

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis Our Ostrava Group

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Ostravak Gathering

About 60 of us met at the synagogue (despite terrible transport problems) for the 4th Ostravak Gathering. Unfortunately, the Ambassador was unexpectedly and suddenly



recalled to Prague so he was unable to join us but the Embassy was delightfully represented by the Cultural Attaché, Jana Příkladová, who came with her daughter, Kateřina.

Jan Bettelheim, Jana and Katerina



Part of the Display - Ostravaks

14th March was the exact 71st Anniversary of the German occupation of Ostrava. We marked the occasion by David Prager singing *Kel Moleh Rachamim* most movingly. The highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly a too brief piano recital by Evelyn McGilloway (née Rix) who played four wonderful pieces:

- Prelude in C minor Chopin
- Nocturne in F minor, opus 55 Chopin

- Impromptu in A flat, opus 142 Schubert

Her finale was *Valse Melancolique* composed by her father Otto specially for her mother. Otto Rix, for whom music was a hobby, had been trained in business and economics at Prague University, had escaped the holocaust and came to London where



he became manager of the Marks and Spencer store on Edgware Road. Otto met and fell in love with Evelyn's mother outside Golders Green tube station! That must give a whole new perspective to several London landmarks and greater respect to M&S store managers!

Evelyn and her brother, Bernard.

In the background, George and Ursula Ader with Rabbi Rosenfeld, examining our Ostrava *sefer*

Even the Jewish Chronicle reported on the event, on 19th March!

One of the several people who were unable to get to Kingston because of the traffic and train problems was Michael Milton from Tikkun Spectrum Radio (http://www.spectrumradio.net/radio_stations/tikkun_spectrum_jewish.phtml) who interviewed David Prager and David Lawson a few days later. David Prager has a recording of the broadcast interview and will email copies (2 emails of 4 mb size) to anyone interested (drprager@aol.com)

On Thursday 8th April, I met the Ambassador, by appointment, and presented him with a copy of *Out of the Midst of the Fire* and of *První Deportace Evropských Židů* on behalf of the Ostrava Group.

Stolpersteine

We now have 33 *Stolpersteine* to be laid in Ostrava in June. Gunter Demnig is scheduled to lay them on 10 and 11th June.

Heinz Vogel has done a great job in liaising with everyone and organising the paperwork (in English, Czech and German!) involved. Libuše Salomonovičová has, as always, been absolutely incredible in tracking down the exact location of houses that possibly no longer exist in streets whose name and location has been changed or which also no longer exists, except as a car park etc. She has braved terrible weather to photograph the exact location to ensure the *Stolpersteine* are laid in the correct place. Dr Sladovnik, of the Ostrava City Council, has been extremely helpful with checking Heinz's Czech grammar and, more importantly, ensuring that all the legal and practical problems are overcome. Radan Salomonovic labours long and hard, translating into and out of English and Czech; he never complains and is always willing.

We owe them all a big “Thank you”.

Trip to Ostrava

22 of us are signed up for our trip to Ostrava (27 June-1 July incl) and it should be quite an experience. On Sunday, after we arrive, we will be received by the City Authorities in the new Town Hall. On Monday, we will see each of the *Stolpersteine* and tour Ostrava with a visit to the Jewish community Centre and a concert in the Rothschild House in the evening. On Tuesday there will be a trip to the Beskydy or we will go to Auschwitz, with Michal Salomonovic as our guide. Wednesday is free in Ostrava before we fly to Prague and on Thursday we will go to Terezin or have the day free before flying back home.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to join us – it might be possible to increase numbers.

Ostrava Tourism

I am please to hear that the New York Times is following our lead, and recommending Ostrava as a tourist destination:

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/travel/04surfacing.html?nl=travel&emc=tda3>

We, of course, know that there is much more to Ostrava than old mines and sleezy bars! Peter Auerbach (who was one of our network who told us about the NY Times) writes:

I must confess I didn't know about the wild bars. I am looking very much forward to walking the streets where my beloved late Father and late Uncle grew up as children. To go to Ostrava and for such a meaningful reason, well I'm at a loss for words. Looking forward to meet you and the others as well.

Our Archive

As you know, the archive that we have collected will be held by the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP). The funds that you had contributed allowed us to employ Hana Sustková part time for 4 months to begin cataloguing this material. The demands of her other job have increased so she is not able to continue (and our funds are seriously depleted!) but I am happy to tell you that Hana introduced us to Dr Jiří Jung and the JMP will take him on, part time for 2-3 months at least, to continue this work.

Also, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington are very interested in sharing access to our archive and making the material available to researchers who use their facilities. The USHMM are apparently willing to fund some of the work, especially the digitization of the relevant parts of our archive. The USHMM and JMP are discussing exactly how this collaboration will work in practice and that will take some weeks to resolve, but it is an exciting step forward and means that the Ostrava story will have a wider circulation.

News of Ostravaks

Paul Rice (geb. Pavel Reisz) told us about his brother, Karel (the film director) who was in the RAF and returned to Ostrava immediately after the war. In the basement of



their apartment building (See Newsletter #12, where, by an awful mistake, the photograph of the Reisz memorial was labelled as being to Pavel, not Karel!) and discovered an old box full of photographs and other documents. Among them were a brooch and some earrings belonging to Pavel and Karel's mother .

Karel brought them all back to England and the brooch is now in the possession of Pavel's daughter.

Kim Bartos-Plashkes contacted Monica having found us on the web. She noticed that we had contact with Herta Kammerling, part of the Plashkes family from Ostrava and that we were looking for any more information about the family (even Libuše had not been able to!). Kim wrote:

My husband's father was a holocaust survivor, his name was Hans Plaschkes born in Vienna 1927. Hans father was Richard Plaschkes born 1896 in Osseg, Czechoslovakia Richard's father was Siegmund Plaschkes born 1859 in Nikolsburg, Czechoslovakia. Siegmund's father was Samuel Plaschkes, we don't know the exact year Samuel was born but we do know he married a girl named Rebeka Taus or Taus from Ostrava. Rebeka;s father's name was Elias Taus from Ostrava. We do know that my husband's grandfather Richard Plaschkes had a brother named Albert that supposedly also married a girl from Ostrava but we do not know what happened to him. I have been in contact with a family in Holland, Israel and the USA all of which have connections to Czechoslovakia

If anyone recognizes any of these names or has any other information, please get in touch with Monica or David.

Rosemary Schonfeld's paternal grandparents were Pavel and Reislá (geb. Weberová).

Robert Schonfeld, was born in 1910 in Olmouc, but while a child his family moved to Moravska Ostrava, where his mother ran a fish canning factory near the post office. His father, Pavel Schönfeld, at some point abandoned the family and probably went to Poland. Before her Aunt Marie and Helen escaped to England in 1938, they sold the factory.*



Mořic and Relly

Mořic Schönfeld MUDr., was employed in 1937 as a radiologist at a workers' hospital in Ostrava. After the Nazis took power he was forced to give up his job. He and his wife Relly (who is now living in Sydney), her parents and my grandmother moved to Walachisch Meseritsch. Mořic went to work in the Jewish hospital in Prague in 1941.

Mořic, Rely and Rosemary's grandmother were deported from Ostrava to Theresienstadt, where Mořic worked as a doctor for two and a half years. Mořic and Rely were deported to Auschwitz on 23.10.1944. According to colleagues in Theresienstadt who survived Auschwitz, Dr. Mořic Schönfeld told Mengele that he could not do any manual work, because he was a doctor and took care of his hands. This sealed his fate and he was murdered.

Egon Schönfeld a medical student, was born in 1914 and died in camp Sosnovice, near Katovice in Poland.

Marie (born 1906) and Helen (born 1907) Schönfeld remained in London after the war, where Marie worked as a chef in a Czech restaurant in Swiss Cottage. This might have been a restaurant on the site of the Czech Club. They both died in the 1960's.

* Information from Libuše; "In the population census from 1921 Ruzena declared that she is representing company "Fischkonserven Moravia" for our region" so she was the representative of the fish-canning factory rather than running it, apparently, but Rely did remember people actually packing fish into jars, so there **was** a factory or at least a cottage industry. Can anyone throw any more light on it?

Madeleine Isenberg is related by marriage to Pavel Seifter. She has provided some more information about her family (with the help of Libuše):

Goldmanová Aurelie and Gizela – both married as Matzner, Yes, these are cousins who eventually moved to Sydney Australia. Gizela's husband was killed during WW II.

Goldman Emanuel and Herman -- I believe these were my great-uncles, sons of **Yitzhak and Regina Goldmann**, and yes born in Staszky.

Goldstein Arpad -- my uncle, son of **Leopold**, lived in Kezmarok but was born in Temeswar. He was younger than my father, Heinrich/Jindrich who was born in Straszky.

Another family member perhaps in MO, was **Hermann Sicherman**, who was married to a Goldstein, sister of Leopold Goldstein. She and their two children perished in the Holocaust. He eventually made it to New York.

Do you know any of them?

Danny Allen (Apfelbaum) read about us and got in touch. We had, in fact, already met his parents (David and Lilly) through a talk to AJR but we now know more about the family from our indefatigable Libuše:

Apfelbaum Jakob *9.12.1888 was painter – varnisher as a profession. He lived with his family in Ostrava -Zábřeh, Havlíčkova No. 150, later Mor. Ostrava, Guttmanova No. 11.

In October 1939 he was deported to Nisko. After the camp was closed he was expelled to line of demarcation. After the war he registered himself at the Jewish Community of Ostrava and lived in Podbialova No.9.

His wife Berta nee Zollmann(ová) *16.7.1893 was deported in 3rd transport from Ostrava to Terezín and further to Treblinka, where 5th of Oct. died.

They had 3 children:

Emil *8.9.1920 Ostrava-Zábřeh

Oskar *6.11.1922 Ostrava-Zábřeh, attended secondary school in M. Ostrava

Edita *7.3.1924 Ostrava-Zábřeh – attended Czech gymnasium in M. Ostrava, deported with her mother to Terezín and further to Treblinka, where 5.Oct.1942 perished.

Louis Hirsch also read the JC and contacted us:

His father Melech (Michael) b 1898 lived in Ostrava from approx 1900-1910. He (ie the father Melech) was born in S Poland (Tarnow) and was the son of a sofer, Mayer. Mayer's father was Yehuda Lev (after whom Louis is named). In 1910, the family came to England where Louis was born.

Melch was known by his mother's surname Alban until the family moved to Ostrava. Louis believes the Galitzian authorities would not recognise the parents' (Jewish) marriage. The siblings born in Ostrava were all known as Hirsch and Melech then was also called Melech Hirsch.

We hope to meet Louis soon and hopefully discover more about his family. Does anyone recognise the family?

Ralph Altmann is yet another (almost – his family came from Orlova) Ostravak who has recently contacted us. He writes:

My grandfather was Emil Altmann, he served in the Imperial Austrian army. He was married to Ottilie, both died of natural causes before the war and are buried in the Jewish section of the municipal cemetery in Orlova.

They had 3 sons Felix, Erich (my dad) and Rudi.

My dad and Felix had a business together in Hamburg before the war.

Again, we hope to learn more.

Dr Tom Pastor and his daughter, Isobel, came to the Gathering on 14th March. Tom and Libuše have discovered a bit about the family – there is already an Orlova connection! – and we hope to learn more soon:

Here is a brief overview of the Izak (Isaac) Pastor family and his son Benjamin Pastor *1872+7.4.1931 in Orlová, who is Tom's grandfather.

There are four children of Izak Pastor. There are not many details about the family, because they lived in a small village Doubrava (today part of Orlová). This village had a separate Jewish community before the war and since majority perished in the Holocaust, it was not re-established after the war. Nazis destroyed the synagogue and just few graves on the Jewish cemetery in Orlová remained.

Benjamin Pastor was married twice. First wife died in 1919, second one – Vanda – survived the war and in 1949 married again. Her second husband was Salomon (Šalamoun) Fuchs, a war widower. Vanda died 18.1.1974 in Mor. Ostrava. Before the war she lived together with children in Doubrava, no. 449. Germans deported the family to Poland in 1939 and from there the sons went to Germany for a forced labor and Vanda with daughters Erna and Eva to concentration camp Gross Rosen.

Tom's father Ignac (or Ignatz) (or in Czech Hynek) worked in an office in Moravská Ostrava and lived on Českobratrská Street 2. In 1939 he wanted to emigrate from Protectorate to San Domingo via Zionist organization. But this project failed. Only from the letter you gave me in Kingston I could read that he went from Poland to Middle East.

Does anyone have any more information?

More Ostravaks

We are always keen to extend our Ostravak network. If you know any other Ostravaks, please ask them to get in touch with us.

Hell Survivors



There is a small exhibition in the Czech Embassy in London of photographs of Czech holocaust survivors living in Israel. The photographs were taken by Jan Noseková, the wife of the Ambassador. A book of the photographs was published by Druhe mesto in 2006:

“The book offers portraits of Israelis from Czechoslovakia who survived the Holocaust, made today in their homes, old photographs, some of them have retained from childhood, fragments of memories, where no photographs survived.

Photographs by Jan Noseková, text Michael Zantovsky.”

The book was declared the best photographic book of 2006 by the Fotograf Magazine.

Pesach Greetings

We had many Pesach greetings to pass on to the worldwide Ostrava network.



Mirjam and Paul Halpern:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgeX_8tBCY&feature=player_embedded



Nurith and Uriel Meretz



Leah and
Yehuda Bakon

And, of course, from us!

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