

12th June 2018

The Board of Deputies of British Jews
1 Torriano Mews
Kentish Town
London NW5 2RZ

For the attention of Marie van der Zyl, Deputies President

Dear Marie,

I note that the Board's website (June 5) refers to your visit to the Terezin Concentration Camp (Theresienstadt) to attend the unveiling of a new monument. As you may know, your husband's great-grandmother was held there for two years prior to her cruel death in Auschwitz in 1944.

Your mother-in-law Nikki still remembers the last moments with her 'Omi' and 'Opa' before she fled Nazi Germany with her mother in 1939. The Talmud says that "a person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten" and so it was fitting that Nikki and I were present in Charlottenburger Strasse, Berlin in November 2013, when a *stolperstein* for her dear grandmother Martha Less was installed in the pavement. It was a sober reminder of the dark days in human history which touched the van der Zyl family. The thousands of tiny brass squares embedded in streets around Europe constitute the largest Holocaust monument in the world.

I understand that no enquiries were made of Nikki by her two granddaughters during their limited meetings in 2017, which would have indicated some curiosity or interest about their own Jewish history. How sad for such an opportunity to have been missed, given the Boards' statement of the need for Holocaust awareness in young people.

Yours sincerely,

George Rooker
Historian

For *stolperstein*, see www.nikkivanderzyl.co.uk/de-14.htm