

operation “The Castles” at the Štiřín Castle. Pavel Tigrid, Minister of Culture unveiled a plaque to Přemysl Pitter at the Štiřín Castle. • September 5, President Václav Havel was awarded by the Medal of Přemysl Pitter at the Prague Castle.

2000 Olga Fierzová was recommended for the State Decoration of the Czech Republic on October 28.



Olga Fierzová

1900–1990

Her life in data

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- 1900** Born July 26, in the city of Baden, Switzerland, in the canton of Aargau.
 - 1911** Family relocated to Brussels.
 - 1920** Olga graduated from teacher's institute in Brussels. She returned to Switzerland, became a resident teacher in Geneva and studied externally at the Pedagogical Institute of J. J. Rousseau.
 - 1921–1925** On recommendation of the Pedagogical Institute of J. J. Rousseau she became a language teacher at a girls' boarding school *The Garden School* close to London.
 - 1923** She got acquainted with the International Fellowship for Reconciliation (IFOR) and acted as a conference interpreter.
 - 1926** At the international conference of the International Fellowship for Reconciliation in Oberammergau, Germany she met with Přemysl Pitter.
 - 1927** Her first visit of Prague, meeting with Pitter's friends striving to build a haven for the youth in Žižkov – Prague.
 - 1928** Permanent residence in Prague.
 - 1933** *Milíčův dům* (The Milíč's House) opened, an intensive educational activity launched.
 - 1938** Sanatorium in Mýto u Rokycan opened.
 - Even after the Nazi occupation, both Jewish and non-Jewish children were

educated together in Mýto and in the Milíč's House, irrespective of superior authorities' instructions. • Olga Fierzová and Přemysl Pitter continued to visit Jewish families and bring them food.



1945 Olga Fierzová and Přemysl Pitter organised a rescue operation "The Castles", concentrating children of various nationalities from German concentration camps and Czech internment camps (Štiřín, Olešovice, Kamenice, Lojovice, Ládvi). • R. Hegnauer of the International Civil Service together with the UNRRA representatives visited rescued children in "The Castles" with material help.

1947 "The Castles" operation terminated. 810 children went through this rescue operation.

1948 The Milíč's House taken over by the Central National Committee in Prague.

1950 February 17, Olga Fierzová left for her sister's funeral to Switzerland. • Her return to Czechoslovakia was denied by totalitarian authorities.

1951 Přemysl Pitter deprived of his office of Director of the Milíč's House and received threats of imminent arrest. • Olga Fierzová organised his escape across the border.

1951 October 23, her first meeting with Přemysl Pitter in exile, in Munich.

1952–1962 Caring for Czech and Slovak emigrants in the Valka refugee camp near Nuremberg.

1962 Activities in the Valka camp terminated. Olga Fierzová and Přemysl Pitter left for Affoltern am Albis, Switzerland. • In December, they started to publish the exile magazine *Talks with Writers*.

1963–1976 November 24, 1968, the first gathering of the Jan Hus Congregation of the Czechs and Slovaks. • September 18, 1971, they founded the Czechoslovak complementary School. • Participated in the Czechoslovak Society for Science and Arts in Switzerland, and in the Masaryk Foundation at the Federation of Czechoslovak Associations in Switzerland.

1968 Borders of Switzerland opened for Czech and Slovak refugees. Olga Fierzová and Přemysl Pitter provided them with their active support.

1976 February 15, Přemysl Pitter died in hospital in Zurich. In place of Přemysl Pitter,



in Kirnbach Olga Fierzová took over a medal of the Johannes-Mathesius-Gesellschaft in memoriam; she got on with issuing of *Talks with Writers* and sent them to exiles and friends all over the world and illegally also to Czechoslovakia.

1977 In Switzerland she founded the MILIDU Society (The Milíč's House). • January 12, she was appraised by the honorific of the State of Israel, by a Medal of Righteous Among the Nations.

1985 May 21, the tree honouring Olga Fierzová planted in the Avenue of the Righteous (The Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem).

1989 She welcomed political changes in Czechoslovakia enthusiastically.

1990 Reacted very positively to the New Year's Address by the President Václav Havel; published it in the *Talks with Writers*. • June 16, a gathering of former children of "The Castles" operation and of Olga Fierzová's and Přemysl Pitter's friends in Štiřín. Olga Fierzová sent a message with greetings and spiritual legacy of P. Pitter to participants of the gathering, where the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports was present as well.

1990 June 17, Olga Fierzová died in Afoltern am Albis, Switzerland. • June 26, she was awarded by the "Certificate of Merit" in memoriam by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for her dedicated work with children and for her loyal patriotic awareness of the Czech Nation.

1991 The Archives of Přemysl Pitter and Olga Fierzová transported from Switzerland to the Pedagogical Museum of J. A. Comenius. The Archives are available to the research public. • October 28, P. Pitter awarded by the Order of T. G. Masaryk in memoriam.

1992 In Prague, there was published a documentary book by Olga Fierzová "Children's Destinies", where she recorded circumstances and problems of work with Jewish and German children in the post-war castle sanatoria. An enlarged edition of this book is being prepared in German.

1993 March 27, an international seminar "Přemysl Pitter – His life and work" was organised by the Pedagogical Museum of J. A. Comenius in the Wallenstein Palace.

1994 The Přemysl Pitter and Olga Fierzová Foundation was established in cooperation with the Pedagogical Museum of J. A. Comenius and the MILIDU Society in Zurich.

1995 March 28– December 31, the Pedagogical Museum of J. A. Comenius presented the exhibition "Přemysl Pitter – His Life – Work – Times" in the Wallenstein Palace. • The UNESCO's general conference declared the 100th birth anniversary of Přemysl Pitter to be a world cultural anniversary of the year 1995. • Festive evening "In Honour of Přemysl Pitter" was held in the Great Auditorium of Carolinum under the auspice of Rector of the Charles University on June 21. • June 22–23, International Conference was held at the Charles University "Přemysl Pitter – His Life, Work, Times". • June 24, a gathering of participants and witnesses of a rescue