

**Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků**  
**Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis**  
**Our Ostrava Group**

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**Czech Ambassador**

There is a new Czech Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Mr Libor Sečka. He replaces Michael Žantovský who has taken up the post as Head of the Vaclav Havel Library in Prague. We wish Mr Sečka and his family a happy and successful stay in the UK.

The following report appeared in the British Czech and Slovak Association Review.

## Ambassador takes UK post



Mr Libor Sečka who has been appointed Czech Ambassador in London with his daughter, Stella and his wife, Sabrina

*On January 5 2016, H E Libor Sečka took up his posting as Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by presenting a copy of His Letters of Credence to the Director of Protocol and Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps in London, the Czech Embassy announced at the end of January.*

*Mr Libor Sečka has been active in diplomacy since 1986. Previously he was the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Mexico, to the European Union in Brussels, to Italy and Malta and to the Peoples Republic of China.*

*Ambassador Sečka speaks English, Spanish, Italian, Russian and French. He is married with three children.*

### Velké Dílo

Our book on Ostrava and its Jewish Community progresses well. The main text is about 80% complete, 100,000 words out of what we estimate to be 120,000 words finally with the addition of almost 200 small biographies of interesting and important families, about 75,000 words which are about 75% completed. The whole will be edited to a more manageable size before publication!

We have two working titles for the book:

- "Ostrava and its Jews: Central Europe and the Holocaust in Miniature"
- "Nice Nazis, a Magic Doll and other stories - Central European History and the Holocaust in Miniature"

Neither of them win great approval, so we need another and better title. All ideas and suggestions will be gratefully received

Richard Joseph of the Arcadia Press (South Carolina, USA), to whom we were introduced by Rabbi Thomas Salomon of Westminster Synagogue has very generously offered to help us with the initial publication of the book.

Watch this Space!

## Ostrava Main Square

Victoria Bursa has sent us two wonderful photographs of the main square in Ostrava, we guess the first is from the 1920's and the second from about 10 years later. Thanks, Victoria! They might stimulate your memories and produce attacks of nostalgia! Hana Muzika Kahn wrote that our Newsletters:

“...always makes me feel I am back in Ostrava and close to my mother's family memories.”



If you really wish to wallow in nostalgia, you can find all the previous editions of the Newsletter on our website:

<http://ksds.org.uk/archive/ostrava-archive/>

## News of Ostravaks

### Otto Winecki

Dear David,

I am writing to let you know that my dear husband of 61 years Otto Winecki (Oton Windholz) died peacefully in Melbourne on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the age of 92.

Christine Winecki

### Amanda Meller

We wrote about Amanda Meller's family in Newsletters 18 and 20, some 5 or 6 years ago but Ostrava histories do not disappear! We were contacted last month by Tim Blowers:

"I have been doing some family research and came across the Ostrava network newsletter from 2011 from Amanda Meller, I believe we may be distant relatives and wondered if there would be a way to contact her as she was looking for more information?"

Kind regards

Tim"

They are now in touch with each other. The Ostravak network works!

### Shelly Pomeranz and 4711 Eau de Cologne

Shelly Pomeranz has discovered a family connection with the manufacturers of 4711 Eau de Cologne, *Kölnischwasser*, which – I am sure – featured in all our childhoods. She wrote:

Walter Ziffer just sent me an e-mail regarding Bruno Borger's wife whose family owned the factory and produced 4711 perfume in Ostrava. My mother-in-law, Erna Pomernz nee Seidmann, alyways wore that and I also love it but never knew the family connection- wonderful!

## Fritz Barber

Peter Barber has sent a copy of his father's memoir, of which this is the first part:

I was born in *Mährisch Ostrau* (after the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 called officially *Moravská Ostrava*). [The town] had developed rapidly owing to the finding of pit coal. [It] is still important because of its coalmines and of its steel industry in the neighbouring locality of *Vitkovice* (Rothschild-Guttman [were the families responsible for its development]). [It was] supplying the armament factories with first class steel already in pre-World War 1 days.

At that time [Moravská Ostrava] belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy ruled by the Habsburg monarch Kaiser Franz Joseph. The Habsburgs had been the rulers for centuries. The Monarchy appeared to be a well-consolidated union of nations, peaceful, happy – until the perhaps unnecessarily provoked World War 1 led to its disintegration in October 1918. My mother seems to have had a foreboding: she did not like the way the Czechs were treated by the Austrians as second class citizens. In fact the consequent upsurge of Czech nationalism was probably an important factor in the disintegration of the Monarchy.

I was born on 25 October 1905 at home [in a] flat in *Scheuergasse/Stodolní Ulice*, [and was] delivered by Frau Seline Schoel, the midwife that had brought into the world ca. 1 ¾ years before that my sister Kati, on 26 February 1904. Kati was protective and kind to me. I do not remember the midwife's name who ca. 8 years later attended my brother Herbert's birth on 17 January 1914.

[We soon moved to a flat in] on the ground floor, [of] a block of flats, at *Bahnhofstrasse 18A (Nádražní Trida 18A)* on a main road near the centre of the town, the *Hauptstrasse*. This is the place where I spent my childhood years until I moved to Brno University. We had a small hall with three doors [leading to] the living room, to the dining room and to the toilet. In the hall there was a big wardrobe on top of which mother kept a good supply of delicious fruit bottled by her. The living room had one large window in a niche. The adjoining bedroom, the size of the living room, also had one window, one door to the bathroom another one to the small veranda in the back corner. There was a bathroom, kitchen with adjoining tiny maids room and, in a hidden corner, a toilet. The bathroom had a gas-fired stove which worked fairly reliably. Initially we had gas lighting. It later was converted to electricity. The kitchen stove functioned well on coal fire. We shared the bedroom. I slept on a couch at the foot-end of my parents' bed. Kate was transferred to a couch in the sitting room, I believe, when Herbert claimed a bed of his own. We took this quite as a normal arrangement. The balcony was important for mother. There was space just for a small table and a chair. She used to sit there on Sunday afternoons with her knitting, or reading, and listen to the sounds of the music coming over from the 'Sokolovna', played by the very good band.

All the windows were oriented to the large courtyard where we children from all the flats used to play. We nicknamed ourselves ‘The Court Society’ (*Die Hofgesellschaft*). I was rather young among them and I believed the fantastic stories they used to tell me of adventures they had during the nights: through a deep shaft – Ostrava had lots of deep shafts leading to its rich coal deposits – they were taken to the kingdom of the Pygmies where they travelled in beautiful regal coaches through lovely lands and lived in luxury, moving among the fairies and lots of noble people. I implored the story-tellers to do me the great favour and take me along with them as well – but they never did!

A high brick wall separated our backyard from a sizeable garden, the ‘Krausgarten’ named after its owner. Some children jumped over sometimes to steal fruit from the trees. Beyond it there was the ‘Sokolovna’, a major club-building of the Sokol organisation, the Czech sports club. It was known for its high-quality gym performances. It, besides, was a very Czech-national organisation. The Czechs, like the Hungarians, considered themselves – and probably were- suppressed by the Habsburg government whose state language and culture were German.

The notes {in square brackets} are provided by Peter.

### **Hanni Grunpeter (née Windholz)**

Hanni writes from Chile asking for our help in tracing members of her family:

I don’t know if it would be possible to help me in my search for a cousin. The family didn’t live in Ostrava, but maybe someone knows something-anything about her and today your efforts, newsletters, etc. are really wellknown in very many places

Name: VERA WINDHOLZ. Born in the last last months of 1935 or the first months of 1936. Her parents were Wischel Windholz and Lily.. and her grandparents (the same as mine) lived in Cesky Tesin Boberhügel str.41 called Hieronima Przepilinskiego later.

I have tried through several channels to try to know if she is still alive, if she had or has children ., could her family escape, etc. etc but I haven’t been able to find out anything.

Thank you in advance.

All my love Hanni Grunpeter Windholz from Chile

If you have any information or can help in any way, please contact Monica or David

### **Hanna Slome (née Beer)**

Hanna wrote us a chatty email. Just to demonstrate how connected Ostravaks are, she mentions Hanni Windholz!

This is to wish you all the best in 2016.

Just realized that when you added my article in the #42nd issue you did not add my Maiden Name BEER - I just thought that may be someone might remember those wonderful skiing trips to the Tatra Mountains with Maccabi - we used to be a big group of most likely 100 members - ah, well .....

Among the names mentioned in your issue the only one that comes to mind is Windholz, I knew a Hana Windholz - even though I thought my circle of friends was huge - it looks like it was very small. I have no help from anyone I used to know as in the meantime they all passed away.

Keep up the good work!!!! Sorry to hear that people stole the Stolpersteine and the beautiful metal candelabra you installed where our synagogue used to stand.

I still speak often about my survival to groups of teen agers at the Wiesenthal Tolerance Center and now have been invited to speak again at the end of January for UJA at which occasion Barbara Winton will speak and I will follow her speech - Barbara is in NY for just one week and has been invited by various organizations to talk about her Father, Sir Nicholas Winton, who saved my life and got me out of the CSR - she will also appear at the UN.

Just wanted to keep in touch, the best to everyone,

Sincerely Hanna (Beer) Slome

### **Ilse Weber**

The Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) has been approached by Charlotte de Luppé who:

I work on a documentary film on music composed in concentration and prisoners camps during WW2.

We would very much like to use this portrait of Ilse Weber

<http://collections.jewishmuseum.cz/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/objectid/135594>

Could it be possible ?

The photograph is actually from our Ostrava Archive and we included it in the archive and data base of the JMP. We do not yet know when the programme will appear.

### **Jewish Communities and Records ([www.jewishgen.org/JCR-uk/](http://www.jewishgen.org/JCR-uk/) )**

Those of you who are keen on carrying out your own genealogical research, might be interested in the JCR-UK Special Interest Group for Eastern Europe. Further information from [RAYMUSIK@aol.com](mailto:RAYMUSIK@aol.com)

## Another Ostrava Sefer –Roswell, GA

Pam Apple wrote to us about an Ostrava Scroll in their synagogue in Roswell, Georgia, USA:

We are a congregation in Roswell, GA just north of Atlanta, GA we also have a Ostrava Holocaust Torah.

This year on April 29th we are rededicating the Holocaust Torah.

It is our intention to make part of it Kosher to be read by the congregation. We have had our Torah for 15 yrs. but many new families and young students do not remember that we have one. So with this new dedication we hope to make the Holocaust Torah part of our community and not just in the Ark. I am writing to ask your permission to use part of "The Legacy of the Czech Memorial Scrolls" that is on your website. I don't know if the people preparing the program need any of the info but I thought I would ask your permission first. Particularly the part about Legacy of Remembrance.

Lastly how can I subscribe to the Newsletter about Ostrava.

Thank you for your help.

Shabbat Shalom

Pam Apple

We are delighted to welcome the Roswell Community into our Ostrava network.

The Memorial Scrolls Trust (MST) records suggest that the Roswell scroll is an "orphan", one whose provenance is unknown, but it is possible that the community in Roswell has better records or more information than the MST. In any case, we are happy to include them in our network.

## Pesach Greetings

We wish all our readers a very Happy and Peaceful Pesach

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