"When I look back today, I have to admit that when I started the 'Neighbours who disappeared" project of the Educational and Cultural Center of the Jewish Museum in Prague and made my students interested in it, I had no idea what I was getting into. I knew that I can't hope to create a professional work with my fifteen-year-old pupils. I wanted to teach them the basics of scientific research, such as data collection, sorting and critical evaluation. I found the Holocaust to be a suitable topic, as it is still current even sixty years after the war.

The first outline of the project, a carefully drafted breakdown of points, was flushed away by the August floods. The rest of the conception fell to pieces during the research – essentially, every few weeks, everything changed.

For the final presentation of the results of our collaborative work, I chose the form of stories. They speak of people, who lived in places we know all too well, they went to school and dance lessons, had shops and then, suddenly with no reason or fault of their own, they disappeared never to appear again."

Dagmar Burdová

In this publication, we used two of the sixteen stories.

Project authors:

Martin Hubinka, Vojtěch Jána, Tereza Jandáčková, Petr Kašpar, Štěpán Kotyza, Radka Kulichová, Šimon Machů, Václav Machů, Klára Nováková, Karolína Osecká, Dominika Pávková, Václav Pechanec, Lenka Škeříková, Petr Tměj, Markéta Zrůbková

Supervising teacher:

Mgr. Dagmar Burdová



"When the selective subject classes were being listed at the end of our sixth grade, a social sciences seminar was among them. Mrs. Burdová explained that it was a subject in which we would occupy ourselves with the stories of vanished Jews. This was how the sixteen strong group determined to uncover the past was formed. In early September, we received a list of Litomyšl Jews who were tortured to death. It was put together by Markéta Freyová after the war. We went around in groups and alone asking elderly citizens if they know any of them. This way, we gained a general idea of who we can ask for information. Then, our own private research began.

Klára and Lenka met up with Mrs. Bergmann, who told them at length of her life with her husband, Karel, a Jew. Her story is one of the more cheerful ones and Klára and Lenka befriended a great old lady thanks to it.

Radka visited a man who recently died. Fortunately, the remaining two witnesses she interviewed, Mrs. Dušková and Mrs. Skálová, are in very good health.

Tereza and Markéta chose as their subjects of research a former factory owner and a lady, who survived a concentration camp. Although their work started of quick, they had their share of troubles in the end. Vašek comes from a village and doesn't know any older townsfolk, so his task was researching in the archives. Petr and Štěpán had to follow their story to Prague.

Dominika had a surprise waiting for her: "I had no idea that I could have Jews in the family. In September, I told my grandparents Anna and Jiří that I will be doing a project on Jews. Grandpa started telling me about his uncle, who married a Jewish woman. I decided I would research my uncle's story. I found out a lot of information and I believe my family is proud of me."

Work on the Neighbours who Disappeared project meant great experience for all of us. We would certainly not like to live through anything similar to what happened during the Holocaust. We thank all of those, who helped us and shared their memories with "the youth", which they occasionally complain about."

Research team members

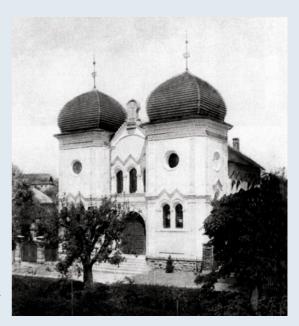


Questions:

- What was the standing of Jews, who had married an Aryan?
- How did the Bergmanns live during the war?
- When did Boženka prove very brave?
- Do you think Boženka could have truly understood Eva after all Eva has been through during the war?

Jews settled in Litomyšl no later than at the end of the 16th century. The only Jewish structure preserved to this day is the Jewish cemetery, where a memorial to the Jewish victims of World War Two was unveiled in 1986. The Romano-Maurish synagogue built in 1909, which had survived the war in fairly good condition, was torn down in 1968 and replaced by prefabricated concrete residences. In January 2004, a memorial palque was placed at the site of the former synagogue.

The project leader, Dagmar Burdová, writes: "Our research was focused primarily focused on the 30's, so we were interested in the Jewish population of Litomyšl from that time. We tried to find out the numbers by searching for members in the records of the Jewish religious community of Litomyšl (the first records of its meetings were dated 1901). According to its articles of association, any Jew older than 20 years could have been a member, if he applied for membership and if at the same time, someone recommended him for membership.



The religious environment of the small town was very tolerant. The Jewish families celebrated the Jewish High Holidays, but also gave children presents on St. Nicholas day and decorated Christmas trees. At the time of the Münich agreement, even Litomyšl started having anti-Semitic moods. People would find Star's of David on their houses in the morning, or labels saying "JUDE".

Litomyšl was occupied on March 16, 1939. There were 115 Jews living in the town at the time. In the morning of December 3, 1942, all the Jews were deported (only the three members of Mr. Freys family remained three more days – he was the manager of the Jewish community) after assembling in front of the synagogue, with their luggage ready. They took a train from the local train station to Pardubice, and were deported from here on December 5 on the Cf 486 transport to Terezín. 92 of them fell victim to the Holocaust.



Sources:

Mgr. Miroslava Ludvíková, Mgr. Dagmar Burdová

The Synagogue in Litomyšl before the war



The interest in history by no means ended with the completion of the Neighbours who Disappeared project. Stanislav Švejcar, a teacher, built on the project and – with the help of the Person in Need public service company – started a project about the Litomyšl victims of the Communist regime. Later years of students searched the communist archives, visited former political prisoners and their relatives. Based on this work, exhibition panels and later a publication called "Stories of lawlessness – the Communist Litomyšl region". The Zámecká primary School is a pilot school since 2004 in the "One World" project, for which it creates and tests methodological materials.



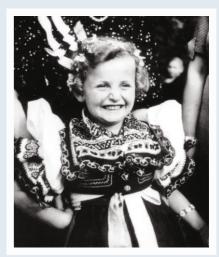


A Story of True Friendship

Eva Dušková (born Freyová) was born on March 23, 1930 in Pilsen. She moved to Litomyšl with her parents in 1934, to a villa built by her grandfather Mr. Finger for his daughters Micie Sgall and Markéta/Margareta Frey (in what is now 428 Captain Jaroš' Street). Eva's father Viktor Frey was born on April 10, 1901, and her mother Markéta/Margareta Frey on April 27, 1909. They met in Litomyšl, where Viktor often traveled from Pilsen to visit granny Breitenfeld. In 1933, Viktor got a job in the Most Steel Mill,

where he was in charge of arranging deals. There were three employees in the company doing that job – one for the Sudetenlands, one for Prague and Viktor for the rest of the country. In order to make the distances shorter, he joined the Fingers and Sgalls in building a shared house in Litomyšl.

Eva started attending what was called the "training primary school", but is now the building of the "Higher Specialised School" and "Secondary Pedagogical School". 35 children started first grade in September 1936, including Božena Bartošová. Professor Martínek taught at the "municipal school" in the same building. Professor Martínek and professor Trefulková decided to start practising for a theatre play and chose seven children as actors. The teacher recommended Božena for the role of the Jester, but she would need black gym-shoes, which she didn't have and her parents couldn't afford. Eva helped her by lending her her own, so Božena got to play in the theatre and Eva was proud that her shoes were also a part of it. So started the great friendship between the Jew and the Aryan.



Eva Freyová, 1936

Božena Skálová (born Bartošová) was born the same year as Eva, in 1930. Her father Antonín was a master cementer and her mother, Marie, a cook. Eva came from a higher status family and was an only child. The much poorer Mrs. Skálová thought Eva had a lot of things – probably anything she ever wanted – but nevertheless was never smug or bossy. She played the piano and studied well, but wasn't very good at drawing. Eva and Božena quickly became friends and visited each other often. They used to play with dolls



Markéta and Viktor Frey, with their daughter Eva, 1936

at the Freys', or toss a ball in the garden and jump the rope. They would always get something good as a snack. "I once visited Eva on a Saturday and they were just holding the Sabbath", recalls Mrs. Skálová. "There were many people, certainly including the Fingers and the Sgalls. Milan Sgall was friends with my brother, Tony (Antonín). We spoke German." They would even go to synagogue together. "It was a beautiful building. The men would wear hats and walked around the altar in circles. It was all gold and red there."

When the Germans confiscated the villa in Captain Jaroš' Street, they set up an NSDAP office on the second floor and a kindergarten on the first. The Sgalls moved to their grandmother and the Freys to what is now 113 Smetana's Square, also to their grandparents.

Eva stopped going to school in 1940. Her mother told Božena that the Germans forbade the Jews to do so and that she should continue to visit and play with Eva: "You used to visit before, you should continue now." Boženka considered that normal. The entrance to Freys' apartment on the

town square was in a side street, but she had to visit at night so that nobody could see. "We used to play with dolls with Eva and various board games. I used to tell her what we were currently learning at school. I still always got a snack, even though everything was rationed through food stamps during the war." Eva was taught at home by Věra Štolcová, who had already graduated and was also Jewish.

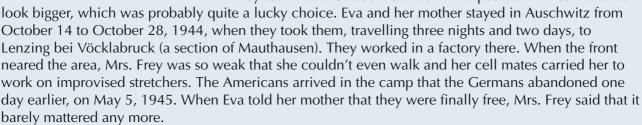
Eva was deported with her parents on December 6, 1942, three days later than all the other Jews from Litomyšl, because her father was the representative of the Jewish community in Litomyšl and had some duties to tend to. Boženka hasn't heard a word of Eva through the rest of the war. Eva met Anita Fischer in Terezín, whom she befriended as well. They were different from the others. Their heim (children's room) had many children from an orphanage, who had much different behaviour and were very unkind to Eva and Anita. In order to keep the girls entertained, their governesses made up all sorts of activities for them. One German artist (Friedel Dicker-Brandeis) taugth them drawing. Eva once got a package with a bit of lard and some sugar. She spread the lard on some

> bread, sprinkled it with the sugar and ate it all. None of the children shared their food – she still remembers how she enjoyed it. Eva's grandfather and father both died in

> > Terezín. Grandfather Julius Frey died during a curfew on April 28, 1943. Viktor caught a flu, which he didn't fully cure, and died of pleurisy as a result 14 months later. He died on June 23, 1944. The wild roses were in bloom. Eva picked one of the flowers and slid it under the coffin lid. Viktor's position as Community manager, which he held before the deportation, protected Eva and her mother right until his death. After he died, both of them were moved with the first

transport to Auschwitz, on October 12, 1944. When they were standing on the ramp in Auschwitz, a passing German came very close to them and mumbled: "Say that you're

Eva and her mother Markéta Freyová, 1940 between 16 and 45 years old and sign up for heavy labour." Mrs. Frey took her late husband's cloak and put it on Eva to make her



The first group of the rescued prisoners went home during May. Eva and her mother left on June 19, 1945, however, because Markéta had been very weak for a long time. In Litomyšl, they first lived at the Filks' in "Bělidla"; in autumn, when their house was vacated, Mrs. Frey and her daughter moved back in. Their relatives, "bábinky" ("grannies"), who were liberated in Terezín, lived with them. In September, Eva started her ninth grade at the Litomyšl secondary school, where she met Božena once again. She had to pass the exams from previous years. Her mother obtained a teacher for Czech language and for math. There were many other things Eva wanted to find time for: she learned playing piano and the accordion, she learned English, joined the girl scouts, had ceramics classes and rythmics, too. After her graduation, she moved to Prague where she originally wanted to study psychology, but ended up studying languages at the Philosophical faculty of Charles University. She was admitted for librarianship, the study of which she also completed.

After the graduation, Eva only met Božena once every five years when the entire class met up. Božena used to visit Markéta Frey more often, however. When she passed away, Eva paid Božena a visit with her daughter, to mourn for her together.

The Story of Great Love

Karel Bergmann was born on December 28, 1914 in Litomyšl to Cornelia (born February 10, 1884 in the family of Herman Popper) and Stanislav (born February 5, 1886) Bergmann. His brother Jiří had already been born at the time. Jiří studied at the secondary school in Litomyšl a then started studying medicine in Prague. Karel joined a school for infantry officers after the Litomyšl secondary school and a business academy in Chrudim. He was transferred to Vysoké Mýto, where he was promoted to lieutenant. He met Růžena Musílková in Vysoké Mýto – she worked there as a correspondent clerk in the Sodomka company. Karel and his group of friends came to a café where Růžena was sitting with her friends having some tea. He

asked her for a dance – which ended up as a relationship. Whenever Karel passed with his regiment around the Sodomka offices, the soldiers would start signing. That would be a message for Růžena who would come out to chat for a while and arrange for a date in the evening. Mr. Sodomka, her boss, was so kind that even if he was just in the middle of dictating a letter to her, he

would tell her "Quick, go! Karel is coming", whenever he heard the signing.

In September 1937, Karel Bergmann started working in his father's shop in Litomyšl, which he was expected to take over one day. The Bergmann boys shared a motorcycle, which they later sold. Karel would drive a car for dates in Vysoké Mýto, and he would often take Růžena to Ústí nad Orlicí. "It was a sort of family trip. First, I got in in Mýto, Karel's parents joined us in Litomyšl. Then, we would drive to Ústí and pay a visit to Karel's grandfather." When the Nazis closed the universities, Jirka came back home from Prague and the family had hard times coming. It started by the sad farewells to their dog – the Nazis ordered all purebred dogs confiscated. Cornelia personally took Dolly to Pardubice. For Stanislav, being forbidden to travel out of town was a catastrophe. He had leukaemia and now, he couldn't even go to Pardubice for irradiation treatment. He stayed at home and was slowly dying. Růžena and Karel decided to marry despite the circumstances. Růžena's parents were worried out of their minds, but Růžena believed she could protect Karel. The wedding was on August 29, 1939 in the catholic church of St. Lawrence in Vysoké Mýto. The newly-weds lived with Karels parents in the apartment above the shop. Růžena continued to drive to Vysoké Mýto to Sodomka and Karel minded the shop.



Karel Bergmann shortly before his marriage

On February 13, 1940, Albin Hobler, a Sudetenlander who had lived in Svitavy till then, came into the shop and demanded it handed over with a gun in his hand. The Bergmanns had to abandon their apartment and move in to a small apartment in the house behind the shop. Only Růžena could stay in the shop in order to train the new owners. During that time, she used her knowledge of the storage and tried to take as much warm clothing for her family as she could. Karel and Jiří found work on a farm near Litomyšl. Růžena and Karel used to visit the Holomkas in Lány in order to listen foreign radio stations. "Mrs. Holomková had a hole drilled in the door of the apartment with a cork plugging it – she would use it to check if anyone was coming, so we wouldn't be found out," recalls Růžena.

Stanislav Bergmann died in 1942 and Cornelia and Jiří were deported on December 3, 1942 to Pardubice. The train full of Litomyšl Jews left the train station at five in the morning. Růžena and Karel accompanied their relatives – Jiří had just undergone an operation and hadn't fully recovered yet. They saw the last of each other at the station. We lost Jiří's trail when he arrived in Terezín on December 5, 1942 and Cornelia probably died in Auschwitz, where she was taken on January 23, 1943 in transport Cr, numbered 1206. Karel was sent by the labour office to work on the construction of a dam in Seče u Chrudimi. There was an internment camp for mixed-marriage Jews. Růžena would visit him from Litomyšl on Sundays from time to time. When the dam was



The Bergmann family after the war, Růžena and Karel with their children Eva and Karel

completed, his wife lost contact with Karel. She later received a post card from Oslavany u Brna, where the Germans controlled coal mines. Karel remained there from September 3, 1943 till the end of the war.

Růžena lost her job in the shop and was ordered by the labour office to take up the job of a munitions factory worker in Škodawerke in Polička Bořiny. She visited Karel twice a year. They decided to have a baby, assuring themselves that before it would be born, the war would be over. The baby boy was born on April 17, 1944. They named him Karel. The Musílkas supported their daughter, but a bank account the Bergmanns had from before the war helped a lot as well. Interestingly, they could withdraw from it as long as the withdrawal forms were signed by Karel. The account disappeared towards the end of the war. Karel escaped the internment camp in Oslavany in spring 1945 and joined the guerilla group of Dr. Hybeš. He returned to Litomyšl in May 1945. In 1946, on November 5, the Bergmanns had a daughter they named Eva. Both children moved to Calgary, Canada, in 1967, after having completed the Litomyšl secondary school. They live there with their families to this day. Karel Bergmann died on May 31, 1996 and Růžena still lives in Litomyšl.

Other stories of Litomyšl:

The story of a house owner Ema Bondy, born Rosenbaumová

* 27 November 1876 transport to Pardubice, 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 15 December 1943 Auschwitz

The story of a plump girl

Ladislav Fried

* 6 February 1891 transport on 6 September 1942, location unknown came back

Adofína Friedová

5 November 1906 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 15 December 1943 Auschwitz

Hana Friedová

* 11 February 1931 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 15 December 1943 Auschwitz

Příběh o šikovné zubařce

MUDr. Traubová

* unknown

The story of brothers and their families Oskar Štolc

* 7 February 1892 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 6 September 1943 Auschwitz

Anna Štolcová

* 23 November 1896 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 6 September 1943 Auschwitz

Věra Štolcová

* 21 August 1921 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 transport to Auschwitz 6 September 1943 came back (freed in Neuengamme) † 1954

Zdeněk Štolc

* 21 August 1921 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 6 September 1943 Auschwitz

Vilém Štolc

* 12 November 11894 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943 Auschwitz

Emílie Štolcová

* 16 March 1903 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943 Auschwitz

Josef Štolc

14 April 1927 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943 Auschwitz

The story of an unhappy marriage

Hugo Popper

* 28 September 1879 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 15 December 1943 Auschwitz

Marie Popperová, born Nováková

the couple has devorced

Milka (Emilie) Weissová, born Popperová

both died before the war

Max Weis – died before the war Františka Weissová – died before the war Olga Weisová – † Auschwitz Marie Weisová – survived the war

Otto Weiss

* 4 July 1898 transport to Terezín 10 December 1941 † 1 October 1944 Auschwitz

Irena Weissová, born Fuchsová

transport to Terezín 10 December 1941 transport to Auschwitz survived

Helga Hošková, born Weissová * 10 November 1929

transport to Terezín 10 December 1941 transport to Auschwitz survived

Emilie Popperová

* 18 January 1875 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † Terezín

Helena Popperová

* 2 June 1886 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 6 September 1943 Auschwitz

The story of the belt makers Ida Friedová

17 August 1887 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943 Auschwitz

The story of the favourite shops

Irma Fingerová, born Ledererová

* 23 May 1884 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † Auschwitz

Rudolf Finger

* 26 February 1877 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † Auschwitz

Jan Finger survived the war in the R.A.F.

Markéta Freyová, born Fingerová

* 27 April 1909

Viktor Frey

Micie Sgallová, born Fingerová * 8 August 1911 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 transport to Auschwitz 6 September 1943 + 8.3. 1944

Otto Sgall

* 30 April 1894

The story of the elegant tennis player

Otto Sgall

* 30 April 1894 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 transport to Auschwitz 6 September 1943 † 8 March 1944

Micie Sgallová, born Fingerová * 8 August 1911 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 transport to Auschwitz 6 September 1943 + 8.3. 1944

Milan Sgall *5 May 1934 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 transport to Auschwitz 6 September 1943 +8.3.1944

Bedřiška Sgallová

transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 15 December 1943 in the transport to Auschwitz

Irena Pollaková, born Sgallová (Pardubice)

Lenka Pollakova (14 years) Josef Pollak (11 years) † July 1944 Auschwitz

Růžena Holznerová, born Sgallová

transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 transport to Auschwitz 16 December 1943 † Stutthof

Emil Holzer

† July 1944 Auschwitz

Věra Holzerová

survived

Lydie Holzerová

survived

Oskar Holzer (Ústí nad Orlicí)

January 1943 arrested by the Gestapo, held in the Small Fort in Terezín † březen 1943 Auschwitz

The story of a silent lady

Filip Neumann

* 4 March 1878 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942

Berta Neumannová

* 1878

transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942

Adolf Neumann

* 9 February 1918 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942

Marie Neumannová

* 10 January 1905

Vlasta Neumannová

*25 November 1907

Josef Neumann

* 24 October 1908

Karolína Neumannová

* 25 May 1913

Jarmila Neumannová

* 25 August 1920

Antonie Turečková, born Neumannová

* 30 March 1910 transport to Terezín 31 January 1945 (Jewish partners of Aryans) † 16 April 1992

Liduška Turčeková

+ 1942

The story of two factory owners

Rudolf Fischer

* 28 June 1870 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 freed in Terezín † 1955

Rudolf Faul

* 16 August 1891

† 14 December 1942 Auschwitz

The story of a divorce and the weddings

Hana Švadlenková, born Fleischerová

3 July 1916 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 freed in Terezín † 1960

The story of a large family

Leopold Eisner

* 29 December 1883 † 10 June 1942 Pardubice, executed in the Heydrichiad

Edvard Eisner

* 9 March 1882 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Věra Eisnerová

* 6 July 1918 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Květa (Flora) Eisnerová

* 6 January 1923 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Eva Eisnerová

* 26 December 1926 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Pavel Eisner

18 September 1929 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Salomon Eisner

* 5 February 1855 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 20 November 1943 Terezín

Berta Eisnerová

* 25 February 1881

† 6 September 1943 Auschwitz

Blažena Eisnerová

* 1 April 1886 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943 Auschwitz

Helena Eisnerová

* 6 February 1895 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Richard Eisner

* 22 July 1914 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 23 January 1943

Josef Eisner

* 25 March 1910 transport to Pardubice 3 December 1942, to Terezín 5 December 1942 † 18 December 1943 Auschwitz

The story of a mother and a daughter

Anita Franková, born Fischerová

* 13 July 1930 transport to Terezín 3 August 1942 transport to Auschwitz 18 December 1943 osvobozena v Auschwitz 21 January 1945 † 2008

Ela Fischerová, born Felixová

* 23 October 1902 transport to Terezín 3 August 1942 transport to Auschwitz 18 December 1943 freed from Auschwitz 21 January 1945 † 30 January 1950

JUDr. Josef Fischer

† 17 November 1939 Praha

A story from our family

Marie Pávková, born Voglová

* 10 December 1896 transport to Terezín 25 February 1945 from Prague † 73 let