Memorial to Ilja



by Edward Isaacs

18th. August 1992
Not an Authors Autograph,
but one from your J.P.
May you continue to be able to
read, write, play, cook, clean, type, shop,
drive, mow the lawn, tend your children
and grandchildren, play intelligent bridge,
enjoy theatre and music, sing, travel
and do anything else that tickles your
fancy for many more years.
Bad form to deface books! All love

The story of Ilja Frischmann born in Kubarty in Russian-Lithuania in 1902 to whom this book is a memorial, may well be comparable with that of many of the Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany who came to this country prior to the outbreak of the 2nd World War. It is nevertheless a further reminder of the brutality and bestiality of the Nazis, and may make those who query such events, realise that they did happen.

Edward Isaacs has coupled this story with other interesting details of the part of Europe from which Ilja Frischmann came, and which to-day is very much in the news.

Memorial to Ilja

by Edward Isaacs

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2023

Walker Carson LIMITED

This book is dedicated to the memory of Ilja Frischmann
and all those members of the
Frischmann, Kaminski, Postawelski and
allied families who perished in the Holocaust

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2023

Copyright © Edward Isaacs 1991

ISBN 0 9518660 0 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the publishers.

Printed and Published by Walker & Carson Limited
Wreakes Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield S18 6PN

CONTENTS

Foreword	
Ilja Frischmann 1902 – 1986	1
Ilja Frischmann's Story 1932 – 1939	6
For Our Elbing Grammar School – Gala Function	44
Retrospective Look at my School Days at the "Athenaeum Elbingese"	45
Letter From Dr. Hans Graf von Lehndorff	49
Rabbi Ephraim Oshry	51
Eric Koch	52
Postcard from Anna Frischmann to Ilja and Paul Frischmann	54–55
Postcard from Anna Frischmann to Miriam Kaplan	54–55
Some of the many letters which passed between Ilja Frischmann and Teddy Isaacs	56–65
Photographs	66–76
A limit to mourning	77
Description of Places Where Members of the Family Lived	83
Border Town Eydtkuhnen	84
Wischtytis – Lithuania	88
Ebenrode (Stallupoenen) Nesterov City	90
Recollections of Koenigsberg	97
From the Königsberger Jüdische Gemeindeblatt October 1st, 1924 –5685	101
Family Trees of Julius Isaacs and Yitzhak Kaminski	Inserts

FOREWORD

The contents of this book which I have gathered together, and to which I have also contributed, are intended as a memorial to Ilja Frischmann. When he passed away in 1988 he left his estate on the death of his wife Dorothy who passed away in 1991, to three Jewish charities – the CBF, WIZO and ORT. Each charity has benefitted to the extent of some £65,000, and the CBF immediately agreed to my suggestion that this publication would be a suitable tribute to him, especially as there was the story which he had already written of his life in Germany between 1932 and 1939 – almost unbelievable but nevertheless true.

Likewise there is the description of his life at the famous High School at Elbing. Ilja told me that somehow he was traced to Brighton, and a delegation from the schoo! visited him to ask him to write an article on life during his time there which would be published in the book being produced to mark the 410th year of the foundation of the school. He consented on the understanding that there would be no deletions whatever from his text, and his article is an interesting insight into the extent of the latent anti-semitism in Germany at that time.

The letter from Dr. Hans Graf von Lehndorff is of particular interest as he is the son of the Countess Lehndorff who so conspicuously made use of the dental skills of Ilja Frischmann at a time when Jewish dentists and doctors were being shunned.

The references to Wystitis, Stallupönen, Eydkünen, Kubarti, Verballen and Königsberg are all of interest because these places were locations in which the Frischmann, Kaminski, Postawelski and Daugiljacki families had their roots. Much of this information Ilja had obtained for me, knowing my interest in genealogy, and of my desire to draw a picture of the kind of life led by my paternal grandparents, and my father in his youth.

My father had been born in Wystitis which Ilja, who was born in nearby Kubarti, knew well, and described it to me as a place which people left, and to which they did not return. This certainly was the case with my father and his brothers and sisters.

My father left at the age of 15 in 1886, and described to me on one occasion how he had escaped one Saturday night over the frontier at Eydkuhnen into Germany from where he was able to make his way eventually to England. The frontier post through which he escaped was the same as that through which Ilja left in 1939.

It might seem strange that in Ilja's story he does not mention his English relations, but it was only after he arrived at the Kitchener Camp that he contacted me following information passed to him by the CBF that I had been the guarantor for him and his brother Paul.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Mrs. Lizalotte Montague for her excellent translations from the German of the articles on Wystitis, Stalluponen and Eydkuhnen, the letter from Dr. Hans Graf von Lehndorff as well as Ilja's article about his school days. I would also like to thank Mrs. Gretel Anderson for various photographs. Mrs. Anderson had known both Paul Frischmann with whom she worked in his chemist's shop in Leeds and his wife and family, as well as Dorothy and Ilja, whilst her husband was in the Pioneer Corps with Paul. My thanks too to nieces Valerie Redgrove, Philippa Freshman, to Sonia Brink (U.S.A.), Rolf Kaminski (South Africa), Lea Kreistman (Israel), Ruth Kaye (Leeds) and David Spector (Brighton). Also to Susan Rosenthal of Portland, Oregon, a 3rd cousin of Ilja who visited him and Dorothy in Brighton, and who is a descendant of Ilja's uncle – Jacob Frischmann. He went to the USA in the 1890's and eventually established a very successful jewellery business in Salt Lake City where I recently visited the family. This is where Ilja and Paul were aiming to go, but like so many others never got any further than England.

Acknowledgements should also be made to the Jewish Chronicle for permission to reprint the article by Philippa Freshman, to the Hebrew University Jerusalem for the extract from the Judische Gemeinde journal of Oct. 1924, to the Wiener Library for the article on Gauleiter Koch, to the Anglo Jewish Refugee journal for the article on Königsberg, and to the Ostpreussenblatt for the article on Eydtkuhnen.

The sources of the articles on Wystitis and Stallupönen are unknown to me. Both were sent to Ilja Frischmann by someone from the locality. The one on Stallupönen as sent to me was in German. The one on Wystitis was in Lithuanian which Ilja subsequently had translated for me into German.

Finally I want to express my thanks to Mrs. Gina Schwarzmann and Mrs. Cheryl Mariner for their co-operation, and an especial thanks to my wife for her assistance in the final production of this memorial.

ILJA FRISCHMANN 1902 – 1986

Ilja Frischmann was born in 1902 in Kubarty, the third son of Hirsch and Anna Frischmann. He was educated at the Gymnasium Elbing, and subsequently at the University of Königsberg where he graduated as a dentist in 1932. My knowledge of him however, goes back to a day in March 1939 when a letter from his mother arrived at our home in Sheffield addressed to my father, and asking if there was the possibility of him acting as a guarantor for her sons Ilja and Paul to enable them to obtain visas to come to England with the intention of going on to the USA when the quota there permitted, and where, in Salt Lake City there was a well established Frischmann family who were closely related.

My father remembered only vaguely the name of Frischmann. He had left Russia in 1886 as a boy of 15, and could not recall how the family was connected. However, he passed the letter to me – it had been written in German, and I was the German speaking member of our family – and told me to do whatever was necessary to help the brothers to get to England. So it was that, in July 1939 with the help of the CBF, and the guarantees I had given, Paul and Ilja Frischmann arrived in England, and were billetted at the Kitchener Camp near Margate. Ilja contacted me immediately, and as I had a cousin living in Dover – Dr. Julius Brown – I decided to go down to see the Frischmanns at once, and couple the trip with a visit to the family. At that time, I also had another cousin – Gabriele Mode from Berlin who had an English grandmother, and had come to England in 1934, taken a language degree at University College and was now working for the BBC.

I arranged for her to accompany me, and on Sunday morning arrived at the Kitchener Camp, found Ilja and Paul and took them for lunch to nearby Cliftonville where there was, at that time, a sizeable kosher hotel – the Northumberland. After the rigours the two brothers had endured, lunch at the Northumberland was, for them, almost unbelievable. Our visit made them feel that they were not alone in a strange country, and from then on I maintained contact with them.

Both joined the Pioneer Corps, Paul a pharmacist was at Dunkirk, and

subsequently for a while was stationed in Leeds, where over Passover he was invited to the home of the Abrams family. There he met his future wife to whom he was married in Leeds on December 29th, 1941. His daughter Philippa told me that her father was eventually invalided out of the army, and in 1943 appeared before an examining board in London to obtain his English qualifications as a pharmacist. He was apprehensive when he saw himself before five august gentlemen, but as he was about to be questioned, there was an air raid warning. The gentlemen took cover under the table, and after the "all clear" Paul was rapidly passed, and so became an English pharmacist.

Ilja was due to go to Norway with his unit, but a number of the men went down with chicken pox, and instead, he found himself transferred to a hospital in Birmingham, where he worked as a dental orderly. His work was greatly commended by his commanding officer, and he remained in that position throughout the war, at the end of which he was enabled to obtain his English qualifications to allow him to practice as a dentist in Great Britain. Through the good offices of his commanding officer he obtained a position immediately as a school dentist in Enfield. At that time he met Dorothy Cozens who had been born in Friern Barnet. She was both a qualified teacher and a nurse, and had volunteered to work as a teacher in the East End of London. Ilja found that working as a school dentist was hedged with much red tape, and eventually, having married Dorothy, decided to take the step of setting up his own practice in Surbiton. Together with Dorothy who acted as his dental nurse they developed a most successful practice in which Ilja acquired a high reputation for his work in the field of orthodontics. With no dependents, Ilja and Dorothy decided to look for a property on the South Coast, and eventually bought a house in Brighton. They continued to carry on the practice in Surbiton, but eventually retired to Brighton completely. Unfortunately, Dorothy suffered a good deal of ill health, but nevertheless they were able to spend some time on foreign travel, whilst from time to time they had visitors from various parts of the world. Ilja seemed to have retained contact with a variety of people both Jewish and non-Jewish who he had known in pre-war days in Germany, and it was through some of these, who had either returned to Germany or remained in Germany that he received much information on life in post war Federal and East Germany. In particular, he was helpful to me in obtaining post

war information on Wystitis where my father had been born, Eydtkuhnen where he had lived at one time, and where he, as had my father, crossed the frontier between Lithuania and Germany to get to England, Stallupönen, to where my grandparents subsequently moved and lived until they were forced in the 1914–18 war to go to Königsberg, Verbalis where Kolef Daugiljacki – my cousin, and a close friend of Ilja was born, and Kubarty where Ilja had been born and where other members of the family also lived. He was a student at the University of Königsberg, and in that period was a regular visitor to the home of the Daugiljackis who had moved there also in 1914. Ilja had fond recollections of my Auntie Basche as a lady bountiful with the generous hospitality she offered to him and other students.

Shortly after he had married I arranged a lunch meeting with him and Dorothy in London, and subsequently when he set up practice in Surbiton, I was able to put him in touch with the Cainers who were a family connection with three young children. The Cainer family became patients as well as friends, and with their children in particular the Frischmanns became very popular, both because of their generosity and genuine interest in them.

On one occasion, I arranged to meet Ilja and Dorothy at Hampton Court together with my wife and our two young daughters. We had a most memorable and enjoyable day together, and it was then that Ilja noticed that the teeth of our children were not as straight as they should be. Through his good offices, he arranged with his friend Mr. J. Gardiner, head of the Orthodontics Dept. of the Clifford Dental Hospital in Sheffield, that they should have the personal attention of Mr. Gardiner who, in fact, used our children to demonstrate to his students the remedial work he was doing. The end result was that our daughters have beautifully straight teeth, thanks to Ilja's intervention and, of course, the skill of Mr. Gardiner.

Ilja could be depended on always to make a particular effort to be present at any of our family celebrations – our silver wedding – our ruby wedding – the weddings of our two daughters – our grandson's Barmitzvah – were all occasions when we were very happy that he, and sometimes Dorothy too, were able to be with us.

Ilja would telephone me from time to time to chat, and on one occasion related to me the story of Gauleiter Koch. Ilja had been asked to write an

article on his school days at the Gymnasium in Elbing on the occasion of the 410th year of its foundation. He agreed to do so, provided that what he wrote would be uncensored, to which a delegation made up of the present members of the directorate agreed. One of the members of the delegation – a woman – had a Jewish grandmother, and from her he obtained information relating to Gauleiter Koch of whom Ilja had some unhappy personal experiences. Moreover, the mass murder by shooting of the Jewish population of Kubarty which included Ilja's mother was in the area under the control of Gauleiter Koch.

The Nazis had a policy of distributing the clothes of people they had shot to the local populace, and Ilja received information about the murder of his mother from a woman who had been her dressmaker. After the war, the dressmaker had managed to contact Ilja to tell him that she had seen someone else wearing one of the dresses she had made for his mother.

Koch at the end of the war was picked up by the British. He was wanted by both the Poles and the Russians as a war criminal, and the British eventually handed him over to the Poles to stand trial for his crimes. At the time it turned out that he was too ill to stand trial, and when he did, and was condemned to death, the sentence for some reason was not carried out, and he ended up in a Polish jail where he subsequently died.

Over the years, Ilja had been anxious to trace what had happened to all the people he had known in the areas where he had lived and been educated. He told me how he had received information that the Lithuanian Customs Officer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Karl Kubatis, who had been so helpful to him were now living in New Jersey. He was able to contact them and was happy to find that they were not in need. However, he used to telephone them regularly, and was concerned eventually when he found the number no longer obtainable. He asked me to find out what had happened to them on one of my visits to New York, which I did. Sadly, it had transpired that both Mr. & Mrs. Kubatis had passed away.

On another occasion, Ilja had expressed to me a special wish to obtain a copy of a book written by Rabbi Ephraim Oshry – The Ruins of Lithuania – a remarkable publication – which contained a vast amount of information on people who had lived in the area, and what had happened to them.

Ilja had been unable to find a copy himself, and knowing of my regular visits to New York, the present home of Rabbi Oshry, he hoped I might

be able to locate a copy there. I found the book equally unobtainable in New York, but finally discovered the whereabouts of Rabbi Oshry who told me the book was out of print, but that the Jewish Section of the New York City Library would be able to help as indeed they did by photocopying the book for me.

On my return to England, I sent him the copy immediately. Two weeks afterwards – on May 26th, 1986, I received a telephone call from Ilja, and was upset to learn that he had just come out of hospital, and felt too weak to study the book. He assured me that he was being well taken care of, and that he would shortly be in touch with me again. Sadly that never happened. He passed away four days later on May 30th.

I attended his funeral to which friends and family and patients came from a wide area to pay their last respects to a remarkable man whose memory will now be perpetuated in consequence of his generous bequests to the Central British Fund, to ORT, and to WIZO.

The Kaddish recited by his friend Mr. David Spector at his funeral was a tribute to the memory of a man who is sadly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Missing from this biography is any reference to Hirsch Frischmann, Ilja's father who was a tea merchant importing from the Far East. He was in that area at the time of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.

He disappeared from Kubarty in 1914, and his wife and children then moved over the border into Germany. The eldest son Max went into the "crack" German regiment – the Black Hussars – whilst Paul and Ilja went to the prestigious Gymnasium in Elbing.

I was told that after the 1st World War, Paul accidentally met his father in the street in Berlin. I do not know the outcome of this encounter nor what eventually happened to Hirsch Frischmann.

ILJA FRISCHMANN'S STORY 1932 – 1939

It was in December 1932 that I passed my finals in dentistry at the University of Königsberg in East-Prussia. Almost immediately afterwards I had the good fortune to be appointed manager of a dental-practice in Braunsberg (East-Prussia). The dental-surgeon who had owned this practice had a very high reputation for the fine work he used to do. Everything about this place was of the highest standard, really too high for a beginner like me, but somehow I managed to handle the situation.

The widow of this man – he had died of an infection a little while before – was most anxious to keep this place going because it had been planned for some time that their nephew who was still studying, and a friend of mine, should one day take over the practice.

The future looked quite promising for me, especially as this practice could easily provide sufficient work for two dentists.

Then, suddenly, everything changed for me overnight. Hitler came into power on January 30th 1933 and I as a Jew became a marked man right from the start.

At first, it appeared best for a person in my situation to try and carry on as well as circumstances would permit and watch for developments. There was an immediate sharp drop in the number of people seeking treatment but on the whole I still had quite a fair amount of work to do. Most people seemed to be gripped with fear what might happen to them or their livelihood if they did not comply with the rules of Nazism and demonstrated their faith in it. There were a few exceptions who would not be subdued. Outstanding amongst them was the Countess Lehndorff. She took every opportunity to express her distaste for Nazism. On one occasion, when she opened the door from my surgery to the waiting room and she noticed several people sitting there she expressed in a loud voice her contempt for everything connected with Hitler. When the treatment of this lady was eventually completed she said to me that my future appeared to be uncertain and I might one day need help. Should such a situation arise she would always be ready to help me. Conditions for me

began to deteriorate almost from day to day. About the middle of March 1933 I had been invited to an evening meal on a Friday by a family Wolff. It was a very pleasant occasion and the more appreciated as the world around us seemed to be so sinister and intimidating. Somewhat after 10 o'clock when I was getting ready to depart there was suddenly a sharp ring at the door-bell. The daughter of the house answered the door and to our great surprise came back followed by two Nazis in S.A. uniform. These two men entered the room, pulled their guns out and pointed them at us, who were by now all standing.

After a few minutes it became clear that they wanted money. Surprisingly they did not ask for much, perhaps the equivalent of £40–£50. I still remember me standing there and thinking it is not worth the trouble of pointing guns at people for such a small sum. We men were quite ready to pay up but the lady of the house thought otherwise. To my utter amazement she told those men that this was far too much and she succeeded in beating them down by half! Having received the money the Nazis walked out calmly. We discussed what we should do next and eventually decided to inform the police. They arrived quite quickly and having been told what exactly had happened, took first of all some time to explain to us that true Nazis would never do such a thing. We must have been duped by Communists who had dressed up in Nazi uniforms. Eventually the policeman in charge said they would now immediately go in search of the culprits. It would be of help if one of us would come with them to identify those men. As I was about to leave the house in any case I volunteered to go with the police.

We systematically went from pub to pub and surely in one of them there were there two S.A. men sitting, enjoying a quiet glass of beer. I pointed them out to the police and then went to my lodgings to get some sleep. For quite a while afterwards I did not hear anything further about this matter and I began to wonder what might have happened. Then, suddenly, one morning whilst I was working in the surgery there was a personal 'phone call for me. The caller at the other end would not give his name. I went to the 'phone and was told by a man something like that not so long ago one evening I went with the police trying to incriminate two S.A. men. If I wanted to avoid any trouble for myself he would advise me strongly to leave the district as quickly as possible, otherwise I would be helped on my way and that I would not like at all.

To me it became clear immediately that this was a threat that had to be taken seriously, knowing only too well what had happened to other people. Some had disappeared without trace and the bodies of others had been handed back in sealed coffins to relatives for burial. It was no good expecting any help or protection from the police even if they had wanted to. They were powerless against the Nazis, who by now were in complete control of everything. So there was only one thing left for me to do; to pack my bags and go and at one stroke give up all that I had worked for so hard to make it a success.

I went back to Koenigsberg (now Kaliningrad) where my mother lived. My situation now seemed to be without much hope. There was hardly a possibility for me to earn a living in Germany in the normal way. The obvious solution would have been to emigrate but no country seemed to want me and all imposed the most severe conditions and restrictions. My case happened to be specially complicated. I was born in Lithuania and had been a Lithuanian citizen since the founding of the Republic after the first World War. A condition of me obtaining a practising certificate in Germany was to be of German nationality. This I applied for and in due course it was granted to me. I became a naturalized German citizen. Dual nationality was not allowed and so I had to renounce my Lithuanian passport. Soon after the Nazis had gained power they revoked my naturalization, with the result that I became a "stateless" person. It meant that any country that would admit me could never send me back anywhere because I belonged to no country.

Added to this my financial situation became gradually worse as time went on. When I went up to University first I read Economics and Political Science. Towards the end of these studies I began to think of employment and the possibilities open to me. I was very disappointed to find that to gain a position was not so much dependent on academic achievements as on the party to which you belonged. Already at that time many people in leading posts in Commerce and Industry were – openly or covertly – Nazis and they made sure that preferably party-members, or at least "Aryans" were appointed to any vacancies that occurred. In other places I might have been given a post but the management feared that this might cause friction with some of their existing staff who were very much confirmed Nazis. Thinking it all over carefully I arrived eventually at the conclusion that there was not much of a future for me in Economics.

Sadly, I decided that I must have a vocation of a more independent and practical nature. As a result of all these considerations I chose dentistry and made all the arrangements for the change.

Now, with emigration foremost on my mind I started to search for a country where there was perhaps a shortage of dentists and I might be needed. No such country seemed to exist but for me in my desire to escape the Nazi yoke there was only one solution and that was emigration. In spite of all the difficulties I had to keep on with my efforts trying to find a country that might accept me. Thousands of others were in exactly the same position being most anxious to leave Germany. This led to the strange situation that soon all foreign legations were swamped with all kinds of applications. They in turn were not equipped or staffed to cope with this extraordinary amount of work and that caused very long delays. As a rule one had to wait weeks just to have the receipt of a letter acknowledged. It was all very frustrating and without hope. In this way I went on for months without making any real progress and without earning anything. Then with the help of relatives I worked out another scheme.

The German frontier town with Lithuania was Eydtkuhnen where the family of my mother had been well established for very many years, equally on the Lithuanian side the frontier town was Kibarty where my father's family had been well known for a long time and where I was born. There was much traffic going on between these two places, local residents on either side having special passes which allowed them to walk across from one country to the other. I was still permitted to practise in Germany. So if I established myself in Eydtkuhnen there was nothing to stop Lithuanians coming for treatment to me and a few Germans might even be able to do the same. My mother had already moved to Eydtukhnen and now it appeared best that I should join her.

In a way I found it very pleasant when I arrived in Eydtkuhnen. There were relatives I liked to be with and other people who extended a warm welcome to me because of the family I belonged to. I bought the necessary equipment second-hand and established my practice in two rented rooms. There was a trickle of patients and that was better than having no work at all.

It was about January 1934, on an extremely cold day with severe frost as it happens in those regions that one morning a Lithuanian presented himself for treatment. He was a strong man but now in poor shape. He was suffering from what is generally known as an "impacted wisdom

tooth" and could hardly open his mouth at all. His temperature was very high. There was no doubt he was a seriously ill man in need of hospital treatment and I advised him accordingly. This he refused to accept, his opinion of hospitals being of great distrust, and in spite of all my persuasive efforts he insisted that I should treat him. Eventually I decided to try what I could possibly do which was rather limited as antibiotics were still unknown at that time. More by good fortune than by my skill the patient recovered eventually, and I could remove the tooth which had been the cause of all that trouble. This man was convinced that his recovery was entirely due to my good efforts and felt very grateful towards me. He was the second in command of the Lithuanian customs post and very happy when he could resume his duties.

One day he said to me that whenever he was in charge I could take anything I liked through the customs without having to pay any duties. I took advantage of this offer in as much as it gave me pleasure to give some presents to the little children of my relations. I thought it right to show him always what I was taking and he would just nod his approval while his subalterns looked on. One day he took me aside looking at me in pitiful sorrow. It caused him obviously mental distress that I was such a fool not to know the basic rule of smuggling. He told me there and then never to show what I had on me, but simply to state that I had "nothing to declare". He would take care of the rest. From then on I always acted as instructed, but even with all this expert guidance at my disposal I was never interested to do any proper smuggling. I suppose he too never expected me to become a professional smuggler because he was really a very decent and honest man. As was to be expected other Lithuanian custom officers started now to come for treatment.

Outstanding amongst them was Karl Kubaitis, the man in overall command of this busy crossing point. His was a very great responsibility but he had the ability to cope with all the various problems his work presented. I was invited to his home and in the course of time he, his wife and I became very good friends. It makes me happy I can say nothing has changed between us up to this day in spite of Lucy and Karl Kubaitis now living in the U.S.A. and me in England. Our friendship is still the same today as it always has been.

Time went on and in various ways the Nazis never stopped to make life more difficult for us although I was still allowed to work and in this way

earn something. Emigration remained my top priority but in spite of all my various efforts and many enquiries practically all over the world I did not attain any positive results.

At the same time I kept myself busy trying to gather as much information as I possibly could of what was happening to the Jews in Germany. The distressing conclusion I arrived at again and again was always the same; we had no human rights whatsoever against the Nazis. They were at liberty to do with us as they pleased and there was no power to stop them doing it. But they had one weakness. They were most concerned that those barbarities of theirs should become known as little as possible to the general public and none of those activities should be reported abroad. I wanted to be prepared for any eventuality and tried to think it all out on these lines so that I should know how to react if anything should happen to me. I decided to scream and shout and make as much noise as possible to attract the attention of outsiders and in that way make it more difficult for the Nazis to conceal their disgusting behaviour.

On the 15 August 1935 I spent the evening with a family Berlowitz. I remembered we listened to the news on the radio at 10 o'clock, a little while afterwards I said good-bye and left their flat to go home. When I came to the Gartenstrasse (Garden Street) where we lived I noticed that there was no street lighting on but did not attach any special importance to it. On reaching the block of flats where we lived a man stepped out of the dark and asked me who I was. I told him and in response I felt a stunning blow on my head. Immediately I was ringed by a group of men who hit me now from all sides. I felt very dazed but somehow it came to my mind that I must make as much noise as possible. Subconsciously I started to shout for help. The Nazis kept on hitting me at the same time shouting that I should shut up. It all happened in a narrow street and soon people opened windows asking what was going on. By that time I became unconscious lying on the ground. Now I was being kicked with their heavy boots and that made me come round. When I woke up I heard some arguments going on, the Nazis telling people to keep their windows shut. One man told them he needed to rest and requested quiet. The Nazis replied that they would arrest him if he did not follow their instructions. To this the man answered something like: "Just try and I will show you what I can do to you". Now I was standing upright. Suddenly, the Nazis did not have much time for me as they were busy going to that man's house

in order to arrest him. I managed to get away in the dark and took refuge in a nearby house where friends of mine, the family Woltschansky lived. When they saw me at their front door they took me in and made me immediately lie down on a settee, put towels etc on me trying to stop the bleeding and then 'phoned a doctor. He appeared quite quickly, looked at me and I distinctly remember him trembling. Then he said in a faltering voice "I cannot do anything, this is a hospital case, call my colleague, Dr. Nabitz". It did not take long for the second doctor to appear and he quite coolly stated: "This is a case for hospital treatment". Without doing anything to help me these two outstanding representatives of the medical profession left.

Soon afterwards there was a sharp knock at the door. The Nazis had arrived. They had been searching the streets for me and met the two doctors. These in turn had given me away. Mr. Woltschansky tried to refuse them entry, stating that he was a citizen of Lithuania and therefore not committed to let them in. Their reply was that they would break down the door and deal with him unless they had immediate access. I could not cause any more trouble to my friends. I got up, managed to go to the door, opened it and gave myself up. They left me in no doubt what they were going to do to me. By this time I do not think it mattered very much to me what anybody said. I had difficulty in absorbing what I heard in any case. My head gave me very much pain which it was difficult to bear, my clothes were soaked with blood and the continuous bleeding from the mouth, face, head and specially right ear complicated matters considerably.

Then when we stepped out of the house something quite unexpected happened. A policeman of the local force came towards us. As soon as he was close enough I got hold of his shoulder-strap while the Nazis told him to leave us alone. They started to talk to each other – eventually I was taken to the "Bunker", a prison underground, without any more beatings. I must have lost consciousness almost immediately because I could not remember anything of what actually happened. I was told at a later date that the Nazis went to their place and had a drinking session.

Then fate took a kind turn for me. Many years ago, probably when the railway line was first constructed, groups of houses had been built for railway-workers about one mile outside the town of Eydtkuhnen. For some reason, probably somehow in connection with my grandfather, my mother took an interest in the well-being of those families and used to visit

them in spite of completely changed circumstances. On one of those visits she found a family where the original wife had died and the man had married again, a very young woman. There was a girl of about seventeen from the first marriage and the new wife made life for her as miserable as she possibly could. Without going into great detail I can state my mother found this girl in a very unhappy and helpless condition. Arrangements were made for her to leave home and she was warmly accepted by a family in a house almost opposite ours. This girl appreciated it all very much and was always very grateful towards my mother. In the beginning she helped me keep surgery and waiting room in good order until she found a proper job.

Of course, all the people in our neighbourhood must have heard the noise during the night and guessed what was happening. This girl got up at daybreak and without upsetting my mother went to our relations Freidberg and told their daughter Flora what she supposed had happened during the night. Disregarding the early hours my cousin 'phoned straight away the Mayor or Eydtkuhnen, who was a Nazi but had known our families for many years. There might even have been some rivalry between the various sections of the party. In any case this man contacted the chief of the local police force and they together found me in the bunker, unconscious. On the initiative of these two men I was transferred to the local hospital. I am not sure when I regained consciousness but I remember it was not easy for me mainly due to the intense pain in my head. The sister of the ward did her very best for me all the time whilst no doctor attended to me as far as I was aware of. Gradually I gained more strength and recovered to a certain degree so that I could leave the hospital. I don't think I have exactly worked it out how long I had been in there. It was all rather difficult then because my head, being the seat of much pain, caused me to react in some ways rather strangely. When somebody tried to talk to me I was really suffering. At night my sleep was disturbed by wild dreams and I would scream and shout, disturbing the peace of the night for everybody nearby. I had lost four teeth.

In the beginning walking in the streets was not easy either as I found it almost impossible to keep on a straight course.

Time went on and my general improvement continued except for my head which has caused me discomfort ever since. Dr. v. Lockstead treated me as best as he could, not being a specialist. There was never any

mention of fees which was very kind of him but embarrassing to me. After the war I was very glad when I could find him and show him my gratitude and appreciation.

How much my poor old mother suffered from all these events I cannot tell. I only remember that when she came to visit me the first time in the hospital she came into my room, gave me one glance and walked out again. Later she said she had not recognised me and therefore walked out to look for me somewhere else. But I was in a single room and I suppose she did not want to show me how very distressed she was on finding me in the state I was in.

Weeks passed by and gradually I started to go to my surgery trying to do what I possibly could. One morning, the date I cannot recall, I had a very pleasant surprise. Some farming people, each carrying a gift of eggs, butter etc., came to my place. I was absolutely taken aback by their generosity for which there seemed to be no obvious reason. We had a pleasant chat and then they told me that during the morning service on the previous Sunday in his sermon the Rev. Pfarrer (Vicar) Segschneider had mentioned my case and condemned strongly the deeds of the Nazis. He had urged all true Christians to support and help me. Their gifts were the practical response to this appeal. Now, very unexpectedly, I had much more food than we could hope to consume ourselves whilst it was still keeping fresh. I was in a position to give to others which meant a most pleasant change for me.

The main stream of the evangelican (Lutheran) church was very much in favour of Hitler and all his teachings but there was a splinter-group who found those doctrines incompatible with their faith. The Rev. Segschneider belonged to this group and he felt it his duty to stand up for his beliefs in his dealings with the Nazis. In return he was made to suffer in various ways. Eventually, one morning, he found the doors to his church boarded up, he could not enter it. (This was told to me by reliable people at the time but I have so far not been able to obtain confirmation of it recently). It must all have been most distressing for him, he had taken on a terrible struggle, far beyond his physical strength. Soon afterwards he had a heart-attack and died.

Gradually I started to work again – there was not much to do. I could cope somehow. Then, one day, I received a summons to appear in court as a witness. I cannot remember exactly how it was formulated but I think

it was a case against the policeman who in fact had helped me. As I have already mentioned before, during the night I was beaten up the Nazis arrested a man in his flat. He had really done nothing wrong but only requested not to be disturbed in his night's sleep which he badly needed. As it became known afterwards he was not only a very severely wounded veteran of the first World War but an old Nazi party-member also. He was in no way prepared to accept the treatment he had received from the Nazis without protest and so he initiated court proceedings against the two men who were the leaders in his arrest.

There was no possibility for me not to obey this summons and so I turned up in court. It was a strange situation as everybody there seemed to be much more concerned not to have any dealings with me than to find out any truth. I could soon return home. Later on I had the satisfaction to be told that the leading Nazi in the events of that night (Sturmbannfeuhrer Jacksties) received a prison sentence of six months. This was, of course, only for depriving a man of such high standing of his liberty and had no relation to the assault on me. There is no doubt that during the discussions in Court it must have transpired what had happened to me. Obviously, at that time in Germany, justice had its limitations and could not be extended to a person like me.

Life went on and it became more depressing for my mother and me from day to day. We could read in the papers about all those conferences abroad, how the various delegates expressed their deep compassion with our fate and then dispersed again without having decided on any effective measures to help us. I kept on writing letters all over the world hardly ever receiving an encouraging response. What made things more difficult for me was that I had never learned English and had always to ask for help when writing letters in that language.

Just to keep herself occupied Mrs. Kubaitis had opened a small restaurant close to the border in Lithuania. My friend Harry Rabinowitz and I were always welcome guests there even if we were not able to spend much money. A visit there was for us a relaxation from the pressures and worries in Germany, and this we very much appreciated.

It was on the Whit Saturday, probably in 1936, but possibly in 1937 that at about 2 p.m. I met in the street Karl Kubaitis and his friend, the commander of the Lithuanian gendarmerie in that area. Those two men were concerned with solving a problem. They had both come with their

wives to Eydtkuhnen on a shopping expedition. By now they felt they did not wish to see the interior of any more stores. They had handed over sufficient money to their wives and then slipped away quietly. It was only natural that they suffered from a great thirst after all their efforts and now the question was where to quench it with the appropriate liquids. They realised that if they visited any of the known places their wives would soon know where to find them and put a stop to their enjoyment. That had to be avoided at all costs. I had never met the commander of the gendarmerie before and was quite interested to know him well. After all, his men guarded the frontier and if I ever should have to make a run for it he could be very useful.

I don't remember who first mentioned it but one of us suggested that my surgery could provide a safe retreat. The idea was accepted with enthusiasm, a number of bottles were quickly purchased and we went to the surgery. There the desk was moved to the middle of the room, the mouthwash glasses proved to be very useful for quite a different purpose and we settled down to what can only be described as a drinking session. My two friends really enjoyed themselves, talking and laughing happily, all the time paying much attention to the bottles.

At about 6 p.m. there was not any liquid left any more and the question arose where to continue. We knew of a man who was in possession of an off licence but was strictly forbidden to sell drinks that would be consumed on his premises. We decided on this man, and he, after consultation with his wife, arranged a table and chairs in their bedroom and of course provided any drinks we might wish and were ready to pay for and food. We had hardly settled down when the lady I had rented my rooms from came looking for me. She was worried as a patient had arrived who insisted on being seen, in spite of her strongly suggesting that it could hardly be done this evening. I had no choice but to return to the surgery not feeling in a fit state to do any dental-work at all. There was an elderly lady waiting who wanted to have a tooth extracted. I hardly dared to talk to her for fear that my breath might smell of alcohol. She explained to me that she had avoided visiting my surgery at normal hours so that it should not become known to the Nazis she was receiving treatment from me. There was no way out for me, I had to do the extraction, fearing all the time that I might do some harm to her. The shock of the situation must have affected me, I became extremely careful and the tooth came out in

one piece. What surprised me too she did not seem to have noticed any alcoholic smell in my breath. I made a point of asking her to contact me immediately, at any time, should she have any pain or discomfort afterwards. I was really worried. After she had left I returned to my friends who were in quite a happy mood, enjoying themselves whilst I was feeling guilty. We stayed at this place till about midnight and then it was decided to go on to the home of Kubaitis on the other side of the border. I was included without being given much choice. Every one of us had to carry some goods, mainly drinks, all of which would have attracted considerable duty normally but in any event the frontier at this crossing point was officially closed for the night. This fact did not disturb my friends at all.

It was a beautiful starlit night and we just walked over the bridge from Germany into Lithuania, unhindered, avoiding the barriers. I realised we were being observed by unseen guards on either side and wondered if the Gestapo would be impressed on seeing the following morning a report on my wanderings at night with my influential friends.

When we arrived at the house of Kubaitis the two wives were there awaiting the arrival of their husbands. They were in a fighting mood but what puzzled them most was how the men had managed to disappear so successfully without anybody knowing anything about them. They had been searching and enquiring for them everywhere they could think of. In the end, when the whole story had been told, we all had a good laugh and then an excellent breakfast was served. I was made welcome, a bed was prepared for me so that I could have a few hours sleep. In the morning I went back, all the time worrying how the lady might be faring whose tooth I had taken out the evening before. There was no news from her until the day after Whit Monday. The she appeared herself in the evening and thanked me very much for the most comfortable extraction she had ever had, not the slightest discomfort afterwards. I checked the socket and have to admit it looked very good but I was rather embarrassed when she stated that she knew in advance she would receive the best treatment possible from me.

Otherwise life went on as usual which in reality was most unusual. In a sense we were "free walking prisoners" which would seem to be a term contradictory in itself. But that is exactly what we were. The Nazi laws aimed at segregating us from the community at large were the walls of our

prison and within it we were forced to act according to the regulations imposed on us. There was always the feeling of being watched either openly or with the help of informers. We were deprived of any possibility to earn sufficiently to meet the necessities of an ordinary life. We had plenty of time on our hands and to pass away those idle hours my friend Norbert Rubinstein and I would play sometimes all day long draughts. This was a comparatively easy going game. I do not think we could have mastered the power of concentration required for chess. The contemplation of our problems never really left our minds.

Some people seemed to make progress with their attempts at emigration but always very slowly – there were very many formalities all had to comply with. My brother Paul who was still living in Berlin and I concentrated our efforts on the U.S.A. where a number of our relatives were living. It was a long drawn out correspondence to make people understand what we needed and why. On the other hand we had to be very careful what we were saying because any letter could be intercepted and the Nazis were very ready at any time to make out a case for defemation of the party. The official line against us was to make our lives as difficult as possible which meant that from time to time always new restrictions were imposed on us.

One day the permission extended to all local people to walk over the border from one country to the other was cancelled for us. This cut us off from cheap food supplies and many other amenities. It made it more difficult to maintain certain personal contacts as well. It was most admirable how in spite of all the official obstacles some people succeeded to remain good friends of ours disregarding the possible risks to themselves. Near to us was a family Thews who had known us very well for some time. Their youngest daughter Irene – she might have been about 15 at that time – struck up a special friendship with my mother who had obviously grown very fond of her. She regularly visited my mother, no doubt with the backing of her parents, and those two would spend a happy hour together talking about and discussing any events that had taken place in the life of Irene. Usually I was given to understand that my presence was not desired and I always departed gladly leaving those two to themselves knowing only too well how uplifting those visits were for my mother and how her outlook on life was so much improved afterwards.

It had always been an aim of Nazi policy to lay their hands on any

property, money or valuables the Jews might possess. So it came hardly as a surprise when we were ordered to deliver all our gold and silver-ware. My mother had been brought up always to obey the laws of the country and strictly stuck to it never questioning the honesty of a government. Without any hesitation she was ready to hand it all over. I considered it my duty to deprive the Nazis of what I possibly could. My first thought was to throw some of the items into the river or to bury them somewhere but then I realised that such an action could become dangerous for me if some informer by chance might watch me from afar. Having considered all possibilities I decided to approach Karl Kubaitis if he could help. I broached the subject to him very carefully not to embarrass him in case he felt the risk would be too great for him. As it happened I did not have to say much. He was very conversant with the situation, had full understanding for my reasoning and worked out a plan of action.

One afternoon his wife Lucy went with a friend on one of their usual shopping expeditions to Eydtkuhnen, each carrying a suitable bag. They went into several shops and then Lucy left her friend for a little while whilst she came quickly to us. My mother, not realising what was going on, went into the kitchen to prepare a cup of tea. This was the opportunity for Lucy to slip some of our old family silver into her bag. After the visit to us Lucy met her friend again and as arranged these two ladies went straight back home. Of course, I was worried in case anything should go wrong but it all worked out well and I was greatly relieved. The following week I handed in all the other items and when confronted with a sneering official it was nice to think that some of the valuables had escaped the Nazi grasp. I was paid some money for it all, but only the value of the metal being considered, and even that was a case when a hostile buyer dictated the price. One could term it legalised looting.

As I recall it today there were not any other special events to report until the beginning of 1938. Previously at times I had been day-dreaming trying to picture what it might be like to live as a free man in a free country, doing some worthwhile work and to be able to earn sufficient money to pay for all my expenses. Not so any more, all my continuous and persistent efforts to secure the necessary documents to make emigration possible had achieved nothing. There was not the slightest cause for hope whilst our living conditions deteriorated from day to day.

My oldest brother Max had stayed on in Koenigsberg and he was in

danger just the same as we all were. He had made arrangements with German friends that every day at a certain time he would pass in the street below their windows to show that all was well with him. I do not remember the exact dates but at some days in September 1938 he did not turn up. His friends became very concerned and started to search for him. Eventually they found out that he was an in-patient at the Municipal Hospital but were unable to obtain any information why he was there. They sent us a message with this information and we decided that I should try and visit him. I travelled by train to Koenigsberg, made my way to the Hospital and without any difficulty was told on enquiry which ward he was in. It was located on the top floor. I went up and there I found my brother in a bed, unconscious. I was very surprised that as soon as I came near to him 4 or 5 nurses positioned themselves round his bed. They made no attempt to hide their hostile attitude towards me and acted as if they were spoiling for a fight. To me it came as a terrible shock to find my brother in the condition he was in. All I wanted was to comfort him and if possible show him that I was there to care for him. My feelings were obviously of no concern to those nurses. All they seemed to be concerned about was to stop me moving the bed-clothes. I did not try to talk to them, to ask them questions about my brother. Perhaps that was wrong but it was a very strained atmosphere and in my state of mind I would not have been able to stand up even to a verbal confrontation. In the end I succeeded in placing my hand on his forehead and saying a few reassuring words to him. He seemed to become aware of my presence to a degree as the expression on his face showed a little change, almost an attempt at a smile. There were no injuries to his face or head.

Soon afterwards I left the Hospital. It was of help to me when arriving on the ground floor I found a quiet corner where for a little while I could stand undisturbed and collect myself, before going out into the street. I was in no mood to visit any friends so I went straight to the station. On the journey home I wondered all the time how best to give the news to my dear old mother without causing her too much suffering. About 10 days later was the funeral of my brother. We have never known what he died of.

There was a sweet shop in Eydtkuhnen, close to the frontier, owned by a Miss Mett. It was well known that some of her relatives were Nazis in leading posts but she herself was in no way influenced by it and kept on friendly terms with practically everybody. On a very beautiful morning in

May 1938 I happened to pass her shop and as the door was wide open I entered to buy a little something. On seeing me she immediately went to shut the shop-door which rather took me aback, especially as she excluded the lovely sunshine. We two were now alone. Without wasting any words she quickly told me that she wished to pass on grave news to me. A few days ago she had attended a family gathering and met some leading Nazis. She had been given to understand on this occasion that a very severe action was being planned against all Jews for the not too distant future. It would mean for us the loss of everything probably including our freedom. When I came out of the shop I felt quite dazed. There was no doubt that this lady had spoken the truth and was anxious to be of help if she possibly could by giving this warning.

When I had collected my thoughts I soon realised that I must work it out very carefully in my mind what I could or should do with this threat hanging over us. I assumed that I was supposed to pass on this message to as many people as possible. The question was which benefit could it bring to those concerned. All of them and everybody made already the most strenuous efforts to secure emigration somehow to any country that would be willing to accept them. They were all under great mental stress. If I spoke to them of this impending danger I might upset some of them even more than they already were but others might panic and then not be able to control themselves of what they were doing or saying. A few unguarded words might be picked up by a Nazi informer. This could lead to prosecutions not only of the people caught talking but eventually of the lady who in her kindness had given me the warning. The consequences would be very serious for all involved.

Reluctantly I came to the conclusion that for the time being I would have to keep this information to myself. It was only left to me to watch out carefully for any danger signs in the future and then if appropriate pass on this warning in confidence provided it could be of practical help to somebody.

In spite of the general atmosphere of hopelessness I kept on writing to all my contacts in the U.S.A. Now my relatives in Lithuania had taken up the correspondence on my behalf as well. They succeeded much better than me in giving a true picture of my situation and as a result I received some encouraging letters. I hardly dared to hope but at least people began to show some real interest in my fate. Considerable financial guarantees

were required to secure an immigration visa for me and it is understandable that some people did not have the necessary means at their disposal. Others were hesitating to commit themselves to such a large extent never having known me and hardly ever heard of me before all the troubles started.

As could only be expected life became more and more difficult as a result of all the restrictions imposed on us. We were very pleased when the flat where my surgery was became available and we could move in. It meant for us a considerable saving of expenses. There was very little oppurtunity to earn anything and the pressures from the various authorities were kept up all the time. To owe any tax whatsoever was simply impossible, so it was quite a surprise to us when one morning an unpleasant, typically fat, German arrived at our door-step, announcing in his bad mannered arrogance that he was calling on behalf of the Income-tax office. We replied that we had no debts. He did not take much notice of what we were saying but came striding into our flat as if we did not exist. It was only right, he said, that people like us could not and should not be allowed to owe any tax. But, he continued, at some future date we might make some profits – he did not explain how this could become possible – and then we would be liable for some tax. As everybody knew we could not be trusted and might run away without paying our dues. To prevent such an eventuality arising he was going to "seal" everything worthwhile. We just stood there helpless. We could do nothing about it all. I dare say we could consider ourselves lucky the furniture was still left with us and we were allowed to use it.

Close to the frontier in Eydtkuhnen there was a pub owned by two brothers. They were known as Nazis and I suppose they would never have been able to run their business without belonging to the party. One Sunday morning the younger of the brothers called on me. He was accompanied by another man who to my knowledge made a living out of informing on people. I really was not happy to let them enter because I feared they might plant some incriminating evidence against me but I had no choice. They explained they wanted to see me professionally. Then the man from the pub stressed that as I would understand on account of generally accepted policies he could not have any treatment from me but he would appreciate my opinion on his dental condition. His problem was that for the last three days and nights he had suffered very great pains

from his teeth and now he was completely exhausted, especially as he had not been able to sleep at all. I had a look and it was quite obvious he was suffering from an abscess which needed opening and furthermore a few roots should be removed. I told him what I had found and if I made it sound a bit more forbidding than it really was I think I can be forgiven considering all the insults we had to suffer constantly. Those two men seemed to listen to me very carefully, then they looked at each other for a little while. Eventually the patient turned to me and asked if I could do the treatment at his home. I assured him that this was quite possible. The end of our conservation was that he requested me to visit him and do what I considered necessary. So it happened that after a little time had elapsed I went to those people's living quarters taking a few instruments with me. In the first instance I did everything to give relief from his pain. When I left the other of the brothers did not hide his concern about the patient's condition but I felt I could reassure him that there was every reason to expect an improvement now. The next morning I started off rather early and called on them at about 6 a.m. I was met at the door by a smiling face! The patient had slept peacefully all through the night and was still sleeping. The brother expressed his very grateful thanks to me and invited me into the pub where he offered me a glass of beer. I appreciated this kind offer very much but had to decline it as the thought of having a beer at this early hour made me feel rather uncomfortable. We had a friendly chat which in a way was rather embarrassing to me because my shoes badly needed replacing and I could not hide them from his glance. After a few days and some more visits by me all came to a happy conclusion. The treatment had been completed to everybody's satisfaction, my fees were readily paid and I was delighted I could now purchase those much desired shoes. But what surprised me most I had acquired two new friends who were always ready to extend a helping hand towards me as long as it could be done in a discreet manner.

Otherwise the summer of 1938 passed by with long days of monotonous idleness taken up by many games of draughts. We had never an opportunity to take advantage of beautiful weather. It was better for us to be seen as little as possible.

The warning given to me in May was always with me and made me wonder when the big blow might fall. By about the end of October certain developments took place. A member of the German Foreign Office was

shot at in Paris by a Jewish youth who had obviously become mentally deranged in face of the brutalities his parents in Germany had been exposed to. That gave the Nazis a wonderful opportunity to unleash the most vile and threatening propaganda against all Jews. From day to day the announcements over the radio increased in ferocity. The obvious aim was to bring the masses to a frenzied fury. We all tried to think what that might mean for us. In the beginning of November the victim of the attack died. Now the broadcasts came to a fever pitch declaring that all the Jews would be made to suffer for this outrage. I believe that was on November 4th.

The same day in the afternoon Mrs. Kubaitis and a friend of hers, a Mrs. Wagner, called unexpectedly on us. I was somewhat surprised when the ladies said they would like to discuss a private matter with me. We went into the surgery where we were left to ourselves. Well, they had all heard the German broadcasts the same as us. Karl Kubaitis and his friend, the commandant of the gendarmerie, had been thinking of me and the danger I might be in. They had decided to help me. Now the two ladies had come to inform me that all had been laid on for my escape into Lithuania. Everything was carefully planned and worked out to the smallest detail even to the extent that a room had been secured in a safe house where I would be able to stay for as long as necessary. I was very moved to have in my hour of need such good friends who were ready to stand by me. I thanked them from the bottom of my heart.

I had often thought in the past if it came to the worst I would try and nip across the frontier somehow and then see how I could go on from there. Now it was going to become reality with the marked difference that it had all been laid on for me in the most proficient way. I was on the point of taking a few belongings and then go with the two ladies when I suddenly stopped. Another thought had entered my head and that was what might happen to my mother and all the others as a result of my disappearance. In their fury that I had managed to get away the Nazis would be ready for the most fearful excesses. This was the situation in which I would leave my mother behind. I did not hesitate, I simply could not do it. With the deepest regret I told the two ladies I had to decline this very kind offer of help. Of course, they were at first absolutely amazed at my response but after I had given them my reasoning I think they understood me better. To make it all easier we joined my mother to have a little general conversation. Soon afterwards these two kind ladies left. My mother and

I tried to carry on as usual.

When darkness fell I took my mother for a little walk and we could talk peacefully about the situation we found ourselves in. We agreed that from any angle one would look at it there was nothing we ourselves could do to improve our position. Whatever might happen the main thing for us was not to panic but to remain calm hoping in that way to be able to cope with any events that might confront us. I would still like to believe this talk that evening gave my mother a certain strength.

The next morning I was up rather early, some time between 4–5. Opposite us was a shoe shop owned by a Mr. Fellmann. When I looked out of the window I saw that it had been completely destroyed. The big shop-windows had been smashed in, shoes you could see strewn about in the street and parts of the wrecked furnishings seemed to be all over the place – a scene of gross vandalism. We did not have to wait long for our turn. Soon we heard the steps of heavy boots coming up our stairs. There was a knocking at our door. I opened it and in came a detachment of S.A. men in their brown shirts starting to break up and destroy everything. Nothing would deter them in their endeavours. We had an old very heavy cupboard originally designed for linen but in those days we stored in it much china and earthenware. This they found very difficult to move on account of its heavy weight. After various attempts they succeeded in turning it forward and downward and eventually bringing it crashing on to the floor. This made the whole of our building shake. Of course, everything that could break was broken and once the Nazis had finished their destructive work all the floors of our flat were covered in debris. They had made it a thorough job. On leaving they told me that I had to go with them.

We went off, me being their prisoner. At the first corner we turned into Gartenstr. and there we met Kurt Rudzewski in company with some other Nazis. He was well known as one of the leading Nazi thugs and had played a prominent part in the assault on me in 1935. Now, on seeing me, he indicated that I should be handed over to him. As he obviously held a senior rank this was done immediately. My new captors were on their way to the flat of a Mr. Keidansky. As soon as we entered the building where it was located Rudzewski tried to hit me. But in those days I used to be quick on my feet. Before he could get a proper hold on me I ran up the stairs knowing only too well that his knee joints had been badly affected

by venereal disease and he therefore could not move very fast.

So it happened that when we entered the flat I had hardly received any blows. To my great surprise Mr. Keidansky was in no way ready for our visit, – he was not even dressed. We stood there waiting for him and I wondered what to do next. By way of explanation I should like to mention that in those days – officially – nobody died at the hands of the Nazis. It was always a story that a person had either been shot whilst trying to escape from custody or that he had met with an accident. Now things did not look good for me and I felt I had nothing much to lose. So I approached Rudzewski and asked him if I might speak to him. "Well, go ahead" he answered. I explained that there was a possibility that I might meet with an accident. Should this happen I would be very grateful if my relatives Friedberg would be informed of it first and not my mother. He listened to me quite reasonably and then said nothing for a little while. He looked at me in a rather strange way first and followed this up by stating: "There won't be any accident". Soon afterwards Mr. Keidansky was ready and we all marched off to the Headquarters of the Gestapo which at that time were located at the Railway Station. Neither Rudzewski nor the other Nazis made any attempt at hitting me.

On arrival we were interrogated about the details relating to each person. When it became clear that I was not a German citizen the Gestapo man told me that I could go home. This was a very unexpected development which I could hardly believe but it was a fact. I certainly did not trust the Nazis and wondered what the real meaning of it was. Of course, I went back to our flat. At least my mother and I were together but there was that uncertainty hanging over us not knowing what the next hour might bring. We had no food fit for eating and to look at all the destruction around us was most depressing. In normal circumstances one would have started with the clearing-up operations but we hesitated fearing it might lead to further complications should we have another visit from the storm-troopers. We decided to try and restore some sort of an order only with things that were most essential. Most of the time we were just sitting around somewhat dazed and feeling completely isolated. Slowly the day passed by and I remember in the afternoon my mother sitting near to a window, the pale rays of a fading November sun shining on her distraught face. It appeared her whole life had been shattered.

We knew there was a guard of Nazis at the entrance to our block of flats

and we could only assume they had been posted there to stop us leaving and at the same time making sure that nobody should visit us. Suddenly there was a ring at our door-bell, a very ordinary tinkle, in no way forceful and threatening and no knocking at all. On that day this was very unusual and did not seem to fit into the pattern of things. I did not know what to make of it and eventually opened the door very guardedly. There, to my utter amazement, stood Karl Kubaitis, resplendent in his uniform. He came in and what a welcome visitor he was to us! The guards at the entrance to our building had let him pass unchallenged either not realising whom he was going to call on or not daring to stop him because he was a foreigner wearing the insignia of his rank. It was a strange situation when he stood there looking around. He made every effort to appear as if he did not notice anything unusual. Turning towards us he tried to smile and to cheer us up. We were so happy to have him with us, we very readily responded to his talking. We would have loved to offer him something as a token of welcome but we had nothing. One could not even expect a visitor to sit down somewhere among all the debris. So we walked or stood around talking when he suddenly like magic produced out of his great-coat pockets the most delicious sandwiches. He knew what was needed. Nobody could have wished for a better friend. When we were low-down and helpless he did not shrink from making his way to us and to bring us comfort and new strength to face the future. We could only say "Thank you" to him but we hoped he would realise how deep our feelings of gratitude were.

We spent a quiet night, not disturbed by any unwanted callers. The next morning Rudzewski appeared with some other Gestapo-men. His attitude was quite different from previous encounters. He just explained that after all I had to be taken into custody too. This removed a certain uncertainty from me, – I did not have to fear that some special treatment, different as applied to all the others was planned for me. A quick good-bye to my mother and off we went. I was taken to the bunker where I had already been in 1935. If I remember correctly I asked even if I could have the same cell as once before. It was an unpleasant place, cold damp and dark but the worst of all was an evil smell from the straw that served as a bed. We were one man to each cell. There was not much one could do just to keep moving in the dark to avoid getting too cold or resting on that straw. Food was a big problem because there was none. We hoped it

might be brought to us but I doubt if our relatives knew anything about our whereabouts and the conditions we were in.

One evening there was a great surprise. We were allowed into the lighted gangway outside the cells. Mrs. X, the wife of Dr. X, who occupied the cell next to mine appeared with a basket of wonderful sandwiches. He must have been half-starved. On seeing the food he ravenously started devouring them while his wife watched, rather shocked. I too stood there, being hungry and having nothing to do. Eventually Dr. X turned towards me and said "You may have one". I appreciated this kind gesture very much and thanked him accordingly, – it certainly was of great help to me. Many weeks afterwards when I was free again I met a long-standing German friend of our family, a Mrs. Achenbach. During a conversation she asked casually if I had ever received the sandwiches which she had handed to Mrs. X to pass on to me. Looking back on those events today I think one can understand that Mrs. X on finding her husband in the state he was in and not having brought any food of her own simply felt not able to tell him for whom those sandwiches were really intended.

We stayed only a few days in the bunker. One morning some Gestapo men came and we were marched off to the railway station. There was a roll-call of all the other prisoners in progress when we arrived and once this was finished we were allotted to the various cells. I was lucky because I was allowed to join my friends Norbert Rubinstein and Harry Rabinowitz. The cells at this station had been originally designed for the detention of one prisoner each, usually the odd person who had fallen foul of the law trying to cross the frontier by train. But we were thirteen men to each cell and the difficulty was how to make the most of the comparatively small space available. It proved best if we would just sit down on the floor, but even then some of use would have to stand. To one elderly man who was recovering from a serious internal operation we tried to give more comfort. He could sit leaning his back on a wall and having enough room to stretch out his legs. When I arrived Norbert Rubinstein offered me a chocolate. His girl friend had brought him some on a visit. After my days in the bunker this gift seemed so precious to me I really felt I could not accept it, but he showed me he had some more and so I ate it with great relish. Here we were allowed to order food from the station buffet which was then brought to us. The prices for the various items were

specially made up for us and so exorbitant that nobody could afford much but it was nice to have a warm snack each day. It was arranged that a few boards were placed on some supports in the station yard some to be used as a table and others somewhat lower as a seat. There we had our lunches which were really the only meals. Soon the Nazis designed a new scheme. The Hitler Youth was alerted to assemble each day on the opposite side of the yard. Whilst we were eating they would stand there and scream insults and obscenities at us.

One morning I was told that our flat had to be searched and I would have to be present. Two Gestapo-men took me there. I had to walk in front with my guards following at a short distance behind shouting directions as and when necessary. I had not washed or shaved for quite a number of days and not been out of my clothes either. Soon it became clear that they wanted to make an exhibition of me. They directed me towards the market square where I was made to walk all around. I just followed their instructions looking straight ahead. Suddenly there appeared two young Lithuanian army officers in uniform. I am sure I had never met them before, they were quite unknown to me. On seeing me they jumped to attention and, with their eyes fixing me, gave me a very smart salute. They could not have done it better on the parade ground in front of a higher rank. These days I still like to think back with gratitude and admiration at the quick and very effective reaction of these two young men to an unexpected situation. I often wonder what might have happened to them in the fateful years that followed and which brought so much tragedy to those regions. It is to my great regret that I never met these two officers again and could not express to them my grateful thanks for their kind action. What the Gestapo-men thought of it all I cannot say but our promenading was quickly finished.

We went to the flat, they just gave the rooms a cursory glance, made a few derogatory remarks and then we went back to the station. During one of the following days it became quite clear what we were being held for. Small tables were brought into the large baggage-hall of the station, behind each was seated a Gestapo man with an extensive questionnaire. Each of us was interrogated about all possible details as to himself and his family, including ancestry. Then we were each photographed, all in the same position (we had to pay for the photos). The purpose of these activities was without doubt to prepare us for the transport to a

concentration-camp. We were not told so directly but it was to a degree hinted at. We were all conscious of a great uncertainty. It was just as well that all of us in our cell got on well together, it made it that much easier to cope with the situation.

On one of the following days there was a special surprise for us; we were allowed visitors. I think everybody's relations turned up and they were all very worried about us. My mother came too and it was not easy to pretend to her that there was no cause for concern whilst looking at her care-worn face. Nobody knew what our future was going to be. But by far the worst cases were the mothers with small children. These youngsters who, of course, could not grasp the seriousness of the situation were very excited and happy to see their fathers again but then they started to beg them, mostly with tears in their eyes, to come home. It was very upsetting to all of us. When the visitors had gone and we were back in our cells again everyone seemed to be extraordinarily quiet, hardly a word was being spoken. In this mood we settled down for the night as best we could. I had by that time a favourite position : standing upright, pressing myself against the heavy door which gave me good support. I am sure I must have been sleeping that way as well because I felt always refreshed after a few hours. In about the middle of the night we were suddenly woken up by some horrible, inarticulated screaming in our cell. What I had never experienced before was happening. One of our men was going beserk trying to creep up one of the bare walls. My friend, Norbert Rubinstein, and I just seized him and forcibly held him to the ground. Soon he began to feel exhausted and then we talked to him quietly and reassuringly which made him relax. A warm drink or at least some water would have been of help but we had neither. Eventually all was quiet and peaceful again and we tried to continue with our rest. As I was told afterwards the wife of the man who had been so upset was expecting a baby at the time.

As usual, between 5 – 6 a.m. we were let out into the yard. Somehow, I don't know why, to me it seemed to be such a strange morning. I watched our two S.S. guards strutting about in their highly polished boots. the representatives of the master-race. To me they looked more to be of a low mental state but full of their own importance. It seemed so unbelievable that a country which in the past had produced so many men of the highest standing in the world of science and letters was now ruled by thugs who were really an insult to human intelligence. Thinking on these lines

suddenly an idea came to my mind – I cannot explain how but it was all based on the probable reactions of the people in charge of us. When we were returned to our cells I said to our guard that I would like to write a letter. He looked at me absolutely stunned but said nothing. About half an hour later or so he opened the door to our cell and shouted "Who wanted to write a letter?" Well, it was me and he took me to a nice clean office – it was quite a treat to be in there. I was shown to a chair in front of a small desk, on it a sheet of writing paper, pen and ink. Three Gestapo-men stood round, obviously very interested to learn what I might be wishing to write. They urged me to get on with it which I did. A similar letter in this country would have been like this:

To H.M. Inspector of Taxes

Dear Sir,

As I am at present unavoidably away from my home I very much regret I am not able for the time being to pay my income-tax arrears. Please accept my apologies for the delay.

The Gestapo-men had, of course, watched me and been reading what I had felt necessary to say. They became quite excited. The lure of money for their Third Reich seemed to overshadow all other considerations – what I had been hoping for. I was taken back to the cell. As I have made it already very clear before it was absolutely impossible for us to owe any tax and one phone call to that office could have provided this information. But my scheme was based on the fact that these Gestapo-men would feel so superior to everybody else that the thought of seeking advice from other sources would not enter their minds. After a little while the guard appeared again and I was taken back to the same office. Now a more senior man interrogated me about my tax-problems and I told him the same story. He ended up by asking me if I could pay the tax in case I was released. My answer to this was that I would only have to approach people who owed me some fees (they existed solely in my fantasy) and collect sufficient money to pay my dues. This seemed to impress him. After a little consideration he decided that I should be freed provided I signed a document that I had been well treated. A further condition of my release was that I would have to report to his office three times each day beginning the following morning.

The seemingly impossible had become a fact; I was free again and this

was entirely due to the lies I had told, a sad sign of the times we were living in.

It had all come about so quickly I hardly dared to trust my luck. Not to mention what might happen if after all someone in the Gestapo should decide to 'phone the tax-office. But I kept on walking. There were not many people about as it was still comparatively early in the morning. One of the first I met was my aunt Rachel Wolpe who had always been very kind to me. On seeing me so unexpectedly she almost shouted out in astonishment. I quickly indicated to her that it would be best for me to be noticed as little as possible and she immediately understood. But we had a nice chat and that was very pleasant. Soon afterwards I arrived at our flat and was greeted happily by my mother. All her worries and sufferings during the last few weeks seemed to have vanished for that moment. Then we had a refreshing cup of tea with something to eat. My mother's eye-sight had much deteriorated recently and that was just as well on this occasion; she could not quite realise the filthy state I was in. Next I had a thorough clean-up which was not only refreshing but gave me altogether a certain feeling of self-assurance.

All the time I had been wondering how my mother might have managed during my absence. Now it was most inspiring to hear how relatives and friends – specially those from across the border who were in a much better position to do so – had all done their very best to stand by her and see to it that she was not lacking any essentials. But one story was certainly an unexpected surprise. When my mother opened the front-door of our flat on the morning following the day of my arrest there was a neat parcel waiting for her on the door-step. On opening it she found it contained various goods like tea, coffee, sugar, etc. but no sign whatsoever who the generous provider might have been. Everything about this parcel – the items in it and the way it had been packed – allowed only the conclusion that it had been arranged by a German person. We have never been able to find out who it might have been and that we regretted very much. We would have loved to express out gratitude and appreciation, not only for the material help it gave but for the moral support it rendered in our hour of need. It proved further to us that in spite of the vicious propaganda constantly being poured out by the media there were still people about who kept a clear mind and used their own judgment.

Of course, I myself kept on thinking all the time how best to continue

with that charade about my income-tax. It was really a big problem. I feared that when my letter would arrive at the office it could possibly lead to enquiries and complications which in the end might be turned against me. From whatever angle I looked at it the best way to cope with the situation appeared to be for me to visit the income-tax office and try what I might be able to do to clear up matters. I went there in the afternoon and was seen by a young man who seemed to be quite reasonable. The case in hand concerned his work and that was obviously much more important to him than any Nazi slogans. Listening to my story he became quite worried that he may have slipped up and overlooked somehow some debt of mine. He went most carefully through my file, checking and re-checking, and in the end pronounced, no doubt with great relief to himself, that I did not owe any income-tax.

It would have been very tempting to tell him that I had known this all along but, of course, I kept quiet about it and just apologised for having caused some unnecessary work. Following it up I mentioned my letter that would probably arrive in a day or two and we agreed that it simply could be ignored as the whole matter had now been cleared up.

Leaving the building I thought it had all gone rather well but then it became clear to me that this might mean the end of the story I had told the Gestapo and with it of my journey into freedom. If when reporting to the Gestapo as ordered I should be asked how much progress I had made with paying my income-tax I could not say anything else but that all was settled. As hard as I might try I could not think of any other answer I could reasonably give.

Now my only hope was that for a few days no questions would be asked. The next morning I was ready early to report at the Gestapo Headquarters. Thinking whilst being there I might have a chance of seeing my friends still in prison I wanted to take some sweets and cigarettes with me. I might be lucky and find an opportunity to slip these things to them. The first difficulty was I had hardly any money. I would not let this deter me and decided to try in a little groceries shop just round the corner from our block of flats if I could obtain something on credit. People there knew me as a customer. I considered it a typical frontier-shop because from what I had observed it appeared their main business was to offer various facilities to smugglers. It was not a place where the law was held in high esteem. The proprietress, like everybody else, must

have known what had happened to us all and so she was very surprised to see me suddenly turn up in her shop. Without any lengthy explanations I just asked her if I could have a few little items and pay for them at a later date. She listened to me but did not show in any way what was going through her mind. I suppose she was considering what risk she might incur with the Nazis making a deal with me in that manner. Then she asked me what I actually wanted and agreed to let me have the goods. I filled my pockets as best I could and was full of hopes that somehow I would manage to hand it all over to my friends. Arriving at the Gestapo headquarters I found the doors of the cells wide open which was quite unusual for this time of the day. Trying to avoid drawing any attention to myself I just passed by and reported at the office as ordered. I was seen by an S.S. man who was obviously thrilled with himself to have advanced so much in life to be entrusted with a desk job. He took great care to make a tick against my name in the right column and no doubt to accomplish such a task gave him great satisfaction. He only admonished me to be back again at midday and that was all, nobody asked me any questions.

I left the office and found myself outside quite alone, no guard to be seen. This gave me a welcome opportunity to wander cautiously around trying to catch a glimpse of the prisoners. But as hard as I might try I could not see anyone, not any trace of them. No doubt, they must have left and to me that could mean only one thing; that they were on their way to a concentration camp. This was a real shock. As I have mentioned before originally it was planned that we should all be transported to a concentration camp but then we were given to understand that a certain difficulty had arisen. In those days East-Prussia – where we were detained – was separated from Germany by a strip of land belonging to Poland and generally known as the "Polish Corridor" because all trains had to pass through it on their way to Germany proper. According to the relevant treaty the Germans had to pay certain duties for the use of the Polish railway installations. Now the Poles demanded that in our case these dues should be paid not in marks but in foreign currency of which the Nazi-regime was notoriously very short. We were simply not worth to the Nazis the sacrifice of any scarce money. So it came about that we remained just in prison.

On the way home I could only assume that this difficulty must have been somehow overcome and as a result my friends had been taken away.

It was a depressing thought.

Those sweets and cigarettes bought on credit just that little while ago I did not want any more. I took them back to the shop to the surprise of the proprietress. Again she did not say anything but she must have guessed that something had gone wrong. Her face showed compassion and understanding.

Whilst we were struggling with prisons and related problems certain events had taken place which now began to affect us all. The November action against the Jews had gone on all over Germany, many thousands had been arrested, a large number ill-treated and most of them sent to concentration camps. It gave foreign correspondents a great opportunity to send home highly sensational stories. Wherever newspapers were being printed abroad they published the most detailed accounts of the brutalities committed by the Germans. This caused a general outcry all over the world and did much harm to the image of the Nazis in foreign countries. It had always been the policy of the German Government to make sure that the true nature of their regime should not become known. In response to all this publicity they immediately started to make strenuous efforts to better their reputation. One of the results for us was that in certain ways conditions were somewhat eased.

People were released from custody if they could show any cause that their personal attention was needed to prepare for emigration, to wind up their business affairs or similar matters. The fate of the prisoners which had distressed me so much was not quite as bad as I had feared. Within a few days we knew that they had been transferred to another prison in nearby Stallupoenen. (The Nazis had changed the name of the place to Ebenrobe). From there some of them were taken to a labour camp where conditions were very hard. (Years later, after the war, I made every effort to find out what might have happened to my companions in that cell. We had been thirteen men. In spite of my extensive inquiries no trace could be found of ten of them. How they perished I do not know. To the best of my knowledge only three survived : Harry Rabinowitz, Norbert Rubenstein and myself).

One morning I had a pleasant surprise. A letter, or better said, circular arrived from the American Consulate in Berlin urging me to collect all documents necessary in support of my application for an immigration visa to the U.S.A. By way of explanation it was stated that this was most

important so as to avoid any delay when my turn would come to present myself with all my papers at the Consulate. This circular really did not mean much, especially as no date for my examination was indicated, but it could be of great help to me. I still had to report three times each day at the Gestapo headquarters. It worried me all the time that on one of these occasions I might be asked if I had paid my outstanding income tax. My answer could only be that this matter had been resolved. This could mean for me the return to prison but now I had this official letter from the American Consulate which stated clearly that I personally had to collect all documents necessary for my immigration to the U.S.A. This would make sure of my freedom. Strangely enough I need not have worried at all, – nobody asked me any questions at any time. A side effect of all that publicity given abroad to the treatment of the Jews in Germany was for me that my relatives in the U.S.A. became much more aware of my needs. Within a short time I had almost more sponsors and guarantors than were required. Added to this I received letters telling me not to worry about settling in the U.S.A. People invited me to stay in their homes until I would earn enough to branch out on my own. That sounded all very well meaning and helpful. The big problem was that very many people had registered for immigration into the U.S.A. before me, there was a long queue waiting in front of me. Much time would have to pass before the American Consulate could be ready to attend to my application. It might take many months and nobody was to know what the Nazis might have in store for us during that period.

The economic pressure continued relentlessly. Any work would have been welcomed by us, never mind our previous education and training if only we could have earned some basic wage. But the regulations were such that we were completely excluded from the labour market. Nobody would have dared to employ us in any capacity. Poverty and hunger became now our constant companions. My mother and I were comparatively lucky. Relatives and friends from across the border would keep on visiting us and always bring something. We certainly appreciated these kind acts very much and were very grateful but it filled us with sadness that we could never do anything in return. Sometimes a cheque would arrive from abroad. That made us feel really good. It proved we were not forgotten, people far away cared about us. The money, of course, was most useful. In this way we carried on as best we could,

drifting along, waiting, with little hope. Everybody had to try and struggle on somehow, but it was very difficult. The most tragic cases were families with young children. It will never be known what sacrifices parents made for them but I remember those sunken faces of the parents distraught with worry what to do best for their children. It must be mentioned that certain charities were very active trying within their limited means to alleviate cases of special hardship as best as they possibly could.

The whole world knew by now of our sufferings. The facts had been clearly established, nobody could deny them. At times I thought those politicians abroad who made such beautiful speeches about their high ideals of common justice and their concern for the good of mankind were bound to intervene. If nothing else they might at least attempt to secure better living conditions for us. Reality was quite different. It is all well known today. They were either captivated by the blandishments of the Nazi Government, or, lacking any fighting spirit, gave in to the slightest show of force. It was no good expecting help from that quarter. Another disappointment.

I had never forgotten the promise Countess Lehndorff had given me in 1933 to the effect that if things should become really difficult for me she would always be ready to extend a helping hand. I knew they maintained a flat in Berlin. My cousin, Dr. Freydberg lived there as well with his family. At the beginning of 1939 he came to Eydtkuhnen to say good-bye to all his relatives as he was emigrating to Cuba. I would never have taken the risk of writing to Countess Lehndorff for fear my letter might be intercepted. So I asked him if on his return to Berlin he would try and contact this lady to tell her about my predicament. He was only too ready to be of assistance. He succeeded in talking to her over the 'phone first and as a result was granted an interview to discuss matters. Talking about my case with him she was fully aware how much worse and more dangerous conditions had become since the days when she had given that promise. But there was no hesitation on her part. All that mattered to her was that it was her word I referred to and she was determined to keep it whatever the circumstances. She was a very courageous lady indeed and events in the future proved it as well.

A few days after that interview I received a letter from a gentleman in London, a friend of the family Lehndorff. That was good news but the trouble was he had obviously no idea how bad my situation really was. He

was not very conversant with all the happenings in Germany and assumed that I could just buy a ticket and come to London. I would have loved to make this journey to England but how was I to explain to him which difficulties would have to be overcome first, – for instance how to obtain a visa with my passport as a stateless person. Writing to him giving details how we suffered due to Nazi actions could have serious consequences for me if the letter was intercepted which was highly probable. I would most certainly be accused of spreading anti-Nazi propaganda, an offence which attracted severe penalties.

As before, I avoided writing to Countess Lehndorff for fear that she might be made to suffer in some way if it became known to the Nazis that she was trying to help me. I was trapped and there was nothing I could do about it but give up the whole idea. Another dream of mine shattered.

It was about the same time that we had to leave our flat. We certainly did not have the money to pay the rent but I remember somehow that the authorities exerted pressure that we should vacate it. My mother and I moved into one room which a family sublet to us of their own flat. It was rather cramped living like that, – the room was not large. In those days one just accepted it. All around us the situation was becoming more desperate. We carried on as best we could.

Then, about March 1939, I got to know of some developments which to me were absolutely tremendous because they changed the whole course of my life. Certain people in London who were very much aware of the happenings in Nazi Germany had formed a Committee for the sole purpose of helping victims of Nazi persecutions. In order to comply with Government regulations they could only offer temporary shelter to people who had all the necessary papers entitling them to settle in a foreign country but would have to wait some time before they could obtain the required visas. We would have to live in an old, unused army camp and leave the country immediately we were in possession of those visas. The Committee would accept full responsibility that these rules were strictly observed. To me this whole plan seemed absolutely heavenly especially as it appeared that I could comply with all the conditions stipulated. Understandably, I did not waste any time and at the first opportunity applied to the regional office which had been set up in Koenigsberg (now Kaliningrad). It was most inspiring how the staff there were dealing with our cases most efficiently in spite of the possible

dangers surrounding them. Then I met with a snag: everybody had to supply a medical certificate that he was mentally and physically fit. The injuries I had sustained to my head in 1935 made me still feel rather strange at times. Dr. v. Lockstaedt had very kindly treated me over the years as best he could, fees never having been mentioned. I could in no way by-pass him. So I went one day to his surgery and explained what a wonderful opportunity had opened up for me to leave all the miseries of Nazi Germany behind me if only I could provide a medical certificate confirming that I was sound in body and mind. Of course, he knew my condition very well but at this moment he realised what I needed most. So he asked me if now I were free of any complaints to which my answer was "Yes" and we both knew it was a lie. Then, he continued, there was no reason why he should not give me the desired certificate and within a few minutes I was holding it in my hand. I went off very grateful and relieved knowing that my documents were now complete to proceed with my application for the journey to England. There was no time to be wasted. It seemed important to me to hand in all my papers at the office myself as quickly as possible so that all details could be checked immediately and no time would be lost clarifying possible queries. I managed to go by train to Koenigsberg; everything went without a hitch and I was assured that in my case one would be processed with the utmost speed.

On the way home it was a pleasant feeling to think that it all might now begin to move my way. Something had suddenly changed in me and I almost dared to hope for a better future. I did not have to wait very long, possibly a week or so.

Towards the end of May on a lovely, sunny morning, I was walking along our street when I noticed the postman coming towards me in the distance. This was nothing unusual but this time on seeing me he pulled out of his bag a large brown envelope waving it high up in the air, beaming all over his face. I had met this man frequently before but he had never shown in the slightest what might be going on in his mind. Now he did not hide his feelings. It was very obvious he knew what that envelope contained and it made him happy to deliver it to me. Wishing me the best of luck he handed it over. Just as well there was no true Nazi about to watch our little encounter. In our room my mother and I looked carefully over every item of this wonderful letter. It told me that I would have to join a transport from Berlin on Monday, June 5th, going via Cologne,

Aachen, on to Ostende and from there by boat to Dover. The visas allowing me to travel through Belgium and to being admitted into England were in my passport. Furthermore, all the necessary tickets were included. My mother and I felt as if a huge load had been lifted off our shoulders. We were happy whatever that could mean in those days.

There was a little time left before the date of departure. Besides using it to make my final preparations for the journey it was important to me to say my "good-byes" to people I felt attached to. I had the feeling I might never see them again. But even that we decided had to be done with a certain degree of caution. If it became generally known that I was getting ready to emigrate, out of sheer spite a Nazi might concoct a story which could involve me in various difficulties with the result that I was stopped from leaving, at least for the time being. We did our best to be careful, asking people not to talk about my plans and we met with much understanding all round.

On Sunday, June 4th 1939, I went to the station in the evening to catch the night-train to Berlin. As arranged, only my mother was with me. Suddenly Rudzewski of the Gestapo appeared at the platform, which was rather upsetting to my mother. On seeing me he asked where I was going and I told him that I was on my way to England, having obtained all the necessary papers. This seemed to satisfy him and he left us alone. Now it was only the good-bye to my mother, then a last wave from the train window and I was on the move. No good dwelling on your feelings, I thought. I knew all that mattered was to bring this journey to a successful conclusion.

I had to cross Nazi Germany from East to West, a long distance and everywhere forces against me. On the Monday morning I arrived safely in Berlin and in the early afternoon I joined a group which was to form our transport. As planned, we left for Cologne and arrived at some time late in the evening. A guide was waiting for us at the station to take us to a communal hall. He warned us not to walk in one group but as much as possible singly to be noticed as little as possible. I remember how we stepped carefully past their magnificent cathedral in the dark. Eventually we arrived at our destination where a very good hot meal was waiting for us – provided by charity. We all needed it and it made us feel good. Then back to the station, we boarded another train that would take us across the border into Belgium. We were all quite excited about leaving Germany so soon.

After a little travelling the train stopped at Aachen which is the German frontier town. There were the usual passport and customs controls which we considered normal. But then we heard some clanking noises which sounded rather strange and which we could not explain. So some of our chaps looked out of the windows and were amazed to see that the train was moving on but our carriage had been detached and left behind. They quickly shut the windows and we all sat down quietly wondering what might happen next. We did not have to wait long. Some S.S. men came in announcing that they would check our passports and stop us from taking out of the country any gold and jewellery we might have hidden somehow. They looked at some passports superficially and ordered three of our men to come out with them. They all went off together. After a little while our three men came back bleeding, dazed, but with a little help they managed to find their seats in the carriage. The S.S. men returned soon as well and the same performance was repeated several times. I was sitting there watching it all, wondering when my turn was to come. But what concerned me most was if any of our men went missing. I was greatly relieved to see them all come back. It was a dark night. Gradually it became very obvious that the S.S. men were drinking in between their activities, they appeared to be more and more intoxicated as the night went on. They found it increasingly difficult to keep their balance. In the end only one S.S. man showed up, totally drunk, waving a large screwdriver in the air stammering something to the effect that he would unscrew everything to find all the gold we had hidden. But he was truly incapacitated and unable to control his movements. With difficulty he managed to leave our carriage and disappear. All we could do now was just to sit there and keep on waiting. I remember how pleased I was to see the first rays of daylight coming through the windows.

At about breakfast time we heard again some unusual noises and now we found that another train had drawn up in front of our coach which was being joined to it. Soon after we were on the move again – no more delays and we crossed the border into Belgium. For a moment I tried to picture what might happen if the officers controlling the passports should find some fault with our documentation and send us back. But I need not have worried. They were very much matter of fact and we continued on our journey. I began to feel so much at ease that I started to wander along the corridor of the train. Eventually we arrived at our destination; the

quayside of Ostende harbour. Here we had to wait for our boat to Dover. It was all new and foreign to us so it is not surprising that we stood all together in one group. Other passengers started to arrive. I noticed specially some people which I assumed were English tourists returning from a holiday. They had assembled not very far away from us. Looking around they could not help noticing us. There was no doubt they did not know what to make of us, we were a puzzle to them. The more they kept on looking the more they seemed to want to know how a crowd like us could wait for the same boat as they themselves. This brought it very much home to me how our appearances must differ from people used to living in ordinary civilised conditions. But I would not be disturbed by it.

I was by now greatly encouraged by our successful journey so far and was very much looking forward to being in England. A cousin of mine who knew this country very well had told me a great deal about the most beautiful white cliffs at Dover which could best be seen on entering the harbour. Now I made it my business to pass on this knowledge to all the others in our party. They became all very keyed up to watch out for these views. Then the ship arrived to take us across the channel and we boarded it in a very happy mood. I had a great feeling of freedom and was convinced nothing could go wrong any more. This was my trust in everything English. It was a beautiful sunny day, June 6th 1939. A friend of mine and I decided to make a tour of inspection on the boat. We came downstairs to a very nice lounge, completely empty. Everybody was on deck enjoying the sunshine. Suddenly I felt very tired and said to my friend I would just lie down on one of the empty settees for a little while and join him again later. I had a lovely sleep. Suddenly somebody pushed me trying to wake me up. I was rather surprised seeing my friend standing there telling me to come up quickly on deck and join the group as we had landed.

So it happened that all the others in our party had greatly enjoyed the magnificent views of the cliffs but I who had talked about it all so much had missed them. Passing through Passport and Customs controls the officers went out of their way to be kind to us. They must have known of our group in advance.

For more then six years I had been walking in fear of my life, had been made to suffer much humiliation and many indignities and now I found myself standing in front of this solid brass plate announcing, as I thought

with pride, Port of Dover. To me it meant that I had escaped from the maddened rulers of a vicious, barbarous regime and that I had found refuge in a civilised community. It was the beginning of a new life for me.

1 9 8 5

FOR OUR
ELBING GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

Founded in 1535
Disbanded in 1945

GALA FUNCTION

GOSLAR

SATURDAY, 7.9.1985
from 15.00 hours

Arrival of Former Pupils at the
Hotel Niedersaechsischer Hof
at 17.30 Hours

Ecumenical Special Service
at 20.30 Hours

Commemorative Address

RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT MY SCHOOL DAYS AT THE "ATHENAEUM ELBINGENSE"

That I undertake with much pleasure, as I am thereby afforded an opportunity, after so many years, to say how grateful I am to our school, or rather to its teachers, for everything they took so much trouble to do for us. Of course, they were all of them totally different personalities, and each one tried in his own way, with more or less success, to surmount the difficulties which we pupils so frequently and in such variety presented them with.

During most of my years at the school, Dr. Wundsch was our headmaster, an honest, upright man who commanded great respect, but also our confidence. Sadly, I have to confess today that I once took him for quite a ride. I found the teaching method of our art teacher very boring and uninteresting. He did not think too highly of my talents and had evidently soon given me up as a hopeless case. Thus, it eventually came about that I did not consider it necessary to buy new drawing paper after I had exhausted what I had, and I spent these hours undisturbed in other pursuits. This idyllic existence was rather rudely interrupted one day when, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, headmaster Wundsch put in an appearance in the art room. Just imagine, I did not have a single sheet of drawing paper. In my extreme situation, I quickly turned to the boy next to me. The good pal that he was, he gave me a sheet . . . . it was green paper. Without attracting any attention, I succeeded in fastening it to my drawing board before the headmaster reached me on his round. I still remember very clearly that he asked me why I had chosen green paper, whereupon my prompt answer was that I preferred it. He said nothing else to me, but before leaving the room, he gave us a short address in which he expressed his astonishment that only one of us used green paper, for it was a well-known fact that green had a very beneficial effect on the eyes. He hoped that, in future, more of us would give preference to green paper.

One of our best teachers was Dr. Baseler, an outstanding pedagogue and a friend to his pupils whose progress was of great concern to him. He was able to present his material, be it mathematics or physics, so clearly

and simply that everyone was able to follow his explanations. Mind you, he would never allow anyone to be a "lazybones", as he used to say, and it was not advisable to let him catch you while you were up to something.

The teaching of Dr. Witthoeft was on just as high a level. His task was to open up the beauty of the German language and the classics to us, and he did so with much devotion and great love. Thus it was that we were always more than ready to follow his trains of thought with youthfully great enthusiasm. Lack of discipline was never a difficulty experienced by these two teachers. In the Unter-Tertia (Fourth Year), our Latin master was Dr. Schultz. We were reading Caesar's "De Bello Gallico" and found it rather dull. What he himself thought of it, we never discovered. But somehow he had to get us to do the prescribed work, and his only method was the constant threat: "I shall slap you so hard that you will despair of life". This was successful up to a point, but I would like to add that, in actual fact, it very rarely happened that he hit anybody. On the other hand, Dr. Schultz occasionally gave us an opportunity for much mirth. That was especially so each year on January 27th, the Emperor's birthday, He was a reserve officer and obviously very proud of it. There was always a big parade, we had a day off school and were among the spectators. So, on that day, Dr. Schultz would march at the head of a column, very erect, in full dress uniform and high boots. Unfortunately, he preferred to wear galoshes over his boots which, in itself, was already in sharp contrast to military bearing. Added to which, we witnessed the amusing spectacle that these galoshes were somewhat bigger than the boots and were constantly dangling on his feet while he was proudly goose-stepping along. So it was that his somewhat exaggerated military bearing ended by being a farce.

Sunny holidays in Rauschen came to an abrupt end in 1914. To begin with, there was much talk of war, and then it was upon us. Extra editions brought the news: war had been declared! There was great enthusiasm, and everybody wanted to take part in the battle for Emperor and country. The older pupils volunteered to join up, and we younger ones were very disappointed that we were unable to do likewise. Everybody was firmly convinced that Germany would win a quick victory. And then everything turned out so differently. The war dragged on and on and thus the casualty lists grew. Even today, I can very well remember the day when the flag above the school was hoisted to half-mast and I asked what had happened:

Hans Mohnen had been killed. For many years, I had always looked up to him with great respect, and now he was no longer there. We all mourned for him deeply. There was much pain and suffering, and all of us felt it.

Then came the end of the war and it seemed as though it signified also the end of all our hopes. One day, we were told that our Elbing Infantry Regiment would march through the town after its return from the front. Naturally, we were all there to cheer them the way we had always done when the various units, with their band playing, had marched to the station to entrain for the front. We were standing there, waiting. Finally, a column came marching along, approximately 30 men! An entire Regiment had left, where were all the others? The awful truth dawned on me all at once when I saw the expression on these men's faces. As though they wanted to say, we have fought and suffered in a different world. You cannot imagine how terrible it is, and that is the big difference between you and us.

Then there was the Revolution, new slogans, new solutions. We pupils knew it all. Big efforts were made to maintain an orderly running of the school. One day, we had a kind of teachers' and pupils' meeting. One of us got up and spoke like a real revolutionary. He said, among other things, how we all hated this "red box" (our school). I was suddenly aware of tears in the eyes of headmaster Wundsch, and it immediately became clear to me that there are certain values which we must never be allowed to lose.

In addition, my memories go back to the time when the school janitor, Schicks, removed the word "Royal" above the entrance to our school. I was standing there during break and wondered what significance it might have for the future.

Later it then happened that on account of the peace treaty, certain territories had to be ceded to Poland. Many of the inhabitants of these areas were not willing to live under Polish rule. They decided to emigrate to Germany and to build a new life there. One day – we were in the Obersekunda (Seventh Year) – we were told that we would have a new boy in our class, the son of such resettlers, and that we were expected to give him a warm welcome. A few days later, I was asked to attend a class meeting in the community hall of the Church of St. Anne. I went there at the appointed hour, without knowing what was to be discussed. It all began with an address by X (I do not want to mention his name, as he is

no longer alive). He informed us that he found out that the new arrival we were expecting was a Jew. This circumstance alone caused him to ask all those present not to have anything to do with him and in no way to have the usual dealings with him such as we were wont to have among ourselves. He was fully aware of the fact that I, too, was a Jew, but would be prepared to make a special exception in my case, as we had all sat on the same school bench together for so many years, and as such there was nothing to object to in my case. In this situation, I could give but one reply: I declared that I considered it simply inhuman to condemn an innocent person in this way. Besides, I did not need their mercy, I wished to be treated in exactly the same way as they were proposing to deal with the expected pupil. After all those many years of being friends, it finally came to a complete break between the other pupils and myself. The exceptions were Georg Kendler and Alfons Michalski – for them, I remained the same as I had always been. Otherwise, I felt myself to be more or less isolated from now onwards.

I was an enthusiastic rower, but soon realised that it was just not possible to go on rowing expeditions if the crew was unable to row in harmony.

Without going into further details, all I still want to report is that in February, 1921, we all passed our Abitur (school-leaving exam). It was an old tradition that, in the evening of that eventful day, all the school-leavers foregathered for a celebration. In our case, there was no longer any question of attending. Thus it happened that Georg Kendler and I had our own festive celebration with our friends in his parents' house, something for which I am grateful to this day. Our schooldays ended officially with a beautiful, impressive ceremony in the auditorium of our grammar school during which our leaving diplomas were handed to us. And we knew that all our teachers' good wishes were with us on our way through life.

Ilja Frischmann
33 Carden Avenue

LETTER FROM Dr. HANS GRAF VON LEHNDORFF
whose mother Countess Lehndorff was a patient of
Ilja Frischmann in Braunsberg

Dr. Hans Graf von Lehndorff

5300 Bonn-Bad Godesberg,
Hensstrasse 6.
Telephone No: 35 19 06.

20th September, 1979.

Dear Mr. Frischmann,

Thank you so much for your letter. I am very pleased that you finally made up your mind to get in touch with me, the other day by telephone and now by letter. What you tell me about my mother touched me very deeply. Of course, I knew that she did much also in Berlin for those persecuted by the Hitler regime, but I knew hardly anyone of them personally, until such time as some of them wrote to me after the war. Such documents are naturally of great value to me.

That my youngest brother, who was your patient in Braunsberg, was the first of us brothers to die in battle, you will have gathered from my book. Our manservant, Köpke, about whom you wrote so movingly, perished at the same time as my mother and my eldest brother, i.e. he was burnt to death by the Russians in a house together with other men. His wife still lived for a long time here in the West with my sister.

You will probably be surprised to learn that, in the past few years, I have been to East Prussia three times, twice with my wife and my two sons aged 23 and 24. We still have quite a few people we know there and good friends also among the Poles. Your life is hard compared with ours here in the West. On each occasion, we were there for two weeks and drove all over the region by car, provided it was situated in Poland. The only place we did not get to was Braunsberg. The town is supposed to have been badly destroyed. The landscape is still grandiose and very much impressed my sons. By getting to know the "land of their fathers" they acquired a new dimension, so to speak.

I have already been living here in Bonn and Godesberg for 29 years, have a lovely house with garden, I was senior consultant at the Protestant Hospital for a long time, but then had to retire for health reasons. But otherwise we are very well, and we are thankful for the peaceful life we have been permitted to lead so far.

I spent six months in England 50 years ago, with a doctor's family in Derby, with whom we are even now in friendly contact. 17 years ago, soon after the publication of my book, my wife and I spent a few days in London at the invitation of German emigrants. We were most impressed to re-discover the former Germany there in its pure form, such as it no longer exists over here.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely

(signed) H. Lehndorff.

The decision to include the story of Eric Koch in this book was as a result of the following letter to me by Ilja Frischmann:

33 Carden Avenue,
Brighton, Sussex BN1 8NA.

February 18th 1986.

Dear Teddy,

To-day I would very much like to ask you for a favour if you can possibly help. Enclosed I am sending you photo-copies of two newspaper cuttings. In one of them a book is quoted: 'The ruins of Lithuania' by Rabbi Ephraim Oshry. To me this book is of great importance but it seems impossible to obtain it in this country. As you mentioned on the 'phone that you might soon be visiting the U.S.A. I wonder if I may ask you – provided that you can spare the time for it – to find out if this book is still available. Should you manage to secure a copy I would be very grateful indeed, of course, I would very readily re-imburse you for any expenses involved.

Our very best wishes and kindest regards

to you and all of yours

from us

Yours Ilja

The source of the article to which Ilja Frischmann refers in his letter of February 18th, 1986, is one I have not been able to trace, but it is of special interest to reproduce it as the massacre of the Lithuanian Jews to which it refers included Ilja's mother.

Copy of newspaper extract to which Ilja Frischmann refers in his letter of February 18th, 1986:

The trial of Colonel Bernard Fischer-Schweder and his nine Gestapo associates which, after four months, has now come to an end, in Ulm, West Germany, has for the first time served to recall in grim and tragic detail the martyrdom of Lithuanian Jewry. It was the longest trial on record dealing solely with the atrocities committed by a single unit of the so-called Einsatz-kommando – Hitler's special police created for the purpose of liquidating Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

By a strange coincidence the trial, in which over 170 witnesses gave evidence, took place just 17 years after the terrible events. It was in the summer of 1941 that the ten former Gestapo officers carried out the mass execution of the Jewish population of Lithuanian towns and villages. The full tragic story of the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry was told by Rabbi Ephraim Oshry in a book published in America under the title "The Ruins of Lithuania." In this chronicle of Jewish martyrdom, *Rabbi Oshry placed on record in detail, the way in which the Einsatz-kommando* carried out their inhuman work in the places mentioned in the Ulm Trial. One of these localities, to which many of the witnesses referred in court, was the small Jewish town of Krottingen, and Rabbi Oshry tells how the Gestapo set about fulfilling their destructive and brutal mission there.

RABBI EPHRAIM OSHRY

Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, born in Kupeshok near Poneshev Lithuania in 1914, was one of the few Rabbinical authorities of note to survive the ghetto of Kovno. Before the outbreak of World War 2 Rabbi Oshry studied at the feet of the most renowned Talmudic sages of the 20th century in Lithuania.

After the war he aided the efforts to revive the Jewish Community of Kovno then lived for a time in Rome where he founded the Yeshiva Me'a Hagolah for survivors of the holocaust. He now resides in New York where he occupies the pulpit of the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol one of the city's oldest and most distinguished congregations.

He is the President of an organisation of Rabbis who survived the concentration camps.

"Ruins of Lithuania" –

Published in New York in English in 1976.

ERICH KOCH (born 1896)



Erich Koch

Honorary Lieutenant-General (SS), *Gauleiter* of East Prussia and Reich Commissar of the Ukraine from 1941 to 1944, Erich Koch was born in Elberfeld on 19 June 1896. After undistinguished military service during World War I, Koch became a railway clerk until he was dismissed in 1926 for anti-republican political activity. Having joined the NSDAP in 1922, he was involved in the revolt against the occupation in the Ruhr and was imprisoned several times by the French authorities. Between 1922 and 1926 he was one of the Party district leaders in the Ruhr and a supporter of the radical wing of the NSDAP led by Gregor Strasser (q.v.). From 1928 Koch was *Gauleiter* of the Party in East Prussia and leader of its faction in the provincial diet. From 1930 a member of the Reichstag for East Prussia and appointed a member of the Prussian State Council in July 1933, Koch was made *Oberpräsident* of East Prussia in September of the same year. His autocratic rule never permitted the SA of the SS to come to the fore, as in other *Gaue,* but Koch's advocacy of collectivization in agriculture made him unpopular with the peasants and he was ruthless in arresting his critics, or expelling them from the Party. During World War II Koch proved himself one of Hitler's cruellest satraps in the conquered eastern territories, his criminal orders causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children, their deportation to concentration camps and the razing of their villages to the ground.

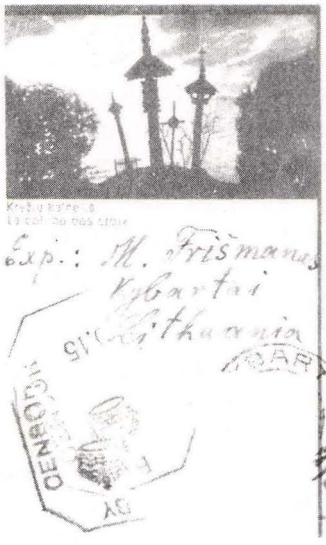
In addition to East Prussia, he was appointed head of the civil administration in Bialystok (1941) and from October 1941 to 1944 he was *Reichskommissar* in the Ukraine with control of the Gestapo and the

police. His first official act in the Ukraine was to close local schools, declaring that "Ukraine children need no schools. What they'll have to learn later will be taught them by their German masters." In a speech in Kiev on 5 March 1943 Koch was explicit about the methods he intended to use to build a slave State in the Ukraine and his complete contempt for Slav *Untermenschen* ("sub-humans"): "We are a master race", Koch insisted, "which must remember that the lowliest German worker is racially and biologically a thousand times more valuable than the population here." Thanks to his twisted policy of brutal "Germanization" and the repression, murder and exploitation of Poles, Ukrainians and Jews, Koch's empire was soon infested with partisans.

After the loss of the Ukraine, Koch returned to Königsberg and then, after the fall of East Prussia, he disappeared in West Germany until his arrest by British security officers in Hamburg at the end of May 1949.

His extradition was demanded by the Polish and Soviet governments who regarded him as one of the worst war criminals, directly involved in the extermination of the Polish intelligentsia, Soviet partisans and hundreds of thousands of Jews in Bialystok and the Ukraine. On 14 January 1950 Koch was delivered by the British to a prison in Warsaw, but his trial did not begin until 19 October 1958 when he was charged with the responsibility for the death of 400,000 Poles (his crimes in the Ukraine were not dealt with). Koch was sentenced to death on 9 March 1959 by the Polish district court in Warsaw, for having planned, prepared and organized mass murder of civilians, but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on account of his ill-health. In a state of partial collapse through most of his trial (rousing himself only to protest that he was a "Christian", a good "socialist" and a friend of the workers), Koch was fortunate to benefit from an article in the Polish penal code which prevented the execution of bedridden persons.

He subsequently died in a Polish prison; the death sentence passed on him never having been carried out.


LIETUVA + LITHUANIE
ATVIRUKA
CARTE POSTALE
15 PAŠTAS 15
15 ct
LIETUVA
Kybartai
Lithuania


ПОЧТОВАЯ КАРТОЧКА
CARTE POSTALE
Куда
Наименование места, где находится почта, и области или край, а для станций—ноя
Район, село или деревня.
Улица, № дома, квартиры.
Кому
Подробное наименование адресата.
Адрес отправителя
Adresse de l'expéditeur

POSTCARD FROM ANNA FRISCHMANN TO ILJA AND PAUL FRISCHMANN
April 12th, 1940

My dear Ones,

I hope you are well. I am all right. For a long time I have been waiting for news of you. Lo and Kahl are in Berlin. They are probably going very soon to Cuba. Bernhard is already in U.S.A. Do you know his address?

For a month now I have been living in Kybartai with relations, who are very caring and loving towards me, although financially they are not doing very well.

Heartiest greetings

from

Mother.

POSTCARD FROM ANNA FRISCHMANN TO MIRIAM KAPLAN (A COUSIN) LIVING IN DES MOINES, U.S.A. FOR REDIRECTION TO ILJA FRISCHMANN
Dated March 10th, 1941

My dear Children,

Your letter with the happy news (17th. Nov. 1940) that I now have a dear daughter in law I have received thankfully. I wrote at once a card to Ilja Frischmann c/o. The Bank Flat, Birmingham, England. Have you received this card? It was sent from here Feb. 18th. 1941. I also sent a letter of congratulations on Feb. 26th. To Miriam Kaplan for you dear children. Perhaps you will make enquiries at the Bank about my card, as I would like to know if you have received news of me.

I am at present feeling sad because I have had everything stolen from my room which I inadvertently left unlocked. This has been a great material loss to me as a result of which I am in a state of embarrassment.

Possibly from U.S.A. you may be able to send me a monetary gift. I hope so.

With love,

Mother.

SOME OF THE MANY LETTERS WHICH PASSED BETWEEN ILJA FRISCHMANN AND TEDDY ISAACS

Mr ILJA FRISCHMANN
L.D.S., R.C.S.ENG.
DENTAL SURGEON

215, TOLWORTH RISE,
SURBITON,
SURREY.

ELMBRIDGE 5023.

November 8th 1964.

Dear Teddy,

It was very nice meeting you all last Sunday and we should like to thank you very much for making it possible. I have been trying to find the last address of our relative in Des-Moines,Iowa but could not trace it as she never mentioned it in her letters.Her married name is Miriam Kaplan.I would very much like to look her up and say 'thank you'for the help she rendered me in days gone by.If you should know of any way to locate herI would be very grateful for your kind help.

To-day is a memorable date for me.At the same time in the evening as I am writing to you now I had to explain to my mother that probably during the night the Gestapo would come to fetch me.The only thing I asked of her was not to show them any feeling of despair.I waited all the night and eventually they arrived at about 5 a.m.Our home was completely smashed up and Iwas taken away.During these proceedings my mother showed a calm composure and I am glad I can relate this to you to-~~night~~ night.

With all good wishes and kindest regards to you all
From both of us

Yours sincerely

Mr ILJA FRISCHMANN
L.D.S., R.C.S. Eng.
DENTAL SURGEON

33, CARDEN AVE.
Brighton BN1 8NA.

[redacted]

2-5-82.

Dear Teddy,

As I already mentioned on the 'phone I am trying at present to write down a record about my experiences during the Nazi-years. It is still very much in the beginnings and I have not even completed the first draft yet as I had hoped to have done by now. Due to various happenings there seemed never sufficient time available for it but if you don't mind and hoping it might be of some interest to you I would like to send you the parts of the story as I go along. So you find enclosed the first instalment. If you could return it to me at your early convenience it would be a help.

Otherwise I am happy to report that Dorothy has come home from Hospital 4 days ago and she is in a much better state of health.

Hoping and wishing that all is going well with you and all of yours, Yours Ilja

33,Carden Avenue,
Brighton,Sussex BN1 8NA.

January 3rd 1984.

Dear Teddy,

Thank you very much for your letter of December 28th which reached me to-day and the enclosed photo-copies which will serve my purpose very well.I only hope I have not caused you too much trouble.I want to send them to my friend Norman Robins(formerly Rubenstein from Eydtkuhnen)now living in Sydney(Australia).He is obviously somewhat depressed and Ihope these photo-copies will cheer him up.The important item in the picture of the market-place is the line of shops one of which belonged to his parents.Again,many thanks for your kind efforts.

If you wish to hear more about Stallupoenen perhaps on your next visit to Israel you should contact Dr.Kleinschmidt in Tel-Aviv who originates from there.I doubt it if he remembers me-he is a dentist - but I am certain he will be able to answer any questions of yours.

It gives us a very pleasing,warm feeling that you,your London family and Gaby Botelho (my thanks to her for remembering me) spent the long week-end together.May you all continue in that spirit for many years to come !

To every-one of yours our kindest regards and very best wishes

Yours

Lyn

33,Carden Ave.
Brighton,Sussex BN1 8NA.

Dear Teddy,

Whenever I am talking about my life under the Nazis I often have to refer to Lucy & Karl Kubaitis how they were always ready to help my mother and me.For a very long time now we have been very good friends. Originally he was on the Lithuanian side in charge of the very busy frontier crossing with Germany.Unfortunately,it meant that he was a marked man when the Russians took over.To avoid being sent to Siberia Karl with Lucy managed in the first instance to escape to Germany and afterwards via a displaced persons camp to make their way to the U.S.A. There they succeeded in building up a new existence for themselves in spite of many difficulties.With advancing years they eventually settled into a small flat looking forward to some quiet peaceful years of retirement.These hopes were soon to be destroyed. They both became ill and Karl almost helpless.Soon it was obvious that it was far beyond Lucy's strength to look after Karl but she insisted on going on doing it.My constant pleas to Lucy to consider her own poor health and arrange for Karl to be admitted to a nursing-home met always with the same response that she would not leave th care ~~for~~ Karl to anybody else.We often wrote or spoke to each other over the 'phone.Then,some weeks ago,it all changed. I could not contact them,the exchange told me that the 'phone line had been closed.I became very worried and in the end I phoned a mutual friend,an American dentist,Dr.Levine.He told me the sad news that Lucy K. had passed away and Karl had been moved to a nursing home.It was a great shock to me.As I know that Dr.L. is a very busy man I did not like to trouble him asking for lengthy explanations.Now you have told me that you are going to New-Jersey.Provided you can spare the time for it I would be very grateful if you would 'phone Dr.L. and ask him about the details how it all happened to my friends.I can assure you it means a great deal to me.The address of Dr.Arthur Levine: Practice:692,St.George ~~Street~~ Ave.
Rahway,N.J. 07065
Tel: 388-0314

Private: 2098 Dogwood Drive
Westfield,N.J. 07090
unlisted number

Please,don't be surprised if he refers to me as 'Dr.'
So far I could not bring myself to talk to Dorothy about it all.Perhaps it is even better on account of her own health-problems not to mention anything about it for the time being.I thought it might be just as well to put you in the picture.

My warmest greetings to you all and all good wishes for a pleasant trip to the U.S.A.

Yours Lyn

P.S. I thought 'phoning from a local place might make it easier to find a time when Dr.L. is not too busy.

Hotel Bellevue au Lac
Lugano
12-5-85.

Dear Teddy,

After the last winter with its various difficulties we felt both rather low and so decided to go on a holiday to Lugano hoping for warmth and sunshine. What we got on most days is rain and cold wind. We are going home in 2 days but I am writing to you because you very kindly suggested that you might try and find out about the whereabouts of Miriam Kaplan. I believe her maiden name is Frishmann. As you might remember my situation in '38 was pretty hopeless. In those days it meant a great deal to me suddenly and quite unexpectedly to receive a letter from her from Des-Moines (Iowa) telling me that after our arrival in the U.S.A. my brother Paul and I would be welcome to stay

at her house until we could establish ourselves. This I have never forgotten. I believe in recent years - her husband has passed away some time ago - she has experienced difficulties of her own. I am most anxious to trace her and would be very grateful for any help you might be able to render. Her last known address to me was: MAPU 12, Apt. 2, Tel-Aviv but I understand she has left Israel.

Many thanks for your good efforts.

kind regards to you and all of yours

Yours Ilja

33,Carden Ave.
Brighton, Sussex BN1 8NA.

July 15th 1985.

Dear Teddy,

Enclosed I am sending you two booklets which friends of mine have secured for me.They give a little information about Stallupoenen -during the nazi-time named Ebenrode - and might be of some interest to you. I am enclosing further a letter from a Mr.Greengard in Chicago,written on 18.11.38, who I believe was somehow related to the family Kaminsky but I am not sure. Perhaps his name means something to you.I have been told ' Greengard's Coffee Shop' doesnot exist any more.All my efforts to trace him or any of his relatives in recent years have met with no success. I wrote some time ago to Lady in Chicago whose name 'Greengard ' appears in the Chicago 'phone book but received no reply. As a matter of general interest I am sending you too a copy of a letter I wrote some time ago to the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel-Aviv.

I have read your very interesting book only once so far,due to lack of time. We have been kept very busy with visitors from all parts of the world, even some Germans previously quite unknown to me who came in response to an article I had written for the magazine of my old school.As much as we enjoy those visits at our age they have a very tiring effect.Anyhow,I think we all have to be very grateful to you that you undertook all this extensive research and made the great effort to write it all down in detail combined with the story of your life.I hope to devote in the near future to the study of your book some considerable time.

Our kindest regards to you all and all good wishes

Yours

Ilya

33,Carden Ave.,
Brighton,Sussex BN1 8NA.

July 31st 85.

Dear Teddy,

Further to our conversation over the 'phone yesterday I am sending you enclosed photo-copy of a leaflet by Freshman's Inc. The business is being managed by Charles Freshman,the son of my late Cousin Abe Freshman.I know him as a good family man and a very sincere person.The business address is obviously given in the leaflet,should you for any reason wish to know his private address it is: 2242,Tompkins Drive, S.L.C. Utah 84 121.

I am enclosing too an old photo of mine which was specially taken - after practically a day of various interrogations by the Gestapo - for the transport to a Concentration Camp.For some reason the left ear had to be shown clearly,we had to pay for 12 of these photos.Eventually I tried to use the enclosed one for my application to immigrate to the U.S.A.The Gestapo forced us to use a Jewish name in addition to our others so I chose 'Elias '.

Our very best wishes to you all with kindest regards

Yours Ilya

33, Carden Ave.
Brighton, Sussex BN1 8NA.

Dear Teddy,

As arranged over the 'phone I am sending you enclosed some more Material re: Eydtkuhnen. I hope it will be of use to you. I am doing my best to obtain the necessary information about Vystinetz/Wystiten but it never belonged to Germany and so it is much more difficult to find the right contacts.

In many places in the U.S.A. you will find people with the name of Gumbinner or Gumbiner as evidenced in the telephone directories. They are all Jews and I believe descendants of soldiers from the czarist army who managed to escape into Germany. Once they had reached Gumbinnen they could not be handed back to the Russians and were helped on their way to the U.S.A. by the local Jews.

Wishing you a very pleasant and successful journey I remain

with kindest regards to you all

James Yours Iyer

I am enclosing a family tree of Abe Kaminski which I have filled in to the best of my knowledge, unfortunately, I cannot now remember the name of his wife. Should you need some information about the next generation I am very ready to supply it. May I take this opportunity to thank you both once more for your kindness to visit us and I can assure you it meant a great deal to us to be able to welcome you both in our home. From Dorothy and me to you and all of your family our very best wishes for a very happy and healthy New Year!

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
Psalm 122,6



Eydtkuhnen – German – Lithuanian – Russian frontier. This was the border through which Ilja Frischmann passed on June 2nd, 1939, and through which Julius Isaacs passed in 1886 en route to England.



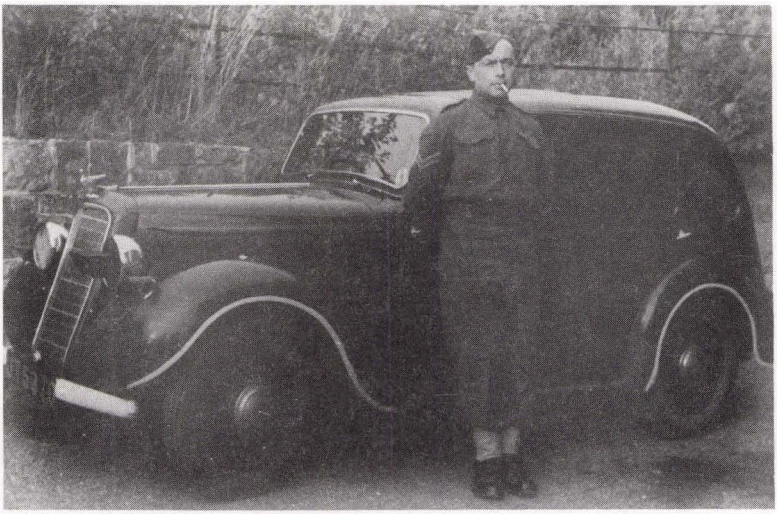
Kubarty. Birthplace of Ilja Frischmann.



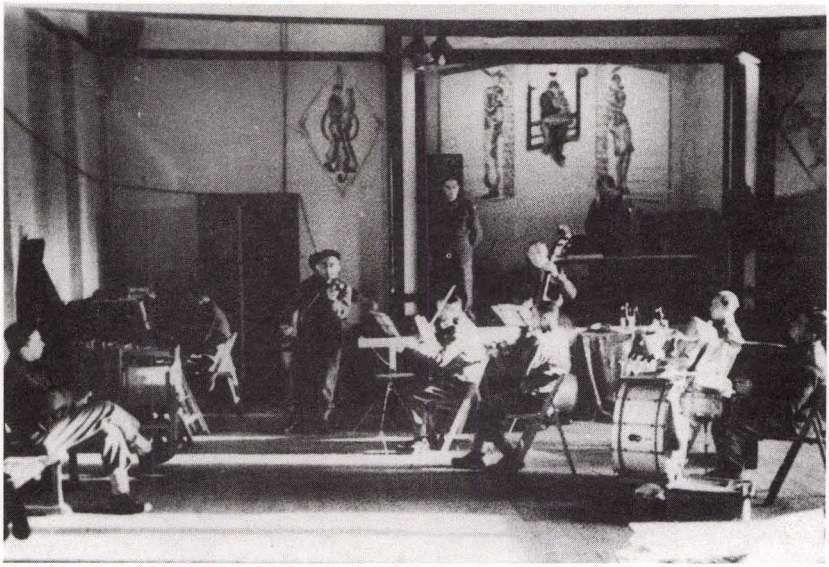
Austrian 1914–18 War Hospital. The photo includes Leon Frischmann (cousin of Ilja) wounded in a battle between the Austrians and the Russians, and taken prisoner by the Austrians.



Wirballen Railway Station showing it having been captured by German soldiers in the 1914–1918 War.



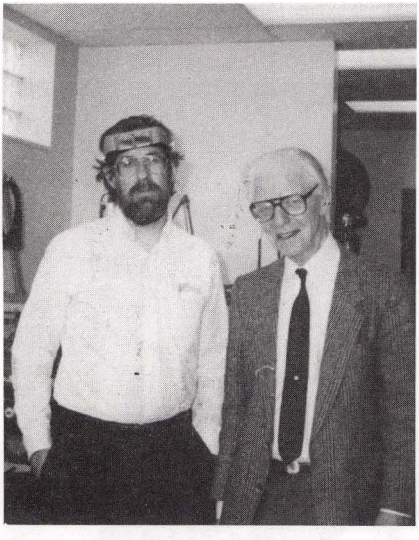
Cpl. Paul Frischmann standing by his car on which should be noted the 1939–45 wartime head-lamp mask.



The orchestra of the Pioneer Corps Unit in which Paul Frischmann served. It contained many talented musicians.



The Freshman family at their home in Salt Lake City with Edward (Teddy) Isaacs. May 1990.



Teddy Isaacs with Charles Freshman in his jewellery design workshop. May 1990.



Jacob Frischmann. Born 1866 in Lithuania. Came to U.S.A. in 1886 and in 1895 opened a store in Cripple Creek, Colorado. He died in 1947 in Salt Lake City where he had subsequently opened a jewellery store under the name of Freshmans. The business is carried on to-day by his grandson Charles Freshman.



Dorothy Frischmann in nursing uniform.



Ilja and Paul Frischmann.



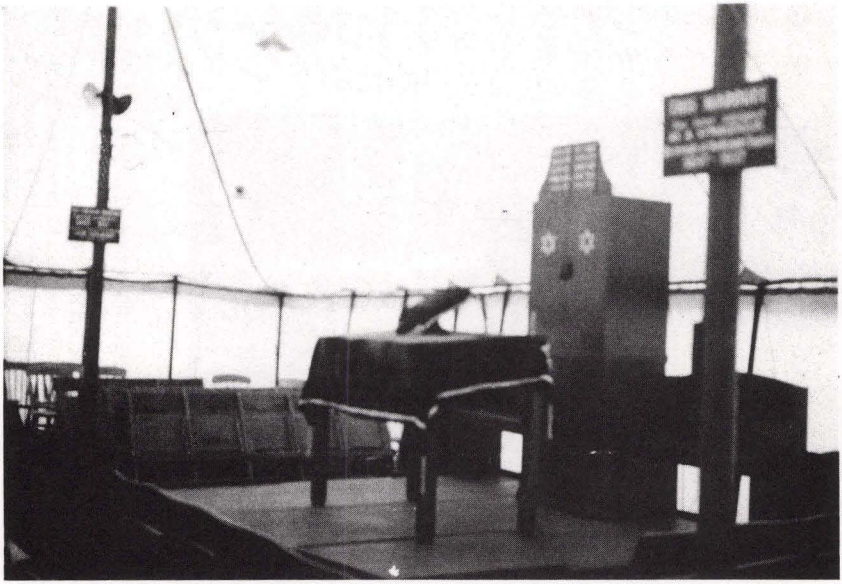
Hirsch Frischmann – father of Ilja, Paul and Max.



Anna Frischmann – mother of Ilja, Paul and Max.



Group at the Kitchener Camp Hut 301 – I, December 26th, 1939. Ilja and Paul are in the group.



Synagogue at the Kitchener Camp. Richboro. 1939.



Max Frischmann – 1896–1938 (Ilja's eldest brother) and first cousin of Leon. The photograph shows him in the uniform of the prestigious German regiment – the Black Hussars – in the 1914–18 war. Max, who became a lawyer, died in a Königsberg hospital in 1938. Ilja describes in his story the circumstances surrounding his death.



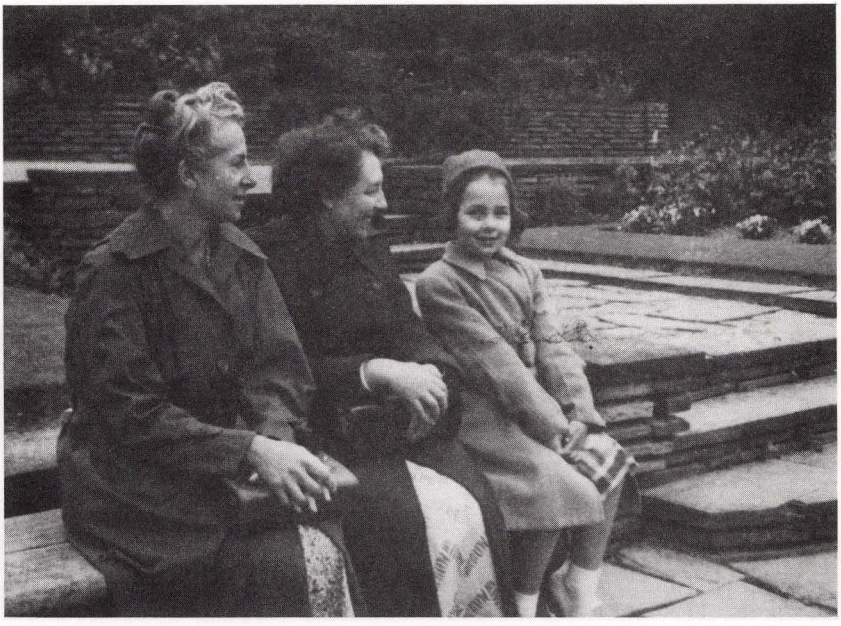
Leon Frischmann – first cousin of Ilja, b. 1896, d. 1944 – as a soldier in the Russian army during the 1914–18 war. Leon was wounded in 1916, and became a prisoner of war of the Austrians. After the war he returned to Russia, but eventually went to live in Paris, having married a French woman – Raymonde. He set up home there and established himself in business as a pharmacist. In the 1939–45 war he joined the Free French and was shot by the Nazis in 1944, as also was his son. Raymonde managed to escape, and subsequently came to London.



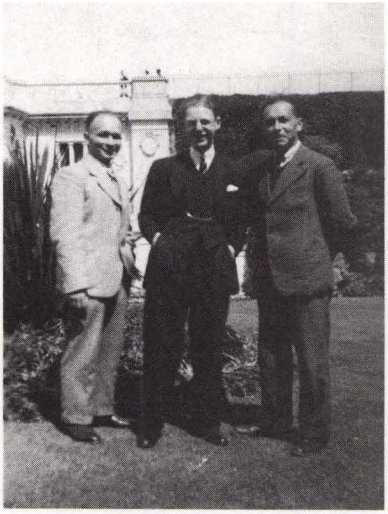
Paul Frischmann with daughter Philippa.



Paul Frischmann at the Hochschule Braunschweig, 1925.



Dorothy Frischmann with Esther Frischmann and daughter Philippa.



Teddy Isaacs (centre with Ilja and Paul Frischmann) in the garden of the Northumberland Kosher Hotel, Cliftonville, a few days after their arrival in England. July 1939.



Ilja Frischmann. This photograph was taken after he had been interrogated by the Gestapo for a whole day, and before being transported to a concentration camp. The Nazis for some reason required that the photograph be taken so that it showed the left ear clearly.



Stallupönen (Ebenrode) Market Place



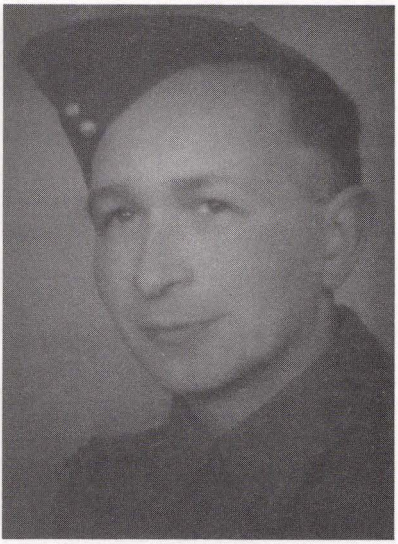
Julius Isaacs (centre) with nephew Dr. Kolef Daugiljacki (right) and his friend.
Königsberg. May 1930.



Dr. Kolef Dagiljacki with his mother "Auntie Basche" and wife – Sonia.
Ben Shemen – Israel 1937.



Ilja Frischmann with Teddy Isaacs
London – 1986.



Ilja Frischmann as a British soldier – 1941.



Elbing. Friedrich – Wilhelm Platz.

A limit to mourning

Yesterday's lessons for today's parents

BY PHILIPPA FRESHMAN, FIRST PRIZE WINNER IN THE 'JC' LITERARY COMPETITION

Published in the *Jewish Chronicle* – November 24th, 1989

In the late 'seventies I was teaching the Jewish class at Cheltenham Ladies' College. I thought I was on to an educationally good thing when I discovered how quickly the girls responded to accounts of the Holocaust and how readily they identified with the victims.

Over the years, as Holocaust material has flooded the media, I have had more and more doubts, especially as I remember that it was far harder to put over the difference between Rosh Hashanah and New Year's Eve.

Well-informed, committed Jewish parents in different areas of the community have expressed to me their concern that a generation may be growing up for whom endless images of emaciated prisoners and heaped-up corpses, often trivialised and sensationalised, are central to the concept of being Jewish.

I do not wish to minimise the tragedies of the Hitler period. My father, born Paul Frischmann, and his younger brother, Ilja, both came to England as refugees from Nazi Germany.

Other members of their family were not so fortunate. Twenty-six perished, including their mother in her eighties.

It was first rumoured that she had died of a heart attack when she saw Russian tanks entering East Prussia in 1941. But later investigations revealed that she was shot by the Nazis, according to the now-familiar pattern, in the local woods.

In her last letter to my father, she wrote that, of all the wartime privations, she most missed good coffee.

The eldest brother, Max, lived in Koenigsberg (now Kalingrad), described by my father as "Oxford by the sea," where all three Frischmann boys studied at the university and where their cousin, Bernhard Freiberg, later a member of the United States' war crimes commission to Germany, knew all the "right" cafés.

In 1938, Max disappeared. Ilja traced him to a hospital and went to visit him.

The patient was lying unconscious, surrounded by four "nurses," who were clearly on duty more to prevent the brothers from communicating than to tend an invalid.

Max's funeral took place about ten days later. The cause of his death was never known.

Antisemitism is the bad weather of Jewish experience. Every generation has to learn to cope with it. "It did happen" rules out "It can't happen." There is no instant guarantee that the catastrophe will not occur again.

We are all parents; we are all teachers. Consciously and unconsciously, we are continually setting patterns for those younger than ourselves.

The Holocaust stands on a borderline between living memory and receding history. But, if we are to learn from the past, we must reach into the whole past. Yesterday began with Creation.

In spite of the unprecedented scale of the losses, the ongoing existence of the Jewish people remains unbroken after the Holocaust; as it was after the fall of the First and Second Temples, after the Chmielnicki massacres in seventeenth-century Poland, after the pogroms. The past and present were always fraught with tragedy, the future with peril.

Judaism prescribes mourning; it also prescribes a limit to mourning.

Often in the synagogue, human, fallible concentration wanders. However, at the ever-popular high spot, when the Scrolls have been returned to the Ark, voices instinctively join and raise to sing that the Torah is "a Tree of Life."

"We were slaves to Pharoah . . ." According to the Hagadah, every Jew in every generation should imagine he came out of Egypt in person.

The Seder service re-creates the hardships endured by our ancestors. Yet Pesach is joyful. It emphasises miraculous deliverance, and the repeated effort of ritual celebration revives hope.

When the State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948, Golda Meir was present at the ceremony held in the museum in Tel Aviv. In her autobiography, she tells how the participants rose to their feet to adopt the text of the scroll establishing the state. Suddenly, Rabbi Fishman-Maimon "stood up and, in a trembling voice, pronounced the traditional Hebrew prayer of thanksgiving: 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive and made us to endure and brought us to this day . . .' It was a prayer that I had heard often, but it had never

held such meaning for me as it did that day."

"I have often been downcast, never in despair . . . I am young and strong and living a great adventure . . . I have been given a lot, a happy nature, a great deal of cheerfulness and strength."

That is Anne Frank. Her diary is not only a powerful, spontaneous testimony; it is a teenage girl's account of the struggle to maturity, written with a fluency and insight rare in mature adults.

In my early years on the Ladies' College staff, the junior librarian told me that it was the most popular book in her library, because so many girls in the age-group (11–14), from so many different backgrounds, identified with it.

Excessive repetition blunts response. The first stage performance of the book stunned its audience into silence. But at that time, the revelation of genocide was new.

Children in the 'eighties have seen the death camps again and again and again. They laugh at the genial, bumbling Wehrmacht captain and colonel and the mock-sinister, mock-Gestapo Herr Flick in "Allo Allo."

When they see, do they feel? Do they mentally – if not literally – switch off?

We live in a world more and more parochially rooted in the present. Many are growing up deprived of the psychological enrichment that comes from developed awareness of past human experience. They are incurring emotional intellectual blindness in crucial areas.

Material rewards are to be appreciated and enjoyed. Nonetheless, a values system wholly concentrated upon them eventually starves the spirit.

It is not an archaic luxury to hanker for a place in the universe, a relationship with dimensions beyond the here and now, a higher guidance in dealings with others; it is a basic human need.

The question often arises: should we be "better" (i.e., particularly good human beings) because of the Holocaust?

Yes. We should be better. But not because of the Holocaust. We should be better because it is the essence of Jewish teaching to make the effort to be so. We cannot expect improvement in others if we do not strive to improve ouselves.

The Holocaust challenged everything. It still does. Its impact is so far-reaching that our approach to it tests our approach to everything else.

Emphasis must shift from quantity to quality, from sensationalism to sensitivity, from shallow conformity to critical discernment. We need factual accuracy and disciplined analysis.

Above all, we need a balanced view – bright times as well as dark, simchas as well as funerals, the candles of Chanucah as well as those of Yahrzeit.

If we were wiped out today, how would we want our descendants to think of us? By the manner of our death? Or by our living personalities?

As she signed the proclamation, Golda Meir could not stop weeping. Asked why, she answered, "Because it breaks my heart to think of all those who should have been here today and are not. "Surely, on many occasions, albeit less spectacular, we have all felt the same about family and friends.

Their very absence constitutes a special sort of presence. We recall individual mannerisms, shared experiences. We regret lost opportunities of better relationships with them. We think how they would have laughed at a familiar joke or of the *nachus* they would have had, watching their grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow up.

The six million are our family and friends on a larger scale. As were all other Jews through the ages.

We cannot alleviate our martyrs' suffering. But can we not think how they would have felt to know that normal, eccentric Jewish life would continue? That wine would spill on cloths, matzah crumbs cling to carpets, Jewish children moan at having to go to cheder? How would the dead of the Holocaust have reacted if they had *seen* Israel?

I enjoyed cheder. Was I a freak?

I don't think so. I look back over a long experience of teaching – and a still longer one of being taught that goes on to the present day. And I can affirm that the teaching I had in cheder was among the best. It went for brain, imagination and commitment.

I wonder whether the discontent with education that pervades our society is a malaise on the part of the recipients. It often seems to me that the world has slid into habits of rejecting anything that is not quick, easy and *there*. That it has forgotten how to learn.

Learning hurts. It gets tougher as people get older.

Yet, if we are to teach, we have to go on learning. And pass that lesson on to our children.

The Jewish people has been through a lot. Over the centuries, it has amassed treasures of knowledge and experience. It is bound together by identifying details of every aspect of life – individual and social, public achievements and household routines. These all constitute the normal, rightful inheritance of Jewish children.

Also, let us not forget one precious, shining psychological jewel. An eminent psychiatrist once summed it up to me: "Humour helps survival – even in Auschwitz."

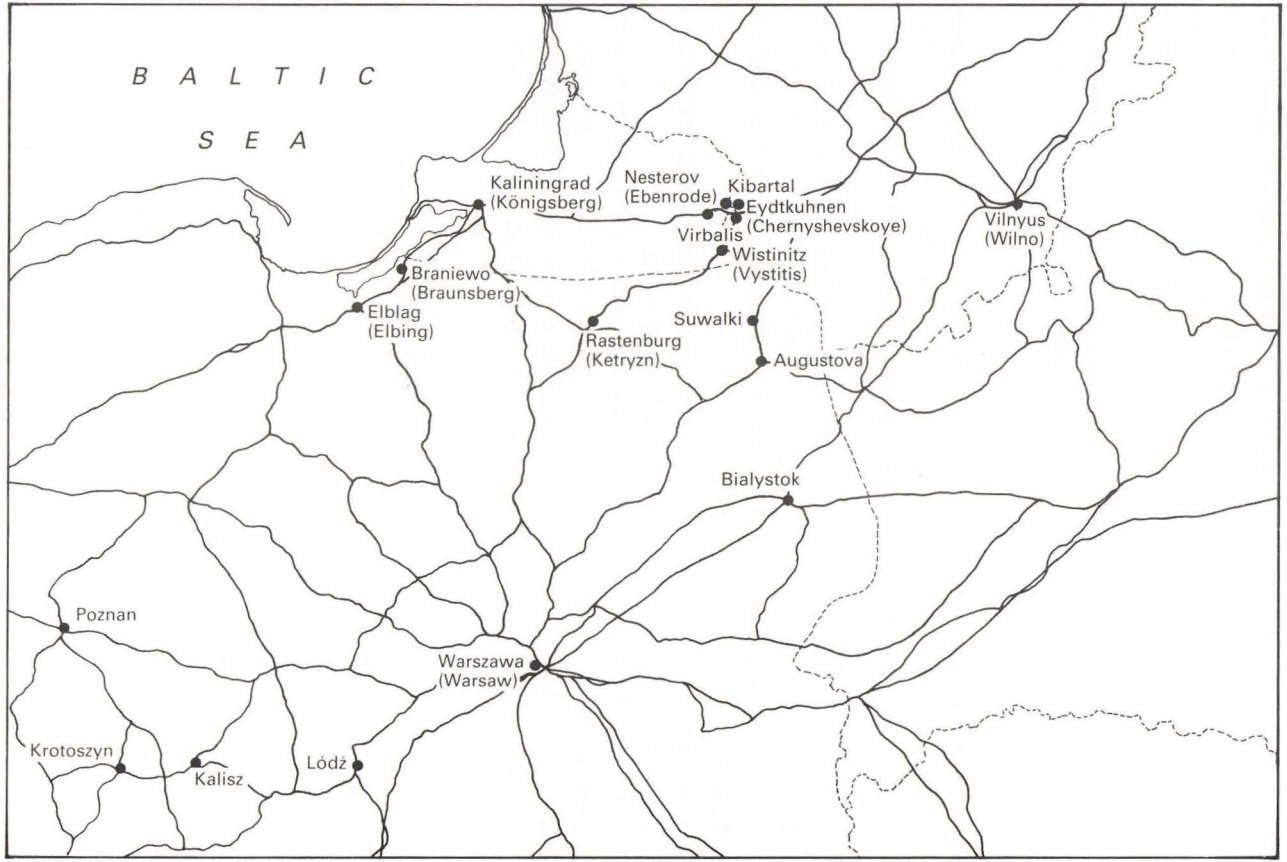
Lechaim!

One night during the 1914–18 war, there was a knock on the front door of the Frischmann family home in Elbing in East Prussia. My father, a stagestruck schoolboy – which he remained until he was nearly 80 – ran to open it.

Outside stood his elder brother Max, resplendent in the uniform of the Black Hussars, the regiment of the German Crown Prince. "Goodness," my father exclaimed. "It's the hero of 'A Waltz Dream'!" – a smash-hit Viennese operetta of the 1900s.

No one living can tell me anything about my uncle Max Frischmann, except that he was a lawyer murdered by the Nazis.

Yet, on the strength of that one anecdote, echoing through the reticent shadows of my childhood like some nostalgic ballroom melody, I can see him, permanently in his twenties, slim and straight, in sword and epaulettes, looking like the hero of "A Waltz Dream."


B A L T I C
S E A
Kaliningrad
(Königsberg)
Nesterov
(Ebenrode)
Kibartal
Eydtkuhnen
(Chernyshevskoye)
Virbalis
Wistinitz
(Vystitis)
Vilnyus
(Wilno)
Braniewo
(Braunsberg)
Elblag
(Elbing)
Suwalki
Rastenburg
(Ketryzn)
Augustova
Bialystok
Poznan
Warszawa
(Warsaw)
Krotoszyn
Kalisz
Lódź

DESCRIPTION OF PLACES WHERE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY LIVED

Stallupönen (Nesterov City). In 1939 population 6,608. Manufactures: agricultural implements, quarrying, flour milling. Initially in East Prussia as Stallupönen, and then between 1938–1945 as Ebenrode.

Eydtkuhnen (Chernyshevskoye). In 1939 population 4,922. On Lithuanian border opposite Kubarty and 22 miles E. of Gusev. Was a major German railroad border station. Initially known in E. Prussia as Eydtkuhnen, became known in 1938–1945 as Eydtkau.

Kubarty or Kybartai. Polish or Russian city. Population 1939: 7,337. S. Lithuania. On railroad. Verbalis (Verballen) station 3 miles away. Verbalis city adjoined Stallupönen. Industries: foundry, tin metal works, manufacture of knitwear, shoes, furniture.

Wistinitz (Vystitis). Birthplace of Julius Isaacs. Village in S.W. Lithuania on North shore of Lake Vystitis, 13 miles S.S.E. of Stallupönen, and close to Eydtkuhnen.

Verballen (Verballis). Population 1939: 4,702. S.W. Lithuania on highway, and 10 miles west of Vilkaviskis. Industries: machinery, chemicals, shoes, furniture, oil, fats, flour milling. Verbalis station was the Russo-German (after 1920 the Lithuania-German) Customs station until 1945. Dates from 16th century. In 1795 passed to Russo-Poland and Suvalki government until 1920.

Suvalki. Population 1938: 13,670. Province of Bialystock. N.E. Poland on Czarna–Haneza and 70 miles north of Bialystok rail junction. Manufactures: chairs, stamps, electrical goods, knitted goods, hosiery, flour milling, tanning, brewing. Founded in 15th century as a Lithuanian settlement. It passed in 1795 to Prussia. Then to Russian Poland and the Suvalki government 1815–1920. Returned to Poland 1921. A short lived agreement granting Vilna (Vilnius) to Lithuania by Poland was signed here in 1920. During second World War was incorporated 1939–1941 into the U.S.S.R. Passed in 1941 to East Prussia and was renamed Sudauen.

Augustova. Population 1939: 8,338. Birthplace of Emil Post. On railroad and 50 miles north of Bialystok. Manufactures: cement, bricks, tanning, saw milling, flour milling. Scene of severe battle in World War 1. During Second World War it was under the administration of E. Prussia.

Rastenburg (Ketryzn). Birthplace of Suse Kaminski-Jacoby and Rolf Kaminski. In East Prussia. After 1945 in Olysztyn province of N.E. Poland in Masurian lakes region. Agricultural markets (grain, sugar beets, livestock), saw milling, brewing. Teutonic knights founded the castle in the early 14th century. Formerly site of of German State farm. After Second World War when it was half destroyed, the German population left the town.

Krotoschin (Krotostyzn). In 1795 there were 1,384 Jews there out of a population of 3,692. In 1744 a disastrous fire reduced the whole ghetto to ashes. The Jews of Krotoschin were amongst the most prosperous. The first synagogue was built in the 17th century and was destroyed by fire in 1774 as was its successor. A new synagogue was erected in 1846. Well known rabbis of Krotoschin included Menachem Mendel Auerbach (1732–1755), Benjamin ben Saul Katzenellenbogen (1785–1792), and Rabbi Issachar Behr Lichtenstadt who was one of the most eminent rabbis of his time and who died there in 1835. He was the great great grandfather of Edward (Teddy) Isaacs. Krotoschin was in the Duchy of Posen, and is between Posen and Lodz.

Kalicz. Between Posen and Lodz. Home of the Schwartzmann family and birthplace of Dr. Joseph Sheldon (London).

Ostpreussenblatt, 23rd November, 1968.

BORDER TOWN EYDTKUHNEN

The railway contributed to the town's prosperity

The trade and military route from Berlin to Leningrad crossed Stallupoenen – renamed Ebenrode thirty years ago. This transit road lost 90% of its significance when the more reliable, faster and cheaper steam engine of the railways replaced it. Romantics in Stallupoenen much regretted the passing of coach and horse with much of its glamour, though also some of its difficulties when horses much needed for agricultural work were commandeered to service the coaches.

Birth of a Town

In Prussia's time of the Knight Orders and the Dukes, trade and travel to central Russia mainly used the road from Koenigsberg via Insterburg and Ragnit to Kovno. The advantages of the road via Gumbinen to Stallupoenen and Eydtkuhnen became evident only in the second half of the 16th century. The principal advantage was that – in the small market-town of Stallupoenen – travellers and merchants had seven inns at their disposal where they could eat, stock up and sleep. Whoever left Stallupoenen in an easterly direction, went into the wilderness and towards uncertain adventures. Eydtkuhnen did not come into its own until almost two hundred years later, and then only gradually, when the road was completed which connected the town with the East-Prussian main road network.

There was an almost overnight role reversal when, on August 15th, 1860, the final stretch of the Eastern Railway between Stallupoenen and Eydtkuhnen became operational – thus establishing the link with the admittedly sprawling Russian railway network – so important for trade. In 1897, the Empire of the Tsars had become East Prussia's immediate neighbour. In 1706, Eydtkuhnen had recently seen the establishment of another inn, equipped with brewing and distilling machinery. Its owner was the Insterburg steward and later counsellor, Joachim von Dewitz. But a few years later, this progress was wiped out by the consequences of the plague, when out of nine farms and a larger small-holding, only four farmers were

spared. It took more than a hundred years to reverse the process.

When looking at the development of Eydtkuhnen, one never ceases to be amazed at what long time spans people had to let elapse in those days before an opportunity arose for them to escape from the narrow, lonely and dependent way of life to something better that allowed them to participate in the progress of the world. While this was happening, generations grew up and went to their graves.

A Gigantic Gateway

Not only symbolically, but also architecturally it was, by East Prussian standards, a gigantic gateway – hurriedly built, as though pounded out of the ground, dead on the frontier with Russia – which arose in the shape of a station amid a confusing network of rails of different gauges. The dimensions of the main building measured up to those of the station of Koenigsberg. There were waiting rooms divided by classes and dining-rooms as well as a room set aside for royalty. Just as they had received special treatment in the past, so the demands of high-ranking travellers had to be accommodated while in transit, when long distance trains from Berlin arrived with through coaches from Paris and Geneva, with stops only in Koenigsberg, possibly in Insterburg, before reaching Eydtkuhnen. In the opposite direction, there were trains from Moscow and Petersburg.

A suitable stop had to be made not only for the quick and superficial customs control; it was necessarily longer, because there was a change of train, for the Russian railway had a wider gauge. Only the dark-blue train of the Tsar was able to continue onto German rails because it had adjustable axles. Naturally, the opportunity was used to eat and drink wine – if one could afford it. The emigrant families, who crossed the border from the East in their thousands and used Germany as a transit country for overseas, ate their food in the fourth class waiting room. They felt like spendthrifts buying a glass of beer or a lemonade for wife and child.

The custom of Russian stations to supply bubbling hot water to make tea had not been adopted by Eydtkuhnen. Many would have felt the benefit of it.

The Daily Arrival of 22 Freight Trains

After the little village of Eydtkuhnen – before and again later as a town

called Eydkau – had stagnated for centuries, it underwent a sudden and hectic development.

A few years before the building of the well-known railway, Russia had had an unfortunate war against Turkey and had had to suffer a trade blockade by the British at its northern flank. The possible goods exchange with Germany served as the Russians' only and thus most welcome safety valve. This trade later developed its own momentum, and could no longer by accommodated by road and ship.

Now, long trains crossed daily on the small Lepone railway-bridge – bringing wheat, pulses, flax and hemp from the mightly Russian granary and the timber trade, too, increased vastly.

Millions of eggs and butter by the pail were delivered to the German capital. in the autumn, thousands of geese were daily driven across the bridge from the Russian side, loaded and transported away. Added to which, there were many furs for the Leipzig Fair as well as the expensive, but much sought after caviar from Astrakhan.

In exchange, industrial products and machines were transported into the industrially underdeveloped Empire of the Tsars.

In 1914, shortly before the outbreak of war, 36 passengers and 22 freight trains passed through Eydtkuhnen every day.

The population rose accordingly. No wonder! Suddenly, there was a need for innumerable railway officials and workers, added to which were the number of Post Office and Customs officials, business men and craftsmen. Teachers were needed for the new schools. Religious matters were the last in the queue – the twin-towered church was built only in 1887.

Before the advent of the Eastern Railway, Eydtkuhnen had 125 inhabitants, in 1914 almost 7,000.

The role of the forwarding agents, for instance, our Tilsit historian, Dr. Kirinnis, once described very impressively:
"To deal with the vast volume of freight traffic, the role of "border agents" had been created in Eydtkuhnen – they had extensive international connections. West European merchants had their own confidential agents in Eydtkuhnen who, through their representatives in the Russian trading centres, negotiated finance and business deals. There was much money to be made. Naturally, the agents were the highest tax payers. In 1914, there were 46 agencies, each with up to 50 employees.

Their annual turnover per agency amounted to six to ten million Marks. In 1913, the forwarding agency business had an annual turnover of altogether two hundred million Marks. It left its mark on this border town, and it was generally the foundation for trade and commerce in Eydtkuhnen."

Rise and Fall

To create something in such necessary haste, it was not a building process in the sense practised by other East Prussian towns, where there had been planning for beauty and harmony. The determining factor was the passage of time and usefulness. The existing road from Stallupoenen to the border was simply raised to the status of a main road and built upon in a totally haphazard way, without any regard as to similarity of front elevations or style. Where the road ended, the blind spot in the unused terrain was declared to be the "market".

The first lost World War had already brought the breathless growth to an abrupt end.

Admittedly, business boomed once more tremendously and success resulted in the fact that the new and more beautifully built Eydtkuhnen finally received its town charter in 1921. But it was an illusory flowering. The great, the golden times were gone.

And yet – who does not today think back on Eydtkuhnen with nostalgia and affection, even if it could not keep what once it promised.

WISCHTYTIS – LITHUANIA

Lithuania nestles against the East coast of the Baltic Sea. Its area covers 65,200 km. The country is not large, but to draw a comparison, we need to point out that it is larger than Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark or Switzerland.

Lithuania lies on the same geographical latitude as Ireland, the North of England, Denmark and the southern part of Sweden. If we travel further east, we find Sakhalin Island and Khamchatka Peninsula, the southern part of the Hudson Bay Company and the forests of Western Canada.

Lithuania is traversed by the Meridian which touches Spitzbergen further north, the north of Norway and Finland and, in the south, runs through Greece and the Eastern Sahara.

The total length of Lithuania's borders amounts to 1,842 km, the distance of its centre from the Equator to 6,124 km and from the North Pole to 3,873 km. The town of Wischtytis lies on a lake and on the Prussian Border. The town took over the name of Lake Wischtytis. The first buildings date back to the year 1530. In the year 1550, Queen Bona let the forest be cut down and founded a new settlement, had a wooden church built and donated a larger plot of land to the community. At that time, Wischtytis was popularly called Koenigsdorf (the king's village). Koenigsdorf was inhabited by four peasants and three gardeners. The inhabitants had to pay taxes to the local pastor. In the year 1570, King Zygimantas Augustus granted the town the Magdeburg Rights and thus the village became a town. The town was granted a coat of arms. The town was governed by a Mayor, a steward as well as four counsellors. The town was obliged to hold four markets a year. The first building was the Town Hall, then roads and bridges were built. A watermill was erected on the nearby river. From 1589 onwards, the inhabitants of the town were exclusively Jewish.

In 1571, King Augustus left the town six acres of forest, with the condition that the wood be used for building houses.

In the year 1790, a well with spring water was sunk in the market place. As the Chronicles tell us, the Jewish inhabitants of the town had to shoulder the same responsibilities and taxes as the other inhabitants. To enter the

municipal forest, a permit had to be obtained from the town elders.

In the 17th century, the town had become rich and big. In 1658, the Prussians raided the town and looted it. The nearby village of Suduvai had 287 houses and 1,570 inhabitants in the year 1798.

When Lithuania had gained its independence, the town of Wischtytis was occupied by Poland. On March 27th, 1920, 2,000 inhabitants assembled in the market place and demanded that Wischtytis be incorporated into Lithuania; they were dispersed by Polish soldiers who hit them. On March 29th, 1920, the inhabitants of the town sent a letter containing 744 signatures to the Polish Government with the request to withdraw the Polish troops. A few days later, Wischtytis was handed over to Lithuania by the Poles.

In the year 1923, the town together with its surroundings had 546 farms and 3,907 inhabitants.

During the Second World War, half the town was destroyed by fire, including also the Catholic Church. The Jews were nearly all exterminated.

The Protestant-Lutheran Community was founded in 1842, and the community built a church (a brick building). During the time of the Tsars, the Wischtytis community belonged to Vizainiai and was administered by the Consistory in Warsaw. From 1920 onwards, the district of Wischtytis belonged to the Kaunas Consistory and Martin Bumbulis was its pastor. Services were conducted in German and Lithuanian. After the emigration of the German members of the community, the church was taken over by the Catholic Community.

The surroundings of Wischtytis are very beautiful. It is the highest elevation in Lithuania – up to 300 m above sea level. 4 km out of town, stands a stone about 60 m wide, 4 m long and 3 m high. It used to be a tourist attraction. The big Draugirion forests start 3 km out of town, covering 501 acres with the following tree species : oaks, birches, pines and other deciduous trees. The following wild animals are found in the forest: foxes, boars, hares, deer, martens and otters, as well as numerous species of birds. The landscape does not boast sharp contrasts, hardly any breath-taking views or rare natural phenomena. But travelling through the surroundings of Wischtytis is by no means monotonous. Your path leads you at times between picturesque hills and along lakes, at others through dark forests, then again across green plains. From the hills, there opens up here and there a magnificent view to the far blue horizon.

EBENRODE (STALLUPOENEN) NESTEROV CITY

The Church no longer stands in Ebenrode (Stallupoenen)

If we go still further East, we arrive immediately in the former border district of Ebenrode. Many boundary changes have taken place in this area. Here, too, the town and its district have had to change their name on several occasions; for, until 1938, they were knbown as Stallupoenen. In 1939, the town had approximately 6,600 inhabitants.

The district consists of seven village Sowjets, i.e. municipalities. Among them is the old border town of Eydtkau, also known as the railway terminus. Today, the trains from Koenigsberg to Kaunas, Vilnius and Moscow do not even stop in the village called Tschernyschewskoje. With this name, another commander of Napoleonic Wars was honoured.

The only town here is Ebenrode – the number of its inhabitants is not known, only its size, 7,3 square metres, has so far been published. The district (without Ebenrode) has, according to statistics dated 1968, 15,400 inhabitants. Ebenrode has a butter and cheese enterprise, which the Soviet authorities – just as in Agerapp – count among the four largest butter factories in the area.

So much for the dull, official facts. Let us now hand over to an eye-witness who travelled through the district of Ebenrode in 1964: it is the Lithuanian Communist of many years standing, Pranas Stiklius, who lived in the U.S.A. for a lengthy period and now spends his old age in Soviet Lithuania. In his report "My Life's Harvest", he describes the impressions of a journey whose destination was first of all Tollmingen (Tollmingkehnen), situated about half-way between Ebenrode and Goldap. Here, the poet Kristijonas Donelaitis had lived who is greatly admired under this name by the Lithuanians.

His name meant and means something also to the Germans: for them, he is called Christian Donalitius. He lived from 1714–1780, for a long time in Tollmingkehnen, and he was born in Lasdinehlen near Gumbinen, where he was born the son of a farmer from Koelmisch(?) (or is it misspelt for "Cologne"?). He studied in Koenigsberg and became a pastor and writer. This many-sided man also made spectacles, thermometers and even pianos.

Even before Klopstock he wrote in hexameters. Among other things, he translated Aesop's Fables into Lithuanian. He had learnt the language only during his studies. He was a bridge-builder to the neighbouring Lithuanians, above all to their language. Because he additionally came from the administrative district then designated Prussian-Lithuania, the Lithuanians claimed him as their compatriot and called him Donelaitis.

"Prussia gave us the great singer, the founder of Lithuanian verse and poetry, Kristijonas Donelaitis. Prussia can justly be called the cradle of our written language" – thus wrote Pranas Stiklius in the account of his journey. And further on:

"This year (1964) is Donelaitis Year – 250 years have passed since the birth of the poet . . . . There were people who wished to travel to Tollmingkehnen (Tolminkies – Russian: Kistye Prudy; it is noticeable that the Lithuanians mostly use the traditional names in their language, i.e. not the new, official Soviet names), where the famous poet lived and worked.

Further on, on the other side of the brook, lies the former German border town – Eydkuhnen (Eitkunai), now Tschernyschewskoje. The town, almost completely destroyed during the war, shows very few signs of life even now. Where formerly there were houses, there are piles of rubble where little trees, bushes, weeds and stinging nettles are already growing, among which can sometimes be seen small pieces of brick. These are the remnants of the one-time houses . . . .

The coach drives along the smooth motorway through the land of Prussia. All around us, there are plains turning green, enlivened by lilac bushes in bloom and surviving fruit trees – remains of the farms which formerly stood here. There are no other visible signs to bear witness that people once lived here – only the red brick, now crumbling pillars of the farm gates still jut out here and there.

We got out of the coach in Stallupoenen (Stalupėnai – Ebenrode, in Russian today: Nesterow), where Donelaitis is alleged to have lived for three years (1740–1743). In the town, there survive undamaged houses which are inhabited; here, there are administrative offices and shops. The streets are clean and not badly cared for. The damaged houses are hidden behind brick walls.

Our tour guide wanted to show us the church where Donelaitis, as its choirmaster, taught the children to sing and headed the choir whose organist he also was. But there was nothing to show us, because there was only an

empty spot on the hill where the church had once stood. In his article, "The present situation in Little-Lithuania", he writes:

"In Tollmingkehnen, Lithuania is paying to rebuild Donelaitis' little church, where a Donelaitis Museum is to be established. I was there a year ago (1976). Lithuanian architects and building specialists are working there, and working quite well. In the church, they also found the remains which, it is thought, are Donelaitis'. Several members of the Lithuanian intelligensia have singled out a project – according to which Tollmingkehnen is to become part of Lithuania.

"In such a case, its old name of Tolminkiemis could be given back to the place and a Lithuanian school, too, could be founded there. At the moment, the place is called Cistye Prudy, that means in Russian "the clean ponds", which is why everybody is up in arms. But the Government in Moscow did not agree with that suggestion. Still, people quietly hope that it will be possible to achieve this at some time in the future."

About other places, Tomas Venclova writes:

"Eydtkuhnen, Stallupoenen, Gumbinen and Insterburg (he also uses the Lithuanian versions: Eitkunai, Stalupenai, Gumbine, Isrutis), are partially demolished and only insignificantly re-built."

Another visitor, a former Koenigsberger, who visited there in the autumn of 1970, describes his impressions as follows:

"From here, the road leads to Nesterow (formerly Stallupoenen). Where formerly there stood closely packed houses, one sees spacious squares and, in places, the grass overgrown foundations of destroyed buildings. Along the main street a few old houses have been re-built. On a wall thinly covered with a coat of paint, it is still possible to decipher the word "Groceries". New buildings are going up."

The severe devastation and ravages of this border area, to which the district of Schlossberg (Pillkallen) to the North of it also belongs, are the result of particularly hard battles in this area. It was here that the advancing Soviet troops for the first time stood on German soil. That was already in October, 1944, when most of the inhabitants of the German Reich could not yet imagine that the same fate – occupation by allied troops – was in store for them all.

In the second half of October, the 3rd White Russian front under its general, Iwan Danilowitsch Tschernjachowsk, was ready to attack. On October 17th, they took Wirballen, on October 18th, Eydtkau, on the 20th,

Tollmingen, on the 21st, Trakehnen, on the 22nd, Goldap, and on the 25th, Ebenrode.

On October 21st, powerful units had already advanced as far as the Angerapp. Nemmersdorf, which had been occupied by them, and which the Germans won back after costly battles, became a symbol for the fact that these soldiers were not only heroes on the battlefield, but also allowed themselves to perpetrate incredible atrocities on the civilian populations.

Once more, the offensive was halted, the Red Army pushed back. The district town of Goldap was recaptured on November 3rd. But on January 22nd, it was finally lost. At that time, Gumbinen, Insterburg, even Allenstein had already been captured. The enemy was already in Wehlau and at the gates of Elbing. He was getting ready for the great assault on Koenigsberg and the lagoon coast. The commander general Tschernjachowsk, did not live to see the final triumph of his units, the capture of the whole of East Prussia. On February 18th, 1945, he was killed near the town of Mehlsack which had been captured two days previously. There, where the Heiligenbeiler Kessel narrowed, bloody battles raged. The town of Insterburg today bears his name, according to the wishes of the victors. 20 kilometres from there, lies Nemmersdorf: it is called Majakowskoje now. The supreme command of the 3rd White Russian Front was assumed by Marshal A. M. Wassilewskij.

Goldap has kept its name, incidentally alone of all the towns of East Prussia. But otherwise, hardly anything remained of the place already 90% destroyed during the October offensive and now situated in Polish occupied territory. It is as though the town, laid waste, was to become blind towards all the surrounding misery. Its inhabitants have fled, driven out by the double blow, later the rest of the population by the new rulers. These built themselves houses which no longer bear any resemblance to those of the established, beautiful border settlement.

Like an accusing memorial against all those responsible for this disaster, stands the solitary ruin of the Old Church by the market-place – itself the one-time vibrant, economic and cultural centre of this small town, it lies there deserted, despite the new buildings and green spaces. As though in mockery, the big gaps created by the war afford views over the neighbourhood in the North which has now become inaccessible. Only 3 kilometres away – Goldap lies closer to it than any other town in the Polish area – the dividing line tears apart, already for more than three decades now,

this country which has belonged together since time immemorial.

Also, the view from the beautiful Goldap Mountain is lost, often wet with tears, in the green infinity, ever growing more blue, of a unique landscape. There, behind Lake Goldap, through which the border runs diagonally, lie the expanses of the Rominten Heath, once the hunting-ground of emperors, kings and rulers of all sorts. Poets of all ages composed songs to it and extolled it as a landscape of special charm. Statisticians call this area, measuring 25,000 acres, the largest coherent woodland. Most of it is nowadays situated in the Soviet Zone.

The famous Rominten hunting lodge in the very centre of the Heath now lies right up against the frontier. It is not known what goes on there, who lives there, who issues invitations to hunt the magnificent deer – Germany's biggest stags held sway there. At the time of the Knight Orders, aurochsen, bisons and bears were even hunted here.

Even when viewed from the North, the world now seems to end before the entrace to the Heath. The newest Russian maps no longer show any roads in that area. Just as the Union-Street from Gumbinen to Waltersdorf (Ol'chovatka) is left off, so also the Republik-Street from Ebenrode to Schlossbach (Newskoje) and further in a southerly direction. Is the Rominten Heath no longer to be touched by the passing traffic – as is the case further south, in the Polish area, with the other large and magnificent forest area of East Prussia, the Johannisburg Heath?

Has the railway traffic suffered a similar fate? The line from Ebenrode to Schlossbach, Kassuben (Il'inskoje), Tollmingen, Hardteck (Krasnoles'e) is no longer mentioned on the most recent atlases and time-tables. It is marked only on the map of the "Big Soviet Encyclopaedia" of 1973.

However, the line from Koenigsberg to Ebenrode is in operation as before. It is the most important in that whole area: for it passes through the former border town of Eydtkau – admittedly now no longer mentioned or used as a station – beyond to Kaunas, Vilnius and Moscow. The 140 kilometre long connection between Koenigsberg and Ebenrode also has the following stations: Gutenfeld (Lugovoe-Novje) – Tapiau (Gwardeisk) – Wehlau (Snamensk) – Puschdorf (Puskaerevo) – Norkitten (Mevduree'e) – Waldhausen (Pastuchovo Nov.) – Insterburg – Kanthausen (Veselovka) – Gumbinnen – Trakehnen (Divnoe-Novoe, Jasnaja Poljana) – Ebenrode; there follows as the next station Kibartaj, which lies already beyond the Lithuanian border.

The name "Trakehnen" no longer exists, at least not as the home of the assuredly most famous stud in the world. Here, where since the first of September, 1732, by order of Frederick William I, a stud farm has been in operation, there are no longer any horses. In Jasnaja Poljana, they have a collective cattle farm these days, after they had established a meat combine for a time. The place itself was badly destroyed. The life-size monument of "Templehueter" ("Temple Guardian"), the most famous stallion of the Trakehner stud, was transported to Moscow. Its pleasant new name – Jasnaja Polnaja – Bright Meadow – cannot gloss over the fact that, in truth, it has grown dark at the place which the poet, Rudolf G. Binding, had called "The Shrine of the Horses". It is not known, almost inexplicable, why the Russians practically extinguished the birth-place of the horse with the seven-pronged elk-shovel, but also essentially dispensed with the continuation of this unusually successful stud. Only on the Don, an attempt was begun to keep the breed alive. With what success is not known. Only the name of these horses is known: Russian Trakehner.

The Poles proved themselves far more active. On the old Liesken estate providing horses for the army, near Bartenstein, they continue to breed Trakehner with much enthusiasm and good results; but they, too, gave them a new name: Masurian horses. At the Liebenthal stud near Marienwerder and on the one-time imperial Cadinen estate near Elbing, efforts are also made in respect of the Trakehnen heritage.

Moreover, these proud and capable horses count among the war victims just like the people of East Prussia. Not too many of them survived the catastrophe, only a few eked out a largely miserable existence in their place of origin, some of them succeeded in fleeing to the West. They escaped from hell by unspeakable suffering and brought their people to a safe shore after a trek of abject misery.

Only about 1,500 out of 27,116 registered stallions and mares from East and West Prussia survived. They saved innumerable men, women and children who were with them as well as themselves and their breed from extinction. Today, they are scattered over the face of the world; but they carry with them the name and the tradition of a unique East Prussian achievement. The best known studs are Hunnesrueck (Einbeck District, Lower Saxony), Rantzau and Schmoel (near Ploen, Schleswig-Holstein) and Birkhausen (near Zweibruecken, Palatinate). In Sweden and the U.S.A., Trakehner are also being bred.

The Granary became a Collective Farm

It is surely no coincidence that the border districts of Ebenrode and Schlossberg have become an agrarian region without distinction or big names. Here, where the fury of the war raged at its very worst, all tradition died – if need be, it was destroyed. Whatever had been renowned sank into oblivion. Everything beautiful was disfigured or withdrawn from view. The flourishing most easterly region of the Reich became the saddest wasteland of all the areas of our land, the recollection of one of the oldest and most stable borders totally obliterated. From 1422 to 1945, it had existed unchanged – 523 years of undoubted, inviolate native land.

Punished for the whole of the Reich, thus has the border strip been laid low. Its towns are rubble heaps, three of them no longer exist. The villages have become faceless. Their names, whether well-known or not, were deleted.

The people who loved this quiet and beautiful corner, more than any other spot on earth, can no longer be found there. They weep for their destroyed homeland, the desolate legacy of the year 1945, from far away. Only the land, the good, fertile soil remained as it was, since that time when it was wrested from the wilderness. For centuries cultivated, tended and cared for – the beloved soil which people of many generations caused to flourish.

And today again, men and women toil in the fields and pastures. But they are not the free farmers who dedicated their lives to their farms, whose heart followed the sowing and harvest, growth, blossoming and wilting with their heart, as though it was their own flesh and blood. Now, they are public servants . . . .

RECOLLECTIONS OF KOENIGSBERG

Gerald Goodwin

(Reflections prompted by reading Michael Wieck's "Zeugnis vom Untergang Koenigsbergs: ein 'Geltungsjude' berichtet", published by Lambert Schneider)

Michael Wieck's fascinating book aroused in me many memories of my childhood in Koenigsberg. How well I understand his suffering in school at the hands of antisemitic teachers and pupils. In a comparatively small town it was very difficult not to be noticed by a largely hostile population, despite tremendous efforts by the Jews to remain as inconspicuous as possible. The Koenigsberg Jews were particularly unfortunate in that the capital of East Prussia was inbued with the mentality of the Junkers and their own virulent kind of antisemitism. For instance, restaurants and public places were barred to Jews long before this became the norm in the rest of Germany. The sense of isolation (East Prussia was completely cut off from the rest of Germany by the Polish Corridor) may have contributed to the inhabitants' extensive xenophobia. It was at times difficult to recall that this was the city of Kant and his *Kritik der reinen vernunft.*

How well I remember my elementary school teacher, Mr. Huntriesser, with whom I had a very good relationship until I moved to a *Gymnasium* in 1934. I met him in the street towards the end of that year, and was looking forward to telling him of my progress at my new school, when he crossed over to the other side of the street in order not to have to talk to me. As a ten year-old boy I did not understand the political implications; but I felt this act of a much loved man as a personal rejection. Far worse was, of course, to come.

My new school was dominated by a virulent Nazi, Mr. Schroeder, our maths teacher. Try as we might, Rudi Josephson, the other Jew in the class, and I could never get any mark higher than "unsatisfactory" (later on in a Jewish school mathematics turned out to be my best subject). At the end of the year, Rudi and I were the only pupils not to be promoted to a higher class. After being told this in front of the whole class, we were dismissed –

and Rudi and I suffered from uncontrollable laughter all the way home. Michael Wieck describes a similar reaction after hearing his Rabbi speak about his deported congregants, from whom no message whatever had been received. After all these years, I am somewhat relieved to know that this is a common reaction in stress situations.

There are other, more personal connections between Michael Wieck and myself. He describes at length his much-loved teacher Rosa Wolff, who happened to be my aunt. She taught me religion and Hebrew and I too was very fond of her. In an unforgettable passage in the book, he describes how he carried her suitcases to the station from which she was deported, never to be heard from again. At least I was spared that experience.

As a *"Geltungsjude"* (i.e. a child of mixed marriage who opted to be a Jew, he was treated almost like a full Jew having to wear the yellow star and being subject to the Nuremberg Laws but standing a reasonable chance of not being deported. In his situation to help and mix with deportees was highly dangerous (he describes the narrow escape he had) and shows the devotion he must have felt for my aunt. By a sheer fluke, through the good offices of the Wiener Library, I have recently discovered a letter which Miss Wolff wrote for my Barmitzvah and which together with a lot of other personal papers and photographs had been lost for nearly 50 years. I hope to send Mr. Wieck a copy of my aunt's letter.

Unlike other East European cities, Koenigsberg, now Kaliningrad and one of the Soviet Union's major naval bases, has never been rebuilt in the original style. The Russians completely flattened those buildings which have survived the bombing and shelling (including unfortunately the beautiful castle) and created a modern city with wide boulevards bearing no resemblance to the old town. Whilst regretting of course that so much history and beauty has gone for ever, I can not but feel that this "Goetterdaemmerung" was somehow an appropriate symbolic end to the terror that reigned so brutally for those twelve years, and which Mr. Wieck portrays so accurately and so movingly in his book.

Koenigsberg (Rus. Kaliningrad)

Former capital of East Prussia, now in Russian S.F.S.R. Two Jewish physicians lived in Koenigsberg in 1540, but sizeable Jewish settlement did not begin until the latter half of the 17th century when Jewish merchants from Lithuania and Poland began attending the Koenigsberg fairs and in

1680 were allowed to open a prayer room for the duration of the fairs. A *hevra kaddisha* was founded and a cemetery consecrated in 1704; a rabbi was appointed three years later. By 1716 there were 38 Jewish families in Koenigsberg; the first synagogue was constructed in 1756, when the community numbered around 300 persons. A steady stream of immigrants from Russia gradually swelled this figure to 1,027 in 1817, 5,082 (3·6% of the total) in 1880, and 4,049 in 1925, later declining to 3,200 persons (1%) by 1933.

Along with Berlin, Koenigsberg became the centre of Jewish Enlightenment. Here, too, affluent Jewish families gained access to Christian society, the most prominent being the family of H. J. Friedlaender, textile entrepreneurs, to which David Friedlaender belonged. Jews began attending the university, mainly as students of medicine, in 1712; one of them was Marcus Herz. Among Kant's pupils were a number of Jews. In 1783 Isaac Abraham Euchel and Menahem Mendel Breslau, influenced by the ideas of Mendelssohn, founded an association "for the fostering of the Hebrew language," and began to publish a Hebrew periodical, *Ha-Me'assef,* which first appeared in Koenigsberg. A number of Hebrew printers were active in Koenigsberg in the 18th and 19th centuries. For a number of reasons, among which may have been import and censorship difficulties, some works printed in Koenigsberg bear a different imprint or no imprint at all.

The community had no school until 1820, when Isaac Asher Francolm came as religious teacher and preacher. A follower of the Reform movement, he set about establishing a school for religious instruction. However, his efforts failed when the Orthodox majority of the community, resenting his holding a confirmation ceremony for boys and girls, protested to the authorities who, already suspicious of all innovation, prohibited the opening of his institution. When Francolm settled in Breslau, Joseph Lewin Saalschuetz continued his work. In 1847 Saalschuetz taught archaeology of the Hebrews at Koenisberg University, publishing several important treatises in this field, although, as a Jew, he could not be appointed to a professorship. Also active in the community at this time was the radical politician, Johann Jacoby, who published a memorandum (1847) in defense of Jewish emancipation. Jacob Z. Mecklenburg was rabbi at Koenigsberg from 1830 to 1865, succeeded by Isaac Bamberger (1865–96). Orthodox circles established their own congregation in 1870, which later rejoined the

communal union. Significant for the community were the years from 1897 to 1920, when Hermann Vogelstein served as its spiritual leader. He was one of the most important leaders of liberal Jewry in Germany. Felix Perles, his contemporary, was rewarded for his scientific research in Bible and linguistics by his appointment in 1924 as honorary professor of modern Hebrew and Aramaic literature at the university. The 20th century also saw Jews playing a significant role in the faculty of medicine, among them Ludwig Lichtheim, Julius Schreiber, Max Jaffe, and Alfred Ellinger. In 1925 there were five different synagogues in the city as well as a variety of social and welfare institutions.

The onset of Nazism drove Jewish professors from the university, many seeking asylum in the United States and Eretz Israel (including Willy Wolflein and Frieda Reichmann). After the prohibition against Jewish children attending the public schools, a successful Jewish school founded in 1935. On Nov. 10, 1938, the main synagogue was burned down. The Chasidic, Polish, and Orthodox ones were similarly destroyed. The inhabitants of the orphanage and the home for the aged were thrown out on the streets. The men were arrested, mistreated, and imprisoned for two and a half months. A year later only 1,585 Jews remained. In 1941–42, 763 were deported to Theresienstadt (59 were alive when the camp was liberated). In early 1944 only 60 families were left in the town. The Jews who remained in Koenigsberg after the war were expelled by the Russians in 1948 together with the Germans.

Bibliography: J. L. Saalschuetz, in: MGWJ, 7 (1858), 163–78, 203–17, 397–407; 8 (1859), 81–100; 11 (1862), 209–22; H. Jolowicz.

This article was sent to me by Ilja Frischmann and, because of his association with Koenigsberg, I felt it should be reproduced although I have been unable to trace its origin. E.I.

בקור חולים הרפ"ה

Zur Neujahrsablösung spendeten zugunsten des Hilfsverein für ostjüdische Kranke die Herrren:

L. Abramowitz, F. Abramowitz, J. Abramsohn, S. Adler. S. Alexander, Geo. Altmann, Leo Altmann, Frau Ida Aron, H. Aronsohn, Dr. Aschkanasy, Alfr. Arendt, J. Barinbaum, E. Barkan, S. Barkan, D. Bartnitzki, Fa. S. Behrendtsohn, Ad. Bennheim, Frau P. Bergmann, R.-A. Dr. Berlowitz, Bankier Bernstein, Jac. Bernstein, S. Blitzstein, Siegfr. Bluhm, Hirsch Braude, Hugo Braude, L. Braude, Frau Rosa Braude, S. Broczyner, Dentist Buntmann, Bruno Caplan, Fa. Fritz Cohn, Edm. Cohn, Leo Cohn, Czernobilski, Daugilajcky, Dawidowitz, Dinesmann, Dinn, Drector, S. Dubowski, Duneck, S. Echt, Fger, J. Eisenberg, M. Eisenstaedt, Frl. Eliassow, Dr. Epstein, R.-A. Epstein, Mor. Epstein, J. Fabian, M. Feinstein, P. Feltenstein, M. Flanter, S. Flatow, John Fraenkel, Apoth. Friedländer, J. Friedmann, Zahnärztin Frl. Garfein, P. Gillis, Heym. Ginsburg, Will. Ginsburg, Dag. Ginzberg, Siegfr. Ginzberg, Fabr. Herm. Goldberg, Dav. Goldstein, Erw. Goldstein, N. Gordon, Sally Goetz, Leo Grünbaum, Leon Grünbaum, Henry Grabowski, Dag. Grünberg, B. Grünewald, Gubermann, Mor. Guttmann, Frau Blanca Herrmann, Frau Henr. Herrmann, Hans Herrmann, Hugo Herrmann, Fa. Louis Herrmann, W. Herzfeld, J. Hess, O. Hillelsohn, El. Hirsch, Jac. Hirsch, Less. Hirsch, B. Hochland, D. Jablonowsky, R.-A. Dr. Jacobi II, Conr. Jacobsberg, Dag. Jacobus, Jaruslawsky, J. Jedwabnick, S. Joachim, G. Jontofsohn, S. Jontofsohn, Dr. Josephsohn, H. Israelit, G. Kahan, H. Kalinowski, Eug. Kaminski, S. Kantorowitz, Marc. Kaplan, Mos. Kaplan, K. Kasper, J. Klatzko, Max Klein, M. Klewansky, G. Klewansky, Klinkowstein, Frau Königsberger, M. Konn, N. Kopelansky, S. Kopelansky, J. Klimowsky, M. Kowner, Art. Krakowsky, Ad. Krohn, H. Krohn, J. Kunowitz, Prof. Dr. Kutzinski, J. Laaser, H. Lake, Landsberger, Isid. Laser, Max Laser, G. Laumann, M. Laumann, B. Lehmann, Dr. Leopold, Sim. Less, Will. Less, J. Lessheim, Ad. Levin, G. Lew, Herm. Lewin, Hugo Lewin, M. Lewinstein, M. Lewithal, Eug. Liachowsky, Geo. Liachowsky, Liebeck, H. Liebermann, E. Littmann, Louis Loewenstein, Dav. Loewenthal, Jac. Loewenthal, M. Malbin, L. Marcus, Komm.-R. Marx, Bankdir. Marx, Apoth. Meyerowitz, Siegfr. Moses, A. Sch. Munwes, Apoth. Dr. Nissel, Rob. Neumann, M. Nachmansohn, Ad. Ohlhausen, Apoth. Oppel, Ludw. Pelz, Frau Luise Perlis, Jac. Perlis, Dr. L. Perlmann, N. Perlmann, J. Podbielski, Mor. Podbielski, E. Piczenik, J. & S. Pinkus, M. Pollack, Frau Ida Pomeranz, J. Powisteitzki, Art. Propp, Hans Propp, G. Putzrath, W. Rabliuski, Gebr. Rabinowitz, John Rabinowitz, N. Ragolsky, L. Rattner, Jul. Rattner, Jul. Rawraway, Isr. Rawraway, N. Rawraway, A. Ripp, D. Rosenberg, T. Rosenberg, Generaldir. Rosenfeld, Apoth. Rosenthal, A. Rosowsky, A. Rubinstein, G. Rubinstein, Dr. Rudberg, L. Radziminski, J. Sandelowsky, Jac. Sandelowsky, Ad. Scharnitzki, D. Scharnitzki, O. Schermann, H. Schiff, R. Schlabowsky, S. Schlossberg, S. Schönfeld, Gust. Segall, Herm. Segall, Ch. S. Segalowitz, M. Selzowsky, N. Simon, S. Simon, Ad. Stolzenberg, M. Salzmann, Silberstein & Bischburg, Ad. Simon, Max Simon, Frau M. Sissle, S. Taube, L. Taube, Teitelbaum, Frau J. Tscherniak, D. Tscherniak, Ukrainski, E. Wartelski, Weissbarg, B. Werblowsky, S. Werblowsky, L. Weissbrem, S. Winter, Hugo Winter, S. Wohl, Herm. Wohlgemuth, Apoth. G. Wolff, Heinr. Wolff, Siegm. Wolff, S. Zerniawski, L. Zimels, G. Zimmerspitz, H. Zimmerspitz, M. Zingelbach. Frau P. Smoira, Frau Jenny Neumann. I. B. Rabinowitz.

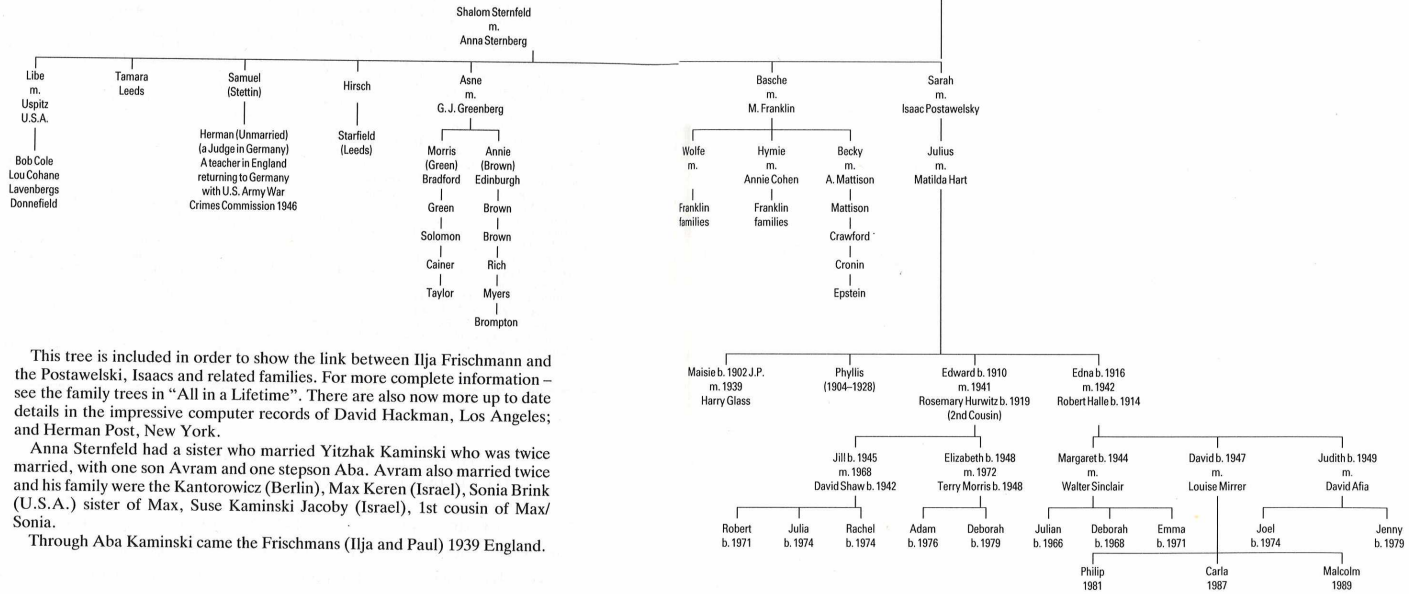
FROM THE KÖNIGSBERGER JÜDISCHE GEMEINDEBLATT, OCTOBER 1st, 1924 – 5685

The list of subscribers to the Bikur Cholim contains the name of Daugiljacki – the family of my cousin Kolef – a friend of Ilja – the name of Eugen Kaminski – a first cousin, and the name Kantorowitz also cousins of Ilja.

The Daugiljacki family emigrated in 1933 to Israel, the Kantorwitz family emigrated both to South Africa and Israel taking the name of Keren in Israel, whilst Eugen Kaminski ended up in Shanghai and died there.

FAMILY TREE OF JULIUS ISAACS
1872–1954
(Maternal)

Showing the Frischmann connection



This tree is included in order to show the link between Ilja Frischmann and the Postawelski, Isaacs and related families. For more complete information – see the family trees in "All in a Lifetime". There are also now more up to date details in the impressive computer records of David Hackman, Los Angeles; and Herman Post, New York.

Anna Sternfeld had a sister who married Yitzhak Kaminski who was twice married, with one son Avram and one stepson Aba. Avram also married twice and his family were the Kantorowicz (Berlin), Max Keren (Israel), Sonia Brink (U.S.A.) sister of Max, Suse Kaminski Jacoby (Israel), 1st cousin of Max/Sonia.

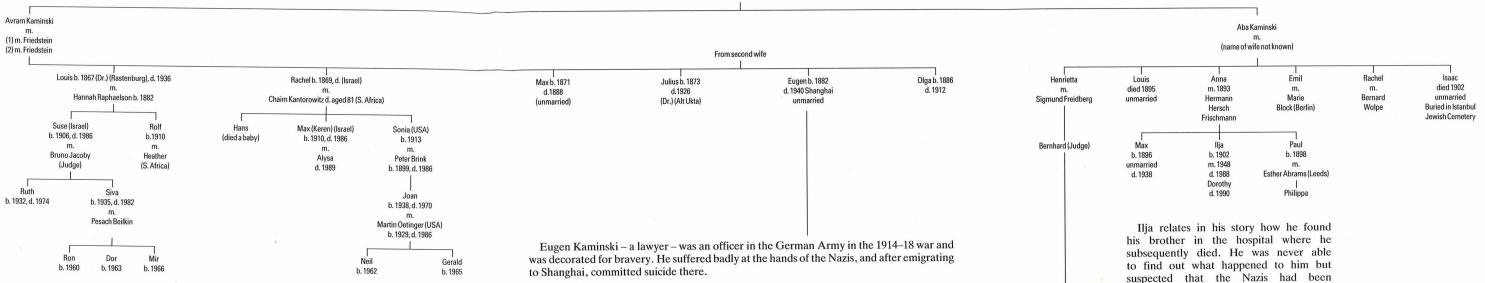
Through Aba Kaminski came the Frischmans (Ilja and Paul) 1939 England.

Yitzhak Kaminski, grandfather of Ilja Frischmann married twice. His first wife – a Sternberg – died at an early age leaving Yitzhak with a son Avram. He subsequently married a sister of his first wife – a widow with one son – Aba – who became his step-son.

A sister in law of Yitzhak – Anna Sternberg – married Shalom Sternfeld, and one of their daughters – Sarah married Isaac Postawelski – grandfather of Teddy Isaacs.

Anna Kaminski-Frischmann daughter of Aba Kaminski was in consequence a great niece of Shalom and Anna Sternfeld with the subsequent connection to the Postawelski-Isaacs families.

YITZHAK KAMINSKI



Eugen Kaminski – a lawyer – was an officer in the German Army in the 1914–18 war and was decorated for bravery. He suffered badly at the hands of the Nazis, and after emigrating to Shanghai, committed suicide there.

Ilja relates in his story how he found his brother in the hospital where he subsequently died. He was never able to find out what happened to him but suspected that the Nazis had been responsible for him ending up in hospital and his eventual death.

Bernhard Freidberg grew up in Eydtkuhnen where Ilja and his family also lived prior to the 1914–18 war and again in the 1930's. He was a lawyer and a first cousin to Ilja. He became a magistrate in Sensburg, and was married to a non Jewish wife. Under the Nazis he was forced to give up his position, but was assisted to emigrate to USA by his wife's very highly placed right-wing relatives in Berlin. He left with his wife and four children, and after a struggle to make good in USA he eventually prospered, and was a member of the U.S. War Criminals Commission to Germany after the War.

Edward Isaacs, who has been responsible for the publication of the Ilja Frischmann story, had his own autobiography "All in a Lifetime" published in 1985. Born in Sheffield in 1910 and educated at King Edward VII school, he had a successful business career from which he retired in 1984.

His many outside interests have kept him fully occupied, as a world traveller and as a genealogist.

He is a Fellow of the British Horological Institute, a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Clockmakers Company and has served the Jewish Community of Sheffield as President of the United Hebrew Congregation, the Hebrew Education Board and Representative Council.

The illustration on the back cover which shows the Postawelski family home in the Bahnhofstrasse Stallupönen is from a sketch by Elizabeth Morris, B.A. Ra-annana, Israel, daughter of Edward Isaacs.


Stallupönen Bahnhofstrasse
Liz Morris