

TEUERSTER PETR,
 AM 12. JULI
 GEHT AN DICH EIN
 PAKET AB. ICH WERDE
 EIN VERZEICHNIS BEI-
 LEGEN UND WERDE
 ANFÜHREN, IN WELCHER
 REIHE EINZELNE
 SACHEN AUFZUESSEN
 SIND. ESSET NICHTS
 VERDORBENES.
 KÜSSE
 9/7. 1944.

Postcard dated July 9, 1944, to Petr Ginz in Theresienstadt, from his father, Otto Ginz. From the private archives of Chava Pressburger.

DEAREST PETR,

A PACKAGE WILL BE SENT TO YOU ON JULY 12. I WILL ENCLOSE A LIST AND EXPLAIN THE ORDER IN WHICH YOU SHOULD EAT EVERYTHING. DO NOT EAT ANYTHING THAT HAS GONE BAD.

KISSES

9/7 1944

The Last Meeting

Chava Pressburger

Petr's diary accurately describes his rich life almost until the moment of his transport to Theresienstadt. He lived for two more years in Theresienstadt, during which time, in spite of difficult conditions, he continued to draw and write. He edited the magazine *Vedem*³⁸ and, as far as possible, lived life to the full. In two years, the naive, dreamy boy turned into a serious sixteen-year-old young man who was immensely interested in just about every scientific subject. In Theresienstadt one had the opportunity to meet acclaimed scientific experts and great artists, from many disciplines. Petr listened keenly to their lectures, which took place secretly, because any intellectual activity was strictly forbidden by the Germans.

Two years later, when I was also deported to Theresienstadt as a fourteen-year-old, I had the chance to see Petr briefly, hug him, and say good-bye to him, before he was deported with a transport to his death in Auschwitz. I wrote down the terrible moments of our last farewell in my Theresienstadt diary:

38. Translator's note: this can mean both "we lead" and "we are winning."

16 August 1944

Petr is an awfully smart boy. In their house he is known as the smartest. When I arrived here, a girl asked me if Petr Ginz is my brother, and said he was the most intelligent boy in the "heim." I was very happy and I was very proud of him.

16 September 1944

I haven't written for a long time, I couldn't find time to do it. Petr was ill, his fever was 39°. There is this epidemic in Theresienstadt now. Fevers, people feel no pains. I was very worried that he might have something, because Petr and I are here alone together and if something happened to him, I am responsible; how would I explain it to our parents?

27 September 1944

So Petr and Pavel are in the transport. They were summoned the day before yesterday. It was said they'd be leaving the next day, but meanwhile they are still here, because the train hasn't come. They are living in the Hamburg barracks in the garret. . . . We are hoping the transport will stay here, they say there is a strike in the entire protectorate, so the train won't even get here. When I found out that Petr is in it I felt ill. I ran to the toilets and cried my heart out there.

In front of Petr I try to calm myself; I don't want to worry him. They are supposed to be taken somewhere near Dresden; I am terribly afraid there will be bombing there and the boys might get hurt. Mummy and Daddy, I miss you very much, especially now that my only support will be gone. Who knows if we'll all find each other ever again? Oh, I wish the war would end already, it's already a bit too much for us! What will our parents say at home when they find out that Petr is gone? They will probably know it soon now; Karel Müller wrote it home. Poor Daddy and Mummy!

28 September 1944

The train is now here and both boys have boarded it. Petr has the number 2392 and Pavel 2626. They are together in one carriage. Petr is amazingly calm; Uncle Milos was admiring him. I kept hoping the train won't come, even though I knew the opposite was true. But what can one do?

In the morning Hanĕa (my cousin) and I went to see them by the slojzka.³⁹ It was a terrible sight, I will not forget it till I die. A throng of women, children, and old people were pushing near the barracks to get a last glimpse of their son, husband, father, or brother. The men were leaning out the windows, pushing and shoving one on top of the other, to glance their dearest. All the barracks were surrounded by police so that no one could escape. Ghetto watchmen were standing near the building and chasing away people who got too close to it. Men were waving from the windows and saying farewell with their eyes to their relatives. Crying was heard from everywhere. We quickly ran and brought the boys two slices of bread, so they won't be hungry. I pushed my way through the crowd, crawled under the rope that separated it from the barracks, and handed Petr the bread through the window. I still had time to touch his hand through the bars and already the ghetto cop chased me away. Lucky it ended there. Now the boys are gone and all we have left of them are empty beds.

12 October 1944

It has been fourteen days now since the boys left, and we haven't received any news from them. There were altogether seven transports, the list for the last one was being distributed yesterday, and I heard there will be more.

39. Slojzka, from the German *Schleuse*—sluice gate, was the name of the place where transports were received and sent off.

16 October 1944

Today there was an alarm again, after a long time. I saw foreign airplanes. First there were droves of them and then we saw four, followed by German fighter planes. I am terribly afraid they will bomb where our boys are. Who knows if my little Petr and I will ever meet again? Dear boy! I hope not even God could allow this to happen.

28 October 1944

Oh, today is another sad day! Uncle Milos boarded a transport to the East a moment ago. He received the summons around midnight last night, saying he has to leave at two o'clock. I heard that Günther⁴⁰ arrived here and was very angry at Rahm⁴¹ for leaving so many Jews here. It is exactly a month today since the boys left, and now Uncle. Hanĕa and I will stay here all alone, the last ones from our entire family.

2 November 1944

Yesterday I found Petr's diary. When I read it, I couldn't control myself and I had to cry. Dear poor darling.

40. The chief of the anti-Jewish SS central command in Prague.

41. The last Theresienstadt Kommandant.

In Israel, one day a year is dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust. On this day, called Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Day, the media deals with this subject, documentary films are shown containing horrifying witness accounts of Holocaust survivors from different countries. A great number of these accounts were recorded many years ago, immediately after the war, when the experiences were still fresh (even though I don't believe that one can ever forget the horrors one lived through in concentration camps). Some testimonies were also used during the trial against Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg.

Israeli television broadcast a witness testimony that was extremely upsetting to me because it also had to do with the death of my brother, Petr. I heard details about how mass murder was carried out in gas chambers. I ask the readers to forgive me for returning to that terrible description. The witness in question worked in the gas chambers. His task was to wait for the people shoved into the gas chamber to suffocate; then he had to open the chamber and transport the heaps of corpses to the ovens, where they were to be burned. This man could barely speak for tears. He testified that the position of the corpses suggested what went on inside the hermetically sealed chamber, when it began to be filled with toxic gas. The stronger ones, led by an overpowering instinct for self-preservation, tried to get to the top, where there was still some air left, so that the weaker ones were trampled to death.

The picture of this horrific scene often haunts my thoughts, especially at night, even though I try to resist it. I see Petr in this terrifying situation and I find it hard to breathe myself. I ask myself: why him, and not me?

Writings from Theresienstadt

Pieces written for the magazine *Vedem* (Theresienstadt, 1942–1944)

Petr Ginz

WANDERING THROUGH THERESIENSTADT

A room buried under The Cavalier,⁴² stinking of the stench of latrines, weak light, filth, physical and spiritual. The only care is to eat enough, get some sleep and . . . ? What more? A spiritual life? Could there exist anything more in those underground lairs than mere animal desire to satisfy physical needs? And still, it is possible! The seed of a creative idea does not die in mud and scum. Even there it will germinate and spread its blossom like a star shining in darkness.

The blind artist Berthold Ordner⁴³ is proof of this. One day I visited him with Jiricek Schubert, in order to write about him in our magazine. After a brief introduction I asked him to tell me something about himself. Unfortunately he spoke only German, so we couldn't communicate very well.

42. The so-called "home" for old prisoners.

43. Berthold Ordner, b. 1889, a Holocaust survivor, a blind Austrian artist who continued to produce unusual wire sculptures even after he was deported to Theresienstadt from Vienna.

“Ever since my youth,” this man said, “I was a keen observer of everything that was happening in front of my eyes. When I was later fatally blinded, I was forced to stop drawing. I couldn’t see or touch what I was drawing. I was simply missing the third dimension. And so I reached for the wire.” Having said this, he took a beautiful peacock off his shelf, made of delicate copper wires. I couldn’t stop admiring the beautiful lines and the detailed execution of this object. The eyes on the tail were made of wire twisted into spirals.

“And how do you work?” I asked.

“First I shape a skeleton, and if it seems to have the right shape, I work out individual details, muscles and such, using a thin wire.”

“How come you still remember so exactly the shapes of models you haven’t seen in over twenty-five years?”

“This is due to my memory. I use my memory to conjure up various objects that I saw in my youth, and I re-create them now, twenty years later, in the form in which I understood them back then. It is a method similar to the expressionist technique. Look at the model at home, then make it, following especially the outline and shape. Colours are secondary. It’s the same with me, except the gap between observing the model and re-creating it is a little longer. Twenty-five years! So much has changed in that time! I used to have shows of my work in America, France, England, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and elsewhere; museums were fighting for my creations. Now in Theresienstadt I am starving; I don’t even have enough wire to work with.”

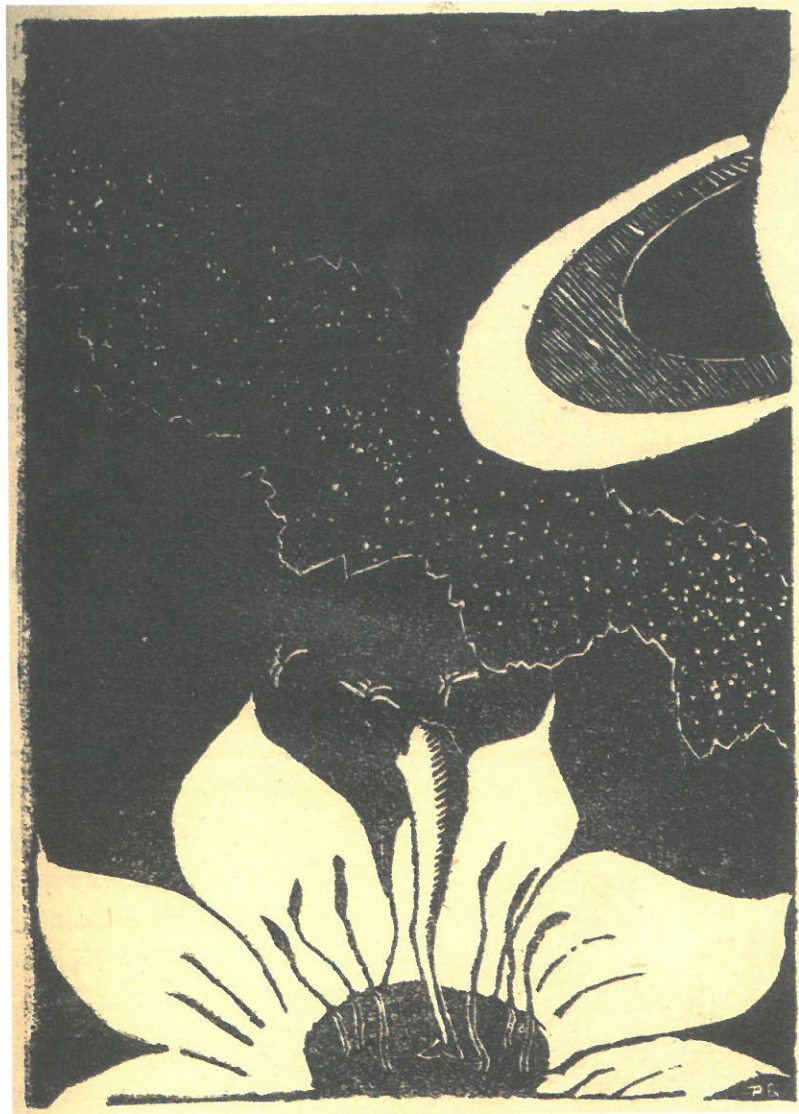
“Do you still feel your blindness?” I asked him.

“Sometimes, when I am reflecting on things, I don’t feel the lack of my eyesight at all. In my spirit, I leave the dirt here completely behind. Those are my happiest moments.”

Petr Ginz

LINOCUTS

As the entire linocut technique shows, a linocut is the expression of a person who does not make compromises. It is either black or white. There is no grey transition. There can’t be any soaring strokes as in a painting or insane fragmented deletions, whose parallels can be found in the mad fruits of some poets’ labour. Everywhere there is the same, calm line, arch, curve, plane. A sculptor, for example, cannot create his sculpture in a state of ecstasy. It would look strange if the sculptor, in a sudden attack of artistic feeling, started hitting the marble, bronze, or other material. That material would either collapse or fall apart. It is simply necessary to work calmly and over an extended period of time, during which you can instantly control the emotions that have just come up. I think that this can only help your art. Paper, music sheetnotes, and a canvass can take everything, but sculptures and linocuts cannot. So according to this I would divide art into two types, the calm and the ecstatic. Of course, this doesn’t mean that every poet or writer has to create in a state of ecstasy. Not at all. Some poets write calmly, others less so. But they do have this choice. An artist working in marble does not have that choice. A linocut artist—and this applies to any engraver—does not have it either. A painter, yes, a composer, too, and so does a dancer, but not a metal craftsman. When I say, “He has a choice,” you mustn’t imagine that after a long deliberation he will choose one or the other. His own character chooses between calm art and art created in a state of ecstasy. And this is also how we must judge those works of art. Calm art reveals the artist’s core; ecstatic art shows his mood. Picture it like this: Every day, we’ll draw lines bent this way or that. These are the poet’s moods. Calm art means that the poet slightly corrects every day the line from the day before, until he arrives at an average angle: this is his core. The ecstatic



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Night Blossoms*, 1942–1944. Linocut; 11.5 × 17 cm; Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa; Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.

artist will capture one line, one mood, which may be different from the one that follows it.

But in the end I beg for your forgiveness for straying so much from the given topic. Farewell!

Petr Ginz

CRAZY AUGUST

The air was humid and chilly. Suspended in it were clusters of steely grey fog that almost touched the surface of the sea. Unpleasant light wind. A green mass of waves at a distance of about a hundred yards gradually disappeared, until it merged with the sea.

August sat in the cabin of *The Bonifacie*. They called him Crazy August, but Petr, the young sailor, believed him. “He is not mad,” he used to say, “he’s just different, a bit strange. He probably knows some big secret you don’t and can’t understand.”

“You’ve become almost like him, you’ll end up losing your marbles if you keep talking to him,” the other sailors would say to him. “They are ignorant,” August would say and his eyes seemed to Petr as if they were looking down at him from a high mountain, hidden by clouds. No, August was not a madman, certainly not, how could he be when he spoke so convincingly? And Petr was fond of him, he liked that crazy man with the deep eyes, he trusted him. August did speak in a strange way. “No one in the world talks like this,” thought Petr. “I have never heard the captain, the ship steerer, the sailors or anyone in the port speak in such a peculiar way.” For this was his entire world. It was nighttime. Everyone was asleep, only the steps of the guard with his dog could be heard on the deck. Petr was falling asleep. His muscles felt soft and relaxed.

His muscles, his entire body felt free, which also relaxed his mind. His thoughts were drifting off behind the blue fog of sleep. He was losing consciousness.

Suddenly he felt someone's light touch, like an electric spark. Petr lifted his head with difficulty in his sailor's cot, looked around, and saw the figure of Crazy August bending over him. "Come with me!" Petr sat up and stretched. "Come quickly," August's voice urged him. Petr stood up without a protest, even though it was warm under his blanket and cold outside. He followed him quietly. They entered the lower deck. August lit a candle. Its weak light barely hid the dark that was hiding behind every corner, in every crack. They reached a small room on the subdeck. Crazy August went inside and Petr followed. The key rattled in the lock and then disappeared in August's pocket. He placed the candle in the centre, sat down on a crate, and held his head in his hands. Petr crouched, as he was feeling cold. August lifted his head. His expressive face shone in the light of the candle, its small reflections dancing like tiny fires in his eyes. A moment passed. Small flies buzzed around the flame. Finally, August spoke, his voice cutting into the dead silence. "Life? What is life? It's like the light of this candle, which burns the wings of these stupid mosquitoes!" Silence again, interrupted here and there by the cracking of the candlewick. "Poor mosquitoes."—"Why do they fly so much around this light?"—Pause. Slowly, he spoke to himself, as if reflecting: "Habit—a move toward individual existence and uncertainty . . ." He buried his head again in his hands and said harshly: "They fly, fascinated, around the flame, until it burns them and they fall down, destroyed. Idiots!"—"Idiots? Habit and uncertainty are too strong, they can't overcome them. Poor insects! . . ." They both sat in silence. Petr was actually surprised—how come he was there instead of sleeping peacefully in his cot? "Think about life, my boy," August said to him, "look, it is like this flame. Do you see it, do you understand it? We

circle it out of habit, and we must die. We want to be ourselves, and we sacrifice everything for this price!"

He reached out and extinguished the candle. Darkness enveloped the room. The mosquitoes could be heard flying away, deprived of the fascinating candle flame. They whizzed around for a little while longer, but soon the buzzing of their wings stopped. They probably made their way into the open space through some crack.

"Did you see, did you see?" August's voice spoke from the dark. "Did you pay good attention, my boy?" he repeated as he removed the lid of the crate with gunpowder.

"One more time, Flamarion." The captain could be heard as if from a far distance, playing cards.

"Deliverance . . ." August whispered. He straightened his hand and threw a lit match flame into the crate of powder.

And the room was lit up by a tremendous glow, and in the blaze of the explosion Petr saw the light of the Great Communion.

Petr Ginz

THE ORCHIDS THIEF

Once upon a time there was a gardener who took great pride in his horticultural talents. His special hobby was orchids. He was especially dedicated to one flower bed. He fertilized it carefully with potassium chlorate, watered and nurtured it. He also had a few more patches of orchids that he was not so concerned about. He left them to nature and birds and wasn't at all surprised when these orchids began to rot, the flowers were not that big, beautiful and

heavy. What used to look like orchids turned into quite ugly little monsters, creepy and disgusting. But the nurtured orchids were blossoming, they were becoming more and more beautiful and the gardener couldn't stop looking at them. "When I sell them," he said to himself, "I will be well off until the end of my life, because no one in the world has such beautiful orchids." Every Tuesday, rich men from town would come to buy flowers. The gardener was looking forward to their arrival, although he was sorry to be selling the beautiful orchids.

On Monday night the gardener suddenly heard quiet footsteps squeaking on the sand in the garden. "Such a late buyer?" he wondered and looked out the window. And what does he see? A ragged boy carrying a basket is quickly approaching the flower bed with the beautiful orchids. He looks around to see if he is being observed, then bends down and quickly begins to pluck the beautiful flowers. When the boy stood crying in the gardener's shed, without the basket, without the orchids, the gardener said: "Why did you want to steal my orchids? Didn't you feel sorry for them?" The boy remains wilfully silent. He is standing in the light of the kerosene lamp and his face looks white, twisted, his sleeves are like the leaves, the haggard body like the stem of—those uncared-for orchids! And that silence of his! Everything is as if intentionally arranged so that I will understand!

The gardener realized the truth; he saw that the boy was the product of a ruined and bad world, just like the neglected flowers had become deformed through his own mistreatment of them. Was that a reason to punish the boy? It would be the same as punishing neglected orchids for being ugly. In the meantime, the boy disappeared. "Really, these orchids are basically the same, but the environment caused good qualities to develop on one side, bad ones on the other. Yes, and this is called character in people, a collection of tendencies. Under the influence of the environment, these tendencies are either

blocked, or developed. And it is the task of gardeners in the entire world to take good care of and to water the gardens that have been entrusted to them."

Thus the gardener sat long into the night and reflected, until he fell asleep, his head on his chest. Sleep well, gardener, and may you dream about a garden full of beautiful white orchids.

Petr Ginz

EXCERPT FROM THE UNFINISHED NOVEL
THE SECRET OF SATAN'S GROTTA

... An adult usually pretends that he thinks only about sensible and worthy things, but this isn't true. In unguarded moments when the ironclad vest surrounding his head opens up and his real face appears, the mask of social stiffness falls off. And I think he feels better when this happens. I know it from my own experience: having once lost my way in the woods and found a lake with dark, calm water, I threw a pebble into it and was very happy to see the circles spreading fast.

It occurred to me then that my feelings at that moment were like a newspaper before it hits the rolling press. All the pressure from every side disappeared. I wondered: why does the pure paper of children's souls have to pass from a young age through the rolling press of life and society, which imprints it with all sorts of qualities and crushes it under the pressure of worries about livelihood and the attacks of enemies. Just as the paper thinks that the picture of its life has been printed, it reenters the printing machine, which prints more qualities and opinions on top of the others, often not complementing but rather contradicting them. Every colour tries to take up as much space as possible on the paper, then a new one comes and can replace the old one. And it's sad that

the paper can't change it any longer, it is moved back and forth and covered with print without any regard for its own will, and when the rotating press finally spits out the finished copy and sends it off into the world, it enters a battle against other printed copies, which were maybe accidentally produced differently.

The world is a rumpus, if you look at it objectively . . .

Notes to Petr Ginz's Diaries

(in chronological order, corresponding to the entries)

Chava Pressburger

19. IX. 1941

Jews were told to wear a badge . . . Police ordinance of 1 September 1942 forced Jews to wear a yellow six-cornered star in public with the black inscription Jude. This separation of Jews from the rest of society was the first step by the Nazis toward "the final solution of the Jewish question." K. H. Frank, Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, asked the Reichskanzlei for permission to mark the Jews in order to separate them from the rest of Czech citizens. After several cases of expressions of solidarity by Czechs (workers in a Moravian chocolate factory came to work wearing yellow stars), it was announced that whoever is seen with Jews or publicly declares that he sympathizes with them will be treated as a Jew. He will receive limited food rations, no tobacco or clothes rations, and will have to wear a yellow star himself.

In the afternoon I went with Eva to Troja . . . A suburb of Prague that Jews were allowed to frequent. Jews were forbidden to go in the opposite direction, against the flow of the Vltava River, along the embankment in the direction of the Old Town.

22. IX. 1941

... near the slaughterhouse ... Prague central slaughterhouse in Holesovice (opened in 1895, finally closed down in 1983), today Prague Market Place (Trznice).

25. IX. 1941

Denis train station ... The Ginz family lived on Starkova Street in Tesnov (called Starek-Gasse during German occupation), directly opposite the Denis station, which was called Vltavske during the war (Moldau-Bahnhof). The station building was torn down in 1972.

27. IX. 1941

Signed by Heydrich instead of Neurath ... Konstantin von Neurath, Nazi politician and diplomat, was from 1939 Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. After the war he was sentenced by the Nuremberg tribunal as a war criminal. On September 29, 1941, Neurath left for a "health vacation" and the new Reich Protector in the Czech and Moravian Protectorate became SS Obergruppenführer and police general Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the central office of Reich security (RSHA). He instantly introduced harsh repressive measures and declared a state of emergency, during which by January 1 about six hundred persons were executed. K. H. Frank was named as his successor.

6. X. 1941

There is a new inventory ... Jewish possessions were gradually listed, cataloged, and confiscated.

10. X. 1941

Ehrlich ... is leaving with the first transport ... On October 16, 1942, the first transport of Prague Jews left for the ghetto in Lodz, Poland. This is the be-

ginning of a new phase in the persecution of Jews, which began in Germany in 1933, when Hitler was elected chancellor of the German Reich. The second phase occurred in 1935 with the publication of the Nuremberg race laws, where Jews were defined as a lower race and deprived of all civil rights.

This new phase in fact begins with a long meeting between Hitler and Himmler in September 1941, after which Himmler wrote to his closest colleagues: The Führer wishes that Germany and the Protectorate be as soon as possible emptied and freed of Jews. Most of the first transport to Lodz, which consisted of a thousand people, was murdered immediately upon arrival and only a few individuals survived.

13. X. 1941

I received notice to go to school and fill sacks with sawdust. ... The full sacks are sent to Veletrzní Palace ... Famous building of Czech constructivist period, a palace built in Prague 7, Holesovice, during the years 1925–1928 for the purpose of presenting Prague trade fairs and exhibitions. From 1939 the palace and its adjoining grounds were used by German Reich authorities for assembling Jews before the departure to concentration camps. The Germans convinced Jewish authorities everywhere in Europe that it was in their own interest to co-operate so as to make the resettlement of Jews as smooth as possible, stressing that it would be made more painless. The Jewish community and its leadership were fully involved in these efforts. Children filled sacks on which those who were called up for transports slept while waiting. The Prague Jewish Community had twenty times more employees than in peace times. Every Jew knew that bad things were happening, but no one guessed what a cruel fate was in store for all of them.

Between 16. X. 1941 and 3. XI. 1941

Six transports left for Lodz and one for Riga. Petr remembers the departure of relatives, the Miluskas and the Jirinas. The registration activity is intensified, organized by the Jewish Community under Nazi supervision. The elimination of the Jewish population is gathering speed.

3. XI. 1941

To Regnartova Street . . . Jachymova Street, Old Town (Josefov), was named during the years 1940–1945 after Jakob Regnart, a composer and musician at the court of Rudolf II.

23. XI. 1941

Transports to Poland . . . are stopped for the time being; now they are sending people to work in Theresienstadt . . . The town of Terezin (Theresienstadt), sixty-five kilometers north of Prague, former fortress built during the reign of Josef II in the years 1780–1790. The first transport arrived here on November 24, 1942. By the order of the Reich Protector of February 16, 1942, Theresienstadt was declared a closed Jewish settlement, a concentration camp. Altogether 140,000 prisoners passed through it.

In November 1941 the Nazis came to the conclusion that they had insufficient means for exterminating so many Jews in a short period of time and therefore, in order to prevent Jews from continuing to live among Aryans, it was decided to concentrate them in temporary ghettos. Only later did the construction and improvement of gas chambers and crematoria allow them to commit mass murder at full speed. Therefore, they asked the president of the Jewish religious community, Dr. Weidemann, and his deputy to work together and present proposals for the creation of ghettos. Their promise that transports to Poland would be stopped quickly spread among the Jewish population. The

Germans did not keep their word and on November 26, 1941, another transport left for Poland.

The lie was the foundation of all relations of Germans toward the Jews. After his conversation with Eichmann, the deputy president of the Jewish Community, Jakub Edelstein, was convinced that the creation of the ghetto could save many Czech Jews. Edelstein even demanded that young and strong Jews volunteer to go, in order to prepare an adequate basis for a self-governing Jewish town with bearable living conditions. He decided to leave for Theresienstadt himself and on December 4, 1941, he travelled there with his Prague team, by a regular personal train and carrying only a small suitcase. He thought that he could return for the rest of his luggage later. But he quickly realized that he had been lied to.

Here are two examples from an infinite number of the Nazis' lies:

When the Theresienstadt SS caught two letters that had been sent illegally, they assembled the entire population of the ghetto and the Kommandant, Dr. Seidl, announced that if those who had written them come forward, nothing will happen to them. But if they don't, there will be terrible repercussions. After a brief hesitation two seventeen-year-olds came forward; they had written to relatives, one of them to his grandmother. Both were arrested. The next day all the prisoners were assembled again and the two boys were publicly hanged.

In the small town of Horodenko in the Ukraine the Nazis ordered all Jews to report to the local church for vaccination against typhoid. Twenty-five hundred people were assembled there. They were loaded into trucks and driven to the bank of the river Dnester. When they arrived there, there was an orchestra playing and German officers were sitting at tables laden with food and drink. Large pits had been dug out opposite the officers. Between the pits and the tables lay soldiers with machine guns. When the Jews arrived, they had to stand next to the pits and were shot at in such a way as to fall directly

into them. At night, a small number of Jews who were not mortally wounded ran away and told about what had happened there. A Sonderkommando arrived in the morning and pulled out the dead Jews' gold teeth. Even those who were still moving were covered with earth.

For the sake of truth it must be added that one of the German officers, Fiedler, who was responsible for auxiliary labor and commanded a group of Jewish prisoners, was always decent to them. He also tried to warn them that the "vaccination" action was a trap.

2. XII. 1941

opened by Deputy Mayor Klapka . . . From March 15, 1939, the Prague city hall was gradually becoming an organ of the Reich occupation powers. It was led by J. Pfitzner, professor of history at Prague German University, whose authority grew with the escalation of the German oppression. The last mayor, Dr. Otokar Klapka (born 1891), was shot by the Nazis on October 4, 1941.

8. XII. 1941

Japan has officially declared . . . On December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers attacked the American military base Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian islands. The next day President Roosevelt declared war against Japan.

9. XII. 1941

The Japanese attacked . . . On December 8, 1941, after attacking American and British holdings in the Pacific Ocean, the Japanese army occupied Thailand and quickly moved south through British Malaysia in the direction of Singapore. They arrived in the domain of Singapore on December 29, 1941, and conquered the city itself on February 15, 1942.

11. XII. 1941

Stefanik's Bridge . . . The chain bridge from the year 1868 was originally named after Franz Josef I; from 1918 it was called Stefanik's Bridge, during the years 1941–1945 Janacek's Bridge. After the war, in 1947, it was taken apart and in 1951 a new one made of concrete, called Sverma's Bridge, was built in its place.

12. XII. 1941

On the way I saw six moving vans . . . about twenty Jews (among them Uncle Milos) were carrying furniture . . . German fascism did not mean only mass murder. It was murder that went hand in hand with the biggest looting in the history of mankind. It has been estimated that the theft of Jewish property during the Protectorate reached at least 2 billion Deutsch marks, i.e., at least 20 billion Protectorate crowns. On February 12, 1941, the Reich Protector published a decree forcing Jewish businesses to declare all home and foreign working capital. These confiscated items were transferred to the Evacuation Fund of the Central Committee for Jewish expulsion. Jews had to give up land, stock shares, bank accounts, securities, jewellery, and so on. The Gestapo enforced the fulfilling of these orders by applying drastic measures in businesses and households, with the co-operation of German occupation authorities and the Protectorate police force, often on the basis of a denunciation by a German or Czech fascist.

But the Evacuation Fund did not include the enormous value of possessions the departing Jews were forced to leave behind in their homes. A special organization was set up for clearing them out, a so-called Treuhandstelle. By October 1, 1940, 14,920 Jewish apartments were registered in Prague. From the first 2,101 apartments, the furniture alone was estimated to be worth 25 million and stored in storage rooms of 36,400 square meters. The next storage

area required a space of 145,600 square meters, three and a half times bigger than the Wenceslas Square in Prague. The Treuhandstelle document stated that by this date the looted collection consisted of almost 2.9 million textiles and the same amount of kitchen and household tools, more than a million pieces of porcelain and glass, more than 61,000 electrical items, almost 9,000 technical and optical instruments, more than 3,200 sewing machines, 2,500 bicycles, 34,500 fur coats, 52,000 rugs, 144,000 paintings, 1.2 million tons of coal and firewood, etc. (Miroslav Karny, *The Final Solution*).

The last theft took place upon the Jews' arrival in extermination camps, where their personal luggage was taken away from them and their gold teeth pulled out after their death.

18. XII. 1941

new crown coins . . . The Germans introduced a forced, non-real currency value against the mark. The new, Protectorate crown, displayed the armorial lion and on the reverse side the leaves of a linden tree. It was valid during 1941–1944.

22. XII. 1941

Hitler is not doing well in Russia . . . On September 21, 1941, Hitler took over the high command of the ground forces.

1. I. 1942

Jews don't have fruit . . . Already in October 1939, a system of rations for food and other consumer items was introduced in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which seriously disadvantaged Jewish citizens. In the course of the war years these rations were increasingly restricted, which lowered especially the living standards of the urban population.

20. I. 1942

A new government . . . on January 19, 1942, R. Heydrich canceled the “civilian state of emergency” and simultaneously named a new Protectorate government led by Dr J. Krejci. E. Moravec was appointed as minister of education. He was an infamous publicist and demagogue who constantly appealed to his fellow citizens to loyally embrace Nazi Germany.

22. I. 1942

There are new transports to Theresienstadt . . . On January 20, 1942, a well-known conference took place in Wannsee about the final solution of the Jewish question. This is not where it was decided to exterminate all the Jews—this had been Hitler's plan since 1939. The discussion was about the best strategy to achieve this goal. The conference was organized by Heydrich and the participants were the highest functionaries involved in the elimination of Jews. Among other things, it was reported that a special Einsatzkommando will be deployed in Russia, which will shoot Jews immediately after conquering new areas. More gas chambers were to be introduced and their size increased.

Eichmann gave a detailed report about Theresienstadt. The lies about this place had to differ. For example, in Germany it had to be described as a ghetto for old people “to keep up the pretense” for the outside world.

Theresienstadt was to fulfill three functions:

1. A concentration and transition camp on the way to extermination camps in Poland.
2. An instrument for the destruction of prisoners.
3. Disinformation about the fate of the Jewish population.

This last function is well illustrated by events in Theresienstadt, when the ghetto was preparing for the visit of the Red Cross commission on June 23, 1944. For this purpose, certain parts of the town along the visitors' planned route were made to look nice. Children's playgrounds were quickly set up, people sat in cafés drinking coffee, young swimmers were swimming in the river Ohre, the prisoners' food that day was of specially good quality, and many other similarly deceptive details. The commission later reported in Switzerland how comfortable the Jews are in Theresienstadt. They happily allowed themselves to be cheated by the Nazis and made no independent effort to find out about the real life of Theresienstadt inmates.

The Red Cross delegation arrived without the main officials who had demanded the visit (the president of the Red Cross, the Swedish and Danish ambassadors), but was represented only by the vice president the of Red Cross in Berlin, Dr. Rossel. He wrote a report about a wonderful, completely normal Jewish town, where people live happily and without worries. And he had written this in spite of the fact that the Red Cross had precise information about what was going on and the Theresienstadt camouflage was obvious. At that time, they already had in Geneva the authentic testimony of two inmates who had escaped from Auschwitz, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler. The scenes that Dr. Rossel had photographed in Theresienstadt were given to the German Ministry of Propaganda for their use.

26. II. 1942

There was a bomb assassination . . . Franz von Papen (1879–1969), Nazi politician, in the years 1939–1944 active as a diplomat in Turkey.

5. IV. 1942

The apartment was locked and covered with stickers . . . "Treuhandstelle" was a department set up by the Jewish religious community in Prague according to a decree of October 13, 1941, to take over and be in charge ("treuhänderisch verwalten") of furniture and other possessions of evacuees and people transported to concentration camps. It also had a list of abandoned apartments.

20. IV. 1942

Hitler is fifty-three years old . . . On Hitler's birthday, on April 20, 1942, R. Heydrich received in a festively decorated Hlavni (Main) train station a completely equipped ambulance train as a gift from President Emil Hacha to Adolf Hitler.

27. V. 1942

There was an assassination attempt . . . R. Heydrich was mortally wounded during an assassination attempt carried out by a group of paratroopers from a Czech resistance unit based in England. The Nazis, led by the new Protector Kurt Daluege and K. H. Frank, responded to Heydrich's death with a terrible persecution of the population. In Prague alone, by July 3, 1942, 442 persons were executed without a reason.

19. VI. 1942

they caught the assassins . . . On June 18, 1942, someone betrayed the group of paratroopers hiding in Karel Boromejsky's church on Resslova Street in Prague, not far from Karlovo Square. Seven paratroopers were hidden there by Chaplain Petrek. Among them were both organizers of the assassination, Jan Kubis and Jozef Gabcik, also Josef Valcik, Adolf Opalka, and others. After

a hopeless battle the heavily wounded paratroopers took their own lives. With the action on Ressler Street, the emergency law and punitive measures did not end—on the contrary, arrests and executions continued: the next day, the Czech prime minister, General Alois Elias, was executed; on June 24, 1942, the Nazis levelled the settlement Lezaky near Louka (Chrudim area), whose adult population was shot to death. Of thirteen children only two returned after the war.

1. VII. 1942

Grandma received the summons to a transport. . . . Within a single month from July 9, to August 10, 1942, Theresienstadt received altogether eight transports from Prague, bringing an influx of 8,460 Jews.

28. VII. 1942—1. VIII. 1942

no entries

5. VIII. 1942—7. VIII. 42

nothing written

The diary ends two months before the day when Petr himself joined a transport, on October 22, 1942.

Earlier, he records that Uncle Milos leaves with his transport on June 14, on June 27 three teachers from his school, on July 1 his grandmother, on July 23 Father's sister Herma and her husband Levitus, on July 28 Aunt Anda. So it seems that the Germans decided that the conditions were ripe for the total annihilation of Jewish Prague. Within a few months they deported more than twenty thousand people from Prague.

Toward the end of his diary Petr's handwriting becomes nervous; his writing is different, disorganized, unsteady. It is clear that he is going through a major psychological crisis; he feels that it is now his own turn.

His childhood has ended; the happy life with his parents, his sister, his school is finished. Fourteen-year-old Petr begins two years of living in Theresienstadt with new friends and new creative projects. Two years, which end with his journey to a gas chamber in Poland.

Acknowledgments

Chava Pressburger

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who found and preserved Petr's diaries.

*The Fates of Those in Petr's Diary**

Jewish Relatives and Friends

Ginz, Petr	died at Auschwitz in 1944
Ginz, Pavel	died at Dachau in 1944
Ginz(ova), Berta (grandmother)	died at Theresienstadt in 1943
Ginz, Emil (uncle Milos),	sent to Auschwitz in 1944. Did not return.
Ginz, Victor (uncle Slava)	died at Auschwitz in 1943
Ginz(ova), Herma (auntie Herma Levitus)	died at Maly Trostinec in 1942
Ginz(ova), Anna (auntie Anda,	died at Auschwitz in 1943

Petr's father, Otto Ginz, Petr's sister, Eva Ginz (now Chava Pressburger), and Petr's cousin Hana Ginz (now Hana Skorpilova) survived.

Other Nearest Relatives

Levitus, Karel (uncle)	died at Maly Trostinec in 1942
The Hanzl family:	
Pavlicek, Jozka, Jirina, Miluska	died at Lodz in 1941

Neighbors

Kohner, Lianka, and her parents	Deported to Theresienstadt in 1942. Did not return.
Mautner family (Ervin, Karel, Egon)	Deported to Theresienstadt in 1942. Did not return.

Petr's Friends and Schoolmates

Popper, Harry	died at Treblinka in 1942
Ehrlich, Richard	died at Lodz in 1941
Kaufmann, Heinz	died at Lodz in 1941
Hayek, Zdenek	died at Lodz in 1941
Stein, Slavek	died at Dachau
Klein, Tomas	died at Auschwitz in 1943
Hirsch(ova), Renata	died at Zamosc in 1942
Bardach, Felix	died at Zamosc in 1942
Baer(ova), Gertruda	died at Sobibor in 1942
Goldmann(ova), Rita	died at Izbica in 1942
Zinn, Erich	died at Treblinka
Stern, Hanus	died at Zamosc
Baum, Hanus	died at Auschwitz in 1944
Dusner, Ivan	died at Sobibor, Ossova in 1942
Fischhoff(ova), Edita	died at Auschwitz in 1944

Wolfgang Adler survived Auschwitz and was liberated at Gunskirchen

Teachers at the Jewish School

Glanzberg, Jiri	died at Auschwitz or Treblinka
Stein, Elisa	died at Auschwitz or Treblinka
David, Robert	died at Auschwitz or Treblinka
Weislitz (Ervin?, Josef?, Vitezslav?)	died at Auschwitz or Treblinka
Beinkoles, Jan	died at Auschwitz in 1943

Irma Lauscher(ova) survived and was liberated at Theresienstadt

Others

Bondy, Emil	deported to Theresienstadt in 1941. Died in Riga in 1942.
Kolben, Emil	died at Theresienstadt in 1943
Dr. Reich, Karel	unknown
Heymann, Martin	died at Theresienstadt
Dr. Storzova, Anne	died at Maly Trostinec in 1942.

Hanka Steinerova survived and was liberated from Auschwitz

*This is not a comprehensive list. The fate of several people Petr mentioned remains unknown.

Drawings

Deník

Petra Ginzé

od devatenáctého zříti rokem
dvadecátého čtyřicátého prvního
(pátek)

do dvacátého třetího únoru rokem
devatenáctého čtyřicátého druhého
(pondělí)

Material darem Evy Ginzové
k narozeninám.

Title page of the first diary

19. IX. 1941. (Částeč)

Počasi je (pě) mlhavé.

Byl zaveden odznak pro
Židy, který je asi takový:



Když jsem šel do školy, na-
počítal jsem 69 "žerifů", ma-
minka pak jich napočítala
přes sto. Dlouhá třída je na-
zvána "Mléčnou dráhou".

Odpoledne jsem šel s Evou ^{spolu}
do Troje a vozili jsme na ^{údržbu}

Potom jsem četl mamince ulit z
olova monogram, ale nepovedl a mi.
Udělal jsem si positioni rýt do lino-
lea, ten jsem položil na dno křivočké bed-
ničky a do té jsem naklil olvo.

Vlak měl přijet ve 7^h na 8, ale zpožděním
přijel až ve 7^h 8. Maniči byla celá zničena,
spolučinitelji byli zanní lupiči a zločinci.

Maniči přivezla spousta cukroví, pečiva
a p. Husa, kterou též M. přivezla včel
6.60.

Dostal jsem jako dárek od tetičky Božky
flanelovou košili, Eva bačkorky.

Hitlerovi se to na Rusku povedlo a proto
odstranil generála a sám šel na jeho místo.

Úterý 23. XII. 1941

Právě jsme dostali oznámení od
židovské obce, abychom odešli
do 31. prosince ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince}
foukání ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince}
aplomény a p. ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince}

Mimo to se musí ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince}
nosit ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince} ^{do 31. prosince}
něm. nástroje.

1 rok

Deník

Petra Ginzse

od čtyřadvacátého února roku
devatenáctého čtyřicátého českého
(úterý)

do

Title page of the second diary

japonských měst.
Dopoledne doma, odpoledne zde
byli Milošova babička.

Pondělí 20. IV. 48

V 6 h ráno odjel strážek Slava
a Miloš do Moraviny k učitelce Karlostejn
(ne Křivoklátnu). Dopoledne doma a ve
městi, * odpoledne vč.

Hitlerovi je 53 let, včera
praporek a přírody a v katedrě v
hlavní školní je jeho busta. Každý
dívka musí vyvěsit praporek s
Hakenkreuzem, včera včera ne-
dostane se toho přetěšení. Jest jim
to přívoně zaskábnáno. Odpoledne s
Kubínkem na Smíchov. Pak jsme
se šli rozhodnout s p. Felsem Ledererem
z českého národního. Odjíždí včera
ráno do Jerežova. - Jest Friedländler
vi mají jet a kolik se p. Friedländler
* (před Klavírní Wilsonovým) nedávno byl včera.

Page from the second diary

úterý 2. V. 42

Dopoledne doma a ve městě
 odpoledne ve škole. Celá Ghiben byla
 lad uvažována. Něco se tam dělo,
 neboť někteří z Ghiben a naši
 Andy Hyseli, jak byl někdo
 v ošlech, jak se dival z daleka
 Jechily sem tam, vozil s sebou
 nějaké vojáky a ~~hodně~~ z nich
 (bylo to asi v obli) dival z oken
 tak po něm ~~bonchli~~ ~~zide ne~~
 vomeji v ~~hobacem~~

Streda 3. V. 42

Dopoledne ve škole. Jdpoledne
 v ~~obchodě~~ ~~byl~~ ~~nikdy~~ ~~prakticky~~ ~~na~~ ~~rozdělení~~
~~3. únor 1942~~ ~~250 de koncentraci~~

Velikým starším divákem z dílny byly ~~schvedliny~~
 myslím jim v domě a zade ~~populární~~ ~~období~~ ~~období~~

Kdosi jme Kolmerton do ochrany
 časopis de Wehrmacht, který dostal
 bratři své deloí čas z daleka. Sam z. myslil
 ovšem, že samostatně, před Kolmer, ~~to je~~
 a 44. ~~jiště ne jistě~~ ~~Stegermann~~ ~~talarský~~
~~nohama~~ ~~z daleka~~ ~~prolaji~~ ~~Pelto~~ ~~me~~

Page from the second diary



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Sunflower*, 1944. Watercolour on paper, 14.5 × 21 cm; Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa; Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Flowers*, 1944. Watercolour on paper. From the private collection of Chava Pressburger.



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Flowers*, 1944. Watercolour on paper. From the private collection of Chava Pressburger.



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Rooftops and Towers of Prague*, 1939–1940(?). Watercolour and India ink on paper, 19 × 12.5 cm; Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa; Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.



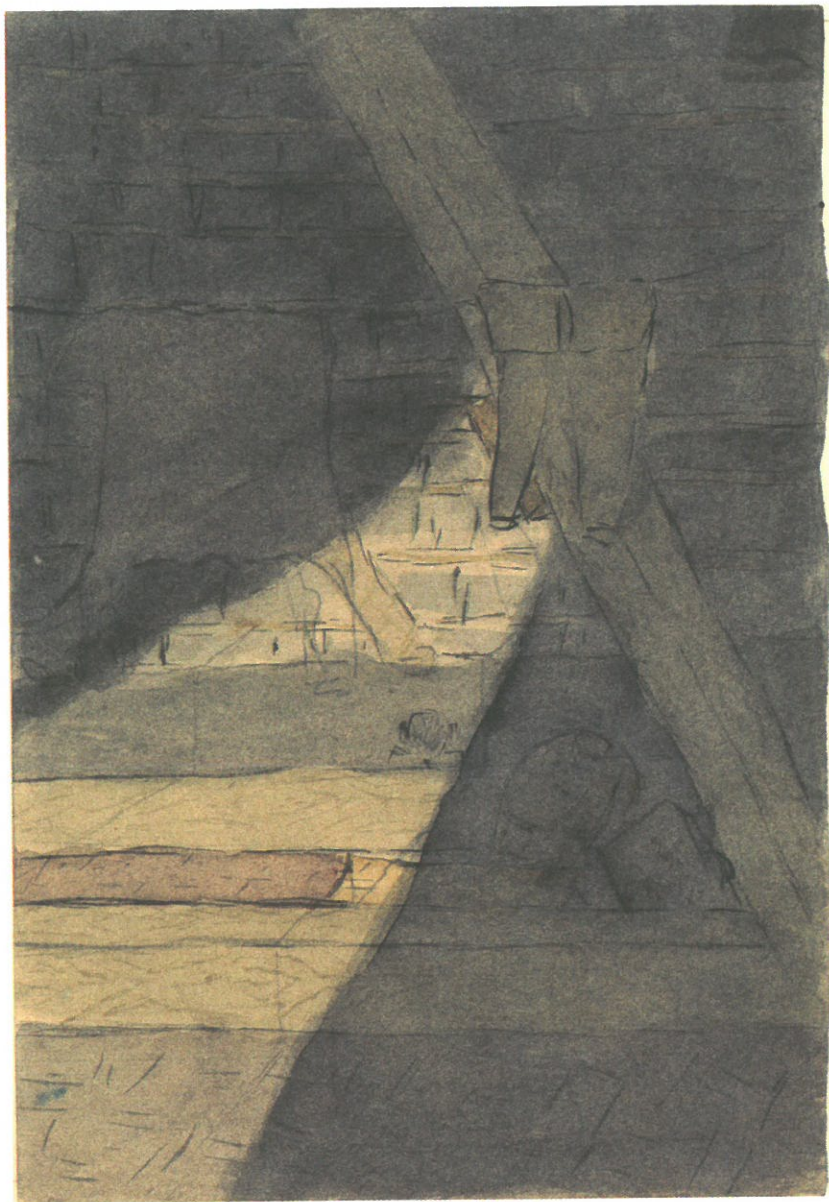
Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Courtyard*, 1942–1944. Pencil on paper, 21 × 28.5 cm; Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa; Collection of the Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem.



(Ghetto drawing) Theresienstadt: Petr Ginz, Illustration, 1943. From the private collection of Petr's sister, Chava Pressburger, Israel.



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Youth Barrack's Dwellings*, 1943. Watercolour on paper, 29.5 × 21 cm; Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa; Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.



Petr Ginz (1928–1944) *Theresienstadt Dwellings*, 1942–1944. Watercolour on paper, 21 × 14.5 cm; donation of Otto Ginz, Haifa. Collection of Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.



Petr Ginz (1928–1944), *Ghetto Dwellings*, 1943. Watercolour on paper, 30 × 22 cm; Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa; Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.



Postal stamp published on the occasion of the explosion of the U.S. space shuttle *Columbia* STS 107, when Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon perished with the others. He had taken a reproduction of this drawing with him into space. The graphic design is by the artist and designer Pavel Hrach. The engravings are by Vaclav Fajt.