

SPECIAL



EDITION

THE VOICE

SPECIAL



EDITION

OF PIOTRKOW SURVIVORS

NO. 6 (105)

"WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU MARTYRS OF PIOTRKOW"

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PIOTRKOW, SEPTEMBER 25TH, 1997. TOP, AT THE CEMETERY GATE, FROM THE LEFT: AMBASSADOR LAVIE, RABBI BESSER, SAUL DESSAU, BEN GILADI, ROBERT DESSAU, CITY PRESIDENT POL, VICE PRESIDENT MARZEC, WOJEWODA WITASZCZYK AND GUTA GILADI. BOTTOM: PART OF THE AUDIENCE AT RYNEK TRYBUNALSKI. ON THE RIGHT: THE YOUNG CANTOR, SYMCHA KELLER FROM LODZ INTONES "EL MOLE RACHAMIM".

THE VOICE OF PIOTRKOW SURVIVORS

c/o Ben Giladi

135-30 82ND AVENUE

Tel. : (718) 263-8158 KEW GARDENS, NY 11435 fax # 212-689-4657

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"OUR VOICE SHALL NEVER DIE"

From the Editor

In 1976, (Bulletin No. 40), I wrote an essay titled "The Sacrilege", beginning with the following words"

"A friend who visited Piotrkow recently told me about the Jewish Cemetery.

The place seems to be in a horrible condition. Broken monuments everywhere. The granite and marble stones stolen. Wild grass and weeds and trees, with only goats on pasture".

(From my editorial - Bulletin No.90 of Sept.-Oct. 1993)

(An Appeal in Bulletin No. 92 of May-June, 1994).

OUR DEEP CONCERN-

THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN PIOTRKOW

In 1976, the Polish Authorities in Piotrkow intended to convert the Jewish cemetery into a public burial place.

The Bulletin editors started a combined action of rescue. Numerous petitions, letters and appeals were sent to various offices in Piotrkow, Warsaw and Lodz. Moving articles manifesting our outrage, our pain and our determination to prevail and to save the sacred, eternal resting place of our Ancestors were written.

We somehow cut through the bureaucracy. Our intervention helped. the Jewish cemetery in Piotrkow still exists.

Now however, the time has come to undertake another noble deed - to save the cemetery from the thick growth of weeds and the wild trees spreading all over the graves and tombstones.

Practically, every visitor coming back from Piotrkow notifies us about the condition of great neglect. Our sacred cemetery is laying in shambles!

So, now we have to take the necessary

action and to clean up the terrain. The task seems enormous, but the deed must be done in order to preserve our heritage and our dignity. The situation is complex. Only a combined action of all our Societies in the world can successfully deal with the task, complicated by the factor of distance, the problem of proper supervision and of course ample funds. There are a few symbolic graves that are tended by the municipality. There are also a few individual monuments restored by families or friends abroad. But this is all...The vast wilderness is waiting to be put in order. Some of our readers, who visited Piotrkow recently, came indeed up with some ideas and notions how to tackle the issue. They are ready to act. We appeal to all of you to express your suggestions, ideas and opinion, how to start the action. Hopefully, the Polish Authorities will fully cooperate...Our pages wait for your reaction. Lets do anything possible that our Beloved Departed should Rest in Peace! Ed.

The above excerpts written in 1993 and in 1994, reflect my deep concern I've always had regarding the sad situation of the Beth Almin in our hometown. Thank G-D, now the problem is resolved! The following pages tell the story of one, tremendous accomplishment. Ed.

Honoring the Departed

Ben Giladi

...EL MOLE RACHAMIM -

W'YANUCHU B'SHALOM AL MISHKAVAM

W'NOMAR AMEN...

Piotrkow Trybunalski located near Lodz, was a town with a rich, Jewish history stretching back more than five centuries. An illustrious chain of distinguished Rabbis and scholars served its community, spreading its renown across Europe. Among them the great, Chasidic leader, Rabbi Dr. Hayim David Bernard, the descendants of Rabbi Yisachar of Radoszyce, the legendary Rabbi Meir Shapiro and the last Rabbi of Piotrkow, the noble scholar, Moshe Chaim Lau.

The great Synagogue of Piotrkow, erected in the years 1791-1793 after thirty years of planning, was a famed site in Poland.

In more recent times, Piotrkow became famous as the center of Holy Books printing establishments.

In 1792, the Jewish main cemetery was established in Piotrkow. One of the most consecrated places of Piotrkow Jewry, it still contains about 3,000 Matzevot. There rest people who were part of our proud, Jewish Piotrkow. During the Holocaust, the Nazis desecrated the cemetery, by destroying many tombstones, profaning the graves, staging torturous executions, inflicting indescribable physical and psychological pain and degradation to the victims, forced to dig their graves.

After the war the small survivors community of Piotrkow tried partially to repair the damages. Still, during the years when most of them left Piotrkow, weeds, bushes and trees overtook the grounds. No one was there to take care.

Piotrkower abroad were concerned- there were calls for some action, but nothing was actually done.

The situation seemed gloomy. Last year however, a small miracle occurred. Here, emerged one man totally committed to the cause, full of motivation, compassion and energy, with the name of Saul Dessau. He was 16 years old when liberated in Czestochowa, on January 16, 1945, after six terrible years in labor camps. There, at liberation day, he witnessed his father's heartbreaking death from the hands of a fleeing Nazi, minutes before liberation, in the presence of his two brothers Zvi and Robert. Years later, the three brothers searched in vain for their father's grave.

Still in 1945, Saul and his brothers left Poland for Germany and then emigrated to the United States where they became successful manufacturers and builders.

Saul started his own industrialists' career in international trading quite early.

Among his many endeavors, he operated the largest hosiery factory in South America. He was always proud to be a descendant of the Great Tzadik of Piotrkow, Rabbi Dr. Hayim Bernard. In 1945, the brothers restored his ohel. In 1993 Saul and Robert rebuilt the ohel and erected two commemorative plaques on this shrine of so many Chassidic pilgrimages of their past, at the Jewish

cemetery in Piotrkow. The cemetery's condition of great neglect, was since then constantly on Saul's mind. When he visited other cemeteries tended by his friends survivors and saw how far behind his hometown is in restoration, in such a disarray, he resolved to do something about it - once and for all.

So, about a year ago, Saul approached me with a concrete proposal. I still remember the crucial meeting with Saul and Robert, when the notion of the Piotrkow Trybunalski Remembrance and Restoration Project was born. A project

entirely financed by Saul and Robert Dessau.

A few weeks later, Saul and I arrived in Piotrkow in order to start the initial arrangements with the many authorities. Creative ideas were exchanged and a promising picture of the restoration plan emerged. This included not only the cleanup and conservation of the cemetery and the installation of wide, new pavements there, but also the unveiling of five commemorative, bronze plaques in five languages, to be erected at respective historic city locations.

1) At the main cemetery gate, 2) Commemorating the establishment of the first ghetto in Europe by the Nazis 3) The marking of the site of the Treblinka deportations atrocities in 1942, 4) The marking of the site of an ancient, non existing XVII - XVIII century cemetery. The fifth, large plaque was put at the front entrance of the Great Synagogue, now a district library.

After this first trip, it became apparent that there is a lot to be done. The chemistry however was there. Saul with his great commitment and organizational skill, and yours truly, with the vast historical and journalistic background, formed a team that could bring this noble project to a swift realization.

Back in New York, our work became intense. It took a lot of effort to ready the five plaques with the proper text, wording and spelling in the five languages. Furthermore, ingenious planning and decisive action was essential. Many faxes with various Polish authorities were exchanged, including lengthy phone conversations, in order to secure permit issuance (also from the Jewish Congregation in Poland). Proper time table and work schedules had to be synchronized.

Finally, in July, the plaques were ready. Saul and I went to Poland again, carrying the plaques (weighing over 700 pounds), as personal baggage. This nearly impossible task was accomplished thanks to Saul's sheer driving force and enormous motivation.

Again, in Piotrkow, we were cordially received by about a dozen personalities - the main cultural and political leaders of Piotrkow. Vital issues were resolved regarding the re-dedication of the cemetery and plaque unveiling ceremonies. Then we went with the authorities to the cemetery and all the other places in order to assure the proper method of safe installation of the five plaques. And such was our quite productive, second mission to Piotrkow. Back in New York, I sent out a few hundred invitations to our survivors all over the world, for the rededication and unveiling ceremonies slated for September 25th. - just before "Yamim Norayim" - the traditional Kever Avot and also the 55th Yahrzeit of the 1942 Piotrkow Deportations to Treblinka.



In 1924, Rabbi Yehuda Meir Shapira became Rav Rashi of Piotrkow. A year before he was catapulted in the annals of Torah history by originating a great program in Torah study, the Daf Yomi. Every seven years after completing the Talmud study, the Siyum Hashas became a powerful demonstration of Emunah and Ahavat Torah. The 10th. celebration of the Siyum this year coincided with our ceremonies in Piotrkow. Rabbi Chaskel Besser of New York, a member of Agudas presidium and Chairman of Polish operations for the Lauder Foundation, he was a ten year old boy then, still remembers meeting Rav Shapira in Krynica, Poland in 1934 and first hearing of Daf Yomi. Now, many years later it became a minhag to travel to Lublin and to celebrate a symbolic Siyum at Rav Shapira's Yeshiva. So, when Rabbi Besser received our invitation to attend the gathering in Piotrkow on Sept. 25th., he accepted and invited us to participate in the Lublin Shas celebration a day before. On Wednesday Sept. 24th., Saul Dessau, Robert Dessau, my wife Guta and myself embarked with Rav Besser and his group on the journey from Warsaw to Lublin. On the bus was also the idealistic Rabbi Michael Shudrich with some of his flock, the young Jewish people who learned of their roots and uncompromisingly embraced Judaism. Rabbi Shudrich, a New Yorker, lives now in Warsaw. He learned Polish and is now the spiritual leader of the young, new Jews.

On the bus, during the conversation about Rav Shapira and his Piotrkow years, I revealed that he was indeed my Sandek. The people on the bus were impressed.

Entering the imposing building of Yeshiva Chechame Lublin, now a medical school, one does experience feelings of awe. In the auditorium, Rav Besser conducted a ceremony in honor of the Siyum. Every while or so, another large group of Israeli youngsters coming to pay homage to the Rabbi, entered the room telling of their visits to nearby Majdanek, Treblinka and Auschwitz. After the ceremony we gathered in the Rabbi's sanctuary, the only place in the building still shelved with holy books. There we had a spirited meal and davened Mincha. When we were leaving, a new group of talmidim from Yeshiva Kirias Shmuel near Haifa, celebrated outside by singing and dancing. We joined them of course, singing the nigunim of Rav Shapira in front of the Yeshiva. The journey to Lublin was indeed an emotional and memorable experience.



The next morning our people gathered at the main gate of the Jewish cemetery in Piotrkow. They came from the USA, England, France, Germany, Sweden, Israel and even Australia! We arrived earlier to check on the last details and walked the newly installed wide pavements in wonder and awe. From a jungle this cemetery was converted into a shrine. The thick weeds and bushes were gone. New pavements gave easy access to the graves. The trees were pruned, the entire terrain was neat and clean.

At 10:00am, at the cemetery entrance, I addressed the crowd. Then, the first commemorative plaque was unveiled by the Wojewoda of Piotrkow, the Hon. Stanislaw Witaszczyk and Saul Dessau.

We all entered the cemetery, approaching the main, symbolic matzevah of the Kedoshim. Here Rabbi Besser spoke of the rich tradition and achievements of the Gedolim of our city. We proceeded and stopped at three modest graves of Lajzer Malc, his fiancée Sala Uszerowicz and Rachel Rolnick. Here, I told the heartbreaking story how they were killed in their beds, in November 1945, just after liberation, by the Polish bandits of the Armia Krajowa.

Saul and Robert, the cousins of Lajzer Malc, restored these three monuments just recently. We then proceeded to a newly erected monument. Here, Guta Flatto-Giladi unveiled the Matzevah, speaking movingly about her uncle, Berish Judkiewicz, the first Jew in Piotrkow killed by the hand of a German. A small tin plaque was then put on his grave. This plaque, crumbling and eroded was found by her husband a few months ago. Her brother, Srulek and Zenek and her grandfather Efraim, perished in the Ghetto and were laid to rest nearby, without a marker. So now, Guta fulfilled her wish to mark the place of their burial.

Next to the restored ohel of the Tzadik and healer, R. Dr. Bernard, another Matzevah was newly erected, a symbolic headstone in memory of Chaim David Dessau, the descendant of the Tzadik. He was killed on Jan. 16th., 1945 at the train station in Czestochowa by a fleeing SS man, just minutes before liberation. Years later, his three sons Zvi, Saul and Robert searched in vain for their father's grave.

Now the brothers, Saul and Robert, also in the name of their brother Zvi, unveiled the names of their mother Gitl and brother Pinchas, who perished in Treblinka.



Saul spoke movingly eulogizing the memory of their parents and brother. Then Rabbi Besser spoke at the ohel, eulogizing the Tsadik.

Rabbi Michael Shudrich, the spiritual leader of the young, Jewish generation in Poland addressed the crowd, and especially the present young generation. The young Chazan Symka Keller from the Lodzer Congregation intoned El Mole Rachamim. His beautiful voice and diction, when uttering this holy prayer, sounded so movingly and clear- far and wide.

One of the London "boys", Reb Israel Rudzinski, a Bobover Chasid, chanted Tehilim. Dr. Henryk Henig of Israel intoned Kaddish Bacibur.

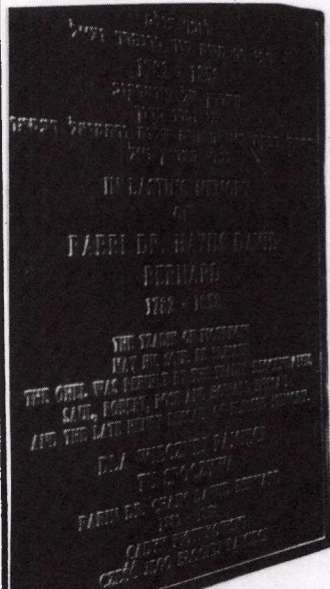
Leaving the cemetery, we stopped at the ruins of three Ohalim. Here, Ambassador Naphtali Lau Lavie, the son of the last Rabbi of Piotrkow and the brother of the Rav Rashi of Israel, told the story of the three great Rabbis laid to rest there. Those of the Radoshitz, Wolborz and Rozprza. He also revealed that between these three Ohalim, are buried the desecrated Sifrei Torah of the Great Synagogue, brought at great risk by himself and other Yeshiva Bachurim to the cemetery in September of 1939. Saul and Robert, right on the spot then, made a commitment to rebuild the three Ohalim and to unveil three commemorative plaques there.

We proceeded then into the heart of the town, the Trybunalski Square. The meaning of the plaque there, commemorating the establishment of the Piotrkow Ghetto, the first in Nazi conquered Europe, was explained by the President of Friends of Piotrkow Society, Mgr. Wladyslaw Hartman. I then pointed out to the house no. 4, the former German Headquarters and recalled that from here, the young Saul Dessau, together with two other boys, also present, Krulik Wilder and Harry Spiro of London, were taken to the Synagogue with 600 other people.

They were miraculously saved at the last moment, before the entire group was taken and shot in the Rakow Forest. Gutka Flatto was also in the Synagogue then and freed at the last moment. The plaque was unveiled by the city's President, Mgr. Andrzej Pol and Robert Dessau.

We proceeded to the adjoining Square, the Plac Czarnieckiego, where a plaque in remembrance of the Martyrdom of Piotrkow Jews was unveiled by the City's Vice President, Ing. Ian Kruz and Dr. Moshe Ish-Horowicz Halevi of Israel.

We then came to the Great Synagogue, now a district library. Here, Ben Helfgott, the chairman of the 45 London Society, spoke movingly. His mother and little sister perished here. He and Vice- Pres. Mgr. Robert Marzec unveiled



the plaque. Between the Shul and the Beth Hamidrash, there lays the site of the first XVII-XVIII century Jewish cemetery. The Germans destroyed every monument there.

Now, a bed of roses was planted there and a plaque was erected. The remarks of Amb. Lau-Lavie were quite powerful. He painted a vivid image of a vibrant, Jewish community, recalling the glory and also the atrocities committed here by the Amakek. He unveiled the plaque together with the last Jew of Piotrkow, Reuven Hipzer and Mgr. Andrzej Switalski, the director in charge of all cemeteries restorations in Piotrkow. Five wreaths of flowers were placed under every plaque at unveiling time, by the City's President.

Then, on the way to the Museum, we went to see the mural of the Ten Commandments upstairs, in the once Beth Midrash, spotted with bullet holes. There Saul told us how he and others tried to escape from the Synagogue putting a wooden board between two windows. The board was shot down by the Ukrainian guards.

The District Museum, just one block away, located in an ancient castle more than five centuries old, was our next destination. Here, Prof. Marcin Gasior, the Museum's curator, opened the impressive exhibit on Judaica and the Holocaust theme; an imposing display of documents, photos, records and relics - an emotional experience for us all indeed. Elaborate greetings by the city's president, a piano concert with Beethoven and Chopin in program and cordial reception concluded this memorable event. After everyone left, Saul and Robert, Guta and I, together with Ing-jan Kruz and Piotr Gaida, went to the Rakow Forest (Rakowski las), and found the site of the 1943 executions that Saul and Guta miraculously escaped from, when freed at the last moment from the Synagogue. A memorial will be erected there in the near future in the memory of the Kedoshim. Back to Warsaw, we met at dinner with some participants of our pilgrimage which was hosted by Saul and Robert.

Next morning, on the way to the airport, the taxi driver recognized us. He saw the nationwide, televised program of the events in Piotrkow, which was given wide coverage by the media.

* * * * *

So, this was one of the rare days of our lives when a tribute straight from the heart moved us all to tears. This day brought us the emphasis of the living spirit - a precious spark of heritage and remembrance, which together with hope and persistence, makes our survival possible. □





A candle is lit by Robert Dessau on the grave of his cousin Lajzer Malc.



IN LOVING MEMORY

We would like to say a few words in Memory of our Dear Father, Chaim David Dessau who was named after our ancestor, the Tzadik, Dr. Chaim David Bernard, they should rest in peace.

On January 16, 1945, before our liberation by the Russians, our father was killed by a German SS-man in the presence of his 3 sons: Saul, Robert and the late Henry Dessau, at the train station in Czestochowa while waiting to be loaded to go to Buchenwald, the death camp. The cross-fire shooting forced us to run for our lives.

We never found our father's body and for years we searched in vain for the place of his burial.

We also like to honor the memory of our beloved mother Gitl Dessau and our youngest brother Pinchas. Both were murdered in Treblinka together with the rest of our large family.

We unveil this symbolic monument here, in their sacred memory and will erect three similar monuments in Czestochowa, New York and Israel. We miss them dearly and will always remember them! May they rest in Peace!

Saul and Robert Dessau



(CONTINUATION)

HONOR ROLL

(CONTINUATION)

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* Asterisk Denotes Second Generation.

WE KEPT OUR PROMISE

Ten years ago, I visited Poland. I've experienced deep emotions there. With my friend, William Mandell and other friends, we first visited Kielce, where the horrible pogrom occurred in 1946. William, who comes from Kielce, accomplished then an important mission; the restoration of the Jewish cemetery in his hometown, where most of the matzevot were destroyed or erased and where 42 Jewish victims murdered by anti-semites were laid to rest in 1946.

Then we went to my hometown Piotrkow. Here, I experienced feelings of sadness and grief. The cemetery there was in a horrible shape. All the ancient and majestic monuments were overtaken by weeds and bushes.

There, I suddenly realized how far behind we are among all the other Jewish Societies, who already restored the holy burial grounds of their ancestors.

Then I made a promise to myself that we will do the utmost in order to restore this place and resolve this problem.

All this happened ten years ago. Now I thank the Almighty that that I was allowed to fulfill my promise.

Robert Dessau



Warsaw, Sept 23, 97.
From the left:
Robert Dessau, Amb.
Lau-Lavie, Rabbi
Besser and Rabbi
Schudrich.

Recollections and Reflections

ON THE EVENTS IN PIOTRKOW - SEPTEMBER 25TH, 1997

In the main hall, inside the Synagogue, I stopped briefly at a plaque which was installed in 1993. This prototype of the large plaque outside was then donated by Isaac (Bolek) Goldlust of New Jersey.

I suddenly recalled the moving scene of the moment when this plaque was mounted - a large group of Israeli youngsters of "The March of The Living", visited Piotrkow then and joined us in the ceremony, raising their banner and singing "Hallelujah"...

* * * *

At one point, I addressed the young students of the Janusz Korczak School, the very school I attended as a youth, although at the time, it was called the Berek Joselewicz School in honor of the famous Jewish colonel who had commanded a Jewish regiment, fighting for Poland's freedom under Napoleon. I thanked the children and teachers for their devoted efforts to clean the graves in the Jewish cemetery. They do it voluntarily, for the last few years, every April, on the Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising...

* * * *

When the young cantor from Lodz, Symcha Keller intoned "El Mole Rachamim" at the cemetery, all the people were in awe! So spirited and splendid a prayer had not been heard in Piotrkow since the days of the great chazan, Boruch Kamieniecki, sixty years ago...

* * * *

At the end of our pilgrimage, after all the traumatic experiences of the day, it was so good and soothing to listen to a piano recital with the Apasionata by Beethoven, Polonaise and Scherzo by Chopin in program, played by the young performer, Marek Pajak.

The music sounded so glorious in the Castle Auditorium. The imposing gallery of Polish kings looked upon us from the walls above... BG.

* * * *



At the Keter Torah in the Beth Hamidrash. From the left: Mayor Shrager Milsztajn, Rabbi Besser, Reb I. Rudzinski, R. Dessau, B. Giladi, Amb. Lau Lavie and S. Dessau.

The Last Jew

By Naphtali Lau-Lavie

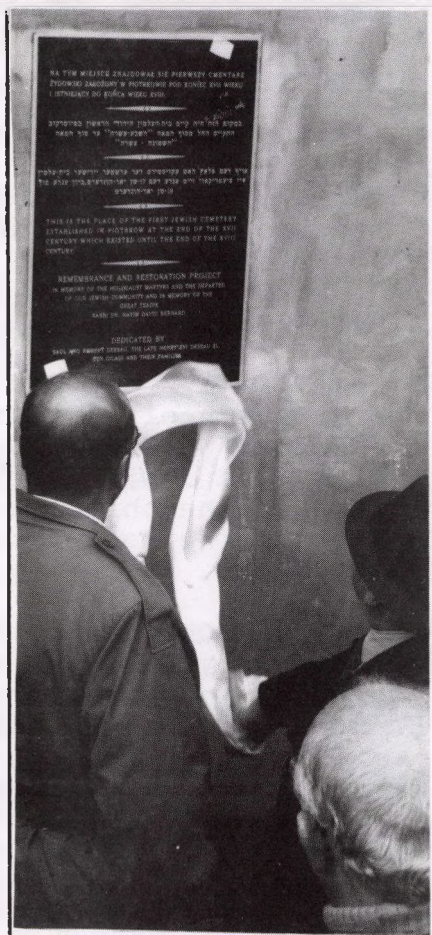
In July 1943 the Ghetto of Piotrkow, the first to be established by the Germans in Europe, was finally extinct. Of the thirty thousand Jews who were squeezed into the Ghetto until the deportation to Treblinka in October 1942, only two thousand four hundred remained in the Piotrkow area, as forced laborers in the glass factories Kara and Hortensja and in the timber yards of Dietrich and Fischer, near the river Bugaj. They were detained in the Small Ghetto, known as the "Block", until they were moved again, this time into especially erected camps close to their working sites. It was on July 1943 that Piotrkow became declared by the Nazis as JUDENREIN. Fifteen months later the last Jews of Piotrkow were again uprooted and dispersed to camps in Czeszochowa, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen and Ravensbrueck.

Fifty four years after the extinction of the Piotrkow community only one single lonely Jew roams through the streets of the city. But for a few hours on September 25, 1997 Roman Hipszer, the last Jew in Piotrkow, was joined by some fifty men and women who came to their native city, from Israel, the United States, South America, Australia, Great Britain, and Sweden.

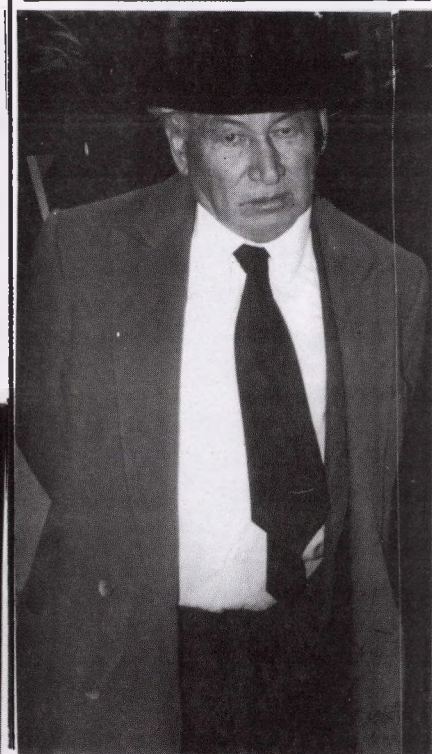
They came to relive their past, their youth, sharing common experiences from their childhood, the dark times in the Ghetto and the camps, and to pay tribute to those who had not escaped the tragic fate of European Jewry. During the few hours we spent in Piotrkow, we fixed memorial plaques on the gate of the Jewish cemetery, recently cleaned up, at the entrance to the Great Synagogue, on a building in Rynek Trybunalski, where the first Ghetto was established in late September 1939; on building of Plac Czarnieckiego, which was the center of the Ghetto, and finally on the eastern wall of the Great Synagogue facing the Old Jewish cemetery of the 16th century.

As I was standing near the new memorial plaque placed between the windows of the Great Synagogue, my thoughts went back to the happy childhood days we enjoyed on this particular spot, opposite the Talmud Tora school on the left, the Jewish hospital on the right and in front of us the Old Cemetery with the ancient tomb stones on which we tried to identify the names of the deceased resting beneath them, and the the Great Synagogue with the adjacent Beth Midrash, which housed the Yeshiva Beth Yosef, of Novahrdik.

Watching with some fascination the scene in front of my eyes, a mystical story came to my mind, told by the Israeli writer and author, Nobel Laureate Shai Agnon, in his book "Yamim Noraim". According to the story, Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk, one of the famous Hassidic leaders, used to spend time at the Beth Midrash of Piotrkow studying Tora. One night, as he was deeply emmersed in his talmudic study, he got up in a panic. He looked toward the windows facing the cemetery and became scared. He raised his voice with the hope to rid himself from his fears of the ghosts challenging him. Finally he took the Shofar, which was lying on the Bima for the early morning prayers of the month Elul, when the Shofar is blown, and began to blow. Within minutes he noticed hundreds of men wrapped in long white shirts surrounding the windows and loudly asking if the Messiah had indeed arrived. Petrified, Rabbi Shlomo dropped the Shofar and ran from the threatening deceased whose rest on the Old Cemetery of Piotrkow was shattered by the sound of the Shofar. □



Ambassador Lavie unveil the plaque at the site of the ancient cemetery behind the Synagogue.



The last Jew in Piotrkow, Roman (Rivele) Hipszer.



BOOK PASSAGE-BALAAM'S PROPHECY

Balaam's Prophecy is a personal account of Jewish history in the years 1939-1989. Written by Naphtali Lau-Lavie, journalist and diplomat, who survived the horrors of Nazi concentration camps and later became a leading personality in the government of Israel, this book reflects upon major historic events during the second half of this century, as experienced by the author.

The Hebrew version of the book "Am K'Lavie" (Nation as a Lion) was first published by Ma'ariv in Tel Aviv in 1993 and received very positive acclaim by writers, statesmen, academicians and a broad spectrum of readers. The book unfolds with the personal drama of the Holocaust as experienced by the author as a boy of fourteen years old in Auschwitz and Buchenwald and continues to reveal most fascinating occurrences in the Israeli struggle for existence. Having been in the inner circle of the decision making leadership of Israel in the years 1970-1985 the author shares with the reader the process of fateful decisions during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 as well as decisive moves at the time of negotiations with Egypt and the United States for peace, which was finally signed in March 1979 on the lawn of the White House in Washington.

With his experience as Consul-General of Israel in New York, as emissary of the Jewish State to the largest Jewish diaspora, the author analyzes the ambivalent relationship between the Israelis and the Jewish minorities abroad. Because of his unique experience he is able to examine the real difference between the two communities and their divergent agendas. In the author's opinion they are not one community, as some like to portray themselves, and their respective realities indicate that they never will be. Many will disagree with his conclusions, but no one will remain indifferent. No one will be able to read this unusual autobiography without examining his or her own life and values, without scrutinizing inherited and adopted perceptions and assumptions about who he or she is and what will happen to his or her children and grandchildren. □

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We welcome the new editions of the book **AM K'LAVIE**, first published in 1993. The first edition in Polish, (title "Zraniony Lew") appeared recently in Poland, publ. by "Znak". The second, English version, will soon appear in the US under the allegoric title "Balaam's Prophecy". Balaam, the Mesopotamian diviner, was commanded to curse the Israelites. He blessed them instead and uttered favorable prophecies after having been rebuked by the donkey he rode. (Numbers, 22-23) We are all waiting eagerly for the books! BG.



A Great Moment in History!
Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat shake hands feelingly. Naphtali Lau-Lavie looks on.

On the right: Naphtali Lau-Lavie and Moshe Dayan during an unwanted respite due to an emergency landing in the Chule Valley on their way to the Golan Heights.

(These two sample photos are from the many fabulous photographs displayed in the book).

WE SALUTE OUR BEN-YIR, NAPHTALI LAU-LAVIE ON HIS MAGNIFICENT AUTOBIOGRAPHY WHICH IS SO CLOSE TO OUR HEARTS!



Some thoughts after the ceremonies of Remembrance and Restoration in Piotrkow on September 25, 1997 and fragmentary verbatim from the visit.

Words, words, words. So many times there is the feeling that we humans are so wrapped up in the words we use for thought and interchange that on reflection it only stresses that every human is utterly alone with his fate and his pain. Well then, if words can serve as a protective hide — it is not so bad.

Then again, I am reminded of the saying that the Torah has seventy faces — seventy interpretations. So each generation has to search and find new meaning. And this adds another meaning to words: that we carry an essential scripture inside of us, analogous to the one of the Holy Scriptures. Some of it is torn, some is deeply buried, large parts are obliterated. So how is it possible, how can we recover the meaning? Cabbalists of age have been occupied with this issue. Incidentally that is also what psychoanalysis is about. Luckily there are meetings where people may discover they are not alone in their solitude. There are stories to be told; new light to be shed; mourning, despair, doubt, joy, pride to be shared. And this at best will help each one of us to find his own way. Such meetings took place in Piotrkow Trybunalski and Warsaw on some beautiful late September days this year. My mother Estera-Chana Jablonska nee Ritterband and Tusha Fajner-Jablonski had gone to Warsaw a couple of days earlier. My sister Elisabeth and I joined them on the evening before the remembrance ceremonies.

We are all looking for miracles. And indeed, many survivals were the result of a series of coincidences and unexpected events that make the word "miracle" adequate. Who has not at least once after the war had the thought: "There in the ghetto or in the camp I could never in my wildest dreams have imagined I would end up with a life like this." Then again there are too many miracles that are missing so that the survivor is thrown between on the one hand the relief to have made it, to have been literally offered a new life and on the other hand the incurable black holes and wounds of loss. (Many people literally feel them in their bodies.).

There is a danger — maybe more for the second generation — that we may become obsessed by the disasters. Still it can be justified if we are in search for the life before and beyond the disaster. We have a dilemma in that we wish to remember and at the same time we also have to protect ourselves. Knowing and remembering can become too much — or even distorted to something soulless.

A few years ago the Israeli psychoanalyst Ilany Kogan presented a case of a 2nd generation teen-age boy who became severely psychotic. (It is now published so I am free to mention it) He held the literal belief that the orange juice that his caring father was pouring for him in the morning contained the ashes of his murdered relatives. I believe quite a few of us would be able to have an intuitive understanding of this aspect in this broken boy. (Many psychoanalysts though — Jewish and non-Jewish — had difficulties in grasping the meaning.) Adults who tell — be they first or second generation — must be in touch with the child's capacity of coping with such stories. And adults who are silent or insensitive can rest assured that a sensitive child will pick up a lot of things from the darkness even without knowing, drinking the ashes with the mother's milk so to speak.

Two issues are getting clearer to me:

Firstly, the Giladis and the Dessaus: Thanks to their commitment, stamina, and generosity at last and at least there are Jewish inscriptions in Piotrkow. They have worked very hard — much more than you can see — to reach this goal. Their achievement is a comfort to all Piotrkower and their descendants. I think it is appropriate to say: their work is for the *Tikkun Haolam*. Secondly, I am gradually getting a more comprehensive picture of the Jewish civilization of Piotrkow. I can see a derivative of it in the achievements of those few who survived and their descendants. I

am also beginning to get an idea of the vibrant, intense and diversified intellectual, spiritual and civil life in the city and in the townlets and villages around. So many sharp and creative minds, so many warm and concerned hearts, so many able, skilled and committed people that have been taken away from us. Also some shrewd and deceitful people, some crooks, many poor and unhappy people, some meshuggeneh etc — i.e. the whole pandemonium of life! In my mind this is a heritage for the future, for life. And over the years I have come to recognize this partial perception of a vanished world as an inner asset to me.

What was it like in Piotrkow on September 25 and 26? I only able to present pieces of stories told, of conversations I took part in, shared memories etc. And it is a very small part of what I have kept from these two days. I shall need a long time to digest and integrate my impressions.

If only

"If she would only have listened to me instead of joining her parents into the cemetery! But she couldn't stand being separated from them. And then, I was told, as they got there to the cemetery and she saw what was happening, she tried to escape. But they shot her..."

"I told him: 'Pan doktor, there is a way through the attic. Don't wait for them here. Come with me this way, please.' But he was pale, stricken."

"If only I had been together with my father during the death march, I am sure he would have made it."

"I told my father: 'Let's sell everything and leave. But he said, "no." If only he would have listened to me. But he did not have the premonition as I had of the monstrosity of Hitler's plan."

"They were denounced after a week in hiding and taken to Tomaszow Mazowiecki and shot." If only one had gotten away.

Shorthand of the conversation with a dignified gentleman:

"Where do you live? Oh, have friends in your area.... so you know them! What a coincidence." "No, I don't know those people in Stockholm, but indeed it is a nice area" "Oh, I see. I am very honoured to meet with you"....."yes I have three children...you too? So what are they doing?"....."May I ask how old were you at the time of the ghetto?" "I was nine"

"And you were with your family?" No, my parents were deported."

"So whom were you with?" "With various people."

The "if only" cannot even be breathed.

Ghetto life

Estera: "Here in 10, Plac Trybunalski we lived. When it was a ghetto, we youngsters would gather here in the loggia facing to the inner courtyard because there was a curfew and we were not allowed out. We gathered and chatted. Here next-door to my parents flat was the private library. And in here we were dancing. And down-stairs were the Fajner's."

Tusha: "Yes, (sigh) we had to move in with others because our flat in Slovackiego was outside the ghetto."

"Yes, I was also in the synagogue once but I got out. When I was outside I saw. There on the outside were the Ukrainians. They were really bad. They had an open fire. I saw one of them going up to a woman, taking her child, smashing it to the wall and throwing it on the fire."

In the Jeruzolimska opposite the synagogue (in Polish): "Yes, madame, I was only a child, they were shooting people inside the synagogue. I saw them taking the dead bodies out. It was terrible." Elisabeth is holding our mother as she cries helplessly and the two

Polish women stand silently and sad.

Once there was a life

Tusha: "Here the judges and lawyers used to sit in the evenings with their wives. Here were the processions on Independence Day and Constitution Day. People came to look at it from our windows. Here opposite our house my father used to sit and read the paper until our maid crossed the street and told him dinner was served. Oh, my father hated the noise from Europa, but I loved to listen to the music in the evenings."

Estera: "Do you remember meshiggene Mania. She was a skilled seamstress and not bad looking. She took a fancy to dr Grynberg some years before the war. It started when she was in the hospital and refused to take her medicine. She made an ultimatum to dr Grynberg: "I will only take the medicine if you promise to marry me." And he did not take her seriously and said "yes" so she took the medicine and from then on claimed he had promised to marry her. He was married to a beautiful wife, had a family. But Mania could not give up her love for the doctor. She would roam the streets cuddling her own elbow as if it were a baby: "I give up the doctor....no! I cannot give him up." It was really sad."

E: "There was a lovely view on the Rynek from our windows. And always dreamt of being able to climb down the facade onto the balcony below"

T: "And I used to play in the garden of the Greek Orthodox church. And the priests opposite knew me. They used to wave at me. I was more free. Our family was not so religious. Your mother came from a very religious home. She could not have short sleeves in summertime."

E: "Yes, in the country-side, in Przyglow, we were allowed. My father was a very religious man: he was a baal-koyre, a baal-tkayo and a baal-tfilo in his *shtibl*. People would also come to him to have the *ayin raa* taken away"

T: "My father allowed me to go to this Polish school for girls. And they gave me shabbos off. Once a non-Jewish boy accompanied me home. My grandfather was outraged and demanded that I must immediately leave the school. In desperation I turned to my aunt. She said: 'I'll talk to him' — continue! I later found out she made him believe I had quit."

E: "My father would never have allowed me in a Polish school."

T: "No. That is why your father arranged for you private tuition"

E: "Do you remember here.... no here.... here it was, and here! Here in nr 2 of the Rynek lived Josef Ritterband. Here was the store of Chaim Ritterband, And here of Yakub Ritterband, and here another Ritterband"

T: "Yes, but they were not so religious."

E: "The whole of Szewska were full of Ritterbands and their shoe-stores. And here a Rubinstein....and here was my father's store, here on the corner of the Plac and the Szewska"

T: "Yes I remember., We used to buy Tretorn Swedish made rubber boots"

E: "Yes, my father was the district agent for Tretorn. He made good money on that. and here in number 10 of the Rynek my grandfather had his store. But he sold it later. And here in Sieradska....They were competitors to my father. And here around the corner was a non-Jew, an anti-Semite but he could not compete. Later he arranged a picketing that people should not buy with my father. But he wanted me to marry one of his sons! Hah! Imagine something so unimaginable!"

T: "Here is Bloomingdale's, here was Harrod's — large stores, 25-30 sq meters. (smiles). And who was here — Grynberg's?"

E: "Look many shops still remain in the same trade as before the war. And here is the shop of X."

H: "Oh it's hers? The retail vendor who cut her share by denouncing Schlomo to the Polish authorities after the first world war because he held a stock of textile fabric which they confiscated? Hm. So, they are her descendants. That is fascinating." Almost every shopowner in the Sieradska, Szewska, Rynarska is named. A Polish woman stops by in the Sieradska. "Yes, I moved in

here in 1937. Yes, here was the diary shop.....oh yes, she was my teacher too...." And the chat goes on for half an hour between white gray and silver-gray heads and between brown, gray-green and blue irises sharing memories from the living city of their childhood and youth.

E: "Here we used to take walks. We were not allowed to walk with boys. They would walk at a distance behind us trying to be witty and making comments about us, about our legs."....."And here on the first floor in the corner house of the Szewska and the Rynek my little brother studied in the yeshivah. He was very gifted and destined for studies in Lublin. Harav Shapira had managed to raise money in America for his yeshivah there. Yes it was this door. And here behind this tiny opening people were hiding during the deportations."....."Here, is the stairway to the women's section. Ah, it is fenced off. My mother and I used to sit in the front and daven. Those women who could not read would count the window-pieces while waiting."

"Here I fell in love with your father. He came in — I was standing right here. It was love at first sight."

"Here is the pipe for the water tap we had installed right here. See, you can see the marks. And I used to jump up and down these flight of stairs in two jumps."

H: "But it is 16 steps. You must have needed a minimum of 4 jumps."

E: "Well then let's see. Yes 16 steps. Well then, maybe 4."

Elisabeth: "Watch it mother this plank in the loggia is loose. We noticed that when we were here 1 1/2 years ago. Be careful."

E: "You're telling me?! I know! It was loose in those days too!" (We laugh. To this plank nothing has really happened. In certain times, to be a plank is something to wish for).

A conversation with reb Ichiel Meyr Ritterband

"You know grandfather, as we came to Plac Trybunalski for the ceremony the entrance to your shop on the corner was open. We went in. It was the first time I saw it. The rooms are really beautiful, particularly the well kept early 18th century vaulted ceiling with its celestial ornamentations. It was fascinating for me and Elisabeth to listen to your eldest daughter. You have a very devoted daughter. Should I tell you? Well, why not — she still is. Would you believe this, grandfather? They are temporarily using your shop as storage and workshop for decorations for an American-Polish film about a ghetto, no, not the Piotrkow ghetto — another ghetto! They are just about to shoot it in the Rynek and the streets around. They even tore down the facade of a nearby house to make it look bombed out. It is a pity you are not here to see it. Well, you would have been 101 years old, dear grandfather. Finally the years are catching up with you. But till recently you were always in your mid-forties, odd isn't it? Yes, grandfather, who could imagine you would have a grandson like me, it's also odd, but I think we do have some traits in common. Yes, yes, I carry your name. Yours and reb Mendi's."

Finally

It was an extraordinary experience for me and my sister Elisabeth to accompany these two ladies, our mother and Tusha Fajner-Jablonski on a Friday, September 26-visit to Piotrkow. For six hours they demonstrated an unbelievable agility for ladies in their upper seventies by walking, standing, climbing almost incessantly up and down the streets, in and out of houses, gardens, at times in dignified leisurely walk in the Slovackiego and in park alleys, at times rushing in various directions at an amazing speed.

This was a beautiful, warm, sunny late September's day. In Polish it is called — Babelato. Indeed it was. Also September 1939 was a Babelato — and the beginning of an ice age to last for six years. I am reminded of the Nobel Prize winner Nelly Sachs who wrote a collection of poems with the title "Still Life hails Death". In the ceremonies on Thursday Sept 25 that held true. But on Friday Sept 26 the two ladies reversed the poetic wording. Still in spite of everything death hailed life. No Treblinka, no Rakow, no Tomaszow

Mazowiecki, no Buchenwald, no Bergen-Belsen, no Ravensbrücken, no whatsoever can entirely destroy life and good living memories. They are indestructible even if they are chained at the bottom of an ocean of loss. And I have seen it in many faces — but not in all — of the survivors whom I have gotten to know a little. And that is really a good enough reason to be optimistic about life. Yes indeed, these ladies are still the same Piotrkow girls.

In the afternoon we visited the cemetery again and were moved when we managed to locate graves of our respective families.

On the way back to Warsaw in the car after a long day:

E: "I am glad I came here. But now I don't know if I will ever come back here."

Then there is silence. I'm tired and start humming in a low voice: "It's a long way to Piotrkow Trybunalski, it's a long way to go...."

getting silent again, thinking: "Yeah, it really is".

Elisabeth and I are taken by surprise as the ladies immediately in high clear voices and with great esprit fill in, improvising:

"It's a long way to Piotrkow Trybunalski,

to the sweetest town I know

Farewell Slovackiego

Good bye Trybunalski Square

It's a long, long way to Piotrkow Trybunalski, but my heart's right there." □

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Haefnersvagen 38

12938 Hagersten, Sweden



DEAR READERS

In order to share a precious, moving experience, I do urge you to read carefully the essay of Henry Jablonski. To the many profound feelings I am experiencing when editing our publication, another precious gift was bestowed upon me — the newly established, truly rewarding friendship with Henry Jablonski...

Ben Giladi



The Swedish and the American Representatives in Warsaw.

Miejsce w moim sercu

Rozmowa z Benem Giladi

GZP: — Na początek proszę opowiedzieć o swoich dziecięcych latach w Piotrkowie.

— Piotrków zajmuje bardzo emocjonalne miejsce w moim sercu. Tutaj się urodziłem i wychowałem. Miałem 14 lat, gdy Niemcy weszli. Ale przedtem lata szkolne i lata dzieciństwa były najlepsze. To się zawsze pamięta. Piotrków to było miasto historyczne, leżało między Łodzią, Warszawą, i mam najlepsze wspomnienia o Piotrkowie. Nauka w czasie okupacji była bardzo wzruszającym okresem. Ja skończyłem pierwszą klasę gimnazjalną w 1939 roku. A skończyłem prawie maturę w getcie. Nauczycielki to były nie tylko Żydówki, ale mieliśmy także nauczyciela Polaka. Nazywał się Nowosielski. Robiliśmy jedną klasę przez pół roku, cztery miesiące. Po wojnie dostałem weryfikację w Łodzi, zdałem maturę eksternistycznie. I poszedłem na Uniwersytet Łódzki.

— Jak wyglądały dalsze losy? Jak trafił Pan do Ameryki?

— W 1950 roku wyjechałem legalnie z Polski do Izraela. Byłem w armii izraelskiej. W 1959 roku pojechałem na dalszą naukę do Nowego Jorku i tam zostałem. Mieszkam w Ameryce już od 1959 roku. Prowadziłem fundusz emerytalny i fundusz społeczne jednego z największych „unionów” — związków zawodowych w Nowym Jorku. Poszedłem na emeryturę w 1962 roku, żebym mógł kontynuować swoją pracę. Wydaję gazetę od 1965 roku, która teraz nosi tytuł „Głos Wyzwolonych z Piotrkowa”. Jest to kwartalnik. Na-

kład wynosi 700 egzemplarzy i idzie na cały świat. Do wszystkich Żydów ocalałych z Piotrkowa, do ich dzieci i wnuków, którzy żyją obecnie. Wydałem książkę pt. „Opowieść o jednym mieście”, „A Tale of One City” — Piotrków Trybunalski”. Daje ona historię społeczeństwa żydowskiego przed wojną, idąc bardzo daleko, w czasie holokaustu i po wojnie, aż do roku 1990. Książka ta jest wielkim sukcesem literackim i historycznym. Jesteśmy częścią Piotrkowa. Jesteśmy w kontakcie i teraz ten kontakt zostanie o wiele bardziej związany, bo znaleźliśmy ducha demokracji. Inny jest wiatr w Polsce. Do roku jakiegoś 1987 nie mogliśmy, bo był reżim. A teraz możemy kontynuować naszą zbożną pracę.

— Co powie Pan o dzisiejszej uroczystości na zamku?

— Uroczystość była niebywała, wspaniała i nie spodziewaliśmy się tego. Bóg rzeczywiście pokierował wszystkim, że przyjechało tylu dostojnych gości: i dygnitarze piotrkowscy, i społeczeństwo, i ocaleni... To jest jedyne, bardzo oryginalne spotkanie, które na pewno odbije się wielkim echem w historii naszej martyrologii. To dzięki urzędowi miejskiemu i wojewódzkiemu znaleźliśmy wspólny język i teraz nawiążemy o wiele szerszy kontakt ze społeczeństwem piotrkowskim.

— Czy to prawda, że Żydzi są bardzo wrażliwi na wszelkie przejawy antysemityzmu w Polsce?

— To jest dawna bolączka, którą czas i dobra wola muszą zaleczyć. Musimy mieć dobrą wolę i dobre podejście. Mam nadzieję, że

krótka przyszłość wyleczy te wszystkie rany. Nowa generacja — to jest nasza nadzieja. Ci ludzie mają już inne podejście do życia. Liczymy na nową generację, że rany zadane w czasie okupacji i kontynuowane w okresie reżimu stalinowskiego zostaną uleczone.

— Aby rany się zagoiły, trzeba dobrze poznać historię...

— Właśnie ten dzień jest najważniejszy. Na spotkaniu była i wasza, i nasza młodzież. Są różne opinie. Są ludzie, którzy starają się postępować według zasady: „dziel i rządź”. A my powinniśmy być razem złączeni, nie podzieleni. Bo jednak łączą nas wspólna kultura. Byliśmy na jednej ziemi przez ponad 1000 lat. I teraz powinniśmy naprawdę nawiązać kontakt. Kultura polska bez kultury poniekąd żydowskiej nie jest pełna. I vice versa, czyli kultura żydowska bez kultury polskiej. To jest ta chemia, która nas łączy i daje cały obraz historii od czasów Mieszka.

— Czy można powiedzieć, że chciałby Pan, aby stosunki między Polakami a Żydami były tak dobre, jak przed wojną?

— Lepšie, bo przed wojną nie były najlepsze. Przed wojną był antagonizm. Po śmierci marszałka Piłsudskiego doszły do władzy siły reakcyjne. I wtedy były bardzo ciężkie czasy dla Żydów. Powinny być o wiele lepsze, jak za czasów Kazimierza Wielkiego i Jana Sobieskiego. Wtedy była naprawdę demokracja i tolerancja. Marszałek Piłsudski stworzył nowe społeczeństwo. Gdy Piłsudski umarł, Sławoj-Składkowski i endecja przyczyniła nam bardzo wiele cierpienia. I to wzy-

sko, co się stało później... Ja uważam, że my będziemy mieli o dużo lepsze stosunki, niż były przed wojną. Najwyższa pora na to. Demokracja w Polsce bardzo mnie cieszy. Ja czytam „Nowy Dziennik” w Nowym Jorku, redaktor Tarkowski jest moim przyjacielem, czytam prasę polską i widzę, że atmosfera jest bardzo dobra. Tutaj w Piotrkowie reakcja władz i społeczeństwa była bardzo, bardzo pozytywna. Prognozy są bardzo dobre. Zażyliśmy się z takimi osobami, jak pan Jan Kruz, Władek Hartman, Piotr Gajda, Marcin Gąsior, prezydent Pol — to wszystko są ludzie, z którymi możemy mówić swobodnie. Ja byłem, i pan Desau, w Piotrkowie 15 lat temu i chcieliśmy coś zrobić. Natrafiliśmy na mur biurokracji. Wtedy był jeszcze reżim. Nie mogliśmy nic zrobić. Teraz mamy dopiero wolną rękę. Jak się mówi — chwała Bogu na wysokościach, a póki ludziom dobrej woli!

— Czytając wydawaną przez Pana gazetę, można się przekonać, że prawdziwe przyjaźnie między Polakami i Żydami przetrwają najgorsze próby i najdłuższy czas...

— Konfucjusz powiedział, że trzeba zrobić pierwszy krok. Pierwszy krok został już zrobiony. Będziemy naszą działalność kontynuowali. Mamy nadzieję zawiązać teraz towarzystwo przyjaźni. Chcemy przyłączyć się do działań Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Piotrkowa. I my naprawdę chcemy pracować w tym kierunku.

— Mijamy nadzieję, że te plany powiodą się. Dziękuję za rozmowę.

Rozmawiał Paweł Reising

Our Special Thanks

PODZIĘKOWANIE

W imieniu ocalonych Żydów Piotrkowskich pragniemy podziękować społeczeństwu naszego miasta w ogólności i poszczególnym osobistościom i dygnitarzom w szczególności:

Wojewoda, Mgr. Stanisław Witaszczyk
Prezydent, Mgr. Andrzej Pol
Vice-Prez. Mgr. Jan Kruz
Vice-Prez. Mgr. Robert Marzec
Prof. Mgr. Marcin Gąsior
Przew. Mgr. Władysław Hartman
Mgr. Piotr Gajda

Mgr. Jarosław Orzynski
Mgr. Krzysztof Łapiński
Mgr. Zygmunt Błaszczak
Mgr. Andrzej Switalski
Red. Kisson-Jaszczyński
Red. Paweł Reising
Mgr. Bożena Krukowska

PIOTRKÓW
TRYBUNALSKI



Ich cenna współpraca, wielkoduszność i gościnność przyczyniły się w wielkiej mierze do sukcesu naszego wspólnego przedsięwzięcia i zadziernięcia przyjaźni między "WAMI" A "NAMI". - Serdecznie Dziękujemy!



Clockwise from top: 1) Chanting Tehilim 2) Flowers for the Martyrs 3) Elisabeth, Henry and Ella Jablonski of Sweden with the Dessaus 4) Lublin, Sept. 24, 1997. The famous Polish-Jewish writer, Hanna Krall, Jan Jagielski of the Jewish Hist. Institute, Guta Giladi and Dr. Symcha Weiss, the Yeshiva custodian.



Sq miasta...

*Piotrków
Trybunalski
jest jeden*



From:
Laurent Olszer
6, Bd Beaumarchais
75011 Paris

THE INITIAL REACTIONS

To: Ben Giladi
fax: 212 689 4657

Dear Ben:

October 19, 1997

Thank you for your letter of 9/28. Indeed it was an experience to go to Poland for the 1st time, and I was happy to meet with you.

Following is a letter I wrote to my relatives in the US to tell them about our experience.

"I just came back from a 5 day trip to Poland with my folks and my dad's best friend from the ghetto (Glazer).

We first went to Pietkow where they spent their best years working in the ghetto. There was an unveiling of several plaques financed by some survivors in remembrance of the ghetto. Polish TV was there and the whole megilla. Poles there looked like they felt a little guilty, and I can't say that one could see joy overflowing from their eyes. The real feeling I got from people in Pietkow was: we'll tolerate you here as long as you're just passing through.

Aside from this ceremony, the 4 of us basically looked for every apartment and factory that they had spent time in. Not an easy endeavour since street names and buildings had changed. We managed to find all those places and the people living in them let us in. Overall, women were nicer than men, in the sense that they were more willing than men to let my father in their homes after he explained that he had lived there. It was great seeing my father behaving and feeling like a teenager. Overall, they were happy to have gone there 55 years later.

Then we went to Lodz where he grew up before the war. Unlike Warsaw, we couldn't go 30 feet in Lodz without seeing anti Jewish graffiti on walls and in stairwell cases inside buildings. Poles are literally obsessed with Jews, even today.

I realized then why my dad always held France in such a high regard.

Although France has its shortcomings with respect to Jews, after comparing it to all the countries I've been in, including the U.S., all I can say is: vive la France!

Last we went to Treblinka where my dad's mother died. There isn't anything left except a monument and ashes, so much they couldn't get rid of them: there is a 2 km "black road" between the 2 camps which is really sand mixed with ashes, it bears its name well. All around the soil in which plants grow is really mostly ashes. Not much left of 800.000 Jews

This trip to Poland made me understand my father better by witnessing first hand antisemitism. I had a nightmare related to Treblinka 1 month later, so now I know why my father has been having those nightmares for all these years.

It's a commonplace today to say that if the Holocaust took place in Germany, one of the most civilized countries in the world, it could happen anywhere. Well I don't know Germany too well, but it was scary to see that Poland is as civilized as France as far as arts and culture go. Actually, the young adults seemed totally indifferent to us and not much different than in any other place, so maybe there's hope.

The real problem is anti-semitism is the socially accepted behavior, so individuals who feel differently may not find it easy to behave otherwise.

Some people ask me how I felt: I realize that it's hard for me to make my own judgment. My folks and Glazer were completely paranoid in the streets, and we all didn't want to do any shopping (even my mother!) so we wouldn't leave them any money. How can I feel differently? I was so in shock and prejudiced that when I ran across a friendly bar in Warsaw with nice rock music I didn't even go in and try to mingle with Poles, which is unlike what I'd normally do while traveling. It could have been easy for me to start a conversation with them, but I just felt I had nothing to talk to them about.

Talk to you soon,

Keep up the flame

Laurent

MUSINGS

Kol Hakavod to Salek Olszer of Paris and Koppel Dessau of London. Despite serious ailments, they came to pay their respects. Theirs was the courage and the merit...



With Mr. Hartman and Dr. Henig.



Koppel Dessau and Izio Glazer.



Joske Windman, Israel Rudzinski and Yakov Horowicz.

LETTERS

Dear Ben,

13.10.97.

It really was nice of you to find time to write to me, in spite of your being so busy and I heartily reciprocate your good wishes for a ~~happy year~~ and hope that this letter finds you and your family well.

About our trip to Piotrkow, it's not easy to sum it up in a few words - I had very mixed feelings about going, - Ben Helfgott said it would be nice if I came - but eventually my wife and my son Yossy persuaded me to go; I'm very pleased that I went and it turned out to be a very emotional experience for me. I was pleasantly surprised to see the ~~old~~ ~~city~~ (cemetery) so beautifully cleaned up; when I was there last year with my family I was very upset to see it so overgrown and neglected. What a ~~big~~ the Dessau Family have, they should be blessed with good health and always be able to do good things. It was wonderful how many people turned up, amongst them Rabby Besser from America and Naftali Lavy from Israel. They all spoke well and to the point including our Ben Helfgott and your good self. It was nice how well the town people behaved - the Mayor and all the dignitaries.

To me the most moving part was the putting up of the plaque in the old ~~city~~ ~~area~~ behind the Shul. I remember soon after the Germans came to Piotrkow they caught men in the street and made them work, not that they needed it, but they made them carry telephone poles from one side of the town to the other just to amuse themselves, hitting them in order to make them run faster. We lived on the main Pilsudskiego Street so we could see everything. Once I saw them looking for workers so I quickly ran home to tell my parents. We closed the door and the shutters outside, but the Germans came and banged on the door, they realised that we were inside and if we would not have opened the door they would have broken it down. They took my father and other men to the old cemetery exactly where the plaque was put up and they made them take books and Seforim and put them into the toilets. The men saw a spade nearby and started to dig a hole and wanted to bury the Seforim, but the Germans saw them and beat them with lumps of wood and my father just about managed to get home. I watched all this from afar as my mother sent me to see what had happened to my father. My father had to stay in bed, we called Dr. Weinciger but all he could give him was Kogutek (Paracetamol). My father died on the first day of Pesach and is buried in the ~~old~~ ~~city~~ in Piotrkow. So you can imagine my feelings when I saw the plaque on this spot.

When I spoke to Rabbi Besser he asked me if there is still a Shul in Piotrkow, and when I showed him the Shul he was very pleasantly surprised how good it looks. In this respect we are very lucky that our Shul is being used as a library and is looked after so well. Some towns have no Shul left and if there is one it's mostly used as a factory or warehouse. I spoke recently to Mr. Cymerman who is the head of Agudas Yisroel in England and he said we could demand a rent for the building; maybe we could ask for a written agreement that in exchange for using the Shul they would look after the ~~old~~ ~~city~~ and keep it clean and tidy.

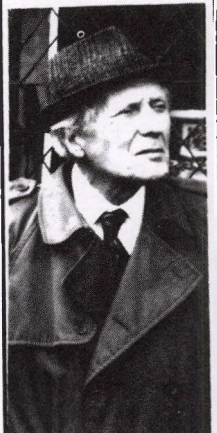
All the very best and carry on with your good work,

Yisroel Rudzinski

"PEOPLE"



Vice- President Jan Kruz.



Moshe Ish-Horowicz



Rabbi Schudrich, Arza and Ben Helfgott, Mrs. Windman



מזל טוב

WEDDING BELLS

Mazal Tov and Yichulim Levavyim to Yakov and Cipora Blumstein in Netanyahu on the marriage of their grandson Eyal to Laurie Weiss of Florida.

Shefah Brachot to the proud parents Dr. Zvi and Rita Blumstein.

Relatives and Friends

Cousin Abram Belz and Family, NJ
Cousins Edward and Lori Belz, MA

* * *

We extend our best Mazal Tov wishes to M&M George Hersh of New York on the marriage of their daughter Nancy to Roy Itzkowitz.

We wish the young couple Happiness!

Relatives and Friends

* * *

We convey our best Mazal Tov wishes to Jadzia Mlynarski of New Jersey on the marriage of her granddaughter Nicole to Jed Marcuson.

Congratulations to the proud parents Anne and Harold Bendell.

Relatives and Friends

Luise Gotthelf, New York

* * *

ENGAGEMENT

We extend our heartfelt Mazal Tov wishes to Annie Schaffer and Jerry Mariasine, Bonnie and Stephen Ta-backman on the engagement of their children Erin and Jeff of Montreal. Congratulations to the proud grandmothers, Hela Rozprza and Sally Cohen.

Piotrkow Tryb. Landsmanshaft in Montreal, Canada

* * *

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

We express our best Mazal Tov wishes to Abram and Regina Oksman of Boston on their 50th, golden wedding anniversary. Happiness Forever!

Relatives and Friends

* * *

WEDDING BELLS

Mazal Tov and best wishes to Sarah and Harold Krisman of Los Angeles on the marriage of their daughter Esther to Mark Warsaw. Best of Luck to the young couple.

Relatives and Friends.

מזל טוב

BAT MITZVAH

We extend our most sincere Mazal Tov wishes to Juda and Fay Rosenblum of Miami on the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter Cara Lynn.

We convey our heartfelt congratulations to the proud parents, Alex and Sabina Rosenblum of New York.

We wish them all a Lot of Nachat!

Relatives and Friends

* * *

GOD BLESS THE THIRD GENERATION

Mazal Tov and most heartfelt wishes to Ben and Arza Helfgott of London on the birth of their grandson Sam and granddaughter Lucy Sarah.

Congratulations to the proud parents, Maurice and Danielle Helfgott and Michael and Thea Helfgott.

Relatives and Friends

(Lucy Sarah is named after her aunt and grandmother Z.L. who were murdered in the Rakow Forest in 1942. Lusie was only 7 years old.

We wish the Helfgott Family so much Happiness and Nachat!)

* * *

GOD BLESS THE FOURTH GENERATION

We extend our best Mazal Tov wishes to Israel and Sonja Rosenwald of Los Angeles on the birth of their great granddaughter Jordyn Solny.

Congratulations to the proud grandparents and mother and father, Lisa and Jeff Solny.

We wish them all Lots of Luck, Happiness and Nachat!

Relatives and Friends

* * *

SHMONIM - AD MEAH W'ESRIM!

Yechulim Levavyim and Mazal Tov to our dear husband, father and grandfather David Korn of Ramat Gan on his 80th Birthday. We wish him Health and Osher W'Osher!

Love, wife Iza, sons Joram and Doron, grandchildren Dor, Idan, Yael and Nadav.

Relatives and Friends.



מזל טוב

REFUAH SHELEIMA

We wish our good friend Moishe Mallinek- Malenicki of London a speedy recovery - Get well soon!

* * *

We wish our friend Pinkus Kurnendz of Manchester a very swift recovery - Get well really quick! (Moishe and Pinkus intended to join us in Piotrkow. Unfortunately, they could not join us personally there. They were with us however by their noble spirit - Kol Hakavod!)

* * *

We convey our most sincere wishes of speedy recovery to our cousin Harold Jakubowicz of Miami. Harold! Please get well really soon!

Adam & Rochelle Kaminski & Family

* * *

We extend our best wishes of speedy recovery to our Landsman Berek Kurc in Montreal. We wish him the best! Landsmanshaft of Piotrkow Tryb. in Montreal, Canada.

* * *

Best wishes of speedy recovery to our friend Sidney Finkel of Chicago. We all wish him Health and Happiness Regina and Abram Samelson, Skokie

* * *

We express our best wishes of fast recovery to our friend Ola Lawson of New York.

Please! Get well pretty soon!

* * *

We wish our dear sister and cousin Hewcia Miller of Ramat Gan a Refuah Sheleima - A very swift recovery!

Brother Hymie Samelson & Fam. Toronto

Sister Mitzi Freedman & Fam. Toronto

Cousins Abram & Regina Samelson, Chic.

* * *

We extend our most sincere wishes of speedy recovery to our dear cousin, Abraham Samelson of Chicago.

Cousin Hymie Samelson & Fam. Toronto

Cousin Mitzi Freedman & Fam. Toronto

Relatives and Friends

Best wishes of swift recovery to our friend Jerry Wenglishevski of Toronto Jerry - Get well soon!

Hymie Samelson & Fam. Toronto

Mitzi Freedman & Fam. Toronto

* * *

Shalom and Best Wishes

Personal Notes

ERRARE HUMANUM EST.....

Dear Ben:

Please clarify what you wrote about my uncle Max Frackman. He did not die lonely and forgotten. He had a loving wife Helen, his daughter Sylvia and son Irving. They were always with him. Helen and Max were a happy and loving couple and I loved them both.

They lost their youngest son Raymond in Germany in World War II.

Beatrice Heitner-Charmatz

(I am so sorry! By writting "lonely and forgotten", I meant by his Landsleit, whom he served so compassionately, for such a long time.

The Survivors Congregation in Piotrkow after the war was named in honor of Raymond Frackman, a war hero.

His parents were indeed the driving force in helping those needy brethren with money, medicines, food and clothing. I know - I was there then... Those were the times of Merit and Glory for the Association under the Chairmanship of Max Frackman! BG.)

IN MEMORIAM

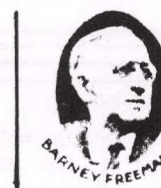
We honor the memory of our parents Gussie and Barney (Ben) Freeman.

They were very active in keeping The Piotrkow Tryb. Relief Association alive during and after World

War II. May their Memory be Blessed!

Anita Bloom-Freeman, California

Harold Freeman, New York



WSPOMNIENIE O ARONIE HOROWICZU

Był on ostathim wykonawcą pomników żydowskich w Piotrkowie, bodajże od lat dwudziestych. Po wyzwoleniu wykonywał swoją zbożną pracę, wykonując pomniki upamiętniające tragedie Holocaustu. Postawił on i odnowił także wiele prywatnych pomników. Po wyjeździe Arona w 1950 roku, stan cmentarza ulegał stopniowo pogorszeniu. Syn Arona Jakub, przyjechał z Frankfurtu na uroczystość re-dedekacji cmentarza.

CZEŚĆ JEGO PAMIECI!

A trip to remember

OUR JOURNEY TO PIOTRKOW

Ziva and Motke Sandowski, New York

We were the only couple from the United States to join the Dessau brothers and Guta and Ben Giladi in the "Kever Avot" pilgrimage to Poland. After our arrival to Warsaw, on September 23rd, the Dessaus and the Giladis left immediately for Piotrkow and we both took a sightseeing tour of Warsaw. We visited the famous Lazienki Gardens and the Belvedere. Then we arrived to the Warsaw Ghetto Heroes Monument, where we met a large group of Israeli youngsters from Petach Tikva and they were singing Hebrew songs. Warsaw itself is an impressive and elegant city.

Motke: The next day we visited Treblinka, a very moving trip indeed. On arrival, a loud-speaker greeted us explaining the tragedy that occurred there. We walked the path through the stones that shows the way to the crematorium covered with ashes and tar. I said Kaddish for my family and all my friends that perished here. My wife Ziva that never went through this was very moved. It was very quiet there - until we met another Israeli group looking around in horror. This was the saddest day of our trip.

On the 25th, we went to Piotrkow for the memorial ceremonies. Starting at the cemetery where we met people from Israel, England, Sweden, France, Germany and Australia. The cemetery was cleaned up, with brand new pavements, all thanks to the Dessau brothers and Ben Giladi. Over a hundred people participated in the ceremonies including city dignitaries, Ambassador Lau-Lavie, the brother of Rav Lau, Rabbis Besser & Schudrich of the Lauder Foundation.

The police closed the streets and cameras were all over the place. We even appeared on television that night. A young cantor from Lodz intoned beautifully El Mole Rachamim. We asked the lady-keeper of the cemetery and from a list, she found my grandmother's grave.

After the unveilings of the other plaques and worthy speeches, we arrived to

the Synagogue where Amb. Lavie told of the destruction that occurred here sixty years ago. The last stop was the Castle (Zamek), which is now a museum, where an exhibition of Judaica and Holocaust records are now on display.

A moving speech of the City Mayor, a concert and a warm reception followed.

My wife and I, then headed back to the house where I was born in on Garbarska No. 8. We met a man there who led us to the apartment where I once lived.

The woman let us in. It was shocking how nothing was changed there, after those 60 years. The same sink, the same stove - even the walls were still painted the same way. Then we went to the old "ORT" school on Leonarda street where I worked with Mendel Henig in the ghetto leather shop. I stood in the yard where in 1942, I witnessed the escape of Dr. Abraham Grinberg, his wife and children from the Ghetto. A few days later, his brother-in-law, Abraham Solnik was shot at the cemetery. The last stop was Zamurowa str. No. 10 where my uncle Shlomo Sandowski, the turner (tokarz) once lived.

Back in Warsaw, we had dinner with a few people from Sweden and from Warsaw, together with the Dessaus and the Giladis. The next day we all returned to New York. This was a trip we will never forget! □



— Ziva —



— Motke —



— Tusia —

LETTER FROM London

Dear Ben and Gutka:

...The entire, moving event just seemed quite surrealistic. I had to keep reminding myself that I was really in Piotrkow that all this was really happening. My brother Ben, of course, was the vital link for me because he remembers so much. He guided me through the small Ghetto pointing out the room in which my mother and sister Lusia, together with all the others, were taken to the Synagogue and subsequently to their deaths, and I was left behind by Tadek Glogowski, well known for his cruelty, but this time, also for his unprecedented act of kindness. Then there was the room which I shared with your family, where I remember waking up to the news of the Rakow massacre and the sympathy and understanding that you all showed me in my hour of need and devastation.

As for more up to date impressions, I was amazed to see how Piotrkow developed and expanded. Although some of the old parts are very neglected and shabby, the refurbished buildings look really beautiful outside. The people too seemed friendly and interested. The highlight, however was the unveiling of the plaques, the speeches and meeting old friends and acquaintances. Imagine; Tusia Fajner recognized me after 50 years. I last saw her, and her sister Rala, in Sweden. My thanks and admiration to you and all those responsible for organizing this very special, moving and memorable event!

Mala Tribich-Helfgott, London

זים
אייביגען
אנדענקען

אונזער פארלוסטען

We announce with sorrow the passing of

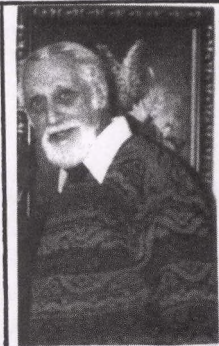
Pinchas (Pinek) Weinrib
who died recently in Sweden.
We extend our deep sympathy to his wife, children and the entire family.
Cousin Herman Weinrib, New York
Cousin Abraham Weinrib, Ohio
Relatives and Friends.

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our Landsman

Yakov Herszlikowicz
who died recently in Haifa.
We convey our deepest sympathy to his wife Anna, sons Henry and Maurice, their children and to the entire Family.
Landsmanshaft of Piotrkow Tryb.
in Montreal, Canada.

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend

Bernard Rosenberg
who died recently in Philadelphia.
We extend our heartfelt condolences to Stella and the entire Family.
Guta, Ben and Iris



Hadassah Rosensaft, 85; Savior Of Jewish Children

Hadassah Rosensaft, a Holocaust survivor who helped save Jewish children during and after World War II, died last week at the Tisch Hospital of New York University.

The sole survivor of her immediate family, Rosensaft helped rescue hundreds of women from the crematoria at Auschwitz, coordinated inmate efforts to keep 149 orphans alive at Bergen-Belsen, served as administrator of the Bergen-Belsen hospital under British military command after the death camp's liberation in 1945, and accompanied the first post-war children's transport to Palestine.

While serving at the Bergen-Belsen hospital after the war she married Josef Rosensaft, chairman of the Central Jewish Committee in the British Zone of Germany and of the Jewish Committee of Bergen-Belsen. The couple's son Menachem was born in Bergen-Belsen in 1948. Josef Rosensaft died in 1975.



Hadassah Rosensaft, honorary president of the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors, was a member of the U.S. Holocaust Commission.
In the last year she completed writing her memoirs.

On the 30th Yahrzeit of the passing of our Dear Father, Grandfather and Great Grandfather

Yakov Flatto

who passed away in Israel on Hoshana Raba in 1967 at the age of 70, we all pay a loving tribute to his Blessed Memory.

IHIE ZICHRO BARUCH!

Guta and Ben Giladi, Iris, Jason, Evan and Corie.

י ע ק ב פ ל א ט א ז " ל

ביי דער ישראל נצחון
פייערונג וואס מיר הא-
בען אפגעהאלטען דעם 16
סעפטעמבער ה.י. האבען
מיר מקבל-פנים געווען
א פיעטראווער באסט פון
ישראל, פריינט יעקב פלא-
טא, דעם פאטער און שווער
פון אונזערע חברים מר.
און מרס. בעני בעלאדע.
פריינט פלאטא האט אויס-
געזען פריש און געזונט,
געשפראצט מיט לעבענס-
לוסט און געווען פול מיט



מיט פלענער וועגען זיין נאנטער צוריקרייזע
נאך ישראל און שפעטער עווענטועל ווידער
אפצושטאטען א וויזיט זיינע קינדער אין ניו
ארק. דריי וואכען שפעטער האבען מיר באקומען
די טרויעריגע נאכריכט אז פריינט פלאטא ע"ה
איז פלוצלונג געשטארבען אין חל-אבייך דעם
10-טען אקטאבער. ווי עס איבערגעכען זיינע
נאנטעסטע, האט ער ווי פארגעפילט זיין אוועק
גיין און ממש זיך געריסען ווי אמשנעלסטען
צו זיין צוריק אין ישראל.
זיין פלוצום'דיקער טויט איז א פיינלי-
כער פארלוסט פאר דער פיעטראווער שארית-
הפליטה.
עהרע זיין אנדענק.

מיט טיפען טרויער האבען מיר אויפגע-
נומען די ידיעה וועגען אומגעריכטען
טויט פון אונזער בן-עיר

י ע ק ב פ ל א ט א ז " ל

מיר דרוקען אויס אונזער טיפען מיטגע-
פיל צו זיין פרוי שיינע, טאכטער און
איידעם, גוטמאן בעני בעלאדע, און איי-
ניקעל אירית בעלאדי.
פיעטראווער און אומג. סאסייעטי, נ.י.

(Bulletin No. 13 - November 1967.)

זוכר ועדרים

Two Sisters

— Introduction —

As Europe moved toward war in the 1930s, two sisters — one in Poland, one in France — corresponded about their lives, their fears, and their beliefs. These letters of Fajga and Nadzia Berliner were lost. The reconstruction that follows is a work of imagination, written for a university course on Women and the Holy Writ. However, while the dialogue is imaginary, the events, attitudes, and opinions are factual.

Suzanne (Sarah) Weiss

— 1 —

Paris, August 8, 1935

Dear Nadzia:

Here I am in Paris! Yakov's friends here, Bernard Flatteau and Marcel Gomolin, took me in and introduced me around. They and their friends belong to a group of immigrant Jews that puts out a socialist newspaper, *Naie Presse*. I'm living in the Hôtel de Chartres at 25, rue de Paradis, Paris 10ème. You can write me here. The people living in the hotel are nice — immigrants from all over Europe. I have already made friends among those who speak Yiddish.

Marcel got me a job as a seamstress in a small garment shop where he works. There are many little shops like this here. If you and Yoyne came here, he could transfer his furrier business to the immigrant Jewish quarter of Paris, where almost everyone speaks Yiddish. Of course, it is also important to learn French. All the Parisians, and especially the French Jews, insist that you speak their language correctly. I picked up enough in high school to manage, but I am studying every night to improve.

Women in Paris are bolder than in Piotrkow! For instance, this morning a woman in my shop, Pola, argued with the boss for a couple of hours off tomorrow to take her little girl to the dentist. The other women in the shop told the boss that if he did not allow Pola, they would take the child to the dentist themselves. Nadzia, if this were to take place in Piotrkow, they would think the women had gone nuts!

Another curious thing happened three weeks ago: everyone celebrated Bastille Day. This comes from their great revolution where they won their "liberté, fraternité, et égalité." Women and men were dancing, drinking, and whooping it up right in the streets. This, I thought, is something Nadzia would definitely approve of. You are always up for a fun night on the town, aren't you? Love, Fajga.

— 2 —

Piotrkow, September 28, 1935

Dear Fajga:

I'm happy that you find France to your liking. It certainly does sound different from Piotrkow. Here things are going on as usual. Last Saturday, we celebrated the birthday of Josef's son, Lolek. He will do his bar-mitzva next year. Pola Glatter is expecting soon, and so is Cesia Horowicz. Mother misses

you most terribly. She worries about you and asks endlessly why she was barren for ten years before she bore you only to have you leave her now. Please keep that in mind when you write her. I know you don't mean to hurt Mother, but I also wonder if you have been fair to leave her.

It is all very nice that you are celebrating, as you say, "liberty, fraternity, and equality," but I hope you were with a young man when you went frolicking in the streets. Otherwise you might be taken as some Jezebel. You know darling, we have been put on earth by G_d, so that man and woman would be fruitful and multiply. I wish you all happiness, but I worry that you are rejecting your Jewish roots and your traditions in your ambitions to be equal to men and in your socialist activities. Please, darling, when you think of your "independence" remember that G_d took a rib from man to make into woman. It is the law of G_d that man shall rule over you. You have often said you don't care about marriage, but it is important to care because you are now over 30 and alone. What will happen to you? Who will take care of you? What will men think of you, an old spinster?

Your mother needs you. You have had your fling. It is time to come back home. Love, Nadzia

Editor's Note

In 1994, Suzanne Weiss, who was hidden during the Holocaust, wrote a moving essay for the *New Bulletin* #93 titled, "How I Found My Roots in Piotrkow." I wrote then, "Life is stranger than fiction. When Suzanne called and told me that her mother's name was Berliner, I was quick and proud to mention her relative, Yakov Berliner, one of the most noble and humane personalities in our home town. He, like Suzanne's mother Fajga, perished in Auschwitz. Then I was astonished to learn that her mother's sister's husband was Jonas Lewy. I tried *not* to elaborate but Suzanne wanted the absolute truth.

"So, reluctantly, I had to tell her some heartbreaking facts of cruelty and betrayal. We all know who Yoyne Lewy was. The shocking contrast of two people, one so good and precious and the other so inhuman, made my heart ache. But our quest is to bear witness and for the sake of history we must go on."

In *New Bulletin* #94, Suzanne wrote *Speaking Up After 50 Years*, which reported on a conference of child survivors and hidden children of the shoah. Now, after three years of research, Suzanne has written another moving piece, where, in the form of letters exchanged between her mother and her aunt, she presents a fascinating reflection on historic events, social turmoil, and enormous human tragedy. The author has used poetic license to good effect in making a powerful statement of poetic justice.

—Ben Giladi

— 3 —

Paris, July 29, 1936

Dear Nadzia:

I am horrified to read of the anti-Jewish pogrom in Przytyk. The *Naie Presse* says that two Jews were killed there and that pogroms are going on all over Poland. What is happening in Piotrkow? Did you know that many Polish Jews have arrived here in France because they are afraid that their town is next? Please write and tell me you all are safe. Have you considered coming to join me in France? I could help with arrangements. Is Mother afraid? Would she be willing to leave and come with you? We all fear the results of Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland. So much for the Versailles Treaty! Here I feel liberated from the burden of anti-Semitism in Poland, but I know that anti-Jewish hatred is pervasive in all Europe. At least in France many people are fighting back. The MOI's Jewish section (they publish *Naie Presse*) plans an international festival of Jewish cultures here next year. I hope to go.

I should explain: the MOI is a federation of socialist immigrants from different countries that support the Soviet Union.

You know, Nadzia, I appreciate your reference to the Torah because I believe I can see myself in Eve. She sought knowledge and ate the forbidden fruit. I think G_d did Eve and Adam a big favor when he threw them out of the Garden. Although it was called the Garden of Paradise, it really was the garden of confinement and ignorance. Eve opened the door to adventure, knowledge, and independence. G_d gave us the capacity for choice. You have your right to choose the closed society of Piotrkow and to hold on to old traditions that bind women to the house. Although I do not find it easy to tread the path of knowledge, I choose as Eve did. Fighting for justice leads me to the pasture of knowledge of the greater world. It leads me to understand my place as a woman working to change this world of poverty and injustice. Don't worry, marrying and having children will come in due course but now I must be true to myself even if it painful to my family.

Many exciting things are happening in France. The Communist and Socialist parties formed a People's Front, and we have elected Leon Blum to head the government. A month ago we had an immense strike of two million workers, including many women and immigrants. Nadzia, can you visualize the streets of Piotrkow lined with thousands of people shoulder to shoulder, singing and shouting out for higher pay and a work week of only 40 hours instead of 48? Even *you* would be inspired. This great unity of working people made it possible for us to win those demands. Talk about joy! Guess what! We have all won two weeks vacation a year with pay — I may even be able to visit you. Isn't that worth the fight?

Lots of love. Fajga

— 4 —

Piotrkow, October 20, 1936

Dear Fajga:

Yes, we know about the pogrom in Przytyk. Who knows what stupid thing was done to tick off those anti-Jews. We in

Piotrkow get on well with the Polish authorities and we have not had any trouble. Last week we went to a party at the Maccabees — that's the club where Yoyne likes to play his trumpet. Everyone asked after you. Did you ever go out with Szimon Rosenstein? He talked of your talents as a seamstress and recalled your pretty blue eyes. Don't you think he would be a good husband for you? I tell him you are doing well, but you know that I am sad that you have left Mother who grieves for you as though you were dead. She is having a difficult time without you in the store, so we have hired a young man, Lolek Epstein, to do the heavy work that Mother cannot do anymore. He is the youngest son of Rivka and Josef. They send their best to you.

I feel bad that you refer to yourself as Eve. You don't like male authority, but it is all the fault of Eve. She was the first who disobeyed G_d. Yes, now we have knowledge — knowledge of death, and we fear it. And, yes, now women have the gross pains of childbearing. It is because of Eve's great sin that G_d lost trust in her and appointed her husband to rule over her. We have inherited that law from her. I would not be so proud to be an Eve.



Nadzia Berliner Lewy

I wish you and I were not so different. I lead my life more as written in the Torah. You seem to reject and flaunt it. You need to be tamed by a man. I prefer a man who does not treat me as equal. I want to be put on a pedestal and admired. I want a man who will take care of me. I remember how offended you were when I first dated Yoyne because you thought he was buying me with the fox fur he gave me on our first date. But he is just what I want in a man. He loves me more than I do him, and so, treats me with respect, and I treat our marriage with a clear mind. I married Yoyne because he promised me that I would never have to work and I promised to help him by raising a family. This is what I want for you. Please remember that G_d made woman as "man's helper."

However, although we are different from each other, I hope you are happy in your "independence." Remember to write your Mother who longs after you. Love, Nadzia

— 5 —

Paris, April 2, 1937

Dear Nadzia:

I am glad that Mother has an able assistant in Lolek. Did she not get my recent letter to her? I am sorry that she is sad and that you are disappointed in me. However, I am delighted with my life here. The thing that tickles me most here in Paris are the debates you see in the street. You would be shocked to see women unafraid to take part in the exciting discussions, now mostly about the Spanish war. These women show no

fear of reprisal from husbands or fathers. My dear Nadzia, this is truly a time of change.

I have good news for your traditions. My co-worker, Pola, introduced me to a friend of hers who likes me very much. His name is Aaron, and he was born in old Russia and has lived many years in Palestine. He and I have so much in common. He is active in the Jewish immigrant organization. He teases me and tells me I am "his inspiration." I guess it is because of my enthusiasm. Mother would like him, although you probably would not approve because he is a house painter and does not have much money. He is sincere, generous — like our cousin, Yakov Berliner. Is Yakov still on the city council? He is a dedicated leader and is definitely a kindred spirit. Love, Fajga

— 6 —

Piotrkow, October 30, 1937

Dear Fajga:

Congratulations! You finally found a man. Wonderful. Mother is happy to hear this great news. Do you like him enough to marry him? You are almost too old to have children, so you have to act quickly. If you come back to Piotrkow we will make a big wedding and find a house for you.

Do you remember the story of Sarah and Hagar in the Torah? If you don't have children you may push your man to a Hagar. Sarah was childless and she wanted an heir. She asked her husband Abraham to take her slave, Hagar to his bed. Later, Sarah had her own child — but she was already old. I wonder, why did she wait so long? Maybe, like you, she thought she had more important things to do.

The way to your man's heart is to have children by him. If you have quarrels with him, never bring them to the bed. Always submit to him, treat him like a king and make him happy. This, in turn, will bring you peace in your marriage and happiness. There! That is my advice and I hope you take it. I want only the best for you, you stubborn one!

Mother is in ill health — her heart, it seems. Dr. Weinzier warns that she must slow down her work and worry less. It will be great for her to see you here when you get your two-week vacation. Love, Nadzia

— 7 —

Paris, April 10, 1938

Dear Nadzia:

Aaron and I have been wed in Synagogue — we had a great time celebrating with our friends. I wish mother had been here.

Dear little sister, you haven't seen the world, and yet you think you know it. You say my husband may go to another woman if I don't have a child. But his values are like mine. As for Sarah, remember that G_d thought so highly of her that he commanded Abraham, her husband, to obey her wishes. Now, look at Mother — also called Sarah — G_d seems to have also favored her. She prayed to conceive for ten years before G_d graced her with me. I never heard stories about father running after other women during that time. Perhaps, I may still have a child even if I am past my prime.

I must tell you that we have taken hard blows here. The Spanish republic is losing ground. In France, the Popular Front government has fallen. Now the Nazis are in Austria — dark shadows are at our doorsteps. But we must not give up. My love, Fajga

— 8 —

Piotrkow, July 15, 1938

Dear Fajga:

Just a short note to let you know the joyous news that I am pregnant. We are very happy. Everything is peaceful in Piotrkow. Mother is delighted and cannot wait for the baby to arrive. She is making all kinds of mittens, booties, blankets, and the cutest little one-piece suit. Of course we do not know whether it will be male or female, but we already have decided to name our first boy Moishe, after Yoyne's grandfather. We expect our little bundle to arrive in March. It will be a good time for you to come home and celebrate. Love. N

— 9 —

Piotrkow, November 30, 1938

Dear Fajga:

A whole mass of Jews are coming from Germany into Poland. The Nazis have beaten and brutalized these people and expect us to make room for them in our already crowded Stetl. Pogroms have also occurred in Vilna and Warsaw — modern Warsaw of all places! I don't understand what is happening.

It seem like a Europe-wide pogrom has been unleashed by your reckless Jew, Grynspan, who thought he could get justice by killing one of the Nazis in Paris. And that killing has brought us Krystallnacht: synagogues, Jewish stores, businesses, and homes destroyed across all Germany, as well as so many people killed.

Even in Piotrkow we had our own troubles last year. But now all is peaceful here. Perhaps it is because we know how not to make waves. It is important to keep low and mind your own business. Love, Nadzia

— 10 —

Piotrkow, September 20, 1939

Dear Fajga:

As you know, the Germans have invaded Poland. The situation is indescribable. We have been bombed in Piotrkow. Young Lolek Epstein, Romek Zaks, and Abram Weinroth were killed, and many dozens were critically injured. I saw intestines exposed and fragments of limbs dragging behind. There was a mad scramble to flee Piotrkow. Others of us converged by the hundred on the house of Rabbi Lau for advice. He quoted Isaiah: "Hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath has passed." [Isaiah 26.20] He added that "flight is the beginning of defeat." [Sotah 44]

Now the German garrison controls our city. People are killed indiscriminately, it seems just for the game. We have a curfew between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. The Germans appointed Zalman Tennenberg to establish a 24-member council to regularize the relations with the German rulers. Thank G_d I

can mail you a letter, but it is done through the Jewish council — and I had to pay to bribe a soldier. The council is working with the Germans to set up a ghetto where the council will have authority — and its own Jewish police! This may help us. We live in fear but hope that we can appease the Germans, adjust to the new order, and weather this hard time.

Dear Fajga, our Mother is gone. In August, Yoyne found her on her favorite chair as though asleep. We have not even had time to mourn her although we buried her in the Jewish cemetery at the end of town. It grieves me that we have not been able to put up a tombstone. Thank G_d she did not have to live through this hell's fire. But in March, Moishe was born to us. How are am I going to take care of him? I am at my wit's end with fear. Nadzia

— 11 —

Paris, September 20, 1939

Diary entry by Fajga:

Everything was so hopeful only a year ago. We had a one-day strike last November where two million people took off work. We were on top of the world. And now, Stalin has signed a pact with Hitler. We feel so betrayed. And now war. The *Naie Press* says we must continue to rally against the Nazis nonetheless. The government has "dissolved" the MOI. I am so anxious about Nadzia and Mother but there is no postal service to Poland. I don't know if Nadzia will get my letters or if I will ever hear from her again. Meanwhile, Aaron has been called up for the army. My dear darling, I may not have him long. I am consumed with worry and sadness. But we have no chance of recovery if we don't continue the struggle. G_d give me courage!

— 12 —

Paris, April 6, 1940

Diary entry by Fajga:

What a day! Aaron surprised me at work. He is on a two-week leave. What joy it is to have him back. I miss him so much. We visited his friend Michel Buchner. Buchner and

his wife Régine are very active in the underground MOI. They promised Aaron that with the MOI's help they would look after me. They are looking after so many people. I must take courage from their example.

I continue to think of Mother every day. I am so sorry I did not see her before she died. But, I am glad that it happened before all this. Nadzia's son was a year old this March. I wonder how he is managing. I am so distressed, it is difficult to enjoy my time with my own darling Aaron.

— 13 —

Paris, June 20, 1940

Diary entry by Fajga:

The Germans are occupying Paris. Miraculously I am able to keep in touch with my darling although it is a one-way communication. Aaron and the other immigrant soldiers are together with French soldiers in a German prisoner of war camp. I hear he is safer there than in France because the French prisoners are protecting the Jews among them. I am now two months pregnant. What a time to have a child, I don't even know if we will survive this war! But maybe if I hang on, my child will live and some day carry on the struggle. Poor Nadzia, how hard it must be for her.

— 14 —

Piotrkow, November 30, 1940

Dear Fajga:

I believe this letter will reach you. Yoyne has made a friend of a German officer who has promised to look after our welfare. He is very charming and very nice. Yoyne invites him for dinner often. William is his name and he has a big dog whom he adores and always takes with him. He is so good to us that we feel obligated to do him many favors. He got Yoyne a job as an ordnungsdienst. Yesterday, Binem went through our apartment house and warned everyone of an imminent raid. I told Binem that Yoyne and I need not be afraid because of our guest.

We are fairly comfortable in the ghetto although we have lost the shop. Every Jew has to wear the Star of David on the right arm. Some have been shot on the spot when caught not wearing it. Many here have been deported — and no word is heard of them. We are hoping that the war comes to a speedy end. But for now, we must do what we can to protect our family. We can be safe only by making the right connections and getting a position in the ghetto administration. No one who survives this hellhole will have clean hands.

Dear sister, we do not hear news of the outside world and so I must hope you are well and happy. Love, Nadzia



Aaron Itzkovitch



Fajga Berliner with Sarah

— 15 —

Paris, January 20, 1941

Diary entry by Fajga:

I am devastated by Nadzia's letter. Imagine having a Nazi dine at your table! This is a terrible omen. Dear G_d she has called me a Jezebel — yet she, like Jezebel, has the prophets of evil dine at her table. I can understand that she wants to safeguard herself and her child. But at what horrible price! And once you seek safety by serving the Nazis, where does it end? What terrible things will you do for them? Dear G_d, please don't let this dishonor be on her head.

The police have registered all Jews in France — it is so frightening. I am still able to write my Aaron and even send him little packages of food. I must do my best to keep his spirits up. Meanwhile I work with the UJRE [Union of Jews for Resistance and Mutual Aid — Jewish wing of the MOI]. We are gaining strength. We are operating a public health clinic here and a canteen that serves 400 meals a day.

— 16 —

Paris, January 20, 1941

Dear Nadzia:

I have borne a lovely little girl on January 6. I have named her Sarah in remembrance of dear Mother. I wish Mother could see my sweet baby girl. She looks just like my dear love, her daddy. Won't he be delighted to have her when he finally comes home! I pray for that time every minute of every day. I received your November letter and understand you are doing everything to protect yourself and your child. Fajga

— 17 —

Piotrkow [Sometime in 1942]

Dear Fajga:

Horrible things are happening in Piotrkow. Jews are assembled and loaded on to trains going, some say, to their death. We must adjust and look after ourselves. Those who do not compromise perish like our cousin Yakov Berliner. The poor fool tried to save the world. Thank G_d for Yoyne. He says, above all, he will do everything in his power to protect our family. It seems that for one to live, another must die. I will do whatever it takes to keep my little boy safe. I cannot bear to leave him behind in strange Polish hands. This is our awful lot. Nadzia

— 18 —

Paris [Sometime in 1942]

Diary entry by Fajga:

Another letter from Nadzia. Dear G_d I fear she is lost. — The Nazi beasts are killing the humanity in her. Oh God, give me strength to be more like Yakov! I will do everything to save my beautiful baby daughter. The police don't know about Sarah! The UJRE has placed her in a safe house, although with a family who is not Jewish. She will be protected if I am caught. She is so like her daddy. I will send him my photograph of Sarah and me along with the next package.

— Epilogue —

A historian of the Piotrkow ghetto writes: "Some of the most horrifying experiences the inhabitants of the ghetto had to suffer were the frequent visits of SS policeman William with his big dog. William visited the ghetto together with his Jewish friend, Yoyne Lewy. On the command of his master, the dog tore pieces of flesh from the bodies of people, especially children."

In October 1942, the ghetto was destroyed and almost all its inhabitants sent away to be killed. Another historian writes, "Further horrors were witnessed when William of the SS, escorted by his black German shepherd, went from house to house, uncovered the concealed Jews, and shot them for fun. William's forays were accompanied by his dedicated assistant Yoyne Lewy, once a furrier and now a Jewish policeman." It was Yoyne who revealed the hiding places and called in Yiddish to those inside that they could come out in safety.

The Lewy family were among the handful of Piotrkow's Jews who survived the holocaust. After the war, they lived in Germany; in 1950 the family moved to New York. In 1955, survivors of the Piotrkow Jewish community brought charges against Yoyne Lewy before the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for "activities contrary to civilization and human decency." The INS convicted Yoyne and ordered him deported to Poland. Yoyne appealed. In 1963 the appeal court confirmed his conviction but, citing procedural inadequacies, commuted his sentence to probation. Yoyne died in 1980. Nadzia and Moishe live today in the United States.

Fajga was arrested in mid-1943 and sent to Auschwitz, where she was gassed. Word of her last days reached Nadzia later in another concentration camp. Aaron returned to France in 1945 severely injured by a bomb. He located young Sarah hidden by the UJRE with a peasant family in Auvergne. Shortly after this reunion, he died of his wounds. Sarah, after several years in the UJRE's orphanages, was adopted in 1950 by the Weiss family in the U.S. Sarah now lived in New York, having lost all contact with her roots in Europe. But in 1955, by chance, she encountered Nadzia, who recognized her. Thus Sarah began to learn the history recounted in these letters.

— Sources —

Interviews with Nadzia Lewy; with Michel Buchner and Anna Vilner of the UJRE and Denise Buchner Candal; with Piotrkow historian Ben Giladi; with Piotrkow survivors Guta Giladi, Kalma and Regina Faywlowicz; Herschel Lefkowitz, Felix Lasky, Alex York, Pola Zamel and Ben James, Jacob Benczkowski and Pola Miedzinski-Benczkowski, Jack Zlotnik, Charles Kotkowski, and Helen Henig.

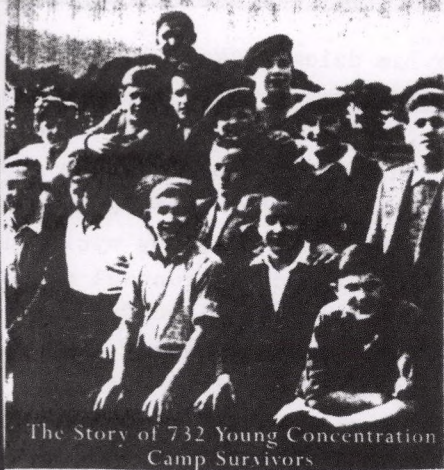
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MARTIN GILBERT

• The Boys •

TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY



The Story of 732 Young Concentration Camp Survivors



Krulik 52 years later. (On the cover - bottom, second from the right).

Dear Ben,

Krulik Wilder

12.10.97

This time the trip to Piotrkow was made more memorable than my two previous visits. The fact that our eldest son Paul accompanied us was one very good thing and the plaques that were erected by the Dessau brothers and your family were the others. Also meeting with fellow Piotrkowers who made the effort to be there from all over the world. The ceremonies were conducted with due decorum. The cemetery has been cleaned up beyond recognition from the first time I saw it, neglected, overgrown, with chickens and dogs running freely. Now it looks like a cemetery and the people can rest in peace.

Piotrkow is very shabby in most places. I took my family to see the house my family lived in 10 Rynek Trybunalski, the house where I was Born 5. Starowarszawska, what memories flawed back in my mind. My long lost Family. We went to the Great Synagogue and saw The Ten Commandments on the wall, I have told my children so much about the events in that Shool and the part my father played in getting 25 of us boys out of there. The pictures of me on my own in Piotrkow is taken on "My Corner" where I sold cigarettes.

Love Gloria & Krulik



GHETTO MEMORIES

In Piotrkow, whose pre-war Jewish population had been reduced during October 1942 from more than 24,000 to less than 2,000, Ben Helfgott's sister Mala, who was then twelve years old, remembered how, at the end of July 1943, 'the ghetto was liquidated and only two groups of workers remained. They were to be allocated to the local Hortensja glass factory and the Dietrich and Fischer Bugaj woodwork factory. During this liquidation my cousin Hania and I, as children who were useless for these factories, were lined up outside the barbed wire fence of the ghetto, ready to board the lorries which were to take us to the railway station, for onward transmission to a concentration camp.

'The column was four deep and very long, and we were surrounded by guards with machine guns pointing at us. The woman in front of us, with a baby in her arms, was hit over the head with a rifle. She was in a terrible state, bleeding profusely. I do not know what she had done to warrant this blow. She may just have moved, because her baby was fidgeting. The sight of her in her agony was alone enough to freeze one to the spot. It was certainly very frightening, and we were getting close to boarding the lorry when suddenly I left the line, went up to the SS officer in charge, and asked him if he would allow me to go back inside to my father and brother from whom I had been separated. I must have moved very fast because the guard was obviously not quick enough to shoot. The SS officer looked at me very surprised, probably wondered how I had the courage or the audacity even to speak to him, but smiled and said "Yes".

'He instructed a policeman to take me back, and on the way I said to him, "Just a minute, I have to collect my cousin". He answered that the permission was only for me, and that my cousin would not be allowed to go back with me. I found myself in an impossible situation, my heart was racing and I was terrified at the prospect of leaving Hania or losing the chance of being reunited with my father and brother. I begged and pleaded and said that I could not possibly go back and ask the lieutenant again, and I could not go back into the ghetto without her. He eventually relented.⁶¹

Mala and Ben Helfgott, and their father, were among between 1,600 and 1,700 survivors of one of the largest ghetto destructions of the Holocaust. Throughout Poland, the deportations of 1942 and the early months of 1943 had completely destroyed more than three thousand Jewish communities. All that was left of the once vibrant life of Polish Jewry by the summer of 1943 was the much-diminished Lodz ghetto, a few thousand Jews in hiding, and the slave labour camps in which several thousand Jews survived amid savage and relentless brutality.

The Days of Deportation

⁶¹ Mala Tribich (née Helfgott), recollections 12 March 1996.



The "Savior", Mala Tribich nee Helfgott of London and her cousin Hania Helfgott of Australia joined us in Piotrkow on Sept. 25th, 97 (together with Hania's husband and sister-in-law).

— KOL HAKAVOD! —

The Spiros and the Wilders at the Huta Hortensia, September 25, 1997. From the left: Harry Spiro, his sons Leslie, Gary, daughter Tracey Moses, wife Pauline. Gloria Wilder, son Paul and Krulik. (Sam Gardner is not in the photo).

← KOL Hakavod! →

Holocaust Oral History

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This original document was found by our friend, an archivist of the Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot Museum. The testimony No. 17, given by Gutka Flatto of Piotrkow, then 13 years old, just after the war in Bergen Belsen, out of 50 children testimonies, is probably one of the first "Bearing Witness" program recorded.

It is quite unusual to see a document issued at a time when the facts were still so fresh and vivid.

Now, 52 years later, such terrible memories are still painfully vivid and just can't be erased from our mind.



A NOTE FROM OUR FRIEND THE "LOHAMEY HAGETAOT"

ARCHIVIST.

Drogi Beno:

Wiesz że pracuję w Lohamei Hagetaot w archiwum. Ostatnio pracowałam nad zeznaniami z obozu Bergen Belsen. Znalazłam tam wspomnienie-zeznanie żony Twojej - wtedy 13-letniej dziewczynki. Jest tamteczka z zeznaniami 50-ciu dzieci. Myślę, że ucieszą was fotokopie tych wspomnień po 50-ciu kilku latach...

Szana Tova! Inka

(MANY THANKS TO DR. INKA WAISBORT!)

Życiorys nr. 17

Flatto Gutka

Dzien Bergen-Belsen

Droga z miasta rodzinnego do Bergen - Belsen

Gdy wojna wybuchła byłam dziewczynką 8-letnią, wkroczyli do naszego miasta do Piotrkowa Niemcy, przez krótki czas bycia zaczął się problem mordowania Żydów. Zaczęło się to tak, z początku nie wolno było chodzić po wszystkich ulicach, po niedługim czasie zabierano nam sklepy. Po nie długim czasie zrobiono geto. Byłam w gecie przez dwa lata. Pewnego dnia wydano rozporządzenie by wysiedlić wszystkich Żydów do Tryblinek / Treblinki/. Ojciec pracował na placówce a ja z mamą nigdzie ześmy nie pracowały. Mówiono że ci co nie pracują zostaną wysiedleni. Ja z moją mamą skryłyśmy się w schronie, byłyśmy tak przez 2 tygodnie. O Ojcu nie mieliśmy żadnej wiadomości. Pewnego dnia siedząc w schronie słyszemy huki / w org. Chuki/wtem rozwała się ściana i wchodzi cała banda Ukraińców. Dali 5 minut czasu abyśmy się ubrali, zabrali nas do piwnicy, tam siedzieliśmy pod eskadrami /?/ żandarmerii. Było to w gecie robotników. Wtem tak siedzimy, rozmawiamy ze sobą, słyszemy głos, zbliżamy się do okna, a to był mój tatuś. Z wielkiej radości nie mogłam nic przemówić do niego. Tatuś mówił że co tylko będzie w mocy wyratować nas to zrobi. Byłyśmy przez dobę w tej piwnicy. Nazajutrz słyszemy /s/krzyki, ale już raus fon chijer / alle Juden raus von hier/, myślałam tylko o tym czy jeszcze się zobaczę z moim /moim/ najdroższym Tatusiem. Tak stojąc i myśląc podchodzi żandarm z pałką - was machst du fafluchte Jude /"was machst Du . verfluchte Juedin / , przerażał mnie tak słodką myśl i musiałam wyjść. Tam nas ustawiono na polu tak jak stoją przylatuje Tatuś, nie zdążył się nawet pożegnać z nami , zaprowadzono nas po eskadrami / eskortą/ żandarmierii i zaprowadzono nas do bóżnicy, tam byłyśmy bez kropli wody, bez niczego. Tak siedzieliśmy przez kilka dni, co za cierpienia tam były to nie mogę opisać, zabierano nam buty, bito nas, było okropnie.

Nazewnątrz bóżnicy pilnowała nas Polska policja. Pewnego wieczora miał służbę znajomy policjant, zauważył mamę przy bramie, powiedział mamie niech się pani przyszykuje na dwunastą godzinę w nocy, ja panią wypuszczę stąd, do tej dwunastej /nie/ mogliśmy się doczekać. Nadeszła 12 godzina, ten policjant przyszedł. Rozejrzał się po wszystkich stronach, otworzył drzwi i wypuścił nas z bóżnicy. Boso po ciemku nikt go nie było na ulicy weszliśmy w bramę naprzeciwko geta. Koło geta stał ukraińiec i kręcił się w górę i w dół i gdy on weszł w górę mama przymówiła do mnie, bądź przyszykowana na śmierć albo na życie. Doleciałyśmy do drutów, ja przesłalam, potem mama, nie zdążyłyśmy wlecieć do bramy, a za nami trzy strzały, w chwili tej zdawało się nam że nieżyjemy, chwilę jeszcze stoimy. Weszłyśmy do pokoju, na szczęście mieszkaliśmy tam wujek, nie byłyśmy w stanie się przywitać z nim. Po chwili poleciał do taty, a gdy tata weszł zemdlą, ledwo ześmy go ocuciły. Tak ześmy były przechowane przez dwa tygodnie w komórce ze szczurami, bo nielegalni nie mieli prawa być w gecie. Pewnego dnia słychać było okrzyki, wszyscy nielegalni mają się zalegalizować,

ale to była afera, bo chcieli wiedzieć ile jest nielegalnych. Potem zabrano nas jeszcze ra-z do bóżnicy. Byliśmy jeszcze raz w tym piekle, ale za wielkim staraniem ojca udało się nas wyciągnąć stamtąd przez niemiecką władzę. Potem już byliśmy legalne. Byliśmy przez dwa lata w tym lagrze / org. lagrze/, był arbaic lager/Arbeitsla-ger /.

Pewnego rana przy pracy słyszymy wszyscy mają iść do domu, mają wysłać do Niemiec. Wracamy do lagru, lager obstawiony żandarmerią. Zebraliśmy się na płacu, zliczono na-s po dziesięć, zaprowadzono nas do pociągu. Na stacji rozdzielono nas z tatusem, nawet nie pozwolono się pożegnać z tatusem. Kazano wejść na pociąg gdzie ~~takżeśmy~~ tak ~~żeśmy~~ jechali przez cztery dni. Zawieźli nas do kace-tu rawensbryk / Ravensbrück /. Odprowadzono nas do łaźni, tam nas rozebrano, ogolono nam włosy, dano nam stare traki /?/ i tak zaprowadzono nas do lagru tam ~~żeśmy~~ byli przez trzy miesiące. Dawano nam brukiew jarmużek pełen wody. Pewnego dnia na apelu wybrano nas na transport do Bergen - Belzen, do tego dobrego lagru. Do tego lagru jechaliśmy przez trzy dni, zaprowadzono nas tam to ~~żeśmy~~ poczuły lager, tam ~~żeśmy~~ byli przez kilka miesięcy na podłodze bez niczego ~~żeśmy~~ leżały, dawano nam raz dziennie trochę brukwi i kawałek chleba.

Trzy tygodnie przed wyzwoleniem nie dano nam chleba i raz dzien-nie trochę zupy, w tym okresie leżałam chora na tyfus, bez wody. Pewnego dnia rano mama wyszła, zauważyła białą flagę na dachu, przyszła z tą nowiną, nikt nie chciał wierzyć. Trwało jeszcze dwa dni, a wkroczyli Angliocy. Byłam tak chora że nie byłam w stanie zoba-czyć. Byliśmy jeszcze trzy tygodnie w Bergen Belzen, później przysłano nas tu do tego lagru Bergen Belzen do dzisiejszego dnia. Mam nadzieję że ~~nasz dziadek~~ ~~x~~ pójdziemy do Erec-Israel.

Flatto Gutka

lat 13



— Gutka in 1945 —
— in Bergen Belsen. —



Gutka Flatto with her parents, Yakov and Sheina in B. Belsen.

FIFTY TWO YEARS LATER . . .

In Memory of Our Beloved

Szanowni Państwo;
Pięćdziesiąt osiem lat temu, 7-go września, 1939-go roku, w dniu wkroczenia Niemców do Piotrkowa, wujek mój, Berisz Judkiewicz opuścił bunker w poszukiwaniu chleba. Został on natychmiast zastrzelony przez Niemca i pochowany w tym miejscu, z małą blaszaną tabliczką na grobie.
Także w pobliżu, pochowani zostali podczas wojny moi bracia, Srulek i Zenek Flatto, oraz mój dziadek Efraim Judkiewicz.
Dzięki tej skruszonej po tak długim czasie tabliczce, mogę teraz uwiecznić ich pamięć i odsłonić ten oto pomnik.
Jako ostatni potomek mojej rodziny, Dziękuję Bogu ze pozwolił mi dożyć tej chwili!
Guta Flatto-Giladi



(In 1967, Yakov Flatto was laid to rest at the Holon Beth Almin in Israel.

In 1983, his wife Sheina was laid to rest beside her beloved husband.)

LETTERS

Szalom Beniek!

Tel Aviv 21/X/1997

Nie mam słów aby Ci wyrazić wdzięczność za tą pracę, tak ważną historycznie coś Ty i inni zdziałaliście w Piotrkowie wraz z członkami Magistratu. Ile pracy i czasu człowiek musi włożyć - ile myśli i pomysłów musi mieć, aby to wszystko zorganizować. Bez żadnych komplementów muszę jednak powiedzieć że jesteś poprostu genjuszem. Czym Ci można odpłacić i podziękować, no i wyrazić uznanie za to wszystko co się urzeczywistniło tego dnia, 25go września, 1997go roku. Ja tylko nie mogę pojąć dlaczego tak mało naszych ziomków było obecnych. Ja z mamą Elą i przyjacielem Dawidem Rolnickim przyjechałem, gdyż wiemy że jesteście ostatnią generacją która jeszcze pamięta jakie bujne życie żydowskie było w Piotrkowie. Wierzę mi Beniek, że czy mi z oczu płynęły gdy słyszałem Twoje słowa jakie wyraziłeś przy każdym miejscu poświęcenia. Bardzo mi się podobało serdeczne podejście władz i mieszkańców miasta i tak ładna przemowa Prezydenta Piotrkowa. Mam wrażenie że to wszystko wejdzie do zapisu historii miasta gdzie spędziliśmy nasze młode lata. Może nasze dzieci i wnuki będą kiedyś o tym czytać. I za to wszystko trzeba Tobie podziękować. Życzę Ci dużo zdrowia i dalszej, owocnej pracy. Załączam zdjęcie w siedzibie księdza Pecolda, którego odwiedziliśmy. Był on także na cmentarzu. Dziękujemy Ci za wszystko - Twój oddany kolega, Josek Windman, Tel Aviv



Z wizytą u Ojca Pecolda. Na pierwszym planie od lewej: Ksiądz Tadeusz, Dawid Rolnicki i Josek Windman.

Dear Ben:

...How do I wish that the "Voice of Piotrkow Survivors" shall endure for a long, long time...

Every night I re-read your book and the previous issues of the magazine, like one reads the Bible - sometimes to 2-3 in the morning, I turn the pages. I, usually can't wait for the next issue of the paper.

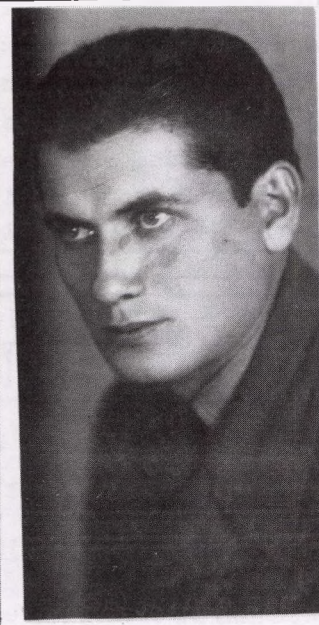
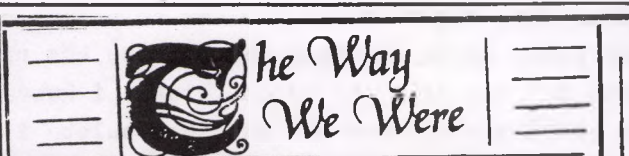
My profound regrets that I was unable to join you in Piotrkow personally, but I was there with you with all my heart!

You sure uplift our spirit and our hope. Thank you,

Your Friend, Shulim Janowski, NY

INQUIRY

Mrs. Estelle Ovis of 151 Union Ave Apt. 24, Lynbrook NY, 11563 ask for information regarding her ancestors who supposedly come from Piotrkow. Their names are: GABRIEL, MOSHE AND MALKA CALKOWNIK. If somebody of our readers remember these names, please let us know.



Dear Ben: I am sending you a photo of my best friend Hanka Lushan, the wife of Josek, holding my son Abe Borenstein in Germany. Abe is now a famous Doctor. He was named the lecturer of the year in Washington D.C. At the award ceremony were present: Senator Lieberman of Massachusetts and his Rabbi. I am also sending the photo of my friend, Beniek Rubinsztajn, given to me in Kaunitz, Germany after the war. Beniek passed away shortly thereafter.

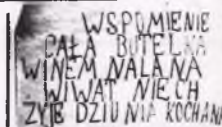
Lila Rosenberg-Kaminska



MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE
A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST



Lodz ghetto coins.
Gift of Julius Ross.
Photography by
Peter Goldberg.



UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM



Niebywała uroczystość

Wchodząc po schodach na najwyższe piętro piotrkowskiego zamku, minąłem dostojnego rabina z długą brodą i w myce na głowie. Po chwili przeniosłem się jakby w inny świat, w inny wymiar. Okazało się jednak, że zastana rzeczywistość nie była jakaś odległa, egzotyczna. Była bardzo bliska, piotrkowska. Była też bliska z tego powodu, że dookoła panowała wzajemna życzliwość i sympatia.

W czwartek, 25 września br., odbyły się uroczystości poświęcone upamiętnieniu martyrologii piotrkowskich Żydów. O godzinie 10 zaproszeni goście spotkali się na odrestaurowanym cmentarzu żydowskim, by dokonać jego poświęcenia. Tam też odsłonięto pierwszą z pięciu tablic z brązu z napisami w czterech językach, a następnie kolejne: przy wejściu do synagogi (obecnie Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna), obok synagogi (upamiętniająca miejsce pierwszego cmentarza żydowskiego z XVII-XVIII w.), na Rynku Trybunalskim (upamiętniająca miejsce pierwszego getta w okupowanej Europie) oraz na placu Czarnieckiego (upamiętniająca miejsce deportacji i martyrologii ludności żydowskiej).

O godzinie 13 w sali piotrkowskiego zamku miało miejsce uroczyste otwarcie wystawy „Żydzi piotrkowscy – w 55 rocznicę likwidacji getta”. Na początek przemówienie wygłosił prezydent Piotrkowa – Andrzej Pol. W zabytkowych pomieszczeniach zamku wspaniale zabrzmiały nastrojowe utwory Chopina i Beethovena, zagrane przez łódzkiego pianistę Marka Pajaka. Później przyszedł czas na wojenne wspomnienia, które przedstawiła zebrana pani Maria Śpiewak. Warto dodać, że pani Maria za pomoc Żydom w okresie okupacji jest odznaczona meda-

lem „Sprawiedliwy wśród Narodów Świata”. Na zakończenie pięknie zaśpiewała, pamiętaną z lat młodości, żydowską piosenkę.

Następnie odbyła się część nieoficjalna. Wypełniły ją pełne serdeczności rozmowy i poczęstunek. Najbardziej obleganą osobą był chyba Ben Giladi – współorganizator uroczystości, działacz Ziomkostwa Żydów Piotrkowskich. Każdy chciał z nim zamienić choć

wanej skrytki, odnalezionej podczas remontu piotrkowskiej synagogi.

Niektórzy przyjechali do Piotrkowa po raz pierwszy od zakończenia wojny. Nie byli pewni, jak zostaną tutaj przyjęci. Odjeżdżali szczęśliwi, pełni miłych wspomnień i głęboko wzruszeni.

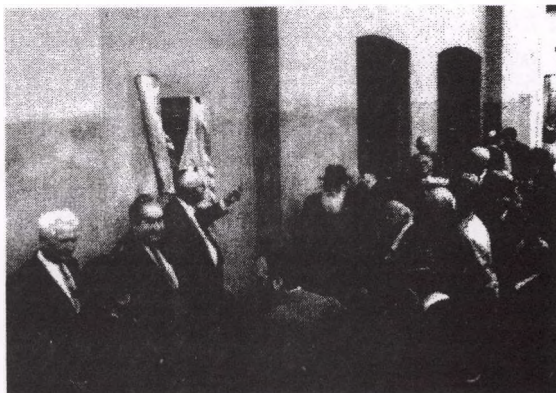
Po zakończeniu spotkania na zamku przedstawiciele ziomkostwa oraz władz miejskich udali się mi-

krobuszem i dwoma samochodami osobowymi do lasu rakowskiego. Celem wyjazdu było w s p ó l n e określenie lokalizacji pomnika, upamiętniającego miejsce straceń kilku tysięcy Żydów.

To właśnie w lesie rakowskim rozstrzelano mieszkańców piotrkowskiego getta.

Fundatorem tablic pamiątkowych i pomnika jest pan Saul Dessau. – *Gdy ludzie pytają mnie, dlaczego chcę to zrobić, to odpowiadam im, że gdyby zabrali mnie goźdźnię później z bożnicy, to bym tutaj, w tym lesie leżał.* Takie słowa nabierają szczególnego znaczenia, gdy stoi się w miejscu, obok leśnej drogi, którą na rozstrzelanie wożono ludzi. Ich winą była jedynie „niewłaściwa rasa”. Pan Dessau podkreśla, że ze strony piotrkowskich Żydów jest prawdziwa i szczerza chęć życia w przyjaźni. – *Czekamy, abyśmy mogli mówić tym samym językiem. Musimy ufać sobie –* dodał na pożegnanie.

Paweł Reising



Odsłonięcie tablicy obok Synagogi
 fot. Darek Stawicki

kilka słów czy zrobić pamiątkowe zdjęcie. Natomiast pani Maria Śpiewak przyznała, że bardzo lubi śpiewać, do czego zobowiązuje ją nawet... nazwisko.

W spotkaniu wzięło udział prawie 50 osób narodowości żydowskiej pochodzących z Piotrkowa. Byli przedstawiciele tutejszego społeczeństwa oraz władz miejskich. Zainteresowaniem cieszyła się wystawa poświęcona piotrkowskim Żydom. Zaprezentowane zostały na niej eksponaty z Archiwum Państwowego i Muzeum Okręgowego w Piotrkowie oraz z muzeów w Opocznie i Radomsku. Obok historycznych zdjęć, dokumentów archiwalnych uwagę zwracały przedmioty liturgiczne z zamuro-

THE THIRD GENERATION

WHY?

by

Jackie Ruderman

April 11, 1994

We were ordered to leave.

"Why?" I asked my mother.

"Because we are Jewish", she replied.

I don't see my mother anymore.

She was sent to take a shower, and never returned.

"Why?" I asked my father.

"Because we are Jewish", he replied.

I don't see my father anymore.

He was sent to work one day, and never returned.

"Why?" I asked.

There was no answer.

I cried and cried.

I pleaded,

"Why is this world so unjust?"

Dear God,

I am all alone.

Help me understand, "WHY?"

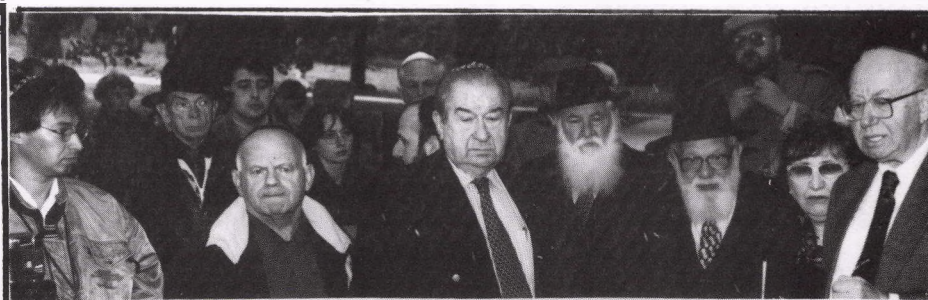
Jackie Ruderman is the granddaughter of Ignas and Rena Weiser of Toronto.

— **THE THIRD GENERATION** —

Laurie Kolin is the granddaughter of Stella and Michael Kolin of New York.

DEAR GRANDMA STELLA

A Holocaust Survivor, a role model to me
 A Brave and Strong hero she will always be
 She also has a very keen mind
 I love her so much, she is one of a kind
 She always knows the right thing to say
 She is loving and comforting in every way
 Though we live far apart
 she will always stay close to my heart.
 By Laurie Kolin, age 13



DROGA DO**Piotrkowa Trybunalskiego**

TUSIA JABLONSKA-FAJNER, SZWECJA

Śniło mi się niedawno że byłam w Piotrkowie i przechadzałam się po ulicy Słowackiego. Obudziłam się z uczuciem trwogi, samotności i tęsknoty. Wtedy zrodziła się we mnie myśl odwiedzenia mego rodzinnego miasta. Gdy otrzymałam zaproszenie na ceremonie upamiętnienia, byłam wciąż jeszcze nie zdecydowana. Ostatni list Benka okazał się bodźcem - postanowiłam pojechać. Przybyłam do Warszawy wraz z Esterką Jablonską. Tego też wieczoru usiłowałyśmy skontaktować z Benkiem Giladi. Rozmawiałam po raz pierwszy z jego żoną, Gutą. Podobał mi się jej sympatyczny, miły głos i byłam pełna uznania dla jej poprawnej polszczyzny. Rzeczywiście, po bliższym poznaniu, Guta okazała się kobietą reprezentacyjną, ciepłą, serdeczną i wyrozumiałą, kobietą pomagającą wiele swemu mężowi w jego działalności. Przysłowie mówi że za każdym sukcesem mężczyzny kryje się kobieta, a Guta jest w dużej mierze potwierdzeniem tej myśli. Środa. Jesteśmy zaproszone przez braci Dessau na kolację. Ben, Saul and Robert są godni podziwu za ich poświęcenie, energię, przedsiębiorczość i dobrą wolę. Wieczór schodzi na miłej rozmowie i wspomnieniach. W tej przyjemnej atmosferze ogarnia mnie uczucie błogiego bezpieczeństwa. Pojawiają się dzieci Esterki J. Syn Henry, Lekarz-psychiatra, psychoanalitik i córka Elisabeth, artystka-rzeźbiarka. Młodzi ludzie w poszukiwaniu swoich korzeni. Jest czwartek, 25 września. Wyruszamy, wreszcie Piotrków. Przed nami rozciąga się panorama miasta z strzelistymi wieżami kościołów. U wejścia cmentarza stoi już grupa naszych ziomków. Jest to dla nas "terra sancta". Jestem wzruszona do łez. Chodzę po ziemi gdzie spoczywają prochy naszych przodków. Szukam mogił moich bliskich. Rozpoczyna się uroczystość. Powoli wracam do przytomności i rozpoznaję ludzi. Nagle widzę znaną mi twarz. To Mała Helfgot której 50 lat nie widziałam. Mało się zmieniła, ładniutka jak zwykle. Kiedy mnie poznała, była zdumiona i rada. Byłyśmy wyzwolone w Bergen Belsen i razem przyjechalismy do Szwecji. Odsłonięcie tablic w Rynku i na Placu Czarnieckiego. Zmęczenie psychiczne mać trzeźwe myśli. W tłumie odrożniam sylwetkę Gutę. Od razy robi się lżej na duszy. Guta jakby rozciągała nad nami swoje opiekuncze skrzydła. Po drodze do Synagogi przechodzimy obok Umschlag-Placu. Synagoga - ongiś duma żydostwa piotrkowskiego, później przedsiónek śmierci dla wielu z naszych braci, jest obecnie biblioteką wojewodzką. Odchodzę z ciężkim sercem. Na zamku-muzeum, Urząd Miejski przygotował dla nas serdeczne przyjęcie. Po koncercie przemowy. Maria Spiewak, Sprawiedliwa Wśród Narodów Świata okazuje się Małą Justynową z którą bawiłam się w ogrodzie Bernardynskim... W sali wystawy Judaica, Naftali Lavie pokazuje mi imię mojego B.P. ojca, Dawida Fajnera w jednej z książek. Zginął on, jak opowiedział mi Naftali, tragiczną śmiercią w przeddzień wyzwolenia. Stoję jak skamieniała, wpatrzona w jeden punkt... Koniec uroczystości; staranne przygotowania nie poszły na marne - wszystko klapowało - wracamy do Warszawy pełni uznania dla inicjatorów tego spotkania t.j. dla Benka, braci Dessau i Urzędu Miejskiego. Opuściłam Piotrków będąc nastolatką, teraz wracam już jako starsza już pani. Jednak, niemiecka zawierucha i zab czasu nie potrafiły zniszczyć we mnie mojej rodzinnej, piotrkowskiej spuścizny; poczucia zasad człowieczeństwa i moralności... Wieczorem, znow zaproszenie do Holiday Inn przez braci Dessau. Tam, po 55 latach rozłąki spotkałam się z Irką K. z domu Englard. Była ona jedną z moich najbardziej cenionych przyjaciółek i powiernic. W ghecie, nasze rodziny mieszkaly razem w mieszkaniu jej dziadka, A.B. Englarda. Miałymy podobną przeszłość naszego dzieciństwa, którego ideałem każdej z nas był dziadek ze strony ojca. Obie pochodzimy też z chasydzkich rodzin. Jesteśmy wzruszone i rade tym spotkaniem. Mam nadzieję że utrzymamy ze sobą kontakt. Szczerze żałuję że nie mogłam bliżej pomówić z Benkiem, kolegą moim z czasów młodości. Niestety, czasu było mało. Może w przyszłości zajdzie okazja. Wracam do hotelu wyczerpana przeżyciami dnia. Czuje jednak pewną satysfakcję z tej mojej polskiej wyprawy w przeszłość. W końcu przecież, to się kiedyś stać musiało... Wspomnienia, jak perły nanizane na nić wzruszeń... □

Gdzie — rodzinny dom —

Czwartek, 25 września 1997, Rynek Trybunalski. Za chwilę miała być odsłonięta tablica, upamiętniająca martyrologię piotrkowskich Żydów. Pani Guta Giladi wskazuje poddasze okazałej kamienicy pod numerem 10.

- Tam się ukryliśmy w asie wielkiej zagłady. Nie odnaleziono by nas może. Ale niemowlę ukrytej z nami młodej matki zaczęło płakać...

Pani Guta, jej późniejszy mąż Ben, dziś po połowie wieku, mistrz ceremonii wmurowania tablic pamiątkowych w miejscach pamięci i męczeństwa, wielu innych, jak bracia Dessau, którzy przeżyli, przeszli przez piotrkowskie getto i obozy koncentracyjne, ale przeżyli. Innych, zdecydowaną większość, wymordowano bestialsko na miejscu w Wielkiej Synagodze, na cmentarzu żydowskim, w podpiotrkowskich lasach czy w Oświęcimiu, Majdanku, Treblince.

Wspomnienia, wspomnienia...

- Tu Gletkier miał restaurację - pokazuje Ben Giladi, człowiek upamiętniający dzieje Żydów piotrkowskich jak nikt inny. - W czasie getta mieściła się w tej kamienicy (dziś z restauracją "Staromiejską") siedziba Schutzpolizei. Przechodzili nasi ludzie. Wypadli i zagarnęli ich jako zakładników. Brakowało



kilkunastu ludzi do egzekucji...

Tym razem ocaleli. Potem byli "okazje" na całym szlaku męczeństwa poprzez obozy zagłady.

- A pamiętasz kto miał aptekę u wlotu w ulicę Grodzką? - pyta młodszego kolegę, syna budowniczego pomników na żydowskim cmentarzu, dziś mieszkanka Frankfurtu nad Menem, dr Henryk Henig, stomatolog przybyły

spod Tel Awiwu, a mający w Piotrkowie do dziś wielu przyjaciół.

Pod synagogę nikt nie miał zamiaru jechać podstawionym autokarem. Pozbawić się "spaceru wspomnień"?

Przed synagogą, a dziś siedziba Wojewódzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej, wzruszające przemówienie wygłosił Ben Helfsgott przybyły z Londynu, działający w instytucie żydowsko-polskim, "by utrwać jak najlepsze stosunki między Polakami a Żydami" - powiada. Ale przed paru jeszcze laty podróż do Polski raniła serce. Mogiły pozostawały bez poszanowania, milczenie wokół innych miejsc związanych z życiem Żydów polskich

i piotrkowskich - to musiało boleć. Teraz pozytywne zmiany cieszą. Wszystko to daje szansę na pełne wzajemne zrozumienie i współdziałanie na rzecz wspólnej kultury, bo była "osobna", ale i była wspólna...



Znów wspomnienia dopiero poznanej siostry Bena, emisariusza Dobrej Sprawy Mali, z męża Tribich. Ona również przyjechała znad Tamizy. "W czasach zagłady - powiada pani Guta Giladi, jej przyjaciółka z lat dzieciństwa - Mała była pięknym dzieckiem. Miała szczęście w sytuacjach, w których wydawało się, nie było ratunku..."

Pani Mała uśmiecha się. Pozostała dojrzałą wiekiem urodą.

- A pamiętasz...

Mówią o współczesności, a ciągle wraca przeszłość. Guta Giladi, człowiek wielkiej mądrości i serdeczności opowiada o humanistycznej "nieuleczalności" męża. Jest wydawcą cenionego pisma "The Voice of Piotrków Survivors", autorem pomnikowego dzieła o Żydach piotrkowskich "A Tale of One City".

- Dla niego humanistyczne wartości w życiu ludzi są ponad wszystkim...

Widzieliśmy się cztery lata temu. Pytam o duchowe koszty takich powrotów "do domu".

- Towarzyszy temu wielkie wzruszenie, emocjonalnie kosztowne. Nie może być inaczej, bo takie chwile wzruszeń są potrzebne.

- Jak pogodne niebo, czysta woda i świeże powietrze...

To potrzebne wszystkim. Trzeba było widzieć twarze uczniów

Szkoły Podstawowej im. Janusza Korczaka, kiedy Ben Giladi oprowadzał po cmentarzu, mówił o Berku Joselewiczu, pułkowniku Wojsk Polskich, wspólnym bohaterze spod Kocka. Trzeba było widzieć te młode twarze w czasie nabożeństwa przy grobie rodzinnym Saula i Roberta Dessau, fundatorów pięciu tablic pamięci właśnie odsłoniętych...

W Muzeum Okręgowym na zamku - cenna wystawa poświęcona życiu i martyrologii piotrkowskich Żydów. Kilkanaście zachowanych zdjęć. Gimnazjalista Jasek Benczkowski, Chil Szlamowicz, młodzian w mundurze żołnierza WP i piękne dziewczyny: Franka Pfeffer i Chaja Szajnert. Jakże były ich późniejsze losy...

- Dom rodzinny? - powiada 71-letni uśmiechnięty mężczyzna o twarzy intelektualisty - To ulica Piłsudskiego 21, blisko szkoły imienia Konopnickiej...

To Naphtali Lavie, były konsul generalny Izraela w USA, syn ostatniego rabina w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim i brat Izraela Meira, od wielu lat naczelnego rabina w Tel Awiwie.

- Wkrótce ukaże się moja książka - powiada pan ambasador - Przyślę ją do Piotrkowa...

Spotkanie oficjalne odbyło się w królewskich komnatach zamku-muzeum. W 1569 roku ostatni z Jagiellonów, Zygmunt August nadał Żydom prawo osiedlenia się w Piotrkowie.

Były słowa "królewskiego powitania" prezydenta miasta Andrzeja Pola, był koncert chopinowski, przyjaciół rozmowy. Dłuższe - już poza murami zamku - wśród przyjaciół, choć wielu myślami było już w Izraelu, Londynie, Nowym Jorku...

Dom rodzinny ma się w zasadzie jeden. Ale w życiu zasady nie zawsze tak do końca są pełną prawdą...

JERZY
KISSON-JASZCZYŃSKI

Robin Williams w Piotrkowie!

Od paru dni przechodzący przez Rynek Trybunalski dostrzegają mur zwieńczony kolczastym drutem. Wiemy już, że będzie "kręcony" film pt. "Jakub kłamca", wracający fabułą do czasów gett i zagłady Żydów. Za tydzień powinny się rozpocząć prace nad filmem, w którym główną rolę grać będzie Robin Williams, znakomity aktor i odtwórca tytułej roli w "Mr. Do-ubtfire".

Głośny aktor spodziewany jest w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim jeszcze w tym tygodniu. (aka)



• W minioną niedzielę rozpoczęły się w podwarszawskim Piotrkowie zdjęcia do filmu Petera Kassovitza *Jakub kłamca*, w którym tytułową rolę gra Robin Williams. Akcja filmu rozgrywa się w latach czterdziestych w getcie żydowskim, usytuowanym w małym polskim miasteczku. Obok aktorów amerykańskich - Matthieu Kassovitz'a i Alana Arkina, grają również polscy - Grażyna Barszczewska, Zofia Saretok, Piotr Gąssowski.

OCTOBER 17, 1997

- Nowy Dziennik - New York -

CASTING CALL

What good casting Robin Williams has just chosen Nina Siemaszko as one of the stars in "Jakub the Liar," Jurk Becker's uplifting story set during the Holocaust. It's the story of a man, the Polish ghetto who... reports from a nonexistent radio. Siemaszko, the voluptuous actress who once had a love scene with Madonna, is the daughter of a Polish Catholic survivor of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp - where Becker spent his childhood. Filming begins in Poland next month.

Monday, September 22, 1997

Odnalezienie zdjęcie

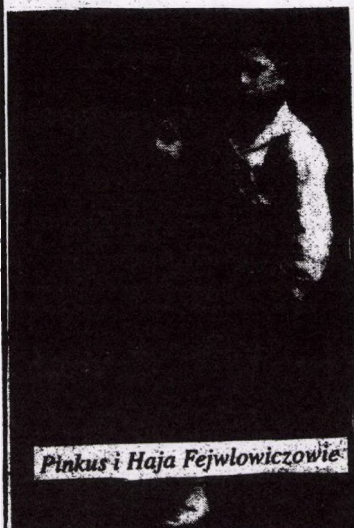
Do sali piotrkowskiego zamku, w której otwarta została wystawa „Żydzi piotrkowscy”, Ben Giladi wprowadził swojego znajomego i wskazał mu jedno zdjęcie. Starszy człowiek spojrzał i nie wierzył własnym oczom. Nie wiedział, co powiedzieć. Wyciągnął ręce ku fotografii, jakby chciał dotknąć widniejące na niej postacie, jakby chciał z nimi się przywitać... Stałem obok. Po kilku chwilach rozpocząłem rozmowę:

Rozmowa z Pawłem Fejwłowiczem

GZP: - Czy to Pan jest na tym zdjęciu?

Paweł Fejwłowicz: - Ja i moja siostra.

- Co może Pan powiedzieć o siostrze?



- Ben Giladi widział ją po raz ostatni w 1943 roku. Ben mieszkał w sąsiedztwie. Oni byli w tym samym wieku. Bo ja jestem starszy. Siostra była młodsza. I ona była w tym samym wieku, co on. Oni bardzo dobrze się znali. Bardzo blisko byli ze sobą. Po raz ostatni Ben widział ją w lipcu 1943 roku.

- W jakich okolicznościach?

- W jakich? No, tutaj w Piotrkowie, w getcie. W najgorszym, najtrudniejszym czasie każdy liczył się z tym, że prędzej czy później zginie. I rzeczywiście, ona zginęła... Siostra wyszła za mąż za Łódzianina, który przyjechał z Łodzi do getta. Razem z nim, w grudniu 1943 roku, zostali zastrzeleni na cmentarzu żydowskim w Piotrkowie. Ich zabrali, tylko tę dwójkę, i zastrzelili...

- Jak Pan sądzi, z którego roku może pochodzić to zdjęcie?

- Bo ja wiem? Miałem wtedy może 6, 7 lat. Zdjęcie to mogło być zrobione w 1935-36 roku, tak przypuszczam. Tak oceniam w tej chwili...

- Gdzie Pan wtedy mieszkał?

- Na Rycerskiej, vis-a-vis kościoła.

- To zdjęcie zaskoczyło Pana?

- To zdjęcie przypomina mi wszystkie moje młode lata. Wszystko to, co

przeszedłem... Wszyscy zginęli. Ja zostałem sam. No i co tu dużo mówić? Wiele by się dało powiedzieć. To jest historia, to jest eksterminacja Żydów, eksterminacja rodzin, najbliższych... Człowiek zostaje sam na świecie. A więc można sobie wyobrazić, co to wszystko znaczy... Ale trzeba żyć dalej i trzeba cieszyć się z tego, że istnieje jeszcze takie ziomkostwo, taka więź. Że Żydzi piotrkowscy, którzy pozostali przy życiu, rozproszeni po całym świecie, czy to w Australii, czy w Ameryce Południowej czy Północnej, gdziekolwiek, potrafią ze sobą tak jakoś trzymać tę więź. Ale to wszystko dzięki temu,

że ten Ben Giladi, który jest niesamowicie energiczny, ma dużo inwencji, ma dużo samozaparcia i potrafi łączyć to całe żydostwo i nawiązać tak cudowny kon-

takt z tutejszym magistratem, z zarządem, ze wszystkimi. I widać tę serdeczność, która jest na tym przyjęciu i w tych przemówieniach. Wszyscy serdecznie się wypowiadali. Z dużą sympatią, nawet można powiedzieć - wręcz z miłością. I chcę utrzymać tę więź, która, moim zdaniem, powinna być przykładem dla innych miast, by w ten sposób kontynuować to wszystko, tę tradycję...

- Pięknie Pan mówi po polsku. Czy na co dzień również używa Pan tego języka?

- Tak.

- Gdzie Pan mieszka?

- Mieszkam we Frankfurcie.

Jest tam środowisko polskie, Żydzi polscy, i nie tylko Żydzi, którzy opuścili Polskę i znaleźli się za granicą. W swoim czasie zmuszeni wręcz do wyjazdu. Oni pielęgnują i trzymają tę więź w dalszym ciągu. Interesujemy się bardzo tym, co tu się dzieje. Wybory, które były ostatnio, były dla nas wręcz chlebem codziennym. Interesowaliśmy się, kto będzie, kto przejdzie itd. Orientujemy się i żyjemy problemami Polski. Życzymy, aby Polsce było dobrze.

- Dziękuję za rozmowę...

Rozmawiał Paweł Reising

LETTERS

L'Ben W'Gveret Giladi Shalom Rav:
The unveiling of the commemorative Plaques and the Judaica and Holocaust Exhibit at the Museum were all very moving events. You and everybody involved in preparing and organizing it deserve a great "Yasher Koach" and the gratitude of all of us. The event was organized and conducted in a perfect way. I was impressed by the attention devoted by you to every detail and particularly the cooperation of the Piotrkow authorities (the Municipality), the participation of dignitaries and the presence of school children and their teachers that took part.

The whole day of September 25th, 97 in Piotrkow was a most memorable event. It was a privilege to take part in it and meet old friends who shared the same experience.

I was very moved to light candles on the graves of both my grandfathers, Moshe Milsztajn and Josef Goldfrajd. The Ten Commandments Wall in the Synagogue with the bullet holes brought back memories of the horror we all went through.

Dear Ben, thank you for your tireless efforts to keep alive the memory of Jewish Piotrkow.

Thank you for your Shana Tova greetings and your letter.

Please accept our belated wishes for a Happy New Year to all of you from both, my wife Alisa and myself.

I have conveyed your greetings to Icchak Goldfried. My younger brother Marek, lives in Arad, and thank you for remembering him.

Kindest regards,

Felek

(Shraga Milsztajn, Mayor of Kfar Shmaryahu, Israel)

Dear Saul and Robert:

I don't think I ever got the chance to thank you personally for that lovely dinner and for being so generously included in your party.

For me, the Piotrkow trip, with all the arrangements there, was a very strong and important experience for which I am profoundly grateful. It was great to meet you and thank you for everything.

Elisabeth Jablonska, Sweden

BRIEF REVIEWS

Losy żydowskie

ŚWIADECTWO ŻYWYCH

Słownictwo
Żydów
Kombatantów
i Poszkodowanych
w II Wojnie
Światowej
Warszawa 1996

redakcja

MARIAN TURSKI

Drogi Benie:
Przeczytałem twoją książkę
i bardzo mi się spodobała.
Dziękuję ci za nią.
Mój jak widziałem
wydawało mi się tylko
na tych kilka stron
z komentarzami
- Irena.

Recenzja z jednej książki

Z zalem stwierdzam, że znajomość mojej genealogii jest bardzo krótka. Sięga właściwie tylko dziadków ze strony ojca. I w tym Dziadku są moje korzenie (...)

Opuszczając rodzinę, by udać się na „aryjską” stronę. Pamiętam pożegnanie. Ojciec powiedział mi: *i nie zapomnij nigdy, że jesteś Żydówką*. Słyszając to, mój wuj gwałtownie zareplikował: *co ty też jej mówisz w takiej chwili? Jak tylko przekroczysz próg tego domu, natychmiast zapomnij, że jesteś Żydówką*. Miałam wtedy piętnaście lat. Odtąd towarzyszą mi te dwa przykazania wyniesione wtedy z domu i myślę, że byłam im chyba posłuszną, obu naraz. Współżyją sobie we mnie i nie przysparzają mi konfliktu (...)

A więc reasumując: kto-m zacz? Polka czy Żydówka?

Ja sama z siebie nigdy bym sobie takiego pytania nie postawiła. To tak jakby zapytać liczbę dwanaście, czy bardziej jest jedynką czy dwójką.

Ze wspomnienia Ireny Majchrzak

Tom zawiera trzydzieści trzy wspomnienia o losach żydowskich. Krótkie i długie, opisujące epizod lub wielki szmat życia. Dramatyczne. Pasjonujące. Pobudzające do myślenia.

Henryk Grynberg

Cud

Cud pieczenia chleba
naszego codziennego jest
większy

od przejścia przez Morze
Czerwone

obliczyli rabini
i sam Cudotwórca nie radzi
liczyć na jeszcze więcej
(Pesachim 64b)

zaś Abraham Jozua Heschel
doradza żeby dziękować

rano we dnie wieczór w nocy

za to nieprawdopodobne

zdarzenie

którym jesteśmy

i święto każdego dnia

które nigdy się nie powtórzy

Midrasz

מדרש

wrzesień 1997



OUR PIOTRKOWER IN BELGIUM

We've received an interesting newsletter published by the Survivors Union and their children in Belgium. The President of this Union is Monsieur Maurice Pioro. Other landsleit on photo left: Karol Sosnowski, Isy Lipszyc and Charles Salomonowicz at a cultural gathering. Photo right: The "March Of The Living" youngsters from Belgium attending ceremonies.

UNION DES DEPORTES JUIFS EN BELGIQUE FILLES ET FILS DE LA DEPORTATION



Vernissage de l'exposition des oeuvres de Danny Danino à Saint Gilles le 27.01.97

Les Jeunes de la Brith se recueillent

Goes Back To Its Roots In Lublin

Just a few days before Rosh Hashana, the Jewish world celebrated the Siyum Hashas of the Daf HaYomi. While the main celebrations took place in Israel and New York, there were also many events marking the occasion all over the world.

SHMUEL BEN ELIEZER
Staff Reporter

One of the most heartfelt celebrations took place at a small gathering in the city of Lublin, Poland. Lublin has a long and famous Jewish history. Before WWII, it was the seat of one of the world's greatest yeshivot, the home of famous rabbis and Jewish culture. Today, there are almost no Jews left, the yeshiva is now the town library, the only famous rabbis in residence are in the cemetery.

But for one day two weeks ago, the Jews returned. Rabbi Chaskel Besser, who for the past 30 years has been the head of the DafYomi Commission, traveled from his home in N.Y. to eastern Europe to partake in this special Siyum.

The siyum took place in the Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin in honor of the most famous of the Lubliner rabbis, Rabbi Meir Shapiro zt"l, father of the concept of

Daf Yomi, and founder of the yeshiva. About sixty people came from all over the world, from the U.S., Israel and from different parts of Poland.

Rabbi Besser gave a lesson on the last page of



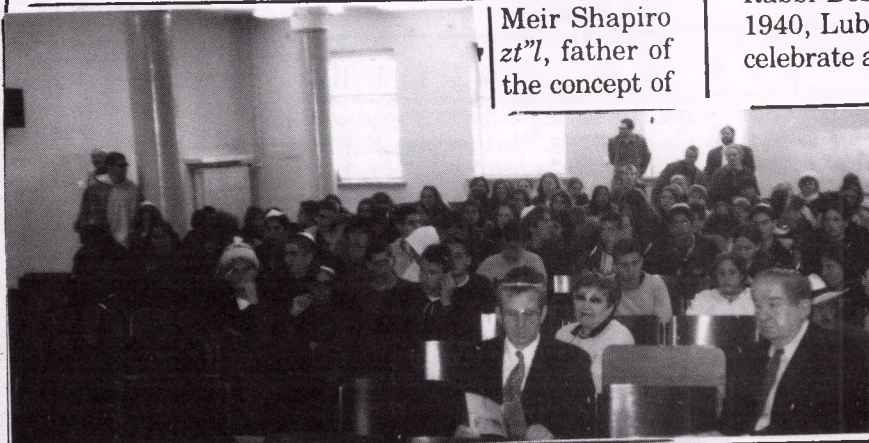
Among the dignitaries who attended the Siyum Hashas in Lublin were (r-l) Ben Giladi, Dr. Simcha Wiess, Rabbi Besser, Saul Dessau and Rabbi M. Shudrich, director of the Lauder Foundation in Poland.

the Talmud and then started the Talmud learning anew. After the Siyum there was a festive meal with much singing and dancing.

This was only the second Siyum Hashas that Rabbi Besser was able to attend in Lublin. Since 1940, Lublin was inaccessible to Jews wanting to celebrate anything Jewish. During WWII, the Nazis were in charge, and later the Communists. Both did their utmost to wipe out anything Jewish in Poland.

Rabbi Besser is known for his hard work through the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation in bringing back as much Jewishness to the Jews remaining in Poland as possible. "Teaching the Talmud, the basic book of our heritage after the Torah, will

unite the Jews of Poland with the Jews in other parts of the world," said Rabbi Besser. "This is following in the spirit of Rabbi Shapiro who first started DafYomi in 1924 and celebrated the first Siyum in 1931." □



Ed. Note: ..Only once in my life I saw my father cry... This was not in the Ghetto... This happened in 1934, on the day when the dreadful news arrived that the former Piotrkower Rav, Yehuda Meir Shapira "NIFTAR" in Lublin...
Ben Giladi

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1997

ב"ה, יום ו', כ"ד אלול, תשנ"ז

פרייטיק, סעפטעמבער 26, 1997

צום סיום הש"ס פון די דף יומי לערנער

● פון טוביה פרעשעל

די מסכתא מועד קטן האט מען געדרוקט אין אנהויב פון יאר תרצ"ג (די גויאישע דאטע איז פון ~~אדר~~ **סיון** 1933). דער דף יומי לוח אין דער מסכתא ווייזט אז מען וועט אנהויבן לערנען די גמרא ז' שבט (אין דער יאר תרצ"ג).

צו דער גמרא איז צוגעדרוקט א מפתח פון מאמרים פון הלכה און אגדה וואס געפינען זיך אין דער מסכתא. דער מפתח האט צונויפגעשטעלט הרב ברוך געלבארט פון לאדז. אין אנהויב פון מפתח איז פאראן א הסכמה פון רבי מאיר שפירא זצ"ל פון תשרי

[illegible]

די צוויי אנדערע גמרות וואס הרב מאירסדארף האט מיר געוויזן זיינען געווען ראש השנה און סוכה. אין ביידע מסכתות איז געדרוקט דער מפתח פון מאמרים (מיט צוגאב פון "מפתח לשיטתיו") ווי אויך די הסכמה פון רבי מאיר שפירא. אין מסכת סוכה איז אויך פאראן א דף יומי לוח. אויף די שערס פון די צוויי מסכתות שטייט אז זיי זיינען געדרוקט געווארן אין יאר תרפ"ח.

(אויב דאס זאל זיין אמת, מוז מען זאגן אז די מפתחות איין וועלכע ס'איז פאראן א הסכמה פון רבי מאיר שפירא פון יאר תרצ"ב, זיינען שפעטער צוגעבונדן געווארן צו די דאזיקע מרות). די גמרא ברכות איז די איינציקע וואס האט נישט דעם מפתח, כאטש ער איז דערמאנט שער דבלט. מעגלעך אז עמיצער האט אים ארויסגענומען פון דער גמרא.

מיין פריינט הרב בצלאל מאירסדארף האט מיר געזאגט אז אין ניו-יארק האט ער נישט געפונען מער "פיעטערקובער דף יומי גמרות". מען קען אננעמען אז מען האט געדרוקט נאך אנדערע מסכתות מיט דף יומי לוחות. אפשר געפינען זיך אזעלכע אין ירושלימער ביבליאטעק, אין דער "בית מדרש לייברער" אין לאנדאן און אין אנדערע גרויסע ביבליאטעקן. ווען מיר וועלן האבן מער ידיעות וועגן די דאזיקע גמרות וועלן מיר אפשר אויך קענען דערגיין צו רבי מאיר שפירא זצ"ל, וולכער איז געווען רב פון פיעטראקאו, איידער ער איז געווארן לובלינער רב, האט ער געהאט א האנט אין דרוקן די דאזיקע גמרות.

הרב פנחס הירשפרונג שליט"א, דער רב פון מאנטרעאל - א
לובלינער תלמיד, וואס רבי מאיר שפירא זצ"ל האט שטאלצירט
מיט אים - האט מיר דעציילט אז ער געדענקט גוט די
פֿעטערקובער גמרות מיט די דף יומי לוחות. ער האט מיר אויך
געזאגט אז אין פולין זיינען געווען אויך אנדערע גמרות מיט
אדעלע לוחות.

“דער קאמיטעט פאר פארשפרייטן דאס לערנען פון דף יומי”
 (“ועד להפצת דף היום”) פון דער אמעריקאנעז אגודת ישראל,
 וואס ווערט אנגעפירט פון הרב יחזקאל בעסער, פלעגט דרוקן
 גמרות אין א קליינעם פארמאט וואס דף יומי לערנערס קענען
 שטענדיק טראגן מיט זיך.

אין די דאזיקע גמרות געפינען זיך פארשידענע צוגאבעס און
אין א טייל פון זיי איז געדרוקט א דף יומי לוח וואס ווייזט די
טעג ווען מען לערנט די מסכתא און וואס פאר א בלאט מען
לערנט יעדו טאג.

גמרות מיט דף יומי לוחות זיינען שוין געווען אין פוילן. מיין גוטער פריינט, הרב בצלאל מאירסדארף, א גרויסער יעדן אין ספרים, האט מיר דערציילט אז ער האט געפונען אין דער ביבליאטעק פון אידישן-טעאלאגישן סעמינאר, אין דער קאלעקציע פון ספרים וואס האבן אמאל באלאנגט צו פראפ. פינקעלשטיין, פיר מסכתות - געדרוקט אין פוילן - וואס האבן א שייכות צום דף היומי.

דאס זיינען נישט קיין גרויסע ש"ס גמרות, נאר פשוטע מסכתות. צום סוף פון זיי זיינען נאך צוגעדרוקט דער מהרש"א, מהרש"ל און מהר"ם. זיי זיינען אלע געדערוקט געווארן אין פיעטראקאו אין דער דרוקעריי פון יעקב צעדערבוים.

אין דריי פון די דאזיקע גמרות זיינען פאראן דף יומי לוחות. זיי פארצייענען די טעג אין דער וואך (לויט דער סדרה) און די טעג אין חודש ווען מען לערנט דעם "בלאט" אין דער מסכתא. דער יאר איז נישט פארצייענט.

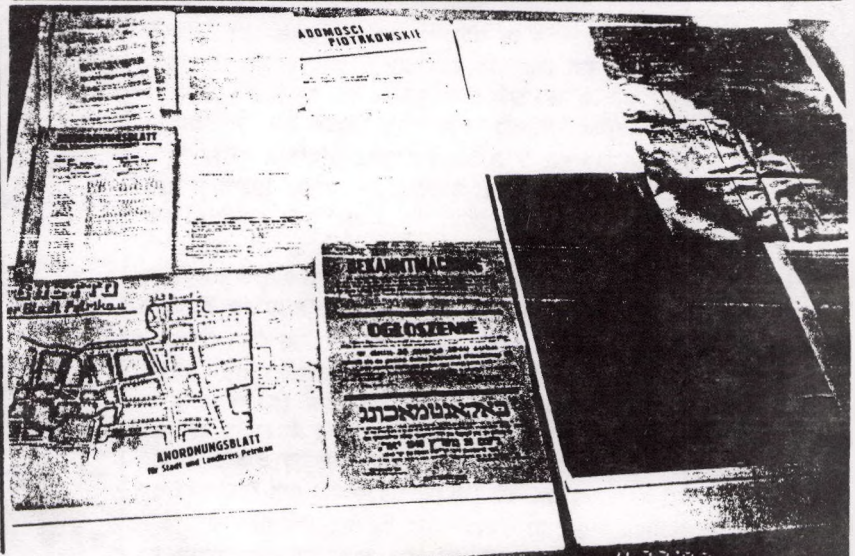
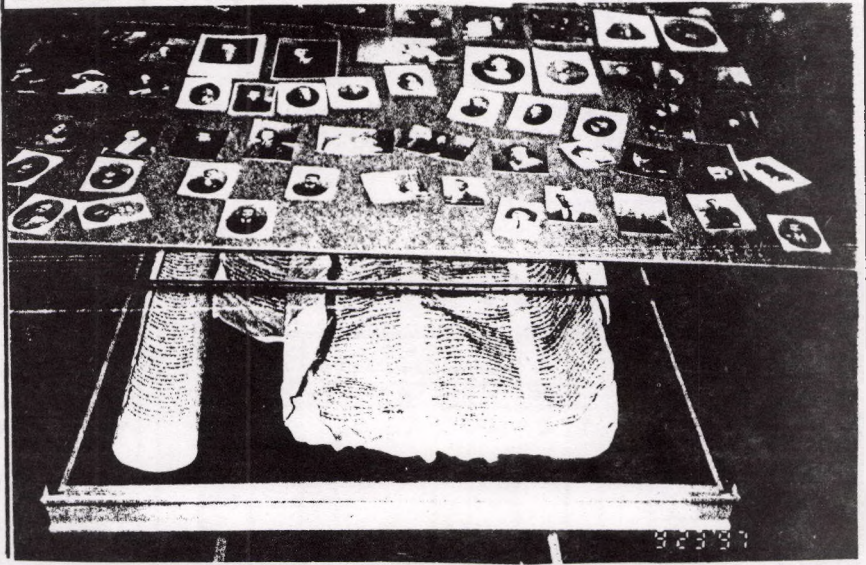
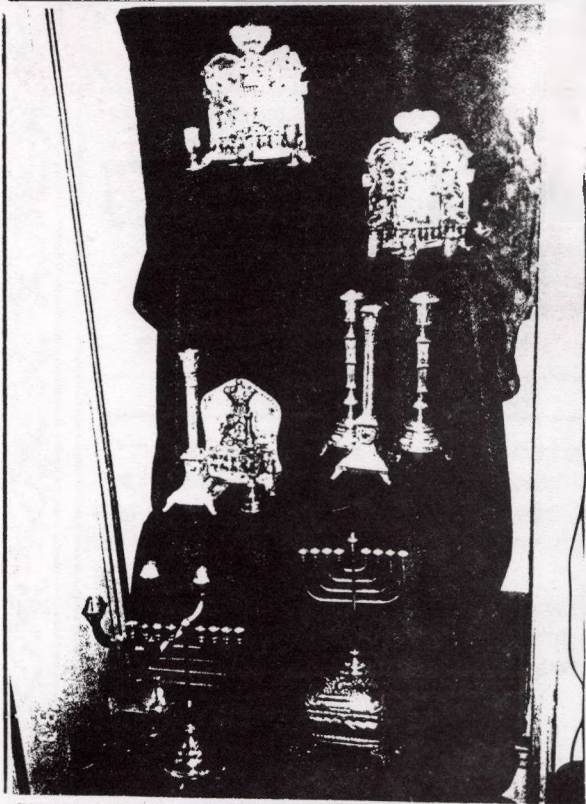
מסכתא ברכות איז געווארן געדרוקט אין יאר תרצ"א. אין דעם יאר חמשה עשר בשבט - האבן די דף יומי לערנער געפראוועט דעם ערשטן סיום הש"ס. וואלט מען דאך דערווארט אז דער לוח, וואס איז צוגעדרוקט צו דער גמרא ברכות, וועט ווייזן אז מען הויבט אן לערנען די גמרא איין טאג נאך חמשה עשר, ד.ה. ט"ז בשבט. דער לוח אבער צייכנט ניט אן די דאזיקע דאטע. ער גיט אן אז מסכת ברכות וועט מען אנהויבן לערנען כ"ט סיון - געמיינט איז דא דאס יאר תרצ"ח. כ"ח סיון אין דעם דאזיקן יאר האט מען מסיים געווען ש"ס דאס צווייטע מאל, אין דעם נעקסטן טאג, כ"ט סיון, האט מען אנגעהויבן לערנען ש"ס דאס דריטע מאל.

פרעגט זיך די פראגע פאר וואס פארצייענט דער לוח וואס געפינט זיך אין דער גמרא ברכות, וועלכע איז געדרוקט געווארן אין יאר תרצ"א, די דאטעס ווען מען וועט לערנען די מסכתא אין זיבן יאר ארום, אין יאר תרצ"ח, און ניט די דאטעס ווען מען לערנט די מסכתא אין דעם יאר ווען די גמרא איז געדרוקט געווארן.

קען מען דאס דערקלערן אויף פארשידענע אופנים. א פשוטער תירוץ איז אז די גמרא האט זיך פארשפּעטיקט אין דרוק און ווען מען האט זי געענדיקט דרוק, האבן די רף יומי לערנער שוין געהאלטן ביי מסיים זיין די מסכתא. האבן די דרוקער פארזייכונט

EXHIBITS FROM THE JUDAICA AND HOLOCAUST DISPLAY IN THE PIOTRKOW MUSEUM, WHICH OPENED ON SEPTEMBER 25TH, 1997.

CLOCKWISE; 1. PHOTOGRAPHS AND HOLY SCROLLS. 2. GHETTO ANNOUNCEMENTS. 3. ANCIENT SCRIPTURES. 4. RELICS FOUND IN THE SYNAGOGUE WALL DURING RECONSTRUCTION IN THE 1950-IES.



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