## The Dressmakers of Auschwitz

The True Story of the Women Who Sewed to Survive

LUCY ADLINGTON

HARPER

#### HARPER

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#### One of the Few Who Survived



Irene Reichenberg as a child



Renée Ungar in 1939



Jewish Orthodox elementary school photo, 1930. Bracha Berkovič standing second from the left, middle row.



Marta Fuchs – standing third from right – at a family celebration 1934



Bracha Berkovič, seated, second from left, with Mizrachi friends pre-war

### The One and Only Power



Prague fashions from 1940, in Eva magazine.



Fürs Haus magazine cover, November 1934



Fashionable hat style, Eva magazine, 1940



Beach fashions from summer 1940, Eva magazine



Spring fashions in La Coquette French dressmaking magazine, undated



Hunya Storch, 1935



Front cover of Mode und Heim magazine, Germany 1940



ADEFA label from a 1930s floral crepe day dress

#### What Next, How to Continue?



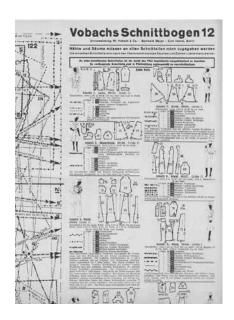
Renée Ungar in Slovakia, 1938



Sisters Bracha and Katka Berkovič, pre-war



Aprons featured in a 1941 German sewing magazine,
Deutches Moden Zeitung



Paper pattern detail from Deutches Moden Zeitung, 1941



Nathan Volkmann, Hunya's husband



Fur fashions featured in Eva magazine 1940



Fur coats featured in the French Bon Marché shopping catalogue, winter 1939/40

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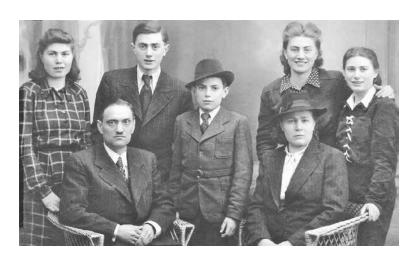
#### The Yellow Star



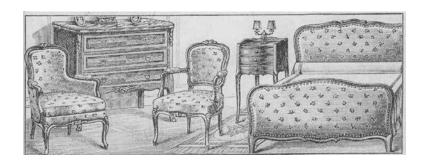
Käthe Kohn/Kohút née Reichenberg



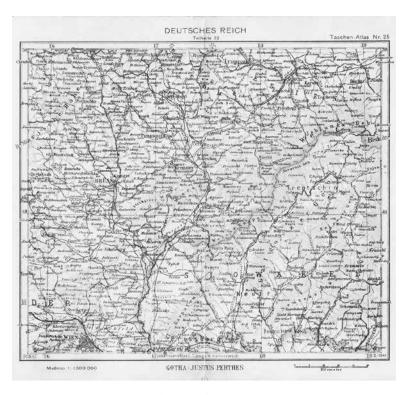
New fashions for spring coats 1942, from the German fashion/dressmaking magazine Mode und Wäsche



March 1942 Bercovic family photograph. Bracha is standing, second from right; Katka is standing first from the left.



Furniture featured in the popular French shopping catalogue Bon Marché winter 1939/40, reminiscent of room sets of plundered goods set out for appropriation by new owners.



1941 atlas page showing German expansion into the former Czechoslovakia. At the bottom of the map,
Bratislava is renamed Pressburg.

#### The Customary Reception

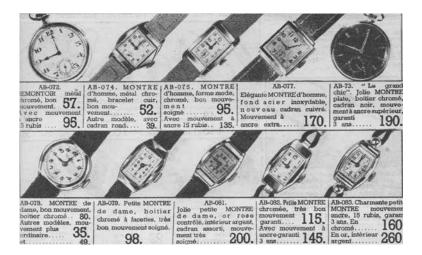


Bracha Berkovič before deportation. Well-dressed, glossy hair, bright smile for the camera.

#### You Want to Stay Alive



Moritz Mädler luggage advertisement, in the German Die Dame magazine, 1939. Arrivals at Auschwitz brought every conceivable kind of luggage with them.



Watches for sale in the Bon Marché shopping catalogue, winter 1939/40



Some of the Kanada barracks in Birkenau, looking unusually orderly. Thousands of inmates laboured here to sort barrowfuls and truckloads of expropriated goods.



So precious to the bearer, so worthless to the Nazis, photographs, letters and other personal memorabilia were burned as junk.

This Berkovič family photograph from 1937 shows Bracha's parents (seated, far left and right) her uncles (back row) and her grandparents (seated, centre.) All save one were murdered.

#### I Want to Live Here Till I Die



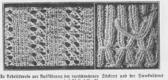
Early 1940s gardening outfits from the German dressmaking magazine Mode und Wäsche.

# Allerlei Neues aus unserem Handarbeitskorb Aparte Strickarbeiten und icone Dorlagen für Kreugitickerei



II Wellingter Kleinden





German knitting patterns for children's wear. Hedwig was persuaded by her Jewish hairdresser Manci that she should acquire an inmate to knit for the children, and so another woman got a protected position.



Girls' school outfits, featured in a 1944 edition of the German sewing magazine Mode Für Alles – Fashion For All'



Höss family portrait, 1943

#### Out of Ten Thousand Women



Autumn suit fashions in Mode Für Alle, 1944

Unice Gelerlichten! Bin seit Dozenskilokue

Bost von Euch in sehr besorgt, hitte schreiket

ofter Kinskt an mich. Röcken ist kann mir

mast Deinen Echlerungen genan vorstetten

wie ihr leht, mocht bins michts daroins, wenn's

sin hischen schwer ist, Du birt ja pevodut

fargen zu ertragen u. zu meistern. Turnekann, zu Deinem Geburtstag u. Banoi zu

Deiner Verlaumg ol. Kerge. Gradulationen

tok bin gesunot, arbeite, Herta u. Frene and.

Ourser Esspaketen, die ich wunderbarige
branchen kann spes. Speck u. Citrone habe ich

van Euch michts erhoften. Vielen Druk daßen

tungen küsse zu Rosa. Vielen Druk daßen

tungen küsse zu Rosa.

Detail of postcard from Marta Fuchs, 3 March 1944



Alida Delasalle, photographed after her January 1943 arrival and processing. Pol.F. signifies Political prisoner, French. The image was taken at the camp Erkennungsdienst identification department. Later in 1943 photography was stopped; there were too many inmates to process. Many plates were destroyed during the evacuation of the camp; about thirty thousand survived.



Elegant dresses featured in dressmaking magazine Les Patrons Universels, 1943



Rezina Apfelbaum, pre-war, in a dress of her own making

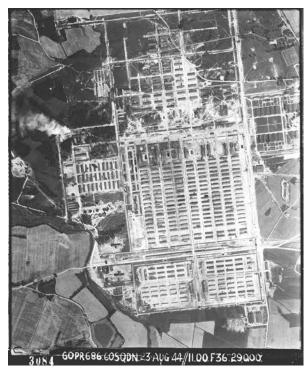


Nightgown and lingerie designs from Les Patrons Universels, 1943.

#### Solidarity and Support



Postcard from Marta Fuchs, sent 3 March 1944, stamped 6 April, with Herta's pencil note



Photograph taken 11 a.m. on 23 August 1944, discovered in the Aerial Reconnaissance Archives at Keele University, showing the thirty Kanada huts of Birkenau and crematoria IV and V

#### The Air Smells Like Burning Paper



Post-war portrait of Bracha Berkovič



Marta's post-war work card with details of Salon Marta



Bracha and Leo Kohút in the early 1950s, with sons Tom and Emil. She stitched her blouse and the children's clothes herself.



Wedding of Marta Fuchs and Ladislav Minárik



Renée Adler, née Ungar, with her husband and oldest son, in Israel



Post-war portrait of Irene Reichenberg

#### They Want Us to Be Normal?



Photograph of Raya Kagan with a fabulous up-do, found among Marta's personal papers. An inscription on the back reads: 'A ma chère Marta, en souvenir de notre rencontre, Raïa, Prague, 3.VII.47' – To my dear Marta, in memory of our meeting





Sisters Bracha and Katka before the war, and again in their eighties, recreating the pre-war pose



Detail of the shoe exhibit in the Auschwitz State Museum.



Irene's sewing box

## ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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- 4. Marta Fuchs, Schneider 1934 family wedding photograph, private collection
- 5. Bracha Berkovič, pre-war Mizrachi group photograph, family archives © Tom Areton
- 6. Prague fashions, Eva magazine, 1940, author's archive
- 7. Fürs Haus, 8 November 1934, author's archive
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- 50. Bracha and Katka Berković photograph, family archives © Tom Areton
- 51. Photograph of shoes on display at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, author's collection
- 52. Irene Reichenberg's sewing box photograph, author's collection

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