A 'car of the future' found in a dark past or How I found the car my great-grandfather lost 78 years ago

Vienna, July 2105 – For eleven years now, I've lived in Austria. During that time I've searched for traces of the shadows left by my family who had to flee the country in May 1938. My journey of selfdiscovery started in 2004 at the Austrian National Archives. Since, according to the law of 27 April 1938 (yes, only six weeks after the 'Anschluss'!), all well-off Jews had to declare their possessions, it was a simple task to find listings of all my great-grandfathers assets. The Nazi bureaucratic apparatus was already functioning perfectly: he had to declare the sum of his life insurance, list all his objects of precious metal (his watch chain and the cuff links he was wearing that day), as well as his stocks, bonds and other assets. It was then that I noticed there was also a car, a Tatra. I knew that the Tatra had a marvelous, futuristic design - but I couldn't get more information about my grandfathers' car.

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Then in July 2015, the Technical Museum of Vienna launched a <u>new database</u> of car owners from the 1930s and 1940s. I was thrilled because I remembered I had seen the 'Tatra A 784' on the listing, so I entered the name of my great-grandfather, 'Segal':

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Startseite >> Datenbanken zu	ı Kraftfahrzeugen in Öster	rreich in den 1930er und 1940er .	Jahren >> Historische K	FZ-Verzeichnisse
Historische KFZ-Verzeichnisse			 HISTORISCHE KFZ-VERZEICHNISSE NS-KFZ-RAUB 	
KFZ: Tatra, Besitze	rln: Segal	ÖSTERREICHGRAFIK		
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BesitzerIn NAME: Segal VORNAME: Arnold TITEL: Dr			Bestandssuche Bundesland Alle Einträge v Bezirk	
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I emailed Christian Klösch, the historian charge of the museums database, to ask for more information, and within a few hours I received some really useful data on my great-grandfathers' car, including that the car was bought for 18,000 Reichsmark (about 27,000 öS). Usually TATRA cars cost between 7,000 oS (for an Austro Tatra 57 Limousine) and 13,500 öS (for a Tatra 75). Because of the high price paid, Christian surmised that my great-grandfather might have had one of the flagship models: the Tatra 77, 77a or 87. He advised me to get in touch with people at the <u>Tatra museum</u> of Koprivnice, in the Czech Republic. In the meantime, I discovered that models of the prestigious Tatra 87 were owned by Erwin Rommel, John Steinbeck, Farouk I of Egypt, Edvard Beneš, and the architect Norman Foster.

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Motornummer 9 Motornummer

After telling my Facebook friends about my first discovery, Ivan Margolius (who worked at Foster+Partners and knows a lot about Tatra cars) got back to me. He also recommended the Czech museum and suggested a contact there, Radim Zátopek. Radim replied within a day, writing back in German:

"Das Auto war:

- Tatra 77a Limousine
- Fahrgestell Nr.: 33 903 [chassis]
- Motor Nr.: 201 643
- Besitzer: Judr. Arnold Segal, Wien I. [owner]
- Bestellnummer: 9227/36 [order number]
- Bestellt am: 11. 8. 1936 [ordering date]
- Geliefert am: 17. 9. 1936 [delivering date]
- Übernommen am: 17. 9. 1936 [taken over]
- Preis im Jahre 1934-5: 95 000 98 000 Kronen"

I was astonished by the clarity of this information and immediately sent it on to Christian Klösch, who managed to find a reference to the car, thanks to the chassis number, in a 1942 listing published in the *Reichsverkehrsblatt* (*Journal of transportation issues in the Reich*). Among the cars reported for the loss of car documentations we read:

Kraftfahrzeughrief I a Nr. 1 635 818, Tatra, Lkw, W 20725, Fahrgestell-Nr. 3903. Motor-Nr. 201 643. zugelassen fur Fritz Bernhard, Wien 17, Promenadegasse 10. Wien, den 24. April 1942. Der Polizeipräsident. 2514

In the public directory of this time, the <u>Adolph Lehmann's allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger</u> (known as the "Lehman"), I found a man called Fritz Bernhard living at the same address, <u>Promenadegasse 10</u>.

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A really interesting thing about the '<u>Naglergasse 2</u>' address (a small street at the beginning of the Graben - the most prestigious street in the city), is that it's the same place my great-grandfather worked! So this means his neighbor at work, who was advertisement painter, must have bought the car. Whether he bought it from the SA or the Gestapo, back in 1938, if the car had been seized, or from my great-grandfather is open to question. So too is the question, whether he bought the car at a cheap price - since my family had to leave the country in great haste after my great-grandfather had been arrested by the Gestapo.

I just know my great-grandfather left on 15 May 1938, and it looks like he had to leave everything in Vienna.

Abteilung II Der Polizeipräsident Eing. 2 0. AUG. 1940 Abteilung II 12 02/40 Wien, IX., den . 8, 1 Berggaffe 43 . Lickusti I Arnold Segul, wygning h. n. jutiges The Reisworstr. 27/6 um 15.5. 1938 mg Strap, til Ambassaston ab - 2. mag mon gomolin.

He died in 1944 and my grandfather, that I knew as 'Papi' or Henri (formally named Henryk, born in Galicia and known as Heinrich in Vienna) never talked about his past. He died in 1982 when I was 11.

It turns out that the man who bought the car, Fritz Bernhard, is quite well-known; there is a <u>page online</u> on his biography. He drew 'propaganda posters', was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1940 and became reporter for the Luftwaffe. He caught tuberculosis, returned to Vienna and died there on 25 January 1945. I wonder whether I should try to get in touch with his descendants - but how, and what for? His biography source is an interview with his widow, Gertrude Marx, in 2001... His atelier is mentioned for some the advertisements he painted, such as those for tyres (here).



Victory for us! (1942)

And of course, I'd still like to know more about what actually happened to the car. The Tatra 77a was very modern, sold as "<u>the car of the future</u>", and there's a <u>Wikipedia page</u> devoted to this "first serial-produced truly aerodynamically designed automobile", which had a top speed of over 150 km/h (93 mph).



The Tatra 77a



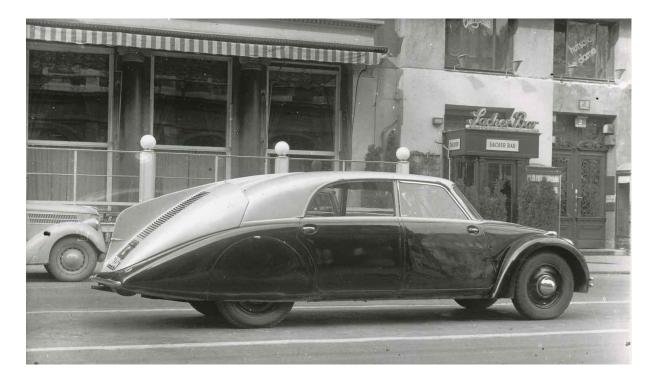


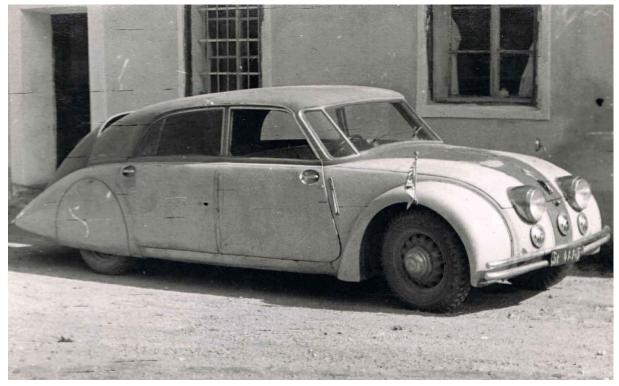
Only <u>150</u> Tatra 77a were produced in 1936/1937, and my great-grandfather owned one [correction from Manfred Haspel, an Austrian Tatra specialist: 150 from the first series with two headlamps, 105 of the second with three headlamps and around four prototypes].

The man who drew this famous painting "Welcome in Austria", widely used in the first years after the war, became the owner of my families car... and I still don't know much about the events that led to this rather odd state of affairs.

Vienna, January 2017

Mr. Manfred Haspel, from Austria, found two photo of Tatra 77 in Vienna, one of them in front of the Hotel Sacher bar in the Viennese Operngasse. As he wrote : "The licence plate itself with "C" indicates the Pribor-district (small town near Korivnice)". The second picture depicts a Tatra with a Styrian license plate, after the war.





Mr. Haspel also sent me this ad.



And still in January 2017, I received an Email from Mr Klösch (Technical Museum in Vienna) who told me that in the photographs of Robert Haas found at the occasion of a <u>new exhibition at the Vienna Museum</u>, he discovered two pictures of the car of my great-grandfather! The license plate is the same: A784 (see p. 1). No doubts are possible.





When Mr Haspel saw these photos, he kindly sent me other photos from black Tatra 77a $\textcircled{\sc o}$





The main question is to know what happened to the car of my great-grandfather after Fritz Bernhard's death in 1945. Was it taken by the Soviets and sent to USSR? Destroyed by a bomb? Any idea most welcomed!

Sources and supplements

- <u>A Jewish Viennese Photo Story</u> (this is how I found old photos of my family in Vienna 90 years later)
- The Google map of the places in Vienna where the Segal lived and worked
- J. Segal, "<u>Black Gold and Yellow Star</u>", on the history of my great-grandfather related to oil in Galicia (published <u>in French</u> for a <u>book</u> and <u>in German</u> in a magazine)
- Two portraits of my family (my great-grandfather Arnold and his daughter Erna) to be seen at the wonderful exhibition "<u>Mythos Galizien</u>" of the Wien Museum (only until 30 August 2015).
- Christian Klösch, "The Great Auto Theft : Confiscation and restitution of motorised vehicles in Austria during and after the Nazi period", <u>Journal of Transport History</u>, 2013
 <u>No 2</u>, pp. 140-161
- Ivan Margolius and John G. Henry, *Tatra The Legacy of Hans Ledwinka*, New fully updated and revised collector's edition, Veloce Publishing, Dorchester, ISBN 978-1-845847-99-9, 224 pages, 326 black & white and colour illustrations, (including: Foreword by Norman Foster and 'My Father' by Erich Ledwinka), to be published in October 2015.
- A <u>website</u> of all existing T77 and T77a (thank you Manfred Haspel)
- A video of black T77a ! (bis)

Don't miss the supplement at the next page, with a lot of posters drawn by Fritz Berhanrd (9 pages).

A BIG THANK YOU to Chrisitan Klösch, Radim Zátopek, Manfred Haspel and

Ivan Margolius !

(and also to Paul Dorfman for the proofreading)

Jérôme Segal, Vienna, July 2015 + January 2017

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<u>Supplement</u>: The posters drawn by Fritz Berhnard, held at the Austrian National Library (<u>here</u>), in chronological order(with a few others I found online):

1919





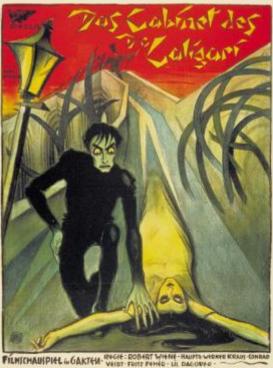
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Alles mis **PERSIL** gewaschen!



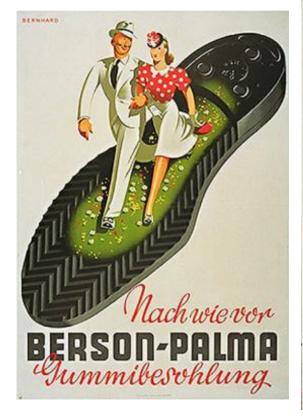
1935-38



























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Silent! You put me in danger



Women know our duty !



You can trust me

(see the same 1937 poster! It looks like there was a kind of continuity in Austria...)





