

# MY MOTHER TEOFILA REICH-RANICKI

Andrew Ranicki

Edinburgh German Circle, 28th February, 2012



## Timeline

- ▶ 12th March, 1920. Born in Łódź, Poland.
- ▶ 22nd July, 1942. Married to Marcel in the Warsaw Ghetto.
- ▶ 3rd February, 1943. Marcel and Tosia escape from Ghetto.
- ▶ 1943-1944 Hidden by Polish family near Warsaw.
- ▶ 7th September, 1944. Liberation by Red Army.
- ▶ 1948-1949 London: Marcel is a Polish diplomat.
- ▶ 30th December, 1948. Son Andrew born in London.
- ▶ 1949-1958 Warsaw: Marcel writes about German literature.
- ▶ 1958. Move from Poland to Germany.
- ▶ 1959-1973 Hamburg: Marcel at Die Zeit.
- ▶ 1973- Frankfurt a.M.: Marcel at the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. "Pope of German literature".
- ▶ 1999 Exhibition of the Warsaw Ghetto drawings.
- ▶ 29th April, 2011. Tosia dies in Frankfurt a.M.

## Tosia's names

- ▶ Tosia = Polish diminutive of Teofila.
- ▶ 1920-1942 Teofila Langnas, maiden name.
- ▶ 1942-1945 Teofila Reich, on marriage to Marcel Reich.
- ▶ 1945-1958 Teofila Ranicki, after Marcel changes name to Ranicki, as more suitable for a Polish diplomat than Reich.
- ▶ 1958- Teofila Reich-Ranicki, after Marcel changes name to Reich-Ranicki on return to Germany (where he had gone to school).

## Tosia's parents

Father: Paweł Langnas, 1885-1940

Mother: Emilia Langnas, 1886-1942



## Łódź, 1927-1933

- ▶ German school.
- ▶



## Łódź, 1933-1939

- ▶ Polish school.
- ▶ Interested in art, cinema, literature – but not mathematics!
- ▶ Graduation photo



## 21st January, 1940

- ▶ Tosia was accepted for studying art at an École des Beaux Arts, Paris, to start on 1st September, 1939.
- ▶ The outbreak of war makes this impossible.
- ▶ Instead, she moves with parents to Warsaw.
- ▶ On 21st January, 1940 father Paweł commits suicide in the Warsaw Ghetto.
- ▶ This is also the day she meets Marcel Reich – as described in Marcel's 1999 autobiography **Mein Leben** and the 2009 film.
- ▶ Marcel and Tosia remain together for 71 years, until Tosia's death in 2011.

**Marcel and Tosia, Warsaw Ghetto, 1941**



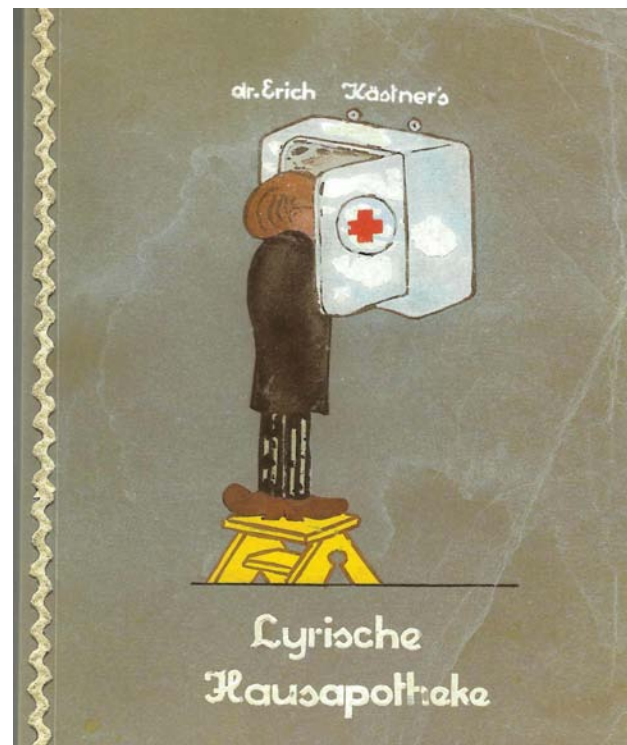


## Studying art in the Warsaw Ghetto

- ▶ Despite all the horrors, the Warsaw Ghetto had a rich cultural life, particularly classical music.
- ▶ As well as she could, Tosia continued her art studies.
- ▶ Paints had to be stolen from the German authorities – a capital offense.
- ▶ Tosia's cycle of Ghetto drawings survived the war: they are unique artistic eyewitness accounts of the horrors.
- ▶ The drawings were only published and exhibited 60 years later.
- ▶ The late recognition gave Tosia some satisfaction, but she never recovered from her wartime experiences.
- ▶ In particular, she did not draw again after the war.

## Dr. Kästner's Lyrische Hausapotheke

- ▶ Tosia copied out and illustrated the poem collection "Dr. Kästner's lyrical medicine cabinet" for Marcel's 21st birthday 2nd June, 1941
- ▶



**”Wir sitzen alle im gleichen Zug  
Und viele im falschen Coupé”**

”We are all in the same train - many in the wrong carriage”



In 1958 Marcel showed the book to Erich Kästner, who was very moved that his poems were read and copied out in the Warsaw Ghetto.

## "Moving into the Ghetto"



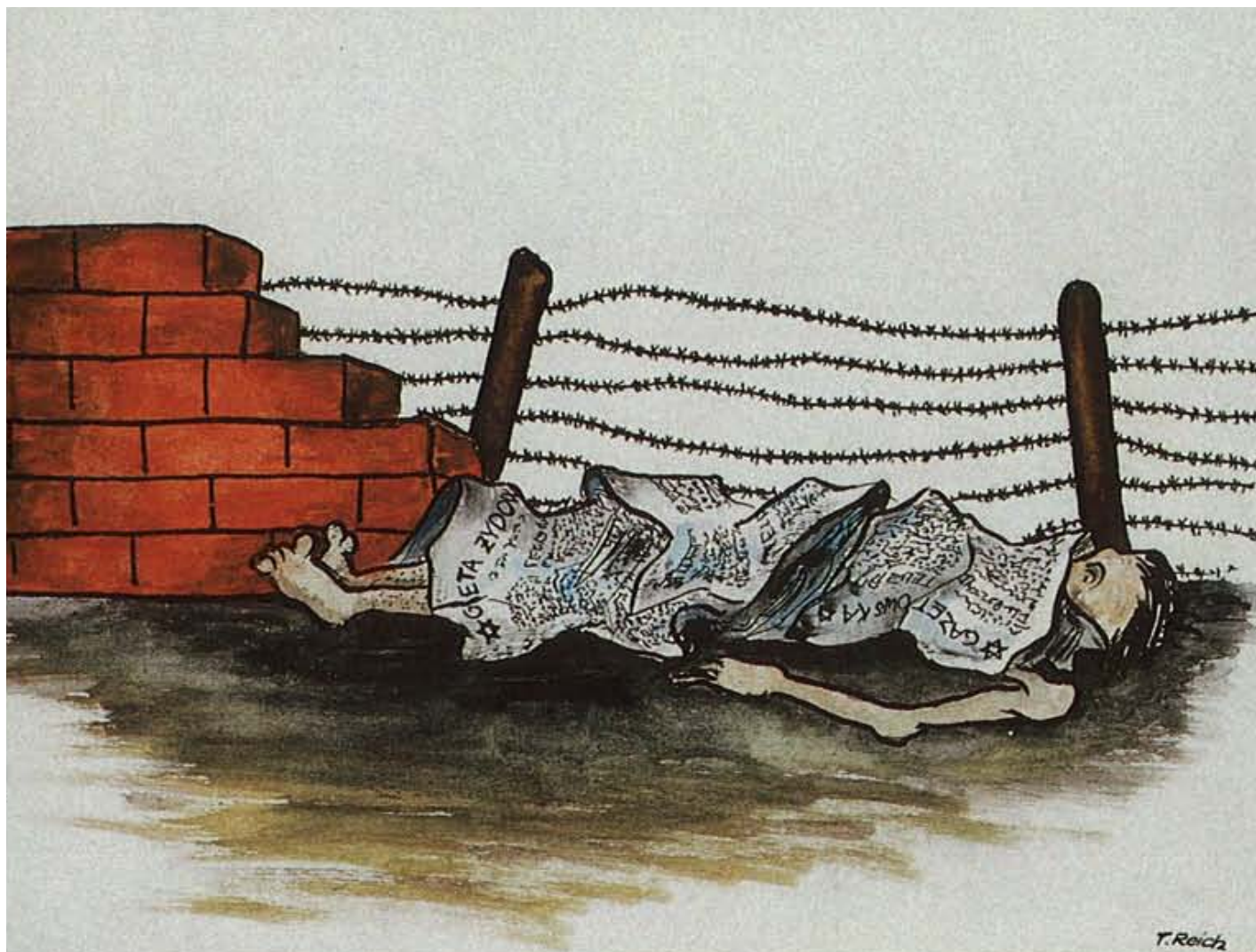
## "Children of the Ghetto"



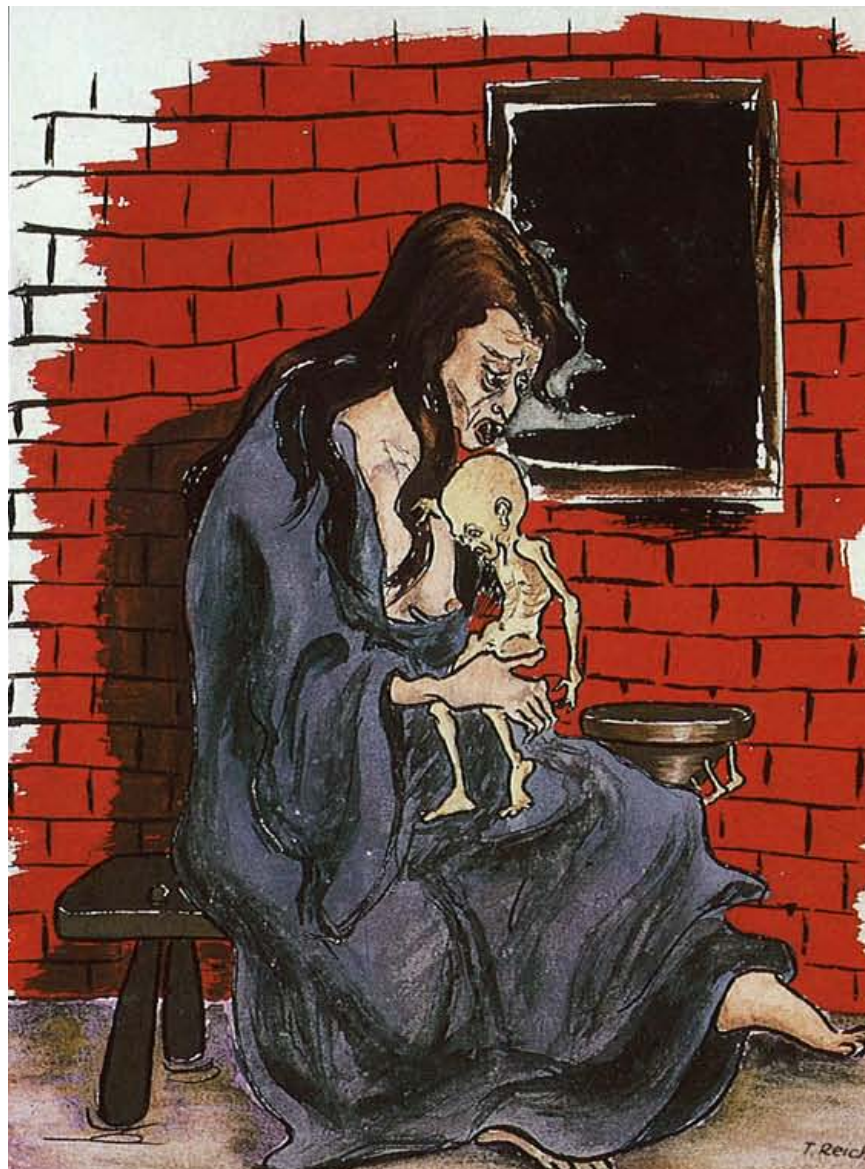
”A roundup in the streets”



## "Death from hunger"



# "Mother"





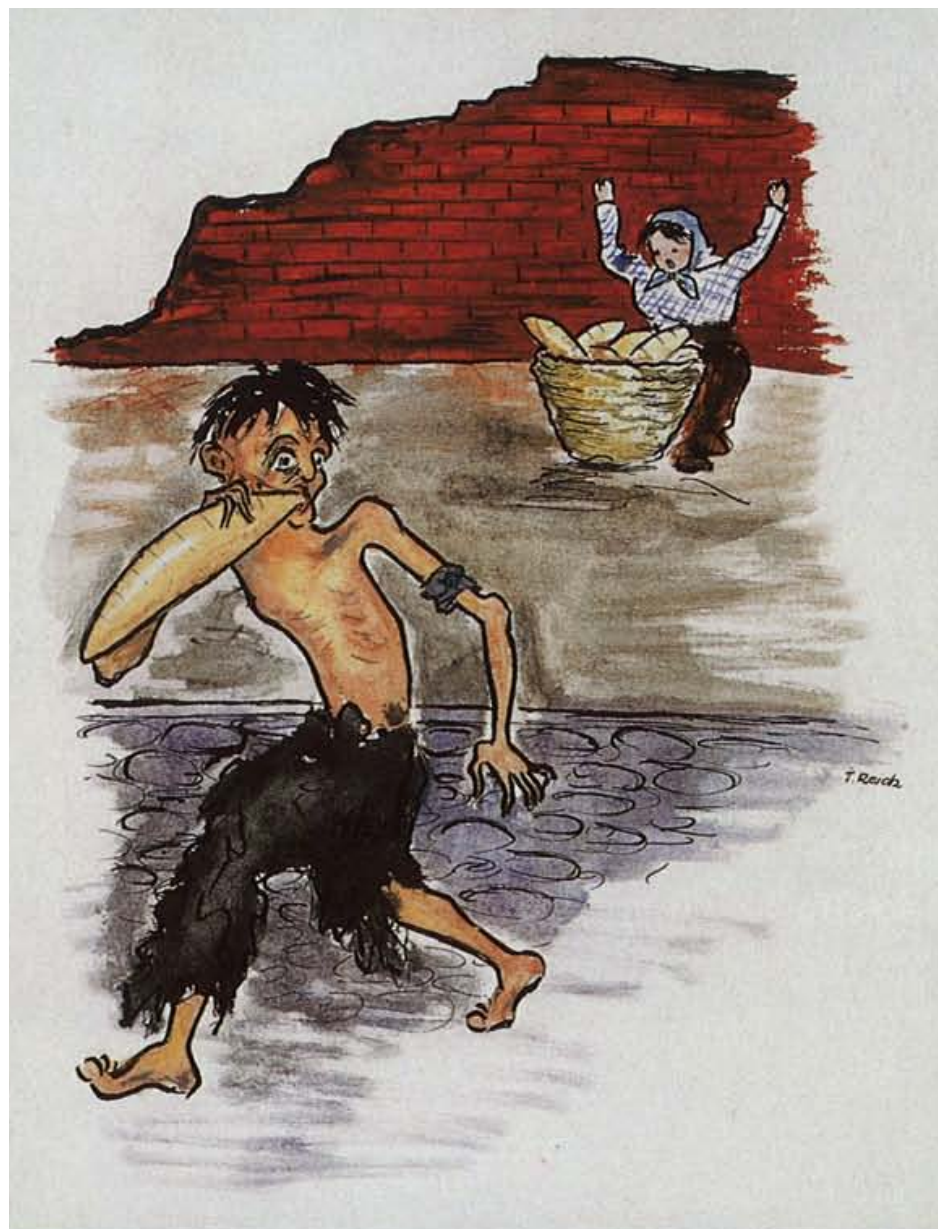
**"Pity the Jewish children"**



## "Photographing the Jews"



## "The bread thief"



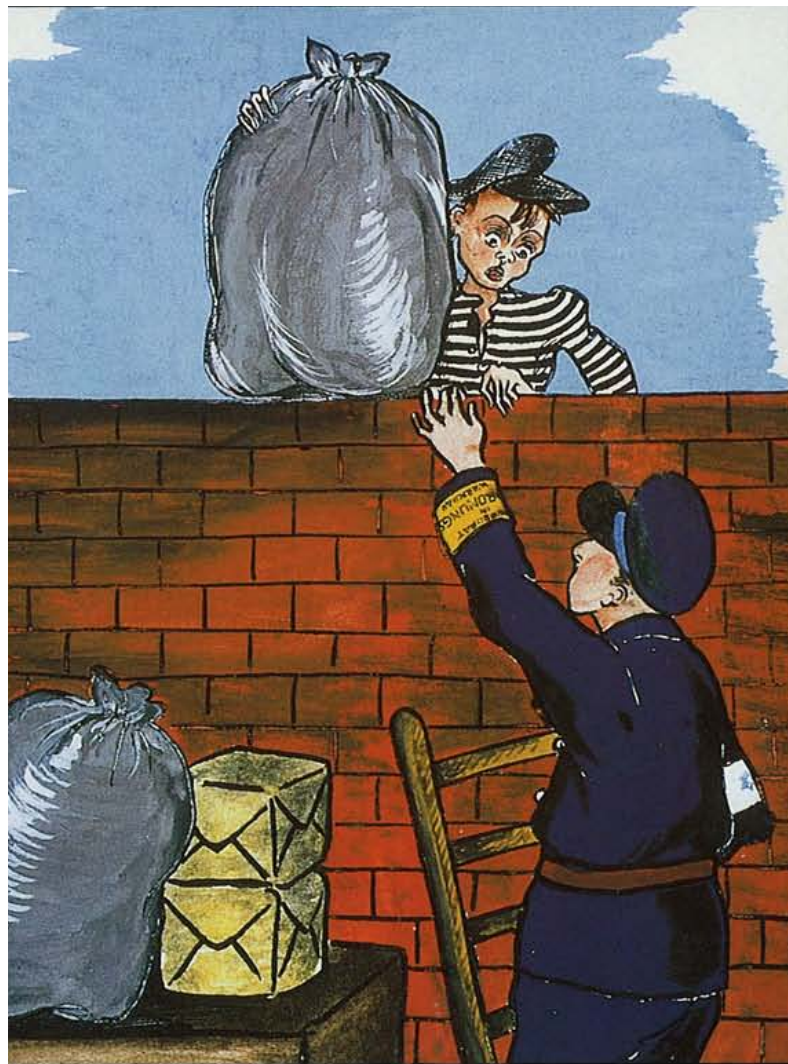
## "The undertaker"



# "Hunger"



## "The smuggler"



## ” Kulturträger”

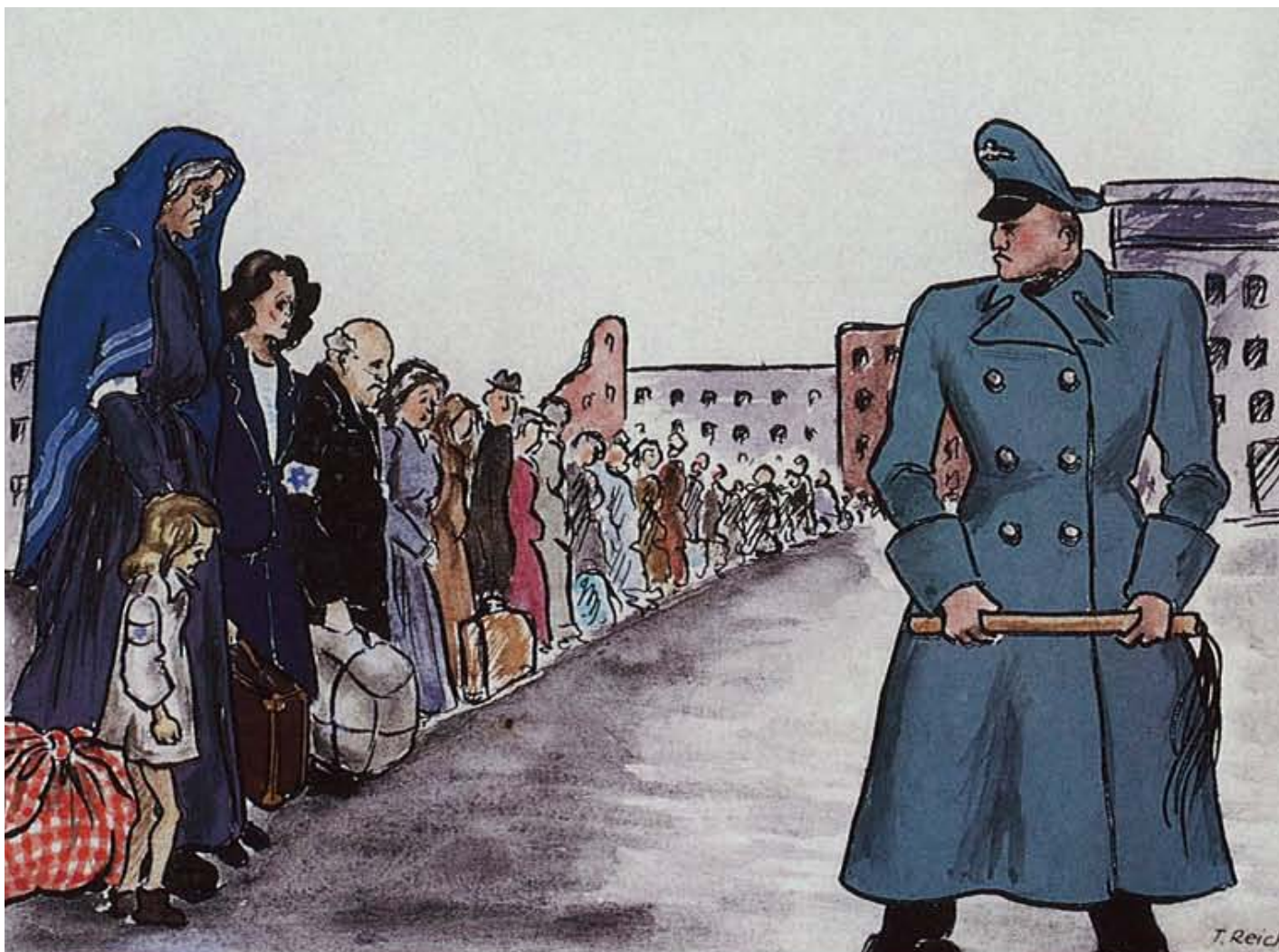


## "Waiting for transport to Treblinka"





## "Selection for Treblinka"



## 22nd July, 1942

- ▶ Marcel works at the Judenrat (" Jewish Council" ) as translator.
- ▶ Present at the meeting when the Germans order the "deportation to the East" of the Ghetto population.
- ▶ Marcel translates order from German to Polish.
- ▶ Workers at the Judenrat "and their spouses" are initially excluded from deportation, so Marcel marries Tosia that very day.
- ▶ In his autobiography Marcel quoted Shakespeare "Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?"
- ▶ In the Schlegel-Tieck translation: "Ward je in dieser Laun' ein Weib gefreit?"

## 27th January, 2012

The dramatic events of 22nd July, 1942 recalled by Marcel in the Bundestag on Holocaust Memorial Day, 27th January, 2012.

”The trains East had only one destination: death”.



## **Saved by the Gawins, 1943-1944**

Marcel and Tosia escaped from the Ghetto in February 1943. Until September 1944 they were hidden by the Polish couple Bolek and Genia Gawin, who thus placed themselves and their children at great risk.



## The Jewish cemetery, Warsaw 1945



## My parents and myself (London, 1948)



**My parents and myself (Warsaw, 1957)**



## My parents and myself (Edinburgh 2002)



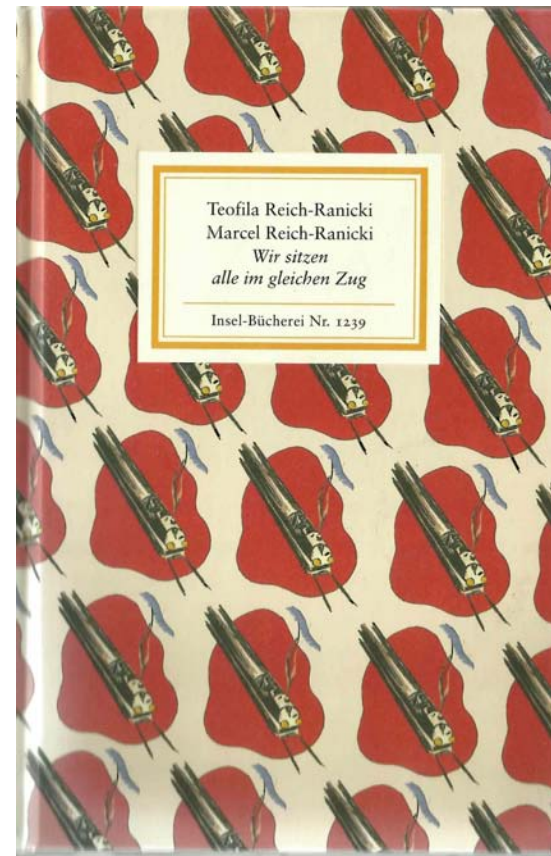
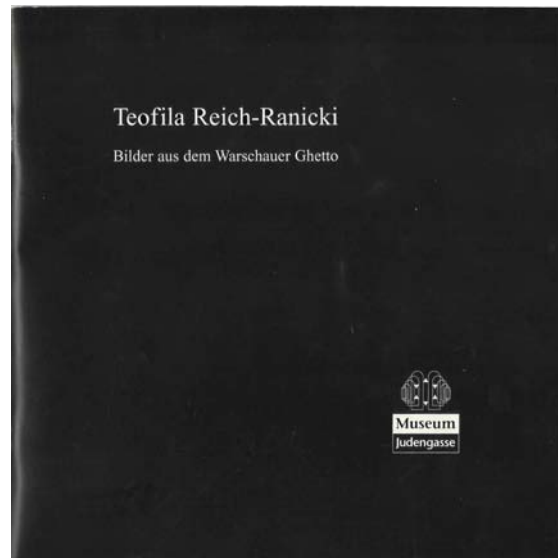


**A photo by Stefan Moses (2000)**

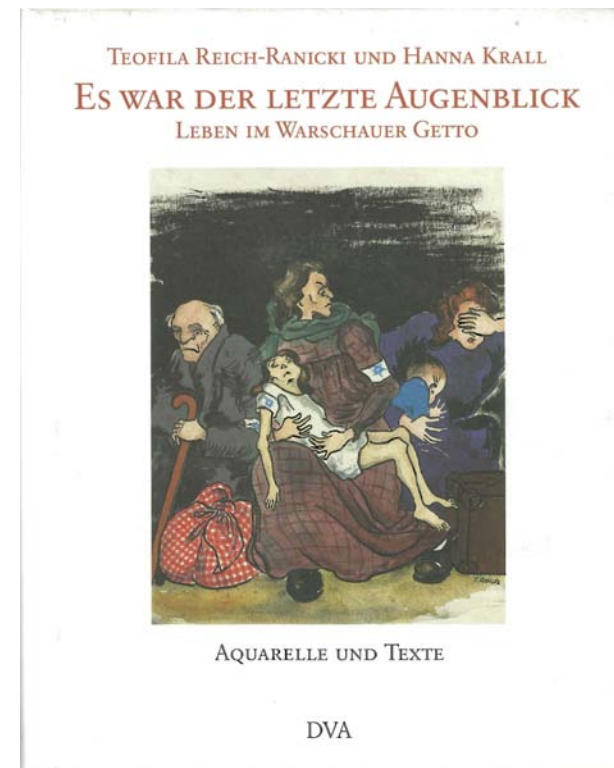
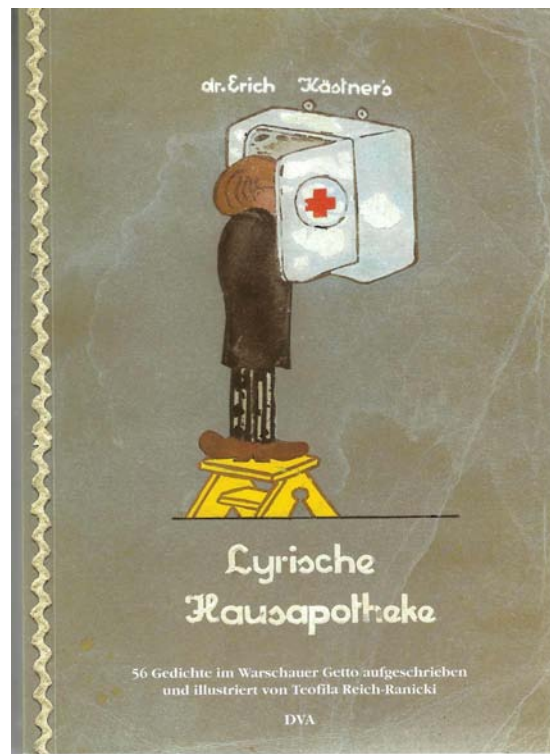


## Books by/about Tosia I.

- ▶ The phenomenal success of Marcel's 1999 autobiography **Mein Leben** sparked interest in Tosia, resulting in 4 books by/about her Warsaw Ghetto experiences.
- ▶



## Books and articles by/about Tosia II.



- ▶ Andrew's website <http://www.maths.ed.ac.uk/~aar> includes many articles about both Marcel and Tosia, including the video of Marcel's Bundestag speech.

## Mein Leben

- ▶ Marcel's autobiography published in 1999, dedicated to Tosia and Andrew.
- ▶ Over 1 million sold in Germany. Translated into 20 languages.
- ▶ TV film 2009. Marcel: Matthias Schweighöfer. Tosia: Katharina Schüttler



Still from the film.



Andrew and Carla (2008)

## Tosia's 91st birthday, 12th March, 2011



**Teofila Reich-Ranicki (1920-2011)**

