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Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project. 1995-2000, undated.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

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Henry & Bella Tovey
1004 S. Belgrade Road
Silver Spring, MD 20902

November 10, 2000

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Tovey,

Thank you for responding to our letter about sending your story to the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at the World Jewish Congress. I am writing to you to confirm that we received both of your speeches and we will forward them to the World Jewish Congress in your names. This is an important project that will help preserve the testimonies of you and other survivors, so the lessons learned and the people who perished during the Holocaust are never forgotten.

Both of you have very inspiring stories. It is amazing that after all that you both went through, the ghettos, cattle cars, and concentration camps, that you found a belief in Judaism and G-d. I am sure that your journey back to Judaism was an extremely difficult struggle. Through survivors written testimonies like both of yours, we will forever have eyewitness accounts of the horrors of the Holocaust and learn from it so nothing like the Holocaust will ever happen again.

Again, we want to thank you for sharing your story. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to call me, Jamie Goldberg, Rabbi Herbert Friedman's assistant, at 212-355-6115. You may also contact Ms. Yudin at the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at 914-722-1880.

I hope you and your family are having a happy and healthy New Year.

B'Shalom,

Jamie Goldberg

A note from...
Henry & Bella Tovey Nov 6, 200

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

Thank you for sending us
the two articles that deal
with the unpublished Holocaust
testimonies.

Also, if you do not mind
"saving us the trouble" please
send in the story in our
name.

Sincerely yours
the Toveys



HT's talk at WHC's 50th Anniversary of the end of WW2
May 5, 1995

- P I was liberated from concentration camp Wöbbelin by the 82nd Airborne Division of the United States Army on the third of May, 1945
- P Only, I didn't know it
- I was born in Lodz, in Poland. Exactly one week after the war broke out, on September 8, 1939, German troops entered the city. I was 15 years old
- P Within a few months the Jews of Lodz were herded into a Ghetto. There were some 165,000 of us, crowded into 1 and 1/2 square miles. Food was scarce, hygienic conditions terrible. Dysentery, typhus, typhoid fever, were rampant. Very soon we were no longer 160,000
- P In 1942 the Ghetto became a labor camp. Those who could not work -- the children, the old, the sick -- were deported to the Chelmno extermination camp. In the summer of 1944 the Ghetto of Lodz was liquidated. Those who survived until then were sent to Auschwitz
- P My parents were murdered in Auschwitz. I was sent to a labor camp in Braunschweig, in Germany
- P They fed us little and worked us hard, but we felt that the end cannot be far away. Toward the end of 1944 the British Airforce started to bomb Braunschweig on a regular basis, and the Germans offered very little resistance. We felt that if we could survive one more day, one more night, we would be liberated. And then, we dreamt, we would be taken somewhere, to a warm, clean place, where we could bathe for hours in big tubs full of hot water, where we would be given clean clothes, and above all, where we would be given food. Lots and lots of food.
- P Actually, I had a day almost like that in the dream while I was still in the camp. An air raid caused several houses near the factory in which we worked to ignite. Our SS guards decided to send us into the burning buildings to bring down clothing, bedding, and anything else of value left behind by the fleeing people. I was sent into a six-story building which was by that time pretty well engaged in fire, particularly the upper stories. I first tried the apartments on the lower levels, but they were locked and I had to go up as high as the 4th floor. The heat was intense there, but when I opened the first door I found myself in a kitchen which a family must have abandoned in the middle of a meal. There was bread on the table, and butter -- or margarine -- jam -- two kinds of jam -- and milk. And I set me down at that table -- it was even covered with a table cloth -- and I cut myself a big slice of bread, spread margarine on it, then jam, and the other jam, and I ate.
- P This was the first time I wasn't hungry in 5 years!
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evacuated. We were put on trains, cattle trains, of course, crowded like sardines in a can. We were taken first to the Herman Goerring Woerke (spelling?) camp, and then to Rawensbrueck (spelling?). There we were told we are being sent to Luebec (spelling ?), a port on the Baltic sea, where we will be released to the Red Cross and sent to Sweden. Nobody believed that. The rumor had it that they were going to put us on an old ship and sink it. Later we found out that this was in fact standard operating procedure for the SS at the end of the war, to eliminate as many witnesses to their crimes as they could. As it turned out, neither scenario played out. The tracks ahead of our train were bombed, and it had to stop. We were ordered out and marched to the nearest camp. It was concentration camp Woebbelin.

I was liberated from concentration camp Woebbelin by the 82nd Airborne Division of the United States Army on the third of May, 1945.

R Only, I didn't know it.

R Woebbelin, unlike Auschwitz, had no long history. It was established just a few months before we came in. But while it did not have the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz, it was a very efficient death camp just the same. As general Gavin, the Commanding Officer of the 82nd Airborne put it,

"You could smell the Woebbelin concentration camp long before you could see it. And seeing it was more than a human being could stand. Even after three years of war it brought tears to my eyes.

"There were hundreds of dead about the grounds and in the tarpaper-covered shacks. In the corner of the stockade was an abandoned quarry into which the daily stacks of cadavers were bulldozed. It was obvious they could not tell the living from the dead.

"Living skeletons were scattered about, the living distinguished from the dead only by their somewhat greenish skin, in contrast to the blue-black skin of the dead."

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R You see, I didn't know it because I was one of the living skeletons distinguishable from the dead only by the somewhat greenish color of their skin.

Henry Tovey gave this talk at WHC in 1995

LIVING THROUGH THE HOLOCAUST

For many years after the war I found it impossible to address a group of people and to talk about my experiences during the holocaust. Oh, sometimes i would talk to my very close friends, sometimes i would answer questions asked by my children. I would even say something to my students in the class when there was a compelling reason. Other than that, I just couldn't talk about it.

This changed when i became aware that the truth about the holocaust was being denied. And not just by some individual extremists, but in an organized, systematic manner. And not just by the Liberty Lobby or the Historical Review, but by apparently respectable people, such as Dr. Butz, a history professor at Northwestern University. Dr. Butz wrote "The Hoax of the Twentieth Century," in which he called the holocaust a hoax that was carefully orchestrated to spread the false rumor that six million Jewish men, women, and children were killed by the Nazis.

That I could no longer tolerate. I felt that in a small way I can fight these deliberate lies. I felt that I owe it to my mother, my father, my little sister and brother, who perished in Auschwitz, that I speak out.

So, I want to share with you some of my experiences and some of my thoughts. And if one day you hear somebody questioning the reality of the holocaust, or hear somebody speaking disrespectfully about the six million, I hope you will remember what I am about to tell you.

I was born in Poland. I was thirteen years old when the war broke out. I was foolish enough to be glad, because I didn't have to go back to school.

I grew up very quickly. The Germans occupied Sosnowiec on the third of September, the third day of the war. After all, it was near the German border. They took the city without a shot; the tanks just rolled into our streets and that was that.

There were the expected things in the beginning. Decrees after decrees, curfews, bread lines. You couldn't get food, everything was closed.

Funny, my mother tried to buy food after we came back from the country. We were gone all summer and returned just a week before the war broke out, and our cupboards wee bare. But all she could get was what used to be expensive delicacies, fancy chocolates, canned caviar, pickled vegetables, but no bread, no flour, no eggs. It was so shocking being hungry for a piece of bread so soon.....

A few days after the Germans occupied our city they rounded up all the Jewish men. They came into our apartments (most of us lived in large apartment buildings), forced us into the courtyard, and took the men away. I am not sure how long my father was gone. It was probably not more

than a week. My father was only 39 years old then, he had a head of auburn hair. When he came back he was gray.

He never talked about what happened during the week. All we knew was that we were lucky that he came back, because some men didn't come back. But we thought - or so I was told by my parents - that this is what happens when a country is occupied. They try to put the fear of God into the hearts of the general population. Many non-Jews were also taken away. Some never came back. And of course, we knew that the Jewish people were singled out for special treatment - only we didn't know what treatment....

It was so gradual. They put a German overseer into our factory, and my father worked there. That was helpful, we got ration cards.

One day someone knocked on our front door. A woman, and two SS-men. They walked through our apartment. She turned to the SS-men and said: "Ich habe's gerne; alles!" I like it; all of it! The next day a moving van came. They took all our furniture.

We lived in what was then called an open ghetto. But we were not allowed into the main streets, we had curfews, we wore the Star of David.

There was little food. we were hungry. We were always hungry.

People started to disappear. At first, young men and women. They were taken to Germany, to labor camps. This wasn't so bad - families received mail occasionally, we knew where they were. But then, evacuations started. I know now that the word "evacuation" was an euphemism for something that was too terrible to call by its right name. By then we were in a closed ghetto and there was no contact with the outside world. There were rumors about all kinds of terrible things, but how could we believe them? We were still together; our family was still intact.

One day my father came home and told us about a conversation he had with Moniek Merin, the Head of our ghetto. Moniek Merin worked briefly for my father before the war, but during the war, when he became the Head of the ghetto, my father had very little contact with him. That day Merin had told him to come in and offered him the job of a militiaman. The militiamen in our ghetto were responsible for maintaining order, of course, and they were the ones who were also rounding up people for labor camps and evacuations. My father looked at Merin and said to him: "How can you ask me to do this?" "Aaron", said Merin, "if you become a militiaman you will have a better chance to stay on in the ghetto". After all, the evacuations are moving slowly, and there is a war going on. This may end in a month, in three months, in a half a year. The longer you can keep your family together and stay here, the better your chances." I don't know what else Merin told my father. I don't know what Merin knew - he did have contacts with the SS-men, and there were so many rumors... But my father was a very traditional and a very believing man, and Merin knew that. He finally became exasperate - I guess he wanted to help my

father, he liked him - and he said, "Look Aaron, there are horrible things going on, and if you won't do it someone else will, and I won't have to spend time pleading with others, And for heaven's sake, it's your God who is watching it and is not lifting a finger to help, it is your God that is doing it!"

And my father answered, "I don't know who is doing it, but if it is God then I will not be His Malach Hamavet." If it is God, I will not be his angel of death.

Shortly thereafter I was taken away from home and was sent to a labor camp. For a half a year there was contact between our camp and the ghetto. During that time I found out that my younger sister was also sent to a labor camp. And then the labor camp was changed to a satellite of the Gross Rosen concentration camp, and mail from the ghetto stopped coming. It was at this time, I found out later, that our ghetto was liquidated...

We worked in a flax processing plant. The Nazis used us to replace the German workers who were sent to the front. We worked 12 hours a day, one week on a day shift, one on a night shift.

One day, a particularly cold winter day, I was working the night shift. We started working at six in the afternoon and at midnight we had a short break and got our soup. The soup was ladled out of a pot in which it came from the camp by the girl who was in charge. Her name was Salka, and she was lovely. She studied music in Italy before the war and she had a beautiful voice, a sweet soprano. Often, after we got our soup we would all sit around her, huddled together to keep warm. Sometimes we would be quiet, sometimes we would talk, sometimes Salka would sing. That night we sat very close to each other. And then Salka started to sing. She sang Schubert's Serenade. She sang it so beautifully, with so much feeling. We forgot where we were. We were in a different world, a world filled with flowers and sunshine - it felt so good, so warm to hear her sing...

Suddenly we realized that we were not alone. One of the SS-men was standing very close to where we were sitting. I turned my head ever so slightly and saw that he was looking at Salka with absolute rapture!

Salka stopped singing. It got terribly quiet. A minute or two passed. And then, the SS-man walked over to where Salka was sitting, pulled her up by her hair, shook her, and started to slap her on her face, right, left, right, left, beating her, shouting, screaming "You have no right to sing like this, you have no right to look like this, you filthy, dirty Jew!"

In 1944, late in November, we were evacuated from Graeben. Rumors had it that the Russians were near the border. We walked for days, and then were put into cattle trains. I don't know how long we were on those cattle trains.

We ended up in Bergen-Belsen. Bergen-Belsen was a death camp. There were no gas chambers,

they were not needed. There was filth and lice, hunger and typhus.

We were packed in a barrack. There was only straw on the floor. We sat with our legs bent so that our knees touched our chins, because there was so little room. But this didn't last long. After only a few days there was room. Some of us started to die. We had to carry dead bodies and throw them on a big pile of bodies next to the oven. I never looked at the faces...

Frieda Ringler was my camp sister. We met in Graeben. She was Czech. We were very close and we shared everything we had. Sometimes one of us would get an extra bowl of soup. If the other wasn't there we would very carefully mark the half-level in the bowl, to leave for the other. I remember I'd eat my portion, eating slower and slower as I was getting closer and closer to Frieda's half. It was so difficult. I never gave Frieda one spoonful of my half. But I never gave her one less than what was coming to her.

A few days after we came to Bergen Belsen a young woman came to our barrack looking for Tilla Ringler. Tilla Ringler was Frieda's older sister. She had left home with a Zionist group trying to get to Palestine, and Frieda didn't know what happened to her. We later found out she ended up in Auschwitz.

The young woman who was looking for Tilla had survived Auschwitz. She was saved from the gas chambers by Frieda's sister, and she remembered it. Now she belonged to the lucky ones in Bergen Belsen. She had a job, she had a bunk, she was dressed, she had more food. Frieda approached her and said: "I am Tilla's younger sister. what do you know about Tilla?" The woman took one look at Frieda and said "My God, you look exactly like Tilla, you sound like her! I owe Tilla my life, so I am going to try to save yours. I am going to take you out of here right now!"

Frieda turned towards me and said "You have to take Bella, too. We are like sisters. I cannot go without her." The woman looked at me and at Frieda - she was hardened by now, there was nothing soft about her - and said sharply: "I will take you, you alone. Your friend means nothing to me. Either you come alone or you can die together with her." Frieda just stood there. I told Frieda to go. I said "You cannot help me by staying here with me. If you go maybe you will be able to help me, so please go and save yourself."

Frieda became a "runner" in the hospital that was a part of the "working camp." It wasn't easy to come to see me, but she tried. Sometimes she brought me some bread, some potatoes.

I was covered with lice. Every morning I would shake out my clothes, but a few hours later I was covered with them again. I was a walking skeleton. I had typhus, then typhoid. I don't know how I kept going...

One day Frieda came to see me. She managed to get me into a working barrack. I got a bunk

which I shared with another girl. But it was too late for me. Actually, I managed to work a week or so - that meant a soup a day, regularly - but then I got sick again. This time it was paratyphoid.

These were the last days of the war. The Germans knew it. Whatever food there was in the camp, they now withheld. There was no food, no water. I was too sick to know and to care. Most of the time I was feverish and unconscious...

One night Frieda came. She didn't see me for over a week and she knew something was wrong. It wasn't safe anymore to cross from one part of the camp to another - the SS-men were roaming around inside the camp and shooting. Frieda knew that it wasn't safe but she felt that she must come, she sensed, she told me later, that something was wrong.

She brought me water. She kept giving me water and she kept washing my face. She sat with me all night. That morning the British came into Bergen Belsen. We were liberated.

After the war I had a Din Torah with God. I couldn't forgive Him for the Shoah. I didn't want to have anything to do with God. I no longer had faith, I no longer had religion. I even contemplated giving up being Jewish, but I couldn't do it. I couldn't hand Hitler that kind of a victory.

Time passed. In 1959 I went to Israel for the first time. I went to the Galil, to the Kibbutzim. I saw ancient Safed. I walked the streets of Jerusalem. I walked into a synagogue.

Later, when I came back from Israel, I decided to study Torah, to study Hebrew. I needed to know what made my father - I loved my father very much - into the kind of person who didn't want to become God's Angel of Death, even if that would save him and his family. What made me not to cheat on Frieda when I was so hungry and so tempted. What made so many of us behave humanly when we were stripped of all that was human.

I read what our Rabbis taught through the many centuries. I read what our modern scholars wrote. I read Jewish history, Jewish philosophy.

I didn't look for answers or explanations for the Holocaust. I knew that these cannot be found.

But I found an answer for me about God and Auschwitz. For me the answer is that God was not in Auschwitz, and God didn't create Auschwitz.

Long ago God told us what was wrong and what was right. Long ago God gave us the freedom to do good or to do evil. Long ago God gave us the freedom to choose to respect life, to love life, or to destroy life. The Nazis chose to murder innocent men, women, and children. The Nazis tried

to destroy us, and our God. We were helpless, and perhaps God was helpless, too, and cried with us.

I gave this talk in 1986 in WTC. Belke Tovey



Henry & Bella Tovey
1004 S. Belgrade Road
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March 28, 2000

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Tovey,

Thanks for sending me the speeches you gave at the Washington Hebrew Congregation: They were splendid because of the detail in which you described what happened to you. As I read them I could feel some of your pain, agony and fear.

Three times Henry said he was liberated but he didn't know it. Then he explained in one sentence that he was a greenish living skeleton. It was a powerful literary symbol.

Bella's paper began with a Holocaust denier, which made her determined to fight "these deliberate lies". (The recent trial in London involving a Holocaust denier will end with a judgement on April 12.) And Bella's search for God's relationship to the Shoah was so honest, so touching, as were the examples of her relationship to her father and to Freida, which were enough to bring tears.

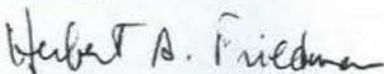
Many books have been written about the Holocaust by great scholars; many museums have been erected; many conferences have been convened, the latest in Sweden. There is great awareness in the world about Hitler's war to eradicate the Jewish people.

But all this activity becomes real only when one student, one teenager, one person reads the story of what happened to another one, a victim.

Your story will make it easier for us to communicate the horror and the lessons to the next generation. The slogan "Never Again" is abstract; your personal experience is concrete.

Thank you again for responding in your own words.

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

March 5, 2000

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

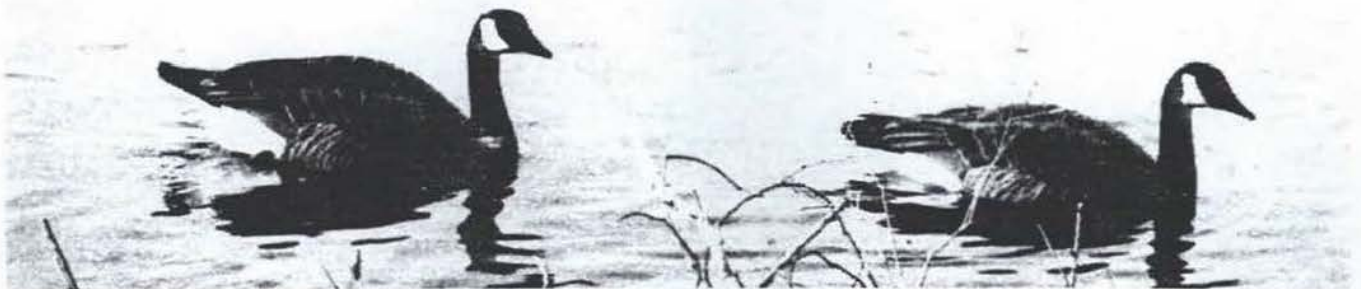
This is in response to your letter of February 25th. I am glad you found the conference so meaningful, and I want to say that your own contribution was very moving.

I am sending you two papers. One is a talk I gave at our Temple, The Washington Hebrew Congregation. The other is a talk my husband, Henry, gave at our Temple, in 1995 at the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II.

I hope that you will find it informative

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He never talked about what happened during the week. All we knew was that we were lucky that he came back, because some men didn't come back. But we thought - or so I was told by my parents - that this is what happens when a country is occupied. They try to put the fear of God into the hearts of the general population. Many non-Jews were also taken away. Some never came back. And of course, we knew that the Jewish people were singled out for special treatment - only we didn't know what treatment....

It was so gradual. They put a German overseer into our factory, and my father worked there. That was helpful, we got ration cards.

One day someone knocked on our front door. A woman, and two SS-men. They walked through our apartment. She turned to the SS-men and said: "Ich habe's gerne; alles!" I like it; all of it! The next day a moving van came. They took all our furniture.

We lived in what was then called an open ghetto. But we were not allowed into the main streets, we had curfews, we wore the Star of David.

There was little food. we were hungry. We were always hungry.

People started to disappear. At first, young men and women. They were taken to Germany, to labor camps. This wasn't so bad - families received mail occasionally, we knew where they were. But then, evacuations started. I know now that the word "evacuation" was an euphemism for something that was too terrible to call by its right name. By then we were in a closed ghetto and there was no contact with the outside world. There were rumors about all kinds of terrible things, but how could we believe them? We were still together; our family was still intact.

One day my father came home and told us about a conversation he had with Moniek Merin, the Head of our ghetto. Moniek Merin worked briefly for my father before the war, but during the war, when he became the Head of the ghetto, my father had very little contact with him. That day Merin had told him to come in and offered him the job of a militiaman. The militiamen in our ghetto were responsible for maintaining order, of course, and they were the ones who were also rounding up people for labor camps and evacuations. My father looked at Merin and said to him: "How can you ask me to do this?" "Aaron", said Merin, "if you become a militiaman you will have a better chance to stay on in the ghetto". After all, the evacuations are moving slowly, and there is a war going on. This may end in a month, in three months, in a half a year. The longer you can keep your family together and stay here, the better your chances." I don't know what else Merin told my father. I don't know what Merin knew - he did have contacts with the SS-men, and there were so many rumors... But my father was a very traditional and a very believing man, and Merin knew that. He finally became exasperate - I guess he wanted to help my

father, he liked him - and he said, "Look Aaron, there are horrible things going on, and if you won't do it someone else will, and I won't have to spend time pleading with others, And for heaven's sake, it's your God who is watching it and is not lifting a finger to help, it is your God that is doing it!"

And my father answered, "I don't know who is doing it, but if it is God then I will not be His Malach Hamavet." If it is God, I will not be his angel of death.

Shortly thereafter I was taken away from home and was sent to a labor camp. For a half a year there was contact between our camp and the ghetto. During that time I found out that my younger sister was also sent to a labor camp. And then the labor camp was changed to a satellite of the Gross Rosen concentration camp, and mail from the ghetto stopped coming. It was at this time, I found out later, that our ghetto was liquidated...

We worked in a flax processing plant. The Nazis used us to replace the German workers who were sent to the front. We worked 12 hours a day, one week on a day shift, one on a night shift.

One day, a particularly cold winter day, I was working the night shift. We started working at six in the afternoon and at midnight we had a short break and got our soup. The soup was ladled out of a pot in which it came from the camp by the girl who was in charge. Her name was Salka, and she was lovely. She studied music in Italy before the war and she had a beautiful voice, a sweet soprano. Often, after we got our soup we would all sit around her, huddled together to keep warm. Sometimes we would be quiet, sometimes we would talk, sometimes Salka would sing. That night we sat very close to each other. And then Salka started to sing. She sang Schubert's Serenade. She sang it so beautifully, with so much feeling. We forgot where we were. We were in a different world, a world filled with flowers and sunshine - it felt so good, so warm to hear her sing...

Suddenly we realized that we were not alone. One of the SS-men was standing very close to where we were sitting. I turned my head ever so slightly and saw that he was looking at Salka with absolute rapture!

Salka stopped singing. It got terribly quiet. A minute or two passed. And then, the SS-man walked over to where Salka was sitting, pulled her up by her hair, shook her, and started to slap her on her face, right, left, right, left, beating her, shouting, screaming "You have no right to sing like this, you have no right to look like this, you filthy, dirty Jew!"

In 1944, late in November, we were evacuated from Graeben. Rumors had it that the Russians were near the border. We walked for days, and then were put into cattle trains. I don't know how long we were on those cattle trains.

We ended up in Bergen-Belsen. Bergen-Belsen was a death camp. There were no gas chambers,

they were not needed. There was filth and lice, hunger and typhus.

We were packed in a barrack. There was only straw on the floor. We sat with our legs bent so that our knees touched our chins, because there was so little room. But this didn't last long. After only a few days there was room. Some of us started to die. We had to carry dead bodies and throw them on a big pile of bodies next to the oven. I never looked at the faces...

Frieda Ringler was my camp sister. We met in Graeben. She was Czech. We were very close and we shared everything we had. Sometimes one of us would get an extra bowl of soup. If the other wasn't there we would very carefully mark the half-level in the bowl, to leave for the other. I remember I'd eat my portion, eating slower and slower as I was getting closer and closer to Frieda's half. It was so difficult. I never gave Frieda one spoonful of my half. But I never gave her one less than what was coming to her.

A few days after we came to Bergen Belsen a young woman came to our barrack looking for Tilla Ringler. Tilla Ringler was Frieda's older sister. She had left home with a Zionist group trying to get to Palestine, and Frieda didn't know what happened to her. We later found out she ended up in Auschwitz.

The young woman who was looking for Tilla had survived Auschwitz. She was saved from the gas chambers by Frieda's sister, and she remembered it. Now she belonged to the lucky ones in Bergen Belsen. She had a job, she had a bunk, she was dressed, she had more food. Frieda approached her and said: "I am Tilla's younger sister. what do you know about Tilla?" The woman took one look at Frieda and said "My God, you look exactly like Tilla, you sound like her! I owe Tilla my life, so I am going to try to save yours. I am going to take you out of here right now!"

Frieda turned towards me and said "You have to take Bella, too. We are like sisters. I cannot go without her." The woman looked at me and at Frieda - she was hardened by now, there was nothing soft about her - and said sharply: "I will take you, you alone. Your friend means nothing to me. Either you come alone or you can die together with her." Frieda just stood there. I told Frieda to go. I said "You cannot help me by staying here with me. If you go maybe you will be able to help me, so please go and save yourself."

Frieda became a "runner" in the hospital that was a part of the "working camp." It wasn't easy to come to see me, but she tried. Sometimes she brought me some bread, some potatoes.

I was covered with lice. Every morning I would shake out my clothes, but a few hours later I was covered with them again. I was a walking skeleton. I had typhus, then typhoid. I don't know how I kept going...

One day Frieda came to see me. She managed to get me into a working barrack. I got a bunk

which I shared with another girl. But it was too late for me. Actually, I managed to work a week or so - that meant a soup a day, regularly - but then I got sick again. This time it was paratyphoid.

These were the last days of the war. The Germans knew it. Whatever food there was in the camp, they now withheld. There was no food, no water. I was too sick to know and to care. Most of the time I was feverish and unconscious...

One night Frieda came. She didn't see me for over a week and she knew something was wrong. It wasn't safe anymore to cross from one part of the camp to another - the SS-men were roaming around inside the camp and shooting. Frieda knew that it wasn't safe but she felt that she must come, she sensed, she told me later, that something was wrong.

She brought me water. She kept giving me water and she kept washing my face. She sat with me all night. That morning the British came into Bergen Belsen. We were liberated.

After the war I had a Din Torah with God. I couldn't forgive Him for the Shoah. I didn't want to have anything to do with God. I no longer had faith, I no longer had religion. I even contemplated giving up being Jewish, but I couldn't do it. I couldn't hand Hitler that kind of a victory.

Time passed. In 1959 I went to Israel for the first time. I went to the Galil, to the Kibbutzim. I saw ancient Safed. I walked the streets of Jerusalem. I walked into a synagogue.

Later, when I came back from Israel, I decided to study Torah, to study Hebrew. I needed to know what made my father - I loved my father very much - into the kind of person who didn't want to become God's Angel of Death, even if that would save him and his family. What made me not to cheat on Frieda when I was so hungry and so tempted. What made so many of us behave humanly when we were stripped of all that was human.

I read what our Rabbis taught through the many centuries. I read what our modern scholars wrote. I read Jewish history, Jewish philosophy.

I didn't look for answers or explanations for the Holocaust. I knew that these cannot be found.

But I found an answer for me about God and Auschwitz. For me the answer is that God was not in Auschwitz, and God didn't create Auschwitz.

Long ago God told us what was wrong and what was right. Long ago God gave us the freedom to do good or to do evil. Long ago God gave us the freedom to choose to respect life, to love life, or to destroy life. The Nazis chose to murder innocent men, women, and children. The Nazis tried

to destroy us, and our God. We were helpless, and perhaps God was helpless, too, and cried with us.

I gave this talk in 1986 in WJC. Belle Tovey



Herbert A. Friedman

The Weiner Heritage Foundation

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Mr. George Oscar Lee
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November 7, 2000

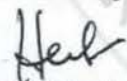
AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Dear George,

Thanks for sending me your manuscript which we will send to Ms. Yudin at the World Jewish Congress.

You sent me a second copy of your book, Goat for Azazel, but it was inscribed to Mr. Steven Spielberg. I have enclosed the book with this letter. Thanks again and take care.

Yours Truly,



Rabbi Herbert Friedman

George Oscar Lee
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Tel.& Fax ; 305-937-6224
E-mail : Siunek@aol.com

Nov.24th,2000

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
The Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Ave.
New York City,N.Y.10022

Dear Rabbi :

Somehow lately we kept missing each other. Simply we lead very busy lives. At the end of W.W.II I thought that I can hang up my "spurs" and live happily ever after. Much did I know than that we Jews have to face obstacles every day . The present situation in Israel bothers me to no end. Some of the articles in the N.Y.Times rise my blood pressure.

Hopefully and this Haman will disappear. To put a bit sunshine enclosed please find my latest book " RUSSIAN SAGA". If you liked "Goat for Azazel" you surely will love "Russian Saga" and who knows maybe you'll want additional copies for your organization. Hope that my letter will find you in the best of health.

Respectfully yours,

GOL:nb
Encl. book-Russian Saga

George Oscar Lee

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Oct.31st,2000

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
The Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Ave.
N.Y.C. N.Y. 10022

Dear Rabbi ;

Thank you so very much for you letter dated Oct.26th and your generous offer. Yes, I have decided to take it and under separate cover I've mailed to your kind attention the following :

- 1). A copy of my manuscript titled " RUSSIAN SAGA" an eyewitness account of my "adventures" during the years of 1941-45. Everything of it is 100% true.I've kept it rather a bit condensed, because sometimes I felt that I could spill an ocean of ink on that tragic period of Jewish history.
- 2). A copy of my book " GOAT FOR AZAZEL " which you are familiar with. May just add that " GOAT" is absolutely historically accurate and characters described were actually people whom I knew and do know to this very day.

I also have written a bunch of short stories some of which were published by "Forward", "Bialystoker Shtime," "Dos Yiddishes Wort"(Poland), "Ziemia Drohobycka" (Poland)both in Polish and Yiddish " Bergen Record"

and just got a note that one of my latest story will be published in Jewish Veteran (J.W.V.) but those plus some of my poems will appear in my next book. However if you think that they may be useful for the "Memoirs Project" I'll be honored to submit them.


By the way my Publisher Xlibris was purchased to some degree by Random House.

Hope my letter will find you in the best of health, sincerely and at the same time fondly,

Encl.

George Oscar Lee



Mr. George Oscar Lee 
2720 N.E. 183 Street
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March 20, 2000

Dear Fire Chief,

Thanks for sending me your story. Specific details, such as you recounted, make an abstract term like "D.P. camp" come alive. Your narrative makes it possible for today's young American Jews to understand what happened 50 years ago. I was a U.S. Army Chaplain who worked in Berlin and Frankfurt, but also spent much time in the Munich area.

We can trade books. I will get yours from Amazon (they are back-ordered; delivery in four weeks) and you can get mine entitled "Roots of the Future". I can see what kind of writer you are from "The Faith" which you enclosed with your letter.

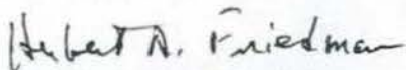
Many books have been written about the Holocaust by great scholars; many museums have been erected; many conferences have been convened, the latest in Sweden; and a trial has recently occurred in London wherein a man has denied there ever was a Holocaust. There is great awareness in the world about Hitler's war to eradicate the Jewish people.

But all this activity becomes real only when one student, one teenager, one person reads the story of what happened to another one, a victim.

Your story will make it easier for us to communicate the horror and the lessons to the next generation. The slogan "Never Again" is abstract; your personal experience is concrete.

Thank you again for responding in your own words.

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

Thanks Rabbi!
for your interest
George

3/3/00

OSCAR THE FIRE CHIEF

Written by :
George Oscar Lee
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305-937-6224

My wife Leah and I were only to glad to participate in the " LIFE REBORN" conference sponsored by U.S.Holocaust Memorial Museum and its SECOND GENERATION ADVISORY GROUP in association with THE AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE in Washington,D.C. during January 14-17th,2000.

The reason was simple enough. Leah spent almost 4 years in D.P.Camp Feldafing,being busy with the freshly organized Jewish Theatre " Amcho",which toured all the D.P.Camps in Bavaria. Having an excellent voice all the major roles including Lealy in Dybbuk were hers.

While in Washington I have met many friends, some I haven't seen in over 50 years. We had ample time to exchange some of our experiences during our stay in D.P.Camp Foehrenwald -U.N.R.R.A.Team #106 near Munich. My friends were curious how did I become the Fire Chief of the camp ? In "vino veritas" but I didn't need the second drink of vodka to tell them how did it all happened :

On Oct.10th,1945 I arrived in Foehrenwald by Wolfratshausen from Deutsches Museum in Munich the transfer point of all Jewish Displaced Persons. With me were my uncle Berlaunt Dora and their children Ala and Manek Einsiedler. After being cooped up in Munich, the one large room for 5 people in Foehrenwald seemed like a palace. The fact that we had to share the bathroom with 2 other families in the same house at Florida Strasse didn't bother me at least. By the way all streets in Foehrenwald were named after the states in U.S.A.

I did arrive in Foehrenwald still wearing my combat boots, my Polish Army pants and my uncle's civilian jacket, that was it .Oh, I almost forgot to mention that I owed a pocket watch. I was 20 years old and all I knew was soldiering. While I barely shaved I was hardened war veteran. The Joint and/or U.N.R.R.A. gave us some toilet articles and some canned food. The very next day I took a walk to get myself acquainted with the camp. There were in the camp still few other nationalities not Jewish. The great majority at that time were Jews, mostly Polish, Hungarian,Rumanian,Lithuanian and Russian. The "linqua franca" of course was Yiddish. My own problem was that while I understood Yiddish I didn't speak it, having been brought up in a Polish speaking family. My parents spoke Yiddish so we the children wouldn't understand. Doesn't that sound familiar even today ? As I was walking on Michigan Strasse I heard "FIRE" "FIRE" which I understood immediately. Smoke was coming out of one of rooms.

A swift kick on the door and I was inside the room. The small fire was caused by an electrical oven.I disconnected the wire and poured some water that I found standing in pail near the oven. That was it.

" Isn't there a fire department in the camp ?" I asked a small crowd of curiosity seekers. " No" I was told." We don't have it ."
Well I said to myself let me than organize one. And without a second to loose I went to the building in center of the camp called " Die Vervaltung" or the " ADMINISTRATION".

(2)

I told the German secretary Helga (that was her name as I found out later) that I wish to speak with "Herr Direktor" because of the fire. Helga the German and English speaking secretary brought me to meet with "Herr Direktor". It was an American ex-G.I. Henry Cohen of U.N.R.R.A.

She told him about me extinguishing the fire. This time Mr.Cohen a fellow maybe 4-5 years my senior asked me in broken Yiddish/German : " Was Du brauchen ?" What do you need ?

I told him that we would need some hoses and other equipment and above all overalls for my crew. " How many men Du brauchen ?" Not knowing how many I told him 8 just about a small squad in the army. " Very good und was is your name ?" " Oscar " I told him.

' We'll pay you a carton of cigarettes a week per man" . " I accept". I couldn't believe my luck. A whole carton of American cigarettes ! That was a fortune on the black market.

" Thank you Herr Direktor, I'll hire 8 men and give you the list with their names."

I walked out of the "Vervaltung's" building holding a carton of Camels the most popular brand. Noticing a group of young men I asked them in Polish if they would like to be firemen. Within minutes I had my men ,6 of whom were Polish Jews, I Chech who understood Polish and one Hungarian who spoke some Chech..

I came back to our "apartment" and announced to my family that I was gainfully employed and gave my aunt the cigarettes.By the end of the day several other young men came to me asking for a job offering me a carton of cigarettes as a bribe.

" Sorry fellows -the jobs are taken but if someone doesn't work out I'll take you in." We found some fire fighting equipment and I started to drill my men,shouting commands in Polish occasionally in Russian if they didn't perform to my liking. We grew in experience and I also started to drill the D.P.Jewish Police. We were issued American Army uniforms and helmets and we looked quite impressive.Small wonder that each time American V.I.P. would show up in the camp we performed like monkeys in a circus. Among those V.I.P's were Fiorello La Guardia, U.N.R.R.A.'s Chief, British Gen.Alexander, wearing a regular British uniform without a single decoration and of course " Ike" Gen.Dwight D.Eisenhower, loved by all.

Herr Direktor Henry Cohen left and was replaced by a former captain Bernard Robbins a no nonsense officer. By that time I had a workable knowledge of English thanks to a German tutors(both female and male) and belonged to a group of D.P.'s who were in the administration of the camp. In addition to our regular duties we supervised the sanitation and guarding the movie theatre.

It was during one of those regular meetings taken place in Mr.Robbins' office when our D.P.Camp Foehrenwald was surrounded by American Military Police and German Local Polizei. It was already second or third time when the German Polizei together with the M.P.'s surrounded our camp looking for "Schwarzhaendlers"- black marketers.

A tough looking southern speaking master sergeant brandishing a 45-caliber pistol was

talking to our Camp Director Mr.Robbins. I couldn't follow his rapid speech, one word kept being

kept repeated over and over again : "Kike" and "Kikes". At that time I wasn't familiar with that expression. I knew words like : " parszywy Zyd" or " yevreyskaya morda" but not "kike" which Mr.Robbins of McCombs Road in the Bronx,N.Y.explained to me later.

Suddenly " our" Mr.Robbins grabbed the sergeant by the collar of his shirt and by the seats of his pants and threw him down the stairs, yelling " you god damn f.....rebel, you are speaking about my people, get f.... out of here. I'm running this outfit and if you do not clear this place I'll be on the phone with Ike."

The sergeant picked himself up walked not so slowly to the parked jeep ,turned around and disappeared on the other side of the main gate. Few minutes later we heard the noise of started engines and a fairly large column of jeeps and trucks moved in the direction of Woftratshausen.

We were never bothered by the M.P.'s again. Mr.Bernard Robbins and I became very good friends. He was most helpful to me and my wife shortly after our arrival in the States in 48. Mr.Robbins whose family was originally Rubinstein died in 1976 of chronic myolitic leukemia just a year after attending the first reunion of Foehrenwalders after 30 years, which I organized.



"THE FAITH"

Recently, during one of those social functions connected with Shoa services and the celebration of the Independence of the State of Israel, I met an interesting young rabbi of Hungarian descent.

If it weren't for his scholarly glasses and a beard, he could have been easily mistaken for a basketball player, because he was well over 6'3" or 6'4" tall. Talking further with him I discovered that the rabbi, just like my own son, was an attorney at law and a PhD (philosophy) to boot.

The rabbi wanted to know if I was ever in a concentration camp? "Luckily for me rabbi I wasn't, however, I had the honor to serve with the 1st Polish Army a part of the 2nd White-Russian Front." His second question to me was: "Where are you from?" I replied with pride: "From Drohobycz in Galicia." It seems that Jews in general or rabbis in particular like to ask questions, because he asked me a third question:

"Is Drohobycz far from Stanislawow?". Being Jewish myself I answered the question with a question: "Why do you ask rabbi?" "You see, yesterday I officiated at an unusual burial ceremony of a Polish Jew from the town of Stanislawow. He was 84 years old. Nobody should die younger."

"What is so unusual about a man dying at 84? That is a ripe old age, isn't it rabbi?". "What was so unusual was his request to be buried in the same striped, pajama-like suit in which he was liberated, rather than the "tachriem" the traditional burial shrouds of the Orthodox Jews."

"That was a strange request, don't you think so rabbi?"

"Come to think of it, it wasn't so strange after all. Do you have a minute, mister?"

"Yes rabbi, I'm listening. Please do call me George."

"OK George. This Jew from Stanislawow, Abraham Zygielbojm, during the war lost his wife and a three year old son. He however, by some miracle, known only to God, survived four concentration camps and was liberated in Buchenwald. After the war he spent 3 years in a D.P. Camp Feldafing in Bavaria, waiting for his visa to the States. Arriving in New York City with \$8 in his pockets he promptly landed a job as a cutter at a tie factory on 26th Street in Manhattan, owned by Mr. Spiegel also from Stanislawow. Cutting layers and layers of fabrics to get the absolute maximum of ties was very hard work, as I found out much later. He worked in that factory well past his retirement age of 65. If I'm not mistaken, he worked there till he was 70 and that is when he moved to Florida and joined my congregation. I do know for a fact that he never remarried, although many widows were after him. Every free moment he spent in a library or playing chess with the new Russian immigrants, always immaculately dressed and always wearing a neck tie even on the hottest days. Needless to say he has never missed a morning or evening prayer. Working hard all his life and not being a spendthrift, he saved some money which he donated to various Jewish charitable institutions. I don't have to tell you George, George isn't it? How many of those organizations do exist?"

"Didn't he have any relatives at all?" I interrupted the rabbi. "He had a ~~son of his~~ cousin's son, on his mother's side in Israel. But the boy, oh I shouldn't call a captain in the

Israeli Army a boy, was killed during the Yom Kippur War in 73."

"What a pity. So what has happened to Mr. Ztygielbojm?" "Well, all those years that Abe, I used to call him Abe, worked with textiles, must have affected his lungs. What he thought was "just" T.B. was cancer. He was in for a tough time. One day he showed up in my office and gave me a copy of his testament, naming me the executor of his last will. It was all legal drawn by a lawyer, another member of my congregation and duly witnessed. He divided his money to the last "grosz" or should I say cent. The recipients were his "regular" charities including our synagogue, but this time there was also money for Cancer Research and a sum of \$5.000 for his steady cleaning lady turned nurse-practitioner a certain Medallaine LeDuc of Haiti. The most important request in that will was to be buried in his "clean and well pressed" (those were his own words) concentration camp inmate's striped uniform." For the love of God, why do you want to do that?" I asked him over and over again."

"Rebeniu! He always called me Rebeniu in Yiddish. You see I'm going to be in front of the Highest Judge and I've not always obeyed His commandments, I ate non-kosher and did not always behave myself like a good Jew should. So if God, may His name be praised for all the eternity, will throw my sins on one side of the scale, I'll just put my striped uniform on the other scale and who do you think will win, Rebeniu?"

"There isn't a shadow of doubt in my mind, that you Mr. Abraham Zygielbojm will win.

You will go straight to the Garden of Eden, where you'll meet y our wife and son."

"Nu, Rebeniu, you see what I'm try to do? This is my very last chance to be reunited with my Roisele and my Shloimale."

The rabbi stopped talking lost in his thoughts.....and I in mine.

Written by:

George Oscar Lee

2720 N.E. 183rd ST. TH-20

Aventura, FL 33160

I'm also the author of

"GOAT for Azazel"

W.W. II Story

Amazon.com

551 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022
212 355 6115
Fax 212 751 3739

Mr. Leon Shear
2053 Temblethurst Drive
South Euclid, OH 44121-3717

November 9, 2000

Dear Mr. Shear,

Thank you so much for sending us a copy of the letter and story you sent to Ms. Yudin at the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project. This is an important project that will help preserve the testimonies of you and other survivors, so the lessons learned and the people who perished during the Holocaust are never forgotten.

Your story is very inspiring. It is truly amazing that after all that you have been through, four different concentration camps, a ghetto, and an orphanage, you use your experiences to teach others the lessons that can be learned from your life. I think you explained this best at the end of your story, "The only way that evil will triumph again is if good people do nothing. I have vowed never to stand by and let evil triumph again."

For those of us who grew up in the United States and were given every opportunity without any struggle, life sometimes can be easily taken for granted. Through testimonies such as your own and other survivors, we, as Jews, can appreciate what we have, especially here in America, and learn from your experiences to never let something like the Holocaust happen again.

Again, we want to thank you for sharing your story. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to call me, Jamie Goldberg, Rabbi Herbert Friedman's assistant, at 212-355-6115. You may also contact Ms. Yudin at the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at 914-722-1880.

I hope you and your family are having a happy and healthy New Year.

B'Shalom,

Jamie Goldberg

COPY



LEON SHEAR
2053 TEMBLETHURST DRIVE
SOUTH EUCLID, OHIO 44121-3717
(216) 382-6641
November 5, 2000

Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project
c/o World Jewish Congress
Attention: Charlotte Trepman Yudin
501 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Dear Ms. Yudin:

I am a Holocaust survivor. I was a prisoner in four concentration camps. I was given your name by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman to submit my story. I am interested in sharing this with you as I feel that it is extremely important to tell the story.

I have enclosed a brief history of my experience.

Please contact me at the number above if I can offer you additional information.

side
Leon Shear

My History from childhood to liberation to retirement

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After a few days, we were directed to a deportation camp called Feldafink. I spent most of my time asking about where to find my living family. I found an Uncle, my father's brother Shiah Szejer. I was then told about where to find my brother. I found him recuperating from typhoid in a hospital in Saltzheim Germany. My uncle and I heard that our cousins were alive in Sosnowicz, Poland, so my Uncle and I went to Poland to bring my cousins back to Feldafink.

When I returned to Feldafink I decided that I did not want to live in any deportation camp anymore. I left for Staumberg, Germany and found a house and lived there until 1947. I was registered as an orphan and was put on a boat for the United States in 1947. I arrived in Cleveland, Ohio August 3, 1947 and was placed in Bellefaire Orphanage where I lived approximately one year before moving to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

For the past 51 years I have struggled to work hard, raise a family, and provide for them. I started my work in the United States as a apprentice in a tool and dyemaking business in Pittsburgh. I met a wonderful woman and she became my wife August 6, 1950. We have four children, three daughters and one son.

After 17 years of working in the tool and dyemaking business for Blumcraft Company, I started a new trade repairing washers and dryers for a cousin's business in Cleveland, Ohio. I moved my family to Cleveland in 1968, where I have been living all these years. I built a washer and dryer business. I now work with my son who is running a vending machine business. My wife retired after 42 years as a microbiologist and currently volunteers like my mother did. My wife volunteers at the Jewish Old Age home.

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My wife and I spend a lot of our time traveling around the world. We have traveled the United States, Israel, Europe, South America and we are going to China and Japan this summer. When I am not traveling I continue working with my son in the vending machine business.

I will be 72 years old February 15, 1999. I can say that my life has surely been adventurous. Although the enormous sacrifice that my family made with their lives, I can only be grateful and appreciative of the peace, happiness and prosperity that I now have in my life living in the United States.

I spend a great deal of my time, telling my story to students. My greatest emphasis to them is that life is so very short and that they should never take anything for granted. They should appreciate what they have and be gracious and kind to others. My greatest message is that they should not discriminate.

The only way that evil will triumph again is if good people do nothing. I have vowed never to stand by and let evil triumph again.

Mr. Leon Shear *
2053 Temblehurst Road
Cleveland, OH 44121-3717


March 28, 2000

Dear Mr. Shear,

Thank you for sending me your story. It was touching in its honesty and so helpful because it was so personal. As I read it, I could feel some of your pain and agony and fear.

All I can say is that your letter is powerful and inspiring. The fact that you lived almost three full years in Auschwitz, saw your mother and sister disappear into the gas chamber and lost track of your father, should have smashed your morale for good. Instead you ended your letter on a tremendous upbeat note as you instruct young students to be kind and fight evil. Congratulations for your strength.

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

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In 1945, I was on a death march to the mountains. At night we stayed in the woods. On May 3, 1945 all of us prisoners got up in the morning and noticed that there were no Germans surrounding us in the area. The Koppel, head of the prisoners, told us to stay put and that no one should leave the area.

We thought that we would see a German truck and that the Germans would kill us with machine guns. Instead, we saw about 6 green tanks with white stars. We thought at first that these were German tanks. To our surprise, a black man stuck out his head from the hatch of the tank and screamed "America – America" gesturing to himself so that we would understand that he was an American. This was in the city of Wolfrutshausen.

The prisoners started scattering around. The black man using sign language told a few of us to get into his tank and he drove us into the city. He took us into a house where Germans once lived. Using sign language we were told that we would sleep there. They gave us cigarettes, chocolates, crackers and cheeses and made all efforts to make us comfortable.

After a few days, we were directed to a deportation camp called Feldafink. I spent most of my time asking about where to find my living family. I found an Uncle, my father's brother Shiah Szejer. I was then told about where to find my brother. I found him recuperating from typhoid in a hospital in Saltzheim Germany. My uncle and I heard that our cousins were alive in Sosnowiez, Poland, so my Uncle and I went to Poland to bring my cousins back to Feldafink.

When I returned to Feldafink I decided that I did not want to live in any deportation camp anymore. I left for Staumberg, Germany and found a house and lived there until 1947. I was registered as an orphan and was put on a boat for the United States in 1947. I arrived in Cleveland, Ohio August 3, 1947 and was placed in Bellefaire Orphanage where I lived approximately one year before moving to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

For the past 51 years I have struggled to work hard, raise a family, and provide for them. I started my work in the United States as a apprentice in a tool and dyemaking business in Pittsburgh. I met a wonderful woman and she became my wife August 6, 1950. We have four children, three daughters and one son.

After 17 years of working in the tool and dyemaking business for Blumcraft Company, I started a new trade repairing washers and dryers for a cousin's business in Cleveland, Ohio. I moved my family to Cleveland in 1968, where I have been living all these years. I built a washer and dryer business. I now work with my son who is running a vending machine business. My wife retired after 42 years as a microbiologist and currently volunteers like my mother did. My wife volunteers at the Jewish Old Age home.

All of my children are now grown and on their own. I have five grandchildren. Two grandsons, and three granddaughters.

My wife and I spend a lot of our time traveling around the world. We have traveled the United States, Israel, Europe, South America and we are going to China and Japan this summer. When I am not traveling I continue working with my son in the vending machine business.

I will be 72 years old February 15, 1999. I can say that my life has surely been adventurous. Although the enormous sacrifice that my family made with their lives, I can only be grateful and appreciative of the peace, happiness and prosperity that I now have in my life living in the United States.

I spend a great deal of my time, telling my story to students. My greatest emphasis to them is that life is so very short and that they should never take anything for granted. They should appreciate what they have and be gracious and kind to others. My greatest message is that they should not discriminate.

The only way that evil will triumph again is if good people do nothing. I have vowed never to stand by and let evil triumph again.

551 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022
212 355 6115
Fax 212 751 3739

Ms. Luisa Ada Affricano
600 Roosevelt Blvd.
Apt. 411
Falls Church, VA 22044

November 28, 2000

Dear Ms. Affricano,

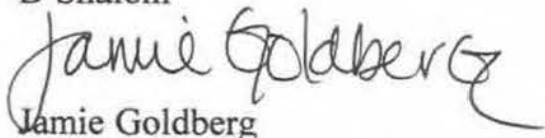
Thank you for responding to our letter about sending your story to the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at the World Jewish Congress. I am writing to you to confirm that we received your letter and we will forward your story to the World Jewish Congress in your name. This is an important project that will help preserve the testimonies of you and other survivors, so the lessons learned and the people who perished during the Holocaust are never forgotten.

Your story is extremely interesting. It is amazing that although the Italians who helped you faced harsh punishments, even death, people still took you and your family into their homes and helped save you. It is reassuring to know that not everyone followed Hitler and the evil ways of the Nazis. Through survivors written testimonies, we will forever have eyewitness accounts of the horrors of the Holocaust and learn from it so nothing like the Holocaust will ever happen again.

In regards to your relatives in Italy, they are welcome to send their stories to the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project. We will contact them with the address of the World Jewish Congress. The project is accepting all testimonies from survivors as long as the testimony is written down.

Again, we want to thank you for sharing your story. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to call me, Jamie Goldberg, Rabbi Herbert Friedman's assistant, at 212-355-6115. You may also contact Ms. Yudin at the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at 914-722-1880.

B'Shalom


Jamie Goldberg

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
551 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

November 14, 2000

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

Thank you for your letter of October 26, 2000. I found it when I came back from Italy last week and I am sorry that my answer is coming so late.

I appreciate your help in submitting to the Publisher my story regarding the Nazi occupation of Rome when I was just a kid and with all my family we had to find a shelter to avoid capture by the SS.

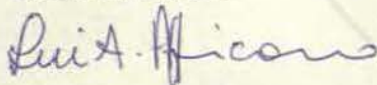
As I probably mentioned to you already I have other relatives in Italy who could submit their personal recollections and should they be interested in submitting their stories too, would it be acceptable to include them in the Italian language, or should all the documents be in English? They are already listed in the Survivors Registry of the Holocaust Memorial Museum and Virginia Gattegno is a survivor of Auschwitz.

Please, let me know if you think that I contact them, or you want once again to "take the trouble" to contact them directly.

Thank you very much again for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely yours,

Luisa Ada Affricano



Here are their addresses:

Virginia Gattegno
Via Andrea Calmo, 20
Venezia - Lido Italy

Paola Corcos
Via Rodriguez Pereira
00195 Roma Italy

Ms. Luisa Ada Affricano
600 Roosevelt Blvd.
Apt. # 411
Falls Church, VA 22044


March 28, 2000

Dear Ms. Affricano,

Thank you for sending me your story. It was touching in its honesty and so helpful because it was so personal. As I read it, I could feel some of your pain and agony and fear.

Your story was unusual in that it describes a Nazi occupation of another country. Your frantic efforts to avoid capture by the SS; the willingness of Catholic friends to hide you; the carpenter who took you in - and how all this felt to an eight-year-old girl, with an ever younger sister. The nightmare ended with the American liberation of Rome. The article you enclosed with your letter was very strong and clear.

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

March 8, 2000

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

Thank you for your recent letter of February 25. As you say it was really a very emotional experience to attend the Life Reborn conference in Washington and it was very meaningful for me to participate. I was particularly touched by Elie Wiesel talk and once again I felt encouraged to talk about my recollection of the war time.

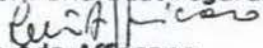
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After the war we could go right back to our home in Rome and I consider myself very lucky of course, since I know of many relatives and friends who did not come back. It goes without saying how hard and difficult it was to go back to a normal life, but we made it!!! For some years we did not even want to talk about it and I can understand now the reasons why. My family did not have to go through a DP's camp and I do not remember of any close relative that had that experience. Two nieces of my paternal grandmother, Ada Luzzatto, who arrived to Rome from Auschwitz where their mother, two young brothers and grandmother were killed, could count on the family's support to get back on their feet and "be reborn". Being then very young, and in reasonably good health, they made a miracle, and have had a rather normal life although, now, in their late seventies, are facing more difficult problems that are certainly connected with the horror of the lager, and this is a taboo topic which we do not want to discuss when I visit the one living in Venice, Italy.

I am enclosing a copy of the above mentioned article which I think you might be interested in reading.

In closing I would like to mention the 1998 Oscar prized Italian movie "Life is beautiful" which I assume you have seen and which has once again struck a very vivid chord of my personal experience.

Shalom and best regards.


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The German Occupation of Rome: A Childhood Remembrance

By LUISA AFFRICANO BORGIOTTI

"That fateful October 16th!" With this grave phrase, my grandmother always remembered the day in 1943 when we abandoned our home in Rome and frantically looked for a hiding place where we hoped the German police wouldn't find us.

In September of that same year, Mussolini's Fascist government had fallen, Italy had withdrawn from the war, and the Nazis with their dreaded SS troops had occupied Rome.

Our situation was further complicated by the fact that my father was out of the country. In 1938, he had gone to North Africa to work for a large Italian firm. Soon after, the British captured the plant and he was taken prisoner. We hadn't heard from him in five years.

My mother carried on as best she could, taking care of her two little daughters and her 73-year-old mother in a city that had become a German stronghold.

Now, nearly fifty years later, I still remember the help that came to us from compassionate Catholic friends and acquaintances who, unlike us, did not find themselves in danger of being deported and sent to concentration camps reserved for Jews.

Those to whom we owe perhaps our very lives and who, without a moment's hesitation, gave us all the help they could, those generous people today are no longer here, but I will never forget them, nor will my gratitude ever fade.

Our ordeal began that October day at dawn when our concierge knocked on our apartment door. During the night an uncle, my father's brother, had been arrested by the SS, she said. The Nazis were rounding up all the Jews in Rome.

Trying to keep as calm as possible under the circumstances, my mother took me and my little sister, Marta, up to the apartment of our tenants, Dr. Garzilli and his wife. As soon as they agreed to hide Marta and me, my mother kissed us and was gone.

The doctor and his wife instructed us to call them "Uncle Claudio" and "Aunt Fernanda" to hide our true identities. They overwhelmed us with kindness and did everything in their power to attenuate our incredible trauma at being suddenly separated from our mother for the first time in our lives.

Nevertheless, I cannot help feeling profoundly sad when I think of those uncertain days in which we knew nothing about our mother and grandmother. At times, I used to cry, hoping that no one would see me. I was eight years old, but Marta was only six. I felt responsible for consoling my little sister, who cried more openly because she missed our mother.

After getting us settled, our mother and grandmother immediately

left the apartment to look for a hiding place. They were taken in for a few days by a carpenter who had recently done some work for us. He lived on the outskirts of Rome in a small apartment with his wife and two children.

This was a very disturbing experience for the two women who came to find themselves in surroundings completely different from what they were used to and where, despite the fact that they felt relatively safe, they lacked every comfort and privacy.

But years later, they continued to feel grateful to that carpenter who had not hesitated to open his humble home to hide two Jewish women even though he ran the risk of

being discovered and even punished for this act of generosity that showed his opposition to the Germans.

After two weeks, my mother came for us. We spent the next eight months hiding in convents, or with relatives who were married to Catholics and were protected by law from persecution.

Our experience was like those of thousands of Jews in Rome, who were forced into hiding until June 1944 when Rome was liberated by the Americans.

October 16, 1943 has passed into history as the day the Germans began deporting the Jews of Rome. Many never made the journey back. Is it hard to understand why some of us were saved and others were not?

In his last work, the late Italian writer Primo Levi, himself a survivor of Auschwitz, offers an explanation. He says the Jews who survived must always remind the world about the Holocaust because if we forget that Auschwitz existed, it would be easier to build a second Auschwitz. "And," writes Levi, "nothing assures us that this time, it would devour only Jews...." □

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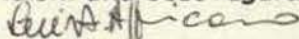
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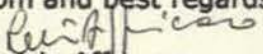
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Ms. Alice Wolk ✓
143 Hampton Circle
Jupiter, FL 33458

March 28, 2000

Dear Ms. Wolk,

Thank you for sending me your story. It was touching in its honesty and so helpful because it was so personal. As I read it, I could feel some of your pain and agony and fear.

Many books have been written about the Holocaust by great scholars; many museums have been erected; many conferences have been convened, the latest in Sweden; and a trial has recently occurred in London wherein a man has denied there ever was a Holocaust. There is great awareness in the world about Hitler's war to eradicate the Jewish people.

But all this activity becomes real only when one student, one teenager, one person reads the story of what happened to another one, a victim.

Your family was fortunate to have the help of Raoul Wallenberg, the Catholic Convent, and finally liberation by the Russian Army. Yes - I knew Chaplain Herman Dicker, and was delighted to learn that he married you. Your story had a happy ending.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert A. Friedman

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

March 16, 2000

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

First of all let me Thank You for your fascinating story of your efforts in developing and greatly improving the lives of the survivors of the Holocaust or the DP's as we were called at that time. Perhaps you recall when I approached you to find out about Rabbi Herman Dicker, who was a U.S. Army Chaplain serving with the 5th Army unit in Munich. In 1948 October my Brooklyn born husband and I were married by him and happy to say we're still married. Unfortunately I've learned soon after the Conference, that the Rabbi has past away in New York last summer.

My story of survival may not be as graphic as of some of my fellow campers, but never the less it was a very painful experience, which can not be erased from my memory.

In 1944 on a brisk Sunday morning in March the German Army marched in to Budapest, Hungary, without a single bullet being fired in protest. I was not yet 15 years old. Almost immediately we were ordered to wear the yellow star of David, our movements were curtailed, people were randomly picked up by the Gestapo and never seen again. Your neighbors some of your gentile friends suddenly did not wish to know you. In June of 1944 all Jews were to be consolidated to a designated "Jewish House", we a family of 5 walked out of our apartment with just one small bag of clothes and personal items, we shared a six room apartment with 20 people, where one kitchen and one bath was ours to organize a schedule to everyone's satisfaction.

By November this overcrowding was reduced, with the daily raids by the Hungarian Arrow Cross guards accompanied by some SS men. First they took the men, my father and 24 yr old brother were taken to a labor camp outside Budapest. The four story building was half empty only older women and children under 18 were left. My mother's main concern was to hide my 17yr old sister and me before the next raid, but some of our gentile friends were afraid or only could offer one night stay. By some good fortune my mother was advised to see a man at the Swedish Embassy, after many hours of waiting among dozens of desperate people begging for help, she was given an address to a Catholic Convent and urged to take us there. Years later we learned the man my mother spoke with and gave us a safe haven was Raoul Wallenberg. Just before the siege of Budapest begun my father and brother managed to escape and contacted us at the convent, however my father was picked up and taken to the Getto in Budapest, but survived. My brother was hiding out at the Jesuit Seminary accross from our Convent along with 14 other jewish men. The Convent called St Anna hid 47 jewish women.

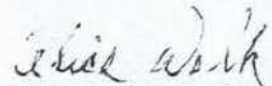
On January 17th 1945 the Russian Army headed by Marshall Zhukov liberated us.

After our lives normalized a little, my brother sister and I felt there isn't much future for us in a Communist Regime and decided to go to Vienna with some friends who were returning from Concentration camps to find they were the sole survivors of their families.

And so our DP life began, eventually we all entered the United States. My parents are gone for many years, but there isn't a day that I don't Thank the Lord for how fortunate we were and that He spared us the Horrors some of our family and friends had to live through.

Rabbi Friedman, again I Thank You for a most enjoyable speech and your sincere interest in our lives.

Best Wishes, Sincerely



Alice (nee Pollak) Wolk
143 Hampton Circle
Jupiter, FL 33458



March 16, 2000

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

First of all let me Thank You for your fascinating story of your efforts in developing and greatly improving the lives of the survivors of the Holocaust or the DP's as we were called at that time. Perhaps you recall when I approached you to find out about Rabbi Herman Dicker, who was a U.S. Army Chaplain serving with the 5th Army unit in Munich. In 1948 October my Brooklyn born husband and I were married by him and happy to say we're still married. Unfortunately I've learned soon after the Conference, that the Rabbi has past away in New York last summer.

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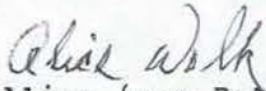
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Best Wishes, Sincerely



Alice (nee Pollak) Wolk
143 Hampton Circle
Jupiter, FL 33458



Michael Gleiberman ✓
1367 Country Club Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601

March 28, 2000

Dear Mr. Gleiberman,

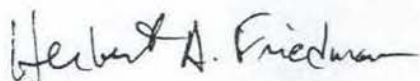
Thank you for sending me your story. It was touching in its honesty and so helpful because it was so personal. As I read it, I could feel some of your pain and agony and fear.

As you started to tell about the "clandestine journey" from Stettin to Berlin led by "two young Polish men", you said "I am assuming they were in the service of Aliyah Bet". Yes - they certainly were. As a matter of fact, whether you know it or not, the Haganah which was in command of Aliyah Bet, started its work in the far eastern Russian provinces of Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, where your family came from. The Aliyah Bet moved hundreds of thousands of survivors across Europe from east to west. The goal was to get into the American zone of Germany. I was a captain (Chaplain) in the American Army, secretly recruited in the Haganah, stationed in Berlin. You came from Stettin by train, but most people came by truck. Every night six trucks left for Stettin from my house in Berlin. We did not meet because I was transferred from Berlin to Frankfurt in July 1946. If you have another Berlin reunion in Lancaster, please let me know.

Your story will make it easier for us to communicate the horror and the lessons to the next generation. The slogan "Never Again" is abstract; your personal experience is concrete.

Thank you again for responding in your own words.

Sincerely yours,



Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

1367 Country Club Drive
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17601
March 15, 2000

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
The Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Avenue – 9th Floor
New York, NY 10022

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

I did not have an opportunity to say hello at the Conference in Washington, so my greetings are coming to you via the U.S. mail.

I was in Berlin – Schlachtensee – from September 1946 till the camp was relocated to West Germany...I believe in 1948. After the camp closed, I stayed in Berlin and continued my studies at the Technical University in Berlin – Charlottenburg. I left Berlin in March '51 and came to the United States and settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

My journey to Berlin in '46 started in Stettin where my family – parents (Z'L), two sisters and a brother arrived from Kazakhstan around June, 1946. I enrolled in a Kibutz and spent my four month in Stettin in one of the Stettin suburbs where the "Kibutz" was located.

Finally, it was my turn to go to Berlin and my older sister, Hinda, joined me on this clandestine journey...led by two young Polish men.

I am assuming they were in the service of Aliyah Bet. We met them at a railway station in Stettin and they escorted the group (about 14 or so) to an empty freight car. We all climbed in and closed the door and waited for the train to move. After some waiting, it moved...made some stops...we were told to keep quiet at every stop. Eventually, it stopped and we sat quietly waiting for it to move again; but the waiting turned into a much longer waiting period. Finally, the "guides" cracked the door open...looked outside...discovered the locomotive was gone. They got out of the car, surveyed the area and told us we are within walking distance to the Potsdam S-Bahn Station. They gave everyone a mark or two to buy tickets and told us not to talk to anyone. We left in twos and threes, walked to the station with our "peklach" (bundles). I asked for a ticket to Schlachtensee and waited for a train to arrive. The station was crawling with Russian soldiers and machine pistols (with the round magazines) hanging over their shoulders. We were especially cautioned not to talk Russian to any of the Russian patrols. The train arrived and we boarded. At this point, I was only with my sister. The others were all separated. We boarded the train and reached a major hub in the S-Bahn system. I think it was Charlottenborg. I asked for directions for the train to Schlachtensee. We managed to find it and we were on our way to our "new home". We had absolutely no idea what to expect...what we'll find...where we'll sleep...But we were hopeful everything will turn out o.k. As I jot down these memories, I have a clear picture of arriving (walking from the station with the bundles) at the gate of the camp. I

am not certain if there was an M.P. at the gate or only a camp policeman or two. We were ushered into an office on the left of the gate. We registered with our name, age, etc. and were assigned a room. The building was right across from the police building...the first on the right as you go into the camp. It was a rather small room on the second floor. It had one bed and two army cots. One of the cots would be folded during the day so there was some room to move around. There were four of us sharing this room...my sister Hinda, myself, a Mr. Shusheim and his young daughter.

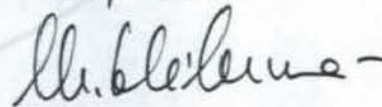
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You know camp life so it is no use repeating it. I am assuming Rabbi, that you may have already left by September '46. I only recall Rabbi Abramowitz, who succeeded you. I volunteered to teach math in the Hebrew school that was formed (not sure if it already existed before September '46). In any event, I was the math teacher...teaching kids in Hebrew who knew no Hebrew and no math. To this day, I ask myself how I managed. My Hebrew was more than rusty. I did attend a gymnasium Tarbut before the war broke out and I had graduated from a Russian High School and had one year of a Russian Teacher's College. With no textbooks, no common language, and students that were as old as their teacher (in some instances), it was a struggle. I must admit I cherish the experience. Some of my x-students went on to graduate high school and college and built productive and successful lives.

I started out just to write a few words, but if I don't stop; it could go on for many more pages.

In the past, we had several Berlin Reunions at my hotel in Lancaster and maybe we'll organize another one in the near future. Of course, we'll extend an invitation to you. So for now,

Shalom, L'Hitraot,



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Fx.: 303-444-4932
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Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
The Wexner Heritage Foundation
New York, NY 10022

551 Madison Avenue, 9th floor

2 April 2000

Dear Rabbi Friedman!

It was most kind of you to help me during our phone conversations. The attachments here are for your information about me and definitely should have been sent before... I became overbusy. Sorry!

With sincere gratitude



TED

SEEN

Holocaust memories renewed

On the day Pope John Paul II visited Yad Vashem, Israel's main memorial to the Holocaust, a Denver hotel ballroom was filled with men and women who had come to honor four people dedicated to making

sure the atrocities of the World War II Nazi death camps in Europe will never be forgotten.

Remembrance & Hope, a dinner benefiting the Holocaust Awareness Institute at the University of Denver's Center for Judaic



Joanne Davidson

Studies, paid tribute to Emil and Freda Gold; Rabbi Stanley Wagner; Fanny Starr and the memory of her late husband, Zesa Starr, for the time they have devoted to honoring the memory of those who perished and to keeping alive the vow "never again."

Brothers Emil Gold and Zesa Starr, natives of Poland, were interned at several camps, including Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, where they were liberated by the British in 1945. It was at Bergen-Belsen that Starr met and fell in love with Fanny; they were married in January 1946 and settled in Denver in 1958. It was here they raised their three children — Hilda, Morris and Helen — and took their story of horror and survival to schoolchildren throughout the state. Zesa died in December, shortly before Jeff, one of his two grandsons, was married.

After his liberation, Emil Gold fought in the Israeli army during the War of Independence, and in 1951 came to the United States with his wife, Giza, and their daughters Rikki, Victoria and Mary. After Giza's death in the 1980s, Gold became reacquainted with Freda, a longtime family friend. They were married nine years ago, and now devote much of their time to educating the community about the Holocaust.

Photographs of many of the Holocaust survivors who live in Colorado were projected on a screen during dinner; the framed originals were displayed in the Downtown Hvatt Regency's Imperial Ball-



Special to The Denver Post: David Zakbowski

L'Chaim: Boulder resident Walter Plywaski, who survived Auschwitz, and his daughter, Halka, offer a toast to life.

for Judaic Studies and the Mizel Museum of Judaica, was rabbi of BMH Congregation for 23 years and was the first and only rabbi to serve as chaplain of the Colorado State Senate. He came to Denver in 1972 after serving two years as national executive vice president of the Religious Zionists of America. His son-in-law, Rabbi Yaakov Meyer, delivered the evening's invocation.

The dinner's success can be attributed to the popularity of the honorees, and to the hard work of a leadership team made up of chairpersons Freda Miklin, Dr. Jerry S. Miklin and Dr. William Silvers, and coordinators Sharon Fireman and Leland Huttner.

"Leland doesn't leave a single stone unturned," observed Lee Kay, one of five honorary chairmen. "I'm surprised his friends are still talking to him."

The dinner, in fact, was oversold, and check-in volunteers Estelle Klubock and Sandra Arkin were kept busy dispensing table assignments to folks like Gov. Bill Owens; E. James Judd, chairman of

the Center for Judaic Studies board; and Holocaust Awareness Institute chairmen Jay Moskowitz and David Zapiller. Zapiller and his wife, Joan, had as their guests North High School Principal Joe Sandoval and his wife, Chris. Former dinner chairwoman Nellie Mae Duman and her husband, Louis, discovered they share a happy occasion with Rabbi Daniel Goldberger and his wife, Ida: Both couples have been married 53 years, and the Goldbergers were celebrating their anniversary by attending Remembrance & Hope.

Other guests included Regis University President Father John Sheeran; Burt and Estelle Gottsfeld; Henry Lowenstein; James and Joy Hoffman; Dr. Ray Gottesfeld; Bob and Toni Binstock; Sandy Vinnik; Jack and Joanie Hartman; and Anti-Defamation League Director Saul Rosenthal.

Denver Post Society Editor Joanne Davidson's column appears every day except Saturdays. E-mail her at jmdpost@aol.com.

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FAMILY TREE 3-15-99.doc

Maks Plywacki's parents:
names & b.dates unkn.

PLYWACKI CHILDREN

Maksymilian Jozef, b. 10/10/1893 near Krakow, Poland. Beaten to death in Riederloh KZ ~1/3/45. First an anarchist & then socialist working with Jozef Pilsudski on the "Robotnik" (The Worker) anti-Tzarist underground newspaper on Zachodnia St. in Lodz. Joined the Legion after Pilsudski's return from Siberian exile via Kamchatka, Japan & USA. Polish cavalry reserve officer.

Adam: coal broker to Lodz textile factories. Common law catholic wife Jadwiga (Jadzia) who once/week ferried him "German store" food from Lodz to Warsaw Nov/39Mar/40 (got "German store" privilege by sleeping with a Völkische (Polish ethnic German). Adam, best-dressed man of Lodz & my best uncle hanged himself in a Warsaw hallway on ~3/15/1941.

Felicja (mrrd. Fajertag): b. d. unkn.; widow in '39. Worked with, or over, Rumkowski in Jewish orphanages prior to WW2. Ran ghetto orphanage till end of '43 when its orphans were shipped to Auschwitz for murder. Source of "protection" for Maks & high position for Stanislaw Jakobson. Gassed in Auschwitz-II ~Aug 1944.

Adolf: owned a hand-soap & cosmetics factory "Viola". Wife's name & children unkn. Died in Warsaw ghetto or murdered in on of the "Vernichtungs Lager" (extermination camps).

Stanislawa: Single, cosmetics store owner. Hid in Warsaw as "Aryan", denounced as Jewess to Gestapo ~3/1944. Imprisoned in Pawiak till Warsaw uprising fell; released as an "unproved of guilt of Jewishness"; died in Lodz, 1962 as a Catholic.

Lola: Single, cosmetics owner. Same history as for Stanislawa; died in Lodz, in Lodz, 1951 as a Catholic.

Male: migrated to Chicago (?); umbrella factory owner (?).

There were 3-5 more Plywacki children who died in childhood

Abram Lajzor Plywacki (Agudath Israel party) (Maks' uncle?): previous vice-chairman of Lodz Kehila (Jewish Community Council) elected chairman 9/12/39; replaced by Germans with Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski 11/13/39 (later "Der Aelteste der Juden in Litzmannstadt). Probably killed by Germans 11/39 with 22 of 30 other Kehila members.

Wladyslaw: b. 8/10/29 in Lodz, Poland. US citizen 1956 as **Walter Plywacki**; BSEE 1957, Oregon State College. Married (4/55-7/82) **Louise J. Waitt**, Portland, OR. Escaped from KZs twice, once from Turkheim (escaped back in to stay with his brother) and then from Karlsfeld (Dachau II) mid 4/44. Captured by US Army both brothers became US Army "mascots". Stowed-away from Cherbourg aboard cargo ship "Charles D. Poston" to US & after 6 months on Ellis Island released. Entry legalized by a Special US Congress law signed by Pres. Truman.

Wlodzimierz: b. 24Oct1931 as **Fialko, W.**; adopted by Maks in Lodz "ghetto", winter 1941-42. US citizen as **William Plywacki**; Ph.D. Theor. Physics Univ. of Colorado, 1967. Escaped Dachau II with Wladyslaw & left for US with a Red Cross Field director from Marseille in Jan 1946. Boulder, CO.

Rhonda Plywacki, nee Burgdorff: b. 2/22/39.

No children.

Fajertag father; died in 1939; all else

Janina (Janeczka) Jakobson (nee Fajertag): b. d. unkn. Gassed in Auschwitz-II ~Aug 1944.

Hannah (?) adopted orphan girl at ~15 yrs. Of age, fm. Prague. Walter fell into puppy love with her, holding hands in the cattle car to Auschwitz. Gassed in Auschwitz-II ~Aug 1944.

Dr. Stanislaw-Szaja Jakobson, b. 1906; Jagiellonian Univ. Law School. Lodz ghetto chief judge & with Leon Rozenblatt (commandant of the Order Service) member of the "Resettlement" Commission to select 25,000 Jews under 10 & over 65 years old for death. Horsewhipped by a Jewish policeman whose family was "resettled" while boarding train for Auschwitz-II; gassed there in ~Aug 1944.

Jakub Jakobson: brother of Stanislaw; migrated to Israel (?) post WW2.

John & Mildred Waitt
Portland, OR, Deceased.

Louise Jeanette Plywacki (nee Waitt): b. 21/7/34, Portland, OR. BA Sci.Edcn., Oregon State College, 1957. Computer programming & engineering on space technology at Martin-Lockheed 1959-61; marr'd Walter 9/4/55/divorced 14/6/82. Now in Portland OR.

Use WinWord's Drawing Tool Bar

Fischer parents, names & b.dates unkn.

Plywacka, Regina: b. 10 Jan 1905 of Orthodox family but lived an energetic modern life after marriage. Kept her husband's pharmacy from disaster carrying inventory across Lodz to save "doroszka" (horse-drawn carriage) fare, bookkeeping & sales-clerking while running the household in warm & happy way. Gassed in Auschwitz-II ~Aug 1944.

Fialkova, Alicja (Ala): b. 1902(?) Lodz, Poland. Died of starvation and tuberculosis, Lodz ghetto, winter '41-'42.

Fischer, Henryk, b. 1901? TB in ghetto; murdered 1940 in Stutthof KZ (RIF soap?)

Fialko, Jozef (Mitja): b.d. unkn. in Russian occupied Lithuania. Cavalry officer in tzarist army fighting in Crimea & Caucasus died of starvation and tuberculosis, Lodz ghetto in ~9/1940.

Russell & Dawn Mannell, Sydney,

Jason Mannell, b. 7/17/69 in Sydney, Australia. BA Mass Communications, Sydney Univ. 11/15/91. Mrrd. Cybele 6/12/94.

No children vet.

Ocker, Dr. Med. John & Mary Ann, Kuna, ID.

Ocker, Gerald B. (Jerry) b. 4/29/70 in Kuna, ID; now Portland, OR.

No children vet

Veneranda Matos b. in Puerto Rico. Mrrd. Wladyslaw in 1950.

Maria Plywacki, b. 4/15/50, in Washington, DC.

Douglas A. Young: b. 4/25/55

Leah Young b. 10/14/75 **Lisa Yurkovic** b. 4/26/76 **Dawn Yurkovic** b. **Steven Yurkovic**

Friends: Marek Magazynek: murdered in Kulmhof. Michal Plotkin (club-foot) & father (hunchback): murdered in Natzweiler KZ & both prepared as "sub-human" skeleton exhibits for Dr. Hirt's Strasbourg Institute (probably). Artur, who at 7 could draw excellent mediaeval battles; fate unkn. Kuba Kogut, Catholic school-mate: disappeared Dec. 1939. Uncountable others: *requiescat in pace!* (sp?)

CHRONOLOGY OF WALTER PLYWASKI

ARR	DEP.	LOCATIONS	DESCRIPTION	KNOWN DEATHS	WORKED FOR	
8/10/29	4/10/34	Zwirki & Wigury Street, Lodz, Poland	Born in a hospital; parents' apartments. Named Wladyslaw Plywacki. Had a beloved Gentile wet-nurse; she visited till WW2.			
4/10/34	12/1/39	#11 Andrzejka (now A. Struga) Street, Lodz, Poland	Parents' apartments & pharmacy; attending Spoleczne Gyzmanzjum school, Sep1937-Oct 1939. Grammar school stopped by Germans' order after one month of third grade.			
2/15/40	8/10/44	LODZ "GHETTO"(urban concentration camp):16 Zgierska St., 36 Zgierska St., & a house in Marysin	Overcrowding, disease, starvation, & deportations to death-camps. At the very end of the "ghetto" hid for about 6 weeks in the attic of the house in Marysin near the ghetto's border. Forced by heat & hunger to surrender & go with one of the last transports to Auschwitz.	~ 40 family members	Elektrizitaet Abteilung (Electric "resort") AEG?	
8/10/44	8/15/44	Freight cars, ~ 5 days,.	Unknown destination to most; known to me and Maks. No water/little food; ~100 people/car, approx. 25% mortality.	~30, no family members		
8/15/44	9/25/44	Auschwitz-2 (Birkenau) death camp	Gas-chambers & crematoria. Wait to be murdered after "selections". A week in quarantine barracks, then men's camp. Brother & I in Mengele's barracks 2 days; smuggled out by a Polish Gentile male block Kapo.	Mother & other family gassed (see "Family tree")		
9/25/44	9/13/44	Freight cars, 3 days.	No water/little food; ~90 people in our cattle car, approx. 15% mortality.			
9/28/44	11/10/44	Kaufering-4 concentration camp	Labor on potato harvest & construction of concrete buildings. Barracks were rectangular holes in the earth with earth bunks & roof at ground level		Unknown; Luftwaffe?	
11/10/44	11/28/44	Kaufering-11 (Landsberg?) concentration camp	Labor on a fighter plane landing strip; someone sabotaged the strip causing all on that Kommando to be shipped to Riederloh camp.		Luftwaffe?	
11/28/44	11/28/44	Riederloh punishment concentration camp.	Earth-bunker construction for explosives. Father, Maks Plywacki beaten to death by camp's commander after Maks yelled insults at the shit. I saw it being done and tried to stop it with no result; Maks died two days later.	Father: Beaten to death. (also see File "Riederloh")	German Nobel Dynamite Factory	

1/15/45	1/30/45	Dachau-1 concentration camp	We arrive only 250 from the initial 2,000. In "hospital" (suffering from "phlegmon") as malaria guinea pig; rescued by Polish male nurses & then rejoined brother in quarantine barracks. I'm made a camp "Laufer" (runner).			
1/30/45	2/15/45	Luftnachrichten Kaserne (Augsburg); Concentration camp in a concrete hangar	Messerschmidt Augsburg plant for production of ME-236 jet fighters. Both I & brother get some contacts with the German "green" (criminal) Kapos & some extra food.		Messerschmidt	
2/15/45	3/15/45	Burgau concentration camp	Messerschmidt plant for production of ME-236 jet fighters in nearby forest by the Autobahn. Camp faced the road & was exterminated with flame throwers after we left.		Messerschmidt	
3/15/45	3/30/45	Turkheim concentration camp	Various & random labor. Escape & secretly return since brother unable to escape. Succeeded in stealing 2 pairs of boots for the projected march.			
3/30/45	4/4/45	Marching to Dachau-1	Very brutal & underfed/watered death march. Don't know how many killed during SS "games" of random shootings at prisoners leaving water in streams; village children throw stones & ask the SS to kill some of us.			
4/4/45	4/15/45	Dachau-2 (Karlsfeld) concentration camp	Escaped during bombardment.			
4/15/45	5/15/45	"Captured" by American Infantry	US Army Infantry. Approx. weight 90 lbs; 1 month later about 120 lbs.		Translator & gofer.	
5/15/45	5/1/47	A "mascot" general helper & civilian employee	US Army; various US Army units. Most meaningful was our stay with the 278th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery C, under Captain John Van Arsdale.		US Army in Europe	
5/1/47	5/15/47	Travelling in France to LaHavre & Cherbourg	No ID papers acceptable in France once not with US Army. Bribed myself out of arrest by Securite in LaHavre & departed immediately for Cherbourg			
5/15/47	6/15/47	Stow-away on freighter "Charles D. Poston"	New York bound via Liverpool. Painted entire ship to get freedom of the vessel. Immigration refused to let the captain dump me in Liverpool.			
6/15/47	12/16/47	Ellis Island, NY Harbor	Slept in a huge boys' dormitory. Work to stave off boredom.			
12/16/47	12/16/48	Philadelphia, PA	Working as a "printer's devil" at Flexton Corp.'s plastics plant, Conshohocken, PA.			
12/16/48	10/30/52	US Air Force	Radio school instructor & radio maintenance chief; St. Louis, MO/Wash., DC/Okinawa.		USAF	
10/30/52	9/1/54	Various US locations				

9/1/54	6/30/59	Oregon State Univ., Corvallis, OR	Began studies in English Literature but since bored, transferred to Electrical Engineering; some post- graduate courses in mathematics & EE.		BSEE, Communications	
6/30/59	7/30/59	Travelling in US	None (self-funded sabbatical)			
7/30/59	6/31/52	Burbank, California	System & circuit design: Naval Tactical Defense System, solid state disc filters, & production test equipment		Collins Radio Co.	
6/31/52	8/1/62	Denver (Loookout Mtn.), CO	Tuning fork filter design		Hamilton- Hathaway Co.	
8/1/62	8/1/63	Denver (Loookout Mtn.), CO	Quality Control on Titan 1 & 2 missiles, operations research in war-games and corporate strategies.		Martin-Marrietta Corp.	
8/1/63	11/2/64	Travelling in Europe with wife	None (self-funded sabbatical)			
11/2/64	2/25/65	Denver (Loookout Mtn.), CO	Entrepreneurial start-up from Lookout Mountain house west of Denver; became insolvent.		Pragmatronics (ownership)	
2/25/65	6/26/65	Boulder, Colorado	GS-14 Senior Electronics Engineer		NBS/NOAA:	
6/26/65	present	751 Left Fork Road, Boulder, CO 80302-5252	Local Area Network production and maintenance in Boulder offices; now (since ~ 10 years) consulting and tele-reselling various tools & machines from my mountain home.		Pragmatronics inc.	

File: Chronology of Walter Plywaski, new.doc

4/2/00 12:49 PM



4/18/00

Dear Mr. Plywaski -

Your well-engineered letter (quite remarkable in its precision) arrived two weeks ago, and I have simply been on overload. Please excuse the delay in my reply.

It was fascinating to see how you structured the outline of your life - and to read of the agonizing period under the Nazis. I noticed that you were "captured" in Dachau 2 by U.S. Army. That was the 42nd Infantry Division, nick-named the "Rainbow" Division, because it had black and white soldiers mixed in together.

I was in the ~~9th~~ 9th Infantry Division, Third Army, General Patton commanding. We fought across southern Germany, in Bavaria. I read that you were in Augsburg, Landsberg. I know those places because they contained D.P. (Displaced Persons) camps after the war was over.

Before going into the army, I was the Rabbi at Temple Emanuel in Denver 1943-44, then army, and returned in 1947-1952. I love that part of the U.S. - and have friends in Boulder as well. Do you know Robert Klutznick?

Once again, deep thanks for your letter and diagrams. They are most helpful. Sincerely,
Herbert A. Friedman

To: **RGolz@t-online.de**
Subject: **Memoirs**
Date sent: **Fri, 10 Nov 2000 10:17:35**

Dear Ronnie,

Thank you for responding to our letter about sending your story to the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at the World Jewish Congress. I am writing to you to confirm that we received Marianne's story, and we will forward it to the World Jewish Congress in her name. This is an important project that will help preserve the testimonies survivors, so the lessons learned and the people who perished during the Holocaust are never forgotten.

Again, we want to thank you for sharing your story. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to call me, Jamie Goldberg, Rabbi Herbert Friedman's assistant, at 212-355-6115. You may also contact Ms. Yudin at the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project at 914-722-1880.

I hope you and your family are having a happy and healthy New Year.

B'Shalom,

Jamie Goldberg



October 24, 2000

Dear Ronnie,

Many thanks for sending us the heartbreaking story of your parents, ending with the ironic fact that the Nazis who persecuted them ended up with good jobs and reparations money, while your father received nothing and your mother was executed.

Enclosed are two articles which appeared recently in The New York Times and the New York Jewish Week.. Your story is written so well that you should submit it.

We send best wishes for a healthy New Year.

Most Sincerely,

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

P.S. The address to which you should send it is:

Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project
c/o World Jewish Congress
501 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
Attention: Charlotte Trepman Yudin

If you want to save the trouble, I would be happy to submit it on your behalf. Just let me know.

Subj: **Your kind letter**
Date: 10/30/00 6:11:51 AM Pacific Standard Time
From: RGolz@t-online.de (rgolz)
Sender: RGolz@t-online.de
Reply-to: RGolz@t-online.de (rgolz)
To: frfriedman@cs.com

Sender: RGolz@t-online.de
Received: from mailout02.sul.t-online.com (mailout02.sul.t-online.com [194.25.134.17])
by sphmgaad.compuserve.com (8.9.3/8.9.3/SUN-1.9) with ESMTP id JAA15380
for <francinefriedman@compuserve.com>; Mon, 30 Oct 2000 09:10:00 -0500 (EST)
Received: from fwd03.sul.t-online.com
by mailout02.sul.t-online.com with smtp
id 13qFdP-0005VA-06; Mon, 30 Oct 2000 15:09:59 +0100
Received: from (0303257652-0001@[193.159.100.213]) by fwd03.sul.t-online.com
with smtp id 13qFdE-2lApm4C; Mon, 30 Oct 2000 15:09:48 +0100
From: RGolz@t-online.de (rgolz)
To: francinefriedman@compuserve.com
Subject: Your kind letter
X-Mailer: T-Online eMail 2.3
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8BIT
Date: Mon, 30 Oct 2000 15:09:48 +0100
Message-ID: <13qFdE-2lApm4C@fwd03.sul.t-online.com>
X-Sender: 0303257652-0001@t-dialin.net

Dear Herbert,

Thank you very, very much for your kind remarks about my article on Marianne Golz!

It was a pleasure to hear from you again. I was looking at those wonderful photos Francine sent the other day and it brought back warm memories of our trip into the past here in Berlin.

As far as publishing the Marianne article is concerned, I'd rather leave it to you to promote the story as you know the people in the newspapers who might be interested. One point is, however, important. Marianne wasn't my mother, but the first wife of my father.

Thanks again and please pass my warmest greetings to Francine!
Shana Tova!

Ronnie

Suarez St.39, 14057 Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany
Tel: +49-(0)30-3217686 / Fax: +49-(0)30-3257652 / Mobile: +49-(0)177-3217686
Websites: www.alib.de www.rgolz.de www.pitigliano.de

----- Headers -----

Return-Path: <RGolz@t-online.de>
Received: from rly-yg02.mx.aol.com (rly-yg02.mail.aol.com [172.18.147.2]) by air-yg05.mail.aol.com (v76_r1.23) with ESMTP;
Mon, 30 Oct 2000 09:11:51 -0500

Preface

In February 1960, my father learnt that the Federal Republic of Germany was going to pay him DM 1.500,- for the 'deprivation of liberty' (i.e. imprisonment) of his wife, Marianne Goltz-Goldlust between November 19th, 1942 and October 8th, 1943 (4.43 p.m.) in Prague-Pancraz prison.¹ Till today, no restitution has been offered for what happened at 16.44 p.m.

On the other hand, a Herr Alois Weiss received remuneration of Reichs Mark 30,- on October 31st, 1943 from the state attorney's office at the *Deutsche Landgericht* (High German Court) in Prague for his work at Prague Pancraz prison.²

Entry 219 in the prison record book states the following:

Golzova, Marianne born. 30.1.1895 Vienna 8 Kls 90/43 25.5.43 8.10.43 16.44 hours

At precisely 4.44 p.m. on October 8th, 1943, Alois Weiss an executioner wound up case '8 Kls 90 / 43' of the Special German High Court in Prague.³

The Search for Marianne Begins

I was born in London in 1947. My mother, Ida Reiss, Jewish refugee from Straznice in Moravia, met my father in 1940 in London. My parents brought me up to be neither German nor Jewish. When they returned to West Germany in 1960, the story of our family caught me up step by step. The search for my own identity took a long time. The sense of feeling 'Jewish' became stronger and stronger, while my knowledge of the fate of my family remained minute. In 1985 I read a book "*Wir wissen nicht was morgen wird, wir wissen wohl was gestern war*" by Peter Sichrovsky ("*We don't know about tomorrow, but we definitely know about yesterday*"). The following sentence is part of the dedication:

*"For my grand parents who I'll never forget, even though I never got to know them."*⁴

The book describes the difficult search by 15 Berlin and Viennese Jews, who were born after 1945, for their identity. In some of the cases described, the parents were already dead and could therefore not answer their children's questions. I recognised my own situation.

¹ Document of the Berlin restitution agency of February 12th, 1960.

² Excerpt from the files of the state attorney's office at the German High Court in Prague of October 31st, 1943 dealing with the 'Work chart of executioner Alois Weiss and special remuneration, travel expenses and sundry expenses in October 1943 in the context of the execution of death sentences. Entry 31: Goltz-Goldlust, Marianne.

³ Today, death row and the execution hall at Prague Pancraz prison are a public memorial. The prison record book listing the executions is also on exhibit.

⁴ Peter Sichrovsky, "*Wir wissen nicht was morgen wird, wir wissen wohl was gestern war. Junge Juden in Deutschland und Oesterreich*" Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Koeln 1985.

many questions I had? Suddenly I had a brainstorm: I began to search for the files of my father's restitution claim and found them at the offices of the Berlin restitution agency.

After his return to Germany in 1960, my father was obliged to sue the Federal Republic because their restitution agency refused to recognize certain physical ailments that he was suffering from as resulting from his forced emigration to Britain in 1939. In the context of the court hearing my father had to undergo a psychiatric examination. His restitution file included the comprehensive report by the psychiatrist of this examination. It was more or less a commented Curriculum Vitae.

And so, one morning, back in 1985, I sat in a drab public office in Berlin-Schoeneberg with a large and tinted file in front of me and started to read. The following paragraph drew my attention to Marianne:

*"My wife Marianne wanted (in Summer 1939) to follow me to England. But as the war broke out this possibility was over. She was never afraid and immediately started to help Czechs and Jews to escape via Vienna to Italy. She took up links to the Gestapo and knew who she could bribe to get at false documentations. Czechs, Germans and Jews met once a week at her apartment. The group was betrayed and arrested during one of the meetings. The Jews were deported to the concentration camps while the Czechs and my wife were put on trial. In 1943 my wife was sentenced to death at the guillotine. She spent weeks in the death cell and was only executed at the end of 1943. The fate of my wife is described in a book that a Czech, employed by the Germans as prison photographer, published after the war. The book is titled 'Zaluji' (Czech for 'I accuse'). This man wrote about my wife and there's also a prison photo of her in the book. Furthermore, secret letters she wrote to her sister that were smuggled out of the prison, were published in the book."*⁵

Suddenly I remembered that my father had mentioned that he had been married before and that he had loved that woman a lot, and that the Nazis had murdered her. I just had to find that photo and see what she looked like.

A few weeks later I held the book in hand and looked at Marianne's photo. I also realised, even though I do not speak Czech, that at least 20 pages dealt with her. The subsequent translation by a friend led to a multitude of feelings within me.

"Marianne Golz was from Vienna. A very intelligent woman aged 48 with grey hair. Not even in this filthy hole did Marianne lose the greatness of her personality. If one mentioned a 'gentle lady of great spirit' in these poor and pitiless circumstances, then it

⁵ Excerpt from the psychiatric report in the files of the Berlin restitution agency.

the prisoners.. She was loved by all and very popular because of her positive thoughts and her political foresight.

Marianne knew, a few days beforehand, about her pending execution. That is why she got hold of poison and took it while in the death cell. The wardens found her in a deep and deathly coma and were scared about investigations on how she got hold of the poison. They thus dragged her in front of the state attorney and she was beheaded in an 'unconscious' state."⁶

Marianne's Life

Maria Agnes Belokosztolszky was born in Vienna-Hernals on January 30th, 1895. Her family were Catholic. Her father was Polish, her mother Czech. After high school graduation in Vienna she attended courses to become a ballet dancer and opera singer and chose the stage name, Marianne Tolska. She is first mentioned as an opera singer in July 1921, when she appeared on stage with the Viennese Raimund Theatre during a guest performance in Linz. Marianne wrote about herself in retrospect:

*"I remember when I was 26 years old. I didn't feel that young at all and certainly wasn't childlike. I rejected all parts where I was expected to play 'youngsters'. I didn't want to be young at all. And by the way, I wasn't anyway. I was more mature than others and married while still very young. I always mixed with older women, and at the age of 26 was self-supporting and already a wealthy woman."*⁷

On July 12th, 1922 she appeared in Stuttgart in the operetta 'Viennese Blood'.

*"How nice that the theatre has succeeded in staging this delightful operetta in such a satisfactory manner. Dancer Marianne Tolska doesn't only look attractive but acts and sings a lot better than in the past. What good can a little rest do!"*⁸

Between October 1922 and September 1924 Marianne is a member of the Salzburg City Theatre ensemble. This is where she meets Nico Dostal the Austrian operetta composer. Dostal writes:

"My first season under the directorship of Mr. Strial in Salzburg was unproblematic. It was he who brought the singers Rudolf Worelli and Marianne Tolska to Salzburg. Marianne was to play a role in my later life. Before we brought the operetta 'Madame

⁶ "Zaluji" ('I accuse' 2 Volumes. Published by R. Karel, Orbis Publishers, Prague 1946. Vol.1: P. 196 - 221. Photo of Marianne Golz-Goldlust in Vol. 2.

⁷ Secret message by Marianne Golz of 28.9.1943 to Richard Macha in Prag-Pankratz prison. "Zaluji"loc.cit.

⁸ Stuttgarter Nachrichten 13th, July 1922.

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*Fritzi Massary performing as Madame Pompadour at the Carl Theatre. Tolska copied all she had seen during Massary's performance and proved to be a splendid Pompadour."*⁹

The peak of Marianne's career was her joint appearance alongside Richard Tauber in '*Die Fledermaus*' on July 30th, 1923 at the Salzburg City Theatre.

*"The 'Fledermaus' with Richard Tauber as Eisenstein was, as expected, a tremendous success. The famous guest's usual quick and tempered performance as well as his wonderful and well-kept tenor voice made the evening unforgettable. But it also should be mentioned that some of the local talents do not have to stand behind Mr. Tauber: Miss Tolska was well suited for her role."*¹⁰

On July 16th, 1923 just 14 days before, Marianne had married the Viennese music publisher Ernst Wengraf. In 1924 they moved to Berlin, where he had opened an office. It was her second marriage. Nico Dostal later wrote about his time in Berlin:

*"As I climbed off then train at Anhalt Station I immediately felt at home. First of all, I joined the circle around Marianne Tolska-Wengraf, who, by then, was divorced from her husband but in mutual understanding. Marianne used to surround herself at her flat on Wittenberg Platz with dynamic people from the theatre and advertising branches. It was possible to get to know all sorts of people and make useful contacts."*¹¹

Marianne probably met my father, Hans Werner Goldlust during one of these meetings in 1924. He was then head of the advertising and distribution department of the *Literarischer Welt* that was published by the well known Rowohlt Publishing Co. My father adopted the name 'Golz' in the early 20's, because as an assimilated Jew he rejected the stigmatisation by 'Jewish' names, such as 'Goldlust'. He never officially registered his new name with the authorities so as not to offend his father. This is the reason why Marianne had the hyphenated name: 'Golz-Goldlust'.

Willy Haas was the editor-in-chief of the *Literarischer Welt*. When Rowohlt decided to sell the magazine in spring 1927, Willy Haas and my father purchased it and subsequently my father became managing director.

On March 21st, 1929 Marianne and Hans married in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Hans Golz writes about his wife:

⁹ Nico Dostal *"Ans Ende deiner Traeume kommst du nie"* (You'll Never Reach the End of Your Dreams) Lied der Zeit, Musikverlag Berlin (GDR), 1986. Pp. 71/72.

¹⁰ *Salzburger Tageblatt* of August 1st, 1923.

¹¹ Nico Dostal loc. cit.

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was always a strong support. I could always rely on her. She was always optimistic and believed that she would never suffer problems in life and that I need not worry about her."

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And Marianne's niece Erika Haala adds:

*"She was a very beautiful and impressive woman. She liked wearing bright colours and she was always well dressed. She was a very striking and dominant person: full of life, energy and vitality. I spent quite some time thinking about the word 'joy of life'. I think it's the wrong term. 'Vitality' fits better, someone who was very dominant. Wherever she appeared she was always the attraction. Whether it stemmed from her stage-work or from her temperament, I cannot say, but it certainly had an effect on all of us. She was a woman with lots of charm, lots of warmth and full of happiness. She was my very much-loved aunt."*¹³

When Hitler came to power in January 1933, Hans Golz and Willy Haas were aware of the danger for Jews. They quickly sold the magazine in March 1933 and subsequently emigrated to Prague with their wives in 1934.

*"Will Haas and I, tried to open a new magazine 'Die Welt im Wort' (The World of Word) with Orbis Publishing Co. We had taken the list of subscribers of the 'Literarischer Welt' with us and we hoped we would be able to distribute the magazine throughout Germany from Prague. But this proved impossible. In 1935 I took up work as the representative of the French news agency 'Mitopress' and also wrote for the 'Neue Wiener Journal'."*¹⁴

It appears that Marianne did not work as an opera singer during their stay in Prague. In 1936 both the parents and sister of Hans Golz emigrated from Berlin to Prague.

Marianne's Arrest

On March 15th, 1939 the Nazis occupied the Czech Republic. Hans Golz immediately fled Prague and reached England via Poland and the Baltic in the summer of 1939. The extensive correspondence between Rosa Goldlust in Prague and her children Hans and Erna in London shows that Marianne stayed on in Prague to help her parents- and sister-in-law to escape and at the same time to wind up her flat.¹⁵

¹² Excerpt from the psychiatric report in the files of the Berlin restitution agency.

¹³ Interview with Erika Haala in July 1987. Excerpt from the NDR documentary film: *"One's Own Story – The Letters of Marianne Golz from Prag-Pankratz Prison"*.

¹⁴ Excerpt from the psychiatric report in the files of the Berlin restitution agency.

¹⁵ Letters from Prague from Rosa Goldlust and Ilse Neumann (née Golz) to Hans Golz and Erna Rosenberg (née Golz) in London of 28.04.1939, 10. 6.39, 14.08.1939, 18.08.1939, 26.08.39, 01.09.39, 25.09.39, 18.10.39, 30.10.39, 06.12.39.

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husband in London, she did not succeed in leaving the Czech Republic that was now called 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia' before the war broke out on September 1st, 1939.¹⁶

The sources covering the period of her trial and execution on October 8th, 1943 are multiple. They comprise of:

- statements by Erika Haala, Marianne's niece,
- a letter from Dr. Friedrich Seidl, a former tenant in Marianne's flat in Prague during the war,
- an interview with Erna Steiner, who together with her mother and others was arrested by the Gestapo at Marianne's flat on the evening of November 19th 1942,
- Excerpts from the German state attorney's accusations and from the court ruling of the Special German High Court in Prague on May 18th, 1943 referring to Marianne and the crimes she was purported to have committed,
- written statements by Marianne from official prison letters exchanged with her sister Rosi in Vienna and from smuggled secret letters, that Marianne sent to her sister between her arrest on November 19th, 1942 and her death on October 8th, 1943 and finally from
- excerpts from secret messages that Marianne exchanged with her co-prisoner Richard Macha and the prison photographer R. Karel that were published in the book "Zaluji" ("I Accuse") in 1946 in Prague.

From all of these sources the following picture evolves:

As of 1939, Marianne belonged to a resistance group that helped Jews to get out of Prague by procuring faked ID-cards and travel documents. Marianne succeeded in saving part of the refugee's monies by transferring them to her sister Rosi in Vienna.

*"Through some kind of source at the Gestapo, Marianne knew who was to be deported next. These people were contacted and were helped by some kind of organisation across the border at night. My mother then received their money."*¹⁷

"I only distantly knew Mrs. Golz. As we used an encrypted name's list, I never knew she was called 'Golz' until she turned up at my mother's shop one day. That's when I recognized her. Marianne permanently and deliberately helped Jews to escape. She was a

¹⁶ Letter by Rosa Goldlust of 26.07.1939.

¹⁷ Interview with Erika Haala in July 1987. Excerpt from the NDR documentary film: "One's Own Story – The Letters of Marianne Golz from Prag-Pankratz Prison".

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*became known she would shoulder the responsibility."*¹⁸

There is mention that Marianne even succeeded in getting people out of the Theresienstadt Ghetto. With the help of a secret contact and by way of her husband, information about what was going on in Prague reached the Czech Government in exile in London.¹⁹

Every second Thursday a 'social meeting' took place at Marianne's apartment in the evening.

*"I recollect that I, and a friend once or twice took part in such meetings, where the greater part of the participants were people on the run, hiding from the Germans".*²⁰ The prosecution later asserted that at these meetings *"hatred was stirred in every manner against the Reich."*²¹

At the meeting on Thursday, November 19th, 1942 all the participants were arrested by the Gestapo

*"It was a Thursday circle that I attended for the first time with my mother. We turned up at around 8 to 8.30 p.m. and already a lot of people were there. The Gestapo opened the door and said 'We've been waiting just for you'. We were arrested and taken to the political department where we were treated worse than murderers and criminals."*²²

The same evening, the Gestapo in Vienna arrested Marianne's sister Rosi.

*"My mother knew that she was involved in helping Jewish refugees to escape from Prague and the meaning of the money she handed to them when they got to Vienna. We learnt that Marianne had been arrested the same day in Prague and that she was to be put on trial."*²³

Marianne describes how she was arrested:

"Evzenie Synek a Jewish woman, has got me and ten other people on her conscience. She works for the Gestapo. Make sure, Mr. Karel, that the double-act of Mrs. Synek becomes

¹⁸ Interview with Frau Erna Steiner on 5.11.1989.

¹⁹ Erna Steiner loc. cit.

²⁰ Letter from Dr. Friedrich Seidl of 2.11.1987.

²¹ Prosecution statement by the state attorney at the Special German High Court in Prague on May 18th, 1943.
Source: Archive of the Ministry of the Interior. Prague

²² Interview with Erna Steiner.

²³ Interview with Erika Haala in July 1987. Excerpt from the NDR documentary film: *"One's Own Story – The Letters of Marianne Golz from Prag-Pankratz Prison"*.

During her interrogation by the Gestapo, Marianne exonerated the others arrested, as she had said she would do.

*"She took full responsibility and we played the innocent lambs, that happened to have been arrested at one of her social meetings. After Marianne had stated that we had nothing to do with the whole affair and that we were only chance guests, we were released."*²⁵

The Court Trial

On May 18th, 1943 the trial against Marianne and 17 further persons took place at the Special German High Court in Prague. It was a show-trial that has to be seen in the context of the Nazis' defeat at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942/43. With this defeat the tide of the war turned against Nazi Germany. The judiciary was assigned with the task to clamp down with all means possible on any form of resistance within the Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The trial and the ruling speak a clear language; it was intended to set an example.

"Since 1940, the accused Golz-Goldlust was friends with Goldschmidt and often visited him. At his apartment she got to know Zapotecky. She learnt that he helped Jews to illegally cross the borders of the Protectorate. To avoid deportation Goldschmidt fled to Vienna. About two weeks later, the accused Golz-Goldlust received a phone call from her sister Haala, who told her that Goldschmidt had turned up. Subsequently several letters were exchanged between the two ... Subsequently Golz-Goldlust advised the Kühnel to approach Zapotecky and ask him for help crossing the border. Zapotecky states that Kühnel handed Golz-Goldlust 20.000 Czech Crowns and asked her to transfer them in small amounts to her sister Rosi Haala in Vienna. Goldschmidt had been informed by Golz-Goldlust of the imminent arrival of Kühnel in Vienna. Kühnel emphasises that Golz-Goldlust recommended Zapotecky and also gave him Zapotecky's office address and telephone number. ...

Golz-Goldlust is third time married. Her present husband is absolutely Jewish (Volljude). Among her two former husbands was a further Jew. It is obvious that Golz-Goldlust, owing to several marriages with Jews, is mentally utterly 'Jew-ridden' (verjudet), has friendly ties to Jews, half-Jews and friends of Jews. This proves the point that Golz-

²⁴ Letter from Marianne to R.Karel, the prison photographer at Pankraz, on October 5th, 1943, (three days before her execution). "Zaluji" loc. cit..

²⁵ Interview with Erna Steiner.

avoiding state measures aimed at them through aiding their illegal emigration."

And further on: "Golz-Goldlust is a very different racial category. She has mixed with great agility and diligence in Jewish circles and has involved herself in the cause of her Jewish and half-Jewish friends. She did not act under pressure but from an inner conviction. Her desire to please her Jewish friends fits her aggressive approach towards the National Socialist state."²⁶

Among the 18 accused, Marianne and 9 other defendants were sentenced on May 18th, 1943 as "saboteurs and aides to enemies of the Reich"²⁷ to death.

In June 1943, some of the accused launched an appeal against their death sentences. On July 19th, 1943 Marianne also made an appeal. Senior attorney Dr. Ludwig at the Special German High Court in Prague dealt with the appeals. As far as Marianne was concerned he wrote:

"Marianne Golz-Goldlust was sentenced on May 18th, 1943 as a saboteur and enemy of the Reich as well as for aiding enemies of the Reich. She was thus sentenced to death and the loss of all civil rights for life. The special situation in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia make it necessary that the death sentence be implemented. I suggest that no pardon be given and that justice take its due course."²⁸

On September 21st, 1943 a further appeal, lodged with the Reich Minister of Justice in Berlin, is rejected.

"In the context of the court case at the Special German High Court in Prague of May 18th, 1943 I have ruled with the consent of the Fuehrer and in agreement with the Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia to make no use of my right of pardon as far as those who were sentenced to death are concerned."²⁹

The Last Letter

"Pankratz, October 5th, 1943

Dearest Rosilein!

²⁶ Court ruling of May 25th, 1943.

²⁷ Court ruling of May 25th, 1943.

²⁸ Letter by state attorney Dr. Zeynek to state attorney Dr. Ludwig at the Special German High Court in Prague on June 19th and September 1st, 1943.

²⁹ Letter of the Reich Minister of Justice to the state attorney at the Special German High Court in Prague on September 23rd, 1943. Source: Archive of the Ministry of the Interior, Prague.

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down as a hero. Please don't cry! Death is something very common here. Life, apart from the last two hours, was wonderful. Till the last moment every one here loved me a lot. Till the last moment I was happy. I have done everything possible that one day my death be revenged. I remain in your memory and near to you.

I kiss you

*Marianne"*³⁰

Marianne's Death

"Prague III, October 8th, 1943

To the Attorney General at the Special German High Court in Prague

Re: Sentence against Zapotecky and others

The court ruling against Marianne Golz-Goldlust was implemented on October 8th, 1943 at 4.44 p.m.

The procedure was as follows:

1.) Between the presentation of the condemned and the handing over to the executioner: 3 seconds.

2.) From handing over to implementation: 6 seconds.

There were no occurrences.

*Rehder-Knöspel, 1st. State Attorney."*³¹

45 Years Later

On June 9th, 1988 Marianne Golz-Goldlust was posthumously awarded the "Medal of the Righteous of the Nations" by the Board of Yat Vashem, Jerusalem. In her honour an olive tree (sapling No. 806) was planted at Yad Vashem Memorial Centre on November 28th, 1988.

Epilogue

What happened to the involved judges *Albrecht* and *Hartmann* and the state attorneys *Ludwig und von Zeynek* after the war?

³⁰ "Zaluji" loc.cit.

³¹ Letter of the state attorney at the Special German High Court in Prague on. October 8th, 1943. Source: Archive of the Ministry of the Interior, Prague.

Between December 18th, 1955 and January 2nd, 1961 he was a member of the CDU-Faction in the state legislature of the Saarland. After his activities in Prague became public, he was ousted from the CDU-Faction on December 6th, 1958.

Dr. Robert Hartmann (*1.7.1901 in Heilberscheid) took up the post of senior judge in Koenigswinter.

Dr. Franz Ludwig (*7.4.1899 in Mainz) became a state attorney in Duesseldorf.

Dr. Wolfgang Zeynek (* 30.9.1908 in Prague) became a state judge in Nuremberg.

Alois Weiss (* 16.10.1896 in Ruma, Croatia), the executioner, lived without court trial in Regensburg.³²



³² "Verbrecher in Richterroben"(Criminals in Judges Robes), Orbis-Publishers, Prague 1960.