The Memoirs of Resi Weglein, a Holocaust Survivor

The Memoirs of Resi Weglein, a Holocaust Survivor:

A Translation

Introduced and Translated by

Albrecht Classen

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2025

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-0364-4795-3
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-4796-0

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FOREWORD

MARY KUNMI YU DANICO, PH.D.
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR ORAL HISTORY

The translation of Resi Weglein's memoirs about her horrible imprisonment in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt in the modern-day Czech Republic would not have been possible without Bob Suzuki, president emeritus at Cal Poly Pomona, and Agnes Suzuki, close friends of Walter and Michi Weglyn. In 1999, Walter and Michi gave a generous donation to establish a foundation for the advancement of future social justice as it impacts minoritized communities. In the 1990s, the commonly used term was multicultural, but the impetus for this gift was to ensure that students are given the knowledge of the horrible consequences of war and its devastating impact on innocent citizens.

"While living as a student in New York City, Michi met Walter Matthys Weglyn, a German Jew who had escaped Nazi Germany to live in hiding in Holland from the age 12 to 17, and they were married on March 5, 1950, in Washington, D.C."[1] Much has been written and documented about Michi Weglyn, yet little can be found in the archives about Walter. According to the memories of Bob and Agnes, Walter was a soft-spoken and kind man who was Michi's biggest champion in life. When Michi was working on the now published book *Years of Infamy* (1975), which was hailed by the Japanese American activist Edison Uno[2] as providing the necessary evidence for the subsequent decades-long battle for redress and reparations, and was coined the "Bible of the Redress Movement,"[3] Walter was there to support her groundbreaking book. Walter was a perfume chemist known to have had an incredible sense of smell, but what he and

[1] Michi Nishiura Weglyn, *Densho Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Michi_Nishiura_Weglyn/ (last accessed on Oct. 1, 2024).
[2] https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Edison_Uno/, last updated on Dec. 19, 2023 (last accessed on Oct. 1, 2024).
[3] Michi Nishiura Weglyn, ibid. (see note 1).

Michi shared was their commitment to social justice and activism for all oppressed communities.

When I served as the Director of the Weglyn Endowed chair from 2017–2023, most of the attention was given to creating spaces to have dialogue about anti-oppression in our society. We also made sure to have regularly a Day of Remembrance event that was not only about the wrongful incarceration of the Japanese American citizens during World War Two, but also to address the overstretch of governments around the globe against the very people they are supposed to serve and protect. The Weglyn Endowed Chair position offered me an opportunity to engage our campus community to learn more about the need for advocacy and coalition building, but little was done to connect the experience of Walter and his experience in the Holocaust with the suffering in the American internment camps.

In 2021, Bob and Agnes shared a printed copy of the memoirs that had been written by Walter's mother and requested that the Weglyn Endowed chair explore translating the German memoir into English. The task was not an easy one as the translation required someone who could translate the text with ease but who also understood the period which Walter's mother had reported about and reflected on. The memoir had been published in Germany over 30 years ago (1988), yet non-German readers have not had access to this rich report about the Holocaust past until now. What I quickly realized was how similar Michi was to Walter's mother. Through her detailed chronicling of what she witnessed and experienced as a nurse in the concentration camp, Resi was ensuring the concrete documentation of the horror that so many Jewish and other oppressed groups had faced during the Holocaust.

While Michi's book was not a memoir, it was a historically dense reading of laws and policies that reflected the overt racist ideologies that impacted the innocent lives of those who were incarcerated. Resi Weglein's book gives us an insider view of the conditions on the ground as the Nazi expansion across Europe was occurring, the displacement and relocation of peoples, and in many instances the observations of people being sent to death camps. This critical work could not just be translated. It had to be ensured that the integrity of Resi Weglein's experience was preserved.

The search to find a scholar with an expertise in German history and translate this memoir was through fortuitous connections. I interviewed various translators and was referred to a few scholars, but none were German historians and could contextualize and frame the places and narratives written by Resi Weglein. It was through a chance social media post where I asked if anyone knew of a German scholar who could translate. I was referred to Prof. Albrecht Classen at the University of Arizona, and

we began this journey together of preserving this important body of work to ensure that readers understand the role of nurses in transition death camps during the Holocaust. In his actual research specialization, Dr. Classen is a medievalist, but he has also done much translation work (ca. 20 books so far) and is a trained German (cultural) historian concerned also with contemporary German history. He quickly became deeply passionate about this memoir, which truly tells a highly moving and realistic story about the horrors in the transitional concentration camp in Theresienstadt (today, Terezín, northern Czech Republic).

Coincidentally, Prof. Classen has been married for forty years to Carolyn A. Sugiyama who was the Legislative Aide to U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye from 1979 to 1980. She, in turn, was instrumental in the creation of the National Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act, which investigated the wrong done to these Japanese Americans during World War Two.

Bob Suzuki passed away on May 1, 2024, but knew that the translation was completed. Agnes Suzuki has been an integral source of support and advocacy with the goal that Walter Weglyn's early life and the life of his mother become a part of the public history for all to read. To think of a young man who fled from Holland to the United States in 1947 and met and married a survivor of the Japanese incarceration camp in 1950 continues to leave a profound mark to fill the holes of history. Walter was one of the few Jewish children from his hometown to survive the Holocaust and deeply empathized with Michi's passion for redress and social justice. He served as her co-researcher of her groundbreaking book. As Michi stated, "Walter is my most exacting critic and mentor," Together they fought for civil rights, social justice, and social equality. Now, the Weglyn Endowed Chair is honored to serve as a liaison to ensure that the Wegleins' story and the story of the Holocaust in Hitler Germany remind us never to turn a blind eye to injustice.

The publication of this memoir is dedicated to the memory of Resi Weglein, her family, Michi and Walter Weglyn, Bob Suzuki, and the survivors and descendants of the Holocaust death camps and the Japanese incarceration camps. We also dedicate this memoir to Agnes Suzuki who remains steadfast in her commitment to ensuring that the legacy of Michi and Walter Weglyn at Cal Poly Pomona thrives far into the future.

INTRODUCTION

The Holocaust was probably the worst crime against humanity committed in the twentieth century, although Joseph Stalin's efforts to exterminate the Ukrainian peasantry through an artificially created famine in 1932 and 1933 killed even more victims (the Holodomor). Unfortunately, this kind of genocide subsequently found numerous parallels in countries other than Germany, and the tragic development across the world continues until today. It is uncertain whether we'll ever fully learn from our past experiences, but it behooves us as human beings to reflect as much as possible on the past and to try to learn from it, as many historians have reminded us. Otherwise, we might become perpetrators as well or even urge others to follow the evil examples from the past. Whether we will be able to improve as humankind in the future is an open-ended, perhaps even doubtful question. However, research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences is specifically geared toward that goal, making sources available and understandable so that we can engage directly and actively with the primary documents from certain events or people. Letters, diaries, memoirs, contracts, last wills, treatises, tracts, and many other narratives matter centrally in that regard and are invaluable as primary testimonies from people on the ground, so to speak.

The current book, a translation from the German original, presents for the first time in English the memoirs written by the Ulm nurse Resi Weglein who survived, together with her husband, Siego Weglein, three years in the concentration camp Theresienstadt (today, northern Czech Republic, Terezín) from 1942 to 1945.[1] The couple was lucky under the worst possible circumstances, they survived and could return home to Ulm once they had been liberated by the Russian troops after those had defeated the German *Wehrmacht*. Resi decided soon after to sit down and compose her memoirs about her experiences. Those were eventually published in 1988, accompanied by a trenchant analysis by two local scholars focusing on the history of antisemitism in Ulm and the entire region from the early nineteenth century up to the Holocaust.

Why would both parts be of relevance today, ca. eighty years after the Second World War? Why would we need an English translation? There

[1] https://archives.cjh.org/agents/people/116057 (last accessed on Oct. 2, 2024).

are already, in fact, numerous parallel reports about people's horrendous suffering in a Nazi concentration camp, and this in various languages. Resi Weglein's destiny was fairly similar to that of thousands and thousands of other people, in many ways incomprehensible, horrifying, and highly depressing for us today. But she survived, having demonstrated an enormous resilience and personal strength, a very strong concept of organization and discipline, a deep empathy with other people's suffering, and a high sense of practicality working as a nurse who could, indeed, offer help and assistance to others in many different ways. She also survived the horrendous conditions because she had been filled with a deep and strong faith in God.

Theresienstadt was not a decimation camp as such in the narrow sense of the word; those destined for their death were shipped off to Auschwitz, Riga, and elsewhere. But Resi witnessed it all, facing the new arrivals, working with the long-term residents, and watching with profound sadness in her heart those who passed away and those who were loaded onto train cars and sent off to die. Her report is highly detailed, well-informed, meticulous, and yet also personal and emotional. Moreover, she and her husband miraculously survived and were eventually rescued and liberated by the Russians troops. Ultimately, they were thus able to return home after the war, but things had changed, and they had a hard time eking out an existence within the new German society. Their lives in the 1950s, however, is not touched upon here in her memoirs.[1] She also does not talk about her two sons, Walter and Heinz, whom the parents had sent away in one of the last *Kindertransporte* to the Netherlands in 1939. Even her husband, Siego Weglein, is barely profiled in the text despite his particular suffering as a war invalid, probably because Resi intended to pay attention primarily to all inmates and the universal tragedy brought upon them as entirely innocent people by the inhumane Nazis.

By contrast, the two historians, Silvester Lechner and Alfred Moos, who edited Resi's memoirs, also provided, based on a thorough investigation of the archival material in Ulm and elsewhere, a highly vivid

[1] For a good historical overview in English, see https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt (last accessed on Aug. 14, 2024). For previous research, see, for instance, Ruth Schwertfeger, *Women of Theresienstadt: Voices from a Concentration Camp* (Oxford, New York, and Hamburg: Berg, 1989); Vera Schiff with Jeff McLaughlin, *Bound for Theresienstadt: Love, Loss and Resistance in a Nazi Concentration Camp* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2017); Dennis Carlyle Darling, *Borrowed Time: Survivors of Nazi Terezín Remember* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2023).

and insightful analysis of the history of antisemitism in that region, tracing primarily the history of the Weglein family and their economic advances in the emerging new economy in Ulm and the environs since the late nineteenth century. They uncovered many disturbing traditions, indications of economic envy, and a rising effort to abuse the German-Jewish population for ideological purposes to grab power within the city and elsewhere.

The book appeared first in print in 1988 and was reprinted in 1990. In 2022, I was asked by Dr. Mary Kunmi Yu Danico, Director, Michi and Walter Weglyn Endowed Chair for Multicultural Studies, 2017–2024, Pomona College, California, to translate the book into English because that Chair had been endowed by one of the surviving sons of Resi Weglein, Walter (with the slightly changed last name, Weglyn). In the process of translating the extensive volume, I became deeply intrigued both by Resi's memoirs as a direct eye-witness account from a Holocaust survivor and the historical reflections by the two editors who succeeded most impressively to convey clearly the conditions that led from the first stirrings of antisemitism in the early nineteenth century to the eventual Holocaust since the late 1930s (see also the Foreword).

The value of both parts of this book cannot be underestimated. These memoirs are most important first-hand observations and shed much light on the actual situation for the German Jews and many others from across Europe picked up by the Nazis and sent to the concentration camps. Other victimized German Jews who survived Theresienstadt also left narrative documents, such as Resi's colleague, Ruth Rieser,[1] and the archives are filled with letters and other documents.[2] Each one of them is highly valuable, but Resi's account proves to be one of the most systematic

[1] Ruth Rieser, *Ich liebe mein Leben trotz allem: Biographie* (Wädenswil: Kunstverlag Au, 1987). See also *Die jüdische Gemeinde Laupheim und ihre Zerstörung: Biografische Abrisse ihrer Mitglieder nach dem Stand von 1933/The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation: Biographical Outlines of Its Members Up To 1933*, ed. Antje Köhlerschmidt and Karl Neidlinger (Laupheim: Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Gedenken, 2008). For Ruth, see Antje Köhlerschmidt's entry for Babette Rieser, http://www.gedenk-buch.de/Memorybook%20of%20Laupheim%20Index.htm (last accessed on July 26, 2024). Resi Weglein is quoted here. See the passage below. I would like to thank Steve Schmal, whose aunt Recha Schmal was a colleague of Resi in Theresienstadt, for contacting me in July 2024 and alerting me to Ruth's account and other documents. Oddly but significantly, human tragedy bonds people together across cultures, languages, religions, ages, genders, and identities.

[2] See, for instance, Brian B. Kahn, "Shards of Memory: Narratives of Holocaust Survival," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 27.2 (2009): 164–67; online at: DOI: 10.1353/sho.0.0239.

and comprehensive memoirs because she viewed the events from the perspective of a nurse and witnessed massive deaths, sicknesses, and suffering on a daily basis.[1]

There is also a profound sense of Resi's love for humanity, her religiosity, and her commitment to helping all those in need, and this in her role as a nurse. Here we face the ultimate evidence to destroy any ideological claim today that the Holocaust never happened (deniers). And we are also informed better than in most other studies about the causes and development of this insidious antisemitism that resulted from people's fears about their own economic conditions in face of a growing industrialization and a rapidly changing market situation in Ulm and elsewhere.

It is fully understandable why the book in German experienced a second edition (1990), and the present English translation promises to achieve a similar success. It ought to be read in High Schools and Colleges; it should also be available in the various Holocaust museums across the world. Scholars working on this history will be well served with these memoirs and the critical analysis. What I present here is only my own English translation, but I believe that this book will serve a very important function for the reading audiences both within the German-speaking world and abroad, especially now in its English version.

It deserves to be emphasized that here we finally get the full explanation of why so many German Jews refused to flee from their homeland, and why it then was too late when they were finally ready to do so. We also learn about the destiny of countless children, many of whom were shipped to other countries into at least temporary safety from the Nazis (*Kindertransporte*). And we learn about the myriads of Jewish victims from all of Europe who did not survive Theresienstadt or were murdered in Auschwitz and elsewhere.

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[1] Barbara Brush, "Nursing Care and Context in Theresienstadt," *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 26.8 (2004): 860–71; online at: DOI: 10.1177/019394590426 5333; Margalit Shlain, "Nursing in the Theresienstadt Ghetto," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*: No. 36, *Jewish Women Medical Practitioners in Europe – Before, During and after the Holocaust* (Spring 2020): 60–85; online at: https://doi.org/10.2979/nashim.36.1.05.

had probably also drawn from Resi Weglein's memoirs, and a BBC production. In this context, we only need to remember that the Wegleins had sent their two sons on one of the *Kindertransporte* to the Netherlands before they themselves were deported to Theresienstadt. Thus, we now would have to read *Austerlitz* not only as a major literary work by itself, but as the result of Sebald's intensive archival work, which directly or indirectly put his novel into conversation with Resi's memoirs. We could hence read the figure of Austerlitz as the literary personification of one of the Weglein sons, Walter.[1]

[1] W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz* (Munich: C. Hanser, 2001); cf. Filkins, Peter, "Twisted Threads: The Entwined Narratives of W. G. Sebald and H. G. Adler," *A Literature of Restitution: Critical Essays on W. G. Sebald*, ed. Jeannette Baxter, Valerie Henitiuk, and Ben Hutchinson (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), 149–65; Edit Kovács, *Letzten Endes: Literatur und Ethik in W. G. Sebalds Werk* (Vienna: Praesens, 2021). See now Albrecht Classen, "W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* (2001) and His Reflections on Theresienstadt in Light of Resi Weglein's Eyewitness Account and *Memoirs* (1945)," *European Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 1.6 (2024); online at:
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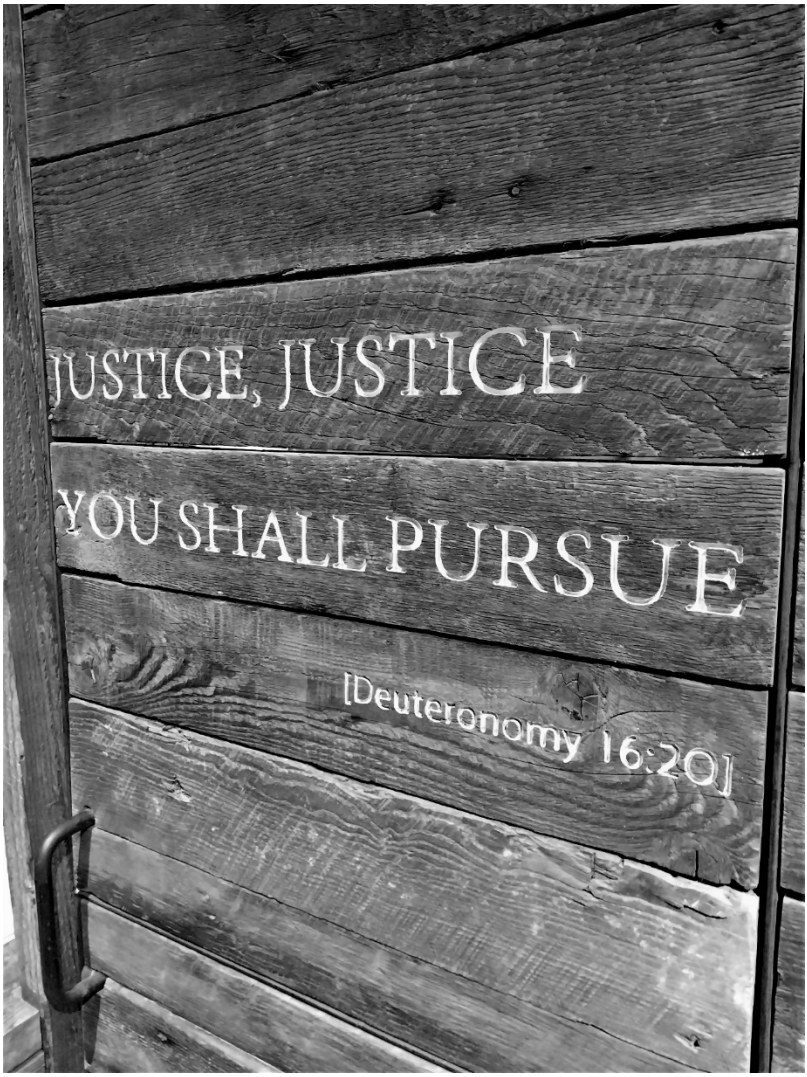
https://ejahss.com/index.php/journal/article/view/96.



Tucson Jewish Museum & Holocaust Center, Tucson, AZ @Albrecht Classen, Oct. 2024

RESI WEGLEIN

AS A NURSE IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP THERESIENSTADT

MEMORIES OF A JEWISH WOMAN FROM ULM

EDITED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A HISTORY AND A BIOGRAPHY BY SILVESTER LECHNER AND ALFRED MOOS

TRANSLATED BY ALBRECHT CLASSEN

The time under the Nazi regime in the region of Ulm/Neu-Ulm [New Ulm]. Previous history, the actual events, subsequent history. A publication series of the documentary center Oberer Kuhberg Ulm, certified and licensed [here identified as e.v.], edited by Silvester Lechner.

Vol. 2 [this pertains to the publication series]

Stuttgart: Silberburg-Verlag

Next page: A list of other titles published by the editor. The cover image shows the first page of Resi Weglein's hand-written report from Theresienstadt, a portrait of Resi Weglein, and the Jewish yellow star, which from September 15, 1941, onwards all Jews at the age of six years and older had to wear, clearly visibly on their clothing.

1st ed., October 1988
2nd ed., April 1990

Impressum

Origin of the pictures.

Right column: further publication data.

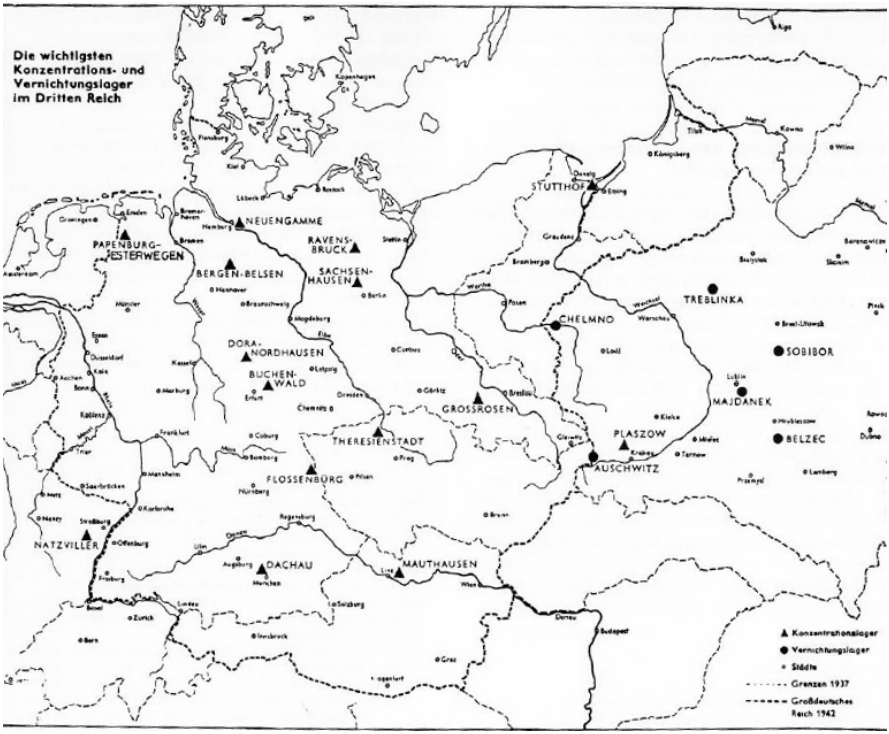
Ernst Ludwig,

Superior mayor of the city of Ulm: Dedication

It will probably not be possible to read the "Memories of a nurse" about her three years in the concentration camp Theresienstadt without being deeply moved. She lived as a citizen of Ulm among her contemporaries for many years and ran, together with her husband, who had been decorated many times and was also badly wounded during the First World War, a business at the square outside of the cathedral. Mrs. Weglein faced, like all Jews in the city, since the power take-over by the Nazis, increasing defamation and was finally deported. The group of Jews who were deported from the Stuttgart Killesberg (local name) to Theresienstadt in August 1942 consisted of 1076 people; only 14 of them returned in June 1945. The time in-between was filled with seemingly endless days, months, and years of humiliation, arbitrary torture, horror, and the constant threat of being killed. No one could hope to stay alive, "we only believed in a liberation through death."

Resi Weglein and her husband survived. She describes, in a sober and thereby particularly shocking, the daily fight for survival within a sophisticated system that constantly invented new forms of suffering. Her untiring work, her readiness never to shy away from the hardest conditions, and her dedication to those who suffered with her, along with her faith in God, gave her support and strength.

It remains a moral obligation for us to engage with the events during the Nazi regime and with the reports by those who witnessed them. In this light, I want to thank Mr. Alfred Moos and Dr. Silvester Lechner for publishing this moving report that appeals to us to remember the experiences of a former co-citizen.


Die wichtigsten Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslager im Dritten Reich
NEUENGAMME
PAPENBURG-ESTERWEGEN
BERGEN-BELSEN
RAVENS-BRUCK
SACHSEN-HAUSEN
DORA-NORDHAUSEN
BUCHEN-WALD
THERESIENSTADT
FLOSSENBÜRG
NATZWILLER
DACHAU
MAUTHAUSEN
GROSSROSEN
STUTTHOF
TREBLINKA
CHELMNO
SOBIBOR
MAJDANEK
PLASZOW
AUSCHWITZ
BELZEC
Konzentrationslager
Vernichtungslager
Städte
Grenzen 1937
Großdeutsches Reich 1942

Alfred Moos

Foreword

More than 43 years have passed since Resi Weglein had been freed by the Soviet army after a period of almost three years of imprisonment in the concentration camp Theresienstadt. Some people might ask, why would it matter to publish her memories of that horrible time after so many years? And this especially in light of the fact that there exists by now a vast body of literature on Theresienstadt!

One could globally answer that no report of an eyewitness in the concentration camp should get lost. The horrible deeds and crimes committed against ten-thousands – or had it been hundred-thousands? – by German men, but also women, affecting the peoples of Europe and especially the members of the Jewish community, must be recorded in writing as minutely as possible for the sake of a true depiction of history. That is so important in the first place because a dangerous form of 'coming to terms with the past' has emerged in the Federal Republic of Germany during the last years. Those promoting it endeavor the cleansing of German history from 1933 to 1945 from the 'excesses' of National Socialism, or, to say it directly, to sweep the crimes of Gestapo, SS, the Wehrmacht (military), and others under the carpet.

How else would it have been possible that even a specialist in the field of Nazi research, Ernst Nolte, could have called the concentration camp Theresienstadt a place "where a number of older and privileged Jews led an isolated but acceptable existence" (*Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945* . . . , 1967, p. 510)? We have decided to publish Resi Weglein's manuscript, which describes the 'comfortable life' in Theresienstadt in all its misery, also with the purpose of combatting such a presentation of history filled with lies.

But I do not want to hide that I am also personally interested in this publication. I was born in Ulm in 1913, and I hardly got to know the Wegleins before my emigration in September 1933, that is, during my childhood and time in school. They belonged to a different generation, and moreover, the Jewish community with more than 500 people was too large to become familiar with everyone.

But very soon after the end of the war, I learned how much the mutually shared destiny had welded together the Wegleins and my father Hugo Moos in the years from 1938 to 1942.

I am quoting a few sentences in a letter of the Wegleins to my uncle Carl Moos, who lived in the United States, from February 25, 1946: "When Hugo and Jenny (my father's second wife, A. M.) still lived here in Ulm, they came to us daily for a visit. At first, we discussed the mean actions that had been committed against us by way of confiscating many things prior to the evacuation. Then they also came to us many times to listen to the radio. We were the only ones who had been allowed to keep the radio. Our circle had shrunk so much, and we pulled together tightly, and we even used the informal 'you'." [Very important distinction in German until today: "du" versus "sie" – AC]

On August 20, 1942, Wegleins, together with my father and his wife, were deported to Theresienstadt. I quote from the above-mentioned letter: "Then Hugo got sick. At first, he rested flat on the ground for ca. three weeks . . . . He did that so that Jenny could come to see him more often . . . . But when the pain became too intensive – Hugo suffered from a bladder and prostate infection – he moved to a room for the sick, and Jenny quit her job so that she could be with Hugo all the time. She has done super-human work during the short weeks, both as a nurse and by exchanging the rest of her properties for narcotics for Hugo so that the poor man would not have to suffer too much."

My father died on December 18, 1942, Jenny was deported to Auschwitz on January 29, 1943, where she was murdered.

It was a matter of duty for me to visit the couple Weglein after my return from the emigration as often as possible, at first in their apartment at Straßburgweg 1, and later, after Siego's death, we spent almost every Sunday afternoon with Resi Weglein in the retirement community, Dreifaltigkeitshof. However, we knew, my wife and I, only too well that our gratitude was little in comparison with what she had done for my father and the many other friends and sick people in her care.

It is my personal concern/obligation that her achievements will not be forgotten, which is hence the reason for the publication of this manuscript.

Silvester Lechner and Alfred Moos

Ulm – Theresienstadt – Ulm

An Introduction

> "You can move people to feel empathy and demonstrate understanding when you touch on one aspect of their own destiny" (Bruno Kresky, "A Postcard from Theresienstadt," *Totenbuch* [Theresienstadt 1987], Vol. 1, p. 40).

> "Memory is the intensive reminder to learn from the past through the events from today for the future unless the latter does not prove to be an illusion." (Rabbi Ferdinand Straßburger, Sept. 7, 1918, during the New Year's Celebration in the Ulm Synagogue).

On July 14, 1945, Resi Weglein begins to record in writing the memories of the forced stay at the concentration camp Theresienstadt. Almost three years have passed when Resi and Siego Weglein were apprehended by the police in their Ulm apartment in the Olgastraße 6 on August 20, 1942, and were, together with ca. thousand other Jews from Württemberg and Baden, abducted to Theresienstadt in Northern Bohemia in cattle cars. On May 9, 1945, the concentration camp, together with Germany and many parts of Europe, was liberated from the Nazi regime. On June 21, the Wegleins, together with the last surviving Jews from Württemberg and Baden, are taken back to Stuttgart. They spend two weeks in a transit center in Stuttgart-Degerloch and reach Ulm on July 8, 1945. On July 12, they are assigned an apartment in Weißenburgweg 12. Two days later, Rosi begins to record her memories. This account is completed almost a year later, on June 26, 1945. Shortly thereafter, the Wegleins move into the yet third apartment, Straßburgweg 1, where they will stay for good until Rosi moved into the center for senior citizens in 1972.

We are so well informed about the beginning and closure of Rosi's efforts because they are all precisely recorded by her in the written text. This report is dedicated to her two sons, Walter and Heinz, and the original is still in the possession of one of them. This original text was not available for the two editors, except for the first three pages and is hence not the basis for the printed version. Instead, this edition is based on the text produced on a typewriter provided by one of the sons, which the author had created in the months (or years) after June 1946. This version is free from any personal,

spontaneous-emotional expressions, on the other hand, it provides some additional names, dates, and facts probably gleaned from other survivors from Theresienstadt. As the author says in the introduction, she intended to inform all those in the world who were family members and friends about the destiny of those who had been kept in Theresienstadt. This allows us to presume a very rich and expansive correspondence during the time when she composed her account and afterward, which helped her to deepen her understanding concerning all kinds of connections. The editors had access to that correspondence only in one case (see p. 6). Her son Walter reports that she also corresponded with major global organizations, such as the "International Red Cross," in order to get in touch with some of the survivors and inform them about the situation in the camp.

Unfortunately, it is unclear what role her husband, Siego Weglein, played in the creation of the report. His personal experiences hardly entered the account; he is hardly ever mentioned.

Let us now outline the principles that guided the editors when they published Rosi Weglein's manuscript. First, we have to mention one principle connected with what was just remarked on. We wanted to preserve the objective approach pursued by the author, who intended to provide exact information not influenced by unreliable outside data, even if the modern audience can no longer be the family members of the prisoners of Theresienstadt. After 40 years, the addressees of this book are primarily people who have no direct experience with what is described here and who mostly have, by default, only fragmentary knowledge. At the same time, we have learned so much more about the 'Complex Theresienstadt' through a body of literature that has vastly expanded. This includes, of course, also the extensive eyewitness reports by people like Resi and Siego Weglein who wrote down their memories.

Nevertheless, the personal experience is and remains the primary source of historical understanding and also the most direct access for the reader. Already in the second sentence of her introduction, Resi Weglein explains her position very clearly by stating, with an almost 'classical' formulation, that 'history' is a report about events and personal experiences, and this in contrast to literary 'history' which is beautifully narrated and illustrated. "I am not a literary author, can neither beautify my thoughts nor clothe them in an ugly framework. I put down in straightforward words what I have experienced." But historiography as personal experience is also determined by the author's motivation. In the case of Resi Weglein's, it was the hope to receive "healing," i.e., healing "from the horror which the Theresienstadt

experiences left behind in my soul."

All that has two consequences for the editors of the report. The text is going to be published as a historical document without any changes. We will correct only typos, a few formal shortcomings (for example, misspelled personal names), obvious errors that are irrelevant to the larger context, off and on some specific dates and numbers (e.g., the age of those who were deported from Ulm). It is rather probable that a few smaller errors have remained in the text because Resi Weglein could not bring with her any written notes from Theresienstadt and because the editors could not verify every detail.

Altogether, we can state: The title and all content matter, as well as the language have been kept exactly as in the source. However, the necessary 'translation' of the historical text into our present time makes necessary the double addition through the editors. We added the sub-headings which are missing in the source, which structures the text and increases the readability. This intervention seemed to be justified because this report should not be kept away, as Rosi Weglein writes in her first sentence, from the "broad audience." The most extensive additions, however, were the illustrations and the commentary. The former are mostly reproductions of original documents that establish a connection between Ulm and Theresienstadt. In two cases, those are documents concerning the Weglein's deportation from Ulm, and in six cases documents that Rosi's acquaintance David Eis had brought with him from Theresienstadt and which his daughter Margot shared with the editors. As to the notes, they serve the purpose to explain important local and general-historical terms, events, or phenomena that most people are no longer familiar with. With their help, we want to place the "single document from 1943 to 1945," as Resi Weglein also calls her report, in a larger context. However, the notes cannot take into consideration the totality of all texts concerned with Theresienstadt; they are to serve as a motivation to read additional studies. The notes have mostly been taken from the three great books by Hans Günther Adler in which personal experiences and suffering, research work, and scholarship are combined in a unique manner. Adler, as a Jew from Prague, had been deported, together with his wife and other family members, to Theresienstadt on February 8, 1942, and from there to Auschwitz on October 14, 1944. While his wife, who had worked as a medical doctor and chemist in the central laboratory of Theresienstadt, was murdered through toxic gas, Hans Günther Adler survived in various other camps. Immediately after his liberation, he began, as an employee of the Jewish Museum of Prague, to collect materials

concerning Theresienstadt, that is, hundreds of original documents with reports by survivors, either published or unpublished. Among those, there were also the "Memories of a Nurse" by Resi Weglein, which he probably had studied as a copy kept in the "Vienna Library" in London, a famous collection especially of German-Jewish historical sources and publications (another copy of the Weglein manuscript is kept in the archive of the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem). In 1955, Adler's foundational study *Theresienstadt 1941–145: The Face of a Forced Community* [my translation – A.C.] appeared in print in Tübingen. Below, we will refer to the second, improved edition as "Adler 1." On the pages 843 to 844, Adler extensively comments there on Resi Weglein's manuscript. In 1958 (second edition in 1960), appeared in print the revised anthology of documents pertaining to Theresienstadt, *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit* [The hidden truth], in the following referred to as "Adler 2."

Both works constitute, with their ca. 1200 pages, the foundation of all scholarship on Theresienstadt, that is, concerning the published primary documents and the precise description of complex factors, events, processes, and structures. In 1977 appeared in print Hans Günther Adler's *Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Theresienstadt* [Studies on the Deportation of Jews from Theresienstadt], consisting of more than 1000 pages, under the title *Der verwaltete Mensch* [The Administered Person]. The deportation is described there as an administrative process with widest ramifications, involving hundreds of thousands of people and forms. He discusses this process and analyzes it thoroughly. We'll refer to that book as "Adler 3." Resi's report is mentioned here as well on the pages 177–178 and 486–487. In August 1988, Adler died in London at the age of 78.

Even though Adler's books were reviewed critically after they had appeared in print because of some mistakes and gaps, their character as handbooks for Theresienstadt and standard reference works is undiminished. Hence, they will be used here also as essential resources for the explanation of Resi's memories. Studies on Theresienstadt, which were published later, have never reached the quality of Adler's work, irrespective of their value regarding individual aspects, concerning the breadth and reliability of the facts presented and the multiplicity of questions raised. Those studies, virtually complete, as far as it concerns publications since ca. 1970, is listed in the bibliography.

There is an important connecting relationship between Resi Weglein's report and Adler's Theresienstadt books, that is, the access [to the original eyewitness], the perspective of the reporting voice. Resi Weglein called her

account "Memories of a nurse," what we can take as the central intention. She reports about the condition of the sick and the dying in a sickening environment, and all this from the perspective that determined her entire existence, probably far beyond Theresienstadt, that is, from the perspective of the 'helper,' whose life finds its fulfillment in helping others. She writes: "In hard times you have to pray to God for work and for people for whom you can live. To live for and by oneself is nothing, to live for others is everything.

Considering this attitude, we have to understand that she hardly reports about her own suffering, her own sickness, and also leaves out her husband's suffering completely. Adler begins his chapter about the "health conditions" in Theresienstadt with the sentences: "The forced community represented a sick community. The Jews were considered the rejects of humanity, and before they wanted to or could murder them all, many were transported to Theresienstadt, into that intermediary space between life and death. Thus, this location became a home for those without any rights and the sick in a lawless and sick time."

We can say: While Resi Weglein provides the narrative account of the conditions on the ground, Adler offers anamnesis (pre-history) and diagnosis. Both are determined by the medical perspective, that is, the access to the sick people. And both make it exceedingly clear that individual suffering is also the expression of the conditions and situations in which it happens. Resi illustrates through many practical observations and details concerning the Theresienstadt healthcare and treatment of the sick more about the actual situation than what you can find in Adler's work. Indeed, her report as a nurse offers a new emphasis in the published literature on Theresienstadt.

As editors we have chosen in our editorial remarks about Theresienstadt the term "Concentration Camp" ["Konzentrationslager"] or "KZ," and this in agreement with the latest scholarly literature. But it must be understood that the acronym KZ was coined only afterward, that is, according to the criteria that can be identified for a KZ. In the Nazi time, Theresienstadt was never called a KZ, but, variously, 'camp,' 'Jewish camp,' 'collecting camp,' 'transit camp,' 'ghetto,' 'ghetto for the old,' and in the last one and a half years, 'Jewish settlement.' All those terms had often only a short-term valid, political, mostly propagandistic function, that is, with the purpose of calming down the Jews, the Germans, the international public. The administrative difference between Theresienstadt and other concentration camps, namely the "Jewish self-administration," was nothing but a demagogical deception since all crucial questions (freedom or imprisonment, hunger or sufficient

food, continued living or death) were never decided by the so-called "self-administration, but by the SS which represented the Nazi regime. Despite a gigantically exploded bureaucracy, which pretended to represent "order, and despite constant adaptations of the language used – we better talk about language lies – terror, arbitrariness, hunger, suffering, sickness, and constant death ruled there. Of the 141,000 people deported to Theresienstadt, 34,000 were intentionally killed, about 85,000 were murdered "in the East." About 20,000 'survived,' often deadly sick in body and mind, and at least badly damaged and harmed. Theresienstadt had just as much a precisely describable function within the framework of the Nazi policy as later had the term "Final Solution of the Problem with Jews," as it was called after the Wannsee conference in January 1942. It is a fact that there were some different 'rules of the game' in the everyday life situation in Theresienstadt compared to Auschwitz, Dachau, or Bergen-Belsen, but it does not change anything in the principal inclusion of the camp into the KZ system and hence as a KZ.

Historical and Life Trails of a Jewish Family from Ulm

Bruno Kreisky, who himself had lost family members in Theresienstadt, says that "empathy and understanding are only possible when you make 'some strings stir by their own drive'." The editors of Resi Weglein's memories share that notion. But how can we make this "string" stir today, decades later, in a very different time and life condition among the new generation? Are not phenomena as the KZ Theresienstadt and a report about it nothing but 'monstrosities,' far removed as if it dated from a century passed? Does a report about it not have the effect of a shock therapy which triggers more resistance than understanding?

In the second part of the book, we try to provide an answer concerning those doubts. We will trace the tracks of time and life of a Jewish family from Ulm. That is, Theresienstadt and its horrors do not remain an isolated 'event,' instead, we try to follow the paths that led into it and then out of it again, and this until the very recent past.

To be sure, it is necessary to include the traces of the time, that is, of the emergence and development of the NS state, its appeal to many people, and the interest groups, not to forget the ideology, politics, and technique of persecuting Jews in German from the time of the civic emancipation to the Holocaust.

As important as those 'traces of the time' are important for the understanding, empathy can only be aroused when the traces of the time can be detected again also in the life traces of recognizable people.

Hence, it is our task, on the one hand, to cover both the unique and also the typical, at any rate 'non-spectacular' life of the family Weglein between 1883 and 1977; on the other, to integrate it into the history of the city of Ulm, that is, the people's lives, all of which constituted eighty-four years of a home for the family. When we face that task, the historian must not limit him/herself to the printed and hand-written documents in archives and books. S/he must also consider the fact that the traces of life can be tracked down among their younger contemporaries. In the case of the Wegleins, their living memory takes us straight to the present, the year 1988.

This year [1988], the 50th anniversary of the "Reichskristallnacht Pogrom" (Reich Crystal Night), has assumed particular importance for the city of Ulm. The invitation and the visit by former Jewish citizens of Ulm made, so it seemed, move the strings, which had been unmoved more or less for many decades. Here, during a week in July, a signal became visible, horrible events, often continuing to have an impact, something threatening from the time of fascism.

People carried out something like 'work with memories,' as far as it was possible for those 'on the top.' The present book has the purpose of promoting and deepening this process. If possible at all, it is intended to oppose two dangers: one, that this process will be forgotten within one year as a result of the usual 'popularity of memories; second, that the crimes against the Jews are being used, consciously or not, to distract us from taking note of the other dimensions of the NS regime.

The second part of this book has, in various respects, turned into a preliminary study of the 'history of the Jews from Ulm in the 19th and 20th centuries.' At the same time, it is a continuation of valuable historical research of the past.

As much as Hans Günther Adler has done the seminal spade work for Theresienstadt, Heinz Keil has done for the *Persecution of Jewish Citizens of Ulm*, so the title of the publication from 1961, to which we have to add the non-published materials kept in the Ulm city archive. Together with the five volumes dealing with the Jewish persecutions in Württemberg and Baden during the Nazi period, which Paul Sauer edited in 1966/1968, in close collaboration with Keil, the Keil documentation represents a key foundation of this book. There is even a shared link. Resi Weglein helped Heinz Keil with her knowledge, and he also published a passage from her memory on the pages 274–276 of his documentation.

A quarter of a century after the appearance of Keil's study, it is time to expand the perspective of his questions.

The time had come to return to the Jewish citizens in the memory of the city their own history and their contributions to the city history, comprising, after all, ca. hundred years of an overwhelmingly productive relationship [with the other part of the urban population].

The time had come to trace in the live example the continuity of Jewish existence in this city from the time of the German Empire to the First Republic, and from Fascism to the Federal Republic, often interrupted and broken up.

Finally, the time had come to contextualize the Ulm persecutions of Jews during the NS regime, which, studied in isolation, often seemed to be inexplicable, in the context of the history before that period, and also in the context of the total panorama of the NS period in that region. This task, however, goes beyond the present book and needs to be addressed in the book series "The Region Ulm/Neu-Ulm During the Nazi Regime: Preceding Events, the Actual History, and the Post-Period. The current book is volume 2 in this series.

A word about us, the editors and, apart from Resi Weglein, co-authors of this book. That what we have contributed to this collaboration has yielded, as far as we can tell, good results in the effort to identify the truth. The Jew Alfred Moser, born in Ulm in 1913, emigrated in 1933, and returned in 1953, represented a kind of 'filter' of personal experience and responsibility for the results of the search and investigations, the scholarly abstraction, which Silvester Lechner, who had been born sort of after the war (1944), a historian who has lived in Ulm since 1974, added to this book.

However, this book would not have been published if not many people had supported the editors. Let us mention some by name: First of all, there were Resi's and Siego Weglein's sons, Walter and Heinz who noticeably supported the work. We have also to mention eyewitnesses who had been ready to provide information: Rolf Dick, Uta Dieckell, Margot Eis, Mrs. Fischer, Else Wilke-Frey, Liselotte Genheimer, Fred M. Hirsch, Senta Kalbitz, Hans Kölle, Heinz Körner, Mrs. Lackner, Tosca and Hans Lebrecht, Karl Lörcher, Resi Nebel, Lydia Neumann, Mrs. Petershagen, Fritz Regele, Elisabeth Scheuffele, Rosa Schöffler, Anna Schneider, Mrs. Stöfferle, Rosa Weckert, Martha Weishaupt, Ruth Weitbrecht, and Anna-Barbara Werdich.

Then there were those who were members of research institutions and colleague historians who helped us more than could have been expected:

Ralf Brendel, Dr. Wolf D. Hepach, Mrs. Jahn, Christian Jansen, Dr. Hermann Keßler, Bernd Köhler, Cornelia Menzel, Helmut Nieß, Dr. Paul Sauer, Alisah Schiller from the Theresienstadt Memorial Site in the Kibbuz Givat Haim-Ihud, Israel Schwierz, Prof. Peter Steinbach, and Dr. Christoph Weisz.

We thank them all. We are particularly grateful to the city of Ulm and three private sponsors for taking on the production costs for this book. We have to mention in this context the superior mayor Ernst Ludwig and the mayor Götz Hartung as well as the party fractions of the community council, then Mrs. Inge Fried, an Ulm citizen who wants to remain anonymous, and the bank Sparkasse Ulm.

Resi Weglein:

Theresienstadt – August 21, 1942, to June 21, 1945. Memories of a Nurse.

Introduction

It was not my intention to share my personal notes with a broader audience. I am not a literary author, cannot express my thoughts in embellished form nor clothe them in ugly terms. I am writing down in simple words what I have experienced. The reason why I let the world participate in my experience is the following: Perhaps one person or the other among my fellow sufferers somewhere in the world might find the name of one of his/her family members, whom s/he had worried about. During the more than a thousand days of imprisonment, so many old and sick people have been entrusted to my care, whom I was allowed to offer the last service of love, so it might be possible that I could convey a last greeting to the survivors.

This book is to serve as a document of the years 1942–1945. I must put down in writing many thoughts because I am hoping for healing from the imprisonment psychosis, of the horror that the experiences in Theresienstadt have left behind in my soul. I deeply feel that those years were necessary for the inner maturation. The biblical Psalms gave me consolation in many sorrowful hours. And many times, I have prayed with the concluding words of the 139th Psalm: "Search me, Oh God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me onto the way everlasting."

In tough times you have to beg God for work and people for whom you may live. Life in itself is nothing. To live for something is everything. Starting on January 30, 1933, the great time of testing began for the world, which has not yet come to its conclusion. It is not my intention to write about all the experiences from the last twelve and a half years.

I want to give you, my dear children, whom I have not seen by now for almost seven years[1] and about whom I can only hope that they are alive and healthy, some insights into the last three years and share those with you.

[1] Cf. page 196.