Rawa-Ruska

ראווה-רוסקה

Rawa-Ruska

ראווה-רוסקה

The Rawa-Ruska Memorial Book

ספר זכרון
לקהילת ראווה-רוסקה והסביבה

נִזְכּוֹר



Published & Edited By

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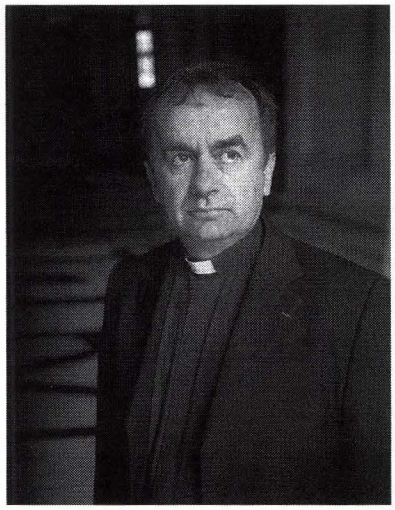
Dedication

To Honor the Holocaust-related work of



FATHER PATRICK DESBOIS

which he began in the town of Rawa Ruska

Father Patrick Desbois is known globally as the French Catholic priest who exposed an as yet unrecognized form of mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis during WWII: mobile killing units, the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*, consisting of middle-aged men who went from town to town following the German army in their sweep eastward, and shot close to 2 million Jews, throwing them into pits, often burying them alive. This travesty has been given the name, the "*Holocaust by Bullets*."

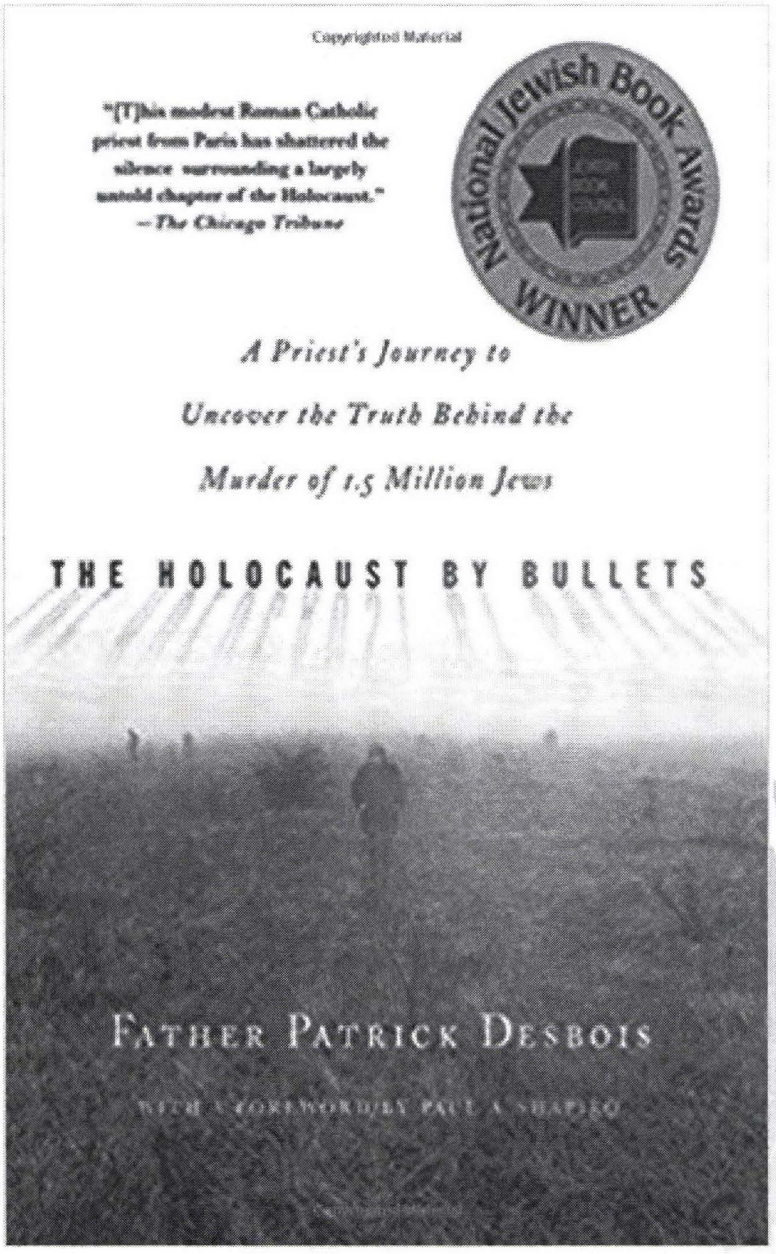
He was born in 1955, in Chalon-sur-Saône, ***the grandson of a soldier held during WWII in the French prisoner-of-war camp in Rawa Ruska on the Poland-Ukraine border.*** His grandfather would tell young Patrick about his experiences, each time ending with some form of acknowledgment that the Jews of the town had it much worse than he and his fellow prisoners did.

As an adult, Father Desbois traveled to Rawa Ruska annually to participate in commemoration ceremonies at the camp, each time asking: "Where are the Jews buried?" meaning, "Where are the Jewish mass graves?" all to no avail. After several trips, and a change in the town's administration, he was finally taken to Borowe, the site of the mass grave that is filled with the remains of the last Jews of Rawa Ruska.

Many Ukrainian elders of the town, people who had witnessed the mass murders as children, joined him there and began testifying as to what they'd seen. From this beginning, in Rawa Ruska, he has gone on to identify Jewish mass grave sites all over Eastern Europe, to gather video testimonies from elderly Christians who were child-witnesses and to collect material proof, e.g. bullet casings, at the murder sites. It is also through his efforts that fences and memorials have been erected around several Jewish mass graves, including one in Rawa Ruska.

In 2004, he founded ***Yachad-in-Unum***, a global humanitarian organization dedicated to identifying and commemorating Eastern European, World War II, Jewish and Roma execution and mass grave sites. His work through ***Yachad*** has been recognized through numerous awards, academic positions and public commentary globally. These include the Légion d'honneur, France's highest honor and the 2017 Lantos Human Rights Prize. His book, "*The Holocaust By Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*," has won the National Jewish Book Award.

Father Patrick Desbois has devoted his life to documenting the Holocaust, fighting anti-Semitism, and furthering relations between Catholics and Jews and we are all grateful to him for his sensitivity and compassion.



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The following members of our extended family of landsleit, friends and well-wishers, provided financial contributions to help make the publication of this book possible. Their generosity assures the preservation of this heritage for future generations, by which they have earned a large measure of our collective gratitude.

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Table of Contents

Translator's Foreword & Acknowledgments. xi

Foreword. xiii

Dear Landsleit!. . . . . **By Gimpel Just** xvi

To the History of the Jews in Rawa-Ruska

לתולדות היהודים בראווה-רוסקה

צו דער געשיכטע פון יידן אין ראווא-רוסקא

Rawa-Ruska and Its Environs. . . . . **By Dr. Nachman Blumenthal** 3
Historical Overview. 3

Origins of the Jews of Rawa-Ruska. . . . . **By Yaakov Baumwohl** ז"ל 10

My City and Family that Once Were. . . . . **By Professor Zeinvill Lieberman** 21
Foreword. 21
A Map of the City. 23
A Map of the City. 24
Memories 26
My Family. 28

A Period of Ferment and Storm. . . . . **By Gimpel Just** 31
The Founding of the '*Hatikvah*' Society and its First Members. 36
The Youth Organizations of the '*Hatikvah*' Group. 44
The Revisionist Movement. 44
The Establishment of '*Mizrahi*' and *Tze'irei Mizrahi*. 44
The Zionist Labor Group '*Hitakhdut*' – Its Founding and Development. 46
The Establishment of '*HeHalutz*'. 51
The Birth of the People's Pioneering Youth Movement, '*Gordonia.*'. 52
The Eve of the Holocaust 55

The Tale of Rawa-Ruska . . . . . **By Y. Tz. Rubin** 57
The '*Zamd*' *Bet HaMedrash*. 59
The '*Klyzl*' 60

The Way of Life in the City. . . . 62
The Influence of Belz. . . . 64
The '*Heders*'. . . . 65
Pleasures in Jewish Life. . . . 67

Regarding Life in Rawa. . . . **By Yekhl Meiseles** 72
Economic Circumstances. . . . 72
Commerce. . . . 72
Hat Making and Fur Trading. . . . 73
The Cooperative Bank and the Merchants' Union. . . . 74
Independent Professions. . . . 75
The Struggle Between Old and New. . . . 75
The Zionist Movement – Dr. Mandel. . . . 77
The Youth. . . . 79
Mizrahi and *Agudah*. . . . 80
Illicit Activities. . . . 81
Left Wing Movements. . . . 82
The Jewish-Communist Group. . . . 82

The Origins of Jewish Rawa. . . . **By A. M. Ringel** ז"ל 84
R' David HaLevi Sega"l the Author of '*Turei Zahav*' . . . 86
The First Rabbi of Rawa-Ruska. . . . 90
R' Yekhiel Hillel ben R' David Altshuler. . . . 91
R' Abraham of Bród, the Author of '*Dvar HaMelech*'. . . . 92
R' Yitzhak Shimon ben R' Moshe. . . . 94
R' Menachem Mendl זצ"ל. . . . 94
R' Nathan Tzvi HaLevi ben R' Joseph Juzpa Stern זצ"ל. . . . 95
Rabbi Chaim Weinreb ז"ל. . . . 96
R' Shlomo Kluger – the *Maggid* of Brod. . . . 96
R' Mordechai Mardisz ז"ל. . . . 100
R' Tzvi Hirsch Heller – R' Hirsch'eleh *Kharif*. . . . 101
R' Sholom Rosenfeld-Graff זצ"ל. . . . 103
Hasidim and *Maskilim* in Rawa-Ruska. . . . 109
Abraham Goldberg. . . . 114
Rabbi Levi Yitzhak Dov Schorr ז"ל. . . . 118
R' Dov-Berisz *HaKohen* Rapoport זצ"ל. . . . 122
R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky ז"ל. . . . 123
R' Israel Dayan זצ"ל. . . . 126

The Rabbi R' Dovberish and His Grandson. . **By Y. Meir Cohen Rapoport** 138
A) My Revered Grandfather R' Dovberish Rapoport ז"ע . . . 138
B) My Master, Father and Teacher R' Joseph-Chaim Rapoport ז"ע. . . . 142
C) R' Simcha Haberman. . . . 142

The History of My Great-Grandfather..... **By Dovberish Cohen Rapoport** 143

My Uncle, R' Yitzhak Nahum ז"ל..... **By Yokhanan Twersky** 144

The Rebbe Simcha Haberman זצ"ל..... **By Yaakov Zvi Haberman** 148

Rabbi, R' Mordechai Aryeh Haberman זצ"ל. **By Rabbi Yehuda Rubinstein** 150

Portraits of Belz Hasidim in Rawa..... **By Israel Klappholz** 155
R' Yehoshua Rawer..... 155
R' Yeshayahu Rawer..... 156
R' Joseph Jarczwer..... 157
R' Israel Rawer..... 159
R' Yaakov Berisz Hebenstreit..... 160
R' Raphael Rawer..... 161
Peyshi Rawer..... 161

The 'Old Bet HaMedrash' and The 'Old Kloyz'..... **By A. M. Ringel ז"ל** 163
The Old *Kloyz*..... 167
R' Joseph Reiser..... 172
R' Mikhl'eh Wander..... 176
Die Lange Pesha..... 178
R' Shmuel Sofer-Axler..... 180
R' Nachman Kleiner..... 181
R' Moshe Rathaus..... 183
R' Saul Levin..... 183
R' Yitzhak Graff..... 184
R' Yaakov Shlomo Rosenfeld..... 184
R' Yitzhak Nachman's (Morgenstern)..... 184
My Father and Teacher R' Yaakov Ringel..... 190
'*Agudat Israel*' in the City and Its Activities..... 192

Recollections of the City Where I Was Born..... **By Shmuel Adler** 199
The Establishment of '*Mizrahi*'..... 200
Members of My Family and those that Came to their Homes..... 201

Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush זצ"ל..... **By Shmuel Adler** 203

My Father & Teacher R' Israel Schwert זצ"ל .... **By Bluma Rubin-Schwert** 204

Memories of Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד..... **By Dr. Shlomit Tir** 216

The Persona of Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד..... **(Letters to his son, Nahum)** 218

Two Documents. . . . . By Y. Meiseles (Y. Kessel) 220
Document A. 222
Document B. 223

In Memory of Dr. Joseph Mandel ה"יד. . . . . By H. Graff 227

Prominent Zionist Activists in the City. . . . . By Moshe Ka"Tz ז"ל 228
R' Abraham'cheh Hoffenbratel ע"ה. 228
Ben-Zion Ginsberg ה"יד. 229
R' Leibusz Weber ה"יד. 230

Two of My Friends. . . . . By Yaakov Baumwohl-Yuval ז"ל 232
Ben-Zion Ginsberg ה"יד. 232
R' Abraham Hoffenbratel. 232

The Zionist Edel Family. . . . . By Chaim Rathaus 233

Memories of What Once Was. . . . . By Zvi (Hersch) Haberman 234
1. Zionists. 234
2. Scholars and Just Ordinarily Admirable Jews. 236
3. *Melamdim*. 237

Memories of What Was Then. . . . . By Yitzhak Daks 240

Personalities – Institutions. . . . . By Dr. Nachman Blumenthal 250
A Cooperative Bank in Rawa. 250
The Baron Hirsch School. 253

An Unsuccessful Attempt to Organize a School. . . . . By Moshe Weiss 256

From the Hebrew Movement in Rawa-Ruska. . . . . By A. Avneri (Hafner) 257

Memories from Days Gone By. . . . . By Penina Barrer-Suslik 259

Jewish Theater-Life in Rawa –Ruska. . . . . By Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld 261

About the Craftsmen in Town. . . . . By Lia Dror-Altman 265

To the Memory of Friends. . . . . By Prof. Z. Lieberman 269

My Teacher and Rebbe. . . . . By Z. Lieberman 271

Memories of Youth..... **By Yaakov Metzger-Magierow** 272
Magierow..... 272
Potelycz..... 273
Rawa-Ruska..... 274
'There Is No Austria'..... 276
War Among the Poles and Ukrainians..... 277
Work in Rawa..... 279
The Youth of Rawa..... 280
The Drive to Pursue Knowledge and Understanding..... 281
The Second World War..... 282

Strivings..... **By Ben Zion Friedman** 282
The Situation of the Jews in Rawa..... 283
Rawa Curiosities..... 284
A Blood Libel Almost Committed in Rawa..... 285
The Houses of Study..... 285
Benefactors..... **By Zvi Aryeh Fendrich** 287

The Polish Government Recognized A Belz Hasid . **By Yekhiel Kessel** 289

Yaakov Shlomo Gold ז"ל..... **By Simcha Donner** 291

A Part of His Correspondence..... **By Asher Rubin** ז"ל 292
A Large Rabbinical Wedding in Rawa Ruska..... 292
The Passing and Funeral of the *Rebbe* of Magierow..... 294

Chaim Becker ז"ל..... **By Lipa Dror-Altman** 294

The Baker of Narol..... **By Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer** 295

A Few Memories..... **By Shmuel Gottleib** 297

A Batch of Memories from My Home..... **By Leibusz Gertel-Wolf** 300

Days of 20 Tammuz in Rawa-Ruska..... **By Yaakov Baumwohl-Yuval** ז"ל 301

The First Organization of Proletarian Youth. **By Zvi Netzer (Siebzehner)** 302

The Historic 14 Elections..... **By M. Y. Steinfeld** 303

My Training for Aliyah ..... **By Eliezer Rekhes** 305

From Back Then..... **By Joseph Frenkel-Auerbach** 306

Jewish Merchants Against Hitler's Germany... **By Moshe Gruber-Axler** 307

Regarding My City That Was Destroyed ..... **By Rivka Fink (Tauber)** 308

Belzec and Rawa-Ruska ..... **By Naphtali Donner ז"ל** 309

Guests at the Wedding of the Duke Sapieha ..... **By Chana Tisser ז"ל** 313

End of the 19th Century to the 20th ... **By Boruch Hammerschmidt (Kesler)** 315
The Miniature *Kristallnacht* 315

The Region
הסביבה
די אומגעגנט

Jews in Belzec ..... **By Chaim Rathaus** 318
Jewish Occupations 319
Belzec Becomes A Pillar of Shame 320

A Memory of My Shtetl Magierow ..... **By Zvi Langnauer** 321
An Overview of My *Shtetl* 322
The *Bet-HaMedrash* 322
The Seven Good People of the City: 323

Magierow ..... **By Ephraim Schreiber** 325
The Jews of Magierow Become Proletarians 327
The Baron Hirsch School 329
A *Rebbe* - style Wedding 330
The Outbreak of the First World War 331
After the First World War 333
The Second World War 334

Kamionka Wołoska ..... **By David Halpern** 336

There Was a City Called Rawa ..... **By Max Halpern** 337

The Holocaust
השואה
דער אומקום

In the Days of Judgment ..... **By Melech Ravitch** 342

Rawa-Ruska & Belzec: The Extermination Camps .... **By Eliezer Unger** 344

I Remember You, Rawa Ruska! ..... **By Bluma Rubin-Schwert** 347

What I Lived Through ..... **By Yehoshua Wolfuss ז"ל** 348
The *Judenrat* 351

In This Manner, Jewish Rawa Was Brought Down ..... **By A. Klag** 371
The World War of 1939 371
Jewish Rawa-Ruska 372
The Eve of the March of the Germans into Rawa-Ruska 372
The Germans Are Already Here in the City 372
The First Decrees from the New Rulers 373
Again, Back to the Old 374
The Death of the Just Among the Rawa Jews 374

The End of My City, Rawa ..... **By Chaim Szpacer** 379
The Locked Ghetto 384
The Road to Death 386
Kamienka - Quarantine 387
Rata-Camp 388
In A Bunker in Hiiche 389
An Interesting Surprise in the Gehenna-Life 389
In the Forest 390
In a Pit in the Forest 391

Memories for the Coming Generations ..... **By Dan Berger** 395
The Outbreak of the War 395
The Soviet-German War 399

Rawa, You Little Shtetl of Mine! ..... **By Yekhl Meiseles** 411

The Janowski-Lager in Lemberg ..... **By Katriel Rosen** 414

From the Memories of Eva Kleiner-Lev ..... **By Meir Levin** 416

The Jews of My City That Were Cut Down... By Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer 445

Hanukkah in the Ghetto..... By A. Klag 449

Among the Partisans..... By Alexander-Shmuel Sztorkh 450

An Excerpt from My Diary..... By Wolf Sambal 463

What My Daughter and I Lived Through..... By Ben Zion Friedman 467

From the Book, 'Kiddush HaShem'..... By Rabbi Shimon Huberband 473

The House of Bogen..... By Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer 475

The Eye-Witness Account of a Non-Jew..... By Franciszek Woloch 477

The Eternal Poem..... By Wolf Sambal 483

I Was Rescued from a Grave Pit..... By Moni Grauer 483

In Holland on the Eve of the Extermination ..... By Itch'i Just 487
My Sister Tells:..... 489

Memories..... By Melech Tziness 490

In the Struggle for Life..... By Yekhl Meiseles 493
New Times..... 493
Vienna..... 495
Antwerp..... 498

From the Events of the War..... By Tova Baumel-Haberman 514
My Family..... 515

The One Remaining Alive..... By Nathan Zimmerman 516

Rawa Young Men in the Russian Army in the Year 1941 By Israel Satz 518

How I Saved Myself..... By Ruth Haskell 520

The Onset of the War..... By W. Wagner 522

1939 – The First German Occupation..... By Ada Weichselbaum 523
1941 – The Second German Arrival and the Extermination..... 525
To the Pillar of Shame – The Principal Criminals and Murderers in Our City..... 527

Rawa-Ruska Under the Nazi Conquest..... By Yitzhak-Kurt Levin 527

Rawa Ruska As an Extermination - Undertaking . . **By Yekhl Meiseles** 539
The Triangle of Degradation and Death 541

The House of My Father . . . . . **By Lipa ben Pesach Altman** 545

Regarding My Dear Parents . . . . . **By Tzila Rosenblatt-Altman** 548

My Parents of Blessed Memory . . . . . **By Naomi Issachar-Guzhik** 549

The Daks Family . . . . . **By Itcheh Daks** 550

The House of Zauerbrun . . . . . **By Bluma Zauerbrun-Lockman** 552

The First to Make Aliyah from Rawa-Ruska . . . . . **By Asher Hahn** 554

The Home of My Family . . . . . **By Zippora Weinreb-Mann** 557

My Family . . . . . **By Yehuda Mund** 557

The Home of My Family . . . . . **By Yekhiel Meiseles (Yekhl Kessel)** 559

A Hymn to the House of My Father . . . . . **By Jaffa Eichenbaum** 561
My Family 562
My Relatives and Friends 564

My Father's House . . . . . **By Tova Fischler-Reinhertz** 566

The Home of My Parents . . . . . **By Yeshayahu Korman-Degani** 567

My Father's House . . . . . **By Leah Rosensweig-Kramer** 568

The Redlich Family . . . . . **By Joseph Redlich** ז"ל 569

The Rosenfeld Family . . . . . **By Naphtali Rosenfeld** 570

My Life During the Nazi Conquest . . . . . **By Batya Szibak-Reiss** 571
The Home of My Parents 573

The Story of One Family . . . . . **By Chana Cohen** 574

My Family . . . . . **By Chava Schuman** 578

Memories and Realities . . . . . **By Hella Schipper-Lev** 581

My Home . . . . . **By Bluma Rubin-Schwert** 584

R' Abraham Mordechai Ringel ז"ל ..... **By Rabbi Nathan Urtner** 605

About Our Friend and Comrade Moti Ringel ז"ל ..... **By Gimpel** 606

Regarding Mordechai Ringel ז"ל ..... **By Bluma Rubin-Schwert** 607

Necrology

The Names of the Sanctified Ones and Martyrs 614

The Diaspora

תפוצות

די יידישע צעשפריימונג

What Rawa Ruska Once Was ..... **By Leib Lev** 650

Landsleit in Canada ..... **By G. Just** 652

The New Home ..... **By Eliyahu-Zelig Altner** 652

My Memories of Rawa in the Year 1906 ..... **By Shmuel (Sam) Essig** 653

The Men of the B'nai Levi-Yitzhak Society ..... **By Shmuel (Sam) Essig** 656

The Society in New York ..... **By Chaim Rathaus** 657

The Jews of Rawa in Uruguay ..... **By Itcheh Erdman** 660

Irgun Yotz'ei Rawa-Ruska & Vicinity ..... **By Gimpel Just** 661

The Bulletins. 662

Efforts of Memorialization. 662

Our Members in the Diaspora. 664

We the Last ..... **By Y. Meiseles (Yekhl Kessel)** 665

Index of Illustrations 666

Translator's Foreword & Acknowledgments

This is my fourteenth endeavor to translate a *Yizkor Book* into English. Like almost all of my previous efforts, this one has proceeded largely on my own initiative, driven by a personal imperative to bring Yiddish and Hebrew books of this kind across the language barrier, so that future generations of English speakers will have access to these works. But the choice of this book involves an interesting personal story.

In the extended course of my dialogue with many people – but especially the classmates of my youth – I came to make the acquaintance of Sheila Rosenfeld Zucker, who attended Yeshivah of Flatbush High School, as I did, but came four years after me. In the development of our newly discovered connection, she made mention of her roots in Rawa Ruska, and the existence of a *Yizkor* Book that had been written about it. While I was preoccupied with prior projects, this item was relegated to the periphery, pending completion of those projects. Then another piece of serendipity occurred: Sheila disclosed to me that her younger sister, Karen Rosenfeld Roekard – also a Yeshivah of Flatbush alumna – resided in Berkeley, California. Well – in view of the extended relationships I have in the Bay Area, because my son David lives in San Mateo, my interest in the Rawa Ruska *Yizkor* Book was heightened . Thus, it did not take long after the completion of my previous projects to undertake the translation of the Rawa Ruska *Yizkor* Book!

The town of Rawa Ruska traces its history to medieval times, but its presence becomes more crystallized towards the end of the 1600's. Like many small towns and villages of that area, it is not useful to speak of the country in which it found itself. The answer to this question depends on the period of time in question, and is a function of the highly fluid nature of borders. At times, Rawa Ruska was part of Eastern Galicia, a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It also found itself to be part of Poland, and today is in the Ukraine, snuggled against the Polish-Ukrainian border. In many ways the Jewish experience in Rawa Ruska is both prototypical, and emblematic, of the experience of all Eastern European Jewry. For anyone who has familiarity with the structure, and the way of life of an Eastern European Jewish community, leafing through the ***Rawa Ruska Memorial Book*** will bring the warmth of familiarity and the recognition of *déja-vu*. Rawa Ruska is no more – and no less – a member of the constellation of over 6,500 Jewish settlements in Eastern Europe, so cruelly exterminated in what must be considered the single most calamitous breakdown in human civilization.

Hasidism succeeded in also putting down roots in Rawa-Ruska, and the entire city fell under the influence of the Belz courtyard, and the dynasty of the Rabbis of the Rokeach family. Belz is a scant 25 miles from Rawa Ruska. The few sparks of enlightenment in Rawa – had virtually no influence among the populace of the city, though its youth were being drawn in many directions during the decade of the 1930's and we can only wonder about how the population would have evolved had there been no Holocaust.

While again, it is true that the tragic outcome of the recounting of this city's history is known in advance, the record is enriched by the endeavor of these writers to tell this tale from their own unique perspective. This is especially true, by virtue of the proximity of Rawa Ruska to the death camp at Belzec, and the intimate contact its residents had with the gruesome details of the Nazis' Final Solution. As an important railroad entrepôt, Rawa Ruska was the last rail stop before reaching that death camp, thus a site of many 'jumpers,' people who attempted to save themselves by jumping off the death trains.

Rawa Ruska will be remembered in the historical record for yet another reason: ***Father Patrick DesBois'*** monumental work in what has become known as '***The Holocaust by Bullets***,' began in this town, the sight of German Stalag 325 where his grandfather had been imprisoned as a French Catholic prisoner of war during WW II. His efforts, supported by the Jewish-born French Cardinal of Paris, Jean-Marie Lustiger ז"ל, have

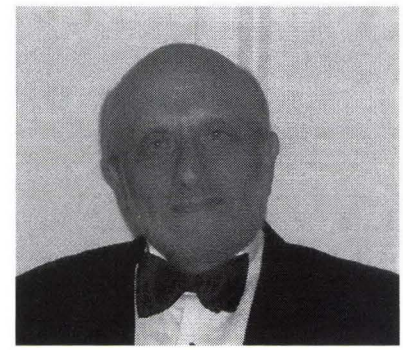
added a whole new area of knowledge to the study of the Holocaust: the slaughter of entire Jewish populations of towns all over Eastern Europe by being shot to death, and then cast into pits that they often had to dig for themselves. His work has three main components: (1) compiling video testimonies from Christians who were child witnesses to the shooting/pit burial murder of a town's Jews; (2) geo-tagging the death pits into which their bodies were cast, often buried while still alive; and (3) collecting bullet casings and other evidence at these death sites. He continues this work, begun in Rawa Ruska, all over Eastern Europe. Father Desbois is motivated by a compulsion to locate all the death sites before the witnesses have died, to 'bring proof of these assassinations to the world,' and to assure that history does not die with the witnesses. If not for his work in Rawa Ruska, this might never have happened.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the very fine support that I receive from certain key people who helped me to assure the highest level of integrity and accuracy in my translation work. I am indebted to Tomasz Panczyk in Poland, and Leon Szyfer of Toronto, Canada, for their assistance in assuring that my rendition of Polish names and places, transliterated from Yiddish into English, were done correctly. Leon deserves an extra vote of thanks for clarifying Russian usage, and for rendering such Russian in Cyrillic script, on my behalf. To Leon, I must now add my newly-discovered cousin, Vera Safroshkina Vodwood, now living in Haifa, Israel. It will be three years this fall that a most amazing discovery emerged for the Freidin Family whose roots are in Zelva (Belarus). It came to light that a branch of our family, then in the Soviet Union, had not been wiped out during the Second World War, but many survived to propagate a third and fourth generation. Vera is one of these, who spent many years teaching ESL in Guandong China, and recently made *aliyah* to Israel.

A special vote of thanks goes to my classmate, Sam (Shmuel) Blumert of Jerusalem, Israel, for his insight into some esoteric Hebrew. Sam was also kind enough to guide me to some useful online sources, where I could research such esoterica, without being a needless burden to others. As many of you know, the transliteration of names from Yiddish, rendered in the Hebrew alphabet, into English, in the Latin alphabet, is fraught with ambiguity that can be vexing. Karen Rosenfeld Roekard deserves a special thank you for specifying an 'appropriate' transliteration, based on her familiarity with the names of the townspeople, through her town-wide digital and computational research. We disagreed at times, and the final responsibility for the choice made is mine alone. I also want to thank her for her 'light' edit of my writing and translation and for her invaluable efforts to promote interest in the book among her Rawa Ruska *landsleit.*

I want to recognize the work of Tomasz Pado, who scanned in all the images, from the original *Yizkor Book*. This is now the third time that the text in one of my works has been enriched by pictures. I note, with considerable satisfaction, the facilitation by Philip ("Fishl") Kutner, who intermediated with Tomasz on my behalf. These gentlemen are part of my "Bay Area connection," and I am delighted to cite their support and contribution to this most significant undertaking.

WINTER 2017 *Jacob Solomon Berger*



Foreword

One of the Jewish communities in Eastern Galicia – today the Western Ukraine in the Soviet Union – which was founded approximately in the middle of the 15th century, was our city of Rawa-Ruska. Jewish life was prominent overall, because Jews were the majority in the city. They were seen to construct a multi-branched network of religious and general institutions, and to develop an energetic level of activity in social, spiritual, cultural and educational areas. Noteworthy was the fact that a younger generation was raised with ideals, that produced talented and committed public servants, and prominent people.

With the great stresses that we encountered, it did become possible for us to gather the material for this book – from those who find themselves in *The Land*[1], and outside of it. In only a small measure, here the many-faceted life of our communities are portrayed, and here, a more or less complete assessment is given of our spiritual and community personalities, and here we place a memorial in place of all the unknown graves of our sacred martyrs of the Holocaust, and it is here, with this sacred monument, that we eternalize their memory, and the memory of our community that was cut down.

This '*Yizkor* Book,' is also dedicated to all the communities of the surrounding vicinity, who in the normal course of events, were in ongoing contact [with us] and in no small measure, influenced by the Rawa community.

The book appears in two languages – Hebrew and Yiddish – in those languages, that the compilers wrote, and only the writing is other [sic: alien] tongues were translated.

Despite all of the strenuous efforts that we invested in publishing this book, and despite the long time it took to get the book ready – we did not achieve the creation of a fundamental portrait, which would precisely mirror the Jewish life in Rawa, and its vicinity, because we were unable to obtain the requisite details for a variety of reasons.

Already after the first of the memorial meetings that we observed each year, those who were gathered took an oath, to place a memorial for the unknown graves of our martyrs. A decision was taken, and carried out precisely – to plant a small forest in the name of our communities in the 'Forest of the Martyrs,' and to erect a memorial tablet in the Holocaust Cellar on Mount Zion. Others proposed that we produce a *Yizkor* Book. Every time, new book committees were selected. But it did not lead to an implementation.

Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Berger ל"ז, who was strongly in favor of this, began to do something, came to the Yiddish-Historical Institute in Warsaw; however, sadly, to our great disappointment, he passed away in the midst of this early phase of the work. This same misfortune also struck our very well-educated comrade Yankl Baumwohl ל"ז, who also reacted in a very active manner to the idea of producing a Yizkor book, who wrote a great deal for the book, from which writing, we print only a few selected articles. His wish was to see the book completed, but regrettably, he did not live to see this.

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[1] A common shortening of The Land of Israel in Hebrew. Hebrew speakers and writers use '*Haaretz*' as an abbreviation, in which the 'Land of Israel' is understood.

Our comrade, Gimpel Just invested a great deal of energetic work and initiative in the gathering of the larger part of the material, which laid the foundation for the book, with which he was greatly helped by our former secretary, our comrade Tzvi Kremerman.

Also, our comrade Hertz Graff, who saved himself from extermination, was one of the first of the comrades, who with his fiery ardor, very much wanted to help in this sacred undertaking, after abandoning his activities, at the last, helped out a great deal with arranging the engravings for the pictures. In the process of translating from other languages to Yiddish, we were greatly helped by our comrade, Yekhl[2] Meiseles-Kessel.

It is also appropriate to highlight the assistance of our Chairman and Treasurer, comrade M. Y. Steinfeld, and the comrades Regina and Moni Grauer.

There were many difficulties and stresses along the way to bring the idea of a book like this into reality.

Year went by; nothing was done about the book.

My opinion was, that if there were to be found a couple of people 'crazy for this idea,' it would be possible to think about writing and producing a *Yizkor* Book. From just talking about it we saw – that nothing was getting done.

In talking about this with our fellow member of the household, best friend and soul mate, Mordechai Ringelז"ר, he suddenly responded: 'if you are agreeable to engage in this undertaking, I am prepared to support you with the maximum effort and help – until we vanquish this task.' And now I am able to admit that both of us had no concept, how much work, effort and exhaustion such an undertaking demands.

Mordechai Ringel ז"ר, a formidable scholar, seriously committed himself to this sacred undertaking without any peripheral distractions, and he was true to his word. With his fiery-*Hasidic* ardor, he put one brick on top of another, and with all his energy, helped to build the [edifice of the] book. I can explicitly designate him as the 'Builder and Architect' of the book, that we can see from his writing and the book's appearance. We mourn his premature passing with great pain, and that he did not have the privilege of deriving pleasure from the fruits of his labor, and we can only say: Woe that we have laid a precious person in the ground!

In a like manner, we wish to express our deep sorrow for all those, who were engaged in this sacred undertaking. And unfortunately, did not live to see the holy memorial completed.

As can be seen, a great deal of extraordinary effort was invested in the publication of this *Yizkor* Book, both in the redaction of all of the writing, as well as in the technical-organizational work.

May all those who felt it was their obligation to write for the book be blessed; [as well as] all those who were in the vanguard and in the various committees of our organization, and also the comrades of today's leadership, who are active to this day, in *The Land* and outside of it, and especially the Rawa 'Society' in

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[2] Throughout this book, the reader will encounter the use of the more contemporary 'kh' for the Hebrew/Yiddish guttural, rather than the traditional 'ch.'

New York; all those who bore the yoke of providing assistance, and last-but-not-least, all of those who will immerse themselves in reading everything that the book has to tell:

How the heart is pained for the murdered Jewish little children, torn out of their mothers' arms, from their mothers' breasts – and murdered;

How blood runs from the heart over your annihilated home, your family nest, father, mother, sisters, brothers, children and friends.

How the heart aches for all the Rawa martyrs, all the scholars and sages, men of integrity, and ordinary people, for all those lives cut down, for all those souls lost through torture, in the greatest calamity of our history.

This book tells coming generations about our decent community, its life, it coming into existence, and its extermination.

May their memory be for a blessing!

Joseph Hersh Rubin

Tel-Aviv 5 Heshvan, 5733
October 31, 1973



Dear Landsleit!

Gimpel Just

Today, thirty years after the tragic annihilation of millions of Jews – among them Jewish Rawa-Ruska and its environs – today, with the publication of the *Yizkor* Book, a spark is lit that will illuminate the long labyrinth, and we, all of us, and later generations, will have to learn and understand what once was, and to assess the resilience and strength of those cut down – to their last draw breath. The candles, that warmed Jewish communities for generations, and strengthened them to the bitter end – were extinguished.

For twenty years, we gathered one seed at a time, in order to be able to memorialize Jewish Rawa-Ruska in a wider ambit, and to erect a permanent monument to our dearest. While the book is not comprehensive, we nevertheless hope that, in the larger measure, it also contains the right quality, and everyone will be able to find in it what appeals to the heart.

We shed a bitter tear for our dearest, who at different times, assisted in dreaming about, and creating the *Yizkor* Book.

We express our gratitude to all, who helped us out, and especially those who helped with financial costs, which assured the publication of this *Yizkor* Book. May they all be blessed.

5 Iyyar, 5733 – 7 May 1973
On the holiday of the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel. It's half-Jubilee

Rawa-Ruska

ראווה-רוסקה

To the History of the Jews in Rawa-Ruska

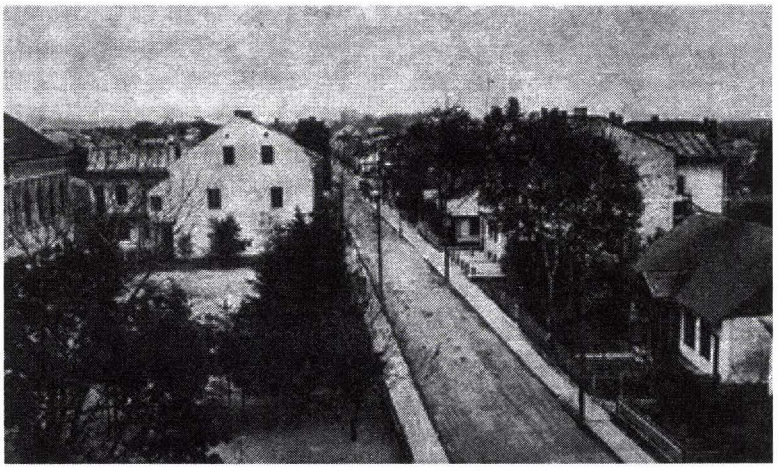
לתולדות היהודים בראווה-רוסקה

צו דער געשיכטע פון יידן
אין ראווא-רוסקא

Rawa-Ruska and Its Environs

By Dr. Nachman Blumenthal

Historical Overview



Page 11: A General View of the City

In the first Polish General Encyclopedia, which was published in Warsaw in 1865-1870 by Shmuel Orgelbrand, we find the position of Rawa Ruska given as follows: 'A *shtetl* in the one-time Voievode of Belz (during the time of Poland's independence), today Galicia, alongside the river Rata, 25 km. from ¯o³kiew[3], to whose ambit it belongs. The city is known by the fact that it was here that the Polish monarch August II, who was simultaneously the king of Saxony, on 10.8.1698, met with Czar Peter I, who was returning at that time from Vienna to Russia. For three days, both kings entertained themselves with feasts and merriment, and thereby, agreed together to join forces in order to wage war against Sweden.'

During the festivities, the Polish king (who was a very strong man, and thereby acquired the sobriquet '*Mocny*[4]') distinguished himself by taking a sword and in one blow, decapitating a rather large billy goat. It is from this moment on that the city appears in history.

Documents concerning the establishment of the settlement are missing, but only that a city already existed since the year 1455; it was founded by Wladyslaw, the Prince of Belz; and the name of the city originates from Rawa Mazowiecki, which had previously belonged to Prince Wladyslaw, and in memory of it (the name Rawa) was preserved in a new location, Rus, and from this emerged the name Rawa Ruska.

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3 Called Zhovka in Ukrainian, and Zholkva by Jews in Yiddish.

4 Augustus' great physical strength earned him the nicknames 'the Strong', 'the Saxon Hercules' and 'Iron-Hand.' He liked to show that he lived up to his name by breaking horseshoes with his bare hands and engaging in fox tossing by holding the end of his sling with just one finger while two of the strongest men in his court held the other end.

The city is also known for a second set of meetings that brought people together which took place in January 1716. In this case, it involved the conclusion of a peace between both sides, the king's hangers-on, and his military forces (both Poles and Saxons) and his opponents, who had organized a confederation in Tarnogrod, and wanted to drive out the Saxon military troops. In this coming together, from the king's side, the Field Marshal Flemming[5] took part, and Galf (both Saxons); from the second side – the head of two Polish Voievodes. The great Polish Hetman, Adam Sieniawski came here, as a representative of the king. On the 18th of January, the undertaking was concluded with an agreement. The Saxon military had to retreat, acquiring the provenance of the way to return to Saxony, along with a specific payoff from each house.[6]

It is appropriate to recall the census of Jews from the time that Poland was independent, given what has happened in the last years of the existence of the country. The census was carried out in order to establish the 'head tax' that had to be paid on an annual basis for Jews – older than one year – into the royal treasury. The census took place in 1764/5. At that time, Rawa belonged to the Belz Voievode, and in its periphery (the city and its environs), at that time, there were to be found 1,050 Jewish 'heads.' And if we add to this the number of breast-fed children (up to one year of age), the number of these 'omitted' – increases the number by 20% – according to Prof. Mahler, it would then come out that at the end of the 18th century, before Rawa Ruska went over to Austria-Hungary, (in the year 1772), there were about 1,300 Jews there. This is the first, more or less, correct information about the number of Jews of the city of Rawa, that we have. Relative to those times – a sufficiently large number.

The division of the populace is interesting, which is presented in the Polish 'Geographic Word Book' for the year 1880, where it is stated:

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[5] Jakob Heinrich von Flemming (March 3, 1667 – April 30, 1728) was a Saxon count, military officer and politician. He was born in Hoff, Prussian Province of Pomerania to a noble family. He completed his law studies in 1688, after which he entered service with Brandenburg. He attained the rank of general in 1705 and Generalfeldmarschall in 1711.

[6] These are events from the Great Northern War, that culminated in Peter the Great defeating Charles XII of Sweden, and laying a foundation for Russian dominance in Eastern Europe.

The nobles, spurred by Russian promises of support, formed the Tarnogród Confederation on 26 November 1715. The Confederation's marshal was Stanis³aw Ledóchowski.[9] The Tarnogród Confederation was only the last and most notable of several confederations formed against Augustus at that time.[10] The Confederates were supported by most of the Commonwealth's own army.[3] Great Crown and Great Lithuanian Hetmans, Adam Miko³aj Sieniawski and Ludwik Konstanty Pociej, respectively, did not join the Confederation, but neither did they help the king.

The Russians entered the country, but did not participate in any major engagements, and in fact they bid their time, as Peter posed as the conciliator between the Commonwealth king and the *szlachta*. Crucially, the Russians did not support the Confederates as promised, and instead insisted on bringing both sides to the negotiating table. The civil war lasted for a year; and the outcome hung in the balance. Saxon forces under command of Jacob Heinrich von Flemming enjoyed military superiority, and advanced south-eastwards, taking Zamoœ (this victory was however accomplished less through military tactics than through diplomacy and a treachery). In January, negotiations in Rawa Ruska led to a temporary cease fire, but it did not hold, particularly as the Russians encouraged the Confederates to be more aggressive.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarnogr%C3%B3d_Confederation

Poles	3,624
Ruthenians "Rusinen"	742
Germans	2,181
Other Nationalities	29
Total	6,576

Where did so many Germans suddenly find themselves in the city? The answer is that under "Germans" they counted the...Jews. This was done through the German-Austrian administration knowingly. According to the documentation of the census commissioners, it was forbidden to give the native tongue as Hebrew or Yiddish. Therefore, Jews, in accordance with their language – Jews – were counted as Germans, whether they were asked about it or not. This was done according to the monarchy and its German government.

Other than that, it appears – according to that same source – one sees a statistic, when one considers the faith of the populace. According to this criterion, the census of Rawa Ruska in the year 1880 comes out as:

Roman Catholic (Identified with Polish Nationality)	1,592
Greek-Catholic (Ukrainian)	1,087
'Israelite' (Jews)	3,905
Total	6,584

The number, 3,905 has to be the number of Jews in the city for that time. This is because – one must assume – that all the Jews of the time felt themselves to be religious Jews. At that time, there was not yet any assimilation, freethinkers, and converts. And if there were, they were solitary individuals, not more. For us, here, we are interested in the general numbers.

The number of 'Israelites' – Jews by their faith – is significantly larger than the total of 'Germans' (who speak German) by a total of 1,724 people. This needs to be interpreted by noting that, out of good will, a number of Jews felt it inappropriate to self-identify as Germans in opposition to the Polish citizenry, or perhaps, they indeed did utilize the Polish language among themselves at home (certainly a rather small percentage). They more quickly would indicate Polish than German! These will be enlightened assimilated people, or people generally straying from the path, or it was involved with partaking in a political demonstration against the Austrian administration, and on behalf of Poland's freedom.

A remark is to be made about the number of residents for the year 1880 (the same can be said as well for the remaining census figures about the counting of ethnic groups, that come to us from the time of the Austrian administration). It is different in another source, being 6,468 – and yet another source gives it at 6,584. The difference arises from whether or not, the residents of the noble's 'courtyard' are counted, that is, the owner of the city, or does one have to take into account these 'land-squatters' (as they were called by

us in Galicia) and his tenants (on the *folwark*[7]), that parcel was called by the colloquial (Polish) name of 'The Courtyard,' namely, up until the outbreak of the First World War, it was a separate administrative entity. It was first in independent Poland, that this was cashiered. The courtyard was appended to the general province.

We will now take the entire *Powiat* into consideration, to which, during Austrian times, the following towns belonged: Lubyca Królewska[8], Magierow[9] Potelycz, Nyvy, Nemierow [10]. We will give the number of Jews in these towns before the year 1900, and their percentage among the general number of residents:

Town	Total Population	Jewish Population	Percent Jewish
Lubyca Królewska	938	821	87.5
Magierow	3,158	1,322	41.9
Nemierow	2,966	1,725	58.1
Potelycz	3,261	335	10.3
Nyvy	4,487	2,140	47.7

The largest percentage of Jews was in the shtetl of Lubyca: 87.5%: The smallest Potelycz – 10.3%

In that same year, there were 67 towns in the *Powiat*, in which there resided 3,606 Jews, 17.1% of all the Jews, which lived in the Rawa Ruska *Powiat in* 1900: 82.9% of the Jews lived in these towns. There were no villages, in general, that had no Jews.

According to the population census, which was taken every ten years, first in Austria-Hungary, and then afterwards (in the years 1921, 1931) in independent Poland, we obtain the following numbers for the city of Rawa:

Year	Total Population	Jewish Population	Percent Jewish
1880	1,468[11]	3,878	59.9

7 Polish for the word 'farm.'

8 Today in Poland.

9 Magierow, is the Yiddish rendition (pronounced Magierov). On contemporary Ukrainian maps, it appears as Maheriv.

10 This is the rendition in Yiddish. On contemporary Ukrainian maps, it appears as 'Nemyriv.'

11 This number appears to be misprinted. To conform to the percentage shown, it would have to be 6468.

1890	7,475	4,406	58.9
1900	8,927	5,098	57.1
1910	10,775	6,112	56.7
1921	8,970	5,048	56.3
1931	11,146	5,658	50.77
1939	-	7,120	-

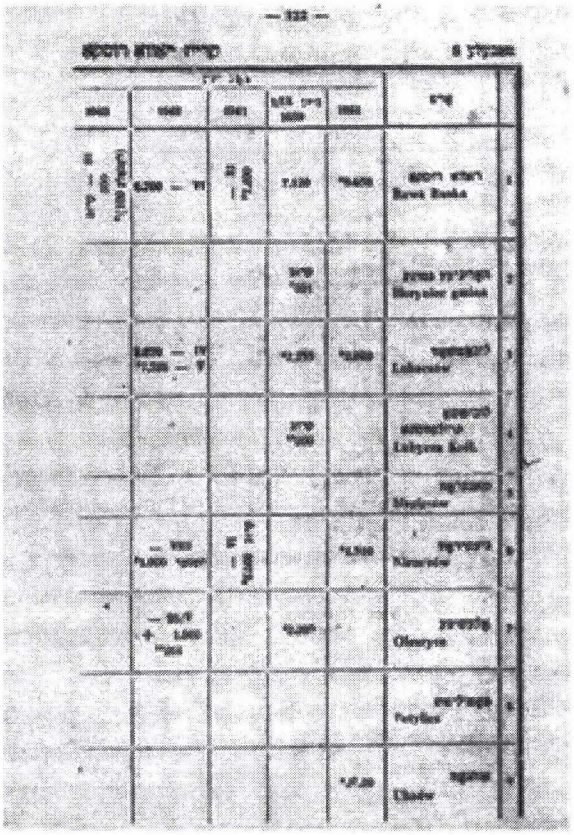
We see from these numbers, that before the First World War (which broke out in 1914), the population of the city grows: In the course of 30 years, the growth was 4,307 people, meaning 60%. During that same time, the Jewish settlement grows by 2,234 people or 63.5%. Alongside the growth of the non-Jewish population, the Jewish population grows proportionately, being different over these thirty years by 3.2%.

A breakdown of the 1921 census gives us, by contrast, a normal, natural growth of a population, a diminution and that with 1,805 souls. Of this number, 1,064 are Jews, at 58%, non-Jews 74.4%. The world war was the cause of this, with people leaving the city. Part of them fell at the fronts, part died as a result of epidemics that broke out during the war years, and part emigrated to the west (Vienna, Czechoslovakia, Hungary); Jews did so in a larger measure than non-Jews.

The second census that took place under the aegis of independent Poland, in December 1931, reveals already a growth in the population, in general to the extent of 2,176 souls, and 610 (27%) among Jews. Jews are leaving the city (emigration). Their natural growth is smaller. By contrast, non-Jews come to the city from the province. In comparison to the non-Jewish part of the population, the percentage of Jews, therefore, falls.

We will take a look, then, how the situation changed after the first census under independent Poland, December 1921, throughout the entire *Powiat*.

The number of residents in all of the villages in the *Powiat* at that time came to 106,607; of which Jews were – 13,161, giving us 12.3%, which in the year 1910 was 16,711 (14.5%), meaning that the percentage of Jews fell significantly. This was a result of the war.



Page 14: Statistical Table Showing Population Data for Rawa Ruska

What is true, however, is that one cannot equate the boundaries of the Powiat in both of these times, because the

Polish administration implemented changes. New tracts were appended to the Rawa *Powiat*; others were cut away. The intent was to obscure the prior boundaries within the ambit of Congress Poland, which before the war had belonged to Russia and Galicia that was part of Austria-Hungary. This division, which recalled Poland's downfall, had to be eradicated.

It was for this reason, that the small *shtetl* of Belzec was allocated to the Rawa *Powiat*, which prior to this had belonged to Congress Poland, and afterwards, in the Second World War, became so notorious as the first death camp in the General Government. In accordance with this enumeration, the total count of village entities in the Powiat came to 68, of which 3 (small villages) there was not a single Jew. And 8 – over 100 Jews, in each one of those settlements.

Ten years later, in 1931, there were three cities in the *Powiat*: Rawa-Ruska with 11,946 residents; Nemierow with 3,016, and Nyvy with 4,212 souls. The rest of the towns and villages, by that time, had fallen to the level of land-community, meaning that a commune had been created in concert with surrounding villages. In this sense, the *Powiat* consisted of 3 cities and 13 land-communities, whose combined population came to 122,000 people (in round numbers), representing approximately a 13% growth as compared with the year 1921, which is practically identical with the natural average growth of the population at that time.

The number of Jews in that time (1931) in the entire *Powiat*, came to 13,381 according to believers in the Mosaic faith; according to their mother tongue – Yiddish/Hebrew – 10,991. In comparison to the figure of the total number of Jews in 1921, the Jewish settlement grew by only 200 people, which is less than 0.2%. This number does not even cover the natural increase during the period that it needed to make up the 10% for the entire 10 years. In other words, we have to deal here with emigration of Jews from this ambit. Whoever relocated to other (larger) cities in Poland proper, and whoever left Poland and went off to America, the Land of Israel, or some other place, this had an impact on the diminution of the natural growth of the Jews themselves.

We have to stop here, to deal with the difference in the census of 1931 between the number of 'Believing Jews' at 13,381, and the number of Jews according to their national language at 10,991: this comes to 2,390 people, at 18% of all Jews. Did we really have this many '*Mashkehs*[12]' in our city, as we called them, or '*Shmendrikehs,*' as they were called in Warsaw, who were ashamed of being Jewish? It is entirely certain that there were Jews, in the city, who because of these, or other reasons (having a government job, being dependent on a Polish employer, being a part of the professional intelligentsia) and the like, would present themselves as Poles, and that they speak Polish at home. But these were isolated individuals. But this certainly was also a result of a 'good' tactic by the census-taker, who on his own, upon entry, recorded the Jews as... Poles (according to language), not even bothering to ask at all. There was no 'nationality' rubric to inquire against, among the questions posed by the census-taker. The Polish administration had an interest in seeing that there should be more Poles in the area, where the majority of the populace was Ukrainian, and so they took genuine Jews, who apparently could not even read, or write Polish, and counted them as Poles. It was not possible to falsify their religion this way. The Jews were zealous in guarding their religious identity. But language? Nobody really paid much attention to it.

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[12] A possible pejorative use of a description of someone who drinks excessively.

Regarding the inaccuracies that occurred in the census-taking, the Jewish community reacted after the fact. Our press wrote about it. The Jewish deputies in the Sejm[13] introduced interpolations. This had about as much effect as cupping a dead person. No new census was taken as a result of this, and consequently, the error was not corrected. The Jews themselves, did not carry out a census on their own, and consequently, we do not know the truth.

We will further pause at the number of Jews on the day of the outbreak of the war 17.120 [14]. This comes not from any census, but simply from a count according to the actions of the directorate of the 'Joint,' in Warsaw. It appears to be slightly overestimated, even if one were to take into account that a large number of Jews, because of the growing anti-Semitism in Poland – from the province (village) moved to the center, Rawa, where there was a Jewish community, a *Starosta* and police. To this day, this total does not lend itself to be corrected. There are no acts, and no eye witnesses from that time – people of the Jewish community, who would be in a position to correct errors. We therefore have to leave this number as is, since we have nothing better to go by.

Ii is also certain, for us, that in this total, the 'Joint' included the Jews from the closest neighborhood (villages), who did not have their own personal representative from the 'Joint,' and in this specific instance relied upon the Rawa Center.

Another important fact:

As is known, on 17 September 1939, the Red Army crossed the Polish-Soviet border, which had been established by the peace treaty, which had been agreed to by Poland and Soviet Russia in Riga in 1921, taking no note of the fact that between Poland and the Soviet Union, normal diplomatic relations reigned until the outbreak of the war, and that both Poland and the Soviet Union were members of the League of Nations. The excuse given by the Russians at the time was that they were going to rescue their 'brethren,' the Ukrainians and White Russians. (This, incidentally was not true, because no one had posed a threat to these peoples).

Today we know, we know that this occurred because of a clandestine agreement that had been concluded between the Hitler-régime and the Stalin-régime.

On 23 August 1939, that is, a week before the outbreak of the war, they divided the territory of Poland between themselves. It is not for nothing that Poles refer to this as the 'Fourth Partition of Poland.' This shameful document has the signatures of Molotov from one side, and from von Ribbentrop on the other side.

In accordance with this partition, our *Powiat* also was cut in two. The largest part was appended to the Soviet Union, and the smaller was taken over by the Germans. The seized territories were euphemistically called 'interest-areas' of Germany and the Soviet Union. Thus Russia absorbed 'without battle,' an area of

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13 The Polish Parliament

14 What this 'date' is, is unclear.

1,114 sq. km with a population of slightly under 100,000 people. It was to them that the previously enumerated cities fell (the only ones in the *Powiat*).

The Germans acquired merely 286 sq. km. with a population of 22,400 souls. In this territory was Belzec, on the border between the two countries, where the Germans immediately created a 'labor camp,' with the sole objective of exterminating those Jews that were to be brought there.

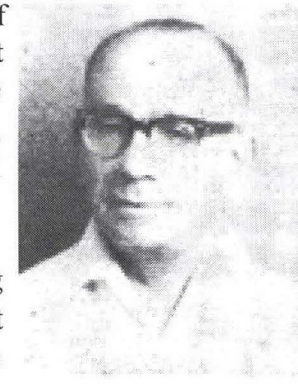
These new boundaries held until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, which broke out on 21 June 1941. The German army quickly moved ahead, and in the first days of the war, seized the entire Rawa-Ruska *Powiat,* which once again had become a center city in the newly established Lemberg[15] district. This situation persisted until the middle of 1944, when the Red Army took control of these areas, which it holds to this day. There were no Jews in this new vicinity. By contrast, according to the Soviet Encyclopedia, there are two middle schools, one taught in the Ukrainian language, the second – with the Russian [language]. As is known, there were no Russians in Rawa-Ruska before the war. And Rawa officially lies in the 'Independent' and 'Free' Ukrainian Soviet Republic, which is part of the Soviet Union.

Little attention is given to the small fact of the tendency of the ruling régime to Russify – 'Sovietize.' This means officially – all nationalities, that have been accorded the privilege within the Soviet Union of enjoying national and socialist freedom.

From the Origins of the Jews of Rawa-Ruska

By Yaakov Baumwohl ז"ל

It is not possible to know precisely when the city was founded, but like most of the towns of Poland, it was founded in the 17th century, and its origins do not differ largely from the other towns and cities: the same tribulations, the same acquisition of privileges, and the same loss of rights as was common those days, that all of the citizenry were given in accordance with the gratuity of the landed aristocracy on whose land the city was built.



Page 16: Yaakov Yuval-Baumwohl ז"ל Passed away 14 Heshvan 5730 14.11.1970

In that era, the Polish nation was internally rent by internecine warfare among competing factions, and on the outside, it was surrounded by enemies, to the point that it appeared that it had reached the end of its days. It is not difficult to imagine what the plight of the Jews was like in a country of this nature.

It is known, that with the establishment of a city in Galicia, the founders endeavored to give it an urbanized cast, and to develop commerce there. For this purpose, the founders invited the Jews to the new cities, and accorded them – against the wishes of the Christian citizenry – privileges that enabled them to develop and sustain themselves in all avenues

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15 This is the Ukrainian city of Lvov, or Lviv.

of life, and all of those initial happenings that occurred for all of the Jews of all of those towns – also happened to the first of the Jews to take up residence in Rawa-Ruska.



Page 17: A Municipal School of the Dominicans for Girls

Rawa stood at a crossroads, that brought it into contact with the cities of Poland and the Ukraine in its area, and its importance grew because of the partition of Poland, the result of which caused Rawa to become a central border location between Habsburg Austria and greater Russia. But with all that, its development remained stunted, due to the national blindness of the ruling government. We do not have all of the supporting evidence at hand that would enable us to illuminate the goings on in the city, in general, nor about the Jews in particular; however, it is possible to establish with certainty, that the growth and development of the city did not match its geographic significance.

Privileges to engage in commerce, and exclusive right to engage in various trades were granted to the first of the Jewish settlers who came to the city. They were permitted to buy and sell a variety of necessities, engaging in retail trade – only in their homes; they were forbidden from engaging in commerce in the market square. They were permitted to engage in commerce all the days of the week, except for the Easter, and the 'Natal' of the Christians, and in the other of their holidays – only after the end of prayers at the church. The Jews were given the right to put up workshops and food establishments serving cheap wines, and hard drink. The Jewish craftsmen had to compete with the Christian craftsmen, because the small-scale work was, at that time, in the hands of the Christians. And it was not only once, that the Christians fell upon the Jewish street, and it was not only once that they spread lies about the Jews before the authorities, in order to inhibit their initiative. The craftsmen included shoemakers, tailors, goldsmiths, butchers, printers, plasterers, moneychangers, musicians, decorators, and bakers.

With the passage of the years, the Jewish population of the city grew, and many synagogues were built, by contrast with the two churches that were exclusively for the Christians on the east side of the city, in which were the builders of the first Jewish community – the prayer houses, the bath house, and the cemetery – and the Jews spread out into all its quarters.

The friction between the Christians and the Jews catalyzed the move to curtail the privileges of the Jews, and it was in this way that they were forbidden to deal in real estate, and their economic commerce was similarly constrained. With the deterioration of the national condition, and the security of the country, additional constraints were imposed, and the situation for the Jews became worse. It became forbidden for Christians to attend Jewish festivities and to eat from their tables. It became forbidden to Jews to transact with Christians, and it was in this way that they were forbidden to bury their dead until after sunset.

The absorption of Galicia into the Habsburg Empire engendered many changes in the life of the Jews. The Austrian administration wanted to transform the Jews to their nature, to new conditions. However the directives that flooded the Jews of Galicia, according to the presentation and effort of the Governor, with the permission of the central authorities in Vienna, instead, created complete chaos. Slowly, but surely, the Austrian government came to understand that it was not possible to institute reforms in the life of the Jews utilizing laws and amendments.

As was the fate of all the Jewish communities in Galicia, so was the fate of the community of Rawa-Ruska: Despite all of the difficulties that befell it, the Jewish population developed – not so much from an economic standpoint as from a numerical standpoint.

The Austrian régime was interested in creating a single national policy towards the Jews, and one of their most important objectives was to discontinue the taverns of the Jews in Galicia, with the objective of forcing the Jews to move on to productive professional endeavor. In 18 districts, only 8 heads of the districts agreed to revoke Jewish tavern licenses; to the good fortune of the Jews of Rawa, the head of their district did not consent to this revocation, because these taverns brought in large sums of revenue to the owners of the land on which these taverns stood.

All of the efforts of the Empress Maria-Theresa did not succeed to bring about any substantial improvement to the economic circumstances of the Jews of Galicia. Accordingly, it will cause no wonder to see that their economic situation during the time of the reign of the Empress, that of Emperor Joseph II, deteriorated to the point that the monarchy sought ways to improve on their situation. Joseph II, who wanted to alleviate the circumstances surrounding the Jewish question, made it possible for Jews to acquire land that they would work for themselves. In the spring of 1786, the first Jewish settlement was established in the village of D¹browa, beside Nowy-S¹cz; after that the settlement of 'New Babylon' was founded in the environs of the city of Bolekhiv, and other small settlements were established, that didn't last for very long. There is no hint of any evidence that any Jews from among the residents of Rawa went to take up this sort of residence, despite the tax relief that was offered. The budget for maintaining these settlers, during the initial period, was assumed by the existing Jewish communities, and it goes without saying that this made the economic burden more difficult for the Jews.

In the final years of the 18th century, the régime prohibited the Jews to live in villages, and to own taverns and whiskey distilleries there. The Jewish communities in Galicia, among them also Rawa-Ruska, requested that the régime revoke this prohibition; however, those authorities deferred considering this request, giving a variety of responses. The economic situation continued to deteriorate, and led to emigration.

A new trouble came to the city, with the requirement to erect public schools for Jewish youth. The community in Rawa-Ruska saw this as a path to religious conversion, God forbid, especially since the initiative seemed to come from the Enlightened Jews, to whom the pious Jews related to as the source of all evil.

An additional trouble was added in 1788, when a decree came out for draft into the military. In general, the progressive Jews accepted this order with enthusiasm, out of an assumption that the military would provide

a path for Jews to achieve an equality of status. However, when the authorities became convinced that the Jews did not want to be conscripted, the Emperor agreed to revoke the order in 1790.

Internal life in Rawa-Ruska was difficult; apart from the leaseholders designated by the authorities, community leaders and other community institutions also left their mark; the privilege of advocacy was given to the wealthiest man on the city, and he did everything in accordance with his own will; they also intensified their pressure on the masses; the opinion of individuals would set everything, including Rabbis, *Dayanim*, and all clergy were chosen and nominated at their hand.

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The period prior to 1848, in the history of the Jews of Galicia, was characterized by the intense struggle between the factions of the religiously rigorous *Hasidim* and the *Maskilim*. The base for the activity of the *Maskilim* in Galicia had two centers: In Brody and Tarnopol. Notwithstanding the intense assault by the *Mitnagdim* and *Maskilim* at the beginning of this period, *Hasidism* began to seize a key position in many communities. It will come as no surprise to know that the leaders of the *Maskilim* fought with literary ammunition, and with appeals to the authorities, and endeavored to rescue Galicia from the courtyards of the *Tzadikim*.

Hasidism succeeded in also putting down roots in Rawa-Ruska, and the entire city fell under the influence of the Belz courtyard, and the dynasty of the Rabbis of the Rokeach family. The few sparks of enlightenment in Rawa – had virtually no influence among the populace of the city.

During this period, the *Maskil*, R' Abraham Goldberg was well-known, and was proclaimed to be an apostate, such that anyone with care for his mortal soul would keep a distance from him. When I was in my grandfather's house, I would hear them tell that he was a Jew like all other Jews; he would don a silk *kapote* on the Sabbath, and wear a *shtrymel* on his head, tying a *gartl* around his waist, and grew sidelocks and a beard. He prayed three times daily. Why was he proclaimed an apostate? – Apparently because he knew German, and read books and newspapers.

When Jews were given permission to acquire land, they bought parcels and built houses. There was a significant number of Jews, who had the means, who bought land in the area, and became property owners; and those who did not have the means, leased these lands from Christian property owners, who instead of working their lands, preferred to receive money, travel out of the country, and there engage in a vicarious life style. And in this way, there were Jews who either owned or leased land in the Rawa environs.

Rawa was renowned for the variety of its craftsmen, especially leather workers and hat makers. Coal was mined in the area, which even though it was not as satisfactory as oil – it was good for manufacturing processes. A stone works factory was established in the city, called a '*steinung*' in the local language. At that time porcelain crockery was not in widespread use, and the previously mentioned stoneware was considered the height of modernity. This factory was established by R' Shammai Baumwohl, who was known by the name 'Shammai *Hrebenner*' from the village of Hrebenne[16] near Rawa, in the decade of the 50's of the 19th

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16 Today in Poland

century. Afterwards, the factory was run by – his son-in-law, R' Asher Luft, and his son, Moshe Baumwohl, who was known by the name Muni'li-Shammai-Hrebenner's. The factory employed Jewish workers and wagon drivers from Rawa, and it was only because of the hard times that came, did it go out of business at the end of the 19th century. For many years, a variety of stoneware goods was to be found in the homes of the Jews of Rawa and its vicinity, that came from this factory, that were of superior quality, appearance, and in the cast of their coloration.

Jews built large granaries in the city, or leased them. There was a well-known factory for cooking oil in Rawa, belonging to R' Hircshel'eh Mund, which every religious Jew throughout Galicia made use of its products. Young Jewish boys, whose parents had the temerity to teach them basket weaving, made a respectable living in this trade from the several workplaces of this nature in the city.

Commerce in the city was entirely in Jewish hands. Because of its proximity to the Russian border of that time, and because of the surrounding agricultural activity, Rawa became an important source for eggs to be sold, and many families made a living from this. Cellars were constructed and plastered, in which the eggs were stored during the winter months for shipment out of the country, and the extensive expertise required by this work provided an attractive income to those engaged in it. A specialized form of carpentry also developed, to create the boxes required to store the eggs, and here, as well, the dominance of the Jews was complete.

There were large market fair days every Monday in the city, to which the farmers of the vicinity would bring their produce for sale, and there was much to be bought in the Jewish stores. Many Jews engaged in the sale of drink; the monopoly for the sale of wholesale and retail –the conventional mundane businesses – was in the hands of the Jews. In this area, a number of Rawa families distinguished themselves, such as Sztokhammer and Graff. In all areas of commerce and craftsmanship, in which the Jews were engaged, they transferred the expertise in their undertaking to their heirs. Rawa was one of the few cities in Galicia, in which there were Jewish builders and plasterers. The Jews excelled in these trades as well, despite the fact that the pressures exerted by the Christians, who did everything in their power to deny them entry into these trades.

Almost all of the Jewish residents of the city were engaged in the retail trade; they took part in everything that came to hand, including speculation. Jews would go from village to village, bartering one kind of goods for another, such as utensils for flax or rags. This way of making a living was occasionally not so good, and often fraught with danger.

The Jewish population did not grow by much, because the local authorities impeded Jewish initiative. The Jews were a decided majority in the city, and it was possible to even conceive of it as being a Jewish city, but in spite of this, they had a minority influence in the running of the city. The Jewish populace did not take advantage of every opportunity to send its representatives into all institutions, but where it appeared that there was a need for representation, it attempted to manifest a unified front every time there were municipal elections, and to demand the place that was due to it. But the Christians – abetted by the authorities – put all of their effort against this.

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The national movement, that aroused a palpable activity among the progressive ranks in Lvov and the surrounding cities, also elicited a substantial sympathy among the progressive ranks in Rawa. At the time of the appearance of the '*Hovevei Tzion*' movement, several young men were moved to action. However, this was stifled while in its embryonic state, because all change was interpreted as a malign deviation from the Jewish tradition, and an opening for leaving in pursuit of a 'malevolent culture.' Speakers that came from Lvov, returned there as they had come, because there was no one to rent an assembly hall for the purpose of giving them a place to speak. However, the fanatics did not succeed in completely stifling the young people, who did everything they could to leave even a meager mark in their work on behalf of Zionism; and with the establishment of the movement of Herzl's brand of Zionism, the Jews of Rawa did not stand at a distance. The movement elicited a very strong response in the city, and the Enlightened among the young people emerged from their hiding places with vigor, in order to extend a helping hand to the newly emerging international leadership that had emerged among the Jews around the world.


אגודת „התקוה" ברוה רוסקה

הננו מתכבדים להזמין את כ' ומשפחתו להשתתף
בחגיגות היובל של אגודת „התקוה" שתתקימנה ביום א' וב'
(ב' וג' דחוהמ"פ 22 ו23 אפריל 1935) באולם בית-היתומים

הפרוגרמה של חגיגת היובל:
ביום א' 22. IV. בשלש שעות אחרי הצהרים:

אקדמית יובל חגיגית

בהשתתפות חברים של האכסקוטיבה הציונית
בלבוב, ובירי אגודות בערי השדה.

ביום א' 22. IV. בשמונה שעות בערב

ב - נ - ק - ט

בעת הבנקט

1) גלוי תמונות של חברים ותיקים של אגודתנו
2) יקראו וכרונות חברים
3) פרוגרמה הומוריסטית ספירית.

אחרי הבנקט יתקים נשף-רקודים.

ביום ב' 23. IV. בשעה 8·30 הצגת יובל גדולה.

יוצג המחזה „נסיעת הצדיק" מאת ה. סקלר.

הכניסה של הבנקט ונשף הרקודים זהוב אחד.

Page 19: An Invitation to the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the 'Hatikvah-*Society. (1935)*

Yet, the work, initially, was conducted clandestinely, because many of the young men were dependent for their sustenance on their parents or in-laws; however, in the course of time, they rebelled, and came out in full public view, and a national movement arose in Rawa that was distinguished. Even back at the elections to the Austrian parliament, that were conducted in the first decade of the 20th century, a Zionist slate was nearly elected from Rawa – were it not for the opposition of the *Hasidim*, and the assimilationist Poles, who united together and went out in battle against any sign of the rise of Jewish nationalism.

The intelligentsia in the city at that time – Jewish lawyers, and their associates, who did not fear the religious fanatics, as well as their students who studied at the gymnasiums in Lvov and nearby ¯ó³kiew[17], who were influenced by the burgeoning nationalist spirit, a great ardor was aroused among them for the advancement and outpouring of nationalism. Zionist orators reached Rawa, and they succeeded in getting their message heard. Nevertheless, the majority of the Jewish populace did not receive them with favor, but they managed to sow seeds that bore fruit. The Zionist organization, '*Hatikvah*' was formed in Rawa, and most of the young men of the city joined it. A Jewish person was located who even rented them a room for their use, and the young men of the *Bet HaMedrash* took their lives into their own hands, came to it in secret, and took

17 Called Zhovka on modern maps of the Ukraine.

part in every national initiative. There was not a committee involving *The Land*, or a Congress, in which Rawa did not take an active role.

Among the founders of '*Hatikvah*' were: Greisman, an appointee with Dr. Segal; Dr. Gutman; Dr. Tauber; Wolf Baumwohl; Hertz Korman, the son of Abraham Korman, the flour merchant, a lovely young man with a musical sense, who sacrificed himself for the sake of the national ideal, and died while still young; Israel Gold; students of the gymnasium, Henrik Edel, the son of Nathan Edel, the proprietor of a tobacco store, and the two sons of Yaakov Barg; Munik Brill; Moshe Hoch; Zhitlowicky, the son-in-law of Zelig Figert who died in an Austrian concentration camp during the time of the First World War, because he was a Russian subject; Ben Zion Ginsberg[18], and Lemel Gortler. The one who did the most in this area was the Greisman previously mentioned, with the active assistance of Ozer Grauer, an ardent Jew committed to the Zionist ideal. Also, with the founding of the *Keren Kayemet L'Israel* there were many Rawa families who prominently decorated their homes proudly with the emblematic blue charity box.

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Zionist activity ceased abruptly with the outbreak of the First World War, in the month of August 1914. The youth of Rawa-Ruska, its young men – married and bachelors – eligible for draft, presented themselves for service in response to the order of the kingdom, in the month of Av 5774, at the military camps. The city was left deserted, empty, and abandoned by its young people. The remaining men, not eligible for the draft, prepared themselves for a time of want. The troops of Greater Russia, who were known to carry out pogroms against the Jews in their land, entered the city, and instilled a terror into its Jews. Many of the Jews of the city, especially those who possessed the financial means, fled in a state of panic to anywhere that their legs could carry them; many of them, lacking the resources, returned after a short time, and saw on their flesh the tribulations inflicted upon them by the hordes of the Czar.

In a coordinated attack by the Austrians and Germans, the Russians were driven out of all Galicia. The German army that came to Galicia brought with it a Cholera epidemic, and this killed off many, and hit the Jews of the city hard. The city was extremely unsanitary, and the Angel of Death walked about in gay abandon, arbitrarily cutting down everyone with his scythe, because there was no hospital. The epidemic made mincemeat out of the place, and the Jewish populace was without any ideas as to what to do. When this epidemic finally came to an end, and before those who remained alive could draw a breath, another epidemic broke out – a typhus epidemic; at that point, it seemed like all life was going to come to an end. The military that had set up camp in the city erected a temporary hospital amid the barracks, but the amount of help was minimal. The authorities drafted all those eligible for service between the ages of 18 and 50. Every person found to be healthy, and able to do service – was not given any opportunity to wind up his affairs or take leave of his dearest, and was taken into the ranks of the military.

The city was emptied of its young people. The lack of foodstuffs was great, and prices escalated. Merchants sat idle, because it was not possible to engage in normal commerce during wartime. It was difficult to make a living, especially for the poor of the city; these people went around dressed in tatters, and swollen from hunger. Bread, sugar, and the remaining foodstuffs were in short supply, and it was possible to get them only

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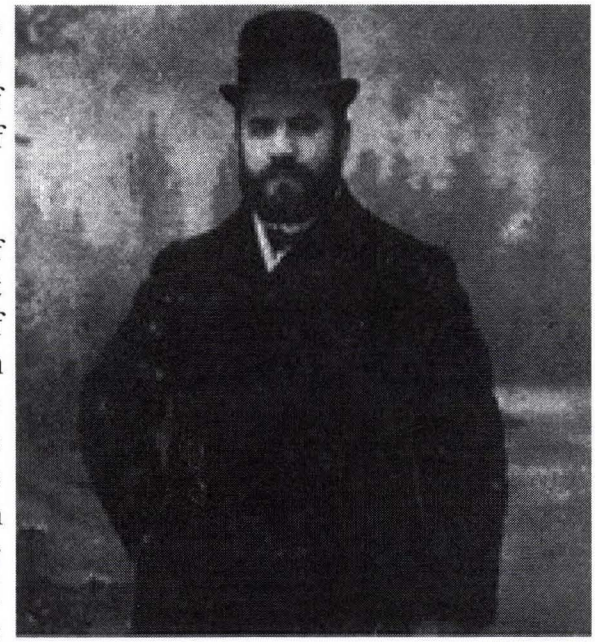
18 Despite a very clear indication that the Yiddish/Hebrew is spelled 'Ginsberg,' English renditions appear to show 'Gunsberg.' It is not clear why this is the case.

by having ration cards that were distributed by the government. These economic circumstances increased the neglect in the sphere of cultural life in the city; the seeds of Zionism that were sowed with the sweat from the brows of individuals – came to nothing.



Page 020: R' Yaakov Landau ז"ל, The First Banker in the City, son-in-law of R' Nathan Edel ז"ל

The fortunes of the city were lit by the sudden appearance of the young soldier from Potok Zloty, Herzl Neufeld. An alert and sympathetic young man, he appeared like an angel of salvation. He aroused the Zionist movement in the city from its slumber, captured the hearts of the young people, with the idea and effort of cultural activity, and the study of the Hebrew language. As a result of his effort, a meeting was called at the home of Hirsch Edel, a dye merchant, in which the following took part: Ben-Zion Gortler and his sister Pesha, Aharon Holland, Aharon Fischler, Abish Beringer and his sister Baylah Mindl, Mekh'chi Zilber, Hanina Edel, the son of the host of the gathering, the writer of these lines, and others. At this gathering, it was decided to renew the Zionist movement in Rawa, to revive the '*Hatikvah*' organization, to found a library, and to open up evening classes in Hebrew, and the recruitment of workers for *Keren Kayemet*. All of these activities were orchestrated by Herzl Neufeld. He overcame obstacles, and aggressively approached all of his undertakings – despite the harassment of those who opposed his initiatives.

However, the guardians of the ramparts did not simply freeze up at their posts, and put many obstacles in the path of the Zionist endeavor. Even the departure of Herzl Neufeld from the city didn't help them; quite to the contrary, the young men acquired additional fortitude and intensified their efforts. Part of the young men openly went off to war, and the initiative continued with vigor – until the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy.

The dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy (Austria), at the beginning of the month of November 1918, created a great deal of confusion, and enormous chaos, that augured a future pregnant with danger for the Jews of Eastern Galicia. Rawa-Ruska, like most of the cities of Eastern Galicia, was thrown to the good graces of the Christian populace of the city and its environs.

When the liberation of Poland from its alien masters became known – the struggle began between the Poles who were the majority in the cities, and the Ukrainians who were the clear majority in Galicia, over who would rule Eastern Galicia. The Poles did not even try to hide their overt enmity towards the Jews in the city, even though they were, as yet, not certain as to who would rule over this part of Poland, and made no effort to obtain the sympathy of the Jews. They chose to turn a blind eye towards the fact that was known to everyone, that the destiny of Eastern Galicia depended on the power of the nations of the world, and in the victorious independence forces, whose weight compels the setting up of [accommodating] national institutions among the forum of nations.

A mixed militia was established to maintain order in the city, from all three of the municipal communities, and the soldiers returning from the front and ranks of the army were drafted into that service. Each of the communities had its own unit, with a person at its head. The Jewish unit was headed by an officer with the rank of flag-bearer in the Austrian army – Hesh'ik Edel, the son of Nathan Edel. But it very quickly became evident, that the Jewish militia, whose appearance at that time made a big impression, was like a thorn in the eye of both the Poles and the Ukrainians. To their great surprise, they revealed that there was much arms and ammunition in the hands of the Jews, because they had the skills to use them during times of need. And it was the militia that was the single hope of the Jews of the city, at the time of distress. Nevertheless, those who wished to torment the Jews did not sit long on their hands, and using the Pharaonic dictum of 'Come we must deal with them shrewdly,[19]' they dispersed the militia, disarmed them, and an order came out from these tormentors to turn over their arms and ammunition in their hands within 24 hours. From that time forward, the Jews were beholden to the good will and grace of the tormenting Poles and Ukrainians. A fright and terror fell upon the Jews. No one knew what the next day would bring. Among the ranks of the enemy, pogroms erupted against the Jews, especially noting the great pogrom in the city of Lvov. These tidings sprouted wings, and the terror took on a life of its own. With hearts pounding, the Jews waited for the next darkly clouded day. On one heavily foggy morning in December 1918, the first traces of Poles appeared in our city: the Polish legionnaires, with their arms, had reached Rawa.

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The legionnaires set themselves up in the familiar '*Klasztor*' neighborhood. Their appearance in the city resulted in an immediate confrontation against the Jews, and it appeared in reality that they were brought there for the sole purpose of oppressing them. The Polish residents of the city opened themselves to the legionnaires, and with shrieking, ordered the Jewish storekeepers to shutter their stores – close themselves up in their houses, and not to show themselves in the city streets, because they were of a different faith...

It is not possible to describe the suffering of the Jews, because of their daily lot. Every day brought new troubles, to the recipients, and one decree came after another. There appeared to be no end insight for the beatings and mayhem, and being seized to perform work appeared to be the rule for the Jews. An incident occurred, that the Ukrainians in the environs of the city had regrouped themselves, and on one Saturday succeeded in capturing the city, in a matter of hours, and afterwards, abandoned it leaving behind dead and wounded. A stern guilt was assigned to the Jews of the city, as if they has been accomplices to the Ukrainian endeavor. At the outset, members of the families of Margulies, and children of R' Leibusz, the head of the household were carried off to Lublin, and they were awaiting a trial with a sentence of death hanging over them. One of the sergeants of the police, by the name of Sztimrowicz, who served as a gendarme in the days of Austrian rule, a foul Pole and Jew-hater, who lusted after bribes, honor and deviousness, libeled the distinguished Margulies family, saying that they had fired upon the legionnaires from the windows of their house during the time they gave battle to the Ukrainians. As evidence, he exhibited a bandaged hand. [But] not a single person could be found to support his representation, and there was not one among the poles who wanted to investigate, whether he was telling the truth, or whether he was wounded or not...

After several months went by, in which the prisoners hovered between life and death, it became clear that this had been a libelous accusation. An incident occurred, and an argument broke out between this Sergeant, remembered as a low-life, and his comrade of the same level.

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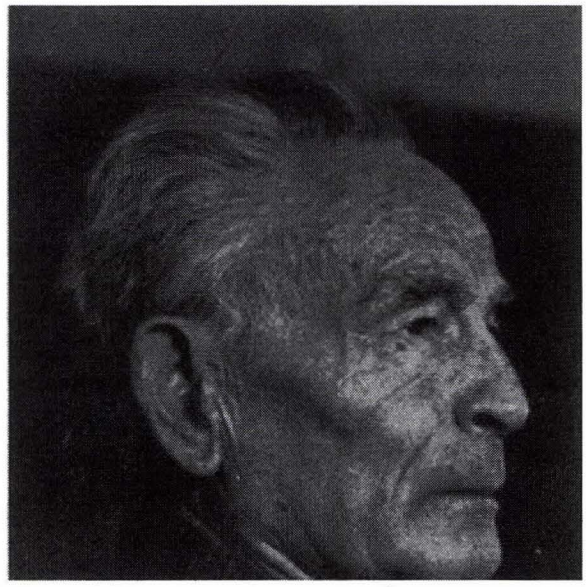
[19] Exodus 1:10

The latter said that they had been attacked from the north, and that the Margulies family was innocent of all wrongdoing, and that the bandaged hand covered an outbreak of leprosy. This loud exchange was heard through a thin wooden partition in the house of Zilber, in whose house the police had set up their headquarters. This matter was relayed to whomever it was given, indicating that the Margulies family was respected even in the eyes of the Christian residents of the city; the matter was put off, investigated, and the family was saved from death. And in the homes of the Jews – their was great rejoicing, literally the miracle of Purim repeated.

By and large, the Poles did not remain subdued. The situation in the city went on and deteriorated further. Hunger began to manifest its presence. The Jews sat locked up and closeted in their houses, without any ability to attend to making their living. It was only permitted to the women to exit, for they were not in any way handled badly.



Page 021: Ze'ev Baumwohl ז"ל, among the first of the Zionists in the city. Passed away in The Land *on 27 Shevat 5730 [February 3, 1970]*

Plunder and beatings were the lot of the Jews of Poland, especially in the smaller cities. The situation became aggravated even further with the appearance of the recruits of the General Haller[20], who came from France. The 'Hallerists' – as they were called – recalled with obloquy, made a sport out of cutting off the sidelocks and beards of the Jews. Every Jewish man, having grown sidelocks and a beard that showed themselves in the streets of the city, were subject to a level of cruelty that had no description. This trouble struck all the cities of Poland through which the 'Hallerists' passed, and this trouble also struck Rawa.

The Jews of Poland raised a great outcry. The Jewish newspapers offered a very sharp response to what was happening, and foreign liberal press aligned itself with them. As a result of the public demonstration of world Jewry, especially that of England and America, and in its wake, the reaction of people of good will around the world – the victorious nations decided to send an investigatory commission to Poland, at the head of which stood Stuart Samuel, a Jew of German-Sephardic origin, observant and traditional, the oldest brother of Sir Herbert Samuel, the first Senior Commissioner in the Land of Israel[21], and an honored member

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20 Józef Haller von Hallenburg (August 13, 1873 – June 4, 1960) was a Lieutenant General of the Polish Army, a legionary in the Polish Legions, harcmistrz (the highest Scouting instructor rank in Poland), the President of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP), and a political and social activist.

21 Sir Stuart Montagu Samuel, 1st Baronet (24 October 1856 – 13 May 1926) was a British Liberal politician. He was the elder brother of Herbert Samuel, 1st Viscount Samuel.

He attended the Liverpool Institute and University College School, Hampstead, London. He served as Justice of the Peace for the county of London, and was elected Member of Parliament for Whitechapel in 1900, replacing his uncle Samuel Montagu, 1st Baron Swaythling. Stuart Samuel retired from politics in 1916.

of the '*Mizrahi*' organization in England. This emissary spent many days in Poland: he inquired, researched, obtained an impression, and made an impression – and he arrived in Rawa, as it happened, as a guest looking for lodging.

In traveling from Warsaw to Lvov, on a Friday, on a snowy winter day, when the rails were rendered impassable because of the snow, he was overtaken by the Sabbath, and he was compelled to stop his travel in Rawa, and saw to lodging as a guest at the home of Rabbi Yaakov Landau, the son-in-law of Nathan Edel. The news of his coming spread quickly through the city, and in this way, it was discovered that the guest would be worshiping that Sabbath at the Great Synagogue. That Saturday morning, the Jewish residents of the city streamed to the Great Synagogue, from the very young to the very old. The Jews of the city, who felt deeply honored by the opportunity to host such a high-standing Jew, girded themselves, and presented him with all that they had, and all of their hospitality.

This visit made a powerful impression: the Jewish newspapers in Poland, dedicated a substantial amount of space to it, and the Polish newspapers did the same. National and Zionist Rawa was deeply impressed by this fortuitous visit, and hung many hopes on it, and decided to memorialize it. Wolf Baumwohl created a glass board, and on it, in gold letters, he recorded this historic event, in the styled by the hands of Abraham Hoffenbratel and Lieberman, because of their good Hebrew penmanship. This board was set into a gilded case, and hung on the east wall, over the place where the honored guest had sat during prayers.

After Galicia quieted down from the war between the Poles and Ukrainians, Rawa-Ruska resumed its Zionist undertakings. Everything began to take root and come to life. The Balfour Declaration was already known, and the substantive work of making *aliyah* to the Land of Israel began.

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Rawa-Ruska, it is on your ground that the cradle of my youth stood, and within you, I whiled away the days of my youth. I will cherish the memory of you forever!

I will not be able to forget my friends, acquaintances, instructors, teachers, educators, leaders, and relatives. It is from all of them that I learned, derived understanding, and so how can I possibly forget them ?! I will remember them to the good forever!

Rawa-Ruska, my soul trembles, and flutters with agony when I recall you, and I have but one prayer in my soul: That *The Nation of the Murderers* who killed, exterminated, and co-opted others to their evil – may an eternal curse press as a yoke on them! And you, my town, we will recall you to the good, and we will weave you into the Book of Life for all eternity!

My City and Family that Once Were, and Are No Longer

By Professor Zeinvill Lieberman

Foreword

Undoubtedly, there were many causes that led to the decision to publish a *Yizkor* Book for the city of Rawa-Ruska, and its martyrs, that were exterminated in the Holocaust by the Nazi Germans and their indigenous accomplices ימ"ש.

All of us sense the cultural responsibility to preserve whatever we can about our nearest, our beloved, and acquaintances of the past, who gave their lives in *Sanctification of The Name*, among the many. This is because, in accordance with the well-known letter *Rambam* wrote to the Jews of Yemen, every Jew who dies because of being Jewish, and were he not a Jew, he would not have died – he sanctifies *The Name* with his death, our Torah, our faith and culture, and is to be thought of as sanctified.

It is not in our means to do more than erect a memorial, to those we loved, in the form of words that will flower and last forever.

All of us, as the scions of a nation endowed with a profound sense of memory, want to raise the images and events that were, and have gone by, in our memory, and to preserve them forever.

This includes all of us, the scions of Rawa-Ruska, in love with our city of the past, that for hundreds of years was a *City and Mother in Israel*, and was totally exterminated. The *Gemara* says, 'a place casts its grace upon its inhabitants;' were we to plumb the depths of our souls, we would be amazed to find that even the mud of the exterior of the city, and the muck of the autumn about *the Schul-Gasse*, and *the dark of Egypt* [22] during winter nights, were also dear to us. It would appear that the gold of childhood and growing up, and the gilded shine of maturing years remain imbedded in our memories, as if in a mysterious aura of our city – that was, passed by and appears as if in a magical case, in beauty and interest.

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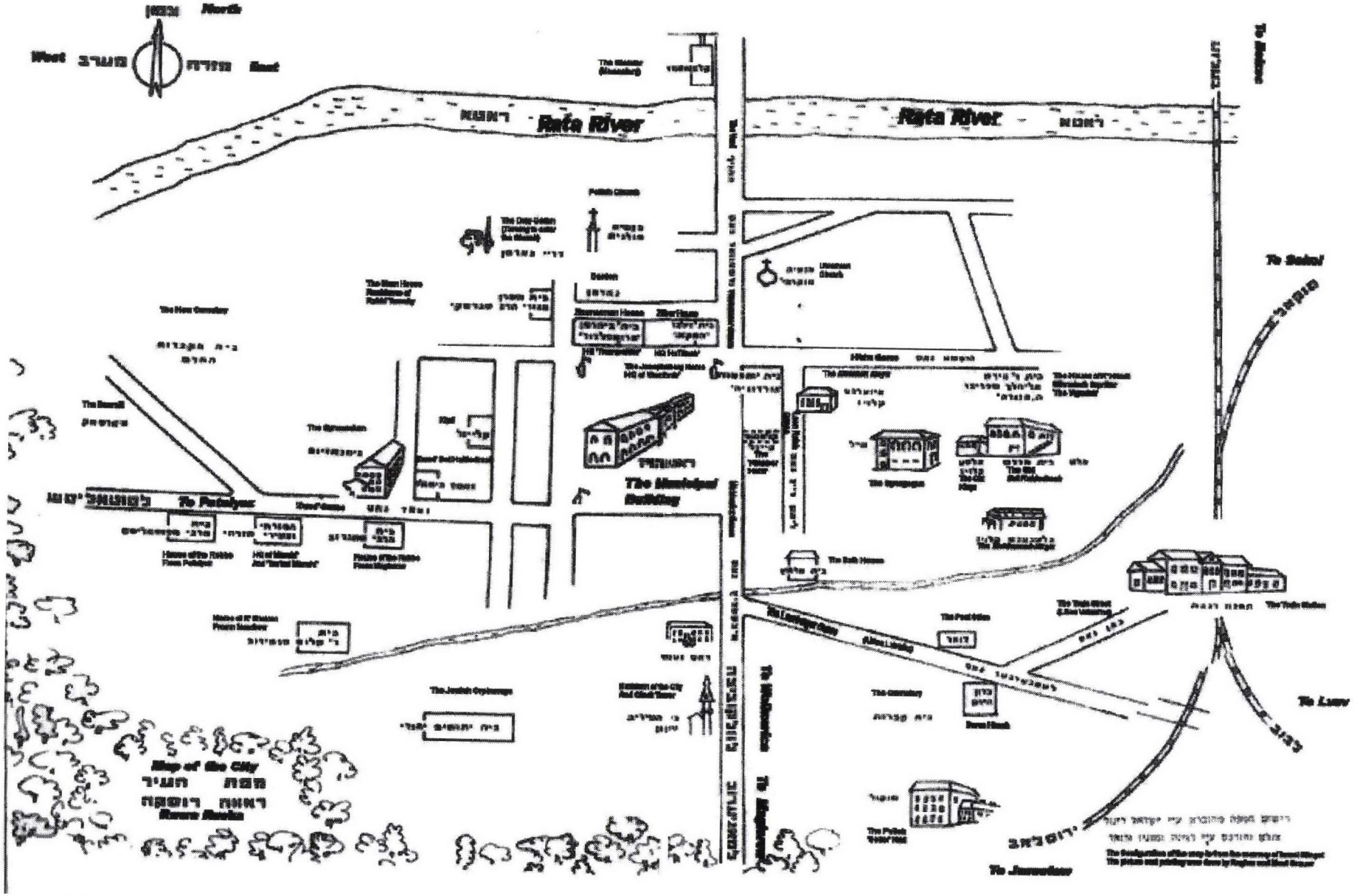
22 An allusion to the Ninth Plague of the Exodus from Egypt.

A Map of the City



Page 022: Map of the City



Page 023: The Market Square (Rynek) Showing the façade of the 'Rathaus'

A Map of the City

Approximately sixty kilometers from the capital of Lvov, and about thirty km from ¯ ó³kiew, thirty-five from Belz, the city that is renowned for its *Hasidic* dynasty, about twenty from Lubyca [Królewska], twenty-five from Nemierow, and six km Potelycz, the city of Rawa-Ruska can be found, spread out at the foothills of the 'Wolko-Wica' mountains, at approximately two km from them. The Rata River, whose waters are as pure as crystal, cuts it in half, and outside of it, in the same vicinity as the '*Hof*,' the road passes through that leads to the village of Hrebenne, the residence of the nobleman Sapieha[23]. In this vicinity, and on the second side of the Rata, the '*Hof*' of the *Starosta* can be found, as well as the monastery, the turnpike toll booth, and the flour mill of Yaakov Landau, one of the wealthy men of the city. The buildings of the train station are to be found at the second edge of the city, at a distance of approximately one kilometer from the 'marketplace' which was the central square of the city.

The market square was made up of four rows of buildings that were constructed over the generations, covering all four directions of the wind [e.g. compass]. These buildings served as places of residence, with their fronts being stores, and between them, a substantially large square was left. On every Monday of the week, the Ukrainian farmers would come to the square, from all of the surrounding vicinity, bringing their produce in horse-draw wagons to the Jewish populace that was in the city. On that very same day, these people would also arrange to make their purchases in the Jewish shops. It was in this way that the market was created, and the 'market-day' on every Monday of the week, that provided a meager sustenance to a great part of the Jewish residents for all days of

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23 The *Sapieha (or Sophia)* family is an ancient White Russian-Lithuanian noble family that traces its origins to 1413, in Smolensk, and Polock.

This family receives extensive coverage in the Dereczin Memorial Book.

the week. The market also served as a place to do business during the remaining days of the week, for the 'prefects,' and for all of those who were not privileged to have a 'window in the heavens,' meaning – their own storefront in one of the rows along the side of the square.

In the center of the market, in all of its splendor, stood a formidable massive ancient building – the 'Rathaus,' comprised of two stories. From childhood memories, it appears like a giant in the dark, filled with mystery.

The road leads to the railroad in a direction to the southeast of the market, and branches off to the Wolkowica, those very mountains that bore witness, whose peaks I saw in my childhood in the heights. That location served the young people as a place for walks during holidays, the Sabbath, and the days of summer and fall, especially for romantic couples, seeking a place to hide from prying eyes. It was a place that was created in a unique manner during the six days of creation, for visionaries, poets, and for those who were daydreaming of faraway lands to which they might emigrate, like my friends Mendl Kurtzer, Abish Beringer, and Mendl Eisen, who spanned half the globe in their travels and dreams.

Along the steps of this way, the tower of the '*Stadtzeiger*' pierced the sky, the tallest building in the city, which looked down haughtily from above down below on the lowly buildings of the city that were as if 'slithering along on their belly.' The word '*Stadtzeiger*,' was altered into a contrasting sense in the form of '*Kloyz Zeiger*.' These were two worlds, which in one the earth revolved around the sun, and in the other the sun revolved around the earth.

To the right of the 'Wolkowica' road, emanating from the market square, was the '*Zamd-Gasse*' that passed by the '*Zamd Bet HaMedrash*' The '*Klyzl*,' and to differentiate it, from the Gymnasium, and ends at the houses of the gentiles, wine merchants, and then leaves the city between grassy fields on both sides, until it reaches the grove of the 'Potelycz Forest.'

In a different direction from the square, the '*Hiiche-Gasse*' winds its way, on whose right side can be found the majority of the synagogues: the Municipal *Schul*, the Old *Bet HaMedrash*, the Old *Kloyz*, the *Blekhener Kloyz*, and the new *Kloyz*, built a short time before the First World War, that was called the 'Iron *Kloyz*,' because of the large strips of iron that were sunk into the ground during its construction. At somewhat a distance from them, apparently out of a sense of modesty, stood the municipal baths, standing alone, and beside it was a well of water, whose waters were the sweetest in the city. The street ran to the houses of the Goshem brothers, Sari'l Berger and her father, the owners of the oil press factory, the house of black [haired?] Sarah Goldstein, and ended close to the butter factory that produced '*Heileh*.'

In yet a different direction from the square, past the house of Noah Berger, and Myteh Katz,[24] you reached the front of the building of the distinguished Zionist Grauer family, and the large expansive

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[24] Rendered as the Hebrew acronym Ka"Tz, for ***Kohen Tzedek***, indicating descent from a priestly family.

garden that spread out for the entire length of the Catholic Church. The garden served as a playground for the Jewish children of the city, and the statue of Kocciuszko in the center, served as a facilitator and morale booster to the Jewish children, to the obloquy of the anti-Semitism of the Jew-haters in the city. The Jewish children avoided the '*Dray-Garten*' that was nearby, because of its proximity to the church, and because there was a crucifix on the gate of the church, around which it was necessary to turn (*drayen*) in order to enter, and primarily because of the gentile thugs that swarmed around it in large numbers.

From the direction of the Wasserman house, you quickly reached the building of Yoss'leh Abraham-Itcheh Marz[25], to the end of the city, to the beginning of the '*Hof*' and its wide-open and huge expanses alongside the Rata River, that surrounds the city in a half-circle, a place of pleasure, and rest for those exhausted in body and soul.

In a nutshell, this is a realistic encapsulation of my city – that was Rawa-Ruska, in which there rose, developed, and over the course of centuries, became the very same community of Jews that lived its rich spiritual life, content with its lot, under extenuating circumstances, until its tragic end.

Memories

As known, our sacred congregation had a '*Pinkas*,' an ancient *Pinkas* with a great deal of detail in it, the content of which contained the details of the continuity of the community from its inception. With the annihilation of the community, its *Pinkas* also was lost. It is up to us to plumb the depths of our memory, and in that way revivify our dearest, to remember, literally to bring back to life, and to breathe life into them.



Page 024: Sima Rumelt and David Freiheiter הי"ד *beside the* 'Stadtzeiger.'

Time devours and wipes out everything, except for memories, and it is the written word that recalls them, and sets them down. It is the written word that is the only thing that can withstand time. So come, let all of us together, revive Jewish Rawa-Ruska: its laughter and tears, its love and compassion, its heartiness and dreams, its yearnings and signature magic, its outlooks and hopes, the integrity of its womenfolk and the beauty of its children, the innocence of its beautiful young women, and the dedication of its understanding and talented young men, loyal to the community at-large, to their

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25 Pronounced either 'Martz' or 'Mertz.'

families and the people, the pleasant intonations of Torah study of the *Bet HaMedrash*, the *Kloyz* and the *Klyzl*, the chanting of the ardent *Hasidim*, the trills of those leading prayer and that of the cantors on the evenings of the Sabbath and Festival Holidays, and the purification from the immersion in the tears of the men, women and children on the eves of Yom Kippur and at the time of *The Opening of the Gates* at the *Ne'ila* Service. For has not all of this penetrated into the very fabric of our bones, absorbed into the folds of our memory. And now that these experiences come to the fore, the pictures and images, and it obtains the trappings of skin and sinews of flesh, and it comes alive as it once was.

R' Simcha Haberman – A man of splendid appearance with a high, scholarly forehead. His left eye was always closed because of concentration. Even during the time of prayer, it was evident that his mind was at work, without stopping, in connection with some matter of *Halakha* or its interpretation. His innards were engaged in deciphering the wisdom of some subject, and he traversed, to his pleasure, in the byways of the heavens... plumbing depths and rising to heights, He was the father of talented sons and daughters, who were accomplished. His son, R' Mordechai Leib achieved the status of a *Gaon* while yet a young man, excelling in Torah and wisdom.

R' Hirschel'eh Mund – A scion of a famous rabbinical family of pedigree, and also known for his lofty personality. He was a scholar, perceptive, gentle and modest, and was active in the more observant aspects of the spiritual life of the city. His wife, Szifra'leh – those who thought highly of her called her R' Szifra'leh – was a *Woman of Valor*, without exaggeration, or distortion of the facts. Her home was wide open to everyone, and within its confines, all the homes of the city found a blessing. Szifra'leh was the daughter of R' Leibusz *Baleboss*, and why was he nicknamed '*Baleboss*?' It was because of his commitment to the mitzvah of taking in guests [e.g. *Hakhnasat Orkhim*]. As was the father, so was the daughter, she was the '*Balabusta*.' In this house, talented sons grew up, who were scholars, and insightful. As is known, when family names were given to the Jews, during the time of the *Nomenklatura,* hundreds of years ago, they took into account the character, trade and skills, in order to match the name with the one receiving it; and the name mund (the mouth in the native language) was given to the family because the members of the family were accomplished speakers and possessed of good sense. And the Munds were, without a doubt, intellectuals from the time of birth, and for many generations.

R' Jekuthiel Josefsberg – His wealth came to him via inheritance. He erected a magnificent home, and out of his own funds, he erected the Iron Kloyz. He married off his daughter to an enlightened man, with Rabbinic ordination fit to be a leader, and who studied the Torah day and night. R' Jekuthiel himself was a learned man, possessed a sharp sense of humor, and caught the ear of the entire city with his sharp and witty sayings: however, he lacked order and direction in the struggle for survival. With the outbreak of the First World War, his world disintegrated. His son Aharon invested considerable energy in order to maintain their position.

R' Hirsch Guzhik – A man of the people, good-natured, an ideal father to his sons, and a marvelous husband. His house was suffused with Jewish tradition, productive endeavor, education and culture. His oldest son, Israel, was accomplished in all the spiritual and traditional virtues. He respected his

father in accordance with tradition, and even beyond that which was required. He was a husband who loved his wife Elka, of the Grauman family, and was a father replete with understanding towards his children. He was respected by all as a merchant, and as a learned person, he was held in esteem by all who knew him, and they knew him affably. Moshe, the son of R' Hirsch, was a Maskil, and served as a teacher in the gymnasium of the city during the time of the Second World War, under Soviet rule. When the Soviets left the city, all traces of Moshe vanished and he was never heard of again.

My Family



Page 25: *The Lieberman Family* ז"ל.

My family consisted of my parents and brothers, the family of my uncle Simcha Lieberman, the family of my uncle David Yitzhak Lezer, my uncle Nissan Lieberman, my aunt Kler'l Bashelia's and her husband Lemel Gortler. I will begin with the family and conclude with the home of my parents.

My aunt Kler'l was a 19th century type: observant, thrifty, and a dedicated homemaker to her husband and children. My uncle Lemel was physically frail, and because of this, the yoke of the household fell on my aunt, and she sacrificed her entire life for her husband and family. Their oldest son, Ben'chi was both educated and enlightened, refined and skilled. Toba'cheh, their daughter died in youth in Vienna, while their daughter Pesha was robust and graceful. She married Ben-Zion Ginsberg. Ben-Zion was a youth built like a cedar. He was learned, had a sense for music, and had a pleasant voice. In the city, he earned a reputation as a learned and erudite person, writing articles for the newspapers in the Capital which even got to America. At the summons of Frosting, the editor of the '*Tageblatt*' in Lvov, Ben-Zion moved to Lvov and became one of the editors of the newspaper. He was an ardent Zionist and one of the founders of the Zionist movement in the city. He was killed in Lvov amid his readers who held him in high esteem. Shmel'keh, his youngest son,

was a realist and an outstanding merchant.

My uncle Nissan Lieberman was one of the enlightened Maskilim of the prior century. He played the violin, knew [a number of] languages, and mathematics. He made a living from commerce and was content with his lot. His only son, Yaakov, was drafted into the army at the beginning of the First World War, and was wounded. Afterwards, he moved to Switzerland, and married a woman there, and his traces disappeared.

My uncle Itcheh'leh Lezer came from a pedigreed family, his family tree going back to R' Yekhezkiel Landau, the author of '*Nodah biYehudah.*' He was enlightened, and known for the nobility of his deeds. No stain could be found on his clothing, or his conscience. His wife, Chay'cheh was a wondrous homemaker, dedicated to the education of her children – Mordechai Wolf, Mendl, Eliezer Asher, and Esth'chi. This home was a glory to the city.

My uncle R' Shlomo'leh Lieberman was a man of insight and acuity, a lover of books, and a lover of life. In his undertakings, he was always tied up in my father's business. His wife Ita, was a good-hearted woman. She worked like a [busy] ant, uncomplainingly and without being cranky. She gave up her whole life for her family and the community. My uncle and aunt were privileged to see that, apart from their youngest daughter, dear Malia, all their children were saved from *The Calamity.*

And in the end – my parents and brothers ל"ז. My father, R' Lemel Lieberman, was a self-made man, thanks to his traditional inclinations and his spirit. He was an enlightened man. He would fill all of his time with the reading of books of commentary, tradition and science. Despite the fact of never having attended any public schools of the country, he was educated in secular subjects, and spoke the languages of the land. We the children, were helped not only once by his extensive knowledge in all fields of endeavor. He was a thoughtful and direct man in his thinking, voluble, able to fabricate original parables that were profound, that he innovated daily, with which he would engage and entertain his listeners. In his final years, he 'smashed the idol of money, silenced Satan's mouth, and dedicated himself to study and reading, which was the central desire of his life from the time he became sentient' – so he wrote me. He would flee bestowal of honor, and refused to stand for election to be the head of the community in the city.

My mother, Tzif'cheh, of the Hausman family, was rigorously observant, enlightened, and educated. She loved her husband, her family, and all of Jewry, with all the warmth of her pure heart.

My brother Mordechai was a gentle soul. He respected his parents, and was meticulous in his regard for all other human beings. His wife Bran'cheh of the Englander family, was a *Woman of Valor*, and a wondrous homemaker, with her compassion, being full of life, and having much spunk.

My brother Yehoshua, was honest, and fulfilled all of his obligations with great faith. He would look after the most minute of details in carrying out his personal obligations. His wife, Esther, the daughter of the Rabbi and granddaughter of R' Simcha Haberman, excelled in her alertness and spirituality characteristic of the Habermans.

My brother Ben-Zion, was of high integrity and honest in all of his dealings and never stained his conscience with improper conduct, not to strangers, and not to his parents whom he greatly respected.

Remember them all for a blessing.

Sayings of my father ל"ז:

A. The wise and understanding leave this world: however, their wisdom and understanding remains as a legacy for all of us, and they remain preserved forever – they continue to exhibit the mark of the wise and understanding.

B. In the course of a dispute or confrontation, do not allow words of accusation or insult to depart from your lips; because if you do so, your opponent will no longer think in terms of 'what if he says...' because you will find yourself having lost your strongest rejoinder, your 'secret rejoinder.'

C. If your son possesses a higher sense, and patience – don't show off about it; and if, God forbid, he lacks this – don't get overly concerned; this is because in life, it is possible to be rescued from a misfortune, and even death – only by means of some 'great shortcoming.'

D. The talent of being able to live peacefully with all in your surroundings is very difficult, and the most important thing of all.

E. To follow the path of pride is dangerous, and it is easy to run afoul on it, because there is no need for any investment or effort, and it was for this reason our ancient sages said: The arrogant fall poor, etc.

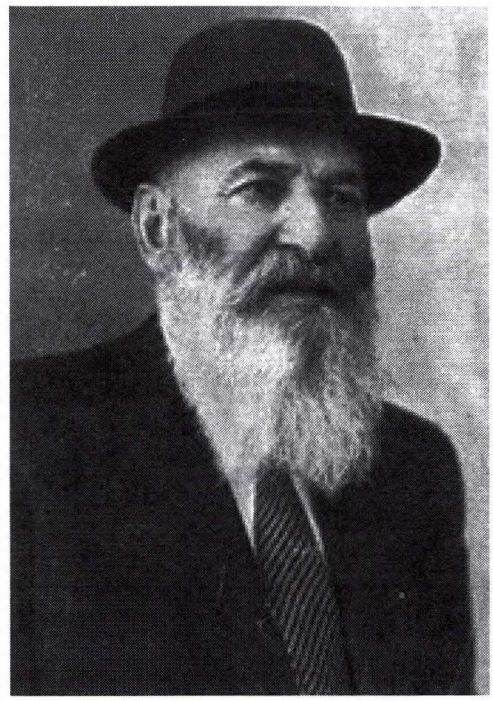
F. It is good to be in harmony with the environment. To partner with it – and not to withdraw and be solitary, because isolating one's self can lead to suicide.

H. If all you are called is 'a fool,' and you get angry – well then, you will end up being an 'angry fool,' and that is much worse.

A Period of Ferment and Storm

By Gimpel Just

The period in which fundamental changes took place in the lives of Jews in the city, and especially in the lives of the young people, was the period between the two World Wars, that is to say, in the years 1914-1939. In order to understand these changes, it is necessary to summarize briefly, the development of the city in earlier years, and to attempt to pause with regard to its nature.



Page 27: R; Shlomo Aryeh HaLevi Zukhman ז"ל . *Passed away in Haifa, 18 Tevet 5712 [January 16, 1952]*

The city was established more than five hundred years ago, because of its value to one of the members of the Polish nobility, and a variety of political considerations. The Jewish settlement began to come together there in a much later period, and its growth was very erratic – in conjunction with national, cultural and social conditions that prevailed in those times.

Not much is known about the life of the Jewish settlement in those early years. In the second half of the 19th century, and even more so at the beginning of the 20th century, the settlement flowered – and along with it, the Jewish population – to the point where it had become a principal provincial city with national institutions located there. In the heart of the city, a large and substantively roomy building was erected, that was called the '*Rathaus*,' which served as a fortress and a meeting place for the various rulers who came for meetings and councils (from which it gets its name, '*Rathaus*'). Around it, four streets worth of buildings were erected, which in the course of time, grew taller, and took on a modern appearance. The entire area was called the '*Ringplatz*,' or '*Rynek*.'On every Monday, the place hummed with the sound of people and wagons, who came from the surrounding villages for the weekly market day. The Jews of the area, like everyone else, derived their living from these market days, with all their noise and color.

The principal streets went on and became lengthened, and off of them branched side streets, and additional streets, which were narrow and winding, being unpaved, and without sidewalks. It was in this area that the Jewish populace congregated. A central focal point of the Jewish houses of worship was in the vicinity of the '*Schiel*[26].' Additionally in another part of the city, called the '*Zamd*,' two synagogues were built, called this way, because its byways had no paved roads, and the expanse was sandy. From time to time, a fire broke out in one of these tightly crowded centers, and an entire neighborhood was consumed by fire. Afterwards, they would build from scratch, producing

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26 A *Galitzianer* variant of '*Schul*' referring to the Synagogue.

better buildings. In one of the section of the city, the Christian populace constructed its residences, with gardens, fences, and small planted areas.

The '*Rathaus*' building, in the last periods, belonged to Jewish families like Goldberg and Kanarek; but in our time, the ownership passed to the town, and a little at a time, the Jewish residents were asked to vacate their dwellings in which they had lived for many generation, and in their place, Christian families took up residence.

One of the members of the Goldberg family, R' Abraham, was one of the leaders of the '*Haskalah*,' and was known for his opposition to *Hasidism*. The story was known in the city, and many variations were repeated about R' Abraham Goldberg, that during one of the 'nine days[27]' a water-carrier came in to him with his yoke on his back, from which hung a pair of pails full of water for the cistern in his house. And here, R' Abraham was sitting and satisfying himself with a meal of fat meat. R' Abraham asked of the water carrier, that he not reveal this matter in public. However, this person, on going outside, began to repeat to himself in a loud voice: The concern of my grandfather is that R' Abraham, the 'rich man' eats a broth containing meat during the 'nine days.' And it was in this fashion that his lack of faith became known to the general public.

Jews who owned property began to appear in our area even back in the days of the Habsburg monarchy. In large tracts of agricultural land, that they either bought or leased, they developed agricultural parcels, and employed tens and hundreds of villagers from the surrounding areas. Accordingly, they were able to earn substantial profits, and even an honored standing in the group and its milieu. The following landowners were known in our area: Ettinger (Werchrata), Horowitz (Dêbica), Federbush (Turawica), Metal (In the village beside Nyvy), Reiss (Potok-Mosty[28]). Lejz'l (Machnów), and others.

Almost all of these landholders had 'trusted' Jews, and also part of the management was turned over into Jewish hands. In the estates of the Ettinger family, R' Shlomo Aryeh Zukhman was known (who died in Israel) who began with the brewing of whiskey, and afterwards as the manager of the estate. He was well-integrated into the local community, a man of gracious appearance, and of a pleasant disposition, a man who achieved national prestige, and he was especially proud of his two sons, Yehoshua and Naphtali Nessyahu who studied in Vienna, and with the initiation of the Third *Aliyah* to *The Land*, they also made *aliyah* as pioneers, and created their homes and families in the Land of Israel. The Zionist groups in the city, especially, '*HeHalutz*,' were eager to hear the various stories told by R' Shlomo Zukhman, about his sons, their deeds, and the building of *The Land*. The father eventually also made *aliyah* in the wake of his sons, and he would very warm-heartedly welcome visitors from his home town at his residence in Haifa. The essayist author, Asher Barasz ז"ל

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27 Referring to the nine first days of the Jewish month of Av, leading up to the fast day of *Tisha B'Av* commemorating the destruction of the Temple. Among observant Jews, it is customary to abstain from such good things as rich food, during this period.

28 Possibly Mostyska

commemorated R' Shlomo Zukhman in one of his books under a fictitious name. Both were from the city of Lopatin.

Asher Barasz was the brother of Miriam Graff ז"ל, and before the First World War, he visited Rawa-Ruska several times. During his visits, he took an interest in the predations of the Dybbuk which at the peak of its madness at the time, would cause someone to roll about uncontrollably, and would soil himself to the point of extreme filth, and shriek in strange voices, and afterwards, when the madness would subside, he would return to being like all other people. The well-known folklorist and author Sh. Anski also took an interest in this matter of the Dybbuk, that interested him, and researched also into the appearance of the Dybbuk. 'The Dybbuk' served as fodder for stories in various genres, and it was on this foundation that the famous folklore play, 'The Dybbuk' took root and grew, written in Yiddish, and translated afterwards into Hebrew by Ch. N. Bialik. This play was put on in our city also, and was very well received.

Another property owner known in the city and its environs was R' Herschel'i Federbush ז"ל. He was harmoniously integrated with all the residents of the city, and he would appear in his *Hasidic* garb before the ruling authorities of the place. He, and his wife Czarna Federbush, lived in the city of Narol, and it was there that their daughters were born, and their only son – Shimon, who after a number of years became renowned as the Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush ז"ל. His first steps were taken in our city, in which he learned Torah from the mouths of renowned Torah scholars – R' Yankl'i Teppich (*Lezhensker*[29]) and R' Berisz Rapoport זצ"ל.

Shimon absorbed Torah from many teachers, but he did not forget these two who gave him access to Torah and helped him to establish his world outlook regarding the order of the Torah. In one of his many visits to *The Land*, in the year 1961, he conveyed the assessment of these two *Gaonim*, and intended to memorialize them in a 'Yizkor Book;' to our sorrow, the Rabbi did not bring this to a material realization.

Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush was one of the leaders of '*Mizrahi*' and '*Tze'irei Mizrahi*' in Galicia and Poland, and was elected as one of the representatives of the united national Jewish bloc to the Polish Sejm (the national legislature). In the Sejm, he struggled, along with the other elected Jewish members, to improved the meager circumstances of the poor, especially of the Jewish poor, that suffered greatly from oppression. In the year 1931, he served as the chief Rabbi of Finland (in the Capital city of Helsinki), and he worked there to deepen the recognition of Jewish tradition and nationality. In the face of the danger that came with the invasion of Russia and Nazi Germany, Dr. Federbush went over to the United States, and there, he obtained a great deal of respect as a representative of *Mizrahi*, at the International Jewish Congress, and The International Hebrew Union. He would travel extensively, visiting Jewish communities in various places around the world. He was active in movements, in writing about issues of the times, and publicized research books on the ideas of the Jewish people. He died in New York in the year 1970. May his memory be for a blessing!

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[29] Leżajsk in modern day Poland. The Jews called it Lezhensk.

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During the period of Austrian hegemony, the Jews lived in most of the towns of Galicia, but in a nearly closed off ambience of their own. Almost every family was engaged in a difficult war of survival, in order to gainsay its livelihood under stressful conditions. There was a struggle to set up a pitiful platform in the marketplace, for a narrow door and opening for a small store, or a corner for a workshop with one or two of its aisles. The worry that came with sustaining a family, consumed the Jews day and night. To this was added the worry of being able to afford the sons the opportunity to study a bit of Torah, and the worry about making a proper wedding match.

The Poles and Ukrainians pressured the Jewish community considerably, and with this, they demanded political support in their struggles, and in bolstering their representatives. During the course of many generations, the Jewish community gave in to them, not having the temerity to rise up, or to brush their demands aside. Certainly there were brave individuals who stood apart from the masses, but it was not them that set the direction of affairs, and they did not possess the power to influence the masses in general.

In the course of a number of years, elections were arranged for the Austrian parliament, whose headquarters were in the capital city – Vienna. The election competition was set up to enable the passage of laws that were more permissive, intended to lighten, and not in a small measure, the struggle for survival of the masses. As one example, let us recall the earth-shaking election competition between those who supported the Jewish national factions – Rapoport, and his assimilationist competitor – Steinhaus, which according to the evidence of the count from our district, was supported by the Belz courtyard of *Hasidim*, who did not turn away from any form of endeavor to assure that he would be elected. It is possible to conclude that it was comfortable for the majority of the Jewish community to constrain itself within a, so-to-speak, social and spiritual ghetto; this, it would seem, enabled the Jews to continue with their day-to-day lives, in accordance with their temperament and understanding.

However, the prohibitions that the Jews imposed on themselves, held them together and sustained them for generations, and they bore them with great ardor; but they choked an auspicious initiative, not only once, denying themselves the use of some suitable initiative for the express purpose of the development of the Jewish community. But our wise men knew, in various times, that to that golden chain of the preservation of the generations of Jews, it was appropriate to add additional links, and even, occasionally, to switch out one link that was surpassed by another link, that strengthens the chain in its entirety.

The *Haskalah* movement that had its influence in the 19th century, even though a number of its exponents lived in the midst of our cities (Brody, Lvov, ¯ó³kiew) – was hardly felt in our town. However, in a later period, there was a more committed cadre of *balebatim*, that manifested, in part, an understanding of the *zeitgeist*, and especially in connection education of their children and concerns about their future.

Community life became stormy at times. The community leaders, the representatives (in general appointed), in the city, the *Gabbaim* of the various charitable institutions, and in the houses of worship, which they ruled with a firm hand – aroused the ire of the majority of the people. It was not only once that a 'rich man' of the city, that was *nouveau riche*, attempted to impose himself on the community. As can be understood, there were also manifestations of good character, and people of charitable will, who supported those who may have suffered injury, with advice, charity, and many gave charity anonymously.

There were those who manifested heroism. Gentiles that would get drunk, and began to curse and beat – were pushed around in the hands of a few of the wagon drivers, people who have a fist, and also a variety of young men that were men with nerve; even a part of the 'pickpocket' group, that was known in the city, its people looked after the Jews. Once a year, the young people were obligated to present themselves before the community, to have their abilities examined, and to present themselves for the draft into the military. At occasions like this, the village youth from the surrounding area, would attempt at times to beat the Jews, and it was not only once that such folk left with stinging heads from such an encounter, with their hands on their behinds.

A slow change took place behind the walls of the city, with the appearance of the harbinger of Zionism, Dr. Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl[30]. The Zionist concept, that began to spread and capture adherents, found it difficult to penetrate the stopped up wall that the Jewish community had erected around itself over the course of many generations. Accordingly, our city was one of the last places in which a real Zionist organization was constituted. Regarding this issue, bitter conflict went on between fathers and sons, and got to the point where blows were exchanged, harassments, and excommunications from the side of the Belz *Hasidim* and their many adherents.

A different struggle ensued when the Austrian parliament passed a law that made it obligatory for every child, upon reaching a certain age, to attend a school. At the same time, a Jewish school, consisting of four grades, was established, by the well-known philanthropist Baron Hirsch. The issue divided the community, and led to severe disputation within many families. Faithful Jews, out of a suspicion of taking a false oath, acceded to the financial demands of the courts – and with great difficulty would approach the court with requests to release their children from attending school for 'reasons of health,' in order that they, God forbid, not be led astray down a path of improper values. Despite this, such schools opened windows, albeit narrow ones, onto the outside world, and it spurred on various people, with skills, to concentrate on their studies and to find other places of learning for the purpose of advancing themselves.

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30 Theodor (Benjamin Ze'ev) Herzl was the visionary behind modern Zionism and the re-institution of a Jewish homeland.

Herzl (May 2, 1860 - July 3, 1904) was born in Budapest in 1860. He was educated in the spirit of the German-Jewish Enlightenment, and learned to appreciate secular culture. In 1878 the family moved to Vienna, and in 1884 Herzl was awarded a doctorate of law from the University of Vienna. He became a writer, playwright and journalist. The Paris correspondent of the influential liberal Vienna newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* was none other than Theodor Herzl.

The Baron Hirsch school, in our time, attracted teachers such as the principal Epstein, Bernstein, Sternbach and Lorber, who facilitated the deepened study of languages (German and Polish), and other subjects. There were two general teachers that were known in our city, that taught many boys and girls how to read and write Yiddish and in the languages of the country. Those were R' Yek'l Lichter ז"ל, and R' Israel Chaim Gottleib ז"ל (*der Dzhevinczer Lehrer*), the latter being the son-in-law of R' Moshe Leib Just of Dziewiêcierz. He was a polished Jew with a pleasant manner, and was careful about introducing anything of the prevailing *zeitgeist* into the minds of the pupils. But, in the end, all of the teachers attempted to create a new spiritual atmosphere. Those few that were taken up by the Zionist concept of Dr. T. Herzl were suspicious of voicing their feelings in public. An exception to this rule was R' Shmuel Metal, the hunchback, who, on the day of the passing of that great leader – 20 Tammuz – entered one of the houses of worship and recited the *Kaddish.* To the day he died, the nickname '*dos Kaddish'l*' stuck to him. There were efforts by young people to organize themselves secretly, However, every time this became known, they would be ostracized, along with their parents, in an insulting fashion, with threats, and shunning. The fanatic *Hasidim* of Belz succeeded, for a time, to delay this form of organization.

The Founding of the 'Hatikvah' Society and its First Members

The first Zionist organization in our city, called '*Hatikvah,*' was established in 1910, and was set up in the home of Dr. Harold, in the neighborhood of the Russian [Orthodox] Church. In a small amount of time there were 30-40 members, They would come together to hear speeches, and the readings from the works of Jewish writers, for parties, especially at Hanukkah, and on evenings to commemorate the anniversary of the passing of T. Herzl, and occasionally, they would raise their voices in song. The songs of Y. Feld especially aroused them – *'Sham b'Makom Arazim'* (There Where the Cedars Grow), The Plow, and others, and also the songs of the prominent cantors. Under the direction of Israel Gold, they began to learn the Hebrew language, and Jewish history. There were those among them who would carry on discussions about events of a national nature within the country of Austria, and around the world, or on what was being bruited about in the Zionist movement. Clandestinely, they engaged in the distribution of the Zionist shekel, and the collection of donations for *Keren Kayemet L'Israel*, amidst the recruitment of those sympathetic to the Zionist ideal, and the addition of new members to their society.

As understood, this infuriated their forsworn opponents, especially the Belz *Hasidim*. These constantly devised ideas for how and in what way, to disrupt them. There was not only one occasion, when parents would lie in ambush for their children at the time of their meetings, and when they came out, rewarded them with sincerely administered beatings. In one of these visits, the meeting place of the organization was befouled with a 'dumping' of excrement. It was not only once that the places where the parents of such children came to sit were smeared with tar, especially in the 'Belzer *Kloyz,*' or that the 'sitting place' was cut out entirely.

Those few who had the courage and nerve to withstand this profuse abuse are worthy to be recalled as having had the privilege of being among the first of the movement. It is because of them, that the Zionist movement branched out, and grew strong. Their exponents are the hundreds (admittedly the

minority) that were the remnants of the Jewish community of the city, and its nearby environs – whose residence today is in the country of Israel.

Among those first, who still remain in my memory are: Ze'ev Baumwohl (died in *The Land*), Hirsch Bach, Israel Gold, Lifsza Gold (the first girl), Benzion Ginsberg (who, up to the Holocaust, was one of the editors of the Halemberger *Tag-Blatt*), Benz'i Gortler, Max Greisman, Ozer Grauer, Benjamin Hoch, Tzvi Haberman, Mordechai Holz, Ber'l Wachs, Bezalel Wasserman, Leibusz Weber, Eleazar Zilber, Zusha Zoltar, Chaim Leib Lieberman, Abraham'chi Edel, Klement Zimmerman, Hertz Kornman, Shalom Rosenfeld, Mordechai Eliezer Szpazner. With ardor, and a great deal of stubbornness, they adhered to, and spread the Zionist concept, and they were supported by facilitators, like Dr. Meir Geier, Dr. Schreiber, Naphtali Glicksman, and Moshe Frostig. A part of these facilitators also knew how to interlace stories and legends of the Hasidim into their speeches, and in this manner, were able to influence people, and brought them close to the Zionist concept. The members of *Hatikvah* had already participated in the elections to the Zionist congress of 1911. There were the occasional voices also of '*Mizrahi*,' even though there was not a separate group of this sort in the city.

In the Austrian parliamentary elections, the members of '*Hatikvah*' strove to carry out a program for the Jewish candidates to achieve national recognition, for those supporting the national Zionist movement. But almost always, the régime won, who knew how to impose their will on the majority of the masses, and with the help of the directive from the *Rebbe* of Belz, the scales tipped in the direction of those favoring assimilation or even to Polish Christian candidates. This issue would arouse anger, and be accompanied by dispute and contention within the Jewish community. But the essence of the act of election added strength to those first participants in the city. The minor Jewish intelligentsia, that had just now begun to appear and establish itself, tended in the main in the direction of those favoring assimilation. However, in the fulness of time, a great change took place among its members, and it began to manifest an affinity for the Zionist camp.

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The assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in the year 1914, shed light on the impending peril that looked down over the Jews of Galicia, and difficult days drew nigh for every Jewish home in the city and its environs. The First World War in the years 1914-1918, dried out the way of life, and brought with it fundamental national changes.

A significant part of the city Jews, on whom the regulation to serve in the military fell, participated in the first of the battles at the front, and part of them also provided military support at the rear. The Jewish soldiers were witnesses to bloodshed in a war that was not theirs, and there was not only one instance where a Jewish soldier wounded another Jewish soldier on the other side of the front. This matter caused a profound emotional disturbance, arousing introspection and deep thought. A result of this, Jewish national consciousness was aroused, and became a national initiative. This initiative bore fruit: the Balfour Declaration, that was an international recognition beneficial to the Jews, looking with favor on the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel. This Declaration inflamed the emotions of throngs of Jewry, and international pride came in a fulfilling measure at that time.



Page 29: *Rawa Ruska Youth Group*

First Row Sitting: *Second from the Right, Penina Seif-Koppelman, Moshe Ram, Bluma Zimmerman, Sima Czermak, Rachel Rosenfeld-Osliar, Rosenfeld*

Second Row: *Chana Brand – Chana Herzberg, Pearl Paster, Chaim Joseph Fendrich, Miriam Baumwohl*

Third Row: *Avner Hafner – G. Just, Sheva Just, Yaakov Shlomo Gold, Tova Szpazner-Rekhes, Eleazar Rekhes, Golda Gartel, Tzvi Siebzehner*

Fourth Row: *Golda Danziger – Neta Ruker, Leah Ka"Tz, Feigenbaum, Fendrich, Tieger, – Regina Grauer, Abraham Moister, Chaya Taller, Zimmerman, Zimmerman, Henya Ka"Tz, Wolf.*

Many of the Jews of the city began to return from the faraway places in which they had taken up residence as refugees from the war, and the same was true of the residents of the surrounding villages. All of these thronged to the city, to join with the permanent residents, because their sense of loneliness gnawed at them, and also fear of the gentiles fell upon them, and they wanted to be part of a larger Jewish community.

While it was still during the war years, R' Abraham'chi Hoffenbratel, the son-in-law of Sima Dina and R' Chaim David Daks ז"ל, arrived in the city with his family – his wife, Czita and their only

daughter Rivka. This young man was suffused with and replete with Torah. In his youth, he had studied at a Yeshiva, and afterwards had studied at a seminary in Lvov, and was also fortified with much in the way of secular knowledge. He loved music and song, and was a gentle soul and handsome in appearance. He came to Rawa from the city of Stary, where he had served there as a teacher in a Hebrew school. He began to organize courses in Hebrew, and in this connection, he took in the assistance of the talented man, Chaim-Leib Lieberman.

Even before the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy, the sergeant Neufeld was in service in the city, a committed Zionist who helped to organize the young people and helped prepare them for a variety of celebrations.

The [headquarters of the] '*Hatikvah*' group in the house of Mekh'chi Toyster, in the neighborhood that leads to the Christian cemetery. It was there that courses were organized, and various speeches given. [Major] appearances were arranged to be held in the large auditorium of the *Rathaus* – in the *Rynek*.

At the end of the World War, a war broke out in our city between the Poles and the Ukrainians. However, this was a war of short duration, but many victims fell, and it created unbearable suffering for the Jewish community. The Jews, by virtue of being neutral, were assaulted from both sides, that were engorged with hatred for Jews. There came confiscations, beatings, plundering, the cutting of sidelocks, the tearing out of beards (especially by those under the command of General Haller, the scourge of the Jews). All of these events became deeply etched into the souls of Jewish youth, and this began to catalyze a search for the means of solutions of escape on its own.

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In the year 1917, the lawyer Dr. Joseph Mandel with his wife Esther, reached Rawa from Lvov, for the purposes of settling down. For a short time, he worked as a specialist in the office of the lawyer Herman Versstandig, and afterwards opened his own independent office in the *Rynek*, in the home of the Grosskopf family. His arrival signaled a change in the level of Zionist activity. He committed himself to Zionist work with the full enthusiasm of an ardent Zionist and young man.

Dr. Joseph Mandel was born in Lvov in the year 1887, into a traditional home, in which only Yiddish was spoken. His father had a business for making grave monuments. He was the youngest of his two brothers and two sisters. He was also the only one among them who received a high school and university education. While still a young student, he joined the ranks of the student Zionists, together with the well-known historian Dr. N. M. Gelber, and Moshe Frostig, the senior editor of the '*Lemberger Tageblatt*.' Joseph Mandel was especially influenced by the latter, who was one of the leading thinkers of Zionist lore in Galicia, and in a short time, an intimate of *Poalei Tzion*. For his entire life, Dr. Mandel stood on the side of the working man, the little man, in struggle with his daily exigencies, and on top of that in his conflicts with the authorities. He fought against every injustice and shortcoming in the legal, economic and social arena. He was a Zionist man of action, a folksy speaker who was both ardent and inspiring, and he issued forth his words – in large gatherings [of

people] that he would attract – from the depths of his heart. He succeeded in acquiring the allegiance of almost all sectors (even those Jew-haters among the Poles and Ukrainians), loyal adherents who were committed to him personally, and were among his steady, permanent followers.

In the elections to the Polish *Sejm*, he appeared as a candidate of the United Jewish Slate, but to the disappointment of many, he was not elected.

He was a proud Jew, and conducted himself with simplicity. He was not oriented towards making money. As a lofty legal servant, not only once did he offer services *pro bono* to people who were straitened in circumstances, but especially when there was a suspicion that the institutions of government, or individuals from the authorities, were seeking to take unfair advantage of someone because he was a Jew.

His pleasant wife Esther, was a dedicated helpmeet to him, and were it not for her taking care of their only son – Nahum (*Na'szek*) – he would not have been able to withstand the burden of his many obligations. They raised their only son in the spirit of Zionism, and they did live and were privileged to see him make *aliyah* to The Land as a student, before the outbreak of the [Second World] War. Thanks to this, a living remnant remains of the family so full of heart.

At every opportunity, Dr. Joseph Mandel fought the war for Zionism. On a few occasions, he grew emotionally intense, in order to capture the Jewish community in the city, and in the end he succeeded, in introducing a different, and invigorating spirit, into the printed media. Up against the fortress of *Hasidism*, he encountered no small amount of difficulties, but with the help of a coterie of comrades that were committed and loyal – like Leibusz Weber, Abraham'chi Edel, Shlomo'li Halberthal, Shimon Margulies as the Secretary of the Community (his wife Manya and two of her sons, who at the time of the war were on a visit to Russia, were saved, and are found in *The Land*), representatives of craftsmen, and prominent merchants – he succeeded in overcoming most of the obstacles and to lead it with a head held high, as the head of the first Zionist community, and to our sorrow, also the last.

During all the years, he was the Chair of the '*Hatikvah*' organization, and he did not abandon his watch and position, until he was taken, with the initiation of the extermination, by the Nazi murderers, and their Polish and Ukrainian accomplices, and was exterminated among the first of the martyrs הי"ד.

I will not forget a detail etched into my memory. While I was still a lad, in the year 1920, on the day of the Balfour Declaration, Dr. Mandel organized the first parade in the city, of the Zionist adherents. The marchers, adorned in the colors white and blue, marched three abreast, and at their head – Dr. Mandel, Dr. Lipa Schumer, Joshi Zeifert, and others. For the first time, we felt we could stand up straight, and that Jewish pride had come to the fore. The parade went through a number of streets of the city, and spread with the singing of '*Hatikvah*' resonating in the market square, opposite the '*Rathaus.*'

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In the years between 1918-1924, the '*Hatikvah*' group was the only Zionist group in the city. It took quarters in an expansive hall, on a story that used to belong to the Salayter family – in the *Rynek*. It had hundreds of members, and the cadre of active workers grew and expanded. A comprehensive line of members displayed a great deal of commitment during this period, and they were: Dr. J. Mandel, Dr. Tauba, Abraham'chi and Israel Edel, Leibusz Weber, Moshe Levin, Tzvi Haberman, Yaakov Shlomo Gold, Aharon Hollander, Hertz Khakhmowicz, Asher Steinfeld, Shia Lieberman, Dr, Arnold Spatz, Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld, Val'chi Reichler, Brein'cheh Haberman, Baylah Mindl Bringer, Reizl Korman, Atli Zimmerman, Feiga Rekhes, and others. Also, younger members joined up. Also some movement began, and a form of arousal, in the conventionally accepted attitudes of the more mature generation. Discussions and dialogue was arranged, and there were organized tours, and from time to time there were meetings that were quite stormy. The '*Hatikvah*' group was the cradle of organized Zionism in our city, and this privilege remains and is standing to its credit, by all those who were members in it, and remember it to this day.

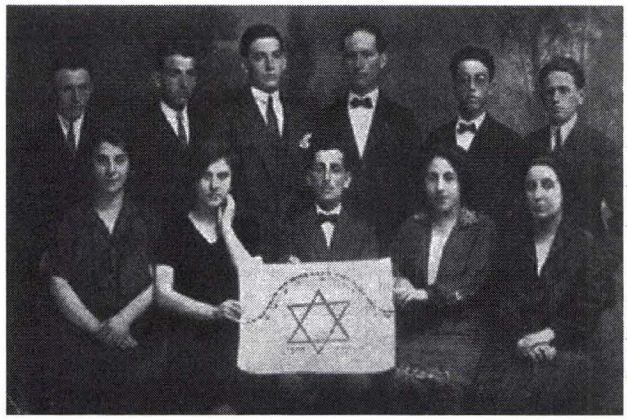


Page 31: A Row of Houses at the 'Rynek,' – *the end house was the* 'Hatikvah' *Hall.*

In all of the Zionist organizations in the city – the '*Hatikvah*' of the general Zionists, '*Trumpeldor*' of Zionist labor, and *Mizrahi* and *Tze'irei Mizrahi* that organized themselves as independent groups in the years 1924-1925 – opened up a widely branched and extensive set of activities; they disseminated a considerable amount of enlightenment, organized Hebrew courses, [courses for] the history of the Jewish people, a knowledge of our Land, Jewish literature, Hebrew, and general knowledge of various kids; they established large libraries, especially '*Hatikvah*' and '*Trumpeldor*,' each of which amassed thousands of different books, in various languages. These libraries were often the sole source to the residents of the city, for material that would allow for obtaining enlightenment and deepening it. Every new book, or new idea, whether in story or song, or in a thoughtful essay in a weekly periodical, or a quarterly journal, was a source for the dissemination of ideas, and the deepening of intellectual thought.

Almost every group organized public appearances and put on theatrical plays, in general, to attract adherents among the members of the various groups. Even the '*Bund*' had no few such events, and were even influential in this area. The income so derived served to fund a variety of initiatives, or were allocated to the various Zionist funds. In addition to this, small presentations were organized on the outside, in which the best of the actors participated, among them Zygmunt and Jonas

Turkow[31], Ida Kaminska, Diana Blumenfeld, and others. There were also appearances of recognized readers, such as Hertz Grossbard, and others. A significant impression was made by an array of presentations that well-known advocates gave, from the entire spectrum of the Zionist rainbow in Galicia and Poland. The '*Trumpeldor*' group excelled in putting on events of this nature during most of the winter months.



Page 32: The 'Keren Kayemet' Committee of the City

Sitting from the Right: Shlomtz'eh Freiheiter, Frum'cheh Steinbach, Abraham Edel, Leah and Feiga Ka"Tz.

Standing from the Right: Itcheh'leh Holz, Dov Margulies, Vovi Reichler, Lipa Altman, Noah Steinfeld, Zalman Adler

As is understood, a variety of fund raising activities were undertaken. The most focused of these was the committee for *Keren HaKayemet L'Israel*, at whose head stood the incomparable and energetic leader – Abraham'chi Edel. Assisted, as always, by members from all movements, including the youth movements. He was especially supported by Lipa Altman who, until he made *aliyah* to *The Land*, served as his deputy. They introduced the 'Blue Box' into many Jewish homes. They organized 'flower days.' In the summertime, they organized festivities, with various lotteries, in the nearby woods. Dance parties were organized, in which beauty queens were selected. On the Eve of Yom Kippur, they would sit with a collection platter in the synagogues of the city, for purposes of collecting donations to the KK"L; donations were collected in stores, and other venues as well. A call from *Keren HaYesod* would elicit participation from the older members, who had to pay a call to other groups, to get sign-ups for an obligation to provide larger sums. The '*Shekel* Committee' was very active: During the years when there was a Zionist Congress, close to one thousand five hundred *shkalim* were distributed. There was also fund-raising on behalf of the *Poalei Eretz Israel* Fund (KPA"I), and it was in this way that shares of the establishment of the Bank *HaPoalim* took place, which was then established in the Land of Israel. To this end, a special emissary came from The Land – Yehuda Levitov – who gathered together a large assembly beside the '*Schul-Platz*,' during which time, he explained the purpose of the bank.

Every emissary from *The Land* was received in our city with great respect, and heartily. The living word of the emissary from *The Land*, was received with great faithfulness, and also led to practical

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31 Zygmunt Turkow (1896–1970) was a Polish actor, director, playwright and director of Jewish origin from Warsaw, who became famous for roles in the pre-war Jewish films and stage plays in Yiddish. His brother, Jonas Turkow, was also a noted actor and stage manager.

Shortly after German invasion of Poland in 1939 he left Poland together with his second wife. In 1940 he settled in Brazil. In 1952 he moved to Israel.

outcomes. The emissaries, by-and-large, arrived and visited with '*Agudat Trumpeldor*,' and especially '*Gordonia*,' which was the largest and best organized of the youth groups.

The engineer, Yitzhak Kuntess, sent to us from Lvov, resided in our city for a length of time. He organized the orphanage (after the setting up underwent a variety of changes and delays because of a variety of causes in the city, mainly on the part of the Christians) and oversaw its construction. When it was finally put up, it did not serve its intended purpose, but rather as a place for public appearances, assemblies of groups, and as the venue for various festive gatherings and dances, because it was difficult to secure the use of the 'Sokal' Hall for these purposes.

Yitzhak Kuntess was a member of *'Hitakhdut'* and gave a set of presentations in the '*Hatikvah*' group on the optimism and pessimism in the Jewish people. His smooth and interesting words engendered a good atmosphere. During the time of his residence in our city, he even wrote Yiddish articles, and prepared his book, '*Einzame Shoh'en*' (Lonely Hours) for publication.

From time-to-time, presentations by various authors were arranged, such as Joel Mastbaum, Moshe Stavsky-Stavi, and Melech Ravitch. The latter spent a few days in our city (he had family in our city – the Berg family), and was one of the editors of the weekly '*Literarishe Blatter*' and one of the leaders in the introduction of the new Yiddish poetry. In the '*Trumpeldor*' group, he conducted a series of lectures on questions of art and literature.

From the First World War up to the Holocaust, a distinct and recognizable coterie of professional intelligentsia congregated in our city. The physicians – Dr. Arnold Spatz, Dr. Ravza, Dr. Gutman, Dr. Krystynpoller, Dr. Bernstein, and others; The lawyers – Dr. Segal, the father and son, Dr. Versstandig, Herschdorfer, Becker, Ziegelbojm, Joseph Mandel, Shimon Popiel, Tauber, and others; Veterinarians, Dr. Bernard Bernfeld, the nephew of the renowned historian Dr. Shimon Bernfeld; Dentists – Lippel, Koner; High School Teachers – Prof. Tenenbaum, Prof. Szteinworcel (in *The Land*), and others. A part of them were active Zionists, and most tended towards Zionism. They lent a hand to a variety of endeavors, participated in institutions providing nourishment and help, took part in theatrical presentations of the Zionist parties. There were among them a few, who understandably tended towards assimilation; however these were swallowed up among the majority, most of whom manifested a Jewish national identity.

The head of the city was always a Pole, even though the majority of the populace was Jewish. From time-to-time, the head of the city was a liberal man, but in general, he would be an overt anti-Semite, who assaulted not only the assets of the Jews, but also their spirit. The officials of the city had practically no Jews at all. There were appointed Jewish representatives for the Jews, and not once would simply accept most of what was being said with complete submission, and in this way, they would suffocate the words of dispute raised by our representatives in the Sejm.

Under the pressure of the Zionist groups, the various Jewish representatives were changed out. In their place came Dr. Ziegelbojm, and the representatives of the merchants and craftsmen, who were more bold, and men of recognizable national persuasion, and because of them, conflicts did indeed

open up. There was no hope of getting proper elections through which it would be possible to correct the flaws of the municipal administration in their relation to the Jewish community, that paid taxes, donations and levies, in order to support the municipal services.

The Youth Organizations of the 'Hatikvah' Group

In the '*Hatikvah*' group of the Zionists, there were two sections of young people – '*Akhavah*', and '*HaNoar HaTzioni*.' These two sections organized children and young people into groups of different ages, and carried out various educational activities. From them, members emerged that joined groups for training with the objective of making aliyah to The Land, and part of the group did so, in the course of time, among those from '*Akhavah*:' Isaac Kudler, Penina Morgenstern, Gittl Falbel (who died in *The Land*), Tova (Gittl) Fischler-Reinhertz, Zvi Renner, and others. From *'HaNoar HaTzioni*:' Nahum (*Na'szek*) Mandel, Esther Kremerman-Fischler, and others.

The Revisionist Movement

For a while, a branch of the revisionist movement existed within '*Hatikvah*.' It was a group that was small in number, but one that zealously promoted its ideas, but it did not succeed in attracting adherents and meaningfully increase the number of its members. Its members would bring in speakers and various well-known advocates of this movement, and in public assemblies, discussions and debates were organized, between their representatives and political protagonists. Among the others the following appeared: Dr. Wolfgang von Weisel and Dr. R. Paldshawa-Ben-Shem. Among the founders and activists in this group were Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld (in *The Land*), Yekhezkiel Adler, Itch'i Edman, Dud'ik Rosenthal, Joseph Shansel and Melech Weichselbaum (in *The Land*).

The Establishment of 'Mizrahi' and Tze'irei Mizrahi

In the course of a few years, tens of members affiliated with the '*Hatikvah*' group that were oriented towards the religious Zionists. They would, naturally, vote for their country slate at the Zionist congresses. From time-to-time, they would meet with a guest member from Lvov, to grapple with special issues that aroused the members of this faction as a separate matter. Slowly, but surely, this religious disposition began to penetrate into various ranks of the middle class, and into the midst of the younger men disposed to an external orientation. In the year 1925 they established a separate organization. They rented premises out of the desire to be able to actuate their social needs, and to be able to function on an independent basis. They opened an extensively branched set of activities among the religious youth, whose spiritual world, from time immemorial, was unresponsive to its needs, and was stunted in no small part to the assets that swirled about it. The activists did not achieve success in this struggle easily, and there was no lack of anger and buffeting that was heaped upon them from the more extreme ranks of their opponents.

Among the first of the founders, that assumed the burden of this difficult mission were: Abraham'chi Hoffenbratel, of pleasant disposition, Chaim Leib Lieberman, the zealot of the Hebrew language,

Ber'li Gerstenfeld, the man of equanimity and tact, Lemel Wachs, of pleasant disposition, Yaakov Bodek, Shia Rosenfeld, and after them – Noah Steinfeld (died in Uruguay), Shlomo Spritzer, and the one who stood out among them – Ber'ish Margulies (died in Uruguay), the premier activist, a



Page 33: The Training Kibbutz *of* HeHalutz HaMizrahi *of Rawa Ruska*
Sitting (From the Right): Moshe Sega"l, Hirsch Rekhl, Israel Ber & Joseph Lockman

Second Row: Golda Berger, Baylah Wachs-Shapiro, Chaya Altman, Pearl Haftel, Chay'keh Fischler-Kremerman, Khien'keh Brand-Sohn, & Tula Schindler

Third Row: David Birnbaum, Yehoshua Fischler, Zvi Dornberg, Shaul Frankel, Kuni Graff

Fourth Row: Leibusz Marmel, Yehoshua Reinert, Abraham Fischler, M. Stern & Gimpel Sztakhel

man talented in expression, and organized with grace. After some time, he emigrated to Uruguay, and he was among the activists of this organization there. He established a religious national weekly periodical, '*Der Moment*,' that appeared for more than twenty years. He fought for his ideals, but always knew how to find the unifying threshold on which to stand. He did this in a pleasant way, and with a folksy dreamy way of telling things. He was far from being zealous, and excelled in his role as a newspaper editor. In this arena, excellence as committed activists without bounds were – the brothers Yehoshua, Yitzhak, Abraham and Moshe Fischler, and their sister Chay'keh Kremerman, who joined with her husband, Zvi Kremerman, who was also among the activists in this movement – and all made *aliyah* to *The Land*. Afterwards, their parents, R' Israel Fischler and his wife ע"ה also reached *The Land*. The people in this movement invested a tremendous amount of effort in the creation of a training camp in the vicinity of the city, many of whose participants made aliyah to The Land, including Bluma Zauerbrun-Lockman with her husband Joseph, and Baylah Wachs-Shapiro

with her husband Yaakov, successfully organized a summer-camp for the young people of the movement, and of course, participated with full commitment in all of the Zionist fund-raising activities; they organized get-togethers, and put on a Purim play called '*Yosef Spiel.*'

In the course of a few years, up to the Holocaust, the youth group '*B'nai Akiva*' also existed, at the head of which stood the very talented young man – Yaakov Feldman ז"ל.

The Zionist Labor Group 'Hitakhdut' – Its Founding and Development

The years of the First World War, and the years after it, initiated compelling changes in Europe, and included in this, the lives of the Jews there.

As has been said, for many generations, the lives of the Jews, in our city as well, were conducted in a closed ambit – resting especially on religious factors, and everything that emanates from that. The transformation out of this ambit was in many respects drastic. This generation was witness to the dissolution pf the Habsburg monarchy, the defeat of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, the definitive sunset of the Ottoman Empire, the defeat of Czarist Russia and the Bolshevik Revolution that took place there. All of this impresses a deep mark in the way of thinking of most members of that generation.



Page 35: Members of the 'HaNoar HaTzioni' *Orchestra*
From the right: Wagner, Zimmerman, Moshe Kutz, Shmuel Weiss, Bella Schmidt, and Shmuel Wolf

New winds blew periodically with great, intense force. Waves of new ideas inundated Europe: the Fascist movement; the 'Pan-European' concept; the creation of republican forms of government, in the place of absolute [monarchies]; the alliance of the Socialist movement with all the ways of free and open criticism of the streams of thinking in this movement; the daring revolution in Russia, with the objective of building a communist nation. As can be understood, not a single person had any inkling of how much blood and tears would be spilled as a result of this undertaking, and especially what was to be the fate of those who were 'believers.' And what was to be the lot of our people, caught sitting in this country, and under this régime. Enlightened forms of government were also established, in other countries, and especially in the Scandinavian countries. There was also a great spiritual awakening, a living literature flowered, and outstanding personalities arose in this connection. However, on the horizon, the sparks of fascism could be perceived, preaching a secular racism, and standing out in its cruelty and sinfulness.



Page 36: *Aryeh Stern* הי"ד

It was a period of outbreak and storm, also for Jewish youth, who, in the midst of contemplating the world around it, began to search for concepts on which to erect a more just and righteous society.

The Russian Revolution had within it an attractive power that was enormous, for the intelligentsia and the young people, who saw in it a solution to a large part of their quandaries. No small amount of the concepts of the revolution resonated, and were adopted in our city, among a section of the cohort of young people. In a matter of a few years, a group called '×èòàëüíÿ Æèâîâñêà'(a Jewish Reading Club) became active, which under the guise of a neutral name, gathered together young people of a variety of ages, to whom the ideals of communism were preached. In this club, courses for reading and writing of Yiddish were organized, as were courses in arithmetic, and general history; speeches and national lectures were organized as well, and both legal and illegal newspapers from this organization were distributed.

Against this, we were compelled to work aggressively – to erect conceptual barriers, to organize courses in Hebrew. The history of our people, the lore of Zionism, group rule, socialist streams, discussions of the issues of the time, and the history of the settlement in the Land of Israel. '*Kestl* Evenings'(Evenings dedicated to questions & answers), which in the large part, had its agenda from the top, placed upon the members themselves to elaborate and explain. These evenings elicited a great deal of support, and participation in them was unusual, almost mob-like. Our cultural initiatives engendered a transformation in the Jewish community: the opposition to study in the public schools weakened, and there were those who even went on to register in the high school, and a few even oriented themselves to continue to access higher level studies. There were even individuals who began to think of going out of the country, to other countries in Western Europe, in order to complete their studies.



Page 34: The B'nai Akiva *Group*

At the beginning of the decade of the twenties, a group of young people left to go to Lvov, in order to prepare themselves for external matriculation and enroll at the Teachers Seminary. This incident made a strong impression on the young people. At the head of those going to Lvov were, among others: the exceptionally intelligent Aryeh Reinert, the gifted Zeinvill Lieberman, the esthetically gifted Aharon Weidhorn, Tzvi Rubin and Hillel Axler.

Windows were opened to enable the comprehension of the changes taking place in the wide world, and with this, an understanding developed that it is not meaningful to sunder the connection between the past of our people, to the present, and responsibility for its future. The walls that had been erected around the life of the Jews in the towns began to arouse a sullen anger, and there were those who went so far as to estrange themselves from their roots. We, in the face of this, understood that there is a continuity of generations that existed, and it is necessary to see Zionism as part of that continuity, understandably, as a continuity placed in the midst of the transformations taking place in the lives of our people. It was necessary to draw from the wellspring that had sustained and preserved our people up to now, and to reveal new well springs to sustain its survival in the future.



Page 37: (Top) The Young Girls of 'Gordonia'

The spark of Zionism kindled among the youth in our city was idealistic, and raised before it the questions of the preservation of the people, its language, and the yearning to build Our Land. The members of '*Hitakhdut*' organized courses for the intensive study of the Hebrew language, and – until he left the city – the member, Yaakov Baumwohl-Yuval (who died in *The Land*) committed himself to this. He also directed, successfully, the first Hebrew play, '*Abba Tov*,' by Y. Lerner.

The conflict between the various positions engaged not only the young people specifically, despite the fact that we had to stand in debate with the members of the '*Yiddisher Arbeiter-Bund*,' who set up a legal organization named '*Fastemp*' (Progress). They also organized courses in Yiddish, its literature, and arithmetic, and also put on an array of plays that achieved noteworthy success.

The members of '*Hitakhdut*' sensed a need to resolve a set of issues that they viscerally felt were required to build a just organization. We were influenced by the humanistic stream of thought, in world-wide socialism, from the '*HaPoel HaTza'ir*' movement in *The Land*, and especially from realistic idealism. Specific personalities had an influence, especially A. D. Gordon, Martin Buber, Chaim Arlozorov, and others.



Page 37 (Bottom): The 'HaPoel' *Soccer Team in Rawa-Ruska*

While still in '*Hatikvah*,' a recognizable portion of the membership sensed that Zionism was not just 'pleasant to preach,' but also 'pleasant to implement.' We began to come together to find a joint expression of our sense, and to organize a seat for this within '*Hatikvah*.' Most of these gatherings took place at the spacious home of that wonderful woman – the mother of my wife – Shayndl Zimmerman, and thanks to that, we were able to strengthen our organization and get it ready for the coming days.

Among those first of the founders, it is worthy to note Dr. Mekh'chi Zilber – then a medical student, young and skillful, a fiery orator, and being able to relate plainly and simply to his juniors; Aryeh Stern, who spent a set period of time in Europe, and was influenced by the humanistic socialist ideas of Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber; Aryeh Stern was well-honed, and sharp in his expressiveness, pleasant in his demeanor, and a dedicated member and friend. He was married to a woman full of grace – Bel'keh Kraut, and they had a daughter – Gina; Yaakov Shlomo Gold – noble and refined in spirit, even though he ran the store of his father, Michael Gold ז"ל, he was totally enmeshed in the spiritual world of the young people, and dreamt of a Zionist Socialism; Eleazar Reinert, full of learning, and knowledge of the Hebrew literature, a man of relaxed temperament, honest, and an adherent of tradition. He would show up at my home in the morning hours, in his traditional garb, to the letter, take out his bag with *Tefillin* from under his topcoat, and we would engage in the reading of the Torah portions, or immerse ourselves in a conversation of a secular nature; Chaim Rathaus – a man of sharp mind, and a facility for substantive analysis, measured in his pace and deeds; the first two active women members – Baylah-Mindl Bringer, and Tzira Zilber – enlightened and understanding, who had the gumption to break through the gender barrier, and to ally themselves with the *'rebels*.' Lejzor Berger-Rittner – enlightened, and of pleasant disposition; the brothers Moshe and Tzvi Gosches – Moshe, the serious one, weighing every word that he uttered, and Tzvi, the dreamer, and possessor of a poetic soul; Noah Alter, Nathan Edel, Itch'i Holz, Berisz Reichler, Chaim and Eliezer Rekhes, Yaakov Zimmerman, Aharon and Leibusz Wolk, Shammai Landes, Abraham'chi Lieberman, Benny Shapiro, Shlomo'chi and Moshe Freiheiter, Frum'cheh Steinbach, Hellie Szyfer[32]-Lev, Leah Ziring-Schorr, Sheva Zimmerman-Just, Brein'chi Bush, Lipa Altman, Yehuda Mund, and others. Everyone worked and served the movement with commitment and complete faith. And the line continues longer and longer. And it pains the heart to know that all these that dreamed the dream, were not privileged to attain their objective.

In the year 1923, at the general conclave of the national Zionist *Histadrut* in Lvov, our members also participated as representatives. At that very conclave, after very heated and painful discussions, the members of '*Hitakhdut*' were compelled to leave the national Zionist *Histadrut*; and on the morrow, the founding conclave was empaneled, and the founding of the Zionist work of the '*Hitakhdut*' was announced in Eastern Galicia. Fishl Werber (who died in *The Land*) and the writer of these lines were elected as secretaries.

For about another two years, we remained affiliated with the '*Hatikvah*' group, without being active in it. In one of the annual meetings, we attained a majority vote, but we did not take advantage of

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32 We are deferring to the Polish spelling because of identified current usage, but note that it sometimes appears as 'Schiffer,' or 'Schifer.'

this in order not to impact older members, especially those who had worked for many years, and had contributed to its development. We decided that we would work toward obtaining permission from the authorities to set up a separate organization.
After obtaining permission to use the name 'Trumpeldor,' we set up the branch first in the Josefsberg house, and afterwards moved our residence over to the '*Gordonia'* youth movement. The *Trumpeldor* Group ('*Hitakhdut*' Branch) set up in a pleasant house on the *Rynek*, at the family of Tzivia and Abraham Zimmerman.

Organized work began, new members joined, parties were arranged, and we brought many ranks of the young close to the ideals of the '*Hitakhdut*.' Many books were added to the library, and the cohort of readers grew. Lectures were arranged, in addition to the speakers from the outside, we were assisted by a variety of members and adherents. Raphael Hahn distinguished himself in the area of literature; he was comprehensive in lecturing about a whole array of books, dissecting the motivation behind them, raising up the central ideas of their creators, and with great ardor, described the way they wrote.

The elections to the Zionist congresses were stormy events. Beginning in the year 1921, in which the 12th Zionist congress took place, and until the last congress before the Second World War, the elections to the congresses were turned into turbulent episodes in all Zionist groups and their streams. Each party would bring its favorite speakers, and organize public gatherings, especially in the 'Orphanage' Hall, and also hold parties in homes. In these elections, 'Hitakhdut' in our city always obtained most of the influential voices – and this provided both satisfaction and a special zest to our work.

From a general perspective regarding the state of Jewry in Poland, the party participated in the elections to the Polish *Sejm*, along with all of the other Zionist parties, as part of one national slate. As understood, there were bitter disputes, involving real questions, municipal issues, and issues of education to obtain a profession. But the major issues were – matters pertaining to *aliyah*, *HeHalutz,* working with youth, cultural and communication activity, and the strengthening of the network of Jewish schools and kindergartens.

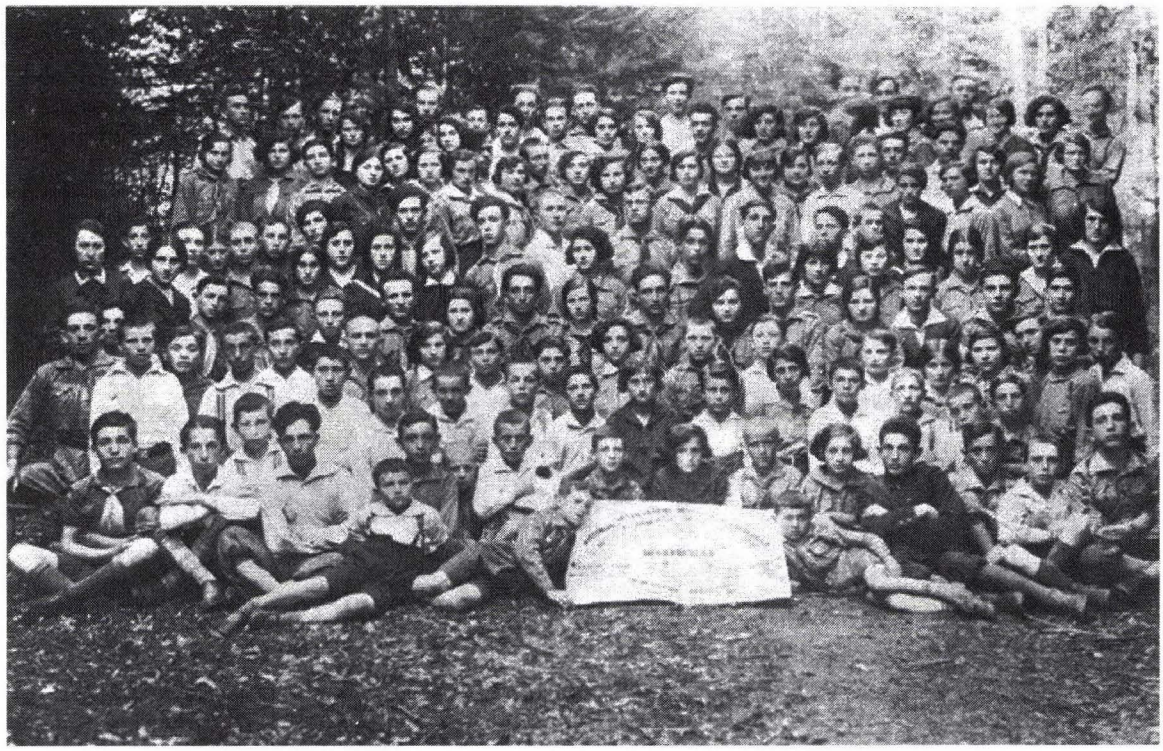
The 'Trumpeldor' Group attempted to penetrate and gain influence among the group of craftsmen in the city, and in a distinct measure, succeeded in doing so. The overall mission was to facilitate aliyah to *The Land* for those with a recognizable Zionist inclination. In the fulness of years, the families of the following made *aliyah*: Hersch Ber Donner and their son Simcha; also Chaim Becker, who, to our sorrow, did not return back from his last visit to Poland, and the only one remaining here in *The Land*, was his son who established his household here.

Alongside the '*Trumpeldor*' Group, two sections of youth were established – '*Tze'irei Hitakhdut*,' and '*Bosalia*.' The latter put its emphasis more on pioneering, training for such, and *aliyah*. Thanks to this, members went out of both of these sections to training camps, and were privileged to make aliyah to the Land of Israel. Also members of '*Hitakhdut*' older, went out to the training facilities in Bielsk, and a few of them made *aliyah* to *The Land*.

The central focus was given to the establishment of the '*Gordonia*' youth group, which during the years up to the Holocaust, was transformed into the principal organized youth group, the largest in the city. In its ranks, it placed the best of its members at its head, who were dedicated to the education of the young people and their organization, until they grew and leaders emerged from within the movement itself. These leaders worked with consummate skill, concerning themselves with ensuring the resources to maintain continuity; most of them were from the ranks of the implementers, and made *aliyah* to *The Land*.

Let us document the first of these founders, the leaders and heads of the groups of the '*Gordonia*' movement in our city: Eleazar Reinert, Tamar Bodenstein, Shayndl Strauss, Chaim Rathaus, Tzvi Siebzehner-Netzer, Sarah Gittl Holz, Abraham'chi Lieberman, Hirsch Berger, Pesha Daks, Gimpel Just.

The Establishment of 'HeHalutz'



Page 38: *The Youth Arm of* 'Gordonia' *in the City*

The first branch of '*HeHalutz*' established in our city, took place in the period of the Fourth *Aliyah*. The members of '*Hitakhdut*' established it, who understood that there was a need for a branch expansion initiative, and especially to serve as a personal example. Among those first, let us recall Shmuel Baumwohl (who died in *The Land*), Naphtali Neuer, Hen'chi Graff-Dubi (who died in *The Land*), Tamar Bodenstein, and Yehuda Mund. In the fulness of the years, the

following joined: Lipa Altman-Dror, Eliezer Rekhes, Zvi Halberthal-Israeli, Chaim Yitzhak Josefsberg, Zvi Siebzehner-Netzer, Ephraim Graff and others, from the ranks of the implementers from the members of *Gordonia,* members of '*Bosalia*' and the youth of '*Hitakhdut.*'

To be a '*Halutz*' at that time – literally meant being a revolutionary: to swim against the current, to be considered somewhat 'crazy' in the eyes of those around you. It was necessary to be well-armed with spiritual fortitude, in order to stand up to one's parents, the surroundings, and from time-to-time, even against members and friends, who attempted to weaken the 'plague' of the pioneering spirit in the '*Halutz.*' It was necessary to fight against all forms of expression of giving up, against those spreading calumny about *The Land*, and with head held high, to set off for *The Land* – in illegal groups, and up against gates that were often locked to exclude them. To be a 'Halutz' also meant a rebellion against the practical Zionism of masses of those who practiced empty rhetoric, against the malign surroundings of Poles and Ukrainians, against the ossification of Diaspora life, against seduction of futile dreams; in order to achieve a personal revolution, within, requiring great temerity, and a relentless striving without surcease – to make aliyah, and reach *The Land*, to realize hidden, but powerful passions, to raise up, and bring the Homeland/ Birthplace into being [once again].The *Halutz* movement knew disappointment and pride in aliyah, it knew about the incidents of bloodletting in The Land, and the suffering of the Jewish laborer, and of his struggle to find a grip on the land with his fingernails. It also knew of the echelons of those who abandoned *The Land*, because of the weakness of their hands. Those who offered encouragement did not say to give up. The scions of our city, *Halutzim* from all movements, took part in this wondrous ambit, and stood in its midst with fortitude and pride.

In the year 1924, Ber'eleh Sztuk (Dov Sadan) came to visit in our city, representing the central office of '*HeHalutz.*' He met with the first of the '*HeHalutz*' members in the Wolkowica Forest, for purposes of getting acquainted, and a discussion of appointments. The evening that we spent together with this charismatic guest will not be forgotten: as an accomplished intimate, he presented to us all of the famous speeches of all the parties in Galicia. In that same year, the house of *'HeHalutz'* was established by Lejzor Ribner and Naphtali Neuer. The officers of the local branch participated in all of the councils and committee meetings of *HeHalutz*' in Lvov, and many tens of members went off to a variety of training camps that had been created in a variety of places in Eastern and Western Galicia. The outbreak of the bloodshed, taking place in the events of the year 5689 (1929) made a very substantial impression on the youth and on wide swaths of those who were making *aliyah* at the time. In general, everyone that made *aliyah* would elicit a great deal of emotion.

The Birth of the People's Pioneering Youth Movement, 'Gordonia.'

The '*Gordonia*' organization was established in our city as far back as the years 1923-1924, almost in a spontaneous fashion, without guidance or direction of any particular sort. The branch in our city was the first or second in Galicia. As is known, it was in Galicia that the cradles stood for the youth movements of '*HaShomer HaTza'ir*,' and '*Gordonia*,' which in the course of time prospered and were transformed into national movements. In the summer of 1925, the founding meeting of this movement took place in Lvov, with the participation of our representatives, and this gave the movement its initial imprint of organization and education.

Today, after more than forty years, it is not easy to raise up from the remnants of the past what had taken place during those first years of the creation of the movement, to express those deeply held aspirations of the youth of that period. It was a period in the world of a burgeoning youth, striking out and looking for a new way to achieve self-actualization. The visible aspects of this were – to cast off the yoke of the older, more mature people, including parents, a rebellion against the status quo, and the search for new worlds and yearning to capture the heights in the realm of thought and deed.

From *The Land*, the shores of the *Kinneret* and the Jordan, came the reverberations of the heroic accomplishments of Halutzim. We heard about personalities and character that were unique of its kind, enchanting and capturing those dreaming young people, catalyzing them to engage in those activities of personal preparation, emulating the Elder from Degania – A. D. Gordon. We were awestruck by this man, who at such an advanced age, carved out of himself a persona, and revealed powerful spiritual strength, standing and realizing those desires for building, and the erection of a just society.



Page 39: The 'Gordonia' Leadership in 1932

From the Left: Yitzhak Daks, Chaim Joseph Wilkenfeld-Zadok, Ber'l Hebenstreit, Kris'l Berger, Gimpel Just, Chava Straum, Aharon Grindiger, Reizl Spritzer, Moshe Berger, and Ut'ek Regenstreif-Ragav

We did not want to mechanically copy from other youth movements in Europe, that spread out considerably after the First World War; but also, we did not have the wherewithal to start something completely anew. During the years, the movement obtained , by absorption, a number of the characteristics of a youth movement, such as a motto, outlooks, symbols, costume, establishment of camps, expeditions into nature, summer camps for educators and leaders, gender division of the age groups, educational units for the members, administering the branch, an advisory council and the like. As an independent movement, '*Gordonia*' guarded the spark of the labor movement's work for its organizers. We were, following the classical expression of one of the outstanding personalities in the labor movement – Joseph Szprinzak – in the ranks of the loyal and free (*Trei und Frei*). At the international conclave of the movement in Danzig, the fundamental principle of the movement was established as ' *Gordonia* aims to educate the man, and to realize Zionist Labor.' As a guiding principle, the movement took upon itself the basic line – Implementation of the concept of the *Halutz*. This is what we dug into, and it was in this way that everyone educated in this fashion was measured. Because of this, we could stand up to all the

assaults and various questioning, and the difficulties that were heaped upon us by the powerful currents of communism that would storm upon the souls of the young.

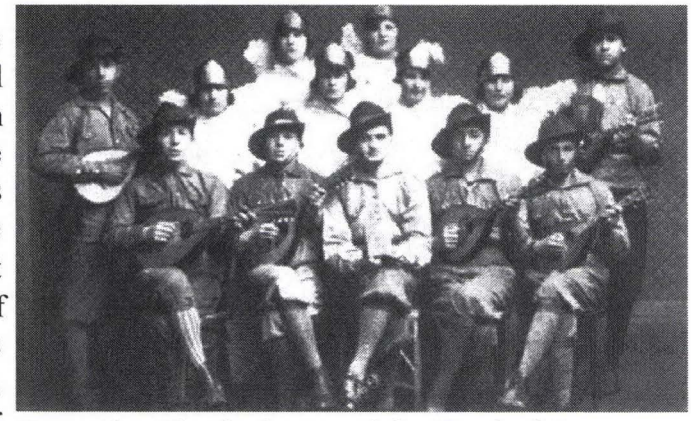
By its nature, *Gordonia* was a people's youth movement, and this was a literal fact in our city. We rented premises in the Josefsberg house, and it was there that the organizational, educational and cultural work was conducted for many years. We divided up the membership into a ladder of age cohorts, and especially into three major divisions of the Anticipators, The Awakening Ones, and those Completing. There were individual unique units within each division, and there was a group head for each unit.

With the establishment of the Hebrew School in the 'Baron Hirsch' building of that day, under the direction of Avner Hafner-Avneri, and the Hebrew Kindergarten under the direction of Pep'keh Beerer-Suslik, we fulfilled the prerequisites for the school. As understood, we also created sections for the study of the Hebrew language, and included into the discussions subjects dealing with Zionism, the Labor Movement, analysis of national policy, and questions that the times raised.

We were vigorous with regard to the various groups of the young people, and there was a period when *Gordonia* numbered more than 250 members. We also succeeded in reaching the Jewish pupils in the public schools, and high school in the city, and we organized most of them. They would come to the branch clandestinely, and were very vehement that they not be exposed for this. Let us record here a number of them: Fredik Versstandig, Na'szek Popiel, Seidman, Meir Lunk, Zigmund and Izi'yu Zimmerman, Ful'ek and Ut'ek Regenstrief, Chaim Joseph Wilkenfeld (Chaim Zadok), Mun'yu Grauer, Moshe and Naomi Guzhik. A younger group within the organization was established in 1929, whose membership received leadership in education and various activities. Of them, let us at least record Pesha Daks, Jonah Ziring, Pinchas Daks, Jonah (Tuvia'li) Bodenstein, Shlomo Wahrhaftig-Priffner, Shmaryahu Freiheiter, Chava Strauss, Yeshayahu Kornman, Sheva Zauerbrun, Zippora Weinberg, Ber'li Hebenstreit, and Aharon Greidinger (Bar-Akiva).

After the leaders (heads of the groups) of the first cohort made *aliyah* to *The Land* – a second cohort of leaders arose, among them Yitzhak Daks, Minna Strauss, Chaim J. Wilkenfeld (Chaim Zadok), Ut'ek Regenstrief, Mand'ik Rathaus, Reizl'i Spritzer, Fradl Morgenstern (Hedva Raszisz), Moshe Berger. Krusa'li Berger, Ze'ev Sambal, and Sar'l Berger.

On Saturday nights, all the members of the branch would get together for a general discussion, singing, under the direction of an engaging member – Abraham Klag. At these get-togethers, various games and quizzes were organized, to the delight of all the participants. During the Sabbath days of most of the summer months, all of the members of the branch would get up in the early hours and go out in song to the Wolkowica Forest, for purposes of having a discussion with their leaders. When the discussion concluded, everyone would make ready to return to the



Page 40: The Orchestra of the 'Gordonia' *Movement in the City*

city for lunch with their families. Occasionally, we would meet with the members of *Gordonia* from Magierow, which was close to the road that led to the forest.

After a while, we put together an orchestra of Neapolitan instruments[33]. That would add a musical substance to the public appearances that the branch would put on at the 'Orphanage.' During the Purim holiday, the orchestra would appear in various houses, in order to stimulate more contributions for the *Keren-HaKayemet*. At public presentations, Hebrew plays were presented, such as 'The Kidnappers,' and 'Jephtha's Daughter.' The celebrations, in which the girls and boys danced the dances of Israel, that were popular among the youth groups, made a very substantial impression.

From time-to-time, emissaries from the Land of Israel came to visit, and spent some time in Galicia, and every such visit left a powerful impression on those who participated.

A special experience of its kind, were the departure evenings, held for members who had completed their training, and their turn had arrived to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. The joy of those evenings was great, and was accompanied by personal pride, and pride in the movement together. On the following day, we would escort those making aliyah to the train station, parting from them emotionally, mixed with both joy and sadness. Those remaining behind hoped that some day, their turn would come, and that they would be reunited with those others in due course.

The Eve of the Holocaust



Page 41: (Top, Left)
R' Nehemiah Just ז"ל

In the month of May 1938, I left *The Land* for the purposes of acting as an emissary on behalf of the senior leadership of '*Gordonia*'– Maccabi Youth,' the *Histadrut*, and *Keren HaKayemet* L'Israel – in order to work in the Gordonia youth movement in Eastern Galicia. As a citizen of the Land of Israel, with the end of a year of being in Poland, I was required to return to *The Land*, in order to obtain a new Polish visa; I returned to Poland in July 1939 with my wife, and my two little children – Naomi, five years of age, and Nehemiah aged three – in order that they become familiar with their family there, and for them to get to know the first of their grandchildren to be born in *The Land*. I did this to etch into our memories, experiences that would nourish the soul of a person for all the days of his life.

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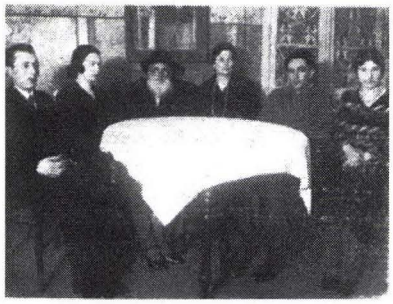
33 One of the several forms of a mandolin, as evidenced by the picture in the text.



Page 41: (Bottom, Left): The Family of Akiva & Shayndl Zimmerman

Within two weeks, I was able to get us to the point of settling in the town of my birth, in order to be in the ambit of my mother Sar'ki ז"ל, the unforgettable mother, so good, and the one who makes things good for her children and her family; to see the shining face of this Woman of Valor, who by virtue of providing support through anonymous charity-giving, or open assistance, supports her neighbors, and even distant relatives, who not only once tasted from the goodness of her heart; to see my sisters – pretty and radiant Yenta, who helps her mother carry the yoke of providing sustenance to the family; Sima'leh, that smiling and robust young girl, flowering in the spring of her life; my brothers Moshe and Leib'li, of such integrity and of good heart; the family of my wife – the mother, Shayndl Zimmerman, that pleasant woman with the magical smile; her sister Bluma, dedicated without bounds; her brother Meir, so wide and enlightened; and her brother-in-law, Mun'dek Muster, the man of energy; and my uncles and their families, and all of my friends and intimates, from the days of my youth. I promenaded through the streets of the city, and down its sideways, reaching every corner, road, stand of trees and forest, in which my foot trod not that many years ago. I inhaled deeply of the air anew, which brought back the memory of all the years of my past.

In my mission on behalf of the movement, I visited close to 50 cities and towns in Eastern and Western Galicia. I familiarized myself with Jewish life, especially the lives of the youth, and realized that it had come to a shuttered end, but it did not desist from seeking some sort of means. Many of my friends had accommodated themselves – got married, raised families, and were immersed in the concerns of survival. A few made *aliyah* to *The Land*, and there were others that went off to faraway places – the lands of Europe, South America and even Canada.

I saw the Jews in our city (as was the case in other places as well) continuing their difficult struggle for survival. There were those among them who succeeded, as a result of extraordinary effort and good fortune. A small part of them left for study, and there were those whose studies were halted for lack of means. There were still the coddled young me, supported at the tables of their fathers-in-law. But there were also those who did not want to be dependent on a table that was not their own, and tried their hand at commerce, in accounting, and other occupations.



Page 41: (Bottom, Right): The Just Family, ז"ל

In this final period, businesses involving forest products and sawmills flowered. The fur and hat making trade also was carried on in our city, and exported its products to a variety of countries all over Europe. But these small points of light did not have the power to change the decline. [In] all the places that I visited, I saw the deterioration and the hopelessness, and I sensed that a day was coming when all of this would dissipate and come to nothing. However, even in the darkest of conceptions, no man foresaw the coming of the Holocaust.

I left Rawa-Ruska with my family on 26.8.1939, and Lvov on 28.8.1939, in order to reach a port in Rumania, and from there to sail off to The Land. I had a sense of those being the last hours before the outbreak of the conflagration. The skies became covered in dark clouds, and a terrible gloom pervaded everything.

The enlightened world fell silent, while the Nazi beast pursued the Jews with fiery anger and tore them apart like prey.

Are there any tears left with which to keen over the Holocaust that overtook my people and the scions of my city?

We, in a free country, and those of our brethren in the Diaspora – have the obligation to remember that which happened to us, and to do all that is in our power to see that in this world there is never a return to such a Holocaust.

The Tale of Rawa-Ruska

By Y. Tz. Rubin

Eastern Galicia occupied a prominent and dominant place in the map of the Jewish Diaspora of the past, as the promulgator of its own general Jewish way of life. Going back even to the days of belonging to the Austrian monarchy, its life was molded to the extent that its circumscribed independent autonomy, and self-determination permitted, in all that related to its Jewish way of life

My birthplace, Rawa-Ruska, despite being a crossroads of transportation to the four winds of the earth, was not distinguished in its wealth, and did not bestow much good on its residents. It was a modest place, its ambience characterized by hills and forests around it. And also a river and a tributary cut through it. It was not endowed with much in the way of natural resources about it, and no great manufacturing facilities flowered there, and the business of prosperous merchants and entrepreneurs did not develop there. The commerce, as well, did not blaze any trails. Exceptions were the few, who in the years prior to the Holocaust, engaged in the business of lumber and fur and hat making. All the activity there, did not stray far from the ambit of making a living. Making a living, in the main – this was the level that only a very limited cohort of people were able to achieve. Nevertheless, most of the populace managed to eke out a bare living, and it was to such an existence that most aspired to. There were no 'easy ways' by which to earn a living, but rather, people survived by the hard labor of their hands, and the sweat of their brow, which was they way their earned their bread.

Most of the Jews of the city (most of the residents were Jewish, and the minority – Poles and Ukrainians) earned their living through the hard labor of their hands. They engaged in all manner of occupations, that encompassed those necessities of life that were common to that time, those being their personal needs, and the needs of the common people in the city and the [surrounding] villages. They were tailors, shoemakers, millers, bakers, builders, glaziers, smiths, wagon drivers, porters and all occupations of this kind. In the final years, the Jews benefitted from the fur and hat making trade,

which penetrated into each and every home. But even store keeping, that barely was able to sustain its owner/operators, was the very face of hard work, and the drain on the energy of those engaged was no less than that of other ways of making a living. The ongoing life of all the Jews of the city were not easy. They were able to eat their bread by the sweat of their brow, and blessed God for it. As is understood, there were a few well-to-do people in the city – 'One or two in the family,' – but it was not they who gave the place its coloration.

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Despite these circumstances, the Jews did not lack energy, and were not in any sense run down. They were not consumed by drunkenness and frivolity; their modest and untrammeled lives was a source of good health for them. All of the businesses and forms of work that the Jews took to, forged their bodies, generation after generation. There were stalwarts among them, who instilled fear on the gentiles of the area on market days. However, in the affairs of the internal lives in their communities, it was the hand of the scholar and sage that was primary, and engendered attributes that were based on the sparks of the soul, whose characteristic always was a clear and distinct Jewish characteristic. It was in this fashion that the Jews of the city built for themselves a Jewish life, a Jewish world, constructed inside of it. From the standpoint of the spirit and the soul, the Jew there felt himself to be replete with inner freedom. It was not only in the religious and spiritual sense, that they were directed into themselves; also in all matters of trade and negotiation between Jews, they conducted themselves in general, without recourse to the statutes of the government, and in the event of a dispute, went to the Rabbi of the city, or to the *Dayan* as dispenser of justice[34] – to the laws of the Torah, or to seek compromise.

I can still recall those days when I was dependent – only for a few numbered months – at the table of my father-in-law, the Rabbi *Gaon*, Our Teacher, the Rabbi Israel Schwert זצ"ל, who was both analytically accomplished and thoroughly versed in the laws of finance and torts, as was proven to me during the many 'Courts of Law' and negotiations involving the Jews of the place and its environs, that were conducted in his presence almost every day, day-in and day-out. His reputation reached distant places, and he directed such disputes using Torah Law, in the courts of Rabbi Seif of Lvov, and even reached the capital of Warsaw, with R' Menachem Zemba זצ"ל, the well known *Gaon*, and many others like them.

The dominant language was Yiddish, but they were compelled to speak a bit of Polish or Ukrainian with the 'gentiles' for the purposes of conducting business. The older generation was suckled on its 'spirituality,' just from the sacred writings in the 'Holy Tongue' – apart from the women most of whose sacred texts were in Yiddish, as for example *'Tzena u'Re'ena,' Ma'ayan Tahor,' Menorat HaMaor,' 'Shayvet-Mussar'* and others. Before my eyes, there are several scenes from the distant past: on every Sabbath and Festival Holiday, all of the neighborhood women would gather in our house, old and young, and my mother ז"ל, would read to them from '*Tzena u'Re'ena*,' regarding the portion of the Torah of the week; and on the night of *Tisha B'Av*, rivers and streams of tears would flow in our house during the time when my mother ז"ל would read from the *Megillah* of The Book of Lamentations regarding the destruction of the Holy Temple. In a semi-circle of stools they sat,

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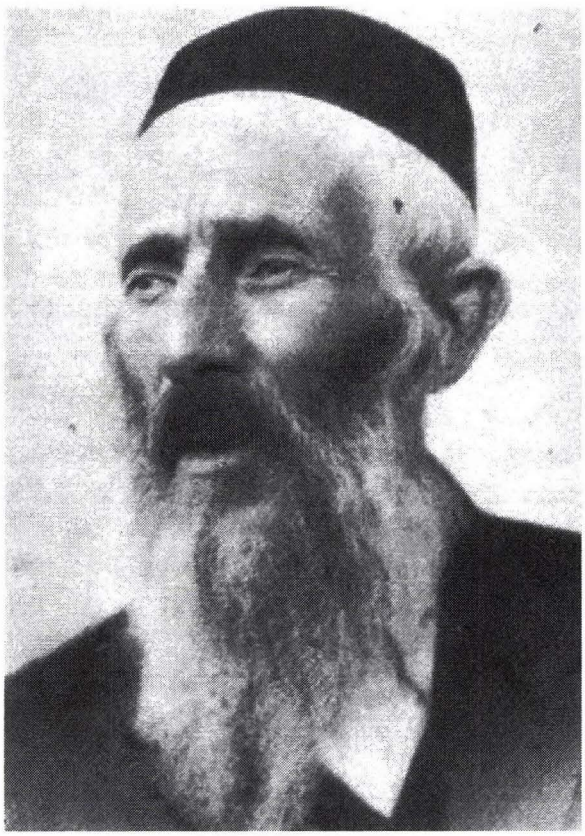
[34] The Hebrew acronym used here is דומ"ץ, signifying a dispenser of justice.

surrounded by the pitch black darkness, with only the flickering of a candle in my mother's hand to recall the tongues of flame that burst forth from the consumed Holy Temple. Groans and crying burst forth from the mouth of each and every one of them, in reaction to those stormy chapters, following the rhythm of the reading that was done with such relish. The pages of 'The Book' remained speckled with the congealed wax from the candle for days. In the years after the First World War, the younger generation went after other books to read, and the readers of newspapers grew, as well as autodidacts yearning for spiritual content and spiritual satisfaction from other sources.

The 'Zamd ' Bet HaMedrash



Page 43: R' Yaakov Graff ז"ל

There were two houses of worship in the vicinity of our residence: the new *Bet HaMedrash*, or '*The Zamd Bet HaMedrash,*' and the '*Klyzl.*' The first was expanded to a building of sizeable dimension, on the remains of the old destroyed *Bet HaMedrash*, even before the outbreak of the First World War. It was R' Zelig Feder-Figrat and his father-in-law, R' Mikhl'l Gold began its construction, who invested their entire energy and strength into its construction and completion. The two *Gabbaim* after them, bestowed with the rubric, 'Faithfully Engaged in the Needs of the Community' [were] R' Yaakov Graff, and R' Israel Fischler ז"ל: the first, for whom the entire income of the household was provided by his wife, the *Woman of Valor*, Hod'yeh ע"ה, from commerce in fabric that she conducted on her own volition, and leaving him, her husband, free from the burden of making a living, so he could dedicate the majority of his time to community affairs, and to being a *Gabbai* of the *Bet HaMedrash* that was built across from their house and place of business. The second Gabbai who carried out great work in leading the affairs of the previously mentioned Bet HaMedrash, in the improvements to the exterior and all of the other needs of the worshipers – was the son-in-law of the 'Rich Father-in-law,' R' Benjamin Yekhl'i's-Weinberger, and attached to his table without any concerns about making a living – sitting day and night studying Torah and Holy Service, also conveying Torah concepts to young 'students.' He was a Belz *Hasid* and a wondrous scholar, and was able to spread his *Hasidic* spirit over the pupils around him. Even after he had learned to engage in commerce on his own, these activities did not disturb his involvement in community matters, and all of the worshipers of the *Bet HaMedrash* selected him as the first *Gabbai* on whose word all things depended. His sons, who were educated in this spirit, joined the '*Torah v'Avodah*' movement in their youth, and became leaders of the '*Mizrahi*' in the city. After the sons made *aliyah* to *The Land*, the parents also succeeded in doing so, and they were privileged to live their lives out there, and privileged to be buried in the Holy Land.

From among the other worshipers, it is appropriate to recall in a praiseworthy fashion the following: R' Hirsch bar Donner, who donated the carpentry work, and R' Itcheh Gimpel's and all of his progeny – R' Zalman Itcheh Gimpel's, and R' Fyvel Itcheh Gimpel's-Fischler, Ser'keh Just the daughter of Itcheh Gimpel's and her husband Nehemiah. Sima Daks and her husband Chaim David; all donated a great deal of money to the construction and bought many 'places' on a 'permanent basis.'

A wondrous and exalted persona between the walls of that very same *Bet HaMedrash*, which is unforgettable, and will not move from memory, was that of the *Hazzan,* R' Abraham Moshe Feldman ל"ז. A God-fearing man both openly and clandestinely, who derived his sustenance from the hard labor of his own hands, because he was a Scribe. On those Sabbaths, when the new month was consecrated, during Festival Holidays, and on the High Holy Days, he would lead services in front of the Ark for the '*Musaf*' part of the service, and his delivery of the service was uniquely sweet and enjoyable, because in reality he was a '*Baal Tefilah*,' with great 'feeling,' that would cause the heart of worshipers to quake, and engender 'arousal' among all those who heard him.

From time immemorial, it was the elderly R' Nachman Sender's, father of R' Yitzhak Nachman's-Morgenstern, who held a 'franchise' for leading the '*Shacharit*' services and R' Abraham Moshe would lead '*Musaf*;'His *'Hineni HeAni Mima'ass'* resonated in the ears of his listeners during all the days of the year. After the First World War, the '*Rebbe*' of Potelycz moved to live in Rawa, and took away the 'franchise' from him for leading *Musaf* on the High Holy Days, as a privilege of the '*Rebbe*:' from that time on, he made a transition to leading the *Shacharit* prayers, and in his thundering rendition of '*HaMelech*' we sensed the aggravation in his soul for having lost his 'franchise.' A Jewish man with a good and warm heart, possessed of a sense of humor with many jokes to tell, he used 'joking banter' to convey the sorrow of his loss, without resort to the verses of forgiveness as it might have related to the wrong that was inflicted on him.

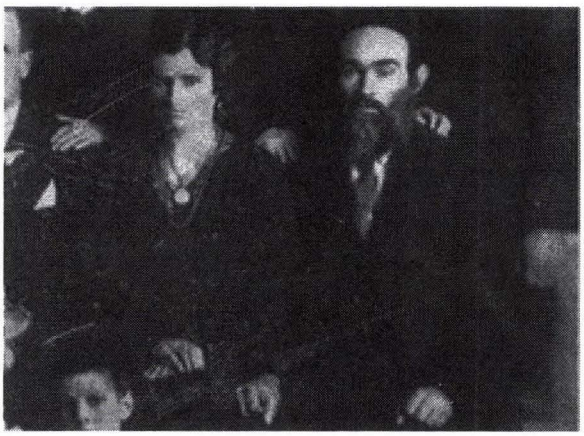
The *Bet HaMedrash* grew to the point that in the winter, it was very difficult to warm up its interior, and all those who 'studied' there set up their learning stations in the *Klyzl*.

The 'Klyzl'

The 'New *Klyzl*' that was built yet in the day when R' Yoss'li Marz was the Head *Gabbai*, and there are those who say: the principal donor to cover the building expenses, because as a matter of fact, the '*Klyzl*'s completely under his aegis, and under his supervision, opened its gates to all comers to partake in the warmth of its atmosphere. R' Yoss'li led *Musaf* services, read from the Torah, and was the 'Master of the House,' seeing as the entire congregation were 'Masters of the House" – being a staunch congregational leader, and 'The Man of Knowledge' – because he was the 'Man of the Hundred.' He was the best *Mohel* in the city, doing this out of a sense of the mitzvah involved, and never receiving remuneration.

After he passed away, the leadership passed to his son, R' Abraham Itcheh, the Rich One, but he didnot hold onto it for long, because with the outbreak of the First World War, he went into exile. The role of *Gabbai* then passed into the hands of two young men, who were both alert and competent: R' Boruch (Buzhe'li) Post, who was trained in the competence associated with property administration, and R' Shmuel Tzipis-Straum, the Belz *Hasid.* They had previously led services at the 'Old *Kloyz*;' from their hands, it passed to R' Aharon Ka"Tz, whose wife Myteh conducted a dry goods business, and he dedicated a large part of his time both heart and soul to community affairs. And his partner in being a *Gabbai* was R' Hirsch Guzhik, whom all of the 'students' and worshipers considered as being a blessing to them, because from the moment that he ascended to take this honored position, there never was a lack of firewood to warm the place – he was a dealer in lumber products of all sorts – and everyone who approached the stove to insert a log of wood, remembered him to the good, and would say: one – because of the Rich One, one and one – for the philanthropist, because he was a good-hearted Jewish man of pleasant disposition.

The '*Shammes*' of the '*Klyzl*' was R' David'l. My mother ע"ה would joke about the extent to which he was a '*schlemiel.*' They built two women's galleries. There was a bottom one and an upstairs one, done in order to give the building balance. One time, during the construction, R' David'l stood on the top level, and my mother below called out to him: 'R' David'l I have *Yahrzeit* today!' He –without stopping to think much, and to look at his surroundings – took a quick step and asked: 'What do you say Kaylah?' And in doing so, he stepped off the top gallery and fell to the bottom one. To his good fortune, he fell into a pit full of mud and water, and got out uninjured. My mother always would go back and repeat this incident, adding that it was only by a 'miracle' and the assistance of a holy soul, for whom he was obligated to light the memorial candle, that he was saved from a certain death. Even though, we, the older ones, would worship in the '*Zamd Bet HaMedrash*,' she would always pray at the '*Klyzl*,' because it was newer, and because of the good acoustics that existed there, and R' David'l would get a regular 'monthly fee' from her.



Page 44: *R' Boruch Post and his wife, Hadassah of the Altshuler Family,* ה"יד.

One of the worshipers was R' Zalman 'The Filthy One,' Klughaupt, a wondrous and distinguished Belz *Hasidic* Jew, clever and sharp, a storyteller and jokester from the Belz court. At all events, such as weddings that took place in the 'courtyard,' he would regale all the *Hasidim* and guests, who had come to share in the festive occasion of the *Rebbe's*, with his wondrous stories and sayings. And why was he called 'The Filthy One?' One time, during a wedding in Belz, he danced on the balustrade of the building of the tall 'Great Synagogue,' and he lost his footing and fell to the ground. To the shock of all the onlookers, he picked himself up on his own feet, quite well and unharmed – one of the Belz 'miracles.'

His son, R' Zindl'eh 'The Filthy One' (These nicknames were passed down like an inheritance) also worshiped at the Klyzl, He married off his

daughter Chaya to my brother Asher, and they had three children.

I remember all of these, and my innards tremble on those that I have lost, but will never forget...

The Way of Life in the City

The way life was ordered, the way of life, and life in general – were Jewish in nature. The sense of being Jewish pervaded everything, even in the process of enjoyment and merrymaking. On lying down and on rising up, this was the heartbeat of life. It was in the cry of 'rise up to do the work of The Creator!' and in the melody that would cause the heart to tremble in the early hours of the morning. We would arise energetically, and ready to go – some to recite the Psalms, sone to study, others to pray. The young boys, 'students,' would arise and go to the *Bet HaMedrash* or the *Kloyz*, in summer and winter, in the frost and snow that sometimes reached up to the knees. In fear and trembling, and with the chatter of 'teeth against teeth,' they would slither along in the darkness, until they reached the *Bet HaMedrash*, which was being heated, and starting to get warm.

The *Shammes* of the '*Klyzl*,' R' David'l would receive a monthly stipend for coming around to wake us up at three o'clock before dawn. We were groups of boys: Aharon Weidhorn, Eleazar Reinert, Israel'keh Wachsman and others. After we had finished at all of the teachers, and there was not any energy left in their hands to inculcate more Torah, we went off to learn on our own, by ourselves; this was the *Gemara* and *Tosafot*, *Orakh Chaim*, *Yoreh Deyah*, and other works. At a later hour, R' Tuvia 'Husak' ז"ל arrived, an enlightened Jew who led us in prayer – sitting with us, and inculcating us in a lesson of '*Nedarim* with the Ra"N,' and other things. Also, R' Yehuda'li Pollack, may he be separated for long life, while being sat at the table of his father-in-law R' Boruch Bush, then a budding young man, and a wondrous scholar, would come every afternoon, inculcating us, Weidhorn and myself, in a session of '*Berachot* with Ri"T Algazi,'

There were times, after we had already gone out to graze in the fields of other cultures, that we took advantage of this 'cover' for other purposes. At an early hour in the '*Klyzl*' there was a *minyan*, or two *minyanim* of men, in which each of them was either immersed in reading Psalms, or engaged in prayer. In our great desire to study *Tanakh* with a 'commentary' that was considered to be 'unclean and invalid' – we took possession and concealed these *Tanakh* volumes underneath the *'Gemara*,' and succeeded for an extended period of time, to study in this way, until it was revealed by someone who then informed on us before the *Hasidim*. To our good fortune, we learned of this at an auspicious time, and we succeeded in removing and absconding with the 'commentary' even before those who were looking for it reached us, and this lesson session then subsided, and we never again had the nerve to continue doing it in this fashion.

At a time like this, it is my wish to recall two teachers of a 'high level,' with whom I learned before I launched my own self-study; the first R' Aryeh Leib Ginsberg, nicknamed '*Der Langer Aryeh-Leib*,' the father of the journalist of the '*Tageblatt*' in Lvov, Ben-Zion Ginsberg, an exceptionally learned man in Torah, disseminating progressive ideas, constantly speculating in the higher realms. Even during prayer, one didn't see him open his mouth. Rather, he would be deeply sunken in his

thoughts for hours upon hours. And even though he was inner-directed, closed off to himself – he was alert, and would attach himself to his students. He would orient his ear like a funnel, cocked to catch the sound of Torah that emerged from the youths, instilling in them the zeal for books, in the expectation of raising them to levels of wisdom. As an added thoroughness, he introduced 'Torah discussions.' These clarifications during study, nuances, ideas in comparing one point of view with another, in a critical way, broadened our capacity to undertake future self-study, in the *Kloyz* or in the *Bet HaMedrash*, would sometimes take on the appearance of sharp disputes, and sparks of fire would emanate from those who won out, to the point that it was comparable to seeing two opponents standing opposite one another. But these were not just victories of word alone – but beliefs, and the opening of the intellectual faculties to deep thinking, acuity, and the resonance of the mind. And the mind became marvelously sharpened through the experiences of 'Abaye and Rava' 'Rav and Shmuel,' and '*Tanu Rabbanan*[35]' – with the broadening of the portals of the Torah in light of all this, it grew and became more pleasurable, the pleasure of Torah. And seeing that my parents v"g wanted to introduce me into a more *Hasidic* ambit – they passed me over to the 'second' teacher, like a transfer from pole to pole, to R' Leib'li-R' Abram-Meir's, to the well of *Hasidism*, to a different world, to a new world. In addition to studies in the *'Talmud*,' and the *Arba'a Shulkhan Arukh*,' you were taken there by the tremendous spirituality of the Hasidic fear of God, and *Hasidism* itself from the source from where it was suckled – Belz.

Daily, every day, we would appear after three o'clock in the morning, before the break of dawn, both in the summer and winter. All studying took place by candlelight. In this nest of *Hasidism*, on an every day basis, there would assemble, before this warm spark, those who were also from among the most venerable and great of the *Hasidim* in the city, such as: R' Israel Mikhl Feder; R' Yeshaya Raver; R' Shlomo Zalman Gurfinkel, who was the publisher and the printer of the renowned '*Belz Siddur*,' '*Ohr HaYashar*;' The wondrous *Hasid* the Rabbi *Gaon* our Teacher and Rabbi Israel Schwert, the talented R' Israel Raver, author of the important thoughts of the previously mentioned *Siddur*, and also '*Der Vyser Srul*' the husband of Kesha Weidhorn, and occasionally, as a guest, we would have the unique R' Yoss'li Jarczwer-Gold, who in general always accompanied the Rebbe and did not leave him for a minute.

These *Hasidim*, and men of action, would pray at the last *minyan*. And in order to assuage their hunger until they got to the *Shacharit* prayers, they would boil up some pure coffee (without chicory, the rigorously observant did not use chicory out of concern for *kashrut)*, and pure milk, drink and eat ring cakes of a sort not requiring a formal washing of the hands. They would sit and converse about 'Torah matters,' but even more specifically about the lore of *Hasidism*. This lore was an oral lore, that one could hear in their conversations, and the conceptual reach in all matters reached wondrous heights and depths. The telling of tales, and the 'Lore from the lips of the *Rebbe* – their intent was to create listening to the lore of *Hasidism*, and to convey the news about it to the world. And to properly orient our thinking, we the young folk, we titled an ear from our learning towards the 'other,' in order to snatch and gather up bits and pieces from their discourse. An electric current would pass and flow through this group, and would engender the great pressure, the peer pressure,

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35 The Aramaic introduction, 'And the Rabbis taught...' preceding a Talmudic exposition.

as they spoke of 'him' about the *'Rebbe.'* We envied them, and everyone wanted to attain to that same level of nobility, to that same intoxication of the spirit of *Hasidism*, to the anchor and to seize that sphere of holiness – called by the name *'Rebbe.'*



Page 46: The Hasidim *of the City Travel to Belz*

The Influence of Belz

In the heart of Rawa-Ruska, there dwelt *'Rebbes:'* The *Rebbe* of Magierow, the *Rebbe* of Potelycz, and the *Rebbe* of Nemierow; However, 'Belz' Hasidism, that of a town close to our city, graced us out of its integrity, from its Hasidism, in every aspect of its life. Rawa-Ruska was a border town. And almost everyone that had a desire to reach Belz, had to pass through it. And the Hasidim – had a saying that was forever on their lips: *'Yehay Rawa Kadamakh*[36]*.'* And it was in this way that Belz placed its imprint on our city, a dominance that was practically complete.

The extent of the dominance of Belz in our city can be understood from the story of an incident that I heard while I was still young: the population of the city had grown, and the 'community' had decided to engage and retain an additional *Shokhet*[37], and offered the position to R' Israel Schwert, the son of R' Hirsch'eleh the *Shokhet* (in passing, it should be noted that R' Hirsch'eleh himself was a formidable scholar in Torah, with Rabbinic ordination, and because he was not a 'Hasid' – it fell to him that his fate would be to remain a. *Shokhet*). R' Israel, who at that time had already received Rabbinic ordination, was inclined by disposition to become a *Dayan*, and the *Hasidim* also sided with him in this respect. However, the 'community' wanted to retain him in the capacity of *Shokhet* only. When the *Rebbe*, R' Issachar arrived in our town for the celebration of laying the cornerstone for the *'Eizerneh Kloyz,'* he ordered the *Bet Din*[38] of the town to come before him, and specifically called out the names of the members of the *Bet Din*: R' Joseph, R' Yankl'i Lezhensker, and R' Israel; and on the following day, he had already received a 'consensus,' for his nominations to the *Bet Din* of the city. The community canceled its own intentions in face of the will of the *Rebbe.*

And I recall yet another incident. In preparing for the time that the *Rebbe* came from Belz to our city, all manner of preparations were undertaken for months, including the erection of a gigantic 'enclosure' to accommodate all those who would come to pray and participate in the *'Tisch.'* And when he arrived, the entire city assumed a festive air, and went out to receive him and his entourage with drum and dance, with musical instruments and torches, with men on horseback like 'Cossacks,'

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36 A play on an Aramaic phrase taken from the Sabbath prayers when removing the Torah from the ark to be read. The phrase means 'May it be Thy gracious will,' but the play is on the Aramaic word Ra'ava, which sounds like Rawa.

37 A Ritual Slaughterer

38 A Jewish religious court, manned by at least three people of scholarly repute, well-versed in Jewish law, usually including the sitting Rabbi as its Head, or Senior.

carrying two giant lanterns: one in the form of the '*Eizerneh Kloyz*,' the handiwork of Wolf Baumwohl, and the second – the handiwork of Yaakov and Aharon Weidhorn, in the form of the '*Klyzl*.'

I remember all this, because I was a pupil at the '*Heder*' of R' Pesach Jataliss-Weidhorn. He was a very insightful Jew, a man truly gifted in making handicrafts, who, apart from teaching us *Gemara* and *Tanakh,* also taught us other intellectual skills such as the beginnings of practical 'penmanship.' When the time arrived leading up to the Purim holiday, everyone was obligated to write out the entirety of the Book of Esther (it was permitted to transcribe this book, because the name of God does not appear within), with the opening word, *Vayehi* beautifully decorated. For the Shavuot holiday, everyone would cut out designs from paper and make decorations (called *reizelakh* in Yiddish), with all manner of flowers, animals and birds, 'soaring from eagles, and deriving strength from lions.' His two sons, Yaakov and Aharon Weidhorn (Aharon later became my close friend and intimate, even though he was older than I by a couple of years) (the sons inherit the qualities of the father, and they, in their great skill, engaged in sacred work, as in the construction of the lanterns previously mentioned.) I remember all this, because they offered their help to their father's students, whom they selected, and I among them would fill in the red color, all of the reddened bricks of the '*Klyzl*' that they did not plaster.

And in this fashion, *Hasidism* reached a level where it transformed the lives of hundreds of thousands of the Children of Israel.

The 'Heders'

The study of the Torah was expressed in each family through the saying: ' [The study of] Torah is preferable to conducting commerce.' Raising one's sons to be fluent in Torah – was the highest ambition of every father and mother. Without recourse to any outside ruling, all Jewish fathers sent their sons, while yet young, to a *Heder*. There was no such thing as a life of indulgence for the Jews of the city, but for only one thing would a Jew go out of the bounds of his means – for tuition. Even the poor of the city would shoulder this heavy burden, denying themselves even the food for their mouths, in order to pay the teacher's salary on time. When the young boy would reach the age of three, 'the barber' would cut the locks of his head, leaving sidelocks on the side, and his father would wrap him in his *Tallit,* and together with the members of his family, with great joy, would bring him to the *Heder*, to the 'Elementary' Level *Melamed*. Whiskey and cakes would beautify the celebration, the celebration of laying a foundation, the foundations of Torah study.

The course of study ranged from the simple to the difficult: A. Elementary; B. Pentateuch and *Gemara*; C. *Tanakh, Gemara* with *Tosafot*; D. *Gemara* with *Poskim*; E. Leaving for the *Bet HaMedrash* for self-study. In the elementary level, the child would begin to recognize the letters and vowels, and after that '*Halb Tropf*' – the joining of the letters and vowels. After that '*Gantz Tropf*' – the reading of syllables and whole words. The approach was on an individual basis; after the teacher called the child to do his reading – the child would be permitted to engage in play. By definition, they learned how to recite '*Modeh Ani*,' '*Shema Yisrael*,' and a variety of blessings. An interesting and important obligation for the elementary level students was to go in the evening,

before a ritual circumcision (*Vokhnacht*) to the home of the mother who had just given birth, to read the '*Shema*' to ward off any evil, and there, they partook in sweets and baked goods to their pleasure.

Like most teachers, those who taught the elementary level were run down paupers. They were not outstanding scholars, but their merit lay in the patience that they had in educating these neophytes, and infusing the roots of Torah in them. Their spouse, the '*Rebbetzin*' was their helpmeet, and her role in this institution was substantial. I am obligated in this connection to recall our neighbor in this connection, R' Abraham-Itzik-Aharon'l's, one of the outstanding people, who for all of his days, fulfilled his role faithfully and a large part of the sons of the city first learned their *Aleph-Bet* from him.

The periods of rejoicing in the process of inculcating Torah to the young were regular. After the first period [e.g. semester/term] at the age of three, one arrived at the second – at the age of five. At the time that the young lad began the study of the Pentateuch, it was a big event for that child and his parents, which was accompanied by a special festival *mitzvah* meal. Everyone dressed as if for a holiday. The child – in new clothes with a white 'vest,' braided in gold, decorated with many watches and gold chains – to mimic a '*Khattan-Torah.*[39]' For this purpose, all the neighbors were asked for the loan of their watches and jewelry with which to adorn the child.

To this day, I can remember the marvelous experience, that left an ineradicable impression on me – the first theatrical presentation, in which I participated along with another student of the *Heder* – on the day I reached 'Pentateuch' age. As the festivities approached their peak, both of us were stood, myself as the 'groom' and the 'questioner' on the table, and the following exchange ensued:

The Questioner: Come here my little boy!
Me: I am no longer a little boy.
He: Well then, what are you?
Me: I am now a young man according to law.
He: If you are indeed a young man according to law, do you have some learning?
Me: It is very clear that I have some learning.
He: If so, what do you learn?
Me: My good fortune is to learn the Pentateuch.
He: If you study the Pentateuch, what does the word 'Pentateuch' mean?
Me: It means [there are] five.
He: What five? – Are these five pence in a groschen?
Me: No, the five books of the Holy Torah.
He: What are their names?
Me: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
He: In which of these are you currently studying?
Me: In the third, Leviticus.
He: What is the meaning of the word, '*Vayikra*?'
Me: '*Vayikra*' means – He called.
He: Who called? Did perhaps the *Shammes* call the Jews to the synagogue?
Me: No, it was the Lord who called to Moses, our Teacher, and he talked to him from the tent of

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39 The traditional name given to the person honored with the aliyah on Simchat Torah for the last portion in the scroll.

the tabernacle, giving him the laws of ritual sacrifice.

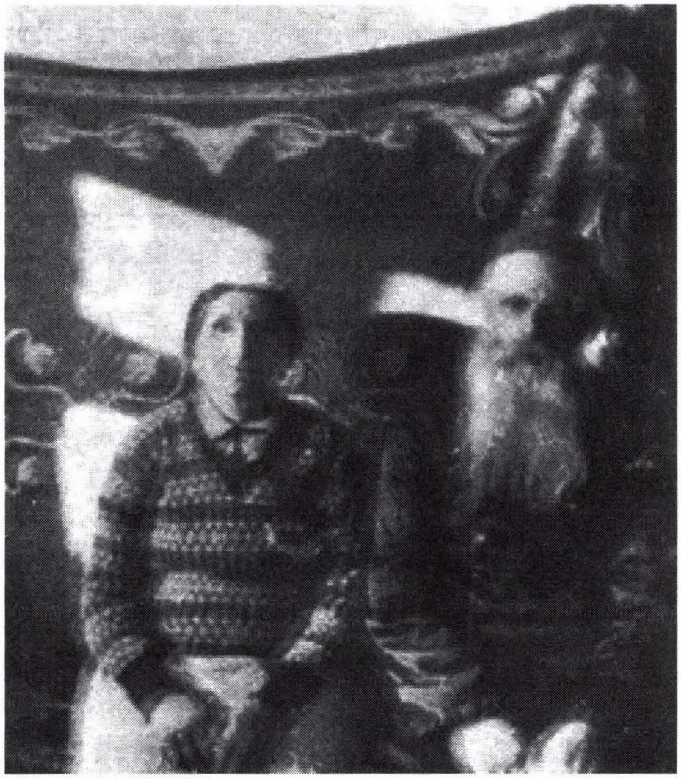
He: Why, specifically, the laws of ritual sacrifice?

Me: Just as the sacrifices are sacred – so all Jewish children who study Torah are also sacred.

Those who were present were greatly impressed, since we recited all of this by heart, without error, or any 'prompter;' The role of the 'Questioner' was also very important, because not all the children succeeded in doing this.

The third celebration in the period of youth was even more grandiose and festive, and took place at the boy's Bar Mitzvah. Then too, the 'Groom' was at the center of the event, in giving a Torah discussion, encumbered with complex casuistry, or just a simple logical argument, but one that was both sharp and profound.

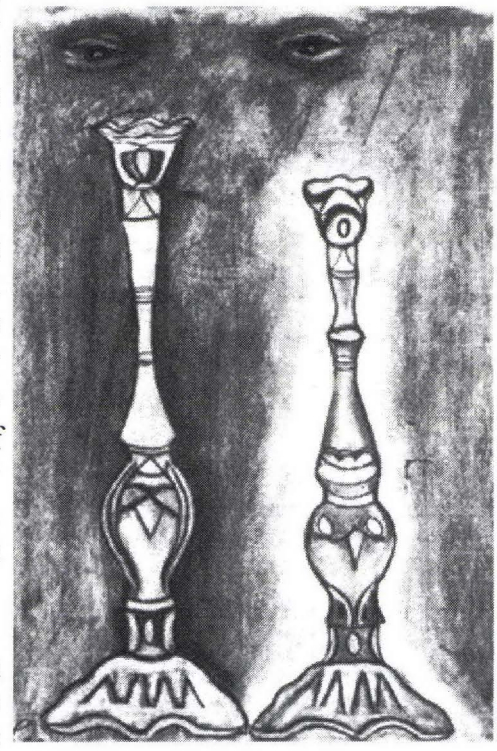
Pleasures in Jewish Life



Page 47: My Parents: Abraham Abish ben Yaakov Rubin and his wife Kaylah bat Asher HaLevi Segal, הי"ד

The pleasures derived from Jewish life was the center of life. The most central blessing at gatherings was the '*Yiddishe Nachas*,' the satisfactions from Jewish life. The foundations of this way of life were the Sabbath and the Festivals. The weekly return of the Sabbath – the crowning in it of the 'Sabbath Queen.' When the week was half gone, the fact that the Sabbath was drawing near began to put its mark on us. On Thursday, you could already sense the onset of the Sabbath. Friday was not an ordinary weekday; it was the foyer leading into the hall of the Sabbath. The Rabbi and the wagon driver, the wealthy man and the pauper – every Jew in accordance with his station in life – oriented himself in this foyer. On the Sabbath eve, everyone went to the bath, to wash off the sweat from their body, and to consecrate themselves in the *mikva,* in honor of the Sabbath. And whoever returned with his body washed and purified for the Sabbath, was therefore seen to be fit to taste of its benefits. At the dusk of the day, it appeared that worlds fell silent, anticipating the arrival of the Sabbath with trepidation. In the home, the sense of the secular day went off and melted away, and the protocol became oriented to the reception of the Queen who would enter with the flame of candles. The silent holy work, that enthrones the Sabbath in the house, was given into the hands of the woman, the mother of the house – And how did she do this ?!

It was with a trembling soul that my mother ע"ה, would approach the charity box of *R' Meir Baal HaNess*, to drop in her donation, and the souls of all the members of the household trembled along with her. She would bless the candles, with the palms of her hands placed to cover her face, and at frequent intervals, the sign of tears would appear on them. This was one of the most sacred moments in the lives of a Jewish home. For what reason did she shed such tears at that festival hour when the Sabbath candles were lit? Her lips moved silently and prayed for health, for the well-being of the family, for the hope of raising sons to the study of Torah, to the wedding canopy and to doing of good deeds, and above them all – '*Yiddishe Nachas.*' Mother hovering over the candles was a silent mystery, encompassing within it the innermost secrets of the Jewish experience.



Page 48: A Sketch by Leah Kramer-Rosenzweig

For the father and sons, there was a different obligation in the reception of the Sabbath Queen. How pleasant was the sound of the tread of the Jews on the [otherwise] silent street, as they hurriedly walked to the synagogue for '*Kabbalat Shabbat*!' I recall my father ע"ה, dressed in his silk *kapote*, with a silk overcoat, the '*razhewolka,*' wearing his *shtrymel* on his head – and his three sons by his side, dressed in their finery in honor of the Sabbath, exiting the house, and stepping on over to the synagogue, and my mother ז"ל, peering out of the window, with her heart melting from a surfeit of *Nachas*, her lips whispering: 'No Evil Eye...' And the phrase '*Mi Yidmeh Lakh, uMi Yishveh Lakh*[40]?'

The Divine Presence of the Sabbath preceded in escorting us, accompanying our steps, even before we sang the refrains of the *Kabbalat Shabbat*, and afterwards, how goodly and pleasant the Sabbath was for all members of the household at the Sabbath table, which floated like a solitary island on all the ordinary days of the week, all of it overflowing with sacred tranquility. The Sabbath tablecloth covered up the six ordinary days of the week quite well, covering all the exhaustion, worries, all the troubles that had come, and those yet to arrive. The anointing presence of the Sabbath Queen encompassed the table, creating the aura of a world in which all was good.

The Jews of the city did not particularly pamper their bodies, but on the Sabbath, the body took on special form, that was not even dreamed about during the ordinary six days of the week. All the preparations, foods and savory items – were in honor of the Sabbath. The Sabbath poured out its

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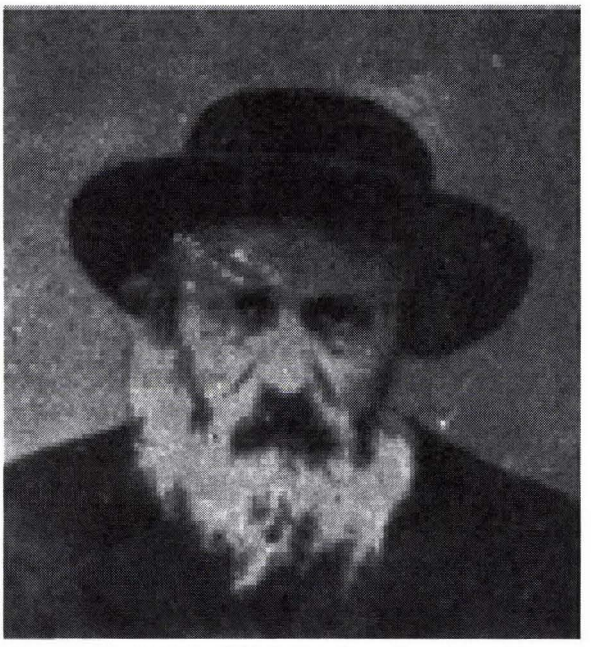
40 From the *Nishmat* prayer in *Shacharit*, slightly altered, since the word is *Lakh*, not *Lah*. The intent is to convey the sense of 'Who can be compared to you, who can be of the same worth as you?'

blessing upon them, a blessing without bounds – the blessings of the table, each person according to his means, and the blessing of rest, all things coming to a halt, and for those that needed it most, saw it with greater appreciation.



Page 49: R' Yankl'eh Lezhensker-Tepikh ז"ל, *the* Dayan *and Director of Justice in Rawa Ruska*

An 'added soul' called out within each and every Jew, and with it, the Sabbath whispered in the language of the flames of the candles, in the language of the recitation of *'Shalom Aleichem, l'Malachei HaShalom*,' in the language of the melody used for the '*Kiddush*,' and even in the language of the taste of all of the food dishes, in which a 'unique taste' could be sensed. The impact of rest was expressed in the acronym of the word '*Shabbat*' – *Sheyna* (Sleep), *B'Shabbat* (On the Sabbath) *Ta'anug* (Is a delight). Anyone who had not tasted of the complete experience of a Jewish Sabbath cannot sense or understand what it meant!

And as the day waned towards dusk, and the time for the departure of the Sabbath arrived – the woman of the house would then rise, who only yesterday had lit the candles of the Holy Sabbath, standing in front of the western window, silently and in sorrow pouring out her heart in the prayer: 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac and Jacob – the Holy Sabbath is taking leave of us. Take pity on us, and bless us with health and a good living, etc...'! And this is how the Sabbath was escorted – with a '*Melave Malka*' and the songs of the Sabbath evening – stretching it out as long as it was possible, because [as the saying goes] we were quick to enter into it, but slow in leaving.

And how wondrous and full of joy were the Festival Holidays in our city. Passover – fresh plaster, cleaning and pure: all of the preparations, baking of matzos, the drawing of 'Our Water,' the baking of '*Shmura*' matzo with [the recitation of] *Hallel*, songs and dancing, the new clothes and shoes, and above all this, 'The Eve of the *Seder* and preparing for it,' And after this, the Festival of '*Shavuot*,' that had us children extensively wrapped up in its preparations, in bringing vegetables and green branches into the house to incorporate into all manner of decorations, '*reizelakh*,' on the sills and windows, and on the *Sukkot* holiday – there was again appropriate merry making, in the building of the *Sukkah* and decorating it.

'*Hol HaMoed*' has a special place for itself in the Jewish way of life. The full rigor of the holiday was not in force during the days of *Hol HaMoed*, but in general, Jews took off from doing work, excepting instances that were necessary for the preservation of life. It evolved therefore, that for the two 'major' holidays of Passover and *Sukkot*, each had a week of embedded vacation. Accordingly,

every working person was accorded, inline with the model of the social conditions of the times, an annual vacation of two weeks, within the atmosphere of a holiday. This vacation was given to everyone, at one time and in one period.

I remember the story of my father-in-law ל"ז, regarding an incident that took place to him during *Hol HaMoed* of *Sukkot*. Here is how he expressed it:

> "Once, on *Hol HaMoed* of *Sukkot*, when I was at the 'Old *Kloyz*' during worship, it was told to me that R' Abram the Builder was occupied not far from the house of worship and was building a chimney. As the spiritual leader of the community, I saw it as my duty to go out to him, and to chastise him, and cause him to refrain from his work. I said to him: R' Abram, it is, after all, known to us that you are not short of work or that poor, and the work you are doing is not essential to your survival, and there is no compulsion for you to work on *Hol HaMoed*. He heard, came down from the scaffold, and stopped working. I returned to the house of worship, and not much time went by, when again it was relayed to me that he returned, and is continuing to work. In this fashion, I left worship three times to warn him in accordance with the law. And he, in overruling what I had to say, continued to build until evening. On the following morning, R' Abraham appeared at my house, prostrated himself on the ground, and begged for forgiveness and expiation in a conciliatory manner, promising that he will never continue to do such a thing again, and saying: 'R' Israel, you performed a 'miracle.' This morning, I went out to continue my work, and I found that the chimney had collapsed, and was lying on the ground.' It became clear that during the night, strong winds blew, and knocked down the brand-new structure, and it was the time of the wind that caused it. I said to him: 'Arise, you silly man, and remember that you should not continue to work on *Hol HaMoed*, if it is not a matter of personal survival!'

And since the days of winter draw close to the *Sukkot* holiday, it is my desire to recollect a number of the pleasures from our spiritual world during wintertime. Apart from the regular studies we engaged in during the long winter nights by candle light, I recall a number of cultural events from my childhood, which were for the purpose of elevating the soul. From time-to-time, a '*Maggid*,' or 'Lecturer' would appear in the city, after the reading of the announcements, in all houses of worship, with 'sign-off,' 'and for the pleasure of the listener'; almost all of the residents of the city would come together in the Great Synagogue, or the *Bet HaMedrash*, to hear a '*Drasha*' worthy of that name, which contained good common sense, and wise direction, whose purpose was to satisfy and also provide parables to help, containing historical references, and inferences for the current times, and words of reproof mixed with words meant to assuage – a feast for the soul! It should come as no surprise that an accomplished speaker of this variety, who at times also was possessed of a sweet disposition, was a source of pleasure to the Jews of the cit, to the point of melting their hearts.

In the ambit of musical life, guest cantors would appear to lead evening or Sabbath services. I remember two such special appearances by the cantor of the city, R' Chaim *Hazzan*, with an expanded choir under the direction of the violinist R' Lejzor Ka"Tz, with the 'orchestra' of the city. On one occasion this was an ordinary '*Mincha-Maariv*' service, and the second time at the occasion of lighting Hanukkah candles. There were two Jews of the city, who had great musical talent, and they were: first – *Hazzan*, spicing up his song and leading with elevated grace, and the second – a wondrous violinist. The Jews of the city literally went delirious with joy on these occasions, and took immense pride in them, without bounds.

I am obligated to recall, as 'the last but not least' one who sank his imprint on the cultural life of the city of that time, educating a younger generation to the Torah, this being R' Yankl'eh Lezhensker-

Tepikh ז"ל, the *Dayan* and Director of Justice of the city, whom I recall from my childhood, and then, while I was yet a child, he made a powerful impression on me. An avatar of the Rabbinate, a Rabbi-*Gaon*, lectured on the portion of the week every Sabbath morning before worship, and his many listeners came to his opening of the '*Klyzl*' that was very tight on space, and barely adequate for the immense crowd that showed up. In opening with the first of the sentences of the weekly portion, he began with the explication of tales that were sublime and wondrous, plumbing the depths of '*Agadah*,' exalting in their nature, conveying parables of profound significance as folklore, telling of his memories of the olden times, and on occurrences and events going on in the world today. And never did he manage to get past the first sentence, before the time of prayer arrived. He was especially dear to the simple people, who listened to him with rapt attention, thirstily drinking in his words. His dedicated student, Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush ז"ל imbibed from his knowledge of Torah and his wisdom, who was raised at his knees, and was educated by him for many years.

All of these, and many like them, sculpted the form of the Jews on their own, and the shape of the cultural life in the city up to the end of the First World War, and when the war ended, the way of life of the Jews began to slowly, but surely discard its old form, and assume a different cast entirely.

The Period of 'Storm and Eruption'

As a marker of the beginning of the new period of 'storm and eruption,' let us recall an incident that made an impact at that time in the city. At that same time, the youth became aroused, and in its search to free itself from the bonds of the surrounding environment that imposed strictures on them, it began to go out to the large centers of freer culture or to emigrate to faraway places, in order to derive the benefits of a substantive broadening that they did not know within the confines of the home of their parents.

In the year 1922 – at the effort of the curator of the elementary and middle schools in Lvov on *Ulica* Zygmuntowska – a seminary for the study of Hebrew was established, under the direction of the better pedagogues in the city.

Zeinvill Lieberman, one of the more talented and educated of the young people in the city, gathered together more than ten friends and acquaintances of varying ages, convinced them, encouraged those who were bold enough, to leave the city, and to register at the seminary and begin their studies. It is important to note that studies were available at no cost, and the students were supported in a variety of ways. These young men entered a world that was alien to them, because they had not tasted a [formal] school experience in their lives. Friend Lieberman undertook and worked on everything: he traveled to Lvov to register all of us in accordance with the requirements, and organized the travel appropriately. And on the morning of *Isru Chag* of Passover, in the year 5682, everyone left the city and traveled to Lvov.

One of these was Aryeh Reinert ז"ל, an outstanding scholar, an autodidact and a genius of the first order in all areas of study. His innards were full of *Shas* and the *Poskim*, and his head full of all the lines of philosophical thought of the world – from ancient to modern – whom he had read in the

original languages they were written. He reached unbounded heights in the study of mathematics and physics.... in his sharp mind, he resolved all of the difficult questions in these lines of study, which professors and students alike encountered difficulties and did not know the solutions.

He was of a gentle and modest disposition, and was retiring from public view, easy-going with people, and forthcoming to everyone, being accessible to render help with his explanations both light and simple. His *Hasidic* garb and small beard did not give testimony to his knowledge, and not many knew him for what he was. Lieberman was one of the few who came in contact with him, and drank from his wellspring [of knowledge] and was his companion. With stealth, he succeeded in getting him out to Lvov along with all the other young men. The pasture on which all the others grazed did not begin to provide him with nourishment. Had he remained in Lvov, he would have undoubtedly done very well in his studies, but after a few weeks, his mother came, and took him back home. Afterwards, he married a woman from Zolocow, and raised a family there, and together with all the others there, was exterminated in the terrifying Holocaust, what a shame to have had such a loss....

Regarding Life in Rawa

By Yekhl Meiseles

Economic Circumstances

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the end of 1918, even before the ending of the war between Poland and the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia, with the victory of Poland and after concluding the peace treaty between Poland and Russia in 1921 – after all of these stormy periods, which gave the Jews in our area no rest, despite the fact that they were on no side of the conflicts involved, they were, however, a party to the suffering and sustained woe from all of the fighting military forces involved, being robbed, plundered, and victims of pogroms.

But immediately afterwards, Rawa became almost a center, a point of connection, which had great economic significance for commerce and for the city. As soon as contact with the surrounding world was re-established, trains then first began to run between Rawa and Lemberg [sic: Lvov], Sokal[41] and Jaroslaw; Gode'leh Edel once again, began to make trips in his leased wagons to Lemberg, and the city once again began to hum like a beehive. Jews began to transact and trade in everything, and with everyone. Trade was conducted in agricultural and forest products, with cattle and fowl, with leather and textiles, and hundreds of other items, that were conveyed from one city to the other.



Page 51: Hat Making Workers

Commerce

Not being an industrial city, commerce was, for the Jews of Rawa, always the principal source of income. The surrounding peasant populace, every Monday, on the day of the market fair, would bring in their wagons, with ladders on

41 Likely the town of Sokal on modern-day Ukrainian maps.

each side, coming on the Lubyca Road from the North, the Hiiche *Gasse* from the East, the Potelycz Road from the West, and the Kamienka and Magierow Roads from the south – everything that they had produced and set aside for sale. The peasants set themselves up not only on the marketplace, and the Targowica (the horse and cattle market on the 'zamd'), with their wagons, but also all over the streets and byways of the city. Jewish storekeepers from all over Rawa would come together , in later years, to the Rawa market fairs from all of the surrounding towns, and even from Lemberg, in order to sell their accumulated merchandise to the peasants; this created more bruiting in the city, and in addition to this, take away business from the locals.

The products, that the peasants brought into the city, were bought up by Jews, who, in following the example of their elders, occupied themselves with this, and passed it on to their children. In this was, grains were bought up by the Redlichs near the courthouse, Grauer on the Lubyca Road, and Hahn on the Magierow Road. Eggs – the Langer and Rathaus families, and Eleazar Stern. Horses and cattle: the Fleischer, Lemel Hendel and Steinbach families; Leather hides: Mordechai Szpazner and Noah Gottesman, and Pig bristles: Shmuel Hoch and Aharon Eilbaum. But these were the big-time merchants of the city, apart from them, there were tens of other buyers in every category, who would buy these good directly from the peasants. Part of it they would immediately sell off to the city Christian residents, and Jewish residents, and the rest they would lay off on the larger merchants, who on a weekly basis would ship goods via transport to Warsaw and Danzig, even on to Germany and France.

But the Rawa Jews not only bought up the products of the surrounding Ukrainians and Swabian-Germans of Dziewicierz; they also sold them things those things that the village populace had need of. This commerce went on this way for the entire week, between the city dwellers and the surrounding populace, but the principal source of making a living was drawn by the merchant from the Monday market fair day.

All the merchants of the city, excepting a very number few, were not wealthy people, and were circumscribed in their dealings by the allocation of permits, so that in these years, emigration ensued to large parts of the world.

Hat Making and Fur Trading

How does the saying go: 'Profit and salvation will come to the Jews from a different place:' A great living and much income and a respectable place in the economic life of Rawa, came from forms of living up to the year 1924.

From that time forward, in Rawa, as in all other cities and towns in Poland, difficult times ensued; times which from year-to-year became increasingly difficult, and which in the course of a few years, transformed the life of all the Rawa merchants, likened to the branches of a trimmed tree, that had its roots cut off.

The tragic and renowned figure of Grabski ascended to the chair of the finance ministry in Warsaw, who each day, levied new taxes upon the Jews; Jewish extra beds and pillows started to be auctioned

off; Grabski-decrees became strictures for Jews in Rawa (as they did for other Jewish cities in Poland); Notes began to come to the notary to protest, and beside this, the bitter struggle began that arose from the boycott of the Jewish business in the city. The Polish '*Spółka Rolnicza*' and the Ukrainian 'Òîðã³âëÿ' (*Torhivlya*)' (both mercantile cooperatives) began to compete sharply with Jewish trade – under the motto of '*Swoi da Swego*,' – and Jewish business began to shrivel up. Like drunken fruit, that eats itself up, in the course of a few years, very many respectable merchants went bankrupt, and many families were ruined. When the *Sanacja*[42] regime took over from the Endekists, and the Jews in Poland believed that their plight may yet then improve, the opposite became apparent – the new regime was more, even than the previous one, under the influence of political events in neighboring Germany, creating its maneuvers to exterminate the Jewish community in Poland, with Rawa Jews among them.

The Cooperative Bank and the Merchants' Union

Two institutions came to Rawa in that time, whose influence was greatly felt in the Jewish economic life of Rawa: the Merchants' Union, which helped in their difficult and impossible battle, against the unjust tax-machine; the second institution: the cooperative bank for small-scale businesses, which provided economic assistance to many Jewish merchants and craftsmen, in their difficult struggle for existence.

Two very talented and dynamic individuals were the living spirit of these previously mentioned two institutions: Lejzor Berger, a young man, intelligent and suffused with knowledge, a bookkeeper by trade, was the secretary of the Merchants' Union, and the second: Abraham'cheh Edel, an activist from the ranks of the general Zionists, the secretary of the bank. But as mentioned above, these two institutions were able only to stretch out the process of demise, to which the official politics of Poland had sentenced Jewish commerce in all of Poland generally, and in Rawa specifically.

At the same time of the economic crisis in commerce, the same thing happened to the craftsmen. They also were hit with tax refreshers, and a variety of other malevolent demands by the regime, such as applied to the sale of finished fabric goods. This too, impoverished them from one day to the next, and ruined them further. Both, in commerce and craftsmanship, both ceased to provide a living and to provide status in the Jewish populace of the city. This created influence among a large part of the young people to begin thinking about ways to get out of Poland; apart from making *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, which for large varied parts of the populace, from the very wealthy of the affluent and lumber merchants to the small hat and jacket tailors for peasants, suddenly created an influx of

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42 *Sanacja* came to power in the final decade of the Second Polish Republic, as a result of Józef Pi³sudski's 1926 May *Coup d'État*. The movement took its name from his watchword signifying the moral "sanation" (healing) of the Polish body politic. It existed from 1928 until Pi³sudski's death in 1935. The Bloc broke up into several factions including "the Castle" ahead of the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany in 1939.

The Sanation advocates supported authoritarian rule, and rested on a circle of Pi³sudski's close associates. It preached the primacy of the national interest in governance, contended against the system of parliamentary democracy.

hat making businesses. Until that time, these workers, the hat makers and *kazhukhas* (peasant jackets) tailors occupied themselves with sewing *boykas* (peasant caps) and *kazhukhas* for the surrounding gentile populace, and occasionally, something of a town jacket for a wealthy young man. In that time, and I don't know whose patent or invention this was, in the surrounding cities, as in Rawa also, the tailoring associated with hat making developed using Persian–pelts–leather and pieces, the sewing of complete jackets together from small pieces for neck collars and jackets, the import of the pieces from out of the country, and the export of the jackets out of the country. All of this created an economic upheaval in the city. From the outset, everyone began to learn how to sew together pieces of fur by hand, and afterwards operating sewing machines to do this, such that there was not a single house where there was not at least one machine, and more machines, and all this created in the city a large, well-developed mercantile industry that brought in income to the homes. And it became immediately evident that this new trade was literally a gold mine and the entire city began to participate vigorously in it. Part of the people became wealthy, a part derived a very nice income and thereby, many of the area Jews derived their sustenance from it. However, even hat making did not prove to be a barrier against bad times. Even here, from time-to-time, a crisis would erupt, which were consequences of the crises that emanated from Western Europe. In such an instance, the entire town suffered greatly, because there was practically no house in the town that had no connection to hat making. In such an instance, the entire business in the city ground to a halt; and the unemployment among the hat makers stretched from one month into the next. And so another ten or so young boys and girls would pack up their effects and took to emigrating. And so these crises, which had collateral effects from one branch [of industry] to another, the boycott movement on the part of the Poles and Ukrainians on one side, and the tightening of the tax screw from Grabski and his Sanacja followers, on the other, not only once, drove the Jewish settlement in Rawa to the threshold of despair.

Independent Professions

The material circumstances of those who engaged in the independent professions was a different one: this was because while they were in a specific measure dependent on the general economic condition in the city, nevertheless, their circumstances was a good one, and their ability to sustain themselves was noticeable in the city. It was necessary to go to a doctor, in order to safeguard one's health, and the same was true in retaining a lawyer, in order to protect one's name, and they also had gentile clients from the city, and its environs. A small percentage of the populace, employees of the régime, municipality, and of private firms, as well as, (to separate them), all of those engaged in religious duties, lived on a monthly stipend, as if each of them were a brick of the economic building of the city of Rawa.

The Struggle Between Old and New

From time immemorial, a bitter conflict ensued for hegemony between the older and newer generation. The older generation was never prepared to admit that it had in fact grown old, and a time had arrived to make a plan for the younger generation with its meanings and ideals [to take over] in managing the way of life.

This same angry situation also was the situation at the end of the First World War. After the dissolution of Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the establishment of the [new] Polish nation.

For many years, Jewish community life in our city was under the unrestrained control of the *Hasidim* of Belz. They, the *Hasidim*, were suddenly shaken up by the fact, that over the horizon of the town, a new social force appeared, in the form of the active Zionist movement, which in the course of a very few years, transformed the *Hasidic shtetl* with its old way of life into a modern city with an urban culture.



Page 53: Chaya the Tailor's Workshop
Standing: Chaya the Tailor
Sitting from the Right: Sar'keh Sambal-Steinfeld, Baylah Kahana, Reizl'eh Halberthal, Miverkhrata Klieger, Dina Berger, Til'cheh Halberthal, Blum'cheh Schwert-Rubin, Baylah Moshe Joseph's Klieger

The appearance of Dr. Joseph Mandel in the city, heralds the bright beginning of the social development of the city. Notwithstanding the fact that there had previously been a group of *Maskilim* in the city, who were engaged with Zionism and municipal politics, but they were missing the man, who would lead them out into the broader way. And the appearance of Dr. Mandel then became the blessing for the entire city. With his dynamic nature, he immediately began to storm the ramparts of the community, whose leadership was in the hands of the Belz *Hasidim*, with R' Israel Mikhl Feder and R' Noah Gottleib at their head, for many years. It did not come easy for him to carry out one of his Zionist missions, of that time, 'capturing [the hearts of] the community:' because the election process for the leadership of the community was constructed in accordance with an old undemocratic system. But in the end he prevailed. His years as serving in the position of head of the community set down firmly the correctness of his committed and stubborn struggle.

The Zionist Movement – Dr. Mandel

The small Zionist group, that existed in the city even before the time of the First World War, at the beginning of the decade of the twenties did not manifest any great level of activity. What it did, so to speak, was to mark time on the same point where it stood. There is no larger manifestation of activity to take note of, until the years 1922-23. A theater presentation, a Herzl Academy on 20 Tammuz, but not more. A change took place at the time of the celebration of the establishment of a university in Jerusalem. The Academy, in the city, in honor of the university, was transformed into a large Zionist demonstration. An ardent Zionist spirit began to pulse within hearts, which only yesterday had not even thought about the plight of its people. Gatherings started to take place in the '*Hatikvah*' Society, courses for Hebrew and the like. Step by step, the movement emerged from its shrunken state within its confines.



Page 54: *The First Youth Organization,* 'HaShomer' *– 1921 (The* Havatzelet *Group)*
Sitting from the Left: Chava Schechter, Leah Rumelt, Zalman Bach, Ziss'eh Zilber, Lonya Engelmayer;
Second Row: Dvora Daks, Tamar Bodenstein, Pearl Bush, Tzila Tauber, Sheva Zimmerman, Chana Lichter, Hodel Ka"Tz, Gittl Zimmerman

That this process of renaissance took so long in our case to develop, is to be attributed to the account of the academic intelligentsia in the town at that time. The Jewish intelligentsia in the city, during the course of generations, held itself aloof from the lives of the common Jewish people in the city. Dr. Rosa, Dr. Segal, as well as their sympathizer, Dr. Becker, like ostriches, buried their heads in the sand of the Polish 'aristocracy:' They thought that if they demonstrated to the 'nobility' that they were ignorant of their flesh and blood brethren, that it will give them the freedom to mingle in the

society of the nobility. In time, it went so far, that part of the Jewish intelligentsia looked at Jewish life in the city with open contempt. Because of this, for long years, the *shtetl* was without real leadership, and only for this reason, the *Hasidim* were able to so easily maintain control of Jewish life in the city. This situation, in time, changed with the moment, that Dr. Spatz, Dr. Hershdorfer, and Dr. Popiel, headed by Dr. Mandel, appeared on the scene.



Page 55: *The* 'Dror' *Group of* 'Gordonia' *with their Group Leader Tzvi Siebzehner*

Dr. Joseph Mandel, upon taking over the leadership of the Zionist movement in the city, immediately became the central figure in the city. With his dynamic spirit and oratorical skill, he became the darling of all sectors of the populace. His appearances at a variety of opportunities: community or Sejm elections, community or philanthropic institutions, drew masses of people, who enthusiastically devoured his spiritually rich talks. Every appearance of his left behind a fire in the bones, and a fire in the mind. Jews began to t h I n k.

His cultural work, his theater productions, his artful appearance as the '*Rebbe*' in '*The Dybbuk*,' by Anski shook up life in our *shtetl*, which had begun to rub its eyes as if awakening from a centuries-long sleep.

But what he especially earned was in that result of being able to draw into the circle of national activity elements and sectors, which up until that time had kept themselves distant from Jewish cultural life. Dr. Hershdorfer's appearance as Chanan in '*The Dybbuk*,' the[43] Breindler as '*Leah'leh*' created, apart from their artistic aspect, also from a personal aspect, a psychological impact, of a positive nature, such that suddenly Jewish people saw that the barrier, that had separated the Jewish intelligentsia from the *shtetl* vanished overnight.

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43 Other references in the text identify this as Lon'keh Breindler. The choice of an article here is unclear.

The Youth

And then came the array of the young people to come out onto the forum of community life in the city. The fresh and intimate contact that was created with the Jewry of Congress Poland, Lithuania and Kressen[44], large centers of Jewish culture, created a huge [fermenting] sour dough, which instilled gratification to the last nerve. Yiddish newspapers, and periodicals from Lemberg, Warsaw and Vilna, books in libraries were swallowed up by a generation, which had not yet liberated itself from the *Bet HaMedrash*, and lusted after knowledge. The young people grouped themselves around the youth organizations: '*HaShomer,*' '*HeHalutz,*' '*Gordonia,*' '*Akhuza,*' and '*Akiva.*'
Young people began to talk about and discuss becoming a *Halutz*, training and preparation, and *aliyah*. The ranks of ordinary Zionism that gave the sense of only dreaming about *aliyah*, but remaining in Poland, were broken up by the young people, and in the years 1924-25 there already was a group of those young people, under the leadership of Aryeh Stern, Eleazar Reinert, Lejzor Berger, and, separated for [long] life, Gimpel Just, came out of the '*Hatikvah*' Society, and founded '*Hitakhdut*,' which immediately became the largest culture and pioneering center in the city.

There were times when the struggle with the general Zionists became a very embittered one. They tried by all means, not to permit their influence on the Jewish street to slip from their hands.

But the anti-Semitism of the Polish and Ukrainian streets, that was continuously revealed from day-to-day, opened the eyes of the young people, and clearly showed them that it could not expect to build its future in Poland, and because of this, the youth movement 'Hitakhdut' grew, and concentrated itself more and more among the young.

Evening courses for Hebrew and Yiddish, discussions and debates involving the best debaters in Galicia and Poland, 'kestl' evenings, on Saturday nights, theater presentations of a very high cultural and artistic level, characterized the new '*Hitakhdut*' movement. And it did not take a long time before its name became renowned in the entire vicinity, from which young people would come, and learn how to organize their own local youth groups.

In those years, yet another youth group was organized, under the direction of Abraham'cheh Lieberman, Eliyahu Zimmerman, and others, called '*Gordonia.*' Already by the first years of its activity, it demonstrated a capacity to concentrate about it, a large part of the youth of the city, and to orient them on the way to 'self-realization,' Now, '*Hitakhdut,*' according to the directives of the center in Lemberg, decided to spread out its beneficent oversight over this young organization, which had up till then suffered from lack of resources, and inadequate leaders and educators.

'*Gordonia*' became transformed into an avant garde of '*HeHalutz*' and '*Hitakhdut*,' and the best resources in the area of education and learning were placed at the disposal of '*Gordonia.*' In a very short time, 'Gordonia' grew into the pearl of the youth of the city. Discussions about art and politics

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44 Overlapping part of Byelorussia, but considered part of Jewish Lithuania.

under the direction of Gimpel Just, Tzvi Siebzehner and Lejzor Berger, courses under the direction of Eliezer Reinert and Nathan Edel, Touring trips on the Sabbath out to the surrounding forests, aroused within the young people an ardent spirit and driving force to achieve a life of freedom, and a striving for their own corner in the manifestly anti-Semitic world. The 'training' for the young people was the first step to a new life in its own national homeland. On the day when a member of *'Gordonia'* made *aliyah*, was transformed into a festive holiday for the entire city. All of Rawa, old and young alike, found themselves then at the train station and danced a *Hora*. At the same time, hidden deep in the inner recesses of the heart, there flickered a tiny spark of envy, questioning why that individual personally was not now in that other one's place.



Page 56: 'HaNoar HaTzioni' *Group in the City: Esther Kremerman*

And if we are able today to underscore the existence of a meaningful settlement of our *landsleit* in Israel today, and if our '*Yizkor* Commemorations' are richly attended, in larger measure this is thanks to that movement of young people that called itself '*Gordonia,*' which served as a guide to the path also for other Zionist youth movements in the city. It was the way of *aliyah* and of realization.

'*Akhvah*,' the youth group of the general Zionists, was formed as a counterweight to '*Hitakhdut*' and '*Gordonia*.' At the beginning, it more quickly assumed the character of a club, as one of the Halutz movement, and it was only first in the later years, when the plight of Jewish youth in Poland became even more bereft of any foundation, and under the influence of the beneficent *Halutz* activity of '*Gordonia*,' and also possibly partly as a counterweight to it – it began to get involved in the processes of training and *aliyah*. A group from them also later on made *aliyah*. Also, another group broke off from the general Zionists – the Revisionists. Under the leadership of Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld and Joseph Sznessl. Its significance in the city, however, remained very limited, and was especially shrunken in the areas of culture and education.

Mizrahi and Agudah

Two other groups exhibited animated activities in the city. Foremost among the religious circles, – on the one side, '*Mizrahi*' under the leadership of the scholar and *Maskil* R' Abraham'cheh Hoffenbratel, the Fleischer brothers and others, and on the second side, the *Agudat Israel* under the direction of R' Uri Zucker, R' Noah Berger and R' Getzel Rubin. Concerning themselves primarily with the religious upbringing of the young generation, the '*Bais Yaakov*' School and the '*Banot*' movement were founded by them, which developed themselves into highly respectable institutions in the city, and in this way filled out an empty area, which had always existed in religious circles, in connection with the raising of daughters. This planting, which they sowed, with time produced very specific fruit, in the form of *aliyah*, but regrettably, in a very minimal amount, as a result of their orientation, which was directed more towards the Diaspora that towards the Land of Israel.

Illicit Activities

As those who are eternal, lighting up our memories to this day, with a clear and warm light, we recall the years of our youth with happiness, which we lived through with storm and fire. This is especially true in our times today, when young people dream only of luxury and comfort.

However, we must recall the movements, that were illicit, which existed among us in the city, just as they did in all of the cities and towns in Poland, and drew a meaningful number of young people into their fold.



Page 57: A 'Gordonia' Group in Rawa-Ruska
Sitting from the Left: Feiga Shatzker, Shayndl Strauss, Shmeryl Freiheiter, Freida Strauss, Zippora Baumwohl as a child.
Standing from the Left: Tzivia Birnbaum, Sheva Zauerbrun, Pesha Sambal, Regina Grauer, Chava Strauss, Golda Axler, Zippora Weinreb-Linder, and Tova Bodenstein.

Two movements appeared in the city, during the years of the twenties. The Jewish communist movement, which grouped itself around the lending library '*Laynzahl-chitelnya*' and the '*Bund.*' Their influence in the city made its impression in the later years – when it became suddenly apparent that both parties, even though they were opponents and the fiercest of enemies – had the impact of a tumult, into which they managed to drag in a specific circle of people, who came out of the most impoverished parts of the city – the '*Bund*' with its ideology to wage battle for the right to work in the Diaspora at a time, when the noose of anti-Semitism was being drawn ever more tightly around the neck of the Jewish populace, and the communists, blinded by the Red Sun from Moscow, and the motto of 'Religion is the Opiate of the Masses,' they too dragged in their followers, at the time, when it was necessary to remain very alert, in order to confront the dangers that were drawing ever near. Both, however, were the forsworn enemies of Zionism mocking it as a utopia.

In later years, I had the opportunity to engage several individuals – from the city – who were fanatic followers of those two labor-ideas in those times, – after they had liberated themselves from their illusions;

they strongly rued why earlier, those movements had not looked into the Russian 'Garden of Eden,' since they would have very quickly healed themselves of their Red Sickness. And many young people would have saved themselves, liberating themselves from such a tragically misdirected ideology.

Left Wing Movements

In the early twenties, few knew of a '*Bund*'- philia in the city. It is hard to validate exactly who it was who brought the seed of the '*Bund*' and planted it in the city. It is possible that it came with Leon Weber, bringing it back with him from his imprisonment in Russia, or it was brought by the young talented Eichler, who had just completed study at the Rawa gymnasium with excellence, and began to engage himself in politics and social problems.

In the small barber house of Leon Weber, in the house of the Reichlers, diagonally across from the pharmacy, individual young men would come together in a collective, and read through the *Bundist* '*Volkszeitung*' and then have a discussion about it. The principal leader of this group was the always unemployed tailor Shia Satz. Later. When the '*Bund*' had developed in a substantive degree, the lady tailor Grossaug materialized as a leader. The '*Bund*' grouped around itself those who held themselves distant, or distanced themselves from the Zionist movement in the city.

In order to be able to rent premises, like all of the Zionist movements, this group began to put on theater presentations. In the '*Bund*' troupe, the singer Ticza Gellis participated, who had a talent for opera, and Abel'eh the Schneider's daughter, named Fand, as the principal stars. This gave them the financial means, and they took a place as a local office at Freida Kressl's, where they developed their political and cultural work, but their influence in the city was minimal.

The Jewish-Communist Group

In 1927, a group of 'leftists' for whom the ranks of the '*Bund*' had become too confining, under the leadership of the same Eichler, the founder of the '*Bund*' [itself], founded the communist 'reading room' in the house of Malia Rosenthal, where '*Gordonia*' had previously been found, which was compelled to move over to the house of Josefsberg, as a result of its growth.

The founding of the 'reading room,'was the factual establishment of the communist party in the city. Through the birth of the *Bund*, it was quickly overtaken, both in quantity and in quality, contesting it with the same ardor as it did against Zionism. In those times, the leader, Eichler, emigrated to America, and his place in the 'reading room' was taken by Raphael Kramer. Kramer was perhaps less intelligent than his predecessor, but because of this, he was a first class organizer and agitator. This young man successfully broadened the political and cultural work among the poorest of the Jewish youth, who came from the most deprived and poorest circles of the city.

For a time, on the tower of the municipal clock, on telephone poles, and other elevated places, there appeared placards with actual communist slogans, and this led to the first wave of political arrests on the part of the Polish authorities. Yekhiel Metal, Azriel Herbster, Yek'l Reinert and others, were sentenced in Lemberg to severe prison sentences. A number of them, after serving their sentences, returned home, cured of their Red Disease, while others had to wait decades until they took the cure in faraway Siberia...

Torah Hasidism and Haskalah in Our City

תורה, חסידות והשכלה בעירנו

The Origins of Jewish Rawa

By A. M. Ringel ז"ל

The little boy who loved to eavesdrop onto the wondrous tales of his mother – in the company of her good friend lady neighbors – on Saturday nights, at the time that the Sabbath went out, knew this.

Repressed and degraded, by punishing decrees and horrid blood-libels, Jews were driven out of the lands where they lived by the cruel gentiles. They wandered for days and nights, their children and torah scrolls in their hands, along roads, and not-roads, and the gates of all countries were locked to them, and they found no rest for their feet, until a great light burst forth from the heavens, and lit up a land broadly open, and in the wake of that light – there was a white piece of paper, and on it the words '*Po Lin*[45].' This was the land of Poland that admitted these wanderers.

The boy warmed up: it is certain that not only one such piece of paper fell, but pieces of paper one on the other, which fell from the height of the heavens, one the face of the entire broad expanse of this good land that was welcoming, and at the site of where they fell, cities and towns were raised most of whom were populated by Jews, exhausted of all their strength. And one of those pieces of paper fell on the place that looked to him, to that boy, as the hub, and the genesis of Jewish Rawa – the *Schul Gasse*.

Those who arrived, built dwellings for themselves, at their point of landing – making them out of bunches of wood, having low ceilings, heaped up on one another, crowded, on narrow streets wide enough to let one person pass, making an endless labyrinth for anyone seeking entrance. On the right, in honor of God – the synagogue, a stone building of spacious size. It was taller than all the other buildings of the city, in accordance with the law and tradition; and beside it, the *Bet HaMedrash*, and the *Kloyz*, that after several generations when other houses of worship were added, received the nickname '*Alte,*' and on the left – the bath house and the *Mikva*, and behind them, far, far away, as far as death was from life – the cemetery. From this central point, the entire city branched out and broadened to all of its precincts, and became a *City and Mother* in Israel.

When did the Jews come to Rawa-Ruska?

It is not easy to answer this question. My mother ע"ה and her wondrous tales are no longer available. The Jews of the city are no more, and their record folios have been lost, along with their lists and minutes of meetings, on which they etched most of their desires, the distilled essence of their longings, their dreams, and the quandaries of creation – from the first of the founders to the last of those who were exterminated.

The bodies were incinerated, along with the scrolls and the letters.

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45 The Hebrew words for 'Here you shall lodge,' as an indicator of the Hebrew rendition '*Polin*' for the country of Poland.

And the task of grasping onto the ends of the thread of the chain of names that constitute a pedigree, that many of the Jews of the city were blessed with, and articulated with one breath, as if it were one name, such as Pesach – Itzik – Moshe – Chaya-Feiga's, etc., to reach by this shortcut method back to the founding family patriarch – all went up into the void, without form, because it would appear that the chain was sundered, and it is no longer possible to get back to that very first link. It is therefore necessary to look upon Rawa, and its distinguished personalities that worked there, and on their aspirations that spilled out over the boundaries of the city itself, through those very same sources, testaments, that were assembled and in which their work and lore was recorded, and made them the legacy of the many.

There are Jewish cities and towns, whose name is bound up with Jewish history and its culture, by virtue of the distinguished people that worked in those streams and spiritual movements in Judaism that they created. But practically every city and town contributed its share to that culture in a specific period by personalities that worked on them, or that they were born into and raised with it. And Rawa was one of them.

Let us return to the origin of the city. There were Jews in the city, each of which represented an institution unto himself. One of these was R' Moshe Mizemik, the leader of the '*Hevra Kadisha*' in the city. In the eyes of young boys, he appeared as a humorless, colorless man – like Death itself. The interest that the young boys took in him paralleled their interest in what he did, and who thought of the 'obligation to the dead' that existed in this undertaking?

During the days of Elul, the days of compassion and repentance, days during which 'a man worried about the loss of his days, and not just for the loss of his money,' the days of prostrating one's self on the graves of ancestors, righteous and precious, inspired also the young boys, into a 'world that was not of theirs,' that existed in the cemetery, that was in the center of the turbulent city. And then, they encountered a quite different R' Moshe Mizemik: a patriarchal man, who presents to the youth, 'his world.' Going from one grave stone to the next, reading the fading inscriptions, and explaining the historical origins of those interred beneath them: Rabbis, *Gaonim, Tzaddikim*, *Lamed-Vovniks*, and others, and others. And all of the history of the city, generation after generation, spread out before us as if in columns on the pages of a book. And it seemed as if R' Moshe had himself lived and passed through all of those generations, had erected, with his own hands, all of the grave stones from the most ancient of them, whose dates are well etched into my memory, the year 5378 [1619]. The first 'seed' of the city, that was hidden underground.

In this period, R' David HaLevi Sega"l served as the Rabbi of Potelycz, the author of '*Turei Zahav*,' one of the pillars of learning and *Halakha* in Israel. The renowned biographer of the great Torah scholars of Poland, Rabbi Kh. Kh. Dembitzer, writes of him as follows, in his book, '*Klilat Yofi*:[46]'

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[46] The Garland of Beauty

R' David HaLevi Sega"l the Author of 'Turei Zahav' [47]

The place of residence of Our Teacher, R' David HaLevi Sega"l, author of '*Turei Zahav*,' after he parted from the house of his father-in-law, the *Gaon*, R' Joel Sirkes, author of the well-known '*Bayit Hadash*' (*Ba"Kh*) from the beginnings of time, was in our city here in Krakow, a city worthy of [King] David, and it was here that he founded his *Bet HaMedrash* for Torah, and related scholarship in this city great in its reverence for God, populous, and replete in knowledge. And from here, afterwards, our Rabbi was taken on as the *Bet-Din Senior*, and the Head of the *Mesivta* by the Sacred Congregation of Potelycz, close by Rawa-Ruska, and in the year 5378 [1619], he already occupied that position. During that time, and while he was still a young man, he wrote in Potelycz, his great responsa which he composed in the matter of issuing a permission for an *Agunah* to marry, sending it to his father-in-law the *Gaon*, The *Ba"Kh* ז"ל, while he was still the *Bet-Din Senior* in Brisk of Lithuania.

And seeing that the city of Potelycz was small, and there were few people there, they did not have the means at hand to provide a respectable sustenance to their Rabbi, and he studied there under great distress and poverty. And he was not accustomed to this, because in his youth, he was pampered and taken care of well in the home of his father, the Rabbi *Gaon* Shmuel of the House of Levi, who had assets in his home that was in Volodymyr in Lithuania[48], and also after that, when he was attached to the table of his father-in-law, where there, as well, he knew no want. Because his father-in-law gave him everything from his own, insofar as food and clothing were concerned, and all his heart's desire, because our Teacher, the *Ba"Kh* was a charitable man, and all of his conduct was dictated by the high ideals of giving charity, and his home was wide open, and many of his Yeshiva students ate at his table.

In the year 5379, after Our Teacher, the *Ba"Kh* was accorded the position of *Bet-Din Senior* in Krakow and its vicinity, he came through the city of Potelycz, the place of residence of his son-in-law, the author of *'Turei Zahav,'* to see how he was doing, and how his wife was doing, she being his daughter, and there, much to the pain in his heart, he saw the extreme poverty and reduction of his son-in-law, the apple of his eye. When the *Ba"Kh* arrived in Krakow, and assumed his honored seat, he put together a letter to his son-in-law, with some brief words of comfort, and these were his words: 'At the time I was in Potelycz and saw the extent of your penury; and this caused me great sorrow, because you are not able to sit and learn Torah peacefully, but I hope that God will expand my ambit, and I will be able to send you a boon, etc.' And the *Ba"Kh* fulfilled his promise and sent him a suitable gift.

And Our Teacher, R' David, upon seeing that the location in Potelycz was too confining for him to reside there, left the city, and traveled into Greater Poland, and pitched his tent with the Sacred Community of regal Poznán, and he sat in court between the reign of kings. From there, he appeared

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47 By descent through the Russian rabbinical family Paltrowitch, the actress Gwyneth Paltrow can claim the '*Turei Zahav*' as an ancestor.

48 This was very likely Volodymyr-Volynsky that is today in the Ukraine, but at the time may certainly have been part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

in the entire land of that valley, through the medium of the light of his Torah study, and in the fulness of time, Our Teacher was accorded the position of *Bet-Din Senior* and *Master of the Vicinity* in the Sacred Congregation of Ostrog in Volhynia, a city known since early times as a place of Torah study by our Rabbis, the *Maharsh"al* and *Maharsh"a*, who served as Rabbis there, and inculcated Torah there into the people of Israel, as is known.

And as is already known, it was during the days of *Ta"Kh* and *Ta"T*, that the land disintegrated, and a great destruction was visited upon the lands of Poland and Lithuania[49]. And thousands, tens of thousands of Jews were killed, and among them, great Torah scholars, *Gaonim*, and leaders of Yeshivas, and many large Jewish communities were destroyed, and the exponents of the Jewry melted away from spiritual starvation, and many aroused themselves to abandon the devastated land, and to seek refuge in a land that was not theirs. Our Rabbi also sought to leave the land. And David was quick to go to the land of Moravia, and in every place, the prominent people of the cities flocked towards him, and everyone sought an audience with David to benefit and enjoy the light of his Torah learning.

And as Our Teacher traveled from one city to the next, and found no surcease to cause him to set down a place to rest and to teach Torah to the Jews as was his heart's desire, and with great sorrow to himself, R' David recalled his suffering, and he regained the spirit to return to the land of Poland, after the land had quieted down some, and this brought him to rest, and legacy, and he was made a noble over his legacy with a host together with R' Asher in the regal city of Lvov [Lemberg], and he spent long years there in Lvov, and also his sons and grandsons all were leading lights in Torah study, and leaders of Yeshivas of the highest quality.

And the days of David drew nigh that he should pass away, and so he left a behest to his household, and he died, and was gathered into his people in Lvov, an old man, full of days on 26 Shevat 5427. A substantial mourning ensued at the time of his passing, because there never appeared another like him among the Jewish people.

And the city of Ludomir was with child and gave birth, and the city of Krakow increased in its offspring. Woe unto it! Said Lvov, because the very source of its grace was lost, and it is with these lines, that Rabbi Dembitzer closes the story of the life of the author of the '*Turei Zahav*' and the role of the various cities in which this great and formidable *Gaon* resided, the great Torah scholar in Jewry. And we will bask in the reflected glory of Potelycz – from which the cornerstone of our city of Rawa comes – in which the step of the Gaon trod his very first steps on the way to such extensive renowned. The heart is full of pulsation, and adoration, for that small group of Jews in Potelycz, that lived such a life of deprivation and poverty, and was prepared to take from its own meager rations of bread, in order to fulfil its inner desire to put in place an individual to provide spiritual direction, and to be a Headmaster of a Yeshiva for its children, and one of the great Torah

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[49] The writer uses the Hebrew acronyms for the secular years 1648-9, to refer to the period of the Chmielnicki pogroms, during which devastation was visited upon the Jewish communities of Southeast Poland and the Ukraine.

scholars of that generation. The way the Jews of Potelycz of that time, the beginning of the seventeenth century, made a living, was off of 'nature's treasures' in the vicinity: mining clay to make pottery and ceramics, and mining coal, the so-called 'Potelycz Coal,' whose use, in time of distress, gave off smoke that blinded our eyes, and whose stench fouled our heads. The Jews of that location were hardly endowed with wealth, but they resided in their places permanently, and were completely fulfilled in a social and community sense. The signs of that fulfillment are found among the first of those who came to Rawa-Ruska.

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In the second half of the sixteenth century, the King of Poland gave permission to the Jews of Poland to organize themselves into a national entity, and gave them autonomy with regard to their internal affairs. With the effort of the Rabbis and community leaders, the *'Va'ad Arba Aratzot'* was established, that was sort of a subordinate country of the Jews, and its activities continued for about two hundred years. The '*Va'ad*' directed the community and cultural lives of the Jews of Poland.

The records of the *Va'ad*, its promulgations, judgements, and all that remained after it, served as a far-from-disappointing source of material about this period. And it is interesting that the book, replete with insight, '*Pinkas Va'ad Arba Aratzot*,' by the researcher Y. Heilperin, that encompasses all of the agreements and testimonies of that period, through which one can see the religious, community and cultural endeavors of the Jews among which are recorded thousands of names of Rabbis, leaders, community heads, and activists – there is not a single Jewish name indicating that the place where he lived, or he was to be found in Rawa-Ruska. The names of people from the area, Janiv, Magierow, Belz, and even Warensz[50] are recorded either as officials, or people involved with the law, concerning communal and community disputes. Rawa-Ruska is mentioned only as a geographic place on the map of '*The House of Israel of the Va'ad Arba Aratzot*,' that is appended to the book. Jewish Rawa already existed at that time, but it was before it had matured into a working community body.

Despite the fact that Rawa had not yet attained the level of a full Jewish community – this did not deter *The Murderer*[51] from wiping out the best of all the Jewish communities in Poland during the years of *Ta"Kh* and *Ta"T*.

The words, '*The Decrees of Ta"kh and Ta"T*, resonated in the time of our youth, with the same resonance as the word 'Holocaust' in our time, because up till then, there had not been recorded in that multi-chaptered book of Jewish tears, so massive a degree of killing in that measure. The day of 20 Sivan was designated as a day of fasting and seeking forgiveness, in memory of that Holocaust. My father ז"ל, who was not one of those who led services at the *Kloyz*, did lead services every year on the 20th of Sivan, because this was the *Yahrzeit* day of his father, and what is etched in my memory, is the '*El Moleh Rachamim*' prayer that my father recited, using the musical notes of 'The

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50 Possibly Varyasz in Ukrainian

51 An indirect metaphoric reference to Bogdan Chmielnicki

Book of Lamentations,' in memory of the Holy *Gaon* R' Yekhiel Mikhl, that was killed in *Sanctification of the Name*, along with the members of his congregation in the Sacred Congregation of Nemierow.

We knew that this was not the nearby Nemierow, but rather the more distant one in the Ukraine. And we thought of that distance in time in the same way as the distance in location. It did not occur to us, that when Chmielnicki and his murderers trampled the Jewish cities, trampling and murdering, that he also passed through our area, and also did not skip over our city of Rawa.

The scroll '*Tit HaYavan*,' by R' Shmuel Fyvusz ben R' Nathan Feitl, is one of the few written records that the contemporaries of the day set down regarding the events of *Ta"Kh* and *Ta"T*. Those who researched these writings do not place much faith in this particular record, because of the general disarray and chaos that ensued as a result of the many predations that occurred then. [However] because of the detail within, we will incorporate an excerpt from it:

> And from there he went to Magierow and there, there were about a hundred *B"B* (Families – Ed.), and all fled to the previously referenced fate. And from there he went to Potelycz, and there one hundred *B"B*, and all fled to the previously referenced fate. And from there he went to the *K"K* (Sacred Congregation – Ed.) Rauz (the meaning here is certainly Rawa – Ed.), and there were one hundred B"B who also fled to that fate. And also Chmiel... went to the previously mentioned fate; and in Narol there were six hundred family heads, apart from those who fled for their lives, and among all the of them there were over five thousand *B"B*, and because of our many sins, there was a great and evil decree, and more than twenty thousand souls were killed, women and children, and from there he went to the *K"K* of Belz (Belz – Ed.), and there, there were about two hundred *B"B* and apart from these, more than one thousand B"B fled to other lands, because the city was well-fortified, but a number of them died of hunger. And from there he went to Uhniv, and there, there were two hundred *B"B*, and all were killed, each at the hand of his neighbor, slaughtered so that they would not fall into the hands of their enemies. And from there he went to the *K"K* of Tyszowce, and there one hundred *B"B* were killed, practically all of them. And from there, he went to *K"K* Sokal, and there, there were about one hundred *B"B*, and they fled for their lives, into a thickly walled fortress, that was built like a fort, and they were saved.

When the fire of anger subsided, the remnants from the killing valley in nearby Narol returned, buried their dead, licked and bound up their wounds, reconstructed the wrecked structures, and began, once again, to build their city of Rawa anew. It appears that many of the Jews in the area, that went out, and then returned from their hiding places, and found their houses destroyed – preferred Rawa, which was found at a crossroads, to their prior, and now destroyed places, and put their shoulders to the development of that city. After quite a number of years passed, after a great deal of physical and spiritual effort, Rawa was privileged to 'rise in that same generation to the status of a community,' according to the telling of S. Y. Agnon. This was approximately in the first, or second decade of the eighteenth century.

The First Rabbi of Rawa-Ruska

R' Naphtali Hertz ben R' Moshe of Brody served as the first Rabbi of the new congregation of Rawa. He was a Torah Great, and his reputation arrived from Bród, a city replete with sages, and the leaders of the Rawa community put him in the position of the Teacher, to show them the way. He engaged in debate and exchange of ideas with all the luminaries of his generation, who crowned him with the sobriquet of *'Gaon.'* Because of this, those seeking ordination, and many authors turned to him, to receive his concurrence for their new books. Every new book was received with a suspicion of being in error; but the concurrence of R' Naphtali Hertz dissipated all such suspicions. Many of the books of that era would begin with their frontispieces showing the concurrence of R' Naphtali Hertz, signed as 'The *Bet-Din* Senior in Rawa,' or 'Currently the *Bet Din* Senior in Rawa.'

In the passage of some years, in 1742, R' Naphtali Hertz moved to ¯ó³kiew, the place of residence of his father-in-law, the Rabbi R' Shmuel Isserl: for this reason, he was called R' Naphtali Hertz – R' Hertz R' Isserl's. His father-in-law was among the respected and wealthy of the community leaders in ¯ó³kiew, and was also a Commissioner in the *'Va'ad Arba Aratzot.'* In ¯ó³kiew, R' Hertz R' Isserl's was nominated to serve as the Head of the *Bet Din.* And served in this capacity for a long period of time, in the *Bet Din* of the *Gaonim* R' Naphtali HaLevi, R' Shimon Meiseles, and the renowned *Gaon*, R' Tzvi Hirsch Meiseles.

In the unfortunate conflict of that period, between R' Yaakov Emden and the Rabbi R' Jonathan Eibeschutz, a conflict that split apart Jewry, R' Hertz R' Isserl's stood at the side of R' Jonathan, and signed a proclamation, together with other luminaries of Torah study, against those who would excommunicate him. Even though a number of the signers recanted, and withdrew their signatures over time, R' Hertz remained firm in his position – a stand that Jewish history came to justify, in its ultimate recording of the Rabbi, R' Jonathan as a *Gaon*, a Righteous Man and Holy.

His grandson, in his book *'The Silver Rope,'* tells: 'My grandfather, R' Hertz R' Isser's, the *Bet-Din Senior* of Rawa, was one of the greats of his generation, and told me of a man of faith, that once my grandfather traveled to the *Rebbe*, R' Elimelech of Lezhensk, to take counsel with him about a matter of importance in connection with issues in his community of Rawa, and when the Honorable *Rebbe*, R' Elimelech saw my grandfather alight from the wagon, he asked: 'How did His Honor know the time of my arrival?' R' Elimelech answered him: ' All of the celestial wheels and sacred creatures above, and the entire host reverberated, with the snap of the whips, indicating that R' Hertz R' Isser's was arriving.'

And there is yet another story about the *Rebbe*, R' Elimelech: The *Rebbe* was visiting a city, and when he was traveling towards it, the people of the city went to escort him. And when the *Rebbe*, R' Elimelech arrived with his wagon, to the outskirts of the city, he too, descended from his wagon, and mixed with those who came out to greet him. And when they asked him, why he did this, because it was the people who were coming to escort him, and given that he descended, it then looked like the people were escorting an empty wagon – the *Rebbe*, R' Elimelech answered: it was

because he observed people fulfilling the mitzvah of escorting a guest, with such intense ardor, and great joy, that he too felt like descending from the wagon, in order to include himself in this great mitzvah.

This story was connected by the elder *Hasidim* in the city at the analogous visit of the *Rebbe* to R' Hertz R' Isser's in Rawa.

The first Rabbi of Rawa was, it appears, one of the students of the *Rebbe* [Dov] Ber of Mezeritch זצ"ל. The second generation of Hasidism, that took its first steps in Galicia, was not subverted by the 'Opposition[52]' of the Rabbis and Torah Greats, as was the case with the prior generation of *Hasidim*, and spread to the areas of Lithuania and the Ukraine. The third generation already benefitted from the considerable encouragement of the Torah Greats in Galicia, that found, in the *Hasidim*, like-minded brethren, and a considerable force of influence, in their combined war against the '*Maskilim*' and the *Haskalah*.

R' Yekhiel Hillel ben R' David Altshuler

(The Author of '*Metzudat David*' and '*Metzudat Tzion.*')

His father, R' David, was one of the luminaries of Portugal, having moved to Prague, and according to legend, took stones of the synagogue from the place he was exiled in Portugal, and used them in the foundation of the well-known Prague synagogue, the '*Altneuschul.*' It was for this reason that the family received the name 'Altshuler.' He was one of the important interpreters of Torah of that generation. It was there that he complied his treatise, '*Metzudat David*,' about the Prophets and Later Writings.

His son, R' Yekhiel Hillel, moved on further to Laworow[53], near Rawa, and served there as the *Bet-Din Senior*. For a variety of reasons, he was compelled to leave Yavoriv, and he took up residence, for a few years in Rawa. And it was here, having the time, he worked over his father's book, and divided it into two parts: he called the explanation of the words '*Metzudat Tzion*,' and the explanation of the concepts, '*Metzudat David.*' And it was through this innovation, that he had inserted into his father's explanations, he made its study easier, and thanks to him, this commentary received wide distribution among many circles of the people, and it was because of it, that large masses of Jewry came to study the Holy Writ.

R' Hertz R' Isser's, the Rabbi of the city of Rawa gave his concurrence to the first edition of the book, that was published in the year 5513 [1754]. The latter-day *Hasidim* that did not draw inspiration from the study of Torah text, even with the commentary of the [two] '*Metzudot,*' did not know that the first concurrence to the book, was given by R' Hertz R' Isser's, a comrade to R' Elimelech of Lezhensk...

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52 The choice of words implies a reference to *Mitnagdim.*

53 A Yiddish rendition of Lavriv on modern maps of the Ukraine.

During that same period, a scion of our city served as a *Dayan* in Lvov, as indicated in the introduction of the book '*Anshei Shem*,' of Sh. Buber: 'R' Aryeh Leib ben R' Yehoshua Chaim of Rawa, was a Dayan in Lvov, and a signatory to the congregational *Pinkas*, on page 98 in a legal ruling, in the matter of a dowry; amending processes before the synagogue, from the date of 3 Adar 5499,and first signed by the Holy R' Abraham Sega"l, and after him Joseph Yehoshua Falik Schorr, the Holy Shmuel of ¯ ó³kiew, the Holy Alexander Ziskind, the Holy Aryeh Leib ben *Morenu HaRav* Yehoshua Chaim ז"ל from Rawa, and others.'

In the book, '*Adnei Paz*,' by R' Meir Ber'l Levy, the *Dayan* of ¯ ó³kiew, in which he collects the sayings of Torah Greats among Israel, there are also the words about Torah of R' Aryeh Leib Rawer.

Regarding the second Rabbi of Rawa-Ruska, S. Y. Agnon writes the following in his book, *'Alei Ayin*:'

R' Abraham of Bród, the Author of 'Dvar HaMelech'

In our generation, the *Gaon* and *Hasid* R' Abraham of Brod, son of the Rabbi and *Tzaddik* R' Israel, grandson of the *Gaon* R' Tzvi of Dalków. A great-grandson and grandson of the *Maharsh"a* and the *Mahara"m* of Lublin, he was raised on Torah by these great Rabbis, the *Gaonim* of their time. His father who was one of the highest of the officials, dedicated his life to his education, and did not stint from any effort on his part, and selected the best of the good teachers to direct him in the study of God's Torah. And when it came to his part, he did not pay attention to money, and bestowed on him the best of everything, together with the daughter of the true and authentic Gaon, renowned throughout all of the lands of Poland, he may truly be said to be holy, Our Teacher and Rabbi R' Mordechai Mardisz, the *Bet-Din* Senior of the Sacred Congregation of Poryck. His grandfather took him to his house, and raised him literally as a father, and opened the esoterica of the Torah to him, teaching him, and delving deeply into the words of our *Ancient Sages* ז"ל. It was because of this, that he was able to discern miracles in God's Torah, and was able to shield himself from disputes and casuistry. Out of a love of truth, and from the integrity of his heart, he was not embarrassed to say that he did not understand things that he looked over, and they didn't register with him, and in truth, they were difficult and intractable. It is possible to see this in the second frontispiece of his second book, at the end of Chapter 41, in the line 'And they will desecrate my name among the nations.' His grandfather who was tried by the loss of sons and male progeny, may God save us from such a fate, sought solace in the sons of his sons, and handled them with the love of a father, and therefore put off the yoke of making a living, deriving sustenance from our uncle, R' Abraham, the soul of this very *Hasid*, which ranged through worlds in which there was no eating and drinking, but only Torah and the fear of God, and would even contribute his thoughts on matters of making a living, just like those who leave God's Torah, and circulate in the marketplaces, and the streets in search of a way to earn a living, and would not amount to anything. When he saw that he was idling away time in place of Torah study, and was not succeeding, seeing that neither this nor that was turning out successfully at his hand, [he recognized that] he was created for the sole purpose of being occupied in Torah [study].

At the side of the table of his father-in-law, he would add understanding in *Shas* and the *Poskim, Rishonim* and *Akharonim*. And he deepened his research into the texts of the Kabbalah, and extracted honey from the flagon of the AR"Y, and ate from the Tree of Life, but remained hungry for the Word of God. He saw that so long as he sat at home, he is not oriented from all sides to the study of Torah. He said to himself, the study of Torah does not become realized except in the instance when someone inflicts himself cruelly on the members of his household, like a raven, therefore I will then go to study Torah in a different place. And despite the fact that the house of his father-in-law was replete with Torah, his soul yearned to go to the remaining places of Torah [study], to become familiar with the Sages of that generation, and more so, to see what wisdom had been innovated by those wise men in all the lands, across all generations. The ways of Torah study are circuitous, and anyone who desires to be familiar with them, must himself travel that circuitous road, in pursuit of it.

But his heart's desire was not given to him, or it is possible he discharged it on the Rabbinical seat. You find, in the ninth frontispiece in Chapter 12 of his book, where he is explaining the commandments in appointing *Dayanim*, he complainingly says: My brethren and friends, woe to the eyes that so see, I come from the humble part of the land, and the Torah has no one to explicate it, better off were those who fell by the sword in the first generations in our country, the rich who would make use of their wealth and would summon a Rabbi from some community, purchasing those services there from the rulers, and they were sinners in their souls, but they did not subvert those Rabbis whom they installed on the chair of leadership, to replace the luminaries of the generation, righteous men, *Hasidim*, and possessing integrity in their hearts. However today, among our many sins, in splendid communities, there is no oversight to seek out a man that God has filled with Torah, *Shas*, and the Original and Latter *Poskim*, and *Responsa*. Everyone that handles matters of what is permitted and forbidden, and the words of the Sages, but all before the dignity that in our current state of sin, everyone that comes to assume the burden, does so in the name of the Great Ones, but if someone of low degree and arrogance, and inverts the binding codes of the how life is to be lived, and perverts the meaning of the *Halakha*, trying to earn a reputation to be prominent among those Great Ones, and they do not even know to distinguish the *Rashi* [commentary] from the Torah, all of these offer opinion on the law, and even to the *Dayanim*, despite not having attained even the level of understanding of shepherds.

Let us return to our original subject. When his relatives heard about this, they said to him, and is it not good for you to sit here peacefully in your land, and not to take yourself off to a different land, because you do not know how much sorrow awaits you there? And our Elder, the *Gaon*, author of '*Yad Joseph*,' R' Joseph Juzpa, the *Mekhutan* of our Elder, R' Mordechai Mardisz, whose words were heard throughout the land, and where most of the Sages of the country were his drawn from his pupils, made an effort on behalf of the welfare of our uncle, until the Rabbinate of the city of Rawa was proposed to him, which at that time had [finally] risen to the level of a community, but there was not yet a [sitting] Rabbi there, since the *Gaon,* R' Naphtali Hertz, the son-in-law of the Regal Rabbi R' Israel Isserl, who was called R' Hertz R' Isserl's, who had been accepted as the Rabbi by the Sacred Congregation of Rawa, but desired to take up residence in the city of ¯ó³kiew, the city where his brother-in-law lived, and he was elevated there to the head of the *Bet-Din*. There are those who

say that our uncle did not receive the Rabbinate in Rawa, and others who say that he did, but that he was compelled to flee because of a libelous accusation. But it appears that through the efforts of the Righteous, things forever are made whole. Not many days went by, and our uncle, the *Gaon* R' Nathan Tzvi HaLevi, was accepted there as the Rabbi and the *Bet-Din Senior*, the son of our Elder, the *Gaon* R' Joseph Juzpa.

The previous excerpt opens up a window to illuminate the path to the second side of the coin of the social and cultural life in that same period, a development that disturbingly aroused luminaries and good people, and especially the masses, and brought about the enlargement of the influence of *Hasidism*, which was characterized by being straight of heart, simplicity and avoidance of putting on airs.

The Sacred Congregation of Rawa also assumed the form of a 'complete' community, with its disputes and conflicts.

To the extent possible, by consulting various sources, the following also served as Rabbis of the city:

R' Yitzhak Shimon ben R' Moshe

It appears that he served as the Rabbi of Rawa for a short period, approximately from the years 5545-50. In the books that were published in that time, and to which he gave his concurrence, he signed: He who was the *Bet-Din Senior* in the *Bet-Din* of the renowned *Gaon* R' Tzvi Hirsch Meiseles of ¯ó³kiew.

R' Menachem Mendl זצ"ל

R' Yitzhak Shimon was the last of the Rabbis of Rawa, whose appointment came from the congregation of ¯ó³kiew, that was, according to the administrative arrangements of the Austrian government, the regional center community for Jewish affairs. There were fifteen communities in the area that were attached to the ¯ó³kiew center, and among them was Rawa. Those Rabbis appointed from the outside, served only for a short time, and the city remained without a Rabbi for most of the time.

With the cancellation of the previously mentioned administrative arrangement, and when Rawa received the permission to conduct its community affairs independently – R' Menachem Mendl, a luminary in Torah and religious leadership, was taken on as the Rabbi, and he served in this capacity for decades. His *Bet-Din* earned him a respected place in the community and the environs. This Senior Rabbi added the young *Gaon*, R' Shlomo Kluger, to his *Bet-Din*, that at the time, was supported at the table of his father-in-law, R' Chaim Weinreb in Rawa. R' Shlomo was a *Safra Raba*[54] and conducted a correspondence with the luminaries of the Torah in the name of the *Bet-Din* of the city.

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54 An Aramaic honorific, indicating a 'Great Scribe.'

'The *Gaon* R' Menachem Mendl, the *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Rawa' is mentioned several times in the book. '*Yeshuat Yaakov*,' by the *Gaon* of Lvov, R' Yaakov Orenstein. He engages in casuistic discourse over matters of what is forbidden and what is permitted, that R' Menachem Mendl brought up to him. Also R' Joseph Shaul Nathanson, the Rabbi of Lvov, in his book '*Questions and Replies*,' returns several times to the innovative interpretations that the *Gaon* R' Menachem Mendl brought before his predecessor, and had ruled extensively in their connection with a great deal of attention.

The '*korowka*,' the tax levied on kosher meat[55], and the '*pachtrim*[56],' the tax collectors who gathered this – brought about the dominance of people who had both force and money onto the business of kosher meat [provision]. They took control over the abattoirs, and also slaughterers [themselves]. The Torah luminaries and leaders of *Hasidim* promulgated an oral decree that explicitly forbade 'butchers, *pachtrim*, jobbers, or bankers, to stand beside the slaughterers at the time that they are examining the lungs after slaughter, in order that the slaughterers not be compromised by the presence and arrogance of these people of power and money, and [inadvertently] rule that *treyf* meat be designated as kosher.' Among those Torah luminaries of the time, were R' Yaakov Orenstein, R' Ephraim Zalman Margulies, the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz[57], and R' Sholom of Belz, who signed the prohibition, and there also appears the signature of R' Menachem Mendl, *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Rawa.

Also, among the signatories, the name of R' Nathan HaLevi, the *Bet-Din Senior* of Turczyn appears, who filled the place of R' Menachem Mendl after his death, as the *Bet-Din Senior* of Rawa.

R' Nathan Tzvi HaLevi ben R' Joseph Juzpa Stern זצ"ל

R' Nathan Tzvi, a *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*, was the son of a *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*. 'There was not anyone like him in his generation in the entire land, his words being heard in the entire land, and most of the sages of the land were drawn from his students.' This is how S. Y. Agnon circumscribes R' Joseph Juzpa. R' Nathan Tzvi was the *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Turczyn. His signature in the capacity of the *Bet-Din Senior* of Turczyn appears among the Torah and *Hasidic* luminaries of that period, on the proclamation mentioned above, in connection with the slaughterers and butchers.

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55 The korowka, i.e., the levy of one kreuzer that was added to the price of kosher meat.

56 A '*pachter*,' was a lessee granted the right to collect taxes.

57 This may be a case of mistaken identity.

Yisrael Hopstein (1737–1814), also known as the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz, was one of the more important *Hasidic* leaders of Poland during the 18th and early 19th century. He was a student of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch and the Rebbe R' Melech Elimelech of Lezhensk. He wrote many books on *Hasidism* and *Kabbalah*.

When R' Menachem Mendl זצ"ל passed away, the community of Rawa took on R' Nathan Tzvi as its *Bet-Din Senior*. This was approximately in the year 5570. Her served as the Rabbi of the city for many years. His sayings are brought together in the book '*Yeshuat Yaakov*,' by R' Yaakov Orenstein and also the book '*Question and Answer*,' by R' Joseph Shaul Nathanson, Chapter 8 of Orakh Chaim, second edition, a response is found offered to him. These two *Gaonim*, show respect for R' Nathan Tzvi, in referring to him as a '*Gaon*' in their replies to him.

R' Nathan Tzvi penned many innovative concepts in Torah study, but nothing of his received any notoriety, because Rawa fell victim to a consuming fire, and all of the writings of this *Gaon* were burned.

R' Abraham Goldberg, a scion of our city, who was one of the pillars of the ranks of the writers of the '*Haskalah*,' and one of its sharpest combatants against *Hasidism*, was, as a youth, among the students of R' Joseph Juzpa in ¯ó³kiew. When a number of years had gone by, when Goldberg returned to Rawa, and disputatiously engaged with the *Hasidim*, they harassed him and excommunicated him, R' Nachman Krochmal of ¯ó³kiew wrote to him: ' And it is at my hand to advise you that you should attempt to earn the affection of your Rabbi, a great *Gaon*, and a *Tzaddik* of highest integrity, and you should ask to learn Torah from his mouth.' Meir HaLevi Latriss, who publicizes the previous writing adds: 'And is this not Rabbi Stern, called the Rabbi from Turczyn,' that sensitized Goldberg to take the advice regarding instruction in the lore of the Rabbi?'

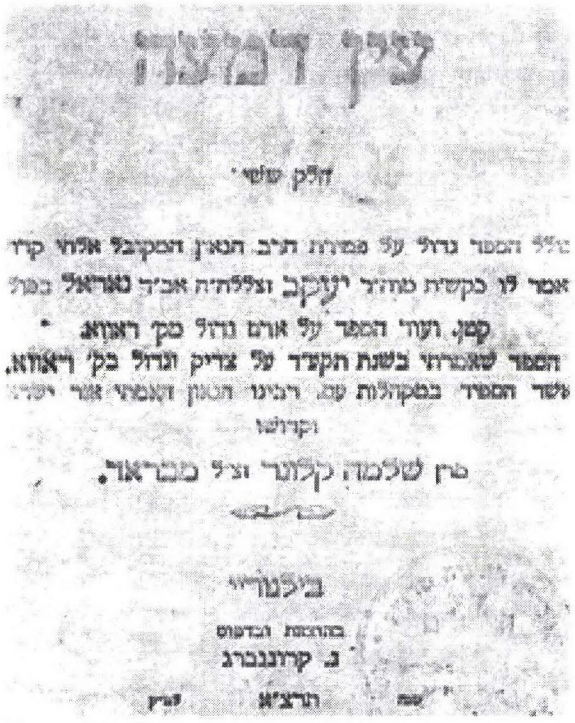
Rabbi Chaim Weinreb זצ"ל

The early *Hasidim* would say: '[He was] a Jew known for not having sons given to him by God, but rather in the sons-in-law that he chooses for himself.' R' Chaim was recognized for this, and for the one's he chose. It is not suitable to call him Rabbi, and no legends remain regarding the extent of his richness, but he did leave a legacy of Torah luminaries and [Jewish] leadership. Whose words and influence transcended the borders of the city, and the boundaries of Galicia, and reached into all of the Jewish Diaspora. Their many books, on all subjects in the Torah, as a literary foundation in Rabbinical literature. The son of R' Chaim, is that not R' Mordechai Mardisz, and his sons-in-law – R' Shlomo Kluger, and R' Tzvi Heller.

R' Shlomo Kluger – the Maggid of Brod

The elders of the city of Rawa spoke of R' Shlomo Kluger, from the period when he resided in the city, as if they knew him personally. They knew him to frequent his sitting place in the *Kloyz*, and in the Old *Bet HaMedrash*, they knew him to frequent the place of his store in the city, and they even knew to tell of the generosity that he exhibited... it appears to me, that they had designated [his place] as the place where the shoe store of R' Shmuel Czype's is in our day. These stories passed, as is understandable, to these elders from their parents, because R' Shlomo lived in Rawa at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

'We look upon this Rabbi-*Gaon* from the place where we stand, and it is necessary for us to raise our eyes to him, as if he were in the high heavens, in order that we be able to grasp the full extent



Page 66: Frontispiece of the Book, 'Eyn Dim'ah*' Part Six, Edited by R' Shlomo Kluger*

of his stature, because the extent of this *Gaonic* persona has not yet been properly researched inside the chronology of those Torah luminaries and Sages of Israel' – writes the Rabbi Y. L. Maimon about R' Shlomo Kluger in his book, '*Sarei HaMeah.*[58]'

From the book, '*Toledot Shlomo,*' a biography of the life of R' Shlomo Kluger, by his grandson, Y. A. Kluger, let us bring here excerpts from the period when R' Shlomo Kluger resided in Rawa-Ruska:

At that time (In the year 5560 approximately – Editor) an important and respected man resided in the Sacred Congregation of Rawa, the wondrous Torah scholar, the renowned noble, Our Teacher, the Rabbi Chaim זצ"ל, and his spouse, the renowned and modest woman Chaya ע"ה, of a distinguished pedigree. The man himself was a product of a Rabbinical line, and was privileged to have sons and sons-in-law who were Rabbis, his son being the brilliant *Gaon* R' Mordechai Mardisz, and his first son-in-law was the Rabbi and true *Gaon*, Our Teacher and Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Heller. And when this previously mentioned prince of a man heard of the reputation of Shlomo, that goes on rising in the camp of Jewry, he traveled to Zamoœæ[59] and showered him with a dowry and gifts, and gave him his righteous and graceful daughter, Mrs. Liba Malya as a wife, and took him into his home, giving him food at his table, and he would sit for all six days of the week in the various houses of study, with his Gaonic brothers-in-law, who would uproot mountains with their casuistry, and we heard this from an unimpeachable source, that they would spend eighteen hours a day in study, leaving only six hours for matters of the body, to eat, to sleep, and to record his innovative thinking in a book. Because before he came to Rawa, he would be innovating new hills and heights of *Halakha*, and despite this, out of a sense of his great modesty, he had no particular desire to record any of this in writing. Only in the year 5561, when he was fifteen years old, did the spirit of God begin to pulse within him, giving him the impetus to record his innovative thoughts on a board, and when he reached the age of twenty-two, he was not restrained in this way, and his name became renowned among the great *Gaonim*, and his word of Torah became a major item in the Sacred Congregation

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58 The Officers [sic: Leaders] of the Century.

59 Among his pupils were famous *Gaonim*, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Heller, author of **Tiv Gittin** (No. 27-30), **Kunterus R' Zvi Hirsch** (No. 58-59) and **Tapukhei Zahav** (No. 76); his brother R' Shmuel Zeinvill Heller, author of **Zikhron Shmuel** (No. 22); Rabbi Shlomo Kluger of Brod, et. al. (Excerpt from the English translation of The Zamoœæ Memorial Book, p. 139).

of Rawa. And the *Gaonim* of that generation sat around on this, in seats of judgement, [these being] the Rabbi and leading *Gaon* the *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Rawa זצ"ל (allocated apparently to the previously mentioned R' Menachem Mendl. – Editor), and the Senior Rabbi and *Gaon,* Our Teacher and Rabbi Aryeh Heller, the *Mekhutan* of R' Chaim Weinreb, and my grandfather, R' Shlomo, was the third, even though he was young in age (About twenty – Editor.), and they were the elders and seniors. Despite this, he was joined with them, and they were happy with him, because they knew of his greatness in Torah study.

And R' Shlomo writes in his book *'The Wisdom of Shlomo:'* Literally in my younger years, when I was twenty-two years old in the Sacred Congregation of Rawa, I was a mediator in a rather substantial issue along with the Rabbi and *Gaon,* the *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Uhniv, and with R' Aryeh, my father the Rabbi and *Gaon* R' Tzvi Heller, and they were then the seniors and of advanced age.

All of his time was dedicated to God, and day-in and day-out he added knowledge, inculcating Torah to the masses, learned in concert with his students, who in their own right became outstanding among Jewry. One was the renowned *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*, R' Sholom Rosenfeld[60], who served in the Rabbinical seat in Jarczew and afterwards in Kamionka. And when we received lore from the '*Etz HaChaim*,' and from the letters of the AR"Y זצ"ל, one could be nourished and lived from them forever.

It never entered his mind that he would make a living from the Torah, and assumed the yoke of the Rabbinate, but his entire desire was to immerse himself in the Torah of the Living Lord, without anyone to turn to except for the Lord God himself, and contented himself with the minimum amount of food and drink, and little sleep. This was his sentence for his entire life, while he was sheltered in the aegis of his father-in-law, who dealt with all of his needs. He lived in penury, and was contented and happy with his lot.

But you cannot remain a bridegroom forever... his father-in-law R' Chaim passed away, and did not leave behind any wealth. His mother-in-law, who was a *Woman of Valor*, turned her hand to commerce to provide sustenance and support. In the year 5567, she too passed away. In his book, '*Eyn Dim'ah*' there is a long eulogy to his ' chaste mother-in-law, of distinguished pedigree, the Mrs. Chaya ע"ה, who passed away in the year 5567.' At that point every support for food and drink was shattered and taken away from him. His wife, the *Rebbetzin*, pressed him, by saying to him each and every day: 'Why do you sit wringing your hands, and you don't make any effort to obtain a Rabbinical appointment like our brother-in-law, for does money simply go in our vessels?' R' Shlomo answered her" 'From the day that I could reason, I set myself a rule that I would not derive anything from the dignity of the Torah. Also, I am not worthy to aspire to the mantle of a Rabbi among Jews, but if it is God's decree on me that I be a Rabbi, who is to annul His decree? However, God forbid that I make an effort to do this, because something bad could befall me.'

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60 We note that the pronunciation of this first name was 'Schulem' notwithstanding the Hebrew spelling. It reflects the Galician Yiddish pronunciation of that area.

And to fulfil the behest of *Our Sages*, 'It is possible that one could sit idle, from this we must learn: And you will be blessed in all that you undertake.' – he went and opened a store, bought merchandise for himself, and became a storekeeper by the book. With one hand, he engaged in commerce, and his second hand held on to the edge of a tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, the Jerusalem Talmud, *Safra, Sifri, Tosefta* and *Mekhilta*[61]. He sits in the store all day, and writes up innovative positions on *Halakha*, in profound and broad expanses like the sea itself. He put together a rather large and expansive work, '*Eymek Halakha*,' on perhaps all the issues in the Shas, writing it in the period that he was in Rawa. And in his store, he would occasionally give more merchandise to the buyer than he asked for, and sometimes he would get less than what was owed to him, and their were times when he gave goods on credit and forgot to write it down in his book.

One time, a buyer from outside the city came into his store, and bought a large amount of merchandise from him. My grandfather, who was immersed in a particularly difficult line of reasoning, forgot to receive the money, from the buyer, in payment for the merchandise that had been taken. And the buyer vanished from the store, with the merchandise tucked away in his waistband, feeling happy and of good heart. When his wife came to the store, R' Shlomo told her about the big 'transaction' that he had entered into, about two hours before, in selling half the merchandise from the store in one fell swoop, thank God. But, she asked him: 'Where is the money for the goods?' Oh me! What a tragedy! The money is not here! R' Shlomo stood there struck dumb, stunned to try and realize what had happened, and after a few minutes went by, he recollected that he had never received the money for the merchandise from the hands of the buyer. You can understand the aggravation to his soul, and especially the soul of his wife, who then found this as an appropriate excuse to pour out all of her anger on him, in saying to him: 'See what you brought upon us, and we are getting increasingly impoverished from day-to-day, and what will be our end?'

R' Shlomo bolstered himself with the fear of God, and with his enormous certainty that had not left him from the day he emerged from his mother's womb, and found no other way, other than to hurry to the house of the buyer and ask for the money from him. That day was a cloudy day, and a great deal of snow had fallen on the ground, and the buyer lived far from the city. Despite this, the rain and snow did not deter him, and he will go to the house of the buyer with the bitterness of heart and the sorrow of spirit, because he had to stop his investigation into the difficult line of reasoning, but he did not mourn the money that had been lost to him.

When R' Shlomo was outside of the city, a 'sleigh wagon' came upon him, and on it were four elderly respectable men, wearing silk clothing, and they called to him: R' Shlomo! Where are you walking to in this heavy snow? So he told them what had happened in his business transactions. And they told him that it had been a half year since their Rabbi, of Kulikówka, had passed away, and when they had taken counsel with the *Gaon* of Lvov, R' Yaakov Orenstein, as to who was worthy and appropriate to crown with the diadem of the rabbinate on his head, the *Gaon* opened his holy mouth and said: 'of all the Rabbis that have passed through and exchanged thoughts before me in these occasions, I have not found any Rabbi that would be worthy of this mantle as is R' Shlomo Kluger who resides in the city of Rawa, because he is great in matters of Torah.' And when we heard

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61 Commentaries on the Talmud, used in study of the original texts.

these words emanate from the mouth of the *Gaon*, the author of '*Yeshuot Yaakov*,' we trembled before his words, and we hurried to travel back to home, we wrote and signed a 'consensus' with the signature of all the men of the city of Kulikówka, and we have come here to take you on as a Rabbi.

So this way and that, the news spread through the entire city of Rawa, and his house was surrounded by small and large alike, from young boys to old men, and the entire people from end to end, and they offered him blessings of good fortune, and the entire night it was lively, there was happiness and joy in the city of Rawa, because all very much wanted to see his aggrandizement. Because they knew, to start with, if he would only just accept the yoke of the rabbinate, even if initially in sorrow, his destiny in the end would change very much, and his might would leave an imprint on all the people in the Diaspora. On the morrow, he and the people who were with him, and all of the people of Rawa, went to escort him, and took their leave of him with a great deal of weeping, and gave him kisses with their mouths.

The people of Rawa guarded their love and regard for R' Shlomo Kluger even in the coming generations, and wove legend upon legend about his greatness. I can recall, while I was little, my father ז"ל taught me to interpret the 'aleph-bet' into words, and created a 'test' for me: if I could interpret the letters in the name 'Shlomo' – I would know how many books R' Shlo-mo Kluger compiled. But nevertheless, the legend is told, that he had written 375 books, in accord-ance with the numerical count of the letters in his name, even though only more than one hundred fifty are known today. About 15 years before his death, he personally wrote that he had 135 compil-ations on the *Shas* and its *Poskim*, and each of these compilations had in excess of approximately two hundred pages, along with responses – approximately eight thousand [pages].

From Rawa, where here, his persona left a mark during the ten years that he resided here, he continued through Kulikówka, Jósefów, Branzi, to Brody, and there he received the name of *'Der Broder Maggid*,' a name that indicated to all of Jewry his greatness in Torah, charity and self-effacement.

R' Mordechai Mardisz ז"ל

R' Mordechai Mardisz Weinreb, the son of R' Chaim ז"ל, was a great Torah scholar. While yet of a tender age, his greatness was told in the faraway reaches of Poland, and he was taken on as the *Bet-Din* Senior of the Sacred Congregation of Grabowiec, and his reputation spread throughout Poland, and he was received, after a short time, as the Rabbi in Ungwar, in the country of Hungary[62], a city in which Torah greats had served in the past.

In R' Shlomo Kluger's book, '*Sefer Chaim*,' a special commentary of R' Mordechai Mardisz is printed, and R' Shlomo writes of it as follows: 'The Rabbi *Gaon,* sharp and thoroughly versed, and famous.' He is recalled in a praiseworthy fashion several other times in the books of the *'Khatam Sofer.*' He was a *Mekhutan* of the *Tzaddik* R' Tzvi Zhydachiv, זצ"ל.

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62 Today this is the city of Uzhgorod (Uzhhorod) in the Ukraine. Other spellings abound.

R' Abraham David Kara, a *Tzaddik* and a renowned expert in the *Kabbalah*, who compiled many books on the *Kabbalah* and *Halakha* – in his second marriage – took to wife the daughter of R' Mordechai Mardisz. In the well-known book of the Rabbi and *Bet-Din Senior* of Buczacz, as they called R' Abraham David, '*Da'at Kedoshim*,' in the foreword he presents a matter of *Halakha*, from 'My Teacher, Father-in-Law, the *Gaon* Our Teacher and Rabbi Mordechai Mardisz.'

R' Tzvi Hirsch Heller – R' Hirsch'eleh Kharif

R' Tzvi Hirsch Heller was the son of R' Aryeh Heller, who was the Head of the *Bet-Din* in Rawa, and previously, the Head of the *Bet-Din* in Zamocæ; and the son-in-law of R' Chaim Weinreb of Rawa, and brother-in-law of R' Shlomo Kluger.

In his foreword to '*Sefer HaMidot*,' of R' Yaakov Krantz, the *Maggid* of Dubno, the writer tells:

> The Rabbi *Gaon* R' Yaakov Orenstein told me, when he was in the days of his dependency, at the side of the table of his father-in-law in Jaroslaw, and was learning together with his companion, the *Gaon* R' Hirsch'eleh of Rawa, he heaped praise on and extolled the virtues of his friend to a great degree. He said of him that he was a great *Gaon*, and his entire demeanor was that of holiness and purity, and when the *Maggid* would come to Jaroslaw, the father-in-law of R' Yaakov Orenstein, [that being] R' Hirsch Meicz's, took him into his home, and would sit all day in the study of the two friends cited above. Day-in and day-out the *Maggid* lectured at the *Bet HaMedrash*, and the young *Gaonim* would go to hear his pleasing lectures. One day, the *Maggid* said to the two young men: Do not come to the *Bet HaMedrash* today. To their question: What makes this day different? The *Maggid* said: when I give my last lecture in the city, to cause the hearts of the children to turn to their Father in Heaven, I bring the listeners to tears, and I do not want to cause this to you, young (men), which might result in physical harm to you. The young people were moved to laughter, and they said: we will go, and not cry. And the '*Yeshuot Yaakov*' told: I decided immediately to cry, when I saw his face and the movements of the *Maggid*, when he ascended the *Bima*, and before he even opened his holy mouth, and Hirsch'eleh remained stubborn for about a quarter of an hour, and did not cry, and when he [finally] did begin to cry, he cried with a bitter heart, to the point that I found it necessary to get him a distance away from the place, because he began to fall sick in a greatly dangerous way, because he was a delicate sort, and inclined to pass out too readily.

He was weak in body, but powerful in spirit, with a sharp lightning-like mind. At an early age, he was taken on as the *Bet-Din Senior* in the Sacred Congregation of Brigidau, with the recommendations of those Torah greats at whose hands he received his ordination. With the appearance of his book, '*Tiv Gittin*,' regarding the Talmud tractate *Gittin*, his name became famous in the world of scholars, as a *Gaon* of a sharp mind, and he was called R' Hirsch'eleh *Kharif*. From Brigidau he transferred over to serve as the *Bet-Din Senior* in Hanart[63] in Hungary.

The *Maskilim* of Brody were planning to establish an elementary school for the Jewish children. As a counterweight against this, those who opposed the *Haskalah*, founded a unique yeshiva, with the objective of it being able to attract to it all of the Jewish children of the city. To this end, the people of the city invited R' Hirsch'eleh *Kharif* to head this yeshiva. He gave up his seat as the Rabbi, preferring the role of *Rosh Yeshiva*, in order to save the children of Brod[y] from the talons of the '*Haskalah*.'

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63 Possibly Hont in Hungary, north of Budapest, on the Slovakian border/

'During the time that he resided in the city of Brody, it is not possible to describe the great extent to which the residents of this city accorded him glory and respect, and they respected him a great deal.' – so wrote his son, R' Menachem in '*Millel L'Abraham*.'

The leaders of the Harieli school in Brod saw in this 'Yeshiva' a danger to their endeavors, and libeled it, saying that it had no permission from the authorities, and they attacked Rabbi Heller, saying that he taught out of forbidden books. The result was, that Rabbi Heller was driven out of Brody in 1818 by an official administrative order' – so writes Mahler in his book, *'Hasidism and the Haskalah*.'

Upon being expelled from Brod, by the Maskilim, he was received with great honor as the *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Ungwar that was in Hungary. There he established a Yeshiva and inculcated Torah to the many, educating students who became Torah luminaries, among them R' Shlomo Ganzfried, the author of '*The Abbreviated Shulkhan Arukh*.' He was a friend with R' Moshe Sofer זצ"ל, the author of '*Khatam Sofer*,' and the MAHARA"M Schick. He engaged with them and with them, contributed in matters pertaining to *Halakha*, but not once is he mentioned in their books.

With the passage of some time, the people of Old-Uvan[64] in Hungary accepted him as the *Bet-Din* Senior of their congregation, a place where Torah luminaries had resided previously.

On 25 Tishri 5595, R' Tzvi זצ"ל passed away, and his honored resting place is in Old-Uvan.

With his passing, the Gaon, author of '*Khatam Sofer*' married his widow. She brought her son-in-law with her, the Rabbi R' Abraham Yitzhak Weinberger, and her daughter, she being his wife, to Pressburg.

And R' Shlomo Sofer writes in his biographical book, '*The Triple Thread*' about his grandfather the '*Khatam Sofer*' זצ"ל: 'After the passing of my grandfather זצ"ל, the wife of the '*Khatam Sofer*,' she came to him in a visit, and hinted that the house needs oversight. To this end, in the year 5595, he married the widow of the outstanding Gaon, R' Tzvi Hirsch Heller, taking her to wife, and I heard that there was a reason in connection with my grandfather, because in the year 5594, the previously mentioned *Gaon* had been accepted as the *Bet-Din Senior* of Old-Uvan, because of the effort of my grandfather, but he did not have many days there, and was taken from this life, to the *Yeshiva on High*, within a year of arriving there, and after that, my grandfather took his widow as a wife, in order that she have comfort after the loss of her husband.

She was a righteous woman, and possessed a wise heart. My father told me that at the time that my grandfather had become weak, and his sons constrained him from going to teach his lesson with the Yeshiva students, because his suffering had overpowered him, she replied by saying that he should not rest from his learning, and rather to hope that God would give him strength, and she gave him ongoing encouragement until he acceded to her words.'

This was the daughter of R' Chaim Weinreb – a daughter of Rawa-Ruska.

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64 Possibly Iván in Hungary.

R' Sholom Rosenfeld-Graff זצ"ל
'Der Rawer Ilui' – 'Der Kaminker Rav '[65]

The Rabbis and Torah luminaries that were in Rawa – came to it from the outside. R' Sholom was scion of the city, he was born there and educated on the benches of the *Bet HaMedrash* which he occupied, and he absorbed its *Hasidic* and scholastic air. The *Bet HaMedrash* of R' Shlomo Kluger in Rawa, and the *Hasidic* residence of R' Sholom Rokeach of Belz, sculpted his character. 'He was visibly the outstanding student of R' Shlomo Kluger, and clandestinely, that of R' Sholom Rokeach'– is how his friends described him.

He did not leave books behind him: his entire persona as expert in *Halakha*, as a *Tzaddik*, a sage, as both perceptive and modest, nourished the *Hasidic* folklore with a surfeit of sayings full of substance, both in terms of acuity and insight.

R' Naphtali Rosenfeld, a scion of the family of R' Sholom, currently living here in *The Land* writes to us: 'my fathers were residents of Rawa-Ruska for generations on end. I still recall that when we went up to the cemetery in Rawa, to prostrate ourselves on the graves of our ancestors, we also prostrated ourselves on the grave of our grandfather, whose name was, R' Sholom ben Naphtali ז"ל and the tombstone was very ancient, more than one hundred and forty years old, and on the tombstone, etched in bold letters were the words: ' He received the title of an officer from the King.' At home they used to tell that during the time of the Napoleonic wars, our grandfather donated a large sum to the kingdom's treasury for the needs of the war, and as a reward for this, he received the title for the remainder of his days. We were always proud of our grandfather, who was called 'The Rich R' Sholom.'

Regarding his grandson R' Sholom, our R' Sholom, R' Jekuthiel Kamelhar writes as follows in his book 'The Generation of Knowledge:'

'The Rabbi and monumental *Gaon,* and *Tzaddik,* a foundation of the world, Out Teacher and Rabbi Sholom Rosenfeld זצ"ל, the *Bet-Din Senior* of Jarczew and Kamionka, was the son of the wealthy man R' Yaakov Joseph ז"ל of Rawa, son of the wealthy man R' Sholom Graff ז"ל. When the rich man R' Sholom fell ill, his son R' Yaakov Joseph traveled to Vilna, to the Holy Man, the '*Khozeh,*' to beseech him to express compassion for his sick father: when the '*Khozeh* read the note, he said to R' Joseph: 'Here, it is not within my power to help him, because your father has passed from the 'Crown of Royalty,' to the 'Crown of Torah.' Rabbi Yaakov Joseph did not understand his words. And when he returned to his home in Rawa, he learned then that at the time that the '*Khozeh*' has uttered these words to him, his father had passed from life, and that his wife had given birth to a son that was given his name: Sholom. The meaning of the '*Khozeh*' was that he, the rich man, R' Sholom Graff, from the standpoint of the 'Crown of Royalty' was a very rich man, and went from that' Crown of Royalty,' to the soul of his grandson who had been born just then, from the standpoint

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65 The Genius of Rawa – The Rabbi of Kamionka

of the 'Crown of Torah.' And his prediction came to pass, and the child Sholom that was born at that time, grew up and earned a Crown of Torah, but not a Crown of Royalty, such that despite the fact that he was a formidable *Gaon*, and a noble *Tzaddik*, he was not a leader of the generation from the truly great Rabbis, like his friend the *Gaon*, and *Tzaddik*, the author of '*Divrei Chaim*' of Sanz.

While Hirsch was still a youth of a tender age, his reputation went out before him, attaining praise as the '*Ilui* from Rawa;' while yet a child, and he came with his father the rich man to Lublin to the '*Khozeh*,' before his father entered to the Rebbe with him, they brought him to the sitting Rabbi of the place, R' Azriel Horowitz, called '*Der Eizener Kop*[66].' And so this child genius engaged with this *Gaon* with such sharpness, and emerged from his presence victorious in argument; and after this, he went with his father to the '*Khozeh*,' and the thought occurred to the youngster, that if it was within his capacity to win against this 'Iron Head,' he could get the best of the *Rebbe*. And when the father presented him to the '*Khozeh,*' and asked him to plumb the depth of his son the 'genius,' the Holy Rabbi the '*Khozeh*' asked him: What is the portion of the week? He replied: The *parsha* of *Kedoshim*. The Holy Rabbi said to him: My son, 'Be Holy,' Rashi offers the explanation 'Be prostrate, etc., at which point a trembling seized this young genius, such that his knees quaked out of such great fear, and he brought down on him the fear of heaven in an overwhelming amount, such that his father was compelled to immediately take him back to the inn in order to restore his equanimity.

'And there in Rawa, R' Eliezer son of the *Tzaddik* R' Naphtali of Ropczyce[67] זצ"ל resided, beside the table of his father-in-law, the rich man, and Rabbi Sholom became known to him, and he pulled him with thick ropes of love to attach himself under the ambit of his father זצ"ל in Ropcyce, and it was there that grace and truth met, and righteousness and peace kissed him. He, R' Sholom, with R' Chaim of Sanz, who were young men then, 'sat' to derive pleasure from the ambience of the *Divine Presence*, and became inseparable friends, both of them *Gaonim* of sharp mind, both of them made holy from their knowledge of religious esoterica.

R' Sholom also found shelter under the aegis of other luminaries of *Hasidism*: With each of them, he sought what was unique to him, and in his heart, he melted in that special attribute in each, and it chiseled his character. Loyal to the inclination of his friend, R' Tzvi Hirsch of Zhydachiv, he was: 'A *Hasid* who thought of his *Rebbe* as the sole *Rebbe* – was likened to engaging in idolatry: the essence being, that each person needs to find the *Rebbe* that is most suitable to his welfare and needs.' In the end, the *Rebbe* that suited him he found in the person of R' Shimon ben R' Sholom Rokeach of Belz, and he accepted his teaching with the full commitment of his entire soul, and in time, he became to outstanding explicator of the *Rebbe*, even though he felt that he had an abbreviated reach to plumb the depths of his thoughts.

When his *Hasidim* implored him to relate the words of Torah that he heard from the *Rebbe* of Belz, he replied and said to them: 'You should know, that it is not within my power to convey to you the

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66 Literally, 'The Iron Head,' as an allusion to formidable intellectual prowess.

67 Pronounced 'Ropschitz' by Yiddish speakers.

words of our *Rebbe*, because he is extremely terse with his words, saying only one of a thousand things of what he reaches, and what he knows, and I only grasp one of a thousand of what it is that he has revealed. And even I am not capable of relaying one out of a thousand of what it is that I have grasped; and of the words that I say here before you – you will not be able to understand more than one out of a thousand, and if that is the fact, you may understand how profound the matter is. Is it, therefore, worth trying to convey these words to you?'

The author of '*The Generation of Knowledge*' further sheds light on the things, cited above, that were said by R' Sholom: 'In these short words, he elucidated a complete orientation in the secret to spiritual life, because he was not only a world-class *Gaon* in Torah alone, but also in the plumbing of the soul, and the lore of psychology, he was a giant in spirituality, and in these few words he explained, before this gathering of *Hasidim*, the secret of penetrating the higher thoughts, and its limitations, when it is taken out of its storage place and expressed in speech, because there is more than what is permitted for the mouth to utter, and the quill to write, and is given permission to the heart to contemplate and mull over.'

From his many sayings, scattered throughout the Hasidic literature, let us bring a few of them, from which we will be able to recognize his greatness, his righteousness, and insight.

One time, a bookseller came to the *Bet HaMedrash*, and spread out on the table many expensive books, among them the book, '*Perakh Mateh Aharon*,' that R' Sholom desired to purchase. The bookseller demanded a rather large sum from the hands of R' Sholom: because of this, R' Sholom asked of the bookseller, to lend him the book for one night. The bookseller consented to this request, and on the following morning, when R' Sholom returned the book, the bookseller asked about his thoughts on buying it: He replied: 'It is heavy in my hands.' The bookseller was struck with wonder, because he knew the worth of the book, that it was precious, and not to be found anywhere in the city. R' Sholom said to him: 'This book is as if in my 'container,' because I can recite it to you by heart till the end.'

The question of 'granting permission to marry to a certain *Agunah*[68]' occupied the Torah luminaries of that time in Galicia. R' Sholom, being still a young man, organized an in-depth 'response' to this question, and traveled to the Rabbi of Lvov to present the argument to him, the author of *'Yeshuat Yaakov*,'who related seriously to the young *Gaon,* respectfully looked at the beginning of the

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68 **Agunah** (Hebrew: òâåðä plural: **agunot** (òâåðåú); literally "anchored" or "chained") is a *Halakhic* term for a Jewish woman who is "chained" to her marriage. The classic case of this is a man who has left on a journey and has not returned, or has gone into battle and is MIA. It also refers to a woman whose husband refuses, or is unable, to grant her an official bill of divorce, known as a *get.*

For a divorce to be effective, Jewish law requires that a man grant his wife a *get* of his own free will. Without a *get* no new marriage will be recognized, and any child she might have with another man would be considered a *mamzer,* a term often translated as but dissimilar to the concept of a bastard. It is sometimes possible for this woman to receive special dispensation, called a ***heter agunah*** (dispensation by a halakhic authority based on a complex decision (based on substantial evidence) that her husband is presumed dead.

'response' that lay before him, and offered the following illumination: 'Young man, one theory of the RITV"A in this matter contradicts the entire construct of your 'response.'' R' Sholom then said to him: I also studied the arguments connected to our issue here, along with all of the interpretations, and I do not recall this particular theory. The Gaon of Lvov said to him: 'It is twenty years since I saw this theory of the RITV"A: Let us look in the book and see.' When the book was brought, and when they discovered that what was written was as said by the Rabbi of Lvov, R' Sholom was moved, and did not enter into conversation, and with the simplicity born of modesty said: Here, this is truly a *Gaon*.'

And in Rawa it was told: When R' Sholom returned from Lvov, he was asked, 'what did you see in the large town of Lvov?' 'Three things' – he answered. 'All the houses are houses of jurisprudence, all the people – are emissaries and only brothers and sisters.' Explanations would be superfluous. Everyone understood the acuity in his inferences. 'Houses of jurisprudence' – tall buildings, full of virtues; it appeared that the 'courthouse in Rawa already stood on its mound. 'Emissaries' – only speeding and hurrying, making haste, not like the Jews of our city, who when walking to the *Bet HaMedrash*, walk casually, or converse or think about matters of Torah, and when they return from the *Bet HaMedrash*, it is, of course, according to law, forbidden to make haste. 'Brothers and Sisters' – self-evident: if his wife is with him, a man is forbidden to engage in excessive talk, if the wife of his friend – it goes without saying; and who were these various couples – if not 'brothers and sisters.' In these three short sentences, he was able to describe the differences in the way of life between the large city and the town.

In making the rounds to the doors of donors for purposes of receiving charitable donations, he also came upon the house of the rich man, who was a known miser. That person received him gracefully, and began to groan and tell him: 'I have a bitterly poor brother, a sister consumed with many children, a sick sister-in-law, an old brother-in-law that is weak, etc.,' R' Sholom arose and said to him: 'You don't know how to speak.' And the rich man was surprised: 'Did I not speak and speak!' And R' Sholom said to him: 'But you don't know how to end the sentence: And to them I don't give a cent, and you want me to give you something here?'

His 'teachings' are the keys to his deeds and behavior:

He explained the blessing that is bestowed on an infant boy at the time of circumcision, on being admitted to the covenant of our Father Abraham ע"ה: 'As he is being admitted to the covenant' – without any volition on his part in the fulfilment of this very first mitzvah of his – 'so let him enter into the study of Torah, the wedding canopy and the performance of good deeds' – also without any reservations and conditions.

It is told that a group of Torah luminaries were sitting in the *Hasidic* house of the *Tzaddik* of Rymanów at a mitzvah feast. They asked: Whom shall we send to bring honey mead? R' Sholom of Kamionka, who was already one of the luminaries, said, give me the money, and I will send my boy to bring the drink. They thought he had a servant lad, and they gave him the money, and after an hour went by, they saw, to their great astonishment, that R' Sholom, in all his dignity, personally

was carrying a pitcher of honey mead on his back. They asked him: But did you not say that you would send your boy? – Yes, that is what I did, R' Sholom replied – because when I became a Bar Mitzvah, and became an adult, I made up with the 'boy' within me that he should not leave me until I reached an advanced and hoary old age; and in this way, I sent my boy, from the time before he became a Bar Mitzvah and an adult.

When they asked R' Sholom of Kamionka, from where does R' Sholom of Belz derive his power to heal the sick with only a touch of his hand? R' Sholom replied: It is written in the Psalms, *'And He will send His Word and heal them*[69]*,'* whose [Hebrew] acronym is 'ידו [sic: His hand].

And while he was taking a rest one time at his *Rebbe* in Belz, R' Sholom suddenly fell sick and could not move his body. The *Rebbe* ordered that on Monday, he was to be brought to the *Bet HaMedrash* with is bed, and ordered that he be called up to the Torah. He lay in his bed, and was unable to move from his place. The *Rebbe* drew near him and said: 'Rabbi of Kamionka! You do love the Torah, go make a blessing over the Torah.' R' Sholom felt the weakness ebb from him and wane, his extremities responded to him, he arose and went up to the Torah. All of this was in light of his love of Torah, in light of what is 'written' in the Psalms, and at the core – because of his great faith in the *Rebbe*...

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R' Sholom was also among the greats of *Hasidism* in that same period, that pounded their feet from city to city, to dispense words of *Hasidism* before the masses aching from decrees that the Austrian monarchy heaped upon them, anew with audit inspections, in order to breathe in hope for a redemption that was nigh, and came to warn them against the illusory teachings of the '*Maskilim*,' that preached the salvation of the Jews to be derived from 'alignment' with the gentiles surrounding them, to learn their language and culture. *Hasidim* sensed that the teachings of the '*Haskalah*' would bring about a rupture of the bond that tied the masses of the people to the root sources of Israel, a loss of their Jewish identity, and to their complete assimilation.

The *Hasidic* luminaries were pursued up to their necks by the '*Maskilim*' who opposed them, with the help of the police of the Austrian monarchy, that leaned towards the *Maskilim* at that time, and were subjected to the danger of being expelled from the city, and imprisonment.

In the *Alte Kloyz* of Rawa, which the leaders of Belz established, they had a custom of *'Yotz'ei Dofen*,' that was not like the customs of Belz itself. During the *Shaleshudes*, which was organized by the Belz *Hasidim* as a pro forma matter, at the time that the special Sabbath melodies were sung, and when they reached the song, '*Baruch El Elyon*,' at the line, *'Therefore with all heart and with all soul, with all might, we will enthrone and rejoice*,' the entire congregation would rise to its feet, and called out with ardor: '*God reigns, God has reigned, God will reign for ever and ever!*' – a line that is not actually found in the refrain mentioned above. The elders among the *Hasidim* explained, that the source of this custom lies in an incident that had occurred. When two Hasidic luminaries

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[69] Psalms 107:20

were taking their rest in the city, R' Tzvi Hirsch of Zhydachiv, and R' Sholom of Kamionka, who at that time was the Rabbi of Jarczew, and the *Shaleshudes* was organized in the *Kloyz*, with the participation of a mass of *Hasidim*, – R' Abraham Goldberg, the head of the '*Maskilim*' along with an accompanying cohort, gathered together, and they fell upon the *Hasidic Kloyz* and its *Hasidim* with the assistance of the police. When the police heard the fervent outcry of the *Hasidim*, as if they were giving up their lives in *Sanctification of the Name*, they became frightened, and fled, and with them also went the '*Maskilim*.' From that time on, the outcry remained as a permanent custom.

Nevertheless, R' Hirsch of Zhydachiv and R' Sholom of Kamionka – both included in the list of the *Hasidic* luminaries, who according to the libelous letters of the '*Maskilim*' before the ruling authorities, were pilloried as dangerous to the Jews and the Austrian monarchy. These letters are shown in the book, "*Hasidism and the Haskalah*' of R. Mahler.

Two excerpts of these letters bear witness to the part played by two scions of the city in the culture war of that day, and the imprint they made on their period of time.

R' Nachman Krochmal writes to his pupil R' Abraham Goldberg, the young *Maskil* of Rawa:

'That sinner from Zhydachiv sits and in public says things that causes fools to stand and tremble, how many fortresses has he captured in the heavens above today with his prayers, and how many worlds bow down under him, and profusely anticipate an enlightenment coming from below to the upper worlds. He who sits in the heavens will make sport of his bizarre pride: the word is yet on his lips – and a policeman comes into the house, with a club in his hand. The *Rebbe* becomes agitated and his face turns pale, and the policeman waves his hand, and he rises from his seat, and follows him in immense fear, and after the (policeman – Scribe) pours out verbal abuse and curses without end, threatening to drive him out of the city, and worlds have not been shaken up, and the luminous bodies of the heavens have not fallen dark, and the world goes on as is its custom...

'Those of you who love me, know me as a man of peace, and not hasty to engage in quarrel! Nevertheless, if this matter is correctly presented, and this travesty was committed, according to the rumors that are being circulated and in which the hypocrites are taking joy, because they have forced this on you with threats of excommunication and obloquy, and pressured you to turn over many of your books to be burned, it is appropriate to exact vengeance from them, and especially from the leading teacher of the previously mentioned town (a renowned *Hasid* from Mosty' Wielki, where Goldberg stayed as a guest. – the Scribe), and he should be subjected to the axe of the ruler, may his honor be raised, and in this way you have no choice but to send your signature to His Honor, and with it a brief that describes the time and place of this deed, and I, who will stand for you in this connection, if it will be remanded and punished in a manner commensurate with the offense. However, if you view that this matter was not so bad, and you wish to forgive it out of your honor, the permission to do so is granted to you.'

As to the elation of the embarrassment of the *Rebbe*, by way of the assaults of the policeman, as expressed by R' Nachman Krochmal, the patient *Maskil* and Jewish philosopher – even the opponents of the *Hasidim* could not digest, the blatant deeds against the *Maskilim*.

And here is a letter from the '*Baal Averah*' from Zhydachiv to his friend R' Sholom on connection with the previously mentioned incident:

'5590. Peace and blessings, and my life is joyful and happy from the wellspring and surfeit of good will, and the desire to be respectful to my friend and pupil who is adhered to the love of my soul, the Rabbi of acute powers, etc. Our Teacher and Rabbi Sholom HaLevi *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Jarczew.

I received his letter which I read, re-read a second time, and a third time, in order that it be etched into my memory well. It is certain that the palms of heaven are spread out to bring down upon you much good, and not to embellish anything at all. And may your hearts be straight and secure in God, because it is certain He will ordain a judgement that will be good, in which the lash of the evil one will not rest upon your destiny. Do, and sense all that is within your power, and in all that your hand will uncover, and may God be with you to grant you success in your way, to abrogate the thrust of the evil ones, and may your standard be raised in great glory, and with a [rich] legacy with much blessings and peace.

My words are those of a weakened servant at this time, and I do not have the strength to engage in the games of offering praise. Nevertheless, I will conclude and say Sholom, and that my eyes and heart are always there; do not fade, and do not be vexed, because the Lord, your God is with you, to help you out against all your enemies, and he will rise on your behalf. I am certain that they came upon you from one direction, but they will flee before you in seven directions, fearing for their lives. Nevertheless Sholom, all will be peace to every extent, and the one who harasses you will be scattered as dust, and you, place your trust in God, gird and strengthen yourselves, and may your hearts be strong, in all that is good, and peace of the soul, of the Holy One, Tzvi of Zhydachiv.'

R' Sholom, the pursued, and Abraham Goldberg the pursuer are both scions of the same city: Rawa-Ruska.

Hasidim and Maskilim in Rawa-Ruska

We who are coming into advanced age, still remember the generous period of the rule of the Habsburgs in Austria, (we) whose parents were among the most loyal and committed of the subjects, out of all the nations that were subjected to its rule. We can still recall the mournful sorrow that coursed through the Jews of the city because of the death of [Kaiser] Franz Jozef, the gracious king, and the one who was gracious among the peoples of the world, at the height of the intensity of the First World War. The '*rynek*' was crowded with Jews, surrounding his large portrait, sincerely mourning their loyal patron. The tapestry woven by our parents about 'what it was like before the war,' that came to be expressed especially at times of trouble, added to our child's impression of a 'world' to 'worlds' than we had previously: 'This world' and 'the world to come,' the 'world of the past,' that it was also a world in which all was good, and sadly was no more...

The condition of the Jews of Galicia became entirely different upon their absorption into the Austrian kingdom upon the partition of Poland in the year 1772. The Austrian Empire that

'swallowed' so many nations into itself, found in the Jewish minority, something unlike all other minorities, being entirely urban, easy material to work with, and being pliable in its hands like clay in the hands of a sculptor: to 'acculturate' them, assimilate them, and to transform them into complete Austrians, who would afterwards serve as an example to the Polish minority, and the Ukrainian, in whose footsteps they should follow.

Decrees raced on after decrees, substantial ones and spiritual ones. The heavy taxes that were uniquely levied against only the Jewish populace, were introduced not only to fill the coffers of the treasury that had run empty because of wars, but also as a way of facilitating the implementation of cultural decrees.

In contrast with the prior Polish hegemony, that turned over the conduct of their internal affairs to the Jews themselves by way of the '*Va'ad Arba Aratzot*,'– the Austrian régime through its dullard appointees, approached the process of frustrating the spiritual lives of the Jews, in accordance with its own views, seeking to uproot them and cut them off from the way of life in they were rooted in for generation upon generation.

The law that was promulgated in the year 1789, ordering the establishment of special elementary schools for the Jews [taught] in German, and prohibiting every lad from beginning the study of the Gemara until they completed that school – aroused all of the Jews of Galicia, who fought against it by refusing to send their children to this school, until it was decisively discontinued after 17 years.

The historian Dr. Gelber writes, in every district of ¯o³kiew, to which 18 communities were attached, only four of them had such schools established – in ¯o³kiew, Krystynpol[70], Belz and Rawa. Lejzor Heller served as a teacher in this school in Rawa, at a salary of 200 Florins. In the year 1806, the year that these schools were discontinued, there were about one hundred students in this school from the district.

The decree that every groom and bride had to undergo an examination regarding their knowledge of the German language, and the decree of a special wedding tax for Jews only – caused them to desist from registering their betrothals in the public registry, and their children were 'illegal.' A member of the parliament, who was educated and honest, argued during a debate in the Austrian parliament, on questions of tradition of the minorities in Austria, that the Jewish minority was concentrated in Galicia, and that this minority was the least traditional in the kingdom, because ninety percent of its children were illegal.

The decree to change the dress of the traditional Jews failed as a result of a definitive rejection on the part of everyone, to produce an appearance as '*Deutchen*.'

The law to change the common Hebrew names to German names in the official documentation gave

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70 Krystynopol became a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Its name was changed to Chervonograd in 1953.

our fathers and us names with the ring of German poets and philosophers, and of Roman emperors. Our R' Yaakov Berisz זצ"ל, that warm and righteous Jew, a scion of *Kabbalists*, the *Tanaim* and Prophets – his public name was Jakob Bernard Hebenstreit.

It is understood that regarding those things thought to have been responsible for the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, and which, in the future were destined to bring salvation, the Jews fought for, with all the ardor of their souls, apart for the clutch of the '*Maskilim*.'

There were no lack of the variety or peculiarity of names for the various taxes levied by the emperor of Austria on the Jews of the time: a head tax, portage tax, wedding tax, hose and field tax, and even a 'minyan' tax in houses of worship; but the tax on kosher meat, that doubled the price of the meat, and the tax on Sabbath candles – heaped on the burden, and literally descended on the lives of the masses of the people.

Regarding the meat tax, which denied the impoverished Jewish populace the taste of meat, except at infrequent intervals, a Jewish writer writes in Vienna: 'It is now no longer Shylock who, according to the play by Shakespeare, cut a pound of flesh from the body of the Christian; these are hundreds of thousands of Jews that are cutting pounds of flesh off of themselves, because of the order of the Christian monarchy.'

And regarding the candle tax, Our Teacher Rabbi Y. *Kohen Tzedek* writes in his monthly periodical, '*The Light of Torah*,' that he published in that period:

And the candle tax burdened us the was a full wagon would, and here is a brief of its laws and judgements: A) Every Jewish person in Galicia was obligated to pay, on each and every Sabbath, half of a twenty-note for two candles that he would light on the eve of the Sabbath. B) If he were to light four, then the duty was doubled, if eight, then eightfold. C) A community leader or Gabbai of the synagogue – must pay for five. D) The Rabbi had to pay for four, and the Rabbi of the province had to pay for seven. E) One does not skip over even the pauper by allowing less than two candles, who must sit in the dark because he has no light. F) The time of payment – during the regular six days of the week of the coming Sabbath, and whoever does not make the payment on time is fined one silver shekel. G) If a man takes a new wife, it is forbidden to the Rabbi to arrange the marriage ceremony until he has seen with his own eyes, a note that releases him from the obligation of lighting candles in honor of the wedding ceremony. The cost of this note – five gulden.

Even the pauper, who returns to panhandle from door-to-door, was not free of paying the tax for two candles. The price of his candles – a unit of currency, the cost of the tax – would be ten units of that currency. If not paid, then the tax officials, authorized to do repossessions, would take his clothing, or pillows and blankets as security, and in the course of a few days, if they were not redeemed, they would be auctioned off.

And let this addendum be written into the annals of this execrable tax: that because when two people sat together in one room, and one would light two candles on his table, and the other lit two candles on a second table, both were compelled to pay for four candles, because of the 'benefit of pleasure' (*mittgenuss*) that all were able to enjoy four candles.

There was not a settlement in the entire land that did not experience an outcry from the poor and the cries of the impoverished, on each and every Sabbath, that reached the heavens, with regard to these fines. In one house, the police confiscated the pillows and in another the blankets, the dress, and the dress of his wife and children, and on the following day of the Sabbath, if they were not redeemed, they were sold at half price.

The leading luminaries of *Hasidism* waged battle against these decrees, that were in force at the time throughout the length and breadth of Galicia, that assaulted the practical way of life, in advising disobedience and circumvention of these laws, by means of clandestine arrangements: ritual slaughter carried out in secret, conducting prayer '*minyanim*' secretly, and to perform deeds of charity and good will, and offering reciprocal support to one another.

Against those decrees and laws, aimed to change the Jewish way of life, that Hasidism saw as a danger to a rupturing of the connection to the Torah of Israel, and a path to complete assimilation, the luminaries of Hasidism fought by hermetically sealing off their way of life, so that no change would be allowed to penetrate, even the most easily introduced. It was the tried and true statement of the Talmud, 'the writer speaks of the war for the permission to act,' – R' Sholom of Belz זצ"ל interpreted this as follows: we are at war even over things that are permissible, which are not a problem in and of themselves, because one change brings on another, and in the end – conversion. 'A Jew remains tied in Belz – but the Jew undergoes conversion in Berlin,' because in Berlin, the change in the connection had already begun.

The '*Maskilim*' in Galicia, many of them because of a narrow perspective, and out of a dearth of loyalty to the tendency of their heart, supported the laws of the king, and a few among them even went so far as to find expression as follows, as was the case in the 'vision' of Abraham Goldberg of Rawa-Ruska, one of the standout *Maskilim* who gave battle in this period:

Therefore, observe the faith of the king,
Not his laws – Only observe the laws of God.

And this was no different to the *Maskil*, if it were the Russian Czar, about whom those lines above were written, or the Austrian Kaiser; both of them were concerned for the welfare of the Jews.

Faith is given, what does it demand?
It asks only to subordinate one's self to the One on high.

In the second half of the 18th century, and in the first half of the 19th century, a cultural war erupted and spread, by non-cultural means, between *Maskilim* and *Hasidim*, in full force, in every city and town in Galicia. Rawa-Ruska was one of the centers of that war, because the city was blessed with standout personalities and protagonists from both camps.

Hasidic legend tells: R' Sholom was up and involved in the Torah for a thousand nights, while still

dependent on the table of his father-in-law in Sokal. His comrades, who associated themselves with him in study, fell away one after the other, and only he alone, withstood all of the obstacles placed before him by the devil incarnate. On the thousandth night, Elijah the Prophet appeared to him, and taught him the laws associated with the building of a synagogue. R' Sholom understood the implication of this revelation, and in this study, that it was his obligation to go out from the confines of his limited way of living, and build a synagogue to surround himself with a host of *Hasidim*, in which he could be their teacher in showing them the way to serve God.

And the legend adds, that the people of Rawa-Ruska were the first to come to Sokal to ask of him to come and occupy an honored place in their city. The place very much found favor in his eyes, but he declined to accept the position of Rabbi, because the Rabbi and *Tzaddik* R' Zechariah lived there, who was his friend and one of the leading disciples of the '*Khozeh*' of Lublin. R' Sholom said to the people from Rawa: I very much want to accept the position of Rabbi in your city, and I know that a great boon will grow out of this for me and my family, and to the people of the city and its environs as well, and also a substantial increase will accrue to R' Zechariah in income as well; however, it may occur that from time-to-time, he may have a weakness in memory. Accordingly, I cannot agree to serve as a Rabbi in your city.

Nevertheless, R' Sholom built himself a magnificent synagogue in Belz, and concentrated his coterie of *Hasidim* about him there, but his spirit and influence were also extended over to Rawa, where the select of his Hasidim gathered , and the outstanding one among them was R' Sholom Rosenfeld, the Rabbi of Kamionka. He made frequent visits to the city, and from the visits of his grandsons and great-grandsons to the city, in our time, we can learn of the festivities, and the elevation of spirit that his visits brought to the Jews of the city.

The fistful of '*Maskilim*' in the city gnashed their teeth and did everything to deter these visits. One time, when R' Sholom was preparing to visit Rawa, he received a letter from a member of the *Maskilim* in the city, in which he was advised to cancel the visit. R' Sholom said: 'Now I know that I must visit here in Rawa.'

When R' Sholom was resting one Sabbath in Sokal, and was getting ready to leave the city, the *Hasidim* persuaded him to remain for one more Sabbath, saying: After all, you spent two Sabbaths in Rawa. To which R' Sholom replied: Even three Sabbaths will not help Rawa; I need to remain at rest there permanently.

In addition to Abraham Goldberg, who was a scion of Rawa, the well-known *Maskil*, Yitzhak Ehrter, the author of '*HaTzofeh l'Beit Yisrael*' resided there for a number of years. Ehrter was a teacher at a *Haskalah* school in Lvov. After getting into contention with the Rabbi of Lvov, the Gaon R' Yaakov Orenstein, and published against him a false document, called 'The Scales of Weight,' – he was compelled to leave Lvov. He traveled to Budapest where he studied medicine at the university, and received the title of a 'Practical Doctor,' because he had not previously studied in a gymnasium. In the capacity of a doctor, he took up residence under the aegis of Abraham Goldberg in Rawa. In the year 1831, there was an outbreak of pestilence in the city, and Ehrter provided medical assistance

to the sick. When some time had passed by, he left the city. There is reason to believe that Ehrter participated in the culture wars in Belz.

Jewish history is one with a big heart! It gathers all of its children into its bosom. The breadth of the cities in Jewry proudly carry the two names: Belz and Ehrter.

Abraham Goldberg

If they brought up his name at all, *Hasidim* recalled his name spuriously, together with the name of R' Nachman Krochmal, and took vengeance on his memory with insulting jokes. The elders of the city knew that he was a very rich man. Many confused two Goldbergs: Chaim and Abraham.

Who was Chaim Goldberg? – The son of Abraham, who did not follow in his father's ways, and burned all the writings of his father that were left to him, or the father of Abraham?

A portrait of the father of Abraham (who apparently was one of the respected Jews of Rawa), is given to us by a friend of Abraham, the *Maskil* author Meir HaLevi Latriss, in his book *'Zikaron BaSefer.'*


משא צפון

עם

מעשה רוקח

מאת

אברהם גאלדבערג

מרחוב

Lemberg.

Gedruckt bei Joseph Schnayder 1848.

Page 74: Frontispiece of the Publication, 'Massa Tzafon with Ma'aseh Rokeach' *by Abraham Goldberg'*

'And I still remember, that I and my friend Abraham Goldberg once went out on a snowy day, into the fields of the city, and there, in secret, we read books that had nothing in them to do with the essentials of Judaism. And the entire evil in them to those who harassed us lay in the fact that they were written in German. Apart from those who harassed us and continuously lay in ambush for us, my friend had an old father, a man of formidable strength, tough soul, and a wild ass of a man, itching for a fight and confrontation with his neighbors all day long, and his hand fell heavy on his son, with the full force of his anger, to deter him from going after those young men who avoided work, and sat and peered into the *Talmud* all day long.'

It is possible to translate the above given description from the Hebrew of the *Maskil* to the Hebrew of the *Hasid*: The older father of the young man feared that his younger son not fall into the trap hidden to catch his legs, by the people willing to throw off the yoke of work, and divert him from the way of the Torah and *Hasidism*. So the father garbed himself in sanctified temerity, and waged a holy war and did not pay attention to the view of anyone small or large, in order to keep his son distant from a coterie of neighbors and friends that were bad people.

¯ o³kiew, which was close to Rawa, was at that time replete with sages, and Torah luminaries, and Abraham studied at the *Bet HaMedrash* of R' Joseph Juzpa, called the *Tzaddik*, author of *'Yad Joseph.'* ¯ o³kiew was also replete with *Maskilim*, at the head of which was R' Nachman Krochmal, and the spirit of the Haskalah penetrated even into the *Bet HaMedrash,* and like many in *the Bet HaMedrash*, Abraham was captured by the *Haskalah.*

Abraham was self-effacing and of an honest heart. In his detailed descriptions of the friction, the battles and the assaults regarding the penetration of the *Haskalah* into the walls of the *Bet HaMedrash*, Latriss does not ascribe an active role to Abraham. However, in the course of time, Goldberg was transformed into an extreme combatant on behalf of the principles of the *Haskalah,* and against *Hasidism.*

It appears that Goldberg was a hale and hearty young man; because when the time arrived for his enlistment in the army, it required the intervention of R' Nachman Krochmal, who at that time was serving as the head of the ¯ o³kiew community, to have him released from the obligation of 'bearing arms.' One *Maskil* wrote: It was not the intervention of R' Nachman, but rather Abraham's thirty pieces of silver that got him released. This release, based on the claim of ignorance of the language, and in opposition to his *Haskalah* teaching that one must obey the laws of the king, since their entire intent is to elevate the lot of the Jewish people – was transformed in the hands of his *Hasidic* protagonists to a whip directed at Abraham's back. There are those who say that the Hasidim actually whipped him on his back with this scourge, and it is from here that the venom stems in his writings.

The tone of his writing was influenced by the first letter that he received in his youth from his teacher, R' Nachman Krochmal. R' Nachman, the most composed of the *Maskilim*, was very careful in the use of his language so as not to be injurious to his opponents, but in this letter, he went over the line, and made use of expressions, that the researchers of the period, and the adherents of the *Haskalah* use prominently. Goldberg was influenced by them, and incorporated them into his own writings. Let us bring here, excerpts from the letter:

The sound of the *Shofar* has been heard in my soul, the blast of war, the *Hasidim* in your city have focused on you, laying in ambush for you at night, together having decided to sow mayhem among you, and intimidate you with [threats of] excommunication and being banned, for the purpose of causing you to cease going in the path of enlightenment, and to content yourself with their empty notions. In hearing this, my heart and innards are inflamed, and a smoke has risen in my nostrils. However, I was even more upset and dismayed to hear, that a fear of them has fallen upon you, and melted your heart, to the point that you felt it was required for you to turn over some of your good books to be burned, and that you must subject yourself to the alien ideas that are in their heads, as if you were a lad reduced to weeping under the scourge. My beloved! Did you fool them. See that you have transformed a despised man into a miracle worker, and it is possible that because of this alone, they will blunder after him as their leader, and anoint him as their king and Rabbi. Did I not know what happened to you? For, after all, you are but a man, and who is their among the thousands of those young in days who is like you? It is certain that all those who hate you, the drunkards and idlers would not even reach up to your ankles , not in Torah and not in genuine fear of God, and not only that you are yet in the spring of your span of life, and it is not pleasant for you to have a teacher

with such a heart, and you are barely twenty years of age, and you should not have to be pursued by one of the rebellious and upstart vermin from the village of Mosty', whom we befouled by giving him a place within the walls of our *Bet HaMedrash*; and you, who should you fear all day long in the face of the harassment from this oppressor? And these hypocrites will not rest, because there are many of them, and they are strong, and they rule by force. By my life! There is no such thing here, in cities wasted like Mosty' 'the minimalist' and Lubicz 'the beautiful' where they raise a commotion and put down roots among the people of the villages who sit on the book of Hungary, etc. which is not the case in the renowned communities of Krakow and Lvov, where they would not raise a head, sitting instead in their lowness, keeping silent like intimidated dogs, unable to bark. Tell them that if it is a strong and powerful hand that they seek, here, with the help in connection with the one who seeks the pursued, there are means at our hand to visit an evil on them from which they will not be able to escape nor find forgiveness...

Goldberg, following the behest of his Rabbi, carries on his war with *Hasidism* as a 'man of nearly twenty.' R' Sholom of Belz, whose influence and control were spread throughout the entire vicinity, served as a target of his sharp literary arrows. The satire, ' The Tale of Rokeach,' that Goldberg published in the year 1848, that was an attack that hurled poison against R' Sholom, who stood above all the Torah luminaries in Galicia, and apart from this, as a 'motto' of this work of his, Goldberg made use of a sentence from the Psalms, *'For the sake of my brethren and friends, I will speak only of peace! To you.*[71]' The attack was not against the concept, or the approach, or on the customs, but rather against the person.

The visits of R' Sholom to the city engendered an elevation of the spirits of the Jews of the city, and they received him as if they were receiving their king, etched into the bitter Diaspora. And Abraham Goldberg gnashed his teeth:

And also upon us, for the second time [he] befell [us],
Like an implacable enemy, to live here for two weeks,

And in order to understand his attack upon the Rabbi of the city, (Nathan Tzvi HaLevi Stern – the Scribe), this explanation appeared in the margins: 'This notice my learners, that the Rabbi of ¯o3kiew (The Rabbi Tzvi Khayot – the Scribe) who is seriously regarded among the Rabbinic *Maskilim* in Galicia, and despite this, when the man called Rokeach was called to this city two years ago, he prevaricated, and he was offered honor in the eyes of the people, in its mouth and lips, abnegating themselves to lick the dust off his feet; and this is what this elderly Rabbi did here in Rawa.' Therefore:

For what purpose have we bent our shoulder to suffer your yoke?
For what purpose do you want to place us in the sweat of our brows?

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[71] Psalms 122:8

The grandeur of R' Sholom, and the vital force of Hasidism, did not permit the prophecy of the end by Goldberg to come into being:

No longer will the names of the Baal idols be heard on mouths,
No [golden] calf, no idol, and also no Rokeach.

The progeny of R' Nachman Krochmal, and other *Maskilim*, distanced themselves from Judaism substantively. The grandson of R' Nachman, Biegeleisen, a professor at the University of Lvov in his time, boasted, in one of his letters, that regarding the writings of his grandfather that were in his possession, admitting that he did not know how to read even so much as one letter of them; by contrast, the great-grandsons of R' Sholom of Belz, and the great-grandsons of those great-grandsons, and a whole host of *Hasidim*, repeatedly learn his 'lore' as it was given to them from his mouth, not leaving out so much as a letter or a vowel, and their way of life does not differ from his way of life, replete with its nuances.

His satire, '*Massa Tzafon*,' which is bound together with '*Ma'aseh Rokeach*,' is against R' Israel *Baal Shem Tov*, within which there is a comprehensive articulation of the world view of the *Haskalah* of Goldberg, given in an the typical words of a *Maskil*, which can be summarized within the bounds of two sentences: The *Maskil* sees no shortcoming among the gentiles, and finds no soundness in Jewry.

Using the language of condemnation and reproof of the Prophets, he rolls up all of the sins of the Jews and its ardor, likening them to the worship of idols, by contrast to the gentiles among whom they are scattered, who tend towards understanding and knowledge. The cultural creations of the generations is without worth, and is even damaging, because it lacks the enlightenment of wisdom, that is to say, the wisdom of the gentiles.

However, from sorrow, the sages of Sepharad warned,
Just as stars in their firmament shed their light,
The days did not last long, the heaviness in them,
The candle of mitzvah, and the light of wisdom, were quickly extinguished,
And Ashkenaz and Sepharad did not know their wake.

The misfortune of Jewry in this last period – to his way of thinking – [was] R' Israel *Baal Shem Tov*, and his teachings of *Hasidism*, that is the '*vanity of all vanities*,' an optical illusion and deception.

Israel did not know (BESH'T – the Scribe) either the gate belonged to God, or the ladder, and would his head reach there.

Because the keys, the gate leading to God, were in the hands of the German philosophers of the time only, therefore:

The honor of my people fluttered, passing like a shearing of miracles,
Not being considered to be people, but likened to savages,

The extensions of the *Hasidim*, caused their name to be defiled among the nations.

The faith of the *Maskil*. The gentiles hate the Jews when they are *Hasidim*, and love them when they are philosophers.

Goldberg's war against *Hasidism* was a sharp one, it wounded, and penetrated – but it was gave it a name. Every line he wrote was written in pain, worry and in faith, and it was his faith that was his truth.

Abraham Goldberg died and was buried in Rawa in 1850. On the tombstone of his grave, are carved the lines composed by Dr. Abraham Natkess:

A great man of strength – whose wisdom cries out bitterly
A lover of melodies, how is another like him to be found
In the plaintive sounds of his violin, every soul rejoices
To the bitter strand of the Hebrew language.

The truth is articulated – in his words of speech
A hero of the pen, of whom I am proud
He abandoned a destroyed source, a disloyal vale
Here is his resting place, there is his place – from which he will rise.

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak Dov Schorr ז"ל

At the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, Jewish Rawa attained the status of being a '*City and Mother in the Jewish World*.' The work of the Rabbis, who were *Gaonim* , and men of spiritual life that were in the city, during those many years, bor fruit, and Rawa was then a city replete with scholars, *Hasidim* and men of action.

In that same period, Rabbi *Gaon* Joseph Shaul Nathanson served as the Rabbi in Lvov, and the b4etter part of the fine young minds in Galicia were concentrated in his Yeshiva, and among them were many from our city of Rawa. In his book of responsa, "*Ask and Answer*," many of his students from Rawa are mentioned, along with their innovative interpretations of Torah, of which it is especially worth noting R' Abraham Kampf, David Landau,


כפר
עטרת תפארת
כולל
שנים עשר דרשות
בפלפול והריפות
Verlag Von H. Efroim Schorr in Brody (Galizien.)
Druck von Kahn & Fried Munkács. (Ungarn.)

Page 77: (Top, Right): Frontispiece of 'Ateret Tiferet' *Published by R' Ephraim Schorr.*

Yaakov Kahana, and the last, but not least and most beloved – R' Meir BR"AM, whose name goes like a scarlet thread through the thousands of pages of the responsa of the *Gaon*.

It appears that R' Meir was one of his truly outstanding students, and one of his assistants in the compilation of these responsa.

The high spiritual level of the community is measured by the greatness of the Rabbi that it places at its head, and it is possible to recognize the greatness of the Rabbi by the people of his congregation, to whom he must impart his spiritual and scriptural message. And Rawa found for itself a Rabbi that was suitable to it, and a match to its prior Rabbis – in the persona of the Rabbi R' Levi Yitzhak Schorr.

Luck favored R' Levi Yitzhak – not as it did for many Rabbis, that worked and slaved for their entire lives to place the fruits of their thinking on paper, and did not succeed – in easily finding a redeemer for his writing. Thirty five years after the death of his grandfather, in 5672, his grandson R' Ephraim Schorr of Brod, published the book, '*Ateret Tiferet*,' bringing together twelve sermons that R' Levi Yitzhak gave in Rawa. 'And his voice was heard when he came into the interior of the sanctuary, in Rawa Ruska, at the place of the congregation of the community, of some size or another, on *Shabbat HaGadol* and *Shabbat Tshuva*.' There are six sermons appended to the book, under the name '*Liviat Kheyn*,' by the father of publisher R' Menachem; a *Dayan* in Brody, and the author of '*Torat Menachem*,' the son of R' Levi Yitzhak.


בעזה"י

ספר

תורת מנחם

קבוצי דינים וחדושי הוראות

מכל הלכות פסח שחיבר

הרב המאוה"ג וכו'

מוה"ר מנחם מענדל שור זלה"ה

דומ"צ ל"ו שנה בעיר בראדי יע"א.

בן הרב הגאון המפורסם

מוה"ר לוי יצחק הוב שור זצ"ל

אבד"ק ראווא יצ"ו.

הובא לבית הדפוס ע"י בנו הצעיר

מו"ה אפרים שור נ"י

אחר פטירת מר אביו הרב המחבר זלה"ה.

בשנת בא עת קץ. לפ"ק.

Page 77: (Bottom, Left): Frontispiece of 'Torat Menachem' *Published by R' Ephraim Schorr*

In the forewords of the sons and grandson (his second son, R' Jekuthiel was the Bet-Din Senior of Lubaczow, a torah luminary, appearing in the responsa books of the leaders of his generation):

'Know reader, that he had other additional innovations apart from what he left behind in writing, because he had nothing in his *Bet HaMedrash* but innovative thinking, and in every issue that he studied, he devised innovations, and even in matters of the traditional tales, which he knew well, and was renowned as an engaging explicator, such that there was practically no one like him, but he did not write a single book having to do with traditional tales, because he had a sense that he did not want to write about things that stood at the apex of the world' R' Jekuthiel).

'My father and Teacher, the *Gaon* זצ"ל who was so advanced in acuity, enjoyed giving explanations to his congregation, using casuistry while referring the *Halak ha*, and many exclaimed because he extinguished the candle of God would also the remnant of his own ember of coal also be extinguished? And who would give that they will draw the law from the book of his words which is the root of wisdom that is drawn, which was so thought in the eyes of the luminaries, saying that a blessing would arise from God and honor opposite your elder' R' Mendl).

It was to this that I rose and aroused my heart, and I will return to the legacy of my fathers to probe as if one would do with all wealth, to put before them, the esoteric grace from the legacy of my precious patriarchs, and these are nothing but a bit of the writings that hare incarcerated with me. And my hand continues to be outstretched to get them published' R' Ephraim).

Biographical details: He was the grandson of the well-known R' Hirsch'l, the Rabbi of Lublin and Krakow, whose pedigree goes back to Joseph the *First Born of the Bull*, who was one of the *Tosafists,* whose pedigree goes back to Joseph the son of Jacob, the rubric being 'In majesty he is like a first born bull.[72]' The *Gaon* R' Mordechai Ze'ev Ettinger[73], the author of '*Mefarshei [Ha] Yam,*' in his book of responsa, has a reply that Our Teacher gave back to R' Levi Yitzhak, in the year 5609, while he was still a young man in years, but an expert in matters of Torah, using a long casuistic argument, calling him by the name, 'sharp wise man.' [References can also be found] in the foreword of the responsa '*Shayarei Tahara*' by R' Shlomo Kluger, and in the book '*Birkhat Ratzah*' by R' Tzvi Hirsch Orenstein, and others. In his youth, he was the Rabbi in Pidkamin', and from there, the community of Rawa invited him to come and stand as its head.

'And the Holy *Gaon*, R' Chaim of Sanz, on meeting him in Krynica[74], and his soul thirsted to engage in casuistry with my grandfather in *Halakha*, and the *Gaon* saw that a light shined from his face when speaking with him, and that his force in Torah matters was strong, shared his wisdom with him, and honored him with the first response in his precious book, '*Divrei Chaim*,' Part One.'

In the above-mentioned response, in the second part, the issue of the construction of a synagogue is discussed, and the prohibition against setting a defined boundary from the synagogue, and thereby nullifying its sanctity, the sanctity of a synagogue. It appears from the discussion, that they were discussing the construction of the 'Women's Gallery' on the '*Old Bet HaMedrash*,' and the building of the '*Polisz*' that connects the '*Alte Kloyz*' to the *Bet HaMedrash*. It appears that those who prayed

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72 Deuteronomy 33:17

73 Mordechai Ze'ev Ettinger (1804–1863) and his brother-in-law Yosef Shaul Nathanson (1808–1875) were counted among the greatest Talmudic scholars in Lemberg (Lwów).

As early as the 1820s, the two were acquiring, editing, and publishing ancient Hebrew manuscripts, as well as writing glosses and supplying references to rabbinic texts. Their most important text was *Mefarshei HaYam* (1827) based on a manuscript written by their uncle, Mosheh Yehoshua Heschel Orenstein.

74 Known for its "Pearl of the Polish Spas."

in both of these places were of 'one skin,' and this connecting passageway was for their use. How did times change over the years? In our day, this '*Polisz*' was transformed into a place where contending factions clashed – the Zionist camp that centered about the '*Alte Bet HaMedrash*, and the Hasidim of the '*Alte Kloyz*' – whose prominent leaders were R' Abraham'chi Mal'akh, and Abraham'chi Edel.

'From the mouth of a trustworthy man, who was beside my grandfather an hour before he surrendered his pure soul, and said to him thus: here and now, my thinking and ruminations remain sharp, to the point that I have the will to write down now marvelous innovative ideas in the *Halakha* of the *Sukkah* and *Lulav*, that would comprise several hundred pamphlets, and would be unique. And he even told that to the *Hasidic* Rabbi R' Yehoshua Kaller, one of the Rabbi's students, my grandfather said these same words, and added: and this will be a compilation so large it will be like the entire seven parts of the *Rambam* זי"ל.'

R' Levi Yitzhak Dov Schorr זצ"ל died suddenly on the evening of the first night of the Sukkot holiday of 5637.

R' Levi Yitzhak was 'pleasing orator' and an excellent speaker. As a Torah luminary, he gave sermons on *Shabbat HaGadol* and *Shabbat Tshuva*, as was the Jewish custom, [sic: exclusively] before the Torah scholars of the city, in *Halakha*, utilizing casuistry, but on all [other] Sabbaths of the year, he descended, it appears, to speak to the masses of the people in the '*Schul*,' or in the *'Little Schuls'* of the craftsmen, as an outstanding explicator, and one who can instill before them those things that come from the heart and go into the heart.

In the final years of the nineteenth century, when the Jewish emigration to the United States commenced, many from our city emigrated there also. When they reached there, they also brought with them the wight of his sermons and the teachings of their Rabbi and spiritual father. When they came together in 1900, to establish a society to engage in activity on behalf of those emigrating from the city, they gave it the name that demonstrated their strong connection to the city, and their highly regarded deceased Rabbi: '*B'nai Levi Yitzhak Anshei Rawa-Ruska*.' The goals of this organization were: 'To guard the Jewish religion and its tradition, to support the needy, to provide sustenance to the ill, and to provide the proper accord to the deceased' – A summary of the beautiful teachings of their Rabbi.

A good name – for a Good Purpose.



Page 78: The Name of the 'Society' in New York

R' Dov-Berisz HaKohen Rapoport זצ"ל[75]

R' Berisz was received as the Rabbi of Rawa after the passing of his predecessor, R' Levi Yitzhak Schorr זצ"ל, even though R' Berisz was not nominated by the *Hasidim* of Belz, because he was ardently attached to R' Chaim of Sanz זצ"ל, but his personality, and greatness in Torah, tipped the scales in his favor, and he was received with everyone's concurrence and went on to become a splendor to the great pride of the city.

A relationship founded on mutual respect, and a deep friendship, existed between R' Berisz and R' Yehoshua זצ"ל of Belz. At conclaves and gatherings that R' Yehoshua organized in Lvov, in order to find ways to block the movement of the organized assimilationists, that arose with the encouragement of the remnants of the '*Maskilim*,' R' Dov-Berisz sat at the head, and his words were publicized in a place of honor in the Belz newspaper, '*Makhzikei HaDass*.' When R' Yehoshua זצ"ל was in Vienna undergoing medical treatment, and before he underwent an operation, he wrote a will and asked that it be given into the hands of R' Berisz, the *Bet-Din Senior* of Rawa, for implementation.

In his well-known book '*Derekh HaMelech*' by 'Dov-Berisz Rapoport *HaKohen*,' the publisher, Margoshes, of Lvov, one of the prominent *Hasidim* of Belz, and the publisher of the newspaper '*Makhzikei HaDass*,' highlighted the word '*Derekh,*' as if it were an acronym [sic: DR"Kh] to serve as the initials of '**D**ov Rapoport **K**ohen.' This juxtaposition of a family name on the name of a book was not in the spirit of the *Hasidim*. In order to deflect any slander, R' Berisz fortified it by making the size one eighth of one eighth, and ordered that an addition be made to each page of the book, beside the header of '*Derekh HaMelech*,' in parenthesis, the words *R' Dov Kohen*, and the family name Rapoport vanished from the book.

Many beat about and researched the origin of the name Rapoport. It's origin was back yet in the fifteenth century in Germany, and a legend is tied to it, involving a blood libel. Before the Passover holiday, gentiles threw the body of a dead Christian boy, through the skylight into the oven of a certain Jew. When the police arrived and opened up the mouth of the oven, and asked the Jew, 'What is in there?' – he answered them: 'Most certainly it is a dead raven that fell through the skylight.' And the police took out the dead body of a raven from the oven, and the Jew etched the image of a raven on the family crest, which in German is '*Rave,*' which was transmuted into '*Rapeh.*' The family moved to Porto in Italy. There are those who say that the sons of the Rapeh family married with a family in Porto, and its sons were *Kohanim* – and that is how the name Rapoport-*HaKohen* came into being.

The name Rapoport was carried, and is still carried with honor by thousands of Rabbis and Torah luminaries in all Jewish communities.

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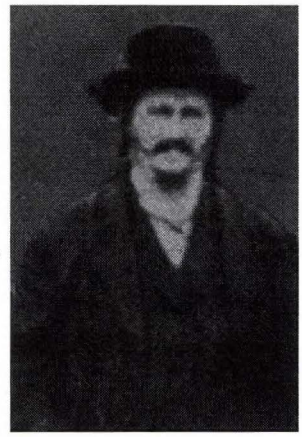
75 Editor's footnote: The detailed biography of R' Berisz זצ"ל, which his great-grandson R' Y. Meir Rapoport *HaKohen* שליט"א prefaced with a new foreword to the book '*Derekh HaMelech*,' which was published in recent years in New York – see this book, p. 86.

R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky זי"ל The Last Rabbi of Rawa-Ruska

The saying that characterizes the friction between, '*Mitnagdim*' and *Hasidim*, that 'There is nothing standing between a *Hasid* and a *Mitnaged*, except one *Rebbe*,' was properly aligned [with reality], especially with regard to the *Hasidism* of Belz at its beginning. The reach of the *Hasidism* of Belz to the *Hasidism* that was external to it, was circumscribed in a small part by the students of the '*Khozeh* of Lublin,' who established the Belz dynasty, R' Sholom זצ"ל, who was one of the young students.

The marriage connection between Belz and Chernobyl – the summit of the second Head *Rebbe* of Belz, R' Yehoshua זצ"ל, his second son, Issachar Dov to the grandson of R' Aharon Twersky, the son of R' Mordechai and the grandson of R' Nahum of Chernobyl, his cousin, and students of the BESH'T and after the passing of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch זצ"ל – to open before Belz a window to a new world of *Hasidism*, whose ancestors slaked their spiritual thirst from the original well of *Hasidism* itself.



Page 79: The Rabbi, R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky הי"ד, the last Rabbi of the city.

Ten years of subsidized living were accorded to the young man in Chernobyl. For a number of years, he was seated at the table of R' Aharon of Chernobyl. These were years of enormous influence on the soul of the young man, that the elder *Tzaddik* Mordechai deeply impressed on him through doing the word of The Lord, in which he set down the essentials, in their simplicity, along with modesty and a good heart.

Upon his return to Belz, R' Issachar Dov brought back a boundless respect for the house of Chernobyl, and a powerful spiritual load, and after ascending the seat of the Rabbinate, he infused it into the *Hasidism* of Belz, to the point that the elders of the *Hasidim* of his time whispered about that he was more of a Chernobyl *Hasid* than a Belz *Hasid*.

When his daughters came of age, his tendency was to look for matches for them especially from among the sons of Chernobyl. Accordingly, a proposal for a match was speedily accepted by him for his second daughter Bat-Sheva. Because in addition to the fact that the proposed bridegroom Yitzhak Nahum was a diligent Torah scholar, he was pleasant in disposition, in harmony with his environment, and was the grandson of R' Yitzhak of Skver, the brother of the highly regarded R' Aharon.

A wedding in the house of the *Rebbe* – a personal joy of all *Hasidim*, was as if their own son and daughter were being led to the wedding canopy. Righteous women sewing and weaving to beautify the fortunate bride; Hasidim weave tales and stories about the character of the groom.

And *Hasidim* tell: During the time that the invitations were being prepared for the wedding, when

it came to do the decorative pictures, in which Jerusalem was placed above all other joys, the *Gabbaim* advised the *Rebbe*: 'the Rabbi *Tzaddik* R' Mordechai (father of the groom) – was called out by the *Rebbe*. And from the bride's side? 'The renowned Rabbi and *Tzaddik*, etc.' And when the *Rebbe* saw the astonishment of the *Gabbaim*, he said: 'Are you wondering at the distinction I made between myself and my *Mekhutan*?' There is a basis for this distinction: I am only 'renowned' as a *Tzaddik*, but my *Mekhutan* truly is a *Tzaddik*.'

And one story follows another: before the couple entered the wedding canopy, the *Rebbe* called together all the marriage brokers, whose proposals did not get implemented, and there was a specific number of them, and he paid them all the brokerage fee. The *Rebbe* explained: 'Is it not an angel that announces 'the daughter of so-and-so, and the son of so-and-so, and the payment of the brokerage fee is merely the price to the broker that inclined towards the announcement of the angel; but the angel does not do his work in a mechanical fashion, but rather weighs and examines that vast treasury of all souls, until he finds a suitable match of one soul with another – a complete fit. Every proposing broker therefore orients his proposal as one of the considerations weighed by the angel from on high, that was not necessarily implemented, and therefore, he too, is entitled to the marriage brokerage fee. There were many assessments done by that angel from above, until he aligned that pure soul for my daughter, and for this reason there were a large number of marriage brokers who made proposals below.'

And between one story and the next, a joyful fact: R' Yitzhak Nahum was not like his predecessor R' Pinia'leh, also from the house of Chernobyl, who created anxiety to our own people with his bizarre dress relative to the customs of Belz; Because immediately at the dawn, following the night of the wedding, at the time he undressed, before he went down to take his ablutions in the *Mikva*, he had an 'urge' to direct the theft of his long pressed trousers, and his sparkling overshoes, and to 'temporarily' put on his *spodek*, jacket, 'shoes and socks.' The groom in question, R' Yitzhak Nahum appeared directly from his house in faraway Ukraine, dressed in outstanding Belz style. It was a sign that he understood the feelings of the people in whose company he had come to mix in, and was thinking of them.

R' Yitzhak Nahum fulfilled the hopes that were pinned on him by his father-in-law and his *Hasidim*; he was diligent in the pursuit of Torah and *Hasidism*, one who exuded affection and respected by all, those around him loved him, and respected him, and his house became a meeting place for the learned among the 'residents.' Rabbis who were not from our people, who were hurled to Belz, with R' Yitzhak Nahum receiving them, to show them that, in addition to *Hasidism* – there is also Torah [study] in Belz; prominent guests, curiosity seekers wanting to 'inhale [the atmosphere]' of Belz – find interest in his house, because conversation and dialogue exists there about all the issues that arise, from time-to-time on the chapter of Jewish life in Poland.

R' Ahar'eleh was born holy and as a *Rebbe* – so the *Hasidim* whispered; R' Pinia'leh was influenced by him for many years, and was inclined more and more to being withdrawn and isolated; to R' Yitzhak Nahum, and his scholarship a place was found for him among the great Rabbis of Poland.

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In the sacred congregation of Rawa-Ruska, for all the centuries of its existence, Torah luminaries served as its Rabbis, with distinction, being a city replete with Hasidim and people of action, scholars and men of the *Haskalah*. With the passing of R' Dov Berisz Rapoport, a renowned *Gaon* of his era, the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*,' and the *Mekhutan* of the author of '*Menukhat Khanokh*' known and praised throughout Diaspora Jewry, and a grandson of R' Joseph, a scholar who was wise and of a refined soul, was prevented from filling his place because the parlous state of his health – the community remained, to its sorrow, without a shepherd.

The First World War, in which our city was one of the battlefields, caused a great deal of suffering to its Jewish residents, wanderings, conscription of the men into the army, all of this disrupted the orderly life of the community. A sacred community without a Rabbi at its head is like a king without a crown on his head.

With the end of the war, and the reduction of the wars in our area between the nations being reborn in our environs, and with the return of the men from the battle fronts – once again, community life began to assume a shape, and once again, the leaders of the community confronted the issue of restoring the crown of the Rabbinate to the city, as it was in the past.

R' Israel Mikhl Feder ז"ל, who bore the burden of all the dignity of the community on his bent shoulders, a scion of Belz, was a Belz Hasid from his early childhood years on, recognized in R' Yitzhak Nahum a man of those lofty virtues and the skills of leadership that were worthy of bearing the crown of the Torah. The choice was an easy one: to raise the crown, and to put it on [him as] the head of the community. The selection was received by the majority of the community enthusiastically, and with joy, because they saw him as being suitable to this position.

He was even able to win over the hearts of those who opposed him, in his first personal encounter with them. Until seeing and hearing him, I was – as understood, 'behind the door,' when I was sent by his supporters, as a messenger-youth, to Belz, to advise the Rabbi on the arrival of a set of emissaries who opposed him, headed by Dr. Joseph Mandel ז"ל, to persuade him not to accept and thereby avoid a dispute in the city. An expression of disappointment appeared on their faces; because, in contrast to their expectation – a man stood before them who was entirely noble in bearing, a man who was courteous and conversed pleasantly, who had at his command all Jewish subject matters, and all other matters that were put on the table for discussion; and his speech was accompanied by hand gestures and the movement of his sidelocks on his shoulders, but every bone in his body spoke of a good heart. With regard to the central subject for which they came to see him especially, the Rabbi offered the illumination: 'If you oppose me personally because of my faults, I am on your side; for did not my ancestors, the patriarchs of Hasidism say; this is why the Holy One, Blessed Be He created man with two eyes. For with one, he had to look inside himself, to search out his shortcomings, and with the second to see the virtues of the community around him at-large. And if you oppose me because of suspicions that I will side with one group on my side – I promise you that it is not in my nature to take sides, and I desire to be the Rabbi of all the people in your city. As to disputes, I need only to utter 'The Name of Heaven,' and in the case of 'ideology' it will not prevail, or lead to a dispute.'

The spiritual opposition to him was broken as a result of that first meeting; also, the formal opposition completely collapsed – and in the time of his lofty service, he did not hesitate to oppose and to cause 'spiritual awe' to his 'allies' and cause a 'cooling of the spirit' among his opponents, when the good of the community demanded this of him.

Opponents and supporters united into one group of people who held him in high regard. Even Dr. Mandel and R' Israel Mikhl frequented his house, that was open to anyone and everyone who sought his advice and help. He fulfilled his obligations punctiliously and in good spirits. His sermons and teachings at his '*Tisch*' on Sabbaths and Festival Holidays, drew throngs of listeners. Even his appearances before the gentile municipal authorities spoke honorably of him.

The Rabbis of the area turned to him with their complex questions, and he became the one to provide responses and an interpreter of the *Halakha*. He continued with his former role in representing 'Belz' in international Rabbinical councils, until *The Abrogator* raised his hand.

He was among the first to be assaulted by them.

The crown was taken off and the kingdom destroyed; that is, the sacred congregation of Rawa-Ruska.

R' Israel Dayan זצ"ל

After spending an extended period in 'service' we returned home; to Rawa-Ruska. This 'service' began immediately with hearing the reports of the first gunshots of the soldiers of '*Fonyeh-Ganev*[76].' Among a milieu of men, women, and children, we found our way, carried in the arms of parents through the forests, mountains, towns and villages, in a panicked flight from those pursuing us. We, the children, were struck with wonder, why, and for what reason is this happening? But from the frightened eyes of our parents we learned: because of the Czar who scourged us, who was our forsworn enemy from then, and for always, and the enemy of our Kaiser, Franz Jozef, who was known to us also by his Jewish name: *R' Frame Yoss'l*, the one who does good and is kind to the Jews.

The hand of the Moskals[77] and Cossacks assaulted us; we thought that their pursuit was solely to reach us. They reached us in Tarnow, two days after we got there,. We remained there.

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76 A pejorative rubric used by Eastern European Jews to describe the Czar of Russia. The Word '*Fonyeh*' is an elision of the name 'Ivan,' and appending the word for a thief (Ganev) was meant to convey unreliability.

77 Moskal (Russian and Ukrainian: ì î ñêàëü, Belarusian: ì àñêàëü, Polish: moskal) is a historical designation used for the residents of the Grand Duchy of Moscow between the 12 and the 18 centuries. Today it has become an ethnic slur, referring to the Russians living in Russia (or Rossiyane) used in Ukraine, Belarus, as well as other European countries - former members of the Eastern Bloc (Poland, the Baltic states, etc.). The term is frequently derogatory or condescending, an equivalent of the Russian term *Khokhol* for Ukrainians. Another ethnic slur, *katsap* is insulting and means "goatee beard".

On one winter morning, we peered out of cracks in the windows, covered with the first snow, and before our eyes was a heartbreaking scene: line after line of bent over soldiers of our Kaiser, beaten, exhausted, and degraded, being moved along like captives in the hands of the Russians. The heart grew faint to see their end, the sense of a child tells him: in captivity, the Kaiser most certainly is walking at the rear of his armies, the ranks extending endlessly; it is the entire army of Austria. My father found out that the soldiers had been captured at the time of the capture of the fort at Przemyśl, his birthplace, and it was on this fort that he had placed his hope, that it was here that the Czar would break his head. But now, the end of the world had arrived, and....the end of the war. And from this came the idea of returning home.

Upon returning home, the war of my father began. On the Sabbath in the evening, at the time of *Shaleshudes*, the German patrol marched into the city from the direction of the *'Hof.'* We received them with joyous fanfare. But the Germans brought with them arrogance, containers of boiling water, and the cholera along with its many dead that fell in the city, and in addition, my father was conscripted.

We children were happy that our father was able to go out and offer the Kaiser some help. Father took a parting blessing from mother and the children, and parted with the remark 'I will return shortly.'

'Shortly' was stretched out for long years.

Father returned home down, and happy, two days after the gentile thugs from the Rivna and Shabel'nya[78] tore out the eagle insignia buttons from the hats of the soldiers and the sparkling golden stars from the shoulders of the officers. The soldiers appeared to us children as if their eyes had been gouged out; that is the way they looked in the pictures in our rooms, the Kaiser Karl, smiling, and his spouse the Queen the modest Zita[79].

Father had been absent from the house for three years, but received '*erlaub*' (furlough) from time to time, and he took advantage of this period of 'furlough' to shake off the gentile and military world, and to re-attach himself to the *Hasidim* and people of action, to acquaint his little son with them, who had been left without the oversight of a caring father, indicating that he should learn from

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78 A district outside of Rawa Ruska, to the north and east on the north side of the Rata River

79 Charles I of Austria or Charles IV of Hungary (Karl Franz Joseph Ludwig Hubert Georg Otto Marie; 17 August 1887 – 1 April 1922) was, among other titles, the last ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was the last Emperor of Austria, the last King of Hungary, and the last monarch of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine. He reigned from 1916 until 1918, when he "renounced participation" in state affairs, but did not abdicate.

In 1911, Charles married Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma. They had met as children but did not see one another for almost ten years, as each pursued their education. In 1909, his Dragoon regiment was stationed at Brandeis an der Elbe (Brandýs nad Labem), from where he visited his aunt at Franzensbad. It was during one of these visits that Charles and Zita became reacquainted.

what they [sic: the *Hasidim*] do, and go in their way.

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The home of R' Israel was a place that we visited during all our free time. Remnants of the impressions remain in the mind of the child, and I will attempt at this time, after the passage of fifty years, to put them down on paper.

Every encounter was emotional. It appeared that to every guest that was encountered, this meeting was a profound experience, after a substantial separation, to immerse one's self in the aegis of such a respected teacher and soul mate. And the guest would take a seat in his cloaked military jacket, and his hat drooping over his ears, orienting his ears to hear the enlightening words of the one sitting at the head of the table, decked out in a spodek and silk. And R' Israel tells, and keeps on telling... and there is [much] to tell, because he returned from Ratzfert[80] , from his visit to the *Rebbe*, he should live, and his mouth is like an ever surging fountain, and precious jewels pour from his mouth. The lore that he heard while attending '*Tisch*' sessions with his own ears, from the mouth of the Holy One, and lore that he heard from the mouths of those *Hasidim* who heard it from the mouth of the Holy One, personally, and of the coteries of 'sitters' far from the chaos of the this world, and the chaos of the war, engaging in Torah [study], and the service of The Almighty. And the feeling engendered in the guest was as if he were personally present at that time, and his heart expanded.
The guest, on returning as a recruit, told of life in the barracks at nearby Greidig, that brought together the Jews from the vicinity, and on Sabbaths, took on the appearance of the '*Alte Kloyz*,' Yitzhak'l Broder, intoning the '*Shokhen Ad*' [prayer] in his own style, 'The *Hai... Ai...* of his, And R' Leibusz Anshel reading the Torah, and David'sheh Gedalia's intoning the '*Mi ShehBerakh*,' and people pledge a '*L'Chaim*' and '*Melave Malka*' and many for the Sixth *aliyah* and *Maftir*, a gathering acting the way it normally did. And R' Hirsch the Scribe, he too is among those who help the Kaiser, through his justice and piety, is the only one wearing a *Shtrymel* during prayer on the Sabbath, because the *Shtrymel* takes the place where *Tefillin* would be in the middle of the week, invoking the acronym for *Shabbat*: Sh"B"T: *Shtrymel Bimkom Tefillin* (in Place of Tefillin). And when leaping exercises over the lines were conducted on the Sabbath, and the leaping on the Sabbath is forbidden, as is known, why R' Hirsch lifts up his long military jacket, and underneath flapping around, is the ðû æåáóðêà[81], and before each leap, and following leap, he shouts out, in accordance with the orders of the government: H–OO–P!



Page 81: R' Eli Spritzer and his Wife Nesha, of the Privess Family הי"ד.

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Let us continue to listen in on the conversations being conducted in the narrow, long room of R' Israel *Dayan*. And R' Israel is full of curiosity,

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80 Újfehértó (Yiddish, German: *Ratzfert*) is a small town in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, in the Northern Great Plain region of eastern Hungary

81 Pronounces '*rizheburka*.'A garment trimmed in orange fox fur, apparently part of the uniform of the day.

wanted to sample from what is heard and what is going on in the larger world, and he hears about the wonders of the 'Schönbrunn,' about the beauty of the fountains, pools and flora that are in it, about the central square in Vienna, full of the cacophony of vehicles and people, and the tall policeman on a high horse in the center of the square. When the policeman raises his staff, all of the wagons and carriages come to a stop simultaneously, and the people cross over without disturbance. There are multi-storey buildings there, that are built without bricks, with the assistance of molds, and soldiers, vigorously pouring in entire walls into them in a single day. And other wonder of wonders like these, and regarding the '*Schiff's Schul*' like the *Alte Kloyz* in our city. And the core of the discussion surrounded that very wonderful Jewish man, that my father never stopped telling about, and holding him out as a model and a wonder: a scion of our city, R' Eli Spritzer, that ended up moving off to Vienna years ago, as an emissary of the Heavens, who passed before a camp of down-spirited Jews, who were exiled from their homes, and the home of their homes, to the alien gentile world, and to prepare for them a warm, Jewish house to convey to them the flavor and taste of the Sabbath and Festivals. R' Eli Spritzer and the members of his household, oriented as they were to perform the deeds of our Patriarch Abraham ע"ה, worked at and pursued guests, to invite them into their home, wash them, feed them, and to clothe them in the feeling that they were with family. When the soldiers returned home, and when they were received into their family circle, they always remembered to raise the generosity of R' Eli Spritzer like a banner, he who was short in stature, but rich in good deeds, in accordance with the teaching of our Patriarch Abraham ע"ה.

Along with the encounters and conversations, the son heard about the story of R' Israel from his father, which was similar to the wondrous stories about Jewish luminaries, that the reading before him, my mother, at the time the Sabbath ended, before she would piously recite the prayer *'God of Abraham*:'

> R' Israel was not like all the other children. While still in Heder, he excelled before his teachers in his insight and the acuity of his mind, traits that he had received from his father, R' Hirsch'eleh *Shokhet*, known for his sharpness. And from the earliest of his childhood, he devoted himself to the study of Torah, immersing himself in it day and night, filling his insides with *Shas* and the *Poskim*, *Rishonim* and *Akharonim*, and circulated in the shadow of the walls of the *Rebbe* in Belz, serving sages and *Hasidim*, covering himself in the dust of their feet, and in their sake, he realized his own teaching, and the people of the city were blessed by this son of R' Hirsch'eleh *Shokhet*. And R' Judah Jonah *Shokhet*, one of the respected men of the city, gave his daughter to him in marriage, and promised him all that he needed, so long as he remained beside his table, so that he could devote all of his energies to the Torah and the Lord's service. And R' Israel sat, and engaged in Torah study, beside the table of his father-in-law, and th table of the *Rebbe* of Belz, and the *Rebbe* recognized his greatness in Torah matters, and Hasidism, and he made a Rabbi and a friend to his first-born son, R' Ahar'eleh, because R' Ahar'eleh, being sanctified from the time of birth, overdid his asceticism, and separation from life; and the *Rebbe*, with his sharp eye, selected R' Israel and in his alertness, to help him restrain him [sic: R' Ahar'eleh] and distance him from proceeding in this direction, which is not

acceptable in Belz *Hasidism*. On one of these days, the position of *Dayan* in the city became vacant, and the eyes of the city, and its leadership, and eminent folks, turned to their distinguished son of the city. And it was in these days, that because of the effort and financial resources of one of the wealthy and eminent members of the city, R' Jekuthiel Josefsberg, the building of the *Large Kloyz* was initiated, which afterwards was called the *Eizerneh Kloyz*. And when the leaders and Rabbis of the city gathered, and the Rabbis in the vicinity, with the *Rebbe* of Belz at their head, for the festive event of laying the cornerstone, and his honor in laying one of the stones of the foundation, the *Rebbe* rose and announced with his holy mouth, 'Let R' Israel be honored, [as] *Dayan* of the city, in laying a part of the foundation.' It was in this manner that R' Israel was crowned as a Dayan of Justice, and a Teacher Who Shows the Way, to the glory of the city.'

Up to here is my father's story.

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Continuing the story about R' Israel, during the latter years, he was helped following the way of life of his brother Fysha in his youth: Because R' Israel was a father-figure and example to Fysha to whom he could liken himself.

The ripples in the pond that covers childhood memories does not raise the young Fysha as an accomplice in those 'sins' of prank and mischief in the streets, that filled the content of the lives of the children in that unrestrained period after the war, including education without the benefit of the oversight of a father's eye. This is because Fysha dwelt inside the tent from childhood on. It was the tent of Torah study, because he was like his brother, R' Israel, and not like the other children.

While still a lad – he had a special corner and a learning stand in the *Kloyz,* like one of the venerable elders. They said: 'There is Fysha and his learning stand, and there is a book between them. They went down and bent over together forever.' Day and night, bent over standing on his platform, his thick black sidelocks descending bunched, in their way, on his corner, isolating him from the entire world, and also from the secular badinage of the other sages in the *Kloyz*. And his black eyes illuminated, combing through and plowing up the lines of the book before him. One tractate after another, one book after another, without stopping. And his mother, Yenta'leh, the righteous woman, as was her custom then, as was for her first-born son R' Israel, so was her custom for the son of her older age. And she would appear day after day, and night after night, at the entrance to the Kloyz, that was already emptied out of its people, and the gaze of her son meets her's, and the student knows that the time has come to nourish his spare body, that body which is the external accouterment to the soul of a man, who thirsts to serve God and study His Torah. And the cadence of his study is like a pure prayer, and his prayer like a profound form of study. His eyes plow up the lines of the *Siddur* with dedication, as if they were the lines of the *Gemara*, and every bone in his body proclaims the Highness of God.

Two things stood on the same level with Fysha together with the study of the Torah: *Tzedakah* and *Gemilut Hasadim*. A respected Jew of the vicinity, who was flung into the *Kloyz*, and in whose house there was a daughter who had come of age, a son that was in need of 'being excused' from military service, or a sick woman, and he simply lacked the means to cover all of these obligations by himself, or that it had reached the point where his living was 'dissipated' in the cities and towns of the vicinity; at that time, Fysha would rise from his place, put the bookmark in the book in front of him, and focused on the issue at hand. He would arouse others, immediately taking on a partner, from anyone who came to hand, and went from door-to-door – taking no small amount of insult from those who made sport of him – but giving it the same commitment and dedication that he had invested in his study and prayer. He would return from his trips to all the doors, emptying his pockets on the table, took off the bookmark from his book, and resumed his study.

Service to God following the ways of *Hasidism* for him was comprised of the three virtues – Torah, Service to God, and the doing of good deeds – on which the existence of the world is based, and served to sustain the world of Fysha. The platform in the Great Synagogue of Belz took the place of the platform in the *Kloyz* of Rawa-Ruska, and the days and nights were not created except for the study of the Torah.

The uniqueness of Belz was in its Torah study. It drew studious young people nigh, and improved their study habits over and above that of those who were simply engaged in *Hasidic* activity alone. And when Torah luminaries, not of the place would happen to be in Belz, these young scholars would be presented to them, in order to immerse themselves in the sea of the *Talmud* and the *Poskim*, and to witness the great force of Belz in Torah. Fysha was always among the better of those presented in this manner, because he was among the choice of the young men of Belz.

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Regarding the youth of R' Israel, the Belz *Hasidim* spoke animatedly of – his diligence, commitment, thoroughness, honesty, modesty, and especially of the acuity of his mind. And about 'R' Israel the Righteous Teacher of the Sacred Congregation of Rawa' – who was their pride.



Page 83: The Hasidim *Travel to (the* Rebbe *in) Belz*

The pride of Belz was in her young *Hasidim* who circulated in its ambience, and who suckled fromits fountains, and in the course of the years, rose in stature in Torah study, and who assumed the crown of the Rabbinate of large congregations in Galicia, placed on their heads, and became renowned in the wide Torah world as Gaonim, and leading experts in the Torah, themselves being *Poskim* who set down Halakha for their own generations, and they never had the temerity to think of themselves as anything but simple Hasidim, and in modesty and with great respect, would make the pilgrimage to Belz to be received by their highly regarded *Rebbe*, and to draw near to their roots and to obtain guidance in directing their lives. R' Israel was one of them.

The customs and traditions of the House of Belz, that were zealously guarded as if they were the laws of Moses at Sinai, were many and complex. These were customs created by the dynastic patriarchs, and those that those patriarchs received from their *Rebbes*. R' Israel, with his wondrous memory, was a source on which to rely, regarding the origins of the custom, and in the process of decision-making as a *Posek*, at the time it was required. In the eyes of the *Hasidim*, R' Israel was a carrier of the instruments of the House of Belz.

In the waning days of R' Issachar Dov זצ"ל, his body grew weak, and the doctors forbade him to blow the *Shofar*. Singed by the pain, and with great feeling, how great was the regard for R' Israel whom the Rabbi selected to take his place for this sacred ritual.

In the morning, at a determined hour, R' Israel appears in the *Kloyz*, dressed in silken garments, cleaned of grease. On his entrance, it could be recognized from the identifiable movements of his hands, that he is concluding a conversation with himself, that he had initiated when he had left the front door of his house; [or] an exchange of views on the arguments, that the complainants had posed before him regarding a complex matter yesterday, and today, he stands ready to render judgment: or, he is ordering in his mind, his answer to someone inquiring about an *Halakhic* matter, questions that come to him from near or far; or, undertaking an accounting of his own soul, between himself and his Maker.



Page 85: Rabbi R' Ahareh'li Schwert ה"יד. *The last of the Teachers of Righteousness in the city, who occupied the seat of his father* זצ"ל *(taken while he was walking in the street of the city)*

R' Israel turns, not to the eastern wall, but to his regular appointed place beside the table against the western wall. The young men who regularly study around that table are happy at his arrival. He, in turn, is happy to offer them help, as was the intent of one who arrives early. His eyes shuttle across the lines, his fingers turn all the pages of the book, and he renders an opinion quickly and simply; regarding this question, such-and-such an explicator rules at the end of the book; and on this matter, a second one offers the following view; here is a printing error; here one should be seeing the end of a sentence in the *Tanakh*, the citation according to the *Gemara*, and the content of the documentary source is, etc., etc. And it is all sharp and clear.

R' Israel's regular place is opposite the large clock in the *Kloyz*, the well-known '*Kloyz Zayger*' that became a symbol, and was also called, 'R' Israel's Clock.' The gentiles adjusted the hands of their watches and altered the setting of the hours of the day to suit their needs and pleasures. The *Hasidim* called the gentile clock, the '*Bahn Zayger*,' even thought it was the clock of R' Israel that was set for fixed hours, just as the Lord had set the heavenly lights in the firmament and said: 'and they will be as signs of the periods, days and years.' In accordance with this clock, it was that Zechariah Einbinder and Mordechai Shammes would go out on the nights of the Sabbath into the city streets, and with their hammers, would bang on the doors of the Jews, and call out: 'Women of Israel, who are kosher and righteous, light the candle, multiply your Sabbath observance, and light them, with prayers and tears, those Sabbath candles, a holy light, and chase out the gloom and the sorrow found within the life during the secular ordinary days.' And when he sat in his place, R' Israel loved to compare his watch to the clock of the *Kloyz*, and it seemed to him that he was a partner to the Holy One, Blessed Be He, in the acts of creation.

Bedecked in his prayer shawl and phylacteries, he fulfills part of his role, the role as '*Dayan*,' responding to 'questions.' In his handling of light matters, as if the character of the Dayan shows through: how with tranquility, he approaches the fat goose, that is presented to him by the servant of the rich lady, and with what heaviness in his head, and trembling, he takes the shriveled up bird

in his hand, that she hands out to him like a lowlife marketplace grumbler. R' Israel, who assumes upon himself all possible difficulties, with a broad-minded sense, and heart, he takes advantage of all that is possible on behalf of the enquirers for 'unusual losses,' and 'in honor of the Sabbath,' that the Halakha has left remaining, in order to tip the scales in the mind of the one who makes the ruling. 'And He shall live within them' – says R' Israel – as is said even in the most stringent of the arguments: he who lives with them, and takes pleasure from them, shall take them to himself: but not to burden them out of dependence on others. And there was an instance with one *Hasid*, that aroused a suspicion within him regarding a strict interpretation about festival foods, on the night of the First *Seder* of Passover, and the question was asked of R' Israel: And the response was: 'The head of the family is not to eat of these foodstuffs, but the rest of the family may do so.' And on the following morning in the *Kloyz*, during prayer, R' Israel approached the *Hasid* with a smile, and said to him: 'The ruling I made the day before last, does not have a source in the books of 'Questions and Responses,' and are complex, rather, I ruled in accordance with the plain reading of the '*Chumash*.' Where it is written: 'And you shall be joyous during your festivals,' and you in order that you have a happy holiday, in order that you took to be cautious in the face of a strict interpretation – should not eat; the members of your family, whose happiness was through the meat and the fish – they may eat.' – The power of permissiveness prevails – . It was said of R' Israel: How superior and greater was his power – by being stricter with himself, yet more lenient with his flock.

The second part of his role, as one who shows the way to righteousness, R' Israel fulfilled in the 'Little Tailor's Synagogue.' During the afternoon hours, after the Little Synagogue had been emptied of its worshipers: tailors, shoemakers, storekeepers, and plain ordinary Jews, who felt the pressure to return to work, and could not tarry in prayer, or in sitting down to acquire knowledge in the *Batei Medrashim*, or *Kloyzes*, hurried to the 'Little Synagogue' from daybreak on, one *minyan* fast on the heels of another *minyan*, in order to snatch a *Kedusha* prayer, *Barchu,* and recite *Kaddish* – after which it was the 'Heart and Intellect' of the community entered the 'Little Synagogue:' [The heart, in the form of] R' Shlomo Schrenzel ז"ל, because of his sermons and eulogies, full of emotion and sadness, that penetrated the hearts of his listeners. And the intellect: R' Israel: the acuity of his mind, his quick grasp that penetrated to the root of the question brought before him, and with his broad fluency in the complexity of the *Halakha*, and the solution provided to those in need of it. It was in his sake that the 'Little Synagogue' became a magnetic center for towns both near and far.

Women, left as *Agunot* as the survivors of the curse of the First World War, who for years knocked at the doors of Rabbis, to release them from the restricting bonds of being an *Agunah* – were sent to R' Israel, because it was known that he was a swimmer in these matters of *Halakha*, as if they were endless waters.

Quarreling couples would bring the detritus of their wrecked lives to him, as if to a physician, seeking for him to provide healing. He, with his sharp eye, would uncover the root cause of their malady, and with his expansive understanding and warm heart, he would excise that root, and the couple returned, relieved, to a tranquil and auspicious life together. He did not hesitate in the dissection of a divorce proceeding, when he saw that there was no prescription in his words, and there was no way to prevent a wreckage of life through persuasion. A pearl of R' Israel's was: 'After

all, our Sages ז"ל said: The *Divine Presence* sheds tears on the one who divorces his wife, but if this does not happen, if the couple does not divorce – the children of the couple will shed tears for all the days of their life.'

Forest product merchants, owners of mills, and ordinary merchants who got into dispute over their affairs, without being able for arrive at a resolution, knew that if they brought the matter before R' Israel, they would leave him with a 'compromise' devised by him, or a ruling, that would leave them with the feeling of satisfaction that the right thing was done for all the sides.

Among the mental jokes he would tell, was a set of remarks by the author of "*Nodah biYehudah*:' 'A butcher that had come before me with an issue involving the condition of the lungs – and I had to condemn the entire ox as unclean and unfit for consumption, and the ox was worth a lot of money, and so he [sic: the butcher] went away from me, parting with an aggrieved groan. It turned out that he was compelled to pay, in accordance with my ruling, only a minuscule sum to the one demanding payment – and the latter also parted from me in a state of anger, the reason: the community did not benefit from the loss of the butcher, and only the one being required to pay according to the ruling – would create a benefit to the one demanding the payment! And it was because of this, that he was angry!' Up to here these are the words of the '*Nodah biYehudah*,' to which R' Israel added: 'Our *Sages* ז"ל said: 'What is mine is yours – that is a *Hasid*:' But is a *Hasid* required to give everything that he has – to just anyone? Rather, what do these words have to say? – In a court judgment, the defendant is supposed to say, 'it is mine,' – because I was sure it was mine; but now, after the ruling, it is 'yours' – the plaintiff!' – And R' Israel added further: 'from this, the aphorism of our *Sages* ז"ל is also understood: 'A *Hasid*' – acts beyond the letter of the law: '*Dayan-Hasid*' – adds even further beyond the letter of the law (the ruling), he injects into the report to the complaining parties, the characteristics of 'mine – yours.'

In the communal disputes about the Rabbinate, and 'franchise,' R' Israel was always first among the 'arbitrators.' And in a general dispute that was national in scope, it was taken for granted that he would sit in 'arbitration,' in the same group of arbitrators, to which R' Menachem Zemba, the pride of Ger *Hasidism* in this period[82], was also appointed,, and the latter conveyed his dealing with the greatness of R' Israel in Torah, and his profound understanding of the issue that was brought before them. The reputation of R' Israel went out far beyond the immediate area of Belz in its influence. Communities offered him the position of being their Rabbi, but R' Israel, who fled this sort of honor, was not responsive to their attempts to persuade him. As a scion of his city, he loved his city, and its Jewish people.

'*Siddur HaTefilah*,' or the '*Siddur'l*' – by virtue of being an ongoing companion of every Jew in his daily life – in the fulness of time, became transformed into a sort of '*Kol Bo*[83]' of laws, customs, traditions and *Hasidism* for all God-worshiping Jews. Eery stream of Jewish persuasion attached itself to the '*Siddur*' and its concepts, customs, and the ways it indicated to serve God. Even all of

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82 Several references appear in the Góra Kalwaria (Ger) Memorial Book to this individual and other distinguished members of the Zemba Rabbinical family.

83 A catchall, or all-inclusive reference.

the various divisions of *Hasidism* had their own prayer books. Belz, for its own hidden reasons, never put down its 'oral tradition' into writing, taking to itself the '*Siddur*' of *Kabbalist Mahara"m* Pafrasz זי"צל, one of the students of the AR"Y זי"ל, and one of the disseminators of his lore and customs, which were mostly accepted by *Hasidism* as the dominating ones.

R' Shlomo Zalman Gurfinkel זי"ל, one of the highly regarded members of the *Kloyz*, whose many 'sources of income' and limited earnings , approached, with the financial assistance of R' Shmuel Tzipis-Strauss זי"ל, whose attitude toward *Gemilut Hasadim* charity took preference over and above all of his other affairs – 'for the benefit of the many, to publish anew, the Siddur, '*Ohr HaYashar*,' on order of his Eminence the ADMo"R [sic: the *Rebbe* of Belz], and also was so ordered by the Rabbi and *Gaon*, the wondrous *Hasid*, Our Teacher and Rabbi R' Israel שליט"א the Teacher of Righteousness of Rawa, to review it a second time, etc.' – as related in the words of R' Shlomo Zalman in his foreword to the *Siddur*.

There was some wonder, as to what R' Israel, 'a sharp mind and one who could uproot mountains,' has to do with a *Siddur* for prayer? When he finished his work, with his observations and thoughts (commentaries and proof readings) about the *Siddur*, it became recognized that R' Israel, in his way, had approached his work with great seriousness, and with a cognizance that demonstrated an all-encompassing knowledge of the issues. As was the case in the issue pertaining to buying and selling, as well as those issues concerning what is forbidden and what is permissible, he delved deeply into the author's books, which were many, seemingly peripheral, read them, and examined their content, analyzing all of the editions of the *Siddur* that had appeared over the course of generations, probing deeply into the complexity of the customs, in order to align them with the rulings in the '*Shulkhan Arukh*,' and the Belz traditions. And in his comments, such as: 'and we do not act in this way here,' he did not hesitate to weigh in on the scales against the Great Sages, providing the support of the greatest authority from his perspective: that of Belz. And R' Shlomo Zalman continues in his foreword: 'The previously referenced Rabbi, R' Israel, conforming to the Holy Will and proofread it with great diligence looking at the 'איזהו מקומן'[84] passage a second time, and I showed it to the Holy Master זי"צל of Belz, who read them, letter by letter, and with a sign of his approval at what he saw, ordered that it be printed.' And the *Gaon* of that period was the Rabbi of Tarnopol זי"צל, who writes, in his concurrence to the *Siddur*: 'And he was ordered to go back and review it a second time, and it was reviewed by the sharp-minded Rabbi R' Israel Schwert, The Teacher of Righteousness of the Sacred Congregation of Rawa, etc.,' and the holy sage saw the proofs and agreed to print them. It was a work consummated by the Great Sages with their praise. And this was a great credit to R' Israel, since the *Siddur* was disseminated here in the land among all *Hasidic* sects, and has remained in print for any number of generations since, and has already been reprinted in several editions.
Regarding his son Ahar'eleh, it was said he was born into silk clothing. The meaning of this was that the Rabbinic seat in one of the communities stood ready for him. Aryeh, who in his great diligence,

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84 The "איזהו מקומן" is the last passage recited as part of the קרבנות that some people (Sepharadim, in particular) say daily before *shacharit* and *mincha*. This presumably refers to the diligence or thoroughness of those who recite it till the end.

in his manner, and in his respectable sayings, managed to push himself into this possibility based on his own efforts. At a young age, he was ordained as a Rabbi by the great Torah Sages, and became a support to his father in the *Bet-Din* of the *shtibl.* It was not only once that his father lent an ear to his thinking and advice.

Eizik, his second son, the 'friend who was like a brother' to everyone, stood out in his acuity and his well-rehearsed speech. He uncovered the absurdities in human conduct and accosted both the lowly and the great. Stories and jokes were his weapons. He used to love the story: 'My grandfather, R' Hirschel'eh *Shokhet*, wanted to give up ritual slaughter.' What was the reason? – he was asked. He replied: In the World To Come, the creatures would come to me with complaint before the Court On High, arguing, for what sake did you slaughter us? Nu, good... I have a reason from the Torah that said:, 'and you shall sacrifice... etc.; but you will have to judge, and even emerge innocent with a beast.'

Hirsch'eleh, the youngest son of R' Israel had within him the characteristic personality of his two older brothers.

He received guests with grace, scions of the city, who came from the Land of Israel, and stopped off at his home to convey regards from his children. And when such a guest succeeded in portraying life in *The Land* to him, also from the standpoints that he wanted, those near to his heart, and to his Land of Israel, that he lived in with all 248 of his corporeal members, how great was his joy, that his anticipations were disseminated, and his concepts were rehearsed, and on his face, shone the light of the sun of the *Jerusalem On High*.

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Hasidim, smoking embers saved from a *Great Kingdom,* would tell:

'The High Holy Days of the year 5700 [1940] were the most terrible among all that were awesome. The *Hasidim*, and their *Rebbe,* as one, were without any idea as to what to do. Russians and Germans one after another in admixture. Which to choose, the snare of Hitler, or the Russian snare. Two horses stand ready in the yard of the *Rebbe*, hitched to the wagon. On the eve of *Simchat Torah*, after the *Hakafot,* the hour of decision came. As was the custom in Belz, someone needed to rule, a *Bar Samkha*[85], to issue a ruling, as to whether it is permissible to go out onto the road on the night of a Festival. Names of Rabbis are brought up as a reminder to the *Rebbe* – 'And let R' Israel enter, and let us receive his verdict' – the *Rebbe* rules. In accordance with R' Israel's ruling, the *Rebbe* departed on his long journey, a journey of suffering, full of agony and mishaps, until, after years, he reached *The Land.* Fysha, the brother of R' Israel, joined up with the *Rebbe*, along with a handful of *Hasidim*, and went through [the proverbial] seventy seven levels of Hitler's Hell, until reaching the ghetto at Bochnia. Being weighed down by his days, out of an exhaustion of his strength, he surrendered his life to his Creator, and his holy remains to the care of the small group of his students. And Fysha received a great boon: he earned and received a proper Jewish burial.

And R' Israel returned to his community. With the first bloodletting of the community, his own blood became poisoned. He fell to his bed. The unclean hands of Hitler did not exercise control over

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[85] An Aramaic metaphor for an 'authority.'

him, because The Lord took him, and the remainder of the community brought him to rest in the place of his ancestors, and his son, R' Aryeh was appointed in his place, as the Teacher of the community headed for extermination.

When the news of the passing of R' Israel reached the ears of the *Rebbe*, in the Vale of Tears that was Bochnia, he stood up on his legs and offered an hour-long eulogy ending with: 'He worked at everything, and R' Israel was a *Posek*, who ruled on matters of *Halakha*, even in opposition to his own thinking, and for a hundred miles around him, he was like Teacher of Law before his Rabbi.'

And so indeed, R' Israel זי"צל was a Master Teacher of his people Israel.

The Rabbi R' Dovberish and His Grandson The Rabbi R' Joseph Chaim Rapoport

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A. My Revered Grandfather R' Dovberish Rapoport זי"ע [87] the Author of 'Derekh HaMelech'

My grandfather, the Rabbi, Our Teacher and Rabbi, Dovberish was born to his father, the *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*, Our Teacher and Rabbi Shmuel Ka"Tz Rapoport זי"ל, who was of priestly descent, son following son, stemming from the Holy *Gaon* Our Rabbi Chaim Cohen Rapoport זי"ל. He was born in the city of Lvov approximately in the year 5584 [1823], and was educated there. While still in his youth, he was recognized as possessing superiority [sic: in intelligence], and his name became renowned and held out to praise. When he was nine years old, he offered a remarkable innovative interpretation in the presence of the formidable *Gaon*, the author of '*Yeshuot Yaakov*' זי"ל, who was the *Bet-Din Senior* there, and this *Gaon* said to him: 'Did you not see this innovation cited in my book, '*Yeshuot Yaakov*?' -- and the minor became embarrassed. Afterwards, the Gaon went and looked this up, and found that this innovative interpretation was not to be found in the printed version of '*Yeshuot Yaakov*,' but rather, had been among his writings prior

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86 The acronym for the Hebrew blessing, יחיחון צורו ישמריהו (*yekhayekhun tzuro yishmereyhu*) meaning that his Rock (i.e. God) should give him life and look after him.

87 The Hebrew acronym for זכותו יגן עלינו meaning, 'may his sake guard over us.'

to when they were printed. He reached out to appease Dovberish somehow, and from that time on, he loved him greatly, and engaged in wordplay with him regarding sayings in the Torah.

When Dovberish was about seventeen, he entered into a contract of marriage with my Righteous Grandmother. Mrs. Gruna, ע"ה, the daughter of his uncle, his mother's brother, the Rabbi and formidable *Gaon*, R' Akiva Eiger זי"ע: the son of R' Azriel. This R' Azriel was privileged to preside over two 'Tables.' Torah and greatness in one location, and entered into marital relations with the luminaries of the generation of his time. He entered into marital relations twice with the formidable *Gaon*, R' Akiva Eiger זי"ע: The son of R' Azriel Meir, the Rabbi *Gaon* R' Fishl, was the groom to R' Akiva Eiger, and his name was brought forward a number of times in his books: And the grandson of this previously mentioned *Gaon*, the Rabbi and *Gaon*, and Holy Man, R' Leib'l Eiger ז"ל, the author of '*Torat Emet*,' was the groom to R' Azriel Meir, and the brother-in-law of my grandfather, the author ז"ל.

After R' Dovberish's wedding, he pitched his tent with his previously mentioned father-in-law, in Lublin, and added additional effort to his already great diligence and wondrous skills, and was an outstanding student to the formidable *Gaon* R' Ber'ish Ashkenazi זצ"ל, the author of *'Nodah b'Shearim*,' who was the *Bet-Din Senior* there, and he had a great influence on the path of all his study and his innovative thinking. To begin with, the previously mentioned Gaon ordered him to begin the study of the Shas in accordance with its divisions, using the following order: *Gemara* with *Rashi, RI"F, Ra"N*, and *RA"Sh*, and only after he would learn these *Rishonim* well – is he to study the explanation of the *Tosafists*: because, in order to properly grasp the words of the *Tosafists* fluently and by rote – it is first necessary to be fluent with the work of the *Rishonim*. He did this, devoting nights as if they were days, and in this manner, he completed and reviewed this material, until all the sayings of the *Tosafists* in the *Shas* were on the tip of his tongue, and it was only after this, that he began to write out innovative thoughts and entered into casuistic argument over them with his teacher, the previously mentioned *Gaon*. This teacher of his, gave testimony that the True Torah was in his mouth, and the lips of the Kohen guarded and preserved knowledge His prominent name spread to far distances, and students streamed to him from far and near – to benefit from his teaching, and from the unique manner in which he conducted study, enfolded in thoroughness and acuity, with a marvelous insight and straightforward explanations, and he was especially renowned as a *Gaon* when it came to matters pertaining to the *Tosafists*. A number of his students, were themselves, also in their own right, considered to be luminaries and renowned.


דרך המלך

חלק ראשון

Page 86: Frontispiece of the book, 'Derekh HaMelech.'

And I heard from the mouth of my Father and Teacher, R' Joseph Chaim זי"ל, that on one occasion, the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*' was with my grandfather in Krynica (there were baths there to be taken for health purposes), and at the time, the formidable Rabbi and *Gaon* Our Teacher, the Rabbi R' Chaim *HaLevi* from Brisk[88], זי"ל was also there, and every day, they would meet in a place set aside for them in the forest, and engaged in dialogue over matters of *Halakha* in casuistry. At the time they parted, the previously mentioned Gaon said to him: *'Yasher Koach* to you, Rabbi of Rawa, who thanks to you, several sayings of the *Tosafists* have become clearer to me.' And my grandfather replied: 'On the contrary, I need to thank him [sic: you], because several sayings of the RaShBa"H have been clarified for me by him.'

And I remember, when I was young, I once came to the formidable *Gaon,* and Exponent of the Torah, Our Teacher the Rabbi Sh. Engel זצ"ל, to receive the ordination of a sage, and this previously mentioned *Gaon* told me about the greatness of my grandfather, the author of *'Derekh HaMelech,'* saying to me: 'You need to know that your grandfather tested me one night on the *Tosafot* for the entire Order of *Nezikim*: He asked me ordinary questions, and I replied to him with ordinary answers, without recalling that these were the words of the *Tosafists*, that is how complete he had the words of the *Tosafists* in his mouth.'

My grandfather the author, sat for many years in the Yeshiva and immersed himself in Torah [study]. And his father-in-law, mentioned above, and also his oldest sister, Mrs. Miriam ע"ה, held him in great respect, and he was not willing to accept any Rabbinical chair that was proposed to him, and only afterwards, when he grew close to the ADMo"R, the Holy *Gaon*, author of '*Divrei Chaim*,' of Sanz, זי"ע, and became one of the greatest of his *Hasidim*, his Holy Rabbi, previously mentioned, persuaded him to take upon his shoulders the service of being a Rabbi. And at the proposal of Her Eminence, the wife of the '*Divrei Chaim*' זי"ל, he was taken on as the *Bet-Din* Senior in the city of Sianowo approximately in the year 5632 [1872], and her served there for about seven years. Afterwards, when the ADMo"R, Holy *Gaon*, author of '*Divrei Chaim*' of Sianowo זי"ע returned from the Land of Israel, the previously mentioned ADMo"R wanted to take up residence in Sianowo as the ADMo"R, while permitting my grandfather to continue in his capacity as the 'Sitting Rabbi of Record:' but my grandfather said to him that he does not want to be one to give direction on *Halakhic* matters before his presence, and when the time comes that he will be invited to take up a different Rabbinical seat – he will leave Sianowo.

It was in this fashion that he was later received as the *Bet-Din* Senior of Rawa-Ruska, and he served there for about thirty years. And he became a bastion there, a mountain to which all of the ADMo"R's and luminaries would turn to for responsa, and all matters of difficulty were brought to him. And he was a pillar as well, one of the great Torah luminaries, and leaders of the Jewish people , and he would stand on the watch, to secure a perimeter and to stand in the breach. He even went out to make battle with the *Maskilim*, and his words were akin to fiery flaming torches. And at every general assembly called to fortify the faith, Judaism and the Torah – he was among the first in the ranks of the warriors on behalf of the Torah.

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[88] The dates in question strongly suggest that this was Rabbi Chaim Halevi Soloveitchik (Brisker).

Apart from his greatness in Torah [study], he was renowned for his righteousness and God-fearing nature, and brought up a number of students in his home and held them closely as if they were literally his own sons. One of his students was the Righteous *Gaon*, Our Teacher the Rabbi P[inchas] HaLevi Horowitz, the Head of the Sacred *Bet-Din* of the Sacred Congregation of Kossow and Grasswardayan, the author of the book, '*Pitkha Zuta*.' And on one occasion, I was staying with him in Grasswardayan, and he told me – it is also cited in the Foreword of the book '*Pitkha Zuta*' by this author שליט"א, how on one occasion he fell mortally ill, not on us, and my grandmother, the righteous *Rebbetzin* ע"ה watched over him with a compassionate eye, as if he were an only child, and for a number of nights she went sleepless. On one night, she observed that he had come to death's door, not on us, and she went to her husband, my grandfather, to elicit some compassion. And my grandfather sat by his bedside, in prayer, until morning, until his soul returned to him, along with his health. In his book '*Pitkha Zuta*,' he brings forth a number of miraculous things done by my grandfather, who was a man of miracles, and many benefitted from his blessings and prayers.

He was also an ardent *Hasid,* and an adherent to his *Rebbe*, the author of '*Divrei Chaim*,' of Sanz, זי"ע ועכ"י.[89] And when my grandfather came to Sanz for the first time, he got there at the time when the '*Divrei Chaim*' was seated at a feast (as is known, His Eminence, the Master זי"ע was in the custom of conducting feasts as on the Sabbath and Festival Holidays, and they were called '*einbeisen*') – and he was immediately given a place at the head of the table, beside the Holy Master זי"ע, and he opened his holy mouth and said to him: 'Certainly R' Berisz Lubliner – as he was called in his time – explained to him, that when he would come to Sanz, he will discover how rational discourse is employed in order to resolve the severe words in a book like '*Mishne LaMelech*,' and others, and now, to our surprise, we see they are occupied with roasted meat and gravy' – and with his holy mouth, he replied: 'To me, it is equivalent to seeing the High Priest eating in the Holy of Holies.' And the Holy Master laughed, and was amused by his reply. When he told this to my father and teacher, R' Joseph Chaim ז"ל, he added, that it was nothing less that heaven sent him this plain and simple reply [with which] to answer, on the spot, to the holiness and dignity of the great and holy *Tzaddik*, זי"ע ועכ"י.

And I still recall, while still a child, on the eve of the holy Sabbath of the *Parsha* of *Bo*, before he died, he was already very weakened to the point of being unable to speak, and here, he bolstered himself, sat up on his bed, and he silenced all those who were standing there, and said that they should not confuse him, because he wanted to hear the *Kiddush* from his Holy *Rebbe* of Sanz. And a fear and trepidation descended on all who were gathered, and those holy words uttered by that previously mentioned one, still resonated in my ears to this day. And close on to his death, literally, at the breaking of dawn on the Monday of [the *Parsha* of] *BeShalakh*, he girded himself with all of his strength, descended from his bed, and with ardor he said that he is going to receive his holy *Rebbe,* previously mentioned, and he was supported to enable him to make a couple of steps, and he said: 'Blessed be your arrival, *Rebbe* of Sanz.' After than, he lay down on

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89 The acronym for an extended blessing, זכותו יגן עלינו ועל כל ישראל, meaning, 'may his sake guard over us, and all of Israel.' Further down in the text, an '*aleph*' (א) is added, to signify the word 'Amen.'

his bed, made the ritual ablution over his hands, and prayed the evening prayer, and when he reached the line of '*Shema Yisrael*' – he recited it in a loud voice, and he gave up his pure soul in holiness and purity, at the coming of daybreak on Monday, the *Parsha* of *BeShalakh*, 10 Tevet, 5666 [January 7, 1906], זי"ע ועכי"א.

My grandfather, the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*' left a large assembly of responsa, and an additional two sections of '*Derekh HaMelech*' on the remaining sections of the *Rambam*. For a variety of reasons they were never brought out in published form, and were lost in the terrifying Holocaust, may God spare us, and it is a pity to have lost them, but they are not forgotten.

B) My Master, Father and Teacher R' Joseph-Chaim Rapoport זי"ע

My Master, Father and Teacher, the great and holy *Gaon*, Our Teacher and Rabbi Joseph-Chaim זצ"ל, הי"ד, was the son of the Rabbi *Gaon* Our Teacher and Rabbi Shmuel ben R' Dovberish זצ"ל, who was the Rabbi and *Bet-Din Senior* of the sacred congregation of Rawa-Ruska יצ"ו. To our great consternation, all his writings [Joseph Chaim's] and innovative interpretations were lost as well in the terrifying Holocaust, together with all of the remainder of the innovations, and responsa of my Master and revered and sacred person, my grandfather, the author, ז"ל.

He worked very hard and exerted himself considerably on the book '*Derekh HaMelech*,' and when it was first published, when he was fifteen years old, he created the key '*Moreh Derekh*,' in which he demonstrated his fluency and acuity. And his [own] innovations are presented eighteen times in the book itself, and my grandfather, the author ז"ל, expressed his pride in him, at the end of the key: '...when I saw the work of my precious grandson, one who was suckled with wisdom and all good things, so sharp and keen as Mr. Joseph-Chaim שליט"א, who worked successfully, in the creation of the keys, calling them '*Moreh Derekh*,' we say 'good work,' and may the Good Lord straighten his path and strengthen him to Torah study, and may he grow to bear the fruits of a stalwart vine, and may his name be for pride. May the Lord give us the privilege of seeing that we will not depart from the Torah, not from our mouths, and the mouths of our progeny and their progeny, for all eternity.'

C) R' Simcha Haberman

I saw fit to bring forward the memory of that man of great strength and worth, a Torah luminary, and a God-fearing person, a substantive cluster of wisdom and knowledge able to expiate his people if need be, a sage and author, a precious stone in Rawa-Ruska, Our Teacher and Rabbi, Simcha Haberman ז"ל, who was among the students of my grandfather the Rabbi, who was the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*' ז"ל. He was killed in *Sanctification of the Name*, during the war years הי"ד. He transcribed the writings of the book, '*Derekh Hamelech*' by hand, as they were printed originally, and he posed a number of difficult questions to my grandfather ז"ל, and they are in the book, under the title: 'And a Certain Sage Asked of Me.'

★

May their memory be blessed with life in the World to Come.

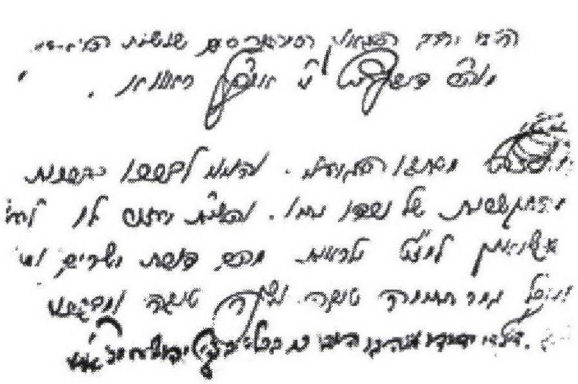
Added Details from the History of My Great-Grandfather

Author of the Book 'Derekh HaMelech,' and his sons, זי"ע

By Dovberish Cohen Rapoport
בן כאאמו"ר מהרי"ם שליט"א

After the marriage of my great-grandfather with my great-grandmother, the righteous woman, when he sat over his Torah study and related sacred work in the city of Lublin, he suffered much pain and sorrow in the rearing of sons, as our *Sages of Blessed Memory* said in *Berachot* on Page5: 'He who engages in the Torah and the doing of good deeds, and buries his own sons (God protect us), has all of his sins forgiven.' His sons died while they were small, and one daughter died on the day of her wedding, God protect us, and all that was left to him was his solitary son, my grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel זי"ל. As you can understand, he was a 'pampered child' and treated as a sole and fragile one by his mother.

The Holy *Gaon*, the author of '*Divrei Chaim*' זצ"ל – in responding to my Master and great-grandfather, the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*,' זי"ל, about his question, if there is some restriction in marriage, when the names of the groom and father-in-law are the same – wrote to him, that if it is true that one of them has two names, there is no restriction; but seeing that his son is a 'pampered child' he is to refrain from this. After this, my grandfather entered into the covenant of marriage with my righteous grandmother, Mrs. Chava the daughter of the Holy *Gaon*, R' Joseph the *Bet-Din Senior*, *Bet-Din Senior* of Tarnopol, the author of the book '*Minkhat Khinukh*,' זצ"ל. After this, she was cut down in the bloom of life. She left behind two small orphans – my grandfather R' Joseph-Chaim, the Rabbi and *Bet-Din Senior* of Rawa, and my uncle, the Rabbi Azriel-Meir, who was the *Bet-Din Senior* of Milnica – who were raised on the lap of their grandfather, the author of *'Derekh HaMelech.'* After this, my grandfather Rabbi R' Shmuel married a second time, and he had a third son, my uncle, the Rabbi R' Yehoshua who became the *Bet-Din Senior* of Khrostkow.



Page 88: Blessings from the ADMo"R R' Yehoshua זצק"ל of Belz to R' Dov Berisz זצ"ל on the occasion of the engagement of his grandson, R' Joseph-Chaim זצ"ל

My grandfather, the Rabbi, Our Teacher R' Joseph-Chaim, took to wife my grandmother, the righteous woman, Mrs. Toba, the daughter of R' Yaakov Koppel Brenner, the *Bet-Din Senior* Rezepnik זי"ל, who was a famous nobleman, and was privileged to preside over two *Tisches*: but after my grandfather, R' Joseph-Chaim became the apple of the eye of His Eminence, my great-grandfather, the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*,' his hand did not move from the other's, and he was kept beside his *Tisch*, raising him

and educating him to take his place. After his [sic: great-grandfather's] death, he [grandfather] was nominated to be the Rabbi and *Bet-Din Senior* of that *City and Mother in Israel*, Rawa.

He was killed, during the Holocaust, in the Belzec concentration camp in *Sanctification of the Name*, on 16 Av 5701[August 9, 1941] הי"ד.

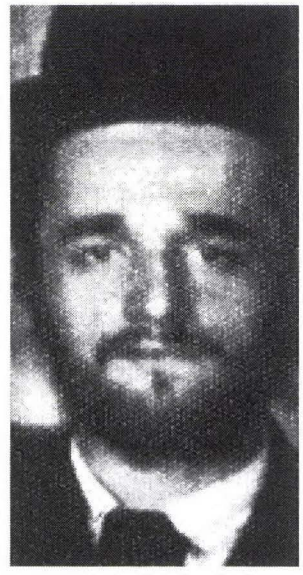
My uncle, the Rabbi, R' Azriel Meir ז"ל took as a wife the daughter of the Rabbi of Zawory. He was distinguished as a Torah scholar and one who did good deeds, and was nominated as the *Bet-Din Senior* in the congregation of Milnica, and died in the prime of life. He left two young orphans – one daughter, Chava Reiza הי"ד, who became the wife of my uncle the Rabbi R' David-Simcha הי"ד, and thanks to God's grace, two of their sons fled and escaped; the Rabbi, R' Moshe Rapoport was the ritual slaughterer and meat inspector in Montreal, Canada, and his brother, R' Leibusz, a *Bet-Din Senior* in Brooklyn – and the son of the Rabbi R' Joseph Zvi who was an outstanding *Dayan* in Richky, was killed in *Sanctification of the Name* in the Belzec camp, הי"ד.

My uncle, the Rabbi R' Yehoshua took to wife the daughter of the Rabbi of Pidvolochys'k. He was an eminent Rabbi among the Jews, great in Torah scholarship and good deeds, and was nominated to be Rabbi and *Bet-Din Senior* of the Sacred Congregation of Khrostow. He was killed in *Sanctification of the Name*, with his entire family, הי"ד.

My Uncle, R' Yitzhak Nahum ז"ל

By Yokhanan Twersky

The *Maharsh"a* writes about a saying of our *Sages of Blessed Memory*, 'How fortunate is he who comes here with his Talmud in his hand,' because the essence of learning is in the written hand, even if he creates a minor innovation (*Baba Kama*, 10). My uncle, who died in *Sanctification of the Name*, created many such innovations in his life, but did he leave anything for future generations that was preserved in writing? I do not even know if anyone of his bloodline remained [alive] to say *Kaddish* after him. I do not even know if he was buried individually or consigned to a mass grave. And on top of it all, I do not know if his tortured remains were brought to a proper Jewish burial at all.



Page 90: R' Joel the son of the Rabbi R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky הי"ד

Because of this, I wish, at least, to raise a memorial candle in his honor.

I do not recall him in his childhood. However, from the mouth of my mother, she should live and be well, I do know that while he was yet a child himself, that he garnered a reputation as a 'genius and knowledgeable.' His second teacher, one of the sages of the *Kabbalah* was, from Tzfat, his name was R' Aharon, was one of those who was skilled in using language to say

the opposite: whoever does not believe in something only in its simple terms – he is stupid. And beyond the fact that the boy, with the curled sidelocks, sways his body back and forth over the *Gemara* – R' Aharon sought to enlighten his eyes with the wisdom of the *Kabbalah*, conveying his ideas into the ambience of the youth, exposing him to the esoteric content of the Torah. It is certain that the boy does not understand his words completely, but despite this, they have an influence on him. But afterwards, other influences arrive, entirely different ones, and with it all, the lore of his teacher from Tzfat is swallowed up into his blood.

However, as I have said, I did not know him in his childhood, but rather at the height of his scholastic powers. The two were apposite to each other: The Rabbi of the city, and my uncle. The Rabbi has a sharp mind, but a man stubbornly set in his ways, contesting, contesting and looking for a fight, being more strict in carrying out mitzvahs, and fanatical. The writers of '*HaTzefira*,' and '*Zman*' are apostates and sinners in his view, but he comes to my uncle, even though there is resonance about him that he studies secular matters – during hours when he had no day or no night, the youth Yitzhak Nahum was greatly accomplished. On his table, resting one on top of another, were volumes bound in red-dyed sheepskin – the '*Yad HaKhazakah*,' '*Yoreh Dey'ah*,' [Talmud] tractates and their commentaries, and those who had commented on the commentaries themselves. The conversation went on until a later hour of the night. The Rabbi bolsters the terms of his question, a question to marvel at, in the manner of the 'heavy flesh part of the hand:' my uncle, who does not yet have the imprimatur of an elder, plays with and curls his long dark sidelocks, the entire time, and the elderly Rabbi harkens to his explanations and answers, and wonders: yes, this young one is in the category of 'he who picked up a potsherd and discovered a precious stone,' and his teaching goes up several levels of volume, like the best of milk, and every innovative point that he creates, seems as if it had fallen on him from above, with the grace of a gift.

And I remember my uncle's wedding. The son of the *Rebbe* of Szpykiv is marrying the daughter of the famous Rabbi of Belz, R' Issachar Dov, a man of small build but of broad influence, to whom the higher echelons in Austria accord favor.

We cross the Russian border. At each and every station, masses of people mill around, a mixed crowd, a silk sash abutted against the sash of a simple man, different sorts of sidelocks: flat and smooth, curly like tubes, braided and plaited; Sabbath *kapotes*, and glistening satin *zhupitzas*, *shtrymels* made of sable fur with thirteen sides to them. Beside the open windows of the train cars, thousands of hands are waving: *Sholom Aleichem* Szpykiver *Rebbe, Sholom Aleichem*, groom. A huge throng of *Hasidim* are traveling to Belz, taking snippets of snuff to inhale, carrying on casual conversation with the Rabbis, dancing in the train cars, in a circle, in a circle within the circle. And the ticket conductor enters the train car and smiles. How different this is from the rule of the Kaiser, may his glory be elevated, whether for good or bad, from that of ours. The air of all the ovens of Belz are warm and heating, and in the interstices of the city, there is the odor of honey cake and cabbage, of a Mitzvah Feast, Belz is filled on all of its sides.

In the summer of 1919, my uncle left for Hungary, to which the family of his father-in-law had fled during the war (the Belz [rabbinical] courtyard went up in flames set by the Cossacks in 1914). And

how happy he was when he arrived, after so many trials and tribulations, visited upon his children, on his mate, and his fate and fortune.

The Alexander square, the red building of the Berlin wedding hall, the low-priced movie houses, with their loud appearance, cheap saloons, here and there with flags decorated with the hammer and sickle, and placards affixed to the walls announcing: 'Vote for the S"D!' and additionally: Vote for the KA.Ph.Da.' And this street was the walking place of Horst Wessel, the author of the well-known song.

In the home of the Banker Steinberg, a relative of Walter Rathnau, on the mother's side of one of the Belz *Hasidim*, we – I, my mother and younger brother Abraham – sit across from my uncle. The two added weight to my uncle, while he was still handsome, having that handsomeness that comes with maturity and strength. He asks about Berlin, and I am happy to tell, as he is happy to hear. Berlin, the worldly metropolis, Berlin, having the beauty of order, the selected cit of those who yearn for knowledge, hah! At that time, we could not conceive that it was from here that the Great Evil would emerge! Could that be conceivable? "The people will continue to do evil things so long as they will believe in words without substance (Walter). But along with all the poets, is it possible that they will believe in words without substance?

But the essence was that my uncles heart, drawn to the study of the soul in which many new discoveries were being made (these were the days of the great discoveries of Freud and Adler, on the one side, and of Wertheimer and Kurt Levin on the other). And he, my uncle, was he not going to plumb the insides of these words, and what we are to renew in our own culture?

After a few days had gone by, and we parted at the '*Anhalter Bahn*' and my uncle rode from here to Marienbad, we did not know that we would never again meet. And when it is decreed on a young man to be parted from his near ones and friends, he is certain that the parting is not permanent; and we were then very young.

Several years go by, and I am already in America, and my uncle, together with the family of his father-in-law have returned to Belz. 'Belz in which everything is frozen in its place,' that is how the son of my uncle, Joel, writes to me, whose mastery of literature was the essence of his soul from childhood (despite this, he too was killed, that master of the skill?). My uncle was appointed as the Rabbi of Rawa-Ruska, 'My effort and strain' he writes in one of his letters, 'has gone over my head, without granting me any surcease or rest to my soul.' And in his letter of 7 Nissan, 5691[March 25, 1931], he writes: 'The utterances of Job[90], in which he expresses astonishment, is no idle remark to me, but rather it is simple as it is heard, all day, I roam about the city to gather *Maot Khittin*[91], accompanied by the *Dayanim* and the *balebatim*, as is the custom in our country -- the Rabbi of the city being saddled with the collection of *Maot Khittin* on behalf of the poor. When I come home

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90 Job 9:18; He would not let me catch my breath but would overwhelm me with misery.

91 Charitable contributions solicited at Passover time for the needy, especially for providing Matzos.

towards evening, I am so tired and worn out, to the point that a number of times I literally do not have the strength to speak, and on top of this, I have other work piled up waiting for me, that I am not free to simply ignore, and questions concerning the rituals of Passover, laws of the Torah, and routine ritual issues of the day, and so forth.'

And it was not because of the considerable burden of his work – that made the role of Rabbi there so difficult for him. It was R' Jekuthiel Weiss ע"ה, who said it beautifully: 'The letter in the Hebrew word נשוא (to carry) can be permuted into שונא (to be an enemy). And this is said in the *Megillah* of Esther[92]: 'וינשאהו' [set his seat above] (to external appearances), but in truth, 'וישנאהו' [despised him] (in his heart); and this is the way it is with being elevated – there you will also find hatred. And the city of my uncle's community was filled with quarrels and disputes between the leaders of the community and those who pursued power, with each side wanting to build itself up on the destruction of the opposition, and the envy and jealousy was profuse. 'I am patient with regard to others – my uncle writes in one of his letters – and I am no fanatic,' but the faction that brought him to Rawa-Ruska demanded that he take an extreme position and be fanatical, and he found himself like a lamb among wolves. The folk say 'the community is not waning.' But because of the disputes within the community, which was poor in any case, it was indeed waning and dissipating. My uncle's earnings went into eclipse, and his spirit fell – even further.

And here, the terrifying years of the Second World War arrive. [These are] days of torture and imprisonment, the likes of which we had not seen nor heard of from the time that we began to reason. Everything that came to hand, that could be used to save one's own soul, one exile after another and another, to flee the fleeing from sword and gun; but he, my uncle, why does he himself not flee? Why does he expose his throat to the slaughter like our Patriarch, Isaac?

He remained at his place, in the face of, after all was said and done – with his heart full of that same esoteric faith, that was planted in his child's heart by that very *Kabbalist* from Tzfat. In the year 5699 [1939] he writes: We are living in historical hours in which all those things that are outside of the realm of possibility can suddenly become a decided certainty.' Is he now still awaiting a miracle? And the essential thing is that he does not want to abandon his community, sunken into great and evil tribulations, during the hours of predation. In one letter, he writes: 'We sit within our people, and we are taking part in the fate of the world, and it is not for us to be the exception, and the Blessed Lord will show compassion to the entire world, and especially to the remnant of His people, and in their salvation, our salvation too, will be as well.'

But his prayer was not heard.

My uncle, my dear uncle! I know that you were not the only one who gave up his life in *Sanctification of the Name.* Millions were cut down, felled by the sword, the gun and by bombs. I

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92 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and ***set his seat above*** all the princes that were with him. (Esther 3:1)

see nothing of you, sense you, you in my eyes bedecked as a symbol of all that we now suffer, and our holiness! And this I also knew: A deep wound exists, over which, in the fulness of time, a healing scar will form, but the pain from it will silently continue to oppress me until the last moment of life.

The Rebbe Simcha Haberman זצ"ל

By Yaakov Zvi Haberman
New York

Out of a trembling, and fear of heavenly sanctity, I raise the memory of my grandfather, the eminent R' Simcha ז"ל. In my youth, I took up residence in his home in Rawa-Ruska, and I was privileged to hear Torah taught from his own mouth.

R' Simcha was born in Rawa-Ruska in the year 5622 [1861] (in Kirov)to his father R' Issachar Haberman ז"ל, whose roots descend from the chain of the '*Khakham Zvi.*' While still in his youth, his reputation preceded him as an outstanding intellect and a dedicated scholar, one possessed of a sharp mind and capable of profundity. He dedicated his energies to the study of the Torah, and was the outstanding student and a confidant to the *Gaon* R' Dovberish HaKohen Rapoport, the Rabbi of that location, the author of the book, '*Derekh HaMelech*,' on the work of the *Ramba"m*. From him, he also received the ordination bestowed by sages; but my grandfather did not wish to serve in the Rabbinate, and engaged, rather, in commerce. The Rabbi of the city was in the habit of presenting his innovative thoughts to R' Simcha, and the latter would criticize, decompose and explain them. He also copied over the handwritten notes of the author of '*Derekh HaMelech*' and prepared it for its first printing (Lemberg, 5652-54 [1891-93]), and the questions that he had dealt with before the Rabbi are also recollected in the book, in the following manner: 'A wise man posed the following difficulty to me' (see the foreword prepared by the grandson, Rabbi Y. M. Cohen Rapoport for the book '*Derekh HaMelech*,' published in New York, 5726 [1966]). My grandfather ז"ל, exchanged innovative Torah interpretations with his childhood friend, the Rabbi, R' Shmuel Gerstenfeld[93] ז"ל, who was the Headmaster of the Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva[94] in New York. For many years, he exchanged correspondence with my father, R' Mordechai Aryeh Haberman זצ"ל; and in these letters, there were marvelous creations and innovations in Torah [study], in which R' Simcha showed his wondrous scholarship, the depth of his understanding, and his unerring knowledge. He was a man

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93 The Rabbi *Gaon* R' Shmuel Gerstenfeld זצ"ל (1873-1958) was born in Rawa-Ruska in Galicia. He studied in the Yeshiva at Klausenberg where he received his ordination from Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Glazner זצ"ל. He served as Rabbi in England for 12 years.

After coming to the United States in 1916, Rabbi Gerstenfeld served as Rabbi in *Bet HaKnesset Shomer Shabbat Nusach Ashkenaz* in Brooklyn. In 1917, he was appointed a *Rosh Yeshiva* [Headmaster] at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, where he taught for 40 years.

94 Today, The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) of Yeshiva University.

of considerably committed diligence, studying until the wee hours of the morning, and in our day, it is difficult to find someone like him in all of the halls of study of the Torah.



Page 91: R' Simcha Haberman הי"ד

My grandfather ז"ל was also expert in the fields of arithmetic and astronomy, and the Gaon, R' Yehoshua Pinchas Bombach זצ"ל from Uszpicyn[95], the author of the book of responsa, *'Ohel Yehoshua,'* saw the pamphlet of my grandfather ז"ל on innovations having to do with arithmetic in the *Shas*, that touch on matters of *Halakha*, and said: 'R' Simcha, if you publish this pamphlet – you will open the eyes of the world:' but my grandfather ז"ל, out of his great modesty, did not do himself a favor and had no desire to publicize his writings. A part of them remained and escaped, before they saw the light of day.

My grandfather ז"ל dedicated from his time and energy to matters of the community, in being a member of the municipal council (*'Radnik'*).

Love of the Jewish people was suffused in him; his house was generously open to all those seeking counsel and assistance. Many sought his assistance to speak for them to the municipal government, and he did not shrink from heeding their quandaries, troubles, and offer encouragement and a bolstering to flagging hands. He had the patience of a Hillel, and I never saw him lose his temper with a person.

R' Simcha was garlanded with an appearance of patriarchal gravitas, all of it speaking to reverence and nobility, acuity, with wisdom and a resonance of knowledge showing out from his eyes. On every Sabbath, he would instruct me, teaching me a *Tanakh* lesson, since this study had disappeared from the old *'Heder.'* I will never forget those lessons, in which he spread out before me, a broad skein of various commentaries, as one who deals in the literal text, but a probing individual who delves in the literal meaning of the sentence, and thereby enlightening me in its meaning. His pedagogic skills were revealed to me when he explained to me in a simple manner, many of the complex sections of the *'Siftei Kohen*[96]' in *'Khoshen Mishpat.'*

He was blessed with four respected children and grandchildren who were sages:

My father, the Rabbi and *Gaon* R' Mordechai Aryeh זצ"ל;
My uncle, R' Yaakov ז"ל, who was a ritual slaughterer and meat inspector, a wondrous scholar and a *Hasid*;
My uncle R' Alexander Sender ז"ל, a man of wise heart, dear in spirit, generous and known; the three of them resided in the Greater New York area, and have already departed this life.
May their memory be for a blessing!

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95 Likely Szpica in Poland.

96 An important commentator on the *Shulkhan Arukh*, of which *'Khoshen Mishpat'* is one major section.

And separated for a long life – my uncle R' Yitzhak נ"י, a man of enlightenment, God-fearing, who lives in Brooklyn.

My aunts, Rivka, Leah, and Tzisha ז"ל, as regards their families, they were all exterminated in the terrifying Holocaust in Poland, הי"ד. My grandfather R' Simcha too, together with my grandmother, Mrs. Chana ז"ל, were killed in *Sanctification of the Name*, in that terrifying year of 5703 [1943]. May their souls be bound up in the bond of life, for living in the World to Come!

The Rabbi, R' Mordechai Aryeh Haberman זצ"ל

By Rabbi Yehuda Rubinstein

The Rabbi, and Great *Gaon* Rabbi Mordechai Aryeh Haberman זצ"ל, who appeared in the Torah world in Galicia, occupies an important position among the great Rabbis who illuminated the Jewish people. He was a *Gaon* in Torah matters, and great in the doing of good deeds. He was a genuine *Hasid,* refined in his thinking, noble in spirit, and a man of substance, who elicited respect and admiration, praise, and affection in his personal appearance, and in his blessed endeavors in the field of Torah education and the strengthening of the faith.

Rabbi Mordechai was born in Rawa-Ruska, Eastern Galicia, in the year 5645 [1884] to his father, the Great *Hasid*, and Torah luminary, Rabbi Simcha Haberman ז"ל, who engaged in business, and whose roots are in that distinguished family, from the origins of the *Gaon* and author of *'Khakham Zvi*,' '*Shaar Ephraim*,' and '*LeMa'alah b'Kodesh*.' He was one of the dignitaries of the city, a wondrous scholar, and a public servant who worked intensely for the common good, and earned the trust of the heads of the community.

Rabbi Mordechai Aryeh was educated and raised on his father's lap, and while still a child, demonstrated exceptional intellectual skills. He stood out as one who was an intense student possessed of a phenomenal memory; it was sufficient for him to go through a number of pages of the *Gemara*, and he would immediately be able to repeat them by heart. His father went to extra lengths to enlighten him, and to direct his deeds, his studies and deportment, and he always sat and immersed himself in his studies.

When he grew, he studied in the Belz *Kloyz*, closely attached to his friends, and under the direction of his outstanding Rabbis, the *Gaonic* Rabbis, the *Rebbe* Dovberish Rapoport, the Rabbi of Rawa-Ruska, author of the renowned book '*Derekh HaMelech*,' and his uncle, Rabbi Nathan Hebenstreit[97], the *Bet-Din Senior* of the city of Przemyśl. He climbed the heights of the Torah quickly, plumbing the depths of every *Halakhic* issue, doing so with a quick and penetrating grasp. There Rabbis, and

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97 Also known as the Rabbi of Zamość, and mentioned in the Zamość Memorial Book, where the spelling is given as Hebenstreit.

also the *Gaon*, Rabbi Aryeh Leib Brody, the Rabbi of Lvov[98], awarded him the diadem of the Rabbinate at an early age, designating him as one of the luminaries of the land. They were generous in their praise and extolled him, saying he was worthy to be a teacher and a *Dayan* among Jewry, as one of the Rabbis of the time.

In the year 5669 [1908] he was nominated to be the Rabbi of Galigary[99]. However, this city was not counted among the bigger communities, but news did reach to the farther corners of the country, that it had a Rabbi of prominent pedigree and grace, and from then on and forever, great Rabbis who were outstanding Torah scholars, and great in deeds, served there with holiness, and whose reputation went forth before them. There, he broadened the skein of his blessed knowledge, and grew in his scholarly stature, and many saw in him a symbol and example of a brilliant Rabbi among the Jews, standing head and shoulders above all the people.

Being enveloped in love and commitment, Rabbi Haberman dedicated himself to study and teaching, and rather quickly, word went out that he was a pre-eminent sage, and beloved young men streamed to his residence to hear the words emanating from his mouth, and he began to communicate before them, his lessons that excelled in their shininess and clarity, in their profundity and thinking, and from that time on, the Yeshiva did not cease to exist in his home. He also came into an exchange of ideas, and in debate regarding *Halakha,* with the Rabbinic luminaries of his time. These items of responsa can be found in the book of responsa, '*Havatzelet HaSharon*,'part two (Bilgoraj 5691 [1930]) number 61, of the Gaon R' David Menachem Maness, the *Bet-Din Senior* of Tarnopol, and in the responsa, '*Tzur Yaakov*' (Bilgoraj 5692 [1931]) number 42, 43,74, from the *Gaon* R' Abraham HaLevi Horowitz, the Rabbi of Probizhna, and in the responsa '*Makhazeh Avraham*,' part two, number 45, section on אהע"ז [100] of the *Gaon* of Brody, and one extensive response of his was printed in the book '*Teshuvah k'Halakhah*' that was printed in Drohovyzh in the year 5672 [1911] (this book today is very valuable), in which are entered more than two hundred letters and responses from the leading *ADMo"Rim* and *Gaonim* of the period, from the entire expanse of Galicia, and from the *Gaonic* Rabbis of Poland and Hungary, in regards to the dispute that broke out between the study-houses of Galicia and Kossow-Vizhnitza[101], in Jerusalem, all of them arranged by the President of the *Kollel*, the Rabbi *Gaon*, R' Abraham Chaim David of Drohovyzh), and there, he reveals the full power of his Torah knowledge, and we see him as a formidably sharp-minded *Gaon*, wondrously fluent, and an individual possessed of a penetrating profundity, into the depths of the *Halakha* (see there, the pages 234-248).

From the time that his reputation as a great *Gaon* emerged, who knew how to make use of the regal

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98 Bernstein, Aryeh Leib (1708–1788), chief rabbi of Galicia, and merchant; born in Brody. In 1776 he was appointed chief rabbi (*Oberlandesrabbiner*) of Galicia. At his new place of residence in Lvov (Lemberg), Bernstein took over control of the religious functionaries and the administration of taxes in the communities under his jurisdiction.

99 This appears to be a Yiddish variation of the name Holohory, a Ukrainian *shtetl*, whose Polish name was Go³ogóry.

100 The acronym for '*Evven HaEzer*,' being an important scholastic commentary on the Jewish faith.

101 Called Vyzhnytsia in Ukrainian

nature of the Torah, many students and sages turned to him with *Halakhic* questions and various matters of learning, and he responded to every knock on the doors of the Torah, and in this way, he began to obtain a revered position as one of the luminaries from the young generation that continues with the resplendent tradition of those responders, that the country of Galicia was famous for, and from whom it garnered such praise.

During the First World War, when the Russian troops invaded the cities of Eastern Galicia, with the speed of electricity, Rabbi Haberman was compelled to immediately flee with his family and abandon his house. After wanderings and moving about, he reached the capital city of Vienna. Vienna, at that time was a City and Mother in Israel, a city replete with wise men, writers, Gaonim and scholars, and hordes of refugee Jews from Galicia, and that alien land from which they fled, in the face of fear of Russian conscription, and set up their homes there.

Upon his arrival in Vienna, he immediately endeared himself to the Rabbis and scholars, and to anyone with whom he came in contact, and Jews from all walks of life and persuasions held his wonderful personality in high regard, and his home became an outstanding Torah center, and many marched to the threshold of his house to hear God's word from him, and his sayings that were full of substance and made a great impression.

Several of the *ADMo"Rim* with whom he visited in Vienna – held him in high regard. They were struck with wonder by the justness of his directions, and the honesty of his way, his thought processes, and his directness, his acuity in Torah matters, and his conduct in matters of *Hasidism*.

When the Vienna *Bet-Din* was established (The *Kultus Gemeinde*), under the presidency of the great *Gaon* Rabbi Joseph, the *Bet-Din* Senior, Rabbi Haberman was nominated as a *Dayan*, and Director of Justice in the Rabbinical *Bet-Din*, thereby taking a place that was appropriate considering his excellent faculties.

After Hitler ימ"ש rose to power, and after the invasion of the Nazis into Austria, with the help of a childhood friend – the Rabbi *Gaon* Rabbi Shmuel Gerstenfeld, the Headmaster of the Yeshiva Isaac Elchanan – Rabbi Haberman succeeded in fleeing to America, coming to the tranquility in that land, to settle himself, and obtain a position for himself that was appropriate to him. When he came here, he was received in every place with great respect. He was immediately recognized as a Torah luminary, and possessed of a personality having many virtues. Every day, the ranks of those who recognized him, and admired him, grew, because his personality, his way of life, and he interaction with those around him aroused wonder.

His patriarchal appearance endowed him with distinction and afforded him respect. He had a distinguished Rabbinical appearance that exuded Torah and *Hasidism*. His eyes gazed out with honesty and being straightforward, showing self-confidence, truth and justice, being honest and full of understanding. He had a mouth that dripped with pearls [of wisdom], skilled in memory and with the essence of the story [he was telling]. It was a spiritual experience to hear him tell stories about the luminaries of Jewry and the *Tzaddikim* of the generation, and it was recognized that he had

lived in those times. His standing in his congregation, and in his coterie of *Hasidim* and admirers, was elevated.

In Brooklyn, a number of congregations, and synagogues of prominent standing, offered him the opportunity to be their Rabbi and community leader. However, he chose to be the Rabbi of the congregation '*Re'im Ahuvim*,' and '*Makhzikei HaDa'as*,' in the Jewish section of Brownsville, because this becoming and *Hasidic* congregation was dear to him, because it was comprised of the 'flour and fat' of the Haredi Jews, in whose midst there were scholars, *Hasidism* and men of action, and the sound of the Torah could be heard day and night.

He served his congregation faithfully and with commitment until his last day, when he knelt and fell, because his pure heart did not retain the strength to withstand the suffering from all the bad things and the exhaustion that he found within himself, befalling his family and the house of his father, and he expired in purity on the Eve of *Rosh Khodesh* Sivan of the year 5704 [1945].

Here are the lines etched into his gravestone [in a Hebrew acrostic].

The Crown of the Torah

The *Tzaddik* Mordechai, taught and served as a Rabbi for forty years,
A Rabbi and Director of :Learning in the city of Galigary and the city of Vienna.
He wrote Torah homilies and wondrous innovations in a book,
Leaving important writings after himself in sayings of beauty.
His book '*Mar'eh HaKhodesh*' appeared about the sanctity of the month.
A lion among his companions, and a Torah noble has passed and been gathered unto his people,
Profuse and great is the loss to his wife and sons, and all who knew him,
Let all the House of Israel weep that the crown of a Torah noble has fallen. A precious man like pure flour, and a pure soul. His *Sacred Reverence*, the brilliant Rabbi *Gaon,* a light unto Israel and how holy is our Master And Rabbi Mordechai Aryeh son of R' Simcha זצלה"ה The *Bet-Din Senior* of Galigary, and a friend to the *Sacred Reverence* in Vienna.

The Rabbi of the '*Re'im Ahuvim*' synagogue, Rabbi of the '*Makhzikei HaDa'as*' synagogue Passed away on the Eve of *Rosh Khodesh* Sivan of the year 5704 [1945].

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

His sudden demise took aback all who knew him, who treasured him, friends and close associates, knowing the extent of the loss they had sustained, and in the knowledge that a budding tree had been cut down among them that was unique.

When this terrible news of his passing had spread, an air of mourning and ennui enveloped Jewish Brownsville, and hundreds of his *Hasidim*, and those who revered him, with broken hearts, escorted their beloved and light of their lives, to his final rest.

Prominent Rabbis and Torah luminaries eulogized him, and gave him credit for dedicating his entire life to Torah and good deeds, and one of those giving a eulogy burst into tears, saying that Brownsville had been orphaned of a *Gaon* and a mighty Torah scholar.

After his death, his marvelous book, '*Mar'eh HaKhodesh*' was published, with the support of the '*Re'im Ahuvim*' synagogue, and the '*Makhzikei HaDa'as*' synagogue, which dealt with the protocols for the blessing of the month, according to the *Ramba"m*, where as is known, even the greatest of the commentators, and in their appended commentary in the margins of the main text, were undecided about these obscure points of *Halakha* in such customs, and abbreviated their assessments in places where they should have been more expansive.


מראה החודש

Page 093: Frontispiece of R' Haberman's Book, 'Mar'eh HaHodesh.'

And among these uniquely endowed ones, came Rabbi Haberman ז"ל, and assumed on himself the burden of being faithful to these customs. He delved into the minute details of the *Halakha*, like the captain of a ship tried in getting control over stormy waves of the sea of the Talmud, and knew how to find the byways to the **Mishnas** that stormed in the matters of blessing the month, that are complex, full of matters having to do with stars and constellations, the precession of stars, in which only very few tread upon. His mastery was strong and firm in the entire Talmudic and Halakhic literature dealing with this subject, and all of its ramifications. His understanding was, sharp and energetic, and fortunate is he who has succeeded in making his mark for eternity by defining himself in this way, and expand these points of *Halakha* to their fullest extent.

Apart from his book, '*Mar'eh HaKhodesh*' he left behind writings that still await publication: there are innovative thoughts about the Tractate '*Zevakhim*,:' Innovations in issues of divorce; innovations in a variety of customs; a pamphlet called '*Siddur Gittin*,' for military men going out to war; innovations in the law of giving portions and tithes, and governing the seventh [sic: *shmita*] year, in this time; responsa; sermons.

May his memory be for a blessing and be blessed.

Portraits of Belz Hasidim in Rawa

By Israel Klappholz
(Excerpts from His Book)

There was no lack of prominent personalities in Belz: outstanding scholars, and noteworthy *Hasidim*, people of action, and those of good deeds, dear Jewish people that stood out in all the areas. Among the tens of thousands of *Hasidim*, from the hundreds of cities and towns, who gathered themselves in the umbra of the *ADMo"Rim* of Belz – many were of an elevated sort, but the city of Rawa distinguished itself in a unique fashion in the greatness of the *Hasidim* that it broth forth from within itself. These were considered as the supporting pillars of Belz Hasidism, its finest, in which one could indeed take pride.

This was unique 'coterie,' united and coherent, that adhered with a boundless faith in the *ADMo"Rs* of Belz. There were many in this coterie, and I will describe the special ones among them.

Most of the members of this 'coterie' did not engage in business, because in Belz, they were the ones who 'sat' over the Torah, and the service of the Lord. Their *Women of Valor* engaged in commerce, and also saw fruits from their labor, in the worthiness achieved by their husbands in the service of the Lord. There were those in the coterie who knew poverty and want, but they did not dedicate much attention to this, because they took satisfaction from the barest minimum of requirements, and forsook any concern regarding secular matters; all of them belonged to someone more elevated, being able to raise themselves above the secular concerns that surrounded them.

With the end of the First World War, a compelling change took place in the life of Jewish youth. Many of the young people took after the new political movements, and sundered all connection to their past. Few remained faithful to a life of Torah. With the return of the Master, R'Y"D זצ"ל from his exile in Hungary, a coteries of young *Hasidim* coalesced anew in the homes of the *Hasidim* in Belz, coteries of young *Hasidim*, truly dear young boys, whose Torah study, and faith, compelled them to work in the ranks of *Hasidism*. Their numbers continued to grow from year to year. This was the fruit of the labor of the outstanding *Hasidim* that resided in the city of Rawa.

R' Yehoshua Rawer

R' Yehoshua Fakh was one of a 'triple thread' of great *Hasidim* in Belz, whose residence was in Rawa-Ruska. He, R' Yeshayahu Rawer, and R' Yoss'li Jarczwer always went attached to one another, and the elements of a very intimate camaraderie reigned between them always. They were the 'officers' in the Belz courtyard, and the trusted advisers to the *Rebbe*; nothing large or small was ever done without taking their counsel. R' Yehoshua was the eldest among them in this coterie. While still in his youth, he sheltered himself under the aegis of the *Sacred Reverence*, the

R'Y[102] זצ"ל. From the earliest days of his youth, he was different from the others, rising above the peers in his age group in knowledge of Torah and the doing of [good] deeds, and after the Master Out Teacher the R' Y was taken to the *Yeshiva on High*. He then sheltered himself in the aegis of the *Sacred Reverence* the Master, Our Teacher R' Y"D[103] זצ"ל, and from that time on, he was thought of as one of the lions of Belz. He continued this trajectory also under the Master Our Teacher R' A[104] זצ"ל.

R' Yehoshua possessed a wondrous personality. He partook sparingly of food and drink, and little in conversation, scrawny, to the point of being only skin and bones, and predominantly seeking solitude. With all this, his disposition was always a good one, taking great care in being dressed in an orderly fashion, and clean to the point of inspiring wonder, carrying himself and speaking genially, exuding love to everyone, and being well-received by all. His behavior aroused feelings of respect, and bore witness to his noble inner self. He never once took a step in order to ingratiate himself or publicize himself; nevertheless, his reputation went before him, and his renowned as a wondrous *Hasid* reached all of the *Hasidim* of Belz. He stood above the people, as if hovering in worlds on high, and despite this, he knew how to get along with all people, great and small. His manner was a pleasant one, and his utterances were thoughtful, rehearsed and insightful. His various sharp and sparkling sayings were transformed into common bywords, and could be heard on the lips of everyone. May his memory be for a blessing.

R' Yeshayahu Rawer

R' Yeshayahu Freger, the son-in-law of R' Yekl'eh Halberthal of Rawa, traveled, while still a youth, to the *Sacred Reverence* the Master Our Teacher R' Y זצ"ל. He was counted there among the outstanding of the young men. The *Hasidim*, and the activists in Belz, began to relate to him with open affection. They took pride in him, and in his manner, and saw in him a true *Hasid*, that earns that designation. He had the appearance that aroused a sense of reverence, in his genial manner, and in his orderly and clean appearance, with not a stain to be seen on his clothing, and just like his appearance, his deeds were also orderly and arranged. His conversation and understanding came out of a foundation of knowledge. He was not seduced into impulsive steps, or quick action. He did not like the noise and the tumult of the public arena. He walked in modesty in pursuing every goal, knowing how to get along with people, knowing how to convey criticism without raising his voice, and to stand guard over *Hasidism* without recourse to inappropriate means. He knew how to mediate between disputing parties without leaving any sense of anger with one of the sides. He knew how to earn respect without pursuing it.

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102 The Second *Rebbe* of Belz :Yehoshua Rokeach of Belz (1825–1894) – youngest son of the *Sar Shalom*. *Rebbe* from 1855 to 1894.

103 The Third *Rebbe* of Belz : Issachar Dov Rokeach (1854–1926) – son of Yehoshua Rokeach. *Rebbe* from 1894 to 1926.

104 The Fourth *Rebbe* of Belz: Aharon Rokeach (1877–1957), also known as *Reb Arele* and as the *Kedushat Aharon* – eldest son of Issachar Dov Rokeach. *Rebbe* from 1926 to 1957.

R' Yeshayahu dedicated his entire life to Torah and *Hasidism*. He conducted himself with generosity and sanctity, within an effort to conceal what he was doing from the eyes of beholders. The *Hasidic balebatim* of Belz also uttered his name respectfully. We too, recollect his name in trepidation, and out of awe and respect.

R' Joseph Jarczwer



Page 95: R' Yoss'li Jarczwer הי"ד *at the side of the ADMo"R of Belz* זצק"ל

R' Yoss'li was the youngest of the three 'beloveds and friends,' being endowed with many good traits. He was gifted with a sweet voice, and was an outstanding conductor of services. His prayer had a pleasant sweetness to it, full of savor and grace; even during the regular week, when he would lead services in front of the Ark, and would pray the *Maariv* service, his prayer was replete with sweetness. To this day, when the *Hasidim* of Belz gather together, they recall the pleasant nature of his praying.

And he was highly literate, possessed of a very polished style, and his penmanship was wondrously beautiful. He was the scribe who wrote the 'Torah scrolls' when he was in Belz. He was fluent in the language of the country, and his writing in the Polish language was both orderly and beautiful. He was possessed of good deeds and was giving. From the beginning, he comported himself in *Hasidic* ways, engaging in modest consumption, and there were few like him.

He was a brilliant scholar. The pleasing structure of his face, and the radiance of his face arouse reverent respect, and gave testimony that this was a man who stood from his shoulders and up, above the people. His heartfelt approach created an air about him that drew people to him, who sought ways to be close to him, to tarry in his ambit, and to take part in his company; R' Yoss'li – received everyone in a gracious manner, willingly, and with affection. And just as his soul was clean and pure – so was his dress clean [as well].

R' Yoss'li occupied a central position in the life of the *Hasidim*; his enchanting personality and his manner, which was full of grace and care, earned him an especially honored place among the residents who were considered to be luminaries. His eyes, which emanated with affection, and insight, and his heartfelt manner full of nobility – created bands of people around him. The breadth of his heart, his honesty and insight, earned him a place in the first rank of the great Belz *Hasidim*, as he was justifiably thought of as a man who was fully qualified; he never embarrassed anyone, and never said anything of an accusatory nature to a person, he knew how to express what was on his heart in a very genteel manner, and his criticism was always accepted in the heart, and never aroused any angry reaction.

Because of his extensive knowledge in all aspects of Judaism, and his involvement in all it s outstanding issues, he was compelled to dedicate much of his time to public affairs. The activists of Galicia, and their leaders could not ignore his counsel and support, and in '*Makhzikei HaDa'as*,' R' Yoss'li was counted among the great men.

His quiet and knowledgeable voice was always listened to with great attention. He never crossed over out of the bounds of his area. It was easy to discern, how he controls himself and what comes out of his mouth, and he never said: 'Accept my opinion!' This sensitive and gentle man knew how to keep guard over his feelings and inner heart – without giving them license to burst into the outside, without allowing them to cloud the clarity of his thinking.

I was privileged to be with him at a gathering of Rabbis in Warsaw, and it was a pleasure to see how he behaved among these Rabbis, showing an understanding for ow to create a bridge for compromise, finding a common language together with the luminaries of Lithuania and its activists, and with the leaders of the '*Agudat Israel.*'

He arrived days earlier than the Master זצ"ל arrived, in order to prepare everything that was needed for the Master and the entire Sacred Group that accompanied the Master: He was the internal executive, the external executive, and also the executive in charge of leading battle, if it was necessary to do so. He also was the bridge between the *Sacred Reverence*, the Master MaHaR'A זצ"ל, and the other luminaries that were at the gathering, a man of unusually forceful energy, a man of extraordinarily great skill, constantly full of ideas and agendas; but he did not confine himself only to the ambit of thought and will, but rather always was acting and enabling and knowing how to thoughtfully handle constructively, all matters that were under dispute. In every place, where there was a need to extinguish a fire, or to adjudicate a dispute – he appeared, easing and compromising, appeasing and unifying, arranging and nullifying quarrels and friction that were not lacking, and especially to assure that there be a single unified group and there be peace in the camp, which was his single goal.

His words were hear in all places, because he knew how to find just the right word, and the appropriate sentence. This is because R' Yoss'li was gifted with a unique sense of divine the nature of a person with a single glance. It was in this fashion that he succeeded where others did not, and for this reason, many sought his advice and help.

There was not a community issue that impinged on matters of religion that R' Yoss'li did not entertain; he communicated the words of the Master ז"ל, and expressed his position, that was always substantive, well thought out, and profound. Every deed of the Master was considered by him to be equivalent to *Halakha*, from which one was not to depart either to the left or the right.

As one of the best among the young people of the *Bet HaMedrash* of his *Sacred Reverence*, the Master MaHaR'Y'D זצ"ל, he served the Master MaHaR'Y'D and the Master MaHaR'A as an escort to all the places to which they traveled: to gatherings and health spas.

When the eyesight of the MaHaR'Y'D grew weak, and it was no longer in his capacity to give lessons because of weak eyesight, R' Yoss'li taught in front of the Master out of the *Gemara*, and the Master, by heart taught him, and created many Torah innovations.

When his sacred eminence the Master was in Krakow, the *Tzaddik*, Rabbi Moshe of Boiany asked the Master about R' Yoss'li: 'Who is he?' – and the Master said: 'My lord and father זצ"ל said of him, that he had a portion in his Torah.' Afterwards, beside the Master MaHaR'A – he was one of the greats of *Hasidism*, and was privileged to receive a great deal of praise from all who came to Belz. He was one of the lions of the Belz coterie.

R' Israel Rawer

While still a youth, he was a dedicated student, who possessed a capacity to quickly grasp ideas, and deal in profundities, and his name went before him as being exceptionally gifted intellectually. He was composed, and by nature in harmony with his surroundings; tranquility and gentility were imprinted on his spare and noble face. In his youth, he studied considerably in Belz, in the coterie with the *Sacred Reverence* the Master, MaHaR'A זצ"ל, and after a number of years passed, the Master said to him: 'One who rules on matters of *Halakha* in the ambit of the residence of R' Israel is equivalent to a teacher of *Halakha* before his *Rebbe*.' And in light of his wondrous diligence in study, that accompanied his outstanding intellectual skills, R' Israel rose, and was elevated in the ranks of the Torah, and his reputation went out in a praiseworthy fashion to the entire surrounding area.

Even after his marriage to Esther Miriam, the daughter of R' Yehuda Jonah, the Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector in Rawa, who had arranged the marriage with the Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector, R' Hirsch'eleh Schwert, the father of R' Israel, he continued his studies, and dedicated himself especially to the laws of what is forbidden and what is permitted, matrimony, and commercial transactions – to the point that he became a master capable of giving direction. It was said of him, that he knew the texts of '*Yoreh Deyah*,' with '*Pri Megadim*' by heart. The city of Rawa was glad to appoint its outstanding scion as a *Dayan* and Master to give direction, in its community.

His expertise manifested itself especially in giving direction on the Halakha having to do with practical matters; accordingly every complicated issue that arose in the city and its surroundings – was clarified and made clear on the table of R' Israel.

By being a formidable scholar, and known for his insight and depth, he was turned to – in addition to ordinary 'Torah laws'– in matters requiring mediation in complex commercial matters. And thereby, he excelled as a select and great mediator; in his understanding, and in the skill of his analysis, he was able to plumb the depths of the complaints of the sides, drawing up the truth, and exposing those who spoke lies. The litigating parties would appear before him out of a sense of respect for his honesty, and the extent of his knowledge that was unbiased, and the quality of the rulings handed down by him.

His broad fluency in the books of the '*Poskim*,' the *Rishonim*, *Akharonim*, his harmony with those around him, his manner in which he conducted himself in worldly matters, and especially his substantial insight – these were the tool with which he was able to unravel every complexity in financial jurisprudence, and he straightened out the conflicts between one person and his friend in community affairs.

Even community disputes, from all reaches of the country, were brought to him; those particularly at a distance – sought his advice and counsel. All the sides were certain, that he did not put on a false front, being by nature a man of clear understanding and possessing an analytical mind – intolerant of obfuscation caused by lack of clarity, hearing baseless yes-and-no rulings argued concurrently, but rather always issued a decision that was structured, a clear conclusion, sharp and to the point in the eyes of all those who turned to him in matters of faith and law.

Because of his wondrous honesty, he earned a good name that went before him throughout the breadth of the country.

R' Yaakov Berisz Hebenstreit

R' Yaakov Berisz was a wondrous personality, great in Torah scholarship and in deeds, of delicate and noble spirit, the very incarnation of what is good and lofty in *Hasidism*. He was never influenced by wealth, but his face always radiated good fortune and inner happiness, and he impressed that joy upon all those around him. His relationship to every person was full of politeness and a good heart. When people were preoccupied with worry and feeling pressure – he would offer them encouragement and comfort, and even attempted to lighten their suffering and the oppression of their siege of concern.

R' Yaakov served as the leader of services for many years, leading either the '*Shacharit*' or '*Starting*' prayers, during the High Holy Days in Belz. His sweet voice, that would cause hearts to tremble, and his soulful outpouring like a child confessing sins before his father – are recalled by many who heard him.

He considered himself to be the leader of services for all of *Hasidim*. While still in his youth, he was upbraided by the *Sacred Eminence*, the Master MaHaR'Y'D for the careless way he dressed. 'Who knows how many mothers you discourage from sending their children to the *Talmud Torah*, to educate them in *Hasidism* because of the careless way that you dress?' – he said to him. From that time on, R' Yaakov took care to assure that he would not be guilty of causing *Hasidism* to, God forbid, have a bad reputation on his account.

He had a great competence when it came to the stories about *Hasidism*. He would imbue these stories with a special grace, when he shed a light on them that came from the hidden inner reaches of his soul.

He had an impressive pedigree, being the grandson of the '*Boruch Ta'am*,' זי"ל.

Beloved by all, he would immerse himself in the foot dust of everyone, because his modesty was a natural one, having no trace of haughtiness.

R' Yaakov was privileged to die in his sickbed in Rawa. When the news reached the *Sacred Eminence* MaHaR'A זצ"ל, he eulogized him with warm words, among which were: 'R' Yaakov thought of himself to be no more that dust and ashes.'

R' Raphael Rawer

R' Raphael Schreiber, the son of the Rawa *Hasid* R' Yek'leh Getzel's was a man of short stature, a man whose eyes manifested insight, and taciturn by nature. He loved the company of the 'coterie,' but also being alone, and because of this, he found solitude within the 'coterie.' It was said of him that he was a formidable scholar, but as to the contemplations of his inner heart, those he kept secret. He was a Hasid in all 248 of his body parts, and a fanatical *Hasid* in all of its rigor. He would be more strict with himself, and loathed taking even permissible liberties. *Hasidim* respected his virtues, but were opposed to his excessive severity. Once, the *Sacred Eminence*, the Master MaHaR'Y'D זצ"ל said to him: 'In the tractate of '*Sukkah*,' the *Gemara* says that *kufra* (the pointed parts of the palm tree that can stick you) are inappropriate to be used for a *lulav*, as it is said: 'It's ways are the ways of pleasure,' and therefore, a *lulav* that can possibly stick you is unfit to be included among the four species [of the holiday], since the people and *Hasidim* are forbidden to suffer being stuck.' From that time on, R' Raphael became transformed into a different person, and became more tolerant of those around him. Justifiably, he was considered to be a loyal pillar in the House of Belz.

Peyshi Rawer

After having given portraits of the Rabbis and *Hasidim*, I will attempt to portray the image of a young man, a scholar and *Hasid*. His name was Pesach (Schwert), and from a surfeit of affection, he was called Peyshi.

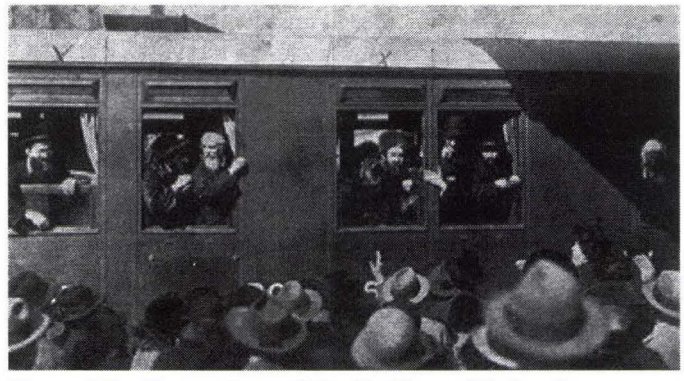
While still in his youth, it was recognized that a wondrous vessel was in the process of being created. Unlike many of the bright youngsters, during his youth he was not a rascal, but rather he stood out in the eyes of all who saw him in two ways: in his unusual dedication and in the force of his ability to delve into the depths of every question and issue.

The years of his youth were no bed of roses. For his entire life, he lived in sorrow and need, but this did not weaken his focus on Torah study. In the Galicia and Belz of that time the sharp minds were a widespread phenomenon – but Peyshi, as someone intellectually gifted, was truly an exception. Outstanding scholars would come from many cities to study in Belz, but Peyshi exceeded many of the recognized great Torah scholars. There was no one who could pave the way before him in order to advance his learning; he did not study at the famous Yeshivas, [and did not in this way acquire] the good name of a young man possessed of far-reaching intelligence. In Belz, it was not customary to seek publicity. He had unusual virtues, in being able to reach the highest peaks of scholarship.

While still in his youth, he was able to quote by heart from several tractates [of the Talmud]. Peyshi continued to mature. Each and every day, his level of scholarship continues to grow and increase along with him. He sits all day and studies. Everyone sees in him a rising star, in the heavens of Torah scholarship. He excelled not only in his studies abut also in the nature of his deeds; he was infused with faith and confidence; he was devoted to the Master and to *Hasidism*; He was constantly suffused with joy, and emanated a spirit of joy to all of his surroundings. A friendly smile always

hovered about his lips, a smile that conveyed a warm and open heart. He was fortified by a fastidiousness and a recognition of his own worth, and with that, he loved spending time in groups, and especially in conversation that was pleasing to scholars.

Without a teacher and someone provide guidance in showing him both a method and direction in study, he engaged sedulously in Torah study – and in hindsight, he actually had many teachers and those who guided him. From all ends of the country, great Rabbis and scholarly young men came to Belz. And when a Torah luminary appeared, Peyshi would run to him, to immediately engage him in Torah discourse, and he would lay out in front of him, his innovative thinking, and brought him every item that posed him a difficulty. It was in this way that he acquired many ideas, and learned a great deal from these *Gaonim*. It was in this way that he obtained a recognition of the method of study of the greatest among the Rabbis, both what was unique to them, and what was unifying among them, and he was influenced by them all. He elicited wonder from them regarding his knowledge and also his acuity. [Also] his understanding of a fact that was within a fact, weighing ideas, and what appealed to common sense, a straightforward explanation, and occasionally the use of casuistry to extract something novel – these served him as a foundation and the core of his *Halakhic* give-and-take.



Page 97: Reception of the Rebbe *of Belz, the MaHaR'A* זצק"ל, *at the city train station.*

Young men, scholars who came from far distances to Belz, all would come to grab a bit of a discussion with Peyshi regarding matters of Torah; he provided insight to an issue with many regarding a variety of issues, and in every subject, he would display his vibrancy, his depth and through knowledge. It was for this reason that many would come marching to Peyshi's door and attempted to insert themselves to become one of his students.

He was a God-fearing young man, and straightforward in all he did. He was a scholar of refined soul. He was one of the splendid personalities of the Belz *Hasidim*. He was exterminated with other martyrs of purity.

The 'Old Bet HaMedrash' and The 'Old Kloyz'

By A. M. Ringel ז"ל

The adjective 'Old' – as applied to the *Bet HaMedrash* and the *Kloyz* came after the building of the '*Zamd Bet HaMedrash*,' and the '*Tin Kloyz*' – which stood adjacent to, and abutting each other. Over the course of hundreds of years, these were the spiritual centers of the city, and it was in them that the way of life was given form, as a model of the way of life of Galician Jewry during the 18th and 19th centuries. Their benches were occupied by Torah luminaries that Rawa was noted for. Its packed bookcases that covered the walls of the *Bet HaMedrash* - that stood on its right side as if orphaned – were witnesses to the fact that many were the students who came and looked into them day and night. The luminaries of *Hasidism* appeared inside the walls of the *Bet HaMedrash* and the *Kloyz*, gathering a following around them, and engaged the hearts of those who heard them with their personalities and their offerings of Torah, the lore of *Hasidism*. It was from these 'houses' that the ardent warriors emerged, against every attempt to institute change. Even not giving a stitch, in the way of life they had inherited from their fathers, and assuming the burden on themselves, to pass this legacy on to the sons that would come after them, for generation after generation.

Many of the pupils of the '*Khozeh*' of Lublin invested the better part of their energies to transmit their lore to *Hasidim* and pass on their influence, in Rawa, and because of this, their visits there were frequent. However, in the course of time, the influence of Belz grew more strong, and became the deciding factor. *Hasidim* and *Hasidism* became identified with Belz. It therefore became superfluous to attach the name '*Belz Kloyz*' to the '*Old Kloyz*,' as they did in other places.

An excerpt from an authentic story of R' Yehoshua ben R' Sholom זצ"ל, the progenitor of the Belz dynasty – underscores the role of the 'houses' previously mentioned in the establishment of Belz *Hasidism*.

'In the winter of 5587 [1826], the Holy Rabbi R' Naphtali Tzvi of Ropczyce זי"ע was among the guests for the Sabbath in Rawa[105], and the *Master Father* sent his sons to the Sacred Congregation of Rawa. R' Naphtali said to them: 'I thought that also your father would come to me, because I truly longed to meet with him face-to-face, and if he were to come, I would remain in Rawa till the next Sabbath. The *Father* said: 'His will is his dignity.' And he will travel from Belz on Tuesday, and everywhere they passed through, *Hasidim* gathered about him, and traveled with him, and he arrived in Rawa on Friday, the eve of the Sabbath, bringing three hundred people with him. That evening, in the *Bet HaMedrash*, the *Rebbe* of Ropczyce honored the *Father* with leading the *Mincha* service. After *Mincha* prayers, the *Rebbe* of Ropczyce said to him, '*Rebbe* of Belz, take your people with you, and go to pray at the nearby *Kloyz*.' The *Master Father* pretended not to hear, and remained in

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[105] Rabbi Naphtali of Ropczyce (1760 - 1827)

the Bet HaMedrash, and the *Rebbe* of Ropczyce led the service for *Kabbalat Shabbat*, as was his custom to do. And the *Father* said to me: 'My dear son, let me reveal to you why it is that the *Rebbe* of Ropczyce did not want me to remain in the *Bet HaMedrash* while he was praying, because it is his custom to recite the '*Kaddish*' prayer silently to himself – despite the fact that it is the *Kaddish* of the orphan – after the '*Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabbat*', and this *Kaddish* is a variant of the *Kaddish* to be recited by the Messiah King who is destined to come after the Lord be Blessed will give a word of *Halakha*, as it says in the *Yalkut, Yeshayahu* page 79. And it is because of this, that he wanted to keep me from hearing him, but the strength of my desire was indeed to hear him. And thanks be to the Lord on High, that I received him, and I became aware of many wondrous things from him.' And on Sunday, when the *Father* went to the *Tzaddik* of Ropczyce to receive his departure blessing, he put his holy hands on the shoulders of the *Father* and said to him: 'Rabbi of Belz, I was at the *Tzaddik* of Opatów before he passed away, and he communicated some very beautiful things to me that he had received from his teachers.' And he then took him into a separate room, and revealed to the *Father* great and esoteric things. And this took place in the winter of 5587, and on 11 Iyyar[106], the *Holy Ark* was placed in repose, and the *Rebbe* of Ropczyce was invited to enter the *Yeshiva on High*.'

In the story, Rawa was established as the point of ordination, as if the mantle was passed from the *Tzaddik* of Ropczyce in the evening of his days, to be placed on the shoulders of his good friend, beginning the establishment of the foundation of his own coterie. In the story there are also allusions of the extension of influence, in the attainment of influence over the community of the *Hasidim*.

In the course of the years, the skein unraveled. The concepts of 'Love of Zion,' and of national Zionism, that had penetrated the city, also had an influence on many who prayed in the Bet HaMedrash. The Hasidim lost their influence and their place, and the Kloyz was transformed into a place of 'rear guard' action, from which the war of defense was conducted without the previous intensity, until the last dark days.

In our day, the *Bet HaMedrash* was a mainstay and fortress of the 'Lovers of Zion' and the Zionists. Many of the worshipers there took an active and central part in the Zionist movements that were in the city. The worshipers at the *Bet HaMedrash* and the *Kloyz* became partisan, this one going one way, and that one to another, from an idealistic standpoint. The only thing that united them was the connecting '*polisz*' and R' Henokh Holanger with the little peas, dumplings and his bottle of '*L'Chaim*.'

R' Shlomo Schrenzel. When R' Yankl'eh of Lezhensk, the *Dayan* and *Director of the Faith* in Rawa passed away, The Rabbi, R' Shlomo Schrenzel was taken in to replace him, who had previously been the *Dayan* in Holyszyc. R' Shlomo had a distinguished pedigree, being the son of the *Gaon*, who was the author of '*Sefer Yehoshua*,' grandson of the *Gaon* R' Chaim, the *Bet-Din Senior* that was the brother of the *Gaon* who was the author of '*Menukhat Khanokh*,' from Tarnopol. He was and outstanding scholar and orator, and added to this – an ardent Lover of Zion. He was

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106 May 8, 1827

influenced by the thinking of religious Zionists, and he seasoned much of his sermons with many of their ideas. His son as well, R' Yaakov – who died while still a youth – and his daughters, were all committed to the Zionist ideal. R' Shlomo designated the '*Old Bet HaMedrash*' as his place of worship, because it was possible to better 'broadcast' his sermons from its *Bima*, that were replete with Zionist ideas.

R' Mikhl'eh Meiseles was one of the regular worshipers in the *Bet Hamedrash*, and one of its distinguished members. He was a scholar, and the core of his expertise lay in *Agadah*, but he also had a considerable breadth in explication. He was an 'eccentric' Jew, a '*Mitnaged,*' – but not in its accepted sense: that is, to be opposed to *Hasidism* – but rather 'in opposition' to every movement or group that does not engage in Torah study. 'The Study of the Torah – Come Before All Else,' he would enunciate loudly in his conversations: If one wished to learn, it is necessary to be opposed to all the groups, whose entire activity involves the vanities of this world. And as he lectured, so did he behave: he did not depart one iota from his policy, and he gave his lessons in the *Bet HaMedrash*, and his lectures in the '*Little Synagogue*,' to anyone who was willing to lend an ear.

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R' Yitzhak Zinger, the patriarch of a well-branched family in the city, was the only one in the city in the period before the First World War, who engaged in the publication of books. He put together pamphlets, whose content had a wide appeal to the masses, and itinerant peddlers distributed them throughout the breadth of Galicia. He also put together the works of a few [other] authors. Regarding his compilation, '*Zaharei Khama*,' which deals with the laws and customs of blessing the sun, he received the concurrences of Torah luminaries in Galicia for his thorough expertise in this subject – one that few delved into.

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With the end of the First World War, and the forgetting of the battles between the Poles and Ukrainians, the Jews of the city were taken aback, returning after 4 years from the battlefields – by the educational condition of their small sons. The institution of the '*Heder*' had been disrupted. The good teachers had died, and others did not come to take their place, and the children were thrown into the chaotic and undisciplined street. The burned out houses, a memorializing scar of the Cossacks, served as nests of play for the youths, and the detritus was transformed into 'arms' in the battles that they waged between themselves, and the '*shkotzim*.' The parents organized themselves, and founded a cooperative 'Talmud Torah' in the '*Eizerneh Kloyz*,' in which those that gave lessons were the '*balebatim*,' – without pay. Among the founders that remain in my memory were R' Hirsch Leib Bogan and R' Mordechai Frankel, that always distinguished themselves in the area of Torah education.


ספר

זהרי חמה

מלל כל הדינים ומנהגי קידוש החמה המיוחד להיות
אירה בזום ד' ה' ימים לחדש ניסן תרנ"ז הנע"ל.
והוא נחוץ מאד לכל איש ישראל לדעת הנעשה אשר
יעשה בעת יתוענדו ה' בכוונה הרבה והנשגבה הזאת
הבאה בכ"ח לביה"ע שנים.

עם נוסח

ברכת החמה ומזמורים בסדור מהגאון הקדוש
מוהר"א ז"ל, ומהגאון הקדוש מוהרי"ם בעל חתם סופר
וכהגאון סריה חיים בהן רפאפורט וצ"ל.

עם פרישת מקומות התקדש בשם דרבי חיים וקול שלוי שערי בינה
פרשת מקומות דינים המהודשים המצויים בפרוזה ראשונים ואחרונים עם
כמה תקונים ענינות אשר אספתי וקבצתי אני הצעיר יצחק צינגער
בן האאריר מוה' נחמן צבי הירש זללה"ה מעיר ראשוא רוסקא.

עבהקלם אלף דינים אינר מנהגים שן קידוש החמה,
ואם ונקט יין אריה כישואך ש"ך כאו אין נתן אים
יאהר תרנ"ז הבע"ל, בלשון הקודש אין אויך אויף יודיש:

דראהאביטש תרנ"ז

בדפוס א. ה. זיגנק.

Druck von A. H. Zupnik in Drohobycz, 1896.

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Nachdruck streng verboten.

Page 99: Frontispiece of the book, 'Zaharei Khama'

There were good Jewish people who among themselves thought it was necessary to 'do something,' – and the coin

was apparently to be found in their pockets. These Jews, among them R' Nehemiah Just, R' Benjamin Szur, Berisz Kremerman, and others, got together, and provided a separate teacher to the boys, that being R' Melech Alter – 'Black Melech.'

R' Melech was a loveable Jewish man, conducting himself with his students as if he was their friend. The opened up their volumes of the Gemara in the morning, and they remained open until the evening, and in his spare hours, he orchestrated his lessons with a sweet kind of elevation. He did not instill bitterness in his students. The 'street' was stronger than he was, and his house, which was his '*Heder*,' was thrown open to the street, where haggling with farmers went on, in order to supply the shortfall from tuition payments.

The allure of the street pulled on them: 'running jester' in his red overcoat, with the bells on his sandals, who rounded the *Rynek* running ten times: The 'Little Cossack' who rode his horse from the Municipal Clock to the '*Klasztor*' in the blink of an eye, and the 'Humpbacked Troubadour' standing in the corners of the city, his hunched back leaning on his short stick, and he mourned the loss of the war: 'On forest fields.' And the wind blows from San Remo reaching even our city. When my father learned that a few of R' Melech's students are putting on 'Zion' pins, and he does not clap his hands [in approval] – the matter pained him, as if they had stabbed the Messiah in the heart, who waits just outside the door, coming to redeem everyone from exile, assaults of the police, and the oppression of the nobility, providing sustenance, out of the sorrow of raising sons, and all the tribulations. R' Melech, in his turning about, returns to the open *Gemara* volumes and continues, without the students, the intonation of the angels, or he runs to the *Bet HaMedrash*, where he was one of the worshipers, and slakes his thirst in its many books there, like a well of living waters, because R' Melech was a scholar and a lover of Torah.

R' Hirsch the Scribe – One of the ones who wore a *spodek* as a hat on their head, and the sobriquet 'Scribe,' was because of his occupation with the sacred work with those things that we loved and kissed with ardor. It was with him, that we began to construct a list of the 'Thirty-Six *Tzaddikim*,' because of whose virtue, the city remains in existence. We were warned not to engage him or distract him while he was at work, that was largely done in one *Bet HaMedrash* or another. From his side, he gave us a privilege, and afforded us the opportunity to help him roll the Torah scrolls that he examined and scrutinized on the eve of the Sabbath, for use in the reading on the Sabbath. We knew his precise origin, even though he was neither a *Kohen* or a *Levi*, because as *Rashi* said – and is known to all – we knew that scribes, teachers and the poor – originate from the tribe of Shimon. And we dreamt about him, that he had absolutely no hope of ever becoming a Rothschild. Our hearts ached seven times for his daughter Sarah'leh the dwarf, and his son Nachman, tall as Og the King of Bashan, who always shuffled after their father, and whose fate was carved out from birth in that they have no refuge from the curses of Father Jacob.

On one winter Sabbath day, after an afternoon sleep worthy of being a *mitzvah*, for it is said, 'Sleep on the Sabbath is a Joy,' as indicated by the acronym for '*Shabbat*,' we saw R' Hirsch grow angry and lose his temper. He was in the habit of studying the Pentateuch with *Rashi* commentaries with his son, and on that Sabbath, they studied the *Parsha* about Dina and Schechem. His son's eyes

wandered, looking out of the window at the ones horsing around outside with snowballs. R' Hirsch started to boil, and he pinched his son from behind: 'Shechem! An outright gentile! Who is he? The son of Khamor, a simple ass[107]. And his soul yearned after whom, do you hear? After the righteous Dina, the daughter of our patriarch Jacob, the *Tzaddik*! And you do not leap out of your place and you don't explode with anger? I would disembowel him like a fish!' The great-grandson of Shimon, how would R' Hirsch the Scribe look in the eyes of adults? The *Hasidim* said: When R' Hirsch leads services in front of the Ark at the time of the *Mincha* prayers, his recitation of the *Shmoneh Esrei* contains 'an essence of the last *Mincha* prayer of the year,' which the Rabbi himself communicates in Belz on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, in which echoes are heard of a Heavenly Voice, that is itself not heard, that emanates daily from the mountain of Horeb, and calls out for repentance: echoes that resonate in the hearts of those who hear the rendition of the prayer of R' Hirsch to this day. Let us unite with the memory of R' Hirsch the Scribe and *Tzaddik*, whose body was incinerated by the progeny of the German and Austrian Kaisers, who approximately thirty years prior to this, desecrated the Sabbath, in order to come to their assistance, and his soul went up above among his incinerated scrolls, and the letters that blossomed into the air.

R' Mordechai *Shammes* – He was the *Shammes* of the *Bet HaMedrash* and of the city. He was a good and honest Jewish man, being an escort to ritual circumcisions, to the wedding canopy and to the cemetery, and to all walks of life. We ask only for your forgiveness because of having angered you in our youth with pranks; for snatching away memorial candles that righteous women placed at the threshold of your *Bet HaMedrash* and taking them over to Khona the *Shammes* for use at his '*Kloyz*.'

The Old Kloyz

The *Kloyz* – was neither splendid nor did it possess any beauty. The *Hasidim* did not dedicate much attention to its external appearance. Do not look at the exterior[108]... the budget of the standing *Gabbai*, R' Zelig Sperber, was constrained and limited to procuring a number of portions of firewood so during the winter days, they could be fed into the mouth of the broad oven that stood in the corner of the *Kloyz*. It was for this purpose that the more important of the '*aliyahs*' to the Torah for the entire year were sold off on *Simchat Torah* before the coming of winter, donations made of firewood, and candles for the '*hengleichter*'[109], for the night students were provided by righteous women. There was no electrical connection to the *Kloyz,* because this was connected to the Christian churches in the city.

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107 This is a reference to the incident of Shechem ben Khamor in his rape of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, as described in Genesis 34.

108 A reference to Pirkei Avot 7:20 which admonishes the beholder not to judge a container by its external appearance.

109 The 'hanging' candelabras suspended from the ceiling

The doors to the *Kloyz* were never locked. Those who came early for *Mincha* prayers would encounter those who were late in finishing *Shacharit* prayers. Those who would rise early to be diligent in their Torah study, would also run into each other after the Sabbath at night. To those who came there, the *Kloyz* was something of a second home. When a man finished his work, closed up his store, and bring his 'implements' home from the market – he would then come to the *Kloyz*; [there] he would meet with his friends, listen to what was going on in the wider world, and look into a book.

Life began in the *Kloyz*: it was here that an infant was brought on Elijah's Chair, and R' Israel the *Dayan* and *Mohel* would intone the prayers and then 'circumcise,' thereby admitting him into the covenant of our Father Abraham ע"ה and to the community of. *Hasidim;* it was here that the festive events of his life took place: Bar-Mitzvah, '*Vorspiel*[110],' and 'Shabbat Morning:' And it was here that life came to an end – when the coffin of the departed was placed beside the *Kloyz* on its last journey.

And life, between birth and death, was full of substance. A *Hasid* once said to a *Mitnaged*: why do you cry at the recitation of 'man is drawn from the dust, and his end is dust?' Had man come from a material more praiseworthy that dust, there would be a reason to weep. Therefore, I recite this calmly: 'Man is drawn from dust -- and his end is dust:' And in between, one drinks a *L'Chaim*. What is there to mourn?

And as a result, the Jews of the *Kloyz* drank a *L'Chaim* and served God with love and joy, and engaged in the Torah, charity, and the doing of good deeds.

All the men of the *Kloyz* were holy and pure. Here, we will attempt to sketch special outlines of a few of them.

R' Israel Mikhl Feder. Even those his place in the *Kloyz* was not at the eastern wall – he lent dignity to the place where he was, earning respect and admiration, and not because of his elevated service – as head of the congregation for many years – but rather because of his heartfelt personality and the simplicity of his bearing. What he had to say was said genially, without haughtiness, and not implying that his point of view, that of the head of the community, needed to be accepted by the thinking of the worshipers of the *Kloyz*. He accepted the role of head of the congregation that was placed upon him because of the *Hasidim*, indicating that it was up to him to fulfill it with the sort of faithfulness that comes without monetary compensation.

He was not from the leading wealthy people, and even the way he made a living – which came from running a brick kiln – was not very prosperous. Despite this, he dedicated most of his time to public affairs. The concerns of the community, especially in securing adequate employment for its workers, weighed upon him as if his own ordinary concerns. Even his most formidable opponents, who wanted to attain his position, did not raise any doubt regarding the cleanliness of his hands.

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110 The celebration on the night before a Jewish wedding.

He would dispose of all his personal and public affairs on a daily basis, in order to give his lesson in the *Kloyz* before the *Mincha* prayer. The listeners also went on to dispose of their affairs, in order not to miss out on the lesson, because in who was in good harmony with his environment the way he taught, he loved simplicity and clarity.

His son, Yitzhak was one of those who occupied a bench in the Kloyz, from the time of his youth, and diligently studied Torah, then went over to assist his father in his affairs. This was a young man alert to the situation of the world, intelligent, and possessed of insight.

His father-in-law, R' Mendl Kneitl, was a respected merchant in the city, in good harmony with the people around him, and his hand was always open to extend help to them.

R' Noah Abraham Gottleib was one of the trio of young men who were the 'exceptional students' of Sokal. The other two achieved fame in the *Heder* world as Torah luminaries: Rabbi R' Shimshon Sztokhammer, a member of the Rabbinical council of Warsaw, and separated for long life, Rabbi R' Yaakov Breisz, the *Bet-Din* Senior of Cirikh, the author of '*Kehillat Yaakov*.' R' Noah became known as the leader of the political issues of Belz *Hasidism*, and its representative before the ruling authorities. While still a young man, he learned the local languages of the country – German, Ukrainian and Polish – mastering them well. He was supported by substantive commentary, and not by just a passing remark.. On the position 'The Impression of Marriage and Birth of the Jews' many in the city contested this at the time, because the was set up only for Jews. With the assistance of Belz, R' Noah received it, and his office was transformed into the political center of Belz. From this office of his, he pursued two goals. R' Noah conducted the war of the *Hasidim* against all parties in the city, a war of defense and survival, in the community and the municipal council, which was still in their hands.

An ardent *Hasid* yet from the time of his youth, he yet remained under the aegis of R' Yehoshua זצ"ל in Belz, a scholar, insightful, and firm in his ideas. All the arrows launched by the opponents of *Hasidism* were aimed at him, because he was taciturn, a word – like a bar of gold, and the word that came from his mouth was as sharp as an arrow. He made his living with difficulty, and forded the sea of making that living every day anew. His financial distress grew because of the love of his life: books that possessed a beautiful external appearance. He stood in contact with Torah luminaries throughout the breadth of the world, took an interest in their new books, and bought them in place of the needs that he had for his and his family's store. And R' Simcha'leh Einbinder, the one who was skilled in his craft in the city, beautified and decorated the books to the best of his ability, because in general, R' Noah ordered the books without covers.

His back room, brimming with books of substance, and sparkling with beauty, served as a retreat from the tumult of everyday life, and the vanity of politics that gave him the possibility to escape for many hours in the night, and turn himself over to the pursuit of matters that were eternal.

He was alert to the goings on in the Jewish world in general, and especially in the *Haredi* world; all the non-partisan *Haredi* newspapers came into his house, and from the lovely monthly of R'

Benjamin '*HaHeyd*,' that appeared in the Land of Israel, from which R' Noah suckled the drop of 'Love of Zion...'

His home served as the 'Committee Headquarters for the *Hasidim*.' It was here that issues were adjudicated and established, and it was hear that the word of the *Rebbe* were heard, that were brought by those who were 'seated,' [there] that Rawa was blessed with. It was here, in his home, that R' Noah appeared in the fullness of his erudition, understanding and acuity.

Epstein, the past principal of the 'Baron Hirsch' school, a remnant of the great assimilation movement in the Austrian days, which the Hasidim fought against with the sharpness of their souls, was one of those who came to his house, as the recorder of the community from the days of R' Israel Mikhl. The discussions of the *Hasidim* also complex encompassed Torah matters, and in the heat of discussion, in order to undercut him, R' Noah would turn to face Epstein: 'Herr Epstein, are you not the standard expert on the faith of Moses, so give us your view as to who is correct' – everyone, including the one being questioned, laughed.



Page 101:R' Aryeh son of R' Noah Gottleib הי"ד

One time, books were stolen from the library of R' Noah. He complained to one of the older 'Yankls' the seniors of the city, that had burst into his house, and the latter promised that the books will be rapidly returned to their place. He asked only: which books, '*Shasn or Shnyayesn*,' – meaning volumes of the *Gemara* or miniature books of the *Mishna*. To R' Noah's elation, the books were found behind the door on the following morning. But a few of them had been damaged. When, in sorrow, R' Noah showed this to the 'rescuers,' the latter said: don't feel sorry R' Noah, turn them over to the bookbinder, and he will cut a bit off, and make *Mishna* volumes from them. R' Noah laughed: even the ignorant among them are full of 'ideas' in the Torah, like [seeds in] a pomegranate.

As a member of the *Judenrat*, he was one of the first – like his past protagonist Dr. Joseph Mandel – that the Germans laid their polluted hands on. With the blessing of 'Be well, my fellow Jews, and stay alive,' he parted from the Jews of the city in the marketplace square, from whom he was taken away and taken to his death – a martyr's death,

His son Aryeh – was like his father: a scholar, someone who was diligent, taking an interest in all things, and insightful. At the age of 18, he received his Rabbinic ordination by the *Gaon* of Brody, who was the author of '*Makhazeh Abraham*.' He wrote many Torah innovations, a number of which were made public in the monthly '*Yagdil Torah*,' which appeared in Galicia. As a Extern, he received a 'Matura Certificate.' He took an interest in what was taking place in *The Land*. On 2 Elul 5699 [August 1939] he happily notified me of his engagement to the granddaughter of R' Araham'eleh Malakh of London, and added: 'I thank you for the book '*Orort HaTeshuva*' of Our Teacher R' Yitzhak Kook that you sent me. His thought processes and style are a wonder to behold. Please afford me the pleasure of availing myself of his other books....' This took place only a few numbered days before the Holocaust.

R' Yehuda Tzvi Leibusz Bombach – His persona is etched into the memory of my childhood, when he appeared in the entranceway to the *Kloyz*, his bag containing his *Tallit* and *Tefillin* tucked under his armpit – one side of his beard exceedingly long, and the other side cut short to the chin. This was the handiwork of the 'liberators of Poland, the Hallerists, who cast their terror on the city in the years 1919-1920. Cutting and tearing out the beard and sidelocks of Jews was one of their pleasures. Jews who were assaulted in this manner, would curve over their faces until the cut side grew back and became one that remained. R' Leibusz would spend a lot of time in the entranceway to the *Kloyz* as a demonstration in front of the congregation of worshipers – not as the image of God within him that had been desecrated, but rather as the 'image' of a gentile. It was in this manner that R' Leibusz conducted himself for many years, with his face fully revealed, in portraying the image of the predation of the gentiles.

He appeared at the *Kloyz* an hour before the start of his worship. Until prayers began, he made the rounds of all the tables where people sat studying, stopping at each group, listening, but not mixing in. He knew that his presence was sufficient.

A sorrow was imprinted on his noble face. He was rendered devoid sons. In his home, which stood at the busy mercantile center of the city – between the stores of Anshel Just and Abraham Frankel. R' Leibusz he sat with in his goods upon him, from which he made a living, with his book in hand, across from his wife Bina'leh, who sat in her bliss, with her book in her hand, and they prayed to God. His brother, as well a *Gaon* of the period, opens his book '*Ohel Yehoshua*' with the prayer, 'May God help my brother the analytically sharp and fluent Rabbi, Our Teacher and Rabbi, R' Leibusz with perpetuating progeny.' In their *Heders*, the word 'bereft' – which all of the teachers in such *Heders* found difficulty in explaining – took on its proper meaning.

His students -- were like his own sons, and R' Leibusz inculcated Torah to the many, and supported many students. Among these students, was also the Rabbi, R' Shimon Federbush ז"ל.

He was among the beloved in the city, among the few elite that were there. He did not serve as a Rabbi in the city, but it was not only once that he sat in a *Bet-Din* of the city, if a *Bet-Din* of three was needed.

He was the son of R' Joseph of Jaworów, the grandson of the author of '*Afikei Mayim*,' great-grandson of the author of '*Minkhat Yehuda*,' and upwards in sanctity, in which his lineage went back to R' Yehoshua Falk, the *Bet-Din* Senior of Krakow, the author of the well-known work,'*Pnei Yehoshua*.'

R' Leibusz sat at home and immersed his days and nights into the Torah. He raised up his innovations to his brother the *Gaon*, R' Yehoshua Pinchas, the *Bet-Din* Senior of Uszpicyn who, in his book '*Ohel Yehoshua*,' dedicated a large portion to the 'give and take' in questions and innovations posed by R' Leibusz. And the *Gaon*, with the best of a scholarly flourish said: 'On the 29th day of *Sefira* [the counting of the *Omer*], 5649 I will provide a response to the heroic warrior in the battle of the Torah'... 23 Adar 5657, in the days of Adar, resplendent glory, to the man girded

with, and girded by wisdom, the honor of my beloved brother…' In approaching the Sabbath, a cup of blessing and a fistful of good… and I didn't want to overdo the arguments in order not to burden you (the 'summary' is about thirty thousand words – the writer). And you be aware of this: And if my words find favor in your eyes, accept them as *Halakha,* and peace be to your refined soul, like the soul of your brother, who looks forward to engage with you in the play with matters of Torah.'. The play of the gentiles put an end to the play of the Torah…

R' Joseph Reiser

The storm of the war abated, as did its tendrils. The fever of 'commerce' in candles and cigarette paper 'Solali' and Reiterblud' also declined. And this 'commerce' engaged practically all of the Jews of the city, given that there was nothing else to engage in, with the destruction of their previous ways of making a living because of the war; and these 'goods' passed from hand-to-hand producing a bare pittance. And even when the participants exited, with their hands on their heads, because of the normalization of commerce, and because a large part of the candles were found to be without wicks, and the papers not fit to be used, the Jews did not succumb to a great sorrow, because in the end they were merchants…

In this period of surcease, our parents concerned themselves with the appointment of R' Yosh'i Ben-Zion's to be the Rabbi overseeing their sons. R' Yosh'i's reputation went before him as a scholar and one of the outstanding Rabbinical teachers of the famous Yeshiva of the *Gaon* R' Sholom Mordechai *HaKohen* Schwadron of Berezhany, the author of the 'Responsa of the *MaHarSha"M*[111]' and other works. In the fullness of time, when we became acquainted with his home, and his 'assets,' he presented one of his treasures to us. From a bag wrapped in linen that ; he had sequestered, ne took out a letter from the *Gaon* of Berezhany written to him, and among the descriptions that were to be found. Heni'leh Hirsch Manis's and within it was: 'My teacher and *Rebbe*, in *Gemara* with *Tosafot* commentary, R' Joseph, etc.' Can all of the valuable treasures of the city compare to his treasure?

It was after the *Sukkot* holiday. The *Kloyz* was not heated for lack of firewood, and R' Yosh'i's house – also that way. Heni'leh, Hersch Maness's, the widow who lost the husband of her youth before the war, and her young son during the war, placed her warmed room at our disposal, in exchange for the cost of tuition for her sole remaining son, Hirsch'eleh. And R' Yosh'i set up his 'Yeshiva' there.

In this quiet, warm room, R' Yosh'i plumbed the depths of the Talmud, forgot his house and his troubles; a sickly wife, a maturing daughter, and a bedridden boy, swimming through the waves of the 'reviewed' pages, this being what we called the pages that remained with empty margins – in the *Tosafot* and the *ShA"Kh* and he raised out of them his sparkling pearls of innovation, and the students making their way with difficulty at the edge of the sea…

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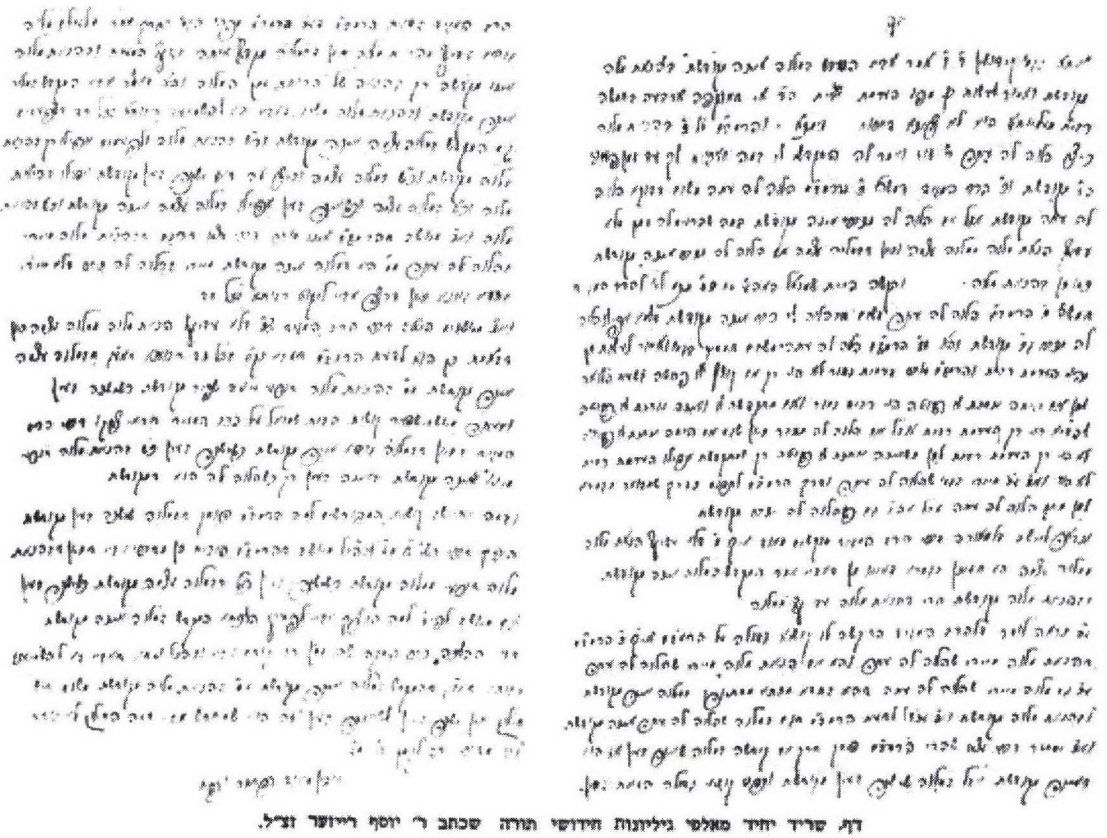
111 An acronym for Shalom ben Moshe HaKohen Schwadron.



Page 103: *A page, the sole surviving remnant from the thousands of pages of Torah innovations written by R' Joseph Reiser* זצ"ל

His notification that, Thursday night and all day he would be dedicated to the study of Pentateuch with *Rashi* commentaries, was received unfavorably, [because] for two years we had studied the Pentateuch with the *Melamed* Yekhiel, and for an additional two years with R' Sholom Drong, and what therefore, was it that Rashi will add to this? Nevertheless, upon opening the Pentateuch to the word '*Bereshit*,' he opened up a new world of ideas to us, a world of Torah.

'The *Gaon* Eliyahu of Vilna sat at a festive repast on the occasion of a '*Pidyon HaBen*,' and he was asked: where is the mitzvah associated with the redeeming of the firstborn inferred in the portion of the week, that being '*Bereshit*?'—He replied: -- In the letters of the word '*Bereshit*' is the acronym of the phrase 'Redeem your firstborn son after thirty days.'

'*Bereshit'* – God created, elaborated one of the *Hasidic* luminaries, is an act of renewal – God created nature anew, and man must always renew himself, and the same is true of his thinking, such that your prayer yesterday is not as it is today, and distance yourself from the fluency!'

And *Rashi*, with his peculiar font style, and his incomprehensible language -- was made: to become

ever so close to our hearts: 'Because of the Torah that is called 'First,' because of Israel who are called 'First' for whom the world was created. R' Yosh'i would explain: 'For – means the path' in the way that the Torah balances things in the spiritual world, and in the way that Israel balances in its conduct, is the reason the world was created and continues to exist, as our *Sages of Blessed Memory* have said: The world in its entirety had been nourished by my son R' Hanina, and it suffices my son R' Hanina to content himself with the minimum from one Sabbath eve to the next Sabbath eve. Because -- of the path that R' Hanina takes forever in his righteousness, in his deportment and in what is due to him. The opening of the gateway. The first word in the lore of R' Yosh'i. And in this way the sentences of the Torah are done, its words and letters are hangers, on which R' Yosh'i suspends the strings of, the pearls from the sea of treasured wisdom of the Torah and *Hasidism* that do not fade. Everything that is printed, that is read, and that is heard, it is as if they re nothing but an echo from the Thursday evenings of R' Yosh'i Ben-Zion's.

And we will include a short bit of the local *Hasidic* folklore as related by R' Yosh'i:

R' Zalman Hutzak the *Hasid* said: I always wondered about what sort of restitution there was for someone who made *Kiddush* over a cup of wine in which the cup was ritually defective. Is one to afflict one's self on Mondays and Thursdays[112], or roll in the snow. When I learned that it was possible to make restitution by reciting the *Kiddush* a second time, using a proper cup, I relaxed, because for this, I am always prepared to comply!

R' Yosh'i added: To drink the wine a second time, and not to enjoy the wine, but rather to take pleasure from correcting the defect in making the *Kiddush* properly, is one of the foundations of *Hasidism*, and it was this that R' Zalman was intending to convey.

On one occasion, a group of us *Hasidim* traveled to Belz in a wagon – R' Yosh'i told. Along the way, the gentile wagon driver rose, brandishing the whip in his hand in a threatening manner, he demanded an increase in his fee. We didn't have it, and R' Zalman, who had been challenged, leaped down from the wagon, straightening himself out to his full height, snatched the whip from the hands of the gentile, and rained down a hail of curses on him in his own language. The gentile panicked, and gave in, and took us to our desired destination in Belz. And R' Yosh'i added: 'All those who are steadfast in their conviction – will prevail.

When we lacked the coin in our pocket, we walked, groups of *Hasidim* on foot to Belz – so R' Yosh'i told us– with R' Zalman Hutzak in our coterie. This was in the period when the '*Bahn*' (the train) began to run to Belz. Before the arrival of the Sabbath, as we neared the city, from a distance, along an undirected road, the *Bahn* was puffing, belching, and whistling with all its might, and blundering off in an inappropriate direction. So R' Zalman shouted to it: 'Come with us, and we will show you the right way to Belz.' But it declined to listen. When we returned on Sunday to Uhniv, we encountered the *Bahn* in the same place, puffing heavily, trying to find its way. R' Zalman shouted to it: 'I told you to follow the way the *Hasidim* were going, back in Friday.' R' Yosh'i

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112 It was customary among some (possibly for lack of food as well as piety), to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.

added: the *Bahn* does reach Belz, but the spirit of *Hasidism* from Belz only reaches Man.'

During the summer, we moved over to his 'residence.' The study room was in the narrow entranceway whose entire lighting came from the perpetually open entrance door. The 'residence' itself was a narrow, dark corridor leading to the store of R' Moshe Sperber, and from our room, it was possible to see not only what was going on in the store, but through it, what was going on in the market square.

It was here that we became acquainted with the spiritual world of R' Yosh'i, and his literary 'workings.' The two rear pockets of his jacket gave significant testimony to the importance of his work. In one – a collection of blank draft paper gathered from everything that came to hand and on them, he would write his innovations in pencil, and he would transfer them over to the second pocket. The '*Eizerneh Kloyz*' was the place where he sat during the day, in every free moment that he had, and at night – sometime until the break of dawn. At home, he, would copy over his innovations using a well-sharpened quill pen, in very tiny, tiny writing , a beautiful reading that was to wonder at, on half-sheets of blank paper, fold them, and store his substantial composition, covering almost the entire *Shas*, this being his life's work; the commentaries of the *MaHaRSh"A*.

The *MaHaRSh"A*, R' Shmuel Eliezer Edels, who lived in the 16th century, wrote one of the most prominent books in the world of Torah scholarship, in which he elaborates and explains the *Talmud* with great profundity and acuity. The pedagogy and knowledge in it provided to the learner the status of a scholar. Out of a love for brevity, the author constructed his book in the form of small excerpts and their themes; and almost every such excerpt ended with the words: and it can be pointed out, and it is possible to establish, or, it is easy to understand, and the matters actually were not so easy to establish and understand. R' Yosh'i dedicated his entire life in order to establish and explain the words of the MaHaRSh"A, and to give those who study, tools to enable them to attain their distinguished objective – to be scholars.

On the shelf, the single piece of furniture in the room, in addition to the table and the slat benches, anchored into the wall plaster – were arranged and ordered the volumes of his work 'The Interpretation of the *MaHarRSh"A*,' that stood prior to completion. One more thin volume lay there, on the shelf, written in his marvelous handwriting. It included all the details associated with the passing of the month – because R' Yosh'i strolled through the byways of heaven as if they were the streets of the *Schul-Gasse* in Rawa – and also a calendar of times and celebrations, in accordance with the computations going out to the year 5804. Because a span of a thousand years is like an eternity.

There was only one printed book that completed his simple 'bookcase' – in the various study houses of the city, all of the books were 'his,' – the book 'Toledot' of R' Yaakov Joseph of Polna, the student of the BESh"T and a foundation of *Hasidic* lore. And in this book, which R' Yosh'i would read when he got on his feet, he would find answers to the issues arising in life. When he read from it – his hands would tremble ; and the book would practically fall out of his hands; and when he would reach sentences that began with 'I heard from my teacher,' that the author introduced, R' Yosh'i would call out to his students: 'do you know to whom he is referring to as 'my teacher'? –the Holy BESh"T!' the impression made, by this form of identification of a person and a book and its contents, is never erased forever.

There was another R' Joseph with whom our R' Joseph identified with a pronounced spiritual connection – with R' Joseph Teomin, the author of '*Pri Magdim*' a pillar of scholarly direction in Israel. R' Yosh'i had begun to put together a commentary for '*Pri Magdim*,' but he was anticipated by R' Sholom Czarnik with his book '*Mishmeret Sholom*.'

R' Yosh'i reviewed '*Pri Magdim*' for his students, and he red the foreword to the book to them as if he as reading a description of his own life, which was written over one hundred fifty years before:

'I the impoverished an young Joseph, a teacher of young children, was in Lvov, and I saw the penury of the people of Israel. [I saw] scholars, moving about and wandering, preoccupied and overburdened, lacking food, sapped of strength from an excess of deprivation, and studying the Torah from the midst of this deprivation, this was the oppression.' 'It is from them that we derive the privilege of inculcating Torah to the masses with students, and from them one finds support and a healing for the soul; when one writes with a steel pen, and the word of them are behests to the world.' 'Fortunate is the one who can print his books during his life and not, God forbid, to have their writings incinerated to ashes on the eves of the Passover holiday, and, and having women taking control of them to wrap chickens, or to have mice excrete on them.'

In the writings of R' Yosh'eh Ben-Zion's, beasts of prey were portrayed in human form.

What place did R' Yosh'i occupy in the '*Alte Kloyz*?' Did he take any place at all in h world of the *Holy One, Blessed Be He?* 'The *Holy One, Blessed Be He* can be found in all places where is allowed to enter' – this was the saying that was fluent on his lips, and R' Yosh'i opened all 248 of his extremities, and 365 of his sinews to receive him with love[113].

And the Good Lord granted him a boon, and took him – yet before the Holocaust – to enfold and shelter him under the aegis of His wing.

R' Mikhl'eh Wander

His place in the *Kloyz* was not on the 'east' benches among the wealthy and the *balebatim*. Those seats were marked (recorded in a table) and parents would leave them as an inheritance to their son, and they treated it like all valuable items, were the subject of inheritance disputes that were complex and lengthy, and the ownership of 'the place' (*stadt*) was divided up into thirds and fourths.

R' Mikl'eh's place was also not on the west wall, among the scholars, *Hasidim* and self-effacing people of the world... he was not numbered among all of these but he bestowed honor to the place that he occupied, and everyone honored him.

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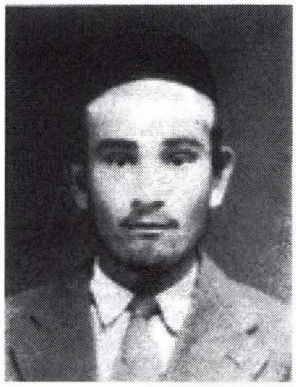
113 Refers to the breakdown of the 613 mitzvot, in which numerical values are attributed to the various parts of the body.

The wide [open] door of his residence, which in the winter was swaddled in sacks, was opened widely to all who came for the healing that the Holy One Blessed Be He had anticipated for maladies, that he had entrusted to the faithful hands of R' Mikhl'eh. The room to which the door led was a wide room, a sign that he was lacking sons, and was not compelled to subdivide the room into narrow stores, to generate income. Despite the fact that his house stood between successful business establishments – he took no interest in how they earned money; but we knew what his activities involved – performing *Mitzvot*…

He was one of the *Gabbaim* of the '*Kollel*' in our city, together with R' Joseph Gutwirt, and was invited from time to time to visit in our house in order to empty the charity box of *R' Meir Baal HaNess*, with which my mother Glik'l ע"ה looked after to fill. He decorated our house with 'calendars' and pictures from the Land of Israel, which were the substance of our lives. The picture of the tomb of our Matriarch Rachel transported us to those very long wintry nights in the *Heder* of R' Yekhiel the *Melamed*, at the time that we learned and sang of the shortcomings and tribulations of Rachel. Our participation in her sorrow was intense, and hit a peak in the singing of the '*auszogen*' on the sentence 'and upon my arrival from Padan Aram.' We mourned her along with Jacob, together with those exiled by Nebuzaradan, we stood bereaved beside her grave, and with our own ears, heard her comforting and caressing voice rising from her grave: 'and sons will return to be within their borders…

The core activity of R' Mikhl'eh, which he did without receiving pay, was to take care of the sick. Wars bring on epidemics, and there was not a house without someone who was sick, and the coin that was not to be found in the pocket even in peacetime -- for sure was not there in time of war, and there were few doctors in the city, and it was in this was that R' Mikhl'eh took to his feet, day and night, from house to house, and from one sick person to another, examining, giving medicines, feeding, giving drink, and quieting concerns with a sense of 'confidence,' and with prayer.

And even in peacetime, if someone fell ill – they would turn to R' Mikhl'eh's corner in the Kloyz, or his wide-open door, and he would immediately respond to the call, bringing with him all of his medical paraphernalia in his kit. In order to calm the members of the household, indicating that the condition is not serious, he would seat himself, affably take out his snuff box take a sniff with pleasure, and establish: who, get spirits, who gets leeches, and who gets an enema, doing all the detail work himself. If it was necessary to spend the night beside the sick person, and feed them, he would be the one to spend the night and do the feeding. He never stinted when it came to a matter of lives. If his discerning eye detected something serious – he, in his extensive knowledge, in taking into account the serious nature of the person who was ill, knows how to give one the advice, that it as worth waiting until evening to visit the physician Daglitz (who has a 'poor people's hour,' which was still the custom 50 years ago…); to another, he might say that it was appropriate to wait a couple of days, that is to say, until the Sabbath, and call Dr. Meir Christianfeld, who as a religious Jew would not take 'payment for work' performed on the Sabbath, or to immediately invite Rosa Doctor, who does not have any free hours, and not on the Sabbath, whose entire connection to the Jews was his visit to the synagogue on Yom Kippur at the time of the recitation of the Yizkor prayers, and if he was late, he cried out in disappointment: 'O, Jesus, Mary! There is someone here to remember.'



Page 105 (Top): Michael Nesser הי"ד

They waited for R' Mikhl'eh to read the prescription brought from the doctor. Even the daughters, who had completed the '*Panie*' school or the '*Dobrydzikeh*' school found it difficult to read what was written there. Because it was written in a language that only the doctors used.

And R' Mikhl'eh reads it, and understands every word, explaining and elaborating as his face lights up – and a heavy stone rolls off the hearts of the family.

And if, God forbid, R' Mikhl'eh's face grew dark – came the time for the lore of the Righteous Woman, '*Die Langeh Pesha* and her coterie, because Pesha had a constant and ongoing dialogue with the *Holy One Blessed Be He.*





Page 105(Bottom): Aharon Nesser and his Wife Esther of the Blaustein Family הי"ד

Die Lange Pesha

There was not a 'Women's Section' in the *Kloyz*, and *Hasidic* women, who stood by their conviction that they had a responsibility to pray, even in opposition to the will of their husbands, found their place in the Women's Section of the Old *Bet HaMedrash*. Pesha, just as her height put her head and shoulders above all the women of the city, so did her knowledge of *Yiddishkeit* and her adherence to Belz, and her *Hasidism* exceeded that of all her companions. The special prayer book for women, '*Korban Mincha*,' was something she knew fluently. The '*Tekhinot*[114]' of Sarah Bat-Tovim would come from her aching heart, by heart, as well as her ordinary creations, and she would add in a substantive whisper, before '*Derbaremdiker Fotter*[115],' saying thus

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114 Plural of '*Tekhina*' describing a prayer of supplication, asking for Divine mercy.

115 The most Honorable Father, referring to The Deity.

and so, suitable for the hour and what the tribulation called for. In her conversation with *Hasidim*, pearls would issue from her mouth, consisting of the sayings of *Our Sages of Blessed Memory*, and the sayings of *Hasidim* that she had collected from her sacred books in Yiddish, just like an enlightened man, whose innards were suffused with the lore of the *Shas* and *Poskim*.

When all of the advice and medications of the doctors and of R' Mikhl'eh proved ineffective, and one stood practically at the end of the life of the sick individual – as indicated, Pesha of the *Bishl-Gasse* would appear, of great height, and of a quick step, in her manner to '*einreisen*,' to tear the heart of heaven via the Holy Ark of the Old *Kloyz*. With her trembling hands and shoulders, she fills the ambience of the Holy Ark, and it is upon its sacred texts that she spread out her litany before the *Holy One Blessed Be He*. In the Holy tongue, like Father Abraham in his time, he sought to shield the righteous, and in Yiddish, like R' Levi-Yitzhak of Berdichev, she know how to enumerate the virtues of the sick one, in contrast to his neighbor the gentile, and to ask the '*Hartzign Fotter*,' her penetrating questions: You, Father of Orphans, are you short of more orphans? And the praying congregation joins in her entreaties. You, the Good God, who knows the goodness of her heart, and of her good deeds – respond, by –and-large to her entreaties.

She was a *Woman of Valor*. In her dark room, tottering, where it was possible to fall in the pitted and narrow streets of the *Bishl-Gasse*, she demanded flax and wool, and produced waistband sashes for the *Hasidim*. The beginning of her hand work was rooted in sorrow: it was the weaving of sashes for the *Hasidim*, who bought '*Die Lange Pesha's Gartlen*' from her. But her fate was greatly altered when she opened a factory to produce socks, which was well-branched out, from which her reputation reached to the far distances in Galicia, in the courtyard of the *Tzaddikim*, to be distinguished from the palaces of the *Starostas* and Nobles, and she derived her income from great distances from the hard manual labor of all the members of her household. In her poor home, a house hummed, and she build a building that was a glory to her and her family.

The heart of her husband, R' Hirsch Leib Nesser had complete confidence in her, and he was known within the gates of the *Kloyz* for sitting with the *Hasidic* elders, studying Torah and doing good deeds, because Pesha's house was wide open to all those in need.

And her sons praised her:

R' Shlomo Eliyahu, who with God's help, and her substantive help, raised a family and earned an honorable living from the work of his hands, and dedicated his free time to Torah and *Hasidim*. Aharon, was among the select of the youth in '*Agudah*.' He would dedicate his free time to its educational activities. He took Esther Blaustein as a wife, one of the most accomplished of the young women of the city, and was anticipating a fortunate future.

Her son, Michael, was different from his brothers. He was one of the young people in the city, within whom there ruled an apocalyptic unrest. He felt that the earth trembled under his feet. An essence of destruction seemed to always rise up in his nostrils. 'To flee from here' – he shouted. He fled one more time, and returned to the bosom of his pleasant family.

She gave a decree to her girls: times have changed, '*Vereinen*[116]' in the place of the *Kloyz*, libraries in the place of the *Bet HaMedrash*, with its shelves packed with books. 'Presentations,' and 'Evenings' in the place of the Mitzvah Feasts of '*Melave Malka*,' and the celebration of the New Month. 'Modes' for Jewish girls that change from day to day, in place of the reserve and modesty that were the responsibility of a girl, just like the four-cornered fringe garment was to a boy. She had to stand on guard to make sure that these malign winds would not, God forbid, blow into her house, she has to be faithful to the memory of her deceased brother, R' Zisha Mameh, whose name had a gone out to be praised as a *Hasid* of strong spirit, when he stood as a mountain cliff against all those who would seek to breach the ramparts of *Hasidism* and all those light-headed 'Germans[117]'.

Holy Pesha did not give up to the last day; she lived a life of holiness, and died in *Sanctification of the Name*, along with all the other martyrs. Rest in peace under the wings of the Divine Spirit.

R' Shmuel Sofer-Axler

The First Word War, that changed the spiritual world of the youth in the city, and the way of life of the population in general, also opened wide horizons in the economic sector, and in commerce to people of action, that were within the ranks of the younger people in the *Kloyz*. The one who stood out among them, was R' Shmuel the Scribe among Scribes: he was a man of integrity and God-fearing. We lived in good hands all the years. Rachel'eh, the righteous woman, who was wealthy, who was always contented with her lot, and despite her meager means, she would willingly and lovingly share with others. In the run of time, R' Shmuel change his role of 'Scribe,' to one of 'Merchant:' He put up a mercantile building, and factories in various branches, that heretofore had not been known in the city. And so, in addition to his role in the *Kloyz*, with times when he was a *Gabbai*, he became a successful merchant among his peers. He instilled his mercantile sense in his sons and daughters, and under the educational guidance of their wonderful mother, the spirit was created in them of 'Torah, commerce and shined boots.'

Their son, Jonah, was my friend from childhood, being brought together, wrapped in a *tallit* by our parents to the *Heder* of the red-headed R' Ber'leh, in order that we be admitted into that sacred coterie and of the sanctity of 'infants of the house of the Rabbi.' Together, day-in and day-out, we rehearsed the sacred *aleph-bet*, under the same pointer, and we practiced and received our whacks from the same 'switch.' We played with buttons, and lay on the ground as we looked at the nearby building, seeing with our own eyes how it was sunk into the ground, because it was being built on the Holy Sabbath, and it also had a tower, looking much like a cloister. We kept out distance from the *Rebbe*, he being both irascible and large in build, rather seeking to be close to the *Rebbetzin*, who was skinny, short, and sooty because of her steady breathing in the vicinity of the '*drei fuss*[118]'. On one day, recruited soldiers flooded the city and reached up to the entrance of the *Heder*. The *Rebbetzin* opened an '*eysek*:' a large bottle full of whiskey, and a small glass. She handed the small

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116 Evening social gatherings

117 A disparaging reference to those who were 'seduced' by western (i.e. German) ways.

118 This use of the Yiddish for 'three legs,' is a descriptor for the three-legged Dutch oven that was used for cooking in that part of the world.

glass to the soldier, and guarding the bottle with her hands, she poured from it into the small glass in the hands of the soldier. Both of us kept an eye on this 'transaction,' until a soldier came over and snatched the bottle from the hands of the *Rebbetzin*, and disappeared. We were struck dumb. This was the first act of violence that we had seen in our life.

The time to 'begin the Pentateuch' drew nigh. We were proud, because we likened ourselves to sacrifices, which is why one began with 'Leviticus.' On the Sabbath, both of us stood on the table, and before a seated coterie of guest, we carried on a 'bi-conversation,' and the feeling of envy then pulsed in me towards him, on the first time – not because of his greater success in the 'bi-conversation' and not because of the surfeit of watches and chains that his aunts decorated him with, but rather because of his heavy black sidelocks that splayed out over his shoulders, and in my eyes, looked like white wings, and it was as if there was the face of an angel before him...

Jonah grew up, got involved in his business, married a woman, brought children into the world, and his life was unblemished, as if it were from that very 'Sabbath-Pentateuch.'

Rest in peace, Jonah, my Holy Angel.

R' Nachman Kleiner



Page 107: R' Nachman Kleiner הי"ד

The name, once again, returns me to the ambience of my childhood. As a new 'Pentateuch-student' I traveled to Uhniv, to my grandfather R' Meir Ortner. On the Sabbath we went to pray. On the 'Golden *Potchineh*[119]' there was stuck a large placard, whose letters did not match those in my 'little prayer book,' or 'little Pentateuch,' and they were very large. The people circled around it with darkened faces. My grandfather, who was a well-informed man, read only the heading, consisting of one word, the size of half the placard: 'Mobilization,' and he nothing else. The beauty of the word was enchanting to the child, so why were the faces of the men so sad?

On Saturday night, my grandfather's house filled up. He was a precise and rigorous leader, and the people were full of concern. They sat on footstools. Also, our great-grandmother, Chaya Sarah, and grandmother Rivka, and our mother, sat on the floor, and recited and cried over the Book of Lamentations from their '*Tzena u'Re'ena*' [prayer books]. The municipal cemetery, that stretched the length of the house windows, gave the appearances of having extended its boundaries into the house itself. That beautiful word, 'mobilization,' took on its full meaning in the mind of the child [listening].

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119 Called *podcienie* in Polish, meaning sideways covered by the roof, something like a porch. Called a *potchineh* in Yiddish.

The war began, as did the fleeing from it. It pursued us and put us in a condition of being embittered and hungry, and my impressions to return home became more powerful: on foot, in wagons, in carriages, that moved for an hour and then stood for two days. My mother lite Sabbath candles in the train car, in candlesticks fashioned of snow, and the 'samovar' was packed with snow instead of water. In the end, we arrived home, and our dwelling had been taken by the Kleiner family. For a while, we lived as one family. We slept in one bed, and we cooked our food in one pot, and ate from pone plate, and from that time on, a strong relationship bond existed between our families.

After some time, we mourned bitterly after the loss of the family matriarch, Chava ע"ה. Many words of praise were offered on her behalf. She was the daughter of R' Joseph Saul Hebenstreit, the *Dayan* of the city, he being the son of R' Simcha, the grandson of R' Nathan *BaBa"D*[120] *Bet-Din* Senior of Jaworów, and the grandson of the *Gaon* R' Hertz, *Bet-Din* Senior of Rawa. His father-in-law was the Rabbi *Tzaddik* Meshullam Zusha of Lvov, the brother of the Rabbi *Tzaddik* R' Yehuda Marazli (according to '*Oholei Sheym*' by Shmuel Noah Gottleib). In the book '*Sho'eyl u'Mayshiv*' by the *Gaon* R' Joseph Saul Nathanson of Lvov, there are found questions from the Rabbi, R' Nathan Hebenstreit, the *Dayan*, and *Just Director* in Rawa, whom the *Gaon* characterized as a 'cut of my own flesh.' It appears that R' Nathan was the brother of R' Yosh'i *Dayan*. R' Nathan was made the Rabbi and *Bet-Din* Senior of Tomaszow-Lubelski[121], and in this connection, receives the blessing of the *Gaon* R' Yosh'i who took his place in Rawa.

R' Yosh'i *Dayan*, who in addition to his formidable erudition was also a great *Hasid*, found the characteristics in his father-in-law, R' Nachman that his soul sought. He was one of the select of the young men of the Kloyz. As the years went by, and R' Nachman became a successful merchant, and his affairs branched out to far distances, those *Hasidim*, who were idlers, cast a narrow eye on him: how this young man, who had spent his days in the *Kloyz* had become changed, and ties up the ends on his long jacket and goes off with his friends on foot to Belz? R' Nachman threw in only his plain covering, and its interior was clean and pure. He took a place in the *Kloyz* beside R' chaim Gelber who was greatly respected, whose daughter Feiga he took as a wife, and raised a family that was a splendor to the city (their daughter Matt'l, who married Simcha, the son of the Rabbi R' Hirsch Leib Bogan שליט"א, passed away in Chicago in he United States).

R' Nachman and Feiga earned a great boon, in that all of their children were saved from the fate of the Gehenna-of-Extermination. May their memory e guarded for eternity.

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120 The Hebrew acronym **B**en **A**v **B**et-**D**in, the son of a *Bet-Din* Senior, adopted as a family name.

121 The Tomaszow Lubelski Memorial Book reports that Rabbi Nathan Hebenstreit, Rabbi and *Bet-Din* Senior, subsequently went off to Zamoc and then to Przemyśl.

R' Moshe Rathaus

The members of the Rathaus family were from nearby, and they came to the city and settled in its neighborhoods. It was yet another house, whose doors were kept wide open to members of the Jewish people who would sustain themselves from one another by means of '*Gemilut Hesed*,' for the discharge of their notes, so that, God forbid, the 'notary' not arrive at their home and levy the terrifying word 'protest.' The Rathaus home always dispelled this nightmare. The mother of the family, Golda, with the daughter Chana-Feiga, in their modesty and their comportment, served as a model to all of the women of the vicinity.

R' Moshe was drawn to the *Kloyz*, even though he was not among the ardent *Hasidim*. It was said of him: 'There is no more a perspicacious a *Hasid*,' and he had his own *Hasidim*, and also his own '*Tisch*.' The table in the northeast corner of the *Kloyz* carried his name. R' Moshe sat there every Saturday morning, beside his *Tisch*, with his '*Hasidim*' around him. They would tell each other about happenings in the world, and discuss the portion of the week, and R' Moshe would incline his head. His hand cupped to his ear, rapt in attention, and when he lets drop a single word – everyone bursts into laughter and melt out of joy. It was said of R' Moshe: His silence was like that of a boulder, and a word of his was like a bar of gold. When he passed away on 25 Tevet 5695 [December 31, 1934], all the worshipers of the Kloyz mourned him and said: Now that R' Moshe has passed away, all of the acuity in the *Kloyz* has been taken away.

Their son David was one of the beloved young men of the city. As a boy, he studied, and as a youth, he did not let his legs wander from the *Bet HaMedrash* and his books. He was murdered in the Holocaust with is wife Esther and their children. His mother, his sister and her husband Ephraim and their children, were also murdered in the Holocaust.

There were surviving sons in the Rathaus family, and they brought a new generation of Torah scholars into the world, who served God with love, and to the glory of their founder.

R' Saul Levin

He took his place in the *Kloyz* as one of the *Hasidim*, of the crowd. He sat among them all of his days, and was always solitary. R' Saul was steady – and did not deviate. He was steady as the son of R' Asher זצ"ל, a sprout from a distinguished rabbinical family, the Rabbi of Maliniec, a luminary in Torah study and *Hasidism*, in whom Belz took pride – and it is certainly that he absorbed Torah lore from his father. And he did not deviate as a Jew who was observant in Torah and its commandments, following in the path of his ancestors with a full commitment. R' Saul peered in his on manner, in his solitude in the Kloyz, following the lines of the book that was in his hands, with his heavy eyes, and it was in this fashion that he was always perceived, constantly looking into a newspaper or a book, at the time he would be sitting, or opening his store in the retail



Page 108: R' Saul Levin הי"ד

market, waiting for customers. He would be peering and not be influenced, because he was put off by the new ideas that assaulted the Jewish thought processes, especially the Zionist concept. He was the only one in the *Kloyz* who evaluated the Zionist proposition. His thoughts and that of the *Kloyz* were in continuous conflict. It was because of this that he was isolated and suffered accordingly.

How he was pleased with the clumps of his earth (??), and there was none like him of Belz in Zion (?)

R' Yitzhak Graff

He occupied the most prestigious place in the *Kloyz*. 'The Place' being along the eastern wall beside the Holy Ark, passed by inheritance from fathers to sons, from the founders of the city and its builders. The Graff-Rosenfeld family had its roots in the virgin earth of Rawa. As one of the *Hasidim* of the '*Khozeh*' of Lublin, the life and legend of *Hasidism* crowned him with the diadem of Torah and a wondrous wealth. This family, it appears, was among the builders of the *Kloyz*, and this prime seat within it, became a legacy handed down to their sons after them.

R' Yitzhak guarded his place with pride, even though he heart was not completely in accord on all things with the *Hasidim*.

His wife Miriam ע"ה, of a distinguished pedigree and an outstanding homemaker, continuously created a connection to the *Hasidim* – despite the conflicts that existed between them and her husband – in her responsiveness to those times they turned to her in matters of charity. Those who raised charitable funds said: No Jew leaves the kitchen of Miriam Graff hungry.

R' Yaakov Shlomo Rosenfeld

A descendant of the greatly-branched and venerable Rosenfeld family, possessed of distinguished pedigree. He was one of modest members of the *Kloyz*. He sat in his quiet corner, with his hear alert and his ears attuned to every good word that emanated from the mouths of his neighbors, who held him in great affection, and he would add in a pearl of his own saying that would delight those who listened to him. He was one who said little but was profuse in his prayers, and in an attempt to be at one with his Creator. To the *Kloyz*, he brought the order, cleanliness and the quiet that his wife and children carried out in their dwelling, that was located on one of the narrow side streets that ran off beside the Kloyz, and because of their diligence was transformed into a kingly palace. And from the *Kloyz*, he brought home his dedication to his house and family, and his concern for the good education of his children, in order to transmit to them the core value of his life: 'how you disport yourself is of greater importance than the work you do, etc.'

R' Yitzhak Nachman's (Morgenstern)

His father, R' Nachman, was an old man, deep in his years with a bent back, his eyes and legs grown heavy with age, but did not fail to attend communal prayer at the *Kloyz* each and every morning. The way to the Kloyz from his house passed through the '*Likl*' (a narrow passage)

of *Feiga-Leibusz Baal Bayit*, peppered with stumbling obstacles, a tortuous descent from the *'Eizerneh Kloyz'* taking you for a short turn to the right, to the same spread out swampy pond, that extends to the *'Schul-Gasse'* and there is only one dry and narrow passage that brings you to the *Kloyz*. And how R' Nachman would pour out his heart to his Master, in the eve of his life, from outside of the walls of the *Kloyz*?! R' Nachman was the leader of prayer of this congregation of *Hasidim* from the early days of his generation, and he would arrange his prayer, in a simple manner within the confines of his person, without a *'minyan,' 'Barchu' Kedusha*, and Amen?...

And his son Yitzhak would every morning, turn away from his affairs, and bring his father, while controlling his own long steps to match them to the shuffling pace of his elderly father, to the *Kloyz* for the *Shacharit* prayers. He would enfold him in a prayer shawl, put on his *Tefillin,* and dedicate a long hour until he completed his prayers, feed him and give him drink from the provisions of *'Der Langer Henokh.'* Is this not a legendary tale from one of the stout *Gemaras*, that were arranged in rows above the heads of R' Nachman and his son? A legend and its ending moral that says: 'What constitutes respect for a father? To feed him, give him drink, dress him, take him in, and take him out...'



Page 108: R' Yitzhak Nachman's Morgenstern, הי"ד

At the time of the World War, the one to which the serial order 'First' became appended, images of the elders of the Kloyz were engraved in to the cards of the young people, these identifications with pictures eliciting regard from the *'Tzena u'Re'ena'* volume of my mother, along with the good *'Rabbeinu B'Chai,'* who brought good and knew it all – in the center. We were indebted with gratitude to R' Eizheh, short and scrawny, whose little head was constantly inclined over his book, not wavering from his concentration, just in case he would never return to it – a fighter now – from a void of chaos, as we were instructed by *Rashi* in our initial encounter with his work, in his first sentence: 'The world was not created, except for the study of Torah!'

Ho! With what trepidation of spirit and resistance in the soul did these youths first receive the onset of the study of Rashi in their own special letter fonts, so different and small. And how was it, in their untrammeled hearts of integrity – in merely entering into his park – tasting of his sweet and juicy fruits, his sayings and parables, that drew them, in a personal way, near to their God and his good angels, causing them a face-to-face encounter, as if with life itself, with the patriarchs and matriarchs, the tribes, Moses and Aaron...

And R' Joel-R' Abish's instilled wonder in us, who would always be standing at his lectern, with his eyes directed at the book in front of him, as if the two of them had been born intertwined with one another. He stood ready at all times to come to the assistance of each one of us, to explain and interpret our 'difficult' concept, utilizing his 'reading' technique (this being the 'reading' – of the *Gemara* he used for himself, without anyone's help), and he would do this with the same simplicity and lightness, as if he were reading the portion of the week in the Torah scroll, with its vowels, punctuation, and notes.

And R' Nachman would cause our hearts to tremble with his pleasing prayer. Fathers went off to distant places to support 'Kaiser Franz-Joseph' and our beloved grandfather, in his confrontation with *'Fonyeh-Ganev*[122]' – 'to put them under his feet' (as it is written in the new little *Siddur*, which we received from their hands before they left); we the children, with very few elders left behind, were the cluster of worshipers on the Sabbath and Festival Holidays. And on the High Holy Days of that time, R' Nachman was with us, dressed in white like one of the angels, crying out the entreaties of '*HaMelech*,' the Lord before '*The high and elevated Throne*,' with the help of 'the utterances of the children of the house of their master,' praying with us for our father, far-far away, that he be guarded from all manner of harm, and for our mother, that she should have a year in which she will be able to earn sustenance and support for her children in the home, and pray for forgiveness and mercy for all of our transgressions, Oho!! What dignity...

From the very young onwards in age, and with our hearts, even now, given to R' Nachman, we transferred to his son, Yitzhak. Firstly, it was because he would take an interest in us, participating in our conversations – with his insightful remarks containing the wisdom of life – as if he were one of us: and secondly, for his many concerns for the well-being of the young boys of the Kloyz, to ease their process of learning. Accordingly, we were gladdened, when we received his approval – at one of the repasts of a '*Melave Malka*,' over salted fish and warm borscht – to assume to duties of *Gabbaim* in the Kloyz. After all of the activities came to an end – that is to say, after the last stranger departed from the storehouse of Chana'leh the *Shammes*, and after the '*shytl*' (ember) went out in the fireplace, used to feed the large oven – the study of Torah was organized in the nights, 'An exile' to the 'Old *Bet HaMedrash*.' The *Bet HaMedrash* and the *Kloyz* abutted one another, connected by one corridor for hundreds of years; despite this, how distant were these two entities from one another; as far as Avram'chi Edel, whose soul was consumed by the fire of Zionism – from Yisrael-Pesach-Yatalis, and as far as Kalman's Zimmerman, the noble one, and one of the city's intelligentsia – from the devoted Scribe, Hirsch.

The state of neglect in the *Kloyz* was great. The wood floor, that had been put in place even before the *Kloyz* acquired the rubric of being 'old' – rotted, and the walls – blacker than black itself, and how will we be able to replicate the *Kloyz* in this degraded condition, together with all of the study houses and synagogues – in the Holy Land upon the coming of the Messiah, our *Tzaddik,* speedily in our day?...

Worries, large and small, were not in short supply for our parents; and the procuring of '*klafter*,' the firewood for the winter, began to bore into their minds as early yet as the first days of *Selichot*, and by the end of the second watch period, when the winds of cold, together with the winds of the Day of Judgement penetrated into their bones – as the first order of concern above the others, and imagine above all else, their concern for the ravenous opening of the large oven of the *Kloyz*, as to how many,

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122 The Yiddish pejorative for the Russian Czar, this being a variation on the rubric of 'Ivan the Thief.' This may be an allusion to a prayer on behalf of the ruler of the country, which was a standard item in most prayer books of the time. Rawa Ruska, being then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, would have prayer books that according such a blessing to the sitting monarch, Kaiser Franz-Joseph II.

'*klafters*' [would be needed] – who will provide them? And by whose hand will they be procured? It was the diligent hands of Yitzhak Nachman's that obtained them! The hands of the new *Gabbai* being in everything! Like a diligent and dedicated landowner, dressed in his Sabbath finery, hinting at a period of wealth and grandeur in his life, in past years – he devoted himself to the *Kloyz* premises of his. The storage baskets of the *Kloyz* became filled with wood, and the closets of Chana'leh – candles, the light of Torah. Just as the concern for the '*klafter*' was with the 'house master,' she provided for footwear for the boys, and winter coats for the girls – and just as the *Gabbai* provided '*klafter*,' also there were tables, new books, a new floor and new plastering of the walls, and more... and Eizik R' Yisrael's that sharp and alert person, made sport of the long-nosed calculations against the 'modernization' of the *Kloyz*: 'It is necessary to plaster the exterior also, and instead of an Old *Kloyz*, we will have a new Small Temple'!...

And so, Yitzhak Nachman's completed his work to the satisfaction of everyone, and then stepped down. He conveyed his retirement in one of the evenings, before the *Mincha* service, in front of the coterie of Yisrael Michal in one of his sayings, replete with grace and wisdom, that everyone strained to cock an ear and listen to them:

Who, [among you] as *Hasidim*, are circumspect in upholding the sayings of our *Sages of Blessed Memory*? It is they who said, 'If this despicable character runs into you – the Evil Inclination – pull him into the *Bet HaMedrash*. Pull him, but additionally, how is this to be done? Take him immediately to the Eastern Wall, and sit him among the distinguished Jews among you.' And what will this despicable sort engage in while finding himself in the *Kloyz*, and not in some den of iniquity, set that thing apart? As is understood, it will be with '*shishi*,' '*maftir*,' *shacharit*' *musaf*' and '*dror-yikra*.' And if to overpower the ordinary impulse requires one to be heroically strong – who is it that is able to gird himself with such a measure of fortitude, to overpower the Evil Inclination of all the *Hasidim* and men of action?...'

It is the sound of Torah that is heard between the walls of the *Kloyz* day and night, from the mouths of the youth and the elders, each and every one with his comrade or with his student.

The coterie of R' Yisrael Michal was different. Yisrael Michal would enter with an indolent grimace. Without an eighth of an eighth of pride (he would push off any attachment of the honorific '*Reb*' to his name), take a few steps in order to shake off the day-to-day personal and community concerns (including a hard way to make a living, tantamount to parting of the Red Sea, and imagine on top of that the sustenance of several additional families, among them widows), then sat himself down alone beside an empty table, under the well-known clock: and who is it that had not heard of the '*Alte Kloyz-Zayger*' that did not take into consideration the clocks of the gentiles, who change their times from one season to the next?! He would then open the *Gemara,* and begin his solitary study.

Hirsch Ber Kessler, who occupies his bench in the *Kloyz* – as one of the young men for whom the burden of sustenance is on his father's shoulders, and for this reason, he relied on his righteous wife Zelda, all of whose acquaintances added about her (without being compelled to do so), the honorific '*Reb*' to her name. And the Lord helped her with all that she undertook, the management of her

house, the education of her children, to become 'those who walked in God's way, and were upstanding men' (*Tzum Gott un tzum Leit*) and such that mothers, with their children still in a cradle, take blessing from her oldest son 'Mottl'i' – that is Hirsch-Ber, when he sees Yisrael Michal, uproots himself from his place, and sits beside him.

To the coterie of Hirsch-Leib Nesser, that man of integrity and straight heart, that *'Woman of the House*,' whose house is wide open to all beset by a difficult fate, is 'Tall Pesha,' who brings in her sustenance from efforts at great distance, and near to her hand she takes a large role in the life of the *Kloyz*, as if she were one of the *Hasidim* themselves and a man of action.

Pesach Beinusz's enters on the run, noisy with his gait and clothing in a state of disarray – and it seemed like none of his clothes had pockets, and his fleeting hands succeeded in extracting every last bit from his clothing, to the very last cent, for the needy – and opposite him, in a like manner, was his daughter. 'An open house' – they said, 'with no doors!' And warm – from that warmness of heart of his wife, that mother to all, even warmer than the large baking oven they had, a warm house – just as simple as the words themselves, providing a warm meal and lodging to every passing guest, day and night. And when Pesach crossed over the threshold of the *Kloyz*, it was as if he left the tumult of life and the pandemonium of the marketplace behind him, and becalmed, and attentive, he tool his place with modesty.

Aharon Leib Strauss adds himself to the table – a patriarchal figure modeled on the [*Rebbe* of] Berdichev before the Holy One, Blessed be He – a Jewish man, persistently pulling himself away, each and every day, from the turbulence of his affairs, and in the later hours of the day, in his corner of the connecting corridor, succeeds in wrapping himself in his prayer shawl, as a barrier between the harassment of the haggling behind him, and his personal unification with The Creator. And in the end, the table fills up with the remaining men of the coterie: Shmuel Szerker, Shmuel Sofer, Yankl'eh Redlich, Shmuel Czipeh's-Strauss, and others, among whom are the permanent occupants of the Kloyz and they, themselves, return, as if from wanderings, to their home.

Yisrael Michal plumbs the depths of a concept, and raises up pearls [of wisdom]... They finish the tractate of '*Avodah Zarah*[123],' and immediately start it all over again from the beginning, there being no end to the Torah. 'The *Hasidim* do not say 'words of the Torah' in a group.'Torah,' rather they say '*Er zoll leben*,' in the common vernacular. And Yisrael Michal explains in rather clipped speech why it is that he constantly returns to this same tractate. – 'Idolatry is a bad sign! As it is written: 'Shun that which is bad, and do good.' And there is also an additional explanation: abandon that which is bad at the time that you do good, without design, as it is written: 'There is no one righteous who will do good – even when in the process of doing good – and he shall not transgress...' etc., etc...

And Yitzhak Nachman's, the perpetual participant disrupted the seriousness of the dialogue with his waggish remark, as was his habit: 'I always wondered why we beat on our breast ' For the sin we have committed in following the evil inclination,' but is it not so that all sins emanate from it?! But

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123 The Tractate in the Talmud dealing with Idolatry.

now we know that we can also transgress while following out good inclination, so why do we not beat our breast in that case? It would appear that for sins we commit in following our good inclination – there is no forgiveness....'



Page 111: My Brother-in-Law, Shimon Haftel הי"ד

And with his pointed remarks, full of the wisdom of life and the freshness of youth, he dispelled the heavy seriousness that flitted about our surroundings, and pulled us to him, to find ourselves close to him, both the young and the old. And he had a good sense of how to inject drops of Festival and Sabbath even in the middle of the ordinary weekday – and in this manner he succeeded, with his conduct of prayer, in elevating the [ordinary] Sabbath to the level of a 'Sabbath on High.'

Who among all of these standing here, who in the grinding days of the secular week, sunk over their heads in the hapless mire of that awful haggling with the farmers of the vicinity, of unsympathetic heart, in the confines of their long, narrow stores (the street of the stores, over the course of generations, became sub-divided into smaller sections as a consequence of inheritance to sons, and as dowries to daughters, with a door that opened out onto the 'market, – a window to heaven) – and who did not yearn for the Sabbath Queen and her loyal emissary, Yitzhak Nachman's And it was he, who lived their life, suffered their suffering, who knew how to savor a ' traditional melody, and knew how to impart pleasure from a 'traditional melody.' He always was at the ready to serve as the mouthpiece for their yearning, as he stood on the night of Sabbath before the lectern, standing a goodly shoulder in height above them, articulating the phrase from prayer, *'It is already sufficient that you have sat in the valley of tears*,' this cry that was in their hearts, arousing them from the dust of their denigration, robing them in splendor, and transforming them into a congregation resonant with song and dance...

And the angels escorting the people to their homes were the angels of 'On High,' the angels of domestic tranquility. The small candles in their burnished copper candlesticks radiated their substantial illumination, and the visage of the woman – was like the shining of the sun in the heavens.

In the year 1938 – after a hiatus of years – we once again met. At that time, he was the leader of services in the *Zamd-Bet HaMedrash*. 'I was uprooted from a fertile ground (The *Alte Kloyz*) and I was transplanted anew in the *Zamd* (the sand) – he said sorrowfully. He invited me to listen to his '*Tefillat Tal*'[124] – I felt certain, that during the recitation of '*Give us dew to enable your land*,'that I was in the Land of Israel – and here I was in the city. He thought a great deal at that point, and spoke extensively about the Land of Israel. His heart quickly felt the waves of tremor in the ground...

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124 The prayer for dew, recited during the Passover holiday.

Upon returning to the Land of Israel, I was already seated in the autobus, in the broad expanse of the 'market,' when he came on the run to say farewell. He conveyed regards to his daughters, blessed me, and on parting, tossed the Hebrew sobriquet at me of '*L'Hitraot!*[125]' He turned, and began to walk. I see him, to this day I see him, walking with his dance-like steps, walking and vocalizing, and the entire community walking and harmonizing coming towards me... forever.

My Father and Teacher R' Yaakov Ringel



Page 112: (Top, Left): A Training Group of Youth of 'Agudat Israel'

He too, was among those for whom the *Alte Kloyz* was their second home, and he also had certain distinct characteristics: he pleasingly demanded of himself, and manifested a deep understanding for the community and its ideas.

He had ups and downs in his business life, and when he had a surplus, he was generous in having his hand open to all. However, in his spiritual growth, we saw him specifically during the time he was in straitened circumstances. At the time that our mother would light Sabbath candles in the old, deep copper candlesticks, in place of the silver candlesticks that had four lions mounted on every base, the splendor of the sole house that remained to him from the days of prosperity, and now sold off in order to settle debts – the faces of the family members were saddened, and the face of our father was radiant from the discharge of his responsibility to tradition, and the Sabbath candles, in the copper candlesticks, gave sevenfold the amount of light.

I do not recall any instance that he was either a plaintiff or a defendant in a court of law. He would say: to the three things by which a person is recognized, it is necessary to add a fourth – his righteousness. It is thought that if he is righteous towards his friend – he is free to descend to his status in life. A person who is righteous can descend to the level of his friend, and content himself, and occasionally, in this manner, he can demonstrate and prove his righteousness to 'the whole world.' It was not on only one occasion, that he raised the example of the persona of Shimon Margulies, who never descended to the level of the common people, even in the time he was just.

He was not involved int the disputes over 'honors' in the *Kloyz*, seeing in them, the hand of the Evil Inclination, having no other 'goods' to present here.



Page 112: (Top, Right): The Ringel Family (Bottom, right): The Woliner Family ז"ל

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125 Literally 'to see each other again,' used as a good-bye.

He admired and respected people of elevated standing and those who engaged in good deeds and above all others – his younger brother R' Anshel of Dobromyl,' and positioned himself towards him as a student before his teacher.

As something to give him spiritual direction, he had the elevated life that came with the spare and limited resources to which they had accustomed themselves, even of their own will, this being the Jewry of Eastern Galicia – by contrast to those in the West. Yet it was from West Galicia, from which he got his good education – that R' Yaakov Yitzhak was imbued with a surfeit of affection, a pleasant disposition, and a good heart.

Of his loving person I remember:

... The tears of his age standing in his eyes, at the time he was privileged to bring his first son, while still a child, to his *Rebbe*, R' Issachar Dov זצ"ל of Belz, at the occasion of the latter's visit to Rawa, to obtain a blessing of 'welcome;' And the *Rebbe* rolled up his long sleeve around his palm, because the hands of the little boy were busy, and he took the extended hand of the child being aided by the father.

... The tears of a loyal officer that my father let fall, like a baby, when after twenty years, the news reached him of the passing of his *Rebbe*.

... The time he took me in his arms, we were alone, at the outbreak of the First World War, and ran with me to the 'Courtyard' in the midst of blood, fire and smoke, that pull at me to this day, only without the enfolding and comforting arms of my father.

... The sorrow on his face when he went off to war, and the joy upon his return, even though he returned as one of the defeated army.

... Of the Saturday nights, how he danced and sang with us children, we were seven, the tunes being '*Ish Hesed Hayah*,' and '*Al Tira Avdi Yaakov*.'

... The nights of Hanukkah, how he presided at the head of the table, as on the Sabbath and Festivals, playing *'Kvitlach'* with us, and 'losing' all of his money to us.

... The look of terror in his eyes, during those minutes of our final departure from one another, before the train sunders the connection to his son, the *Alte Kloyz* and their influence, to take him to a distant world, alien and dangerous.. The time of a whisper in his hear, as if it were a form of spiritual nourishment for the journey, a comprehensive tractate of education made complete by three sentences made up of three words each.

★

I saw him, with my inner eye, in the final moment of his life. In those very years of 5702-5703 [1942-1943], of those days that were not days, and those nights that were not nights, having been

hurled into the Gehenna of the nether regions: Belzec. At the approach to the city, there is a bare stretch all horizon, a sullen red sun hung from the dull heavens. My father sensed in me (?). In rebellion, he flung away the shovel out of his hand for digging of his own grave, and the murderer who stood over him assault him and split my father's head open.

In the blink of an eye, my father yet was able to call out in my direction: 'Know that I have not left you any inheritance.' These words that weighed on me for years, took on the form of some sort of 'will' at a time of stating a polemic of 'retribution.'

At that same time, I stood beside the sickbed of my dear mother Glik'l ע"ה, at the time she gave up her pure soul to The Creator.

I will, with this, also memorialize the memory of my dear brothers and sisters: Id'l-Pesha and her husband Yitzhak Fand and the children, Itt'l-Malka and her husband Shimon Haftel, Moshe-Shmuel, Rachel and Tzivia who were 4exterminated in the Holocaust, and Sholom-Eliezer whose traces vanished in the battlefields of Russia.

I will, additionally, memorialize the parents of my wife, Shmuel Meir Woliner and Chaya Feiga the daughter of R' Moshe Blaustein of Rawa, and her brother Dov-Berisz that yearned for the Land, but was not privileged to get there, and her sister Chana who succeeded in deceiving the murderers and managed to exit from Poland but was killed in Germany in Allied bombing, and her aunt Sarah and her daughter Malka, תנצב.ה

'Agudat Israel' in the City and Its Activities

With the outbreak of the First World War, all of the *Kloyzes* and houses of study in the city were emptied of the occupants of their benches, except for the elderly. The elderly Aryeh Hebenstreit, the stepbrother of Abrahm'chi Czwok the merchant, who did his military service in the city, was the only one to look after the direction of the *Alte Kloyz* while in military uniform. Most of the eligible men went off to the barracks and war fronts, and a minority escorted the Rebbe to his exile barracks and war fronts, and a minority escorted the Rebbe to his exile in Ratzfert and Munkacs in distant Hungary and were 'neutral' in the war between their beloved Kaiser and the Czar who hated them.


ספר
למודים בנסים

Page 113: (Top, Left):Frontispiece of the book, 'Limudim B'Nissim.'

With the end of the Great War, and the smaller wars that followed it, the men returned home. After being distant for some years from the way of life of the *Hasidim* of the city, they returned changed from what they had been before they left the city. They became aware of new ideas of Zionism, and joined its political organizations in the city, in all of its branches. Every man with a sense of self-worth was thirsty for community work of some sort, to the extent of wanting to 'belong' to something.


„אגודת-ישראל"
מודעה!
חגיגת סיום ופתיחת הש"ס

Page 113: (Bottom, Right):Announcement of a Siyyum *Event Sponsored by* Agudat *Israel*

Among the cluster of young men that grew up in the *Kloyz* during the war years, there were: Mordechai & Nathan Kessler, David'chi Mund, Eliyahu Eilbaum, Pesach Blaustein, Yitzhak Shlomo Reisler, Yehoshua Reichler, Moshe Mendl Gottesman, Moshe Mendl Meiseles, Abba Sperber,



Page 114: (Bottom, Left): **Tze'irei 'Agudat *Israel' 1933***

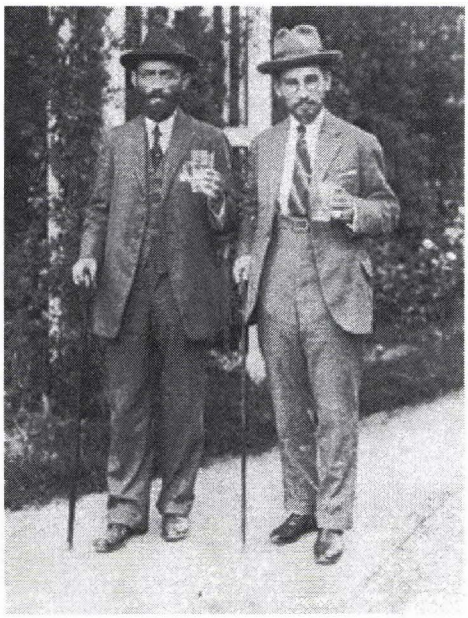
Standing (R to L): Moshe Halpern, Yehoshua, Shlomo Altman, Yitzhak Shlomo Reizler, Pesach Blaustein, R' Noah Berger, Aharon Nesser, Yaakov Hirsch Sperber, Moshe Nahum Klinger, Mordechai Haberstaub.

Seated (First Row): David Birnbaum, Nathan Kessler, Monusz Linder, A. M. Ringel, Moshe Mendl Meiseles, David Mund, Chaim Margulies, Hirsch Redlich, Mardisz Garfinkel.

Seated (Second Row): Asher Hahn, Pinia Gottesman, Meir Laukran, Naphtali Urber, Yaakov Kessler-Garfinkel, Lejzor Frankel, Aharon Chaim Reiss.

Meir Birnbaum, Monusz Linder, and others. The reputation of the '*Agudat* Israel,' and its work and educational activities reached them, and they desired to 'join' it. Also, it crowned the organizations, and proposed an ideology to the young people (merchandise at that time went over to the merchants on the Jewish street), there were symbols, medallions, 'unions,' libraries and newspapers.

As far back as the second half of the nineteenth century, Belz fashioned modern tools, in its war against the *Maskilim* and assimilationists, in the form of a party, and a newspaper named '*Makhzikei HaDass*.' It is told, that when R' Yehoshua of Belz זצ"ל turned to the *'Sfat Emet*,' the father of R' Abraham Mordechai Alter of Ger זצ"ל, the founder of the '*Agudah*' and asked him to be listed on



Page 114: (Top, Left):R' Mendl Seif and his friend, R' Mendl Khanales Malovich from Lubicz הי"ד

the newspaper '*Makhzikei HaDass*' – he did not refuse, but rather ordered it to be destroyed when it arrived, because he did not want to distract his sons from the study of Torah.

In the lead-up to the First World War, at the time of the organization of the *Agudah* by the luminaries of Torah study and of *Hasidism*, Belz was still in the 'exile' of Hungary, and its sympathies did not manifest themselves in the organization of this grouping. It actually opposed the organization of an entity of this kind with all the force of its influence. The will of those to create something 'for young children,' to the extent possible.

After the construction of the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, on the eve of the outbreak of the War, no further houses of worship were added in the city. However, the force of war tossed a cohort of new, religiously observant elements, thirsty of community activities, as a response to the secular undertakings about them.

The ADMo"R R' Aryeh Leibusz Rokeach, the son of R' Yehoshua of Belz זצ"ל, who was the *Bet-Din Senior* of Magierow, put down his roots in Rawa after the war, and collected a host of *Hasidim* about him from that city and its surroundings. R' Abraham Klahr, the owner of the plaster calcining factory, was one of the leading activists in this group.

The ADMo"R R' Yitzhak Landman, a man content with sitting in his tent, a sensitive soul and given to pensiveness, the son of R' Menachem Mendl, great-grandson of R' Uri of Strelsk, זצ"ל, grounded in *Kabbalah*, and the author of the book, '*Limudim B'Nissim*,' and '*Drushei Yom Yom*,' and others – moved from his residence in Potelycz to Rawa, and acquired a following of supporters and admirers. The grandson of R' Sholom, he was one of the activists of the '*Agudah*' in the city. R' Moshe Shmuel Marfeld, an enlightened man, possessed of acuity and was a *Maskil* – was one of those who stood among those who frequented his house.

R' Todros, the grandson of R' Sholom of Belz זצ"ל, who was the ADMo"R of Nemierow up to the war, designated Rawa as the place where he would reside after the war. After he passed away, his place was filled by his son, R' Sholom. He, his sons, R' Mordechai and Eliezer, and their daughters – in their simplicity, the pleasantness of their demeanor, and in their graciousness with which they received everyone who came into their home – transformed their hose of worship into a magnet for the talented young people with an energy for undertaking activity on behalf of the community. R' Noah Berger, R' Bunim Goldstein, R' Getzl Rubin, R' Baruch Fast, and R' Ephraim Blatt demonstrated with their activity in the *Agudah*, that the home of R' Sholom was a good school for them in learning how to perform faithful public service.

The adherents of the Agudah were dispersed throughout all of the houses of worship in the city: R' Shmuel Hoch and his skilled son-in-law R' Hirsch Leib Bogen, and Rabbi Yehuda Pollack – in the '*Zamd Bet HaMedrash*;' R' Leib'leh Zauerbrun – in the *Alte Kloyz*; R' Uri Zucker – in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*.

In the summer of 5688 [1928], in a narrow room, a branch of the Agudah was established in the city. As the Chair, R' Moshe Shmuel Marfeld was selected, his Vice Chair – R' Uri Zucker, Recording Secretary – Rabbi Yehuda Pollack. As was the custom of all parties in the city, a large 'Activities Committee' was formed, and smaller 'committees,' for which minutes were recorded and decisions taken – and all came to fruition. Belz was opposed to this, was enraged, and interfered. This edifice risked disintegrating almost immediately after its construction, were it not for the wide-ranging understanding of R' Uri. He, while being opposed by all of the active workers, understood how to explain that the fundamental principle in the organization of the *Agudah* was to accept the guidance of the leader of Torah study and *Hasidism*. And that there was no purpose in fighting for the privilege of a specific form of control that does not fall into line with that in substance. He preferred to be from 'one of the insulted who do not hurl insults themselves' to open up those productive activities that will blunt the arrows of opposition.

R' Uri, the son of the R' Yehoshua, the Ritual Slaughterer and Inspector from Uhniv, who fortified a place for himself and his sons in a place past the great city of Lvov, was the son-in-law of R' Mordechai Gimpel Hahn. He gave his lessons in modesty at the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, and was not counted among the distinguished Jews of that location. With his entry into the work of the Agudah, he manifested all of his talents – the skill of leadership, an engaging facilitator, a convincing and arousing speaker, and above all – a man of considerably personal magic. His influence was recognized in an the issues of the city. His regular lesson in '*Daf Yomi*' and his lectures at the *Agudah* attracted a large following. The gap between the *Eizerneh Kloyz* and the '*Schul*' that always served as a platform for Dr. Mandel to his political talks, in the various election contests, was transformed into a platform for R' Uri as well, that drew a large audience of attentive listeners. In his home, where he wife Feiga warmly welcomed the members, he revealed himself as a loyal intimate of the great orators and cantors.

The '*Bais Yaakov*' school for girls was opened, due to the effort and financial support of R' Noah Berger, and his brother-in-law R' Bunim Goldstein, whose generous hand was open to all manner of beneficial undertakings, under the direction of the teacher Szifra Weisenfeld-Tukhawer. The registration exceeded expectations; and among those registered – the daughters of the most prominent of the *Hasidim* of the city. The presentation that the director had made for the dedication of the school was an attraction in the city, and under pressure from the mothers, she returned and presided on all evenings of the dedication. A '*Bnot Agudat* Israel' organization was also founded, in which the *Hasidic* girls developed a significantly branched educational program. In the place of societies for boys together with girls – there was a vehicle of talented Jewish girls to both hear and present views



Page 115: (Top, Right): R' Moshe Rekhess הי"ד



Page 115: (Top, Left): Shmuel, Shema'leh Rekhes ז"ל *Passed away in Montevideo, 12 Tammuz, 5720. 7.7.1960*

on matters pertaining to Judaism. In the place of libraries filled with novels – there were books about great men in Israel, to which the ear of a mother could also be inclined. In the place of plays of strange names – '*Fish'keh der Krumer*,' '*Yosh'eh Kalb*,' and '*Mash'keh Khazzer*,' – there were



Page 115: (Bottom): 'Hannah and Her Seven Sons' – A Play of the Hebrew School, In the Year 1930

plays of '*Hannah and Her Seven Sons*,' and '*The Cruse of Oil*,' broadening knowledge and enriching the soul. The flow to organize the youth by secular means weakened, and quarrels between mother and daughters ceased, and the respect for the *Agudah* in the city rose. The number of its members grew, and among its adherents, many of the respected members of the city could be counted, which included the following:

R' Mendl'eh Seif, one of the dignitaries of the '*Blekhener Kloyz*' and one of the important *Hasidim* from Belz. All those coming from Belz knew how to imitate the call of the Gabbai R' Aharon Shia , with his Russian pronunciation that had a long 'L:' 'Mendl'eh Seif! Let him come near' when he called to him to have him approach the table and circle over at the *Rebbe's Tisch*. Because of his diverse businesses, he was a man of the 'wide world,' and in settling down in Rawa, he brought with him an orientation to life that was regal. It was his son, Yaakov, who was the first to drop the idea of the *Agudah* before the youth of the Kloyz. And whose eye did this energetic young man not attract, when he walked by on the street, in his radiant *Hasidic* garb and with a large *Gemara* volume from the rich library of his father's house?

His son-in-law was an offshoot of Torah luminaries. He carried his ordinary name, and the name of his family, that of one of the great Torah scholars, one of the outstanding students of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch – R' Pinchas Horowitz. His cognizance was directed always so as to place attention to the *Agudah*, and he was always among the chosen of its institutions.

R' Moshe Rekhes, also was one of the dignitaries of the '*Blekhener Kloyz*' and one of the important *Hasidim* from Belz. A lover of books, and of pleasant conversation. His wife, Rozhi was good-hearted and gracious, and it was a pleasure to visit in their home which was a place that throbbed with life. Their pride and joy was their eldest son, R' Fishl, who raised a family to splendor in Oswiecim, and as a master of Torah, raised his sons in the ways of Torah and *Hasidism;* as to their son Nehemiah, he was a successful man and one of integrity; as to their daughter Feiga'leh, who skillfully ran their business in the center of the city; as to their son Chaim, that was not to be counted among the idlers, occupying corners in 'societies; and last-but-not-least – their son Shema'leh, who then sat in the Kloyz over the Torah, and was counted among its talented young people.



Page 116: (Top, Left): R' Leibusz Shapiro
הי"ד

R' Leib'leh Zauerbrun, was one of the dignitaries of the *Alte Kloyz*, and a Belz *Hasid*. An alert and active man, he was possessed of a courageous heart. He was the only one of the worshipers of the *Kloyz* to belong to the *Agudah*, and he was active in all areas of its undertaking. Because he was accepted in the broad ranks of the Jews of the city, as a result of his good intentions, and the way he conducted himself in discourse and interaction with people, he was selected by the *Agudah* as a member of the 'Community' council.

R' Abraham'chi Schechter, was one of the pleasurable leaders of prayer in the city, and one of the most dearly beloved. Full of life and optimism, he instilled it in everyone with whom he came in contact. In Belz, where he was one of its *Hasidim*, it was said that if one rummaged around in his bag – you would find a Zionist 'raffle ticket.' He extended a charitable hand to the *Agudah* in every proper undertaking. He loved life, and was an ardent supporter of everything that gave it flavor.

Baruch Post, was a man of many business interests and constantly busy. His state of being busy, and his running around were derived from his business affairs. He guarded his membership in the *Agudah* by providing from the better part of his own money; he would, generally, send his donations by way of a messenger, because he was that busy with business. With the establishment of the 'Kopiecki Cooperative Bank' R' Baruch became harnessed to that endeavor as well, and extended the better part of his assistance to it.



Page 116: (Top, Right):Israel Hahn
הי"ד

R' Leibusz Shapiro was one of the great admirers of R' Uri. He did not miss a single one of his lessons, nor even one of his lectures, to the various venues he spoke to. We had a fortuitous disappointment that he caused us, when we recognized in him up close, in our childhood, when we were inclined to pranks. In the bath house, when he looked at us with his sparkling green eyes, we congratulated ourselves to have recognized a Jew with a warm heart, the first to pay, and add to, the levies and donations on the land. One can see his childlike purity emanating from his good eyes.

R' Getzel Rubin, the son of Leib'leh the sharp one, devoted himself entirely in his work to the *Heder 'Yesodei HaTorah'* founded by the *Agudah*. R' Mordechai Frankel and R' Israel Wachsman, who had a great deal of tribulation in their education work, helped out with all their might in the founding of this institution.



Page 117: Pirkhei Agudat *Israel, with Mordechai Sperber in the Center*

R' Akiva Hamerling[126], the son-in-law of R' Benjamin Szur, and R' Yitzhak Pamp, the son-in law of R' Shlomo Haberstaub; both of them were outstanding Torah scholars and excellent educators. They threw themselves into the cultural work of the '*Tze'irei Agudah*,' and set aside time for themselves to engage in Torah study. They served as a great influence among the young to make *aliyah*. Several went through formal training, and planned to make aliyah, but did not realize their ambition. As to Yaakov Hirsch Sperber, he had already been granted a certificate from '*Agudat* Israel,' but he was trapped in the snare of the Holocaust.

The skilled young people occupied a large role in all of the activities of the *Agudah* in the city. David Mund, Moshe Mendl Meiseles, and Hirsch Redlich served in the capacity of Recording Secretary. R' Hirsch Leib Halberthal, the sone of the well-known *Hasid* R' Yeshayahu Rawer, who published essays that were full of substance in the newspapers of the *Agudah*, under the pseudonym of *'Hasid ben Hasid*,' and last-but-not-least – Israel Hahn, who spent many hears in the capital city of Warsaw, and would come and go to the various central institutions of the *Agudah*, and upon his return home, would work a great deal to banish the spirit of provincialism from the minds of the young people in the small town.

In the year 1938, a year before the Holocaust, during a festivity to mark the *Siyyum* of the *Shas* in the second round of the *Daf Yomi*, R' Uri Zucker said, in his spoken homily, as he connected the subject of the *Siyyum* of the *Shas*, 'He who alters the *Halakha* every day, is guaranteed to have a

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126 The sole place where this name is rendered as 'Hamerling,' and not Hamerlin.

place in the World to Come' – with the beginning of the *Shas,* 'From what time onwards does one read the *Shema*,' and finishes with: 'The reading of the *Shema* symbolizes the *Sanctification of the Name*, and also assures a life in the World to Come.'

The *Sanctification of the Name* was the core of their lives, and their death.

Recollections of the City Where I Was Born

By Shmuel Adler

As a scion of Rawa, I think we are commanded, as the Jews of Rawa and its environs, to write the record of the glory of the city – not especially only from an historical perspective, but rather specially from the standpoint of community education and religion, in order that memory of it remain for coming generations.

There are few historians who undertook to research the history of Rawa and its environs, and because of this there is no detailed information based on the initial settlement of Jews in this place. Accordingly, as we come to etch out the faint lines of the chapter dealing with the origins of Rawa, we are compelled to resort to using those writings, knowledge, and scattered remnants from various sources of different periods of time.

I make no pretense to engage in history, but according to the inferences in [various] sources, it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that the city was [already] in existence before the fifteenth century, however, it was destroyed and rebuilt anew by one of the nobility in the year 1455, and passed along as an inheritance to a variety of owners, in a simple transaction, until the beginning of the 18th century. From that time on, Jews from a variety of places began to take up residence also in Rawa and its environs.

From 16th century sources, the period of the flowering of Torah study in Poland, with the arrival of the Jews from the lands to the west, the names of the prominent rabbis is found recorded as follows: R' Moshe Ka"Tz, the student of the *MaHarSH"Ah*, who served as the Rabbi in Narol or Lubicz beside Rawa, and participated in the '*Vaad Arba Aratzot*[127]' in Lublin. In that same period, in the year 1575, when one of the leaders of the sect of 'Aryans,' the priest Martin Zahowiec, composed a book called '*Christian Discourses*,' he told, in an accusatory fashion of the abuses directed towards the Jews and their faith – and he was countered by the Jewish doctor, R' Yaakov Nachman of Belzec, adjacent to Rawa, in his composition, '*Maaneh Yaakov*.'

In the year 1618 (5378) The *Gaon,* R' David HaLevi סג"ל (Segal) was taken on as the Rabbi and Spiritual Leader in Potelycz, being one of the great Torah scholars out of whose mouth, direction emanated to all corners of the Diaspora. Known by the rubric of the title of his book, '*Turei-Zahav*,' and he was the son-in-law to R' Joel Sirkis, the author of '*Bayit Khadash*.'

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127 The Council of the Four Lands permitted by the secular authorities to enable the Jews to govern themselves.



Page 118: (Left): Leib Kastner and his Wife Sarah and their Daughter Czarna הי"ד

The years of *Ta"kh* and *Ta"t* (1648-9) were years of trouble for the Jewish people, this being the time that the hordes of Chmielnicki pervaded the cities of Poland and Galicia. Hundreds of communities were wiped out, and among them was Rawa. R' (Nathan) Neta Hannover, one of the survivors, tells in his book, '*Yevayn Metzullah*,' that in the vicinity of Rawa alone, more than twenty thousand souls were killed.

It was only the very few who were able to flee and save their lives. Among those who were saved was the Rabbi, R' Moshe *HaKohen,* from the Rawa area. He reached Metz in France, and there, was taken on as Rabbi of that location.

The son of this previously mentioned R' Moshe, R' Tuvia – according to professor S(imon) Dubnow – one of the Jewish doctors from Poland, that studied at the University of Padua, wrote the book '*Ma'asheh Tuvia*' whose content deals with medical matters, in accordance with the older science of that era, philosophical research, and other matters.

A little at a time, the Jews returned to Poland, and began to build new lives on the wreckage that Chmielnicki had left behind him.

The Rawa community developed over the generations, amidst decrees, assaults and suffering, until the rise of the Nazi *Abrogator*, who tore it out by the roots, its Jews, its houses of worship, and its institutions.

The Establishment of 'Mizrahi'

I spent my childhood years in Rawa. I remember the streets of the city, the walled houses and its side streets, in which I found my way, on the cold winter nights, with a lantern in hand, to the *Heder* of R' Issachar Gedalia's.

Those byways and side streets, in which the joyful laugh of the children of the city resonated – what a tragedy.

The'*Klapperheizl,*' home of the Rekhes family, a main artery of life in the city, became clogged.. We passed by it on our way to *Heder,* the residents of the city passed it by on their way to synagogue, to the *Bet HaMedrash* and the various *Kloyz* locations, it was past it that the heads and leaders and activists



Page 118: (Bottom, Right): A Group of B'nai Akiva Youth

went, those who were frequenters of the *Bet HaMedrash,* and the religious youth, in taking their first steps in the establishment of the *Mizrahi* movement, and '*Tze'irei Mizrahi*' in the city.

The path of the founders of *Mizrahi* and '*Tze'irei Mizrahi*' was not strewn with roses. The Zionist concept penetrated into Rawa as it had in the remaining cities of Galicia – at the end of the 19th century. But the *Mizrahi* concept was not yet accepted by certain specific ranks of religious Jews in Galicia. It was only thanks to the will and commitment of several of the comrades, that the idea put down roots in the city, and was able to win over hearts.

I can still remember the first regional committee meetings that took place in Rawa in one of the large rooms of the home of Sztokhammer-Kastner. Many representatives came there from the cities of the area, and at frequent intervals, leaders of the world organizations participated: Rabbi Y. L. Maimon, Rabbi Dr. Federbush, and Dr. Abraham Gutsdiner, may their memories be for a blessing. The accomplished activists of the city also stood out: R' Abraham Hoffenbratel – a Torah scholar, fluent in the mechanics of the Hebrew language, precise in his speech, resplendent in his dress, refined and noble, a man of dreams, and a man of means, a man of many virtues and accomplishments.

R' Ber'l Gerstenfeld – modest, a taciturn man who recedes into the background, and with that – an activist who does many things, a talented organizer, and always full of ideas for implementation.
R' Berisz Margulies – One of the representatives in the committees of the movement that stands out. He took very distinguished positions in Montevideo in public life, and in international religious institutions, and directed the weekly '*Moment*' there as the editor. He passed away at an early age.
R' Moshe Danziger – An enlightened man, a man versed in both the law and the legendary tales of our history, who excelled in the explanation of the subtleties of the teachings of the '*Ibn Ezra.*'

The comrades, Chaim Leib Lieberman, that dedicated educator, Shlomo Halberthal, Israel Guzhik, the brothers Lemel and Ber'l Wachs, Aharon Josefsberg, Saul Frankel, Moshe'li Ka"Tz and Herschel Goldberg – were workers striving to strengthen the Zionist movement in the city in general, and in the development of the *Mizrahi* movement in particular.

Members of My Family and those that Came to their Homes

The signs of blood and tears well up and rise before my eyes, and a heavy sorrow dominates my mood. Before me, I see the clear image of my dear mother, Sarah Gittl, who was killed by the Nazis in Sokal; the alert eyes of my grandmother Rachel Sztokhammer, whose sayings were replete with the wisdom of life; my uncle R' Mordechai Frankel and his wife, Ser'li and their precious children: Eliezer,



Page 120: A Reception for R' Berisz Margulies ז"ל, a Mizrahi activist in Montevideo



Page 119: ***The* Mizrahi *Activists in the City***
Sitting (From the Right): Israel Bodek, Haberstaub, Ber'l Gerstenfeld, Moshe Ka"Tz, Abraham Hoffenbratel, Lemel Wachs, Leib Kastner
Standing (From the Right): Shlomo Spritzer, Yehoshua Fischler, Sperber, Yaakov Hirsch Szitz, Linder, Shmuel Frankel, Gimpel Sztokhl

Moshe and his son; and my uncle R' Eliyahu Kastner and his wife Dvora and their children: Leib and Sarah his wife, and their daughters Czarn'i, Manya and her husband Hirsch Leib, and their children; the precious children of my uncle Bendet Sztokhammer: Reuben and Pearl, Bel'tzi and her husband Mendl Weingast, Hirsch'eleh, and Abba Sztokhammer and their families. May all of their memories be for a blessing.

I see the precious Jews of Rawa in my mind's eye. The city in which *Hasidism* and Zionism were as one, a *Hasidism* that bubbled up from the depths, and an ardent Zionism that yearned for an even better future. And, rising in my memory, are those precious images that I came to recognize in the home of my grandmother, which I would visit from time-to-time.

R' Simcha Haberman – His external appearance spoke of respect, being a tall man, with his beard reaching down to his midriff, nobility and refinement imprinted on his visage, pleasant in demeanor, a God-fearing scholar, a man of substance, one of the personalities in which Rawa took great pride.

R' Leibl'eh Zauerbrun – A man of erect posture, nattily dressed, a man of good manners, everything about him saying respect. His wife, Chana'leh the refined and noble woman, was beloved by all who came to the house of my grandmother.

I remember R' Mordechai Axler as always leaning on his cane, and I remember R' Mikhl'eh Meiseles with his small but penetrating eyes. Both of them were partners with my grandmother in the business of preserves. They were masters of the *Mishna* and the *Gemara.* During my recess time from school, that I spent at my grandmother's house – they always tested me on my studies, and revealed considerable fluency in the various interpretations of the Talmud.

I knew Benzion Ginsberg, the son-in-law of Lemel and Klar'l Gortler, a member of the editorial staff of the '*Lemberger Tageblatt*,' more intimately. He would ignite the hearts of listeners with the excellent speeches that he gave in the *Bet HaMedrash* of the place that I lived, Krystynopol.

R' Yoss'li the brother of Leib'l Zauerbrun lived in Krystynopol. There, he served as the head of the community. In addition to this, he was a member of the local municipal council. He was the Chair of the local Merchants Society, active in community and religious institutions, and an adherent of the religious Zionist movement. He was a Torah scholar and ran a lesson in the Bet HaMedrash.

He was exterminated in the Holocaust together with his family הי"ד.

In this enumeration, I will also put forward my uncle, my Teacher and Rabbi, one of the luminaries of religious direction in Eastern Galicia, the modest and *Hasidic* R' Moshe Helman זצ"ל. He was born in Nemierow beside Rawa-Ruska.



Page 121: Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush, זצ"ל

During his youth, he was known to be exceptionally intelligent. He was ordained by the *Gaonim* of his time at a young age, among them the *Gaon* of Berezhany, the author of 'The Responsa – of the *MaHarSha" M.* At the beginning, he served as the Headmaster of the Yeshiva in Oswiecim, under the *Gaon* R' Yehoshua Pinchas Bombach זצ"ל. After this, he was appointed as the Headmaster of the Yeshiva in Bacau (Romania), and among his students who were privileged to have him, was the *Gaon* R' Meir Shapiro, the founder of '*Yeshivat Khakhmei Lublin*.' Up to the outbreak of the war, he served as the *Dayan* and *Righteous Teacher* in Krystynopol. He fled to Oleszyce, to his daughter and her family, and there he was taken out and killed by the Nazis.

May this memorial book serve as a monument to the Jewry of Rawa that has been diminished, a memorial to her luminaries, and to the masses of those honest and straight people, who gave their lives in *Sanctification of the Name*, and a sacred memorial to that very resplendent community that met its end in blood and fire. הי"ד.

Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush זצ"ל

By Shmuel Adler

Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush, the son of R' Herschel Federbush of ¯urawica, was born in Narol and was raised and educated in Rawa-Ruska. He [first] studied in *Heders*, and afterwards with the Rabbi *Gaon* R' Yaakov Teppich זצ"ל the Director of Justice in Rawa.

At the age of 19, he received his ordination to give [religious] direction by the *Gaon* R' Sholom Mordechai *HaKohen*, the *MaHaRSha"M* of Berezhany, and by the *Gaon* R' Meir Arukh, the *Bet-Din Senior* of Tarnow. He stood for his graduation examinations, and in the year 1917, was accepted at the University of Vienna.

In Vienna, he also studied at the Rabbinical Seminary with Prof. Szurtz. In the year 1922, he completed his studies in philosophy, history, and sociology, and was awarded the title of Doctor of Philosophy.

After the completion of his studies in 1922, her returned to Lvov and was elected on the national Jewish ticket as a representative to the Polish Sejm. In that same period, he organized anew, the *Mizrahi* institution in Galicia, and in the year 1925, was elected as the President of the *Mizrahi* in Eastern Galicia.

He participated as a representative in the Zionist Congresses, and in the year 1927 was elected to the Zionist Executive Committee. He participated in various international committees, including the committee for the protection of minorities in Switzerland. As one of the founders of the World Jewish Congress, he served as the head of the culture division.

He was among the founders of the international religious educational institutions such as MT"T (*MiTzion Teytzei Torah*) in Galicia.

In 1930, he was invited to serve as the Chief Rabbi of the Jews of Finland, and also served as a lecturer at the University of Helsingfors.[128] In Finland, he published one of his books in Finnish and Swedish.

In the year 1940, he left to go to the United States, and there he occupied several important positions in Zionist, community and cultural institutions, and served as the Rabbi in the Salanter Synagogue in New York.

While yet a young man, he stood out as an exceptional intellect and a man of thought. He published hundreds of research findings in Hebrew and other tongues, on a variety of subjects, and in ruminations about Israel, apart from his casuistic skill in Torah matters – he had an impressive command in many other subjects.

May his memory be for a blessing.

To the Persona of My Father & Teacher R' Israel Schwert זצ"ל

By Bluma Rubin-Schwert

My father זצ"ל R' Israel Schwert, the Director of Justice of the Sacred Congregation of Rawa Ruska, was the first-born son of R' Hirsch'eleh the Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector of the city. My grandfather ז"ל, R' Hirsch'eleh was a wise man, and a formidable scholar the likes of which were not many in the city, and he was qualified to be a Rabbi, but apparently he did not want to be a Ritual Slaughterer, but the *Hasidim* opposed his appointment. Despite his extensive knowledge, and his thorough knowledge of the *Poskim*, he was compelled to pass on the rabbinate, and remained a Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector. And it is perhaps for this reason, that he did

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128 Indigenous spelling for Helsinki

not give my father permission to travel to Belz after his Bar Mitzvah, and become a 'sitter' there, because he was so incensed at the *Hasidim*.



Page 122: The Rabbi, R' Israel Schwert זצ"ל

My father was [recognized as] exceptionally intelligent at an early age, and my grandfather R' Hirsch'eleh, despite being very busy, dedicated time of his own to instruct him, because there was simply not an appropriate teacher in the city at all. At the age of thirteen, he began to study with the Rabbi *Gaon* R' Dovberish Rapoport, the author of *'Derekh HaMelech.'* His mouth was replete with praise for the young lad, and when R' Simcha, the Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector, the neighbor of the Rabbi heard this, he decided that he would become the groom for his granddaughter Esther – and lo, this was indeed my mother, the firstborn daughter of R' Yehuda Jonah the Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector. Being a man of means, he provided him with a handsome dowry, and my mother was at that time only 11 years old, and my father was 14 and a half, and after 4 years, the wedding took place. After the wedding, when he had departed his father's premises, he began to travel to Belz, and became a 'sitter.' After 4 years, my father had two daughters of which I am the first-born. We lived at my grandfather's house, and all our needs were covered by him. When my mother became pregnant a third time, she traveled to Belz to receive the blessing of the *Rebbe*. It was her entreaty to give birth to a son, and that the delivery be an easy one, and she complained that it was difficult for her to be under her parents' wing for such a long time, and she begged the Rebbe to send him home, because there was a desire for him to be retained as a Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector, and he would be able to support her; but the *Rebbe* opposed her, and said: 'God forbid, for he will not be a Ritual Slaughterer, and for a husband of this caliber, it is worth suffering.' And when the son was born, Aryeh'leh, after two daughters – the joy was considerable. This took place at the time of the Festival of Sukkot 5670 (1909), and my father continued to sit in Belz.



Page 123: (Top, Left): My Sister Czarna הי"ד

In the year 5671 (1910), it was decided to build the '*Eizerneh Kloyz*,' and the *Rebbe* of Belz was invited to the celebration of the 'laying of the cornerstone.' When the *Rebbe* reached the parcel, on which the Kloyz was ultimately to be built, he asked for the *Bet-Din* of the city to be invited, and specifically called out the names: R' Joseph, R' Yekl'i and R' Israel.

On that same evening, the head of the community, R' Yoss'li Marz, who was also a Belz *Hasid*, called for a sitting of the community council, and on the following morning, the *Shammes* arrived and brought the first salary payment to my father in his capacity as the *Dayan* of the city. Then my father was compelled to discontinue his residence in Belz, but he would travel there at very frequently intervals, together with is three sons.

He succeeded in giving his sons an education in Torah, instilling a fear of God, and teaching them the *Hasidism* of Belz. He has, however, issues with his daughter: we were in a coterie that was not palatable to the *Hasidim*, and in the '*Alte Kloyz*' which was called the *'Belzer Kloyz*,' they would be saying all manner of things about us. But my father did not conduct any investigation of what we did, because he suspected we would lie – he would say – and he was alter to transgressions. And the daughters observed their father's wishes carefully, because they respected him, because his love for us was out of the ordinary. In him, we saw a miraculous man.

Our home was like most of those in the city, in which the parents educated their children raising them to study Torah and do good deeds; yet in the education given to us by our father, and in his comportment, we saw a great difference from what we perceived in the homes of our friends. Two instances will give testimony to this:



Page 123: (Bottom, Right): My Brothers: Aryeh'leh, Yitzhak Isaac, and Moshe Hirsch'eleh הי"ד

My father once came across a box of letters, and out of curiosity he took out one letter and began to read it. When my sister Czarna ע"ה saw this, she advised him: 'Father, is this not the Interdiction of our Rabbi Gershom!' – he did not say a word, but rather, returned the letter to its place. And we, no longer hid the box of letters, because we knew he would not touch them. We saw the opposite of this in the homes of our friends, who, after we told them of this incident, when she repeated this tale before her own father, at the time he received a letter from the post – he returned it to her, because there was no 'Interdiction' to her father, and additionally, he slapped her in the face.

Another incident is tied up with the *Shammes* of the city, R' Hona'leh. His wife went into labor on Thursday of the week, and because he was a Jewish man who was a pauper, and he did not have the money to pay to the doctor – he waited until the Sabbath, at which point he would be able to turn to Dr. Christianfeld, the son-in-law of owner of the Ettinger property, who was a rigorously observant Jew, and would not take money on the Sabbath. The doctor ordered her to be taken immediately to Lvov, because she was in great danger. Hona'leh ran to the *Alte Kloyz*, and found a few worshipers still there among those being late in leaving [the Sabbath], and told him of his distressed circumstances. My father had already returned home from prayers, and they came to ask him a 'question:' That is, would it be permissible to gather monies for the woman in labor, to defray the cost of the trip in the Sabbath. My father rules, that they could immediately gather the monies. And to two of them, he called out and said: 'I will give you the first donation.' It was then, that one of the two advised him to call our little brother Hirsch'li, three years old, that he should take the money out of the chest drawer for them. And to this, my father said to them: 'God forbid, he is yet a minor, and he does not yet understand what it means to save a life. I will close the door, in order that he not see his father touching money on the Sabbath, and at the same time, I will hand it to you.'

The two previously mentioned Jewish men thanked my father, saying: 'We have already earned the wages of doing a mitzvah, because in this we have learned an important chapter in the education of children.'

The *Rebbe* of Belz held my father in high esteem, and asked of him to teach his son. And my father was happy to fulfil the will of the *Rebbe*, and from that time on, he sat day and night with his son R' Aharon'yu and taught him. After the passing of the *Rebbe*, R' Issachar Dov of Belz was the one who filled his place.

When the *Rebbe*, R' Issachar Dov grew weak in the time of his old age, and was no longer able to blow the *Shofar* as was his custom – he passed the *Shofar* to my father, and from that time on, he was the '*Shofar Blower*' in Belz. And it is not an overstatement in this, having turned over his beloved son Mikhl to him, and also if he ever encountered a 'quandary' – he would ask my father, and would carry out the law in accordance with his decision.

My father also faced issues with his sons, despite the fact that they followed in his spirit as dedicated scholars.

My brother Arye'li was a formidable scholar, and when he was ten years old. There was already no suitable teacher for him in the city; my father, who was a very busy man, could not devote more than an hour a day to him. For the rest of the time, he sat in the *Alte Kloyz*, and studied by himself, and what he did not understand – he would ask those older than him. When he attained the age of *mitzvot*, my father did not permit him to prepare a speech for the celebration. He did not explain the nature of his refusal to him, but at home he said, that he knew that Arye'li was certainly qualified to prepare a speech worthy of being called a sermon, but would be better that he refrained from doing so because of possible emotional reaction.

Arye'li, who like the rest of us, was very careful to abide by the commandment to honor father and mother, could not at this time overcome his own impulse, and prepared a rather lengthy sermon secretly in writing. During the Bar-Mitzvah feast, the Bar-mitzvah went up on the table, took out a clutch of written pages, and entreated his father to permit him to read. His father gave him a strange look, and my brother folded everything up, and came down from the table. In the end, the Rabbis who were guests prevailed upon my father and he gave him permission to read – and Arye'li did not get emotional, nor did he in any way falter.

My father was greatly pleased to continue hearing for many more years afterwards, how well-learned luminaries would talk about and argue over the contents of this 'sermon.'

Arye'li wanted to attach himself to a number of his friends – with whom he studied together in the Alte Kloyz – who were preparing themselves to travel to Brody to receive ordination. However, my father objected to this in saying that many who get their ordination then cease their learning, because they thing that they know enough. Out of great love, my grandmother Rivka'li gave the money of the trip expenses to my bother, without my father's knowledge, and together with his all of his mates, he traveled off and received ordination. After wards, it was proven that his father was right; a

number of my brother's friends began giving up their study of one page a day. However, Arye'li continued with his studies as he had done previously, and after a year, he traveled, with the permission of his father, to Maciejów, to the '*Mishmeret Shalom*,' and obtained from him a designation of '*Hetayr Hora'ah*.[129]' My second brother, Isaac, was a man of considerable common sense, a Rabbi and scholar, but did not aspire to become a Rabbi.

My third brother, Hirsch'eleh also went in the same direction as his brothers, but his intentions regarding his future were as yet unknown to us.

We loved to carry on a discussion with our father. He was wise, a psychologist, and very knowledgeable in matters pertaining to medicine, from the various writings of the *Rambam*, which he knew entirely by heart. He also knew the entire *Shas* by heart, and all of his positions were oriented based on this knowledge. He was no only a man of robust soul, but also a man of healthy physique; occasionally, he would show us his strength picking up the entire *Shas* in one hand, in order to show us that a person not only needs to concern himself that the Shas be in his mind, but also needs to be concerned about the health of his body, and that the body be healthy and strong. And this is the way he cured us when we were little children.

When the cholera plague broke out after the First World War, my father showed us how to eat old bread, that he burned on the fire with garlic, and to drink tea with rum. During the night, he would go and deal with those sick with cholera. He would abide by all the rules of hygiene, and even used his two white '*kittls*' of his two grandfathers, R' Yehuda Jonah, and R' Hirsch'eleh, when he visited the sick, which he would alternate from one visit to the next. Our entire family opposed him doing this, out of fear that he would infect us all; but he did not stop and thereby saved many from death.

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He was a great expert in rendering legal religious decisions. He was invited to comment on all matters that were either of importance or complex, and it was in this way that he reached Lvov, to Rabbi Ziff, and even reached as far as Warsaw.

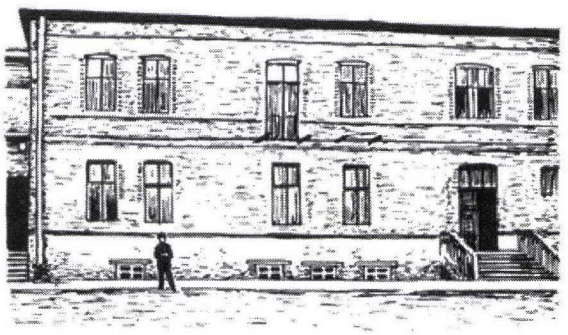
There was once a very large dispute in the city of Narol over the issue of the rabbinate in that location: the Belz *Hasidim* supported one of the two


סדור
אור הישר
Printed in Israel

Page 124: Frontispiece of the Book, 'Ohr HaYashar,' *the Belz Prayer book*

[129] A permit to 'give direction' in religious matters.

candidates for the rabbinate, but he also had many who opposed him. Not one of the candidates wanted to defer to the other, and the dispute became wrapped up in literal danger to life. When this became know in Belz, the *Rebbe* sent my father as an emissary and asked of him to travel there, and straighten out the matter. The opponents of Belz criticized my father in a letter, in which there were specific threats made, that he should not have the nerve to come to the city of Narol. On the following day, in the morning, when my father was supposed to travel, all members of the family came before him and pleaded – on the side of my mother, and the side of my father – that he should cancel his trip. But he did not cancel it: the *Rebbe* of Belz is sending him, and he is not afraid of any man. I the evening a telegram arrived: not to worry, everything is in order. And indeed, after he had heard the complaints [and arguments] of the [two] sides – he issued a ruling to the satisfaction of their will, including the will of those in opposition. When the *Hasidim* came afterwards to Belz, and told the *Rebbe* about the ruling of my father, he said: 'Blessed be the Lord, that I knew whom to send.'



Page 125: The Municipal Court Building of the City

Belz placed many responsibilities on my father, and he fulfilled them all to the satisfaction of the will of the *Rebbe*. I recall that in Galina Nowaria, the Rabbi there died and left no heirs. Two Rabbis put forth a large sum of money to the community, in order to acquire the rabbinate. The Belz *Hasidim* came to the *Rebbe* to ask his advice, as to which of the two they should take. The *Rebbe* replied to them: 'Give me a bit of time to think about this, and in another few days, I will tell you.' But they argued that in the city, there is no one even of whom an 'inquiry' can be made in regard to the question of qualifications. To this the *Rebbe* replied: 'I will send someone to you in a few days.' On that same day, a messenger reached my father, and conveyed to him, that the *Rebbe* requires that he travel there immediately. My father, as is understood, made haste and traveled off. After three days had passed, the people of the community came to the *Rebbe*, and said they are prepared to forego the money, and that they want my father as the Rabbi. And the *Rebbe* answered them, that my father was certainly going to come to Belz for the Sabbath, and he will talk to him about it. When my father asked the *Rebbe*, what is to be done? He replied: 'It is better to be the *Dayan* in Rawa.' We then knew that his destiny had been cast, and the carefully weighed intention of the *Rebbe* then also became understood.

When R' Sholom'ki, the son of the *Rebbe* was appointed Rabbi of Opatów, the *Rebbe* sent my father there for six weeks, to guide him in matters pertaining to the rabbinate. The people in the community complained, that it is not possible for him to leave the city for an extended period of time, but he was of his own mind – the behest of the *Rebbe* was more important that everything else. They were right, because he went missing at times, because of religious trials, and also because he was a *Mohel*. Many requested that only he be the one to circumcise their sons. There were instances, when he had to travel over the Sabbath to some distant village, to eat only some bread and herring, and to sleep abutting the baking oven (*pialik*) in the winter. 'This is a great mitzvah' – he would say – 'And for it, all is appropriate to do.' Once, on a Monday, the market day, a village woman came into our house and requested that my father circumcise the infant she was carrying in her arms, that had been born of the evening of Friday, and the '*Brit*' was supposed to have been on the Sabbath. My father asked her, why did she not invite him for that Sabbath to the village, to perform the mitzvah of circumcision in a timely manner? She cried and said, she had no possibility of coming except on the day in which the [local] gentile traveled to the market fair. My father entered the kitchen, and said that the new mother should be given food and drink, sent me to the known R' Henokh, to buy honey cakes (there was wine in the house), and with the assembly of a '*minyan*,' he consummated the '*Brit*.'

Sons and grandsons were born in the Belz 'courtyard, and not once was my father called their to serve as the *Mohel*. On one day, a messenger arrived from Belz, and called upon my father in the name of the *Rebbe* to circumcise one of his grandsons.' It is understood that my father traveled off immediately. On that same day, there was a '*Brit*' that took place at the home of one of the wealthy men of the city. However, a terrible mishap occurred at this '*Brit*:' During the feast afterwards, the infant suddenly died in the arms of the mother. The father came with complaint to the head of the community at that time, Dr. Joseph Mandel, and the latter understandably turned to my father, and my father composed himself and said: 'Firstly, if Belz calls me, I am prepared to even leave my son in the hands of others; secondly, if some ordinary person invites me to a festivity or a *Brit*, is it forbidden for me to travel there? And thirdly, I never take any monetary compensation for this kind of an undertaking.' In the house, my father said this was a 'miracle' of the *Rebbe*; the child was destined to die, and the *Rebbe* did not want the child to die on his hands.

At the time of the publication of the Belz prayer book, '*Ohr HaYashar*,' R' Shlomo Zalman Gurfinkel came to my father and said, that the *Rebbe* wants him to be the proofreader. My father was not enamored of such detailed work, but he was not inclined to refuse a request from Belz, and took on the proofreading task. Afterwards, R' Shlomo Zalman came to the *Rebbe*, asking him to examine the prayer book, and to sign off on it. The *Rebbe* said: 'There is no need for an examination if R' Israel was the proofreader' – and he signed it on the spot.

I remember two judgments of my father in which Belz was involved. My father wrote many wills, and for purposes of authorization, he would, from time-to-time have to appear at the local municipal court as a witness. And because a witness who gives testimony was required to take an oath – he had the consent of the gentile judges, that he will give his testimony, but he will only take an oath if one of the parties demanded it. This process remained in force for a long time, without anyone

demanding that he take an oath. This persisted until an incident occurred, and a wealthy man passed away in the city, whose will my father had drafted. The deceased had sons, who were Belz *Hasidim*, and one daughter. This daughter, being a spoiled child, was of the opinion that her father was supposed to have left her the lion's share of his wealth, and because this was not the case – she demanded of the judge to swear in my father, as a means of applying pressure on her brothers who had refused to give her anything from their share. My father was forbidden to refuse this, but he also was not quick to comply, and policemen came to arrest him.

One of the sons of the deceased ran to the *Alte Kloyz* to relate what was happening, and may of the Jews came to the courthouse, and tried to convince the daughter, wanting to dissuade he, and talking her into dropping her demands. Even the judge tried to reason with her: 'You are a very religious woman, with a shaven head, covered in a kerchief, and have you no fear of heaven to demand that the Rabbi do something that goes against the Torah? If I had it within my power to punish you – I would do it on the spot.' and she steamed.

My father sat between the policemen, glancing at his watch and saw that there was yet 20 minutes before the departure of the train to Belz – and he then asked one of the *Hasidim* to make haste and travel there, in order to ask the advice of the *Rebbe*, whether to refrain, or to take the oath. When about two hours passed, the *Hasid* returned from Belz, and repeated the words of the *Rebbe* as he said them: 'Something like this happened to me as well on one occasion, and I took the oath – and I also say to you that you are to take the oath.' And my father took the oath, and this was the only oath that he ever took in his lifetime. After the trial, when the woman went off to her home, two rows of people stood along the sides of the street and they cast pebbles at her, to discharge the mitzvah of stoning. From that time forward, she fell sick: she did not eat, did not sleep, her conscience was not clear, and after several months she died in her youth, leaving behind four small children. When they came to tell my father about her death, he said: 'I forgive her, and my hope is that The Lord will also forgive her.'

The other trial was conducted at a demand made by the community, without my father's knowledge. On one occasion, the *Rebbe* of Belz traveled to a health spa, and when he passed Rawa Ruska in a private train, that train stopped for an hour at the station, and all the Jews came out to offer the greeting of '*Shalom*' to the *Rebbe*. The privilege of entering from the waiting room into the train car was given only to those that had a ticket that had been bought for money, that was bought at the ticket window. As usual, exit was always through one gate, but for that occasion, the railroad management opened all the gates, because of the great pressure of the crowd, and they placed a guard at each gate. Seeing as it was difficult to buy a ticket at the ticket booth – it was arranged that those who stood at the gate could collect the requisite money at their spot. In this instance, they were able to take advantage of their position, and rake off part of these funds into their own pockets. My father, who was always very rigorous and organized to a fault, secured a ticket for himself early in the day, and when he was standing to pass through the gate – he handed his ticket to the guard. The latter on seeing this, shoved my father and knocked him to the ground. My father got up, did not react, and ran straight to the train car to the *Rebbe*.

When the heads of the community heard about this incident – they lodged a legal complaint against the guard. Their argument was that, in this case, by knocking down one of the Rabbis of the city, he had insulted all the Jews of the city. My father did not appear in court; only Jewish lawyers stood in for him. The accused argued that he did not know that this was a Rabbi, and the judges asked him: and does this mean you can knock an ordinary Jew down to the ground? On the day the sentencing took place, my father also appeared, and when the accused saw him – he crossed himself and said, that he had never seen this person; for if he had indeed seen him – he would have immediately seen that he was a Rabbi. As was usual, my father was dressed in silk clothing, but only on the occasion of his appearance before the *Rebbe* of Belz, he was dressed in ordinary clothing, out of a sense of 'do not aggrandize yourself before the king.' When my father verified this argument. The lawyers lost their case that the accused had insulted all of the Jewish community, and only won the case that he had assaulted a single Jew. This gentile railroad official sold his house in order to pay court costs and also – in accordance with the verdict – a compensation to my father of one thousand gold pieces, which was a highly respectable sum in those days, and my father donated it all to the 'Red Cross.' May father did not like two things: to give eulogies, and to write inscriptions on gravestones. My mother, ז"ל even though she suffered from a heart ailment, would gather funds for the purpose of dowering of poor brides, and performed activities for the common good over and above her capacity and strength, and when she died at the age of 46, I was in *The Land* – and a friend of mine wrote to me about her funeral: the entire city turned out to escort her, and the funeral lasted a long time, because many Rabbis eulogized her. My father rose last, and said only a few words: 'I do not have a need to say what and who she was: look only at her three sons, whom she educated, and you will know all about her that you need to know.' When his father died, I heard him say, as the last of those who eulogized, 'It is upon me to mourn for two, for my father and my teacher.'

All the children of my grandfather Hirsch'li were very talented people: but only the firstborn, my father, and his youngest son of Pesach-Pesha, were committed scholars, and ardent Belz *Hasidim*. My father was very particular in his dress, and Pesha, whom my father also entreated to be particular in his dress, used to complain, that this steals time, and causes *Bittul-Torah*. My father received his complaint, and advised him to do this on account of his peace of mind: 'Either that, or you should sleep a little later, or you should get up a little earlier.'

At the beginning Pesha listened to him: He shined his shoes, even later, tied his waistband on the sides, and not on his stomach or behind him, and ordered his sidelocks – and my father was pleased. After a short time went by, Pesha decided, that if one gets up earlier – it is possible to get to *the Alte Kloyz* to begin study sooner, and then continued as an early riser. He would organize a group to gather monies on behalf of the needy sick, and would be the first to run, never being one to walk, to go from door-to-door, to gather donations for *Tzedakah*. And when he would return to the *Kloyz*, he would turnout his pockets on the table and take out the money, never knowing any time, how much money there was, and returned to the *Gemara* and his studying. Some times, he would pass up eating. Even though the *Kloyz* was close to his house. When his grandmother saw that he was not coming to eat – she would bring him a variety of comestibles that do not require a ritual washing of the hands, and he would eat and then continue with his studying. He began to travel to Belz while still at a young age, and in the end, he became a 'sitter' there. During the war, he would travel and escort the *Rebbe* to all th places they went to. I heard that he had fallen severely ill, but by a miracle he got healthy again. But his end – was the same end as all the people of the Belz courtyard.

At the beginning of the war, in 1939, at the time that my father was in Belz for the *Shemini Atzeret* Festival as usual, despite the fear that the Jews had of the Russians, the Russians suddenly appeared in the Belz Courtyard and said, that according to the Agreement with the Nazis[130], they are obligated to turn Belz over to the Germans, and they are prepared to take the *Rebbe* and all the people of the Courtyard to Sokal under their protection. But since this was a Festival Day, the *Rebbe* asked, out of all the other Rabbis present, he asked my father if it was permissible to travel – and my father gave permission, and they traveled.

During the period of the Holocaust, Pesha was exterminated along with all the people in the Courtyard. By a miracle, the *Rebbe* of Belz was saved, and his brother from Bilgoraj, R' Mott'li, and both were brought to the Land of Israel in 1945.

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When I came to visit the *Rebbe* in *The Land*, in his home in Tel-Aviv on *Ahad-HaAm* Street, the *Rebbe* of Bilgoraj sat in the first room. When I said my name to the scribe, for the purpose of him writing a 'note' on my behalf, he stopped writing, and approached the *Rebbe* of Bilgoraj and said: 'Does the *Rebbe* know who this is?' Upon hearing whose daughter I was, the *Rebbe* of Bilgoraj turned to me and said: 'Do you know who and what your father was?' He was a Torah luminary, and wise, and the likes of him was not clear to us, and we asked who was to be found in the *shtibl*, and they told about many Rabbis, and among them, the name of your father was recalled. Then we requested to call him, and not only did he explain to us everything correctly, but he also read everything out to us by heart, word for word, since he had a miraculous memory!'

Afterwards, when I entered the *Rebbe's* room, he went over the 'note' line-by-line, and every time he read my father's name – he rose to his feet and said the same thing: 'Do you know who your father was? He was a Torah luminary, a many of phenomenal memory, and a great wise man. Hitler had no control over him. He was sick, and I sent him medicaments in the hands of a gentile, separate us from them. He died, and a funeral was carried out for him secretly, and your brother Aryeh'leh became the *Dayan* in his place.'

This was in the year 1942, and my father was just 57 years old.

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130 The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that led to the dismemberment of the Polish Republic at the time.

Memories, Personalities and the Way of Life

זכרונות, דמויות והווי

זכרונות, געשטאלטן אוּן לעבענסשטייגער

Memories of Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד

By Dr. Shlomit Tir

I came to know him not a long time before the outbreak of the First World War, at the time he began to visit his betrothed in our home, that being my firstborn sister. This was after he finished his studies in law, and began to work as an apprentice in the office of lawyers in Lvov.

He was a young man, full of humor and the vitality of life, and he had a good voice that had come to him as a legacy from his father R' Nahum ז"ל. He gave his father's name to his son, to whom my sister Esther gave birth, in the year 1919, at the end of the First World War.

Apart from his great love for his betrothed, he had two other loves: song and Zionism. He was constantly going about, singing, and always would rule on and talk about Zionist subjects. At that time, a written Zionist periodical appeared called '*Moriah,*' and he participated in it as one of its managing editors, and he would spend long hours leading us in 'discussions' about things that stood out at the forefront of the Zionist world.



Page 129: (Top, Right): Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד, the Last Community Head of the City

After his marriage, he opened a law office in Rawa-Ruska, after having worked for a while in the office of the lawyer Dr. Versstandig.

I do not have the capacity to describe the pleasant atmosphere that reigned in their house, at the frequent times that I came for a visit from Lvov, to be a guest with them, and to find myself in their company. An affectionate love, a joy of life, an affectionate respect, and a n intense adherence to their friends both professional and in their party; tranquility and stillness, a sense of security and loyalty – all of this gathered in those who visited their home, and who came in contact with them. Accordingly, they were always surrounded by friends and acquaintances, sitting around the large table, where guests would be seated, and he would read to them excerpts from the writings of *Sholom Aleichem,* and they would listen with great pleasure.

With his considerable talents, he succeeded in developing the affairs of his office – however, not for very long, because he began to commit himself more and more to partisan matters, and would be frequently traveling to the 'center' in Lvov. It was only because of the considerable dedication of his beloved wife – he did not suffer even once from this undertaking. After he was elected as the head of the community, and the deputy head of the city (the head of the city was a gentile) he became like the patriarch of the city. When an enormous fire broke out in the city in the decade of the twenties

– he stood at the head of the fire-fighters and rescuers. Because Rawa-Ruska did not have a 'Fire-Fighters' organization – he brought them in from ¯o³kiew; he ran about and oversaw their work, and with his own hands, he saved everything that was possible to save, with his comrades from the party helping him at his side. To this day, the report of those being consumed by fire, resonate in my ears, calling out to him for his help: '*Herr Doktor*, save us!'



Page 129: (Bottom, Left): My sister, Esther Mandel הי"ד

He participated in every community undertaking and always as the 'First Violin.' He would organize presentations and appearances, whose intake was then dedicated to community needs, and the provision of necessities for the indigent of the city. In the presentation of '*The Dybbuk*' which he directed, he played the role of the *Rebbe*, as if he were a natural born actor – even though he was a novice participant in theatrical presentations. He gave his entire soul to the benefit of the Jews of the city, and also gave of his money. During the construction of the Jewish Orphanage in the city, the community assumed large amounts of debt; and he was compelled to be a personal guarantor of these debts, and in the end, he retired them using his own funds.

The Land of Israel, to which he dedicated the majority of his thinking and actions for his entire life – remained for him, for economic reasons, only a land of his dreams. He raised and educated his only son to have a love of *The Land*, and the seeds that he sowed in this field – sprouted according to their nature, and guarded their privileges. From the age of thirteen and on, the son was a member in the Zionist youth movement, and in the year 1938, he made *aliyah* to *The Land* with a cohort of young people, accompanied by an endless stream of tears from his mother, and with great joy – but nevertheless feeling an ache – by his father, who felt complete with the forced separation from his only son whom he loved.

This was the last time they parted.

With the accession of Hitler to the rule [of Germany], he called in his speeches for an embargo against all German goods, and opposition to the rule of this tyrant. He was honest in his ways, and was sensitive to every wrongdoing that led to [an increase in] death rate. The Russians, after they captured the city, wanted to exile him, as a wealthy lawyer, deep into Russia; but all the residents of the city stood up for him, and worked for his benefit; [they did this] in presenting requests to the leaders of the régime, and in portraying the man, who for his entire life dedicated himself to the populace of the city and its indigent poor. The Russians, despite their cruelty, permitted him to remain in the city, and gave him a position in the post office as an assistant bookkeeper.

After the outbreak of the war between the Germans and the Russians, and after the capture of the city by the Germans – they arrested him, that man who walked in an honest path, and practiced justice, a man whose soul was as pure as Bdellium, and brought him to Montelupich in Krakow[131] and threw him into a jail, that was set aside for the most dangerous of criminals. There, as it became known to me, he fell sick with typhus, and expired, giving up his pure soul.

I recollect, at the time when he was celebrating his fiftieth birthday, he said to me: 'If I can summarize the half-century that I have lived – I would be able to say: I was fortunate.' It was not the honor, the riches, the splendid house and the appurtenances that bestowed this sense of good fortune: that sense of good fortune reached him from within, from that big and warm heart of his!

Regarding the Persona of Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד

(From the letters to his son, Nahum)

Troskawiec, 18.9.36

... I would see myself as fortunate, and would that I could know that your way in life would not be any worse than mine, and to the level I have reached, despite the fact that I did not enjoy a great deal of pleasure or much bounty. In the course of my life, I did not pay attention to those things that engender envy or covetousness, regarding those either above my station or surrounding me – rather I always oriented my eyes towards the depths of the poverty and hopelessness to my rear, and I overcame them, and was saved.

This and other things, caused that not only once, I had to peer into these depths and to see people, who went by me as if a flock of sheep, in their unconstrained dash to overtake others, and myself included, and occasionally they appeared to be in death's shadow, these, who flashed like meteors in the heavenly heights, where one was compelled to see them in their entirety, and myself as well, even though I never once raised my eyes to the heights.

I know and recognize your self-effacing nature and modesty, my son, and it is my hope that it will come to your hand to establish yourself in the healing arts, without dissipating yourself, and do so in a self-effacing and modest manner. All should be done with proper measure, as befits a doctor, and the best of all doctors, most capable of all, is the man himself, as *Our Sages of Blessed Memory* said: 'Know Thyself!'...

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131 The Montelupich prison, so called from the street in which it is located, the ulica Montelupich ("street of the Montelupi family"), is a historic prison in Kraków from early 20th century, which was used by the *Gestapo* in World War II. It is universally recognized as "one of the most terrible Nazi prisons in [occupied] Poland." The *Gestapo* took over the facility from the German *Sicherheitspolizei* at the end of March 1941. One of the Nazi officials responsible for overseeing the Montelupich Prison was Ludwig Hahn.

Troskawiec, 22.9.36

...therefore, do not afflict your soul, and don't take to heart, if at this time, as you attain spiritual maturity, you will be vulnerable to all manner of upsets, accompanied by attacks of despair. This is normal. In part, the physical and spiritual body is made up by components like a complex machine, inter-connected in very precise ways, that when the parts move, it is capable of producing concerted activity in harmony. In a like manner, your intellectual faculties are now going through a period of development and creativity. Parts of that symphony are now being created, and nature – that Great Artisan, the Engineer – is completing the etching of every manifestation, and honing the teeth of those gears, to match them, one to the other, to create that complete harmonious meshing, for the purpose of creating a precise working order. [The Engineer] must also push away those defects that stand out, and bring you to a [healthy] closure. As is understood, within the ambit of what is humanly possible, it is my desire, in this case, to be the facilitator for this natural process, in his mission to correct the mistakes that you make...

Rawa-Ruska 7.10.38

... my dear son, it is undoubtedly known to you, that it is not my intention to decide your future against your will, and your final decision I will leave to you alone. However, because of my unbounded love for you, and also out of the feeling of my responsibility to the ideal for the attainment of freedom and liberty for our oppressed and wandering people, it is my will, with the help of the experience that I inherited during my time in serving this ideal during the course of time that exceeds twice your age, to intercept the train of your thoughts, getting ahead of your final decision... therefore, my beloved son, I say to you with an open heart, that your decision to find your fortune in the fulfilment of the demands of your heart, and on behalf of our people and our ideals – gives me very, very much happiness...

... this morning, I awoke with the thought, that your ship stands at port, ready to sail to *our Holy Land,* about which we have been longing for lo, millennia, and you have literally been given the opportunity to satisfy your personal longings. May I bless you at the outset of this important event, with the blessing '*May you be blessed upon your arrival*'...

... Your feet now step on free Jewish land, your lungs are breathing in a fresh free air, lo, you are in *The Land*, that 9/10 of the cultured world recognizes your right to. Black clouds do not hang over you, nor the events and suffering that had dogged us, the Jews in the Diaspora, which we have to bear because of the day-to-day low levels imposed on us, that oppress our human condition. There, you are able to confront everything with greater clarity, with greater freedom, without feeling an assault on your sanity, that here so confuses our ability to think.

... now, your Mother and Father pray, that in your choice of this new way, you will find roots for us, that will gladden us with your outpouring of news that will be a balm and lightening of the aching longing [we have for you]...



Page 131: Narutowicz – A Street and Park

And here, I bless you with this, in the Land of Israel, in that *Land* of good fortune, blessing all the Jews for the sake of my son, the best part of me, in all of Jewry...

Two Documents

By Y. Meiseles (Y. Kessel)

We present two documents, both by Dr. Joseph Mandel ז"ל, which shed light on two separate periods of Jewish life in Rawa. Both cast a clear illumination, and an indication, of how the Jewish populace was ruined by the rulers of the city, disarmed and unfortified spiritually during the course of years, and became mixed into, so to speak, the defenseless and confused masses, which had nothing left with which to fight for in life.

The first document sheds light on the problem of the economic destruction of Rawa Jewry, which began a few years after the occupation of Eastern Galicia by the Polish Army, by the ruinous political politics of the Endekist finance minister St. Grabski[132], the Chairman of the 'National-Democratic' Party, who, on his flag, etched as his goal the objective of exterminating the Jews, precisely the same thing that later on would be expressed by National Socialism.

With the help of awakened Ukrainian nationalism, which in its war against the Polish régime, [the insurgents] took out the old and proven battle-strategy: the incitement against Jews, and principally against Jewish commerce. [They were] following the general rule of" 'You do best in beating the Jew, when you undermine his existence.' The war against the régime was involved with dangers, such as punitive expeditions or 'pacifications,' – as the Poles called it – for the most minor acts of sabotage, but the war against the Jews, and their commerce, was not only carried out through the Polish régime, but rather the opposite, which gave it support, thinking of it as a first-class method for diffusing the Ukrainian nationalist war. Placards of incitement against Jewish business in the Ukrainian language were found hanging in every corner of the city, and the Ukrainian populace were demanded to shop only in Ukrainian places of business. At the same time, the Poles were not sitting around on idle hands, and mimicked their Ukrainian enemies. Poles shouted from the walls: '*Swoi da Swego*!' 'Poles buy only from Poles!'

The familiar Grabski wagons began to appear in the city, and began to empty the Jewish houses of sleeping materials, their beds, pillows, and broken tables and chairs.

But let us return to our document. We see, that it deals here with a request for a loan from a few prominent Jews in Rawa and its environs, in order to be able to complete the construction of the

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132 Stanis³aw Grabski (April 5, 1871 in Borów, £owicz County – May 6, 1949 in Sulejówek) was a Polish economist and politician, member of the *Sejm*, associated with the National Democracy political camp.

Orphanage (which in time, was destined to become one of the most important centers for culture in our city). In normal times, this would not have been a big problem for a Jewish city such as Rawa; however the sequestrations of Grabski sucked out the last drop of the marrow from the Jews, and it was not possible to complete this edifice.

The second document, in my opinion, is the tragic document, in which we sit over the political plight of the Jews in Rawa, on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War, or better said: In the vise of their physical extermination.

We hear, in this second document, the confused and frustrated outcry of our so-dearly held Doctor Joseph Mandel ז"ל, the leader of Rawa Jewry, who appeals to the Jewish '*Kolo*[133]' in the Polish *Sejm,* Dr. Emil Zomersztajn, one of the most prominent leaders of Galician and all of Polish Jewry, about the fact that in Rawa, that Jewish dignity is being systematically trampled by the *Sanacja* rulers, and every elementary political and human right [is being degraded]... The *Starosta* makes fiery promises by day, and his representative calls out the leaders of the populace in the middle of the night, in order to give substance to the promises of his chief... the leader of the city, sowing dissension and enmity between the *Hasidim* and the Enlightened elements of the city; they force the *Hasidim* to openly take a stance against the elementary rights of Jews, that were fought for and obtained over the course of many generations – such as setting up a Jewish slate for candidacy to the municipal government, where Jews amount to 70% of the general population. And to same that shows even a drop of energy and does anything to oppose the will of the *Starosta*... against Jews, who are faithful, and do indeed present a slate , against the explicit prohibition of the *Starosta*, and then the help of the gendarmerie is sought; and already on the following morning, reports begin to rain down on their heads, and nullification decrees, for storekeepers, whose homes and places of business were half-missing their parts; going so far, that these Jews were compelled to go run to the *Starosta*, to bow before him and beg for his forgiveness for the 'sin' that they had committed.

It was in this way that our dearest had to lower themselves, first economically, later politically, and in the end, also morally to the point of resignation.

And the bloodthirsty Nazi beast later also occupied our city, and overall, immediately after the occupation, took itself to the extermination of our dearest, and in addition to this, the territory had already, for some time been much, much well-prepared for this by putative Nazi advance personnel – the Endekists and *Sanacja* of pre-war Poland.

The fact that such a large part of Poles and Ukrainians took part in this shameful undertaking – will be documented in the history of the Jews with letter do fire and blood.

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133 Polish, for a 'circle,' and is best seen as the equivalent of what in American politics would be called a caucus.

Document A

Circular

Rawa-Ruska, 1 September 1925

Honorable Sir,

The status of the issue regarding the completion of the Orphanage building in our city is generally known.

The surrounding 'Joint' began the construction in September 1920, but was abandoned in the course of about a half year, because, Christian members of the populace of the city, who for political reasons found this objectionable, presented a judicial appeal in court, to cause the construction to be halted. – For this reason, the greater part of the building materials was spoiled, and had to be destroyed; but in the moment that the prohibition against the building was rescinded, the Jewish progressive element in the city organized a broad-hearted spending campaign, in order to help the then-founded committee to complete the work that had already been started. It was done with the objective in mind, to build a building that will serve as a place that would give work to Jewish craftsmen.

Regrettably, however, the material crisis of the last times fell hard upon our work. The expansive outlays of our populace , for understandable reasons, dried up. However, in order not to permit what has already been accomplished to date to go to ground, It became necessary to get back to work anew, such work requiring a fresh budget of 1,000 dollars. With this income, a hall and a stage were completed, and with additional income we will be able to pay the merchants and hand laborers, for whom we have, come what may, already been waiting too long to disburse their salaries, as well as loans that carry a high interest rate. But under these circumstances, given the situation in which the previously mentioned building now finds itself, it is only useful for institutional events during the summertime. In order for the building to be useful in the wintertime, it is necessary to finish out certain other work, such as: soffits, plastering it, and installing ovens.

For this purpose, we require an additional 1,500 dollars. Part of this has already been raised by selling off materials, that had remained from [prior] building work, and also revenues from certain events, such as the evening event of the dedication party. Despite this, we still have a need for a sum of 900 dollars, and eventually 1,400 dollars in order to properly complete the building. We must pay our debts, because we cannot betray the trust of those who put their faith in us and lent us money. Under no circumstances, can we permit them to wait any longer, and we must complete the building, because the winter is waiting at the door, and this is the time when we can obtain the greatest revenues from it.

The committee that signs below, which has the oversight for Jewish orphans and youth in Rawa-Ruska, has decided, because of this, to approach an entire array of Jewish people in our circle, with the request to help it in its critical plight and to provide it with an interest-free loan of 400 dollars. This is to be paid back during the course of a half-year, solidly guaranteed by the undersigned:

To you, Honored sir, we come with the entreaty to lend us the sum of 20 dollars, and to send it tothe address of Dr. Joseph Mandel in Rawa Ruska, after which, we will immediately send our certification and promissory note.

With the hope that you will not refuse us your help for our meaningful work.

Dr. Emil Ziegelbojm
Dr. Joseph Mandel
Dr. Becker
Dr. Barek Breindler

Respectfully:
The Oversight Committee
For Jewish Orphans
And Youth, in Rawa Ruska

Document B

To the Respected
President of the 'Jewish *Kolo*' in the Polish Sejm
Sir, Dr. Emil Zomersztajn In Warsaw.

I feel obligated, as the representative of the Jewry of Rawa-Ruska, to share with you the events surrounding the election that took place for the municipal council in our city.

Rawa-Ruska possesses an unimpeachable Jewish majority. The official census shows that to be 57%. The previous municipal council consisted of half Jews and half Christians, and up to the last times, it was the case that the Jews always occupied the Vice-Burgomaster's position, and one position as Assessor (a member of the presidium of the municipal council). In the year 1928, the *Sanacja* rulers found it useful to reduce the number of Jewish council members to 22; out of the general total of 48. In accordance with an agreement made with the Polish representatives, I was to be designated as the Vice-Burgomaster; but in the meantime, they entered into an alliance with the extreme Orthodox Jews, and in their fourth 'curia,' they put up *Hasidim* to oppose my candidacy. Despite this we were victorious over them, with all 22 seats taken by members of my bloc, who were elected. When it came to the question of the Vice-Burgomaster, the Poles broke the agreement, and it nearly led to a dissolution of the newly elected municipal council. In the end, I had to agree to the fact that, in my place, a different person would be nominated as Vice-Burgomaster.

In the year 1934, elections to the municipal council took place again. Under the heavy pressure applied by the *Starosta*, the Jews of the shtetl were forced to agree to [only] 10 council members, out of a general total of 24. Once again, the Starosta, personally, and with the force of his office, offered me the position of Vice-Burgomaster, thereby certifying, that I am also endorsed by the officials of the *Voievode* in Lemberg, for this position. To all appearances, he played the role as if he supported me, but behind my back, he did everything so that my opponent would win, because the latter always served as a blind tool in the hands of the ruling *Sanacja*, and that person indeed ended up being elected to that position...

After a while, our *Starosta* became angry with his Burgomaster, and dismissed him from his

position. At the same time, the Jewish Vice-Burgomaster Dr. Bardach, was called to the *Starosta,* and his resignation was demanded to be handed in within two hours time.

Dr. Bardach immediately resigned, and a Pole was elected to replace him.

Also, at the same time, a Jewish *Lavnik* (a member of the presidium of the municipal council) was to be nominated, but, to this day, this [nomination] has not occurred, despite the fact that since that time, two years have passed.

On the 9th of January of this year, new elections were called for, yet again. It was required to present the list of candidates by the 29th of that same month, and the elections were to take place on the 12th of February. For this purpose, the city was divided into four circles; each circle was to elect 6 candidates. One circle was a purely Jewish circle, two were mixed Jewish-Polish, and one was mixed Polish-Ukrainian. In the outer suburbs, through a *Hasid*, who served as an agent, the *Starosta* presented me with a proposition to which I was to agree, that the situation was to remain as is – 10 Jewish councilmen, two *Lavniks*, and one of the two – was to be me...

Knowing the depression that reigned in the Jewish populace, I was prepared to accept this proposal. However, I demanded guarantees, that I would not be deceived, as had happened once already. On the 26th of January, I immediately made a presentation of my consent to the proposal, but I demanded of him that he should call a joint meeting – between our, and their Polish candidates, with the participation of the Polish intelligentsia, who would assume the obligation, after the elections, to carry out what it was that the *Starosta* had promised. The *Starosta* saw my proposal as the right one, and he promised to organize this assembly for the following morning. Instead of this, on that second day, the Deputy *Starosta*, Mr. Stanis³aw Balusz, telephoned me, and told me that my mandate as a *Lavnik* stands as sturdy as a wall, but for this, he is demanding of me that I reduce the number of Jewish councilmen to 9, and to this he further stressed that this single candidate must be removed from my slate, but need not, God Forbid, be a Jewish candidate, who are supported by the *Sanacja*. (It is worth noting that almost all of the six people (in the *Sanacja*) cause more harm that doing good for the Jewish welfare); but in order to work through to an agreement, I was prepared to give in, the only condition of mine being, that of the 10 Jewish councilmen, at least three should be from my bloc – that is one, from each Zionist grouping. In the end, however, the Deputy *Starosta* portrayed for me, that this was his last word, and on top of this he raised his voice, using a commanding tone, and so I declared to him, that his proposal was unacceptable to me, the core problem being that it had no explicitly stated guarantee from the side of the Polish candidates of the city, and without the *Starosta* assuming responsibility that it will be carried out.

On Saturday night, I was invited over the telephone by the Burgomaster to an encounter in the premises of the *Starosta* – there, to be found, were 2 of the *Hasidim* that were supported by the *Starosta*. In their words to oppose me, the Burgomaster asked me if I am agreeable to 9 Jewish candidates. The truth be told, I was ready to do this, but under specific conditions, and that is why, at first glance, I had to say that I am not agreeable, because we should be allocated a proportional representation to our mandate, which means 12 [seats].

My last proposal so upset the Burgomaster, that he jumped up and declared, that every word is a

waste, that is squandered in discussing this with me, and already had extended his hand to me to offer me a good-bye. I had no other choice at that moment but to take leave of him, and I began to put on my overcoat. But in that precise moment, the Deputy *Starosta* appeared in the doorway, and the Burgomaster said to him: 'They can work it out amongst themselves, and put up their own slates in three election circles.' Regarding this, the Deputy *Starosta* addressed me as follows:

'*Herr Doktor*, I am letting you know the responsibility for the consequences of your act, will fall exclusively on you. I will immediately issue an advisory to institute repressions against the Jewish populace in the entire area; in the city and all villages, where there is even found only one Jew.' And he left the room where we were to be found.

Immediately after returning home from this encounter, the *Starosta* himself personally called me by telephone, and declared to me:

In connection with your proposal in the offices of the *Starosta*, I retract my word, in which I made you a promise, to give you a place in the municipality as a Lavnik.' To this I replied to him, that this is entirely understandable to me. To this he added: 'and furthermore, I have nothing more to do with you,' and slammed down the telephone receiver.

A few minutes later, after I left the Starosta premises, the *Sanacja -Hasidim* arrived and created a panic in the city, saying that the *Starosta* had threatened them, that tomorrow, he is making ready to order the lockdown of Jewish businesses in the city, and in the villages, if the Jews of the city, with the Rabbi at their head, are not willing to come to him, and to forego all of my demands.

It did not take long, and a large mass of Jews, with the Rabbi at their head, came to me, and began to entreat me that I should not place the entire Jewish populace of the city in danger and subject to misfortune. The worst of this was, that my closest friends, and most loyal fellow workers had themselves become infected with this panic, such that even before the Rabbi and this mass of Jews had appeared at my place, I was already made to agree to pull out of and not take part in these elections. I told the Rabbi, however (in order to rescue the last little bit of Jewish dignity), that to do this for him, and in anticipating his entreaty, I am stepping back from my interactions, and I am agreeing to 9 mandates, as well as, we will not put out any slate in that circle, where the *Starosta* is interested in seeing that Jews should not be candidates.

The *Hasidim*, who had been set free, quickly ran to the *Starosta* to relay my decision to him; but he did not want to receive them at his premises, but instead, he received them at the home of the Burgomaster, who declared to them, that as punishment, the *Starosta* is giving the Jews... only 6 mandates.

Because of this fresh blow, the Jews decided that on the following morning, they would again go to the Starosta. The following morning was to be Sunday, and on that day, by three o'clock in the afternoon, the slates were to be posted. The *Starosta* kept them waiting until 12 o'clock, and then declared to them:

'I wanted to carry out a fatherly political process with the Jews, but I have now seen that I made an

error in my politics. I have therefore decided to give the Jews a free hand. Let them do as they please.'

This was said by the same *Starosta,* who that same summer ordered the refurbishing of the fronts of houses in the city four times; and if anyone complained that he was poor, or had no money, the *Starosta's* answer was: 'So let another Jew do it that does have the money.' In the meantime, he shut down the place of business from eight to fourteen days.

After returning from the visit with the Starosta, once again, negotiations began to put together a general [sic: all-embracing] Jewish slate. The Jews of the city were so frightened, that it was only with the greatest of difficulty that the required 25 signatures were obtained. And when our emissary appeared at the head election-committee, it was already too late – by three minutes... and it was in this manner that to the elections there remained altogether [only] two Jewish slates: *Hitakhdut* and the *Hasidim*.

Immediately after this, on a Tuesday, I was in Lemberg, Coming home at night, I heard that on the same day, the *Starosta*, together with the Sanitation Officer had gone around through the businesses and houses in the city, of those who had signed the slates of *Hitakhdut*, and locked down their houses and businesses. A frightful panic broke out yet again, and all those, who had signed the slate for *Hitakhdut*, ran to retract their signatures. It went so far, that under the pressure of the masses, the *Hitakhdut* was compelled to withdraw its slate. Because of this, immediately on the following morning, all the locked down houses and businesses were immediately re-opened...

In attempting to understand about these unheard of maneuvers of our administrative ruling authorities in the city, I want to ask for a clarification for myself, if an intervention by the central institutional authorities might not produce something useful.

A short while ago, during a discussion with a Pole, I heard something backwards about comments of the Minister of the Interior Sklodowski, regarding the honesty of district elections. To this, the latter replied: If it is backwards, it remains backwards, and the *Starosta* remains the *Starosta*'... The latter certainly would not have conducted himself in this way, if he did not have the cognizance of those above him. Apart from this, he is in constant contact with the Voievode office in Lemberg, and doesn't take a single step without their prior knowledge.

But, however, if there is no one-hundred percent outlook, that the intervention of the Jewish '*Kolo*' will bear fruit, I am more than certain, that first, the *Starosta* will begin to oppress our Jewish populace with all his might. It will then be after the elections, and the Jewish populace will be entirely without recourse. He will not even need his *Hasidim* any longer. Is it not, for just a bit of prestige, absolutely not worth risking this – according to my sense, utilizing the last bit of peace of mind of our exhausted Jewish city.

I will be very grateful to you for a reply, if it is at all possible to so something regarding this matter, or if something, in hindsight, has already been done.

Rawa-Ruska, 2 February 1939

With Respect,
Dr. Joseph Mandel

In Memory of Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד

By H. Graff



Page 136: ***Zionist Activists with Dr. Joseph Mandel at Their Head***
Sitting (From the Right): Shmuel Weiss, Hersch Sztokhammer, Aharon Hollander, Zisman Szteinbach, Leibusz Weber, The Aunt's Daughter of L. Weber, Dr. Joseph Mandel, and his son at the head, Abraham Bandstein, Israel Edel, Israel Mordechai Millmeister, Yaakov Altbach, Esther Kurtzer-Rosenfeld, and her husband Fyvel Rosenfeld.

Standing (From the Right): Yehoshua Fischler, Yekhezkiel Adler, Simcha & Joseph Szteinbach, Nathan Edel.

At the end of June, the German *Wehrmacht* marched into Rawa Ruska, which at that time had a loyal relationship to the Jews.

After 14 days, the civilian 'occupation troops' entered, and began to occupy all of the positions. They came to the Jews of the city, asking that they put forward candidates for the *Judenrat*. Understandably, that the Jews to whom they came, did not understand anything other than to put forward candidates from the ranks of those people who behind them had community work experience, such as: Professor Tenenbaum, Wattenberg the Druggist, Hersch Stahlhamer[134], etc. But at the head of them, they put the decent and heartfelt committed Jewish man, Dr. Joseph Mandel.

Dr. Mandel, in taking over the leadership of the *Judenrat,* took on a heavy burden of responsibility, which was against his revolutionary and impulsive character. This man, who had never tolerated any

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134 We note the entry of 'Herschel Sztokhammer,' and 'Hersch Sztalhamer' in the Necrology. Since there are three distinct 'Stahlhamer' entries, we do not conclude that this is a typographical error.

injustice, was subjected by the German occupation authorities to carry out a variety of gruesome actions, such as: [implementation of] forced labor for Jews between the ages of 16 and 60, regardless of gender; provisioning of goods coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar, leather, etc.; furnishing all residences that had been taken away from the Jews, using their own furniture.

To understand that Dr. Mandel suffered from all of this, a person who was always prepared to both morally and physically, to suffer material loss in order to safeguard the life and the dignity of Rawa Jewry. And it was in this manner that he struggled daily, suffering, being beaten not only once by the German police for his defense of the life and dignity of the Jewry of Rawa-Ruska.

But the *German Beast* could not tolerate permitting a Jew to have the authority to defend human worth and rights. Therefore, he had to pay dearly – and, indeed, he was one of the first martyred victims.

It is worth noting, that when the Germans arrested him, they spirited him out of Rawa Ruska stealthily, fearing that the Jewish populace might discover this, because the person of Dr. Joseph Mandel was strongly admired and valued by Rawa Ruska Jewry.

Those Rawa-Ruska Jews, who lived with him during those times, and remained alive, are proud of this wonderful role model in life, and who died in dignity, Dr. Joseph Mandel ה"יד.

Prominent Zionist Activists in the City

By Moshe Ka"Tz ז"ל

Died in New York, 23 Nissan 5727

R' Abraham'cheh Hoffenbratel ע"ה

Every one of us, who remembers R' Abraham'cheh Hoffenbratel ע"ה, must add that we had the great privilege of having in our city, such a religious personality such as he presented, he who was born in the little *shtetl* of Narol, and became the son-in-law of R' Chaim David Daks ע"ה. Before he came to Rawa-Ruska, he already was a Hebrew Teacher in Stary, and also other cities in Galicia.

R' Abraham'cheh Hoffenbratel, a *Tanakh* scholar with a phenomenal memory, a first-class Talmudist, was a top-notch pedagogue. Also, in Rawa, he became the teacher and disseminator of the Hebrew language. All those who wanted to learn Hebrew, or even the individual who wanted to learn modern Hebrew, learned a great deal from him, both in speaking and writing. To each and every one us, he was the *Rebbe* of Hebrew and, in general, his influence among students was colossal.

Apart from this, he was also very musical, and was endowed with a special sense for melody. During the time of *Hanukkah* celebrations, and other institutional events in the '*Hatikvah*' Society, he was very outstanding with presenting, to us, the young folk, new melodies and songs, for which I afterwards wrote down the notes and then rehearsed with the choir, which participated in this. The nostalgia alone, of that time, fills me with great happiness.

Later-on, when we worked together in establishing the '*Tze'irei Mizrahi*,' he instilled great energy and courage in everyone for [sympathy toward] working for the Land of Israel and for community undertakings.

All of us held him in great respect, as well as for the colleagues: R' Ber'l Gerstenfeld as the President, and R' Chaim Leib Lieberman – the Spiritual Leader. Apart from the fact that we all were members of '*Mizrahi,*' – I would encounter the previously mentioned worthy and dear friends at worship on a daily basis in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*.

I was able to evaluate them from close up, for their work, modesty and their exemplary attributes, which elicited a great deal of reverential respect.

Honor their memory!

Ben-Zion Ginsberg הי"ד

We remember him as a pioneer and builder of the '*Hatikvah*' Society in Rawa-Ruska. He was a man of great idealism, an intellect of high rank, with admirable attributes. Later, he became the co-editor of the Lemberg Yiddish newspaper, '*Tageblatt*' and also a correspondent of the '*Forverts*' in New York.

I remember him very well, when he was still a small boy. He would often get together with my father, R' Mordechai Ka'Tz ע"ה, and like two intelligent men, that always had something to talk about, they always discussed the contents of the Viennese paper, '*Neue Freie Presse*.' At the time of the Russian invasion, in 1914, he would go to the post office every day, and take over letters from outside the country, that came literally through Japan, bound for Rawa-Ruska, because, at that time, there was no other way [for it to be delivered]. I remember very well, and can certify, that Ben-Zion Ginsberg was the first one who brought us the happy news in the middle of the war, in 1917, that England had redeemed us with the Balfour Declaration.

Ben-Zion Ginsberg was born in Odessa into a poor home. His father taught *Gemara*, he was a scholar who taught only the older boys. His father was called R' Aryeh Leib, and his mother (b"g) was called 'Bracha the Baker Lady.'

Ben-Zion married a daughter of Rawa, and became the son-in-law of Lemel Gortler of the dye business, who was a brother-in-law of R' Lemel Lieberman. After the wedding, he lived in Lemberg, and from time-to-time he would come for Festival Holidays to Rawa, where he held his interesting lectures and speeches.

Hold his memory in respect!

R' Leibusz Weber הי"ד

Writing about Leibusz Weber entails writing about the entire complex of the day-to-day Zionist work that took place over the course of decades: it means writing about the Jewish social activities on all fronts, covering the multi-branched help and philanthropic dedication for everything and everyone. For small businessmen, craftsmen, and just plain ordinary poor people. The larger Zionist social machine, of which he was one of the first ones in the city to construct it, moved as a result of the dynamo of his soul, and the force of his own hand. Without a doubt, his actions had only one, single solitary goal: the realization of his Zionist ideal, Zionist faith. He may be simply designated as: a servant of Zionism.

I remember him even before the First World War, still being a young boy, with short sidelocks, [at that time] he already was the secretary of the '*Hatikvah*' Society, and already by then, he was the living spirit of the Society. In the middle of the war, when all Zionist work came to a halt, he, despite being employed at a bank, strove mightily to breathe life back into the '*Hatikvah*' Society that had been closed down.

Later on, with the arrival of Dr. Mandel ז"ל in the city, Leibusz Weber became the one who bore the burden, and became a loyal student. With the broadening of the Zionist-community work, along the lines of a variety of other areas, Leibusz Weber became the implementation-apparatus; his small business became the larger center for important community work on all fronts.

In order to illustrate what engaged the thinking of Leibusz Weber, only a few short months before the *Great Destruction,* it is worth to bring forward excerpts from his last letter to me in New York, of July 9, 1939:

"First of all, it makes me very happy that you have begun to get active in the 'Relief' for Rawa. Perhaps, through you, matters will be corrected, and set on the right path, because up till now the activity of Rawa 'Relief,' in comparison to that of other Galician cities, has been non-existent.

We know that the Galician *Landsmanschaft* entities have organized themselves into a union. Mr. Levy, the delegate of the union, which was elected in Galicia, communicated this on behalf of Benzion Ginsberg. He wanted to organize a conference in Rawa Ruska, including surrounding places, but because of a lack of time, the conference took place in Lemberg. At that conference, Dr. Mandel represented Rawa. Mr. Levy got along very well with Dr. Mandel, and he took note of all the wishes of Dr. Mandel in connection with Rawa.

But, until this day, we have had nothing from all of this, having received no support whatever, and not a single youth from Rawa has been taken into the Lemberg Trade School, despite the fact that there are many candidates.

As to the support from the Society of '*B'nai Levi Yitzhak*' via R' Hirsch Mund: I hold that the means by which support is given must be changed. It constitutes an older system of charity, which brings no use with it, which could be transformed into a significant useful endeavor.

To wit: The '*B'nai Levi Yitzhak*' Society sent Rawa approximately 5,000 zlotys; on average, each individual received from this 17 zlotys. Can such an individual, who is realistically needy, do something with such a sum because of the fact that debtors currently do not have the means to repay them? And there are many, who take these few zlotys that don't need them. Regarding this money that you send here, and which you have most assuredly gathered using a great deal of energy and expenditure of effort, if you want to accomplish something useful – listen to my advice:

There exists a *Gemilut Hesed* Fund in Rawa, where every needy person can come to obtain a loan of up to 100 zlotys which is to be paid back in 50 weekly instalments. It is not only one Jewish enterprise that this Fund has managed to rescue. Regrettably, because of the difficult economic circumstances, and because the existing debtors lack the resources to repay their loans, the activities of the Fund have come to a halt. With your help, we can get it open again.

Other *Landsmanschaft* organizations behave in this manner: every *landsman* becomes a member in the Fund, and pays a dollar a month. The sum is then turned over to the 'Joint' for the Fund of the designated city, and the 'Joint' pays an amount into that Fund, which is double the sum of what has been donated by the *landsleit* in America.

The dysfunctional old system must be discontinued. That same individual, who receives the 17 zlotys, would instead get 100 zlotys for a year's time, without interest, with which he can accomplish more with the few zlotys that he now receives as aid. This would be termed constructive help, not dysfunctional help.

Get information from others, and you will be convinced that we are giving you the right advice, and we are looking after the welfare of your *landsleit* in Rawa, whom you and I would both like to see in better material circumstances.'

With heartfelt Zionist regards,
Leibusz Weber

Everything with the imprint of his Zionist ideal, everything for the public benefit, nothing for himself personally. He worked for Zion all his years, strove for Zion, made preparations to make *aliyah* to Zion, there where his heart and soul were, since the time of his youth, and did not realize this.

He fell as a martyr under murderous German hands, together with his fellow co-workers: Moshe Levin, Shimon Margulies, Abraham & Israel Edel, Aharon Fischler, Wolf Reichler, Aharon & Israel Hollander, and more others.

Honor their memory.

Two of My Friends

By Yaakov Baumwohl-Yuval ז"ל

Ben-Zion Ginsberg הי"ד

I came to know Ben-Zion Ginsberg back in the first decade of the [sic: twentieth] century, while he was still a boy studying the Pentateuch – and he drifted into the Zionist pioneering movement in the city. It was said of Ben-Zion: 'He cuts himself [through],' and in all of the groups they thought that he had a 'good head' and great things were expected of him. When the *Hazzan*, R' Chaim came to Rawa – he became one of the members of the choir, because he had a pleasant baritone voice, and loved to sing.



Page 140: Ben-Zion Ginsberg הי"ד

But he was active not only in this. During those days, like every autodidact, he would study and read from everything that came to hand, and to form friendships with the students at the Harieli school, that had been opened a short while before this. Even though he was older than them – he knew how to get along with them and take advantage of their knowledge. His desire to learn and understand and to progress was very great, even if it was also incumbent upon him to help his father, an impoverished *Melamed*. He progressed in many of his studies, and practically reached the level of graduation exams, had the First World War not then broken out.

His second desire – apart from his studies – was to be a journalist. To this end, he began to study languages, because the French language was then in its zenith – he also studied French. He began to send chronological letters to the Zionist newspaper '*Der Tageblatt*' that appeared in Lvov, and in the year 1911 they published his first letter. In it, the incident is related concerning a butcher from Rawa who had reached the Ukrainian village of Kariv, beside Uhniv, to buy cattle. The farmers fell upon him and murdered him, and the authorities demanded from the people of the village, that they turn over the murderer (or murderers), and because they did not respond – a punitive contingent was sent to the village, and they also drafted everyone capable of serving, into the Austrian army. All this, and other occurrences in the city and its surroundings, were written up and described by Ben-Zion in that same newspaper; and we, the people of Rawa, were proud that one of us was writing for newspapers.

In the fullness of years, he became an accomplished and prolific journalist, and he would have his work appear in the newspapers of Poland and outside of it as well.

R' Abraham Hoffenbratel

He came from the town of Narol, but he integrated himself into the life of our city as if he were of its very flesh. He was modest, and grace and goodness were the mark of everything that he did. He was modest in everything that he did, but he stood out because of his acuity, and with the substantive and wise things that he uttered, and came from his mouth.

He was an ardent Zionist, and a religious man with his whole soul and his entire might. Never did he look [enviously] at other people, he did not engage in conversation, and exhibited tolerance to everyone, even to the most simple among the simple.

He was a man endowed with many forms of competence, possessed of a broad base of knowledge, and never bragged, and never told of what he had learned and what he knew. It was only randomly that his thoughts were revealed. And he also tried his hand at music.

His knowledge was broad-based. He was thoroughly fluent in the *Tanakh, Shas* and the *Poskim*, and enveloped Torah with respect towards people. He understood the *zeitgeist* of the younger generation – his students, and did not oppose the introduction of new things that appeared in the city.

He made his living by the teaching of the Hebrew language, and as a teacher, he was a committed pedagogue with his entire soul. In the work of teaching, he knew how to separate the wheat from the chaff and to inculcate the best of his knowledge to his students, and because of this, he was an outstanding teacher.

He would pour love onto his students, and they reciprocated from their own love. He raised generations of Hebrew speakers.

The Zionist Edel Family

By Chaim Rathaus
New York

Dedicated to the memory of my comrades:
Nathan Edel, Noah Alter, Berisz Reichler,
Yankl Zimmerman, Joseph Leder, Chaim Rekhes

I always loved to observe the family of R' Mordechai Edel and his 4 sons. They excelled in their character and activity, in ways different from all Rawa Jews. I would enter their home, for a long period of time, almost every day. After Nathan and I completed the 6th class of the government school, we had plans to propose – privately – to continue our studies in the gymnasium. Their house stood on the south side of the marketplace.

One character trait that was common to the entire family, can be designated as 'The Position of *Gabbai*.' R' Mordechai Edel was the perpetual *Gabbai* of the 'Old *Bet HaMedrash*.'
The role of *Gabbai* in the *Bet HaMedrash*, and active role-playing in municipal affairs, which was synonymous with the entire family, were passed down by inheritance to his son, Hirschel'eh, who loyally discharged the duties of his father's legacy, and was also a loyal and committed *Gabbai* and municipal activist.

In prior times, Rawa had the tradition of 'permanence.' When Israel-Mikhl was the head of the community, he was the permanent head of the community, until other times ensued, and things were done differently.

As to Abraham'echeh there is nothing to say. He was a born *Gabbai*. He must have been a *Gabbai* while still in his mother's womb. He was not the *Gabbai* in the *Bet HaMedrash*, where it was possible to be the *Gabbai* only at one place; apart from that, it was the place reigned by his brother Hirsch'eleh.



Page 141: **'Hitakhdut' – *The Activists***
(Sitting, from the Right): Aharon Wolf Gertel, Yeshayahu Grauer, Nathan Edel, Gimpel Just, Elazar Reinert, Aryeh Stern, Moshe Freiheiter, Bennie Shapiro, Yekhezkiel Hoftler

(Standing from the Right): David Freiheiter, Hersch Wolf Siebzehner, Noah Alter, Lipa Altman, Berisz Rapoport, Meshullam Linder

Abraham'echeh was an outstanding *Gabbai* at more places and institutions. He was the permanent '*Gabbai*' of the KK"L, which he led precisely and pointedly. Annually, he produced an accounting, as required by the central KK"L in Lemberg, that he pieced together from visible places, He approached everything head on and completely. He struggled and carved out a respectable place for the KK"L in the city, such as having plates put out on the Eve of Yom Kippur, in both of the two *Bet HaMedrash* locations, flower days, charity boxes.



Page 142 (From the Left): Leibusz Weber, Hersch Haberman, Reuben Sztokhammer (During the First World War in the Austrian Army)

Memories of What Once Was

By Zvi (Hersch) Haberman

1. Zionists

The personalities of the first of the Rawa Zionists, according to my memory, were: Greisman, a document preparer for Berner the Lawyer, also my friends, who had enough energy to go, at night after *Maariv* services, to the Society: Benzion Ginsberg, Israel Gold (the spiritual leader), Mordechai Holz, Leibusz Weber, Ozer Grauer (who had the privilege of seeing both of his children,

Regina and Muni, saved, and are today living, with their families in Israel), Zalman Rapoport, Benjamin Hoch, Sholom Rosenfeld, Abraham Hoffenbratel, Ber'leh Gerstenfeld, the brothers Abraham & Israel Edel, Hersch Bach, and Chaim Leib Lieberman (an uncle of mine). Part of them were overt Zionists, and a part were clandestine. It was not easy to go about wearing the 'color' of a Zionist, being necessary to fight against Isaac Stip, Mordechai'leh Hersch Maness' Yankl'eh Getzel's and many, many other *Hasidim*. On felt alienated and stained with sin in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, where our spiritual leader was – Boruch Lustig from Lemberg, a dear young man, a scholar, and also no sort of an idler, and yet still a *Hasid*. It was hard to look him in the eyes, upon asking him about a bit of the Gemara, because it was only the evening before that we had met stealthily in the 'Hatikvah' Society, and sang the verse '*Od lo Avdah*' together.

The first office location of the Society was in a diminutive gentile house. The second location -- at [the home of] Hersch Rosenfeld, a Zionist sympathizer. After that, we moved to the use of Doctor Herold, near the Ukrainian church, and there we were more member-friends of the Society. I remember a short Jewish man, a hunchback named – Metal, who had the temerity to recite '*Kaddish*' at a Herzl memorial assembly, and indeed, for that reason, he got the permanent name of '*Dos Kaddish'l*.' I remind myself of an incident involving Sholom Rosenfeld; His mother Shayndl-Chaim-Yaakov's received a notice (relayed to her), that her son finds himself at that memorial assembly. She came on the run, took him out of the Society location, and gave him fiery slaps. His hat fell off, and he remained standing there in his yarmulke; however, he had 'respect' for his mother, and did not reply. Afterwards, however, he went back inside the premises of the Society, this being a high level of the opposition of parents. Isaac Stip, then a nearby neighbor of the Society, rewarded him, on one morning, with a special 'offering' which I do not want to put down on paper... But how does the saying go: 'The way they will respond to him – that is how it will multiply and sprout.'

We had already begun to collect for the KK"L and on the Eve of Yom Kippur we indeed collected for this purpose, using platters set up near the *Kloyz*. We opened a library. However, the harassment by the fanatic *Hasidim* grew strong, and a number of the hangers-on stopped coming to the Society, because their fathers and mothers held on hectoring them, and applying pressure.

The elections to the Austrian Parliament brought in a little bit of life. Speakers came, representing a variety of parties, agents for their candidates, and among them – also Zionists. I remember one election assembly in Sattler's premises, where an agent of the assimilationists spoke, opposed by Ben Zion Ginsberg. An intense storm broke out and R' Yaakov Landau (a son-in-law of Nathan Edel) was prepared to deliver slaps to the opposition. This only served to even further strengthen and doubled our ranks.

Coming home, after the First World War to my Rawa, I encountered a completely different atmosphere. The young men, who came home from the war, a part of whom were officers, had traveled a world, seen cities and countries, forgot to let their sidelocks grow, and the same happened with their beards, and began to look at life with different eyes. And also, many of the parents, a little bit at a time, began, to change, and those who were lecturing about tradition began, slowly to lose their influence.

The '*Hatikvah*' Society evolved, the members participated in a variety of fund-raising activities, and already, they were going to collect monies for KK"L from homes, the study house, and on the Eve of Yom Kippur they were already putting out platters with less apprehension.

We founded an amateur [player's] club and put on theater presentations in the hall of the municipal building. I participated in the performance of '*The Luria Brothers*,' and I remember part of the participants, such as: Moshe Berger, Shia Lieberman, Esther Kurtzer-Rosenfeld (the wife of Fyvel Rosenfeld), and Yaakov Isser Neuer. I remember yet another presentation – '*The Din-Torah with the Wind.*'

The tickets for these presentations were always sold out, and the income was allocated to the KK"L. The Jews of Rawa began to feel a completely different taste in life, and great changes took place.

2. Scholars and Just Ordinarily Admirable Jews

My recollections of the city of Rawa reach only to the First World War. I cannot recall the types of night locations, because there were no such locations there; in contrast, I spent many hours and spent days in the *Kloyz* or the *Bet HaMedrash*, and I can tell about those locations.

The permanent discussion participants in the *'Eizerneh' Kloyz*: Mekh'leh Meiseles and Yankl'eh Mund. These were two scholars, and also two greatly stubborn people, 'taking their position.' Each was sharp and thoroughly versed, constantly tussling over some matter of *Halakha*, or a difficult passage in the *Rambam*. I see them before my eyes, Yankl'eh in a *Tallit* on half of his shoulders, his left sleeve rolled up, holding the *'[Tefillin] shel yad*' in his right hand, the strap rolled up, wanting to put on the '*shel yad*' but Mikhl'eh doesn't let him; they are deeply engrossed in arguing the concept, and it cannot be interrupted; both are shouting, these two stubborn men, and it is obvious that they are both right, '*Torah Wars*,' two genuine [Torah] scholars.

Yankl'eh, son of R' Hirsch'eleh Mund, a fine Jewish man, a prominent merchant, a prince and a gentleman; Szifra'leh, his mother, runs her own *Gemilut Hasadim* Fund for the poor marketplace women vendors. His protagonist, Mikh'li Meiseles, was a formidable scholar, and was a *Melamed* in the Yeshiva of Brzezany, and this alone says enough. Incidentally, we had another *Melamed* retained from the Brzezany Yeshiva: R' Yosh'eh Ben-Zion's, a dear Jewish man, one who recessively kept himself hidden; Being a *Melamed* in Brzezany as by itself a credential of note.

R' Yankl'eh *Lezhensker*-Tepikh, the *Dayan* of the city, was a very accomplished well-educated Jewish man, suffused with Torah, also possessed of skills to impart his learning to others, and indeed, he was the one responsible to produce such a student from our city, in the person of the well-known *Gaon*, Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush ז"ל.

R' Shimon Hollar, still quite a young man, the son-in-law of R' Jekuthiel Josefsberg, was a formidable scholar of that time, began making an impression in the city, but returning home to the city from the war – he no longer remained in Rawa.

Two friends were in constant intimate contact – both of my own flesh and blood – one, a truly wondrous and impressive type, R' Simcha Haberman, within him much Torah was intermixed with

worldly understanding, was privileged to bring children into the world who became great scholars; one son was the well-known *Gaon*, the *Galier* Rabbi. The second friend – my father-in-law, R' Lemel Lieberman, a Jewish man who was a scion of Torah and doer of good deeds, a respected merchant, a wise, modest man, comprehensively endowed with all good virtues.

A few words about my brother-in-law, Akiva Hamerlin, a Jewish man also a scion of Torah, more than average, also suffused with general knowledge; up to the Holocaust he was the secretary of '*Agudat Israel*' in Stanislawow, and there, he was exterminated along with the entire [Jewish] community. הי"ד!

I cannot end without recalling one person, a truly exceptional and dear Jewish man, who was the pride of Rawa, R' Israel Dayan-Schwert, a son of R' Hirsch'eleh the Ritual Slaughterer, who was held to be one of the *Gaonim* of the area, and he remains, to this day, etched into my memory.

And now, last of the last, a couple of lines about my dear father ע"ה, R' Benjamin, who was a member of the coterie of the most admired, and maybe the most admired, of the *balebatim* of the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, a scion of Torah, a master of the *Tanakh*, and perhaps the only Jew in the *Kloyz* who understood the 'riddle' of the *Ibn-Ezra*, or a difficult aspect of grammar; at that time, he wrote freely in the *Holy Tongue*, was always surrounded by a ring of those who respected him, and always found something to ask him, or wanted to hear a bit of light wit. He was privileged to be accorded a ritually suitable burial and eulogy, and also to be interred properly in a Jewish grave. He died 14 Shevat 1938.

My mother ע"ה, the well-known Sarah Haberman, a sister of R' Simcha and R' Israel Haberman, with her great wisdom was a peer to her brothers, and a well-known *Woman of Valor* in the city.

Part of those previously mentioned were exterminated in *Sanctification of the Name*, in the last destruction of the city.

May the memory of all of them be blessed for all eternity! ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

3. Melamdim

I find it very difficult to undertake probing my memories of or, and very beloved city of Rawa; when I begin to write, and start to remember our beloved near ones who were martyrs, who were so tragically exterminated, along with the entire city of Jews, I am subject to a great deal of physical pain in addition to an attack of spasm. But seeing as I do remember a bit more about our younger friends , I wish to fulfil my obligation and, indeed, start at the very beginning, as a little Jewish boy begins his life's journey, and in this fashion, I want, indeed firstly, to begin with those who taught me:

Heder* of Pinia the *Melamed, which was the first place in my life that I saw the form of a letter from the '*Aleph-Bet*,' on a cardboard board, used and also cleaned of many traces of clean fingers...

and from the heavens, suddenly a piece of candy falls down to me, being certain that this was thrown down to me by a good angel, to give me incentive to learn. This is what the *Rebbe* said, a diminutive, good and patient little Jewish man, (Sheve'leh the husband of the *Gabbai* Itcheh), with the black-gray beard, who came at the beginning to us at the table and joined our study, doing the alphabet once, and then again.

The second one after him comes as follows:

Yekhiel *Melamed*, a dear Jewish man and a good Melamed, a sparse beard with long sidelocks, curled into small cylinders. Under his tutelage we started the *Gemara,* '*Baba Metzia*.'

Sholom Drong, lives a couple of houses past Leah the Dairy woman, as it happens, not my *Melamed*, but has the reputation of being a good pedagogue – someone with some mastery of the *Holy Tongue*. As for his teaching, it is a little difficult to extract its substance, but, no Evil Eye intended, a couple of youths: a Moshe with blonde sidelocks, a Leibusz and without a purpose; It is necessary to make satchels with chests[135] in order to earn one's bread from the young.

Der Krumer Melamed, pitiably, a handicapped person, with only a quarter of a foot, and in addition to this a heavy cane that he would use as a disciplinary rod: but he is not diminished in importance because of this. This is a Jewish man who is capable of extensive study, a master of the *Tanakh*, knowledge of the *Holy Tongue*, and proudly confronts the *Hasidim* with no fear; his students –almost all from families with Enlightened fathers too.

R' Yehuda Yaakov Mundsztok, *Der 'Terik*,' a *Melamed* of mine, a tall Jewish man, who goes to pray in the old, Belz *Kloyz* wearing a *spodek*. A dear Jewish man of pleasant disposition, having no gall, and could tolerate everything; even in the case when a student would leap into the Heder through the window; he loved learning intensely; an obsession that he had was – not permitting us to go out in the wintertime on the slippery ice between Juzip *Melamed* and the *Blekhener Kloyz*. I loved him with the love of my soul, he always gave me extra 'nosh', like on the Eve of Passover, when we would have a ritual *Siyyum* of tractate of the *Talmud*, because I was a firstborn; but because of this, he got a new tobacco snuff pouch and three large handkerchiefs for *Mishloakh-Manot*.

Moshe Mordechai *Melamed*, lived in the home of Moshe the candelabra-maker, whose window looks out over the fruit-garden of Arbisboyer, which we would often go into through the window. He, himself, was a great scholar, a brother of Shmuel Leib Paster, an ardent Belz *Hasid*. Every couple of weeks, the Sabbath when the New Month was blessed, he would make the leap to Belz, coming home on Sunday, with many miracles, and Sabbath Torah lessons from the *Tzaddik*. Of my friends in this *Heder*, I remember the names of: Gabriel Billig, a grandson of R' Sholom Grosskopf and Moshe Tzwerin – learning and rehearsing together. I still remember the point of argument of the Bar-Mitzvah feast: -- 'From what do we learn that attention should not stray while wearing *Tefillin*?'

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135 Perhaps a sense of making 'a silk purse out of a sow's ear,' in working with less than capable students.

Not only did I have to know this, I had to explain it – at [the *Heder* of] Moshe Mordechai's there was no fooling around…

Abraham'echeh *Melamed*, a son-in-law of Itcheh *Melamed* and the inheritor of his *Heder*. Who does not remember the large '*koluzha*' between the *Heder* and the synagogue, where in the summer we would bring in the 'Jordan,' and in the winter, we would slide on the ice. R' Abraham'echeh, a very good *Melamed*, a master of *Tanakh*, a grammarian, but a bit 'tetched,' God save us, reads '*HaTzefira*' surreptitiously. My father ע"ה was a partner to the [subscription of] *HaTzefira* which arrived – smuggled from Tomaszow and one reveled with R' Nahum Sokolov 'from one Saturday to the next'…

R' Itzik Mordechai 'Tzipis"-man who wore the old boots, a *Melamed*, a Jewish man of the highest sanctity, wearing a genuine *spodek*, and prayed at the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash*, an ardent Belz *Hasid.*

R' Shlomo Naphtali's Rosenfeld, yet another *Melamed,* but pitiably a wretched pauper; the *Heder* with the residence and the kitchen with the beds, in a small shtibl and in addition a daughter, practically an '*Agunah*,' whose husband was a 'sitter' in Belz, coming home only once a year for Passover to the 'Kingdom,' and all this teaching does not carry enough income with it, and they are still indebted for the daughter's wedding. And so *taygelach* have to be made without an egg, with dark flour, and dark peas. There I studied for only one learning period, but absorbed a great deal…

R' Leibusz Mendl Birnbaum, yet another *Melamed*, where I studied for two or three time periods, and he has left a favorable impression in my memory, a dear and respected Jewish man, an accomplished leader of prayer services in the *Eizerneh Kloyz* (that is where we studied). The husband of Chaya-Sarah'leh, she had the best pickles, and the best herring in the entire city; he – a somewhat stout Jewish man, under the jacket a thick clasped vest, summer and winter; a great scholar, with the pride in a pedigree of an 'Opatów' grandson. He always had pieces of candy in his pockets, in order to buy us, the *shkotzim* off, so we should be given the incentive to learn.

I remember another one, but not a skilled *Melamed*, but, pitiably, a failure, where I learned for two time periods in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, with the name **Melech 'Tchipis'** – who personally was a great student; however, I was a bit 'singed' by 'the blunderers through the ways of life' from Smolenski [sic: Smolenskin] and the YAL"AG's work – 'The Years of Joseph ben Shimon.' However, it is necessary to learn, because one must be a refined young man, imbued with the spirit of Torah – an asset when seeking a match to a wedding.

R' Aharon Leib, '*Der Langer*' – he was so called – Ben-Zion Ginsberg's father, a *Melamed* of the highest order, who because of his son's apostasy in suborning the little boys into the heresy of Zionism, lost a large part of his students, and his wife, Bracha, had to help making a living; she became a baker and delivered bread to the houses in the city.

I will end this list with a very interesting type of Jewish man, sightless, ***Der Blinder* Froyim**, who sat continuously in the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash*, summer and winter, with his back to the large oven, and learned by heart [sic: not using books]. We, the little boys would go up to him, ask him about a bit of the *Gemara*, and he, as if he knew all of the tractates by heart, immediately read, as if he was actually looking into the *Gemara*, and gave us an understanding of everything.

May the memory of all these be blessed for all time to come!

Memories of What Was Then

By Yitzhak Daks



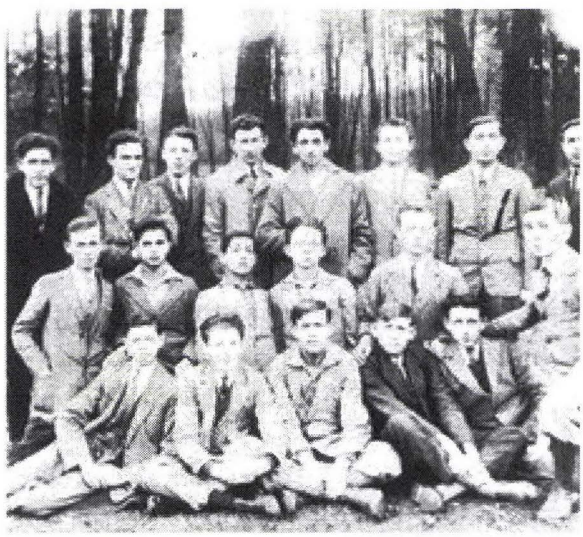
Page 147: The Train Station

Once there was a city, ringed by towns for generation upon generation. Rawa-Ruska was such a *City and Mother* in Galicia. It was diminutive, a clutch of about 20,000 souls. There were Jews of all kinds, Hasidim, scholars, grandees, and plain ordinary nice Jewish people, and those that once had been prominent, meaning those who had failed, and there were those without end. There were craftsmen, merchants, wagon drivers, and plain idlers. 'The common people,' the gate and iron, up to the lumpen-proletarians; the well-known 'underworld crowd' – the '*Chaim-Druckerlach.*[136]' A city, in which the community pulse beat every day of the year. All parties that were in the Jewish street had branches in the city: Zionist parties the *Bund*, *Yad Kharutzim*, communists; all the youth organizations buzzed with throngs, without exaggeration.

According to one respectable Jewish person, the city of Rawa is actually referenced in the prayer '*Brikh Shmey*'. Where it says '*Yehay* ***Ra'ava*** *Kadamakh...*' This is taken as a sign that Rawa is an expression of a world that was, and is now no longer.

As mentioned, this was a small Jewish world, circled by a large hostile gentile world. Here and there, clashes occurred with the gentiles. An occasion would arise where on a market da, unruly gentile thugs, who had gotten drunk and were looking for trouble, wanted to rob a poor widow who had a market stand. Frightened storekeepers quickly began to close the doors of their places of business.. but 'Israel is not bereft'... butchers, wagon drivers, set up a barrier and broke their bones.

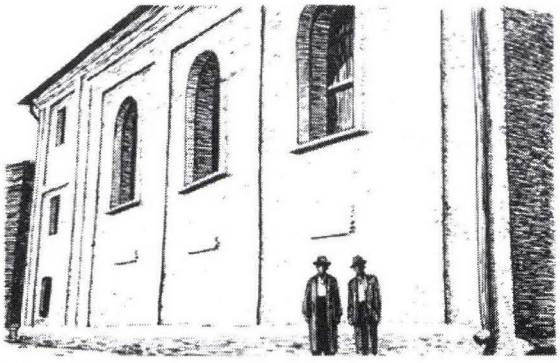
Berakh Lemsak, the Jewish *Hitzel* (Dog Breeder) of the city, was a real piece of work; he was literally *sui generis*, the only Jewish dog breeder in the entire country; a dissolute youth able to do just about anything. For the entire year he was, as the Jews say, the equivalent of ten gentiles; but when it comes to protecting Jewish assets, it is not possible to walk away from one's Jewish 'gut.' The same could be said for the underworld coterie – all of them felt it to be their obligation to *Bless God's Name*, and show the gentiles what Jews can do. [To show them that] we are not, God forbid, just patsies... and they knew how to land a blow; just rely on them. That is the way it was since time immemorial, and the sense was that it would be like this forever. One became inured to those of the gentiles in the immediate area. Bredi the chimney sweep spoke Yiddish like flowing water. Wokhlowicz the builder takes bribes from everyone and then complains in Yiddish: 'Jewish people, speak to the point!' Even the barrel maker,



Page 150: 'Gordonia' Youth

136 The choice of the name Chaim Drucker, as an epithet for underworld personalities, is not known to us. It is possible that an individual by that name garnered an unsavory reputation, to the point that his name became a metaphor for those who engage in such activities.

who is a Corporal in the Fire Brigade, when he would come for everyone, when the fire had already been put out, with the fire hose attached to the community horses, he would say: [sic: in Yiddish] 'what's on fire?..' it's not too bad; the diminutive Jews would recite the fire blessing '*Boray Meoray HaEysh*,' 'they should only burn.' And so, on Sunday, to the parade, when he went decked out in his silken *tchakeh*, with the blue insignia, he would twirl his blond '*kadma ve'azla*[137]' moustache, and say in Polish: *'teroz zydki, doicze ognia'* and add a spicy curse as well.



Page 152: The Great Synagogue

Let us jump off the wing of imagination; shake off the nightmare, maybe all of this is just a bad dream. Come, let us go back into the city. If you are a scion of Rawa, born there, help me to recall, because every stone cries out from the wall (*evven maykir tiz'ak*). Where shall we begin? Maybe from the train?... Yes, indeed, from the train: because it was here that it came to its tragic end... the transports from Belzec have a great deal of connection to it. The Rawa train station is well known to us, having been built even before the time of Franz-Jozef, whom the Jews considered as a benevolent monarch. Older Jews, in general, very much loved to tell stories from pre-war times (before the First World War). 'Before the War,' this was an indicator, that one wanted to offer no small amount of praise, and so my father, peace be unto him, would say: there is war merchandise, Lodz merchandise, or the Polish way, which was an artificial substitute for the past. In general, the reign of Franz Jozef, for the Jews of Galicia, was a wellspring of memories, of a world that no longer was there. During the time of Grabski, they would recollect those years, as if to highlight the difference relative to the six days of creation, before Adam, the first man, was driven from the Garden of Eden. Some difference – the elders would say – first of all, before the war, there were no parties, the way it is now. The *Hasidim* of Belz were the leaders on top, and the only ones with pedigree among the masses. Israel Mikhl Feder was the head of the community, without any opposition from the Zionists. Every evening, all the *Kloyz* premises and houses of study were packed with the masses of the common people. After running around all day trying to make a living, Jews would grab the opportunity to get into a *Mincha-Maariv* service in the *Kloyz,* some to study a page of the *Gemara*, some to simply read in an '*Eyn Yaakov*,' or to audit the discussion of a chapter of the *Mishna*. Here and there, a *Maggid* would bring an audience to tears, especially the women. Chana'leh *Shammes* would drag herself around on her ailing feet, distributing candles to those who were studying. Henokh the Sugar Baker would, between *Mincha* and *Maariv* sell kasha knishes, cheese knishes, or a wooden measure of *flign-bokhes* in the connecting corridor, for a *kreutzer*[138].

Balebatim are familiar from these old days, prominent people such as: Leibusz *Baleboss*, Yoss'leh Marz, Hirsch'eleh Mund. How do all of the present day prominent people measure up to them?

Once upon a time, there was a Jewish man, a *Hasid*, Yankl Berisz, with a warm Jewish heart; a God-fearing Jewish man, like Joel R' Abish's, who was the Torah reader in the *Alter Kloyz*. A scholarly Jew like R' Azh'eh...

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137 A humorous reference to the 'trop' notes in cantillation that have the appearance of two sides of a moustache.

138 Pronounced *greitzer* by the Jews.

... yes, it all started with the train. My father, peace be with him, told me, that in his time, the students of the Heder would go for a stroll to the train station. Today, the young people stroll literally as far as the Wolkowica Forest; or to the yard of the church on the Rata.

At that time the train was the mode [of travel]. To their bad luck, by the train they encountered the father of one of the boys" 'What is this dereliction of Torah study, etc?' To this, they had no other answer, except – that they had gone to wash their hands at the hand-pump. This was because the pump at the train [station] had good water. True, this was a weak excuse for a scholarly Jewish man; but you should not forget, that in the entire city, there were very few sources of running water (pumps). For those who had the means, water was delivered by the bathhouse gentile Ivan, perpetually drunk as Lot, with a red nose; he was a surly gentile, who would curse Jews and threaten them in his drunken state, saying he would kill all of the Jews if he was only permitted to do so. Jews feared him, and attempted to appease him, some with a piece of Challah and whiskey on every Sabbath. It was no small matter that a gentile hurled curses, they should only go to desolate fields... but there was a danger that one would be without a gentile to perform services on the Sabbath. Moshe Poyetz would deliver water a little at a time; for this, if he was caught in the act, there was a fear of letting him in among women and children in a Jewish home. The simple folk 'the people,' hauled water in cans [for themselves] by hand. In the winter, ash was sprinkled out around the bathhouse, in order that the community of Jews could draw water without slipping on the ice.

Let us now really get back to the train; it is train-time; Fish'leh the wagon driver sits on the *kelnya,* waiting for a guest who needs a ride into the city; Gedalia the Whipper who was a driver for Ber'eleh Piakarnik, ties off a small sack of oats for the horse, and goes off to wait for elegant guests, seeing that he speaks a good Polish.

There are Jews in beards and sidelocks from the surrounding small towns; Nemierow, Uhniv – in black overcoats with plush hats, with umbrellas and suitcases, with curled sidelocks reaching to their waist, each rushing to catch the train to Belz. The train to Belz is predominantly Jewish; not a gentile for healing... even the conductor speaks Yiddish; he had great reservations, wondering why the '*Lapserdrakehs*' push and shove endlessly, and why, even though they do buy train tickets...at the entrance to the train-station platform there is a ticket-seller, a surly gentile with two long moustaches; he does not let anyone through without a ticket. Even if the *Rebbe* of Belz is traveling through the city to Oleszyce. Children and adults all come to the *Rebbe* to offer him the greeting, *Shalom*; but the gentile lets no one through, only passengers. Having no alternative, the *Heder* children, and other ordinary young people, must jump over the low fence, or go through the un-kosher buffet in second class. This is not savory at all to a Jew observing *kashrut*; the odor of 'that other stuff' offends the nostrils. Apart from that, it is possible to run into someone, who will have to be circumvented. One of our people, who would like to eat something, goes to a kosher stand by the train, to eat something. There one encounters a fourth part of something healthy to eat and a genuine eighth part of mead. Seeing that there is plenty of time, it is Sunday before noon, so we will then go on foot; in the middle of the way, the band from the railroad is playing in their professional society, across from Yaki Becker. Who does not know Yaki Becker? He, himself is a German, but he has long forgotten German; he speaks Yiddish, *Mameloshn*. He argues, that at the end of Passover, at night, he has a franchise for selling a freshly baked small loaf of bread to the public. Wags like to tell a story: On one Saturday afternoon, a young *Heder* boy was sent to an examination

by a Jewish man on the street of the train station; by mistake, he ran into Yaki Becker. Yaki received him with grace; he listened to the recitation of his lesson, even gave a pinch on the cheek, and then sent him off to his Jewish neighbor, after the Sabbath repast.

The only photographer in the *shtetl*, Meyer, puts out new pictures; here you can see which new couples have fallen in love. There are group pictures of the youth-organization '*Gordonia*' as posed last Purim, at the fund-raising for KK"L, and just ordinary pictures of high-ranking people, and haughty people, in a variety of poses.

From here, it is a few steps to the Baron Hirsch School. Recently, the building has been transformed into a Hebrew School, and in the distance, one hears a mish-mash of children's voices. On the ground floor, the *Gemilut-Hesed* Fund can be found, and here is also the community council.

Years ago, Yiddish studies were also given in the Baron Hirsch School; the director was the old man, Epstein, a man of the people, and also a teacher of religion in the other Polish schools. The school building borders the boundary of the old cemetery.

There are many old wives tales that waft about the old cemetery: a fright can literally befall you by going home at night from the train; essentially, everyone wondered about this: how does that old Dr. Segal life in peace with all the dead as neighbors, for all those years, and they do not bother him...and on a *Tisha B'Av*, or an Eve of Yom Kippur, when the entire body of the community goes *en masse* to pay homage at the graves of their ancestors, their wailing reaches the very heart of the heavens; or during a conscription call-up, when mothers are prepared to tear up the world to free their son from gentile hands. This was also the reason that the newly installed Hetman ordered the old cemetery closed.

A cemetery was renewed on the sand, past the *Targowica*. As a child, I remember the dedication ceremony of the cemetery very well. A fast was decreed in the *shtetl*. As it happened, nobody died for a week; and Karlik the Porter, stood watch over the same grave, until another deceased person was interred. The oldest gravedigger of those times, who lived a long time, was R' Moshe Mezemik; he was a Jewish man over his eighties, who wandered about as if he were in his own vineyard. He knew by heart where each and every person was buried; he said that he does not need a map, having all of this memorized in his head. His son, Israel Mezemik took over this franchise 'on the sand.' The second set of hands was Reuv'eleh *Shammes*; This was a rigorous Jew. He envelopes you in a sharp, stern glance. The women tremble before him; this was especially the case, when he would go through the city, calling out in his sorrowful voice – 'Come to do a mitzvah for the dead!' During funerals, he would shake the charity box, shouting out from time-to-time: 'women to the side.' Apart from this he was the *Shammes* in the *Blekhener Kloyz*. In praise of him, it must be said that the *Kloyz* was held to be very enchanting, literally spotless, as only the Great Synagogue was on the Eve of Passover. In his presence, the *Heder* children did not dare to throw snow in the corridor of the *Kloyz*, because it implied getting slapped.

Who lives in the *Hekdesh*? Poor people, people passing through; no locals. The city poor had regular lodging, some in the *Alter Kloyz*, or in the old *Bet HaMedrash*. Moshe Poyetz and Zeinvill Bass, sleep by the oven in the old *Bet HaMedrash*. Shia Abraham, an old bachelor, sleeps in the Women's

Synagogue of the *Eizerneh Kloyz*. To defray rent, he would help out on Friday, by sweeping out the *Kloyz* and lighting the candles. What does he live on for the entire week? He distributes wedding tickets among the *balebatim*; he teaches how to recite '*Modeh-Ani'* to girls; he puts on an act during Purim, and this provides him with half an income. This is how he imbibes his life, until such time as a wealthy bride will come for him.

And here again, the Jew-hater, and Ivan the drunk, both serving as a *Shabbes-Goy*, sleep in the bath. Froyim Fatzig would disappear each summer, and spend the season in the mountains. With winter approaching, he would return, dressed in a gentile fur jacket and head-covering. He would sleep at the '*Hatikvah*' Society premises together with Abraham Fatemacz. The latter belonged to the half-crazy folk in the city. His insanity was that the Duke Sapieha was his own brother; but the latter pursues him, and has driven him from the palace in Siedliska. However, only thanks to him – he says – the Duke sends him every few weeks a couple of wagons with trees to decorate the *Kloyzes* and the Great Synagogue with greenery… this is his franchise from time immemorial.

A guest fixture was Tevel; his rubric was: 'little one, have you eaten noodles with bones?'… he was a tall emaciated Jewish man, always with a sack thrown over his back; he was the only one of the paupers who would take bread as a handout; others were more haughty – so give them nothing… and recently, whole rows would come from £aszczów – Bilgoraj; *balebatim* would give donations, groan and say: 'Some nice deal I got! Instead of Prague and Vienna – I got Krakow and Tyczyn'…

Moshe Meir, an elementary level *Melamed*, a Jewish man with a visage graced by a white beard, and a Jewish heart. He would look after all the unfamiliar poor in the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash*, those passing through, to see to it that they would have somewhere to eat on the Sabbath; that no one, God forbid, should be left without a meal. He would arrange for Jewish military recruits to have a meal at Schweitzer's for the Sabbath, and often defrayed the cost himself; he did this while not being particularly well educated.

How did Jews make a living? The principal source of income was from the gentile; every Monday was a fair day. This provided half the income. If winter occurred because of the cold, or it was before the harvest, and so the fair day turned out to be a weak one, it was not easy to get through the week. The essential concern was: from where will the funds come for the Sabbath? True, it was seldom that anyone died of hunger. Jews, compassionate, sons of the compassionate, a group of '*Matan B'Seyter*,' would distribute a couple of zlotys every week to those in need, for the Sabbath. In this virtue, let my brother-in-law Abraham'cheh Hoffenbratel be reckoned, who for long years, involved himself in this endeavor. Apart from the peasants, the Rawa Jews fulfilled the behest of King David: 'Go, and make a living one from another.' One might be a jobber, or just plain circulating around the market. Regarding this, a story is told, that a judge, a gentile, asked a Jew about his occupation; the Jew then argued: 'Here, one circulates.' 'I don't understand – the judge said – were I to circulate around the market even for the entire day, I would not earn a pfennig.' 'That is true,' the Jew said, 'but if you, Your Honor the Judge, were to let me circulate around you, both of us would earn a nice bit of income.' Yes, this was once the case, everything was accepted for its goodness, a quarter of

a *razowy*[139], a slice of bread smeared with a bit of chicken fat, rubbed with a bit of garlic, was considered an evening meal fit for a noble.

The sick poor lay in the *Hekdesh*, there being no hospital and no old age home. Righteous women, like my great-aunt Ser'keh and others, would always send in a bit of soup, or a bit of fruit jelly conserve, to help sustain life.

Rawa is a Jewish city, but all the official positions are occupied by gentiles. The reason for this is, that Jews would be required to write on the Sabbath. The exception to this was in connection with post office work, where indeed there was a Jew, but that individual very much wanted to be taken for a gentile, and happened to have a Jewish nose... also the pharmacist in the city was a convert [sic: from Judaism to Christianity]. Religious Jews avoided him, and made their purchases at the gentile pharmacy.

Pretty soon, we are close to the market, and it is Sunday. The store businesses are closed. The storekeepers are milling around the shops, they pace about, seeing if Arenda, the Police Commandant has already passed through the market from the church, on his way home. Then, it will be possible to let a buyer in through the back door.

In the marketplace proper, circles of Jewish people are standing, and politics is being discussed; *Sejm* elections, and elections to the municipal council. Choloniewski is always thinking up new decrees to impose on the Jewish merchants. He wants that the east side of the municipal building to be free for the entire week from the merchants, except for Monday, the market day. There is talk of the gathering which Dr. Mandel calls for after the noon hour, at the place between the synagogue and the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, indeed, about this very subject. Apart from the head of the community, the *Bund* member Grossaug will speak on behalf of craftsmen and ordinary people of the working masses.

Monday is the market day, from which Jews derive their sustenance for the entire week. The clothing retailers get trousers and jackets ready for the peasants. They hang out seaworthy boots, Damascus style, with small heels, for the peasant women. Over there, by the municipal building are the stands of the swine merchants. The unclean odor of bacon and garden produce, perforce, creeps into the Jewish noses: further to the right, the bakers take up space, with sweet goods and other baked products, which has remained with Jewish storekeepers for the entire week, even before the Sabbath. Further on there are merchants selling sewed notions, peasant harvest, sitters at the market with fruit produce, with Sheva'leh the Lady *Gabbai* at their head. There is a particularly great deal of crowding around the four market [water] pumps. Horses stamp impatiently, waiting for the peasants to draw a vessel of water. Antokh the water-carrier, curses all the Jews with devastating imprecations, as soon as he encounters his relatives from home. The sounds of people and cattle rise up into the heart of the heavens. One storekeeper slaps the peasant in the hand, assuring him by all that is holy, that he will be able to wear the boots for at least two full years...-- on the shoulder...the Jews in the marketplace extol the virtues of their wares.

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139 Brown bread

It was possible to begin to feel the Holy Sabbath already by Friday in the morning. The odor of freshly-baked flame-*pletzl* with onions and mohn, filled every house. Shia Meister the *Schmeisser* of the steam bath, rings his little bell and calls the community to take a sweat in the steam bath. Here, in the bath, all are equal, poor and rich, and everyone derives pleasure from the same heat, because Shia always is pouring a fresh pail of water on the glowing stones. There is only one minor difference: the host of poor people serve themselves, while the rich let themselves be switched and served by Shia, who drags the vessels of water up the high hot steps, up and down. Beside the hot steam bath, the smaller cooling off hut stands. Here you find the gossips, the ordinary jokesters, and while the world changes, the circle with its joking around never changes – being much like an eternal light. The foremost speaker is Itcheh Bobenik, Rachel'eh *Der Bobbeh's* husband. Who does not know Rachel'eh *Die Bobbeh;* an entire generation has passed through her hands; She herself no longer remembers the number of births. Itcheh *Der Bobenik* is a man of great imagination: he can tell stories of things that never happened, or never occurred. However, they have substance, and are to the point. People know his weakness, but lend an ear, hearing exaggerations without end – as if they were hearing it for the first time. If, for example, there is talk of the warm *mikva,* R' Itcheh tells that as a young man, on one Friday occasion, he caught a live pike fish in the *mikva*; or if they were talking about freezing weather, he tells, that in former times, there were intense cold spells; [he tells that] his grandfather, of blessed memory, had his pinky finger frozen off, during the conduct of the [Passover] Seder, at the enumeration of the Ten Plagues, when it is dipped into the [wine] cup.

In the summertime, groups of young people would go bathe in the river. Brave sorts, who had no fear of the gentile thugs, even bathed beside the railroad bridge, beside the outhouse. *Heder* boys feared the gentile thugs, who would take their clothing and throw them into the river, or sic dogs on them, and would therefore swim closer to the courtyard…

Deep meadows extend from both sides of the river, with high-standing cut hay, that gives life to souls. Separately, in a corner-located bath, the women swim. In the distance one can see white, inflated shirts, and from time to time one hears shouts, if a man should happen to draw near. The *Heder* boys take fresh onion egg rolls with them to the river. According to the color around their mouths, one knows what sort of fruit layer cake their mother baked for the Sabbath. Ranging from black berries, or from wine-colored ones. In the forests from every corner of the city, plain berries grow in profusion, as do strawberries and raspberries. The children of the peasants, half for free, brought them to be sold in the city.

A little at a time the storekeepers close up their places of business, even yet before Reuben *Shammes* raps [his message] to come into the synagogue, and that Sabbath has already arrived in the world. The blessed Sabbath candles shine out of every Jewish house. Children with their combed and coiffed hair show themselves at the doors.

All the streets, leading to a synagogue or a *Kloyz,* are full of people; also modern young people, those who don't pray particularly seriously, are also out for a stroll in the street. Friday evening – after eating – adults and children all go for a stroll in the market, to grab some fresh air. A few people look for solitude, rather distant from the yard, near the bridge. One seldom goes further on towards the Rata church; here is a danger in encountering gentile thugs, or dissolute youth. In the wintertime, the part offices are packed with young people here there will be an evening dance, there, might be an evening of discussion and lecture. In the '*Hatikvah*' Society, there is some sort of lecture by a

Doctor-Professor; because for just an ordinary speaker, one does not hurry particularly, and it attracts few listeners. Sabbath in the summertime, one goes for strolls in the forests. The youth organization, '*Gordonia*,' holds its discussions in the Wolkowica Forest, near the brick factory. In the Borove Forest, the communists have their clandestine get-togethers. Just plain strollers enjoy the fresh air on the yard, going as far as the Siedlice Forest, and along the way they can inexpensively purchase fruit from the priests in the church. Here, one can encounter the two philosophers: Yoss'l Sznessel with Abish Bringer. They talk about a new book that they had just received from the '*Hitakhdut*' Library.

Yes, where are we, in the market, beside the Piłsudski memorial, indeed, near the '*Klapperheizl*,' if you are a native, from Rawa, you know exactly where we are standing. Here, a large notice hangs, about a presentation that is to take place on Saturday night, in the hall of the orphanage. The play is 'Hasia the Orphan.' Who are the performers? The community head, Dr. Mandel, Shim'ek Margulies, Leibusz Weber, and the director is – Dr. Herschfeder. The proceeds are earmarked for the *Keren Kayemet L'Israel.*

From the women's synagogue in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, one can hear the *Heder* students reciting out loud: '*Modeh Ani LeFanekha.*' This is a sign that it is close to mealtime. There, R' Yekhiel is inculcating a measure of Hebrew into the elementary level boys. You can say what you want about him, that he was stern. However, to his credit, it must be said that, thanks to him, almost everyone, who studied under his tutelage for a couple of learning periods, knew how to understand a portion of the Pentateuch with *Rashi* by heart. For this reason, after two learning periods, the young rapscallion would go over to study with the red[-headed] *Melamed* Chaim Shmuel, so the first thing he had to do was throw rocks into the *Heder*. For this reason, all of the window panes on the first level of the women's synagogue would be knocked out. Leib'leh *Shammes,* a man of pleasant disposition, would always get freshly angry: if he would ever catch that youth... who knows what he might have done. Inside the *Eizerneh Kloyz* itself, the last *minyan* is ending, that of the *Shacharit* prayers; from six o'clock in the morning, until now, without stop, there is one *minyan* after another, *Kedusha* and *Barchu*... Jews praying, snatching in a page of the *Mishna* after a *Yahrzeit*, one quaffs a *L'Chaim* with a bite of honey cake, or rugelach from the homey buffet. And conversation ensues in the corners.

Yankl'eh Mund: this is Torah and commerce in one place, truly a beautiful Jewish man, a son of R' Hirsch'eleh Mund, one of the seven best men of the city. He had a private bank; the monopoly over the sale of salt belonged to him. If it was necessary to escrow money for an arbitration, it is deposited with Yankl'eh Mund. He leads services very beautifully; he has a sweet voice, and is also a good Torah reader. The womenfolk literally come apart from crying, when on *Hoshanah Rabba* he chants the *Hoshanot*. He travels to Belz for the High Holy Days. At that time, the Rabbi of Magierow leads services in the *Eizerneh Kloyz.*

In the second corner, a group of Jewish *Maskilim* are seated, and are engaged in a conversation befitting Torah scholars. Simcha Haberman, an exceptional intellect, with a wide-open mind; R' Benjamin Szur, a formidable expert in Hebrew, and a master of grammar; Abraham'echeh Hoffenbratel with Chaim Leib Lieberman, the founders of the Hebrew language '*Tarbut*' School in the city, and last of all: R' Lejzor Zinger, -- the last, a Jewish man who was a master of the Torah,

a *Maskil*; in his youth, he traveled around the world, reaching the city of Brody; he belonged to the 'Singers of Brody.' Now, in old age, out of financial need, he taught the children of *balebatim Tanakh* and grammar, The *Hasidim* don't hold him in much regard; in his youth, he learned with the commentaries of Mendelssohn, which to them was an illegitimate and unacceptable source.

In the vestibule by the entrance to the Kloyz, Zechariah'leh the bookbinder lays out his merchandise for sale. Sacred writing, prayer books, pentateuchs, calendars, fringed garments and – differentiated – just ordinary books for the womenfolk. On *Hoshanah Rabba*, he has a franchise for the sale of *Hoshanot*. Yet from all of these sources of income, he derives few blessings. He doesn't have much of an income from bookbinding. Jews pray from memory, prayer books are not torn. The competition with Ber'leh the bookbinder is great; the latter had purchased a machine for cutting paper. All the *Heder* children buy newly printed blessing books from him. There is yet another bookbinder, a good-natured Jewish man, who gets himself very upset when a congregation of Jews surround him, sniffing around and reading, on one foot, all of his story books, wrinkle their nose, as a sign of their understanding, and go away buying nothing from him. At that time, being upset, he argues that he entirely does not want Yiddish readings, and only wants to deal with the nobility. And the evidence of this is: in the winter months, he binds books in the barracks where the soldiers are, and he derived more than half his income from them; he finds it difficult to extract the other half of his income from Jews... it is a great loss, that the gentiles do not pray using [Jewish] prayer books, for then he would be able to derive pleasure from God's little world.

Zechariah'leh has a franchise to do the 'knocking' that summons people into the synagogue. Every Friday, towards nightfall, he passes through the other half of the Jewish quarter in the city, and raps with the wooden hammer on every Jewish door; this is how he divides up the mitzvah with Reuben *Shammes* every Friday evening. He took over this franchise from R' Hersch *Shammes*, who was for many long years, the *Shammes* in the Great Synagogue. The latter specified in his last will and testament, that the wooden hammer he used to rap on doors to initiate candle-lighting, should be placed in his grave.

Yitzhak'l the bookbinder wakes up to go to *Selichot*. After midnight, he calls out in a sorrowful voice: '*Yiddn, shtayt oyf l'avoydas Ha'Boyreh*.' At the beginning, the city guards would drive him off, but after that the left him alone. As payment, he received a pair of boots for the winter. He was a complete pauper, but content with his lot. There was not a wedding in the city, a *Kiddush* on the Sabbath, or a *Sheva Berachot* without Yitzhak'l. He would carry a small pouch with him; first off, he would put honey cake n it for his wife and children, they should be well, and afterwards take a taste for himself. He loved making merry at the celebrations of the common folk, and not only for the better off people.

The Great Synagogue is beautiful and always enchanting; this is thanks to the *Gabbai* Abraham'eleh Weiss. Himself, a well-dressed Jewish man, he makes sure that Mott'l the *Shammes* not forego his obligations; this is not like the other houses of study. During the entire week, there is barely a *minyan* that worships here. For this reason, on the Sabbath, the Great Synagogue is full of worshipers. Jews who for the entire week are consumed by their work, or weighed down, market merchants, craftsmen, their own masters. Here prayer is conducted in the style of Ashkenaz. At exactly eight o'clock in the morning, the Rabbi arrives; unlike the *Hasidic Kloyzes*, they never start late.

He rules the synagogue with a high hand in his capacity as the Gabbai. No politics are discussed in the synagogue. In general, Abraham'eleh Weiss says that with Jews, it is only good to eat kugel; but not from one plate. What does he demand from our Jews? Hear a story: He Abraham'eleh, served in Greiding[140] during wartime. There 'KYR"H' assembled all of the Jewish soldiers that had beards and sidelocks; as a *Feldwebel*, he was ordered to lead a company of Jews in praying on the Sabbath in the morning. He stood out in front.

And precisely then, a colonel has to pass by, and as a matter of discipline, he must offer him a salute. He calls out: '*Achtung*!' Then he turns himself around, and a darkness descends on his eyes: every time to a pair, another Jew disappeared. And from the entire company, there did not remain a *minyan* of Jews. Oh surliness and anger. Not only did he lost his stripe, but he was subject to court martial... go conduct a war with Jews!... No wonder that Austria lost the war...

The synagogue is a tall, beautiful building: it was built back in the days of the King [Jan] Sobieski. The high soffit is supported by pillars; on the soffit and on the walls, are pictures of all the signs of the zodiac, landmarks, Rachel's Tomb, the Double Cave of the Patriarchs. The animals, for example, have Jewish eyes, with no feral look in them. There are pretty crown-like flowers drawn around the Holy Ark. The Bima is a work of art. On the Sabbath or a Festival Holiday, it is a joy to see the Great Synagogue all lit up with all of its lights and hanging candelabras, packed full of a community of Jews, children and adults alike. The *Hazzan* adds a great deal. Who does not remember the *Hazzan*. In former days, it was not so easy to get to be a chorister under him. All week long, after the holidays, in the winter nights, the prayers would be sung in all of the hat making shops: '*U'Nesaneh Tokef*,' or '*V'Yeasu*.' Leah, the *Hazzan's* wife, would be very solicitous of making sure that her crown not catch cold: an act of Satan, to become hoarse right before the High Holy Days. 'Chaim,' she would say, 'I think that it is hurting you over there. Perhaps it is enough already for today? It would be easier to make an entreaty to a thief.'

Apart from Chaim *Hazzan*, there also was Meir *Hazzan*. He would lead services in the Old *Bet HaMedrash*. For the whole week, he served as a sort of religious functionary. He was an overseer of the butchers at the slaughterhouse.

The *Bayiker*[141] Belz *Kloyz,* as the 'Old' *Kloyz* was called, is fully packed with worshipers; Even though many *Hasidim* would spend the entire Ten Days of Atonement at the *Rebbe* of Belz, at that time, R' Sholom Rokeach would come here to pray, or as he was called, R' Sholom'keh. For many years, the beginning of the service was led by R' Nachman Moshe Sanders, a Jewish man over eighty, blind, who led the service from memory in the style of Skarbow, literally revitalizing, and this was his franchise from year-to year.

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140 Gorodok: Khmelnitskaya-oblast (Greiding, Grayding, Graydung, Graydunk Horodok , Gródek, Gorodok-Proskurovskiy

141 Conveying a sense of having been relegated to a secondary status, by referring to it as 'nearby.'.

On the night of Yom Kippur, immediately after *Ne'ilah*, when the lay congregation hurried off to get something to eat, the Hasidic Jews, at their leisure, offered the blessings for the new moon, wishing 'to pray for all that is good.' Then they would escort the Rabbis home in song. Nachman the Baker would go ahead, lighting the way with a lantern. Led by R' Moshe the *Pitchinik* at their head, the *balebatim* of the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash* would escort the Rabbi of Potelycz, singing and clapping their hands. It was only the Rabbi of Magierow, that the gentile, a *schmeisser* working for Fishl'eh the Piakarnik, would be driven home. The *Hasidim* would form a ring around his coach, singing: 'Let the redemption finally come, may the Messiah finally arrive,' In the streets, not a gentile could be seen to get a bit of medicine, except for Ivan the bathhouse gentile, who would stand watch over the *Yahrzeit* candles, to assure they not, God forbid, cause a fire; and without him, who would there be to extinguish it?

The Jewish intelligentsia lives in the mixed quarter, doctors, lawyers; here, if you go a bit further, the Viennese doctor Dr. Daletz lives. It is to him that all the impoverished Jews come, in the off hours, every morning. Everyone believes in him: first God, then the Viennese doctor; He is truly one of the righteous of the world, and a philo-Semite. We are getting close to the train ramp. Here, the trains pass through going to the west, -- to Cracow. Then the Jewish quarter comes to an end, and the gentile suburb starts, where we lived side by side for years on end; and despite this, the Jews were 'a people that lived apart'…

Personalities – Institutions

By Dr. Nachman Blumenthal

A Cooperative Bank in Rawa

There existed a cooperative bank in Rawa under the name of 'The Cooperative Union,' which was tied into the general union of Jewish cooperatives in Poland. The center for that general union was to be found in Warsaw, and in the land central office for "Lower Poland' (Galicia) in Lvov.

Year-in and year-out, the land central office in Lvov would call together a general gathering of the leadership of the separate cooperatives from the entire region, in Lemberg. Apart from this, the head central office in Warsaw would call for an annual gathering in Warsaw, where the Lemberg expositor would send its elected delegates, the leadership from Lemberg, and other larger cooperatives in 'Lower Poland.'

Both the expositor and the central office would, after every gathering, would do an open assessment of the separate cooperatives, as well as the minutes of the general cooperatives, which also submitted the assessment of the executive, the discussion surrounding it, as well as newly passed instances [sic: resolutions] for the new working year, etc.

From these open assessments (printed and handwritten), we extract the ones that are the important ones submitted for the city of Rawa Ruska. The bank in Rawa was established in the year 1923, with

a membership of 176 persons. During the course of the year, 64 new members were added, and 8 were lost; in this manner, by the end of the year, the bank numbered 232 members. This was a substantive growth, which by itself shows that the bank fulfilled a real need with its work among the Jewish populace, and the Jewish populace was more or less satisfied.

The number of members of the bank at that time broke down by the following occupations:

Small businessmen:	154
Manual Workers	41
Factory owners, Merchants (Large Scale):	16
Independent professions	5
Land managers	4
Various others	12

From this, it can be seen, that the bank first of all served the middle, or better said, poorer classes; the craftsmen and small merchants, who comprised the majority number and most of the property of the Jewish populace in the city. Their number of 195 represents 84.4% of the members.

The fact that most of those who drew their needs were especially from the poorer classes, the common people, indicates the low level of a fee – 25 zlotys, in all, and a responsibility for an addition of 10 zlotys.

We will take under consideration what is reported for the year 1937. The number of members at the beginning of the year came to 289. During the course of the year, 26 members were added and 17 were lost (as a result of emigration); taking this into account, at the end of the year, the membership stood at 298.

Their social status:

Land managers	35
Merchants and Factory owners	171
Manual workers	54
Bureau employees	4
Others	34

Here an amalgamation was made between the small and large merchants, together with the factory owners; they were put together into one class!

From the other class, we see that the independent professions were lumped in with 'Others.'

The number of paid employees of the bank came to 3 people.

We will take a look at the operations that the bank conducted during the year. The size of the largest loan that the bank made amounted to 2,000 zlotys. The total number of loans extended in the year was 241, in the total amount of 85,814 zlotys. The discount amounted to 53,367 zlotys, and other credits – 1846 zlotys – bringing the total to 141,017 zlotys. The total of those receiving these credits by the end of the year was 97. The highest number of loan repayments came to 10%.

During the course of the year, deposits in the mounted 222,693 zlotys were taken in, and withdrawals were 207,190 zlotys. There were 74 depositors. A rate of 4.5% was paid for the deposits.

In this year, documents were taken into the bank in the amount of 1,508,392 zlotys. The clear profit of the bank in that year came to 2,256 zlotys (not an larger!). It will be interesting to note that the 3 employees in the bank, together took [sic: as pay] 3,600 zlotys during the year. This means on average, that each took pay in the amount of 100 zlotys a month. This was not a particularly large sum of money! As it seems, the remuneration was not equal for all three. One got more, the second less, and interest was paid out during the year to deposit-holders in the sum of 1,921 zlotys.

The bank did not run any large operation. However, given the fact that the frightening economic crisis that the Jewish populace was undergoing, especially in Eastern Poland, because of either the overt or clandestine boycott that the spheres of the Polish regime were carrying out, and also the competition from the Polish and Ukrainian cooperatives – the bank was able to meet its obligations, and even showed a profit. This is a good sign.

In other Galician towns, a number of banks at that time were forced to shut down. They sustained proportionately significant losses. The reason for this, is because the impoverished storekeepers, the craftsmen, could not pay back their loans, etc.

This means, that the city of Rawa was still able, one way or another, to keep itself afloat.

The last report that we have from the bank, is for the year 1938, and was conveyed at the seventh regional gathering of the leaders of the cooperatives in Eastern Galicia, which took place on 30.4.1939 in Lvov, in the offices of the Jewish community. The members of the presidium took part in this assembly: Abraham Zilberstein, Dr. Emil Zomersztajn, Dr. Zygmunt Meilbaum, and 5 delegates from the separate cooperatives.

According to the report of the delegate from Rawa Ruska, at the end of the year 1938, the bank had 296 members. The sum of all deposits came to 64,108 zlotys, meaningfully down from the prior year; this is a sign of poverty!

At this gathering, 29 fully empowered people were elected, who had to take part in the gathering of the leadership of the Jewish cooperative movement from all over Poland, to take place in Warsaw. Among those elected, Dr. Popiel from Rawa-Ruska may be found.

This is the last report, which appeared before the war, in the minutes of the assembly. The war brought this endeavor to an end.

It is worth taking note, in passing, that in the year 1900, Groynsky relates that in the Rawa-Ruska Powiat, there were 14 cooperative institutions: of these, Christian were 5, and Jewish were 9.

The Baron Hirsch School

As is known, in Galicia and Bukovina, there was a network of private schools for Jews, founded and supported by the Baron Hirsch Foundation, whose leadership ("Curatorium') was to be found in Vienna, and the purpose of the schools was to give Jewish children a worldly education, make them into 'Europeans,' teach them to speak and write the national language: German and the language of the country – Polish, and to reduce the amount of time devoted to Jewish education, and by this, these schools had a great influence on Jewish education in the land. Among the teachers of these schools, good Zionists could be found, loyal to the Jewish people, and in the ambit of the school, also gave the child a national education.



Page 155: The Gemilut-Hesed *Fund in the building of the Baron Hirsch School, sitting: Abraham Edel, Breindl Haberman, Mottl'eh Rosenfeld.*

The schools also – as an innovation of the times – instituted the study of manual trades in school (called '*slajd*'), gymnastics, etc. And they sent a portion of their children, who finished school, to study a trade with a master, or in a trade school.

The Foundation not only supported the teachers, but also put up building for the school, with a playground area and a garden, to teach the children gardening; the Foundation also provided pamphlets for the poorer children, satchels, clothing, gave midday meals, etc.

In a word, the school had an influence on the entire conduct of Jewish life in the city, in part through the fact that teachers came here with a worldly education, most of whom had completed study at a Teacher's Seminary, as well as the fact that the children of the schools comported themselves differently from the children of the existing, established *Heders*.

There was a school of this sort in Rawa Ruska.

The 'Curatoria,' on an annual basis beginning in 1896, would issue a report on the past school year in the German language, with very precise details, that give a picture of what and how was taught and learned, how much it cost to build the schools, and what the other expenses came to, etc.

The last report appeared in the year 1914, for the school year 1912/1913. The war put an end to the schools, and nothing came of the entire Foundation. The Austrian-Hungarian monarchy fell apart, and in its place new counties arose, each of whom organized their school systems in their own fashion: In Galicia (Poland) – there were Polish government schools, eventually for the Jewish children, meaning they were treated differently in this respect, in that they did not go to school on the Sabbath (for this reason these schools were called '*Szabasowki*') and most of the teachers were Jewish. The Jewish religion was also taught, but nothing else from a 'government' standpoint. Another thing was that the teachers, for the most part, and on their own volition, attempted to inject Jewish content into the education (in Polish) (organizing national celebrations, taught Hebrew, etc.). It was not only on one occasion that this led to conflicts with the school authorities.

We extract those things from the reports of the Baron Hirsch Foundation that has a relationship to Rawa Ruska.

The school existed since September 1890 until the outbreak of the First World War in the year 1914. Its director (later on) and only teacher in the beginning was Shmuel Krel-Tzilf, who had a Seminary diploma and a license to be a teacher. The number of students at the time was very small, such that the single teacher was more than enough.

As is known, this school, from the outset was boycotted. Namely, the very religious Jews saw in it a nest for apostasy. Well, and as is self-understood, the *Melamdim* of the *Heders* also waged war on their side, fearing the competition…

Furthermore, the richer class of Jews did not send their children to this school. They more quickly wanted to send their children to the Polish schools, or have them taught privately, before resorting to sending them to the Baron Hirsch School, which they saw a 'charity school' for the poor.

In the year 1893, three new teachers arrive: Benjamin Brandes, Isidore Zeidenweg, and apart from these, a Hebrew teacher – Yaakov Adler, who did not have a Seminary education.

At the beginning of the 1894/95 school year, yet another teacher comes to the school, David Schauer. From this school year on, the school now belongs to a higher level, with four qualified teachers, apart from the Hebrew teacher. They remained at the school until the very end.

From 1895 on, yet another teacher teaches at the school, by the name of Michael Joffe, a qualified teacher. In that school year, there were 150 students in the school.

What did they learn at the Baron Hirsch School?

The language of instruction was German. From 1894 on, books in the Polish language are introduced, in keeping with the demand of the Galician 'Kaiser in the Royal School Council.' There was no requirement, to the study of the Hebrew language, yet it was learned almost everywhere, because not only the parents, but the children as well, wanted to.

Here we have the official curriculum of the four-grade *Volksschule* of the higher level. This was the way instruction was given in Rawa:

(Class hours of the subjects during the week by class level)

Class Level	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Subject				
Religion	2	2	2	2
Reading & Writing	11	2	2	2
Instruction Language				
(Polish)	-	9	7	7
(German)	2	3	2	3
Arithmetic and Geometry	3	3	3	3
Design & Drawing	-	1	1	1
Singing	2	2	2	2
Gymnastics	2	2	2	2
Total	18	24	24	24
In the Second Half Year	21			

Some of the students, who finished school, learned a trade working for a craftsman. In the school year 1902, -- 8 boys [did this]; 2 studying hat making, I – tailoring, 3 – shoemaking, and 1 – carpentry.

The school also had evening courses for mature people to teach reading and writing, as well as for girls who were taught manual trade skills. In the 1901/02 school year, 60 people attended these evening courses.

The number of students continues to grow. In the school year 1901/02, it reaches 190 students. This number holds steady for the school year 1903/04. The enrolment then wavers. It then falls until the year 1909/10 to 125 (the lowest number), but later on, it grows again.

In the school year 1902/03, the school already has its own building. To construct the building, the Foundation disbursed 42,000 crowns, an enormous sum for those times. In the building there were living quarters for the director of the school, a play area and a gymnasium, a garden that was to be planted and worked by the students (agricultural work) etc.

The children also on a yearly basis would make field trips in order to acquaint themselves with the country, and the like.

The final teachers: Director Epstein, Sternbach and Lorber.

An Unsuccessful Attempt to Organize a Hebrew School in 1913

By Moshe Weiss

New York

Not everything that we see in current times, or that was created prior to the Second World War, came about so easily, as one would like to believe. The Hebrew School, which developed between the two world wars in Rawa-Ruska, which stood on such a high level – also had its predecessors, going back years before then, and as the case was with each attempt at creation, you cannot get everything the first time around. The fortress that had to be broken down was already a weaker one –when its walls received the requisite blows [to weaken it].



Page 157: The Students of the Hebrew School of the City Receive the Author Moshe Satoy

I want to portray an episode from November 1913, which I recollect so well, because it played out in our own home.

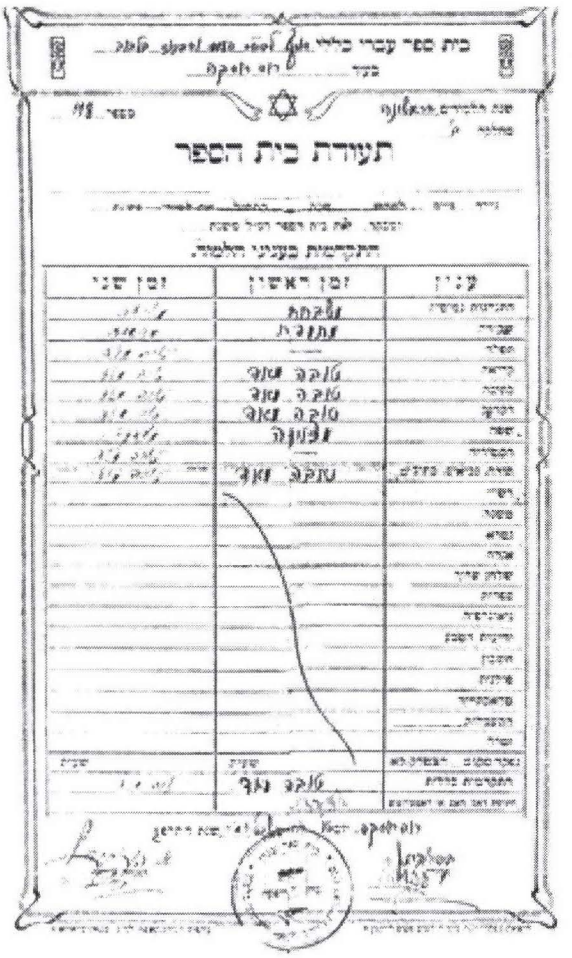
Israel'ki Gold and Abraham'cheh Edel came into our house – at that time we were already living in the *Rathaus* [sic: the municipal building] – and they rented a room from us, for cost and a quarter, for a Hebrew teacher. In that same room, where he lived, he also gave Hebrew lectures. The name of the teacher was – Weisberg, or Weitberg from Skolot (Galicia). The youth of that period were the ones who attended his lectures, being the ones, after the First World War, who created the Zionist movement in Rawa. Among them were: Abraham Edel, Israel Gold, Leibusz Weber, Yaakov-Shlomo Gold, Moshe Josefsberg, Abraham'cheh Grauer (son of Leibl'eh Grauer), Simcha'li Rapoport, Benzion Ginsberg, his future wife, Pesha Gortler, the daughters of Yankl Graff, Todros Reitzfeld, and all of the outstanding youth of that period of time.

Regrettably, the first attempt could not endure for very long. First, because there were too few students, and also because of the very difficult economic circumstances in the city at that time, and the core reason, because of the local Jewish political situation, where there were many protagonists; and so, after 3 months, the entire undertaking dissolved, the attempt did not succeed, and the teacher was compelled to leave Rawa. In those days, it was difficult to obtain a location for the office of a Zionist Society in the city, resulting in the need to rent premises outside of the city, from Hersch Rosenfeld, who lived near the gentile cemetery, in the home of the son-in-law of Ozer Potelyczer. The seed that was sown at that time, only first bore fruit in the years of the 20's: [it took the form of] organized Zionist life, with '*HeHalutz*' and the '*Gordonia*' movements. Also the present ones, who were the survivors [of the Holocaust] whether in Israel or the Diaspora, are the successful result of that one-time intensive, enlightened, and revolutionary work.

From the Hebrew Movement in Rawa-Ruska

By A. Avneri (Hafner)

Encouraged by the success of the Hebrew School, in the first months of its establishment, I came to the general realization that it was perhaps appropriate also to broaden its mandate and establish a Hebrew Kindergarten. However, this constituted quite an innovation: there were not many Kindergartens in Eastern Galicia, even among the general population, and the sole Kindergarten that existed in Rawa-Ruska was run by the monastery, and was principally a social institution. Despite this, the members of the school steering committee accepted my proposal enthusiastically. However, a more difficult dilemma arose: where would we raise the money for the budget? It was not prudent to assume that parents would agree to pay the requisite 'tuition' for such little ones, in order for some young girl – a *prawlianka* in the foreign tongue – to distract them with games and other such nonsense. But I also found a solution to this question. Because the school was open in the afternoon and evening hours, I will personally volunteer, and personally direct the Kindergarten for a number of months, in the morning, without asking for additional compensation. In that time, the parents will become accustomed to the idea, and then, they might agree to pay some appropriate amount, and we would then be



Page 158: Facsimile of a Report Card from the Hebrew School

able to retain a Kindergarten teacher. My proposal , during the three months that remained to the term was accepted, and in a number of weeks before Passover notices appeared in the city, indicating that after the holiday, a Kindergarten would open beside the Hebrew School, for children ages 4-5, and the monthly tuition will come in total to only one zloty. Quickly, 50 children were signed up. And the monies we received, in the remaining three months leading up to the summer vacation, gave us enough resources to buy food and materials, and to provide a symbolic payment to one of the older girl students, who was taken on to help me (Golda Grauer was selected for this job, a young lady of stormy emotion, but both skilled in, and loving to work with children).

At that time, it became apparent to me, in the spring of 1931, about a half-year after opening the school --that I had not correctly assessed the nature of the responsibility that I had taken upon myself. Despite this the Kindergarten class was transformed into a beehive of joy, in which the beloved youngsters engaged in song, declamations, in dance, and most importantly into joyful manual activities.

At the end of the school year, we put on a Hebrew play in the hall of the 'Orphanage,' and how great was the happiness when the play opened with the appearance of the Kindergarten children singing and declaiming in the 'language of the Prophets.'

We made haste, and focused on opening up the registration of the Kindergarten for the new year. All the parents came to sign up their children anew, and indeed, new parents also came. However all were surprised to hear, that this time they are being asked to pay 5 zlotys per month, however, to their credit, it must be said that the conversation was short, and in the end, almost all of them signed up their children, and signed up for their obligation for the entire year. In the fall of 1931, a licensed Kindergarten governess was retained (Mrs. Penina Barrer – today Suslik, who lives in Tel-Aviv) and the Kindergarten was opened completely staffed in accordance with our capacity and understanding of the requirements. In that time, we were privileged to have a festive opening in which an important guest from the Land of Israel participated, the author Moshe Stavsky – and is this not the very M. Satoy ז"ל.

At that same time, Mr. Satoy visited Poland and spent a couple of months, for the purpose of publishing his writings. The designated secretary of '*Tarbut*' in Lvov, Mr. Moshe Barnik, took advantage of this visit, for the purpose of arranging meetings for the author in a number of places in Eastern Galicia, in which there existed Hebrew schools. It is clear that we, also, invited this guest from the Land of Israel. Mr. Satoy got a very deep impression from the spirit of the school that he found in Rawa-Ruska, that manifested itself in its commitment to the Hebrew language- the pioneering ethos- and the Land of Israel itself, and after the formal reception, he remained with us in the school for a simple party of friends, in which he regaled us with 'songs from *The Land*.' It was in this way that a true sense of friendship was fleshed out between ourselves and the author, and when we celebrated the opening of the Kindergarten – he willingly agreed to participate in our celebration, and to be our honored guest.

Incidentally, Mr. Satoy visited us a third time. And the circumstances were as follows: On one Friday evening, I heard a knock on the door of my room at the school building. When I opened the door,

I was surprised to see the important author, the guest from the Land of Israel. The guest immediately explained what was going on. He explained, that Mr. Satoy had decided to take some time in Belz, and to observe the *Tisch* of the *Tzaddik* on the Sabbath. He had arrived by train from Lvov to Rawa-Ruska in the afternoon, and according to the schedule, in less than an hour, a train full of students was due to leave from Rawa-Ruska to Belz. To his dismay, the writer found out that the day was a vacation day from school, and consequently there was no special student train running. The train that was due to leave, was not coming in until nightfall, and the writer was concerned that he would not reach Belz before the onset of the Sabbath.

I was actually happy about this 'unfortunate happenstance,' because it brought with it yet an additional opportunity for the guest from the Land of Israel to be within my walls. And in order to remove any concern from my guest's heart, I immediately connected him with the very hearty Dr. Joseph Mandel. He made contact by telephone with one of his friends in Belz, and arranged for that person to await Mr. Satoy beside the train station, and to receive him with grace. Mr. Satoy got to Belz without incident, and while yet on that same night, escorted by his hosts, paid a visit to the home of the *Rebbe*.

Those who benefitted from this entire event were we – the Kindergarten governess and I. On that same Friday afternoon, we spent time in the company of Mr. Satoy, who was effusive in humor and song, and told us extensively about his work in Be'er Tuvia, his work as a dairyman in Tel-Aviv, and even about his clever cow, Ditza, who learned how to open the water tap when she was thirsty.

Memories from Days Gone By

By Penina Barrer-Suslik

As the first of the things I wish to say, I want to thank you for the pleasant surprise that you arranged for me, and because of your consideration, I have this precious gift – to prepare a piece of writing dedicated to the memory of the martyrs of the city of Rawa-Ruska.

Among the first of the pages, and the pictures that look down on me, is the picture of the Kindergarten shielded in the shade of trees. There are not many meaningful pictures that were guarded by me, in all the years of my work in *The Land*. However, this picture has special meaning. It arouses a wave of emotions: happiness adulterated with sorrow, good fortune and grief, a marvelous memento. It is a beam of shining light, a distant echo of youth, the warm joy of creation, the days of childhood, and joy-of-life that have been sheared away and are no longer.



Page 159: The Kindergarten in Rawa Ruska

It is futile for me to tax my imagination and try to reveal what occurred there, it is like a stone that weighs on my heart. As I would recollect first the



Page 160: The Kindergarten Children Receive the Author Moshe Satoy

scions of the city of my birth, and all that is precious in it, so I will remember the city of Rawa-Ruska and all that was lost in it, and all that lofty good that she bestowed upon me during the days in which I resided there.

Despite all the years that I have been away from you – the city Rawa – before I made *Aliyah* to *The Land*, that great day remains guarded in my memory, in which I arrived to open the '*Tarbut*' Kindergarten – a Hebrew Kindergarten.

A Hebrew School already existed in that place, under the direction of our friend Avneri, and now a beloved corner was added to it – a Kindergarten.

This cultural event was underscored by much festivity and an elevation of spirit. The representatives of many varied interests participated, Zionist groups, *Maskilim*, and parents of the children. The invited guests started with the dignitaries of '*Mizrahi*,' all the other Zionist organizations, all the way to the active and alert members of *Gordonia*. Supported speeches were given, and blessings and congratulations were heard.

Within numbered days, the premises rang with the joy of children. Amid conversation, song and play, the little ones picked up words, rhymes, and Hebrew songs. My work was conducted out of a satisfaction and recognition of the fulfilment of purpose, in the role of one educating the children toward life and a new order. The parents followed along the development of their children with interest, and placed value on the work being invested in the Kindergarten.

The school went on and grew, and with its development, our friend Avneri recruited me to help with the class of the starting students, and also with the evening classes. The learning was carried out in a fundamental way, and in a pleasant atmosphere.

Rawa-Ruska knew how to create a marvelous atmosphere among its scions, both mature and youthful, who all had both different personalities and aspirations: it knew how to build a bridge in the face of conflict, to create a common goal. Being geographically close to the city of Belz, it was influenced by the *Hasidic* spirit, which was circumscribed by fanaticism and being inner-directed. Many homes of fathers, lived within this closed inner world, in accordance with the accepted traditional norms developed in the courtyard of *Rebbes* in prior generations. Opposite this, one felt the influence of the proximate city, the capital city of Lvov, and of all the progress it embodied . Lvov was the spiritual center of culture and *Haskalah* for Eastern Galicia. The city of Lvov served as a cornerstone and was enchanting to the youth thirsting for Enlightenment and knowledge.



Page 162: A Theater Production of 'Herschel Ostropolier' *by the* 'Hatikvah *Society.'*

It was in these circumstances that a national Jewish youth movement arose, that was held together by related idealistic concepts: having one great yearning for making *Aliyah* to *The Land*. This movement received encouragement from Zionist organizations, who only in this way, of a *Return to Zion* – saw a resolution to the issues facing Jewish young people. The Zionist activists did not spare themselves from the work involved, neglecting their ordinary business affairs, for the purpose of attaining that goal. They were alert to everything that was going on in *The Land*. In the secret recesses of their soul, they undoubtedly dreamed that they, themselves, would make *Aliyah* to *The Land*. However, their life's goal was not realized.

The *Halutzim* of Rawa-Ruska reached *The Land* more than forty years ago. The dream of their youth was transformed into a reality in the Land of their Fathers, that arose and was built, in the country of Israel.

Jewish Theater-Life in Rawa –Ruska

By Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld

Regardless of how small our *shtetl* was, it attempted to take a prominent, and also frequent and strong part in Jewish cultural life, which transpired in that time in the Jewish world.

Apart from activity in the Zionist movement, in all of its shades, such as: 'Ordinary Zionists, *Mizrahi, Hitakhdut* and Revisionists, and also other partisan societies such as: '*Agudah*' and '*Bund*,' where our young people participated vigorously, and thereby distinguished themselves in their enthusiasm and profound awareness – a part of Rawa youth dedicated itself to cultural work in the arena of the Jewish theater. In the epoch between the two world wars, the drama circles, in the Galician cities and towns, played one of the principal roles in Jewish life.



Page 161: ***The Activists of All Parties at the Reception for the Writer, Moshe Satoy.***
(From the Right, Sitting): Lemel Wachs, Abraham Edel, Leibusz Weber, Moshe Satoy, Abraham Hoffenbratel, Ber'l Gerstenfeld.

(Standing): Yaakov Shlomo Gold, Gimpel Just, Hersch Wolf Siebzehner, Penina Brauer, Avner Hoffner, Aharon Hollander, and Nathan Edel.

Approximately in the year 1920, a drama circle of Zionist youth began to impact and have an influence with its great impression in the city, and the surrounding vicinity. The influence of the drama circle on the cultural and community life played itself out with great visibility, not only in our city, but also in the surrounding cities and towns, where such circles were beginning to be formed. A fire, and great ardor enveloped all the members of the circle, in their roles in the plays, that they put on in the city; also, a great part of the members offered considerable help, [even though] they did not have an active role in the play.



Page 163: (Top Right): Dr. Ziegelbojm ד"ר

In general, every performance of our drama circle brought a great increase in liveliness to all segments of the Jewish populace in the city. Those who attended, and saw the play, would be talking and discussing it for quite a long time afterwards. In essence, the play itself was critiqued, the author, and primarily the actors, decorations, and other technical details.

It especially began to provoke bruiting and movement in the *Hasidic* homes. For days on end, the play would be talked about, taking the theme only from the marquee title, because going to the theater was considered equivalent to going into a church. On the evenings of performances, the *Hasidic* parents exercised strenuous vigilance over their children (especially girls, because the boys, as a matter of course could be found in the study houses or *Kloyzes*), so that they, God forbid, would not be entrapped, and so they had to spend their free time that evening at home. This was a frequent occurrence, and there were certain plays that had to be put on several times.

It is also necessary to remark that because of this dramatic circle, that in selecting the plays, the literary value and cultural character of the play was always evaluated, and not its financial or box office potential. The circle could only succeed, thanks to its committed members, and the amicable joint effort of all those who took part.

The created drama circle first performed on the Rawa stage in the municipal building hall, afterwards in the '*Weisen-Hoyz*' (Orphanage) and once in the Polish 'Sokal' Hall, putting on an array of theater pieces, a variety of dramas and pieces, which were on a very attractive artistic height, and was very enthusiastically received by the Rawa public, and by visitors from the surrounding neighborhoods. The pioneer of Jewish theater in Rawa was – as I remember –'Srol'keh Gold, a son of R' Mikh'li, and the older brother of Yaakov Shlomo Gold. He, 'Srol'keh, came back from Russia after the First World War, bringing back with him a fresh new spirit from the large world, and he turned to dedicating himself to the cultural life in the city and, at first, put on the play, '*A Din-Torah Mittn Vint*' in the municipal building hall. This made a colossal impression in the city, to the extent that the performance had to be repeated several times. 'Srol'keh played the lead role, where he excelled with strong talent and excelled in his artistic skill. Regrettably, he did not have the benefit of reaping any satisfaction from his work; he left this world at a young age.

This constituted drama circle went on working further; this time, thanks to an outside young man, Weizner, who worked as an employee in the Rawa courts; he was also very gifted artistically, very handsome, and played his roles with talent. In that time, the play, '*Yom HaDin*' was put on, with Weizner and Reizl Korman in the leading roles; this made a very strong impression.

This great success in the city drew in the entire Jewish intelligentsia – part of who, until then, stood at a bit of a distance from Jewish community work. A larger drama circle was created with the participation of Dr. Mandel, Dr. Ziegelbojm, Dr. Hershdorfer, Leibusz Weber, Abraham and Israel Edel, Shimon and Mani Margulies, Moshe Yankl Steinfeld, Zalman Bach, Moshe Berger, Hen'chi Graff, Lon'ki Breindler, Esther Kurtzer, and many others, whose names, regrettably, I no longer remember.

Similar to other parts of Jewish life in Rawa, so it was with the drama circle, where immediately a central and dominant figure emerged, this being Dr. Mandel ז"ל. He was a great community worker, a Zionist leader, head of the community, a Deputy Burgomaster of the city, and in addition to this, he still was able to find time to give of himself to the Jewish theater. He worked along with everyone, and also performed in the best leading roles with exceptional talent.

After this, the play, '*Khasheh di Yesoymeh*', by Yaakov Gordin, was put on, with the participation of Mani Margulies as Khasheh, and Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld as Vladimir.



Page 164 (Top): The Play, 'Tevye the Dairyman' *by the* 'Hatikvah' *Society.*

This also made a strong impression in the city, such that performances had to be repeated several times. Mani Margulies stood out with her exceptional artistic talent, and also took an active part in subsequent performances.

The following performance was '*Dorfsyung*' with Moshe Berger and Hen'chi Graff-Dubi as Natasha. They also did extraordinary portrayals s if they were professional artists. In the coming presentations such as: 'the '*Shkhita*,' '*Gott Mensch und Tyvl*' and many other pieces, where many other of the members excelled, such as: Reizl Korman, Leibusz Weber, Yudl Schwert, Zalman Bach, 'Srol'keh Edel, who, to our sorrow, are no longer with us.

Seeing the great success of our theater acting, we took ourselves to a bigger thing – the '*Dybbuk*,' by Sh. Anski. We dared to compare ourselves to the large 'artistic troupes' and it actually worked out well for us. Thanks to the tireless work of the entire drama circle, and at its head, Dr. Mandel as its leader, who placed his legal and counseling office at our disposal, where rehearsals took place practically on a daily basis in the evenings. We would push apart and take out the furniture, and we turned his counseling office into a genuine *Hasidic Bet HaMedrash*. He, Dr. Mandel, committed himself to his role, as the Rabbi of Miropol, with heart and soul; the image of him stands before my eyes even now, his appearance and his acting made the impression as if he had literally emerged from genuine rabbinical circles. The other principal roles were played by: Dr. Ziegelbojm as the 'emissary,' Dr. Hershdorfer as Chanan, the *Bet HaMedrash* youth, myself as R' Sender Britzener, the father of Leah'li; the role of Leah'li was played by the beauty of the city – Lon'keh Breindler, with great talent. Everyone performed to a very high degree of talent, as if they were born artists.; the *Shofar* blower, Shimon Margulies, a very capable person, very musical, a director of the choir, during the scene of exorcizing the '*Dybbuk,*' blew the *Shofar*, smoothly and clearly, such that the devil had no control over him. The [performance of the] '*Dybbuk*' was so successful, that we received invitations from many surrounding cities to come and perform it there.



Page 163:(Bottom Left):Shimon Margulies ה"יד

After this, we put on many performances, such as: '*Tevye the Dairyman*,' '*Herscheleh Ostropolier*,' the Yiddish 'King Lear,' '*Moshkeh Khazzer*,' which was translated by our comrade Y. Tz. Rubin, from the original 'He and His Son' by Berkowicz, He participated in our circle many times as a prompter during plays.

I also cannot forget the 'Small Arts Presentation,' which we gave in the 'Sokal' Hall. On that evening, in a sketch called 'The Shoemaker and the Poet,' our member Zeinvill Lieberman portrayed a writer-poet, and he portrayed the poet with very great talent, and the impression that it made on the public elicited wild applause, and he was not let off the stage, and it was only with great exertion that we were able to go on with the rest of the performance.

One of the greatest sources of help for our theater work, we found in the very talented person of the barber Sztalhammer, who configured the players; he was truly an artist in this area; he came only one time to the general rehearsal, listened to the presentations of the figure-roles, and immediately aligned the appropriate costuming in such a way, as to make them appear they were born into their roles. This was the first time he had done such work in his life. Also, like the players themselves, he too demonstrated his artistic skills.

The great success of the previously mentioned drama circle and its powerful influence on the cultural and community life in the city, also impacted, and gave impetus to other non-Zionist circles of the Rawa populace, giving them the rationale each to pursue its own direction. They also created a drama club, in which the '*Bund*' stood at its head.

True, the club was much weaker, and did not stand on such a high, plateau as ours did. Nevertheless, they manifested much activity, having organized well, cultural events for both the young and the old, which many times also met with good success.

As we said, the *Bund*, as well, also took a strong part in theater-life in Rawa. They also put on beautiful performances, and thereby they excelled in having great talent: Sheva'li Ka'Tz, Avigdor Spritzer, Wolf Grossaug, Titch'eh Gellis, and also Tomasz Zac as the permanent prompter. He was a living lexicon and also a very intelligent young man, who knew a great deal.

Rawa-Ruska was full of Jewish life, had a youth of gold, and stood out in excellence on all fronts, took part in all literary and political movements, devoted Zionists, who literally tore at being able to get to the Land of Israel by any and all means, but to our great sorrow and pain, everything went away, not even a memory remains of that beautiful Jewish Rawa life. What a pity for our loss!

About the Craftsmen in Town

By Lia Dror-Altman

[Raw Translation by Miriam Vakhnin, edited by JSB]

As one of the locals of the town and a son of a 'craftsman,' I would like to recapture the activities of that group designated as the 'craftsmen. The largest part of this group made its livelihood not only from the Jewish population but also from the non-Jewish one as well. In the city, and the surrounding areas, this cohort was diverse as well as large, and it was alert to all kinds of work, in all fields of endeavor. Without an official organization, there was a common framework between the members, and especially in philanthropy.



Page 164 (Bottom): A Purim Play, with Regina Graff-Post as the Director

The Great Synagogue that was a substantial building, stood in the center of the '*Schul Platz*,' where most of

the houses of prayer were clustered. At the side entrance from the right and left side were two special prayer houses for the craftsmen, they were called the '*Schneider Schilkhl*' and the '*Schuster Schilkhl.*' It was there that all their activities and gatherings were held, which mostly took place after the prayers, apart from those every half year *on Hol HaMoed* Passover and *Hol HaMoed Sukkot.* The gatherings of the craftsmen took place with their workers, during which they would discuss the annual salary raises. It is worth mentioning that, in the workers' salaries they included the meals that they received, when the workers would eat their meals together with their bosses, as was the accepted practice then. All of these meetings and discussions were held in good spirits and a pleasant atmosphere.

Roles involving responsibility were allocated to the people associated with honor and worthiness. Sometimes the principle of: 'the owner of the one hundred [sic: the coin] is the holder of the opinion...' was invoked.

In the circle of the '*Schneider Schilkhl*' the brothers Ber'l and Hirsch Bach ז"ל stood out exceptionally. Ber'l Bach was a modern and handsome man, with a short trimmed beard, and knew how to ingratiate himself to the community. He concerned himself with assuring that the income of the craftsmen was a respectable sum because their professional status was at a lower level.

From amongst the officials of the '*Schuster Schilkhl,*'Rabbi Yudl Schuster ז"ל is recalled for standing out in his modern dress, he was possessed of energy and very alert to all that was happening in the community and especially with regards to, and between, the craftsmen. Similarly Rabbi Leibusz Siebzehner ז"ל is remembered (the father of Zvi Netzer may he be separated for a long life) he was a *Hasid*, very shy and retiring, honest and modest he was accepted amongst both the modern and Hasidic communities. On the Shabbat afternoon he would be seen taking leisurely walks dressed in the traditional *Hasidic* garb the *kapote* and *shtrymel.* He never even once missed the weekly study of the *parsha* at the '*Schilkhl*' and the *Pirkei Avot* reading on Shabbat. For a long period time he served as the representative of the craftsmen in the community. This was during the term of Rabbi Yisrael Mikhl Feder ז"ל as the sitting Head.

His brother should be mentioned, Rabbi Wulvesh Siebzehner ז"ל (the father of Etka Karmon]. During his service in the Austrian army he had internalized some western culture, and so he was different from his brother Leibusz, At every gathering he would voice his opinion as a rebel against the establishment, and he would appear in the name of the craftsmen whom smaller in number, and less accepted, and not brave enough to voice their views in public.



Page 165: R' Leibusz Siebzehner, ה"ד

It should be noted in memory of those mentioned that immediately after the First World War, when the daily necessities for living were difficult to obtain, they made sure to get them for the craftsmen and the hired workers. During the period of the activities of the "Joint" in the city, in connection with extending support to the needy, it was there that the representatives

that were mentioned above made sure that everyone got their fair portion. They also exerted themselves to initiate the erecting of the '*Konsom,*' a co-operative provision shop for the craftsmen, whose purpose was to secure merchandise that would be sold at a cheaper price to enable everyone to afford the things they needed. The accountant Rabbi Mikh'li Hermlin ז"ל, an honest man, managed the '*Konsom*' up until when it became easy again to buy goods and the commerce returned to its normal pace.



Page 167: R' Shimon Ruker and His Grandson הי"ד

Jews were also represented in the government offices for example the '*Tz"Kh*,' an association of professionals that gave certificates to the apprentices or the 'evaluation committee' of the municipal and government taxes, and the like. At the '*Tz"Kh*,' a representative sat for every profession. For the bakers there was Herman Zimmerman ז"ל, (the father of Nathan Zimmerman (may he be separated for a long life, who resides in Israel) he made his living from the hard work of his own hands. He treated his workers with fatherly care, and under his tutelage, many good professionals were produced. After he passed away Rabbi Nachman Baker ז"ל filled in his position. In the "evaluation committee' where my father ע"ה sat, before him was Rabbi Hirsch-Ber Duger ז"ל who was an owner of a carpentry shop, and very popular among the craftsmen in town. His main concern was about the apprentice craftsmen, and those with minimal capability. He would say 'Let the rich worry for themselves.' Because of his understanding and honest manner he was highly respected by the government officials, and it was not only once that they would comment 'if Mr. Duger says something about someone that they can't pay, we believe him.' He made *Aliyah* to *The Land* in 1934 with his wife Hinde ז"ל, (his son Simcha, separated for long life, preceded them), Although he did not read Herzl's writings and had never heard of the 'Auto-Emancipation' by Pinsker, he did observe the commandment of returning to Zion and rebuilding it in the fullest sense.

Every Shabbat afternoon he would walk to the '*Zamd-Bet HaMedrash*' to join in the group study and learn from the teachings of Rabbi Berisz Geisler ז"ל (the father of Dvora Greenstein and Nechama Zinger, may they be separated for long life, who may be found in Israel] who was a brilliant Torah scholar. During the weekdays, Rabbi Hirsch would gather the working folk to teach them the weekly *parsha* and on Shabbat – '*Pirkei Avot*,' and Rabbi Hirsch-Ber Donner ז"ל was among his regular audience.

During the twenties, a new era began with new concepts and ideas concerning the organization of the above-mentioned groups. These organizations were based on a more modern and democratic approach, under the aegis of the '*Yad-Kharutzim*' Organization of Lvov. New representatives from different political parties with fresh new energy showed up on the scene. Following these changes

the organization took on a political dimension. Parties like the '*Bund'* and the 'communists' took pains to infiltrate these organizations and to put their mark on them. From the '*Bund'* group, the following especially stood out: Wolf Grossaug, Shia Satz, Yudl Spritzer, and Leon Weber, may all their memories be for a blessing. To their credit, it must be noted that their concerns were mainly for the apprentice craftsmen and the working conditions for the workers in the big workshops.

In addition, the members, that held a national certificate, were concerned with strengthening their influence in the organization. Among them, let us recall R' Shimon Rucker ז"ל, the representative of the furrier branch that developed into something very large in the city; Rabbi Yehoshua Seifert ז"ל [the father of Leib'li Seifert, separated for long life, who resides in Israel today] had prospered in his profession and engaged in many activities, and participated in public life, and in whose home, there was a very strong Zionist atmosphere and during elections for the government offices, he would emphasize his deep positive stand regarding Zionism; Rabbi Moshe Scheinert[142] ז"ל (the father of Itta Czyczk, separated for long live, who lives in Tel-Aviv), was the owner of a tailor shop, a generous warm person who treated his workers like brothers and donated generously to all the fund raisers for Zionist events; Sztalhammer ז"ל, the owner of a barbershop who always was the leader of "his party."

It was because of their effort that an orphanage was established, which was also supposed to have a training school for youth from homes of minimal means. Because of inner, political disagreements the above mentioned never came into being, and the 'orphanage' became a place used only for group meetings. There was a stage used for plays, and mainly used on election days for different Jewish and government institutions to have their voices heard at gatherings.

During the elections, the differences of opinions emerged between the position of the craftsmen, the *Bund*, and the communists, who had deeply infiltrated the organizations, and the Zionist group, that was concerned with voicing their very nationalistic opinion, with the help of those friends previously mentioned, who discharged their duties faithfully. Later on when the '*Trumpeldor*' Organization was created, their outlook blended Socialism and Zionism together. The committee of Organization found it necessary to task its three members –Yaakov Shlomo Gold, Aharon Wolf [Gartel] and this writer, to ingrain in all of the craftsmen with the tenets of Socialistic Zionism, and to work for the *Aliyah* to *The Land*, of the Jews for the good of the working class in the Land of Israel.

Most of the young craftsmen were organized in '*Gordonia*' and the '*Hitakhdut,*' and their activity lightened the work for the previously mentioned committee. Thanks to work of the committee, Rabbi Hirsch-Ber Donner and his family, and Chaim Becker and his family all made *Aliyah* to *The Land*. Through them, I heard words of praise about Yaakov Shlomo Gold and the help that he extended to them.

When I came to visit to Rawa in 1935, I was present during a meeting of craftsmen with a representative from the workers of Israel: I was happy to see that a majority of the craftsmen from such a large city were present at this gathering. I could sense a great change was occurring within

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142 Also Sheinart

the group, which previously had an aversion to Zionism, but nevertheless, at that time were taking an active role in all the Zionist plans. They listened to the speeches of the representative with deep concentration. They also requested from me, as an eye- witness, to relate to them what was going on in Israel. They were captivated by what I told them, and I was witness to their strong will to immediately make *Aliyah* to *The Land*, and leave Poland. To our calamitous misfortune, all gates of entry to *The Land* were closed, and the hope of this large and productive group did not materialize. They remained in Poland and were exterminated in the Holocaust.

We shall remember them, this precious group

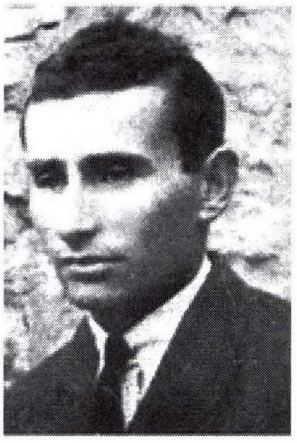
To the Memory of Friends

By Prof. Z. Lieberman



Page 168 (Right): Hillel Axler הי"ד

My friend, Hillel Axler, was the firstborn son of Mordechai David's and the grandson of the refined Joel, R' Abish's. He was the first and youngest of my friends from elementary school. He had a precious mind. He had a golden heart. He had very straight common sense. He had a fine, sensitive nature. 'I get more pleasure in giving a present than if I am given one...' he said to me when he was 6-7 years old. A man without any gall in him. He was unable to get angry or jealous, for that matter. Or hold a grudge... affectionately, I called him Hillel 'Shofar,' because he was lean with a long throat, and a prominently protruding Adam's apple. He had good eyes. A smile. His mind and heart were a deeply human duet on two violins... and so my heart aches. How strongly I feel the fact that he is no longer here!



Page 168 (Left): Mendl Kurtzer הי"ד

My friend Mendl Kurtzer-Scheiner, Baylah Gitt'leh's, Eizik'l Kurtz's grandson, also a fine friend of my earliest youth. A light shining sprout from a darkened home. A talented young man. A rich imagination. A soul open and searching for everything beautiful, for wisdom, witty and truthful. A perfect autodidact. A self-taught person of the best cut; physics, mathematics, languages of the world, singing, playing the violin, practical scientific experiments and many other worthy undertakings. Mendl brought 'pure quality' to his collection of legacy. He simply snatched the required 'quantities' out of the air. [He would do this] from old journals and historical, illustrated discards. And enough! He always dreamt of a better, more beautiful, finer, more just world, where people will be able to live, respecting and correspondingly helping, and not hating one another, exploiting and restraining... but, he never lived long enough to see this. Not entirely. And not even a morsel's worth... rather, (he was) incinerated through hate. What a tragic distance separates human reality from human hopes! Boruch Dayan Emet!

My friend Abish Bringer, the only son of the gentle Baylah-Mindl's and his taciturn father 'Siali'... [he was my] friend from the age of 12 onwards. He was an intense scholar, in the mold of Bialik's model child, a heavy spiritual laborer. [He had] a poetic soul with a wondrous memory for writing, books, languages and pearls of wisdom. He was a loyal son. A warm friend. He was a dreamer of knowledge and understanding. He was a fiercely ardent adherent of all that was beautiful. He was an apostle of perfection in thought. He was an aesthete of words, a learner and dreamer, a medieval scholar. An abstainer from day-to-day pleasures and conveniences... he was constantly saving up dowry money for his talented, capable and unemployed sisters, but never got there. He didn't live that long. He never ate of the fruits of his labor. Chopped down and burned. May his memory be blessed forever!



Page 169 (Left): Yudl Schwert הי"ד

My friend Aharon Weidhorn, the son of Pesach-Yet'leh and Yaakov's brother. My friend from age 15 to 25 years... a fine type of person. He had the soul of a creative artist... he had golden hands, and a golden heart. And a fine head [also]. He was the son of a renowned *Gemara Melamed* and the finest master of the *Tanakh* in the city, who had the idealism and the civil temperament to oppose that older traditional and not traditional environment... to learn *Tanakh* with children. In that time, he was considered 'maybe' Jewish, but 'certainly not' *Hasidic*. And my friend Aharon's father, was something of a '*Mitnaged*' to both points of view. And with his talented dexterous daughters. Aharon left with me for Lemberg in 1922, to study and give lectures. Aharon was a born gentleman, with an inherited good sense for things and people... his manners and genteel carriage, his charisma and precision, he did not get from the outside and then mimic it... rather he drew them from his own inner wellspring. It was his essential tact that caused everyone to love him, because he loved everyone in turn. There was none like unto him on the earth!



Page 169 (Right): Aryeh Reinert הי"ד

Aryeh Eizik'l Becker's... my friend for 10 years. A wondrous person, with genial common sense, with a lightning-fast ability to grasp things. He had a memory for images and words, which one seldom encounters even among geniuses. Short, with a round face, white, pale, clean, having no blemish, which the sun and daylight did not color, or ever shined on... with his large, sick, exhausted, spent 'eyes'... and his little book, he would stand by his door, without a window (a storage room for the firewood used for baking). He would open it a crack, because, after all, it was winter... and he shivered. And he read... close to the nose... and sneezed. And inhaled. And swallowed, wisdom, wisdom!! Oy, Aryeh, Aryeh, your fantastic 'impact' met with identical, classical previously thought out wondrous types of the world literature. Twice, I brought him out, and stole him away... to Lemberg. I barbered his goat's beard, and he studied!! Only on these two occasions, did his loving mother, pitiably, 'abet the stealing.' And in this way, also married him off. He was, sorry to say, a philosophical 'determinist.' He had no interest in practical realization, for earthly things. He was a Jewish lofty soul. Spinoza, Uriel Acosta, the *Rambam*... also sorrowfully, incinerated.

'Srol'keh Guzhik, the firstborn son of Hirsch Guzhik. [He was] my brother Mott'yeh's friend. I knew him well. [He was] my friend Yankl's oldest brother. He was a fine type of a person. Talented, thorough, active, straight, true, fine, genteel, full of love to his father, brothers, sisters, and wife's family. He was loyal to everyone. He was a doer that was always active. He had a fine sense of humor, with a real touch of human magic, which engenders affection, and draws people to him. He was possessed of sparkling and brilliant insights. And with this, he had commensurate courage to bring things into being. He was completely rounded out in all qualities. !ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

My friend Yudel'eh Schwert. The youngest son of R' Hirsch'eleh the Ritual Slaughterer, 'Yudl *dem Shokhet's*.' He was a fine little man, a genteel youth, with a fine heart, a fine head, with an unusual sense for the truth, justice and beauty. With his acute Jewish sense of humor, he harmonized with me, like two synchronized broadcasting stations and receiving equipment. We were like aligned waves, of equal amplitude. We had a reciprocal attraction and completed each other in a complementary fashion, which filled up the souls of both of the friends. Misfortune destroys more...and more. This is not just caprice. It is nature's law. When I arrived from Lemberg for all of the Festival Holidays, and went to worship with my father at the *Blekhener Kloyz*... Yudel'eh was constantly with me. And he had sparkling eyes, and was 'all ears' listening and listening... and in every instance, reacted with relish and understanding, which for me was absolutely delicious. It was like the taste of the Garden of Eden, in the sense of good taste and understanding. My friend Yudel'eh was not alone. He was classical and representative of many, many, many... such Yudel'ehs – and where and what became of them? My God, for what reason, for when, for whom?

They... our precious relatives and friends, our beloved martyrs, our intimate beloved own, who were tortured and slaughtered, in manner never before seen in the human, and even not in beastly, world history.

They... have not died out entirely and absolutely – so long as we, the Rawa scions, love them, and guard, and revere, and mourn, and tremble for them, and long for them.
They... will live with us, even after us. Here, in the fiery letters of our 'Yizkor Book.'

May their memory be blessed for all time to come, Amen!

My Teacher and Rebbe

By Z. Lieberman

My violin teacher, R' Lejzor Ka"Tz was a musician who was endowed with exceptional talent. In his youth, he learned to play the violin from his father and uncle, two very talented brothers, Torah-educated Jews, God-fearing and complete, respected and important in everyone's eyes. His father and uncle were already old and feeble by the time I got to know them. But when the two of them played at a wedding, at a table surrounded by those who came to make the bride and groom happy, or at a '*badeken*' – they became energized and vibrant, being very moved, and they moved the others, and the melody emerged from their hearts, and entered the heart of all their listeners. And the young Lejzor would accompany them, or played a solo part, in accordance with the wishes of those who were seated around the table.

At home, he was in the practice of playing for himself in the quiet hours of the evening, without light. He would begin with scales, and slowly, slowly work his way into improvisation of his own. His lean fingers and his wizardly bow would dance and jump with the speed of an electric spark over the strings, his melody bursting through the bounds and lines and memories of the pleasure. You entered into the world of creativity, enchanting and inspiring, with his divine skill, and the outpourings of his soul in that moment, for all those who were listening to him.

Most of the talented sons of the city were his students, and many good players came out of them.

May his memory be a blessing forever.



Page 170: R' Lejzor Ka"Tz ר"ל

Memories of Youth

By Yaakov Metzger-Magierow
Sao-Paulo -- Brazil

Magierow

When the First World War broke out, we were living in Magierow – and indeed, that is where we came from. Despite the fact that I was not yet a full four years old, I can remember, as if it were today, how the city was taken over by the Russian military. The fighting took place around Magierow, and the shells reached the houses and everything around us started to burn; – the entire city was on fire. The largest part of the houses were built out of wood, and therefore, in a matter of only a few minutes, the entire city stood in flames. A mass fleeing ensured – everyone looking for a secure place where to save themselves. People ran to the synagogue, which was the only stone building, with the hope of finding a safe place there, because the synagogue stood somewhat further from the city, and the fire did not reach there. Our mother and all her children also fled there. When we arrived, we encountered the synagogue overly packed with people who had fled the *shtetl*. The air was full of screaming and crying. Many had fainted from the overcrowding, and in addition to all this, the bullets flew through the windows. It was fortunate that they did not strike anyone, because the synagogue was built high up. The crowd of people saw that it would be impossible to remain in the synagogue for long, and so they began to run out. At the gate, they encountered Russian soldiers, who barred the way, not letting anyone out, unless they were given a large sum of money. You can understand, that the demanded sum of money was immediately produced and as soon as they received the money, they opened the gate, and let us out of the synagogue. We ran even further from the fire, from the bullets, until we went out of the city, out into the open field. The soldiers who were approaching us from the other direction, advised us to run towards the ¯ o³kiew Road. There, they said, it was quiet, and no battles are taking place there. When we fled our home, in great haste, our mother did not have the time to have us put on shoes, and running in this way through recently harvested fields in bare feet, our feet became stabbed and we could not continue to proceed further. Our mother could not take along many effects, while fleeing,

and apart from that, she had to carry us in her arms. This is the way we proceeded for the entire day, through fields, and between military divisions, and at night, we arrived in ¯o³kiew.

Our mother's relatives lived in ¯o³kiew. We were very warmly taken in by them. They gave us a separate room, and we remained living with them.

In the meantime, the winter closed in on us, bringing various diseases with it, foremost for us, the little children. Various epidemics broke out because of the great overcrowding, which was the situation in ¯o³kiew. The largest part of the Jews, who lived in the surrounding villages, and in the small towns, had descended on ¯o³kiew to find refuge.

Potelycz

And it was that way that we wintered there, suffering from a variety of ailments, and other tribulations. Permission was not granted to travel out of there, but as soon as the situation began to normalize a bit, permission was then granted to travel out of the city. The frosts became weaker, and along with our mother, we traveled off to Potelycz. We dragged ourselves along with horse and wagon, and in three days' time came to our grandparents. They were extremely happy at our arrival, because for the whole time, they had no news from us. They thought we were no longer alive. They had heard that many people had died in Magierow. We found our new home with our grandparents in Potelycz.

With them we found a warm home. They surrounded us with love and care, and there we really were able to get rested from the difficult and long journey. The children got healthy again. I began to attend *Heder*, became acquainted with my peers, with the little children of this little town, climbed the well-known Potelycz mountain, and a little bit at a time, began to forget the troubles that we had to suffer. But, now again, another trouble! Suddenly, a cholera epidemic breaks out. There were no doctors in the *shtetl,* and when a person fell ill with this frightening disease, the only recourse was – to rub down the body in spirits, rubbing it in vigorously and for a long time. There was nobody to do this, because it was wartime, and the [able-bodied] men were all mobilized, and only elderly and weak men remained behind, and there was no one to save the sick. The only one in the *shtetl* was my grandfather. He was a very strong and healthy man, and for whole days and nights, he ran around the *shtetl* rescuing those felled by this disease.

On one day, my grandfather fell sick with the disease, and there was no one to save him. I recall him calling my mother over and saying to her: -- Chay'cheh – that was our mother's name – flee this place and save yourself and your children. Again we began to run, returning to our city, to Magierow. We fled there with the outlook of encountering our mother's father, her sisters, and everything that had been left behind. But what we found there were burned out houses, everything being wrecked, but we did find our family. Nothing had happened to them. All of them were fortunate in saving themselves. Our happiness was very great, but we had no place to put ourselves. Our grandfather died two days later, after we had fled the *shtetl.* Our grandmother remained alone, and so she ordered a peasant that was traveling to Magierow to turn around, the disease having run its course and stopped, and we decided to travel back to Potelycz, to live together with our grandmother.

In time, the Russians abandoned the entire area, and the Austrians entered. This became a big deal; it was no small thing that they came in! They were greeted with flowers, with bread and salt – an old custom. People danced in the streets, the *shtetl* was spruced up, and wherever there was a vacant house, it was turned over to the military. My grandmother had a beautiful and clean living quarter, to which officers were drawn in, and immediately telephone wires were being pulled in, and other nice things. We, the children, did not leave the place, especially as the officers treated us with chocolate and other good things. We were so occupied, that we didn't notice that our mother was not in the house. And if we finally did remind ourselves to ask our grandmother where our mother was, she gave us a variety of answers such as: she was off to Rawa-Ruska and that either today or tomorrow she was coming back. Until one fine day, she indeed arrived, nicely made up, and she laughed. We immediately knew that something had happened... she brought back nice clothing in which to dress us, and told us, that we were traveling to a new home, 'we are going to go to live in Rawa-Ruska.'

Rawa-Ruska

Our mother, being left as a widow with two small children after having everything consumed by fire, and not having any prospects for herself and we, the children – decided that she would marry a second time. She married the Rawa resident Eber Blatt. He was called Eber '*Holtzfirrer.*' This was the way almost all the men in Rawa were called, after their craft or occupation in which they were engaged[143]. He was a very tall man, a very quiet and decent man, a man of his word. He had an ascetic appearance, a bit stern. It is possible that this wass the way we perceived him to begin with, but in time, we got used to him. He actually was a good man, and took to us as if he were our real father. He had two sons from his first wife: Ephraim and Hertz Blatt. We lived with one another like real brothers. We lived behind the *Rynek*, across from the *Eizerneh Kloyz*. One only had to pass through the '*Klapperheizl*' and one was in the *Rynek* , and further past there, stood the houses of study, and a bit to the right stood small houses built out of wood, pressed together with small alleys. The windows – were at ground level. It is noteworthy, that these small houses remained intact, despite the fact that substantial battles took place in Rawa, and the opposite – in the left side of the synagogue, all the houses, even those made of stone – were wiped out during the time of the fighting.

When we came to Rawa, I, as a child of seven years of age, coming from a small little *shtetl*, thought of Rawa as a major metropolis. For me, there was no larger city in the world, and like all children of that age, ran around for days on end to get acquainted with the city. I was curious about everything. Here, I uncovered an *Eizerneh Kloyz* and a *Blekhener Kloyz*, the Old *Bet HaMedrash* and the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash*, and an Old *Kloyz* and a *Zamd Kloyz*, and today, the Great Synagogue. Was this sort of sweep a small thing? And it was necessary to become familiar with all of them immediately, because if not, one could not show one's self to one's new friends. And today, the city itself, with the *Rynek* with the municipal building, [a place] where we only occupied a corner. Also

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143 In this case, a deliverer of wood.

the branch of the Rata River, where we went to bathe in the hot summer days. It is understood, that after *Shavuot*, we went bathing, because during the days of *Sefira* this was not permitted. We also familiarized ourselves with the surrounding forests, and with the field, which was on the other side of the river, with their own acacia trees, where we would promenade in the early summer evenings. The Wolkowica and Potelycz Forests were wondrous, with their redolent pine-scented trees. It was in these very forests that the people of the community would stroll, on the Sabbath, laying themselves down on the grass, and taking in the fresh air. The air in Rawa itself was not that good. Cavorting about in the forests on the Sabbath was truly restorative.

It was tranquil in Rawa. The men, who during the war had left, had returned. Despite the fact that in, and around Rawa it was quiet, no battles had taken place, one still felt that there is a war going on. All the important commodities such as: bread, sugar, meat, cigarettes, etc., were distributed by ration cards. It was necessary to stand in long lines at the bakeries for bread, and it was raw and mixed with a sticky substance, and people got sick from this bread, especially the little children.

Since, the larger part of the Rawa population consisted of Jews, the Rawa community took the initiative to protest, and did so in a Jewish way: on the Sabbath, before the Torah was read, the table was rapped, that they should not permit it [sic: the Torah] to be taken out, in order that all the Jews gather and march together to the *Starosta,* and demand from him, that he do something to improve the [quality of the] bread. Jews, with long beards, wearing *shtrymels*, came out of all the study houses and took to the streets. The community elite marched in front, until they came to the government building, where the seat of the magistrate was located. Shouting began, and it was demanded that the *Starosta* personally show himself. It was desired that he hear out what the people of the city are demanding. The *Starosta* came out, listened to what the people demanded, and very helpfully expressed his intent to respond to the demands that the Rawa citizens demanded.

After the *Starosta* had promised what he did, they went off to complete their worship, which had been interrupted. But the bread was not made better. Despite this, the Rawa Jews took pride in the fact that under the Kaiser Franz-Joseph, Jews have rights…

In time, the situation in the country grew worse. It was bruited about that the Kaiser wants to abdicate, since the war was going badly.

We, the children, listened to everything that the adults were talking about in the *Kloyz,* and on one occasion, while running through the market, we saw something that our eyes had never beheld before. Several soldiers were going by, or officers, in the street, heading for the street leading to the train, obviously to travel back to their military units. Opposite them, they were approached by several gentile thugs who blocked their way. They talked to the military personnel in a very loud tone of voice and suddenly begin to tear off their military hats, and throwing them on the ground. They tear off their insignias, and shout at them: 'The war is over! There is no Austria!'

'There Is No Austria'

The soldiers stood as if confused, not knowing what to do. Seeing this, I sped home like an arrow loosed from a bow, to tell about what I had seen. Nobody wanted to hear or believe it. What is this, after all, what a child says could be the product of childlike fantasies. Who would dare to tear off the hat of a soldier, who is it that would dare to do such a thing. It didn't help to swear to this. Despite the fact that I was not believed, my uncle – that is the way we referred to our mother's husband – nevertheless went out into the marketplace, to become aware of any news. Was it possible?! Who knows, a child swears that he personally saw it! This time they believed me. Coming out, into the marketplace, there were already many people gathered. The news spread quickly over the city, and the same scenes that I had seen were repeated in various parts of the city. And here, there is talk of 'There Is No Austria,' 'There Is No Kaiser,' and a shudder seized the city. This was no small thing, no Kaiser, no rules, no law and no judges. And what will become of the city? Is everything to descend into chaos? There were gendarmes, were they also out of power? This is how I grasped what was going on.

The community sought counsel on what to do. Summonses were sent out to all parts of the city, asking the populace to gather in the *Rynek,* across from the municipal building. I recollect that Dr. Mandel appeared on the portico of the municipal building and in a speech, he clarified what was happening, and he requested that all those who are capable of bearing arms, should present themselves at the government building. A large part of the Jewish youth, who had returned from the military, presented themselves, and a voluntary militia was created. Everyone received an armband with an insignia on it. They guarded the city. This, however, did not last long, because shooting was immediately heard through the nights. The shooting was coming from the Poles, who opposed the Ukrainians, or vice versa. Every day, dead bodies were found beside the train station, beside the toll gate, or in other places, mostly in the outer neighborhoods. The voluntary militia itself was threatened by the unconstrained shooters and renounced guarding the city. Once again, Rawa was left out of control. The shooting this time became more intense, especially at night. When evening fell, the windows were shuttered, doors were blocked, and one did not go out of the house, and many times went to sleep fully clothed. We were justifiable frightened, concerned how a city can be without a government. Nobody knew what would come of this.

It was on one Friday, on which there was an intense cold outside, but there was yet no snow, military troops appeared wearing green uniforms, four-cornered hats with sparkling medallions, having arrived from the train street and marched off to the field. They were looked at with deep thought and apprehension, but yet, the hope was that there would not be chaos.

In the meantime, the host of people went to synagogue to pray. After all, it was Friday evening. It did not take long, and both distress and running was heard. People ran in bare feet, others without a hat, appearing to be beaten. It became evident, that the soldiers who were marching through, had entered the study houses, forcibly pulled the boots off the worshipers, and robbed them of everything, whatever they happened to have on their person, and anyone who put up any resistance was soundly beaten. The people immediately grasped who these new guardians were.

The days went by in fear and uncertainty. In the meantime, winter arrived with snow and snowstorms. The shooting became that much more intense between the Poles and the Ukrainians, struggling over who it is that will rule the city.

On a second Friday evening, when we were in the middle of eating, shooting and an unending staccato of machine-gun fire broke out. The family of Aharon-Leib Strauss lived across from us. In that family there were small children, little girls. They became fearful of remaining in their home alone because, first of all, they lived on an upper storey, and secondly, their house stood off by itself, while our house stood among other houses, and so they thought that it would be safer to be with us. Suddenly, we heard a knock at the door. R' Eber opens it and lets Aharon-Leib Strauss into the house with his entire family. They came to spend the night with us, and remained living with us for a stretch of time, because the shooting did not stop. We gave the little ones a place to sleep where we could, and the parents did not undress, remaining seated around the table. The shooting did not stop. All of a sudden, there is banging on the door with rifle butts. –'*Otwocze*' – they shouted, 'if not, we break down the door'!

The door was opened, and from eight to ten soldiers came in. All were armed. They demanded we give them money. You can understand what we had, and we gave it to them, and the remnants they took by themselves, even the Sabbath food they ate up. They pushed open the door, went outside and positioned themselves to shoot back into the interior of the house. We began to raise an alarm, both the adults and the children. At the sound of the shouting, several officers came, and they chased the soldiers away. Were it not for these officers, they would have shot everyone. These bands of robbers continuously assaulted us, and perhaps the reason for this was, that we lived immediately behind the *Rynek*, where the stores were located, and they must have reckoned that on the second side, was where the owners of the stores lived. We learned, finally, that when robbers banged on the door, we would immediately begin to shout, and the robbers would then go away. Our neighbors, when they would hear me shouting, would say that over at Eber's 'they are singing *zemirot*.'

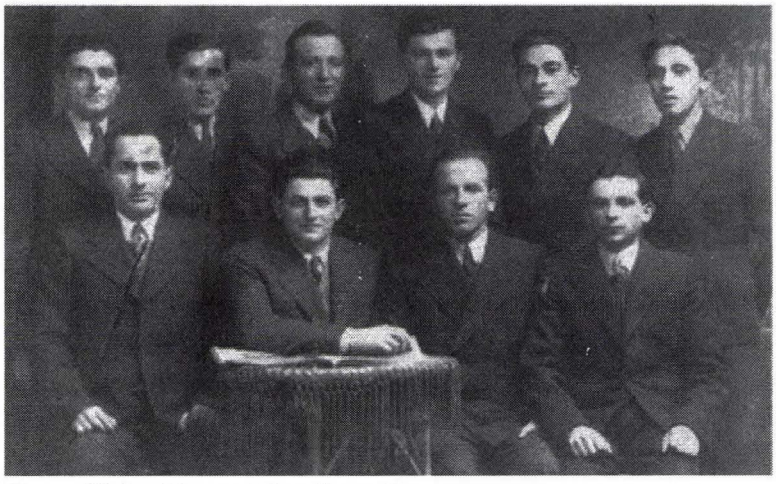
War Among the Poles and Ukrainians

The battles between the Poles and Ukrainians sharpened.

On one occasion, it was on a Saturday morning before dawn, the Ukrainians burst into the city and street-fighting ensued. There was very heavy gunfire. Soldiers were standing at every gate and door. We went down into the cellar, because bullets were penetrating the house. The battle lasted until about three o'clock in the afternoon. The Poles were successful in driving the Ukrainians out, and when it quieted down, and got more tranquil, we went out into the street to take a look. There were tens upon tens of dead strewn all over the streets. We recognized part of them, these being Ukrainian peasants from the surrounding villages who were known to us.

After that particular battle, it got quiet in the city and its environs. It appeared that the Poles had won, it grew quiet, and it was possible to go out into the street. A few went out to do business, and a few – with other things to do. Suddenly the Hallerists appeared. These were lawless sorts, which

General Haller had formed into a legion in France. He came with the legion to 'liberate' Poland. They devoted themselves to cutting off the beards of Jews, and they did the cutting with a knife. On one occasion, exiting the '*Klapperheizl*' and going into the market, I went by a scene that etched itself into my memory, to this day. Two of the bandits had seized a Jew, who was on his way to pray, tore his head from behind, and used a knife to cut his beard. It looked to me like they were slaughtering the Jew. I ran home in tears, and shouted that I personally saw how a Jew was being slaughtered. We did not have a single good day in Rawa.



Page 176: Young Men from Rawa

And now a new situation came to pass:

Men, who went out to do business did not return home not sooner that two, or three days later, Later, it became evident that they were being seized to do work to dig trenches or other dangerous tasks. It became impossible to go out into the street. And so a delegation was sent to the commandant to undertake ways to provide paid labor to the extent they required, in order that the merchants will be able to emerge into the street to do business. The commandant received the request, and the *balebatim* hired Jewish laborers, porters, and other poor people, who were seeking to earn a day's pay.

Every day, very early, these laborers would gather together in the yard of R' Hirsch'eleh Mund, and there they were paid out for the day, and also a work permit, and from there they went off to work, wherever the military indicated they should go.

For the entire time that this arrangement for hired labor lasted, we had two guests every day: in the morning, before going off to work, the elderly David, the Porter and his son Moshe came to us. He was called 'Moshe the Redhead.' They came for a good pinch of snuff with R' Eber, and on top of this they got two hot cups of chicory with buttered warm *pletzls*. This was the case every day.

It became more peaceful. Laborers were no longer demanded. The Poles had emerged victorious over the Ukrainians and it looked like everything was in order.

On one Thursday, all of a sudden, shooting erupted. Bullets flew from all sides, and we didn't know what was happening. Afterwards, it emerged that the Bolsheviks had seized the train station and *Panzer-zugen* shot up the city. All those who lived in low-slung wooden houses, on the Synagogue street, took up residence in the various houses of study, with everything they could transport over from their houses. This is because it was only in stone houses that one was protected from the bullets.

Rawa-Ruska possibly suffered more than other cities, because Rawa was a strategic point as well as also a great rail hub. In any event, Rawa suffered enough.

The Poles emerged victorious. They took in all of Eastern Galicia and we became Polish citizens. Young people were called up to the military. There was no more Austria, now we were Polish citizens.

New winds began to blow in Rawa, especially among the youth. The practically medieval way of life that we were used to, like going to the synagogue with one's father to pray, or meeting with a friend at the *Kloyz,* or around the *Kloyz* – was exchanged for meetings in societies, in youth organizations of a variety of persuasions. This was a time of great events taking place: two great historic moments – the Balfour Declaration, and the October Revolution in Russia. The first, which touched the Jewish people, and the second – of universal character. Rawa youth reacted in a very positive way. One must not forget that Rawa was a city without an industry. Almost all the residents of the city drew their livelihood from commerce, stores, or dealings with peasants from the surrounding villages. Rawa youth, having no craft skills, as well as no possibility of acquiring higher education – was directed to follow in the same commerce as that of their parents, or better said – with the so-called insubstantial livelihoods. Rawa youth fought against this situation, and therefore streamed and filled the Jewish national organizations in the movement of the *Halutzim*, with a twofold outlook: to tear one's self out of the old way of life, and to become a productive element, while simultaneously preparing the ground for the future state.

Work in Rawa

As has been previously said, there was no industry in Rawa at that time, where young people could be engaged. What there was in Rawa, was a basis for the craftsman, such as, for example: tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, hat makers. Of all the trades that have just been enumerated, the trade of hat making was considered to be – as it was called then – the work for *balebatim*. If parents trembled at the thought of turning over their child to study shoemaking, it was with satisfaction that they sent their child to learn hat making and very often paid for the teaching involved. Later, as the trade expanded into an import-export industry, the small workplaces became larger factories, with tens and tens of workers, Rawa became an industrial city with a working class.

In that time, our area was still under the control of the old guild rules, where the owner had all the rights, and because of that one worked from twelve to fourteen hours a day for very little wages. The owners quickly became rich. The hat making workers began to organize themselves, in order to fight for better working conditions, and higher pay. At first everyone demanded a raise for themselves, and afterwards for all the workers in that work location. The bosses, not being used to being

confronted by demands – because since time immemorial, they knew that the workers have to wait until the boss needed to remind himself that he had to give a raise. All of a sudden, a strike breaks out among the hat making workers. A strike committee is created. The more informed of the workers man the strike committee, with Raphael Kramer as the President of the committee. The leadership of the '*Gordonia*' Society puts their offices at their disposal, where they are able to run meetings.

And this is the first time there is an organized strike. The strike went on for a longer time. It was hard to fight with the employers and also with the strikers. We were not yet used to striking. A few were afraid of losing their jobs. It cost enough energy and stress, until such time that the committee was able to persuade those, who became frightened, that only by means of an organized approach, can the strike be won, and higher wages, accompanied by an eight-hour day be achieved. The employers came to the committee and signed an agreement, in which they conceded such as the '*Bund*,' and the '*Chitelnya*' to all of the demands that the workers had put forward. The hat making workers saw, that when one is organized, one has power. And seeing that in Rawa there was already an organized working class, it is no wonder that apart from the number of Zionist societies such as: '*Hatikvah,*' '*Hitakhdut,*' '*Gordonia,*' '*Mizrahi*' and others – left-wing organizations were formed such as the '*Bund*' and '*Chitelnya*,' whose ideological bent was no secret to anyone, even not for the Rawa-Ruska police...

The Youth of Rawa

The youth of Rawa began to become politically active. All manner of real questions were discussed, both Zionist and international problems. Rawa seethed with discourse. I do not know of any other city where there was so much discussion about political, scientific and literary themes, that used to take place on Friday evenings, as well as so-called 'bench' evenings, which were carried out in practically all organizations. Members of other organizations would come to these meetings. People would listen with great attentiveness to each word, to each phrase. The evenings would stretch out into the early morning, with great ardor and enthusiasm.



Page 177: The 'Bosalia' *Group in the city, Sarah Gittl Holz, Group Head*

The thirst for knowledge among the Rawa youth was very great. What an uproar took place at election time! It is known that Rawa was counted as one of the large Jewish centers for having a politically active populace, because well-known Jewish personalities would come to Rawa, when election for the Sejm took place, or in regard to Zionist problems. Rawa was also visited by culture guests from Warsaw, Lemberg, and other Jewish culture centers. Rawa was also known as a city of theater-lovers and for this reason, Rawa was visited by theater troupes such as the Jewish Art Theater group '*Wikt*' from Warsaw with Ida Kaminska and Zygmunt Turkow. The orator Yaakov Wyslyc gave a series of evenings, as did others. And this was apart from operetta-troupes, as the case of Spivakowsky's theater, and others. I do not know if, in another city with the same population as Rawa, was so much theater performed. Almost all of the organizations put on theater productions. The first society that put on theater was '*Hatikvah*,' and after that comes the '*Bund*,' the '*Chitelnya*,' '*Hitakhdut*' and others.

There were also groups that put on evenings with small plays. Each society put on pieces of writers of whom they were more fond of. '*Hatikvah*' put on plays by Anski, '*Hitakhdut*' – Peretz Hirschbein, the '*Chitelnya*' – Sholom Aleichem and Sholom Asch, the '*Bund*' – Lateiner, Zolotorowsky, Gordon and others. These were mostly operettas or melodramas. Each society had its own play director. Dr. Mandel led the theater group of '*Hatikvah*' and also performed in all lead roles. Shia Satz, who always carried to such pieces in his breast pocket, would be reading such a piece even in the midst of prayer. He directed plays in the '*Bund*.' In '*Hitakhdut*, -- if I am not mistaken – Yaakov Shlomo Gold directed, and in the '*Chitelnya*' – Azriel Herbster. This was a rare type of individual, regarding participation both on the political front and also on the theater front. Every theater performance in the city was like a Festival Holiday. The halls were packed with people. Just from this alone, it was possible to measure the level of culture among Rawa youth. Apart from theater, other cultural activities were also undertaken in Rawa. There were functioning courses in Yiddish and Hebrew.

The Drive to Pursue Knowledge and Understanding

I recollect when evening courses were opened in the '*Chitelnya*' for the youth of the poorer class in Rawa, who did not have the means with which to pay to attend school, and remained totally illiterate. And so the undertaking proved to be a great success. These were the children of parents, who lived on the familiar '*Zamd*' in frightening poverty. The more elite *balebatim* looked down on these people as some sort of lower class, and when these same folks were brought near, and given consideration as equals, it was necessary to see with what complete diligence and affection these young people learned. They learned how to read and write, and became big borrowers of books in the library. What a dear group this was! The youth that grew up out of that '*Zamd*' was one that it was possible to take pride in. Rawa also had a constellation of learned people, scholars, and the students of scholars. The years that I lived in Rawa-Ruska were the most beautiful of my life. It bubbled with social and cultural activity, with partisan conflict, with get-togethers, and debates. The young people entertained itself by marching out on summer evenings, and on the Sabbath days – to the surrounding forests. Groups of friends of both gender would together spend their time and share meaningful experiences together. Those romantic times became etched into the memory, despite the fact that the economic condition was not a good one, and one was tied to the city. One had to struggle hard to make a living. The young person in Rawa did not see a future for themselves there. It began to get crowded for the largest part of Jewish youth. An emigration to the larger world began. A large part of the young *Halutzim* – if they could procure a certificate – went to the Land of Israel. A great number of the hat makers went to Paris, Italy, Belgium and to the South-American countries.

The Second World War

The Second World War broke out. A dark nightmare descended upon European youth. All the Jewish communities were exterminated, and together with them, my city of Rawa-Ruska, with my family, with all my dearest and most beloved friends, with all my Rawa *landsleit*, who remained there after I left, during the dark years of extermination.

Even though we were thousands of miles from the destruction, we suffered deeply, were in pain, and shed blood, when those terrifying facts came bursting through, about the extermination and destruction, that the Nazi-Murderer imposed on the Jewish populace of all Europe.

Although I was not in Rawa during those terrifying years of annihilation, I want my modestly written words to be etched into the memorial, which is being erected in memory of the Rawa community, with the publication of the Yizkor Book.

And may their souls be bound up in the bond of life for all time!

Strivings

By Ben Zion Friedman

Rawa-Ruska became my second home after my marriage there to my wife, Reitza Graff ע"ה. I came from £opatno to Rawa into the very center of the city, into the house of my wife's parents, which was located on the principal street in the city, in the ring, in the front facing the municipal building.

The ring, which was a beautiful, large area with four sides, tall houses and in the middle – the municipal building.

This was a formidable building, a palace, a fortress – dating back to the time of the *'Panszczyzna*[144],' and apart from one Pole, the historical Polish municipal building was occupied by only Jewish families who also occupied the storefronts and businesses, on all four sides of this massive building.

The residents of Rawa-Ruska were 85% Jewish. Also, all of the businesses of the Great Ring, around and around, were all taken by Jews – except for one business owned by a gentile – a pig farmer.

Also we, my wife Reitza and I, opened a bookstore and writing supply business in the attractive front part of the house of my father-in-law, R' Yankl Graff, and also a place to procure all periodical publications. But the principal trade of the business consisted of the commercial concession we had in tobacco and cigarettes. I obtained this franchise thanks to the intervention of the Engineer, Dr. Lucas, the finance-supercontroller, in the finance directorate in Brody, who traveled with me to the

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144 The period of serfdom in Poland

Ministry in Warsaw, and presented me as someone who had saved his life. And that sort happened as follows:

In the year 1920, during the Bolshevist invasion. He, Dr. Lucas, was stuck remaining in £opatno, was hidden and given food by my family, until the Poles returned to the city, and in this way, he saved his own life. The Ministry, indeed, immediately gave me the concession on the spot. This was a golden business with an easy and honorable way to make a living.

Regrettably, almost with the beginning of Polish rule, pressures began to be applied to Jews in a variety of ways, and especially in the economic sphere. At the beginning of the year 1927 Poland began to confiscate all of the franchise concessions from Jews, and gave them to wounded war veterans, after the war of Polish liberation. This also happened to my concession, because my sponsor, Dr. Lucas was no longer still alive.

The Situation of the Jews in Rawa

Rawa-Ruska was an impoverished city. It was difficult for Jews to find a way to make a living there. In all the houses surrounding the municipal building – there were businesses, and in addition there were many stalls of so-called market-sitters, with articles that had already been used. Each of the [lady] sitters wanted to sell her wares, and as a result competed vigorously with one another, as you can understand, with minimal profit.



Page 180: The Rynek *and the Municipal Building*

There was no social security, and also no official concern for the poor; despite this, the worshipers in the study houses did much to help out the poor, with anonymous charity-giving, or through the *Gemilut Hesed*, but what did this have to show.

The part of the city that called itself 'Zamd,' was extremely poor; in its center, it concentrated a larger part of those of middle means. The well-situated were: the hat makers, the lawyers, the pharmacists, the firewood sellers – Guzhik, Hahn, Szpazner and Weichselbaum; also Marz, Lieberman, Daks, Mund.

To be remembered for the good – R' Abraham'eleh Rathaus, a son of R' Moshe Rathaus ז"ל, who did not forget me, and after the liberation, sent emigration papers for me and my wife from Vienna, for us to go to America, which certainly cost him a great deal of money; he must have sunk significant thousands into the government as security, and also looked after getting visas for us. My daughter, already pregnant with a child, had decided to travel to Israel, and I did not want to part from my only daughter and grandchild, and so, I [too] traveled to Israel.

The visas, the security for us, and a large sum of money, I have, to this day kept hidden in memory of this distinguished family – Rathaus in Rawa-Ruska.

The largest part of the city drew its sustenance from the market fairs, also the well-situated, the middle class and the poor. Rawa had a large vicinity around it with well-endowed villages. The peasants would bring their agricultural produce, grain and vegetables, cattle, horses, and fowl, to the city, and the Jews would buy it all up, and afterwards would sell back to the peasants all the things that they needed – ranging from a variety of foodstuffs, clothing, up to and including working machinery.

Seeing that most of the residents did not have much means, every form of riches was highly visible, and held in high regard; the poor largely depended on these well-off people.

Poverty coursed silently through the life of the city. Nevertheless, people were able to joke, make sport, and take in everything affectionately, and lived with faith in the *Master of the Universe*, until...until...

Rawa Curiosities

The Self-Inflicters. Every year, after the Sabbath of Hanukkah, the season of the self-inflicting of young boys began, who, after Passover, were compelled to present themselves to the military service. Young men, who did not want to go serve in the military, would inflict themselves, causing personal physical harm. They did not eat properly, did not drink, and not only one of them, as a result of this severe self-infliction – left the world before their time.

During the nights, we would come together in the houses of study, and from there, go out into the streets, dragging ourselves around, and wandering, in order to avoid going to sleep. On occasion, we would sit down for a bit and study, but this would engender falling asleep; if one finally did lay down – it was on a hard bench; but one would not let the other sleep; if one person fell asleep, the second person would douse him with water, tying another to the bench with a sash, or smear his face with black soot from the oven. This is how the young men behaved until after Passover, up to the time of the military mustering.

Following the custom of engaging in self-infliction, every Saturday night, they would go to various homes of the balebatim, to gather *Tikkun*-money – that is what it was called – to buy a bit of 96 proof whiskey. Seeing that not everyone gave them a donation for *Tikkun*, they would perpetrate pranks against such misers; they would take the signs from one storefront and move it to another location in a completely different street; on a Friday night, they would steal away the *cholent* from one

person, and give it to a needy poor person; or climb up on a person's roof, and put a glass pane on top of the chimney, and when the miserly homeowner would light a fire to heat the house – all the smoke would back up into the house. These were the kinds of pranks the self-inflicters would perpetrate against those would did not want to donate any *Tikkun*.

A Blood Libel Almost Committed in Rawa

A circus once came to the city. The principal owner of the circus, and his wife, took up residence in the Hotel-Sztokhammer. On a certain day, the circus performers observed that it was rather late, and the Director had not yet shown up. So they came to the hotel, and banged vigorously on the door, but there was no answer. So they broke down the door, and they found the circus master and his wife dead in their beds. There was an immediate descent of Poles on the run, with great alarm, accusing the Jews of poisoning their artist, the gentile, and his wife. The situation became very critical, because there was no lack of those wanting to create incitement against the Jews.

Intervention was made with the appropriate government officials, and to the right time, the police with a military detachment, stationed itself in the city, the hotel was surrounded, and the Jews, in general, put under surveillance. The dead bodies were sent to the pathology institute, which confirmed that their death was caused by an accident involving gas from combusted wood, because they prematurely stopped up the chimney and went to sleep permanently.

The head man of the circus ordered placards printed in three languages: Polish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish, in order to properly inform the aroused populace.

It was in this way that the anger, of the gentile populace, was quenched, and the Jews were saved.

The Houses of Study

The large, beautiful synagogue, in which all segments of the populace came to pray, had a very loyal *Gabbai,* R' Hirsch Zimmerman. He kept the synagogue in the greatest state of order, and the best state of cleanliness, well-lit and designated seats kept guarded. Annually, a good, first-class *Hazzan* was retained, and during the High Holy Days, even many non-Jews would come to the synagogue to hear the *Hazzan* sing. R' Hirsch Zimmerman knew how to receive all the gentile dignitaries, and the high-standing people, in the appropriate manner, and nothing bad ever happened to the Jews because of this.

Around the area where the synagogue stood, there were concentrated a network of houses of study, and *Kloyzes* such as: the *Blekhener Kloyz*, where most of the more affluent Belz Hasidim worshiped; the *Old Bet HaMedrash* with its many worshipers, such that it was always crowded to the full, and where mostly the *balebatim* and merchants worshiped; I, too, worshiped here, and thereby, I must recall my steady neighbor in the *Bet HaMedrash*, that tall and intelligent Mr. Clemens Zimmerman, with whom I would spend my free time, carrying on very interesting conversations about political and social themes; he would always take along his two little boys, who received a proper fatherly upbringing from him.

The *Belz Kloyz*, which was under one roof with the Old *Bet HaMedrash* was truly crammed with worshipers, as well as the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, which mostly drew the freshly married young people, of the young, upcoming generation.

In the other side of the city there were: the New *Bet HaMedrash*, which was called the *'Zamd' Bet HaMedrash*, where the Jews of that part of the city worshiped, and also the *'New Klyzl'* in the same neighborhood, which was erected with the help of the wealthy city dweller, R' Yoss'leh Marz, who became the *Gabbai* there, the Torah Reader, and the leader of *Musaf* services. Apart from this, there were other *minyanim* and *Klyzl* locations, such as with R' Joseph and by the Rabbis: Potelyczer, Nemierower, and Magierower, who was a brother to the *Rebbe* of Belz, R' Issachar Dov, זצ"ל.

The city Rabbi, R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky worshiped in the synagogue, a son-in-law of the previously mentioned *Rebbe* of Belz, the *Dayanim*: R' Shlomo Szrencel, who worshiped in the Old *Bet HaMedrash*, and R' Israel Schwert in the Belz *Kloyz*. All were martyrs, הי"ד!

I further wish to favorably recall R' Yitzhak Morgenstern; he was a rarely accomplished leader of prayer services, and was also a Hazzan; every year, for the High Holy Days, he served as the *Hazzan* at Jonah Szprekher's in Lemberg, and this by itself is a good enough indication for him. For the entire year, he, as a Belz *Hasid*, led services from the prayer stand of the Belz *Kloyz: Kabbalat Shabbat, Shacharit* and *Musaf* prayers. All worshipers, at the neighboring houses of study, would gather near the windows *en masse*, to hear his singing and praying, which was full of sweetness, and penetrated everyone's heart. He has a beautiful, strong and sweet voice, and was gifted in being able to perform all of the familiar prayers of the great cantors, in song. In the end, he was retained by the head of the community, Dr. Mandel, to be the City Cantor in the new *'Zamd' Bet HaMedrash*. And seeing that I have recalled our Dr. Mandel, I wish to end with these final words that 'the last of all is most beloved:'

I am referring to our dear head of the community, and Zionist and community activist, candidate to the Polish parliament, one of the greatest, most loyal Jewish minds, with a Jewish heart, not only in the city of Rawa, but one of the greatest Jewish-Zionist activists in Galicia and also Poland.

Dr. Mandel, a very good and skilled lawyer, practically abandoned his law practice and counseling, in order to devote himself to community activity in the city, and with general work for Jewish causes in Poland.

My few lines are entirely too little to describe the assessment of such a dear Jewish man, which demands an entirely special extra endeavor.

May the memory of all be blessed for all eternity!

Benefactors

By Zvi Aryeh Fendrich

Even in hard times, the Jews of the city always found, one from another, a warm heart and a hand open to offer help. Yet among these, there were those who truly excelled in this: they did not wait for the entreaties of the needy, but rather took an interest in others, and knew who those were that needed their help, and did so clandestinely, in a self-effacing manner and with commitment. These benefactors left a deep impression on my heart, and it is here that I will raise up a memory of them.

Zelda Kessler ע"ה – She always found the time to perform the *mitzvah* that was beloved to her, the *mitzvah* of *Bikur Kholim* [visiting the sick]. She was a homemaker who was always busy with taking care of her sons and daughters, and on top of that ran a store, because her husband, R' Hirsch Ber spent most of his time in the *Kloyz* beside a book. And here, even during the times when the store was overrun with a surfeit of customers, she would find the time to provide her help to the sick person, the bereaved, or a woman in confinement during labor, who was in need of something warm to eat, to heal properly, or for a good word.

Sima Dima Daks ע"ה – The woman of fortitude, that even during the days of the war, during which plagues broke out, did not stint regarding her own well-being, and went from one sick person to the next, feeding them, washing them, and looking over them to make sure they got their medications on time. And the reward for her endeavors – performing the *mitzvah*.

Sar'keh Just ע"ה – A woman burdened by many tribulations. Even at the time she was widowed from her husband, R' Nehemiah ז"ל – a modest man, wise and respected for everything [he was] – she continued in his straight path in the conduct of her affairs, in the raising of her children, and her home was open to anyone requesting her help. During the dark days that befell Jewish commerce, during the time of the Grabski régime, a word circulated in the city, that the entire capital of all the merchants in the city came only to one thousand gold pieces, which was recycling from hand-to-hand to retire promissory notes. A large part of this 'recycled capital' came from the resources of Sar'keh Just. It is for this reason that all those who knew her, held her in high esteem, and all those who dealt with her loved her.

Dvo'sheh Zilber ע"ה. She had a large market-store in the corner of the 'Market.' Beside her store is where the porters of the city would congregate, waiting for a job, which was not always to be found at hand. When the Sabbath drew near, and Dvo'sheh would discern that among them there was not means at hand to buy the Sabbath necessities, she would fill up their baskets with those necessities from her store, 'on credit,' without hoping to be paid.

Freida Karsel ע"ה. She looked after the poor in her own way. On the evenings leading up to the Sabbath, she would pass by the houses of the city, gathering Sabbath Challahs in her container, and what was missing was given as a charitable donation by R' Pesach Beinusz's and his wife Sarah, from their bakery, for the purpose of being divided up among the poor of the city who lacked the means to procure Sabbath provisions on their own account.

I will also recollect a number of the community activists, who performed their work without compensation.

R' Zelig Figert ז"ל, one of the venerable heads of the community, and for a short time also served as the head of the city. During the time of his service, he concerned himself with Jewish affairs. He worked on behalf of those wanting to purchase a parcel of land that were owned by the municipality – despite the fact that this proved to be tedious for him, and interfered with his own making a living.

R' Moshe Blaustein ז"ל, better known by his name as R' Moshe-Chaya-Feiga's. It was told of him, that as a skilled Mohel, he would take a higher fee than ordinary from those able to pay, and he would then add to this sums that he collected with the help of friends, such as R' Berisz Kramerman, in order to buy provisions for the sustenance of those confined mothers that were in need.

Dr. Joseph Mandel ז"ל was the first among the Jewish intelligentsia of the city who leapt into the sea of community activity and swept all else aside. In one severe winter, during the twenties, he erected a 'field-kitchen' in the middle of the *Rynek*, through which hot soup was distributed free of charge to the porters, wagon drivers, and other laborers that stood in the street in the freezing cold, waiting for a job. Afterwards, he organized a few of the youths of the city, to transport the kitchen also to quarters of the city in which the poor were concentrated, who because of the intense cold were not able to get to the *Rynek* in order that they derived benefit from the hot soup. Many of little means extended their gratitude to him, and also for the help he extended to them through the treasury of the *Gemilut Hasadim* that he founded in the city.

It is also my desire to favorably recollect those people who made it easier for me to make *aliyah* to *The Land*. In Lvov, this was Dr. Koppel Schwartz ז"ל, of '*Hitakhdut,*' who helped me with obtaining the certificate of a craftsman, following the recommendation of my friend Yaakov Shlomo Gold ז"ל. I became a craftsman thanks to my father-in-law, R' Meir ben Mordechai ז"ל, who taught me baking. I wish to extend a profound sense of gratitude to R' Pesach Altman, who was the Chairman of the Tz"Kh of the bakers in Rawa, and it was he that provided me with the certification of being a qualified professional in my field. R' Pesach was the driving force of the bakers, and he had access to the offices of the government, because he had earned their respect for the medal he had received from the Polish government for his role in the Polish liberation. He did a great deal, without compensation, in liberating people from all manner of fines and punishments. In return for the help that he gave me, he only asked that I give his regards, once I reached *The Land*, to his son, Lipa.

Additionally, I will recall my father, Joseph Alexander, and my mother Itta, the martyrs who were pure, of modest bearing, of straight heart, going in a righteous path with God and humanity. They were occupied with children, and bore the heavy yoke of making a living, not forgetting to set aside from their limited income, in order to help the invisible poor, and it was in this fashion that they exerted themselves to educate their children. I will even recall my brother Uri, who from his earliest youth worked to help his parents and the general community. And my brother Shlomo also recalled as good, with the modesty of a refined soul, book-knowledgeable, and a lover of books, who, despite his being busy with his help in supporting the household, never strayed from his Torah study offered

by R' Uri Zucker ז"ל, in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, and he was the right-hand of R' Uri on his community and educational activities in the '*Agudat Israel*' in the city. He was beloved and well-received by all who knew him.

May the memory of them all be blessed forever and ever.

A Belz Hasid Recognized by the Polish Government with the Independence Cross

By Yekhiel Kessel

On every Polish Independence Day, on the Third of May, there would be a celebratory parade – encompassing the distinguished élite of the city: the *Starosta*, the Military Commandant, the Police Commandant, the Burgomaster, Army Officers, and those who fought at the front, and other distinguished people of the city – all decked out in their finest, a satin robe and sash, with a broad velvet headdress, their breasts decorated with glistening medals, our very well-known R' Pesach Altman, called: Pesach Beinusz's. Our mother ע"ה would then tell us:

This had taken place on a snow-covered Sabbath of *Hanukkah* in the year 1919. After the collapse of the Austrian [sic: Austro-Hungarian] monarchy, there ensued a bloody war, face-to-face, between the Ukrainian and Polish legions, to take over the rule of Eastern Galicia, thereby, (including) our city. The dwelling together with the bakery of Pesach was to be found on the May Third Street. As was the case in all Jewish homes, on that bloody Sabbath, all the people in Pesach's home stood behind locked down shutters, and attempted to look out, on what was happening, through cracks, at the unfolding tragedy, as it played itself out in the snow-covered outdoors.

Suddenly, Pesach thought that, through the bruit of the gunfire, he heard a human voice beseeching: '– Save me!'

Pesach quickly goes to raise a slat on the door shutter, and sees a young Polish officer standing, beseeching to be rescued. Pesach opens the door more widely, and the officer is quickly swallowed up into the storehouse of flour and empty sacks, under which Pesach covered him very well. Outside, the Ukrainians following him break in, demanding that the Pole be turned over to them. But Pesach deflects their demands. And they then set off in search of the officer. A great miracle took place here – literally, a second *Hanukkah* miracle. When the Ukrainians entered the bakery, and found freshly baked Sabbath *Challahs*, they completely forgot about the purpose for which they entered in the first place, filling their hands with *Challah,* pried open the door and left.

Now, when they first went outside, it became rather dark and silent, and one could hear the voices of Polish soldiers that were following the Ukrainians, the young officer began to crawl out from underneath the mound of flour sacks [he was hidden under]. The officer, covered in flour, shook Pesach's hand, and said: 'I am the son of the *Arendowa* (proprietor of a restaurant in Rawa) and I will remember your act for my entire life. Should you, at any time encounter any trouble, so long as I am alive and able to do so – I will help you' – and he went off with the Polish soldiers.

✶

Years went by, Rawa had long forgotten that it had, at one time, belonged to Austria. The Poles were victorious over the Ukrainians, and began to rule the Jews with a firm and aggressive hand, squeezing out the marrow of their sustenance in the form of a variety of taxes.

And our Pesach followed in the same path as all the other Jews in the *shtetl*. There already is no remains of the large storehouses of flour... everything went into the taxing authorities. And when the water rose up to the throat, and he was threatened with having the bakery shut down entirely – he went off to the young *Pan Arend* who today held the position of an Assistant Judge in the city, and the decree was immediately nullified. The troubles that plagued Pesach, as was the case for all the Jews in the shtetl, did not cease. Executors and other malign emissaries harassed him day and night, and he was constantly compelled to ask for help from *Sendza Arend*. And this is the way things went on, until the *Arend* was transferred to Lemberg, as a Judge, and Pesach was left stranded with his troubles on the water.

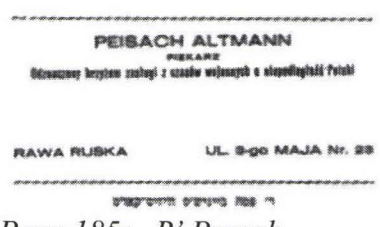
In the year 1926, a new law was passed: all bakeries – had to be electrified. And Pesach received an order: electrify or be closed down!

For Pesach this literally meant: ruin! Having no alternative, he went off to Lemberg to the *Arend* Judge, and he poured out his bitter heart to him. After hearing him out, he thought for a little while, and said to him very seriously: –'Listen to me, *Panie* Altman! You need to know, that my transfer here to Lemberg was without political motivation, and as such protection from my side can now only bring you harm; but in order to help you, I advise you to write a letter to Pi³sudski himself, which I will certify, and I hope that this will help a lot.

Pesach immediately agreed, and the Judge wrote the letter, in his own hand, and then with the typewriter wrote up a certification that all in the letter is true, and ordered it to be sent off as recommended.

A couple of weeks later, Pesach received an invitation to come to the *Starosta*. The *Starosta* personally, in the presence of the Police Commandant, interrogated him, asking a variety of questions, and details about that Sabbath of *Hanukkah* of the year 1919. Afterwards, the two highest officials of the city shook his hand and said, that the act that he performed, literally an heroic act, for which he is entitled to a great reward.

Later on, Pesach received an invitation to visit the War Ministry in Warsaw. R' Noah Gottleib, the Metrical-leader traveled with him. In the presence of many high officers and Jewish activists of the *Sanacja* Party, he was decorated with the Cross for Poland's Independence, a medal, that was awarded only to very prominent and high officers.


PEISACH ALTMANN

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Page 185: R' Pesach Beinusz's Business Card

You can understand that the decree regarding electrification was immediately nullified. This did not even help much regarding

livelihood, because one could not even buy a small sack of flour with it, but he was still released from all decrees that were issued against Jews.

And now, when the Third of May comes around, Pesach Beinusz's marches together with all of the prominent veterans of the front and officers, and when Jews need something to be worked out with the *Starosta*, or the Burgomaster – they send Pesach.

Yaakov Shlomo Gold ז"ל

By Simcha Donner

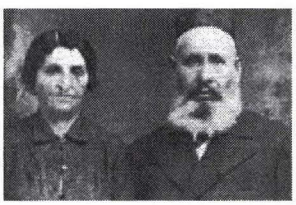
I owe my life, and the life of my parents ז"ל, to Yaakov Shlomo.

I recall his respected family yet from the days of my childhood, whose house stood across from ours. His house was different from all the other houses, because this family earned respect and recognition in the city. Zelig Feder, the grandfather of Yaakov Shlomo, was a wealthy merchant. For many years, he served as the head of the community in the city, and was known to be an active community man. Mikhl'eh Gold, Yaakov Shlomo's father, was a scholar, enlightened, and a man of tranquil character and a pleasant disposition.



Page 186 (Right): Yaakov Shlomo Gold הי"ד

There were four children in the house: Israel, the eldest son, two sisters, who were very pretty, and Yaakov Shlomo, 'Steeped in Torah and commerce, and with shined boots,' as many mothers would wish such sons on themselves.



Page 186 (Left): R' Hirsch Ber Donner ז"ל*: died in 1952; and his wife Hinde* ע"ה*, died in 1961.*

He began his Zionist work as a general Zionist in '*Hatikvah,*' and in the passage of time, he was one of the most energetic activists in '*Hitakhdut*.'

On one morning in 1933, Yaakov Shlomo came to me and asked me: 'Simcha, would you want to travel to the Land of Israel?' My parents were not in the house at the time, and I could not ask for their advice, but [nevertheless] I immediately agreed. On that same day, he traveled to Lvov. The provincial city, and registered me for *aliyah*. After not much time, I received notice to begin preparing the necessary paperwork, and to present myself for examination. After successfully passing the test, I received the 'certificate,' and on the 28th of February 1933, I reached *The Land*. After a year went by, my parents also made *aliyah* to *The Land*, my father Hirsch Ber, and my mother Hinde. They were privileged to live in *The Land*, to see its establishment as a State, and died at an advanced age.

This man – of a good heart, pleasant in his manner, noble in spirit – did not do for himself and his family, but rather did so much for others.

May his memory be for a blessing!

A Part of His Correspondence

By Asher Rubin ז"ל

Asher, one of the Zionist activists in the city and also, regrettably, the last Chair of the Revisionist Organization in Rawa, was also the stable correspondent of the Warsaw daily newspaper, '*Unzer Ekspert*.' He was killed together with his wife, Chaya'leh and three small children, ה"ש.

Here, we present a part of his correspondence

The Editors

A Large Rabbinical Wedding in Rawa Ruska



Page 188: Asher Rubin and His Wife, Chaya'li ה"ש

In this week, the *shtetl* of Rawa-Ruska has a great attraction: the Rabbi of that location, Rabbi Yitzhak Nahum Twersky, is marrying off his son to the sister of the Rabbi of Radomsk. Seeing that Rabbi Twersky is the son-in-law of the Elder *Rebbe* of Belz, and a brother-in-law of the current one, the wedding is not just some ordinary Rabbinical wedding, but a major get-together of many Rabbis, *Rebbes,* 'grandchildren,' and thousands of *Hasidim*. Our *shtetl* altered its appearance; it has been given a completely *Hasidic* look. Wherever you go – you see, only young and old alike, in long, black clothing, with large, long sidelocks, with long thick waist sashes that hang off to the side.

And the people do not simply walk rather – they run; they have no time... *Hasidim* have come even from Berlin. And they are here from Hungary, with their typical Hungarian, *Hasidic* head wear, with short *kapotes*, and fully filled out thick sidelocks...

★

The most difficult task was to properly lodge all of the *Rebbes*, Rabbis, 'grandchildren,' and their 'Suites.' And politics also played a large role in this, because each *Rebbe* had his own adherents and committee, who wrote that their *Rebbe* was the greatest one.

This past Sabbath saw the '*aufruf*" with the participation of all of the Belz 'grandchildren.' The *Rebbe* of Belz himself came traveling to Rawa Ruska and, as you can understand, he will enter the shtetl not like some ordinary person of flesh and blood.

Triumphal gates are erected, using transports. The *Hasidic* 'cavalry' was mobilized, to ride on horses and to sing *Hasidic* marches.

The wedding ceremony took place in the large municipal *Bet HaMedrash*, which can accommodate several thousand people.

The *Hasidim* are no longer like the ones of a past time... they have become a bit modern. This time, the reception of the Rebbe of Belz did not happen in the same tumultuous fashion as in the past. The *Hasidic* cavalry rode in a formation and in order; music played; the entire city does not treat all *Rebbes* alike – and the committee had a difficult bit of work in allocating quarters, Across from this, the uninformed Christians muttered: '*Krol Zydowski Pszyakhol*'...

In Belz, it was the custom, the night before [the wedding], to make a [festive] meal for the groom. Here as well, on Monday, a special banquet was prepared for all of the poor people, and on Wednesday night, they made a feast for the groom, which lasted until the morning.

The feast for the groom took place in the Kloyz: the congestion was limitless. The throng and the guests – on tables and benches. Music played, the comedians entertained the guests and the *Rebbes* distributed their *shirayim*.[145] The *Rebbetzins* attracted special notice for their mantles, kerchiefs and antique jewelry.

The bride and groom were then made to 'confront' one another for the first time: the actual wedding ceremony under the canopy took place on Thursday evening, with the participation of 10 thousand people. On the *Schulhof*, a special place was cordoned off, so that the surrounding crowd could not storm the ceremony under the canopy.

Torches and candles – in profusion... miniatures of the Belz synagogue, and of the synagogues of the entire surrounding area, artistically rendered, were carried by dancing, merry *Hasidim*.

It seems that at the time of the wedding ceremony, there was nobody who had stayed at home. The police guarded to assure there was order.

This same wedding celebration took place on Thursday, and lasted the entire night, until 7 o'clock in the morning. The comedians worked: Hasidim ate and – grabbed at *shirayim*.

The *shtetl* had been up... already for several nights.

On can almost call for a conclave of Rabbis. Who was not here?! The Rabbis of Sosnowiec, Radomsk, Sieniawa, Przemyśl, Jaroslaw, and more and more.

On Friday, music was played for the entire day; *Hasidim* danced and sang in the streets; the shtetl was alive, lusty and joyous...

('*Unzer Ekspert*' Warsaw
Tuesday, 29 June 1937, Number 149)

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145 Literally 'left-overs,' but in fact are dishes of food previously tasted, by the *Rebbe* in question, as a form of either blessing or legitimization.

The Passing and Funeral of the Rebbe of Magierow

On Sunday morning, in Rawa-Ruska, the *Rebbe* of Magierow, Rabbi Aryeh Leibusz Rokeach ז"ל, passed away at the venerable age of 82, a brother of the *Rebbe* of Belz, R' Issachar Ber, ז"ל, and a son of the renowned *Rebbe* of Belz, R' Yehoshua'leh.

The sad news spread through the city with lightning speed, and Jews began to stream, to the house where the *Rebbe* lived, from all directions.

How beloved the *Rebbe* of Magierow was in our area, could now first be grasped by the thousands of people who came traveling from all corners; Lemberg, ¯ o³kiew, Mosty Mala, Mosty Wielkie, Nemierow, Potelycz, Uhniv, Belz, Sokal, Magierow, Tomaszow-Lubelski, Zamoœæ,Tyszowce, and many other cities and towns.

The funeral took place Monday. It lasted from one o'clock till seven in the evening; Rawa had never seen such a large funeral. More than 10,000 people took part in it. Many of the Rabbis from surrounding cities came traveling especially for it. Only the *Rebbe* of Belz was not present, because he is now to be found in Ska³a, the vicinity of Strier, at his summer residence, and special care was taken not to tell him of the death of his uncle, in order that it not have an adverse effect on him. The Rabbi of Rawa as well, who was also at that time in Ska³a for the same reason, did not come. The Rabbi of Rawa was a brother-in-law to the *Rebbe* of Belz.

A tearful eulogy was given by the son, Nahum Aharon'cheh, the *Rebbe* of Lemberg, who with weeping words, eulogized his deceased father. The entire gathering wept along with him. Also, an array of Rabbis gave eulogies. His son R' Yehoshua'leh was appointed as his successor.

'*Unzer Ekspert*' Warsaw Friday,
10th of Av, , 9 August 1935

Chaim Becker ז"ל

By Lipa Dror-Altman

In the year 1934, Chaim and his family made *aliyah* to *The Land* on the basis of certificates of 'trades people.' He arrived at a measured conclusion to settle specifically in a settlement to do agricultural work, even though his means were such that he could have lived in a city. It is understood that he preferred the settlement of Hadera, in which we lived, [that is] Eliezer Rekhes and I, and we were able to help him in his grasp and putting down roots in the land of our origin.

In Hadera, he bought a parcel of land with a house, and in the first year, he worked hard at agriculture, and found his sustenance there. Afterwards, he worked as an official in a fruit distribution group; but this was seasonal work only, during the days of winter.

For family reasons, he was compelled, after difficult tribulations, to return to Rawa-Ruska with his family. But there, he did not have peace, and did not have quiet, because he had already had a taste of the *Moledet*. During a period of 3 years, he left Rawa, his family and the place of his work, and

returned to *The Land*, to his seasonal work in Hadera, in order to keep watch over his permanent place of work.



Page 189: R' Chaim Becker הי"ד

Chaim had a split soul – between the Diaspora, in which he succeeded at his affairs, and between the land of the *Moledet*, in which he had invested so much, in order to settle there. Even in his visits to the countries of the wider world, such as Germany, France and the United States, where his oldest brother and two sisters lived – these people were unable to get the Land of Israel out of his head, and convince him to settle down with them. All were amazed at the force of his spirit, and the courage in his heart, and his stubborn persistence, when he would come year-after-year to *The Land*, in order not to sunder the tie with it. He said to me: 'Lipa, I no longer can live in Rawa; the mental processes of a Diaspora Jew are alien to me; I feel myself to be a Jew of the Land of Israel in all respects; I also worry about the future of the Children of Jacob.'

In his last letter to me, before the Second World War, he beseeched me to look after his son, Yaakov, 18 years of age, who had, in the meantime, made *aliyah* to *The Land*. He also asked me to approach the group that he had worked for, and to speak on his behalf, indicating that it was only because of the war situation that he was unable to come there, and he fervently asks that his position there be kept for him, until such time that he will be able to make *aliyah* with his family and put down roots there permanently.

To our great pain and sorrow, this desire on his part did not come to pass; he and the members of his family were murdered by the Nazis, may their names be erased.

His son Yaakov and his family, may they be separated for long life, continue in *The Land*, going in the path of their father ז"ל, to fulfil his will. The parcel of land that his father bought, is today the legacy of his son.

May the memory of Chaim Becker not leave us, and not leave all the members of his family!

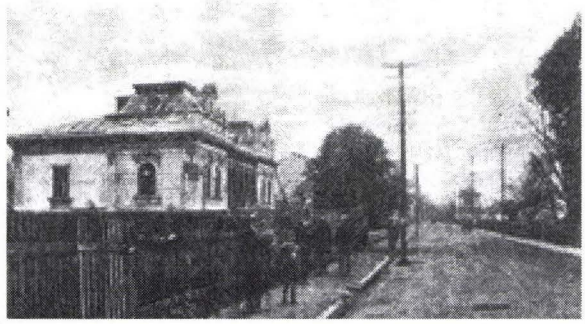
The Baker of Narol

By Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer

It is hard to peer through a thick, opaque smoke rising from conflagrations: it is also hard to look at something, that does not exist any longer, when the eyes overflow with tears and burn from extenuating stress, searching for something that once did exist, lived, and was so close to the heart. This is not a light undertaking; but one who has made a compact through an oath, that(s)he will tell and (s)he will not forget, to this person, God gives another eye, an inner eye, that can gaze unimpeded, through the years, through regions, lands and cities, just as if they didn't ever exist, just as if they were not separated from such a distant or such a close past. And that eye soars like the flight of a bird, here and there, where the heart has remained, and where one's thoughts remain anchored.

There is one house near the railroad street, the house of the Baker of Narol, where, from the tall chimney, on a daily basis, smoke rose from the burning oven. It was a different sort of smoke, a pure gray one. And the higher it rose, it became more faint and more blue; later on rosy and lustier; and behind it flew sparks, higher and higher; and they were accompanied by the odor of baking bread, rolls and rugelach. On Friday, the odor came from sweet *Challahs*. The Narol Baker, a tall Jewish man with a nearly completely white beard, reaching down to his midriff; a white shirt tucked into his trousers, of an indeterminate color, but so immersed in flour that they appeared to be white. A man of labor, who had already been standing for a long time, silently by the hot oven, pushing into it and out of it with a long-handled oven peel, exchanging it for a longer one, and then for a shorter one, and when he had the chance, would wipe away the drops of sweat that fell on it from his reddened face because of his effort. Apart from a few hours of sleep, one thought that the man never rested. This image was the central model of a life of labor... in a word: a wink of the eye; a twist of the hand, and to everyone to whom he turned, immediately knew what he had to do... his wife, Rivka, a diminutive person with a clutch of keys in her hand, or in the deep pocket of her apron, was a helpmeet to him in managing his little world...: the journeymen, the wood chopper, the servant girl; the messenger boy and five children, a house full of people; where each one had his occupation, for which he was responsible.

During the day, which began early in the morning, and lasted into the evening, everyone was occupied; in the evening, at the main meal, the evening meal, all were at the table: the journeymen, and all the members of the family, everyone sat by deep bowls, and the Narol Baker, Ozer, in his white appearance and high forehead, with his clear eyes and white beard, holding one of the younger children on his knee, stroking him, shoved a spoonful of soup into his mouth from the plate... he was the pillar of the family, and whether a stranger, a relative, a Jew or a Christian, all belonged to his community. It was a home where everyone was taken in; whether a lad from a village, who wanted to learn the trade; or another, who God-forbid, had strayed from the righteous path, having just now been released from prison, and was looking for a day's work and a corner where he could lay down his head. All of these found a good word and a source of income. Friday, on returning from the *Bet HaMedrash*, he would always bring along a guest, who was almost always an unanticipated arrival, of one of the local paupers. He felt loyalty to people, and believed in them as he believed in God... He believed that a man, no matter how forsaken and downtrodden he might be, can always return to the right way. To believe in God, but not believe in man was for him unthinkable... It was in this way that Jaszu, with the nickname 'Lelak' was a steady guest, but not a steady worker. Often he would vanish for weeks (gone 'to *Heder*') after which, when he would return, he would always receive a clean shirt, and a couple of groschen, in order to go to the bath, and once again deliver bread to the various stores; and again tell stories to the children; singing them songs of thieves, or invite over a strange soldier. After a while, he disappeared yet again, in order to commit further misdeeds such as: extracting money from a villager by pickpocketing a back pocket, or to rip off a head of cabbage from a passing wagon. It also happened, that



Page 190: The Railroad Street in 'Wiela Jasna'

children were sent to convey a small package to him, with foodstuffs and sweets for Jaszu, which they loved, in order to assure that God forbid, he not go hungry. Ozer was a man whom the neighbors held in high regard. He would, from time-to-time, visit them, and engage them in earnest conversation. They would visit him on Festival Holidays, and sit with him over a glass of Wiszniac or Jagodnik... At Christmastime, he would always bake a large sweet Challah with raisins for the *Starosta*. In the winter, when he would go home from worship, and his long *kapote* and long beard were covered in snow, the Christian children would tell that they saw Saint Nicholas with his white beard.

During summer days, he loved to sit on the steps in front of the house, and listen to the complaints of the children who would play there... he would quiz them about what they had learned in school, or in 'Heder,' and after that he fell silent, listening to the rustle of the trees, which hung over the house. It was also of interest to him to listen to the pealing of the church bells, and their echo. When he became tired of listening, he would get up, straighten out his large body, and go home.

It has been a long time since all the voices have been stilled, and the whistle of the locomotive has died away, which was the last sign of life. After all this, an absolute darkness reigned...

And this is how the persona of the Narol Baker was brought low, together with all the other, and...others...

May their memory last forever and ever...Amen!

A Few Memories

By Shmuel Gottleib

There is very little that I have to tell from my memories of our city, because I left it while still at a young age to live in Lvov. And indeed, precisely because I lived in the large urban Lvov, that I was drawn to Rawa-ruska. All of the beauty of the large city was insufficient for me, and my yearning for the city of my birth grew stronger. Every corner of Rawa that was etched into my memory, became a magical corner. I could not find a place as beautiful as the Wolkowica Forest, or the forest on the way to Potelycz. And, as a matter of fact, Rawa-Ruska was surrounded by forests on all sides from which it could be approached. I will never forget the square of the synagogues on the Friday nights before Sabbath, on the Sabbath itself, on the eves of Festivals, and the Festivals themselves; it was to this square, that a huge throng would stream on such days, from all sides of the city. I did not know many places in Poland, in which the majority of the synagogues were concentrated in one place, as was the case in Rawa: The *Hiltzerneh Kloyz*, the *Schul*, the Old *Bet HaMedrash*, the Old *Kloyz*, and to round this out, the *Blekhener Kloyz*.

I would visit Rawa every Festival Holiday: and if it occurred that I would have to remain in Lvov for one Festival or another – I was hapless, and could find no surcease. Despite the fact that I was not among the rigorously observant, I could not stand the secularists of the city of Lvov.

When I would come to Rawa, I would find warmth in the bosom of my family: the Adler family, the

Ziegler family. On occasion, I would drop in on my uncle Leibusz Landsman, who was a representative of the Jews in the municipal institutions. And also his brother, Hirsch Landsman.

In describing the square of the houses of worship, I will not be able to skip over the big red house of my father-in-law, R' Aharon Leib Strauss ז"ל, that stood in that same surrounding. Hebrew song would always burst out from this house, and sounds of happiness and joy emanated from within. There was an impression that all of the young girls of the city were concentrated in this house, singing and dancing.

It is my desire to pause with regard to two people whom I knew from close up: R' Eizik'l Herbster, and his son, Azriel. I knew R' Eizik'l from the time he would be learning with his son Azriel in the *Bet HaMedrash* on the Sabbath days, and I, and my grandfather ע"ה sat not far from them, and were engaged in some form of a concept in the *Gemara*. I also recall R' Eizik'l from the time he was my last teacher in the Talmud Torah. He was a diminutive Jewish man, skinny, wrapped in a large long jacket, and a hat covered his teary eyes. You could always find him late in the evening at the synagogue, sitting with a large *Gemara* volume in front of him. The students made a lot of trouble for him, did not want to learn, and looked for opportunities to abandon their studies. A unique incident occurred to me at that time, that caused me to begin to think a great deal about this Jewish man. One time, on *Tisha B'Av* when we had been let go from studying, R' Eizik'l encountered me and said to me: 'Listen, do you wish to study '*Lamentations*?'

I agreed, despite the fact that we had just spent the past three consecutive weeks studying the *Megillah* of *Lamentations*, and I entered the synagogue, and we began to learn. I will not forget how this Jewish man bewailed the destruction of the Holy Temple; I will not be ashamed: I bewailed it and wept along with him, and when we finished our study, he said to me: 'It is forbidden for us to forget, what '*Edom*' did to us!' I think that this was the tipping moment of my life, because the decision took form in my heart that I must travel to the Land of Israel.

And the joke of this fate is: This Jewish man, who instilled the telling decision of my life – could not influence his only son Azriel to do the same thing. On one of the Saturdays, in the afternoon, I was sitting with my grandfather and studying, and suddenly I heard a voice calling: 'Azriel! Azriel!' – it became clear that Azriel had picked himself up and fled the synagogue, and R' Eizik'l was pursuing him. After a while, R' Eizik'l returned alone, and sat himself down beside a *Gemara*, seemingly very saddened. Azriel became an atheist, and afterwards became one of the activists in the communist movement in Rawa.

After a few years went by, I encountered Azriel, when we worked at the 'Brothers' Bank' in Lvov. It is worth noting that he approached me with gladness, like an old-time friend. He asked me many questions, and among others, about my brothers. I told him that they had made *aliyah* to *The Land*. It is not possible to describe the change that then came over this man, when he heard what I had to say. Suddenly he shouted over to a group of workers: 'Listen, listen, *Bundists*, two sworn *Bundists* made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel!' (This is because my brothers in Rawa were to be counted as members of the '*Bund*'; In Lvov, they got connected with *HeHalutz*, and went for training. And immediately afterwards made *aliyah* to *The Land*).

The roster of employees in the ranks of the Brothers' Bank in Lvov came to close on 50 workers, part of them from Rawa, and part from ¯o3kiew. Most of the workers were communists, a small portion *Bundists*, and we had – a limited number – members of '*Gordonia*.' Azriel was a communist with heart and soul, and the copy of *[Das] Kapital* of Marx and Engels never left his hand, despite the fact that he was not a 'missionary,' and made no effort to convert people to his way of thinking, and the proof was: every Friday, there was a payment of weekly salary. The communists would solicit donations from the workers on behalf of political prisoners, We, the Zionist group, resisted paying this levy, for understandable reasons, and the communists pressured us, threatening that if we did not pay the levy – they we compel us to leave our work. Azriel then got up and announced that there is no basis on which to force any individual to pay this levy, because 'these are people who have no recognition of their position: however on the day the revolution comes – they will regret not having joined us in this undertaking.'

On one occasion, we had a discussion about savings, and Azriel said that 'My savings bank is the property of the bourgeoisie, which will fall into our hands with the revolution, and then we will no longer know want.'

When years went by, I left for training, and made *aliyah* to *The Land*. After spending 5 years in *The Land*, I returned to Poland for medical care. I reached Lvov, took care of several formalities, and traveled to Rawa. I reached Rawa during *Hol HaMoed* Passover. As was usual on a day of this kind, most of the scions of the city were beside the railroad station. It is interesting that most of the people there recognized me, and I simply was unable to tear myself away from them, to go to my relatives. On the following day, as I was walking in the street, I ran into Azriel. I stopped, and said 'Hello' to him, and he – understandably – replied '*Sravt*.' We began to converse, and I saw before me a man who was completely different from the one I knew in my youth; gray hair, a fallen face. While I was yet standing and conversing with him – two of my friends walked by, and hinted at me in a way that I did not understand the hints. In the end, I parted from him, with the intention of meeting a second time to continue the conversation. Then, my two friends came up to me and warned me not to engage him in conversation in the street, because he is under surveillance by the secret police, and was even imprisoned for 4 years in jail for his communist activity, and this is the reason his appearance had changed so much.

I met him for a second time beside the river. He said: 'Here we can speak in an unconstrained manner.' Apparently, he understood the hints of my friends better than I. We began to talk about the Land of Israel, and he took an interest in everything that was going on there. I said to him, I am fulfilling communism in a real way, because I live in a *Kibbutz*, a commune, in which there is no private property, and everything belongs to everyone. He took an interest in all of the details regarding the *Kibbutz*, and in the end, he said to me: 'But, this cannot bring about a transformation to the condition of workers on a global scale.'

News reached me that Azriel did not realize any benefits from communist rule: he was exterminated before the Russians captured the city...

A Batch of Memories from My Home

By Leibusz Gertel-Wolf
Montreal

I think that each of us, who has remained alive, knows and remembers our destroyed city Rawa-Ruska, but each in his own way.

I remember the houses of study, the Rabbis, organizations from the extreme right to the extreme left, Jewish intelligentsia, Jewish doctors, lawyers. There was a district court, a gymnasium, where Jewish students also went to school, a library, a *Gemilut-Hasadim* Bank, where money was lent to the poor small business owners, a '*Yad Kharutzim*,' a Merchants' Guild, where assistance was rendered in connection with problems associated with taxes.

The largest part of the Jews were poor, and lived on a low standard of living. There were only a few numbered Jews who were rich.

Organizations would very often arrange for literary or partisan lectures, which were read by local members of the intelligentsia. Prominent personalities would also come, from outside the city, such as Dr. Koppel Schwartz ע"ה, Dr. Meltzer ע"ה, Zvi Heller, Aryeh Tartakower, Pinchas Lubyanker, and others.

Theater performances were also put on, by the amateur troupes of the local organizations, and also theater troupes would come for guest appearances, that had world renowned actors, such as Zygmunt Turkow, Jonas Turkow, Ida Kaminska and many others.

The largest part of the young people were hat makers. Many of them, who were very good business people, worked themselves up and became wealthy. They would travel out of the country to sell their finished goods and would return with raw materials for their work. But this was very complicated, since it involved dealing with the Polish government, and one required special permissions to export and then import goods.

Also, Jewish people, who were not hat makers, benefitted materially from this, lending money at interest, and discounting promissory notes. When the hat making workers earned money, they were able to provide income through expenditures made in the [local] businesses.

There were also Jewish people who had small businesses, who looked with anticipation to the market day once a week – on Monday. There were also horse merchants, cattle merchants, and just plain buyers of calves, chickens, eggs, flax, etc.

On Friday, everyone began preparing for the Holy Sabbath. One baked, cooked, dressed in Sabbath finery, and went to worship. From worship, one brought home a guest for the Sabbath.

And that is how Jewish life went on in Rawa Ruska until Hitler ימ"ש arrived, and with the help of

the Poles and Ukrainians, exterminated all of the Jews in a frightful fashion, for their one and only sin, that they were Jews. The entire Christian world looked on in cold blood. May this remain as a permanent stain of shame on them forever.

I wish to recall my dear, sainted mother ע"ה, my older brother Aharon with his family ע"ה, my younger brother Joseph-Hersch ע"ה (he was called Johnny), my near and distant family, and all the Jews of Rawa-Ruska, who were so murderously cut down by the Nazi killers. I remember them each and every day. I see them, very often in a dream. I will remember them for my entire life.

Honor their memory!

I do not possess the apt words or the skill, to express my pained feeling, and I must make use of the articulation of Uri Zvi Greenberg:

' You lie there, my murdered ones, trodden ones,
stabbed ones, trampled ones,
Burned ones. Earth, and ashes, and limbs – and among them
also my
Mother and her children and grandchildren.
And your pain unto death – there is no language
to tell of it,
And no violins to mourn for it.
Is there a power that can distance the degradation?!'

The Days of 20 Tammuz in Rawa-Ruska

By Yaakov Baumwohl-Yuval ז"ל

The first annual commemoration of the passing of Dr. [Theodore] Herzl ז"ל, in the year 5665 [1905] left a strong impression on the city.

He who did not live during this period, in the first decade of the [sic: twentieth] century, when few had the temerity to publicly disclose their Zionist sympathies –will not understand how daring the step was, of one Jew in our city, committed in heart and soul to the Zionist ideal, to gird himself to recite the *Kaddish* publicly, in memory of Herzl. This incident created an uproar throughout the city: and the wife of this same Jewish man, Shmuel Metal, who was physically more robust than he, gave him two strong slaps, after he returned that same day from the *Kloyz*. From that day forward, the people of the city called him '*Dos Kaddish'l.*'

This daring step served as a sign and portent of what was to emerge in the coming years, and in Rawa, every year, on the 20th of Tammuz, commemorations were held in honor of Herzl without any apprehension or fear.

One incident, that took place at the commemoration on the 20th of Tammuz of the year 1921, is worth noting.

In that same year, courses were initiated in Rawa, for Hebrew, under the direction of the teacher Lazar, a dedicated teacher and an excellent pedagogue, who immediately attracted friends and confidantes. Despite his frail physical condition, he threw himself, mind and body, into the widely-branched set of Zionist activities.

Especially noteworthy was the commemoration of the 20th of Tammuz of that year, which was set up to take place in the large auditorium of the *Rathaus*. Rawa had not yet witnessed so moving an assembly. People came, that the activists in the '*Hatikvah*' group did not anticipate seeing there: and the pleasurable speech, rich with content, given by the teacher Lazar – made a powerful impression, whose echoes were heard for many days afterwards.

A number of years afterwards, this anniversary day of the 20th of Tammuz, stood entirely under the auspices of the '*[Brit] Trumpeldor*' group. This was 'the day' of that group. And it is important to underscore, that the effort of this group, and the central driving force was Gimpel Just, at that time a young man full of drive and spunk. He had a great part in the establishment of the youth group, '*Gordonia*.' I apposition to its activities, the rest of Rawa youth organized itself under banners of other Zionist youth movements; however, '*Gordonia*' surpassed them all.

I remember one 20th of Tammuz in the year 5683 [1923], entirely in the hands of '*Trumpeldor*.' A large procession was organized in the streets of the city, under the direction of the writer of these lines; with raised heads, and joyous song, all marched to the auditorium of the movie theater, for a showing of the movie, 'The Life of Herzl.' A festive feeling enfolded the entire city, and for days long afterwards, the residents spoke of that day with great pleasure, with pride and honor.

The First Organization of Proletarian Youth in Our City

By Zvi Netzer (Siebzehner)

It was in the summer of the year 1919, after the First World War, and the economic situation in the city was at a very low level, and young people were not organized. Young people before ceasing to complete their course of study in the public school, most of them not even knowing how to write Yiddish properly – began to work as apprentices with craftsmen, who themselves were in a reduced state of economic well-being. These boys worked, starting at a very young age, from very early in the morning until late at night, for a pittance in wages, and under social and hygienic conditions that were inadequate. Some form of action was desperately needed in order to alter this hapless condition of the young people.

At this same time, W. Grossaug invited me to his house, for a meeting with other people, in order to pool ideas on how to improve the situation. About twenty people showed up to this meeting. The speaker was a guest from Lvov, our friend Gesund, who spoke regarding the plight of the working Jew in Poland, and it was decided to organize and revitalize the '*Fastemp*' organization, the organization that was active in the city before the war. I got the impression that what was being discussed was a cultural initiative; this indeed is what '*Fastemp*' had done in the past, but only

within that sort of area. However, afterwards, I became aware that our comrade Gesund was a representative of the Zh.P.S party, a Jewish socialist party, the intent of whose organizers was partisan and political.

The following were chosen as the committee of the group: Grossaug, Yehoshua Satz, Sznafer, Tritt, Leon Wolf, Ka"Tz, and Spritzer. The committee gathered books, and also donations for the purchase of books, and set up a public library in the house of Grossaug. After a while, the library moved to a specially set up rented room. The library also served as a meeting place, where members would gather in the evenings to hear speeches, and to undertake various cultural initiatives. We also organized cultural activities and educational activities amidst the working young people. The core of the initiative was – to inculcate the elementary skills of arithmetic and Yiddish language and its literature into the young. We had no budget, and therefore assembled the young people in ordinary homes, and the shops of the craftsmen Yuk'eleh Schuster and Reizl Toyba's – and the board of the '*bankbetl*' served as our blackboard for writing. The young men, even though they came after a day of hard work, were thirsty for the knowledge, and progressed handsomely.

This activity continued until the year 1922, until the Zh.P.S. merged with the *Bund,* and the latter wanted to absorb these young people into the '*Jugend Bund*.' Then a schism occurred: a small part remained in the confines of the *Bund*, despite the fact that most of these young people, in the course of time, entered the ranks of '*Gordonia,*' the Zionist-Pioneering youth group movement that had been founded in the city.

The Historic 14 Elections

By M. Y. Steinfeld

In the Yizkor Book of our city, Rawa-Ruska, which will endure as an eternal memorial for us, for our children, and also for later generations, I wish to document an episode from our *shtetl.*

I continue to live today with all my memories of Rawa Ruska. The city stands here, before my eyes, as if it were alive. I am in Israel for over 30 years, and yet, when I hear the words 'Rawa-Ruska,' my heart is seized, and also my soul, and various dreams and memories of those past years float up, which sadly, have vanished forever.

And it is no wonder: one lived one's entire life in the *shtetl*, knew all the people personally, knew what went on in everyone else's home; lived together as a community, like a family, and despite the fact that there were many disputes, they all had the flavor of a family feud.



Page 195: The Betar *Group in the City*

No matter how small the *shtetl* was, it excelled in its strong and intensive level of community activity.

All the Jewish parties in Poland had representative parties



Page 196: The 'Margulies' *Group of* 'Zionist Youth'

through their branches in Rawa Ruska. Starting with the general Zionists, there were also *Hitakhdut, Poalei-Tzion, Mizrahi, Agudat Israel*, Revisionists, *Bund*, Communists and others. The *shtetl* seethed with parties, as if it were a focal point – a capital city.

I want here, to merely recall a few things about the Revisionist movement in the city, where I had the honor of being the President.

In the year 1928, the Zionist movement became intensified over the discourse regarding the ultimate goal of Zionism and on two opposing sides there stood – Weizmann and Jabotinsky. The latter left the movement of the 'General' Zionists, and created his own revisionist movement: *TzAHa"R* and *Betar*. The new revisionist movement found in me, and other members of *Hatikvah* – very committed adherents.

In practice, I lived with the 'General Zionists' in Rawa, working with the members for all the years, such as: Leibusz Weber, Abraham'cheh Edel, Moshe Levin, Aharon Hollander and Shimon Margulies, day-and-night, sitting in the *Hatikvah* Hall and together carried out Zionist initiatives, putting on a variety of social events, putting on theater plays, and lived a good comradely existence. Foremost, when Dr. Mandel came to us, and became our President, it was then that the real intensive work began on all fronts: this was the golden epoch, that I will remember forever.

And it was here that a major schism occurred; we left the 'General' Zionist Organization, and a separate Revisionist World-Organization was founded under the leadership of Jabotinsky, Meir Grossman, and other additional leaders.

Also we, in Rawa Ruska, founded our own independent organization; we rented our own local premises, something of a *shtibl*, each of us brought a picture, a bench from home and auspiciously founded a society. With tears in the eyes, we opened our first gathering, because it was not easy to take leave, and tear one's self out of the *Hatikvah* milieu. We had spent a substantial chunk of our lives together with the previously mentioned comrades, and suddenly, we were outside of their support, and remained alone, making ourselves independent.

It is true, and a few loyal comrades came along with us, committed revisionists and these were: Asher Rubin ז"ל, an intelligent young man, taciturn, and possessing a good mind, and also had the talent to write; Melech Weichsbojm, today in Israel; Yitzhak Erdman, today in Uruguay; Joseph Sznessl ז"ל, something of a philosopher; Moshe Schechter ז"ל, a very refined comrade, and Yekhezkiel'eh Adler ז"ל, who was a truly committed comrade – a flame and fire – to the work; also our lady comrade, Bruriah Rubin, today Szutzberg, living in Israel, and also others.

Together we barely made up a minyan of comrades, but we would come together in the shtibl, and we engaged in discussions and even held literary evenings, where our friend Asher Rubin would referee and also presented a variety of things. And when the time came for congressional elections,

it was like a festival day in the *shtetl*. A small thing – congressional elections! Even the elections to the Polish Sejm did not have the taste of such ardor as did the elections to the congress. All of us felt that here we were at home, we were fighting for our own thing. The elections always took place on Sunday; all of the young people were outside, not going to work, each being preoccupied with the election. The elections took place in Sattler's house, in the center of the city, where the local office of *Hatikvah* was located. There, the place bubbled for the entire day, like a boiling pot. All of the Zionist activists carried on as if they were at a wedding, with an ardor and with dedication, and with a genuine Zionist fire.

We all felt that here we were voting on behalf of ourselves, for our own home, not for strangers, and even though they were merely congressional elections. It nevertheless caused the Jewish heart to pulse, and instinctively, we – the Zionist youth – felt, that we are working here for the future Jewish state and not for alien areas.

The work lasted for an entire day, lasting later into the night, until it was time to start counting the ballots. The hundreds of people waited around outside, with an indescribable tension, for the results of the voting, and now try to imagine the following situation!

Hitakhdut received about 80 votes, and *Hatikvah* about 600, *Mizrahi* also several hundred, and we, the Revisionists, attracted altogether 14 votes.

To this day I remember the hysterical cry of our comrade Yekhezkiel'eh Adler, for whom this was a tragedy; a whole day working, running, sweating, bringing people to vote in wagons, and yet from all of this such a denouement! We did not count on this! Nevertheless, we had many people [with us] in the city, that strongly sympathized with Jabotinsky and his Revisionist movement, which preached even then – for a Jewish state; bur how did Jabotinsky put it: 'I have much sympathy – but not the votes.'

Today – there is no more *shtetl*, no more youth, no more disputes, the people are no more, the life is no more – all that is left are memories!

My Training for Aliyah

By Eliezer Rekhes

When the First World War ended, the city created a militia of Jews, Ukrainians and Poles. After a certain period of time, the Ukrainians took over control, and a Ukrainian hegemony was instituted, but not for long. In the 'Polish-Ukrainian War,' the Poles emerged victorious. Immediately as the Poles entered, they began seizing Jews to do labor. There was fear about going out into the street. Even small children were seized.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to bring water from the well in the marketplace, and so I, wearing a cap with a Polish eagle went early. I also was able to obtain some flour and a variety of other things.

At the same time, the feelings of nationhood were awakened in us. We would sit in the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, I and a few of my friends, with our comrade Just. Comrade Just brought a variety of books: Jewish history and books about the Land of Israel.

And so in this fashion, after a short while, a youth society was created [which met at] the [home of the] Josefsberg family. After this, we joined in with *Hitakhdut,* and turned over our headquarters to *Gordonia.*

In the year 1924, we, a group of friends, went for training at the ranch of Dr. Horowitz, on the *debiss*[146]. We worked only for our food. Every week the economist would come, took a census of us, and would give us a report in the shops about products. It was very tenuous when it came to food. Our good fortune was that we were not far from home. Because of this, on Friday, almost half of the comrades would travel home. Because of this, more food was available for the rest of us.

We were 22 male comrades and only 2 female: Miriam Bekherbluth and Breineh Busz. We worked at various different types of labor. There was a distillery on the ranch, from which whiskey was sent off to Lemberg. The distillery was turned over to us, Before we arrived, gentiles worked there. When they would transport the whiskey, they would [also] get drunk on it. For this reason, this was turned over to us.

Everything was in order. We worked for the entire summer, and then returned to the city. We were once again in *Hitakhdut*, and carried on our social life in the city.

In the year 1930, I left my *shtetl,* where I worked, and once again traveled for training in Biliec. All my dear friends mocked me, wondering why I abandon a good position in order, once again, to become a *Halutz*. That was the time of prosperity in Poland. However, I understood that our future was not in Poland. In the year 1933, I received a certificate to make *aliyah.* With effort and money, I was able to also take along my dear wife Tova with me, and here we established our home.

From Back Then

By Joseph Frenkel-Auerbach
Buenos-Aires

It is already 40 years since I left my city of Rawa Ruska. However noting permits me to forget the intensive life of my beloved city, as if it was just a few years back.

I lived for many years in Paris and lived through a variety of times there. I was inspired by many experiences, but they flit by as if in a dream. By contrast, not even the smallest detail about Rawa Ruska leaves my memory. I constantly sought to explain this to myself. I have arrived at the conclusion that I am a part of it, and that it is not possible to separate one's self from it.

Rawa Ruska was a city that did not require anything to be imported into it from the external world. On the contrary, life there in all aspects was so active, that it was possible to export. The life in the organizations and the idealistic striving of the organizers was accomplished with a full heart and soul. I knew prominent personalities around the world, who did a great deal for their countries and

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146 Perhaps from the Russian, ääáü, meaning a thickly wooded vale, or ravine.

received the top recognitions and rewards for it; by contrast, in our city, the young people threw themselves into this work with the total ardor of their youth, in order to extract the youth from backwardness and they did not stand around waiting for any recognition, or any sort of reward, and despite the fact that their economic circumstances literally did not permit them to work day and night for their ideals.

If it should arise that someone should come along to document the history of our city, he/she will have a gr4eat deal of interesting things to write about, regarding our institutions.



Page 197: Young girls of Gordonia, *The Group Head: Sheva Zauerbrun*

Who among us does not remember the years of 1922-1923? With what sort of enthusiasm did *Gordonia* develop? What sort of influence did it have at that time in the city? Thanks to it, other youth organizations also became organized, with the same ardor.

Until the time when the Nazi Beast extended its murderous paws, and with the greatest barbarism, wiped all of it out.

Nations erect monuments of stone; our monument is in our blood, and in our memory forever!

Jewish Merchants in Rawa-Ruska Against Hitler's Germany

By Moshe Gruber-Axler

I wish to pause here regarding a protest movement in the city against Hitler's Germany. With the arrival of the first news of the Anti-Semitic incitement propaganda in Germany, the Jewish merchants in the city, as they did in other cities of Poland, spontaneously organized themselves to declare a commercial boycott against Germany, meaning, that the merchants will not sell German manufactured products in their businesses, and are then distributed through the city by traveling agents, who were almost exclusively gentiles.

A boycott of this nature was also organized in my father's place of business, against the German electric battery business, called 'Daimon,' whose production was extensively distributed in all cities and towns, and among the rural Ukrainian village populace, who were their greatest consumers. The German firm actually conducted its business using a Ukrainian agent.

My father R' Shmuel Sofer-Axler ז"ל, was active in organizing the boycott, gathering signatures from the merchants, with their commitment not to buy 'Daimon' batteries, The Firm in Germany began to feel the impact of the boycott, and arranged for a Jewish representative in place of the Ukrainian agent, but Jews refrained from buying their products.

My father's business suffered a great deal from the boycott, because the Ukrainian populace specifically demanded 'those' German batteries.

Sadly, this was the only ammunition that Jews were able to use at that time.

Regarding My City That Was Destroyed

By Rivka Fink (Tauber)

All the members of my family, for generation upon generation, were born and lived in the city of Rawa-Ruska. I, personally, lived there until I made *aliyah* to *The Land*. I did not imagine at that time, that this would be my last departure from my dear family and the city of my birth.

There literally were beloved nooks all over: every such nook and cranny is well-remembered by me. All the years, I lived on the square of the synagogue and the houses of study. How pleasing it was to me, to hear the prayers and the songs that emanated from those sacred houses. For me, a very unique experience was – to walk after those streaming to the houses of worship on the Sabbaths and Festival Holidays.

Those who left Rawa, to live in other cities, whether for purposes of making a living, or other reasons – never once forgot it, and at every opportunity were happy to return to it.

The youth was saturated with Zionism and the pioneering spirit. How beautiful, and with what pleasure, we spent the evenings and Sabbaths in our youth movement, '*Gordonia*!'

On the Sabbaths, towards sunset, the street that brought you to the train station was teeming with



Page 199: Young Lady Members of Gordonia. *Sitting from the right: Brand, Madlinger, Leah Ka"Tz-Ruker. Standing: Miriam Baumwohl, Chaya Paster.*

young people, strolling back and forth, being happy in their youth.

Our city was not large, but it was alert, and pulsed with life.

The unwavering memories of my outstanding Hebrew teachers always rises up in my memory, Hoffenbratel, and Lieberman ז"ל. What devotion they had, and what commitment they showed in *inculcating the Hebrew language to the young people!*

My heart clenches when I recall the Jews of the city, who once were, but are no longer.

Hulda

Belzec and Rawa-Ruska

By Naphtali Donner ז"ל

I am going to speak here about Belzec and Rawa-Ruska at the time that I was rather born in ¯o³kiew.



Page 200: Naphtali Donner ז"ל

But this is Jewish fortune, it is a case of wandering, and the Jew must run after it, from birth onwards...

I was still a child when my parents, better said, my mother and stepfather left ¯o³kiew for Belzec and it was in Belzec that I spent my early childhood years.

I remember little of Belzec. I only remember that Jews garbed in long *kapotes*, and with beards and sidelocks, felt themselves to be in the Land of Israel, because on one occasion, I heard how Jews were talking amongst themselves, and one threw up his hands and complained:–those Zionists, they need something of a Palestine, let them go run there;

but we, who yearn for the Land of Israel, we will wait until God will take pity on all of us, and then the Land of Israel will be all over, and we will have, here in Belzec, also a Land of Israel...

And something else I recall about Belzec, that Belzec was in Galicia under Austria, and near the shtetl was the border with [the land of] *Fonyeh*[147].



Page 201: Children Being Driven Into the Death Wagons

On *Rosh Khodesh*, after noon, when we were released from *Heder*, we, the children, went for a stroll, and we crossed over to the 'second side,' the Jewish children from that side would hurl the epithet: – *Kireh Mak*[148], and therefore, we replied with ' '*Fonyeh Khazzer*,' or '*Fonyeh Ganev*..[149]'

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147 The pejorative form of 'Ivan' referring to the Russian Czar, and thereby referring to the border with Russia.

148 'Kireh' comes from the acronym ***K****eysar* ***Yar****im* ***H****odo*, an honorific accorded the Austro-Hungarian Emperor, Franz-Jozef II, who was viewed favorably by the Jews under his rule. 'Mak' is a poppy seed. When put together, the epithet labels the target as an insignificant trifle from the realm of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor.

149 Appending the word for either a pig, or a thief, was meant to denigrate the opposite – Russian – party. So you have a 'Russian Pig,' or a 'Russian Thief.' The Czar himself was often indiscreetly referred to by Jews as *Fonyeh Ganev*.

Despite this, the children from both sides of the border played very nicely with each other, and the opinion was held that the purpose of the border was for the Austrian Emperor and the Russian Czar for them to know how far the hegemony of each extended, but as for the people on both sides of the border, they treated each other as being the same kind of folks.

And it was in this way that I was raised, until 1914 when the war broke out.

It was as if by magic, in one minute Belzec was split into two enemy camps, and it was not possible to understand how each of the sides so quickly were shown to have come into possession of so much arms and gunpowder, because on that same day, when the war broke out, Belzec had already been transformed into one fiery boondoggle, and the civilian population barely got out of the way of the fire, with the skin of life, fleeing, some on foot, some in wagons, off to farther destinations and it was in this way that we came from Belzec to Rawa-Ruska.

I was already eleven years old, and I already knew what I see and hear, and I already grasped that the situation in wartime is a tragedy for everyone.

But even in this tragic circumstance, learning went on, as did commerce as well as work, and even argued about politics, about *Hasidism*, and about 'apostates,' who want to transform the order of life of the entire world...

Many Jews, hearing that there *Rebbe* (of Belz) had fled, also left behind their worldly goods, and left Rawa-Ruska to suffer exile together with the *Rebbe*, and it was in this way that we lived, worked, carried on commerce, argued, and suffered, until the war ended. Poland was liberated, and Jewish youth looked for liberation away from *Hasidic* onslaught, and it was at that time that the battles began in the same Jewish camp and it is incomprehensible, from where, as if overnight, so many parties sprung up in Rawa-Ruska, and every party sought to draw to it the Jewish masses and Jewish youth, and to win the upper hand in the city.

The strongest party however, continued to remain the unaffiliated populace of the Belz *Hasidim*. The Belz *Hasidim* were so much against the organized [political] parties that they even opposed the '*Agudah*.' The Belz *Hasidim* argued that there is only one God, and one kingdom, and the *Rebbe,* who should live and be well, and anyone who thinks otherwise is a denier of the faith.

The conflicts grew steadily stronger, and the principal thing was that the *Hasidim* were opponents of the Zionists, and when it came to the 20th of Tammuz, the Yahrzeit of Dr. Herzl, both sides prepared themselves for a variety of battles, and it actually did result in substantial clashes, during which time the Belz *Hasidim* wanted to disrupt the procedure of the commemoration ceremony.

Later, the conflict broadened its scope into other opportunities for confrontation.

These other opportunities were during the election processes and also [public] gatherings.

The Belz *Hasidim* always sided with the party of the régime, and they always supported the opponents of the Zionist candidates, even in situations when the opponent was an outspoken anti-Semite.

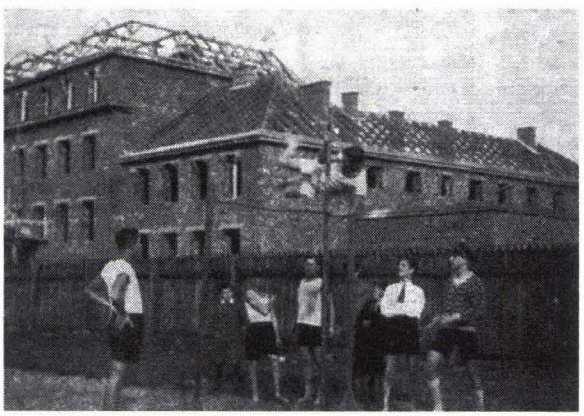
In those cases, the clashes went on with a great deal of embitterment.

I recall Dr. Mendel, how on one occasion, when he held a speech and a demonstration for the Jewish voting masses, asking them to cast their vote for their own representatives, and suddenly something flew at his head, this being a signal and a fist fight broke out, and on all sides, young Belz *Hasidim* showed up and the police had to substantially exert themselves, in order to quiet the crown down and restore order.

But Dr. Mandel was not intimidated. He was a tall man, with a dignified visage, a fine orator, and a humor-filled polemicist, and as a result people loved to hear him speak, and he was the most potent weapon against the fanatic Belz *Hasidim*.

Dr. Mandel was not only a Zionist, but a general Jewish cultural activist, and he understood that Yiddish theater is an important channel through which it is possible to win over the masses and he created a Drama Circle which he personally directed, and played roles, and put on a number of pieces such as Gordon's '*Der Vilder Mensch*,' and after that, Anski's '*Der Dybbuk*,' and you can understand, that with these initiatives, he drew even more ire from the Hasidim; however, this drew even more adherents to Dr. Mandel, until such a point that the *Hasidim* did not dare to go against him with force.

The conduct of the Grabskis and the Stronskis, which were always protected by the Belz *Hasidim*, helped Dr. Mandel, as did his straightforward explanations to the Jewish masses, and it went so far, that the Belz *Hasidim* of yesterday, voted for Dr. Mandel today, so that he could become a councilman in the municipal council, and when I had already left Rawa-Ruska, I received the news that Dr. Mandel became the Kultus-President, and the community fortress of the Belz *Hasidim* in Rawa-Ruska in the end had become democratized.



Page 203: The 'Sokal' *Sports Hall*

Jews as Guests at the Wedding of the Duke Sapieha

By Chana Tisser ז"ל

The pretty *shtetl* of Rawa-Ruska lay along the railway between Lemberg and Lublin, that led to Warsaw, whose population consisted about 70% of Jews.

The ruler over Rawa Ruska and over the fields, forests and land assets that were around the *shtetl* was the Duke Sapieha, a brother of Bishop Sapieha.

Not far from Rawa, on the road to Potelycz, the Count Ramon Potocki had a large coal quarry, and he was in business relationship with the Jews of Rawa, buying 'mining wood' from them and '*oszwares*' (*shvortn*)[150] for the scaffolding in the coal mines, and the Count also turned over the distribution of the coal to Jewish distributors.

But the Duke, Sapieha, not only dealt with Jews, but he also had friendly relationships with them. My father, Hersch Berger, with R' Joseph Marz, and other Jewish merchants, were so friendly with the Duke, that when he was going to get married with the daughter of the Corps Commandant of Przemyœl,he invited the Jewish merchants to the wedding, and so that they could be able to eat like all the other guests, he hired a Jewish cook, and a waiter, and had set up a separate table in his large salon in the resplendent palace of his, that would have kosher food for his Jewish guests.

My father and R' Joseph Marz were the closest Jewish friends of the Duke. They oversaw the shipments of the trees from the Duke's forests to his factories, and afterwards, they sold off the boards, which they exported to Germany, mostly to Breslau.

Other wealthy Jews tended to his properties and mills, the most prominent of these overseers were Boruch Wasserman and Shia Golden, and apart from these Jewish people, who were in direct business contact with the Duke, many other Jews made a living from these undertakings.

Jewish community life in Rawa Ruska stood in the hands of the *Hasidim*, who were the majority of the Jewish populace and since the majority of them were Belz *Hasidim*, the Belz son-in-law Twersky took the position of Rabbi, and apart from this, a brother of the *Rebbe* of Belz, the *Rebbe* of Magierow, conducted his rabbinical affairs while domiciled in Rawa-Ruska.

Despite this, even though the *Hasidim* fought sharply against every enlightened idea, and stood watch, to assure that the young people go in their direction, young people began to take an interest in worldly things, and were already Zionists and socialists, and before you know it, they were organized in circles and Jewish cultural work was undertaken. Social gatherings were arranged for worthy causes, and musical-vocational evenings were arranged, in which the children of the

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150 Possibly joints or seams.

balebatim took part, and the *Hasidim* burned with anger against the Zionist lawyer Joseph Mandel, who was the leader of the Jewish cultural activity.

Rawa Ruska had a Jewish Orphanage, and other worthy institutions, and a local prominent sight in Rawa Ruska was the old cemetery, which stood already locked, with a wall around it, right I the middle of the city, literally right by the major public office, tax office, and other government institutions.

The new Jewish cemetery was already located outside of the city.

The promenade place for Jewish and non-Jewish youth was the Lemberg *Gasse* (during the time of Austrian rule), which ran far out of the city, where the military barracks were to be found, housing Austrian and Czech regiments, and even more so later, in liberated Poland, when the name of the Lemberg *Gasse* was changed to *Ulica* Grunwaldska[151], and in the former Austrian barracks, a Polish Officers' School was set up.
The second, and further on promenade location where the organized and enlightened youth often held excursions, was Wolkowica, were a large forest started, and stretched far over the high mountain and in that, presented a resplendent panorama.

Under Austrian rule, despite the fact that the youth was not so modernized, the youth, nevertheless, took strolls, both on the Lemberg Gasse, and into the Wolkowica Forest; however, at that time, the Christian young people related to the Jewish youth strolling by in a loyal manner. It already became different during the time of Poland's hegemony; despite the fact that Jewish youth was more-or-less clothed in modern European garb, it nevertheless was a fact that not one such promenade went by during which the taunts of *'Żyduze Prachu*[152],' or '*Żydy do Palestyny*' were not heard, and clashes often took place between Jewish and Christian young people.

Our house stood on the Lemberg Gasse (or *Ulica* Grunwaldska), No. 913, which was close to the center of the city, and merchants, friends and acquaintances were frequent guests in our home, and in the latter years, we commented on a new clash between Christian and Jewish young people, and therefore, it was with a longing that we recalled those times, when Jews were so prominent in the government institutions, and about the great friendship of the Duke Sapieha towards Jews, and one never forgot to mention the Duke's wedding, in which his Jewish friends were invited, and how they had especially prepared kosher food for them, and how the Jewish-*Hasidic* guests decked themselves out in their finery for the wedding, wearing their finest and best satin Sabbath clothing, and perhaps,

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151 It is of historical interest to reflect on this choice of name. Under Polish hegemony, the newly liberated Poles referenced one of the major victories the combined Polish-Lithuanian kingdom had, in July 1410, when they threw back the Prussian Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald. The defeat at Grunwald left a long-lasting humiliation that remained part of the Prussian identity until the German victory on nearby ground at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914.

152 The epithet, 'Jewish dust' or 'filth.'

for the first time in their lives, put on white gloves on their hands, and how the Jewish-*Hasidic* guests were received at the palace with the greatest respect...

– Those times had gone by, and they will nevermore return – everyone complained; the young people, and the newly married couples, who were gradually preparing themselves to emigrate, and the older people, especially the *Hasidim*, argued that this was God's punishment, because the youth had embarked on evil ways, and they themselves believe they can bring the Messiah...

I left my home in 1931, leaving my two brothers and sisters with their families in Rawa Ruska, and my house on Grunwaldska 913.

During hours of nostalgia, I think, with heartache about my brothers and sisters, with their families, that had remained behind.

End of the 19th Century and the Beginning of the 20th

By Boruch Hammerschmidt (Kesler)

The Miniature Kristallnacht

Our city too, lived through, in miniature, a *Kristallnacht* at the beginning of the 20th century. The perpetrators of the *Kristallnacht* were the fathers of today's Nazis.
During [the time of] the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a Kaiser – a Military Police Battalion was created in Rawa, these being of German extraction. Already at the start of the 20th century, they had begun to molest the Jewish populace, so that a young woman, or a girl, would not show herself in the streets at night.



Page 204: Boruch Hammerschmidt - Kesler ז"ל, died in Paris, 14.11.1964

On one night on an ordinary weekday, a group of recruits descended upon the Hiiche *Gasse* and began to knock out the windows of Chaya'leh R' Zelik'l's up to the entrance to the *Rynek*. At that time, the Hiiche *Gasse* was inhabited mostly by craftsmen, teachers, and there were a number of food businesses, and others.

But the craftsmen did not let themselves be overwhelmed so easily, and put up an heroic resistance. They came out with their very specific arms such as: hammers, iron implements, torches that were lit, and battle ensued.

I want to recall the names of the simple, but dear Jewish men: Yoss'l

Leichtermacher[153], Yehuda Leib Kottler (my father ז"ל), Hertz'eleh Boruch Herszt with his sons, Boruch Szok, Sholom Drong (a *Melamed*) with his sons, and Jonah Schuster with his small hammer. Of him it was said, to his credit, that after every mark that he would hammer into a shoe, he would go for an ablution in the *Mikva*; even our Hasidic ascetics put up resistance, such as: Yosh'eh Dayan, Yek'leh Getzel's, Yoss'leh Getzel's, Yekhiel *Melamed*, Zisha Mameh and Mekhl'eh Baylah-Mindl's. They 'marked up' the recruits so that they were well recognized in the [ensuing official] report.

The pogrom was entirely stopped in its tracks by the bolstering that came from the *Rynek*, such as from Itzik and Yekl Graff, Mones Morgenstern, and others, and in the end, under the pressure from the Jewish community the battalion was transferred to Lemberg.

As previously mentioned, these soldiers came from that part of Austria that later became the cradle of National-Socialism. Their sponsors, Dr. Schnerer, Dr. Karl Hermann Wolf and others, carried out great incitements against Jews in the Austrian parliament. They attacked the *Rabbiner* Dr. Bloch, the publisher of the Austrian weekly who spread the liberal-national Jewish ideology. The ideological battle between Dr. Bloch and the previously mentioned anti-Semites was an angry one. One time, in the middle of a heated debate, he threw an inkwell in the face of the leader of the anti-Semites.

We had a privilege, that the very same Dr. Bloch stood as a candidate in the parliamentary elections of 1906. However, regrettably, he was not selected because of pressure from the one-time official opinion-makers with the help of certain specific '*Moshkeh*[154]' activists. He could not obtain the use of any form of hall for a gathering, except for the old *Bet HaMedrash*, where the simple Jews of the neighborhood worshiped.

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153 One of the many-encountered trade-related names, in this case being a candlestick maker.

154 An epithet applied to erstwhile observant Jews.

The Region

הסביבה

די אומגעגנט

Jews in Belzec

By Chaim Rathaus

The famous, tragic place that Belzec has become, in the annals of history that were created after the Second World War, for all eternity – whether it is at Yad VaShem, or the Holocaust Cellar in Jerusalem – is one of the leading tragic places, whose accursèd soil swallowed the ashes of approximately one million martyrs; however, as regards the *shtetl* itself – as far as I know – very little has been written.

Belzec always was, and has remained a village, an anonymous sort of place, that was only known to people in its vicinity. It lies 21 km. North of Rawa Ruska. I was born and lived there, up to the First World War, when I was all of 10 years old. Therefore, I will permit myself to write about how it looked up to the First World War, to the extent that my memory enables me to do so.

Belzec always belonged to the vicinity of Rawa Ruska, which was surrounded on three sides by Jewish towns: on the north – Tomaszow-Lubelski, on the west – Narol, on the south – Lubicz. It was only on the east, as was the case with all Jewish cities, was there an open way to Jerusalem. All of these towns were approximately equidistant from Belzec to the tune of about 7 km.

Half of the local populace was Polish and half Ukrainian; and to be reckoned separately from them, there were also about a hundred Jewish families, about whom I will tell here.

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Until the First World War in 1914, under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, an idyllic Jewish existence reigned there. The Jews lived like one big family; everyone felt very close to one another. And one person's celebratory affair was everyone's celebratory affair, and if, God forbid, there was a sorrow, it was everyone's sorrow. A beautiful Jewish life slowly developed, and it took on the form of life in a city.

The Jews has their own specially built large *Bet HaMedrash*, a bath, a *Mikva*, and a well-organized *Heder*, under the direction of R' Hirsch Liferman, which could be likened to, if not better than, all the other *Heders* in Jewish cities and towns. In the *Heder*, writing and arithmetic were also taught.

During winter evenings, the little Jewish boys would go home from *Heder* carrying lanterns, and it was an undertaking to make lanterns of colored paper (you understand that the *shtetl* had no electricity). When attendance at *Heder* in the evening ceased, a feast was made, and at that time there was no lack of joy. On *Lag B'Omer*, they would make [toy] rifles and swords, and go to Mount 'Sinai.' As an aside, what appears to be the relevance of *Lag B'Omer* to Mount Sinai? It would seem – by my interpretation – that it is because the portion of the week read at that time is *BeHar*.

The beginning of the study of the Pentateuch, was accompanied by a whole ceremony, with a presentation, and a dialogue between a student of the Pentateuch and a questioner. I was most of the times a questioner.

The reading of the *Shema* (on the day before a *Brit-Milah*) was a joyous occasion and a festival for the children. The recitation of *Akdamut*, The Song of Songs, *Ha'azinu*, using special tunes, was a special experience for the soul of a child, a symphony which is recalled to this day.

Lastly, Belzec also had a Rabbi.

The Jews consisted of young and middle-aged people. 90 percent were an urban or big-city element. There were merchants, jobbers, teachers, and intelligentsia. Genuine village Jews only comprised at most 10 percent [of the populace].

The train station, that the Austrian government laid to that point, made it possible to construct large-scale businesses, because it had a large hinterland in Congress Poland, up to Lublin, along which there were no railroad stations. Both Tomaszow and Narol utilized this railroad station up until the Second World War.

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Jewish Occupations

The fact that the border with Russia was nearby, permitted there to be large egg export businesses with specially built local premises, such as a factory. There were specially constructed warehouses for straw, wood products, boards and boxes, and darkrooms in which the eggs were to be illuminated, and also lit rooms in which the eggs were packed. There were cemented *katkehs*, meaning basins, in which to put preserved eggs for the winter. In every location tens of Jewish people were employed, who were brought in from the city.

The warehouses of the brothers Boruch and Moshe Rathaus were well-known; Sobel from Jaroslaw, where Mekhl'eh Hermelin was the bookkeeper and business manager; Gerstenfeld from Rawa, and others.

There were also large-scale forest and lumber merchants, with specially constructed factories, such as the Reiber family. They were several brothers, who played a principal role in this commerce.

Among the Jews, merchant-scholars included: my grandfather, Yossl'eh Mandel with a large number of daughters; Yehuda-Hirsch Lichter; Simcha Seif; Eizik Reisenberg; Moshe Leib Plever, Kiv'keh Schrenzel, Moshe Schwarzwald, Gedalyahu Felig, and Shlomo Kasper (my uncles), Mikhl Miller with his then grown-up son, Moshe Reiber, Yitzhak Szyfer, Moshe Freger, Pinchas Hauben (who ran a armored facility), Mekhl'eh Hermelin, and my father, Moshe Rathaus.

The residents were divided over the question of a ritual slaughterer, a *Mohel*, weddings, and God save us, a cemetery. One half held itself to have community ties to Narol, and the second half with Lubicz. My grandfather and father held with Lubicz, and we had 7 ritual circumcisions performed in our house, all carried out by the Rabbi of Lubicz.

On a Festival Holiday, especially *Simchat Torah*, the celebration took place in full style, which one could sense in the air. One went from house to house, grabbing a *L'Chaim*. Everything was in a state

of [gay] abandonment. A lock and key at that time had no control. It was Mekhl'eh Hamerlin who distinguished himself in these antics, as an active, emotional, lively and impulsive man. He was lusty and comradely.

Almost all of the Jews were economically well situated. The Austrian-Russian border brought the place prosperity. Emissaries would often come in connection with eleemosynary causes, and also ordinary poor people, especially at Purim time. People gave generously.

The relationship with the gentile populace was a correct one, with courtesy shown to one another, as was the case for other places under Austrian rule.

At the outbreak of the First World War in the year 1914, the entire place, approximately 90 percent, was destroyed. It was there that the first weapons fire broke out, because it lay on the border. The entirety of Jewish life came to a halt, which had been so idyllic, and it was brought to the ground with the destruction.

The Jews, especially the urban element, dispersed, with some going to Rawa, others to Lemberg, and yet others to different places.

There was something that remained hidden of the former shine. Tomaszow and Narol had to make use of the railroad station, as before, but the level of commerce especially the cross-border commerce and the appearance of the city, was arrested, and it reverted to being a village. But with it all, it remained a transit-place, until the *Evil One of All Time* came, and made it so tragically famous.

Belzec Becomes A Pillar of Shame

On the place that the idyll once existed, on the place of that beautiful, tranquil Jewish way of life, that once held sway there, came murder and incineration. Not an incineration of houses, as was the case during the First World War, but an incineration literally of living human beings – young, old and children. On the place where, during the summertime, people would come to vacation in the forest, with family that lived there, in that very same forest, *The Evil One* cremated the entire Jewish population of Eastern and Western Galicia, having killed them in his murderous fashion and in this way, made this tranquil place tragically 'notorious.' It was on this place, that the entirety of Galician Jewry was martyred in *Sanctification of the Name.*

Of my most immediate relatives, the following were killed there: my mother, my brother David, with his wife and children, my sister Feiga with her husband, Ephraim Kupperstein and their children.

As is told, there were many Jews in Belzec, who wanted to cross the German-Russian border in the year 1941, which, at that time lay between Belzec and Lubicz. They remained stuck, and indeed, with their labor, *The Evil One* built the camp. After the outbreak of the Russian-German War, they were the first victims.

We, who were born there, and partly raised there, will never forget this.

May the murderers be cursed for all eternity of generations! The voice of the blood of our brethren cries out to us from the accursèd earth, and we are able to return to the ancient and grievous imprecation: 'O, you pillaged Daughter of Ashkenaz! May we be so fortunate as to see you repaid in kind for what you did to us, may someone come and take up your newborn and smash their heads against the boulder. Thus shall all the Evil Ones perish.'

A Memory of My Shtetl Magierow

By Zvi Langnauer

A shudder runs through me, when I take pen in hand to write a few words about the destruction of Magierow, and I ask myself: 'Who am I and what am I?'

I am reminded of a *Gemara* [passage] relevant to what I want to write: [Original Aramaic], which means: Eliezer the Young put on black shoes, and went into the streets of Nahardeah[155] (this being the custom of those in mourning): [Original Aramaic]: *Resh Galuta*[156] asked him, why is it that you are wearing black shoes? – [Original Aramaic]: He replied to him: I mourn Jerusalem: – [Original Aramaic]: Who are you that you mourn Jerusalem? [Original Aramaic]: – They thought that he was being arrogant.

This is the way I feel as well: who am I, that I give myself permission to write about an entire sacred community? – especially since I know the *shtetl* for [only] an entirety of two years, that we lived in ¯o³kiew; but our *Sages, of Blessed Memory* tell us: 'In a place where there is no man, strive to be a man!' Here, where there is no other, you must be responsible to be that person. Despite the fact that I do not have access to any special archives and documentary materials, I will have to content myself with what I know and what I remember. I rely on the words of the *KhaZa"L*, who taught us: It is not up to you to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to free yourself from the task – and so I hope that others will come to round out and fill in those things that I have not covered.

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The *shtetl* Magierow lay right between Rawa-Ruska and ¯o³kiew. Many traces of the past bear witness to the fact that the Jewish settlement there was an ancient one, one that existed for hundreds of years. The *shtetl* developed in stages, built itself up, and grew to be a city characterized by a Jewish way of life. The imprint of olden days, the deeply-rooted custom of generations, the untouched rituals, guarded like a treasure, have continuously remained. There were thousands of nuances and graces that this heartfelt Jewish *shtetl* possessed, and they rested on everyone like a holiness. On a Sabbath, or Festival Holiday, one could recognize a holiness that had been poured out

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155 Along with Pumbedita, one of the two principal centers of Jewish learning in Babylon, from which the core of the Babylonian Talmud emerged.

156 Possibly the Exilarch

over everything and everyone; every memory of life in this place, which was so suffused with Yiddishkeit and fullness of heart, with its suffering and its joy, is precious.

A Jewish life had blossomed. And suddenly, the Nazi storm-wind descended, and ripped out that deeply rooted and widely branched Jewish tree, wiped it out, ground it up, and flattened it to the ground; everything was ruined, like in a dream; but such a profound truth, the eternity of a sacred community must not be allowed to remain overlooked. It was only the physical body that was destroyed, the form; but the soul, the letters float over us, over the sealed secret of our destruction.

The single legacy – these pages, are the monument to the sacred community of Magierow!

It is a story of rivers of blood and tears, ...*by the rivers of Babylon*... but it was not given to our enemies to undercut the entirety of Jewish existence; the surviving remnants and twigs of the old city, will regrow themselves, and with God's help will revitalize Jewish life.

As a memorial and monument, I write this historical chapter about our shtetl, a monument to a beautiful past.

Honor to your memory, *shtetl* Magierow!

An Overview of My Shtetl

(How goodly are your tents, O, Jacob – your sanctuaries, O Israel)

Like all small Jewish towns in Galicia, the *shtetl* of Magierow also had: closely built-together, low little houses, with storefronts around the marketplace. Jewish proprietors would stand on the threshold of their storefronts, looking about to see if a peasant's wagon would stop, or if a peasant was coming to buy something, or to sell something. A Jewish wagon driver would convey people to take the train, several kilometers to the train station – Dobrosyn.

The city marketplace had a special appearance on the fair day, when the peasants' wagons that brought grain with them, green vegetables and fowl, set themselves up in the middle of the marketplace, across from the Jewish stores, and began to deal; one bargained with them, sometimes lowering the price, sometimes adding something, and this is how we made do; there were no wealthy people in the *shtetl,* apart from those few, who had good businesses. Before the First World War, the *shtetl* had 500 families. During the war, the entire shtetl was consumed in flames, and it was first, after the war, that the city slowly rebuilt itself until the Hitler-Destruction (his name be erased), at which time there were not more than 200 families.

The Bet-HaMedrash

The *Bet-HaMedrash* was the most beloved and dearest place, that drew to it all of the residents of the *shtetl*. Everyone felt a debt, and sensed a need to go to the *Bet-HaMedrash*, or to the synagogue. A few would come to study a bit of *Gemara*, some a chapter of *Mishna*, and *Ein-*

Yaakov, and even progressive and free-thinking elements came, out of habit. The *Bet-HaMedrash* was filled with worshipers, and apart from this, youths sat studying Torah with intense concentration.

When, in my memory, I transition to those half-befogged childhood years, what hits me up front about the *shtetl*, is the strong redolence of Jewish folksiness.

It is not easy for me, at this point, to turn back in my memory and take cognizance of the fact that this Jewish *shtetl* now lies in ruins; how the way of life, that had been interwoven with the *shtetl*, was eradicated. I have been in a variety of places, in various settlements, but in no place have I found this way of life and its atmosphere.

In the long thousand-year history of our dispersion, communities arose in a variety of corners of the earth. Nahardeah and Pumbedita are well-known from the Jewish past in [ancient] Babylon, but they are by far not the only Jewish provincial locations outside of the borders of the Land of Israel. It is not necessary to point out the various small and large stations of our wanderings, where a rich Jewish life sprung up. Worms and Granada left their permanent imprint on our spirit; Toledo planted that very rich garden in our poetry; Mainz created the residence of our scholarship. All these had their mighty influence on our rooted, spiritual values and the generations-long situated foundations of our forms of life. The storekeepers, the craftsmen, the plain ordinary Jews of our *shtetl*, who posted with haste upon rising, to enter the *Bet-HaMedrash*, children, when they reached the age of three, mothers and fathers would lead them into the *Heder* – this all thanks to the previously mentioned influences.

The Seven Good People of the City:

My father, R' Zusha זצ"ל, R' Yehoshua'leh Wachs זצ"ל, R' Bunim Boydek זצ"ל, R' Leib Klahr זצ"ל, R' Yehoshua'leh from Nemierow with his son Av'leh זצ"ל, and the famous sage, Last, last [but beloved] R' Eliezer Schlager זצ"ל. He was the Head of the community at the time the Germans י"ש demanded people from him, warehouse workers, and in fright, he declared to them: 'I do not turn over Jews, and I am ready...!' In this way, he was immediately shot and Sanctified the Name ת.צ.נ.ב.ת This was a philanthropic Jewish man, possessed of good deeds and character.



Page 211: The Rebbetzin *of Magierow and Her Daughter*

In the month of July 1942, I received back my postcards from Paris, that I would write to my parents and also the packages of up to 500 grams that I was permitted to send; all this was returned to me and on it was written: 'transferred.'

And this was the last journey to Belzec. In this manner, the Rabbi, R' Yitzhak Rokeach זצ"ל was sent away together with the entire *shtetl*, apart from the fact that they had already murdered many Jews beforehand. The Rabbi R' Yitzhak זצ"ל was a son of R' Nahum Aharon זצ"ל, also put to death in

Sanctification of the Name in Lemberg, grandsons of the Rebbe of Belz זי"ע, and up to the First World War, they ran their courtyards in Magierow.

And it was in this tragic manner that an ancient Jewish community vanished. This last destruction tore away a robust, vital shtetl, with its *Heders*, Talmud Torahs, *Hasidic Bet-HaMedrash*, synagogue, various organizations, who in the course of centuries were vibrant and creative. The thread of hundreds of families was torn out, who in the aftermath have no recollection left behind of them, no grave left [to remember them by]. We, the remnant of survivors from Magierow will forever guard their memory, we will not forget; your history has ended, Jewish *shtetl* of Magierow!

Let our dearest never be forgotten, who were tortured and cut down so tragically, in a manner that has no precedent in human history, even during its darkest and most terrifying periods. Our people felt the cruel hand of many enemies very intensely, who had abused them, shamed them, degraded and annihilated them; but the world had not yet seen such a mass-slaughter, planned and implemented. All of us have lost the dearest and most beloved and there is no solace; there are not enough words, or shades of color to articulate or portray the accompanying sorrow and anger; their blood cries out and gives no surcease. We sorrow together with our entire people, over the tremendous, dissimulating tragedy and its gruesome cruelty, the total lack of pity of the murderer-bandits against millions of our nation. As scions of the city of Magierow and its vicinity, we bitterly mourn our martyrs, who suffered so much, and are no more.

Those few, who by a miracle managed to survive, should not tire, and always be able to retell what happened; we have to do it for ourselves and for coming generations. The very few Righteous Gentiles who helped to rescue Jews and put their own lives in danger, to them, the Righteous Gentiles, we call down a blessing for them; may a curse fall on the Nazis along with their accomplices! May they be accursèd to the end of time! And it remains for me to end with the words of the Prophet Jeremiah[157]: I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the Lord's wrath.

This is why I weep
and my eyes, my eyes overflow with tears,
Streams of tears flow from my eyes
because my people are destroyed – the community of Magierow...

יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא ...

Yizkor

May God remember the souls of the martyrs of the city of Magierow
Together with the souls of their brethren who were killed in *Sanctification of the Name*
May God Avenge Their Spilled Blood!

ת.צ.נ.ב.ה.

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157 The reference is incorrect: The quotes are from the *Book of Lamentations*

Magierow

By Ephraim Schreiber
Paris

Everyone who has sought to commemorate, in writing, the memory of his hometown, has in the usual course, attempted to note, from the [ancient] records of that city: when it was that the city was founded. Regrettably, this is difficult for me to pinpoint, because such a set of records [for my town] is unknown to me.

It can be assumed, that Magierow was established around the 14th or 15th century, if we allow ourselves to be supported by the historian Dr. Yitzhak Szyfer, despite the fact that Dr. Szyfer does not mention Magierow, but only neighboring cities, but from this, it is possible to infer that Magierow was founded in that same time.

What took place with regard to Magierow? The shtetl lay geographically well-situated: on one side was ¯o³kiew (30 km): on the other side Rawa-Ruska (20 km). The closest train station was in Dobrosyn (12 km). To the extent that I can recollect, the *shtetl* was not in any way different for other Polish towns. There were many Jews, about 2,000 souls, and few gentiles (gentiles typically lived outside the city). On Sundays, they come to the church, drop in on a Jewish saloon, in order to have a little glass of the 'bitter drop.' There was no lack of alcohol in Magierow. In the *shtetl*, there was an armored facility.

As was the case in many small towns, Magierow was plagued with large swampy areas that only dry out during the summer, when it is very hot. But this does not last long, and the swamps return.

Because of the fact that the shtetl lay at a distance from a train [station], development took a long time. The rays of civilization had difficulty in breaking through the backwardness that blew from the courtyard of the *Rebbe*.

These difficulties were perhaps due to the fact that in the *shtetl*, unlike other cities, there was no Jewish doctor, no Jewish pharmacist, no Jewish dentist. In all the small towns, it was these sorts of [professional] people who were the avant garde of progress. It was to these people that the children of the wealthy would draw close, and it was in this way that progressive, or nationalist movements would arise. The doctor in the *shtetl* was a Ukrainian; the pharmacist – a Pole; and there was no dentist altogether. If it was necessary to extract a tooth, one went to Gersz'keh the blacksmith. Today this seems uncivilized. It is not long since I read in a French monthly journal about a story, that in France the blacksmiths extracted teeth. I was so overwhelmed! That means, that in Magierow they were current with the times, because up until then, I thought that having a tooth extracted by the blacksmith Gersz'keh was part of the Magierow backwardness.

Up until the First World War there were only two [organized] groups in the shtetl: the *Hevra Kadisha* and the craftsmen. I will not pause to discuss the Hevra Kadisha, because everyone knows what its purpose was, but regarding the organization of the craftsmen, it is worth stopping.

Its president was Wolf Frimmer, my grandfather. The program was – mutual aid, the principal objective – if a member of the group fell severely ill, then one, or two would stand watch beside him through the night. In that time, medicines were not effective against high fever, and so the doctor would prescribe that the sick person be wrapped in cold sheets. You can understand that this was beyond the strength of the sick person's wife also, support was offered with several Krone[158] when it was necessary.

As was the case in all towns, there were two churches – a Polish one and a Ukrainian one.

By contrast, we had a synagogue, a *Bet-HaMedrash* and a *Kloyz,* which was built into the *Bet-HaMedrash*. In the summer, the *Rebbe* would pray in the synagogue, and in the winter in the *Bet-HaMedrash*. The *Hasidim* would escort him to his prayers with song. The swampy ground did not deter them in this regard, no matter how large the swampy area was. You can understand that wherever the *Rebbe* prayed, the *Hasidim* prayed. In the winter, only the craftsmen would pray in the synagogue.

One of the lead singers was called Wolf Pollack. He also had a cart for conveying the dead, because the cemetery was sufficiently far from the city. The conveyance would constantly be circulating around in the city in the middle of the marketplace, as if on its own, primarily close to the gendarmerie. There was a bit of green growth in front of their house, and the horse would gnaw on it, to the extent that it wanted to. It was on this conveyance that all the *Heder* children learned how to ride. It was enough to show the horse a little bit of hay, and it then went off, wherever one wanted it to go.

In one respect Magierow was not like other little towns, which didn't have a municipal clock. It was usual that in all such towns there was a clock, which could be seen from all sides. We, however, had a living municipal clock in the person of Yendrikh [Heinrich] the mailman. He would travel to Dobrosyn every day to the train station, receiving the mail for Magierow. He had a fast small horse at his disposal, and a box on two wheels. The box was colored yellow with black stripes, like the Austrian flag. On both sides was an Austrian eagle. When he would ride through the city, he would sound a trumpet. This Yendrikh was the municipal clock for a long time. First of all, one knew exactly what time it was when he rode through the city, and when there was any doubt about the time, he was asked, because his timepiece was set in synchronization with the train clock and he answered in a helpful manner.

★

Magierow was strongly tied to Rawa economically, but also with Lemberg. There were wagon drivers who would transport merchandise from Magierow to Lemberg and on their return, they would bring what had been ordered for them to bring. They were called list drivers. I remember one of the wagon drivers, and his name was Pinchas.

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158 The Krone or korona was the official currency of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1892 (when it replaced the gulden, forint, florén or zlatka as part of the adoption of the gold standard) until the dissolution of the empire in 1918.

One can say with complete certainty, that whatever pertained to making a living, the Magierow residents perhaps had more than the other towns of similar size. You understand, that people did not go around adorned in gold. There were Jewish people that worked terribly hard for a bit of bread, but there was not a single Jewish person that would have to go around the houses [sic: begging] as was the case in other towns.

Regardless of the fact that the shtetl was as small as it was, it did have small-scale industry, which was led by the brush making business. It is possible to gather that more than 30% of the Jewish populace made its living from this trade, whose entire production went for use by the Austrian Army. You can understand, that there were substantial jobbers, for whom Magierow worked.

Apart from this, there were Jews who could be called wealthy. There was a good-size middle class, large exports of eggs, around whom itinerant emissaries to villages circulated. There were also substantial grain merchants, leather and wood. Then there were the tailors and shoemakers. Since my father passed away, Magierow did not have a Jewish carpenter.

The Jews of Magierow Become Proletarians

Around the year 1910-1911, the Groman family built a factory and a sawmill in the area behind the city. The sawmill only cut up large blocks into boards. However, the factory worked on the output to create all sorts of wooden boards that were needed as part of the brush manufacturing business. This can provide a portrait of the reach of production, that it was worthwhile to construct a factory. Later on, the factory also produced white furniture and a variety of assembled benches.

The factory called the workers to work with a siren. The siren whistled a half-hour before 8 then at 8 o'clock and then at noon, and also in the evening, signaling work to be ceased. It was from that time on that Yendrikh became degraded. He was no longer the municipal clock. If a Jewish person wanted to know what time it was in the morning, he asked whether the siren had whistled for the first time, or the second time.

There was also a large water mill. Where possible, the peasants would come into this mill. They would take along a sack of corn to be sold, or a sack of potatoes, and in turn, also do some buying.

There was also an opportunity for girls and women to work. A woman lived at Yekhiel Sheinert's who was a representative of a large Viennese firm for knitting and crocheting a variety of piecework and for the crocheting of various collar pieces, and even buttons for women's wear. In the long winter nights, girls would come together, many times at our house, because my sisters crocheted. While working, they would sing Yiddish songs, such as '*Chana'leh iz fun der arbeit gegangen*,' and Peretz's '*Di drei naytorehs*.'

But a person does not live by work and bread alone, he has to have some way to spend his/her free time. In the summer, one could manage, but what about the winter? The young people would amuse themselves, as in other small towns, with the village idiot, in the summer they would throw stones at him, and in the winter snowballs. The older boys and the more grown girls, would go for strolls

in the summer in the nearby woods, which was called *Grac Janek*. On one side there was a mountain, which lay rather close to the city. There, the young men permitted themselves to carry their hat in hand. And to greet the girls with a 'Good Day.' The winter was bad, when all roads and byways were frozen over. One didn't see a soul in the street. Windows were frozen over. It was the practice to exhale on the windows in order to free them from the layer of ice, so it would be possible to look outside. And when one looked out, what did one see? – a pig and ravens. The city belonged to them...

There were also homes where the adults would get together. These were so-called small stores, where one would go to on a Friday evening, and even on the Sabbath, for the whole day. People borrowed [sic: bought on credit] because it was not possible to pay on the Sabbath. The gathering passed the time cracking straw nuts, or thin seeds. There were also noshers, especially those who already had an eye out for a girl, who would then buy a hunk of chocolate.

The owner/operator of one such store, where they would gather together, was called Elya'leh. He was a chef for weddings. If one saw Elya'leh walking with his wooden trough, one knew that there was going to be a wedding in the city. It was at his location that the adults would sit for hours on end and wait for the light to go out.

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On one fine day, the people in the street – on encountering one another – asked one another: have you heard the news? Yitzhak Shmuel David's has returned. The wife will get tied up. It was like he went off into the water, never once sending a letter, and here, all of a sudden, he appears.

On the second day, Yitzhak came into the market, because they lived outside the city, near the slaughterhouse.

– 'Look him over – the Jewish bruited among themselves – he looks like a *Miesczan* (a city Christian).'

He was dressed in light-colored clothing, brown shoes, and a straw hat. He had a curled moustache. He also used to ride a bicycle.

Magierow was turned on its ear. This was the sensation of the city. Everyone had their own advice to offer. One said: 'Were I his father, I wouldn't let him over the threshold.'

'Don't be a fool,' – a second one retorted – 'his father knows what he is doing.'

'Look at him, how he looks. If he doesn't let him in, he will drive him to convert, It wouldn't take very much.'

I do not know when Yitzhak went off, I only recall that he returned. I do not know where he was, or

for what length of time he was out of sight. However, the Jewish people would talk among themselves, saying that he had seen the entire world. If it happened that a father saw a child talking to Yitzhak, he would immediately say to him: 'If I ever see you talking to him again, I'll hack off your feet.'

However, in the time between when Yitzhak went away, and when he returned, a bit of bloodless progressive revolution had taken place among the Magierow youth. In every home there especially was a constant conflict between the father and the children.

The young people took off their black velvet caps, and put on linen ones, and not black ones in particular, as was the existing custom, oftentimes a dark gray, and the long jacket was discarded in favor of a pullover with a vent in the back, and also a bit shorter: even up till now, I cannot understand the reason why the *Hasidim* cast such an anger against the vent, and also sidelocks became shorter.

A little at a time, people became accustomed to Yitzhak's presence in the city. He opened a small business in jewelry and watches, and people made inquiries as to where he had learned this trade. With time, people began to ask him about the outside world. There was always a ring of people around him, and he would tell of miracles and wonders. Out of enthusiasm, a Jewish person might say: 'He won't get burned on the fire.'

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The Baron Hirsch School

He didn't have much work. Accordingly, the idlers of the city would get together in his place of business, and they would have discussions that they relished. On a certain day, people became aware of the fact that Yitzhak and his 'followers' had it in their minds to establish a Baron Hirsch School. A delegation was sent off to Rawa Ruska, where such a school existed.

Everything looked like it was going to be for the best. But all of a sudden, as if awakening from a deep sleep, the *Rebbe* and the *Hasidim* awoke: Jews are setting about to establish a school with their own hands, and take the children away from the *Heders*, not allowing Jewish children to study Torah!

On one occasion on a Friday towards dusk, at prayer, a Jewish man rapped the balustrade and shouted out: 'Jews, I will not permit the Sabbath to be welcomed so long as you will not say what it is that you want to do? Turning our children into ignoramuses, taking them out of the *Heders*! Forcing them to go to school. The *Creator of the World* will not be silent. The punishment will not wait long before descending on us, and I hope that I am speaking a lie.'

You can understand that the other side did not remain blameless. A fight broke out. 'It is a disgrace that Jews should exchange blows with one another in a sacred place!' – was heard shouted out. Someone let the gendarmerie know about this, and gendarmes appeared in the *Bet-Hamedrash*, with rifles hanging from their hands. They shout in the name of the law, and they are heard like the call

for Haman from a Purim noisemaker. Things slowly quieted down, and prayers were completed. But they did not immediately go home, rather, entire groups of people stayed behind conducting discussion.

Now, a war broke out in every home, in which there were sentiments both for and against the school.

The war on behalf of the school would have certainly continued. A part of the enlightened *Hasidim* began to get more pliant, and let it be heard that this was not entirely foolish. Is it not the case that there already are Jewish children who attend a school, a gentile one, where they sit with an uncovered head, and there is a crucifix hanging in front of there eyes? Is it not better, therefore, for Jewish children to attend a Jewish school?

A Rebbe - style Wedding

On one fine day, we became aware of the fact that the *Rebbe* was going to marry off a grandchild, the daughter of R' Nahum Aharon, to a groom from Hungary. As if by a magic wand, peace returned and the entire city began to make preparations. Every day, the letter carrier would go to the *Rebbe* laden with packages. It was bruited about that treasures were arriving with requests for indulgences from wealthy *Hasidim*. It was known that many Rabbis would be coming from the bride's side, and also from the groom's side. Lodging began being prepared for these important guests. The dressmakers of Magierow were extremely angry, because for the really good clothing, people traveled to Lemberg. They were asked to create only the minor items.

The day of the wedding arrived. The owners, meaning the heirs of the estates of Zalman Fand, supplied as many coaches as there were, with attractive horses, which were supposed to bring the immediate family of the wedding party from the train [to the town]. From the surrounding cities, principally from Rawa, the *Hasidim* came dressed in military garb. The Jews of Magierow also dressed in military garb. There were even a number of Uhlans[159], indeed, Magierow youth, who served with the Uhlans. From the courtyard, they received saddled horses. The entire city looked like a military camp.

The Magierow musical ensemble of Meir Alter's, you understand, was not sufficient, and so musicians were brought in from Rawa and ¯o³kiew. The groom rode into the city escorted by an honor guard. At their head was a music band.

That same night, the ceremony under the canopy was performed out-of-doors near the synagogue. The evening was a very beautiful one. My grandfather had made an enclosure out of boards. Only the Rabbis were admitted and the official guests to the wedding ceremony. The entire garrison maintained order. It is not every day that you get to see such a wedding. The entire festive host, all together, looked like a carnival.

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159 Uhlans (in Polish: "U³an"; "Ulan" in German) were Polish light cavalry armed with lances, sabers and pistols. The title was later used by lancer regiments in the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian armies.

The youth of the *Bet-HaMedrash* carried a large lantern, in the form of the local *Bet HaMedrash*, on four large poles, and food was consumed inside the *Bet HaMedrash*, because in all of Magierow there was not any other large premises that could accommodate such an extensive crowd of people.

The *Sheva Berachot* were held at that same location. There was a comedian, a *Gaon*, from Hungary. Not only did he hold forth in oration to such *Gaonim*, he even made small presentations. I remember that on a certain night, there was a bit of a battle. Torches were lit, and the entire *Bet HaMedrash* became red from the flames. There were also any number of shots fired.

The joy of the occasion was rendered pale, because exactly at the same time, the Crown Prince of Austria was assassinated in Serbia. The week of the wedding went away quickly, and the *shtetl* once again crawled back into its sorrowful daily weekday routine, with all of its concerns. Immediately at *Tisha B'Av*, the war broke out. The young element went away, and all that remained in the *shtetl* were womenfolk with children, and the elderly.

The Outbreak of the First World War

Nervousness grew intensely, and one did not know how the factual situation would actually turn out. People relied on gossip. The peasants would tell that they saw Russians in the surrounding forests. In the entire city, two copies of a Jewish daily newspaper would arrive from Lemberg. One came to Ozer Fand and the second to our neighbor – Mandler. The name of the paper was *'Der Lemberger Tag-Blatt.'* Jewish people would station themselves around them, and would pass about the latest news. This was our single contact with the outside world.

From the authorities, we were warned not to take the gossip seriously, the buzzing the rumor-mongers were spreading, was in order to instigate a panic. But all of these warnings did not help, and a panic ensued in the city because of one peasant who swore in the street that he had spoken with the Russians and that they would be in the city that same week.

We were not the only ones relying on gossip. Because of this, someone in Rawa said that the Russians were coming, and because of this, practically the entire city came fleeing to Magierow. You can imagine the state of panic. It was bruited about that the Russian officers were hiding out with Ukrainian priests.

It was not far from the gossip to the real truth. But Jews fooled themselves. The Jews in the surrounding cities did the same thing, even from Lemberg. The Jews, you will understand, the 'strategists' reckoned, according to their calculations, that the Kaiser [sic: Franz Jozef] would not want to cede a city like Lemberg to the Russians. But a *shtetl* like Magierow?! This is not so much as a sniff of tobacco to the Kaiser. According to that assessment, a lot of people came to hide themselves with us in Magierow.

On one day, the Jews communicated with each other silently, practically in the ear: it is bad! The *Rebbe* has fled this night. The entire city was in a state of confusion. That is to say, we were like a

flock without a shepherd... before the storm, the shepherd vanished. The Jews of Magierow could never forgive him for that. The truth however was, that even if he had stayed, it would not have changed the situation. Possibly, the *Rebbe* would have fallen as the first victim.

The Russians entered the city at about 9 in the morning. There was an immediate outburst of gunfire, which kept on going without stop for 8 days. A Russian soldier came into us. He spoke Polish, looked around, and said to my mother: 'I advise you to leave your home, because you will not be able to stand the shooting.' My mother made an extra package for each child. We decided to go to the bathhouse, where there was a substantial [concrete] wall, and the bathhouse attendant, Mendl Frimmer was my mother's cousin.

Upon arriving at the bathhouse, we encountered about half of the town's Jewish people. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, a Jewish man entered, neither dead nor alive, barely able to get a word out, out of fear, and he groaned out: 'Fellow Jews, the *Rebbe's* house is on fire!' And the truth be known, the first fire was at the *Rebbe's*. The fire was not put out, and it quickly spread to neighboring houses.

Many people fell from the shooting. In the bathhouse, everything was treated like we were in a fortress, but shrapnel got in and created a wreckage. Those who were hurt ended up just laying around without getting any help. There were even some among the wounded who were burned up alive.

This is the way my home city of Magierow looked up till the First World War.

On the same day that the battle ensued, all the Jews abandoned Magierow in the evening, at the time the gunfire subsided. There were isolated fires, but 80% of the city remained intact. We had only one way open to us: on the side of the town toward ¯o³kiew, the side towards Rawa Ruska being where the battlefront was. The largest part of the Jews remained in the villages around Magierow, and only a small portion went off to ¯o³kiew, and even as far as Lemberg. A rumor spread that the peasants will enter the city and plunder the houses, where they will not encounter anyone.

When the Russians broke through the front and captured Rawa Ruska, The Jews of Magierow returned to the city. But how terrifying was the appearance of the city! Only the houses of the Christians remained, because the Christians put sacred images [sic: icons] into their windows. The Russians set the Jewish houses on fire, that continued to be a source of gunfire, but spared the Christian ones. Three small Jewish dwellings remained intact, as did the synagogue. This was to the advantage of the Russians, who installed their first-aid stations there.

It cut the heart to see entire families lying on the place where once their house stood. That 'once' was a mere 10 days ago. All those years of strenuous labor, and exhausting effort went up with the smoke. The only thing remaining standing were the blackened smoke-stained chimneys, that instilled a fear in the people. Where there was once a wall, there now stood half-fallen walls. The burned out windows instilled fear even in the daytime, seeming to be like burned out eyes...

All hopes were ruined. It was necessary to take the wandering staff in hand... during the High Holy Days of the year 1914, all of us, without exception, were homeless, without a roof over our heads. It was rare to find someone who had an extra shirt to change into. Despite this, there were the few who had managed to sequester a bit of money. Immediately after the Austrians returned, they began to rebuild their destroyed houses.

When the Polish authorities took charge, those who had made requests to rebuild their homes, received some small amount of building material from the government. You must understand that this little bit of building material was not enough to rebuild an entire house. It was necessary to have quite a bit of additional money. Those Jewish people, who had children in America, received support from them, and it was easier for them to rebuild. There were others, that received support through relatives.

A little at a time, Magierow was rebuilt. A community was created. If one had a community, then it is necessary to have a spiritual leader. The *Rebbe* of Magierow returned from Hungary, to which he had fled, but it was no longer to Magierow. He took up residence in Rawa Ruska, because he could no longer make a living in Magierow. And so, a grandson of the *Rebbe*, R' Itzik'l, the son of R' Nahum Aharon was invited to become the Rabbi of Magierow.

For the community, and better said, for the city as a whole, there were severe problems that required solution. It was necessary to reconstruct the *Bet HaMedrash*, which had suffered greatly during the war, and also the wall around the cemetery, which the peasants had taken away. For the few families, that once again took up residence in Magierow, these tasks were beyond their capacity, and therefore, they turned to the Magierow Jews in America for help.

In a little bit of time, the community received a specified sum of money. The *Bet HaMedrash* was renovated, and a new wall was built around the cemetery.

After the First World War

Magierow returned to being a shtetl a little bit at a time, but in truth, it was not what it used to be before the First World War. Many Jews did not return. Many Magierow families found themselves in Rawa Ruska, ¯o³kiew, Lemberg, and other cities, where it was initially difficult for them. Many of the old ways of making a living had gone under, and it was necessary to get acclimated to the new circumstances. The young people traveled to ¯o³kiew to learn the hat making trade. This youth quickly acquired the skills of the trade, and took the place of the former brush making businesses . The Young people felt themselves to be the responsible ones, because many families lived off their children's earnings. This enabled them to create a variety of societies, and also a sports-club, not being resisted by their parents in the same way that it was before the war in the year 1914.

The youth posed itself this question: can Magierow stand off in the distance, when in all cities there is a burgeoning nationalistic revival? One cannot complain about the youth of Magierow, because the first priority was to rebuild the homes that were destroyed, and only then get involved in politics.

It is for this reason that the Magierow institutions, such as '*Gordonia*,' and other nationalist movements date from the years 1928-1929, where in other cities, such as Rawa Ruska, or ¯o³kiew, these institutions were already in existence from the years 1919-1920.



Page 217: The 'Gordonia' *Group of Magierow*

'*Gordonia*' carried on a very lively activity, and were helped to get organized by veteran activists from Rawa Ruska, such as Gimpel Just, etc. There were interesting debates that took place, that attracted a large audience. A football [sic: soccer] club was created, and life was no long unbearable, as it was before the war. There even was a communist cell under the aegis of a Peretz Library. That is, until one day, it would appear that they did not want to relinquish their activity in other cities, they hung out a red flag on the First of May. They were informed upon. L. Szporn and Hersch Reichbach were tried in court in Nemierow, and received a sentence in jail for several weeks; and well cut off... in those days, a couple of weeks imprisonment for a communist was considered to be outstanding, and something in which one could take pride...

It was dangerous for a Jew to go into a village, because the Ukrainians blamed the Jews for being allied with the Poles, and the Poles blamed the Jews for being allied with the Ukrainians... The Polish régime, from its side, did everything it could to spread the poison of anti-Semitism, which was felt with force by the Jews of Magierow, as it was in all Polish cities.

Life had the appearance of having been normalized. Each person went about doing their own work. The aspirations of the young people were the same as those of young people in other cities. A portion of the young people, who belonged to '*Gordonia*,' went off to receive training for *aliyah*; others were impelled to take off for the greater world. Approximately in the year 1929, young people from Magierow arrived in Paris; many worked in Lemberg. The older generation sequestered themselves in their homes.

The Second World War

In accordance with the Hitler-Stalin agreement[160], our area was allocated to the Russians.

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160 The reference here is to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, (also known as the Nazi–Soviet Pact), named after the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, officially the Treaty of Non-aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was a non-aggression pact signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in Moscow on 23 August 1939.

The pact remained in force until the German government broke it by launching an attack on the Soviet positions in Eastern Poland on 22 June 1941.The stated clauses of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact were a guarantee of non-belligerence by each party towards the other, and a written commitment that neither party would ally itself to, or aid, an enemy of the other party. In addition to stipulations of non-aggression, the treaty included a secret protocol that divided territories of Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland into German and Soviet "spheres of influence", anticipating potential "territorial and political rearrangements" of these countries. Thereafter, Germany invaded Poland

Approximately on 20 September 1939, the Russians took control of Magierow. This misfortune made itself felt immediately. The entire city remained without a means of making a living. The trades, in which the Jewish populace was engaged, became redundant, because the products they produced went for export. Deprivation and want was immediately felt. For engaging in black market transactions, the penalty was imprisonment for an extended number of years.

Magierow had no industry whatsoever. There was no point in going to the villages, because the peasantry had nothing to sell. The Russians requisitioned everything. However, by contrast to this, what was taking place under German control – this was like the Garden of Eden.

On 22 June 1941, the Germans attacked the Russians. A couple of days later, the Germans entered Magierow, and it was only now that the real misfortune began. The Germans organized the Ukrainians as an auxiliary police force. The lives of Jews became worthless. Jews were impressed into a variety of forced labor, under the oversight of the Ukrainian hooligans. At work, they were frightfully beaten with the butts of rifles, and with whips. At this, our peasantry proved to be masters.

Magierow had no luck, as was the case with other cities, to have a ghetto with a *Judenrat,* which could organize a bit of watery soup for the hungering. Magierow expired at once.

In the year 1942, about sometime before Passover, a unit of the S.S. came to the city from Rawa Ruska. The harassment and pursuit of the Jews began immediately, most succeeded in fleeing; those that remained behind, were shot on the spot. The voices and crying of the women and children split the heavens. The children, frightened, helplessly clung to their mothers. The barbarism of the murderers cannot be described in writing.

A few Jews had the opportunity to hide themselves in the gardens of the gentiles, but the gentiles seized them, and turned them over into the hands of the S.S. murderers. This is the way people behaved, and this is what they did [the same people] who lived for generations-at-a-time with the Jews, in a good, neighborly fashion.

A small clutch of Jews, on that day, remained alive after the destruction, and so the murderers took them to Rawa Ruska, and from there to Belzec to the gas chambers. From that day on, Magierow was *Judenrein.*

Very few [Jews of] Magierow remained alive. A few went off with the Russians; others were in the Polish Army, and fell into German captivity. After the war, these people came back to Magierow, but encountered no one [that they knew]. It was not only the Jews that were not there [any longer], but also the gentiles were not there. The entire city was in a state of destruction. In the course of thirty years, Magierow underwent destruction twice.

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on 1 September 1939. After the Soviet–Japanese cease-fire agreement took effect on 16 September, Stalin ordered his own invasion of Poland on 17 September. Concern about ethnic Ukrainians and Belorussians had been proffered as justification for the Soviet invasion of Poland.

In the year 1944, in the month of June, or July, the Russians drove the German hordes out of our area. Bitterly fought battles took place, and the city was transformed into a heap of ash. During the time of the German occupation, many Jewish homes were seized, brick by brick, by the gentiles of the city, who were searching for Jewish treasures, that Jews has [allegedly] hidden. [The reason for this is] because to a peasant, every Jew was a millionaire.

And so, in this fashion, my home city of Magierow was brought to ruin, with its holy Jewish people.

I bend my head before your sacred memory. You did not even leave a grave after yourselves, nor any stone grave marker, where I could lean my head and murmur a silent prayer.

May my modest few lines here, be that memorial marker over your grave, which is to be found in my heart.

Kamionka Wołoska [161]

By David Halpern
Argentina

I was born in the village of Kamionka Wo³oska to my parents Israel and Rivka Halpern.[162]

My father was a savvy man, and that is why his nickname was '*advokat*.' He was recognized in the entire area as a man with a highly developed sense of justice, and did not stand for wrongdoing, always standing on the side of the poor, and supported them against the *nouveau riche*.

Several tens of Jewish families lived in the village. Part of these families were engaged in working for the land lessor Tchaikovsky, who had a liberal attitude. I would like to describe a few of them, that I can remember, in these few lines I am writing.

The three brothers: Chaim, Boruch and Shmuel Tieger – were called '*Die Letnikehs*.' I am a scion of Chaim Letnik. Shmuel Letnik owned the [sic: flour] mill in the village. Everyone called him 'Uncle Shmuel,' and his wife – 'Aunt Esther.' Their home was open to everyone: every hungry person [who entered] left there feeling sated.

I remind myself that Meir-Leibusz Fatzig from Rawa was a glazier in his younger years. He would come into the village, go from house to house installing window panes. Aunt Esther would cook

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161 Kamionka Wo³oska is an area, formerly owned by nobility, and lies directly east of Rawa Ruska, approximately 40 km to the northwest of Lviv. Currently, the village located in the region of Zólkiewski Lviv. After the Second World War, the area was detached from Poland and incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR. Today, the name of Kamionka Wo³oska is born only by a station on the Lviv - Rawa Ruska route.

162 Both spellings (Halpern and Halpern) are given in the Yiddish. It is unclear whether one is 'correct.'

large portions of food for him, in order to satisfy his appetite; but this didn't always work out for him, because even a pot of a number of liters was not sufficient to make him feel full...

The village had a '*minyan*' and a Torah scroll. On the Sabbaths and Festival Holidays, all the Jewish families would come together, in order to be able to conduct communal prayer, and naturally, thereby, use the opportunity to catch up on a variety of news and happenings, by snatching a conversation one with another. The *minyan* was held at the home of Chaim Leib Altshuler. He was a very fine man, the brother of Yankl'eh the Dairyman.

We came to the *minyan* every Sabbath. As the distance for a part of the Jews was rather significant, it was the custom to also make *Kiddush* there, using honey cake and whiskey, in order to 'revitalize the spirits.'

Yossl'eh Rubin, from the old part of the village, who was my grandfather's brother, sold the honey. Itcheh'leh Schlatiner brought the whisky, and Itcheh Letnik cooked up the whiskey with the honey.

The joy during *Simchat Torah* was great, which was celebrated in a special way. Many women, my mother ע"ה among them, actively participated in making the arrangements for the festivities.

It was in this fashion that Jewish life went on for decades, and perhaps for centuries. The younger folk began to look for ways to emigrate out into the greater world, thereby sowing and dispersing themselves all over, each in accordance with the degree that they had wings with which to fly.

I married Chay'cheh Morgenstern the daughter of Maness Morgenstern ז"ל of Rawa. I set myself up in Rawa in the dairy business, which didn't fare too badly. But the anti-Semitic chicanery of the Poles compelled me to emigrate.

I emigrated to Argentina, where I am to be found to this day.

There Was a City Called Rawa

By Max Halpern
New York

Before the world, the city was called 'Rawa-Ruska.' By we, the Jews of the surrounding towns and villages, such as: ¯ó³kiew, Potelycz, Nemierow, Belz, Narol, and Belzec – the name was Rawa, which had an enchanted ring to it, a magnet which attracted everyone's awareness, a musical ring in every ear. A variety of flavors and tastes ringed this never-to-be-forgotten city with Jews in it, that once was Rawa.

I was born in the little village of 'Fariness[163]' – Kamionka Wo³oska. From our house, a window looked out over the highway, which stretched off to Lemberg up to Rawa. Every Monday, Ukrainian

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163 Possibly one of the several small villages that made up this district.

peasants from the surrounding villages rode, with their horses and wagons to Rawa for the market fair; in their wagons they conveyed pigs, sacks of grain, chickens and eggs. Outside the city, by the way to ride in, there was a gate – a tollbooth; everyone with a horse and wagon, had to pay an entry fee to the city authorities. It was the usual case that a Jewish person would obtain the franchise from the authorities for doing this, at a set price, and if there was anything extra left over – this became the payment for his effort.



Page 220: Reinkind's Villa in Nemierow

The outskirts of the city, that stretched from the barracks to the marketplace, was called *Ulica Żółkiewa.*[164] Closer to the city proper, on the right hand side, stood the pharmacy, and diagonally opposite it for the entire length, the street was built up with row houses: [These were the houses of] the lawyer Dr. Segal, Abraham Helman, Shmuel Letnik – 'Tieger,' Abraham'echeh Letnik, Itcheh Letnik and Boruch Letnik. The Letniks were veterinarians; [the name was] taken from the Polish word '*lecyć*' – to heal. Peasants from the neighborhood would bring their ailing horses and cows to be cured by the Letniks; Why am I telling this? – because they, the Letniks, were my relatives and when I had just set foot in the city, my first point of call was with them. All of this is in my memory from the years after the First World War.

Now, I will turn back to my childhood years. This was at the beginning of the current [sic: twentieth] century. I remember my youth between the ages of five and eleven. As I have already noted, I was born in the village of '*Fariness*,' seven kilometers from Rawa; my father Israel Halpern ע"ה, was born in Rawa; he lost his father Mordechai while still very young. When my father grew up a little, he became an assistant Heder teacher, and when he got married to my mother, Rivka ע"ה, he moved into her village, where he became a *Melamed* and ran his *Heder* in the house. Once a week, he would go into the city, to Rawa, carrying with him a can of milk to sell, in order to transact for something to bring back to the house for the Sabbath.

My mother ע"ה put herself to doing business. When Friday came, my mother was busy around the house for the entire day, with baking and cooking for the Sabbath. In the summertime, the days ran long, and she was able to utilize the time effectively; in the wintry days, Fridays were short, and very often she would have to work strenuously in order to get everything ready before sundown. Quickly she washed her face, changed her clothing, putting on a fresh dress, and a fresh kerchief on her head, and placed herself standing to bless the candles. My father would wash himself, put on his satin jacket with a sash, and the *shtrymel* – and in the house, the Sabbath atmosphere pervaded all. My father set himself to pray, and I prayed along with my father. My mother and my sister, Shayndl, sat by the covered table, on which the candles burned, in three brass candlesticks, and at the head of the table, the Challahs sat under a white covering, and also a small bottle of raisin wine with a small glass.

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164 This could also be rendered as the *Zolkiewer Gasse*

I, the older of my two little brothers, sat with great respect and observed everything that was going on, [especially] what my father was doing. After praying, my father made Kiddush, and then gave a little to everyone to recite a blessing. My father then washed his hands, made a blessing over the Challah in the form of the '*HaMotzi.*'

On Saturday morning, Shmuel Glock arrived from Lipnik, my father and I were already outside of the house, waiting. With their prayer shawls already draped over their shoulders and with their *shtrymels* on their heads, we all went off to pray, at the '*minyan*' on the *nesteria*[165] at the house of Chaim-Leib. The following would assemble for this minyan once a week from the surrounding villages: Hirsch'eleh Kaminker-Altshuler with his two sons-in-law – David and Yoss'l, his son, Moshe-Shlomo and his brother Yankl'eh with his son, Yoss'leh; Yankl'eh and his son ran a dairy business from Tchaikovsky's yard. From the 'old village,' Yoss'leh Rubin came with his two boys; And from the 'Pumalinas[166]' came Itcheh Letnik-Tieger with his two boys, and all of these made up the *minyan*. These are a few lines concerning that which I can remember from my childhood years.

At this time, I do not know if I should count myself among the so-called 'lucky ones' because of the fact that I fled in the year 1922, from the new Polish régime, and because of that, was saved from the murderous German beast – or should I count myself among the unfortunate because of the fact that I left behind my mother, my father [to be interred] in the Rawa cemetery. I left my sister and her husband behind, Leib'l Weiler and their children, the rest of my family together with all of the six million Jews.

This plague follows me day and night, from which I will never be able to free myself for the rest of my life.

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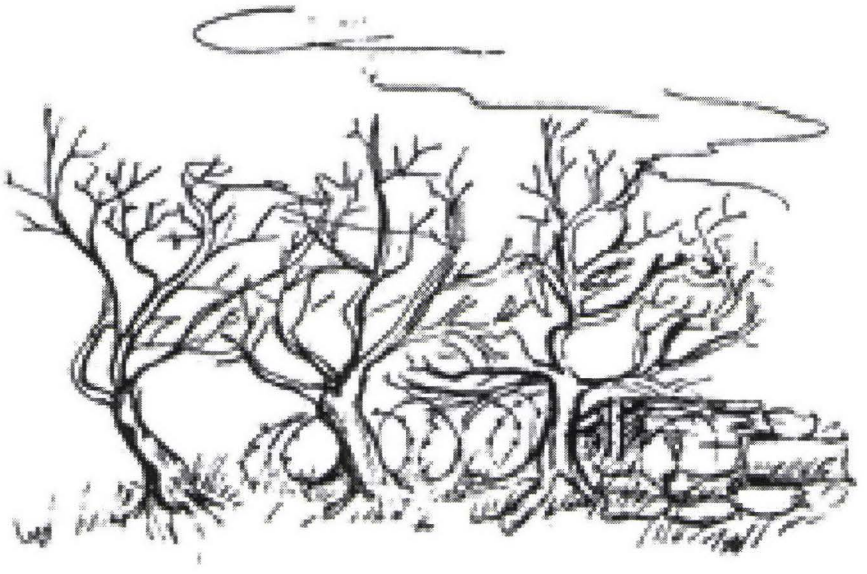
165 Seemingly a location in the Rawa-Ruska area, but not well characterized.

166 Possibly the nearby village of Pomlyniv, about 7 miles southeast of Rawa Ruska.



Page 221: Untitled Drawing of Trees by a Stone Fence

The Holocaust

השואה

דער אומקום



Page 224: Golda'leh Grauer הו"ד, *Tortured in Treblinka*

In the Days of Judgment

By Melech Ravitch

Melech Ravitch pseudonym of Zekharye-Khone Bergner; 1893–1976); Yiddish poet, essayist, playwright, and cultural activist. Melech Ravitch was born in Radymno, eastern Galicia, into a home where the main spoken languages were Polish and German. He was a co-founder of the Yiddish section of the International P.E.N. Club From 1920 to 1934 he was General Secretary of the Jewish Writers' Association in Warsaw. In addition to 13 volumes of poetry, he has published three volumes of Pen Portraits of Yiddish and Hebrew writers. Ravitch left home at 14 and lived in various cities, including, for long periods, Vienna (1912–21) and Warsaw (1921–34), later emigrating to Australia (1936–38), Argentina, the U.S., and Mexico (1939–40), before settling in Montreal in 1941 for the rest of his life (excepting 1954–56 in Israel).

[After the Translation of Max Rosenfeld] *Montreal*

'My mother was in Rawa Ruska,
It was there that she was seized by the Nazis.'

There is not enough blood in my body,
That can be transformed into tears,
Tears – salted with fire,
To be able to weep to that very bottom,
For the agony and shame,
Yes, that human shame and vile indignities,
[Inflicted] on your old body, your agèd years,
What the German Nazi did to you
In the Belzec-crematoria,
My old mother.

He trod upon you like a bear,
His heavy boots, studded with nails,
As though you were a sack of rags,
And when you were sufficiently so trod upon,
He drove you to the gas with dogs.

Your dumbly stifled and silent shriek
– was heard.
Only by the ancient and unheeding Mother Earth. But, really, what more could she have done for you, than to be the discard-grave for your bit of [residual] ash.

No, there is not that much blood in my body,
To be transmuted into tears,
To cry over your sorrow, old mother.

And there is no punishment in the world,
Not in the heaven, nor in the earth,
There will not be – even in Gehenna,
Which can be measured out in appropriate measure for your crime – German Nazi.

Even if all the crimes in the world, from East to West and around the globe,
From Time's beginning to its end,
From one end of space to the other end,
Washed clean with the waters of forgiveness,
There would still remain in stellar space
The darkest stain of all the worlds – your crime – Nazi.

Even if there has never been a crime
In all of space and all of time,
Your crime would be the first
And will forever be the last!
Because more gruesome there cannot be,
Even was the earth to again become the [primordial] ash of the universe
And return again into the rays of all the stars –
Your crime will remain,
It will never, never again become light again.

There is no punishment for your crime,
It is on the other side of humanity and on the other side of punishment,
Also, all of the Four Deaths prescribed by the Bet-Din, combined together –
Stone, molten metal, the chain and sword

Burned through with fire,
Would laugh, if they were able to hear and understand, that they must be the instrument
Of punishment for your crime, Nazi.
There is no [red-hot] iron that can put out such eyes,
There is no chain that can extract such a soul,
There is no stone that can crush such a skeleton,
There is no sword, that can hack his head off such a neck – –

And his boots trampled you,
My mother,
The good one among the good,
Among the best – the best,
Trod on you, on you
And on your millions of sisters,
And sisters of those sisters. And brothers' brothers;
You were so good, though, mother,
You taught me from Friedrich Schiller's Canon, that all men are brothers,
And also from Johann Wolfgang Goethe's poems, that man must be delicate,
Prepared to help and be good.

[But] they trod over you,
With their boots, as over a sack of rags,
And punished your living flesh like dead clay
With thorns,
And later, with dogs, drove you
To the gas.

Only the formless wind escorted you,
Your only escort.
It found you on the threshold
Of the conflagration bonfire,
Wanted to give you one last stroke
On your old, long, snow-white hair.
But the Nazi had already torn out and shaved your hair,
To be used to stuff mattresses,
And to snore well on them,
After having become drunk on the pails of Jewish blood.

But the wind still caressed your naked wrecked form –
And accompanied you to the threshold
Of the chamber of gas
And murmured quickly in your ear:
An easy death,
Good, my old child! –
And the wind also fled in fright,
But you, Mamma, with all your sisters, and sisters' sisters,
Went off to your Jewish fate.

There is not enough blood in my body,
That can be transformed into tears,
Tears – salted with fire,
To be able to weep to that very bottom,
The sorrow that the Nazi-German inflicted upon you in the Belzec crematorium,
My [dear] old mother.

There is no such iron – with which to tear out the Nazi's eyes,
There is no chain – with which to extract his soul from his throat
There is no rock – with which to smash his frame,
There is no sword – with which to sever his head from his neck.

And there is no living thing,
That from my memory,
Even after twice ten bitter years
From that day that I remember you in pain
Old, suffocated mother,
That can squeeze you out of my heart,
Along with pieces of my heart,
That sight of your last minutes
In the Belzec-Crematorium.

Man must be refined,
Ready to help and be good,
And all men will be brothers,
But first, departing from the world, into the abyss of forgetfulness, must vanish
The last, last, last [trace of]
The Nazi-poisoned blood.
And until that very hour,
There is no forgetting,
No, No!

Rawa-Ruska & Belzec on the Map of the Extermination Camps

By Eliezer Unger

The little town does not occupy such a prominent place in the 'glorious' train of the S.S.R. Army, being nothing more than a railroad node point along the way from Lemberg to Lublin, but now, we are precisely for that reason departing from Lemberg, Brisk and Bialystok – important strongholds of military significance. But regrettably, to our great misfortune, this *shtetl* occupies a very important point on the map of the last train for a million Polish Jews. For the most part, these were Jews of Eastern and Western Galicia. The Rawa-Ruska station was pitiably the last, before they surrendered their souls in the closest *shtetl* named – Belzec (not to be confused with Belz, which, as it happens, is not very far from there).

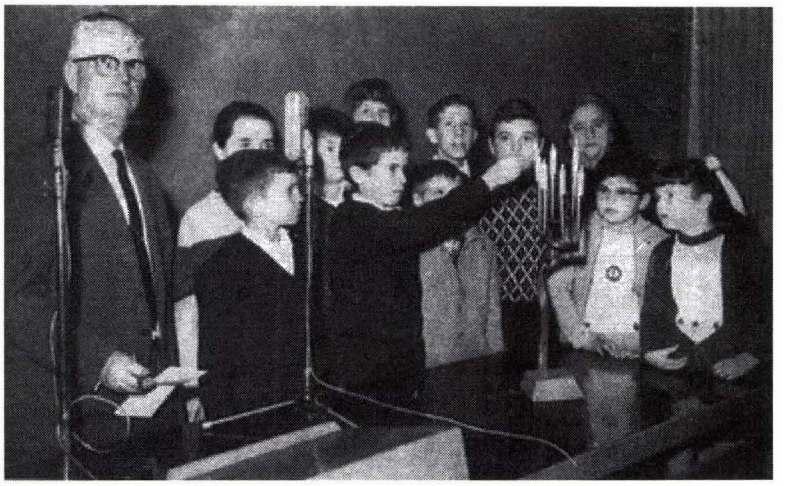
Belzec – is the largest point of the extermination of Polish Jewry after Treblinka and Oswiecim. Not everyone knows that the roads and highways, that lead to Rawa-Ruska – and from there to Belzec – are seeded with thousands of graves of Jewish men, being practically suffocated by quicklime and chlorine that the murderers sprayed into the wagons, and being driven almost mad by the frightening and gruesome images and events that took place in those wagons. In their last moments, (some) leapt from the death-trains, which was taking them to the gas chambers and crematoria, that the Nazis had constructed in Belzec.

But not everyone that jumped off the trains – was able to save themselves. If all the highways and woods had mouths, and could speak – they could tell of terrifying and frightening things that were done to those leaping Jews, Jewish 'parachutists.' How much suffering and agony they put up with until they found some sort of hiding place for their souls, that hovered between life and death!... If leaping off the speeding train did lead to success – they could still fall into the hands of the murderers, who lay in ambush waiting for them, at every step of the way. The murdering Nazis informed the surrounding gentile populace about a [reward] premium of 500 gulden for every seized Jew, and a sentence of death for anyone, who would hide a Jew. So, you try to imagine what the gentiles opted for! True, there were to be found decent Poles, who put their own lives in danger, and the lives of their families, by hiding one Jew or another; but there were very few such people.



Page 228: A Drawing on the Holy Ark in the Lod Synagogue, in memory of the martyrs of our city, by Yaakov Garfinkel-Kessler

Oy, if the wooden thresholds of the railroad line from Rawa-Ruska to Belzec could speak and tell about the Jewish blood that was spilled and sprayed from these victims, who leapt from the trains and were not successful; because many of them, because of their great confusion, lost their balance in jumping, and came to no good, or were immediately shot by machine-gun fire. Hundreds thousands of jumpers, for days and weeks, blundered through fields and forests, with broken hearts, frayed nerves, bodies that had been hacked on, and starved innards, in order to find something of a corner, a nest, a place of refuge.



Page 229: Children of those saved from the Holocaust, lighting candles during the Annual Memorial Service.

It was only the very few, a small number, that had the privilege of being able to recover and find places, where the ghettoes were still standing. They had to crawl their way through the darkness of the nights, and through thick forests, in order to shake off the pursuit that the Nazis mounted against them. In the mouths of the 'fortunate' Jews, who had remained orphaned from their parents, children, and entire families, who had the chance, after the first *aktionen*, to remain back in the ghettoes – the name 'Rawa-Ruska' was a terrifying specter.

I remember: the first time the name of that *shtetl* was mentioned in connection with the expulsion of the Jews from Mielec, a *shtetl* between Rozwadów[167] and Dêbica; that was the beginning, the first sad day, the first expulsion in Western Galicia, and Poland in general. The Jews of the ghettoes heard of that expulsion, but did not know what it meant, or what it smacked of... the Murderers made an effort to call every one of their acts of murder using a variety of names: '*Juden Übersiedlung*' – '*Juden Aussiedlung*.[168]'

This took place in the beginning of March 1942; All of the Jews, without exception, were driven out of the previously mentioned shtetl, and they were taken by transport in the direction of Lemberg. After a number of days, letters came from Rawa-Ruska and Belzec from those who had been driven out. They let their relatives in other cities know, that they arrived safe and sound, and are intending to get themselves in order in the new locations; but after a month's time, all news from them stopped

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167 Shown along with Stalowa Wola on current maps.

168 Jewish resettlement

coming. 'Aryan Gentiles' and 'Aryan Jews' were sent off to Rawa-ruska to learn how the expelled people were faring – but all came back without any information. Everything seemed to be shrouded as if in fog, wrapped up in secrets, and whisperings... but after the expulsion of Lublin, after driving out the Jews from all of the towns of that surrounding area, the traveling 'Aryans' in the trains – I was already at that time an 'Aryan-Jew' – communicating and whispering among themselves about Belzec, 'where out of the fat of Jews, they were making – soap.'

How filled with trembling and how full of pain became the Jewish heart, hearing about this 'slaughterhouse!'...

It is worthwhile that the entire world should know about the mass-murders in the *shtetl*!... the first of the transports of death trains came there in March 1942 from Mielec. In April, transports arrived from Tarnopol, Stanislawow, Kolomea and Lemberg, approximately forty thousand [people] (40,000). In May, from Ropczyce, Chmiadowo and Kalusz, about five thousand (5,000), In June – About ten thousand from Cracow, Tarnow, Briegel and Przemyol. In July – From Rzeszow, ¯abno, Dabrowa [Tarnowska] (near Tarnow), Szczucin, Dêbica, Radomyol-Wielki, Pilona, Jaslo, Frysztak, Sambor, Drohovyzh, Boryslaw, Rimanowe, [Nowy, Stary] Sacz, Bobov and Gorlice –about eight thousand, and in August, the large transports arrived: From Lemberg, approximately fifty thousand (50,000); from Bochnia, Wieliczka, Pszczyna, Skawina, Sanok – about ten thousand (10,000). In September 1942, the second *aktion* took place, during which everyone [sic: Jewish] was driven out of Stanislawow and its environs, Tarnopol, Kolomea, Buczacz, Czartko[wice], and all of the surrounding towns. All of these transports went to Belzec.

The Nazis called all of these elements of the second *aktion* – '*Juden- Ausmeckung*[169], meaning that they disemboweled the ghettoes. In August, there were additional transports from Cracow, Staszow, Pinczow, Miechów, Kazimierza-Wielka, and Sandomierz. In accordance with Jewish estimates, from people who were still in the ghettoes in April 1943, the sum of those sent to Belzec – from March 1942 to April 1943 – was approximately Seven Hundred Thousand (700,000) Jews[170].

During that time, all those who were traveling through the 'Rawa-Ruska – Belzec' environs would relate, that along with the air -- they inhaled the stench of burning corpses, which emanated from the smokestacks of the crematoria.

What is now important, now, that the Red Army marches into all of these places, where our sacred martyrs lie, that they take the covering off of the graves, and we will then inform the world, what that Nation of Murderers did to us, and of the sort of perverted technology they used to carry out their murderous deeds, that is what is now important !...

And maybe, in the end, there will be an official reckoning about the millions of death factories, and maybe it will be possible to yet rescue, from the Nazi Beast, that portion of Balkan Jewry that hovers between life and death? Let everything be uncovered! Raise up the covering!...

'HaTzofeh' 24.7.1944

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169 Jewish eradication

170 Estimates vary from as low as 400,000 to a high of 800,000 with a likelihood of not in excess of 600,000.

I Remember You, Rawa Ruska!

By Bluma Rubin-Schwert

From you, my *shtetl,* I went so far away,
Made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel,
Though even such a long time has gone by,
I see everything there as it once was.

I se the Study Houses, the Old *Kloyz*,
Masses of Jews go there,
And prayer quorums from a Rabbinic house,
All streets are full with them.

I hear the voice of the *Shammes* waking people
to get up, to serve their Creator, to rise,
In the still night, that voice would frighten
Those rising, those hurrying to go to the *Kloyz*.

It is cold in the *Kloyz*, the air is heavy,
At a reading stand – One with a *Gemara*, or a
Yoreh Deyah, by a tiny burning candle,
Learning with a tune, curling a side lock,

Learning ceaselessly, interrupting only for
Shacharit,
Swiftly, they would say their prayers,
No time to even eat, grabbing a bite
From Long Henokh's confectionery.

All, all of them stand before my eyes,
As if I were just now seeing them,
There is nothing new, born there – raised there,
That was, after all, my home.

No one forgot the hall in the orphanage,
The comrades of the Drama Club, all talented,
intelligent,
Successfully performing the best plays,
Such that everyone in the *shtetl* knew them.

I remember the organizations and their societies,
Full up until late hours of the night;
Presentations, discussions, with various themes,
And sometimes also – plain socializing.

I see the craftsmen, merchants, businesses,
saloons, the fairs, the market, the municipal
building in the middle,
Oy, how hard it is to think that everything was
so tragically cut down.

Only few have remained of all these Jews,
We are the heirs to their suffering and torture;
Though the martyrs left no wills,
Only those who survived of them – can be the
heirs.

We are obligated in our lifetime
To write a will – indeed,
To hand over the legacy to future generations,
Not, God forbid, to forego this obligation.

Let every coming generation,
Like us, bemoan their fate,
Make a *Yahrzeit* on the Tenth of Tevet, A
Yizkor, and recite a group *Kaddish,*

יתגדל ויתקדש!

What I Lived Through

By Yehoshua Wolfuss ז"ל

From a Diary 1939 - 1942

In the year 1939, I once again began to deal in wood products. As it happens, in the month of October, I had to begin the exploitation of a piece of forest, together with my son and son-in-law, into which we had sunk our entire net worth. Serious talk had begun about war with Germany. Hitler demanded of Poland [the surrender of] the Corridor – Danzig, and also transit through Posen and Silesia. Poland rejected all of this. Hitler instills a fear. Poland concludes a treaty with England and begins making a partial mobilization. We are listening to radio news broadcasts, and seized by a great trembling. On August 28, Germany makes a Pact with Soviet Russia, and we understand that they have agreed to divide Poland between themselves.

On September 1, the war begins. Germany attacks and bombards Polish cities, and there are many dead among the civilian population. On Thursday, September 9, Rawa is bombarded with bombs of light and heavy caliber. I take my wife, with the children and grandchildren, and we flee to Prusie, 7 km. from Rawa, to our sister-in-law. It is not far from Werchrata. Immediately, bombs fall on the bridge, and the train station of Werchrata, and 118 civilian dead are extracted from the train cars, containing refugees who were fleeing together with the Polish military; but there were no Jews there. This is because the Polish authorities did not permit any Jews onto the trains, preventing them from fleeing. We, approximately one hundred Jewish souls, sat an entire day in the Siedliska Forest. Bombs are falling on all sides. The terror is indescribable. The children are crying, and the adults are screaming: *Shema Yisrael!* I ordered us to spread out and not sit together, in order that we not all together be killed at once. That was how we spent the day, and at night, we went to sleep in the village. In the morning, we received news, that the Germans were already in Rawa, and indeed, two autos with Germans arrived, searching for Poles. I ask them whether I can travel back to Rawa, and they answer: *Ja*.



Page 230: Sitting (Right to Left): R' Shmuel Trieber ז"ל from New York, Bluma Rubin, Tshiva Shickler.

Standing, Second Row ® to L): Tova Graff-Ribak, Leah Ziring-Schorr, Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld, Miriam Ka"Tz-Rosen, Petakhya Ka"Tz.

Standing, Third Row ® to L): Mendl Schmider, Katriel Rosen, Aharon, Greinidger-Bar-Akiva, Dvora Freiheiter-Greenstein



Page 231:The Gymnasium

It was the Eve of *Rosh Hashanah*. We all went back to Rawa. There, 20 victims of the bombing were found. Near my house, stood the Red Circle with Austrian soldiers who were quite nice people; in contrast, inside the city, there were German soldiers, who beat Jews and cut off beards. The officers went into the tailoring businesses and plundered their contents, [putting the booty] into the autos. On the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*, they came into the *Zamd Bet HaM*edrash, during worship, tore up the Torah scroll, and discharged their guns many times. All the Jews scattered and fled. I was praying at the location of the *Rebbe* of Potelycz. When we heard of this, we all went home. Only I, as a former Austrian soldier, had no fear. So I allowed myself to enter the *Bet HaMedrash*, in order to assemble the shards of the torn up Torah scroll. Along the way, I encounter Germans, who are driving Jews. A *Feldwebel*[171] wanted to take me along with them, but I show them my crippled left hand and say, that I am an Austrian [sic: military] invalid, and so he ordered me to continue on my way, but by a different direction. I enter the *Bet HaMedrash*, and a darkness descends over my eyes: all of the Torah scrolls are torn up, half of a scroll lies on the threshold, the volumes of *Shas* and the prayer shawls are stained and torn up. I gather everything up, lay it out on the table, and cover it with torn prayer shawls and go out to return. Along the way, an S.S. man encounters me, who takes me into custody to the gymnasium, near the *Bet HaMedrash*, where they had put together a hospital. He assigns me 10 Jews in order to make order, and we worked there until three o'clock in the afternoon.

On September 17, 1939 the news spread through the city that the Germans are pulling back and the Red Army will take their place. Every Jew yearned for that minute because there was still gunfire being exchanged between the Poles and the Germans, and we lay for this entire time hidden in the cellars. In the end, on September 24, the Russian patrol appeared, and the entire city went out towards them with great joy, to the great frustration and disappointment of the Germans. The young people went up on the Russian tanks and kissed them, and everyone shouted that the Messiah had arrived. There were many Jews in the ranks of their military, in various ranks and various services.

Life began to resume its course a little at a time, with both work and trade resuming. Even though conducting trade was very difficult, because the merchant was labeled a speculator and for the slightest infraction, one could be jailed. People even joked and said that there are three kinds of people: those who had already been in jail, those who are now in jail, and those who need to be in jail; one would ask the other, to which category they belonged. – But despite this everyone, who wanted to, could work, obtain a position, all at meager wages, but could breathe freely, and not feel persecuted. On the Sabbath and Festival Holidays, the Jews could walk through the streets dressed in *Shtrymels* and white socks, and no one was accosted. Nevertheless, nobody was satisfied, because they were not in agreement with the way the regime ordered things, and each person hoped that

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171 A German non-commissioned officer, a sergeant.

salvation would come, but not from the Germans. They began to take Jews into military service, but my son was released, because he and I worked in the forest doing wood production, as developers. My son-in-law Yoss'l Post, also worked as a quartermaster in the military bakery. We did not lack for income. Apart from fear and fright, that we should not fall into prison. Also, the Gentiles, who were forced to organize themselves into collectives, also went about dissatisfied.

Sunday, June 22, 1941. During this time we were listening to the radio news from all over the world, and especially from London, in which we had the greatest trust. During June, the English radio continuously held that Germany was preparing to attack Russia, and that a war would break out between the two. The Russians are dismissive of this, but by Thursday, June 19, the first German airplanes appear, and indeed, Sunday morning, at 5 o'clock, the entire sky was covered with them, as I had heard from the English radio, and the war with Russia commenced, and ensues with full force. I tune in the German radio, and I listen to their wild shouting, that they are coming to liberate the world from Jewish communism. The heart becomes heavy with sadness, one does not know what to do, where to run to, where to run and hide from the bombs falling on the city, because at least for the time being, the war between the Russians and Germans has not reached its full intensity. The Russians defend themselves very heroically, all the cities and villages around stand in flames, and in the end, the Russians set fire to all the magazines, and begin to retreat on all fronts. We are in great trouble, fleeing our street, where a great battle was going on, to the Warszawska *Gasse* at the Liebermans, in the cellar; but there were many Jews there with small children, crowded, so much so, that it was not possible to breathe, and when it got a little more quiet, (we) went back to our house; but again, we could not remain there, because there was fire all around us. We went into Latowicz's cellar, after which we lay there for a day at Zimmerman in the bakery.

Friday, at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the German patrol already appeared, and this threw a fright and terror on us Jews. By contrast, the Ukrainians and the Poles were very happy; they threw themselves on the magazines that the Soviets had left behind, full of food, leather, manufactured goods, and the distillery with whisky, and plundered all of it. It was first in the evening that we returned home, but we immediately received news that the Germans were beating and torturing Jews, cutting beards, and also shot a couple of Jews. The Ukrainians lifted up their heads, and also beat Jews. They put together a militia, and each time, took in another Jew and beat him.

The Germans issued an order that all Jews, women and men, between the ages of 16 and 60, must present themselves at the *Rynek* every morning at 7 o'clock to do work. At work, they were beaten and tortured, and the Jews were compelled to keep their heads down. A couple of us men, hid ourselves in the attics. On Sunday, June 31, in compliance with the order of the city commander, a *Judenrat* was created, with Schweitzer as 'President' at its head, who was not a normal individual – but rather someone who was insane. The *Judenrat* allocated people to work, to the extent that was demanded.

On that day, I permitted myself to go to the barber for a haircut. Sitting on the stool, two Germans happen inside, and ask me: '*Jude?*' I reply: '*Ja!*'—One then tears off the sheet [covering me] and

the second hits me across the back with a *nagaika*[172]. When I ask, '*Warum schlagen sie?*'—I get an additional good beating. Outside stood about 65 beaten and bloodied Jews that had been driven together, and 10 soldiers with firearms, driving us through the *Rynek*, while continuing to beat us. Wives, whose husbands were also being driven, attempted to protest, but the soldiers stabbed them with bayonets, and also beat them with the *nagaikas*. Among them were Jews between 70 and 80 years old. I was ashamed in front of the womenfolk, because that day happened to be exactly the market day, and they laughed at the way the Jews were being tortured. We were ordered to sing and whoever didn't sing was severely beaten; everyone sang for himself, and I sang '*Hatikvah*' for myself. After this, we were ordered to run; but not just run, but with all our might; the soldiers drove us on with their rifle butts, such that rivers of sweat ran off from us, as well as them, until we came to the train station. There, everyone had to load the train cars with work products, and iron rail tracks, and in going up onto the train cars, we were beaten, over the head and in the face, until blood ran, until the locomotive carried us off to Hrebenne. There, beside the train, about 100 soldiers were also working, who treated us a little differently already, and after a day of work, we were brought back home. After this, I hid myself at home, and no longer went out into the street, nor did I go into the city.

In the meantime, news arrived that 2,000 Jews were killed outright in Lemberg, and another 15,000 were taken away to an unknown destination, or where they had arrived. And very ominous and sad news arrives from all over Eastern Galicia, that the Ukrainians had killed about 30,000 Jews. In our area and vicinity, the Gestapo seized about 250 Jews, allegedly because they were communists, and to this day there is no trace of what happened to them.

The Judenrat

The *Judenrat*, which the authorities put in place as an extortion mechanism, levied a 5,000 mark charge against everyone, and also, on behalf of the Germans, plundered all the good furniture, decorations, leather, store-bought coats, boots, foodstuffs, nails, benzene, dyes, and everything that the Germans could make use of the *Judenrat* was compelled to provide. The 'President' Schweitzer, a mad dog, beat the Jews, and anyone he got mad he accused of being a communist, and this carried with it the odor of a death sentence. Who, this Schweitzer was, nobody knew: when the Russians were with us – he was a porter, and under the Germans, the city commandant made him the President, placing our beloved Dr. Mandel under his hand. But since he felt that Dr. Mandel was his competitor, he argued with the *Gestapo* that this greatly regarded Dr. Mandel should be taken away and to this day nobody knows what became of him. At that point, Schweitzer was able to continue with is way of doing things, beating anyone he wanted to, and robbing whatever he wanted. For the Germans, and for himself, he arranged comfortable quarters, and Jewish girls served him a long time, until a fresh district commandant arrived, who saw that the '*Jude*' Schweitzer is not a normal person, and ordered elections to the '*Judenrat*.'

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172 A Cossack whip.

Schweitzer, at this point was not placed on the slate of candidates. Seeing that he was lost, he then informed that the candidates agitated for themselves, and the Germans canceled the election. Two weeks later elections were again held, and 12 residents of Rawa were elected from among the intelligentsia, merchants and workers. The dentist, Herman Lippel was elected to be President. They continued to carry out the same activities, but in a more civilized fashion; it was possible to complain and there were no more beatings. Naturally, when the Germans wanted to beat a Jew, in order to amuse themselves, the *Judenrat* was not able to help, because it was not only once that a member of the *Judenrat* himself was on the receiving end of such a beating. On one occasion, the Judenrat was assembled and taken to the police, and were asked for: 3 store-bought coats, 5 decoration items, and 15 pairs of boxed-boots – The chief of the gendarmerie gave R' Mendl'eh Seif a blow to the midriff, and he had to lie in bed for 8 days.

On one occasion, when the Jewish labor authority provided several Jews to the gendarmerie for work, and the gendarmes wanted to make sport of the Jews, they released a ram, to let the Jews try and catch it, if not, they would be shot. And when it was finally caught, they released it a second time indicating it was to be caught again, and the Jews should run after it, with sweat running off them, and they [sic: the gendarmes] with great laughter, amused themselves. After capturing the ram, they were ordered to quickly push an auto, in order to get it started. So they pushed it, but the auto refused to turn over, so the wild commandant descended on the young Jewish boys, and beat them murderously.

One time, 2 gendarmes with the commandant Klein came to me at home, allegedly to look for a radio apparatus. My wife and daughter declare to them, that two soldiers from the army had a long time ago confiscated it; but they make an inspection of the drawers, in the night stands, up in the attic, and they found nothing, because I hadn't prepared it for them. Becoming angry, he sadistically stepped on my daughter, and seeing that she had a fur jacket, he immediately ordered it to be taken to his office, for his lover.

In the meantime, we received bad news from Lemberg, indicating that a ghetto was being created and that the elderly or the crippled were being taken away, with the supposition that they were being shot. Younger men and women were being taken away to do work. Jews must leave their place of residence and move over into the ghetto. During the transfer of belongings in a small wagon, the German calls away the owner, and the hired peasant rides off with the possessions to wherever he wants. Stories of this kind are heard every day. The blood in one's arteries becomes congealed our of sheer terror. And immediately a woman comes traveling from Brzezany and tells that the Ukrainians had shot 80 Jews there, including her husband and 2 sons, who lie buried in a pit. They burned alive a son of the *Rebbe* of Belz along with 5 Jews. One hears about such murdering going on, to the extent that one lives day and night in terrifying fright.

In the German newspaper, we read how Goebbels rains down fire and brimstone on the Jews, and levels the accusation against them, that the Jews are guilty of causing America to enter the war. The Jew is beaten before everyone. If the army suffers a defeat on the front – the Jew is beaten, If a gendarme wants a small golden watch or a pair of box-boots, the Jew is beaten, and threatened with

being shot, or taken away by the thousands to a camp. And Jews sell off the last shirt on their backs and give everything away, because each of them wants to remain alive.

I organized about 40 Jewish men, and we go off into the forest as forest-workers. I am the group leader. For the day's work, all we earn is 2 zlotys apiece, and we go into the forest on foot, 8 km. there, and 8 km. back, but one is content, that one is able to get out of the city for the entire day. We receive special permission to go, good for 15 days, and for arranging this permission, the *Judenrat* takes 3 zlotys from each of us. A large portion of us go into the forest hungry. While it was still warm outside, I would go into the nearby village of Siedliska to peasants of my acquaintance and begged potatoes from them, which we roasted and ate.

It was in this way that we lived in fear and fright; from other cities, they say, with us in Rawa it is still like the Land of Israel. But what we hear, going on in other cities, it is much worse, as for example: In Kamionka Strumiłowa[173] they took away 750 Jews including pregnant women and children, and took them to nobody knows where; In Jaworów all the Jews were driven into a ghetto, they were robbed, beaten and killed. Only one God in heaven knows what is going to happen to us, but for the time being we live in constant fear, because if things do not go well at the front for our masters, they will decide to take a reckoning with us; but we live with hope, that Our God, Blessed be He, will protect us.

We hear from Lemberg that the terror there does not abate, that Jews are shot and killed in the streets. Also in Rawa, when an elderly Jewish man, 70 years of age, went out of the house, and only upon coming out of the house first put on his yellow badge, the officer saw this, and he was immediately taken into custody, he never came back again. Even the Poles and Ukrainians, naturally the perpetrators themselves, began themselves to speak up, that the barbarism of the Germans was too much already. They saw: in Rawa Ruska there was a prisoner's camp of 12,000 men, out of which only a couple of hundred remained. The remnant had died out from hunger and from being beaten. Every day, [the dead] are taken out to the Wolkowica [Forest], where those who were murdered are buried, using a tractor, from 80 to 90 dead [at a time]. On Mondays, two such trips are made. All Jewish prisoners were shot to death.

Now, the conflagration had enveloped the entire world and the Germans hold the Jews responsible – 'International Jewry.' We are living in great fear because we see what awaits us. It is now Christmastime, and the *Judenrat* is once again taking effects from homes, and money, for the German employers. Yesterday, 3 Jews traveled into the forest for wood, and near Hrebenne, the soldiers dragged them down from the wagons, and shot them. All of Lemberg was plundered, and approximately 40,000 Jews, women and children [included] were taken away. Twenty families live in one house. The creation of the ghetto was extended until January 3, 1942, because it was not possible to transfer all of the Jews from the Aryan parts of the city in such a short time.

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173 Kamianka-Buzka is a city in Lviv Oblast, of western Ukraine. It is the administrative center of Kamianka-Buzka (district). The city was previously known as **Kamianka Strumiłova**, and was a district city in Galicia. From 1918 to 1939 it was part of Poland, and called **Kamionka Strumiłowa**, was the capital of a county of the Tarnopol Voivodeship.

On Saturday January 3, 1942 two Jewish men and a woman were again shot, without any reason, and with no warning. The woman, who lived with a husband and two children on the Shabel'nya, was going into the city to obtain bread, and so the soldiers shot her. Out of grief, the husband lost his mind.

On Sunday, prominent Jews of the city were arrested, such as Prof. Tenenbaum, Dr. Spatz, and others, with the underscored demand that all Jews must surrender their fur clothing. Accordingly, heavy coats, store-bought coats, taken down fur collar pieces and *shtrymels* were turned over and not a piece of fur was left in any house. Also all items of gold were confiscated, in order to prepare 2 kg. of gold as a fine-contribution that was levied on the Jews of Rawa. Jewish lives, and Jewish property became worthless.

Once again, gendarmes go about the city, beating Jews, with the claim that they are wearing dirty insignias. On the Sabbath, they encountered a '*minyan*,' that was praying, and each participant was forced to pay a fine of 10 zlotys. It was told that in Brzezany, the Jews themselves were ordered to dig a pit, in which they were buried alive.

We lack the facility with pen and ink to describe the feral nature and the barbarism; who knows if we will be able to endure it. It is said that if a Jew is encountered outside of the city, he is to be shot immediately with no warning. The hunger is great among a large part of the Jews, and they are frozen by the cold. With me and my daughter, until now, thank God, there has been no hunger or cold, because we had provided ourselves with food and flour, and also wood, until the summer. God should only help that we remain alive and that I will have the privilege to see both of my children back from Russia.

As we read between the lines of the German newspapers, because we are forbidden to listen to radio, the Germans have suffered substantial defeats from Russian attacks, but we live in constant fear, that it not result in falling on our heads; [this is] because we keep hearing of a variety of Jewish troubles, of how Jews are tortured and killed, and that it is not permitted to leave one place and go to another.

The 2 kg. of gold that had been put together was given over to the *Gestapo*, and the extermination-group traveled off. There is a huge epidemic in the city of intestinal typhus and spotted typhus, from which many people die. The epidemic is mostly among Christians, but German soldiers die as well. Out of aggravation, I contracted a throat ailment, and every day, I suffer severe attacks. How long this is going to last, and will we be able to overcome these troubles, we do not know; we live on hope, and days and nights go by with only thinking, and sleeplessness.

On Saturday January 17, 1942, four *Gestapo* agents came into Rawa with 5 freight trucks, with the demand that The Rawa district provide 250 men to go to a labor camp. Belonging to this district were: Potelycz, Nemierow, Lubavitch, Magierow, and Uhniv. On Sunday, they already began seizing people in all of these cities, even in sleep; it was a frightening thing; the small cities seized rural Jews. The Ukrainian militia made a significant haul, taking in such items as golden watches, decorative items, fabric from Bielsk, and whoever gave them bribes, they let off, and took others

who were poor. In Rawa, the wealthier children were seized on Sunday, and the *Judenrat* took 2-3 thousand zlotys from them and let them go. In contrast, on Monday and Tuesday, they took people who, for all this time, had kept themselves hidden. On Tuesday, they loaded them onto the trucks. There were 170 Jews taken from Rawa.

Before traveling off, the *Gestapo* demanded for 20 minutes, to have the 8 richest Jews, and if this was not done, they would show what they can do. The [*Judenrat*] President Lippel began to negotiate with them, and gave them 3 kilograms of gold and diamonds, and they went off in the direction of Tarnopol.

In between, a roundup action was conducted, of foodstuffs, and warm clothing, because there was a frost of 25 degrees. There was a great sorrow in the city, and the outcries and weeping went up into the heart of the heavens. Afterwards we heard that part of them were sent to Vynnyky to a labor camp and the rest to Brzezany, to work there on the roads and snow removal, 10 hours a day, getting 20 dkg of bread and twice a day, a bit of soup with horsemeat. The oversight was done by the S.S. and the Ukrainians, and whoever grew weakened to the point of being unable to work, was immediately shot. Whoever had money, could buy himself out, and flee.

And so, indeed, was the case with a boy of our acquaintance, who had the chance to flee. After paying money, he came [back] with frozen feet, such is the appearance of the new order of civilization, where at every step and every turn there is illegal payments, bribery, robbery and murder only directed at the defenseless Jews.

My son Shimon and I, work in the forest as wood processors. All of a sudden, an order comes to fire all of the Jews. The forest rangers replaced us with 2 Ukrainians. But since they made very significant damaging mistakes, he called us back. We received good papers with medical certification of good health, so that we could move about freely in the entire area, and we were fortunate that we were not under detention.

Today is February 10. The soldiers in the hinterland are sent off to the front. It appears that their situation is not the best. They are sad, they know that certain death awaits them. So let them perish! But with us Jews it is very much not good. In all cities and towns, the isolation grows, along with fear and hunger. A kilogram of potatoes costs 2 zlotys already, a kg of brown-bread flour, milled on a brazier cost 9 zlotys. The poorer element of the populace, whether Jewish or gentile are hungry, and the members of the *Judenrat* tear from the dead and the living, on behalf of the German and Ukrainian administration, and threat of noncompliance is jail or being shot.

Today they demanded that we furnish 30 rooms with furniture for a German home for children, and the children were to be brought from Germany. In the city, many people lay sick, and every day 8-10 of them die. Up to this point, people still were able to make [sort of] a 'living' from selling off everything that they had, such as decorative items, shirts, linens, something of a manufactured item, a wagon, a sleigh, other household effects, such as bath items, pails, and containers. Now the money had run out, and there were no more takers, and everything became cheap. All the fur items were given away to the authorities and when someone buried something in the ground, which would for

sure rot, he feared to dig it up and retrieve it. Every day, one grows more poor, more hungry, and collapse threatens. In the city, terror reigns even more intensely, part of the Poles registered themselves as *Volksdeutsche* and together with the Ukrainians, receive appointments as *Gestapo*-agents. They go about making inspections among the Jews, allowing themselves to be bought off and in this manner, the very last is extracted from the Jews.

As is discussed, a number of streets are being readied and being appropriated only for the Jews, my street, 'Fredera' will also be among these, and Jews are already making the move into our quarter, in order not to wait until the last minute, when a panic will likely ensue. The Jewish plight once again was thrown into sharp relief, after Hitler's speech to exterminate the Jews. 500 Jews were led out of Tomaszow-Lubelski and taken to Cieszanow. Of these, 14 were shot, because they didn't stand exactly in the ranks. Those younger than 42 years of age were left behind for work. In Cieszanow, people are dying in the streets from hunger.

On the 3rd and 4th of March 1942, there was a cavalry mustering in Rawa, for the military. So the Germans took older Jews out of the houses, told them to kneel and to beat their breasts while reciting *'Al Khet,'* all the while beating them with whips until they drew blood, to the laughter of the thousands of peasants. The previous district-commandant went off to Sambor and the commandant from Chelm came to Rawa. He immediately called the *Judenrat* and demanded 3 things:

1. All the streets must be cleaned off of snow by 10 o'clock in the morning.

2. By March 15, through a building engineer, the house of Gorky is to be renovated and repainted.

3. By March 15, it is mandatory to provide 15 newly furnished furniture sets for salons, dining rooms, and kitchens. If not, he will do as he did in Chelm, there he exterminated 1200 Jews. The city is very frightened, because where is that much furniture to be gotten? Because since the 9 months of the occupation, the nicest and best furniture had already been taken away from the Jews. They are having no fortune at the fronts, the Bolsheviks attack them vigorously, and when they are beaten, they take it out on the Jews.

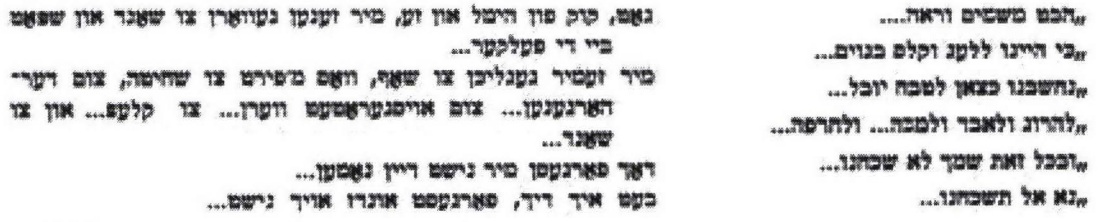
It is already 3 weeks to Passover, and nobody is giving any thought to the holiday. Costs get higher from day to day, and only worse news comes from the provincial cities, and one city can't help another.

On March 3, 1942 a great calamity befell the populace of Rawa Ruska. The German gendarmerie together with the Ukrainians fell upon the entire city, seizing about 1,000 elderly men, women with children, and led them off into a garage. They were not permitted to take along any sort of small parcel, and the frost stood at 15 degrees, without a morsel of bread, naked and barefoot, they were packed in without any possibility even to sit, and were forced to perform their bodily functions on one another.

They found themselves there until March 22 and after that, they were led off to the train station.

There, they were sorted out, the men separately, and the children also separately, after tearing them away from the hands of their mothers. Among these were venerable elderly Jewish men, and women with 4-5 children, entire families, and also single individuals from families. Two children had already died the night before in the garage. The weeping and outcries reached the very heavens, and where they were taken – we do not know.

The panic in the city is indescribable, with everyone hiding themselves in every nook, wherever it is only possible. After, the Jews were taken away, the houses were left empty, and in order not to permit the gentiles to plunder them, the *Judenrat* locked the houses and posted guards. What is going to happen afterwards – nobody knows. One cannot sleep for whole nights. Hitler is carrying out his extermination plan, against us innocent Jews, and only a miracle can save us. Well, for us middle-aged people, everything is as one: but the heart is extremely pained on behalf of the innocent little children! I am severely beaten down and I pen my prayer:



Page 237: ***The Prayer***

[Lord,] look down from heaven and see...
For we have become a shame and mockery among the nations...
We are thought of as sheep being led to the slaughter, to be killed...
To be killed, exterminated...beaten...shamed...
Despite all this, we have not forgotten Your Name...
We beseech thee, do not forget us...

On the second day, a fresh decree was issued. Regarding the sacred place, the old cemetery, which was in place now for over 500 years, it was demanded of the Jews that they dismantle it in the course of 8 days: the headstones were to be uprooted, and the wall around it broken down, and if not, the city-commissar threatens to shoot and kill thousands of Jews. Each day, 500 people work at this task, also women and girls. But the ground is still intensely frozen. The longer of the headstones are deeply sunken into the earth, and it is physically very difficult to carry out this task in such a short period of time.

And now, yet another fresh decree. The Jews must clean off the main streets, and move over to the Jewish quarter. In the process of so moving, each individual drags along or carries whatever little household effects still remain with them, because all of the new and good things have long ago been taken away by the *Judenrat,* and should a German see something during this move, or one of the gendarme servants, something else that might be of some worth, and it pleases him – he takes it away immediately for his own use.

Since Hitler is unable to launch his promised springtime offensive against the Bolsheviks, he turns his forces against the Jews, and it is against the Jews that it is focused, one hundred percent. We hear that, in all of the cities and towns of Poland, the extermination action is being carried out with full force. My heart is extremely pained over my four little grandchildren, whom I love very much. I have no fear for my own life, but I am extremely disturbed that we are being led like sheep to the slaughter, and we have no way to defend ourselves. It is only God who can help us, and if God forbid, not so, then we are all lost.

It is already the time of Passover, and the city groans, everyone asking if it will be possible for Hitler to uproot and exterminate all the Jews of Europe. The *Judenrat* again gathers up a quarter million zlotys, it is taken and one gives away the last of what one has, and one thinks that maybe it will be possible to save one's life.

We hear no signs of life from the Jews that were taken away. According to what we hear, they were all wiped out. At the cemetery, they were almost done with the extraction of the gravestones, and the city-commissar gave an order that by April 15, the entire area of the cemetery is to be paved with the all the headstones. The reason is that he wants to turn it into a park, a garden in which to promenade. And all this is to be done by Jewish hands.

But all of these things are not at all for us. If only we will be able to save our lives. History has no record of such barbarism... Is it possible, God forbid, that the entire Jewish people be wiped out? God, see our pain...! Everyone goes about in a state of confusion, one asks the other, what will be the end of all this... we do not know, whether our brethren outside of the country know of our misfortune... whether even the German people knows of this terrifying barbarism that is ongoing here, that to beat or shoot a Jew is the same as killing a fly... even the peasants can no longer look at our plight... God, you alone see, God...!

Today is Passover, and the entire Jewish populace of the city is dragging out the remnants of the headstones from the sacred place [sic: cemetery]. Today, the first day of Passover, a rumor came out, that once again, Jews will be seized, and so everyone fled, in whatever direction was possible, into the villages and woods. There is a famine in the city, there are no potatoes, no matzos; the butchers actually tried to slaughter two cattle, and so the Ukrainian militia robbed all of the meat along with the proceeds from its sales.

From Lemberg, each day, from 18-20 wagon loads of Jews are taken to Belzec, and it is rumored that the barbarians are exterminating the elderly, women, and children, with an electrical current, and it is only the younger people – who are harassed with hard labor. A woman asked a German gendarme: 'Where are we being taken?' – And he answered: 'To your death.' This is the way innocent Jewish children are being murdered according to a careful plan, and in cold blood, while nobody asks: 'Why?' And the rest wander about frightened, and as if they were also dead.

Today is April 22, 1942. It is 10 months since Hitler attacked Soviet Russia. The front is in the same place as it was in November 1941. The promised offensive – is not going on. All we hear is that

England and America are intensely bombing Germany, but the offensive, the uprooting and extermination of the Jews, continues on. Nevertheless, since April 15, the wagon-transports to Belzec have ceased. The reason for this is not known. It is said that this reflects pressure on Germans outside of the country, but the Jews continue to live in a state of terrifying fear.

Yesterday was a good day; rumors spread through the city that peace is coming in a short while, that a schism has developed within the German military, but we know nothing for certain. In the streets, a couple of German soldiers tore off the sleeve armbands from the Jews, and said they were no longer required. The essential thing, however, was that we lived with hope, that already in the year 1942, this tragic play, especially for the Jews, would end favorably. Help us, Master of the Universe!

In the meantime, the German gendarmes and the Ukrainian police are seizing many Jews from the provincial towns such as, Nemierow, Magierow, Uhniv, Lubaczow and Holyszyc, and they are brought to Rawa to do work. One works 10-12 hours, on the streets and in other camps. There is no bread given any longer, only a bit of potato soup, and all fall down from [a loss of] strength. In Lubaczow, a Jew named Klahr attempted to flee, and a Ukrainian military person immediately shot him.

The trains to Belzec meanwhile had ceased to run. Nevertheless, the peasants, that ride by that location, continue to tell, that it is possible to detect, at a distance, [the odor of] burned flesh, and no matter how many gentiles are sent there, it is not possible to arrive at the truth. It is said that military personnel continue to live there, but in general something there is not quite right. In the meantime, there was a great hunger, a kg, of bread costs -- 15 zlotys. The municipal administration stopped distributing the 10 kg. portions of bread. Everything one has is sold off, in order to buy a portion of bread, or a kg. of potatoes, that costs 5 zlotys. I go into the forest every day in order to harvest wood. I earn 6.30 zlotys a day, but I have not received a disbursement since March 15. My son Shimon ad I go every day for 20-30 km. into the forest, but we are very satisfied, that we are able to get out of the city. We can move about freely there, nobody can touch us, and nobody has any control over us. May our Blessed God help us, and just let us remain alive, because in the labor camps people die from being beaten, from hunger, and from spotted typhus. In some of the cities, such as Zamocz and Lublin, many of the Jews were shot dead, and the rest taken off. Also, in the case of the village Jews, their fields are taken away along with their cattle, and the Germans are unable to quench their thirst for blood. In the city, whoever was capable of doing so, make themselves bunkers, in order to have a hiding place at times when seizures of people occur.

Today is May 24, the *Isru-Khag* of *Shavuot*. I want to write more: But from where to begin – I do not know. The heart is full of pain, should I write about the village Jews, from whom all of their worth was taken away, after the hard work of generation upon generation, and driven out of their domiciles. Or should I write as to how all the Jews were taken away from the Tomaszow vicinity, places like: Narol, Cieszanow, Jarczew, Tyszowce, and £aszczów , and it is now the third day, and where they are being kept in an encampment, nobody knows, nor what *The Beast* is thinking of doing with them. Or shall I write about how Jews are shot in the street, or about the child laborers, that 6 months ago were taken off to 'Jaktorów' and 50% of them came back and the remainder were all

shot to death, or they died of hunger and from typhus. Those who came back were half-dead, scrawny, weak and broken, with frozen hands and feet. I write the number, how 3,000 Jews are working in forced labor, and receive no bread, and work this way for 12 hours in a state of fasting; or about the fact that the *Judenrat* continues to rob, and that the Jews must sell off the last of their belongings for half their worth, in order to support the German administration. There is ones thing that I can write about briefly, how *The Beast* revels in its gruesome anger, and only the people whose bitter fate it is not to have yet been exterminated, still carry themselves about with the hope that they will yet remain alive. We live in very crowded conditions, or three families in one room, and on top of this, the village Jews have arrived, and should it happen that the house appeals to an Aryan, he goes to the authorities and immediately receives an order that the Jew must vacate the house.

Now, the former president, Schweitzer has insinuated himself into the graces of the municipal commissar, and continuously informs, on the people of the city, giving out a variety of orders that must cost the *Judenrat* hard-to-raise tens of thousands.

Today is June 1, 1942. After the previous day, after the Rawa Jews overcame the process of having about 5,000 people, men, women and children, from the age of 14 up, compelled to work from 5 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock in the evening, 15 hours without any break; part of them cleaning the Christian streets of the city, part worked by the old *Sacred Place,* where approximately 4,000 headstones had been hacked apart and broken up, and a yard made out of everything. Because the municipal commissar had threatened that if this was not accomplished, he would 'send off' 4,000 Jews from the city, and such 'sending off,' as we already know, implies certain death. So everyone worked, from the small to the grown up, everyone exerting themselves beyond their normal strength. Also one million zlotys was put together, at his order, but for how long we had appeased *The Beast*, we do not know.

Today, I happened to encounter a young man, who was able to come back from the labor camp 'Jaktorów,' while having fallen ill with typhus, he was sent to the hospital and from there he came back home with frozen feet. There – he tells – there is a terrifying commandant with 30 additional Ukrainian militiamen, who, when the mood moves them, shoot Jews like flies. One time, 400 Jews were brought there to work, and the commandant – with a smile – asks them, if anyone feels weak or sick; they thought that if so, they would be sent back home, so a large part of them indicated that they were sick. He then led them off 20 men at a time and in this way shot 123 people. Occasionally, if he feels like it, he select workers, orders them to lie down on a bench, one Ukrainian holds him by the head, and a second holds his feet, and then two Ukrainians with *nagaikas* deliver 25 lashes. They deliver the blows with the same force as a smith hitting a piece of heated, glowing iron, and every two lashes are counted as one. This is how the wild animal runs rampant. In addition to this, we have our own parasites in the *Judenrat*, who live off the account of the Jews. My luck, for the time being, is that I have installed a small still in the woods, where one is able to work without being beaten, and thereby, I was able to organize at this work my children and an additional 40 Jewish men and 20 women.

Today is June 1, 1942. There is much to write about, if one wishes to write about Jewish troubles: Full trains of Jews are being transported from the vicinity of Cracow and Tarnow, to Belzec to be

exterminated. The trains, with 30-40 sealed cars, each containing from 70-80 Jews, guarded by *Gestapo* troops at the front and rear. The pitiful children, stick their little hands through the small windows , closed off with grates begging for a bit of water and it is not possible to approach them. They, as it appears, have no idea where they are being taken.

In the forests around Rawa, armed bands have been organized. They cast a fear into the entire area, and there are those among them, many wounded and dead gendarmes. Yesterday they encountered a Jew from Rawa, Yankl Zommer, who was in Siedliska, in connection with a bit of foodstuffs, and he was shot, a Jewish [father] of 3 small children. Hunger is very great, but the central trouble is, that the so-called 'Relocation-*aktion*' with the great incitement against the Jews, and the fact that the 'Extermination-*aktion*' in Poland is proceeding at full tilt. Two or three times a week, hundreds of train cars pass through Rawa carrying Jews to Belzec to be exterminated.

Today is the 21st day of June 1942, and it is now a year's time since Hitler ימ"ש attacked Russia. I am not in a position to assess how many lives of young people this has already cost, but the bloodletting is greatest among the Jewish people, for nothing and for no reason, but only because of the [depraved] madness of one man. One works hard and bitterly, engaging in such work that has no purpose, and has no use, and are only designated to exhaust Jews, but at every minute there is hope that the work will save one from being 'relocated.'

This week, in Jaworów, the Germans demanded 13 Jews from the *Judenrat* to be shot, and the *Judenrat* satisfied their wishes. The members of the various *Judenrat* organizations also lost their humanity, they became cold-blooded murderers without pity. They rob, beat, and turn over Jews , as sacrifices, they fill their pockets and live off everyone else's account. There is no one to whom to complain that our lives and possessions are considered as having no worth.

Newspapers bring us news of small victories of the axis nations (Germany, Italy, and others); but the Allies (England, America) are only having gatherings conferences, and only vocalize, indicating that they will take an account, but in the meantime, nothing is seen happening. Here, everything ticks along like a clock: every Tuesday and Friday, approximately 45-50 train cars, loaded with Jews, come through Rawa. Mothers on board put up their little children to the grated windows of the cattle cars in order to get a breath of fresh air. They cry out at the train station and beg – water. The Poles carry over a bit of water and for a small pot they take 5-10 zlotys. No Jewish worker who works at the train station is allowed near the train.

We are unable to accurately assess how many Jews are already missing from Poland, because one not does accurately know what is going on in other cities. We are not permitted to go, and also not to travel, [and can only rely on] what one becomes aware of from a gentile. In all, I estimate that there already is a drop of 30-40 percent. Because according to what we hear from other cities, the circumstances in Rawa are actually better. In the year 1941, there were approximately 8,400 Jews here, and today there are not more than 6,400, meaning that in Rawa 25 percent are missing, of these 80 percent were killed or sent to Belzec, and the rest died from hunger and fear. This is what is meant by conditions in Rawa being not so bad; because in other cities like: Cracow, Lublin, Zamocæ,

where there are many Jews, today, were already '*Judenrein*.' No person outside the country would believe what is happening to the Jewish people in Poland, We are like between the fangs of wolves, and thorns along the side also continue to stick us in the sides. If you talk to a Pole or a Ukrainian, he will dig up a variety of reasons that go back 400 and 500 years, when our ancestors had suffered profanations, or rented out churches, and the gentiles, at the time of a baptism or wedding, were compelled to pay off a Jew, and now they are paying us back. How foolish and specious were these arguments. We are forced to listen to this, staying silent, and shaking our heads. As helpless as we are, leading us to the slaughter, we stretch out our necks for the cutting blow. Not only once, did it come up in conversation that maybe we should organize ourselves, connect with others in other cities, not to carry out an order, or to entirely mount an outright resistance – to which the reply is that it will only make things worse. [The fear is that] they would kill out the entire city, and so it goes from day to day. One hears that so many were taken out of the city, and in a second city, so many were shot, and one becomes inured to the situation. At the time what a train to Belzec goes through, it becomes very heavy on the heart. But if a day goes by, one forgets, and any minute, and every minute that one is not touched. And that is how the Jewish people of Poland are brought down!

On June 24, I was given a written order that I must vacate my entire house in the space of 48 hours, which is occupied by 8 families – more than 30 souls, and turn it over to the German firm 'Stickel.' After, a long amount of effort, and expending considerable energy, giving up on eating and giving up on sleep, until I built it up, and now – I must vacate.



Page241: The Wolfuss Family הי"ד

We were driven out like fledglings from the nest.

I went over to my sister Malka. My daughter, with 3 children went away separately and my son Shimon, with his wife and child extra. All the household effects were divided up among the neighbors, and we were barely able to cram ourselves in with my sister, where it was very crowded and humid.

On June 25 a bitter destruction descended on the *shtetl* of Magierow. Everyone in the shtetl was seized, and taken away to Belzec. Of the 1,100 souls, 800 were taken away, about 100 fled, of which a portion were shot at while they fled, and they fell on the roads.

A part of them hid out with gentiles, but on the second day, the Germans bruited about and let everyone know, that if a Jew is found with anyone, all will be shot. The peasants were instilled with fear, and turned over 30 Jewish women, along with men and children, and they were taken away to Belzec. After the *Gestapo* then plundered everything in Magierow, it became *Judenrein*.

On the 27th Rawa lived through a great terror, during which rumors spread that there was going to be an *aktion* of seizing people. People ran into the fields and forests, and hiding in attics and cellars. There was a fear that it was going to take place during this week.

Also, the Gypsies are being murdered *en masse*. This week, in Lubaczow, 80 Gypsies were shot, and 8 Jews buried them, after which the 8 Jews were killed.

One lives in a state of constant fear, being afraid of one's own shadow. We hear no word of comfort, we have no leader who should look after us. Yes, we do have the members of the *Judenrat,* who work for the Germans, and do nothing for us; all they do is rob and steal.

Today is the 11th of July. On Wednesday and Saturday, transports full of Jews in 50 cattle cars pass through on their way to Belzec. From the outside world, we hear speeches against the extermination of the Jews, the Cardinal spoke, Thomas Mann spoke – and here, the transports continue to run without surcease.

Pole and Ukrainians are also dragged off to slave labor in Germany. And we find ourselves in a state of confusion, in fear and fright, in great hunger, and we see no salvation. We are waiting for the execution of the death sentence, that Hitler had promulgated against us. Since February 1942, according to my estimate, Poland is missing 50 percent of its Jews. Even the families that still exist, are broken, because a large part of them are missing. We know, that our brethren outside the country have tremendous sympathy for us, but they can do nothing to help us. We are hoping for a miracle.

Today is the 19th of July. This week was a terrifying week in Rawa. On the Warsaw *Gasse*, near to where I live, a division of the Killer-gendarmerie took up residence in the house of Abraham-Itcheh Marz, and in a second nearby house, the Ukrainian police took up residence. They seized Jews, tortured them, beat them, ordered them to lie face down and beat them murderously, and afterwards took all of them off to Belzec. Once again, people ran to hide, wherever they could find a place, it was said, that an extermination-aktion was going to be carried out for the Rawa region. Jews were being continuously brought into Rawa from all the surrounding locations, for purposes of being dispatched. It became desirable that this happen already, because there was no sight of any help. We are suffering from great hunger, and people's appearance changes to the point that one does not recognize the other.

Today is July 22, the Eve of *Tisha B'Av*. There is no way to equate to destruction of Jerusalem to our destruction. The extermination-*aktion* does not stop. We curse the English, they being held responsible, because they have time to wait with their offensive, and we, in the meantime are being exterminated.

Now, after July 29th I am again going to write, with trembling hands, about this great destruction, that has befallen me and that small remnant of Jews in Rawa. On this day, the *Gestapo* took up residence in the city, and carried out a seizure-aktion for shipment to Belzec. They seized: mothers and children, old folks, cripples, young beautiful daughters with sons, Rabbis, Torah sages, the sick that

were dying, and me among them, and also my sister with her children and grandchildren. We were taken to a place on the Grunwaldska *Gasse*, inspected by the *Gestapo* with Ukrainian police, forced to lie face down on the ground, and they beat us with iron and wooden staves, and the voices and crying reached up to the heavens.

The pen, is an inadequate means with which to describe the gruesomeness, the barbarism, the murderousness visited upon small children. In addition, 800 Jews were brought from, and they gathered up about 1200 from Rawa. With my own hands, I had to carry into the truck those who could not crawl up themselves [including], my sister and her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, and other sick and crippled people, and this is how, along with the former *Judenrat* President, Schweitzer, who was afterwards also sent off, loaded up five trucks to Belzec. Remaining in the remnant that was arrayed in rows, in order to proceed on foot, and so I walked over to the head man and showed him my credentials as a woodsman. He showed this to the murderer, the Major, and he set me free, and I went off to the house.

But I am satisfied with one thing, that with my 16 hours of fatiguing exertion and suffering, I meanwhile rescued 25 people from certain death. Because, the Ukrainian policeman that discovered and opened our bunker, and gave a shout of 'Get out' – caused me, my sister and Shlomo Schmidt to come out, and he corralled us and when he took us to the place, the remnants left behind, in the meantime -- we were approximately about 30 people, among them my wife, my sister Malka – all fled, hiding themselves in various places and when the Ukrainian and the *Gestapo* returned to do an inspection, they found no one. For the time being, they were, in this way, rescued. The threnodies from the *Book of Lamentations* are of no use against the current destruction.

Every other day, a trainload of 50-60 cars passes through. In Belzec they are poisoned with gas. People jump off the train cars, a part of which succeed in saving themselves, and a part are shot. Also in Rawa, there were about 30 people who were shot, who said: 'We are not going, just shoot us here' – and so they were viciously tortured and shot afterwards.

I reckoned that I would no longer be able to write, but God helped and I can write further, but for how long – no one knows. As we hear, every week, over 100,000 Jews are murdered, from which I hold that it is very bad for us, and that we are [also] going to be killed out. We know that Hitler has lost the war, but we Jews are also lost.

Of those taken off to Belzec, about 60 people from Rawa jumped off the trains and now return back with broken limbs and severe wounds. One woman first threw her child off, and then jumped herself afterwards, and remained alive. A large part were killed.

One young lady, named Fleischer, begged for 5 minutes of time to speak. The commandant gave her permission to do so. So she said: 'You believe, we do not know, where you are taking us, you are taking us to Belzec to be incinerated. You have already killed my family of 21 souls, and now you want me as well. What murderers you are…! Hitler has lost the war, killing the Jews will not help you, and you will remain in history as barbarous murderers..!' And so the commandant shot her on the spot with his revolver. The most beautiful daughters and the best sons of Rawa had already been killed out.

O, woe upon us, we Polish Jews, three and a half million are being taken down, Two million have already been killed, suffering a surrealistically cruel death. We do not know what will happen to the remainder, and we are convinced that not one of us will remain alive, and God is watching and seeing how we are being murdered!

Woe unto our fate, and woe unto you, Germany, that you have such murderers, may their name and memory be erased, and we will erase their memory from those who would want to remember them...!!!

Germany will not kill off all the Jews of the world, at most it will be the Jews of Europe, and while the Jews in other countries will live to see the downfall of Germany, for us it is very bad. In addition to this, the Poles and Ukrainians jeer at us. When a Jew hides himself, they show the murderers the hiding place and the Ukrainians themselves seize and shoot them. Every day, without stopping, Jews are carted off to Belzec. There are Jewish intercessors, but they, themselves fall victim. Now, they too, are carted off to Belzec. Every family already has a broken heart. Every home weep and wails for its victims; one cannot eat, sleep, only to sigh and groan. *Oy, gevalt*, a curse on our fate...!

Today is August 9, 1942. The rom various cities panic in the city has not yet subsided. Every day, trains with Jews go to Belzec. Part of them do not know that they are going to their death. They think that they are traveling to do work. The executioners engage in various forms of subterfuge to deceive the people. On Friday and Saturday, Jews jumped from the train cars, that had come , something regarding what Belzec really meant. It was told to me that there are 3 barracks there, and 300 people go into each of the barracks, each with metal wall covering, into which the victims are driven in naked, men together with women. It is then closed up for 5 minutes, after which the gates open automatically, and the dead bodies are thrown out, and they are loaded on lorries to be taken away to be buried in pits. Everything is automatic. This is the way the murderers exterminate the innocent unarmed people.

In Rawa, each Jew makes for himself an underground place to hide, and all day long the only thing that is talked about is the ongoing murdering going on, there being nothing else on anyone's mind, thinking only of what one has to sell, except that the peasants have stopped buying. One schemes about ways to rescue one's self from the hands of this Angel of Death. For the time being, our luck is at a very low level, it can't get any worse. Every family is broken.

The Poles and the Ukrainians experience the 'glee of Jethro' – while externally the people show they are sorry for us, inside they experience pleasure. There will be a Poland without Jews. Jews are allegedly concealed, but when a seizure-*aktion* takes place, they drive the Jews out into the street, or they send the *Gestapo*, or the Ukrainian militia, who takes them away; and at that time, they pretend to be good people, acting like innocents, but simply want to euchre the Jews out of their household possessions.

It is August 16th. The wickedness has ascended to the highest level. A person cannot conceive, because there is no name in history that can be used to describe it; to say murder is not enough; by

comparison, barbarism is nothing; since the world was created, such things have never been heard of nor have they been seen; nothing of this sort ever took place among uncivilized nations and cannibals. The extermination of the Jewish people goes on continuously. Every day, Jews are led on one train from the line at Jaroslaw and one train from the Lemberg side, to Belzec. Along the way, people jump from the train cars, breaking hands and feet; afterwards, they fall into the hands of the Gestapo, who beat and then kill them, taking them afterwards into the forest, while they are still breathing, such that the earth moves and heaves.

It is already 10 days that a gruesome pogrom is underway in Lemberg, which is indescribable, and the city is almost *Judenrein*. There are already very few Jews in Rawa. One no longer sees a child in the street. One does not see a smile on the face of a Jew. At work, even the civilian Germans are beating with poles and with iron truncheons, one becomes crippled, and the Beasts take great pleasure from this agony. We Jews are like sheep, without a shepherd who would be able to say to us what to do. And so every day follows every day, and it always gets worse. In every village and every city, 70 percent of the Jews are already gone. If it will continue in this way – soon it will be an end to us. We can no longer sleep at night. Life no longer plays a role; everything that one has gets sold off for a pittance, if one can find a peasant to buy, because they no longer want to buy, and they say, no matter what, when we will be taken off to Belzec and we will end up leaving everything to them anyway. Therefore things cannot get any worse. Mothers bewail their children who have been driven off, men their wives, wives – their husbands, and this is how we are going towards total loss.

Today is the 20th of August. A flicker of hope entered the Jewish heart. As was conveyed to us, a second front has been opened from the West, and the Americans and the English have landed on the European continent. There is the hope that Hitler will be defeated, and maybe God will take pity on us and that small remnant of Jews will remain alive.

Many people do not believe that help can yet arrive, because everyone is very much beaten down. In the meantime, a train with Jews went, yet again, from the Jaroslaw region to Belzec. But I figure that they will be compelled to stop, because they will lose their senses. We see that the Germans are going around without their heads on. The Russians are attacking on all fronts, and now there is the western front; it is reckoned that yet another front will be opened, and they will have to surrender. In any event, a spark of hope was fanned inside our hearts.

The destruction in Lemberg is indescribable; in one hospital, all the Jewish patients were all shot and killed. One hospital was taken away, and many died along the way from the beatings they received; it is not possible to convey the nature of how gruesome this was in writing. Meanwhile, the *Judenrat* continues to take money and household effects from the poor and broken-hearted people. Foodstuffs have become a bit cheaper, and the peasantry, despite the fact that the murderers had hung out placards, that no Aryan may come in contact with Jews, pays no heed, and sells things to the Jews, because the Jews pay better prices. Possessions and money play no role, one only wishes to remain alive.

Oh, God, have pity on the few Jews and send them Your consolation; we are now only a tiny remnant; and if we are not worthy, do it for the sake of our ancestors the Patriarchs, or help us for

the sake of the remnant of innocent little children! Punish the wickedness of the murderers, and we should live to see their downfall!

We do not know if our brethren outside the country know exactly what is going on, and what is going on with us, because people who are not involved with creating such a *Gehenna* could not conceive of such bestial things. There are part of the Germans who mourn for us, but every German is a murderer! Behind our backs, our neighbors rub their hands and are regretful for us, and advise us to mount a resistance.

Today is the 24th of August 1942. The bestiality continues on. Once again, trains of Jews are taken to Belzec. Rawa once more has the fear of becoming *Judenrein*.

I want to return to the *aktion* of the 29th of July, in order to convey and write down the barbarity of these cold-blooded murderers. When I was then standing among a group of 50-60 Jews, that the Ukrainian police and the German gendarmerie had ousted from their hiding places, there was a 30 year-old woman, a pretty brunette with a head of curly hair, with a substantive and beautiful six-month old child, apparently a little boy, and she spoke German fluently. So she says the following to the head man: '*Herr Offizer*, perhaps, after all, you have a human heart, and perhaps you also have a wife and child, look and see, what a beautiful child this is.

Spare, I beg of you, the life of this small innocent child.'

The head man looked around, and found a thick branch from a tree and gave a shout:'*Wirst halten di schnauze?*![174]' – and with that, he gives her a whack over the back, with all of his might, causing the child to scream, and so he struck the child, such that both the child and the mother remained lying on the spot. And when an elderly woman attempted to go over and did not remain standing in her place – she was immediately shot.

The wife of Ben'cheh the Ritual Slaughterer, who was paralyzed, was ordered by the German to walk, and she could not. So he took her out of the house and shot her. Her husband, Ben'cheh the Ritual Slaughterer, he took with him. – That is how they murder us in cold blood!

We are told frightful and terrifying things that are happening in Lemberg; of Jews are being murdered, women with children. The Jew is worth nothing, and even the Ukrainians and Poles also hold that it is easier to kill a Jew than a mouse or a starling.

Belzec consumes Jews by the thousands every day.

The intense bombing of Germany, for the time being, does nothing to help us; The Madman still has time, and does with us what he wants. He continues to have time, for special executioners, with special trains, and everything continues to go on as if normally. Every day, one train or two, with 50-

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174 'Can you not hold your insolent tongue?!'

60 cars, goes by, each car containing approximately 100 Jews. It is done so that on each day, Belzec devours between 8 and 10 thousand Jews a day. We only see those trains that pass by Rawa, but whatever goes on in other lines and other cities, we do not know. Who knows if Poland has even a million Jews left; if it will keep up like this for even a little more time, not even a trace will remain of the Polish Jews. Maybe it will not be too late. We wait for miracles, the Jewish people have always had miracles. Maybe God will still have pity on us.

Today is August 31, 1942. It is three years now that Hitler has ignited a global conflagration. How much blood this has cost, how much in property has been wiped out, but no one else has so bitterly been impacted by the war as we, the Jews in Europe. Our entire worth, and lives have been relegated to nothingness, and whoever wants to, bathes himself in Jewish blood. Jews are used to do the most repulsive and hardest form of work; if anyone excuses himself from something, there is the Jew; we are beaten; we are killed, we are burned alive, our innocent women, small children, nursing children, are taken off to Belzec to be electrocuted. Sages, who sit day and night studying the Torah, old people, *Dayanim* and Rabbis are taken to Belzec and no one asks: Why and for what reason. We are regarded by the Germans, and have become a laughing stock and embarrassment to the peoples of the world. And every day, the transports of 50 cars run, from all the ends of Poland, to Belzec to extermination. It is in this manner that the promised National-Socialist new order is being carried out, and we stand with our hands inactive, waiting for help, and from whom can this help come. No one knows – only from God! And God, it would seem, has forgotten us.

Part of us wants to organize ourselves and seek to mount a resistance, but we lack a leader, an organizer, and the energy, and meanwhile, we grow less and less each day, and we cannot achieve this. Every day, the number of Jews in Poland declines. Every minute, in which they intend someone else and not you. In the *Judenrat*, the intent is to cover themselves, and to bury the next person. But now, they see, that they too are not exempt, because from all of the cities that are already *Judenrein*, all the *Judenrat* members were also taken away.

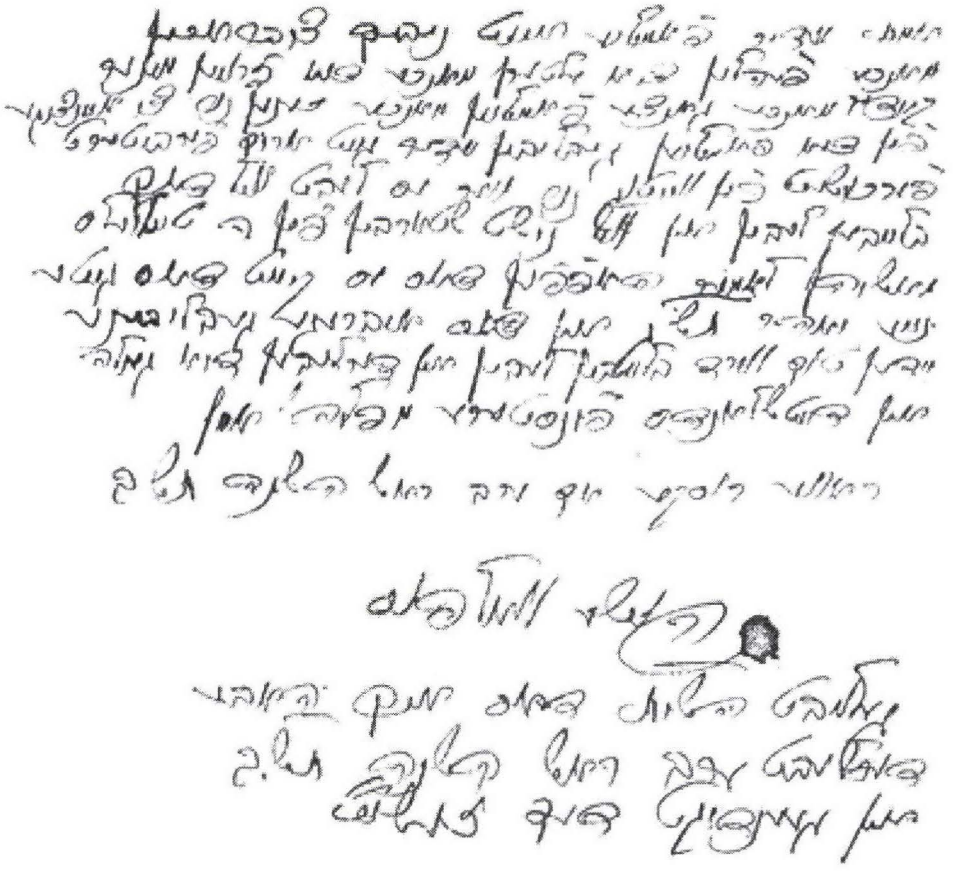
It is worth noting that the worst scandal was with all of the *Judenrat* entities in Poland, who betrayed their own brethren, as for example, in Rawa, the members of the *Judenrat* at the outset did not let anyone know what Belzec really is. Therefore many people traveled not knowing that a bitter death awaited them, but rather engaged in playing the mandolin, or with cards along the way, and only upon arrival in Belzec, they are stripped naked, and they are beaten, so they move more quickly into the baths, and they never come out again, but rather are cremated into ashes.

How one can stand all of this, I do not know!

Today is September 6, 1942. This week we lived through a great panic. Late Thursday night into early Friday, at about 2 o'clock, the entire Jewish populace of Rawa got up. The gendarmerie and the Ukrainian militia became alarmed, and it became immediately obvious as to why. But they went off to Potelycz, and brought 250 Jewish men from there, and as it was told, about 250 Jews fled into the fields. We believed that they were going to be taken to Belzec…

Also, we in Rawa were certain, that such a so-called *aktion* would immediately commence. [We believed this because] in the other more distant provinces, the Jews are gulled into believing that they are leaving of their own free will. [The murderers] devise a variety of crass untruths, such as: near Rawa a Jewish colony is being created and people even buy tickets at 30 zlotys, take their baggage, and when they come to Belzec, we already know what their end is.

And so, the Rawa Jews scattered and fled into the fields and forests, and hid themselves in bunkers. I and my family, my daughter with the children, the two sons, and my wife, lay hidden in the Shabel'nya Forest. Friday at nightfall, two Soviet bombers came, and dropped 10 bombs on Rawa, which pleased me a great deal. Saturday morning, we became aware that the rounded up Potelycz Jews were liberated and set free, settling them among the Jews of Rawa, and why this happened, I do not know.



Page 246: A photocopy of the last page of the diary of R' Yehoshua Wolfuss ז"ל *(He concludes on the Eve of Rosh Hashana 5705 [1944] – which in error, he writes as 5702 [1941] – with his signature and final sentiment: Praised be the Blessed Lord, that I have lived to see the Eve of* Rosh Hashana *5702 and finished this folio).*

Every day the transports with Jews continue to go to Belzec in the same way as always. We read the air-dropped leaflets from Soviet aircraft, and we hope that an end will come to the war. Also the allied nations took themselves to the task, but for the while, the bandits continue to take Jews to Belzec. For us it is dark, very dark; who knows whether anyone of the millions of Jews will have the good fortune to be rescued? Only One God knows!

People travel off on Aryan papers, a part of whom are seized and thrown into jail, and a part manage to succeed in getting through. Women travel off to Germany under the guise of being Christian, in order to work. There, however, one can also not be secure, because there they are under intense bombardment. And it is this fashion that the Jewish people live in fear and fright. However, this week, a new year arrives, *Rosh Hashana*. Perhaps God will have mercy on us ?!!

Today is the Eve of *Rosh Hashana*, September 11, 1942. In Europe under German hegemony, this year for the Jews, has been a terrifying and dark year. Millions of Jews have been exterminated in a satanic machine; hundreds of thousands have been shot to death, murdered outright; included in this are tens of thousands of children, women, and innocent people. By my estimate, more than two thirds of the Jews of Poland have been exterminated. We sell off everything that we allow ourselves to, such as: underwear, suits, bedding, if only to assure that we have something to eat.

Yesterday a train went through with Jews from Kolomea. Today – a large train, of about 120 people in a car, from Tarnow, all going to Belzec. A few individuals jumped from the train, and came into Rawa. They tell how the murderers tortured them, stripped them naked, so that they may not be able to flee. Despite this, bare naked, they leapt [from the train] and they saved themselves and are with us; But what do we have out of this, if the extermination of the Jews does not stop?

But a new Jewish year is ongoing, and maybe God will remind himself of us Jews, and will take up our cause against those who transgress against us?! The front now becomes alive, the allied countries now control the skies, and in the forests, there are also partisans. Something is going on today, at the end of the accursed year 5702 [1941-2], more animated, and better on the soul. True, each family, pitiably, is broken: part of them are missing parents, part – the womenfolk, part – the menfolk, children; and part – there are only solitary individuals left; part – are missing the entire family; everyone goes about embittered, their mood darkened by pain. But whoever remains alive – wants to remain alive though, and does not want to die in Hitler's satanic machine.

Let us hope that the good, new year 5703 [1942-3] arrives, and the remaining Jews will remain alive, and live to see the salvation and that Germany will have an execrable downfall, Amen!

Praised be the Blessed Lord, that I have lived to see the Eve of *Rosh Hashana* 5703 [1943] and finished this folio.

Rawa Ruska, The Eve of Rosh Hashana, 5703

In This Manner, Jewish Rawa Was Brought Down

By A. Klag

The World War of 1939

Years from now, when children will learn modern history in school, and come to the chapter "The World War of 1939,' if the teacher is a Jewish teacher, the teacher will tell his children, with a feeling of pain, how most terrifying and enormous the destruction was that the Nazi troops inflicted on European Jewry, during those same years of that war. In one breath, that Jewish teacher will convey to his students the sorrowful bottom line regarding 6 million Jews, whom the German murderers slaughtered in such a cold-blooded manner, not leaving any memory, even of those former Jewish settlements. But if the teacher should not happen to be Jewish, he will doubtlessly pause to cover the matter in a more broad fashion, of the entire history of the period... and he will certainly declare to his students, what the entire naïve world was talked into: that it was they, the Germans who suddenly found themselves to be strongly 'overcrowded,' in their fatherland. Constrained by the 'barbed wire of the Versailles Treaty,' stemming from the days of the First World War (1914-1918), severely wronged and robbed, therefore millions of Germans voted once and for all, to make an end to their 'poverty' and to their 'frightful' living conditions, and together with their wives and children, rolled up their sleeves, and went out to conquer the not-so-just world...

That is the way it is going to look from the dry, modern, historical perspective. For us Jews, however, especially for those of us who were as rescued smoking embers, who had personally lived through this so gruesome a destruction, this chapter: "The War of 1939" – is written in the blood of their nearest and dearest, and made painful the heart of our people[175]. And forever, until our last breath, this shadow will dog us, lo this sorrowful nightmare, implemented by a '*Volk*' that in the end, threw off the mask of a '*Kultur-Volk*' of a 'Noble Race' -- and permitted themselves to be entranced by a Super-animal, and this very '*Volk*' returned to the dictum of: 'And you shall live by the sword.'

With foam on their unclean lips, the '*Herrenvolk*' jubilated and sounded the alarm, under the clenched fist of their misguiding Führer of the fatherland. With the well-known German discipline and precision, this beastly nation of murderers went out and fell upon the larger world; and it sowed death at every step it took, burned cities and towns, to the degree that heavens were sundered and torn apart, and in the entire realm of the world, the messianic echo was heard of 'Blood, Fire and Columns of Smoke...' and it is noteworthy, to ruminate about the important people of the world of that time, and of how short-sighted and naïve they were, strengthening it from day to day. How delicately they stroked this very poisonous snake, the 'Munich Agreement' game. They appeased and titillated the snake, instead of choking it immediately at its birth. They plagued the frightful beast, and bolstered it from day to day. Because, had they immediately oriented themselves, when Austria and Czechoslovakia were bestially raped, the Polish fields and forests would not have become saturated with so much blood of millions of innocent people: men, women and children.

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175 A mis-typed extra line from the next paragraph was detected here.

Jewish Rawa-Ruska

Rawa-Ruska is found about 60 kilometers from Lemberg, a *City and Mother in Israel* – on the Lemberg-to-Warsaw road. It is a *shtetl* where, up to the outbreak of the Second World War, there were close to 18 thousand residents, of which about 11 thousand were Jews. Most of the Jewish population was engaged in small-scale commerce and manual trades. In the last couple of years before the outbreak of the war, the development of hat-making underwent strong growth, around which nearly 90 percent of the Jewish youth of the city concentrated itself, as well as those from the province, and a very large part respectably supported their very poor parents.

From a geographical standpoint, Rawa-Ruska was not among the larger cities in pre-war Poland; however, from the perspective of our Jewish point-of-view, it was a very lively and moving *shtetl*, where Jewish life literally bubbled, with all manner of youth movements, and organizations: Zionist, *Bundist*, and others; libraries, a kindergarten, Hebrew school, evening courses, dance get-togethers, Yiddish theater, and others. All these things richly reflected life for the Jewish populace in Rawa-Ruska.

The Eve of the March of the Germans into Rawa-Ruska

It is difficult to forget this black fear which befell our city immediately with the outbreak of the German-Polish War. News arrived from near and far, that the Nazi pursuit had commenced with an unrestrained wild pursuit at the outset. The 'heroic' Polish Army had this time not evidenced cognizance of its surroundings, and there were cities and villages, towns and forests, inundated by incendiary bombs dropped by the Nazi air-pirates, and a hellish fire spread throughout all of Poland. Jews went out into the crowded streets and byways in Rawa-Ruska, and as usual began engaging in political discourse. (In general, one only saw Jews in the streets, since the Poles appeared to have opted for hiding themselves). It was only Jews who immediately were unable to find a place for themselves. We had, as it would seem, anticipated our fate; perhaps not in such a cruel fashion, but all the bitter news, did not augur any good for us. Electrical power was immediately knocked out; the dark shadows of frightened Jews, with concerned looks, moved about for whole sleepless nights in the dark streets and byways of the *shtetl*.

The Germans Are Already Here in the City

On the 10th of September 1939, altogether ten days after the outbreak of the war, the Nazi troops appeared in the empty, cleaned out streets of my city, Rawa-Ruska. A silent unease spread itself over the city in general, and through the Jewish-occupied streets and byways in particular. Even the birds 'exerted themselves' to avoid the area that was filled with the smoke from the exhaust emanating from German diesel motors. It was only later on, in the free evening hours, here and there, from between the byways near the synagogue, or somewhere near the butcher shops, the frightened form of a Jewish woman would appear, who stealthily slunk over to the pump to be able at least to snatch a bit of water, for the gums dried out from thirst, and the scrunched up lips. It has been 3 days since it was possible, because of the shooting, to think about showing one's face.

It is only now, when everything had finally quieted down, that one could move around there, from time to time, taking difficult and uncertain steps... with stark and pale faces, with deeply frightened eyes, throwing wild, frightened glances, at the desolate and darkened surroundings. And the constant fear of: what will come today? – and this is how life went on for the first couple of days.

The First Decrees from the New Rulers

Immediately on the 5th day, after the Nazis marched in, the wild beast shows its talons...placards appeared on the walls, written in all languages: German, Ukrainian, and Polish, which gave notice to the Jewish populace of the following: with no exceptions regarding gender, all Jews are required to wear a white armband on their right side, 8 centimeters in width, with a blue Star of David, in order that they be identifiable, and heaven forbid, not confuse him with a non-Jew; Jews, regardless of gender, up to 60 years of age, must immediately register for forced labor; Jews, under penalty of death, are forbidden to use the sidewalks; Jews are not allowed to show themselves in the streets before 9 o'clock in the morning, and after 5 o'clock in the afternoon. These, and more decrees, were at once heaped on our heads. And it was not only one Jewish person who, immediately, in the first days, paid with his life for not scrupulously obeying everything, in accordance with the 'well-known' German punctiliousness.

As long as I live, I will remember, and not forget, that very first gathering, on the marketplace, near the municipal building, of the pale and frightened Jews, to go to work. That work was: to clean out the entire marketplace, and the main streets, using bare hands. This was accompanied by beatings with staves, by the Ukrainian bandits, who guarded us, and so we complied with the order, and cleaned up the main streets and the marketplace.

Then we were ordered to array ourselves in more long rows of eight men, one behind the other. The Nazi murderers with their wolf-dogs at their feet, then held forth with long speeches to us, peppered with abusive words, and generally insulting epithets directed at the entirety of the Jewish people. A Jew was put up on an elevated box (regrettably, I have forgotten his name); -- being pale, dead-faced, he stands now before my eyes, and is handed a broom, and ordered to 'direct' us, and that all of us should sing... the deep and heart-rending groan of our rendition of '*Hatikvah*,' blended in with the relaxed laughter of our 'neighbors,' who had assembled around us, the Poles, deriving enjoyment from our downfall (Others have said that it was the wood carrier R' Ephraim Blatt).

With the discharge of several revolvers, we were given notice that we may now depart. Many ran off to their homes, the largest part though, were detained by the murderers and were led off to two gathering-camps; the orphanage and the house of Dr. Becker. There we were 'quartered,' and we were held that way in those two buildings until the end of October 1939, when according to that one-time Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviet Army, which among other places, occupied Rawa-Ruska, and liberated us.

Again, Back to the Old

During an interval of 20 months, the Jews of Rawa-Ruska lived a relatively quiet life. You will understand that there was no lack of troubles at that time either; but is it within the realm of possibility to equate these relatively benign troubles with the *Gehenna* of the future?

In June 1941, the rulers of the 'Master Race' broke their treaty with Soviet Russia, and first now undertook to put an end to that which they had initiated in September 1939. Altogether a week later, on the 28th of June 1941, once again, the Nazi executioners appeared in Rawa-Ruska. Once again the Jew stands dissimulated out of fear and uncertainty, and thinks in his heart: who knows, what they have thought up for us now?

And time did not leave the Jew long to think or ruminate about this; it immediately gave an indication of what awaited us Jews in the very near days to come.

And indeed, it was let down on our exhausted heads like a deluge of representations, advisories, decrees, and threats. Indeed, that bitter Hitler-anger very shortly poured itself out on Rawa-Ruska right along with all the other Jewish communities in Poland, which found its realization in death and extermination.

As soon as our Ukrainian 'neighbors' formed themselves into German police units, they began to carry out inspections in Jewish homes. According to a list that they themselves had put together, Dr. Segal, Dr. Hershdorfer, Dr. Sziele (The Rabbi of Magierow), Simcha Steinbach, and hundreds of other Jews, were taken away. (Regrettably, I cannot now remember all of their names). According to what many Christians have related, on the same day, at night, all were taken out in autos to the Wolkowica Forest, ordered to dig graves for themselves, and there, all of them were shot [and killed]. A day did not go by without a Jewish victim. This took place for a variety of accusations, such as: one had forgotten to put on the armband, a second had gone out of the door merely having left 2-3 minutes before 9 o'clock; another, while trying to avoid a freight truck, went up on the sidewalk, etc. When the Devouring Angel was merely acting as if it was making sport of us, under thousands of answers, by taking away the soul from the Jew... even if the murderers did not, in general made use of any accusation to kill a Jew; But this is merely one aspect of their deranged nature: the Jew is guilty of everything, even for his own death...

The Death of the Just Among the Rawa Jews

It can be said that the death throes of Rawa Jewry held on much longer in comparison to most of the other Jewish communities. Our fate, on the face of it, dictated that, not far from us, not even a half-hour ride from Rawa-Ruska, the Nazi murderers erected an extermination camp, that sorrowfully known place, **Belzec**. More than 2 million Jews הי"ד were brought under in that very place, Belzec.

Many, under a hail of German bullets, leapt from the freight cars. Most of the jumpers, or as they were called by us, '*skotchkehs*,' were killed right on the spot by the German murderers; others were

otherwise spotted by the surrounding Ukrainian peasants, who, first above all robbed the victims, and then turned them over to the German police, or with their own filthy paws, beat them to death. Some met their death in the act of jumping itself, leaping out onto rocks, or against iron railings. Very few, had the 'luck' and were seen to be able to conceal themselves during the course of a day or two in forests, and then stealing themselves back into the city.

The Jews of Rawa-Ruska ז"ל, must be recalled here in a praiseworthy manner, who while personally practically expiring from hunger, nevertheless discharged the mitzvah of taking in guests. Almost in every home, '*skotchkehs*' were taken in, with whom the last morsels of bread were shared. Later on, they too shared in the bad fate that overtook our dearest, and together with them, they went down.

The first of these so-called '*aktionen*' took place in March 1942 when 1,500 Jews were seized in the streets by the German police, with the participation of the Ukrainian support police, coming home from hard labor. Many were also driven out of their homes. They were, pitiably, loaded into freight trucks, pressed in like herring, women, men and children, and taken off to Belzec, where they were exterminated that same day. The official systematic murder of the Rawa-Ruska Jewish populace began at that time.

In July, that is, 5 months later, once again, 2,000 Jews, after hard, endless tribulation, made that same tragic journey of martyrs, from Rawa-Ruska to Belzec. This time there were bloody scenes played out at the assembly point, where tens of Jews were shot on the spot by the Ukrainian bandits. After this very '*aktion*,' the perfidious Germans drove together all of the Jewish families from the surrounding smaller towns such as: , Potelycz, Uhniv, Magierow, and others. We immediately understood what this act meant. On the 11th of December 1942), the murderers officially cordoned off two Jewish quarters with a high wall, the synagogue street, and around the butcher shops. An ordering was issued that if a Jew exits the ghetto without special permission, is punishable by death.

On Sunday, the 7th of December, Ukrainian and German murderers began to drive together the old and the sick (there was a typhus epidemic rampant in the ghetto at the time), into the synagogue, with tens of the sick being killed along the way, being dragged and pushed by the previously mentioned bandits, with the help of Jewish outcasts.

This '*aktion*' lasted for only two days, and on Tuesday the 9th of December, the expulsion of Rawa-Ruska began.

Freight trucks came into the ghetto. Under frightening shooting, and rivers of blood, the Ukrainian murderers loaded up the dead with the living Jews into the autos, and took them off to the Siedliska Forest, where two pits there had previously been dug and prepared by the two murderers, Meyers and Tregner ימ"ש, who shot them all with machine gun weaponry.

A person from our city, a certain Yankl Tritt, found a way, by a miracle, to run away, and later came to the ghetto. He then told what sort of frightful scenes took place there, when mothers refused to

fling their small children into the pit. Many of the others simply lost their minds, and their voices filled the entire environs; their voices must have reached up to the heart of the heavens.

There are also two large mass graves at the cemetery; most of the transports with fathers, mothers and children from Jewish Rawa-Ruska also went off to Belzec.

The writer of these lines found himself among the so-called 'legal' 300 Jews, workers, whom the German murderers employed in 'cleaning out' (read: plundering) the ghetto.

The finding and driving out of Jews from bunkers, cellars, and ordinary holes-in-the wall, went on for long weeks: 'living ones,' half-dead, and literally completely dead; many actually eaten up by wild cats and mice – this is how they were discovered and carried out to be killed by the diligent Ukrainian murderers.

I also had the 'luck' to be a disinfector for a longer number of weeks. When the ass-slaughtering began, we – myself and three other comrades – what our Jews of stood in the ghetto, at the entrance to the municipal bath, near the oven, and disinfected the clothing, that was taken away from those who were sentenced and pitiably, taken by transport to Belzec, or to the mass graves in the Siedliska Forest. It was in this way that I saw with my eyes, what our Jews from Rawa-Ruska went through, until they 'lived to reach' the point of their death... not for one minute do these heart-rending images vanish from my eyes... and they will accompany me to my own grave. Who can forget the half-wild, burned from thirst M. M. V. (I do not want to write out names for understandable reasons), with an open mouth and tongue hanging out, who stammeringly called out unendingly: Water! Water! Water!... so the Ukrainian Haidamak poured out a full pail of water on his head, and the unfortunate one raised his head, in order to taste a few drops of the water... and for this, he got a bullet in his high, outstretched throat... he died thirsty and with a smile on his parched lips... הו"ד.

They extracted two deathly pale Jews from a cellar, led them off, and put them against a wall with their faces toward the wall, across from the bath, and the 'Lilith,' the wife of the murderer Guszimka, may her memory and remembrance be erased, began to 'get some experience' with the revolver, and aimed at the heads of these two unfortunate victims.

Most of the Nazi beasts who saw this 'amusing' spectacle, kept on laughing, and when instead of hitting the head, the 'heroine' struck an ear, or somewhere else, and when the two Jews, pitiably, turned their heads, to see if the bullet this time will not spare them ... and in the end the opposite, they received kicks from the 'riding' boots to the head, and in their scrawny bodies. And once again, the drunken laughter of the wild ones echoed in the space of the ghetto... until the two martyrs in the end, fell down...

But with this, *The Beast* still was not sated. A number of Jews from among the laborers there and me, the minor among them, were gathered together under the blows of staves, and ordered to bring a couple of lemons in order to 'save' (revive) two Jews who had fainted... the wild voices of laughter from the side of these outcasts reached up to the heart of the heavens.

Once again, [here is] the self-same 'Lilith' the chief murderer's street woman. It was known to tell of her that she had an obsession with fire. Her greatest pleasure, it was known, was to witness how a house is burned down to its foundation, while not touching the other two neighboring houses on either side of it, not on the right, and not on the left. And, indeed, her husband, the murderer, on one occasion gave an order, late at night, to set fire to a middle building in the so-called '*Rynek*.' And at the time that the flames had already spread through the house, several tens of Jewish men were called out from the ghetto, and ordered, under threat of death penalty, to keep watch over the burning building with previously prepared pails of water in hand, and '*behütte dich dein Jüdische Gott*,[176]' that one of the two houses on either side not, God forbid, catch fire from the sparks... 'You will all be hanged if this will happen!'

It did not happen, thank God, but it was only the following morning that we found the burned body of a Jew, who, it seems, had sequestered himself in a bunker and had no time to 'save himself.'

This scene, as you can imagine, found favor in the eyes of the previously mentioned 'Lilith,' because under her influence, all of us were given permission to 'go home' and go to sleep.

No *aktionen* took place during the nights. Only the Ukrainian police patrolled the streets of the ghetto. Accordingly, many Jews took the opportunity to crawl out of their hiding holes, in order to refresh their souls with a bit of cold water from the pump... the perfidious Ukrainian murderers, during this time, would hide themselves between the small houses, and when they saw the shadow of a father and a child in his arms, or of a mother, who was fortunate enough to bring out a fresh little bit of water for her hapless little swallows... they, like wild animals, came out of their hiding places. They literally blinded their victims with pocket flashlights, shining the bright lights directly into their eyes. Like scared rabbits, they pitiably, remained frozen in their tracks, not knowing what had befallen them...

On the following morning, we were barely able to tear off the victims from the frozen ground... many with their little children still in their arms, young children, sweet Jewish boys and girls; fathers and mothers were smashed to smithereens...

It is these, and other similar acts of murder and killing that I saw with my own eyes, and one wants to ask: what kind of strength did I have to be able to see such things? And where does one find the strength to forget everything? Is it possible, after all, to actually forget? I give my own answer: No! Not only can I not, I will not forget!

It is with a terrible pain that I will here recollect – for eternal memory – a woman of our city who when at a time that I was still a small boy, I thought of as my own mother... and her children were literally like my own sisters and brothers. This woman was: Shayndl Zimmerman ע"ה. Her house was my second home, spending nights and days there. As one says: It was not only one bite of food, or just one lunch that I ate there. I just simply became engrossed in conversation, or engaged in play

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176 May your Jewish God protect you.

with the children: Bluma, and Meir ע"ה, dear and quiet children, talented children. Her daughter Sheva, to be separated for long life, lives in a *Kibbutz* in Israel. For all of her years, this widow (since the First World War), the intelligent and beautiful Shayndl'eh ע"ה, worked hard. She breathed in the foul breath of the Haidamaks and that emanated from their stinking tobacco plugs... day in and day out in the saloon, she served them, giving one a glass of beer – to at least earn a living and raise good children. And this indeed worked out for her. But then the Nazi beasts arrived, and everything was wiped out, eradicated from the face of the earth ה"ד.

May I be granted , at this opportunity, to say a few words dedicated to my one and only sister, Rachel'eh ע"ה. She lived in isolation, and was killed in isolation. She was carrying a sweet, three year-old little son in her arms, shrunken and made scrawny from hunger and the cold, driven to a camp colony in Belzec of men, women and children. Her husband, a very dear young Jewish man, was mobilized into the Red Army a few weeks before the outbreak of the war, and was killed in action somewhere or another, while there. His wife, my beloved sister, together with her little son, literally expired from hunger and cold, on the 9th of December 1942...



Page 253: ***The Annual Memorial Gathering – 5723 [1963] in Bet Zioni America, Tel-Aviv***

Presidium: From the Right: Dan Berger (Sao Paulo); Anshel & Melech Tzinnes (Metz - France); Aharon Bar-Akiva (Greidinger); Chana Cohen-Szaffel; Zalman Wolfuss (Montreal); Rivka Gross.

And to this day, her last words of prayer reverberate in my ears: 'O, God! Help my faithful brother, Abraham'eleh, so that he remains alive! He was like a father to me and my child!'

Yes, I remember, I remember yet many Jews from my Rawa-Ruska, where, when and how they, pitiably were brought down. Beaten to death, with *nagaikas*, rifle butts, staves, and all manner of

destructive implements, by the Germans and Ukrainians, may their names and memory be erased.
I will remember, and not forget my nearest and dearest forever, and also the dear Jews, fathers, mothers, young men, young women, and the children of Rawa-Ruska, that were so bestially murdered with the *Four Deaths*[177], by the German '*Kultur-Träger*' and their low-life accomplices – the Ukrainians.

Pay homage to our martyrs and pure ones, who were killed, suffocated and incinerated in *Sanctification of the Name,* and for the Sanctity of the People! ת.נ.צ.ב.ה



Page 254: A Reception for Survivors

The End of My City, Rawa

By Chaim Szpacer
Milano

Before I write about what happened to the Jews of Rawa, and what has remained of the city, I first have to portray for the reader, for those who did not know Rawa, and also to remind those who many have forgotten its appearance, how Rawa looked.

It was a small Jewish city with all of the requisite details: a Jewish community with a Rabbi, ritual slaughterers, a synagogue, study houses, and *Kloyzes*, a steam bath with a *mikva,* and in essence, nothing was missing.

The residents: doctors, lawyers, professors, larger and smaller merchants in all lines of business, workers of all callings: tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, millers, builders, smiths, locksmiths, bookbinders (who does not remember Ber'leh Einbinder with his glistening jacket of calf's material). We also did not lack Jewish thieves and crazy people: only the chimney sweep and the dog-catcher were gentiles; they called themselves 'community employees,' and a Jew was not permitted to be

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177 A metaphoric reference invoking the 'four deaths' sanctioned by Jewish law for use in execution, these being: stoning, burning, decapitation, garotting.

a 'community employee,' and even more so a 'government employee.' Most of the working people were engaged in hat making.

And who does not recall a Friday in Rawa? As early as the morning, one could see people running to the market in order to buy fish in honor of the Sabbath. And soon thereafter, one could hear the banging sound from all of the houses and fish were being cut up, and by midday one could get a prepared fresh bun with fish. --

Then one could see people going to the steam bath, this being only those folks who did not have time before the middle of the day.

And one began to get ready for the Sabbath; and as soon as one saw Israel Mizemik running and banging, to call people to synagogue, one did not tarry at all in waiting, but rather locked up the place of business, grabbed a smoke on a cigarette, and – presto – it was *Shabbat*.

The first Sabbath ceremony was performed by the women who blessed the candles. One could observe how the Jewish mothers approached this ritual in all earnestness, preparing for this responsibility with complete conviction.

The Sabbath dress was donned with the knitted apron, the well-ironed white head kerchief, or the *shytl* wig with the black, satin shawl, wearing all the jewelry and the shoes, which had been made ready since the previous Sunday; the brass candlesticks had already been polished with sand or ashes; the table was covered, as if this were the residence of a prince, using a snow-white tablecloth. The mother of the house would then light the match with conviction, and even the match burned differently than all the other matches during the entire week.

Lighting the candles, then she covers her eyes with both hands, and certainly not without tears in them, she recites the blessing and beseeches the Master of the Universe, asking that her family be healthy and observant, and also asking about other things that she deemed to be of need.

Men, of all classes, decked out in their Sabbath finery, some in a satin jacket and a *shtrymel*, another in a black pullover with a flat hat, went off to pray.

This ideal Jewish life went on for hundreds of years, in this *shtetl,* until the end of the summer of 1939.

On the 1st of September 1939, the Polish-German war broke out, and after two weeks, the Germans occupied Rawa; to our good fortune, it was only for a few days. But it was enough, that the Jews were able to both learn and understand what a soldier in Hitler's army connotes.

Then the Russian army came, and freed us from the Germans. Naturally, the happiness was very great; once again, the individual became a free person, and not only free, even more free than we were in Poland. This is because to them, all people were equal, and it was not permitted to say

'*Żyduszy*' and everyone had to be called 'Òîâ àðé÷.' It was permitted to work on Sunday, and '*Yankl'eh-Polizei'* could not levy any punishment. There immediately were Jewish police, Jewish employees in the municipality and so forth.

But, in time, we began to sense that not only had we been liberated from Hitler, but also from human freedom. All societies were immediately liquidated, the visible libraries were eradicated, the houses of study were requisitioned, and they were turned into storage facilities and magazines. The business people closed down their businesses, because they had no place from which to purchase merchandise, because everything became monopolized. Also many craftsmen had to change their line of work and seek new work to do. A few became employees, a few – sellers in the Russian cooperatives, and a portion – became engaged in other work. But the principal question was, for those who did go to work for the Russians, they had to work on the Sabbath. And it was not easy for a Jew in Rawa, who was suffused with religion and tradition, to abandon the Sabbath, and go to work, instead of going to pray.

Despite the fact that the houses of study had been requisitioned by the Russians, a few were occupied by Jews who had fled from the cities occupied by the Germans, such as: Tomaszow, Belz, Sokal and others. But Jews always find ways: worship was conducted in private dwellings, where there was a large room.

Only two sorts of work remained for which it was not required to work on the Sabbath. A coal mine was found on the Potelycz mountain. In actuality, the mine had been there for a long time, but the coal had not been utilized because it was not very good; but for the Russians, everything was good. There was a business there for Jews, if they did not want to work on the Sabbath. The mined coal had to be transported to the train station. Whoever had the money to buy two horses and a wagon, and simply knew on which side of the wagon the horses were to be hitched, immediately became a wagon driver and conveyed coal.

It was unbelievable how quickly the Jews learned. We saw men, who never in their lives even knew what a horse meant, and the same person was seen sitting on a wagon, fully loaded with coal, which he himself had loaded – with a whip and the reins in hand, and immediately learned horse-lingo (*heyta*, and *vitsha*), knew how to snap the whip, and knew when the horse got sweaty, you don't have to give him water. They would also grease the wheels of their wagons; in a word: a fully-fledged wagon-driver.

The second trade was chopping wood. One would then see the more refined young Jewish youth, all from the most prominent Rawa and non-Rawa families, who in normal times wouldn't have known how to even hold a saw in their hands, dressed more-or-less, like a bona fide wood chopper, their sidelocks tucked behind their ears, covered with a cap, girded about with a saw, wearing large gloves on their hands, with a large axe, with a stand on their shoulders, and they went from house-to-house looking for work; because every living person needs to work, and if someone has no work, he was then asked how he sustains himself; and if someone can sustain himself without working, he must be a spy, a parasite, who lives off that which others generate from their work, and there is a saying in Russia: 'He who does not work – does not eat.'

But even the one who worked, did not earn enough to be able to eat; especially one who had a family. Jews also helped themselves out with this question as well, because they had something to sell; one may have had a bit of dry goods, another a bit of leather, a jacket, a leather coat, a piece of furniture, and many other things they no longer needed. It was possible to get along with a Russian cloth jacket, stuffed with cotton, and a pair of woolen boots (*valinkehs*) with galoshes. For winter, this was enough, and for the summer, a pair of sandals sufficed to wear to work.

And, in time, one got used to Russian life, and it was almost all right for everyone. And for the one for whom it wasn't quite right, he would say, that The Lord God, Blessed be He, will help. Divided off from the entire world, separated from people, from community, without newspapers, no radio, because everything was forbidden. Whoever had a radio, sold it, because he didn't want to be judged as a spy. Also, it was not good to receive correspondence from outside the country – also indicative of being a spy.

Even when one went to look for work, the first question was whether or not you had relatives outside the country, and the father did not have to be a merchant, just a worker. All of this did not last even two years.

On the 22nd of June 1941, the German-Russian War broke out, and in three days, the German troops occupied Rawa. That was when the 'real thing' began.

Once again Jews had to be Jews, even those who had long ago converted. It was necessary to create a *Judenrat* and a Jewish police. Every Jew had to wear a Star of David, and on every Jewish house, the Star had to appear, so that one would exactly know that a Jew lives there, and everything had to be at the disposal of the Germans.

The *Judenrat* received orders from the German authorities, and had to precisely carry out those orders, and was not permitted to say '*nein*.' It had to provide for the deployment of workers, materials, premises, furniture, goods, leather, and separately foodstuffs, which were not easy to come by, etc. All Jews from the age of 16 to 60 had to go to work every day. However, there were also people over the age of 60 who passed themselves as younger, in order to be able to go to work; in this matter, the bread ration card played a role.

The *Judenrat* received an order to register everyone along with their exact birth date, which served a variety of purposes. For not carrying out the orders of the Germans correctly, there was the threat of a punishment that was not light. It was the responsibility of the *Judenrat* to assure that all Jews were notified of all orders – exactly like *Moses Our Teacher* conveyed God's law...

And the Jews said: 'All that Hitler said, we will do' and they did it all, even when this was against their will. Every day brought new laws: Jews must cut off their sidelocks, and may only wear a beard that is trimmed short. A Jew may not walk on the sidewalk, may not carry an umbrella; in order to ride a bicycle, special permission was required, and only one or two people in Rawa had such a permission. To leave the city required an exit permit, also when one needed to leave the city to go

to work. An this is how the exhausting life continued along, until the *Gestapo* arrived... and instituted the first *aktion*.

On the 18th of March 1942 the first transport was taken away. It was almost only the older people that were seized off of the streets, also dragged out of the houses; and when this proved insufficient, they began to take from among the people who were at work, and it was not known to where these people were taken.

At that time, we did not yet know of that *Gehenna* called 'Belzec.' Simcha Haberman said that Belzec was *The True World*. When they came to take him at the time of the second aktion, and one already knew to where the people were being taken, he put on his *kittl* and *tallit,* and called in his wife and said: 'come Freydl'eh, our time has come, Belzec is *The True World*.' Simcha Haberman meant this seriously; but he was the only one who thought this way: all the others had a different opinion, when they saw on the belts of the *Gestapo*, there was the insignia reading '*Gott Mit Uns*.' Naturally, the panic and the fear was great; but what could one do? Those whom it struck suffered, and the others comforted themselves and hoped, that this calamity will perhaps pass them by. People became very egotistical, each person caring only for their own head, and there was no sense of unity; but this did not come from wickedness, but only arose from need.

And life continued to go on, and once again we went to work, and every time we heard that the Germans are seizing people for labor, a part of these seized workers did not come back. The workers, that the *Judenrat* provided, were too little for the Germans, and on their own, they seized other workers. There was no lack of work; in hindsight, it seems that the Germans were skilled at finding work to be done; they would do this even for Sunday, which was a day of rest...

They had 'necessary and urgent' work such as: tearing out all the gravestones from the old Jewish cemetery, making a park with a beautiful walkway, that led from the post office up to the dwelling of the *Starosta* and the court house. It was not easy to tear out the first of the stones. An old stone; it was difficult to read the name: the rain had practically washed everything away, but one reminded one's self of how many Jewish tears were shed over the old stone; and how many people returned from that cemetery with a lighter heart and mind, after having cried themselves out over the stone. And how many times was '*El Moleh Rachamim*,' and the '*Kaddish*' recited over the stone... and it was these very stones that needed to be torn out... to eradicate such a sacred object, who could conceive of such a thing? The hands trembled, and it was very hard to lift the cantilever; but when the German voice was heard: '*Jude, warum arbeits du nicht?*' the stone was out in two minutes, and the second one even more quickly, and from these stones, the roads and sidewalks were made.

The hunger in the city was very great, even greater than in Egypt during the Seven Lean Years. One bought potato peels and birds' feet and from this, baked flat breads. We perceived that there yet were people who had a potato and flour; but how many of these were there? And as a result, people began to die from hunger, and these people were the lucky ones, who died earlier and therefore suffered less.

Then, people who had the means to do so, began to build bunkers in attics and cellars, under the bridges and all over, where it was only possible to do so, in order to be able to conceal themselves, when an '*aktion*' would occur, and it was known that an '*aktion*' would occur, only it was not known when.

In the meantime, one heard of the *aktionen* that were made in, Magierow, and other towns, and everything went through Rawa. Also, transports from outside the country went through Rawa: Jews from Holland, Belgium, and France. These people traveled in open cars, happy, full of life, playing their gramophones, hearing music and being unaware of anything...

The reports we received from the Jewish workers who worked at the train station, and the Rawa Jews told the Jews from outside the country, where they were being taken, and advised them to flee from [certain] death, and the people did not want to believe this; they were certain that they were being taken to a labor camp, and that they have enough money and gold and will be able to live through the war... they did not know that their lives would last only as long as the ride to Belzec ... 18 minutes...

Then a new order came down: a ghetto was being created, and we must abandon our dwellings in the various streets, and all the Jews must live in specifically allocated streets in the ghetto; it will not be locked. All the village Jews must leave their dwellings and fields, and can only take along a bit of food, and their clothing, and go to the city, into the ghetto, where everything was already pre-arranged for them.

On the 20th of July 1942, the second *aktion* occurred. Once again, a few of the people were taken away; the tumult lasted for one day and one night and whoever remained, again had to live after the *aktion,* receiving a new order: the Jews of , Potelycz and the entire vicinity of Rawa, anywhere they was even a single Jew, had to move over into Rawa, in the ghetto. We lived two and three families in a room; people slept in the streets. It was then that the typhus broke out. To begin with, no medicines were received, and people died by the tens every day. The grave diggers had no means, there were no burial shrouds, no coffins, wrapping the dead in sheets, throwing them into a pit and that ended it.

Towards the end of 1942, another new order was issued: passes would no longer be issued to those who have to go to work outside of the city, and it is compulsory to remain in the ghetto. Everyone understood that the time was drawing near, and that everything was getting close to the end; yet one hoped that God would help. A few believed that it didn't mean them, because having money and food for a longer time, a good bunker, connections with the Judenrat, and with the controlling authorities, they will certainly live through this.

The Locked Ghetto

Two days later an order comes: the ghetto is being reduced in size and being locked. All the people, who lived in houses that have been cut off from the ghetto, must immediately enter

the ghetto and whoever will be found outside of the ghetto will be shot. One can see how the streets are being nailed up, connecting one house to the next with boards; people are running around with packs on their backs, everyone taking with them whatever they can, and going into the ghetto. On the second day, all the Jews were within the confined area, that was called: 'The Locked Ghetto.' Nobody knows what is going to happen, as day and night pass, it is still, and one does not go to work, and one knows nothing.

During the day, word is received that the 'seizers' have arrived, the *Gestapo*, and it is certain that an *aktion* will take place. People begin to hide themselves in the bunkers, believing that it will be like it always is: it will last a day, and that will suffice. Whoever will have the opportunity to conceal themselves, will be able to struggle on.

But this time it was not an *aktion*, it was an extermination, which lasted weeks on end.

On the second day, my wife, children and I were taken out of our dwelling; we could not conceal ourselves, because with a small child, we were not permitted into a hiding place; a child could [inadvertently] betray the position of all the people. It was approximately three o'clock in the afternoon, when we were taken out and escorted to the synagogue courtyard.

I was not the first one there, since there already were more people there already, and every minute others came as well. We were guarded by German and Ukrainian police; there were small children already there, whose parents had left them behind in their dwellings and had hidden themselves. The children are crying and the older ones are calling out: 'Mama;' however the mother was hidden in some place and could not hear her own child calling for her...

After an hour of standing near the synagogue, there were already several hundred people and every time, an empty auto came by, the officer [in charge] is told how many Jews had been shot; everything is punctiliously documented, and we hear all of this, and we know that the same is going to be done to us.

Then a Jewish administrative person comes over to me, someone of my acquaintance, and he comforts me by saying that we are not being taken to be shot; we are going to a camp to do work. He also tells me that my father was also shot; he had an unanticipated death. He was told that a hospital was made inside the synagogue for the elderly people; in there they will be cured, and they will be able to live in the synagogue. But immediately as he drew near to the synagogue, he was shot. The same thing happened to others...

I believed this story, because the wall of the synagogue was riddled with holes from the bullets and the ground was full of blood mixed with snow; but if we are to go to a camp, this was already harder to believe.

We stood at this location, and it began to get dark already, and finally an order came: we were set out in rows, like soldiers, and we were led off, not knowing where to; naturally, we were guarded

on all sides, so that no one could flee. And we came to the *Sokalplatz*, where there was a large barracks, and we were driven into the barracks, the gates locked, and wished 'Good Night.'

And then the crying and shouting began coming from the people, who no longer looked like people. A few want to pray, because they have to recite *Kaddish*, others laugh with an insane laughter with tears in their eyes, which one could see from the light of the lamps, which lit the barracks from the outside. The weeping, and the shout of 'Master of the Universe, Help,' reached up to the seventh heaven: but it was of no use. For a bit of water, the police were offered one hundred thousand zlotys, but they did not offer to provide it.

And barrels of water stood by the barracks, which were to be used by fire-fighters, in the event that the barracks caught fire. This Gehenna lasted until three o'clock in the morning. People became exhausted from shouting and crying, and the cold contributed as well, to the extent that people slept for a long time.

At seven o'clock, the police began to pound on the walls, and the people awoke – and the crying commenced again. At about nine o'clock, the gate to the barracks opened, and everyone was driven out onto the plaza, arrayed in rows. Then, the chief of the *Gestapo* arrived, and began to separate the women and children from the men. Then, the examination began, with a feeling of the muscles, looking at the hands, and taking of temperature. It was decided: whoever was considered able to go to the [labor] camp, and whoever was to go to Belzec. This examination process continued to midday, and then the '*Herrn*' went to have their midday meal.

The police gave the Judenrat an order to bring bread and water; but only for those who were selected to go to the [labor] camp. This work lasted until four o'clock in the afternoon, and during the day, all that was done was to bring other people who had been dragged out of the bunkers. Hundreds of people were assembled, but few had the good fortune to be selected to go to the [labor] camp.

The Road to Death

After four o'clock, the chief of police arrived, who was permanently stationed in Rawa; he also wanted to be present at this 'departure-event,' and I will never forget this image, when the rows of people were arrayed, who were destined to leave Rawa and travel to Belzec; those, who could no longer stand on their own feet, being already half-dead, their blood already congealed. The police shouted '*Achtung*' and arrayed the half-dead people in rows, and led them off to the train station, where the wagons had already previously been provided, that would be used to take these people to Belzec.

And when the police commanded the people to march to the train station, the chief of the *Gestapo* said to his friend, the chief of police: 'see what kind of refuse I am carting away, this is, after all, worth nothing, it is only a shame to waste the food...' These were the words of the escort for the people who had been selected by the *Gestapo* or an 'S. S. Man' to be led off to Belzec.

Kamienka[178] - Quarantine

The remaining people were taken to the steam bath, and then loaded into an auto and brought to Kamienka into a camp. This was not yet a work camp; this was just a camp. Where a quarantine was carried out; this was because there was typhus rampant in Rawa, and it was necessary to see who was infected and who was not. The sick were separated from the healthy, and only the doctors and sanitation workers had access to the sick.

Naturally, there was also a Jewish commandant, who was a commandant of the authorities. This individual believed, that if he were to be a faithful servant for the Germans, he will stay alive; but he too was shot, like a dog and may the earth vomit up his bones.

The German camp commandant would come to visit the camp almost every day. He didn't stay for very long. He only gave orders, which the Jewish commandant carried out punctiliously.

The number of those ill with typhus grew larger day-by-day; all the beds in the barracks were already occupied; the only thing that the doctor was able to do, was to measure temperature, because he had no medicines at his disposal in the first place.

Two weeks later, the druggist Wattenberg and his son came to us in the camp, who was the President or the Vice-President of the *Judenrat*. He advised that everything in Rawa had been emptied out... and Wattenberg and his son were already ill with typhus, and they were compelled to go to the second of the barracks. But that second of the barracks did not continue to function for very long...

I do not recall the date: it was after the noon hour, when the German commandant came with two freight trucks with a few policemen, and all of the sick were loaded and taken away, and with this, the typhus [epidemic] was ended...

A week later, we heard that part of us would be taken across the Rata[179] [River] where there was a labor camp beside the factory, and the commandant was Moshe Haberman. For this reason, everyone wanted to go across the Rata, and myself and Wof'cheh[180] (Sambal) were able to go to the Rata [labor] camp.

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178 This is not an uncommon name for this part of Eastern Europe, but the evidence suggests that it refers to what is shown on modern maps as Nova Kam'yanka, just south of the Rata River, about 6 miles to the east of Rawa-Ruska.

179 There was a 'suburb' of Rawa-Ruska named Rata, presumable for the river.

180 One of the endearing nicknames for a man named Wolf. Others include Wowucz, Wowczi, etc.

Rata-Camp

Later-on, being in the Rata camp, the Jewish commandant from the Kamienka camp came to us and told us, ordered him to select people, with whom he will go to the Rawa ghetto and a few of these people will become street guards in the ghetto. They are not to permit anyone to enter the ghetto, not even German soldiers, and to oversee the safety of Jewish assets that are not to be stolen from the ghetto, and then, they will create various groups of workers, who will gather together all the Jewish belongings such as: furniture, bedding, clothing, underwear, and bring everything in order: create warehouses for all these goods, and then all of this will be sent off to Germany.

Hearing about such workers, and knowing that it is possible to find food in the ghetto, a shirt, that was left behind by those taken away, and that it will be possible to live in a house, not cold barracks, everyone wanted to go work in the ghetto. By means of relationships and bribery, I and Wowucz were able to go to the ghetto, where life was materially easier. At the same time, we had not yet begun to work; we only now began preparations; but we did begin to serve as guards. A yellow band on the sleeve and no one was allowed into the ghetto, only the *Gestapo* had free access.

In Rawa, there remained yet a group of about 60 Jewish men; their leader was Noah Berger. They lived in Yaakov Graff's house, diagonally opposite the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash*, and the Gymnasium; their work consisted of digging graves in the cemetery to bury the dead; but even this work was coming to an end. There were no longer any Jews left to bury.

It was a Sunday night, at about three or four days after we had arrived at the ghetto, when we received news that the diggers had received an order to dig out a pit, in which it would be possible to hide about 60 people, and that the pit was already completed.

We did not know from where these people would be brought; a part believed that these were going to be people who worked near Hiiche[181], on the road from Volytsya[182]. There job was to process the trees that were taken out of the Volytsya forest; but there, only 40 Jews worked. Will they be taking us, the first to work in the ghetto, away? Or, perhaps, they would take away those people from the Rata camp?... Each person offered their opinion, but nobody really knew what was going to happen here...

A few leave the ghetto, in order to hide with Christians that they knew, others are starting to search for a bunker; there were also such who said they had nothing to lose, and I was among these last; and in addition to that, I had to stand guard from midnight until 2 at night, and from 6 to 8, at the place where Eli Pizder had his traffic. I personally selected this spot, because it was at the entrance to Hiiche, and I wanted to see which peasant it was, because I knew, that someone from my family was still alive there. But at eight o'clock, nobody arrived to relieve me, as was usually

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181 Rendered as 'Hitkeh' in Yiddish

182 Rendered as 'Olytsk' in Yiddish

the case, taking over my post, and I was compelled to remain further on; from this I gathered that something was out of order...

Toward nine thirty, the German chief went by with two policemen. The commandant with a policeman immediately went into the courtyard, where the Jewish grave diggers lived, and they immediately began to lead the men out, standing them out near the Gymnasium, with their faces towards the wall, and began to count. Naturally, there were people missing, who had sequestered themselves, because there were bunkers there; but the Germans understood this, and immediately called for the fire-fighters and they set the houses on fire. The people were compelled to come out, and sought a means to flee, so they were immediately shot down. After this, the police took the men who had been stood [against the wall] and led them to the cemetery, where the day before, they had dug out the pit, and they were buried there.

In A Bunker in Hiiche

It was first after the noon hour that they cam to release me from my place. This, for me, was the end of my guarding the ghetto, because that same day, I left Rawa and went to Hiiche; Wowczi Sambal remained in the ghetto. It was the month of February when I arrived in Hiiche; a bit of snow, cold, but the way through was good.

My two sisters were still in Hiiche; the older one with her husband, and a small child of one and a half year of age; but they were hidden separately. I, and my younger sister were hidden by a peasant, who lived close to the forest, far from the village, up in a stable attic. In the evening, we would descend and go into the peasant's home, to get a bit warm, and to eat something. It was enough on which to survive... the only question was, how much longer would the war last, and would the peasant be willing to let us stay, and from where would we get the money to pay him; however, one lived with hope. But, also, our time up in the stable attic did not last for long.

An Interesting Surprise in the Gehenna-Life

It was in the month of March 1943, an evening like all others, and we, along with my sister descended from the attic, and went into the house of the peasant. Naturally, we did this quietly, and took our time, so that no one would take notice of us, and also we did not notice anyone, and when we were already close to the door, I heard a voice which called, Chaim, Chaim!... It was dark already, and I saw no one. I look in the direction from which the voice emanated, and I notice that on the second side of the fence, a woman is standing. I immediately recognized her; this woman lived diagonally opposite from my peasant, and was a familiar and intelligent woman. Having a facility in German, she was a secretary in the Hiiche administration.

The woman said with absolute certainty, that tomorrow morning, the police are going to come to search the peasant, to see if he has not concealed any Jews, and warned me, that we should flee this area. She did not want to say how she knew this, that we were hidden at the peasant's location. She took her leave of us, and vanished into the darkness of the forest.

We entered the home of our peasant; the evening meal stood prepared already, but the peasant was still in the village at the cooperative, where he would hear news. After a few minutes, the master of the house returned, and we sat ourselves by the table; I asked if he had heard anything new, and I told him my news. Naturally, he did not want to believe what I said, indicating that this was not possible, and that we could continue to remain undisturbed. But naturally, we did not stay, and we abandoned the attic.

At about four o'clock, before dawn, we went out through a rear door, and left the small house with long, but quiet steps, so that no one could hear, or see where we were going; also the peasant had no need to know where we were going. To him, the master of the house, we said we were going to a second peasant.

Now the question remained: where to go? We decided to go into the forest. It was winter, and during winter, the peasants don't go into the forest; therefore, the forest was the best place to hide one's self. I however, wanted to know, if the police would actually come to the peasant to search for us. So I sat myself in a spot, from which I could see the peasant's house, and the road which led from the village to the peasant, and at nine thirty, I saw the police coming to my master of the house...

In the Forest

They searched his entire working premises: they hit him with murderous blows, to induce him to reveal where we had gone; but he could not say, because he knew nothing of the fact, that we were in the forest, perhaps less than a kilometer from him, because who can live in the forest during winter?... the forests of Hiiche were small parcels, of private ownership by the peasantry, and for this reason no one went there; apart from this, every night we altered our place of rest, going from one such forest to another.

On the 30th of March 1943, at about 8 o'clock in the morning, we were in a small forest by the road that leads to Volytsya; a half kilometer from the place where a group of Jews worked, whose job it was to process the trees taken out of the Volytsya Forest. These were Jews from -Hiiche- Volytsya, approximately 50 people in all. I took note of the fact that two freight trucks went by, with a number of German soldiers. It immediately occurred to me that they were going to liquidate the workplace, and not more than 5 minutes later, I heard shooting, and the shooting was directed at those who were attempting to flee. All the others were loaded into the freight trucks and taken away. The only ones who saved themselves were those who had been late in coming to work, and were able to discern from afar what was happening there, and took that opportunity to flee and hide themselves in the large forest, which was densely and thickly overgrown. They would come to the peasants who were local to that area, and forcibly obtain food from them, because they had no money with which to pay. Accordingly, the peasants informed the police, and the police knew how many had fled from the 'aktion.' Accordingly, the police pursued them with dogs, as one would do in hunting animals, and they shot whomever they saw. Of all those that were hunted down, only one Jew from saved himself, whom I saw in Meiland, after the war, and I believe that today he is to be found in Canada.

I was always in contact with Wowcza Sambal, through peasants of my acquaintance, who delivered mail. I believe that it was at the end of June or the beginning of July, when I got something in writing from Wowcza, that he plans to leave the ghetto; he appears to have anticipated something...

I went to that very same peasant who had once hidden me, and for which he had received a beating from the police, to get him to tell where I had fled; I secured for him a specific sum of money, and he promised me on Monday, when he would go to Rawa for the market-day, he would bring Wowcza to Hiiche.

Naturally, I came to the peasant late at night, when he was not yet asleep; he was waiting for me, despite the fact that he was very tired, because to carry a person from Rawa on a bicycle to Hiiche was not an easy thing to do. When the peasant saw me, he showed me the way up to the attic, and after my subdued call, Wowcza descended. I paid the peasant the money he had earned, and we went to the place we were residing at in the forest; the rain interfered a bit in our progress, and it was possible to get wet; also the ground was wet, and while it was no longer possible to sit, it was possible to stand, and this permitted the water to run off more quickly.

Wowcza began to tell why he no longer wanted to remain in the ghetto. Apart from the ghetto, there was also a labor camp in Rawa, which was called '*Der Moster Lager*,' in which only Jews from Mosty' lived, which had been sent to Rawa.

The German chief of the ghetto said that the ghetto must be liquidated, because the work it was to do had been completed, and in order to be able to save the Jews, who worked in the ghetto, he had a good plan: he demanded a huge sum of money, with which he will demand of the chief of the *Moster Lager*, to permit all the Jews in the ghetto to enter the *Moster Lager*, and there work with the Jews from Mosty.' (Their work was on the Potelycz mountain, digging up stones) and to be in the *Moster Lager*, implied a certainty of remaining alive.

It appears that this business didn't satisfy Wowcza, and proposed Hiiche instead of the Lager... I believe that all this was a matter of fate...

As I have already remarked, Wowcza left the ghetto on Monday, and on Tuesday, all of the people of the ghetto went to the *Moster Lager*. Regrettably, this did not last long, not even 24 hours. On the next night, the police surrounded the *Lager*, ordered all the men to undress, all in their underpants, loaded them onto freight trucks and took off to the Borove Forest, where a pit had already been made ready and 500 Jews were thrown into that pit. And with this, the question of the Jews of Rawa and its entire vicinity was 'resolved'...

In a Pit in the Forest

There is much to write about what we lived through in the forests and in attics. It is possible that it will not be very interesting. It is also possible to infer, that these sorts of things did not [actually] happen. But I will attempt to try and document something.

Time continued to move along, slowly. [It did so] accompanied by great fear, trouble, hunger and thirst...

My two sisters and brother-in-law, no longer existed... all shot to death... I remained with Wowcza. The summer came to an end. Not having any money, the thought of finding a peasant that had an attic did not even come into the question. It was in this way that we arrived at the decision to dig a pit in the forest, and lie there over the winter. Having made the plan, we went to look up a friend of mine, a Pole, who was a master builder of roads.

To meet this master builder of roads, we had a designated sign: I put a stave up at a certain place, and my friend, seeing this stave, knew that I wanted to see him, and he therefore would come to that place in the evening. If he could not make it that evening, he left the stave where it stood: this meant he would be coming on the next evening.

I asked of him to make me a board, that should be a stela (a support) of the pit to be dug out: all this was to be covered in straw, and it will be in order. After several weeks, the board was complete and ready; but it was not an easy thing to transport it into the forest. Making the pit demanded a great deal of work. We had to work at night. And the displaced soil had to be carted away, and spread in a fashion that would not make it seem piled up out of the ordinary.

After two nights of work, the pit was ready; it was only 80 centimeters deep, because further down, one ran into rocks and to deal with that, we had no more strength left and it was dangerous to leave the pit open and exposed. We camouflaged the pit well, with grass, and branches, and at an auspicious hour, we entered the new 'dwelling.' It was not bad, warm, and tranquil, and it was possible to sleep.

At half after one o'clock, we hear that something is going on in our immediate vicinity, and the question is: what does one do now?

We quickly decided to come out, and covered the exit, then sat down not far from our dwelling, that we had constructed through the expenditure of much energy, and we waited to see if the passer-by would notice anything, and if so, he would most certainly return with someone else, and would certainly want to find out what was going on here. But if he only walked a few meters past the pit, then everything would be in order, and we could again reclaim the use of our dwelling. We waited this way until four o'clock in the afternoon, and nobody came, and we went back into our home, and wintered there better than we would have in the attic of the peasant.

The one problem that we had was the question of procuring food, because we made [potable] water from the snow. All we lacked was bread; we needed a half kilo of bread daily for both of us, and this was not easy to come by. It was only possible to come out of the pit while it was snowing, or there was an intense frost; the snow froze hard, and we left no trace in the form of footprints from our shoes. On those occasions, we went to the village, and brought 15-16 kilos of bread, which was then enough for an entire month. It did not bother us that the bread got old, the important thing was simply to have it.

Every time we returned with the bread from the village, we wished that this would already be enough to last us to the end of the war. A peasant woman baked the bread for us, after she had obtained flour from my friend the Pole, and the peasant woman knew when she needed to have the bread ready.

It took a while for the winter to pass, and the snow vanished. We were then able to emerge from the pit. Naturally, only at night. We saw the German pilots, when they flew to bomb the Russian front. Also, from a distance, we saw the partisans giving light signals and later on, airplanes arrived dropping arms, medicines, and soldiers by parachute.

My friend also had to abandon Hiiche, because the Ukrainians drove out the Poles. He came to take his farewellfromu s; he knew where our pit was to be found.

Every night one heard gunfire from the partisans, and a variety of bands: the Russians against the Germans; the Ukrainians against the Poles, it was a Gehenna; the village was guarded by Ukrainian partisans; it became increasingly difficult to gain access to the village. In the end, it became possible for us to see the peasant woman who baked the bread for us.

The peasant woman advised us not to go back into the forest; it was her opinion that it was no longer safe because of the partisans; she also had no more flour with which to bake bread. From the other side, she proposed that we stay with her. In her house there was an attic, in an old '*stodala*[183],' half of which had already caved in and was ruined; yet there was straw there, piled high, and there in the broken-up attic, we remained until the Russians liberated us.

We left the peasant woman at night, because she did not want anyone to know that she had hidden us, and took leave of us with these words: 'Chaim, do not believe that you have encountered a foolish peasant woman, who helped you, and hid you, being oblivious to what awaits me, were they to find you in my premises; I knew everything, and understood it all, but I did it anyway, because I gave my word that I would hide a Jew, or help him to hide. I am fortunate to have been able to fulfil my wish; I demand no compensation from you, just as I have not demanded any compensation to date; go in good health, I wish you both much luck.'

We remained in Hiiche a half day, and then we went off to Rawa. We arrived in Rawa at three o'clock in the afternoon, and the first Jews we encountered were: Hertz Graff and his brother-in-law Klag.

It is difficult to describe how this encounter appeared. There was an additional few people, all of whom looked deathly ill and broken. The impression left by the city, and especially of the Jewish quarter was that everything was wrecked, exterminated, burned... this being the case of all the Rawa houses of study, *Kloyzes*, only the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash* remained. The *Gestapo* made covering

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183 A barn.

leather out of the Torah scrolls for boots, and in a few of the cellars, pieces of Torah scrolls were found. In a word – it all looked like what would be expected after a destruction, and one could have recited : 'How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!' how is she become as a widow...[184]' Without people, without houses... only the name Rawa remained...

Also, after the liberation, more Jews returned from among the Ukrainians. These Jews, returned from the villages, where they had managed to hide some of their belongings; I was among those who were hidden, and had not immediately fled the city, and fallen into the hands of Ukrainian bands... but not all Ukrainians were the same. One tale was told to me as follows:

It was at the beginning of May 1944, and already quite warm. We had remained in the pit, there being a small hole in the board, which covered the pit, through which we got a little [fresh] air. In this little hole, we had yet inserted a small stick which covered the entire little door. It was 12 o'clock, the sun profusely warmed us, and inside the pit there was not a bit of air, and it was hard to breathe. So we opened the small door., and the little stick stood itself up slightly, and we immediately heard that someone was approaching. We were scared to death. We quietly pushed ourselves down under the door, in order to see a bit. We only hoped that the passer-by would not look at the ground, because then we are lost. After a half minute, I saw that a head was looking down inside the pit. I immediately opened it, and recognized the peasant.

He was well-known to me, and a reliable person, but a Ukrainian. And who could know what he was thinking?

I asked him what he was looking for, and he said that he had come to cut branches for brooms, and knowing that partisans are about in this area, and seeing that the nearby grass had been trodden down, he understood that this was a hiding place and by happenstance he found me...

So I asked him what he thought of doing, and whether he would go and inform of my presence to the police? The peasant crossed himself and said: what sort of opinion do you have of me; I was a friend of your parents, and I already know who you are, since the time you were a small child. He gave me a cigarette, and assured me that I can be at ease, because nobody in the village knows where I am. It is being said that I am most certainly with the partisans.

He asked me, what should he bring me. Naturally my reply was – bread, because what else did I need?

I told him to come at nightfall; to signal by banging three times on the ground, and then I will know that he is here. In two hours, we heard three thumps and we became quite frightened, thinking that he certainly had returned with the police... I took my time in sticking my head out, and I saw that he was lying in the grass. I let him into the pit, and I wondered why he did not wait until it got darker, to which he said, that he knew we had nothing to eat, and coming at night, he thought could be to stressful.

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[184] Lamentations 1:1

He brought me bread, savory items, salt, tobacco and matches, and he said that if it should happen that I not have anything to eat, that I should come to him at night, but that no one should see me, immediately ascend into his attic, and in the morning, to let him know by rapping on the stela, and he will bring me up something to eat. He also requested that I tell no one that he saw me.

I did not go to him, I saw him after the liberation and with tears in his eyes, he greeted me and asked, how it was that I could keep myself together and live through the experience of the pit... We lived through many instances of this sort...

I am convinced, that were the Jews a little less egotistical, and were able to band together, many more Jews could have been saved...I do not want to say that I was better than others. Everyone live for himself alone. There was a lack of leadership.

Memories for the Coming Generations

By Dan Berger

The Outbreak of the War

The day of the First of September 1939 fell on a Friday. Immediately in the early morning hours, the radio advised that German armed forces crossed the Polish border. Towards 10 o'clock, the first people who arrived from Lemberg, told how they saw, with their own eyes, how immediately in the morning, German airplanes appeared over Lemberg and bombarded the Gorodotzka *Gasse* and other streets and neighborhoods, and thereby, the first of the victims fell.

With us, in Rawa-Ruska, we sensed no panic until Wednesday, the sixth of September, despite feeling that the enemy was cutting more deeply into the country. Since Monday, September fourth, the main highway began to fill up with refugees, who streamed in [our] direction from the Romanian border.

On Thursday, September 7th, German airplanes first showed themselves over Rawa, dropping bombs on the Koleowa and Slowacki *Gasse*. A few bombs fell on the railway station, and on the Fleischer house on the Slowacki *Gasse*. Fortunately, there were no human casualties. Immediately afterwards, the populace of Rawa-Ruska abandoned the city, and went to hide themselves in the surrounding forests, out of fear of the bombardment. Only the representatives of the authorities remained in the city, and part of the membership of the fire-fighters and anti-gas service, among whom I was to be found.

On Friday, September the 8th of September, I led my family into the forest on the Wolkowica. And the truth is, that day was replete with fear. A large squadron of German airplanes shot up the shtetl with machine gun fire, and in the end, a scant few bombs were dropped on the train station. I personally saved myself by being on the municipal cemetery grounds, diagonally opposite the post office, where I had hidden myself from a hail of bullets, under a high gravestone. When the attack

passed by, I found a severely wounded person there, among the gravestones, the lady, Malka Tieger, who then died of her wounds.

A day later, my parents were taken out to Hrebenne, where they felt safer than in the city. And I began to transfer out all valuables from our domicile, in order to hide them in a cellar on the *Rynek*; I did this because I saw in our house a special danger, because it lay between the barracks and the train station.

How childish and naive were our expectations of the Germans at that time! A few hours later, I was compelled to abandon the city, and join my parents, since the Germans did not stop bombarding the city, ceaselessly for that entire day. They dropped the bombs on the houses in the center city, and it was only thanks to the fact that people had hidden themselves in the surrounding forests, that there were only five people killed.

When the great wave of bombardment went past, I returned to the city, in order to ascertain what was possible to do further, in order to salvage at least some bit of our assets.

Once again, the roads were filled with refugees from the vicinities of Cracow, Tarnow, Deitch and Jaroslaw, who traveled or ran, confused, as if they already knew from what sort of a bestial enemy they were running from.

Our house stood intact, but I, myself, once again was compelled to leave the city, because of a freshly renewed bombardment. Saturday towards nightfall, and on Sunday, we traversed the forest, in Hrebenne. However, on Monday in the morning, feeling that the Germans were getting closer to Rawa, we decided to return to the city, and hide with the Knobloch[185] family in the cellar.

And it was in this fashion, that after midday Monday, our relatives along with three other people, were by the Knoblochs, because additional members of this family were to be found outside the city.

A large part of the Polish-Ukrainian populace began to plunder the Jewish houses of the city. Doors of houses and businesses were broken down, indicating that the city was without the usual security and protection.

On Wednesday the 9th of September, six o'clock in the morning, I went out of the cellar into the street, and at that moment, I observed the first German patroller, who was wearing the leather jacket of a motorcyclist, and with armament, pushed himself opposite me. I therefore stood, and waited until he got closer to me. Suddenly, I heard his voice: '*Hast du waffen? Warf es avek!*' I replied that I had no weapons. So he then asked me again: '*Was denn tuest du in gasse?'* To this I replied, that after lying in the cellar for several days, out of fear of the bombardment, I decided to come out into the street, to look for cigarettes for my father; he then took three cigarettes out of his case, and gave them to me, and with them, I quickly went back down to my father in the cellar, and declared to him, that I was very pleased and awed by the demeanor of the Germans, and that it is possible that, what

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185 The Yiddish spelling is not consistent, yielding Knoblach and Knoblich as variations.

is being told, regarding what they do with Jews, is perhaps simply a fantasy of the Jewish refugees coming out of Germany.

On that same day, the German occupied the shtetl, and we returned home, taking along with us all of our belongings, with the thought of starting a normal life anew. This was until suddenly on Monday September 18, when the first gruesome order appeared on the walls, that the Germans are gathering together all Jews between the ages of 14 and 50 putting them into camps, and already on Tuesday, September 19, at 6 o'clock in the morning, the Jews must gather together at the train station, under the threat of the death penalty, for not carrying out this order.

Precisely on time, approximately a thousand men assembled themselves in the place in front of the train station. We were divided into 20 groups, of fifty men, and a soldier was stationed beside each group to stand guard; this is how the day went by, in which no one was allowed to approach us to give us food or drink, while we stood on our feet. Whoever attempted to sit down on the ground, was beaten by the commandant of the guard, to the point where he could not stand any longer, but could not even just lie there.

Finally, at about 6 o'clock before nightfall, we were taken off to the Jewish orphanage *(Der Weisen-Hoyz)*, where we were packed in like herring, and where there was barely enough room to stand.

There in the *Weisen-Hoyz*, we heard the news for the first time, that seemed to resonate like some distant fabrication, that the Soviets as well, had crossed the Polish border from their side, and in accordance with a treaty, the Germans have to withdraw back to the Bug and the San [Rivers], in favor of the Soviets; that Rawa-Ruska, has to be vacated in favor of the Soviets. But we did not believe in this very much, and thought that some sort of a miracle would happen to us, and that the Soviets would free us, and not only free us, but also consider us as fully-equivalent citizens and even more than that, to the degree that we had never attained under Polish hegemony.

As previously said, at the outset we did not believe this, and when night came, the largest part of us fell asleep; part standing, and part half-sitting or lying down, one on top of the other. In the morning at 5 o'clock, the Germans permitted our families to provide us with something to eat. Rumors flew through the air, that we were being taken to a camp in Cracow.

In the meantime, a number of us were let free. It was possible for their parents, by paying substantial sums of money, to extract needed craftsmen. It was also possible for some, to steal out in the darkness on that first night. I was also released on that first day, and on the way home, my father told me how it was possible for him to do this. But my brother remained back there yet, also for the second night. Overall, the talk was that they were going to be deported to Cracow.

It was in great fear that I lived through that second day, and concluded that he [sic: my brother] had not yet been deported, and with extensive effort, I was able to get him out on that same day, with the help of a German identity pass, which was provided to me by Esther Haberman, who worked in the administration.

On Friday, September 22, the Eve of *Yom Kippur*. And the Sabbath of *Yom Kippur*, we prayed at

home, after the previous Sabbath, when the Germans entered the synagogue during worship and frightfully beat the worshipers, and afterwards burned the Torah scrolls. Late in the afternoon, I went out into the street, to hear what was going on, and I encountered a man, who had come on foot from Lemberg, and who told us, that with his own eyes, he had seen Soviet soldiers marching into the city, after the Germans had – according to the treaty – withdrawn, and that the roads are full of German military and Russian military, who after them, are occupying the cities and villages [of the area]. This had the ring of being so distant and legendary, were it not for the fact that I had heard this with my own ears from a man, who saw it with his own eyes, I would have designated it as unbelievable. Is it possible that, reasonably soon, we will actually be rid of our most bloody enemies ?!...

But the week dragged on, and nothing happened. Sunday and Monday went by, without anything changing. It was only first on Tuesday, September 26, that a taxi full of officers drove into the city, who – for us – were wearing unfamiliar insignias.

We immediately understood, that this was certainly a group of Russian officers. On that same afternoon, under the reverberation of a march, the Russian cavalry rode in, and at that same time, the Germans evacuated the city.

That same Tuesday, was, for the Jews, a day of liberation. Everything came out into the streets, and the Soviet soldiers were taken up with wild enthusiasm, and even the rich did not care. So long as we had gotten rid of the German murderers; this, despite the fact that they knew that they would not have it easy under the Soviets.

In the course of the immediately following days, approximately eight thousand Jews flooded into Rawa from Belzec, Tomaszow and Narol, who had fled their cities, not wanting to remain under German hegemony, at the time that the borders were finalized, along the line from Belz-Belzec-Narol-Tomaszow-Jaroslaw.

The new way of life immediately commenced in the city. Jews benefitted from the fullest freedom, in a manner they never had experienced in their entire lives, but because of this, shortages began to envelop everyone. The liquidation of private businesses began, and in their place government-run businesses were opened, and in order to obtain the necessities of life, it was necessary to wait for hours on line. Out of this, a black market emerged. People started making a living from this, as well as from reserves, that had been accumulated in the past.

But in April 1940, the Soviets began to carry out *aktionen* against the black marketeers, and for the slightest infraction, people got five years of imprisonment. Former manufacturers and rich folk began to be deported to Siberia, and in this manner, increasingly larger circles constricted the illegal ways of making a living, and people began to occupy themselves with real work.

The organs of authority began to demand that people have working papers and at this opportunity also gave them Russian documents. A large part of the refugees from those areas that were found under German hegemony, refused to take out Russian passes (this means, accepting Soviet citizenship) and for this reason, the Russians, in May 1940, carried out a deportation of about a half million of such Jews, to Siberia.

Apart from this, life continued in its usual fashion, In May 1941, the Soviets mobilized a few hundred young people – myself among them. On May 19, 1941, I moved into Siedliska not far from the border, where we were supposed to carry out military training exercises in the course of 45 days. However, on June 20, rumors began to spread that the Germans were getting ready to assault the Soviets.

On Sunday, June 21, the officers held speeches in front of us, that all the differences between Germany and Russia had been, as always was the case, and is now, straightened out, and the Russians avoided a bloodbath. With lightened hearts, we all went to sleep with hope, that after six weeks, we will truly be liberated and be able to return to our families.

But instead, at 2 o'clock in the morning, the drone of airplanes woke us up, and 10 minutes later, the official emergency alarm condition was called out, and we were marched out onto the first line, which lay at a distance of 3 kilometers from us. This was on June 22, 1941 before dawn.

The Soviet-German War

On Sunday, June 21, 1941, at 3 o'clock before daybreak, when the Germans attacked, I was at the front in the vicinity of Lubycza Królewska. Bloody battles ensued there for the entire day. On the following day, Monday, in the retreat to Rawa-Ruska, I made use of the opportunity and entered my home for a few minutes. For this transgression, I was accused of desertion and thrown into the Rawa jail. I sat there for one day and one night, and received a sentence to be sent to the first front, which was found in the vicinity of our city.

We left as a contingent of 150 men, and when we retreated, only 10 of us were still alive. On Friday, June 26, 1941, at 10 o'clock in the morning, I abandoned the city as the last Soviet patrol.

On Saturday June 27, we fought tenaciously against the enemy in ¯o³kiew and after that, when the city became surrounded by the Germans, and there was no longer any hope of reconnecting with the Soviet Army, I had the opportunity to change over into civilian clothes, and on Wednesday July 2, returned to Rawa. In this connection, it is necessary to underscore that the distance of 32 kilometers between Rawa and ¯o³kiew, needed to be traversed on foot, and the roads were guarded by local Ukrainians, who murdered every Jew, or buried them alive. Already being in civilian clothing in ¯o³kiew, I encountered Boruch Tieger there, and Isaac Szpazner. We became aware that our Rabbi, Rabbi Twersky was found in ¯o³kiew, and we went to visit him. The Rabbi, upon hearing that we were intending to go back to Rawa, broke out into a wailing cry, and blessed us. Indicating that we should go in peace, and return in peace.

At home, they were very happy to see me, but that happiness was disrupted by the first German demands levied against the Jews. The first, was an order issued that all Jews must wear a yellow badge with a Star of David in it, so that even those, who don't have the appearance of being Jewish

can be so recognized. Men from the age of 14 to 60, had to present themselves for forced labor on a daily basis. It was written in German on one side, and in Ukrainian on the other side, the Jews were compelled to do forced labor and also large sums of money that had to be paid to the Germans through their newly-designated *Judenrat*. (The first head of the *Judenrat* was a certain Schweitzer. Then, Mr. Wantberg became the head of the *Judenrat*, the owner of the drugstore, in the hope that his activity would in some way lighten the fate decreed for the hapless Jews). Everyone exerted themselves to give of their last capacity, but this still did not satisfy the Germans. Jews had to turn over things not only to the Germans, but also to the Ukrainians, that being their furniture, better clothing, and undergarments. Jews lived from whatever they could purchase from the peasants of the vicinity, this being the needs of daily living. For a kilogram of potatoes, or flour, the peasants got the best and finest Jewish possessions.

Commerce was free, but not for Jews. Despite this, Jews had to do business, having to have something from which to live. The Ukrainian militia exclusively locked out the Jewish merchants, but these could be bought off. Therefore, in that time, few Jews were detained for engaging in commerce (for this transgression, the punishment was being sent to a labor camp for an indeterminate period of time). And so it was in this manner, and thanks to the fact that everyone gave significantly large sums of money, and their most precious possessions – above all else, what the new rulers demanded, that it was possible, for a while to carry on a life, but filled with fear.

Apart from the first arrests by the *Gestapo*, immediately after the occupation of the city, for the time being, the so-called 'political arrests' did not take place. In that first *aktion* by the *Gestapo*, the victims that fell were former communists, lawyers, and other prominent personalities, who were shot on the Wolkowica by Rawa-Ruska, where a very old Jewish cemetery was located.

At that time the following lawyers were killed: Segal, Hershdorfer, Kubusz Zimmerman, Shmuel Bekherbluth, Simcha Steinbach, Chaim Becker, Yehuda Altman, and others.

The first more extensive terror-*aktion* against the Jews was carried out in February 1942. Raids were then carried out, and a larger number of Jews were crammed into the labor camps, where they were frightfully tortured, and for the most minor infraction of not carrying out a work order, they were shot to death.

Since that day, the populace began to live, apart from being in chronic hunger, also under a frightful constant fear of the labor camp. The Judenrat, again, began to demand higher and higher levies, thinking that with an increase in bribing the Germans, it will be possible to buy one's life from these murderers.

But a frightening blow fell on us, together with all of Jewry in the year 1942.

On Thursday, March 3, 1942, after noon, the German gendarmerie fell upon the house of the *Judenrat,* and everyone, without exception, whether by age or gender, approximately 50 people, were taken off to the Rawa jail. The Jews in the city began to break their heads, and thought, that what this meant was the Germans were trying to squeeze more money or valuables out of the Jews. Others

thought that the Germans were looking for young people to do work, and the detainees are serving only as hostages. Nevertheless, the majority opinion was that after this, when the German demands will have been satisfied, everything will pass peaceably, and those arrested will be released.

On Friday the 20th of March, Jews remained in their houses, and waited for news about the fate of those arrested the previous day; but suddenly, a huge raid began, in which the German gendarmerie took part, Ukrainian militia, and informers, who pointed out where the Jews lived. Nobody had any notion as to what this raid was all about, and almost everyone was convinced that what was going on was an *aktion* to seize people to do work in the labor camp.

When the Germans surrounded our house, my father and brother and I had the opportunity to conceal ourselves. Because of this, they found in the house of my uncle Yitzhak: my aunt Reizl, Rachel, and cousin Khasheh Berger and they detained them. Later, it became evident that in the beginning, the raid took place without any lists. But later on, every Jew, that the Germans seized, was detained. Nobody even dreamed that a day later, none of these victims would be among the living.

The *aktion* lasted all of Friday (20.3.42), and on Saturday morning, about 1500 people were crammed into a freight train, which traveled off in the direction of Warsaw. As was later revealed, it did not travel more than 18 kilometers from Rawa, meaning until it reached the train station at Belzec, and there, the entire transport was unloaded and was made ready for the death camp.

At the outset, the people were talked into believing that they were being led to a 'bath,' but later on, everyone already knew, that the train the Belzec was taking them to death, a bare few minute after they arrived there. In that first *aktion* in Rawa, almost everyone lost somebody [in their family]. The pain was greatly terrifying on the one side, and on the other side, a personal struggle for survival began, which in part was tied up in a large amount of egoism.

It became clear, after the first *aktion,* that Hitler's objective was to murder all the Jews. The misfortune of March 20th had barely gone by, and almost immediately a fresh blow fell on the heads of those who remained: an order appeared that in the course of only a few days, all the Jews must leave the Mickiewicz, Grunwald and *Gasse* and the Bahn *Gasse* and move over to live in the center of the city, in the so-called Jewish quarter. A shortage of domiciles ensued, and there were up to 10 people accommodated in each room. After a long search, we found a residence on the Szewczenko *Gasse*, but we were able to stay there for only 3 weeks, because the Germans confiscated the residence for their own use, and drove the Jews out of it. From there, we went over in the Jewish quarter to my father-in-law Nachman Kleiner ז"ל, who lived on the Sobieski *Gasse*. Moshe Levin was here with us for a couple of days, who, at the time had sunk into a very deep depression. We live here with our entire family in perpetual fear of a new *aktion*, because weekly transports would come through Rawa with victims being taken to Belzec, from the so-called General Gouvernment (meaning all of Poland).

Women, who had up till now not worked, began to agitate for work, thinking that the barbarians would not murder working Jews, and in this manner that will be able to save their lives. What touches me is that I never believed in this, and exerted myself to try and extract a release from work, also for my father, Moshe Meir and brother Simcha, and thanks to Israel Marz, I was able to accomplish this, who worked in the labor council.

On July 29, 1942, at six o'clock in the morning, my mother and brother Simcha went off to the issuing office in order obtain the signature on the release forms from the director for Simcha. The latter did not want to do this. In the meantime, rumors spread through the city, that a new aktion is imminent, and I succeeded in getting an order out for the director from the labor council, that he should release my brother. He promised to carry that out first that evening, after work. But we decided that we would not let this matter go for any price, and my brother, in the end, was released and also returned home with me with the assessment that it would be best at this time to go into hiding. As it later became clear, the truth of the matter was that the director's intent, who was a Nazi, was to turn my brother over to be loaded up for Belzec, because he viewed him as being a weakling. Upon arrival home, we hid ourselves well, thinking that the rumors might very well be true, and the *aktion* can erupt at any moment.

On July 29, 1942 at 11 o'clock in the morning, when the entire Jewish population of Rawa was hidden in their houses, and whoever had them, in their bunkers, the German *SchuPo* (*Schutz Polizei*), accompanied by the Ukrainian militia, surrounded the entire city, and an hour later, the section *aktion* in Rawa commenced. At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, I peered out through a crack in the shutters, and I saw how, on our street, the Ukrainians were exerting themselves with all their might to break down the doors in the house of Shayndl'eh Zimmerman, where Nahum Kleiner lived, in order to drag the Jews out from there, and load them up for shipment to Belzec.

This *aktion* lasted from Wednesday July 29, 12 o'clock noon, until Thursday the following day, at 9 o'clock in the morning. Two hours later, a transport with 2,000 souls departed for Belzec. It was first at 4 o'clock in the afternoon that we attempted to look outside on the street, and we saw that by some miracle, the Germans passed by our house, and it was in this fashion that we remained alive.

Rawa, which before the first *aktion*, was populated with 7500 Jews, now had no more than 4000 frightened and starving [sic: Jewish] souls. The Germans promulgated an order that, all Jews living in the surrounding towns and villages, must immediately transfer themselves to Rawa, into the Jewish ghetto. Now, once again, there were 11,000 Jews in Rawa, who were compelled, both day and night, to work, in order to sate the Nazi beast. This same situation was repeated throughout all of Poland, because by that time, the Germans had decided to carry out the extermination of the Jews at a quickened tempo – and it was possible, for example, to take note of this by the fact that instead of two to three transports a week since August 1942, two to three transports would come through Rawa *each day*, and every one of those trains held approximately ten thousand Jews, who did not receive any food and also no opportunity to attend to their bodily functions. These sealed train cars were guarded by German gendarmes and soldiers, who shot at anyone who attempted to jump off the trains. The way along the rail tracks from Rawa-Ruska to Belzec was sown with the corpses of Jews that were killed this way. At that time, in Rawa, about 500 Jews from all over Poland had hidden themselves, who managed to save themselves from these trains.

In praise of the *Judenrat*, it must be said that despite the immense difficulties, it did a great deal for these Jews, in order to provide them with material assistance, and also to hide them from the German authorities.

Rumors began to course through a variety of towns that had become *Judenrein*. Homeowners began to think about building bunkers in their cellars or up in their attics. It arrived at a point, where the concepts of ordinary people overruled the expertise of graduate engineers. During all of November 1942, a long, daily panic reigned in anticipation of a new *aktion*. At the sight of a single German gendarme, everyone quickly holed themselves up in their hiding places, being convinced that their hiding place was the best in the city, and on the start of a new aktion, they will be saved from death, and live to see the capitulation of Hitler – an event, at that time, thought to be almost impossible.

There were 5 rooms in our residence, in which 15 people resided. In that connection, we created two hiding places, in order that everyone be able to be concealed within them. On December 1, 1942, the Jewish Quarter was officially proclaimed as a locked ghetto. The threat of the death penalty hung over anyone who left the ghetto confines without the permission of the *Gestapo*. The gates of the ghetto were guarded by Germans and Jewish Policemen. Three days later all permits, that were to be found in Jewish hands, giving permission to leave the ghetto, were canceled, as a result of an outbreak of a typhus epidemic, which each day claimed several tens of Jewish lives. At this point it did not take much longer, and the Germans decided to liquidate Rawa Jewry in its entirety.

On **December 7, 1942**, at 9 o'clock in the morning, at the time we were praying in our room, I heard a few gunshots. I went to the window, and saw that there were four Jewish dead lying on the ground. (One of those four was Mendl'eh Bogen). And since we were anticipating new *aktionen* in the city, I quickly locked all the doors, and we all went into the previously prepared hiding places. On that day, not a single Jew came out into the street. But nothing else transpired on that day. However, because of that, the following morning, Tuesday, the 8th of December, at 9 o'clock in the morning, a new *aktion* commenced. On the pretext, initially, this was to seek out the sick, but in reality everyone, that fell into their hands, was being murdered, making no distinction between the sick and the healthy, whether they were workers or not. Those Jews seized on that Tuesday were shot in the synagogue.

On Wednesday and Thursday, two transports were sent off to Belzec. Despite this, the *aktion* rampaged on through Friday and Saturday. From the street, the shouting and crying of people reached us in our hiding place, who were unable to move as quickly as the murderers ordered them to, and were therefore shot for this reason by the Germans. Looking out through a crack in a window, I saw our entire street sown with the dead.

The remaining people that were seized, were led out of the city on Friday and Saturday, and shot there. During the *aktion*, there was one instance when the Jewish police was able to get into our house, but finding no one, they went away. We were then lying in our 2 hiding places, apart from our father, who had a separate hiding place in the attic, because of his chronic cough.

On Sunday, the first news reached us that Rawa-Ruska had been designated to become '*Judenfrei.*' In the beginning, we thought to flee to ¯o³kiew, but because I was so tied to my parents, we decided not to become separated. For the entire day, we lay hidden in our hiding places. At 10 o'clock at night, we went out of our residence, cooked something or another, and ate then, for the entire day.

On the outside, the *aktion* continued, and on one occasion we suddenly heard the voice of Kehat Szaffel, who knocked on the bunker, where Shayndl'eh Zimmerman was hiding with Abraham and Bluma Moster (Zimmerman), with their children, begging them to let him in.

Our plight was so confused and uncertain that only a miracle could save us from death at that point. We had even gathered up enough food to live on, but as to water... we practically passed out from thirst. And how could anything be cooked when there was no water to be had? But in the second week of the aktion, the heavens bestowed a pleasant gift on us. A rain descended on us... for us, this was like a cure for a dying person. With that little bit of water that we gathered up, we were able to cook and drink. But there was no talk of washing one's hands or face.

Friday, December 18, we noted that the police were hammering shut all the entry gates and all doors to houses, formerly occupied by Jews, with large nails. On that evening of the 18th of December, our youngest sister, Matilda, went off in an unfamiliar direction.

In the ensuing days, we made attempts in the evening, to crawl out from our hiding places, believing that we were not directly threatened by the police, because the doors were all hammered shut with nails. There were even those who, during the day, sat in their residences for the same reason.

On the 20th of December, we could no longer hold fast without water, and risking our lives, which in any case didn't have much worth in our own eyes, I, together with my sister, went down into the cellar for the purpose of digging down to a creek. Apart from us, Yoss'l Dyksler and Hertz Mensch were in the cellar, and all of us together dug to reach the creek. And how fortunate we were, when we saw the first drops and fell upon them like some sacred remedy.

It is not possible to describe the circumstances under which we dug out that creek, but as previously stated, our joy was boundless. For the first time, in a long time, we truly slaked our thirst. It was in this manner that our water issue was resolved on the 22nd of December 1942. However, despite this, we began to unceasingly ask: what is the purpose of our struggle to remain alive, when the city is practically already *Judenfrei*?...

On December 25, my father-in-law Nachman Kleiner fell sick, and could no longer go down into the bunker. He lay in bed and his situation deteriorated with each passing moment: also my father-in-law's sister-in-law fell sick with typhus. I, once again, sat, during those days, by myself by the window, and observed through a crack, how the remaining Jews, about 70 souls, the so-called '*totengruppe*,' worked the entire day moving corpses to the local cemetery.

On the 2nd of January 1943, in the morning, we took note of the fact that the Germans, accompanied by Ukrainian militia, were drawing closer to our gate, and opened it. Abandoning the sick to their gruesome fate, we all quickly descended into our hiding place. In that same minute, the Ukrainians began to work with crowbars in order to break in the door, which was made of iron. They worked like this for nearly two hours, until they succeeded in doing this. They then took the two sick people with them, and led them off to the Jewish synagogue, and shot them there, along with other assembled sick people.

They did even worse with those who were healthy. Approximately 200 people were loaded into autos, and taken out to the Jewish cemetery. There, they were murdered in a terrifying and sadistic manner. There were pits that had been dug out at the cemetery, and the victims were murderously beaten and forced to strip naked. Then, they had to lay themselves out on the ground of the pit, until [the pit] was entirely covered [in people]. Then, with several shots from machine guns, the murderers killed them, and forced the remaining Jews to lay themselves out in a fresh array [on top of them]. This was repeated several times, until the pit became full. There were approximately 15 layers of people in each pit, which came to 400 people. Part of these hapless unfortunates were even forced to dig pits for themselves with their own hands. The human hand is incapable of writing down the sort of gruesome actions that those grave diggers saw in those days.

Apart from, the fact that the murderers led out the two previously mentioned victims, the German police escorted by Ukrainians began to ceaselessly search for us. For this reason, we were compelled to remain in our hiding place both during the day, and by night, to the point where we could not see the light of day.

In addition to this, my brother fell ill on the 2nd of January (and this illness lingered on for more than two months). Three days later, meaning January 5, 1943, our Aunt Chana Feiga, who was hidden along with us, also fell ill. Finally, on January 8, my father fell ill. The frost was fierce, and my father had to lay up in the attic, because of his cough,, which plagued him fearfully. My aunt did not want to lay in the hiding place, and lay in the dwelling itself; by contrast, my brother lay in the bunker. After a mishap with two sick ones, you can imagine the fear that overtook us regarding the fate of these new three.

A day later, on the 9th of January, Ukrainians entered the residence and came across my dying aunt. They left her there. A couple of hours later, she expired. On another day, these same Ukrainians came with a wagon, and took away her body.

At that time, our relative, the brother-in-law of my father-in-law lost his mind, and we were in a quandary as to where to hide him. Suddenly, on one occasion, he went out into the street. A couple of minutes later, he was shot.

The condition of my father's health grew worse from day to day, despite the fact that he did not suffer from the cold up in the attic, because we wrapped him up in extra bedding, but we could not give him any medicines, not even a bit of warm tea with sugar. His craving for a drink of tea with sugar so oppressed him, that for a couple of days running, he thought this to be the single cure that would set him upright again on his feet.

Observing this, a little girl that was Christian in her appearance (she also was hidden with us), volunteered of her own free will – knowing that she was risking her life – and on one evening, went out into the street, and brought back a few bits of sugar from an establishment, some small other pieces of sugar, and candles.

When I brought the tea up to my father in the attic, he burst out crying, to the extent that for my entire life I have not forgotten it. This was also the last time I saw him alive. On the next morning at 5 o'clock, when I went up to him again with a glass of tea, I found him dead. This was Sunday, January 17, 1943.

I decided to dig a pit out in our cellar, and inter his remains there. Seeing that this was an undertaking that could not be done in one night, I took the decision to complete his grave on Monday night. In the meantime, however, on that day, the bandits came back into the house and found his dead body in the attic. They took him away and threw him into a mass grave in the Jewish cemetery.

The Germans did not find us that day, because all of us were in our hiding places. The grave that I had begun to dig for my father,[186] did not remain empty. We interred Mendl Muhlmeister in it, whom the Germans had shot in a neighboring house.

Added to the great pain of losing my father, came the great worry about the illness of my brother. He had already gotten past the crisis, but his feet were frozen, and he had to move around on all fours. It is not possible to describe the suffering of my mother.

On the 26th of January, Mrs. Kalichman died in her bed after giving birth, beside my mother and sick brother. We quickly carried her body out into another room, and we interred her a day later (buried in the cellar).

On January 26th, at seven o'clock in the evening, we went out to the cellar, where the brook was located, in order to bring a bit of water. On our way back, being very cautious, we heard that someone was moving about near our hiding place. Suddenly we sensed the light from an electric lamp across from me, and an unrecognizable voice quietly said: 'We are Jews.' In that same moment, I heard the voice of my wife's sister, Matilda: 'This is Dan!' My joy at seeing her alive was boundless. The youth, who had escorted her, was a 20 year-old Pole, who became our liaison with the outside and living world.

At that time, they made me aware of what was going on in the city. The police had received the order not to force their way into Jewish houses, after the time when most of them had become infected with typhus in the ghetto. We breathed a bit easier because of this, because it meant that we would be able to move around more freely. We also learned from them that Matilda, along with her brother-in-law Berisz Steinfeld, are hidden in the residence of the Pole.

After we had acquired this connection to the outside world, our hopeless life changed a bit. Every ensuing day brought with it something else new. Every day, the man would come, his name was Kozarczyk, bringing along foodstuffs and news from the outside. We would send a variety of useful necessities through him to the brother-in-law, so the latter would have something from which to sustain himself.

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186 Author's footnote: This was the same cellar were we dug out the brook, in the house of Shayndl Zimmerman.

At that same time, Mr. Kozarczyk found a place for us, with a Christian family, where we could hide out. But the place was designated to be used for only two people, meaning my wife and I. Just from the mere thought of leaving my mother and sick brother behind, I nearly went out of my mind. Instead of being satisfied with this, that we were going to move to a secure hiding place, I felt myself to be most unfortunate, knowing the sort of danger I was leaving them behind to face.

The move to hide out with Aryans was tied up with a payment of 20 thousand zlotys, which I had to gather together after selling off my wife's and my clothing, which were still in our possession from the past. The Pole did not want to see or hear anything about taking in my mother with my brother. – He had no more room, for more than two people – he argued.

Two weeks had gone by since our first encounter with Matilda. Today, Kozarczyk came to discuss when we will be able to make the move into the new hiding place with Aryans.

This was on the 7th of February at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when I, as usual, had crawled out of our hiding place, spied a thick smoke coming out of a nearby house. In a minute's time that smoke had transformed itself into a terrifying conflagration. I quickly went back into the bunker, and from there, we quickly snatched a few valuables, and fled from the fire to the more distant Mund house. There, we joined up with additional Jews in the cellar.

We stayed there for two days and two nights, and when I once more went outside, I noted that the neighboring house had been completely burned down, and ours had been partially destroyed. Everything that we had not had the ability to take with us from the bunker, had been plundered, most obviously it appears, by the fire-fighters, during their quenching of the blaze.

I had not the slightest idea of how we were going to get in touch with Kozarczyk, about moving over to the Aryan side. As previously mentioned, in the evening, when we were supposed to meet, the fire broke out, and from that point on, we did not meet. However, a day later, on the 10th of February, being in the destroyed bunker, and thinking about what else to do, Kozarczyk suddenly appeared. At first I was frightened without measure, because, in the darkness, I thought this was a policeman; however later, the fear turned to joy. In the end, we did thoroughly discuss that on the following morning, we would be going over to our new hiding place on the Aryan side.

After his departure, I brought the bunker back to its previous condition and we, once again, went into it. But a day later, Matilda came to us with Kozarczyk, and declared that our plan to go to the Aryans had come to naught. My wife got a bit upset at this, because in our present location, our lives hung by a hair; I, by contrast, saw in this a sign from heaven, indicating that we were not to separate from my mother and brother.

At that time, Meir Zimmerman appeared at our hiding place, and conveyed to us that during the aktion, 60 were selected out of the 12,000 Jews, who were designated to inter those who were killed, and an additional 250 were selected for labor. All the rest were now already in the *Other World*.

From prior information, I was familiar only with the grave diggers, but as to the 250 who were at the start taken off to work in Kamienka, and afterwards, at the beginning of February, brought back to the ghetto in Rawa, I did not know; now, my friend Meir Zimmerman related that they are working in sorting out effects that were left behind by those who were now dead. We also became aware, at that time, that approximately 400 people remained alive in Rawa, hidden in bunkers like ourselves.

At this opportunity, I beseeched Meir Zimmerman to make an effort to get Doctor Bernstein, the Jewish doctor in the labor camp to come to us, in order to examine my brother. And in reality, it was Dr. Krystynpoller who came instead of him, and brought along a number of medicines, which served to lighten my brother's condition a bit.

Kozarczyk also came to us on a daily basis, and declared that there are some possibilities to hide out with yet another Pole, but that Pole is demanding an enormous sum not in money, but in goods. Now, it was not as hard as it had been previously, because in all of the destroyed Jewish houses, there was much merchandise. And it was here that it became evident that we could no longer expect to go over to the Pole – because he was arrested, while in the process of transferring goods from us, and once again, nothing came of the initiative. Having no alternative, we had to start all over anew to find a new Pole, who would be prepared to take us in and hide us.

But in the meantime, we had to arrange for our existence, as it was up till now, in our [current] hideout. That is, until one day, at the end of March 1943, in the morning, as I was peering out of a crack in the hiding place, I noticed, how three young Polish gentile thugs, are standing in our dwelling, and saying something among themselves, pointing with their fingers up to the attic. After a short while, they went away. At first, I had the impression that they were just looking for Jewish effects. But following their pointing with their fingers to the attic, I came to understand that they had heard the footfall of people who were hiding up there.

In the attic, I found 9 people, who over to us, in the house, 9 weeks earlier, after Poles had taken note of them in an opposite house. Among the 9 was Yekhezkiel Lekhtzier, his mother and sister, as well as the husband of Perl'eh Mund (a German).

A half hour had barely gone by, since the departure of the gentile thugs, and we already heard an alarm sounded around our house. I looked out through a crack and saw how the thugs had returned, accompanied by the German *'Schutz-Polizei'* (*Gestapo*). They immediately threw themselves at the stairway up to the attic, and as one of the hidden people attempted to jump out onto the roof, he was met by a report [of a gun] and he rolled down dead on the ground. The remaining eight people were taken down to the Jewish cemetery, and murdered there in a bestial fashion.

The terror we felt during this aktion in the attic is impossible to put into writing. We feared as to whether they would continue their search, and get to us. After this incident, I decided to move myself over into the ghetto, that so-called '*lager*,' because it was not possible to remain in the place where we were.

Our greatest danger now, were the tens of Polish gentile thugs, who would plunder the Jewish houses day and night, and because of this, on every occasion, they would run into Jews. They immediately

reported this to the *Gestapo*, and the people were then lost. By contrast, in the so-called 'lager,' which was a part of the former ghetto, not only them, but also the Ukrainian militia were not permitted to come in; It was guarded by Jewish Police. After the good fortune of the Germans not having searched further, we immediately had another stroke of good luck, in which Jews from the labor camp immediately appeared (among them Weichselbaum) and helped us move over our effects. Thanks to his assistance, I was able to convey into the work camp a little bit of clothing and foodstuffs. Later, at approximately 12 o'clock at night, I went back to the house, where our hiding place was located, and brought the family over to our new quarters in the '*lager.*' This transfer, from our old hiding place to the 'lager' was fraught with great dangers, and a great miracle happened, that the German gendarmes did not detect us.

Here, in the *lager*, a new phase in our 'lives' began. While we were illegal here as well, and could not show ourselves out in the daylight, we found ourselves to be in an attic all the time. And since the *Gestapo* was a frequent 'guest' in the *lager*, we had to, even here, construct a hiding place for ourselves. But in the few days until the hiding place was set up, our suffering was exceptionally difficult, and it was our mother and still half-sick brother who suffered the most. But after this, when the hiding place had been completed, it turned out to be very suitable, meaning that it was secure. We carried over our belongings into it, and afterwards, as soon as I had the ability to put up a primitive small oven, and the possibility was created to cook something from time-to-time, we were as if in heaven. Fear of the Germans was much less here, than it was in our house on the *Slowacki Gasse*, so much that my mother and brother would be able to occasionally stick their faces out onto the lit street, for the first time since Rawa had become '*Judenrein.*' It was here that my brother regained his health.

In that time, it was known to the *Gestapo* that there were about 250 Jews hiding out in Rawa, whom they could not capture under any circumstances. However, willing to pay any price to get them into their murderous talons, they, at the end of April, turned to the Jewish commandant of the labor camp, asking him to round up all the illegal Jews to be taken to work. But it was clear to everyone that all the barbarians wanted was to arrive at a figure of how many Jews yet remained, and then on a set day, they would surround, capture and murder this remaining remnant. This was clear to everyone. But the people, after such an inhumanly severe winter, ached for a drop of fresh air, and a ray of sunshine, in order to warm up their bones. For this reason, they left their bunkers, and presented themselves for labor. They thought that by doing this, that even if the Germans wanted to murder them, they won't do this before the onset of winter.

I, my wife and brother were also among them. Only my mother remained back in our hiding place, up in the attic and would cook something for us to eat in the evening, after work. But at the same time, I did not forget the danger for one minute, which threatened to liquidate the entire *lager*, and with relentless energy I exerted myself to find a place [to hide] with a Pole, where I could hide myself and my family.

I developed something of a view with regard to one such Pole in the village of Kamionka and I had to meet, almost every day, with intermediaries, who lived on the railroad station street, and who lived off the Ukrainians and the *Gestapo*. The matter stretched out for a long time. And in the interim, I

utilized the time in order to generate money and other assets, which were necessary to pay for the place. On the 28th of May, my wife went off to Mr. Kozarczyk, where her brother was hidden, in order to remain there, until we would be able to go over to the Pole in Kamionka.

From that location, it was also easier to remain in touch with intermediaries, who benefitted from my complete trust. At that time, my mother also went over to a former neighbor, a Polish woman, with a request to hide out with her, naturally, for a larger sum of money, but regrettably without success.

Suddenly, and unexpectedly, on June 7, 1943, the Chief of the *Gestapo* arrived in Lemberg, and represented that since the ghetto was in large measure already liquidated, those remaining, numbering about eight hundred Jews, will also be transferred over to Rawa to do work. Our *lager* will be integrated with theirs, and will be located in the barracks opposite the Jewish cemetery. Beginning tomorrow, June 8th, we had to already be found together with the others in the previously mentioned lager.

For me, this news was literally a tragedy, and it became clear to me, that at any price, I must go to that location where my wife was, in order to consummate the transaction with the Christian in Kamienka.

I knew that in the new lager, we were under threat to be surrounded at any minute by the *Gestapo*, without any possibility of escape.

With this burdensome knowledge, I left my mother and brother and went off to Kozarczyk. Having no alternative, he took me in, but with the very explicit condition that it would only be for a few days, until the matter regarding Kamienka would be resolved. My hope was that I would be able to take my mother and brother to Kamienka. Regrettably, fate decreed otherwise, because by Thursday June 10th, the *lager* was surrounded by the *Gestapo*, all the people were led out to the Potelycz Forest, and murdered there.



Page 277: The Expulsion of the Jews of the City to Belzec. Photographed by Dan Berger

On that day, the last remnant of the Rawa Jews were murdered.

I cannot describe what reaction ran through my heart. That I did not lose my mind at the time, must be counted as one of the greatest miracles in the entirety of my life. However, suddenly, two days later, on June 12th in the evening, Kozarczyk came to me and told me that my brother had managed to save himself, and for the time being, was hiding in his garden. I was transformed in that moment, as if born again, and I beseeched Kozarczyk to take him in, until we would be able to go from there to our hiding place in Kamienka, but he refused, and I was left helpless.

Late at night I went out to my brother, thinking that I would be able somehow to help him. Both of us approached Poles that we knew, with the hope of finding some location, even for just a few numbered days, but all this without success. And it was in this way, late at night, I was compelled to return to my place, and he to his, in a pit in Kozarczyk's garden. My pain was indescribable. After a few days, my brother was compelled to abandon his pit in the garden, because the owner did not want him to remain for any price.

After this, I saw him for maybe two or three times altogether. And beyond that, it was impossible. With exertion, I attempted to stay in touch with him in writing, with help from Kozarczyk. I attempted to get in contact with that Pole who, at one time, was detained for transporting effects from us, and was now out free. On the 30th of June, my brother got permission to go to him. However, he never got there.

The last news I had from my brother was from June 29th. It appears, that in going to the Christian a day later, as agreed, he was seized along the way by either a Ukrainian or a German and murdered. Our state of distress was boundless. And Kozarczyk now understood that he had had it within his power to save him, were he only amenable, for a very nice financial emolument, which we offered him with our heartfelt thanks added to agree to let us all remain with him.

There would be no lack of what to relate about our continuing life until July 20, 1944 in the hideout at Kozarczyk's. I hope to cover that more fully in another part of my memoirs.

August 6, 1944

It is 10 o'clock at night. I happen to be standing in the attic, and the door to the dwelling is open. I am seeking to taste a few drops of fresh air. Through a window, I look out onto the road, where I had gone for the last time over a year ago, during the day, when I fled the ghetto to come here, to my hiding place at the Christian's house on the Hiiche *Gasse*. With great heartache, I recall how, with a broken heart I took leave of my mother and brother. Despite this, I believed in my heart, that a miracle would happen, and that I would be able to take them over to a secure location. But it happened otherwise, and they went away, like all the other of our dearest went away.

With tears in my eyes, I give thanks to the *Beloved Name*, that I am still standing here, and am able to speak, and hear and see. And one wish fills my heart: to live long enough to see the barbarians repaid, in kind for what they deserve, for what they did to our families and millions of other families, for the sole reason of them being Jews.

Rawa, You Little Shtetl of Mine!

By Yekhl Meiseles

Brothers and sisters, friends and survivors,
Come to me, I will recount to you a poem,
A poem about our little *shtetl,* which in pain,

Was brought low – in a sea of blood.

A poem about Rawa, our little *shtetl*, so diminutive,
Where we were born, and where we were once young,
That tremulous weeping does not cease to reverberate in my ears
Of its little chicks – the air of the entire world is full of that sound.

In dark nights, the screams of those little chicks cuts my ears,
The blood streams in the vessels, my temples want to burst.
O, my impoverished little shtetl, where I was young and where I was born,
How immense is your calamity – it is impossible to grasp!

To the south – the Wolkowica Mountain,
To the north – The Rata, the river,
From the west – The '*Zamd*' Targowica,
To the east – you are taken to the train station.

Oh, right over here, there is a small vale
Where the city of Rawa spread out,
Jewish Rawa, that once existed,
Our home, our life, our joy.

It was our city,
The remains of our grandfathers lie there.
Today, from there, the blood cries out
Of parents – and the weeping of sisters and brothers.

★

Ancestors lived in Rawa for generations
And blissfully passed away there, content,
There were as many as three cemeteries,
For hundreds of years, long before the *Destruction*.

Our ancestors lived with neighbors:
Poles, Ukrainians, for an uncountable number of years.
Dreamed, sorrowed, and were happy, all at the same time,
As was the usual, as it happens among neighbors one time in the past.

The *shtetl* is poor in wealthy folk,
In total a couple – maybe eight or ten;
Therefore quite well-endowed – in truly wretched poor,
Nobody knowing how, or since when.

In Rawa there was – an old spacious Synagogue,

Many houses of study, *minyanim* and *Kloyzes,*
In the morning and evening – packed to capacity,
One prays, a concept is studied, with letters and signs shown.

In Heders without number, one hears the singing
Of reedy little voices, the little voices of Jewish children.
A large part of them – swallow with their saliva,
As they learn of the Patriarch Jacob's sheep and cattle.

★

On the Sabbath, a majestic rest reigns over the city,
That incremental soul hovers over everything,
Even one who hungers year-round, having no bread,
Has braided *Challahs* and *Cholent* for the Sabbath.

Mothers, stand by candle-blessing with interlaced fingers,
Beseeching the *Master of the Universe* for sustenance and good health for children:
'Lead them in the righteous path, whether older or younger,
You, *Father in Heaven*, reveal your wonder!'

The fathers, first at the *Kiddush,* and later at the *Zemirot,*
Eyes tired from the burden of work, sticking closed,
Looking at the lines of the portion of the week in the morning,
Thinking: '*Gottenyu*, a little more income, perhaps you can provide it!'

★

And who can enumerate all of the Jewish ways of making a living!
Retailers of dairy, of oil and eggs,
Nails and iron wire for lubrication,
But from all of them, there is not enough to pay the tax.

One deals in boards, with wood and forests,
With herring, with wool, and with leather and salt,
Buying up orchards and the grain in the fields,
Worked one's self out over the summer and left without anything.

★

A city of *Hasidim*, scholars and Rabbinical leaders
Of just plain Jews, who learn a bit of Torah all year-round.
Also non-believers, 'intelligentsia,' lawyers, doctors
And also 'The Guys' who fear no one.

And self-sufficient youth, with a knowledge base,
Young people who can write with flavor and talent.
Overloaded, pressed into the hall,

As one of them speaks about or reads from Marx or Kant.

★

And it was this, that was Rawa, our city,
The city of our youth, our parents – our home.
And let us all raise our hands, against those who shed their blood
And shout until our last breath is drawn, 'Remember what Amalek did to you!'



Page 280: A Grove of Trees Planted by the KK"L In Memory of the Martyrs of Rawa-Ruska

The Janowski-Lager in Lemberg

By Katriel Rosen
Sydney

Regrettably, I am unable to provide exact dates, because I did not keep a diary.

It was in the month of Kislev 1941. We were in the Janowski Lager: the mood of people was one of confused uncertainty. There was a fear of even sticking one's head outside of the barracks. When one went out in the later hours of the night, the Ukrainians at the observation posts would shoot the people going to the privy.

The 'routine' began at about 4 o'clock in the morning, where like in a prison, the S.S. troops with dogs and whips, came into the barracks with shouts of: 'Get out, like the wind!'... and everyone fell over each other in order not to be bitten or hit. Outside it was dark, as if the sun was ashamed to shed any light on the day... every group gathered together in a specific trade, under the oversight of a *lager* senior. The cold and snow abetted the suffering. All of us from the lager stood in groups, waiting to go to work, until 7 o'clock and then we heard: '*Hitte ab!*' And woe unto the individual who was

deemed not to have moved quickly enough to take off their hat... one would jostle the other in order to retain a bit of body heat. Many of us were in torn clothing, and torn shoes... parts of the body were exposed to the open...

In the end, came the shout: 'March!'

While we were standing, a Jew came out, having a high temperature from typhus, and wandered about the *lager*. An effort was made to get this Jewish person back into the barracks, but without success. An S.S. trooper took note of him, and immediately killed him with one blow... at the egress from the *lager*, where there was a four-sided area ringed with barbed wire. It was in there that the weak, or those that did not satisfy the S. S. trooper – were driven in. And it was good, when the victims had the good fortune of being shot because the other hapless unfortunates were undressed to the point of being half-naked, and allowed to freeze to death...

Our group stood close to the egress. All of a sudden, we hear somebody calling out from behind the barbed wire: 'Moshe, I owe you 5 zlotys, here they are; I want to die without debts'... I saw that many frozen people lay there, but some still showed movement with their hands...

In the end, we all march out under the escort of a Ukrainian and a German. All human feelings are lost, one becomes apathetic, envying the dead... they have already overcome [the ordeal]...

We worked at Kazimierżowska 32 at 'Opel-Ramka' as auto mechanics. The sky looked like lead the entire day. From time-to-time, rays would show themselves... we were confused, at sea. We had no outlook. The wintry skies reddened a bit: the sun was readying to set. We hear, that they are shouting: '*Einstellen!*' (End the work). We gather ourselves together; we are counted; we are all present. Once again, escorted by a watch... we are led back to the lager, we march... the tramways are full of Christians, who look upon us with mockery and scorn... on the tramways, Vlasovites stand, and they beat the marching Jews with nagaikas. We encounter other groups, who are going to work on the night shift. They shout to us: 'Today is Vitamin B or C'... and we did not know what this meant. We asked of the German, who treated us a bit decently, to let us walk longer. So that we could learn something from another group; but the Ukrainian forced us to continue marching; in between, we reached the *lager*... a pandemonium. Gestapo, S. S. Troops, Vlasovites, are beating, they are shooting, and driving people, and we also are in the middle. The surroundings: a transport of blocks and bricks was being received at the Janowski train station, and in order to save on transport, the weak and the sick people from the *lager* were being forced to carry the goods by hand. Each of the blocks was short and thick. Approximately 2 meters long, and from 300 to 400 kg in weight... and it was necessary to carry this by hand into the lager... also boards and bricks...

The human imagination is not rich enough to convey this tragic picture in the written word... people dropped like flies, part of them were shot, and part beaten with rifle butts... whoever did not have enough strength to run, was thrown into the rectangular barbed wire pen, and in this way, the frosty night ended their lives. And finally at 11 o'clock at night, work was ceased, one looks for the people of the group, and many are missing: in the barracks, there are approximately 400-500 people, where

one lies on top of another. It is quiet, no one speaks; one only hears groans, or weeping, and in this manner one dropped off a bit to sleep, in order to start that same 'routine' over again at 4 o'clock in the morning... We all went off to work as auto mechanics. In the lager, a count was made of all the crafts and trades. Upon returning to the lager at night, we found the barbed wire rectangular area to be empty. All we found were many items of clothing and shoes... and this is how the chapter ended:

Vitamin B (Blocks) and Vitamin C (*Cygel* – bricks)...

From the Memories of Eva Kleiner-Lev

By Meir Levin

And perhaps you will be the one who will be privileged to remain alive – my mother said. – 'And if you do remain alive, Eva, it is for you to write it all down – how you lived, and what happened with us, in order that it become known to all. You have to write it all down, just as it was.'

And even now, it appears to me that she is saying these things to me, and that I still am standing at the doorway, but I am no longer myself. Here I am, the daughter of Ukrainian farmers, a stranger, all alone, whose name is Katarina. Katarina can go out of this house. Me I, Eva, cannot. Katarina has those blushing cheeks that Eva always had, cheeks that were pinched and rosy, full of life, those very same cheeks that everyone had to restrain themselves from pinching. It was impossible not to, they would say – when I was a little girl. Grown people would bend over in order to pinch them, and as you understand – every mother in the city. Whether Eva was on her way to school, of whether running an errand, whether leading her group of friends to play – no person could stand by restraining themselves from stopping her. Even the notary of the city, Mr. Novick, who would put a flashlight to his nose, would bend over, and say in wonder: 'Eva, Eva, what life! What life! What health! Literally like the daughter of Ukrainian farmers! And he would give her a gentle pinch, and she would see the golden ridges on his sleeves.

And so, on this day – Eva the one who had those very rosy cheeks, her black hair combed and pulled down around her face, as was the custom of village residents, Eva, dresses in her broad farmer's half-dress, and in her hand was the purse which had her forged identity pass. Eva, who had now become Katarina, and therefore was able to turn, in another minute, and leave her home, to attempt to sneak herself alone, into the world where it was permitted to live.

I know, that I cannot take refuge in feelings of guilt for this, as life demanded it: my mother demanded this while in the very minute that she still had the force of life in her. I know that my mother sent me. She sent me for the sake of her brothers. And despite this, that moment is frozen, like a skin that now in which it is possible not to decide to entirely run away, and place them there, awaiting their fate.

Like my family being redeemed from their terrifying interminable expectations, only after I will

return home, and relate to them, the events that took place, what happened to me, in that entire adventure going on in the outside – since I knew in those evenings, when I began to go out with boys, that if I was tardy in coming home, my father and mother would lie awake, waiting, and only upon hearing me returning home, would they extinguish the light in their room, and fall asleep.

Certainly, in our city of Rawa-Ruska, their wait was not an eternal one, but nevertheless – I see them there, in that house, at the time that I took leave of them. That is not our house, that has a candy store on its first floor, with three pleasant residences, with bathrooms on the upper stories – that our father had succeeded in building beside the open space of the courthouse. He erected it, one story after another. As soon as he had discharged the debt for one story, he would be able to borrow to build another story. And here the Russians came, in 1939, and imposed their reign on our part of Poland, and they confiscated our father's store.

And in the summer after that – I had just completed my course of study at the gymnasium – the Germans came and drove out the Russians, and they took my father's house, and we, in turn were driven into the old Jewish Quarter behind the St. Stepan Church, and that is where we lived when I was a little girl.

The Blumenfeld family took us in, and gave over the living room in their house to us. The Blumenfeld house was always a second home, because Alla Blumenfeld was my 'twin,' we were born on the same day – on Rosh Hashanah! And her oldest sister Frieda was the same age as my sister Tuncza – Tauba. The four of us entered school on the same day, because we, the younger ones, would not let the older ones go without us. We went through school together. All in the same class.

And now the Blumenfelds gathered us in. They had a piano and works of art in their living room, and it was there that we spread ourselves out. Mr. Blumenfeld was a 'progressive' man; he was the first to install a telephone in his house, and bought himself a radio. His daughters were the first two girls in the city who had bicycles, and afterwards, Tuncza and I.

Tuncza – was taken from the Blumenfeld home, seized during the third *aktion*, in the third assault on the Jews of Rawa-Ruska, at the time she ran outside, to attempt to return four little girls to their home, and was seized with the four girls.

It was then that the decision was taken that I must go. For the span of several days we were stunned – and afterwards, my mother's pressing was renewed. 'It is not possible that all of us will simply sit here and wait for our deaths,' – she said – 'Eva, you must go.'

On the way, we discussed in hushed tones, (that I should) attempt to pass as a Christian, who was a volunteer worker, under the aegis of the '*arbeitsamt*,' the actual German labor office, which for the elderly-weak no longer represented an avenue of escape. However, a young girl might have a chance to succeed at this.

Initially, I refused, because now, more than ever, I could not simply leave them. But my mother did not accept my argument. 'Eva, I am telling you, you must go.'

I said I would try, if I could take along my young brother Zelig. 'In this manner, you will bring an end on both of you,' my mother said. She was quiet, but action-oriented. A young girl might attract their eyes, but the boy – the minute that he would arouse a doubt, they will expose the fact that he is Jewish. No, she said, you must go alone.

But – all by myself? To be by myself in this dark, enemy-infested land? I relayed the plan to Frieda, to Alla, and they were even more taken aback than I was. Won't we be seized even before we get out of Rawa-ruska. No, no, if it must be death, it is better to stay with the family, to die together.
My mother did not relent.'Eva, you must be the first one. If you succeed, the others will follow in your footsteps, and they also will be saved.'

My mother knew my stance, my pride in always being the first, leading the others. 'Eva the Cossack,' that was my nickname, when I was a child. In the end I said I would go.

When I agreed, we began to work feverishly with speed. At the outset, we had to decide, what identity I would assume. A Polish girl? Polish girls had longer faces than I, and paler. With my round face and reddish cheeks, I could pass for a Ukrainian. Yes, yes, a Ukrainian, my mother said. Because there was something extra here. In the eyes of the Germans, the Poles were still vanquished enemies, who resist control. And besides, most of the village residents of the area were Ukrainian, who despised Polish rule. They never gave up entirely in their struggle to throw off the yoke of Polish rule in favor of Ukrainian independence. And the Germans saw them as allies, and extended a better level of relationship to them.

So it is settled, I will be Ukrainian.

I was in need of papers, a birth certificate, and identity card. Here, Rachel Schwartz helped me, my friend from school. I always thought of Rachel as a good-looking girl, but not with much sense. During the time of Russian rule, Rachel worked in one of their offices. Now it became clear that she had sequestered for her own use, several samples of identity cards, and even held onto a seal.

From the registry of residents, we identified the name of a young Ukrainian girl who had died, Katarina Leszczysyn, from the nearby village of Werchrata. She was older than me by four years, but I had developed beautifully, and I could present myself as a twenty-two year old. We prepared various Russian documents in her name, along with the names of her parents, and their birth dates – everything that was needed. I was even able to get a hold of a German labor card, and we filled it out in her name.

And what would be the story that I would tell? After all, it had to be a simple story, readily acceptable. I was reminded of the situation of another friend from school, Rita Meir. Before the Russians arrived, Rita's family resided in a small retirement city, and she herself studied at a dormitory in Lvov. During the days of the Russian conquest, the staff of the N.K.V.D. arrested her parents, who were respected Zionists, and exiled them to Siberia. Rita moved over to the home of her grandmother in Rawa-Ruska, close to our house.

There were many stories of this nature among young people, who were left on their own when their parents were suddenly exiled by the Russians. The Germans were inclined to believe stories of this kind. And so, accordingly, I became the daughter of rich farmers, Kulaks, who were exiled during the time I was in school in a different location. Now I am alone, and life is hard on me. There are no good places where to work in Rawa-Ruska, and it would be preferable for me to work in the Reich.

Now I needed to transform myself into Katarina. I needed a broad colored skirt, but not an actual village skirt, since Katarina had already obtained something of an education. And the chemise also has to be something 'betwixt and between.' Despite this, Katarina did bind up her hair in a kerchief, combing her hair around her face, and as you might understand – wearing a crucifix.

My mother went to Polish merchants, to ask for a crucifix and a prayer missal. I began to change my appearance, because it was necessary to take a picture for my identity card. I said to myself, this has to be a *bona fide* transformation, and not just a superficial one. If I go out in my mind as Eva, and only present the face of Katarina, I am certainly going to give away my disguise one of these days, in one of the places I go to.

My mother returned and inspected me. She offered me encouragement by saying: 'You have to completely stop being Eva. It is forbidden for you to think about us. Who knows when the war will end, and what the world is going to look like.'

This is because, in the summer of 1942, the German victories were still coming in a connected chain and no man had a doubt that they would impose their hegemony on all of Europe. And perhaps on the entire world.

My mother hung the crucifix around my throat. The crucifix was large, yellow and cast. For all of my days, I had not been particularly religious. On the Sabbath days, my father, R' Yerukham Kleiner, would don his long black kapote, and put on his fur hat, and walk to the synagogue, but I always sensed, that he was doing this out of habit, and never demanded of us to be punctilious regarding *mitzvot*. My mother looked after *kashrut* in the home – she too out of habit, or so I was of the opinion. And as to festival days, the High Holy Days, and the Three Major Festivals, we would observe as was done in all Jewish homes. During the days of the Russian conquest, we were taught in school, as you understand, that all religious faiths were nonsense. Despite this, at this instant, I had a strange feeling. It is *their* crucifix. It is their Christ. It is as if, there was aroused in my inner childhood heart, a stirring of fear and apprehension, because of their magic amulet. As if some terrifying fate awaited us all, if something should seize their crucifix. But is it not so, that Jesus himself was a Jew?

Someone knocked at the door. The photographer had arrived, and in the first instant, he did not recognize me. We laughed: this was a good beginning, He photographed me, hurried home, and after an hour had passed, he brought the picture. We affixed it, Rachel and I, to the Russian identity card, and we affixed the seal to it, half on the picture, and half on the card itself.

I had readied to take along a small wooden case, in the style of carrying bags of the village women. My mother packed my effects into it. I saw her putting in one of my better dresses. 'Mother! No!'

'You were at school in Lvov,' – she said, in reminding me of a chapter in the life of Katarina. – 'Therefore, it is possible that you possess a few items of urban attire. Eva, also take along a pair of shoes with high heels. You are going to have to live in public view, and have to be like all young, and lively girls.'

I went out on my final errand. That evening, the closest of my friends came to bestow a parting blessing on me, and I had hoped to find something to serve them – perhaps fruit. And here I am rushing to the broad street, and coming towards me is the good friend of my sister, Esther Warshawsky. During the final months of Russian rule, Esther and Tuncza were students together at the high school in Lvov. We struck up a conversation, cautiously making certain not to bring up Tuncza. In the course of the conversation, it was said that 'I am thinking of leaving here.' Suddenly Esther said to me: 'I too have already thought to leaving. But I am afraid to travel alone. And my parents would never let me go.'

'Esther! Come with me!'

It was as if half of my apprehension just rolled off of me. To not be alone! We went straightaway to her home. On our walk, I looked at Esther again and again, trying to see her as if I was someone who didn't know her. She was small, thin and pleasing to the eye, with her two pigtails coming down to her waist. If she were to braid up the pigtails around her head, she would, for all practical purposes look like a Ukrainian. But in that same moment, she turned to me with a question, she straightens her look at me, with the glance of her Jewish eyes. How could anyone err upon seeing her eyes? Warm eyes, sunken, whose look had no trace of guile? Her habit in which she indulged, was to tilt her head to the side, when asking a question.

I knew from whence she picked up the habit of tilting her head this way. It was the habit of her father. The family of Esther was a family of the intensely religious type. R' Chaim Warshawsky was constantly spouting sayings from the *Gemara*, but most of what he had to say came out in the form of questions. And if his victim did not know how to answer, R' Chaim himself would supply the answer, with his head tilted to the side exactly this way.

And now, Esther is this way, except that her questions were not from the Gemara. 'How is it, you say, that you are going to get out of Rawa-Ruska?' –she asked – 'You can't just simply enter the train station and ascend the train, because everyone recognizes you.'

'I will board the train at Huta-Zelena[187],' I said. The Huta-Zelena train station was at a distance of about twenty kilometers. ' I will sneak on as it passes the city, I will take off the insignia from my

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187 Shown as Zelena Huta on modern maps.

sleeve, and I will go to Huta-Zelena,' and that was the way it was. At that time, a barbed wire fence had not yet been erected to surround the Jewish quarter.

'You are going to pass through the city and you will be carrying a case in your hands?'

I did not offer an opinion regarding this.
And now she tilted her head to the side, and declaimed in a pleasant sing-song tone, in the style of her father, when he was bringing forth a citation from the *Gemara*: 'First of all we have to find a Pole, who will bring our cases to Huta-Zelena...'

'Esther,' – I said – 'If we are to travel together, you must be careful not to speak in a sing-song tone like a *Rebbetzin.*'

She immediately understood, and was not even insulted. 'And you too, Eva, you know you speak with your hands.'

'I know. You will have to watch me, and I will watch you.' Oh, in this way we will be more secure, when going together.

'To take our cases,' – Esther returned to our issue – 'I will ask this of Antek.'

Antek, the father of twelve children, was the porter at the post office, where Esther had worked during the days of the Russians, after classes at school. He was prepared to do whatever was asked of him.

We arrived at Esther's house. She had two sisters, younger than she, and an older brother. All the members of the family were seated around the table, when we presented our plan. It was agreed that we should go – but would I be able to wait a couple more days?

I was suspicious of the change in plan. What couldn't be arranged within a day?

However, she was in need of making a large number of arrangements. She still needed to procure forged documents. 'We'll get them,' her brother said.

That same evening, when the friends of my youth came in, it seemed to me that my entire life had been captured there, in the Blumenfeld living room. There was Mila Stein, full-breasted, feminine, wearing a brassiere. How we envied her, all of us, when in the course of dancing, when she would be dancing close by, you could feel how the boy would be drawn to Mila. And when our entire group would be strolling in the street, in those days before the Germans came, and the boys would surround us, tease us, and push against us, touching us, we would cry out and cuttingly remark – and Mila would say" 'boys, leave me alone,' and would wander a bit, trying to shake off their touching her. This Mila was a pleasant person, and all of the mothers agreed that she was really a good girl, and never did they say that we should not take a walk with her, as they would say about others. This was

a victory for Mila's mother; because Mila's father was just a barber, and even at that he didn't work, but rather sat around the house, and it was her mother who went out and worked, as a midwife. But Mrs. Stein had the fortune to be able to succeed, and in this way, succeeded in paying for piano lessons for Mila, and she made an effort to dress her in pleasing clothes, and we were always invited over to Mila.

Rachel Schwartz, who always looked pale to me, despite the fact that she was more fully developed in the chest than all of us, and in the beauty of her face, came with her. In those days when we matured into young women, I would be jealous of Rachel a great deal, in the skillful way she comported herself, and her good looks, because I, myself – despite all that I did, I was not that endowed, and for everything that I did, they would say of me that I was nervy, a thief, a Cossack, destined to become an item of gossip for the entire city.

I gave a hello to Rachel – and suddenly I was reminded of that very evening – when I was twelve years old, and I went out to stroll with Munya Frankel, the outstanding Hebrew student. This was Munya, who was seized in the same sweep in which Tuncza was taken. How Munya could play the mandolin! That very night, long-long ago – when we were still children, at the edge of puberty – we returned home, Munya and I, at a late hour – after ten. It was a pleasant evening, and it was warm, and the lad asked to tarry a while at our door. I asked my father, if we could stand outside for a little while longer. And right there, on the spot, he gave me a slap on the cheeks! 'There is enough talk going around about you, more than is necessary!' my father shouted. I rushed to my room, and fell onto my pillows in an hysterical choking, and my mother came up, and I cried out, 'Why? Why? I don't so anything more than any of the other girls, and I am not even as pretty as Rachel. Why must there be talk about everything that I do?'

My mother calmed me down and said: ' Eva, you should feel happy about this. There is life in you. Everyone around you takes an interest in what you do. A girl can be pretty, like Rachel Schwartz – but nobody in the world is going to talk about Rachel.'

Now they will speak of me. Even though Rachel assisted me in getting my forged papers, even though everyone spoke of the courage of my heart – here, they will talk of Eva, the cruel one, the one who flees. Rita Meir, whose parents had already been exiled to Siberia, did not refrain from saying: 'It is I that ought to go.' But she did not want to leave her grandmother behind. On one occasion, both of them were nearly taken to their death, Rita, and her grandmother Meir. They were seized during the second aktion, a month before; because there was a crying infant in the place they were hiding, under the roof of their house, and grandmother Meir went out, with the infant, in order not to endanger the others. At that precise moment, the men of the S. S. entered the house and seized her; and Rita, upon hearing the tumult, hurried to go out to her grandmother, and she also was seized.

I saw Rita and her grandmother standing among others in the street, waiting to be taken to the train. I was able to walk in safety in the streets to whatever extent I wanted to, because they used me in the police station itself – doing cleaning, polishing shoes, and running errands for the Germans – and all of the police knew and recognized me.

When I first spied Rita's red hair among those condemned to extermination, a spirit like a squall took hold of me. I hinted to her that she should sidle over to the edge of the gathering, and after that, I distracted the attention of the closest of the guards, with a couple of emotional questions, that were nonsensical. He was still standing with his head turned away, when Rita and her grandmother fled off into one of the side streets.

Rita never stopped telling about how I saved her, and she said that I, being so resourceful would certainly succeed. But why did I not succeed in saving my own sister? Why, at that point, could I not summon an idea, doing nothing, when Tuncza was seized?

And every time this thought came up in my heart, I had a feeling that I wanted to go hide myself among my girlfriends, to remain here, with all my girlfriends surrounding me close by, with Alla and Frieda together, as from our earliest childhood, with Rosa Golub, who was always sunken into romantic stories so intensely, with Lucia, the dentist's daughter. I wanted to hug them all, and have all of them surrounding me, up to the minute that death would come upon us, and even in the moment of death itself. For how could I go off by myself and be far away from them?

And the girls asked me to show them what I would look like. I changed the style of combing my hair, covered my head with a kerchief, and hung the crucifix around my neck. There was a light gasp; when we were young, we were eager to enter 'their' church. Or, we would be looking at the obeisance performed by the gentile women during their prayer, and at the time their rituals came to pass, we would seek to touch their belongings, their crucifixes and amulets.

'What kind of a feeling is it?' each of the girls asked, one at a time. And Rosa exclaimed: 'Oy, I wanted to say something, and I did not recognize you! Oh, you will succeed!'

And Rita tried to put on the crucifix. 'Does this not arouse an unusual feeling in you? Surely this must seem strange.' They hung it around their necks, one at a time, and afterwards returned it to me. My mother prepared tea, and was even successful in procuring a bit of flour from which to bake cookies. Suddenly, I had the feeling that I was not in my place, that I am the only one that is trying to disguise myself, in the manner we would masquerade on Purim. I rushed to take off the kerchief, combed my hair back, from the forehead and on. I donned my dress and buttoned up my shoes. It was in this fashion that I wanted to receive the parting blessing from them, as myself, as Eva. After all, was this not the last time that all of us will be together – and who among us will remain alive?

We would always be jabbering in Polish, but a few Yiddish words would creep into the Polish that was on our lips, and now they said to me: '*Mazel Tov*, Eva.' Each and every one of them enunciated these words with such respect, as if in those days, according to the custom, was offered only in going to the wedding ceremony. We always wondered, as did all such groups of girls in the world, who would be the first to take this mysterious step – and look how strange this was! – and with this very same blessing, I am going off as if to my wedding, to a wedding with an unknown destiny, and I will be the first of this group that will be taking such a step, and thereby reveal its secrets, and its true substance, in order that others may follow in my footsteps.

Of all my friends, who came to see me off on that evening, and offer me the blessing of *Mazel Tov* – only three were destined to survive, and remain alive.

On the morrow, in the afternoon, the time came for me to take leave of my family. Here I stood in the guise of Katarina. My father practically did not move during the two weeks from the time that Tuncza had been taken away. In the mornings, he would not go out to his work in the wider expanse of the city. If they were to take him – again, he simply did not care. He was apathetic, lying on the sofa. He practically didn't eat. How swiftly did this tall man, quick in his pace, and a man who loved action, our father who always found a way out of every difficulty, become so transformed. When the Russians confiscated his store, and made him a night watchman, he began to shrivel, to dissipate. Now, the Germans had taken away the remainder of his living.

And so the hour of my departure arrived, and it seemed to me that, for a moment, my father had rebounded to his original state. He stood up, and took the iron box in which he would keep the currency he had on hand in the days when he had the store. In it, he now had the deed to our property, and the few valuables that were permitted to the remnant – his gold watch, two tiny round diamonds of my mother, a few dollars that he had sequestered – and a number of family documents. We sealed the box with wax all around. Afterwards, we went down into the cellar of the Blumenfeld's. My father dug a pit, and put the box in it, and Zelig filled in the pit, and we placed an old wine barrel on it.

'Perhaps you will return,' – my father said – 'so you will know where it is.'

We went back, and came up.

I conversed with my mother, until the hour arrived for me to go. She spoke of the changes in plan, now that another girl would be going with me. 'Perhaps it will be easier for you to pass through together. But once you reach there, you must part from one another and not meet too frequently. There was much persuasiveness; don't long for the familiar acquaintance, Eva, for one of your own people, because such encounters are dangerous. Only meet on infrequent occasions, and at that, it should be from a distance.'

How did she know to give me such advice? Never had she done what I was about to do, but despite this, she went before me, in order to mitigate all danger that was likely to loom over her daughter. Would that I could do as she advised – I would have saved myself a great deal of trouble. And I knew that her words were wise ones; I agreed to them the minute she said them. But I did not know how difficult it would be to follow her advice, because I was no longer by myself.

Four o'clock arrived. I was dressed as Katarina. I planned for the hour that I would arrive at Huta-Zelena, such that I would not have to wait too long for the arrival of the train.

Antek came to the back door, riding his bicycle. Zelig went out on the run, giving him the case, and Antek went off.

My father put his hand on my head. I kissed him. A sound burst forth from his throat. Zelig had already returned: I hugged him. 'Have a successful trip, Eva,' he said, like one of the adults. He kissed me on the cheeks, and I pressed my lips to his brow for a long while; I practically had never kissed my younger brother since his childhood. We were constantly fighting with each other. Zelig – he was a wild one, more undisciplined than I. Many times, I chased after him around the kitchen, to grab him, to compel him to obey me! And after a while – how I longed to feel his muscles twisting around me in anger, when he fought with me. Even to feel the pain of the kick of his shoe in my thigh, when he fought with me, to know that he was here. 'Have a successful trip,' he said.

And finally – my mother. We parted as two women part with each other. 'Go, and live,' – she said – 'we cannot know what will be. Whether a day will come that the war will end, and not one of us will remain, not even a single person from among us, and again, you may not be able to be a daughter of the Jewish people again, in any event, do as nature demands of you, and when the time comes, marry a man, and give birth to children, and have no regrets. You have been a good daughter, despite being so unruly at times.' She wiped away a tear, and returned to pull on her nose, regarding the joking 'curse' that was frequently on her lips, the same curse she would utter against me when I made her particularly miserable: 'The Lord give that your children be as wild as you are, and pay you back in kind!' And afterward she whispered: 'Live, my daughter, live.'

I went out the back door, and in my heart I had resolved not to look back. With a bowed head I trod, and despite this, I knew each and every house, every stone that I passed. It was on these streets that I passed my childhood, and it was here that we sat while our father built his house beside the broad area of the city. Yesterday, I could not pass through these streets without having every person call out to me, stop me, ask for news, because of my work at the police station where I would hear things. Eva, is everyone preparing for a new *aktion*? Eva, is it true that seven thousand Jews were taken to the stadium in Lvov and shot there? Eva, is it true that the train that leads to Belzec – when it gets there....

But even at the police station, no person ever referred to what happens when the train, filled with Jews snatched in sudden surprise, reaches Belzec, a distance of about 15 km. from Rawa-Ruska. From a Polish locomotive driver, it became known that the trains go into a large building lot surrounded by a wall. But prisoners are not seen there. And only empty trains depart from behind the wall. And is it not impossible that this lot should be able to contain so many people as the number that were conveyed there?

There were rumors. There were those who said that the floor opened, and the people fell into an enormous pit. No, no, but these imaginings, they are from horror movies – that is what I said to myself. Nothing of this sort happened to Tuncza. I sped up my step.

There were only a few people in the street. Yet, I walked right past Mr. Tischler, the head of the *Judenrat* himself. He saw me on a daily basis, when I was sent from the police station as a messenger to the *Judenrat*. Did he not recognize me? Or perhaps, he was feigning a lack of recognition? Without question – half the street is aware of my endeavor. Perhaps Jews are following me, looking

from behind windows, from behind doors, to see if Eva will be seized in the very first steps of the journey. But I am certain they wish me well, and hoped that I would succeed in my undertaking.

And what could a person see? A young Ukrainian woman passing in the street. But what is she doing here, in the Jewish quarter of Rawa-Ruska? Even the lone Ukrainian classmate that I had in school, Lucia, did not have the nerve to come into our neighborhood. We got very friendly during the time of the Russian occupation, when Jews and Christians sang together in a choir ensemble. During the first weeks of the arrival of the Germans, she would steal into us by way of side streets, and indirectly, and always bringing something with her – a half loaf of bread, and even some eggs. After a while, she no longer dared to come.

And suddenly, I saw myself as the image of an unmasked deceiver even more: a Ukrainian girl wearing a Jewish insignia on her sleeve! Quickly, quickly, it is necessary for me to reach the outskirts of the city. To the fields. But it is forbidden for me to accelerate my pace more than usual, in order not to attract attention. The distance is not great. Another five minutes.

I passed by our old house, the house in which I was born. Inside was my father's old store, where he would sell merchandise to the farmers – salt, oil, clothing – and they would park their wagons in our yard. All the years of my childhood, I would clamber and get up into these wagons.

I entered between the trees, and saw a young girl – with pigtails tied up on her head, red in her cheeks, a different girl, whose appearance did not say 'Esther.' It is the name 'Anya' that will always come up onto the thin part of my lips.

We walked [together]. The small station became visible to our eyes. We saw Antek placing the valises beside the wall, and then disappear. The hour played with us. There was not a man on the platform.

But now we had to approach the window and buy tickets. This was the first time we had to stand face-to-face with a person, and to speak to him in the guise of our new identity. And even though this was as routine a thing to do, among many routine things – buying a ticket for a short ride on the train – there was, nevertheless a bit of an impression on the part of the man who sat behind the ticket-window; it is possible he might be able to discern who we were, even in such a small place as Huta-Zelena, they stood watch to uncover Jews, who were forbidden to travel.

Together, we stood beside the window. Like rural girls, overcome with emotion, leaving for vacation, and I requested two tickets to Przemyśl. This was the nearest city on the western side. In Przemyśl was the head office of the *'Arbeitsamt*,' – the labor office – for volunteers to work outside of Poland. In reality, we were supposed to present the identity card from the '*Arbeitsamt*' in our area; but we could argue that we were housemaids, and were not registered for external work.

The ticket seller did not scrutinize us with care. I restrained my hand, and Esther – Anya – didn't ask a single question. Our calculation was exact: here came the train. At that same moment, a serious

thought arose in our hearts. I saw the concern light up in Anya's eyes. The train arrived, as understood, from the direction that we had come. The last stop had been Rawa-Ruska. Perhaps someone got on board there who might recognize us? Every Pole, and every Ukrainian from Rawa-Ruska knows us. After all, Anya had once worked at the post office. And I was known to all of the people of the city. Everyone that came in to drink soda water, or whiskey, when my father still had ownership of his new store, everyone would immediately see through our masquerade! Two foolish Jewish girls trying to fool the Nazis.

I gave Anya a push to get up the stairs, and I went up after her. We entered the train car, and with one glance, covering the entry of the interior, I attempted to see all of the travelers. There was not a person from Rawa-Ruska. We sat on the nearest bench. The train departed.

The last time I had left Rawa-Ruska, was in an auto of the gendarmerie – the auto of Meister Klein himself, the head of the municipal gendarmerie. I traveled with Freitag, his driver, to Lvov and back. At that time, I returned Tuncza from there. Everyone then said: 'Eva is like that! Everything was oriented to be orderly. Even with the Nazis!' And from this my arrogance grew, until now, I do things that are foolish.

At the time the Germans came to Rawa-Ruska, Tuncza was in Lvov – studying, and giving lessons to the children of the family where she boarded. Already starting from the first days, we heard reports about pogroms, of slaughter in Lvov. We feared for Tuncza. In Rawa-Ruska as well, assaults began, as well as expulsions, but despite this, all we talked about was Tuncza, and how we might get her back home. At times like this, the first thought was: to reside together.

Almost from the first day, I was sent to do cleaning work at the police station, and there – even there – there were the few who showed us a relationship of affection and sorrow. Freitag, the driver of Meister Klein, was one of these. From time-to-time, he would offer a cigarette to the Jews that worked in the yard. When he sat idle, waiting for orders, he would engage in conversation with us. On one day, after we heard of an aktion in Lvov, I told him about my fear for Tuncza. 'Let's get her back,' he whispered.

After a few days went by, he really succeeded. He was sent to take care of something in Lvov, and he sneaked me into his automobile. The very prominent large auto went past the guard stations with a wave of the hand only. When I knocked on Tuncza's door, she was astonished. 'Only you can succeed!, Eva, Eva'leh, our Cossack!' We hugged, and hugged each other. We packed up the few of her belongings quickly, and left on the run. Within a few short hours, Freitag managed to sneak us back into Rawa-Ruska.

And now, on the train, the thought arose in my heart: what if I had not brought Tuncza back from Lvov, might she not have ended up being seized.

And that entire episode replayed itself in my mind, and was passed before me, that entire day, that I am running away from, went past me. When I came to work at the police station, from my nearby

neighbor Freitag [I heard] 'Eva, be careful today. This time the *Gestapo* is coming from Tomaszow.'

Aktion! It had been quiet for almost a month. I sought to run outside, to run to the *Judenrat* and warn them, in order that the Jews could hide. For this reason they had sent me to the police station. Already in the first days after the Germans arrived, they ordered the Jews to elect a *Judenrat*. We knew that, in other cities, the better people refused to undertake this obligation in concert with the Germans; but in Rawa-Ruska, the better among the Jews agreed to become members of this committee, in the hope that they could manage to do something [good]. Our pharmacist, Dr. Wattenberg was the head of the committee, and our dentist, Dr. Lift, cleaned out the ground floor of his house to set up the office of the *Judenrat* there. I was called there along with five other girls – two of them daughters of our Hebrew teacher – the smartest girls by far in Rawa-Ruska. Dr. Wattenberg himself received us. He had selected us when he had received an order to provide six girls to work for the Germans at the police station – as he explained to us – such that if we remain alert, and if we work for them diligently, keeping our eyes and ears open, we will be able to bring much good to our people.

In the first *aktion*, as in the second, we were able to provide a warning to the people quite early, to enable them to hide themselves, so they would not be found out in the streets, at the very least. But now, the third time around, Meister Klein blocked my way, when I asked to be allowed out urgently, Eva. Don't go out! Do not go running into the street to spread rumors!'

Vehicles began to arrive, one vehicle after another, full of *Gestapo* personnel in their full dress. Doors were slammed shut. The local police arrayed themselves behind the *Gestapo* personnel from Tomaszow. In a short time, the entire building emptied out, except for the Austrian telegrapher from Linz. He was the second one to explain matters to us personally. He would sit by himself in his small room, whose walls were decorated with pictures of nude girls; when we would clean out his room, he would occasionally give us bread to take home, and he would say: 'I am happy, that it is not up to me to go out and do this loathsome work.' On that same day, he went out into the corridor. 'Girls, get up top, on the roof. Today you are not safe, even here. Up, all of you!'

We climbed and went up onto the roof. We looked out at the departing vehicles. After some hours, one of the Polish girls came up from the kitchen and said: 'it is finished.'

On the stairs, I encountered Klein himself. In a strangely hushed voice he said: 'Eva, your sister is among the [seized] group.' He stood and looked at me, and perhaps it was possible to think that it was the look of a friend.

I said: 'Can you help me Meister Klein?'

'No, no, I can do nothing.'

I ran to the door.

'Eva, if it is your will to remain alive, don't go outside!' he roared.

I went out on the run. I will save Tuncza. I will extract her from between their hands, just as I extracted Rita and her grandmother. I ran to the broad plaza. It was empty of people. A number of Poles were already in the streets, and one of them said: 'They are at the train.'

I ran to the train station. The train had already left. I walked home. I found my mother on the sofa, and my father was sitting at the side of the table, silent. Zelig too was silent.

'But how did they take her?' I screamed.

'She herself is at fault!' My little brother cried out. And then my mother spoke. In the morning, Tuncza had gone out with four little girls – daughters of neighbors – to take a stroll in the fields, as was her custom on other mornings. She heard the pandemonium issuing from the assault, and returned with the children on the run, and reached the Saint Stefan Church, and asked for refuge there, and when she expedited it, she succeeded in reaching our home, and led the four young girls into a hiding place that was in the cellar.

The little girls were in the thrall of terror and hysteria. 'Mama! Mama!' they cried. – 'I want to go home.'

Tuncza could not bear their fear. All of them lived nearby, and she resolved to take them back to their homes. Zelig grabbed hold of her arm, and pulled her back with all his might. But the little girls opened the door, and Tuncza broke free of Zelig's grip, and ran after them into the street. They had not gone more that a few steps when they were all seized.

In two days time, a Pole came to us, a locomotive driver of the train that led to Belzec. 'You daughter gave me this note on the train.' He said.

These are the parting words of Tuncza 'My dear ones, I am being taken away from you forever. There is no hope to remain alive. It is up to you to be brave, and to be accepting of my fate. My one single hope is that I will be the only sacrifice from our family, and an expiation for all of Jewry. Be at peace. Yours – Tuncza.'
And I had to return, day after day, to go to the Germans, to make their beds, and shine their shoes.

And to make the effort that nothing could be discerned in my eyes when I looked at them.

Did these things appear in my eyes now? I was always in the habit of being open-hearted towards people! It was difficult for me to conceal my true feelings. Now, I had to find different thoughts, to distract my attention from Rawa-Ruska.

I attempted to strike up a conversation with Anya. But what shall we talk about? Were we to whisper to each other about our plans, about our suspicions, there was a risk that our faces would give us away. We needed to converse as if we were two young Ukrainian village girls, excited, and joking.

We needed to speak about our village and our families, on incidents in the lives of Katya and Anya. I began to gossip, to bat about things, 'Do you know, Anya, that something strange happened to my sister, the one whose husband fell off the horse precisely at the point where he was getting ready to give birth to her second sin.' For a moment, she looked at me in wonderment, but afterwards she got my drift, and added a story of her own to mine, and together we bantered back and forth about brothers and sisters, quarrels over land parcels, and we fabricated a whole village. Telling stories about friends who had thrown themselves to Russian soldiers, and one old crone who was undoubtedly a sorceress, and we laughed together about her love potions – and each of us tried to tell something new about those that tried these potions. And in this way, we engaged one another, conversing, laughing – and we began to sense that we really were Katarina and Anya. And suddenly, we were in Przemyśl.

★

... and now we boarded the train; two special cars were filled. We were on our way to Cracow. It became clear to us, Anya and I, that we would not have to rely on our forged papers. In our hands, we held passes from the '*Arbeitsamt*.'

The camp in Cracow was a huge camp. It was made up of tens of rows upon rows of barracks. Here, the atmosphere was more active. They separated the men and women. We were taken to the baths. Afterwards, we were told to stand in a row, naked, for a physical examination.

As the line moved on, I saw the doctor. I recognized him! He was from Rawa-Ruska! At frequent intervals, in those days, he would come into my father's store to drink a glass of soda water. He was a Ukrainian independent, and the Russians detained him, and now the Germans set him free. For sure, he would recognize me.

I could not get out of the line. Perhaps he will say nothing. And after a while, I began to hope that he would not recognize me at all. It had been a number of years since I had last seen him, and in the meantime, I had matured. And my hair was hanging from my head, wet and in disarray, and a young woman alters her entire appearance when she combs her hair. I stood this way, when we would bath in the river beside the city. There were times where I could not be recognized by my own friends.

The doctor gave the girls a rather superficial examination. Palpated the breast, asked some questions, and I coughed. He would see hundreds day after day. Generally speaking, he could not really tell one appearance from another.

My turn came. I attempted to think that I did not recognize him, and that he could not possibly recognize me. Here I am, Katarina. He did not look at my face, even at the time he asked me his questions about childhood diseases. The examination was automatic. I passed. I moved on quickly. All I had to do was turn around to the rear of the baths, to retrieve my clothing.

At the same time I saw Anya, still in the line. She was waiting, and from her eyes, I saw that she too recognized the doctor. And so, I had to go through the entire ordeal a second time. I did not have the

nerve to tarry, to see what ultimately might happen to her.

In the end, Anya also came, quickly, to the rear of the baths. Because all of the girls were being pushed around, we could not exchange even a word about what had happened to us. But if this happened to us already on the first day, how much time could we hope to have not to be recognized? If we would only succeed to get out of Poland.

Because there was a requirement for a conversation with each and every worker, we were destined to have several days of waiting in Cracow. In the meantime, there was no way to fill the time. Group upon group congregated on the sidewalks, developed connections, exchanged rumors, married their lovers. In a condition of such general idleness, there was every opportunity to simply follow one's own curiosity.

We could not get used to the notion that we would arouse attention by constantly keeping our distance from the rest. Accordingly, we decided to separate for the remainder of the day. We walked through the byways of the camp, each on her own. And two youths began to walk after me. They began to tease me. Every time that I turned a corner, they would suddenly appear in front of me, laughing. I would not answer them. Now, I found them in the middle of the street, blocking the way in front of me. One of them – the more handsome one of the two, who was also the leader – started to say brazen things about me in a loud voice.

'What do you think, Tiva? – he asked his companion – 'Is she Polish?'

And he then looked me over from head-to-toe, screwed up his face and said: 'Maybe, maybe not.'

'She speaks Polish,' – the alert one said – 'but she also speaks Russian. Does she look like a Russian to you?'

His companion, who wetted his lower lip, made out to be interested in the question.

Passers-by began to pay attention to this game.

'I tell you, I think she is too alert to be Polish. Perhaps she is a Jewess. What do you think? Is she a Jewess?'

His companion opened his mouth wide, and raised his eyebrows, peered at me with a sevenfold penetrating look and announced: 'You know, it is possible that this is a *Żydowka*.'

I recoiled from this insulting epithet, the most profane among the profanities that came from the mouths of the farmers, and I pushed aside, and went past them.

I sat for a long hour in the reception house. After that, I entered the barracks and began to put the effects in my valise in order, putting things back, and organizing. I wandered off to a far point of

the camp. The two who harassed me did not find me again.

We sat in Cracow for another few days, but to our good fortune, these were days in which we were kept busy. The line of interviews finally got to us. We were asked if we had a preference regarding where we would like to go. Anya and I agreed that we would ask if we could be sent to Austria. I thought of Austria only in connection with our dear telegrapher, the man from Linz. Perhaps the attitude of other Austrians would be like his. During my childhood, my father traveled a few times to Vienna, on business, and told us that the Austrians were upright people, people of culture, among the better of the gentiles.

An interviewer asked me: 'Is there a specific place in Austria?'

I said: 'Linz.'

'Do you have a reason for this?'

'Among the soldiers,' – I smiled – 'I had a friend who came from Linz.' Would he only stop asking me questions! I saw him write 'Linz' on my card.

★

My mistress provided me with the working radio; it was a large'Telefunken' set in the living room, and tuned to the national station. It provided music, that was periodically stopped for news bulletins – our forces are making progress, making progress consistently. Rommel is storming forward at the head of his Afrika Korps! Will he storm ahead as far as the Land of Israel? Will he pursue us until that final refuge? And my oldest brother Nahum, will he be seized there, and will they do to him as was done to Tuncza? It was already difficult for me to raise his image before my eyes. I saw him only as he looked on that last day before he traveled off, a black day coming home from Warsaw, after he had given up on all of his effort to be accepted into law school. He spent the last of his pennies on gifts for the children – books for Tuncza, and a violin for me – Oy, why did I not learn to play it? – and a three-wheeled bicycle for Zelig. And afterwards, the friends who were members of his youth movement, '*Gordonia*,' came to Nahum, to take their leave of him, and all the older girls looked at him with looks of longing and rapture, and he went off to stroll in the stand of trees with his own girl, Ida Segal, the daughter of the lawyer, and afterwards everyone escorted him to the train station. There, they stood and sang the '*Hatikvah*.' And where is Nahum now? Perhaps he is a soldier in the Land of Israel? Perhaps he is in pursuit of the enemy that is drawing near, listening to the same frightening news that I am hearing here in Linz? And could it be that all of these news items are not credible? That not all of them are true?

There was a great temptation to seek a broadcast from outside the country, but I didn't have the nerve to touch the tuning dials. Perhaps they will give the Eberhardts some sort of secret signal? As if the hairline would move from its place if the dial is turned?

At the most, I could turn the volume off.

I continued with my work, dusting, and cleaning off the furniture. The piano stood in the living room. I passed the cleaning rag over the cover, I picked it up, and touched the keys. I did not know how to play. But suddenly, I was reminded of Tuncza.

In Lvov at boarding school, she studied piano playing. And when I brought her back from Lvov, I heard her playing, once, and alone. Our family was still living in the rear dwelling of the house, having not yet been ordered to return to the Jewish Quarter. In the front of the dwelling, German officers had settled in the three stories of father's house. It was up to us to clean their rooms.

On one morning, after all the officers had left the house, Tuncza and I stole into the house and went up to the third floor, to the room that used to be ours. When my father had built the house, he built a kitchen and a dwelling space for the family behind the store, and he, my mother and Zelig used to sleep there. But he built a separate room for the two daughters, on the third floor in the center, beside one of the residences that was rented out. It was in this room that we spent the most pleasant years of our youth.

Now, this room had been transformed into the room of a man, the furniture had been swapped out, and the Germans even had brought a piano that they had taken from the home of a Jew. It stood against the wall.

'Tuncza,' – I said – 'Now you can show me how you play. Play something.'

First she glanced out into the foyer to see if anyone of them had remained behind. After that, she sat down and played a popular love song, that had been widely disseminated in those days, she played and sang:

Though your heart does not beat across from me,
Your name, oh, your name is the seal of my love...

I sat down and looked at her, at my sister. A dear girl, playing the piano, and in my heart, some voice said: look, what a wondrous creation the human being is! How carefully curved are the fingers. How sprightly do they move, and how is it that the mind can remember each note, each word. And that hour my heart seized up. What do they want of us? What do they want of us!

I heard the last echoes of the ring, that I had extracted from the piano of Frau Eberhardt. It was the noon hour. I was supposed to go to their restaurant to eat.

The restaurant was a local restaurant, all of whose patrons were in the habit of sitting at the same tables each day. The Eberhardts were all sitting there, and they hinted to me. When I entered, I felt the cast of hatred, and at the time that all of their eyes followed me as I went to the Eberhardt table, I had the impression that there was some sort of undercurrent. Had I already done something inappropriate?

Frau Eberhardt whispered sharply: 'Katarina, you didn't say *Heil.*'

Her husband said: 'Generally you probably don't know. But when you enter a public place, you are obligated to say *'Heil Hitler.*'

'I am sorry,' – I said. – 'Shall I say it now?'

Frau Eberhardt nodded her head, 'but don't forget it in the future.'

... I tried to concentrate on my work, to tire myself out. I took on consecutive tasks, I washed the major laundry, I learned to be a completely rounded servant. This was the first time in my life that I engaged in cooking. The food provisions in the Eberhardt home were not bad, apart from some specific items. Bread was doled out in limited amounts.

... In those days, during which time I would attempt to try and summon my dear ones into my memory, and suspected they were lost, an intense desire for news grew strongly within me, for even a single word of what was going on in Rawa-Ruska. Were they all dead – the Jews of Rawa Ruska, the Jews of Poland, the entirety of all the Jews in the Ukraine? I curiously gleaned all of the German newspapers, I listened to all radio broadcasts. It was strange that nothing was said to inform the German people, as to what was happening to the Jews. The plan against the Jews seemed to be an very important part of the war of the Germans; everything, from the outset was prepared on a firm foundation, organized, and carried out according to a plan, in the hands of people trained especially to deal with us. Logic would suggest, that in Germany, there would be continuing publicity of news on the enormous extermination campaign, in order that the German nation know how one of the most important goals of the war was being accomplished.

But there was not a single word about this subject. A lot was being said about the Jews in general; at designated intervals, they would repeat those same anti-Semitic themes, and at all times, the newspapers would publicize the related awful characteristics. But news of what was actually being done – nothing. Perhaps it was all over? Perhaps there were no more Jews left in this world?

Even the Eberhardts and their acquaintances did not speak of the Jews. Occasionally, I would hear them cursing us, besmirching our name. Nothing. Were there ever any Jews? Was there ever an Eva?

...Why did they seek to hear news from a foreign station? After all is said and done, an 'eighth part of an eighth,' maybe all was not well with the German Army. I could no longer contain myself. One day, when I was certain they would not return home until evening, I turned the dials on the radio. Forward, backward. I looked for a broadcast coming from outside the country. But it was impossible to get anything that was clear – it was as if they denied the air the opportunity to transmit a signal from my people.

In the end, I decided to write a letter. My mother said that I should wait for a few months before I indulged myself this way. The months went by. And one day, I hurried my work, in order to

finish it, I took a pen and paper, and went up to my room. I wrote and wrote, page after page, and tears fell and blurred the ink. No matter, let them see the signs of my longing for them. Everything I was to write was to be done using indirect references – my dear aunt, how I feel her absence; everything with me is in order, but I worry about you. What is the state of her health – and perhaps she is not even there? And I described everything that I could about my life in Linz.

I sent the letter to Poles who knew us, who conveyed it to my mother. That is what we had agreed with them. And I knew that weeks would go by before a reply would be able to reach me – if they were still alive.

Weeks went by. And one day, while Frau Eberhardt was engaged in retrieving the mail, she called to me: 'Katarina! You have a letter!' When she saw my emotional reaction, she said: 'Good, leave the dishes from breakfast. Go up to your room and read the letter.'

The letter – was in my mother's handwriting, they were still alive!

'We are happy that you are healthy and you have a decent working place, and we are hopeful that you will be able to sustain yourself there.' And here are things that were unbelievable: 'We also heard about our little bird.' The bird – Tauba – Tuncza! ' A bird came on the fly and swooped up our little bird to a nest in the forest, and they are free there and they are doing well.'

A nest in the forest? They are free, and they are doing well? Is Tuncza still alive? A bird came on the fly and swooped up our little bird? Did someone actually penetrate Belzec and help her to escape? Is this not entirely impossible?

In this regard, I found another indirect clue in my mother's letter. 'One day, a strange man came to our house, and brought a letter in the handwriting of your sister. We don't know from whence he came, nor where he went off to.'

So that's how they found out about 'our little bird.' From Tuncza herself! A letter in her own handwriting! Tuncza is alive! Alive!

And returning again – my mother sprinkled the clues all over the letter – I read: do you remember Bistrai, your father's friend? We heard that his brother is free, and in good condition.'

Bistrai, my father's friend? But Bistrai was the head of the N. K. V. D. in Rawa-Ruska during the Russian occupation. Truly, he was a sort of friend to our family. But I did not recall that he had a brother. What was the meaning of these strange words?

I tried to recollect what I knew about Bistrai. I conjured up the image of the day the Russians arrived. Despite the concerns of all the residents of the city, I felt an uplift at the beginning of the war. There were no battles during that summer day in 1939. The Polish police suddenly vanished. My father drove me around to all corners of the city on his bicycle. He brought flour to his brother Nachman,

to the Blumenfelds to buy oil, to the candlemaker. And here, the Russians entered our city, and several freight trucks stopped beside the municipal police station, near our house. My father said, that these were the people of the Russian N. K. V. D. who are taking over the station into their own hands.

After a while, a number of the officers came into my father's store, and asked for vodka. Up to that point, he sold strong drink only in bottles. Now, they said to him, he had permission to open the bottles, and to sell drinks in the store, and from that point on, we would sell vodka in place of soda water. They would drink without stopping, sometime when the day would wane and it would grow dark, they would go to the back room, and continue drinking there. Bistrai, the head of the N.K.V.D. himself, was one of the biggest boozers. He was in the prime of life and had gold teeth in his mouth. My father said that Bistrai was Jewish. My mother was not certain: a Jew doesn't drink that much. But my father held to his position. If this was so, I asked my father, if they had any doubt, why not ask Bistrai himself?

'If a Jew does not extend a greeting to a Jew, one does not ask him if he is a Jew,' my father replied.

After a while, Bistrai's family reached Rawa-Ruska. My mother said, that his wife was not Jewish, and without a doubt, their little boy was not circumcised. 'That is nothing in their milieu,' – my father said – 'By the Russians, the Jew is like all other people, and from the looks of it, he has ceased to be a Jew.'

Despite all this, I once asked Bistrai. The Russians had used up all the vodka that my father had in his store, and he could not get to Lvov to bring a fresh supply. One day, I saw Bistrai in his car, getting ready to drive to Lvov. Could I ride with him? I asked. He took me with him, and I went to my father's wholesaler, and got vodka bottles to fill up my sack. On the way back, Bistrai looked happy, and we even sang some Russian songs together, and towards the end, I attempted to sing a Yiddish song. He learned the tune quickly, but didn't sing the words. 'You don't know the text?' – I asked – 'I thought that you also were Jewish.' He laughed and said: Despite the fact that he was born Jewish – what about it? An intelligent girl like me – I am not observant? And I do not believe in all of these foolish beliefs? A God with a long beard, speaking with Moses face-to-face? No, I said, I don't believe in this. We did not speak anymore about Judaism.

And here, I recollected the day that the Russians left the city, after two years. On that same morning the sky was filled with German airplanes, and there was a real war; and seeing that our city was only a few kilometers from the border, all the Russians began to pack up their belongings. Bistrai's family stood beside a freight truck in the yard behind the police station, and boxes full of papers, protocols, and cases were all loaded onto the truck. My mother ran to Bistrai and beseeched him: 'Take us.'

He only shook his head.

'Take only the children!' She begged.

He was silent.

'I am begging you, take the children, the Jewish children, in place of the documents!'

All he said was: 'Don't worry, we will be back! We will let these pigs come in for a distance, and then we will drive them out, we may even let them cross our borders – and after that, we will bust their heads!' He rubbed one hand into the other, 'We will bust their heads!' And that is the way Bistrai left us.

Now, I read his name in my mother's strange letter.

'Do you remember Bistrai, your father's friend? We heard that his brother is free, and in good condition.'

'He is free and in good condition' – the same expression she used previously in her letter: 'A bird came on the fly, and swooped up our little bird to a nest in the forest, and there they are free, and in good condition.'

And so it is clear! Bistrai's brother – that is to say, the Russians. In the forest – Partisans! The partisans had broken into Belzec and they themselves extracted Tuncza! It appears that this partisan attack was on that very burning hell! There were even bombs from the air – 'came on the fly.' Was this possible? Here we heard no word of such a thing.

The letter from my mother lifted me so much, to the point that I felt that I could now do anything, to withstand anything. Without a doubt, I would live! After the war, I would find Tuncza, and we will live together.

During all of these days, when this secret of good fortune filled my heart, I would sing while working in the house. All of me vibrated. At times, when I looked at the Eberhardts, the news almost burst out of my mouth: 'Do you know – my sister is alive!' Oh, if there was only someone to whom I could tell this to!

On one day, at an hour when the Eberhardts were not in the house, the telephone rang. I answered the call – and it was for me! Nina, from the 'Arbeitsamt,' from Bindermichl[188]. She had a letter in her hand for me.

Only Anya could send a letter to me there. I asked Nina to send me the letter immediately. In the meantime, Nina asked me why it was that I kept my distance, as if I was one of the strangers? Why do I not come to visit them?

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188 A neighborhood in the city of Linz, Austria

I sensed a warmth from her, that I had felt the first time I met her. And so, I had a friend in Bindermichl. And why did I sense a need to go there, to Nina and Klawa? Suddenly, I felt myself to be rich. After all, did I not have Anya, and Nina and Klawa, and my Tuncza was alive! I danced with the broom.

When Frau Eberhardt returned home, she said: 'Were you called?'

'Yes,' – I said. – 'From the '*Arbeitsamt.*' 'But how do you know this, Frau Eberhardt?'

'Ah,' she said.

There was no malign intent here; it appears that she wanted to give me a hint that everything was known to her, at all times.

On the following day, Anya's letter arrived.

'Ah, here is yet another letter for you!' Frau Eberhardt said.

I said to her that this letter was from my best friend. It was the very same girl with whom I had come to the Reich. This friend of mine works in the Steiermark district, in the village of Steinkeller [St. Martin] am Grimming, in one of the big estates, as a teacher/governess to the children of the estate owner, and she is inviting me to come and visit her.

Excellent! This will be a wonderful change for me. I have to go.

At that same hour, I recollected my mother's advice, to maintain contact with Anya only at a distance. But I had such a desire in my heart, a tremendous need for any sort of contact with home. I had the feeling that without this, I will lose myself entirely.

During my childhood, I used to think of the reward received from my transgressions opposite the losses incurred. If my mother said not to stay outside after nine o'clock, and if after nine, there was still some quality of activity in the open broad part of the city, I would be thinking in terms of the pleasure I would derive versus the slap in the cheek I would get in the case I was late in coming home, and in general, I used to decide to take the chance. Yes, I was still the same Eva.

Since the trip entailed four or five hours, in any case, Frau Eberhardt said to me that she will give me an extra half day off on Saturday – otherwise, I would have to spend the entire day of Sunday on the train, and it would not leave me much time for the visit itself.

She personally supervised my preparations. I put on my good dress – the very dress my mother stubbornly insisted in putting in my case. Oh, Frau Eberhardt took pleasure in her Katarina. I really looked good.

I went off.

And here was the servant, sitting in the train – and who knows what she really is? A young lady, tranquil and at peace, reclined in her seat, taking in the scenery.

And the scenery was indeed quite beautiful. First the wintry forests, and afterwards, a chain of ponds, each one prettier than the last. Tranquil cities, whose description was appropriate, because those who lived there had the privilege of living and enjoying their lives. I closed my eyes, and dropped off to sleep from the rhythm of the rotating wheels.

Now the train tilted, and ascended the mountains. I reached the station at Liabon, and Anya was waiting for me in the dim light of the platform.

... we conversed at length, and afterwards lay down to sleep, and for the entire night, I lay and exerted myself to recollect our city, to remember the life that we had lived 'previously.'

Our Rawa-Ruska – a dear little town, in the south of Poland, near a river where the horses would water themselves, and we would bathe there – the men at the upper part of the river, and the women in the lower. I would go and tease the boys, and on one occasion snatched the clothing of a boy, because of a dare from another boy, and we jumped on a horse and fled, me, and the one who dared me, with the naked boy running after us through the whole city, screaming, and shouting: 'Thieves! Thieves!'

There was one other bathing spot further up the river, sheltered between trees and bushes. There is where the *Hasidim* would go – and even a 'thief' like me did not have the nerve to get close to that location. I always desired to know if their sidelocks floated on the water, when they swam.

The fields spread out all around Rawa-Ruska, that the Ukrainian farmers would work. They hated the Poles. And as understood, they hated the Jews even more; but this is the way it always was, the most frightening part of the period of enmity was – the period of the pogroms – for us this was only a matter of stories told to us, that our father would tell us about the time when he was young.

We, the children, would go out for strolls among the farms, and we would stop off at the cabins of the farmers, to satisfy our hunger with buttermilk and black bread.

On occasion, the family would travel by autobus, through a number of villages, to the village where our grandfather Korngold had his store. Four sons grew up in the house of our grandmother, and the little store proved adequate to support the four of them and their families. The oldest emigrated to Paris, and the second brother, my uncle Reuben, lived in the little town, and the third son, Nachman became a flour merchant in Rawa-Ruska, and my father followed Nachman and established his first store.

Rawa-Ruska was not particularly large, but it had in it, the courthouse for the vicinity. And in the final years, a new institution was put up, a center for the training of Polish police[189], and a training

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189 This would likely be the Polish Border Guard (*Straż Graniczna*, also abbreviated as **SG**)

facility for the canine corps. We were in the habit of peeking through the cracks in the fence that surrounded the yard, where they trained the dogs[190] in a variety of exercises.

Rawa-Ruska was certainly large enough, having a 'good quarter,' where Jews were not wanted, and also a thieves quarter – and what city didn't have such a thing? Ours was known as 'the sands' – and as is understood, our high school literally stood on the border of this quarter. My older brother Nahum studied there; but in order to continue his studies, for example, to become a doctor or a lawyer, he had to go to Lvov or Warsaw. When I was a little girl, he was intent, along with myself on becoming a member of the 'intelligentsia:' to succeed in the manner that I would succeed in becoming accepted to the high school, and to the higher school for the study to become a lawyer, to appear in the courthouse, to be counted among the elite of the city, and even to construct a large house. Like the house of the lawyer Segal. And to be a noteworthy resident in it, anonymously.

But in the meantime, I became mentally fatigued – to excel in my studies in order to gain admission to the high school, because there were only a few places that were open to Jews. And the majority of our city was Jewish. Many of the young people, who did not succeed in attaining the independent professions, studied the fur-making trade, and in all the streets of the city, it was possible to see the untanned skin hides that were being scraped, stretched out on boards.

And yet, our family was among 'the better off,' because after everything else, our father was a merchant – even though he only owned one soda kiosk. His name was Yerukham. He was tall, above average in height among Jews, stood straight, solid, his blue eyes alert, and wonderful teeth. It was said of his grandfather, that when he died at the age of ninety, he was not missing a single tooth. My father grew a small pointed beard, with streaks of red in it, even as the rest of his hair was duller. Year after year, my father would cut his beard off a little more, according to the fashion, up to the point that we would joke that in short order, he would not be a Jew at all. But only when the Germans came, and already in the first day, their soldiers seized Jews in the street, and tore their beards out of their faces, drawing blood, did my father go into the bathroom and shave off his beard entirely.

On that same night that I slept in Anya's room, I recollected him as he was in my childhood – a happy man, who loved to tell playful stories to the thick-headed farmers, about their craftiness, and his own craftiness; he was easy to anger, even if he was the cause, and occasionally he would exchange shouts and insults with them – but the matter would always end with a slap on the shoulder. He was proud of the fact that his farmers would always return to do business with him.

He loved to carry a tune after meals, and to flirt a little with the ladies. My father would tease my mother, when he would extol the flirtations of so-and-so, who gave him a look on his way to the synagogue. Oh, what a pleasant woman she is!

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190 Furthermore, in the inter-bellum period Rawa was home to Main School of the Border Guard, which was moved here in 1928 from Góra Kalwaria. The school had a department of training of guard dogs, also located in Rawa-Ruska.

'I'll put her eyes out!' my mother would retort, in order to cool his ardor, because she never really had any suspicions. She, herself, was tall, an outgoing person, a str9ong woman actually, even though she had gotten stout. My father loved to tell, what sort of a sensation was aroused during the days of their courtship, a short time after the First World War; there were still troops in the barracks, and when she would come to visit him there, in her regal beauty, the entire encampment was taken aback.

He was her second husband; the first, R' Abraham Wolk, was killed in the war, and she remained alone with her baby – that is Nahum, my oldest brother. It is possible that for this reason, my mother harbored an aura of grief. But she did not give into it. She was always busy, engaged, the center of all the women in her coterie, providing advice on all matters, from the change in business to the arrangement of marriages. She was always busy around the house, and always busy with my father in the store, as if she were in two places at the same time. And never was there a case where work was left undone, that had been unfinished. My mother was a Woman of Valor of the old school, a model mistress of her home. Her warm dishes were the richest in Rawa-Ruska, and her noodles – the thinnest and most delicate in the city. 'Aristocrats' like Feiga Segal would buy their dresses in the 'Bon Ton' store – whose copies were brought directly from Vienna at the word of her husband. My mother had already arranged to dress her daughters in those very same copies, which she copied from those that were displayed in the model window.

I can still see her kneeling on her knees, fixing up the hem on my new dress, rotating around me on her knees, in the kitchen. At times like this, it was easy for me to talk to her about 'women's matters.' Alla Blumenfeld and the rest of the girls told me that I was a fortunate girl, because they did not have the nerve to start up such a conversation with their own mothers, and they were in wonder that my mother was so progressive in this respect, that a girl need not feel shame in talking to her, in this way. During these measurement times, when my mother would be arranging her words, and her hands were clasped in satisfaction, regarding the fact that I was developing and becoming 'more of a woman,' she would converse with me, about how things would be with me. With Jewish girls, things could not be the same as it would be with the gentile girls among us, the village girls. With us, a young girl, or a woman, must stand on her own self-worth. Not only with regard to her husband, but she would also steal the most precious treasure of her life from herself, if she will behave more loosely than is called for before she marries. And without any hemming and hawing I knew that it would be this way: as a pure Jewish daughter, I will bring myself to my husband, who will be the man I love, the choice of my love. And as you can understand, I never even considered that he would not be Jewish, and if not? In the inner recesses of the soul, a fear lay hidden, and with it, a terrifying curiosity, what would happen then? There were always stories whispered about regarding Jewish girls who had been 'tempted off the straight path' by gentiles. But how could this be? In our city, in our school, the Jews and the non-Jews practically did not speak to one another.

After the conversation with my mother about women's matters, she would get up off of her knees, smooth out my dress with her hands, straighten out the linen on the back of my new bodily curves, and would say: 'take it off and run outside, put on your old dress and go, run around in the fields, sing, shout – after all, you are still a girl!'

Because all the days of my youth I was effusive with a wild aggressiveness, that from time-to-time I ran in the fields and gave full-throated vocal shouts, out of a surfeit of lust for life. During the summer, my mother would travel to Ulanów, to take the healing waters, because of a throat ailment that dogged her. At the beginning we would lodge at the pension of Meir – their little Rita was my age – but I would raise such a fuss, climbing on trees, peeking through windows, shouting, guffawing, and laughing, to the point that my mother was compelled to rent a small house at the outskirts of the city. There she could permit me to run in the fields, to shout with a full throat, and to engage and fight with my little brother Zelig.

But from the minute I was accepted into the high school – in essence they accepted me because of Nahum, my big brother, who watched out that because I was a student in the school – I would attempt to restrain myself. But I was concerned that maybe there was someone within me that was not intelligent, because I exhibited so much extroversion. I made great efforts to behave like one of the other girls: I would practice taking small steps like our tripping Mila Stein; and I attempted to lower my voice, and to speak in a low tone like my sister Tuncza.

During the invasion of Poland in 1939, a movement of emotion and activity passed through me, and I can remember how my mother tried to calm me down. 'Eva, Eva, you don't know what war is like.' And she told me about the First World War, the time her husband was killed, how abandoned she was, and Nahum was still a baby, and that there practically was no family that had not been struck with misfortune and death.

But, when the Russians came to Rawa-Ruska, her first words were: 'It will be all right.' Good for the Jews, it is understood. There were tens of new orders promulgated. Everyone was free and equal – even the Jews. Now we no longer had to compete, practically to the point of surrendering our lives, for those few places that were allocated to us in school. I was almost sad that Nahum, my big brother, made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, because there, he would be able to gain admission to law school.

There was no end to the happiness for all the communists in the city. There were dances in the streets, the loudspeakers were not silenced at all. One evening after the other, the Russians would cordon off a part of the broad square for dancing. The young people went outside; everything was filled with life.

And because of this, it gave the appearance that all was well. Units of soldiers, short in height, in their brown uniforms, demonstrated exemplary behavior. They came from faraway Tashkent, and even the decorations in Rawa-Ruska were like a wonder in their eyes. They bought every bauble from my father, every flashlight, every toy. And in every place, they would endlessly pull on the chains of the bathrooms! When we would joke about this, they would say: 'Ah, you have lavatories, but we have tanks.'

The N. K. V. D. set up its offices in a beautiful new building, that the Poles had built for a regional police center, a small distance from my father's store. They had just settled themselves in the

building, when we saw one of their cars bringing Dr. Miller there, one of the Zionist leaders in the city. He entered the building between two Russians, and we did not see him come out.

In a short time, we saw other people going into the station: the municipal notary, the owner of the flashlight factory, a few of the defense attorneys. In a state of concern, I anticipated that they might be bringing Feiga Segal's father there. No. By all appearances, not yet. But others – teachers, even judges. Rita Meyer came by herself from Ulanów, and told how her parents had disappeared. And on one day, I saw my mother sewing several knapsacks out of a strong linen. They possessed specific dimensions, like little sacks, and I knew their purpose. Each knapsack was made to contain clothing, and necessary effects up to ten kilograms. The N. K. V. D. did not permit people to take any more than this with them. When they would come to a house to take an individual, he was given fifteen minutes to get ready for the journey – and it was better to have knapsacks already at hand.

Now began the period of the wanderings, of probing in every place after some connection with life. Having walked a kilometer or two, we would encounter a group of citizens, with Russian soldiers guarding them. The soldiers approached us, and by waving their rifles at us indicated – that we too were under detention. Have all of these things started as they had in the beginning?

They led us, with the others, to an inspection place, and there each and every one of us was interrogated. 'What are you?' The officer asked me.

'I am a Jewess. A Jewess who has escaped from Oswiecim.'

'A Jewess? But what are you?'

Who am I? And I saw in the Russian officer's eye what it was he was asking me for. Am I Polish or Ukrainian. And am I perhaps connected to some underground independence movement?

But I am just a Jewish girl from Rawa-Ruska, I said, and my companion is from Kielce.

And in Rawa-Ruska – what were you there?

Now I understood. During the time of Soviet rule, I worked in the notary's office, I said, and I attended school in the evening.

And he nodded his head. And what did your father do?

During the time of Soviet rule – he was a night watchman. And before that? – a storekeeper, I said. He nodded his head, and in the end, he took his eyes off me. So it is. A Jewess. Better. I am free. I can go. And this was also the case for my friend Lula.

This is how we returned to the world.

★

I needed to return to Rawa-Ruska, but on the second day after our arrival in Pszczyna, we encountered a Jewish man, a survivor of Auschwitz like us. He had already been in that vicinity. There is nothing there. Not anything. Not a single Jew remained in the entire area. Not even in Lvov, not to mention Rawa-Ruska. If so, I said, I will go to the Land of Israel to find my brother. But I know nothing. The way to get there is sealed off. The English are blocking the way. No Jew can get into the Land of Israel.

We tarried in the city, and on one morning, I saw a man in the street that looked familiar to me. Yes, he was Dr. Appel from Rawa-Ruska, that at one time was a stalwart and pleasant-looking man – he was even a member of our '*Judenrat*.'

Yes, he had been in Rawa-Ruska, hidden all alone in the cellar of a teacher, after the *aktion* in which all of the members of his family were seized, and when he emerged, there was not a trace of a Jew in the city.

And my family? Had he heard anything?

He had heard, that in the fourth *aktion*, the event happened, the time when his family was taken into custody, at the time when it appeared that the assault was over, and everything had quieted down, Meir, the deputy of Klein, went through the Jewish streets, and stopped in front of the Blumenfeld house, where my family was hidden, and called out to my mother in Yiddish: 'Mrs. K. Come out!' Come out!' And my mother, who did not recognize his voice, and thought this was some Jewish person in need of help – my mother came out from the cellar, to fall into the hands of the murderers.

And my father? Zelig?

After a while, in another *aktion*, all of them, all of them, even the members of the '*Judenrat*' were taken, all of them, all of them, to Belzec.

★

In the morning, we debarked at the shore of the Land of Israel, my brother was waiting for me there. A man, the father of a family.

From time to time I run into survivors from Rawa-Ruska in the streets of Tel-Aviv, Esther, Rita, and the like. Occasionally, I meet with my friend from our days in Auschwitz, Lula, because she too made *aliyah* to Israel. On occasion we get together on Sabbaths, with our husbands and children.

But what makes me most happy, is when I see one of my friends going about her business – entering one of the stores, and I say in my heart: well, does she not look like any ordinary homemaker, living a normal life. No person could grasp what she ad lived through. And as a result, I contemplate: Eva, too! It must be that you appear this way as well! And my heart races.

After work, I take care of shopping. When I return home. My sons run towards me, in leaps, and calling out loudly: Mama! Mama! And there are times when my husband gets home from work before me, and when I open the door, he utters my name: 'Eva?'

And I answer. 'Eva, I have returned home.'

The Jews of My City That Were Cut Down

By Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer



Page 297: The Shtetl – An Impression by Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer

So many people have already written memoirs about what they lived through during the Holocaust, in the ghettoes, concentration camps, forests, or saving themselves through Aryan [identification] papers. All of these memoirs are so similar to one another, and despite this, no matter how many times one does not write about this, to align one's own tribulations with those of others before the world and one's self. And therefore, no matter how much will be written, there will remain views of the world that will remain forever vanished. And in this, is lost the worlds of our dearest and closest with their thoughts, and who knows, how many genial thoughts and emotions, along with their ideals and disappointments. Because of this, it is our sacred duty, using our memories, to rebuild, even if only partially, their personas, in order that their memories not be permitted to sink in to a permanently forgotten abyss. In this way, we sanctify their memory for all time.

Our little *shtetl* of Rawa-Ruska lay on the intersection of the way from Lemberg-to-Lublin, or better said: Bucharest – Warsaw, surrounded on all sides with forests, fields and orchards. The vicinity was seeded with an innumerable number of villages, which brought a bubbling life into the city. Every week, on Monday, the residents of those villages would travel into the city, for the weekly market fair, and flood us with their wares and boisterousness from morning until the dark of night. The city derived its income from this fair for the entire week. The shtetl was a lively one, and its cultural life stood on a high level. The youth lived out its life within its organizations, such as *Gordonia, Akhuza, HaNoar*, and BETAR. The left-wing youth in its 'Reading Room,' or '*Bund*.' Also, *Hasidic* youth and *Mizrahi* youth had, apart from the *Bet HaMedrash* and the *Kloyz*, their societies, where they rounded out the life they led in the *Kloyz* and Yeshiva. The *Hasidim* here especially lived a fortunate life– being so close to their *Rebbe* – in Belz, who from-time-to-time traveled through, or even made a trip as a guest in Rawa. On those occasions, they put themselves out like true Cossacks, and rode on horses side-saddle . The bands played *Hasidic* marches, and the populace was constrained, being pushed off the walkways, in order to catch a glimpse of the *Rebbe's* holy glance, during the time he rode by in a carriage, through the city, in the company of the *Starosta* and Commandant of the gendarmerie.

The memory of the *Hasid,* Pesach Beinusz's-Altman is still in my memory, who would march in all the official military parades, along with the nobility, and élite personalities of the city, decorated with his 'Independence-Cross,' one of the highest decorations of Poland, which he received from Pi³sudski for hiding and saving a Polish officer, the son of a lessor, the owner of the well-known restaurant on the street of the train station in Rawa.

[It was] on that snowy Sabbath in 1919, when the bloody face-to-face fighting took place, in Rawa, between the Poles and the Ukrainians. The officer, at that time was overwhelmed by a larger number of Ukrainian soldiers, and every way to retreat was cut off for him. Suddenly he felt that behind him, a door was opening, and a hand was pulling him inside the house. Here, Pesach Beinusz's quickly packed him into a box, which was used to knead dough (he was a baker), and covered him with a mountain of flour sacks. The Ukrainians then ransacked the entire bakery, but they did not find the officer. Had they found him, they would have shot not only the officer, but certainly the person who had moved to rescue him, along with his wife and children.

The entire materially-endowed populace of storekeepers, to whom all the stores in the *Rynek* belonged, and all the fur merchants. Who dealt with export – all these gave the shtetl the appearance of a good material condition. But there were also poor people. They resided in the small side-streets, around the bathhouse, near the synagogue and *Kloyzes*, where strangers and travelers passing through would lodge, who would come as guests for a few days, or for the Sabbath at better situated homes. There was poverty there; but there was always heartiness with joyful laughter, which called out the familiar personalities such as Shim'eleh Mateh, Tevel'eh and Moshe Payatz.

Close by the *shtetl,* the Rata River flowed. There, and in the surrounding forests, or on the Wolkowica, our young people would spend their free time. On *Rosh Hashana*, one went to the little river for '*Tashlich*,' and for the entire summer the noise of the young people would carry from there, where they bathed, and where they threw off their day-to-day worries for a while. Until late in the evening, one would hear the sounds of song carried in the air, and the laughter of our young, who would be returning from their stroll and forays outside of the city, after political and cultural discussions, and courses. It was in this fashion that our little *shtetl* of Rawa lived and dreamed...

Until... the First of September, when the first of Hitler's bombs fell on Poland. Two weeks later, the Russian and German armies encountered each other in Rawa. The Germans withdrew to 14 km. outside of the city, and the Russians remained with us for the period of two years. Then the Germans returned again, in order to finish that which they had started two years previously, to exterminate us with that precise German punctiliousness...

1941. Children, who had just yesterday been sitting on school benches, received brooms and shovels, in order to clean off the walkways and streets of the city, and the classes and closets of the schools, where up until yesterday they were pupils.

6 o'clock in the morning, all those from the age of 12 to 55 had to present themselves at the marketplace, in order to be led out by Ukrainians and Germans to work. The entire city was transformed into a labor camp. They worked at the train station, in the barracks, in the camps of the Russians, and later (in



Page 296: The 'HeHalutz' *Contingent of* 'HaNoar HaTzioni' *in the City*

the camp of the) French prisoners-of-war. Others worked in construction, at Polish and German firms, who were building an air field in Kamianka near Rawa. The men work honestly and diligently; they think that in this way, they will ransom their lives. But the plans of the enemy are different. They place no value on our work; they are focused only on us... first they rob all of the Jewish valuables: money, furniture, fur coats, leather, kitchen ware – everything is given away to them, in the hopes that this will be ransom for our lives.

Passover 1942. The first *aktion*. People crawl into wherever they can: into the forests, in cellars, up in attics. The victims were taken away by train, not taken far; only as far as Belzec. A few days later, we became aware of the complete truth: there are only two blocks in the Belzec camp, and day and night, the smokestacks belch smoke, and spreads the odor of burnt flesh... this precipitated a state of hysterical confusion among the people. Some are resigned, 'no matter what, we are sentenced to death, and the sooner the better, with less suffering.' Another group: living from today till tomorrow, 'no matter what, this makes no sense.' And yet another group: had decided that with all their might, focused on not hearing and engaging in the solitary thought: how to save one's self from the talons of death...

Those who were left after the first *aktion*, continue for the time being, going to work. The Germans enrich themselves every day by plundering more and more. Jews are compelled to don the Star of David, and they are not permitted to walk on the sidewalks, and are not allowed to wear any fur coats, not even a collar of such a coat. For the hardest labor, one is paid with a fourth of a loaf of bread per day.

In the city, there was the old cemetery. This disturbed the esthetic sense of the executioners, and on one Sunday, they drove together several thousand Jews, grown ups and children, men and women, and forced them to uproot the headstones of the graves, and smooth out the area. Jews were forced to wipe out the graves of their fathers and mothers, or children, for whom they had just, only several months back, personally erected grave stones. These grave stones were then conveyed into the city, and laid out as sidewalks for the villas of the German executioners...

At the entrance to this sacred place, there was a truly ancient grave, of a child, who according to the legend, had been martyred in *Sanctification of the Name*, and was called 'The Little *Tzaddik*.' This very grave site was wiped out with special brutality, down to its foundation...

The *Judenrat* exerts itself for the welfare of the Jews in the entirety of what is within their power. There is a kitchen, that every day distributes a bit of soup and a quarter loaf of bread for the hungry; but despite this, the reality is that it serves as a tool in the hands of the executioners. For the Germans, it is much easier to come to an organized body with their demands. And so long as money and valuables are transacted, the problem is only half as severe. But when they begin to demand manpower for the labor camp, then the situation became very different. Unfortunately, the first of the victims were the poorest of our brethren; the rich, at that time, were hidden away, in order to be able to make use of their money or valuables, in the case they might be needed. For this reason, the small houses around the synagogue and bath were the first to fall, also on the *Zamd*, and by the slaughtering area... but immediately, even the rich needed to abandon their houses and gardens; a decree was issued, that they must leave their houses in a matter of hours. It was possible to take along only so much, to the extent that it could be personally carried.

The nadir sank lower and lower. Trains would pass through two and three times a day each comprised of hundreds of cars, with tens of thousands of Jews being taken to Belzec, from various countries and also from Poland. Jews, who worked on the train explained to them where they were being taken; but they did not believe it; they were certain that the Germans were taking them to Kiev to work.

After a few *aktionen*, the Germans gathered together all the remaining Jews from the surrounding towns, and brought them into Rawa, in order to have them closer to the train station, from which it would be easier to transport them off to Belzec. In the interim, the crowding in the ghetto became so great, that there was not one house in which typhus did not reign...

One knew of these *aktionen* a day or two before they took place. The first sign was the arrival of a larger number of S. S. And *Gestapo*. Apart from this, every Jewish person had a gentile who provided this information to him. Also, the *Judenrat* had paid off people in the *Gestapo*, who described this sort of thing to them. And the fact that these *aktionen* costs the lives of so many Jewish victims, is exclusively thanks to the Ukrainian populace, whose thirst for [sic: Jewish] blood exceeded even that of the Germans...

Judenfrei. The idea hit like a clap of thunder. *Judenrein*, meaning there would no longer be Jewish fathers and mothers, who day and night beseech the heavens, that God would help. Mothers, who bless the candles on Friday evening, and children, whose song, at one time carried over fields and orchards, in Hebrew and in Yiddish. *Judenrein* means, that there will not remain even someone who will be able to recite *Kaddish* [in your memory]. *Judenrein* means, that Rawa-Ruska, which we had, in the course of many, many generations, built up containing a burgeoning life will swallow us, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and there will be no trace of us left, no memory of our existence.

In that moment, a voice called out within me and shouted: 'Save us!' The silence of my murdered parents, who gave their lives in *Sanctification of the Name*, shouted out from within me: 'Flee!' And I fled.

... barely 18 years old, I fled alone, entirely alone, among strange people and in unfamiliar places. It was only my parents, who before surrendering in *Sanctification of the Name*, gave me the strength to carry this out, by instilling a hope in me, that at the very least I will save myself, and indeed, their blessing shielded me from all that was bad, preventing me from failing, running over swamps, rocky boulders and wilderness...

... I ran from city to city – in every city, it was the same fate for the Jew. Ostrów – *Judenfrei*; Czêstochowa– *Judenfrei.* In all, it was the same. Over all, I must pass for a Pole with my Jewish eyes, persecuted at every step.

... by a miracle I reached Vienna, and there survived to see Hitler's downfall; and in this way, I remained as the one living memorial in place of my dear parents, whose last prayer certainly must have been: 'God, spare her, and bestow our life on her.'

... that life, which I managed to rescue with such difficulty, is precious to me, because this was the last wish of my parents and relatives, out of all the Jews of Rawa, who wanted so much to go on living. Their love of life was their last will, their sacred testament for us who were left alive. Their hopes and dreams are sacred memorials for us, that no human hand will be able to eradicate, and for whom we now stand to recite the *Kaddish*.

With my foregoing poor words, I simply wanted to eternalize a part of those holy souls of our *shtetl,* who were wiped out in *Sanctification of the Name*, and especially my nearest and dearest friends: Hen'ek Weiss, Hen'keh & Kuba Berkower, Alsh'eh Kuner, Pinia Sztokhammer, Mila Kupperschmidt, Fried'keh Rozman, Fried'keh Bodenstein, Fried'keh Berkhard, Henya Muhlmeister, Minna Berghertz, Manya and Leib Rekhes, Chaya, Tzila and Malka Lehrer, Maleh Billig, my brothers Azriel and Burier, and above all, my dear parents, Aryeh and Rachel Kramer (née Koenig).

יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא!

Hanukkah in the Ghetto

By A. Klag

My heart aches and beats in the silence,
My bloodied soul weeps: – – –
To live! Oh, how intensely I want to live,
And live to see the day of vengeance!!

Angry winds blow, and stir things up.
Carrying on wildly with death there...
Red stains show themselves in the snows
Where the shadow-bodies lie there in silence...
At me, in the window flung wide open,
The Devouring Angel laughs insolently;
The odor of the dead, a house that just reeks,
Of fire in the ghetto, day and night.

The murderers run about, with rifles in hand,
Rushing about noisily and in anger;
Frightened Jews wait at the wall
For the bullet, their means of redemption.

The murderers, they aim at the heads of the Jews,
Who go with the '*Shema*' to be sacrificed.
A shot! And everyone is now satisfied:
The murderers, in contrast, also the sacred host.

The killed, the killed, not yet brought to burial,
Because who is there to do this, and when?
It is after all Hanukkah, the holiday of miracles and heroism,
But this time, no miracle occurred!

Among the Partisans

By Alexander-Shmuel Sztorkh[191]
Porto Alegre, Brazil

I was born in the little village of Vil'shanka[192], near Potelycz, beside Rawa Ruska. A small number of Jewish families lived in this little village. Part of this little village belonged to the nobleman Dr. Mayewski, and I made use of this name during my fateful years, as Captain Mayewski. And it was not only once that this name saved me from certain death.

After the murder of my wife, two children, my parents, family and all of my friends – I was possessed by an overwhelmingly powerful force: to exact vengeance for everything and everyone.

Thanks to my various connections, I obtained documents and a passport in the name of Mykhal Szwed (A Ukrainian).

Thanks to the added help of certain people, I was able to arrange work for myself as an assistant to a blacksmith, a Polish patriot, in a yard near Horyniec[193].

Until this opportunity materialized, I went through a variety of tribulations, fears, and great trembling. I lived in a room by myself where the armored facility used to be. I took care not to be with anyone, even fearing to let out so much as a groan, or to utter a word, that I could utter in my sleep, while being in bed, covered up, that I should not betray my true identity.

On a summer Saturday, after work (in the month of July) the old blacksmith invited me to his home for an evening meal. He had organized something of a family feast. I accepted the invitation, and accompanied the elderly one home. After eating the evening meal, and after downing a bit of strong drink, it became rather late into the night, such that Bielak's household members didn't want me to go home. So I spent the night in Bielak's house.

On the next day, Sunday, after eating breakfast, both of us, I and the elderly blacksmith, went out of the village for a walk. And along the way, we engaged in a conversation about various things. In general, he only conversed with me about politics, and about his son, Stanislaw, and his activities.

The day was unusually hot. The sun beat down on us mercilessly, as was the case in the month of July, during the time of the Polish harvest. We were dressed only in trousers and a shirt, barefoot.

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191 While 'Sztorkh' appears to be the most faithful transliteration from the Yiddish, there are non-Yiddish sources that render this name as 'Storch.'

192 Elided in Yiddish as Ilshynka

193 Possibly Horyniec-Zdroj

We were about 500-600 meters outside of the village, and we came up to the river, which incidentally was part of the same yard in which both of us worked. Suddenly, the old man says to me: seeing that the sun is burning like fire, let us bathe in the cool water. When I heard Bialek's proposal, a darkness descended over my eyes. 'Here, have a fresh quandary on your head' – I thought to myself. Well, strip yourself naked, and show Bialek what sort of an officer you are. And what sort of a lessor's son you are! And, perhaps, he will then know why I am such a good blacksmith! What sort of advice does one give to one's self? What sort of an answer can one give the old man, in order not to bathe? Neither of us had a bathing suit. Also, there were no strange people nearby. And even if there were? What would transpire? For whom did I have to be ashamed? Certainly not for the burning sun.

But even before I looked around, the old man was already in the water. The old man, being in the water, shouted at me from a distance that I should quickly come in. The water is unusually good, and it is a shame to lose even a minute. Along the way, he even performed a variety of acrobatics, wanting to show by this, that he is a good swimmer even at his advanced age. What to do? What sort of advice should I give myself; how can I not go in and bathe? In the meantime, the old man didn't even let me catch my breath. He kept on shouting:

– *Chodz chlopcze, szybciej, szybciej!* (Come little boy, faster, faster). Time is a-wasting!

Seeing and feeling that I will not be able to get out by not swimming, and to actually bathe – I cannot under any circumstance, I could not distance myself from the old man for a kilometer of distance away, because for what reason, and why? Maybe, I thought, if I distance myself from him, he will certainly be suspicious of me. So I decided to undergo a uniquely dangerous step. I took out a small knife, that I always carried with me. I ran towards the river, unbuttoning my trousers, so the old man should see that I was going to swim. In that act, I tripped and fell, and began to shout and asked the old man that he should more quickly come out of the water, to help me stanch the flow of blood that was streaming out of my foot.

At the time that the old man came out of the water to give me help, I used the small knife that I had taken out to give myself a deep cut in a foot, from which I have a scar to this day. I can imagine that today, I would not do such a thing for any sum of money. And perhaps, who knows? In a time of trouble, a person does such things, that can exceed even the wildest of a person's imagination.

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The relationship between the Poles and the Ukrainians were very tense, and led to a posture of each trying to wipe out the other.

I looked for a contact with a representative of the Russian partisans, and found that in the person of the former Soltis of the village, during the time when the Russians ruled there. His name was Stepan Sol. He knew that I was a Jew, but he tolerated that, and held it as a secret.

During the time, when I worked in the yard, I would meet with my friend Mekh'chi. He would come every day, to work in that same yard, to which came all the other Jews from the surrounding vicinity,

until the complete extermination took place in the gas chambers. At every opportunity, I would say to him: 'Mekh'chi, listen to me and flee so long as it is not yet too late.' Mekh'chi would laugh at my warnings, and would answer me in the same way that my friends in Rawa Ruska did:

– 'What is it that I have to fear. I was not a Zionist leader, I was not an important director among the Soviets. It is different with you, you already don't have anything more to lose, but me? I have a family of six people. In addition there are three small children and an old mother-in-law. Apart from this, I live off in a far corner, where apart from me, there are no other Jews. So what then? They will demand that I work, like a slave – then I will work. I am already used to that. I will exert myself one way or another, until the war will finally come to an end.

I could not provide a reply to the words of my naive friend; he, that dear and heartfelt friend, whom I have to thank for the fact that I am alive today, and was not killed along with the other six million martyrs.

It was not only once that I thought: Maybe Mekh'chi is right. Is it possible that the German Beast could kill out all of the Jews? And especially, a Jew like Mekh'chi, who lives so far away in a non-Jewish settlement? Unfortunately, later on, this foolish mistake became evident. Just as the Jews from the areas, from Rawa Ruska, at a previous time, were compelled to abandon their homes, and draw themselves into the city, among them my parents, so this fate came to those Jews, who lived in the vicinity of Lubaczow.

Knowing that Mekh'chi with his family have to abandon their village on the next day, and go into Lubaczow, on the night before, I went to take leave of him and his family. I do not undertake to describe the nature of our parting. I am not in a position to do so. At the time we said our farewells, Mekh'chi still did not believe that we would never see each other again. He thought that the Germans needed more workers in the city, as in the villages, and that is the reason they are being ordered to go there. I gave my friend Mekh'chi whatever I had, and said my farewell forever.

After a conversation with Stepan, my soul was lightened somewhat. I began to feel more secure in my role as a Ukrainian with the name Mykhal Szwed. And in this way, a couple of weeks went by. I went about my daily work as an assistant to the blacksmith. I had accustomed myself to my new craft, and also to the thought that I am a Ukrainian with full standing and do not have to fear anyone. The permanent fear began to leave me, that in any arbitrary moment I could fall and be shot. My satisfaction in this, however, did not last long. On one morning of a June day, when the beautiful summer sun warmed us up, for every person in general, but for me in particular, a Ukrainian policeman came into the yard.

The policeman that had arrived was from the same neighborhood from Horyniec. It is clear that he knew all of the residents. Seeing me, an entirely strange person to the area, he took me to task: what is my name? Who am I? Where do I come from? Etc.

'I am seeing you here for the first time' – he said, half in earnest and half smilingly. You can appreciate that I replied that my name is Mykhal Szwed, I am Ukrainian, and I told him the names of my parents, where I was born – in accordance with my current documents in the present situation.

To this day I do not know if he perhaps recognized me, or was just plain suspicious, as was the case with all the policemen, after looking over all of my documents. At that point, apart from the Soviet pass, I also had other documents, such as: a work card, and others. He turned them over on all sides and said, that my documents are indeed proper, but as to believing – he doesn't believe me. At the time that the policeman said that he did not believe me, I began to feel as if worms were crawling under my skin. A death-sweat began to run down me. I felt that I found myself in a situation of lethal danger.

I could not show that I was afraid. But what is one to do? Instead of answering anything, I began to laugh out loud. This was a false laugh that covered up my true feelings, but yet I laughed.

– 'Well, good, Mr. Policeman' – I said to him – 'The documents are in order, but as to believing, you don't believe me. So what then can I do to convince you of the validity of my documents?'

Then he began to smile, and called me to him, that I should go along with him into the closet. I understood very well what it meant to go with him into the closet. But what could I do? So, smilingly, I replied to him:

–'*Nu*, good, I am going.'

To my good fortune, Bialek the blacksmith was not in his smithy. Going out of the smithy. I asked him for what reason does he want me to go with him to the closet. To which he answered: 'Don't play the fool.' During the time this happened, not a hundred thoughts flew through my mind, but a couple of thousand. In my thoughts, I had already bid farewell to the world. I went along with the policeman, as one who was going to the gallows.

The closet was about 50-60 meters from the smithy. Along the way, going together with the policeman, I whistled. To me this was whistling before death. The way stretched out like an eternity. In the closet, which was a small one, such that only one person at a time could fit inside, it was crowded for both of us. There, I had no alternative way out, and certainly did not see a way to do the same thing that I had done a couple of years before in Lemberg.

To make it short, when we were inside, the policeman told me to drop my pants. But the end of that encounter in that place, is that the other one lies in the ground, and I live in Brazil. Even though 25 years have passed after this event, I still feel his large bulging eyes looking at me, in the moment when I garroted him. It was not possible to shoot, because the shot would have been heard, even though I had a revolver with me.

In that time, we would get together, from time-to-time, in Horyniec at the train station, indeed, with the station master himself. The station master, even though he was a Pole, with a pure Polish name – Mazurkiewicz, was pro-German during the invasion of the Soviet Union, according to the information that we later received about him. But later, he wanted to rehabilitate himself, and began

turning over a variety of information to us, as to the day and hour when German echelons would be traveling through with military to the East, or conveying weaponry or other materiel. This was in the time when the Germans began to get severely beaten, whether from the regular Soviet forces, or those from the various partisan movements, which [by this time] had become well organized. Mazurkiewicz began to feel that a German defeat was unavoidable.

On one evening, when we had come together to take counsel, Mazurkiewicz told us that he wants to present to us a very beautiful young woman, who in his opinion, would be a very important co-worker in our movement. We, and especially myself, were not in favor of this, to take in someone we didn't know well. But Mazurkiewicz gave us his fully backed assurance that he knows her, and it is possible to trust her completely, and she can be taken on and he will be fully responsible.

But before we could even come to grips with agreeing to this, yes or no, the door opened from the second room, and on the threshold there appeared no other than Gittl'eh Lenz. She was the youngest sister of my childhood friend, who row 122 – Rawa Ruska Altcaandeau Wolf, I learned together with in *Heder* at Aharon *Melamed* in Potelycz. Today, he, Itcheh Miller, lives in Saõ Paulo (Brazil).

Our activity (as has already been mentioned) in the meantime consisted of only acts of sabotage and in the elimination of those elements that cooperated with the German authorities. Since our objective was to wipe out these elements, and the Germans also had such elements that informed them of our activities, about our underground work, and turned them over into the hands of the *Gestapo*. One such a 'jewel' was the son of a Ukrainian priest in the village of Radru¿, not far from Horyniec, about 8-10 km.

We began to work entirely intensively. It was such, that the Germans began to feel our impact quite well, and also in a specific measure, came to fear us. They had reason to be afraid, because every Monday and Thursday, we carried out our bit of work, practically under their noses.

On one afternoon, at the end of 1942, the postmaster of Radru¿ comes to me in haste, and tells me, no more and no less, that the son of the Ukrainian priest, in that village, is an agent for the *Gestapo,* and shows me a letter, that the latter had written to the *Gestapo* in Jaroslaw conveying various revelations. Among them, that in the Podemszczyzna yard, run by the *Volksdeutsche* Unterschitz, a Ukrainian by the name of Szwed works, who is, in his estimation something of a suspicious person, because he has very good relations with Stepan Sol and they both support one another. But since he, personally, is not in a position to investigate this issue, he asks the *Gestapo* on its own, to investigate, or take up this issue. (The *Gestapo* indeed did not know me, but it did know who Stepan was). The *Gestapo* knew that Stepan had at one time been a *Soltis* under the Soviets.

Reading this letter in the presence also of Unterschitz, our mouths ran dry, and a coldness descended on our souls. The feeling we all had is not easy to describe, and obviously not to understand. The only one who can understand this is someone would actually went through such moments. So the question was raised before us: What shall we do? Unterschitz was more frightened than anyone else, because we had a variety of ways out, such as: leave the Podemszczyzna yard in favor of a second

location. But he, Unterschitz, was a man with a larger family and in addition to this he was a *Volksdeutsche!* To the extent that I could, I calmed Unterschitz down. We asked of the postmaster, that he should, for the time being, not dispatch the letter, until we decide what we were going to do.

You can appreciate that we did not get lost in this, despite the fear which was great enough. We immediately called for a sitting. After a short counsel, the fate of the young son of the priest was decided. The only question that remained was: who will carry out the death sentence? Since all of the people who worked with us were local, apart from the Soviets, the decision fell on me and I undertook the mission very eagerly. In a certain measure, even with gladness. I had, for some time now, gotten used to the idea of looking death in the eyes. I thought: Boy, am I going to give him one more *Sholom Aleichem*! In addition, by that time, I felt much, much more secure about myself than I had been previously. I was politically active, and already had under me, an entire staff of people. In addition to this, I was strongly tied to Stepan Sol, who, incidentally, was the only one (apart from Genya Lenz), who knew that I was a Jew.

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After carrying out the death sentence against the young son of the priest, our underground work began to take on strength, more and more each time, as well as getting enlarged. This happened because that other one's 'disappearance' threw a fear into all others, in the entire area, who were cooperating with the Germans. They thought that if the bandits (meaning our movement) could lead the priest's son out of the church, which was under the guard of an entire outpost with police, how will a solitary individual be able to protect himself, who is not being guarded by anyone?

As became evident later, the priest's son was the chief informer. His comrades understood very well, that if we were able to eliminate their chief, it will certainly not be difficult for us to harmlessly do the same thing to his underlings. Apart from this, it was already the case, at this time, that the German hordes were taking one beating after another, and those that worked for Hitlerism were able to see that the game was practically lost, and their cooperation [sic: with the Germans] was for naught.

Despite the fact that our movement grew from day-to-day, no Jews joined it. Regrettably, this was because all of the Jews were first led off to the cities, where their fate was like that of my parents and with my friend Mekh'cheh. Later, all of them were taken to the gas chambers. Their tragic end is only too well known to us.

Had all the Jews imagined [correctly] that the Nazi murderers would act so heinously towards the Jewish people, a larger part of those who were subsequently killed would certainly have joined one of the various partisan groups, or on their own, would have established resistance movements and not allowed themselves to be led off to the gas chambers, like sheep to the slaughter. It could also be, that many Jewish boys and girls, and possibly older people, feared going off into the forests, and to the shame and obloquy of the Polish partisans, and even a part of the Soviet ones, no small number of Jews were killed, whom they, the partisans, encountered in the forests. They would murder these fighting Jews, who were smaller in number and less well armed.

It was first in the year 1943, that a number of Jews came to us, out of those who had been able to hide themselves by a variety of means from the Nazi Beasts. This was in that time when we had already come out into open battle with the Nazi Animal, according to directives from Moscow. Up to that point, we worked and fought on our own account, not having any authority over us.

It was in this manner that I came to work on two fronts, because in that same time, in which I was the leader of the Soviet group, with a small group of pro-Soviet sympathizing Ukrainians, I was compelled (not wanted) to be the leader of the Polish rebels, from the *'Chlopuv'* battalion.

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At the end of '43 we were already connected to one of the great heroes of the Soviet Union, indeed perhaps the greatest that the Soviets had, with General Kolpak[194], who organized the first Ukrainian partisan rebellion in Eastern Ukraine, in Bryansk.

General Kolpak was replaced by Pyotr Pyotrovich Vershigora (nicknamed 'Broda' Bord), because he wore an unusually long beard. He, himself, was from Kiev. Under his leadership, I fought until shortly before the end of the war. Vershigora, even though he was a Ukrainian, was a very decent sort of person. And the most important thing, to the extent that I could surmise, he was not an anti-Semite. He, after Stepan Sol and Genya (Marisa) Lenz, was the third one that knew I was Jewish. He personally advised me not to reveal this to anyone. This pained me no small amount.

When I asked him why I should keep this fact hidden, that I am a Jew? [He said]:

'Ï îê î ÷òî âîé í à' (for the time being there is a war going on),à òû ì í å í óæåí (and I need you).'

For the sake of truth, I did not understand what he meant by saying this. It was only first later, that I grasped what he said very well, and what his words meant, and what it was he was trying to convey to me, because as long as those good and dear world-liberators didn't know that I was Jewish, my situation as a military man was normal. They called me nothing else except *Comrade Kapito*, or í àø ãåðîé (our hero); but when the war came close to ending, and each name had to be exactly registered, the names of parents, birthplace, etc. – then my friends of yesterday, who previously had practically deified me, already called me none other than 'í å äîðå çàí è é' (the unslaughtered one).

I will let go of the issue of anti-Semitism, because today this is no longer news, that in the Soviet Garden of Eden, anti-Semitism is not any lessened, as in many other countries, and possibly even greater, with the difference that in the Soviet Union it is polished and covered up with the mantle of peace.

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We consisted of several hundred men, thrown together from a variety of places from whatever

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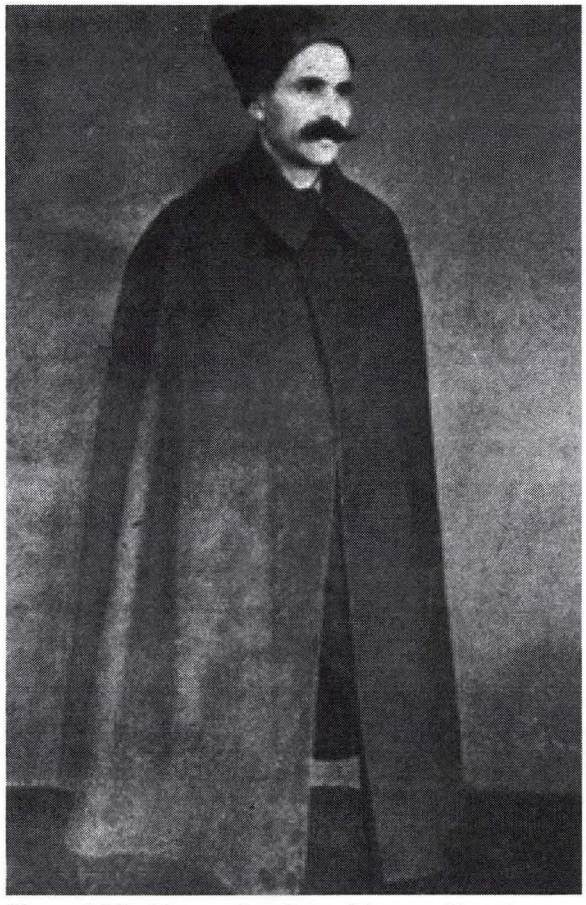
194 Sydir Artemovych Kovpak (June 7, 1887 – December 11, 1967) was a prominent Soviet partisan leader in Ukraine.

vicinity. We also had with us a variety of armament and ammunition. For the time being, we did not have a strong need for automatic weapons, because we were carrying out only diversionary actions, and also only at night. During the day, each occupied themselves with their ordinary day's work. We got the arms and ammunition from those that the Soviets had left behind after they retreated at the beginning of the war. The remainder, that was missing, we improvised on our own. How? It was really simple. We would disarm German and Ukrainian police, as well as their police posts. You can understand, that this did not come so easily, as it is to write about at this moment.



Page 308:Alexander Sztrokh as a Partisan

No matter what, the Soviets have nothing to complain about regarding me. If the Soviet authorities later awarded me the rank '*Gvardii Kapitan*' and also did not stint on medals – it was not for naught.

On one July day in 1943 we decided (because of strategic objectives) to wipe out a large German-Ukrainian Fore Post, which was found in the village of Basznia Górna, which lies between, Horyniec and Lubaczow. We had to wipe it out, in order to clean up the Lubaczow– Jaroslaw road, in accordance with the direction of the Kolpak Division, which was already now being led by Vershigora.

The Germans would not exact retribution for any sort of territorial work as much as for the wiping out of an armored facility, even if it was really small. But we, knowing how valuable the armored facilities were to the Nazis, and what they meant for the Nazi military, we would devote the majority of our efforts to destroying another armored facility every time, even if it was guarded by a whole division of soldiers. At every explosion, that could be heard for tens of kilometers, it seemed that just then, just then the war was ending, and this was not favorable for the Germans, because the more one heard shooting in the neighborhood, (the more) it meant that the Soviets were nearing arrival, and this caused the Germans to tremble mightily.

We began to make a variety of plans, how to take control of the arsenal of the O.P.A. movement. We decided to extract the ammunition from our opponents without firing a shot, we decided to take it without force, but quite simply by stealing it. Here, the question was raised: How does one do this?

For a couple of nights in a row, I could not close my eyes, and eating was out of the question. I wandered about like a living corpse. In my imagination, all I saw was my grandfather, my

grandmother, my father, mother, sisters, brothers, my *Heder* and my childhood years, my entire past, my father's Jewish, and perhaps fanatic upbringing. The main thing that I saw, were my beloved children!

And here, I saw them alive, how they played with their friends. Here, I saw them killed, murdered by the Nazi executioners. And here I saw them burning in the Belzec crematorium, and heard the way they screamed in pleading voices: Father, save us! The smoke is choking us! And I had other such visions. The shadow of my dear children gave me no surcease. They accompanied my every step. It seemed to me as if they were talking to me and saying: Father, do not forget who you are! Father, take vengeance on our enemies for our young lives, but never in any case, in accordance with how they would like it. Father, do not deny your origins! Etc.

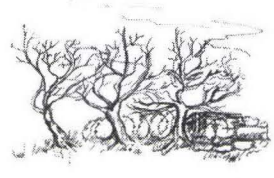
On that same day, we relayed a radio report to Vershigora, telling him the entire story, with all that happened, that we had linked up with such-and-such a group of the O. P. A. Movement, whose leader was such-and-such. They have a large arsenal with various kinds of ammunition. Since we, have no alternative, we made a sort of partnership-business arrangement with all of the details completed, except for one, that I must marry the sister of their leader.

24 hours later, we received a radio report, that we are to wait for a short period of time, and not do anything substantive. After getting this radio report, we began to get our people ready. We informed them that they should be prepared, because any day, 'they' might arrive.

The word 'they' was like an electric current or like a bar magnet for all people, who were connected with us. In the meantime, we wiped out the police post in Ruda-Ró¿aniecka, indeed with Daniel's help, which did not frustrate the O. P. A. Group any small amount. They complained that this region belonged to them, and no strange elements are permitted to mix in. To this, we had a good reply. 'What strangers?' – we said – 'Are we not already related to one another!'

In Ruda-Ró¿aniecka, as was the case in all other villages, night watchmen circulated, who guarded the village from thieves, and watching that no fire break out in the middle of the night, which was not uncommon in those times of mixed residences, where Ukrainians lived with Poles. And who talks yet about the time, shortly after the liquidation of the police post. And in this instance, the village of Ruda-Ró¿aniecka was left without official guardianship, and indeed, because of this, it was much easier for us to achieve our objective.

We left our group on both sides of the mill. We were afraid to go all together, in order not to make any loud noise. Our group was already prepared, that if the guards get nearer to the mill, before we carry out our mission, in order not to wake up the other peasants of the village with a special bell, that the guard had for this purpose.



Page 309: Untitled Graphic

At the time Stepan ran to the mill, I took up with Ivan. Under the threat of being shot, after absorbing a few good blows, I forced him to open the gate,

where the largest part of the ammunition was stored. In the meantime, other young men arrived, and with the greatest speed, took out all of the ammunition and immediately took up defensive positions.

At the end of 1943 I came together with the entire staff, with all the members of our underground movement, who were spread out over 20-30 square kilometers, apart from those, who for family reasons could not leave their homes. They had to feed their children, and many also – the parents. And also those, on whom no suspicion could fall, that they had cooperated with us as resistance people, those remained.

I also abandoned the Polish movement with the reply that I had been called out by higher authorities to fight on the other front. I left all of them under Janek's responsibility as the direct commander.

Before leaving the yard, we knocked down all of the buildings, that were part of the yard, along with all their facilities, the place where I had worked all this time.

After taking the best horses, cows, pigs, sheep and everything that we needed, the entire yard along with the armored facility, was completely wiped out, with the entire weapons cache, that we had, such as arms, ammunition, and other things, and we set out on our way, into the largest of the forests of Graf Zamoyski.

The forests were our greatest shield. We had an indication of this: Kolpak's division was surrounded by 4-5 divisions [sic: of the enemy] and yet Kolpak emerged practically unscathed. This was the same time that the enemy lost substantial thousands of its own soldiers.

Kolpak's replacement. Vershigora, also understood very well, that after abandoning Podemszczyzna the Germans will pursue us, seeing that we were too weak to be able to defend ourselves in open battle, therefore Vershigora commanded me to wait for my departure on his order. He also understood and knew, that the German military command strongly respected Kolpak's division as a force. Vershigora categorically ordered me to delay my departure from Podemszczyzna. He feared that the enemy would completely wipe us out.

After arriving in the Zamoyski forests, we temporarily organized provisions for ourselves. We set out patrols to be on guard against a possible enemy assault, and waited with the greatest impatience for the division with Vershigora at its head, my direct commander.

In the meantime, we sent out scouts in all directions, in order to become aware of what was going on where we were hidden. The scouts confirmed that the Germans already know, that we had left Podemszczyzna. They also know where we are to be found, and are making ready to surround us, in order to liquidate us once and for all.

But the enemy did not accomplish this, because one could begin to feel the action of Kolpak's Division, which emerged from encircled Carpathian-Russia. Instead of the German military, that was quartered in our vicinity, taking on the task of liquidating our small group, it now was compelled to

take on Kolpak's Division, which by that time had acquired a reputation in the entire area. This was already the time, when the German military was suffering one defeat after another. And so, as they thanked God that they were not being touched by any assault on their key positions, with each passing day, that the enemy grew weaker, we, the resistance, became increasingly stronger.

Our scouts, began to bring news practically every hour about the Kolpak Division. [Information about] the strength of the Division, against which the enemy retained a position that was even stronger.

When it started to dawn, the entire staff of the Division arrived, with General Pyotr Pyotorovich Vershigora at its head. I gathered my entire host together. We even forgot about the cold, as also not having to station watchmen against unanticipated assaults by the enemy. This was done by the leadership of the Division, in accordance with standard procedure.

When all of our comrades had come together, I led them to the place where General Vershigora was to be found. Our soldiers fell out in rows of two, in the formation of a moon, and presented themselves to General Vershigora in the military manner.

After the military ceremony, I showed him a document with an accounting of how much ammunition we had brought along, and also a delineation of the missions we had carried out up till then, a few that we had carried out on our own initiative, and others in accordance with his orders. He was very pleased by this. An hour later, when we were finished with the report, we both again, turned back to my group.

I spoke to them, and thanked them for their loyalty, and for carrying out my orders up to this day, which for me was a point of pride and an honor. I said that from now on and further, we are all enlisted in the first Ukrainian Partisan Division under the leadership of our beloved and dear comrade, General Pyotr Pyotorovich Vershigora.

After my speech, which was embellished and daubed with political color, I saluted, and officially gave over my leadership into the hands of General Vershigora. Vershigora, when he had already officially taken over my group, greeted everyone, and thanked them for their loyalty, for the various missions that they had carried out to date under my command, and as a recognition he immediately awarded me the title of *Gvardii Kapitan*. He filed a report to Moscow, that they should endorse his nomination, and in addition that two distinguished medals be awarded to me: 'Êðàñíàÿ Ñâåçäà' and 'Çà Àòàíî' (the Red Star for bravery). He also took up the names of the people in my group and sent them off to Moscow with a proposal that all of them are to be awarded medals of distinction, in accordance with their worth and what they earned. From that moment on, we were all integrated into Kolpak's Division.

Emerging from the Zamoyski forests in the direction of Byelorussian territory, as I had always done with a small group of soldiers, in order to reconnoiter the surrounding areas, on one day, I encountered a small group of people in a smaller forest. When they took note of us, they became terribly frightened. They began to flee. My comrades even wanted to shoot at them, but at the outset, and to this day, I do not know why I did not permit them to do this, despite the fact that

this group was so heavily suspect, that it would have been possible for us to assume and then take them for the enemy. An unnatural force told me, that I should not give the order to shoot at them. Were I religious, I would have said that it was an angel from heaven that said this to me, that I should not permit shooting, because it is possible they were Jews. And what if so? Who is it that can understand the fog-enshrouded world and its nature?

True, not all my comrades were certain that I was a Jew, apart from Major Jurkin and Misha Koval. I was still going under two names – Sztrokh-Mayewski – so they took me for a half-Jew and half-Pole. But when Jurkin was wounded, and I had to take over the command, I declared before everyone that I am entirely a Jew, and not the way they thought of me today. Why did I do this? Knowing that a rather virulent anti-Semitism reigned among us, I was plainly and simply afraid to hide my Jewishness in the moment, when such a great responsibility had fallen upon, and was placed on me, to lead my entire group. Woe was unto him, that chose to hide himself behind a non-Jewish name, and he was very badly cut off when they later became aware of the fact that he was a Jew. I mean this only in the sense of morale, because formally, and by law, so to say, it was permissible for everyone at that time to conceal their nationality. You can understand that this was true except for the command. They, the commanding officers, needed to, and had to know, who and what every soldier or officer was. Formally, each soldier, or officer, was permitted to, and could be a leader, if he only possessed the skill and qualifications to do so.

The dissatisfaction of my subordinate comrades would quite often be expressed for the following reasons: as a commander, I no longer could, and also was not permitted to participate in the various missions, but only to send others. Not once did they say: See how our 'Õîçÿé' (Boss) watches for his own safety! He, himself, does not go, but rather sends us on the military operations.

A while later we received a radio message from Moscow, that at a specified hour, we should expect the arrival of an airplane. Exactly, at the specified time, we heard the thrum of engines from an air vehicle. We immediately lit a fire, in accordance with the prearranged signal and a few minutes later, the airplane landed, on board there being a number of high Soviet officials. Among them Stalin's right-hand man, the Political Commissar at the time, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. They also brought along a doctor and medical supplies, which we needed desperately at that time.

With this same airplane, we sent back our wounded, as well as the wounded from other partisan groups. There was not room for everyone. Since the airplane stood closer to our group, I sent our wounded first. When the 'Head' Nikita Sergeyevich entered the airplane, looking through the document of the sick, he saw [the name] Misha Koval, and he became wild like an animal. I thought that the 'Head' had gone crazy, thinking that he was a Jew.

After sending the wounded to Moscow, our activity almost came to an end, because the Byelorussian territories had practically been cleansed of the enemy. In those places where they still remained, other partisan groups engaged with them.

We remained for several weeks in the forest, not far from the Byelorussian *shtetl* of Hantsavichy, but now without any fear of the enemy. The enemy by now was completely demoralized. The city of Baranovich had been liberated. A large part of the German military had voluntarily surrendered to the Russian Army.

but now without any fear of the enemy. The enemy by now was completely demoralized. The city of Baranovich had been liberated. A large part of the German military had voluntarily surrendered to the Russian Army.

After the liberation, I made an effort to return to my old home and arrived in Lemberg.

For a couple of hours, I went about the Lemberg streets bewildered, broken like a smashed potsherd.[195] Once again, I came to the corner of Kaszimiersz and Legionów *Gasse*[196], exactly diagonally opposite the former large Polish theater, where I encountered an open restaurant (that was the place of the well-known 'Dorfman' restaurant). Automatically, I went in there, and ordered that I be given a half-liter of whiskey (as was the Russian custom). Seeing that during the war years I had not even seen the outline of a coin, I did not know the price of a bottle of whiskey. I recalled that, before the war, a half-liter bottle of whiskey cost a few small amount of rubles, and accordingly did not ask the price. At a nearby table, I noticed how an individual paid 150 rubles for such a portion, and I did not have more than 200 ruble with me. To be able to get something to have a bite after drinking, was now out of the question. I drank up the whiskey, grabbed a little something to eat, and went out into the street half drunk.

In this condition, I permitted myself to go through the ¯o³kiew *Gasse*, talking to myself. Out of sorrow, sadness and great bitterness, I wept silently. What could I do? Not one passerby stopped, certainly not to mourn with me, and perhaps to mock me, who knows? Passing through the ¯o³kiew *Gasse*, the road led to Rawa Ruska, through which a variety of military transports drove, by way of ¯o³kiew. It was in this way that on the same day I arrived at my home city of Rawa-Ruska.

I will never be able to convey what I felt upon arriving in Rawa-Ruska. This exceeds my powers. Despite the fact that the war hardened me considerably, but yet... when I rode through the street of

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195 The writer makes use of the metaphor from the High Holy Day *Mahzor,* describing the evanescence of the human life.

196 Svobody Boulevard (prospekt Svobody) is the main street of Lviv. From the mid-nineteenth century it consisted of two streets, known as Untere/Obere Karl Ludwig Straße or, in Polish, Karola Ludwika wy¿sza/ni¿sza ("Lower/Upper Karl Ludwig Street"). In 1871 the Obere Karl Ludwig Straße was renamed Hetmañska, in honor of the Great Crown Hetman Stanis³aw Jab³onowski, whose monument had been erected there in 1859. Obere Karl Ludwig Straße became simply Karl Ludwig Straße/Karola Ludwika, until 1919, when it was renamed Legionów ("Legions"). The bed of the river Poltava was driven underground in 1887, under supervision of engineer Wac³aw Ibañski. In 1940 Hetmañska and Legionów Streets became part of the single Pershoho Travnia ("First of May") Street. In 1941 the street was first divided into Opernstrasse and Museumstrasse, and later joined under the name of Adolf Hitler Platz/Ring. In 1944 the street's name went back to Pershoho Travnia. Later it was renamed Lenina Boulevard. In 1991 it was renamed Svobody Boulevard.

http://www.lvivcenter.org/en/lia/objects/svobody/

the train station, where it seemed to me that it was just yesterday that I went for a stroll in the company of my wife and children, with other members of my family and friends – I felt the tears pouring out of my eyes and running down my cheeks. The chauffeur, beside whom I was sitting, did not take an eye off me, and kept on asking: ×òî âàì òîâàðè÷ Êàïèòàí ? (What is the matter Comrade Captain?). What could I answer him? Could I tell him why and what for? And were I, indeed, to tell him after all, would he be able to understand me.

After debarking from the freight truck, and after bidding the chauffeur farewell, I remained standing, taking in the entire surrounding. I saw myself in my total gruesome bareness. All alone – without a father, without a mother, without my wife, without my two dear children, without sisters, without brothers, without comrades, without a friend, I remained like a tree, from which all the branches had been hacked off.

An Excerpt from My Diary

By Wolf Sambal



Page 311: A Yizkor *Gathering of* Landsleit *in the Holocaust Cellar on Mount Zion*

I am going to make the effort, with short strokes, to convey how the extermination initiative against the Jews of Rawa-Ruska appeared. I already know that, despite all of my striving, I will not have the power to describe exactly how this appeared. For this, one requires a person of extraordinary talents, with a supernatural skill, to convey an image to a reader, that would precisely portray all of the details.

It began with the concentration of the entire Jewish populace of the city into two small side streets. In addition to this, the Jews from the surrounding Rawa vicinity were also incorporated, and in such an inhuman fashion, such that from 20-30 people were packed into one room. And this is how the 'ghetto' began.

Because of this, a disease spread: in order to isolate us, the *Gestapo* surrounded the ghetto on all

sides with gendarmerie, militia and security police. The Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*[197] must, under terror, cooperate with the Germans. News is conveyed from mouth-to-mouth. One is not permitted to traverse from one street to the next. Here and there, there are people who attempt to run off over in the direction of their prior domicile. But instances start to occur, that people are shot along the way. Oh, God! – It has started. Men from the *Ordnung* are going from house-to-house recording who is ill. All the sick must be taken over to the synagogue. People nailed shut doors and windows, and hid themselves in previously prepared '*schróny*' (hiding places, shelters). A deathly silence reigns outside. People lie in cellars, in attics, and one hears the sound of shots in the street. In many houses, people had no place where to hide. Accordingly, they sat in the house and waited, not knowing for what. A knocking began on doors and windows. Shots were fired inside. Whoever was struck by such a bullet remained lying there. The remainder were taken off to a gathering point, from which 5-6 thousand people were loaded onto freight trucks, and taken off to Belzec. What Belzec means – is for the time being, not known. This is a secret. But one knows already to say that the place is a *Gehenna*. A place where 10-15 thousand, and even 20 thousand, people are killed in the course of a single day.

The gathering-point, a large expanse, where for the last time you were able to see people of your acquaintance, who no longer had a human appearance. There you found yourself on the edge of the precipice. There, you consciously look death in the eyes, and feel it pierce your delicate feelings with its talons; where it claws at your forehead, behind which there arise images of how your death will seem, in a half hour from now. Here you hear the outcries of young people, who are parting from their nearest loved ones forever. In the pandemonium, you encounter people who no longer have any tears left to cry. Their wish is – to keep one's self together for the half hour – and get through with it. Among them, people wander about laughing and singing, it is even possible to envy them. They have lost their minds, and no longer know what is happening. They tear off their clothes and stand entirely naked. At every moment, the murderers fall upon, and beat the hapless mob. But one no longer flees the blows. They are beating dead people.

In a corner, you see a Jewish man sitting with a white beard and sidelocks, R' Hircshel'eh Mund ז"ל. He is a scholarly Jew, a treasure, one of the pearls of the city. He is sitting (for the first time in his life) bare-headed. He has one shoe on his left foot, and white socks, he sits and does not shed a tear. He is asked something – to which he simply answers: 'This is the will of the *Master of the Universe*; we have certainly sinned.'

And now an image of the synagogue location: the bestial murderers are running around like crazy people, and from the cellars and various hiding places, they are dragging out – the victims of their bloodthirsty lust. Many of the people are fortunate, because they have been waiting for death already a long time. Immediately, on the threshold of their house, they get the bullet. Now they no longer know anything. As far as the eye can see, along the entire street, you see splayed about – the killed. Each lies in a pool of blood.

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197 An alternative, and perhaps more formally generic designation of the *Judenrat*.

How can you forget such a picture, when a mother recognized her son lying in the street, with a bloodied forehead?! She falls on him with a wail, and immediately you hear a shot, which cut the mother's cry short. She also got a bullet in the head, and lies dead – together with her son.

You see a man lying off to the side with folded hands, that person having no head. The head lies a distance away. Near him is a child with an open mouth, as if it wanted to say something.

On that place, between the synagogue and the Belz *Kloyz*, the chief of the gendarmerie guard stands in the company of his troops. He gives an order to have a group of people brought to him. He tarries a while – until the victims are brought. He runs about the place, and is impatient. 'This is taking too long' – he shouts. To the side, one sees a group of 20 people being led off.

– 'It is too few,' he shouts.

They run off to bring more. The group is enlarged, numbering 40 people already. The chief takes out a case containing a bottle of whiskey, knocks on the bottle, and the cork pops out. With a feral head, and murderously bulging eyes, he drinks ceaselessly from the bottle; afterwards, he approaches his victims, and in the voice of an incited beast, says the following words, 'You are not Jews any longer, you are the selected ones, and I am your Moses, who will lead you across the Red Sea.'

And with his machine gun, he began to shoot into that assembled group. Up until the last one – of them fell dead.

And the blood ran. As if from a spring.

And suddenly – from the mountain of the dead – a little girl raises herself, about 7-8 years old. Drenched in blood, looking around at everything about her, she runs away.

The child had been covered by the dead, and was not hit by a bullet, and remained alive.

A little later, she fell, at the hand of other murderers.

Yom Kippur in My Shtetl Rawa

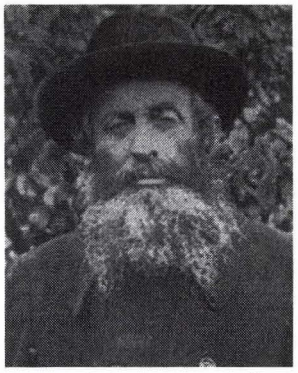
A. Shmuel Sztorkh

Yom Kippur Eve among enemies full of hate,
The one remaining Jew stands, embittered and wet...
With an old *Mahzor* that is half-burnt,
He mourns the yesterday, his hands tremble.
He looks at the '*Zamd-Klyzl*' with its fallen walls
Recalling the yesterday, which causes his heart to seize up.
It is Yom Kippur Eve; it is already late into the night,
Jewish houses and streets are under the enemy's watch.
He stands for a moment in a sorrowed posture,
Chokes back the tears, it is so painful and wounding.
He reminds himself of that one-time Yom Kippur melody,
But today – he only hears the reverberations of pain.
An 'echo' from the distance: the bruit of echelons,
Packed full of Jews, off to Belzec in train cars.
On the Eve of one-time Yom-Kippur days, here, not so long ago,
There was a tumult in Jewish Rawa, an impetus.
The entire host extended itself to go to *Kol Nidre* together,
One following the other – extending their hand for compassion.
All places in the houses of worship were occupied,
But today? They stand empty, evacuated by enemies.
A fire, a burning brand has come to my *shtetl*,
It remains without Jews, such a farce, such an obloquy.
Once there was a city, containing Jews without number,
Today – he, the solitary Jew, is like a memory of what once was.
He stands orphaned, already old and sick,
With the half-burnt *Mahzor* from the burned bookcase.
Suddenly a sorrowful melody comes to him;
But it is only a dream, a contemplation of the soul.
A thought that ceaselessly natters at his mind,
As he begins to murmur that Yom Kippur phrase from yore:

As clay we are, in the hands of The Artisan,
Turn to Thy Covenant, and not to Thy Impulse.

What My Daughter and I Lived Through

By Ben Zion Friedman



Page 315: My Father הי"ד

At 1.9.39 on a Friday, at four o'clock in the morning, the German assault on Poland began. The German bombardiers thundered from the heavens, and shot with fire.

Approximately at six o'clock before dawn, three bombs fell in Rawa, and one of them turned the house of Aharon Fleischer into ashes and dust, but by good fortune, there were no human casualties at the time. A great panic ensued in the city, and people began to flee into the surrounding forests, and those that did not flee, and remained in the city, had their hands full, with the work of putting out fires. By contrast the Jews of Rawa, who found themselves far from the city – because of business, or because of visits to relatives – they began to return to the city, in order to be with all of their family during a time of trouble.

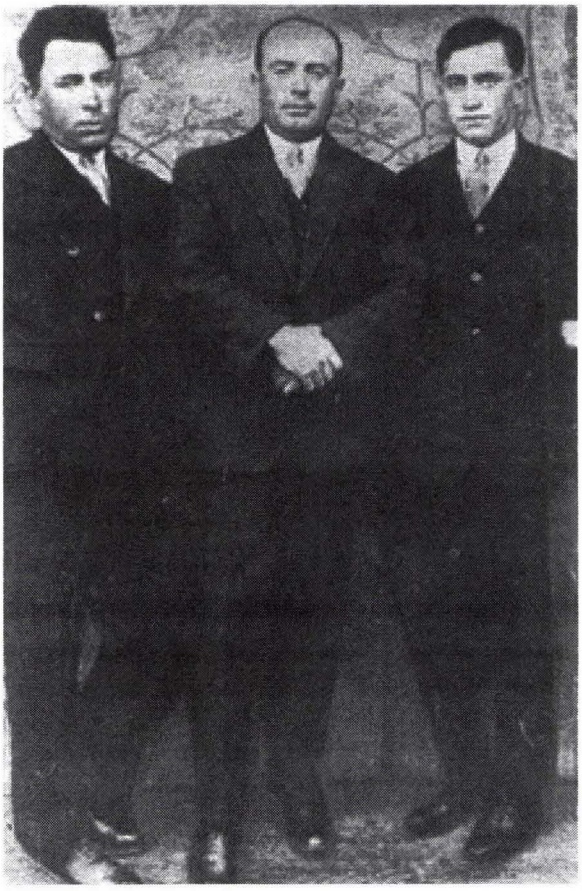
All brought gruesome tales from the surrounding cities and environs, which stood in flames.

The Poles in the city accosted the Jews, and forced them to dig deep trenches around the city, but their hegemony did not last very long, and by Sunday we began to see the great retreat of the Polish military, and with them – the Poles – those who controlled opinion in the city. A large part of the employees remained in place, and awaited the entrance of Hitler, in order to be able to seize a part of the Jewish assets, which they had begun to lustfully covet, with their murderous eyes, for a long time already.

In this respect they did not have to wait very long, and in a week's time, Friday, the Eve of *Rosh Hashana* at about four o'clock in the morning, a mechanized army, without a single shot – occupied Rawa. The Thursday watch night was a quiet one, but on the Friday early in the morning, after the appearance of German troops, a great fear fell upon all the Jews of the city.

Immediately on the Sabbath, the First Day of *Rosh Hashana*, the Germans gathered many Jews together in order to create work groups to clean out the city, and to refill all the trenches that the Poles had ordered us to dig.

Sunday morning, the Second Day of *Rosh Hashana*, placards were posted throughout the city, with the order – that all doors and windows of places of business were to be repaired and again re-opened. The Germans immediately began to rob, and empty out the businesses, and take out the Jewish assets; I personally saw how they emptied out Chaim-David Daks's business, and all of the dry goods carted off. The immediately began to abuse and murder, because already at the conclusion of *Rosh Hashana*, they had already shot several women and men, among them Feiga'leh Rekhes and the son-in-law of Yankl Fink.



Page 316: My Brothers הי"ד

However, already by Wednesday-Thursday, we were able to hear from the peasants, that the Germans were pulling back, and the Russians were coming to Rawa-Ruska; in those last days, the German murderers conducted themselves less violently, and released the Jews from labor. One did not see a Jew outside, everyone hid themselves as if they were in a museum.

On *Shabbat-Shuva*[198] it began to become apparent that the Germans were pulling back. On *Yom Kippur* Eve, the Soviets were already in ¯o³kiew, and by the conclusion of *Yom Kippur*, the Hitler troops left Rawa Ruska.

This was the first visit of the Nazis by us – from the Eve of *Rosh Hashana* until the conclusion of *Yom Kippur*. We had the truly genuine *Days of Awe*, and *Ten Days of Repentance*.

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At the end of the day of *Yom Kippur*, the Germans left Rawa-Ruska, and the Russians occupied the city the next morning. They immediately implemented their obligatory program: read their written propaganda; listen to their party speeches and appear promptly at gatherings, applauding 'bravo' and calling out 'Õàé Æéâå!' (Long may he live!).

They permitted businesses to remain open, commerce [to proceed]; sequestered merchandise immediately became visible; commerce was carried out in Rubles and also for zlotys; prices rose without control. I also received permission to open up trade in tobacco and newspapers, but regrettably only up to January 1940.

In the meantime, it was heard that many families were being awakened in the middle of the night, taken into custody, seized and sent off deep into Russia. At the time, it was considered to be the worst misfortune – imagine, such an exile! But in the fulness of time, it was recognized to have been the greatest good luck, because a large part of all these [exiles] were saved from the Hitler-slaughter and with the Polish repatriation, all returned to Poland, and from there, emigrated into the larger world, and many made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel.

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198 The Sabbath between *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.



Page 317: (L to R) *My Son, Yaakov, My Wife Reitza Graff Respectively a Grandson and Daughter of Yankl Graff, Rawa-Ruska* ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

Feeling the earth burning under my feet, I gathered my family up, and packed myself up and off to my old childhood home, '£opatno.' My parents, sisters and brothers lived there, my entire family, who received me with great joy, as if I had come to participate in a family celebration, not knowing, and having no idea, that here we will see each other for the last time, and from here, the entire family would be cut down in the gruesome extermination. This was the last stage of their existence.

While in Rawa-Ruska, I was a man of means, a capitalist, but in £opatno, I fared less well, because here I was a refugee along with all other refugees.

My brothers helped me to get set up in the spirit distillation business of the region, which was located in £opatno: I registered my Yent'chi ז"ל in the gymnasium in Radekhiv, and my daughter Reizl'eh remained at home, because she did not succeed in her studies.

My divine-spirited wife, Reitza started up a good business in the home, and twice a week we traveled together to visit our divinely-spirited son Yent'chi, who was a very handsome and smart young fellow, as well as an outstanding student. We carried on a good life there, and many times, we helped out our relatives in Rawa with sustenance, until...

The outbreak of the German-Russian War in June 1941. Close to the outbreak [of the war], in the quiet time, my wife Reitza traveled to Rawa-Ruska to her family for a visit. She culminated her visit by her mother, Rokh'chi ז"ל, and on her ride back to £opatno, stopped off at my cousin Wolf Friedman in Lemberg. It was here that she was engulfed by the outbreak of the war, and she was no longer able to travel home. During a lull in the fighting, she and my cousin, with six neighbors went to procure water at a water-pump, which was to be found not far from the house. An artillery shell suddenly landed, and killed my cousin along with five neighbors on the spot, and my wife Reitza, ז"ל, was severely wounded. This took place on 3 Tammuz [1]941.

My cousin's wife was immediately able to notify me. A local friendly gentile disguised my wife, saying that she was his sister, and with his wagon and horse he brought her home to £opatno, in a very bad condition.

There was no doctor, no medicine, no first aid: and we also were compelled to hide her, because the Germans shot sick people on the spot. She suffered greatly physically, was very nervous and had sustained shock.

Sunday in the morning, 23 Av, she gave up the ghost. It was in this way that the Hitler-murderers extinguished the light of my wife Reitza ז"ל, of the Graff family; [she was] the mother of Yent'chi ז"ל, also a Hitler-victim in the prime of his life at the age of 19; the mother of her daughter Reizl'eh – she should have long years, be healthy, and have good fortune!

After my wife's death, the real troubles, and the ultimate extermination of the Jews, began. After a number of *aktionen* in the *shtetl* of £opatno, where we had hidden ourselves, it became *Judenrein*. We had a bunker-hideout in the distillery, where we hid ourselves, my brother Chaim, my two children and myself – until the militia became aware of our presence there. Once, towards evening, a day before *Hoshanah Rabba*, we suddenly heard voices and espied how the militia with the gentiles were letting themselves into the distillery, in order to catch us. As you can understand, they came to know this only through having been told by an informer; however, we also got prior notice to be careful, because the gentiles were preparing to assault the distillery.

For this reason, we always stood guard with open eyes, and were attentive with cocked ears. When they instituted the *aktion* to seize us, we, upon seeing them arrive, we sprang out through a window, and fled to a pasture field, to conceal ourselves among the small trees. As it became dimmer and darker, we set out on the road, to the nearest *shtetl* 'Stanislawczyk.'

It is self-evident that in such a terrifying time, one cannot allow one's self the luxury of using the regularly traveled roadways, where there is even a greater danger of being caught. We needed to reach the Styr River and get over to the other side, where the small *shtetl* of Stanislawczyk lay. It was with this in mind that we crossed fields and meadows, over pits, deep and full of water, where we were threatened with the risk of drowning. The ground was very soft, with deep holes, after the digging out of the peat located there, creating deep and sticky swamps, such that it was very difficult to put down one's foot, and then pull it out again.

My children, the 14-year-old daughter Reizl'eh and, to long life, the divine-spirited Yent'chi – carried themselves heroically. They internalized the saddest tragedy within themselves, and did not show any fear or fright to their father.

After a full night of wandering, even before the dawn, we arrived in Stanislavchik, where we immediately encountered a Jewish man, who was returning from the Kloyz, from having spent the entire night reciting the '*Tikkun Leyl Hoshanah-Rabba*.' He immediately brought us to the head of the community, who received us in a very fine and helpful manner, and saw to us receiving food and shelter.

Regrettably, our surcease did not last long, because immediately after the *aktion* in £opatno, and in the entire vicinity, we were informed that the same was soon to take place in Stanislawczyk. The only alternative was to flee into the nearby forests, which were to be found on the other side of the Styr River. So we returned again, and repeated the same journey, until we crossed the river, and hid ourselves in the forests of the Pankowa region. There, the peasants were truly among the Righteous Among the Peoples of the World, and brought bread, milk, cheese and cooked potatoes, to us out in the forest, for as long as we were there, until after the carrying out of the *aktion* in the *shtetl*, we were able to return there, and once again attempted to settle ourselves together with those Jews that remained there.

Here it became apparent that my entire family: parents, sisters, brothers and their children, had been swept up and transported to Belzec. Also, for those of us remaining, an order came, to concentrate ourselves in the Brody ghetto, and if a local Jew was found in the area – he would immediately be shot.

We attempted to understand that concentrating the Jews in larger collection points enabled the Germans to carry out their extermination plan more easily, and thereby for us, it created the greatest danger. Many of the Jews from our group fled to the larger forests, and joined themselves to the general partisan groups, but very few of them remained alive. A larger part of them were murdered by the gentile partisan groups: a second part died of their own accord, because they could not withstand the gruesome conditions in which they found themselves; another part – were captured by the militia and shot on the spot.

Hearing that a ghetto was being created for us in Brody, I set off for that place, in the hope that I would be able to encounter people from home, to look the place over, and ferret out and find a good place for myself and my children. After finding a place to live with my relatives, I returned, back to Stanislawczyk.

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It was Thursday, 21.12.42, when I set out to return to my children, to advise them of the good place that I had found with my relatives in Brody. Right away, S.S. troops and Ukrainian militia appeared and it was impossible for me to flee. Now, I saw my end.

They drove the Jews together from all sides, old and young, men and women with children among them. They brought us into the forest, handed us shovels, and ordered us to dig pits. After that, they told us to strip naked, and lay our clothing, tied together, at one location. I was already certain of my death, and saw the father of my children as lost. Nevertheless, I maintained my composure, and remained clear of mind. I did everything as if I was an automaton, as if they did not mean me, but having no choice, not being the only one, we were 80-90 people: the screaming voices, and the crying – must have reached to the heart of the heavens, but there was no one who answered!

Immediately, the sound of shooting was heard, and I leaped into the pit along with the first victims, I fell and lost consciousness.

This was Friday, the 22nd of December 1942. Later in the night, perhaps after midnight, when I regained consciousness, when I was again able to take stock of what had happened to me, I began to understand that I was alive. I could not, however, crawl out from under the dead bodies that lay on top of me.

It was fortunate that the pits had not yet been covered. For a long time, I held up an arm, and it was here that naked people helped me to crawl out of the pit.

After regaining my composure, I found my clothing, and threw them on. Dawn immediately began to break, and in the distance we saw a small house, lit by a light, and we, a couple of people who saved themselves, took to running in the direction of that house. There we found a good peasant woman, who gave us bread and milk, that kept us alive. She implored us to leave her house immediately , because she was very much afraid that she not be killed for doing this. The others went off to Brody, and the peasant woman showed me the way to Stanislavchik.

I personally, literally came back from the Other World, but in the meantime, I did not want to tell the children anything, because I did not want to instill a fear or panic in them. How I lived through all of this, and withstood it – is not possible to convey on paper. I saw that, sooner or later, our end will come, so what was the point in trying hard, and why exhaust ourselves ?!

My paternal feelings, just the fact that I was a father to my children, only this single thing sustained me, and gave me the strength to endure further, and give me the energy to go on existing.

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The last phase of entering the ghetto was 31.12.1942; and indeed, on the Sabbath of Hanukkah, on 30.12.1942, my relatives entered Brody, and began their life in the ghetto, along with all of its troubles, all of which are well-known to everyone.

I will not here write any details of what we went through in the ghetto; because, after finding ourselves in the ghetto, and after hiding ourselves there in a variety of constructed bunkers – until Brody was made '*Judenrein*,' we had the opportunity to flee the place on 24.3.[1]943, once again, going into the 'Pankowa' forests, where we hid ourselves in the newly constructed bunkers in the forest – until the liberation on 2.4.[1]944.

That is where we hid ourselves: a single remnant of my entire family, a couple of other relatives, and an additional couple of people we knew: with great pain and suffering, for me and my daughter Reizl'eh, we found ourselves there, because my son, Yent'chi ז"ל was no longer with us.

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The misfortune with my son, Yent'chi, started while back in the Brody ghetto. The Germans set up a work camp there. Surrounded by electrified barbed wire, with watch posts at every corner: inside, they concentrated the healthy men, with skills for all sorts of work, who every day, under strict control and watch, were led out, in order to carry out the orders received . In the meantime, they were

given enough to eat, and a few people, who had lost their families, and were chronically hungry – presented themselves voluntarily to be in the camp.

This is the way it happened, that on Thursday 28.3.[1]943 the militia seized my Yent'chi and took him into the [work] camp.

From that unfortunate day forward, I never saw my son again. I had messages from him a couple of times, and I know that he was to be found there up until the liquidation of the Brody ghetto on 23.5.[1]943; after this, the entire [work] camp, and also my son Yent'chi were transported to Belzec.

As I became aware, after the liberation, from our rescued townsman R' Moshe Klager – when the train transport arrived at Dobrosyn, near Rawa Ruska, my Yent'chi leapt from the train, and a local Jewish man gave him suitable clothing into which he could change.

He immediately set out for his birthplace, Rawa-Ruska, in the great hope of finding someone from his family, who will be able to help him, and be able to hide him and possibly save himself and remain alive.

Moshe Scheiner ז"ל, who sewed for the Germans, and could move around freely (he had indeed told all of this to Moshe Klager) helped my son with what he could.

Regrettably, the *Gestapo* captured my Yent'chi ז"ל, and murdered him.

May God Avenge His Blood!

These few pages, written with blood shall stand as a memorial stone for my not-to-be-forgotten and eternally remembered sanctified and revered martyrs.

From the Book, 'Kiddush HaShem'

By Rabbi Shimon Huberband

To the ache in our hearts, this is not an empty dream
And not a dreamy imagination
Not the tale of prevaricators
But rather the barefaced truth, and a bitter reality

With the outbreak of the war on the 1st of September 1939, I was to be found in the training *kibbutz* that was in Kaszeszwica, 30 km from Kharkov. On the second day of the war, hordes of people streamed through Kaszeszwica who had fled from various places. A panic seized us, and the pandemonium was great. We decided to leave our location and head for Kharkov, to our *Kibbutz*. However, the members of that Kibbutz decided, even before we had arrived, to flee Kharkov. We rested a bit, and decided to flee from Kharkov.

It became known to us that at the train station, there was a train readying for departure, but we did not know in which direction [it was headed]. Nevertheless, we decided to board the train, and travel in whatever direction it went, if only to flee Kharkov, which we saw as a city of the greatest danger.

After eight days of travel, we reached the outskirts of Jaroslaw. We saw the thousands of people who were fleeing from the city, in great panic. They testified to the danger that awaited us while sitting in the train, which was very likely to be bombed by air attacks. We left the train and together with the thousands of other fleeing people, ran to the San [River], with the intention – to reach Rawa-Ruska.[199]

Minutes after we left the train – it was bombed, and all the people who remained on it met their death. The way along which we were compelled to flee, brought us among many deep holes [in the ground]. It was hot, and we were very tired . Our way was lighted up by the fires burning in Jaroslaw. The entire city was engulfed in flames. We began to run until we reached the town of Lubaczow. In this town, we saw the Polish soldiers, who had become aware that the Germans were arriving, and they were plundering the homes and businesses of the Jews.

From Lubaczow, we continued to flee in order to get to Rawa-Ruska. The road was full of people, and everyone ran in a state of panic to wherever their eyes fell. For the entire way, the German airplanes dropped bombs on us, and we were shot at with mortars.

Tired to the point of death, we reached the *shtetl* of Potelycz, 5 km before Rawa-Ruska. For lack of any remaining strength, when we could not take even one more single step, a Jewish man took us to his house, gave us food and drink, and afterwards, we washed up well. After such an extent of time, the bathing gave us a great deal of pleasure. The Jewish man provided us with good lodging, and we fell asleep in the blink of an eye.

In the night, intensive gunfire awakened us. When we awoke, we saw troops of Germans streaming towards Rawa-Ruska. The Jewish man was afraid to keep such a large number of young Jewish men in his house. For this reason, he asked us to leave his domicile. Having no choice, we were compelled to continue to walk.

On the first day of *Rosh Hashana* 5700 [1939] we reached Rawa-Ruska. We found elderly Jews there, deep into old age, sweeping the street of the city. A certain Jew took us in. We ate, and lodged at his house. It became known to us, that as soon as the Germans arrived, they began to seize Jews for labor. During their work, they cut off their beards, beat and tortured them. They desecrated the synagogue, and tore up the Torah scrolls. On *Rosh Hashana* itself, no worship services were conducted in any synagogue, *Bet HaMedrash*, or *Hasidic shtibl*; only sporadic neighbors put together a minyan for themselves, and prayed silently and secretly. The city was flooded with refugees and all the local Jews took some refugees into their homes. We remained there, until after the holiday.

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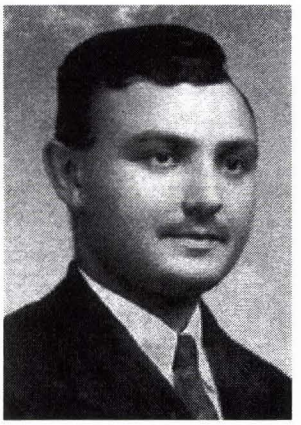
199 Inspection of the map indicates that this train went substantially to the *West*, into Poland, bringing its passengers into the jaws of the Nazi war machine. The intention to reach Rawa-Ruska ('crossing the San') is a reversal of direction, taking them to the *East*, and presumably further form the dangers of the war.

The House of Bogen

By Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer



Page 319: Menachem Mendl Bogen הי"ד

The Bogen house stood on the train street, a street that was a sort of a 'Luz' of our city. Anyone who didn't live on that street – had relatives there, or friends, and would visit there on a frequent basis. The train street was like a bridge that tied our city together with the cities and other towns in the vicinity. Whoever came to visit the city did not want to leave it – there was a long way to go along this street. For a part of the residents of the city the street was –the way that brought one to a wide world, that was free. As a result, for the residents of the city, this street was –the final road to the abyss of death...

The train street stretched for the length of ponds, green fields containing gardens, and one or two storey houses. One of these houses was the house of the Bogen family. It belonged to the grandfather of the family, the venerable R' Shmuel Hoch. The house had two storeys, high windows, and wide stone stairs. The principal entrance was used only on occasions to receive guests. It had wide stairs, its railings were made of wood, and it brought you to a yard, that served as a playground for the local children.

For us, the children, the most interesting places in this house were the roof and the cellars. Only little boys and girls can understand the mysteries that these places held for us; we engaged in a search for hidden treasures there, over the course of many hours. By-and-large, they emerged when the trousers of the boys were torn, and the dresses of the girls had become soiled with spider cobwebs, but nevertheless, in their hands they had financial notes in millions, and old accounting ledgers. The children could not understand that this treasure of the millions, had no value at all, and was merely evidence of the decline and loss of a fortune that once was...

The Bogen-Hoch family consisted of many members: sons, daughters, sons-in-law, brides, grandsons and granddaughters.

Mendl Bogen, despite being young, stood out and earned respect and affection from his family and neighbors. His seriousness, loyalty and attention to his studies, being focused and inner-directed, hunched over his books constantly, even when they were not comprehensible to we, the children – all of this earned him the awe of respect and admiration from us.

During the first days of the war, and also during the first days of the entry of the Russians into the city, the cellars served as a refuge to the residents of the house and the neighbors. During bombings, the old, the young and the children, sat pressed up against one another, not daring to utter so much as a syllable. And the sitting in the cellar was not something unique: it occurred several times, during the day and also at night, and people practically did not leave the cellar: they sat in their circle, in

silence, casting up their glances to the ceiling, and listening to the noise of the explosions on the outside, that shook the entire building.

Only Mendl did not sit this way: he stood in the corner praying. His body swaying hither and thither, his lips rapidly articulating, in order that he could make real all of the thousands of words and supplications, bursting out of his seething heart.

Outside are explosions. Mendl's mother faints. An effort is made to revive her, and bring her back to consciousness, using water and lemon. Mendl opens his eyes, and peers at her, and it looks like he has returned from another world. He intensified his prayer, with greater fervor, spreads his palms to the heavens, and begs for mercy on behalf of all those sitting in the cellar: and when the explosions do not stop – it appears that he transitions into a state of resignation.

The children, nevertheless are frightened: however, they sit in silence, do not cry, and do not ask for anything; all they do is stare at Mendl's form, who continues his spare whispering.

Suddenly – everything grew calm: the siren let out an extended signal of respite. Everyone breathed more easily, and Mendl's face was shining: he had been found worthy, and his prayers were received. He looked like a leader after a difficult struggle with powerful forces. Women, children, and even the grown ups all look at him with admiration, as if it was he, and not the siren, that had sounded the shofar of redemption, to leave us among the living.

Because of this, in these dark days, Mendl was a source of strength for us to lean on, in breathing hope and faith into our hearts.

And in the long nights, when we were ordered to sit in our houses from 6 o'clock in the evening onwards, we always went in with the Bogen family. We spoke about the events of the day, as if we were outlining a plan for the future, dreaming of a life without wars and death. And Mendl would walk among us, being silent, sometimes nodding his head, sometimes focusing on some distant point on the ceiling, making movements with his hands as if he were conversing with someone invisible, and this without opening his mouth, as if he was living a different life, in a different world.

The residents of the train street knew of the fate of our brethren who were being brought to their death. In one of the last meetings that took place in the Bogen house, we spoke of (possible) means of being rescued from this certain death, that lay in ambush for us. Each of the young people put forth a different plan. There would be one idea, or another approach. Only Mendl remained silent. His brother Yekhezkiel shouted, with his lightning-like black eyes flashing, because to attain rescue by having an 'Aryan' pass, there is an act of religious conversion, and because of this eventuality, we are commanded 'be killed, but do not pass over,' and therefore death in *Sanctification of the Name* is preferable.

When Mendl heard the words *'Kiddush HaShem*,' coming from the mouth of his brother – he stared at length into his black eyes, as did his son, slowly he raised his eyes heavenward, and exited in silence...

The Eye-Witness Account of a Non-Jew Concerning the Extermination of the Jewish Community in Rawa-Ruska

By Franciszek Woloch

[Contents] My identity; Rawa-Ruska under Soviet Rule; The Assault of the Germans; The relationships between the native born Ukrainian population to the Poles; The relationship of the Ukrainians to the Jews, and their cooperation with the German occupant in the uprooting and extermination of the Jewish populace in the city; The founding of the first ghetto; The tragedy of the Jewish ghetto, seen through the eyes of a non-Jew; Stages of the annihilation of the ghetto. The Jews were the builders of Belzec; Transports to Belzec, their number, their fore-plan, the maneuvering with the trains, the service; Their appearance; Transports from outside the country and their special appearance; Transports of non-Jews; The acquaintance with the Belzec death camp; A Jewish partisan woman in the shrunken small Rawa ghetto; Heroic resistance and the ultimate liquidation; A partisan woman from the Polish resistance movement; The rescue of two Jewish girls from the cemetery.

I was born in the year 1920 in ¯o³kiew to my parents Jan and Magdalena of the Kernicki family. I was the oldest brother with two other brothers and 2 sisters, who live together with our parents in Poland, and want very much to come to Israel and settle there. I attended the *Volksschule* in Rawa, where my father was the Pastor of the small Baptist community. Also, I started the gymnasium there, but I finished in Lemberg, at the Lyceum named for Mickiewicz.

The outbreak of the war in the year 1939 took me aback in Lemberg. I did not remain there for long, and traveled back to Rawa, which only a few days later went over into the hands of the Russians. I have no memory remaining of that time of the [initial] German occupation. The Russians remained in Rawa until the German invasion of June 1941. The relationship of the Ukrainian populace to the Jews became frightfully bad, and immediately after the Germans marched in, the murdering commenced. With my own eyes, I saw in the first hours, how Ukrainians murderously beat and tortured Jews to death. Immediately, in the first day, it became forbidden for Jews to walk on the sidewalks. In the autumn of that same year, the ghetto was erected, surrounded by a high wall, and heavy barbed wire. All the Jews of Rawa, and from many surrounding small towns such as , Magierow, Lubicz and others, were driven into that location. Later, transports with Jews were also brought from Lubaczow, Jaroslaw and Przemyol.

The commandant of the ghetto was Hans, or as he also called himself, Heinrich Grzimek, a Sudeten-German holding the rank of an S.S. *Hauptman*.[200] His wife was a Volga-German woman, of the same

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[200] Josef Grzimek (b. 10 November 1905 , d. 18 February 1950) - criminal Nazi, SS-Hauptscharführer , commander of the few Nazi labor camps in the territory of occupied Poland.

Born in Glogówek (Ger. Oberglogau). He took part in Operation Tannenberg . From March to December 1942 was the commander of the labor camp for Jews (Judenlager) in Jaktorowie . Then the same function held in camps in Rawa Ruska (from December 1942 to mid-March 1943), Lviv (from March to July 1943), Zloczow (July 1943) and Bolechowo (August 1943). From 1 December 1943 to August 1944 Grzimek was the commander of the Ukrainian company, a guard at the camp in Szebnie . He took part in an mass executions in the forest of Dobrucowa where around 1,600 people were killed by a firing squad . Grzimek also directed the action-smoking bodies of victims on special grids made of railroad



Page 324: ***A Reception for Friends as Guests: Hammerschmidt and Trieber in the Home of Ida & Yitzhak Lev***

Sitting from the Right: Bluma Rubin; Yaakov Trieber, Boruch Hammerschmidt, Chaya Kremerman

Standing: Zygmunt Zimmerman; Israel Trieber; Eva Steinfeld; Eliezer & Tova Rekhes; Dvora and David Greenstein; Mate'leh Schechter-Zimmerman; Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld; Zvi Kremerman.

rank. The two of them were demons, thirsty for money and blood. Four times they levied a requirement for 'contributions' on the Jewish populace. The first time, it was at the level of 25,000 dollars and later, something of a lesser amount. And if you take into account that, at the time, the Jewish populace was comprised of about 7,000 souls, it was practically impossible to put this together. Moreover, on top of this, the ghetto for the entire time was an unceasing object of plunder for the German and Ukrainian bands. The representative of the *Judenrat* was the owner of the pharmacy, Wattenberg, the father of a personal friend of mine, and it was through him that I knew almost about everything that was going on in the ghetto. Hunger and inhuman need reigned there, typhus and other epidemics.

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tracks.

After the end of the war he was tried for his crimes by a Polish court in Warsaw and 29 January 1949 sentenced to the death penalty . He was executed by hanging 18 February 1950.

https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=pl&u=https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Grzimek&prev=search

In the spring of 1942, when the Jewish populace was no longer in a position to pay the last contribution, Grzimek shot those who owed money with his own hand. This was the onset of the death rattle of the Rawa ghetto. A specific number of the young, healthy Jewish men still worked at chopping wood, in the '*Öst-bahn*' labor camp, and later in the construction of the death camp at Belzec. Young Jewish women and girls were pressed into forced labor in Grzimek's villa, as well as in the military building force. But at that time, many of those whom I knew were no longer alive, among them the dentist Lippel, the Binder family, and many, many others.

The liquidation of the ghetto played itself out in three stages. The first stage was carried out exclusively and personally by the Germans, during the time of Passover 1942. The first victims that fell were the elderly, half-sick, helpless and children, in the amount of between one thousand and fifteen hundred people. Part were shot in the ghetto, and part were loaded into large trucks and taken off to the nearby village of Hrebenne, 5 km. to the north of Rawa, and there killed out and murdered, and buried in three large pits that young Jewish men from Rawa, a couple of days earlier, were forced to dig out.

In the second stage, about 3 months later, the *aktion* was carried out in partnership, by Germans and Ukrainians. Jews were shot in the houses and in the streets, children were thrown alive through windows of upper stories. About two thousand five hundred people were gathered up by uniformed Germans and Ukrainians, by the gates to the ghetto and then led off to the train station, where they were loaded onto freight wagons at the level of ninety to one hundred people in a wagon, and taken off to Belzec.

By that time, I was already connected to the Polish resistance movement, and together with another comrade in the movement, we were able to extract and save a Jewish woman from that transport, the wife of a doctor from Jaroslaw, who also survived the rest of the war. Apart from this, two people rescued themselves from that transport, for a lot of money, and three others by having the daring to flee and leap from the train.

After the second liquidation, only workers remained in the ghetto, who possessed working papers. In addition to this the ghetto was sub-divided. A small part of the former ghetto, consisting only of three of the larger buildings (the former gymnasium, the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash*, and one other house) were allocated for the use of the remaining living young and healthy Jewish workers and the police. These houses were ringed, in part, by a high wall, and partly by high barbed wire. The rest of the now emptied ghetto went over into Polish hands.

Until the Fall of 1942, the residents of this shrunken ghetto, numbering one thousand five hundred young people, worded at forced labor in a variety of German undertakings. Every day, they were taken in groups to work, guarded by Germans and Ukrainians. Those who worked at the train did the hardest work.

In that period, trains went through Rawa systematically, filled with Jews, being taken to Belzec for extermination. Everyone of those trains – and since the Fall of 1943, 2-3 trains a day passed through

– needed to stop in Rawa for a half hour, until a telephone call came from Belzec, that the train may be allowed to continue; this telephone call was taken by a special commandant, a German, who was appointed for this purpose, and stood in direct contact with the commander of the camp in Belzec. Every transport, at the beginning consisted of 60 cars, and each car held about 100 souls. Almost all of the transports transited through Rawa-Ruska; there were, however, exceptions – and these trains were shunted over to Lublin, and Rejowiec, Krasnytsaw and Suszyc.

All the transports from out of the country passed through Rawa, and for the most part from Western Poland and Galicia. If there were transports from Poland, such as Lemberg or Krakow, there were three a day. If from out of the country – only two; one came at 10 o'clock in the morning, and the second between two and three in the afternoon.

Beginning in the Summer of 1942 until the Fall of that year, the transports were carried out with freight cars, closed but not barred windows. The German guards were to be found in the last car of the train, armed with automatic weaponry; there were no guards between the cars. The people were still being well-treated and possessed valuables, which they could use to buy something to eat from the train staff, but principally water to drink. It was still possible to talk to them.

The Jews, who worked at the train station, warned them, that a death camp waited for them at a distance of eighteen kilometers away. The people on the train did not want to believe this and even laughed at it, being convinced that the Germans were taking them to work.

I remember precisely, as if it were today, a transport of Jews from Greece. The cars were entirely open. Men and women were dressed in elegant clothing, with a Star of David inserted in their buttonholes, as if it were a piece of costume jewelry, and danced in the salon car, accompanied by the sounds of an orchestra. A renowned doctor, who was with them, had all of his instruments with him in a special car, and he stepped out of the car in Rawa, and approached the S. S. troops, who guarded the train, with the request that he be allowed to further attend to the sick on the train. The German train guard detail was helpful to the people, and the S. S. troops even danced with the Jewish women, and here, suddenly, a young Jewish fellow grabbed himself by the head, and began to shout at the Jews on the train, that they are being taken to their death, and an S.S. trooper shot him, and declared that this Jew was insane.

However, in the later months, the trains arrived every time in worse and worse condition. The windows were already barred, and there was a guard at every train car. Trains full of lime began to pass through. Since the winter, the people were already naked, and looked like skeletons. In empty cars that passed through Rawa, holes were found, that the Jews had cut out, using their nails and teeth, in order to be able to throw out children, so that they themselves could leap out while the train was moving.

On the train tracks, dead bodies of individuals were found on a daily basis, or groups of ten of such that had jumped from the trains. The fields all around and along the tracks were sown with money and valuables, that people had thrown from the cars, in order that it not fall into the hands of the

murderers. In many instances, when it was fortuitous to have remained alive after leaping from the train, a day or two later, the victim expired from hunger and even more usually from the cold. The people were partly, and also entirely naked. I am unaware, of even a single instance, where either the Polish or Ukrainian populace saved the life of a Jew, or even helped out with a bite of bread.

The Germans issued an order, to inform them about every naked person, and the gentile population carried this out almost 100 percent. This lasted until the summer of 1943. Then, I was transferred to other work, and here I had the opportunity, as the fireman on a locomotive, to penetrate deeply, almost to the actual death camp at Belzec.

The entrance procedure to Belzec took place using all precautionary measures, such that the Polish service people of the train not obtain any indication of what takes place in that location. From Rawa to Belzec, the line was clear only for the death transports, and trains would move at a high [nearly reckless] speed. At the Belzec train station, at a side-branch, which led to the death camp, the train was detached, up to the last car, where the guard was located. S. S. guards with the insignia *'Toten-Kopf'* remained on the steps of all the cars. Then the locomotive was also detached, and the last thing, was with one push, the train was pushed inside the gates of the death chambers of the camp. The locomotive was then quickly attached to an empty train, which was waiting to be taken back to Rawa, in order to, yet again, come back with a fresh load of victims. From a distance, all that I was able to see, was how in the camp, people went about with large fierce dogs.

Through Rawa-Ruska, as is known to me from my own experience, transports would come to Belzec from Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Greece, Yugoslavia and the other Balkan countries.

Together with the Jews, all Italian officers were murdered in Belzec, in the beginning of 1944, who, together with their three divisions of soldiers, in the winter of 1943-44, were disarmed and interned in train cars on a side platform of the Rawa train station.

This was during the time when the German-Italian Axis began to buckle, and when it really fell apart in the following few months, the Germans gassed these officers together with the Jews in Belzec. These soldiers, taken in a few transports, had been conveyed to the fronts in the south, and knowing the cruelty of the Germans, it is more than certain that they were murdered there to the last person.

During the time of their forced stop at the train station in Rawa, the Italians manifested much humanity to the hapless Jews. Not only once, did it come to bloody fisticuffs between the Italians and the Germans. Also, the Italians had some opportunity to conceal weaponry and, to the extent that it is known to me, a part of this went over into Jewish hands, where a resistance movement was in existence already for a long time. It is also known to me, that a larger number of Yugoslavian prisoners of war were exterminated in Belzec, under the allegation that they were partisans. With my own eyes, I saw them riding by in military uniforms, through the train station in Rawa, and they declared that they were Yugoslavians, who fought against the Germans. This was in the year 1943. Apart from this, it is also known to me, that the entire leadership of the death camp in Belzec consisted of German S. S. troops. This is in contrast to the lower duties and guard duties, which were

carried out by Germans from the Volga, who spoke Russian among themselves. This group, by itself, was liquidated by a special detachment of the German S. S. during the liquidation of the camp, in order to wipe out all traces behind them.



Page 325: A Memorial Tablet to the Community of Rawa Ruska

Under such conditions, it is self-evident that the remnants of the Rawa ghetto were sentenced to be exterminated. Jewish youth, those able to work, who were the only ones left alive in the ghetto after the second *aktion*, began to set out a clear reckoning of their situation, and decided that they would sell their lives only for a very dear price.

In the Fall of 1943, the Germans sorted out from among the last residents of the ghetto, a group of 400-500 persons to work at the train. On the location of the train station, huge barracks were built, and that group was quartered there on a stable basis. There, they found themselves under the command of commandant Freund, the director of an enormous lumber undertaking. About two weeks later, the Germans set off to liquidate the last remaining traces of the ghetto. The residents of the ghetto barricaded themselves in cellars. At the order of the Germans, for these people to come out, in order to go over to other places to do labor, they did not respond. And as the Germans began to shoot up the houses and cellars, the Jews responded with gunfire and hand grenades. A regular fire-battle developed, and the beast, in female form, Frau Grzimek, took command of the German side; she was not satisfied with how her husband was conducting the engagement. Frau Grzimek permitted flamethrowers into the *aktion,* that ignited all the houses. She shot the Jews, trying to save themselves from the burning flames, with her own hand, using a machine gun. The frustrated battle lasted for an entire 24-hour cycle, exactly up to the last Jew in the ghetto.

After this *aktion*, the single group remained that worked at the train. But also this group was liquidated by the Germans, a few months later, in two or three stages, depending on the work that they did, in the Wolkowica, hill 2-3 km. outside of Rawa.

As is known to me, the largest part of these Jews worked at burying Russian prisoners of war. Their camp could be found near Rawa. Fifteen thousand Russian prisoners of war were killed there, dying from hunger and cold, in the course of three months.

Now, at the end, a few words about myself:

As mentioned above, in that time, I joined a resistance group and along with them, I had the

opportunity to visit Narol, while in service. On the cemetery there, I found a Jewish girl, Miriam Korman, from Warsaw, where, after the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, saved herself from there, but afterwards, was captured and sent off to Belzec. She was able to leap from the train, in the last moment before the train was pushed into the death camp, and after great inhuman suffering, was able to reach the cemetery in Narol, about 12-13 km from Belzec. She had been hiding herself for 3 months now, in a grave in the cemetery, together with one other Jewish girl. I retrieved her from there, and brought her to my resistance group, and afterwards, when she was able to get back a bit on her own feet, she became one of the most dedicated people in our group. Today she is my wife, we married in the year 1944, and in that same year, our first daughter, Ruth, was born. After the collapse of Germany we first lived in Narol, and later in a *shtetl* near £odz. But as a Baptist believer, not only once, I had to withstand unpleasant moments in the new Poland, we decided to make *aliyah* to Israel in the year 1957, and a year afterwards, my wife gave birth to my son, Thomas.

Our life in Israel is not easy, despite my positive attitude towards the country. We had already experienced sufficient hardships behind us, and there are certainly not a few that await us, but we are fortunate to be alive in the Holy Land, with the profound recognition that we, as well as our children, find ourselves in the right place.

The Eternal Poem

By Wolf Sambal

Page 325: The Memorial Plaque to the Rawa Ruska Jewish Community

Hitler wove a net,
Implemented a huge slaughter once:
He slaughtered young and old,
Not giving them a Jewish burial.

You must forever weep, you may not rest You shall not forget, that you are a Jew:

Melodies of mourning shall stretch on! Father's blood, it boils and seethes!

No *Kaddish* and no *Yahrzeit*,
It cuts the heart even more and more: Accord the young and old people alike – More weeping, and one more bitter tear.



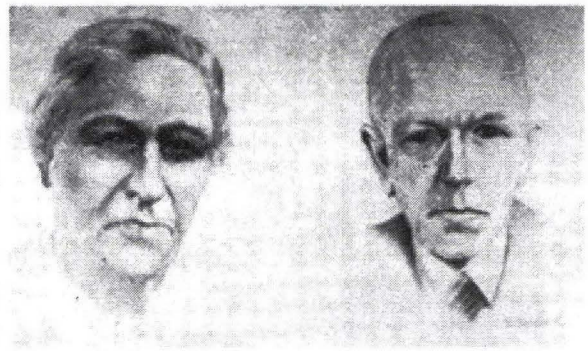
Page 326: Myself, in the Habit of a Priest

I Was Rescued from a Grave Pit

By Moni Grauer

My first memory is lodged in August of the year 1939: the shrieks of an old woman at the entrance to our house, on *Ulica* Sobieski 7, in Rawa-Ruska. My father ז"ל opens the door, and sees a German

soldier beating Mrs. Knobloch. My father asks him why he is doing this, and his answer is that she is Jewish. To the question from my father, who asked him who taught him to behave this way, the soldier replied: 'Our *Führer*.' My father's reaction: 'Well then, your *Führer* is a lovely person.'



Page 327: My Parents: Ozer & Golda Grauer הי"ד

My father, Ozer Grauer, was, as he was in the habit of telling us with great pride, one of the first Zionists in our city of Rawa Ruska. One time, on a Saturday night, my father, along with a number of his friends, organized a clandestine Zionist meeting. As a surprise, a number of *Haredi* Jews came and threw a pail full of excrement inside, and by chance, they hit my father. My father cleaned off his trousers, and kept them as a memento to his last day.

When they began to exile the Jews to Siberia, my mother would go to the train station early in the morning, and bring them something to eat and a warm drink. This I heard from the mouths of people who today are found in Israel.

In the final days of 1942, during the *aktion*, my sister Regina was detained, and she was taken to Belzec. In the morning, at 5 o'clock, the emissary stood ready to go take her on her way. At 3 o'clock before dawn, my mother ז"ל went with all of her jewelry to the train station, and my sister was the only one who succeeded in escaping the clutches of the emissary. How my mother did this – is a secret that is not known to me, to this day.

After this, we decided that my sister had to leave this place as speedily as possible. I got the papers ready for her in the name of Katarzina Czuch, and with much luck, she succeeded in getting through the transit camp in Krakow and reached Vienna. There, she worked as a servant for a senior S. S. officer. I would receive letters from her under the name of my Christian friend, Zbyszek[201] Koropiowski. After we had succeeded in this task, I once again knew no peace, and I decided to convince my neighbor friends, the children of the Korman family, that they should rescue their only daughter, Tauba, this way and I gave her all the papers in the name of Anna Stempen, and I arranged with my Christian friend to hide us in the Potelycz woods. We reached the woods, and Tauba continued on her way until reaching Germany. There, she began to work, and remained alive.

I remained in Rawa-Ruska. I hid in the monastery with the consent of the priest Podczerzynski, who was a friend of our family. Unexpectedly, on one day, the 'loyalist' of the monastery came to me, and asked me to come with him to the hiding place of our neighbor, Rabbi Twersky. When I arrived, he pleaded before me, with tears streaming from his eyes, that I look after his young son, Mottl'eh and that I should take him to wherever I would go, because he knew that it was in my mind to flee to Germany. However, even with all my goodwill, I was unable to fulfil his request. I was compelled

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201 Diminutive of Zbigniew

to leave immediately, because every second was precious, and it is not always possible to behave in a manner that we desire. I went to take leave of my parents, who were hidden with the neighboring Katz family. An hour before this, my father was detained, when he came out of hiding to procure food. The last words of my mother, before we parted were: 'I felt just now that you and Regina will be saved. Be together, and from my innards, I wish for you to succeed in your way.'

Along my way, I was detained, and together with others, I was forced to clean off the dead bodies of Jews from the street, to load them onto wagons, and to convey them to the cemetery. There, I encountered Yeshaya Grauer, Haskell Haftler, Alter, and others. Unexpectedly, I recognized the bodies of Izh'yu Turberg, Al'usz Kuner – both children of my uncles: Joseph and Benjamin Reiter: in this manner I also saw the body of the head of the Jewish police, Altshuler. I searched his effects, and I found Aryan papers and a pistol. I took them, and hid them on my person.

When we finished with the burying, we were ordered to get down into the pit, and for each person to bury his friend while he was still alive. Then Yeshaya Grauer came over to me and told me that Zbigniew Koropiowski was looking for me. Without thinking much, I put on a short black jacket, and went to the gate of the cemetery. There, a Ukrainian militiaman stood, armed with a rifle. He pointed it at me and asked me where I was going, and quietly, I replied to him, that I have a letter and an order from the officer of the secret police to bring him eggs. I went on my way, taking off the police insignia from my sleeve, and continued on the way to the train station. There, the father of my Christian friend, Mr. Jozef Szlak, worked as a ticket seller. I succeeded in reaching his house, and there I found out when the train would be leaving for Krakow, and I was told to hide myself at a distance of 100 meters from the station, and when it comes – to leap into it in order make the trip.

Close to the station there were wide rusted pipes. I got into one of them, and hid myself there for a few hours awaiting the arrival of the train. Exactly in accordance with the schedule, I leapt onto the train, in order to make the trip, and I sat myself in one of the seats. During the inspection of the tickets, the conductor, Fula, immediately recognized me as a Jew, and he called me to the ticket station, and ordered me to take off my trousers. I did not tarry a great deal, and asked how much I have to pay (as a bribe). I paid, and continued my travel to Krakow.

When I reached Krakow, I went to *Ulica* Wolnica, where the office of the labor [ministry] was, and the transit camp, and I presented myself as a Pole volunteering for work in Germany. There were many Poles and Ukrainians there, who were looking to travel to work in Germany, and like all of them, I had to get undressed for a medical examination. I placed myself in front of the S. S. doctor, who looked at me and saw that I was filthy and my hair overgrown. He did not want to touch me for fear of lice. Beside him was a Christian Polish barber, and the doctor told him to shave me from head to toe before returning me to him. During the work, the barber asked me if I was Jewish. In Polish, I quietly replied that this was the case. He asked me where I was headed, and I said to him that it is my desire to reach Germany, in order to save my life. Quietly, he wished me luck. I did not go back to the S. S. doctor. I went over to a different official, and from him I received all my papers for travel.

On December 21, 1942, according to the writing on my work card, I reached Germany, to the Ruhr-Westphalia Region. Immediately, the symbol 'P' was pasted on me, signifying Polish. I began to work in construction.

On every Sunday, at 10 o'clock in the morning, we were obliged to go to church for prayer. They did not permit the Poles and the Russians to go together with other strangers, such as French, Belgians and Dutch. During prayer services in the Catholic church, a great silence reigned, so great that you could hear a pin drop. All those with me prayed in the Polish language, except me – in Latin, which I had learned in the gymnasium. The priest heard that there was someone praying in Latin, and he walked in the direction of that worshiper. When he stood beside me, I made no sign of any sort, and continued my praying covering all of its aspects.

At the end of prayer, the priest invited me to his office, and received me graciously. In response to his questions, I told him that my name was Zbyszek Koropiowski, that I was born in Lemberg, and that I had studied German and Latin at the humanistic gymnasium. In this way, I was able to 'kill two birds with one stone.' The priest explained to me, that he knew the Poles to be very religious, but it was difficult to speak to them; because of this, he asked if I was prepared to help him. As you can understand, I agreed to this, and quite willingly, and the priest liberated me from my construction work, and I remained in the church.

I did very well in my new position. Within two weeks, I learned everything under the direction of the priest. I received sacramental clothing, and also a crucifix, and I took to everything with great seriousness. I succeeded to the point that the Poles in my company nicknamed me 'Our Father.' In the street, the children of the Poles kissed the hem of my clothing, and people extended the holy blessing to me of: 'May Jesus Christ be blessed.' Girls and youths came to me for confession, and it is self-understood that I bestowed upon them the forgiveness of the Lord. I buried the dead, and married the living.

I continued to work in this way until August 1945, when the English arrived. Then, I was sent to Poland to assist the Polish associates. In Krakow, I encountered my only, and beloved, sister Regina, who was to be found with the Klager family. My sister Regina immediately made all of the arrangements, paid off everything (seeing as I did not have a cent), and using the facilities of the Red Cross, we traveled to Munich. My sister Regina immediately began to work, in the ORT trade school; in this manner she resumed the work she had done before the war, when she served as a crafts teacher, for Dr. Klaptan. Because of her knowledge of the crafts, she progressed, and rose to Director of the ORT trade schools in Germany. We saved money from her salary, and in Munich, I completed studies at the school for printing.

Through joint effort, we brought a new photo-offset printing machine to Israel, and both of us worked together under the joint name of 'Regina & Moni Grauer – Offset Printing House & Books.' I live in Tel-Aviv, am married and the father of three children. The children graduated from the 'Zeitlin' High School. My oldest son already is fulfilling his national obligation and serves in the TzAH"L [sic: Today's IDF].

In Holland on the Eve of the Extermination

By Itch'i Just

The tranquil, solid life in Holland, also had its psychological effect on the greater part of the Jewish population there.

Holland Jewry, on the eve of the Second World War, numbered 120 thousand souls, comprised of those who were deeply-rooted residents for many generations, and newly-arrived who came after the First World War, and up to the last times. Jewry there, had a large and very rich past. It had also produced many great personalities in all walks of life.

The large majority of the Dutch population was, and continues to be far from enmity towards Jews, and related to them in a loyal manner. Naturally, there were anti-Semites, as there were those who collaborated with the Nazis. However, in general, the nation, the leaders of the political parties, the royal court, and the ministers, had an amicable orientation to Jewry and towards their Jewish citizens.

When the Nazis occupied Holland, and began to set up anti-Jewish demands, the Dutch citizens attempted to resist the orders and expressed their solidarity by donning the yellow badge on their sleeve. Also, many times they strongly protested against anti-Jewish laws. The port workers in Amsterdam organized a large strike and for this, they paid in blood and sacrifices. A witness to this is in the well-known memorial, which the Dutch nation erected in honor of the port workers (who protested), to the shame of the murderers and to the honor of the people who put their lives on the line because of their solidarity with Jews[202].

An order came out that all Jews had to register themselves, in order to be sent to work in Poland. The Dutch Jews, who were raised for generations to obey orders issued by the government, regrettably also believed the Nazi murderers, who had planned out and calculated everything, how to first deceive the Jews, and then exterminate them. It is for this reason that the Jews of Holland paid the price of such a high percentage of victims, because, in total, after the Holocaust, barely twenty thousand Jews remained [alive] in Holland.

My wife, Chaya and I had a different assessment and we decided to try a different way, in order to

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202 The February Strike, also known as the Strike of February 1941, was a general strike in the Netherlands during World War II, organized by the then-outlawed Communist Party of the Netherlands in defense of persecuted Dutch Jews and against the anti-Jewish measures and activities of the Nazis in general. Its direct causes were a series of arrests and pogroms held by the Germans in the Jewish neighborhood of Amsterdam. The strike started on 25 February and was largely struck down the next day.

The 1941 February Strike was the first and only direct action undertaken against the anti-Jewish measures of the Nazis in occupied Europe, and it was carried out and supported overwhelmingly by non-Jews.

save ourselves. We began lodging with neighbors, hiding ourselves in a variety of places, and in the end, planned on how we could get out of Holland. The members of the *Gestapo*, at all times, according to what the neighbors told us, came with lists, and asked questions about us. But we did not want to put them at risk, and began our wandering towards Belgium, to France, to the Vichy part of France.



Page 329: The Émigrés of Rawa-Ruska, in a Wood Named for the City Martyrs, in the Forest of Martyrs

These were difficult and bitter days, and we went through long and worry-filled nights. More than once our lives hung by a thread. We dragged ourselves along with our two tiny daughters, Tzila and Dina, exhausting ourselves, and suffering. One had to feel an extraordinary pity for these two little doves. Not only once, with high fever, and other pains, did we search for a place where we could lay down our heads, restore ourselves somewhat, and search further for a way out.

In the end, we decided on a risky plan, requiring much energy, but that emanated some rays of hope that we might possibly save ourselves. We rented a large freight truck used for furniture, and made a small wall inside of it. We all went inside behind this small wall, and on the other side of the wall, filled the space with various pieces of furniture, and in this manner set out for the Swiss border. It was not only once that our hearts pounded, or that a fright descended on us, covered in much sweat, and trembling. In the end, we crossed the border, and rode more deeply into Switzerland, such that, in accordance with the law, it would not be easy to send us back. The mother and children were put aside separately, and they were sent away to a camp for refugees. I was sent to a refugee camp for men.

Naturally, our life in the camp was neither simple nor easy. But we won the hope that the liberation day would come, that families would once again be united, and that we will live to see the downfall, of these great murderers, with our own eyes.

Naturally, our thoughts were occupied with the welfare of our families in Poland, in that great *Gehenna,* and we wanted to hope... but to our regret...

A ray of hope was my contact, through the Red Cross, with my brother in the Land of Israel. After the downfall of the Nazi régime, we came back to Holland, beginning to again restore the order in our lives. Our family got larger with the birth of our daughter Sonia. It took us a long time to begin to breathe easily again. In the city of The Hague, where we had lived all our years, we were able to observe the extent of destruction quite well. Many from our circle, friends and comrades were no longer there. The ranks became thin, and the pain was great.

The 'Anne Frank House' in Amsterdam, in which this shameful bloody, period of time is memorialized, is widely known. Pilgrims, by the tens of thousands go to visit there, in order to commemorate our Extermination – the Great Misfortune that befell us, the Jews.

My Sister Tells:

In the year 1949, exactly one year after the establishment of the Jewish State, I traveled there to see that great miracle, and naturally, to meet with my brother Gimpel and his family, and with my dear survivor sister, Yenta.

On a certain night, the three of us were sitting and listened to the terrifying, bloody experiences of our sister, as well as details about our unforgettable family and their brutal extermination.

My sister lived in Jaworow with her husband and their little daughter; our family was in Rawa. We heard with profound disturbance, about the sending away of our unforgettable dedicated and genteel mother, Sar'ki to be gassed in Belzec: about the brutal murder of our younger brother, that very decent Moshe-Leib'leh and his wife, and about our youngest, blossoming sister, Sima'leh who yet had come to Jaworow, where she was provided with Aryan papers that were paid for, but unfortunately did not have the energy to make good use of them, and went back to Rawa, trying to hide herself there. When the Typhus epidemic was raging, being extremely thirsty one night, she went out to the [water] pump, in order to quench her thirst, and was shot on that spot.

We recalled her dear, bright visage, full of the marks of grace and an enchanting smile, and her life that ended so tragically. Even more profoundly, we were shaken up by the terrifying and bloody experiences that our sister Yenta lived through. And may this remain as a *Mark of Cain* and a burning stain of obloquy for the Nazi criminals.

The tears run without stopping from our eyes, and deep gasps are torn from our hearts. Our sister puts forth her bloody tale: 'We were hidden along with several families in a bunker in Jaworow, when the *Gestapo* staff were on the rampage, and looking for Jews. They drew nearer to our bunker. I held a child in my arms. Suddenly, the child burst out crying. In order not to reveal where we were, we attempted to use a variety of methods to calm the child down, and get it quiet. And when this did not help, the father of the child, my husband, put his hand over the mouth of the child, in order that its cry not be heard, and suffocated it in my arms. That we did not lose our minds from the pain, I do not understand until this day. It is clear that the bunker was uncovered. They took everyone to be exterminated, and only I alone was able to wriggle out and went off to a Christian woman. Naturally, I paid for this, and was in her cellar for 17 months.'

'It is not possible to write about, and words fail me to describe the months of my life in the cellar. During that time, I did not see any rays of the sun, no daylight. Only at night did I emerge for a few minutes, in order to get a breath of fresh air. Every day, the peasant woman opened the door to the cellar, and put a bit of food on the step. In this way, life came to a halt for me, for a long time. Every day, I attempted to talk to myself, in order to feel that I had not lost my power of speech, and that my self-awareness was still functioning.'

'In the end, the day of liberation came. I came out, and immediately ran to the *shtetl* of Jaworow, to find any sign of a grave for my husband and child, After that, I ran to Rawa-Ruska, to Belzec, looking for traces of my dear mother, my brother and sister, of my large family, friends and acquaintances. I came to the realization that I had lost them all. And inside, I ran on further like a poisoned mouse, almost never stopping, in order to get closer to the Land of Israel, to live long enough to get to see my brother and his family, as well as to see my brother and family from Holland.'

'After much wandering, we arrived in Italy in the year 1946, where along with my husband, Shmuel Bachman, I boarded the ship '*Dov Hoz*' and came to the shores of *The Land*. I lived to be able to sit with my two brothers, and to see their families. I lived to see the establishment of the Jewish State, and be to able to convey 'something' about that enormous *Gehenna* that we lived through.'

We were still sitting late into the night, and the well-springs of those bitter tears opened yet more widely. We wept about that frightening fate and destruction of our nearest, and the destruction of millions of Jews. We found a small bit of solace in that at least someone yet remained alive, who would be able to tell and reveal for the entire world to see that gruesome and terrifying image of the total extermination.

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Regrettably, our goblet of tears was not yet full. That dear, and so pained Yenta, who, in Israel, had established her family anew, with her husband and two children: Sarah and Moshe, who was beginning to breathe freely, and to have her deep wound be 'covered' a bit, lived in Israel for only 23 years, and did not live to see one drop of the gratification, that she was so desperately in need of. After a severe and short illness, she died on 6 Tevet 5728, 27.12.1968. We give much reverence and respect to the sacred memory of our sister Yenta-Yehudit Bachman-Just, ז"ל.

Memories

By Melech Tziness

The 'Werchrata Grandchildren' – that is how we were called. My grandfather was R' Abraham-Yitzhak Herzog (of Werchrata) – a renowned forest products merchant; my mother – Ziss'l Herzog; and my father – of a Rabbinic line who was himself a considerable scholar and Enlightened. [He was] R' David Tziness, who was under my grandfather's patronage for a longer period of time, and despite his involvement in his big businesses, engaged personally in Torah study, and sponsored a *Shas Siyyum* every year. In Rawa, as in the entire vicinity, he was held to be an important and respected one of the *balebatim*.

After the First World War, we moved over to Rawa, not for long, and from there went further on to Lemberg. When the familiar residence-process took place, and anti-Jewish excesses started to occur, Berisz Margulies and his brother Todros emigrated to Montevideo. He influenced me also to go there.

Indeed, he waited for me at the ship, when I arrived there. On the first Sabbath, we spent time at the table of his brother Todros, and his wife, Reizl'eh Holz.

Naphtali Sperber, who looked like a 'general' in his tramway conductor's uniform, also waited for me. He assured me that if I only wanted to, I would also be able to become a 'general.' And that is the way it was. After a short time as a peddler, I established that I was not suited for that sort of work, and became a 'general,' meaning a conductor on the tramway.



Page 331: ***A Reception for our Townsfolk: Melech & Anshel Tziness, Joseph & Sabina Frenkel & Zalman Bach-Leinwall***

Sitting (From the Right): Zahava Stern, Zippora Stern, Gimpel Just, Moshe Stern, Sheva Just, Tziness, Anshel Tziness, Hertz Graff, Naomi Issachar, Regina Graff, Sabina Graff, Joseph Frenkel, Zalman Leinwall-Bach, Zvi Kremerman, Dvora Greenstein.

Standing (From the Right): Juta Stern, Mameh'leh Zimmerman, Yitzhak Lev, Ida Lev, Tova Rekhes, Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld, Baylah Guzhik, Eva Steinfeld, Melech Tziness, Bluma Rubin, Joseph Zvi Rubin, Baylah Wachs-Shapiro, Leah Ziring-Schauer, Tema Bodenstein, Yaakov Shapiro, David Greenstein, Zygmunt Zimmerman.

Last Row (From the Right): David Post, Joseph Schauer, Lejzor Rekhes, Lipa Altman.

I want to take note of the fact that the workers on the tramway were Jews, and we would be in the habit of singing Yiddish melodies. Not only once did this turn out to be young people from Rawa. Apart from those already mentioned, there was also Nachman Koytek and the son of the crippled *Melamed.*

After a period of time, I left Uruguay and traveled over to Argentina. In the meantime, my sister Roch'cheh got married to Mendl Spatzner in France, and I traveled for a visit to France and remained there.

For a long time, up to the war, life went along in a modest, in a tranquil fashion. Shortly before the war, my younger brother Wolwisz came to us. And then the great Second World War broke out, which for us was the greatest tragedy.

I volunteered for the French Army. But this did not last long, because the war for France ended quickly. Regrettably, however, that was not the case for us. Our great troubles were then first starting. Our peregrinations were only just beginning.

As is the case with all trouble, there is occasionally a lighter moment. It was during these wanderings that I met and made the acquaintance of my future decent wife Angel who, before the outbreak of the war, left Vienna because of Hitler-inspired harassment. We shared our sorrowful fate together, wandering through various cities in southern France.

I am reminded of an incident that was somewhat comical, and therefore a very touching one: traveling from the city of Briv [-la-Gaillarde] to Lyon, I had to change trains in the city of Limoges. On the train, I made the acquaintance of another Jewish man. Together we changed in Limoges, and waited for the connection to Lyon. We took note of the fact that an assault was taking place by the Vichy-Police. The Jewish man advised me that we should go hide in a synagogue, because in those times, they respected those places. In the synagogue, between afternoon and evening services, I met up with an acquaintance. Suddenly, behind my back I hear:

– Are you not, perhaps, Melech?

Being taken very much aback, that someone was calling me by my correct name, because outside of my home country I was called Max, I took an interest. I became aware, that this was Yekhl Kessel, who had come from Belgium and did not have any French documents with him. Having a variety of stamps with me, I immediately made him into a 'Frenchman.' We took leave of one another heartily, and I traveled on.

Being in great trouble all of this time, hiding out in all manner of places to squirrel one's self away, we did not, for one minute, forget the need to help out a fellow Jew, to whatever extent was possible. I, especially, want to recall my wife, who saved any number of Jewish families from extermination in the vicinity of Briv.

My brother Wolwisz was in the German prisoner-of-war camp with French soldiers in France. From

there, he fled, and we were together for the entire time.

I also wish to recall that in these sorrowful days, there were also happy episodes of making a marriage between a couple, in which I performed the marriage ceremony, and fulfilled the official function of a Rabbi. That couple is alive to this day, and live a happy and satisfied life.

After the war, the only survivors of my family were those that I have mentioned, having saved themselves in France. My brother Wolwisz, and his wife Olga, live in Lille; my sister Roch'cheh and her family live in Lyon and my wife and I live in Nice.

Of the family members, that were there in Poland, tragically, no one remained alive.

In the Struggle for Life

By Yekhl Meiseles

(Jews of Rawa in Western-Europe During the Nazi Period)

New Times

In the year 1929, after the great crash in the world economy, especially that of Wall Street in America, overnight, millions of people with means were transformed into paupers. Banks, that had been respectable for generations, were no longer in any position to pay out even the smallest deposits. On the markets of the world, it suddenly became apparent, that like a hungry bear, the Russian agricultural dampening and the Japanese industrial dampening, threatened to wipe out the export and commerce of all countries.

Our city suddenly became a fourth – or fifth level victim of these conditions. First as an agricultural point; the prices of agricultural produce at one point fell so far, that the peasant who brought a calf to the market on Monday, took home between 2-3 liters of oil, a kilogram of herring, and a couple of light bulbs. As to chickens and eggs, there literally was no one to sell them to, because all the exporters, such as Yudl Langer, Rathaus and Eleazar Stern, those who were the largest among the egg exporters, for more than thirty years, no longer had anywhere to which they could export eggs.

As a result of this, the Jew-haters, whether from the Polish or the Ukrainian camp, had an easy time to incite against the Jews. The '*Spółka Rolnicza*,' the 'Òîðãâëÿ' (*Torhivlya*), the 'Bank Rolniczy' and 'Bank Ludowy' began to carry out a life-and-death war against Jewish commerce and credit [extension]. This made itself felt quickly throughout Jewish business life in the city. Prominent exporters of lumber and eggs, merchants, wholesale and retail merchants – were impoverished, as they were unable to buy back their promissory notes. There were also many instances, when merchants not even requested, wanted to retain their [good] name, and so began to borrow money on a weekly basis, which quickly brought them to ruin.

This also led to a cessation of export from the hat making production. In Western Europe, large portions of the populace, in almost all countries, all at once had to confront the gruesome question of how to procure bread and a bottle of milk for a child, and so were no longer concerned about a

fancy overcoat. And in the end, the uprooting politics of the '*Sanacja*' régime against the Jewish minority in Poland, with a turning of the screw of its tax policy, sucked out the last of the marrow of its [financial] reserves, which had been somehow set aside.

A spiritual depression set in among the young, who were far from able to consider being *Halutzim*, and also by a large part of Zionist youth, who because of the shrinking possibility of making *aliyah,* and the frequent crises in the Land of Israel, gave rise to the thought by a large part of the young people, that they should emigrate away from Rawa. A large stream went off to South America, and another portion, by contrast, saw a future for itself in an array of lands in Western and Central Europe, which were all nonetheless closed to immigration, but here and there, there were cracks by which to get through, and through which our young people pushed themselves through into those countries. Two of the most important such countries were France and Belgium. Also Austria and Germany, and later on, Italy, England and Holland. All of these previously mentioned countries came to the same thought solely with regard to hat makers. In normal times, their production in Rawa would have been exported there, by the '*obrotnikehs*[203],' meaning the large scale hat makers in Rawa, ¯o³kiew and Lemberg, who had previously sold raw materials, which they brought from those countries to the small-scale hat makers, and afterwards, bought the finished products off of these same hat makers, and then turned around and exported them to these same countries.

It was in this manner that one of the most prominent colonies of Rawa hat makers came into being in Paris. A few hat makers were spread out through Vienna, Milan and Antwerp; even in London and The Hague, you could also find a *landsman* from our city there. And if the general economic conditions in those countries improved slightly, the circumstances of our *landsleit* in those countries also got better. Another circumstance had an impact on our *landsleit,* in those countries in Western Europe: they were minimally affected by periodic crises. The fact that their business operations, the piece-good manufacture they engaged in (putting together pretty jackets, and neck and collar pieces from the remnants of luxurious and remnants of leather) they produced a sort of fur jacket, which was an equivalent to other sorts of jackets, and were very practical, but not expensive. For an equivalent price, every ordinary citizen – a woman, or a seller, could don a Parisian jacket, that only a skilled craftsman could tell [from an 'original'], that was not made from a whole piece of fur. For this reason, the material circumstances of the larger part of the Rawa landsleit in those countries, was a good one, sometimes more, sometimes less, and in the fulness of time, they became a prominent factor in the economic life of their place, Almost to the extent that they had been in their 'old home' Rawa-Ruska.

The calamity that befell our people in Europe – the long Nazi *'Kristallnacht'* which began on the 10th of November 1938 and continued for 6 years and 7 months (May 1945) – also fell upon our dear close ones in Western Europe, and robbed them, taking many victims.

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203 From the Polish, '*obrotny*' meaning skilled, or shrewd (as in business).

Vienna

Logic would demand that I begin with the life of our *landsleit* in France, but since these pages are first and foremost memories, and not more – I must begin with Austria, Vienna, in order to ease my ability to hold onto the thread of this theme, with the help of memory.

In that time, when the Nazi party carried out a war against the Social-Democrats and rivers of blood ran in the streets of Vienna, Jewish life in Vienna [continued to] flow like a tranquil ideal, as if nothing was going on there. Ninety percent of the Jews knew nothing of this, that knowledge was restricted to a numbered few pessimists, who by happenstance were living on those streets, where the marches used to take place. They understood the signal of *'Mene – Tekel,*[204]' and without much thought, left Vienna.

It is self-evident that under these circumstances, plus extreme material want, something more important was missing to the Viennese citizen, or woman, than a fur coat. Our *landsleit* were not permitted to ply their trade in Vienna, only to engage in commerce. Accordingly, all had concessions to engage in trade, and when the chance presented itself, to actually work at their trade in secret, a repertoire of the same, of even a form of fashionable hat making. It was under these circumstances that the following of our landsleit were found in Vienna: Naphtali Donner, Mendl Keller, Aryeh Schuster, Yudl Schutz, and others. (The last two actually resided there illegally, because they came there smuggled in, without visas, and sought asylum as political refugees; but the police did not want to give them any support in Vienna, and their plight on all sides was truthfully very critical).

An exception to all of these was that well-known to us, Eli Spritzer, who took up residence in Vienna after the First World War, with his two sons-in-law, Chaim Rumelt, and Aharon Weidhorn. They were not known to the Viennese market, rather they dealt with a *demi-monde*: Leipzig, Paris, London and New York. In addition, Eli Spritzer owned a nice house on the Rotensterngasse. Like many other Rawa Jews, during the war in 1914, he boarded a train that took him almost as far as Vienna. Here, his sharp mind began to work very intensively. He was very successful in the trading of fur skins; it is also important to take note of the fact that he was the founder of the hat making industry in Rawa. He sought out his sons-in-law, Chaim Rumelt, and Aharon Weidhorn in their old home, and all three carried on their business in harmony with one another. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Eli Spritzer, and his entire family fled to Antwerp illegally. Eli Spritzer, this decent and alert Jewish persona, later lived in Antwerp under greatly straitened circumstances. And afterwards, when the Germans also occupied Antwerp, his last journey was the same as that of all the six million of our sisters and brothers.

Netta Kindler was also there. Along with a Jewish man from Hungary, who had a right to work in Vienna, he conducted a business with a works; he lived in a nice house, and was one of the prominent of our *landsleit* of that industry in Vienna. Before the occupation of Austria by the Nazis, he and his family fled to England, and in this manner saved themselves from the Nazi talons. After the war, he died in London.

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204 A reference to the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, interpreted by the Prophet Daniel.

Moshe & Nathan Weiss also lived in Vienna at that time, and things, in proportion, went well for them. After the unification of Austria and Germany, both went to Italy. They remained there until the implementation of the anti-Jewish laws promulgated by Mussolini, and at that point emigrated to New York.

Since the upheaval of 1914, the family of Yoss'l Stoliar also lived in Vienna, who had a nice house in Rawa, between Freiheiter's bakery and the café of Berkover. The family held itself at a distance from the Rawa residents, except for the fact that one of their sons, got involved in the hat making business. This tied them, in that time yet, to Rawa. In the year 1935, because of the economic crisis in Vienna, he went off to London.

The plight of my closest friend, Naphtali Donner, was a very difficult one. He suffered a great deal from the crisis at that time, and because he had no capital at the beginning of the year to work on raw materials for that entire year, in order to be able to sell in the first season, he earned nothing, and in the winter of 1934-35 was compelled to move to Rome. There, his two wealthy cousins from Sokal lived, who had a factory for making raincoats. At first, he worked for them in making raincoats; afterwards, however, when he uncovered large troves of Parisian remnants in the attics of the fur coat salons in Rome, he returned to his own craft. Once again, he was very successful, and in a year's time reached out and brought his wife and child to him.

When the [Second World] War broke out, there was already a small colony of Rawa *landsleit* in Milan: Hersch Kohl, Abish Brill, Durek Rosenthal and others, all of whom had traveled there from Poland and from the Austria that was then on fire. At the outset, things were good for everyone, and at the last moment, all of them had the chance to get visas to Bolivia, and thereby actually save themselves for a while, before it became too late. Today, they are all spread out over the entire South American continent.

At that time, Yaakov Leibusz Blumenfeld also lived in Vienna, also a hat maker, a son of Avigdor Blumenfeld, on the '*Zamd*,' a nephew of Eli Spritzer, who had come here illegally in 1921. The police did not want to give him any support; however, he was able to win them over, in that he needed to be considered to be an Austrian, because that is the way he was born, and wants to continue to considered as such in his life. He even was – the only one – that had the right to work. In the year 1939, he arrived in Antwerp illegally with his wife and child. During the German occupation of Belgium, we lost sight of him; for many years, we were forced to digest the worm of uncertainty about his fate: but how lightened was my breathing when I heard that he was living in America.

However, it was not only the hat makers of Rawa who were the only ones that lived in Vienna. Apart from them, there was an array of families who lived in Vienna, which I will attempt to – as far as possible – to enumerate here: R' Yehuda Gross, was once a noodle merchant in Rawa, and in the year 1914 fled before the Russians to Vienna, in the same train taken by R' Eli Spritzer, and the Josefsberg family. He again began to work in his operation there, generating sustenance, and in time

became one of the biggest income producers in Vienna, until the destruction wrought by Hitler. In the year 1939, a couple of weeks before the outbreak of the war, they were able to come to the Land of Israel.

Apart from them – since the flight of 1914 – the two sons of R' Simcha Haberman lived in Vienna, and in the year 1941, I met up with them in Nice, in the year 1943 in Switzerland, and now they live in America. After Vienna, we met up with Sarah Haberman's son, Zvi, during the war, in Antwerp, after which we lost contact, and only first found each other again in Israel.

The youngest son of Pinia Einbinder, Yudl, who studied with me in a number of elementary *Heders* in Rawa, also found himself in Vienna, since twenty years before. He had a freight truck and transported agricultural products. In the year [19]38, a couple of months before the '*Anschluss*,' his oldest brother Getzel came to him from Lemberg, who was a brush maker. He attempted to settle himself here, and he almost made it in the form of a vegetable business, but the conflagration broke out immediately, and within a couple of months he was transported off along with thousands of other victims from Poland to Zwonszyn[205], that hapless camp of Jewish victims, that will remain as one of the most shameful blots on the face of the Sanacja régime in Poland. (Jewish victims from Germany and Austria, who possessed legitimate Polish passes, were transferred by the Germans to Poland in November 1938 in the most intense frost. However, Poland did not want to admit them, and so they remained there, at the outbreak of the war, hanging between heaven and earth. Only first, when the first bombs began to fall on the camp in Zwonszyn, and the guards all fled, those unfortunate victims also fled; And whoever was not killed immediately by the bombs, was subsequently killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Belzec). Yudl, alone, after this, came to the Land of Israel illegally, and today he lives in Hadera. Nothing was ever heard again from his brother Getzel.

The following watchmakers also lived in Vienna: Aharon Brand, Melech Sztokhammer and Petakhia Ka"Tz. Because of the [economic] crisis, Aharon Brand had already left Vienna in the year 1934, and made *aliyah* to Israel, where very shortly before the outbreak of the war, he also brought in his youngest brother Yankl'eh. Petakhia Ka"Tz today also lives in Tel-Aviv.

The story of Melech Sztokhammer is one of the most tragic of our *landsleit* in Vienna. He came their either in 1927 or 1928, working illegally under a watchmaker, a Jew who was a formidable scholar, and a genteel person, who was named Flintstein, and came from Sodagura[206] in Rumania. His brother-in-law, also a watchmaker, had a very talented daughter, Elsa; Melech and Elsa married, and things went very well for them. At the end of 1938, both families – Flintstein and Sztokhammer – came to Antwerp illegally. (Elsa's father, Koysz, had made *aliyah* to Israel a couple of years before that). Melech's wife, being a frail person from the outset, could not bear the difficult circumstances for long, and began to ail and hovered between life and death. In May 1940, after the assault of Germany on Belgium and Holland, many people went off to the Belgian-French border, to the

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205 Perhaps Zwonowice.

206 Appears to be in modern-day Ukraine as 'Sadhora.'

country city of La Panne[207], where the French, during the First World War, held the Germans up for 3 years' time, in the hopes that the Maginot Line would give them all the necessary support. However, ceaseless bombardment by the Germans, quickly transformed that tranquil place into a hellish wasteland. During one such air attack, I encountered Melech and Elsa in the street in La Panne, and quickly led them up to us in the house. My wife and I who knew Elsa before this, wondered from whence this frail woman was able to draw the strength to bear such a difficult existence. A day later, we parted forever. When , years later, we met up with Flintstein's widow in Switzerland, we became aware that Elsa had expired in the winter of 1940-41, in Belgium at the point where she was sent into Limburg, where the Germans had led off part of the Jews from Antwerp, – from hunger and the cold. And what happened to Melech? – He went to the same place as all the rest.

Also, R' Yaakov Graff's daughters and sons, at that time were also found in Vienna, and they were also able to save themselves.

Antwerp

A bare four years of the Schuschnigg régime in Austria was like the flowing of calm waters, which is still only on the surface, but a couple of centimeters deeper, opposing streams battle with each other, with an embittered force, and threaten at any moment, to bring that conflict up to the surface, and in this manner, transform the flow into a self-destroying force.

With strong impulse, the régime drew itself closer to the régime of Mussolini, the northern neighbor, taking over in partnership the other's methods. A hermetic censorship assured that the populace would not get itself involved directly in politics, and have no idea of the avalanche that was gathering force inside the cloud that calls itself Austria. Only those, who had access to a newspaper from France, England, or America, was able to sense something of this, that which is being played out only a few tens of meters or hundred meters from his house. But these were the very few in Vienna, and even fewer among the Jews of Austria, who lived on a second planet. (Excepting the members of *HeHalutz,* which met in its small meeting place, consisting of maybe ten to twenty people, young 'opportunists' as they were once called).

Officially, Jews had equal rights and were active in all facets of economic, cultural and also, in part, political life. Jewish cultural and justice councillors, even ministerial councillors, enjoyed formal recognition and the greatest respect. Jews occupied all manner of positions, in the police and the judiciary, side-by-side with their Christian colleagues, and did not dream of the possibility, that almost all of them are – secret members of the Nazi party. Even those who played the role of being communists... this is the way it went on, until the end of February – beginning of March 1938.

At the end of February, Schuschnigg was suddenly called by Hitler for an ultimatum at Berchtesgaden, and presented to him, that his protector – Mussolini – betrayed him. He returned as a vassal of Hitler. He flung wide open the gates of the régime for the Nazis. The Nazi beast began

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207 Likely De Panne not far from Dunkirk on the English Channel

to prowl about unfettered and free over the streets of Vienna, like a wild animal, that had broken out of its cage in the zoo, and began to spread its poison and devastation over the land. The streets of Vienna began... to weep and the predations of the Nazi beasts woke you out of your slumber and you suddenly all at once, felt the entirety of the solitude against which you stood.

Friday, the 10th of March 1938, the Nazi beast, for the first time, put down its hobnailed boots on alien soil in Europe and in this manner, began its death-march over the graves of Europe, which for our people was – the greatest of all calamities.

No Jew that lived through this in Vienna at the time, will ever forget to the last breath that he draws, this very same night of Friday, into the Sabbath. With torches mounted on pointed arms, the Nazis, without number, without an end, marched through the streets of Vienna, circling and singing songs of victory, accompanied by the bestial roaring of voices from the jungle. The second circling could be heard endlessly, the smashing of window panes in Jewish places of business, and the Horst-Wessel Song did not stop thundering and poisoned the air of the city. Through the drapes of the bedroom we – my wife Henia'leh and I – followed the march of the bestial horde and with anxiety looked every while at our little daughter Mary (Miriam), who then was a year and nine months old, and slept innocently in a childlike slumber. On Saturday morning, swastika-bearing flags fluttered throughout all of Vienna.

My first move that Saturday morning, was to go to the Polish consulate, in order to extend my passport. But in front of the entrance to the consulate there were already waiting, since three in the morning, hundreds of Polish Jews, who demanded the same thing that I wanted. Every now and then, young and old hooligans went by and made jokes at the expense of the hapless victims, but they were not touched, out of respect for the Polish eagle, which hung over the entrance to the house. This was only a scant few hours before the Polish Legation published its greeting in honor of the 'unification of the two sister-countries' and promised its loyalty. After standing and waiting until four o'clock in the afternoon, I finally appeared before a bureaucrat, and declared, facing an antipathy on the other side, what it was that I wanted.

– 'You must leave your passport for a couple of days. In the course of the next week, you will get it extended.'

Breathing easier, I left the consulate building under the envious stares of hundreds of eyes, who envied me for having resolved my issue, while they were preparing to wait the night – and perhaps a second night – because tomorrow was Sunday, and the consulate would most certainly be closed.

At that time, I did not grasp that on that day, my Polish citizenship, wrought with blood and exertion going back hundreds of years, through my grandfathers from Mainz, Worms, or from Cordoba, formally ended..

It was first then, that the race with time began. A commissar arrived at my business, who ordered that I put a sign in front of my business reading: 'A swine is one who buys from Jews!' – I was forced to fire the woman that had worked for us in our house. This Maria, who did not hold down

any position for more than 2-3 months, and had been with us for barely two years, would argue that it could not be better for anyone in the Garden of Eden than it was in our house; but letting an Aryan employee go was forbidden.

I attempted to look around for some sort of emigration possibility, because it had become clear to us, that we must get away at any price, before it becomes too late. At a moment of our greatest sense of quandary, a friend offered us the suggestion that we should get in touch with his brother in Brussels, and maybe he could help us. Five days later, we received a reply from Brussels, that we should immediately travel to Aachen, a city on the German-Belgian border, and there meet in a certain hotel.

At this time what happened, is that our child began to run a high fever. During the long ride from Vienna to Cologne, none of the Germans saw any need to make room for the woman carrying the child for even a couple of minutes. It was very crowded in the train, and they stood for the entire time by an open window, and the child developed a severe angina. With considerable difficulty, we obtained the address of a Jewish doctor, who, upon seeing our plight, comforted us, and said that he would do what was possible in order to help us.

At the specified time, after the noon hour, our 'guide' came to the hotel and up to our room. He immediately saw what was going on, and lowered his hands in resignation.

– He is 99 percent certain that we will fall into the hands of the *Gestapo*. He asks only one thing of us: in the moment, when we will be seized, we should say that he also is a Jewish refugee, like us, and not our guide.

The doctor came again in the evening, and hearing that we are imminently due to cross the border, he gave the child an injection against the fever, and the child fell asleep. A half hour later, we were already sitting in the tramway, that traveled to the border. Midway, we got off and went to a small side street, where a clay road led to a large field that was ringed with barbed wire. Crawling, we went to a spot, overgrown with heavy bordering bushes, separating the field from the road, which ostensibly was the border. Not far from there, we saw lights, and our guide quietly said to us that this was the station of the German border guards. At that moment, lights were lit up on the other side, the lights of two [motor] cycles, and the guide signaled us to hold our breath. These were two German border gendarmes. Later, the guide showed us a large cut in the [barbed wire] enclosure, crawling, we went over to the other side of the road, finally arriving in what was Belgium.

For the night, we rested at the home of a peasant, and on the second day, we traveled with the train to Brussels, where we rented a room, in order to bed down the sick child. Regrettably, the child did not get better, despite the fact that we gave her every form of medical help. A few days later, we encountered a woman in the house, who advised us to come to Antwerp because there, the Jews are more concentrated, and she implied that there were better possibilities there to make a living.

In Brussels, for the first time, we felt the taste of a person without a home, a refugee among several tens of Jewish refugees, who come together in the single, solitary Jewish restaurant in such a huge

city. We had no contact with the native Jews of Brussels, apart from the rescue-committee, which allotted cards for food, and support of so much and so many Francs each week, for sustenance, or a card to access a doctor, when there was a need for medical help. But we almost immediately went over to Antwerp, and there we turned over our sick child to the hospital, from which, 12 days later, we were able to take her back to our dwelling.

We began to look around for some way to make a living. I was not skilled at hat making (there was nothing at hand to sell – except those things that were severely forbidden). Henia'leh reminded herself that in year's past, the clothes that she would tailor garnered much praise, and with a centimeter of string, she began to make her first dress. We also immediately became aware that a number of Rawa [*landsleit*] were living in Antwerp.

The first was Melech Foster, who was a prominent hat maker in Antwerp, and possessed a business that had a factory. He had a frequent need for those who could model fur coats, cut out from thick packing paper, and my wife Henia'leh would make this for him with great talent. Also, we would finish out coats for him, and our families became close friends.

After this we found Chaim Grandes, who had completed study here at the faculty of Economics, married the daughter of Reindl, and brought her here. He had a furniture business and garden supplies, and it went very well for him. Their home, with the passage of time, became a second home to us, going so far as on the 10th of May 1940, when the Nazi beast fell upon Belgium, both our families together fled Antwerp.

Yet another *landsman* of ours who lived in Antwerp at that time was – Sholom, the son-in-law of R' Shlomo Zalman, the eminent *Hasid* of the Old *Kloyz*; he was the Ritual Slaughterer for the observant community, but suddenly, the police no longer wanted to give him permission to continue, and a few weeks before the outbreak of the war, he traveled back home. I encountered him by chance, he recognized me and asked me if I were not the son of Mordechai Leib Kessel, where a daughter had died before *Sukkot*... it was from him that I then became aware that my sister Chana, who was so dear to me, had died. My parents kept this from me.

Yes, if the police in Antwerp had extended his permit at the time, it is possible that he would be among us today!

Others lived in Antwerp – but illegally – Ben-Zion Reiser (a son of R' Yosh'eh Benzion's), Kalman Spindler and also Kalman Ka'Tz.

The living conditions of these latter people were very difficult – without material resources, because they worked, and earned respectably, but the police pursued them, and on occasion captured them, and set them over on the other side of the border, sometimes into France, and sometimes into Luxembourg. Every time they came back, and worked again, until it happened again; this went on ceaselessly, and they dared not go out into the streets.

The political situation in Belgium at that time was as it nearly always was: tense. Apart from the permanent conflict between the Flemish and the Walloons, many extortions of land took place, as an outgrowth of the lost Civil War in Spain.

Jewish life in Antwerp stood under the heavy-handed mark of the onset of the extermination of German Jewry. On a daily basis, new masses of refugees arrived from Germany, Austria, and the subjugated Czech state. Then the first of the demands that Hitler made regarding Danzig began to permeate the atmosphere. A small part of the refugees continued to travel west, but the larger part remained residing in Belgium, because all the countries of the world were closed to them. And now, the Belgians no longer permitted refugees free entry, but rather situated them in refugee-camps, or in specifically designated residences. After the actions of Herschel Grynszpan in Paris, at the Embassy-Council Flag-Advisory meeting, which served the Nazis as their official excuse to begin with the mass extermination of our people (the so-called '*Kristallnacht*'), the tension grew from day to day. It had the feel like a thick coil had wrapped itself around the throat, like a snake, and was constricting itself tighter and tighter.

The summer of 1939 arrived, The rescue-committee had very difficult and responsible work dealing with such a mass of refugees. It made very strenuous efforts halfway, to feed and clothe those who were in greatest need, and also looked after the travel arrangements of all who actually had someplace to which they could go. But the world was as if hermetically sealed. No country declared that it was prepared to accept these unfortunate victims, that Hitler had already condemned to extermination. And when the attack against Poland arrived, the depression sank even more deeply. The fear over the fate of fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, mixed itself into the indescribable sense of isolation of each victim, that was in the process of fleeing, finding himself locked in, as if in a mousetrap, and at any minute, someone is going to come along, pour gasoline on him, and set him afire.

The winter of 1939 arrived. Letters started to arrive from the homes in Lemberg, and we breathed a little easier. But for how long?

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The 10th of May 1940 was a Friday. The truth be told, all of this happened to me unexpectedly. Also, our friend Grandes, with whom I often spoke about our plight, held that the neutrality of Belgium is something that only Belgium believed in, that it remains protected by it. A few days earlier, Grandes sent away his wife Esther with the children to La Panne on the French border, in the belief that they would find protection in that location.

At 5 o'clock in the morning, we were awakened from sleep by a noteworthy thrumming of motors, which informed my heart, that was already full of suspicion, that something of a trouble was drawing near. I got out of bed, and went over to the window, and began to scan with my eyes across the lightening blue sky. My glance quickly uncovered a host of Nazi airplanes, and suddenly bombs and fire began to rain down on us, window panes began to shatter, and walls began to shake. In a panic, people began to run to hide themselves in bomb shelters.

When the air attack passed by, I went down into the street to see what was going on there. I immediately went off to Chaim Grandes to hear how he was. We had previously arranged that in the case of a German attack on Belgium, we would both flee to La-Panne. But communications were

already, from the first day, disorganized, and there was an enormous chaos that reigned on all the roads. A road trip that normally would take 10 minutes, took more than two hours in those days. We left our home and in the end, after several hours, arrived exhausted at the train tunnel, where a policeman stood at the entrance, and demanded to see passes.

Grandes, with his Polish pass, passed through without any difficulties, but Henia'leh and I were detained, because all we had were one-use passes from the Belgian government. Finally, late in the afternoon, a watchman arrived and brought back our passes, and released us. I was already so broken, that I wanted to go back home, but Henia'leh argued that there was no turning back, and we returned to the tunnel. A half hour later we reached the train station, where we were so greatly overwhelmed by running into Chaim Grandes there. He had been sitting there with his luggage since before noon, because there was no transportation. The train had not come, because the line had been disrupted by the Germans. We sat and sat, while we observed German airplanes flying hither and thither, and in the distance, we kept hearing explosions. Finally, at night, a train arrived from somewhere or other, and we got going under pressure. Late, after midnight, we finally arrived at La-Panne, on the French border.

The sirens, here too, sounded the alarm every couple of minutes. Somehow, we managed to reach the house, where Mrs. Grandes lay together with her two children, all bundled up together from the cold and fright, and we managed to get through the night. When we went out on the following day into the street, the sight almost calmed us down; it was so quiet, tranquil and seemingly secure, that little vacation-spot of La-Panne. It was only a couple of days later that we first saw, how naive our assessment was, and how incorrectly we had evaluated our plight.

It was only after a very few days, that the entirety of Belgium and Northern France, along the northern shore to the Atlantic Ocean, was transformed into one endless deluge of disorganized and demobilized military and refugees, and more refugees, and yet more refugees from Holland, Belgium, and France, without number and without an end.

No matter how many times we attempted to tear through the ramp that cut off France from Belgium, every time we were sent back by the French gendarmes:

– 'The stateless may not cross over!"

We had for some time, already abandoned La-Panne, and found ourselves in a hut close to the border. Our situation had not, however, changed, not one way, or another. On one night, however, the front was so close to us, that we could hear the cannons firing over our heads, and it was then that we decided:

– 'We must cross over!' – and we set out for the ramp.

–'Let whatever happens to us be, no matter what!'

And the miracle happened: the gendarme, close to where we passed by, saw Henia'leh's old, worn Polish passport, didn't even open it, and signaled to us that we could proceed.

Over on the French side, we first brought back to mind the Grandes family, who had remained in La-Panne, because of their newborn child; but there was not much time to stop and think about this. Time sped on, and we strove to flee even faster than the German military. It was with a pounding heart that, many years later, we would, from time-to-time recall them, and with concern think, what could have happened to them. But who can imagine our joy, when we read in the fourth bulletin, that they had been saved alive in Brussels.

We began to flee like possessed demons, having no fear as to whether we would be seen, seized and taken back. Suddenly night fell, and the sky became transformed into a covering of fire and steel, by we only ran more and further. In the end, we came to a destroyed factory, and decided to stay there, until daybreak. Henia'leh and I lay down on the wooden bridge, and Mary remained lying in her play wagon, that we had taken along with us from Antwerp, that was barely being held together; but it was entirely impossible to even snatch a few winks, because the bombs and the anti-aircraft fire kept going and disrupting the night. Despite the fact that it was a great danger to remain in that ruin for the night, we simply could not leave, because it was forbidden to be out in the street in the nighttime.

When day began to break, and eventually, the sky began to extinguish its fires, we ventured outside to again resume our way. Of those things we had taken along from Antwerp, all we had was the child's carriage, and a covering for the child for cold nights. After marching for a couple of hours, we arrived in Dunkirk.

The picture of the city was frightening. There were ruins and fires, which no one was attempting to put out. Sirens were wailing unendingly, and the military there was like sand on the edges of the sea. French, English, Polish, running around hither and thither, the roads filled with refugees, and over everyone's heads were the German airplanes.

When the planes would come, and if one was far from a bomb shelter, one would fall flat on the ground; not everyone got up. And it was in this way that the German machine guns chattered on all sides. We made an attempt to get to the train station, but a lock hung from the gate, and a notice advising that the last train that left the station was yesterday before dawn. We went off to the harbor with the hope of being able to get over to Dover in England. However, this did not become possible for us to do.

We went back into the city, and began to concern ourselves with getting a morsel of bread for the child, and I went off to do that. When I returned to the place, where I had left Henia'leh and the child, I suddenly heard my name being called from a fully loaded auto, full of English sailors. With great difficulty, they barely agreed to take me along. We were beyond fortunate, thinking that they would take us at least as far as Paris; but regrettably, they took us only as far as Calais and there, they let us off in the middle of the street. From that, with Calais filled with military and refugees – we

were barely able, with considerable effort, to extract ourselves and get to a small town near 'Boulogne-Sur-Mer.' It was already before nightfall, and in the street, everything was already still, as death, because of the prohibition against being outside, after dark, and not a spark of light could be seen from anywhere.

We stood there, in a state of great confusion, not knowing what to do with ourselves, and how to pass that cold and stormy night. A cutting wind came off the ocean, and our teeth were chattering, to the point of falling out. There was the unceasing sound of the thrumming of motors; these were German bombers flying to England and on the other side of the channel. One could hear muffled echoes of explosions, and there was fire being spread over the entire sea.

We immediately noted that we were standing in front of a church. Hoping that the door was open, we ascended the 5 steps that led to it. But it was tightly locked, and our quandary knew no bounds. We already had in mind the idea of lying down on the stone steps in front of the entrance to the church, in the hope that in this manner, we could find some shelter from the wind coming off the sea, and from the darkness of the night.

Suddenly, a woman appeared before our eyes, in a black cape, lighting us with a flashlight, and asked us in French, whether or not we were refugees. Hearing that we were Jewish refugees from Poland, she called for us to go with her. After investigating a number of places where we could be quartered just for the night, she regrettably found that all the places were full of refugees, and she was compelled to take us into her own home. She gave us the best of everything, including a bath where to wash ourselves; but she asked of us that everything that we would see and hear in her house – must be kept secret.

During an alarm, when we went down into the bomb shelters – we saw, that this was the location of the entire general staff of the Allies,(who were attempting) to evacuate the army to the other side of the La Manche[208] Channel to England. After spending an entire night in the cellar, in the morning, we again came up into her house, and Mme. Berta graced us with a fine breakfast, and provisioned us with a new child's carriage; she bid us farewell, and requested that if we live through the war, that we should return to that place, and not forget to visit her, assuming that she would still be alive... and the Allies will be victorious...

It merely took a few minutes for us to traverse the entire town and once again, we stood on the road, along the length of the edge of La Manche. Suddenly, an auto came along full of refugees, to which was attached a two-wheeled hand-drawn freight wagon. Those who were driving the auto were soldiers, and for the price of thousands of francs, they crammed Henia'leh and the child in along with the other refugees, and showed me where to seat myself in the hand-wagon. After traveling this way for two to three hours, alongside the blue sea, in which the gilded sun was beginning to be reflected, we came to the harbor town of Boulogne-Sur-Mer. Boulogne on that day was similar to a sea beset

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208 'La Manche' (French for 'the sleeve') is the French name for the English Channel, favored by this author.

by a storm: from Holland and Luxembourg, from Belgium and Northeastern France, millions of people came together in a crush, set apart from the soldiers of the Allied armies, who, for the entire day, were to be mostly found in the fields surrounding the towns, and the entire vicinity gave the impression of being an enormous stretch that was overgrown with human heads.

Everyone strove to reach the harbor, or at least to the edge of the sea, with the hope of finding some possibility to ford the water to England, which lay so close to that location, such that it could be seen with the naked eye, even what was going on over on the other side of the English hills. It was with one such wave, that we were also carried to the harbor, and remained standing on the platform of a building, about 8-10 meters high, that separated the city from the sea. The water was smooth and calm as a mirror, and there was no trace of a ship, as far as the eye could see. Despite this, German airplanes flew over hither and thither, and raked the masses with machine-gun fire. People fell burying their heads in deep in the ground, but even as some got up, there were tens who lay there, unable to rise again...

We lay for three days and nights in a cellar. Bitter fighting took place in the city between German and French military forces, that needed to protect the retreat of the French and the English.

On the morning of the fourth day, as soon as it became light, we saw a German soldier on a motorcycle, armed with automatic weaponry, looking down at us in the cellar. We understood, that the Angel of Death was securely standing before our eyes, and began to crawl out. On that same day, they immediately began to ride around on motorcycles and autos, as if they were in their own home (town), searching about, looking – and giving out orders:

– All refugees must go back home, each to his country from whence he has come!

At that time we had decided to leave the city and enter a home, in a village – Saint Léonard. Everything there was in ruins, except for a little bit of straw on the ground, and whatever we had covered ourselves with at night.

At that time, we rented a tender, who had received permission to travel, and set out on the way to Paris. We hope that what our eyes beheld on both sides of the road, during that ride to Paris, will never again be seen by human eyes. Body parts, were cast about in gullies and on the fields on both sides of the road, and starving dogs were sating their hunger with them.

There were many Rawa *landsleit* before the war in Paris. The first of them, who had taken up residence in Paris after the First World War was – Mrs. Unger, a daughter of Yoss'l Geppert, who worked with furs. During the prosperous years, she would often come to Rawa with raw remnants, sell them, and take back Parisian styles that had been produced from Rawa labor.

Also, a son of Mrs. Brill of the Lemberger Road lived in France, since the early twenties. From the year 1926 – until into the thirties, the following were in Paris engaged in hat making: Shmuel Bekherbluth; Zalman Finkelstein; The Kleiner Brothers; Altshuler; Neta Ruker; Leibusz Blassberg

and his sister; Mrs. Greener; Shmarya Drucker; Chaim Hausman; Melech Tziness, and many, many others; But you practically did not find any of them in Paris during those days. A few at a time (in the end), all of them went over to unoccupied France, or hid themselves with a friend, a Christian, or were mobilized into the French Army; some of them were successful, before the outbreak of the war, to get out across the sea.

As to the Sztrokh brothers, Leibusz and Aharon were in Paris; the third brother was at the front in northern France, and there were rumors that he had fallen. In the street by the Galleries Lafayette, one often ran into Aryeh Schuster, who, in the year 1935, illegally got over from Vienna to Paris, and here, with the help of the communist party, which had for a specific time taken part in the government, gotten asylum as a political refugee. Also, one ran into Raven Sztokhammer and Kalman Ka"Tz, in that neighborhood. Mrs. Greener, the daughter of Yekl Wolf Schuster, at that time, lived with her husband and their 7-year-old daughter Charlotte (her brother Leibusz Blassberg, a few months before the war, was able to emigrate to Haiti).

Nobody thought about working or making a living, because the situation was so depressed, that parents did not know where to find their own children; women – where were their husbands were to be found; one thought of only one thing: 'What will tomorrow bring.'

It was in this hot, suffocating Paris, that we spent the summer in a small room in a hut.

On one morning, in September 1940, placards appeared on the corners of every street, that all aliens are required to return, each to the country from which they came. The first of the winds began to blow, and the first rains came. Lacking warm clothing for our child, and for ourselves, we decided that we have no other way, but to go back to Antwerp, where we hoped to find our belongings, clothing, and bedding, that we had left behind upon fleeing.

After casting about for several weeks from place to place, from train to train, finally, in October 1940, we arrived back to Antwerp, to the place we had left five months previously, where we found our home, as we had left it on May 11.

But here (in Antwerp), the situation was now than in France. There were many already missing from the (local) Jewish populace. There was no sign of the Jewish diamond merchants; some fled to Vichy-France, or even further. Some remained lying under the bombs on the roads to Flanders and Paris, or drowned in La Manche. There no longer was a Jewish rescue-committee in existence; all of its members had either fled, or were detained and deported. In contrast, Jewish refugees were able to get support from the 'Open Social Fund,' serving the Antwerp community, but very few refugees were able to enjoy these benefits, because as its name indicates, it was a chance-possibility how to obtain this support without an endorsed listing ahead of the [sic: native] Jewish refugees in Antwerp.

On the other side, hat making literally flourished. Anything that even resembled a piece of leather was torn out of the hands.

In later years, it became clear to me, that it was the Germans who had begun to collect all manner of leather and hides for their coming campaign against Russia. This could also have been the reason why, in the first three quarters of the year, when they occupied Belgium and France, they did not touch any Jews; they knew that Jews were the key to the reservoirs of leather and hides in those countries – and so they permitted them to exhaust those reservoirs and only after that, did they take the Jews.

On a given day in December, this too came to an end. According to an order from the occupation forces, thousands of Jews, who lived in Antwerp closer than two kilometers to the harbor, were packed into trains without any windows, and deported to Limburg, not far from the Dutch border. The winter was at its fiercest intensity, and many people froze [sic: to death] along the way. R' Eli Spritzer and his wife were also on that transport, and one of those victims was Elsa, the wife of Melech Sztokhammer. Our train car was left in the middle of the night at a small station, and finally attached to a second train, and before dawn, we were let off at the small village of Ache, not far from Genk. There, we were put into an empty school building and told:

– 'You will remain here, until further orders are received!'

We were there for four months, not knowing in the evening, what awaits us the following morning.

But on one evening, Henia'leh came home with the bad news that the *Gestapo* was coming tomorrow, in order to take us away, and it is not known to where...

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At that time, Moshe Zinger, the brother of a good friend of mine in Rawa, with whom we were friendly, resided in Brussels. Without much thought, we got on the train – to Brussels. On the train station in Antwerp, traveling to Brussels, a one-time neighbor of ours handed over a letter to us from Henia'leh's mother ע"ה, which had that same day arrived from Russian-occupied Kosiv near Kolomyya. This was the last living communication we received from the world that Hitler had sentenced to be wiped out.



Page 345: Henya Meiseles of the Szpeikher Family of Kossow ז"ל

In Brussels, we sought out Zinger, and were taken in by him, like we were brothers. He heard out our troubles, and immediately promised to try and find someone who would be able to get us over into unoccupied Vichy-France. And no sooner said than done. On that same evening, he got us together with a man, who would be able to smuggle us through.

In this fashion, we went over to Nice, on the Riviera.

There, we received the right to reside for three months, enjoying its beauty and bathing in the blue sea waters. A couple of weeks later, I met someone from Rawa in Nice, Hersch Kohl. He had come from Italy, after they had promulgated anti-Jewish laws there. His wife was with him, whom we knew yet from Rawa, and their only child. He was not

bad off materially. There was also R' Simcha Haberman's daughter-in-law from Vienna.

For the time being, these were the only two families from Rawa, that lived in Nice at that time. But only a few weeks later, in June, the first of the Rawa *landsleit* fleeing from Paris arrived in Nice, not as optimistic as they were during our last trip through there, three months ago, but rather beaten down, and half dead of fright.

Mrs. Unger was the first to arrive; after that the Greener family; after them, the family of Aharon Sztrokh and Yankl'eh Scheier, a brother-in-law of Aharon Sztrokh. The troubles of the Sztrokhs were great. There were three brothers, apart from the sister, before the war broke out. Moshe immediately presented himself voluntarily for service in the French Army, and in the year 1940 he fell near Reims. Leibusz, the oldest, was captured in the first action in Paris in April 1941; the brother of a fallen volunteer soldier, he was released after a couple of days, but on that same night, he was taken in again, and sent to Drancy[209]; nothing further was ever heard from him.

Also, Neta Ruker, his wife Leah'cheh ad a little boy came. Also Kalman Ka"Tz came on a certain day. In the end Rathaus's oldest son, who could no longer sustain himself in Italy (not Paris), came. He was waiting for papers from Chaim, about the time that the Germans attacked Russia, and he was able to continue to travel to America.

As regards the material circumstances of our *landsleit* in Nice at the time, it cannot be said that it was bad. Each had brought a small amount of money with them from home, and strove to the extent possible to do something with it. For example, the person looking after Aharon Sztrokh's house even sent over three or four hat making machines to him, to be deployed to the extent possible. The storm was still far from Nice, and only pessimists, like me, had their hearts pounding, when we would consider the sort of upheaval that awaited us on the morrow.

After the invasion of Russia by the Germans on the 21st of June 1941, it became clear as if in one's own hand, that the first victims of this new aggression would be our parents, sisters and brothers, and their children in Rawa and Kossow. Now, all at once, this calamity also fell on them, and only God himself could help our people in a great need; we could not help them.

At that point my permit ran out, and I could not get it extended any further. We had to move to different quarters, and begin to live as illegal aliens. Our life went on in gravely in this manner, like in a twilight, until the beginning of 1942.

On the evening of 31.1.1942, I along with other illegal Jewish residents were arrested by the police and began the most difficult years of our lives. I lay crammed into a cellar all alone, not knowing whether it was day or night; for sleeping, I lay on a board, but it was impossible to sleep, the cold was unbearable – especially if one went out of the house wearing only a sweater, even for only a

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209 The Drancy internment camp was an assembly and detention camp for confining Jews who were later deported to the extermination camps during the German military administration of Occupied France during World War II. It was located in Drancy, a northeastern suburb of Paris, France.

couple of minutes. The thought of Henia'leh with the child gnawed away at my mind. This already weakened and frail woman, how will she be able to survive this?

In the end, this also came to a finish. At the time that I lay half in faint and thinking, that I certainly had been forgotten and that when they would remember that I am here, there will certainly be no trace left of me – I heard noise at the door, and it was opened.

After spending an additional two days and two nights in the police cellar, I was transferred to the Nice prison. Here, I made new friends, French, who were accused of murder, stealing, engaging in black market operations, and counterfeiting. They moved apart and made room for me on the expanse of straw, which served as the sleeping place for all of them together and I was told that should I get cold at night, I should move closer to my neighbor, and in this manner, we will both be warm.

Frightening and difficult days came upon Henia'leh. She personally was also illegal, and she needed to look after nourishing not only herself, but the child, and also me. At this opportunity, I must emphasize that none of this would have been possible for her to do, without the help of the unforgettable Aharon Sztrokh ל"ז, who stood at her side, not only in material matters, but also with the right word of solace. Without this, only God knows how she could have sustained herself during those days, when she oscillated between heaven and earth.

But her most important worry and concern was, and remained how to get me out of prison. A lawyer from Vienna put her in touch with one of the most prominent Nice lawyers, and the latter began to make moves to get me extracted and returned to freedom.

Here, I wish to pause for a minute and make an observation: all of this, that I am telling, is not to describe my own story, but rather with the objective of putting forward one picture of a *landsman* from Rawa, in Western Europe, in the period of our greatest [national] catastrophe, which reflects, more-or-less, the situation of our *landsleit* during that period.

The efforts of my lawyer did not help at all. Four weeks after getting in contact, I was brought before the court, which for the charge of illegal residence, sentenced me to a year in prison. Among other things, the prosecutor accused me, saying that I, along with thousands of people like me, are eating the bread of young French children, who are expiring from hunger, and therefore my punishment must be an example, in order that all French people should see, that in the New France, the Jews are no longer in control, nor are their subordinated servants...

To attempt recourse was the most senseless thing; this is because it could happen that in such an instance, the sentence could be increased from one year – to two years.

A month after the trial, I fell sick in jail. The prison doctor, incidentally one of the greatest of the Righteous Gentiles of the World, immediately had me transferred to the hospital, where there was a section set aside for those affected, who were under police surveillance.

During that time, with no surcease, Henia'leh raised the alarm with the Red Cross in Geneva, using letters, in order to establish contact with our families in Galicia. After countless approaches of this

kind, she received a telegram-letter through the Red Cross in Geneva, from her oldest brother, using the following language:

- 'Bobeleh, with all of the children, Uncle Pinia, Chaim and Rachel are all living with the father.' That father had been dead since the year 1920.

It was very hard for me to calm her down: we understood that none of them remained alive.

The lawyer advised Henia'leh to enter a plea with Marshall Pétain in Vichy, for a pardon. Everyone laughed at this: 'Marshall Pétain will pardon a Jewish refugee from Poland?' – But there was nothing to lose, and therefore she did so.

In the meantime, my illness became worse; lying in a state of high fever, I did not recognize Hersch Kohl at all, who was brought into my sick room.

But as if to make matters worse, suddenly the pardon arrived from Vichy, and the entire house, French and Jews, rejoiced, but I lay in a state of fever. This was on a Friday, and on that same evening, all three of us were already on our way to the freedom for which we had cried so much. When we arrived home, Henia'leh and Aharon Sztrokh laid me in the bed, and sat down to take stock of the situation. What is to be done next? It was decided that we must leave Nice as quickly as possible. On the morrow, Saturday in the morning, Henia'leh went off to the Viennese lawyer we knew, who had helped us so capably during this period of our misfortune, in order to thank him, and to use that opportunity to ask for a liaison to get smuggled over the Swiss border.

With the help of a French jobber, we decided to flee to Spain. We decided to go unaccompanied, even against the advice of others, and even to take along our little daughter Marianne, who had been given over to one of the best Jewish families in Nice, to be sequestered. A scant few days later, the Sztrokh family escorted us to the train station, and wished us well, in arriving at our destination.

This was our parting for the last time with those genteel people, who had grown so close to us, and whom we were fated never to see again.

This time, the trip was even more dangerous than the ride to Nice a half year before this. People were unceasingly being taken off the train. We traveled with great detours and roundabouts, and on Friday morning, we arrived safely in Perpignan, a town in the Pyrenees, on the French [-Spanish] border. We suffered a great deal there, and it was only with miracles that we were able to flee to Limoges, which is more centrally located in the country; another reason for traveling there was because that was the location of a Children's Home [sic: Orphanage?] where we would be able to transfer our little daughter.

Finding ourselves already in Limoges, we then received all of the needed help from the resident Jewish populace, which did everything for us, to lighten the task of getting ourselves settled.

When I was at the *Shokhet's* and talking about various things, we became aware from him that a

Rawa family was living in Limoges, a hat maker [by trade], but he did not know their [family] name; following that, I became aware that this was a friend of mine, going back to *Heder*, and also from the later years of my youth, Mendl Garfinkel, Dark Abraham's youngest son.

Towards the end of the twenties, Mendl left Rawa, and for a specific period of time, worked in Lemberg. After that, because of the [economic] crisis, he emigrated to France, and lived there until the collapse of France. Merely several days before the cease-fire, he had the opportunity to travel from Paris to the more tranquil setting in Limoges, and settled there. His circumstances were very good, and he lived a quiet and tranquil life together with his wife and small child.

This was the case so long as the Germans didn't occupy the so-called 'unoccupied' France, and then the Nazi storm also came and knocked on the gates of Limoges. It began to be heard that, here and there, an individual was seized in the streets, or rousted out of bed.

Since our daughter resided in the 'OSA' Home and since we received a report that she was suffering considerably and was not in good health, we permitted her to be brought to us. Her state of heath truly was deteriorated; this beautiful and pleasing child, now really looked like a pitiful little orphan, this despite the fact that we were alive. Our hearts were bloodied, and our state of quandary knew no bounds. She begged us to keep her with us, and not ever send her away, but this was absolutely impossible. A day did not go by without victims falling, and we decided to giver her over to a convent of nuns. But, to our misfortune, this did not give her any surcease, because [on another occasion] the *Gestapo* found out, through an informer at the convent, and on one day, dragged a little Jewish girl out of there, and because of this, we were fearful and removed her from there, and sent here to a village of wood choppers, about twenty kilometers from Limoges.

At that time, I sat in the little synagogue, following the afternoon-evening prayers, and waited for Henia'leh, in order to go 'home' together. And suddenly, the persona of someone very familiar to me appeared. This, even though the face was obscured by a pair of sergeant's moustaches, his eyes looked very familiar to me. It took a bit of a while for my mind to sort all of this out.

– 'Melech Tziness!' – I spread both my arms out to him. The Tziness family came to Rawa from Werchrata after the First World War. They settled in the '*Zamd*' and did business with the gentiles, like the larger part of the residents of the city.

Mendl Spatzner, a son of their neighbors, who, in the last years of the twenties, had emigrated to Paris, took Melech's oldest sister, Racheh'cheh there, and married her. After that, they took the youngest sister, Sarah'keh there; Melech, however, first came there later, from South America to France.

The joy, of encountering someone of 'one's own' during those unsettled times, was boundless; Again, and again, each day brought fresh Jewish victims. We decided, again, to move off to the Riviera, where Italians resided, and Jews had the possibility of getting along there, and at least temporarily hide themselves from the Nazi murderers. After getting in touch with the Sztrokh family, who lived there, and after they had advised us also to come there, we began to make all the necessary

preparations to be able to get relocated there. But it was not to be. Taking note of the fact that periodically children, who were being supported by a variety of people, would disappear, we began to search out and ferret out the cause of this. We became aware, that through a clandestine path, the children are being taken away to Switzerland; also, that the entire direction of this rescue operation was a certain Herr Solomon, for whose wife, Henia'leh often sewed [clothing]. From the wife of the community Rabbi, Rabbi Deutsch, we got a wink of encouragement to request of Mrs. Solomon, that she should approach her husband, and ask for him to transfer our child to Switzerland. This did not come easily to us, because to begin with, Herr Solomon categorically denied his involvement. He also demanded of Henia'leh that she tell him from whom she heard such a thing. However, she could not tell him this, because Mrs. Deutsch had asked her not to mention her name at all in this connection. In the end, he did promise to do this, but two weeks went by and two transports, in the meantime, already were dispatched, with a variety of children, and we had nothing. Henia'leh began to strongly pressure Mrs. Solomon, who gave her the excuse that her husband had the idea of transporting all of us, and therefore the matter is being dragged out; she, however, did promise, that we would be on the coming next transport.

The call to leave actually did come a couple of days later. Rabbi Deutsch gave us two French [visa?] cards, identifying us as pure Aryans. We acquired a group of children to be their leader and ombudsman. After traveling by train for 14-15 hours we finally arrived at that longed-for city that lies half on the French side and half on the Swiss side of the border [sic: Geneva].

After disembarkation from the train, we first took note of the fact that Solomon himself was with us on the train; he went up to a tall lean French woman, who stood on the threshold of the buffet, who was visually examining everyone, as if she was looking for something. Upon spying him – she approached him and greeted him. In the meantime, the children had disembarked from the train. She took charge of them, and led them through the buffet, without any difficulty, and immediately returned to the platform; hearing from Solomon that two adults also had come, she made an extremely puzzled grimace, but in the end, she made her peace with this fate, and ordered us to go the gendarme on the right, who controlled the inspection of papers. We did so. The gendarme attempted to cause us a certain amount of grief, but we were able to overcome his objections, asserting that we were legitimate citizens. And we passed through.

But until we reached Switzerland, we still had to endure a great deal, wandering in the night, and in the dark, over mountains and through valleys, over fields and through forests, fording a river, holding the child on our shoulders, with the water up to our throats, and in this way, wet and freezing, we crossed the border and, with much good fortune, went over into the hands of the Swiss gendarmerie. Warmly, and with tears in their eyes, they received us, giving us the best of what was possible to enable us to revive ourselves. It was with spasms of tears that we trod on the soil of the Switzerland that was willing to save us.

The Swiss told us that our child was given over to a family, that she remains in contact with to this day; Henia'leh because of her weakened condition was placed in a sanatorium, and I was sent to a small village, not far from the resort city of Davos. In Switzerland we heard that Itcheh Just and his wife Chaya'leh had saved themselves from Holland, and came here.

In May 1945, with the capitulation of Germany, we obtained a certificate to make aliyah to the Land of Israel, and it was only upon our arrival in Tel-Aviv, that we became aware of what happened to that dear family of Aharon Sztrokh, who himself expired from hunger in the camp. In Auschwitz, a couple of weeks before the liberation. Woe unto us, for our loss!

From the Events of the War

By Tova Baumel-Haberman

I found myself in Nemierow at the outbreak of the Second World War in the month of September 1939. After all the guests fled my sanatorium – I closed the business and remained in this town. When the Russians entered, they warned us that we were considered 'bourgeoisie,' and therefore being put on their black list. The told us that they would transfer us about 100 km from where we lived. At the end of the matter, on the 19th day of April 1940, they jailed my husband ז"ל, and exiled him, and I never had the privilege of seeing him again. My daughter, Penina, was with me prior to receiving her graduation diploma, and accordingly, we sent her to Rawa-Ruska to my parents.

On Friday, April 13th at midnight, I was taken out of bed, along with my son Nissan, twelve years-old. The liars promised us that my husband was waiting for us at the train station. Traveling through Rawa-Ruska, my daughter joined us. All of this, as understood, was a lie and a falsehood. I had managed to send our clothing to Lvov to our winter home, because I had planned to flee there. My husband, ז"ל, the planner, had provisioned sacks of flour, spelt and sugar, because we knew that the Russians were only bringing poverty and hunger. I took nothing, because my little son and I were in no condition to carry anything; I reasoned that, in any case, the Russians would take everything away from us. I myself, had on an undershirt and a winter coat, but I did not even have any money. We were brought to Jaworow along with 30 other people, and shoved into a cattle car, traveling for 12 days, not even being permitted to get out to attend to our bodily functions. Everything took place inside the train car. A gentile village woman was there with a dozen children. They put their heads on my dress, and left me a souvenir of lice. My son got sores on his body from them.



Page 348: The 'Villa' of Tova Lieberman in Nemierow. At the left, are standing Yetta Holz and her daughter, Sarah Gittl.

When we arrive in Kazakhstan, to a *Sovkhoz*, we were put into earthen locations full of bedbugs. We slept outside. I worked in a brick factory, made from cow manure and straw. I also worked in pigpens. After five months, they came to the conclusion that I owed them an additional 20 rubles, even though I did not eat by them. Out of deprivation of vitamins, my teeth loosened, and because of this, in exchange for a box of cigarettes that I had received at home, I convinced the doctor that he should send me into the city to see a dentist. After many tribulations and harassments in connection with changing the type of work I was doing, threats on the part of the N.K.V.D., and receiving permission to remain in that same city, of a 100,000 in population – I remained and worked, but was unable to get a salary sufficient to live on. To my great good fortune, my son reached me. For a full year, I continued to receive food packages from home. The diamond ring, that I had brought on my person,

I sold for 60 kg of rye (half straw), and occasionally bought bread in the black market for 200 rubles a loaf. In the fifth year, they took us to the Ukraine.

In Oktobinsk I recognized a Jewish family of noble spirit, and they were of help to me. My son fell ill with a variety of ailments, and even at the age of 17, he got a dangerous case of measles. It would appear that a Higher Authority looked over us. In the year 1945, a year before everyone was liberated, a Jew named Lebwahl from ¯o³ki ew left the Ukraine, and sent me a permit to move to Lvov. A young bachelor, from Lithuania, who in the past was a Yeshiva student joined me, his name was Rimlat (found in Jerusalem) and also the Levin family. I thought that if one were to help others, the good Lord would help that person as well. In Lvov I found ruins, and not a single soul of my relatives and acquaintances. I tried to leave this City of Killing, and after 10 days I reached Silesia, Bytom, and I entered a *Kibbutz* with my son, that prepared the young to make *aliyah* to the *Land*[210]. There, I met Leah'cheh Kleiner, of the good soul, who also helped me and encouraged me. To my joy, I found my brother's daughter, who today is found in Haifa, and together with all the young people, we went over, on foot and during the nights, across many borders, and through Prague, and we reached the American sector in Germany. We were in the Lamfretheit camp. With deliberate speed, I sent my son off to the *Land*, to *Kibbutz* Degania. I also found my daughter, and signed her up for *aliyah* Bet, via France, and we rode to the land on the ship 'Exodus from Europe.' They returned us to Europe to the English camp 'Offendorf.' My daughter worked on the ship as a nurse. She later volunteered for the *Palmach*, and transferred immigrants to Cyprus. I reached the Land at Degania Aleph. My uncle's daughter and her husband received me with a warm heart, and open arms. In May 1948 I reached Haifa and that is where I remained. My son served in all three wars. And he is now a captain in the service. My late husband, Yisroel, was a victim of the cruelty of the accursèd Russians.

My Family

My father ז"ל, Lemel Lieberman was a man of good heart, a scholar, wise, a lover of peace, who pursued peace and fled from honor and recognition. If someone insulted him – a fleeting smile would appear on his lips, and he would explain to us, that in place of getting angry at him – it is necessary to pity him, because all of this indicates a (spiritual) blemish.

Many came to him when they were in need of an arbitrator, and he was responsive to them in the full measure of their desires, and as you can understand, without compensation. He was supportive of the poor, and helped out with loans for straitened merchants. He also helped his three brothers considerably with their livelihood. He, personally, lived modestly, and his desire was to cut himself loose from his many affairs, in order to commit himself to the study of Torah. And my righteous mother. Czyp'cheh, ע"ה, was his helpmeet.

During the time of the Polish régime, he could not derive profits from his many assets, and was compelled to support himself only from rents. My mother ז"ל was a righteous woman, paying heed to every sad sigh and offering advice, food and medicine to all in need: dowering the bride, and visiting the sick were central to her activities.

The education that I received from my learnèd father and good-hearted mother helped me a great

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210 The Hebrew word for this is *'Hakhsharah.'*

deal during the difficult times. His value system – to make do with the least, stood us in good stead in all the instances of suffering we went through.

He would convey lessons to us only through the examples offered by our *Sages of Blessed Memory*, or a line from the *Tanakh*, and with a good word, he would orient us to go in the straight and true path. My brother ז"ל Mordechai, was comprised entirely of a good nature and full of compassion. He dedicated a lot of time and money to the needy. He was a remarkably loyal son, and a dedicated father. At the time I was exiled to Russia, despite the fact that he did not have the means, he was prepared to pay a large sum of money in order to get me released from there. He and his wife were exterminated by the Nazis.

My brother Yehoshua ז"ל, that good and honest man, was preparing to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, and never made it. Together with his wife and son, they were killed in the Janowski camp.

My brother Ben-Zion ז"ל was both savvy and honest. In Rawa, he was taken with my parents, his wife and daughter to the death camp.

My first husband, Israel Baumel ז"ל, was taken to Russia where he died before his time. He had a good soul, was dedicated to his family, and at harmony with his environment. As to his dream of going to the Land of Israel, we fulfilled it, my children and I. It came to pass that we were saved, because the Russians sent me as a bourgeois into a land of exile inside Russia.

It is my wish also to inscribe for eternity the memory of my uncle, Simcha Lieberman ז"ל. He was good-hearted, and full of joy. At the advice of my father ז"ל, he sent his children out of the country, and that is how they were saved. We loved him very much, as if he were our big brother. He, together with his good wife, Yetta, who would host guests, and their daughter Malt'chi were taken to their death.

My aunt Kler'l (Baltszis), her husband Lemel Gortler and their daughter Peshi, the wife of Ben-Zion Ginsberg, the journalist and Zionist activist, were exterminated by the Nazis in Rawa and in Lvov.

The brothers of my husband from Niemerow, Elkanah and Yehoshua, and their sister Rachel, with their families – were also killed by the accursèd Nazis.

In this manner, I raise up the memory of all of them for a blessing, now and forever!

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה!

The One Remaining Alive

By Nathan Zimmerman

When the Germans entered Rawa, immediately after their invasion of Poland – I had, as it happened, just returned from service in the Polish military, which had disintegrated, and

each soldier fled home under his own power. A great stroke of luck for me, as was the case for everyone, was the fact that the Germans did not stay for more than two weeks, and immediately after their departure from Rawa – the Russians came in, and we Jews hoped that with them, salvation had come.

My return to our home, and our bakery, which my divinely spiritual father Herman Zimmerman ran, with my mother Ruzha, ע"ה, was a big help. My sisters who came: Feiga, Esther, Sarah, and my brothers: Izho, Kuba and Edmond together took to the work, and baked bread for the Russian military, which gave us a handsome income.

While my father was alive, the business was good, because he was a quiet and honest man, and also my mother was a modest woman, a good housekeeper, and made a living from hard manual labor.

When, in June 1941, the war broke out between Germany and Russia, I already, for the past month had been a Russian soldier and along with an additional 50 Jewish boys, were quartered in the 'Motetchkis' school, after we had undergone a variety of military exercises in the Siedlice Forest. But as the Germans drew nearer to Rawa – we were loaded into freight trucks and taken in the direction of Lemberg and even further.

My principal good luck, is that I did not do what others did, who jumped off the autos, and fled back home. It is true that I went through a great deal, and suffered frightfully from the daily bombardment of the Germans by day, and from fleeing both day and night, barefoot and naked, torn apart and deprived, in hunger and thirst. Until we finally arrived in Stalingrad. The Germans bombed here intensely as well, and here too, we suffered from hunger, because there was nothing to eat.

After driving the Germans off, in the year 1944, things got a little better for me, because I was placed in a bakery, and so, I had something to eat, and could help others.

In the year 1945, when the war ended, I received a month's liberty and traveled from Leningrad to Rawa. But my happiness over having the good fortune of remaining alive, was transformed into profound sorrow and pain, when I arrived in the city of my birth – Rawa.



Page 349: The Annual Memorial Assembly

I encountered no one from my family, I encountered no one that I knew; all had been exterminated by The Murderous Hand.

I recognized nothing in the city, it is not possible to conceive of what had become of such a city as Rawa!

I went to the cemetery, to the headstone marker on the grave of my father ע"ה – but no trace or remnant of it remained. A great fright fell on me, and not tarrying for even a single

day, I immediately set out for Lemberg, where our entire family had lived for many years.

I found nobody there. And with great pain, I traveled back from Lemberg to Leningrad. Immediately after discharge from the Russian Army, I went off to Poland, and from there to Germany into a [displaced persons] camp.

With help from relatives in America, I was able to travel there, but decided that it would be better to make *aliyah* to Israel, and indeed, it was here that I made a home and family, with a wife and two children, and I am very satisfied.

And so, this is how I remained the only one left out of my entire family, whom I will never forget, and may their memory be consecrated with this writing for all eternity!

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה!

Rawa Young Men in the Russian Army in the Year 1941

By Israel Satz

It was on the 20th of May in the year 1941, when I, along with a group of boys left our *shtetl*, and traveled off to the Russian military. Our parting with the city was very warm, because each of us had spent our childhood years there.

I cannot forget our Rawa, the Rata River, the field expanse near the cloister, the Wolkowica, the Potelycz Forest, and the Jews of Rawa, those on the left and those on the right, the *'Zamd' Bet HaMedrash*, the *Eizerneh Kloyz*, the beautiful synagogue... and especially our beautiful young people with their ardor to be a *Halutz*. And how can we forget our Rawa football [sic: soccer] soccer leadership, Myt'cheh Zimmerman, Hersch Geppert, and our Rawa goalkeeper – Hertz Graff.

During wartime, in the distant forests of Byelorussia, and in the even more distant forests of Moscow, where the war years flung me to, no matter where I was, and despite everything that I saw, I never saw any place more beautiful than my Rawa...

And lo, the day arrived when the war ended, and I received permission, and on the 18th of April 1946, I came back to my home, hoping that my arrival would be identical to my departure; but in this I was mistaken; when I had only exited from the train station, I immediately recognized Proff's house; but there were no people inside it. Everything was boarded up with boards... I began to follow the train street into the city, and on the way, I came to a place, and recollected, that this is where Berkover lived with his 'Café.' And here was Freiheiter's bakery, the '*Jasna Wilia*' and I drew near to the Baron Hirsch synagogue, and it was there that the tragedy of my *shtetl* unfolded before me... that old 'sacred place' had been completely wiped away... it becomes more difficult for me to continue... when I came to the Polish pharmacy, I saw that the entire city lay in ruins; the marketplace no longer existed, the municipal building lies in a heap of stones... and this is how Rawa greets me; nobody greets me with 'hello'... and nobody offers me a '*sholom aleichem*'... and I ask of myself: 'why is it that I, the son of Rawa parents, who remained alive past the predations of our

enemy, German Hitlerism, passes through the streets of Rawa, where the streets are all paved out with the headstones from the old [sic: Jewish] cemetery...' I no longer have the strength to walk around alone, by myself... I return to the station, and I travel off... this was the hardest day of my life...



Page 351: ***Young Men of Rawa in the Russian Army in the Year 1941***

Abraham Szrut and Israel Satz live in Tel-Aviv, Yudl Laba in Australia, Shmuel Fleischer – to this day in Rawa, Abraham 'li Spindler ז"ל fell in Rawa during the war.

The entire part of the street where the houses of worship were, the various Houses of Study, the *Eizerneh* and *Blekhener Kloyz,* is wiped out, and the only thing visible are the desolate solitary walls of the synagogue, which had remained as a reminder of the destruction. The house of R' Joseph Rapoport, where one went to the courtyard, remained intact, but had been turned into a warehouse. On the place where the *Zamd Bet HaMedrash* stood, is a public school, and the place of the gymnasium is overgrown with grass, where horses and colts are raised.

On the *Zamd*, where the following families once lived: Fendrich, Szpazner-Halpern, now stands a marketplace, where the peasantry comes together from the surrounding area once a week.

I would carry on a conversation with Rawa gentiles who recognized me, and remembered my family, and the pain was great.

Later on, I become aware that one of my friends from home has returned; Shmuel Fleischer, the son of Charna the Lady Butcher. He settled in Rawa with his family, where he lives to this day. I traveled to visit him, and together, we traversed the *shtetl*, and looked out over Rawa, as it was left after the war; we had no one with whom to speak...

In the year 1953, I came to Rawa for a month's time with my family. On this occasion, I had the time to show and tell, how Rawa looked at one time, and how it appears today... I would go about for whole days, and converse with the Rawa gentiles, who knew me from my childhood years. I would also collect from them stories about the city, because this is all that remained of our Rawa...

Before departure from Poland, I traveled to Rawa to say goodbye; this was on the 5th of March 1957. Once again, I went around with Shmuel Fleischer through those streets that remained; on the new cemetery, where several headstones stood of Rawa Jews. On the headstone of David Green, I put on 3 stones as a memorial... these were the remaining headstones... then, we yet went to the Rawa mill, once again saw the river and the works... we saw the Potelycz Forest that had been hacked apart, and this is how I took my leave of the city where I was born, that is so deep in my heart forever...



Page 352: An Annual Commemoration Event

How I Saved Myself

By Ruth Haskell

The millions of Jews who were exterminated after being tortured and subject to oppression, were certainly martyrs and heroes, but also the surviving Jews, who were witness to what was happening to their most beloved, and also those who were dependent on their parents, are also heroes in their own right. The burden that they bear is out of the ordinary, and despite this, they move ahead to carry on their day-to-day lives. And now, to the story of how I saved myself:

In the summer of 1942, it was already good to note that the Germans had decided to liquidate the Jewish populace of Rawa-Ruska. The operating transports to Belzec made all of this quite visible; to the extent that there was no basis on which to devise any illusions [to the contrary]. In June, my mother went to one of her maids, who at that time lived in Kamionka Wo³oska, in order to hide me there. After spending approximately a month there, her husband threatened both of us: [that] if we do not immediately leave the place, he will turn us over to the *Gestapo*. And so, having no option, I returned home.

At that time, rumors circulated that the remaining Jews would be put into the ghetto, and later on would be liquidated. This was at a time when my mother hit on the idea, while being torn and puzzled over how to save her child, that the Germans, in fact have no possibility of proving that I, Ruth , was Jewish, and not a Polish, or a Ukrainian girl. All that was needed was to procure papers from a Polish or Ukrainian girl; but this was easier said than done, and especially since one had to pay for Aryan papers with American dollars.

Fortunately, my mother had in her possession 1000 dollars and with the help of good friends, who knew a certain woman by the name of Babizh(a), in Lemberg, she bought from that woman, her daughter's birth certificate, identity card, and other related items. Part of the agreement was that Mrs. Babizh would take me to Lemberg and register me with the 'Labor Office' as her daughter, and to register me as a voluntary worker for Germany. My mother packed up my better clothing, and sent me off to Lemberg to Mrs. Babizh.

Mrs. Babizh had two daughters: Appolonia, whose papers I had bought, and a second daughter whose name I do not remember. Both daughters liked my clothing, and after one week, Mrs. Babizh took possession of my clothes and sent me back to Rawa-Ruska empty-handed. I was lucky that she didn't take back the papers, which had been altered by specialists to show my photographs. Not appearing particularly to be Jewish, I arrived peacefully by train in Rawa-Ruska. In the space of that time, half of those remaining [sic: Jews] had been taken away to be exterminated. The Rawa train station was guarded by Ukrainian police, who knew the local Jewish populace very well, and their great pleasure and duty was not to permit even a single solitary Jew to escape on the basis of Aryan papers.

Abraham Altman, the son of a family friend, who looked one-hundred percent like a 'gentile,' took me to Zhelono Huta, which was presumed to be free of Ukrainian guards, in order that I be able to take the train from there to Przemysl, the recruiting center for voluntary forced labor to be sent to Germany. We arrive in Zhelono-Huta in the morning, and precisely then, when I was getting ready to board the train, a certain Royza Stramer was identified by a Ukrainian guard.

I arrived in Przemysl in the morning, and by midday a band of shakedown artists (*shmaltzovnikehs*[211]) accused me, demanded valuables from me, and threatened to report me to the *Gestapo,* citing to them that I was Jewish. In the first 24 hours, I gave away all the jewelry that my mother had given me. I had some luck, and the next day we traveled to Cracow. As soon as we had arrived, the *'Obersturmführer'* called all those who had been designated to a gathering, and we paraded before him. At that time he noted the fact that I looked like a typical Aryan; blue eyes, blonde hair, which had been dyed, because my mother insisted, that an elegant Polish girl has to be blonde. He asked me if I spoke German, and since I was young and foolish, I proudly announced that I spoke Russian and English as well (Abish Bringer taught me English privately). Assessing my language skills, he advanced me to the rank of his personal servant girl, for the remainder of my stay in Cracow. He made a bad business judgement, because my knowledge of languages was far better than my skills in cleaning the house. Despite it all, he made do with me, until a certain person, a Polish girl, 'took pity' on me and told him that she believed me to be Jewish... 'with concern and regret' he told me, under the prevailing circumstances, he must turn me over to be imprisoned, where I will await my execution... being a devoted 'Catholic,' I requested a clergyman in order to receive absolution for my sins, before I die...My request was fulfilled, and being acquainted with the 'New Testament' and thanks to Fraulein Franja the *'Kosciolna'* who took pity on me, and absolutely wanted to save my soul, not only did I confess my sins, but also convinced the clergyman, that I am truly a Christian... since I had the papers all in order, after confession, I was freed from the dungeon, and along with other Polish workers, sent off on a transport to Germany.

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211 Using the Yiddish word '*schmaltz*' for fat, indicating they aim to grease themselves with the valuables of others whom they shake down.

I arrived at Halle an der Saale' and having a knowledge of German and other languages, I received a post as a translator in the transit camp where thousands of slave laborers from Poland, France, Belgium and other Nazi-occupied lands would arrive on a daily basis. I always lived in a state of fear, that I might yet be recognized by Poles, or somebody else, who might come from Rawa-Ruska into the camp. As it was said, that only Germans possessed a certain level of intelligence. My '*Lagerführer*' was convinced, that I assuredly had certain German ancestors, which gives me the right to be a '*Volksdeutsche*' which was tied up with endless parades, and standing naked in front of countless members of the S. S., of whom it was said they were formidable experts in such matters. What scared me was the conviction of asking the Red Cross for information regarding the ancestors of Appolonia Babizh (this was me) and thereby would have become aware that Appolonia Babizh was born in Lemberg, and that I was a traitor; apart from this, they could have found out that my grandfather Moshe Grauer was a Jew with a long beard. Pretending to be an ardent Polish patriot, who is not prepared to renounce her Polish national identity, I was permitted to remain Appolonia Babizh.

Diagonally across from my camp. Stood a camp of English prisoners of war, and there, there was a group of Palestinian young boys. I took note of that, when I passed by the camp of the prisoners, and one of them addressed me in Polish, with a Yiddish accent, and asked if I was Polish, and I told him that I was Jewish. He immediately let everyone know of this fortunate circumstance, and we were able to boost the morale of the boys, and help them out in various situations. In 'Halle an der Saale' I was liberated by the Americans, and I immediately went to my family in America; I came here in the year 1949. I, the sole survivor of a rather large family consisting of a grandmother, mother, uncles and aunts, with cousins – altogether 40 souls.

Honor their memory.

The Onset of the War

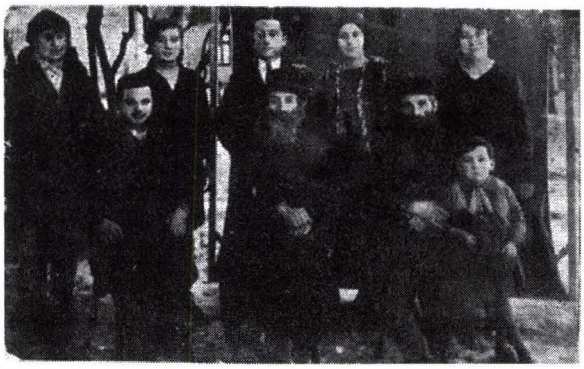
By W. Wagner

It was the year 1939. Germany attacked Poland. The Polish Army, 'The Shining Light' collapsed like a tower of cards. And on the Sabbath before Rosh Hashana the Germans stood at the gates of our city, Rawa-Ruska. The Germans bombed — (hiatus in text)

In the aftermath of the order to do so, we all turned to the gathering place. There, we were kept standing for the entire day, and without food, while at the same time the Germans, and their accomplices the Ukrainians, beat us murderously. Afterwards, they preyed upon the entire city despite the fact that there were no Polish military there, or in its environs. There were a number of people killed among the Jewish populace; most of the residents of the city fled in panic to the surrounding villages.

Along with my family, I fled to the village of Klebany. On the following day, I returned to the city to clarify what was going on there. The city was full of German soldiers, but these were just drafted forces that came from Austria. The soldiers standing beside our home said to me: 'We will do nothing to you, but after us, the members of the *Gestapo* will come, and they will finish off the accounting with you.' and that was the way it happened.

Little-by-little, the Jews began to return to the city. And the Germans began to seize them for labor, murdering them, and forcing the Jews to shave their beards and sidelocks, assaulting them, beating each and every Jew, including in this also the women and children that they encountered. They even issued an order that all the Jews from the age of 15 to 60 had to present themselves beside the train station in order to go out to work, and whoever did not obey this order – was sentenced to death.



Page 355: The Wagner Family הי"ד

[We were sent] to the 'Orphanage.' The place was very tight and suffocating, and in addition to this the *Gestapo* members assaulted us. We remained there until the Eve of Yom Kippur. On that same day, a young woman stole into us, and let us know that the Germans were leaving the city, and the Russians were coming in their place. I stealthily conveyed this happy news to all those kept confined in the auditorium of the 'Orphanage.' However, rumors were bruited about that the Germans were scheming to burn the city along with us in it, before they left. I decided to leave the place. I attempted to escape through the steel bars of one of the windows, but I got stuck between the bars, without the possibility of getting out, or returning to the auditorium. The people in the auditorium pushed me with force, and I fell to the outside, without the guards taking notice of me.

I was received at home with indescribable joy. On the following morning, everyone returned from there to their homes, because the guards had disappeared, and by nightfall, the Germans had left the city, and the Russians entered in their place. The joy of the Jews was great.

At the time that I was already far from our city, I received the news that the Germans, once again, were drawing close to our city, and this caused me a bitter pain, a heavy burden, and a fear for the fate of our family.

1939 – The First German Occupation

By Ada Weichselbaum



Page 357: Moshe Levin הי"ד

Our *shtetl* was subject to bombardment for 8 full days, and it was the train station which was located close to our house, that was principally shot up. Seeing as we were under fire for the entire time, the bombs also fell in the yard of our house. In our yard, we even had a deep large bunker, but it became worthless. People fled to the surrounding villages, but we could not do this, because we had relatives hiding with us, who had fled to us from the surrounding vicinity.

On one evening, when the bombardment had abated somewhat, Frau Dr. Gutman sent a messenger to us, indicating that we should move over to her house, which was further away from the fire. On that same day, pre-dawn, my two brothers, Shlomo and Fyvel, together with my groom, Meir, had set off on the way to Lemberg, because we had heard

that, wherever they entered, the Germans were shooting all the Jewish men. We, the remaining women, went off to the residence of Dr. Gutman, which was located on the Mickiewicz *Gasse*. On that same evening, Sarah Goldstein came to us, and took us to her.

On that night, the train station stood in flames, because of the frightful bombardment, which meant that our house also was burning. Not thinking very clearly, I began to run home. On the way, the Polish military was fleeing in a disorganized way towards the east, civilian people were fleeing in panic, pushing baby carriages, with children in their arms, in the direction of Lemberg. Our house stood without doors and without windows, with people attempting to hide under its walls, and among them, I encountered one of my aunts, who has fled Reisha[212] to save herself at our location. I took her with me, to the Goldstein house, which was located far from the city, almost in an open field.

On that same night, at about 3 o'clock, the Germans entered the city. A scant few hours after the invasion, Poles and Ukrainians came fleeing on foot and by car from the city and surrounding villages, full of lust for plunder. First they got themselves good and drunk in the Jewish saloons, and then, like wild animals, let themselves loose to perpetrate their first pogrom, and act of plunder, in the *shtetl*. They robbed everything: goods from businesses, furniture and valuables from residences. Many were bent under the yoke of their plunder. This went on for 3 full days and nights.

The Germans, from their side, immediately issued an order, that all the Jews must gather on the first day of *Rosh Hashana* on the market square, and there, they will be ordered to clean up the city using only their hands. Jews, who attempted to start their prayers in a small synagogue were dragged out, wrapped in their prayer shawls, to gather up the refuse, that others had gotten together. This is the way a number of days went by, until the Germans, following their agreement with Russia, turned the *shtetl* over to the Russian Army and its rule.



Page 358: Ada Weichselbaum Donates a Torah Scroll in the Name of Her Family
הי"ד

212 Possibly Richky, north of Rawa Ruska

1941 – The Second German Arrival and the Extermination

In 1941, we had the Germans in the city for the second time. First, they arrested Dr. Mandel. After his arrest, they designated a *Judenrat* of well-known Rawa Jews such as Wattenberg the pharmacist, the rigorous leader Noah Gottleib, the Gymnasium teachers Shlomo Weichselbaum (from Borshchiv), Tenenbaum and Szpazner. Frequently these previously mentioned Jews set themselves against the demands made by the Nazi Beast, putting their own lives at risk, up to the last day, until the liquidation of the Jewish populace of the city.

On the 12th of December 1942, at 5 o'clock in the morning, all these previously mentioned members of the *Judenrat* were detained. A few of them took their leave with the surrounding people with the words, 'Stay well, stay alive!' All this, while themselves they were going to a certain death.

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Immediately after occupying the city and creating the *Judenrat*, the Germans also created the 'Jewish Labor Office.' My brother Fyvel, and Israel'keh Marz were appointed to it. Up to the liquidation, of those remnants of Jewish life in the city, they also exerted themselves to do whatever was possible to help the Jewish populace, and especially to do so for women. A pauper's kitchen was also organized by our women, in order to help the poor, and those that did hard labor for the murderers – with a little bit of warm soup. At the head of the kitchen stood: Reizl Korman, Lucia Weissman from Hiiche, and Regina Weichselbaum, my sister.

They also illegally organized a domicile for the sick, and for 'jumpers' (meaning those who jumped off the train traveling to Belzec, and as a result became injured/wounded), or children, whose parents threw them off the train.

Incidentally, the noise of the wheels on these trains, will not stop reverberating in my ears for my entire life. A few numbered Poles, and even some Ukrainians, with a human heart, took these hapless children out of their fields, and secretly brought them to Rawa, and turned them over to the appropriate Jewish hands. Most of these children, sooner or later, ended up in the 'hospital,' being infected with typhus and afterwards died in agony.

My sister Regina, herself became infected with spotted typhus and I had to take her place. The ghetto was at that point locked down, and guarded by the Germans, and I had to get in by going through barbed wire, in order to render some assistance. The hunger and need was frightening, and typhus took many victims on a daily basis.

On the **31st of December 1942,** we found ourselves in the camp on the Rata [River]. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the Germans set fire to the new auditorium on the Rata. My sisters, Regina Einzer, Peppy and Frieda, together were under a very strong guard by the Ukrainians, and were taken out of the blocks to be shot. My sister Regina was the first, and was shot in front of my eyes, and after her the remnant of the women, all together, put into a huge mass grave.

But let us return a bit to recollect what had happened before the 31st of December 1942. A few days earlier, *Obersturmbannführer* Grzimek, the head of the *Gestapo* in the city, legalized all the Jewish

children that were in hiding. He ordered that all the hidden children be turned over, with the promise that they would be legalized. Our happiness at that point was great, especially when they had brought along medication for those among them that were sick. We thought that the Messiah had come; but suddenly, on that day, flames leapt out of the auditorium, and we had a premonition that something frightful was going to happen. My sister Regina went into a spasm, and my attempt to quiet her was without success, as if she had a sense that these were the last hours of her life.

Later on, when we were driven out of the barracks, the *Gestapo* had us arrayed in rows. All of my sisters, and myself were to be found in the first row, but suddenly, I felt a hand on me, to this day I do not know from whom, and it immediately set me into the fourth row. Grzimek, who with the S. S. Chief Spett, was standing at the head of the *Gestapo* during this *aktion*, called out: 'whoever is sick, let him present himself!' Nobody responded. But the murderer saw signs of blood on the foot of my sick sister Regina, and he brutally dragged her out to the car, and shot her with his Browning in the temple. Her cry of: 'Please let me live, I am young!' will not stop ringing in my ears for my entire life, – 'You swine! You sow!' was his answer.

He then ordered the children and the sick to be loaded onto the trucks. My sisters Peppy and Frieda were also thrown up onto a truck in this fashion. Seeing this, I went over to the truck myself, wanting to die with them together, but a scoundrel gave me a blow with his rifle butt, and I was knocked unconscious to the snow.

As the trucks went off, and they began to gather up the dead to be buried, and having found me alive, I was again shoved back into the block. A Jewish driver afterwards told us that the victims were ordered to lie down while still alive, in the pits, and afterwards shot to death with machine gun fire.

To the Pillar of Shame – The Principal Criminals and Murderers in Our City

Stepp, the *Obersturmführer* and police chief, came to Rawa approximately in September [19]41. In October of the same year, he ordered many Jews to be arrested, among them Moshe Levin, and killed them in a bestial manner. On the 10th of December, he 'distinguished himself' by carrying out the *aktion* through Grzimek. That gruesome *aktion* cost the lives of twelve thousand Jewish victims. It went on for two whole weeks. Among others, my acquaintances Yakhess Szaffel and Steinbach were killed, who were shot against the wall of the municipal lavatory. Also, the incineration of the Jewish cemetery was carried out by these two previously mentioned criminals, also the leaders of the Judenrat, Wattenberg and Tenenbaum were simultaneously shot by them.

After the previously mentioned liquidation of the remnants of the Rawa camp, only 26 women remained to clean and wash their effects. At the end of March 1943, *Obersturmführer* Hilda Brandt[213] came from Lemberg, Weilhausen and many other S. S. Men. They registered the remaining

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213 The full name of this individual is Fritz Hilda Brandt.

A German court here today sentenced Fritz Hilda Brandt, one-time Nazi commander of concentration camps in Poland, to eight years' imprisonment following his conviction on charges of responsibility for the murder of over

men, and transported them to Lemberg, and there, they were shot in the Janowski camp.

At the end of March [19]43, Grzimek brought us back into the Rawa Ghetto, after the camp on the Rata had been liquidated by shooting all of the men there to death. On that day, Grzimek and Spett shot the 16 last Jewish policemen. On that night, they ordered all the Jewish houses to be set on fire, because they thought that there might be solitary Jews hiding out in them. These were the houses of Shayndl Zimmerman, Grosskopf and others.

On one day, when I was occupied with sorting out the clothing of victims that had been killed, Gestapo staff brought 2 Jewish young people, whom they found near the train station. Spett, who was now the only ruler in the city, ordered them to be stripped naked and shot at the wall of the municipal lavatory. A couple of days later, Spett brought a very young Jewish girl, Katz, from ¯o³kiew, that the police had dragged out of some sort of a hiding place. Spett also ordered that she be stripped naked, and after he had photographed her in the nude, in all manner of positions, he ordered her shot. He did the same with all of the women who still were working. One trembled in anticipation of his orgies, even more than going into a mass grave.

From everything that I still recall, from before my escape, (one thing stands out) is how he, Spett, with his helper, a *Volksdeutsche* permitted the encirclement of the joint house of Yaakov Ringel and Shmuel Sofer-Aksler, where a few of the remaining Rawa Jews had hidden themselves, permitting it to be set on fire, and those that attempted to save themselves from the flames, were shot down by machine gun fire.

In July 1943, he, once again, dragged together the last, about a thousand Jews from the entire vicinity, and shot all of them dead to the last one.

An eternal obloquy for the German murderers!

Permanent glory to the Jewish martyrs!

Rawa-Ruska Under the Nazi Conquest

By Yitzhak-Kurt Levin

(Excerpts from his book, '*Aliyati miSapatzya*')
... and I wanted life, and I thought:

1,000 Jewish camp inmates.

The court ruled that the 50-year-old former major in the Nazi Elite Guard "was not the man who decided on life or death of the Jews in the Lemberg area" but that he had "collaborated in the big liquidation machinery." He commanded the camps at Drohobych and Boryslaw.

http://archive.jta.org/1953/05/07/archive/ex-commander-of-Nazi-camp-sentenced-for-murder-of-over-1000-jews

How can I get out of Lvov and get to a village in the fields, because we had heard that life there is easier. The pressure of making a living intensified at home, more and more, and I became a burden to my mother, this matter accelerated my decision and my mother's relative Oscar, who worked at the firm of Victor Karmin (dealers in raw materials and residues – part of the Goering undertakings) and was sent to Rawa-Ruska to establish a branch there, stood by me,. He agreed to have me join him on this trip of his there. My mother's first impulse was to restrain me by her hand, but seeing as she saw that were I to remain in Lvov I would have no future – those aged sixteen to twenty-five were more likely ordered into an '*arbeitslager*' – and therefore she agreed to me traveling. My relative and I left from the house and came to the location of that firm. Here, a laden freight truck waited for us, the driver, a Pole, ordered me to hide under the tarpaulin, since I was not carrying any appropriate documentation, and for a Jew – it was forbidden to leave the place where hie lived without special permission. Everyone who violated that rule and was caught – was sentenced to death. When I crawled under the tarpaulin, I was preceded by execrable curses – there were any number of travelers under there like me. Eight people crouched under there. We waited for four hours before the travel commenced, and when we were ready to move, a man from the *Gestapo* came who was a friend of the owner of the business, and he advised that he would be traveling in this vehicle. As understood, he was unaware of our presence inside, and with nightfall, the vehicle began to move.

The ride was not easy at all. When it reached one o'clock in the morning, I suddenly sensed that someone was tugging at me. I came out from under the tarpaulin, because I heard the whispering of my relative. We discussed and agreed that I would jump off during the unloading of the truck, and I would find a shadowy corner and wait there for him. When the ride slowed down a bit, I jumped off, and saw myself to be in a city, a different city, and we were frightened strangers. Our first, decision was to get among the Jews. We headed toward the light of a candle that flickered in the distance. This was a restaurant, and we asked straight away where the Jews lived. The owner of the restaurant opened the gates of the house and showed us a door. We knocked on it, for a long time, and when it was finally opened – we were among our brethren, the scions of our people, who received us with light in their faces. All the members of the family got dressed, and after providing us with food to eat, they began to examine us and inquire about the fate of the Jews of Lvov. We were among the first of the refugees, and we spoke of the life of hell: the pogroms, the extermination initiatives, all of which was news to them. Here, in Rawa-Ruska, there were no such things. Nevertheless, they believed us, because they know the cruelty behind the force of the Germans. Before dawn, we lay down to sleep.

On the following day, after noon, we went out into the breadth of the streets. At first, we conducted ourselves like the Jews of Lvov – we went about stealthily, sneaking from one street to the next. However, when we saw that no one was assaulting us, we walked in a more free manner. What caused us the most wonder, was the plethora of food and its relative inexpensiveness – prices were less than one tenth that in Lvov. This was the first time, after a long time that we ate our fill of bread. At the beginning of the conquest, the *Gestapo* men arrested sixteen Jewish men, who fell under political suspicion, and were taken out to be executed, but since that time, there were no seizures or killings. What was surprising, is that after the Gehenna in Lvov, Rawa-Ruska appeared to us like a

Garden of Eden. The Jews of the city helped us, and treated us with great heartiness.

And if you ask, why was this city privileged, in place of its sister city, the capital, the answer is simple: the appointed German here,, and most of the German and Ukrainian police were bought off with a great deal of bribery. This was not difficult – the number of Germans here was about thirty. And even the *'Judenrat'* here was made up of honest men, who applied their energy and effort for the protection of the general public. And in addition, the *'Judenrat'* here was selected by the populace at large, and there was even an election contest. In the face of all this, I decided not to go to our property in Potok at a distance of ten kilometers from there, but rather to settle down in this city, I was made a secretary to the president of the *Judenrat*.

I lived with honest people – the elder, Kalman Zimmerman, took care of me like a father taking care of his son. As the secretary to the president of the *Judenrat*, I got to see the operation of this organization: it also intensified the burden on the Jews of the city, just as the *Judenrat* in Lvov had, but here there was no thieving and robbery. What was taken – was taken formally, for the good of the leadership of the area – suits, watches, jewelry – that is to say, for the purpose of giving bribes which in turn bought peace. I do not exaggerate when I say that the leader of the vicinity received a new suit every week, and the head of the police received gold, which was his particular lust. An especially focused endeavor was undertaken in connection with social support. Ambulatory services were active, a kitchen for the poor, and the like. In general, it could be said that here *Judenrat* served the Jews, and not the Jews serving the *Judenrat*. After a while, things underwent a bit of a change, which by the standard of the times was an idyll, which did not continue for Mr. Schweitzer, a Jew from Germany, the prior president of the *Judenrat*. This was an unnatural person, who had an insatiable lust for seeking honor. In the days when he was the president, he decreed that he was to be addressed as *Herr Burgomeister*, that is to say, the Lord Head of the citizenry. One of the ordinary people of the city called to him, Mr. Schweitzer, we are not citizens, and you are not the head of the citizenry. When he stepped down from his position, he did not rest, being a troublemaker, an informer, causing injury to everything that his hand touched...

... The *Gestapo* came to Rawa-Ruska, and demanded three hundred Jews for the *'arbeitslager.'* Once again, seizures began by the hands of the Ukrainian police with the cooperation of the Judenrat, causing terrible injustices – it was only the poor that were so seized, who could not redeem themselves from the hands of the *Judenrat*. In the course of three days, three hundred of the torn, penniless and impoverished, were seized. On one of the days of January, of an intense and biting cold, they were loaded onto trucks and taken to Lvov. Their mothers, wives and sisters, gathered in front of the *'arbeitsamt,'*(labor office), and wept the cry of the hopeless, but the hearts of the Germans were like stone. Now, all the efforts of the targeted was to flee the danger of being seized – I did not rely on my own permit pass that I held, and we hid ourselves, my relative and I, for these three days, in a cellar, and after that, I was compelled to find other work, which I did at the first-aid station. The objective of the station was to combat the typhus that had spread through the city, and was causing death casualties. We would walk the city, going from house to house, looking for those sick with typhus, and conveying them to the hospital in Wolkowica, adjacent to the city. And lo, it was then that I saw the poverty at its deepest – dark holes in which human beings and other living

creatures rolled around. And children lying in beds for entire winter days because of the cold, covering their scraggly bodies with shreds of rags.

On my way to the hospital, on a day-to-day basis, I saw the living dead going along – these were Russian prisoners of war. They were dressed in tattered rags, swollen from hunger, most of them utterly exhausted, going to work. A number of them lacked the capacity to walk on their own, and needed to lean on their comrades. And the guards would ceaselessly beat and torture them, and these were not the men of the Gestapo or the S. S., but ordinary German soldiers, who from the measure of their age, were not fit to serve at the front. Beside the hospital was a prisoner-of-war camp – about forty thousand of them were brought there in September. They were given practically no food. With my own eyes, I saw on the gate of the camp, a board on which was a notice in three languages –Russian, Ukrainian and German, which said: eating of human flesh was punishable by death. Jews, who worked in the camp, told me, that cannibalism there was a daily occurrence. And what was the end of these prisoners? After only a few months, only a couple of hundred remained alive. The rest were interred in the Wolkowica Forest – in mass graves covered with earth and snow. There were many instances that we saw dogs that lived beside the road, eating the remains of these soldiers.

Divisions of the S. S. headed for the front would come through the city, and in their passing they perpetrated – pogroms. Rawa-Ruska now took on the appearance of Lvov – the symbol on the hats of the S. S. men, the skeleton of a human head, instilled terror in the surroundings. Even the Poles declined to go out into the streets. On one occasion, I returned at nine o'clock at night, from Dora's house, and I had in hand, a pass that permitted me to go about at night. Suddenly, two S.S. troop emerged from a side-street, and upon seeing the mark on my sleeve, they called out to me. I could not flee, because the distance between us was only several meters. I approached them, and without waiting for their question, I said to them that I was going sick with spotted typhus to the hospital. They ordered that I get away from them immediately – the fear of typhus was the greatest fear among the Germans. Who knows what my end might have been were it not for this minor deception. And it is easy to understand, how happy we were when these divisions departed. And the general satisfaction was appended to the specific satisfaction – on one of the days, when it was my birthday because I returned home, I was advised that a package had arrived for me. I recognized my mother's handwriting on it. I opened it – and inside were three packages, mementos as presents, from my mother, brother, and a letter of congratulations. I was moved to my core, because I could see my mother, laden down with sorrow and worry, fighting for every slice of bread, and here, she remembers to try and liven the spirits of her stepson. A great ray of compassion passed over the dark cloud of my sadness: I am alone, but someone is thinking of me, there is someone who remembers me.

The remainder of what we could do, was like assembling leftovers and junk. In essence, there was nothing to gather, but the green insignia that was given to me, provided some assurance. The important thing was, that I did not go so hungry. And here, on one day, in the afternoon, several *Gestapo* officers arrived. The entire city fell dead in a minute – every

foot disappeared from the streets. Something new was suspected, and was not thought to be good. The Germans, with the assistance of the Ukrainian militia, seized Jews. The new thing about these seizures, is that they grabbed not only adults, but also women and children. From the other side of the window, I saw men and women, their hands tied, surrounded by a substantial guard. Those who were seized were brought to two large assembly points. The hygienic conditions there were horrifying. Several old people and children died that night from the cold. On the following day, after noon, when there were already one thousand two hundred seized people to be found there, freight trucks were brought to the train station, and the cars were loaded up, one hundred to a car, and these were closed and sealed with seals. The train departed in the evening. We asked: where are these seized people being taken. The Germans answered that this was merely a population transfer, and despite the fact that the people of the *Gestapo* tried to keep it quiet, rumors and suspicions circulated without end, and nobody knew anything factual. The only thing we knew, was that the train was traveling to Belzec, whose train station was at a distance of sixteen kilometers from Rawa-Ruska. Out of a desire for some comfort, we arrived at the conclusion that the intent here was to transfer people to do forced labor in the Ukraine. However, the farmers who came to the market day in Rawa-Ruska told, and not with any lack of conviction, that close to Belzec, a factory building had been constructed, in which soap was being made out of the bodies of Jews. The *Judenrat* sent clandestine emissaries to investigate what was the disposition of those who were seized. These emissaries returned and advised that near Belzec, the Germans had erected a number of pens, and a side-rail. The pens were surrounded by barbed wire, and apparently also electrified, and a large chimney stood over one of the pens, from which emanated a peculiar and thick smoke, that carried the odor of burning flesh and hair. This then was the explanation of why this populace was being transferred – a road to the House of Death. This we all now knew, but what we did not know was how the killing was being done, with steam gas, with electricity, or poison gas.

The Jews of Rawa-Ruska, whose lives were more tranquil than that of other communities, were among the first victims of the first extermination aktion. Many days did not go by, and additional victims were added – from nearby communities and those more distant, from Little Poland, both east and west, trainloads, filled with men, women and children, came to Belzec and returned empty, to bring additional victims. We saw that this was a special train – in which the windows were sealed up using barbed wire, and a Star of David was stamped on the doors along with a number. A train of this sort usually had between forty to fifty cars, followed by a car full of gendarmes. At the beginning, this train would come through Rawa-Ruska three times a week, and its appearance would freeze the blood in our innards.

And now the changes of the people in charge of the city also halted – when the appointee was seen as too soft or lenient in the eyes of those who sent him there, another would be sent in his place –and this was the district commander Hager[214], known for the excesses of his deeds against the Jews of Tarnopol. He brought a new staff with him, including a Jew whose purpose was to be an aide to this low-life, seeking his favor. And here were the first of the acts of this newly appointed official: he uprooted the Jews from the three principal streets of the city, forbade the Jews from walking on sidewalks, permitting them only the use of the road. His intent was to say: the Jews are like horses. I was among those uprooted from their homes, being sent from one place to the next. I was enveloped in a sense of being orphaned, and as a support, all I had were my mother's letters and that of my friend Czorny. From a letter of my mother, I learned that my effort to rescue the library of my father was an effort in vain – it appears there was someone who informed that a library had been sequestered in the cellar, and the Germans came, took it out, and sent it to Cracow. From Czorny's letters, I learned that he was driven out of the hospital while he was still sick, but his will to live helped to restore his strength.

Spring, the festival of spring, but in our hearts there is no spring and no festival – close by, the trains travel to Belzec, at a distance are the victories of Hitler, and the victories of the Japanese in the Pacific Ocean, The days of Passover went by me at the home of my relatives in the *shtetl* of Lubaczow, which I had reached by farmers' wagons. My uncle conducted the Seder in accordance with tradition, but his heart was not in it, in the usual manner. His visage relates the words of the *Haggadah* on the redemption and salvation, and the vengeance, and to his son, this is a well of sorrow. And in Lubaczow, there is a pervasive tranquility, only the emblems on the arms of the Jews reminded us of the bitterness of our fate. Because this was a small *shtetl*, off to the side, and there were no Germans in it, there was little local populace, along with a few local citizen officials and gendarmes. But in truth everyone knew that the *shtetl* was still peaceful, just as nearby Rawa-Ruska was, until very recently, and its end would be the same, and the decree that emanated from the *Evil Empire* will not skip over it, and, indeed, it did not.

After the holidays, I sought to return to Rawa-Ruska, but I was unable to hire a farmer's wagon. I said: I will risk the danger, and travel by train. The reason [for the danger] was that Jews, from the outset were forbidden to make use of the train. I came to the station, but the teller refused to sell me a ticket. I went to the German official, and manifesting great desire, I demanded permission to travel.

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214 Gerhard Hager, one of the more notoriously cruel Nazi commanders in Galicia.

I said that the firm needs me without delay. The '*Landart*' took the telephone receiver, and directed the head of train transport to sell me a ticket. It is difficult to describe the perversion of the ticket teller, when I came up to him, accompanied by the leader of the station – the blankness in his eyes from excess dismay, and the silence of his tongue. I arrived in Rawa-Ruska without incident, and here also I was like a center of a sensation – seeing that there was no movie star riding on the train.

... After the Passover holiday, Schweitzer came to the new leader, Hager, and proposed a plan of his own – the establishment of a district *Judenrat*, that will give the rulers additional leverage in extracting more of the capacity of the Jews. The plan found favor in the eyes of the leader, and he accepted it and appointed Schweitzer as the president of this district *Judenrat*. Schweitzer took to him, as an assistant, the father of Dora and Goldstein – this was the name of the Jew that the leader had brought with him from Tarnopol. When the Judenrat in the city saw that Schweitzer had become the master of the situation, it decided to contest him openly. Goldstein, who was not one of the worst, attempted in the hands of the Judenrat, and Dora's father, who saw that the end of this tension was only for the benefit of the cruel enemy, and utilized all of his energy to compromise and ease, However, Schweitzer, who paid no heed to the outcome of his evil doings, incited the Germans against the *Judenrat,* and in so doing, against the Jews of the city. He would disport himself in the streets, beating and intimidating people and inducing harmful contacts one on top of the other. The Judenrat did not have the means to satisfy the appetites of the Germans, whose lusts grew even more intense, abetted by Schweitzer's instigation, like a Satan to the city and its fate. The fleeing sons of the city, saw in the shadows, that the end result of this was a Holocaust, but they did not have the means to offer help. And in the meantime, the Germans looked on at this internecine struggle, openly praising Schweitzer, and secretly adding one form of dissension on top of another.

Opposite the municipal building, in the center of the city, was the old Jewish cemetery. It was here that the deceased of the community were interred up until 1925, at which point the burying ceased because of a lack of space. It was here that the families of the communities lay – there were old gravestones here, going back distant generations, and there were also gravestones that were new, from contemporary times, old and new, conveying the history of the city. However the eternal sleep of those in the ground appears to have disturbed the sleep of the Germans – who could not stand the peace of mind of Israel, even if they were dead.

A decree was issued by the district leader Hager, and the Commissar of the city, Schtrochhold, to tear down the cemetery, to plow up its grounds, and to put through a road paved with the headstones. And so Schweitzer arrived, and said that his finding was – that the Jews worked every day of the week except Sunday, so they should work on that day to tear down the cemetery. His finding was immediately accepted by the same lowlife of the cruel masters, and on the next Sunday, all the Jewish men of the city were ordered to appear in the old cemetery – while Ukrainian militiamen surveyed them with peered eyes, so that no man among them could wriggle out of this destructive work. And so, the Jews of the city stood there, and with their bare hands, tore down the graves of their fathers and forefathers, parents, relatives, and generations upon generations of the scions of their city. Our hearts were like a vessel filled with shame, our eyes ran with tears, as our

hands were striking heavy hammers, splitting up the grave markers of stone. The German scum, and their lackey Schweitzer, circulated among us, and did not stint on uttering curses and insults. The Jews looked at them with darkened visages as if in mourning, seeing themselves entrapped by sorcerers – the rulers on one side, and the populace on the other – their hearts expand over their boundaries out of sorrow and anger, yet their mouths remained sealed. There was more than one instance when the stone of a grave marker was uprooted, that it revealed both bones and skulls, and eye sockets that seemed to ask: children, children, why are you assaulting your ancestors in this way? I saw in the eyes of a father, who found the grave of his child, digging, and bringing up his bones, sequestering them in a sack in order to re-bury them in the new cemetery. I swore that I would never return to this work of destruction again, even if they take my life.

In those same days, I was engaged in the warehousing of wrapping materials. Warehousing – is a nice word, but these wrapping materials, the explanation for them was that they were a collection of worn out rags that were bunched together, that had been gathered from garbage heaps. I sat between piles of these rags like a person that didn't care. I did not have the heart to tell the workers bent over before me that they should work – because they were hungry and exhausted, and in reality, what did it matter to us – because in essence we did not believe that someone or something would save us from sliding into the abyss of extinction. And the days were days of solitude – whatever comfort that I got from the love of solitude dissipated as well. Dora, from that time forward, began to work for the German firm in the Wilhelm Stickel building, and she was of a different spirit. And on one occasion, I came to her house and found a German officer sitting at their table. From that time onward, my foot never crossed their threshold.

I said in my heart that it had been a half year since I've seen my family, and I will make the attempt to travel to Lvov. And that is what I did. When I appeared as a surprise at the house, both my brothers jumped on me, and out of sheer joy, danced around me like Indians. I fully took in the atmosphere of the house. And indeed, it was an extremely impoverished household, but a household nevertheless. The city, Lvov – how it had changed since I had left it! Life was difficult beyond all difficulties, but there was some semblance of order. This was the period, in which the Germans labored to squeeze out the last of the capacity of the Jews, and for this reason, gave them some surcease. It was like s sort of recess-break after the extermination initiative of the month of March, during which time, tens of thousands of Jews were seized, and taken to the House of Death in Belzec. But even these days of relative quiet, were days of great want – every face I saw in the street – was a peculiar one, or shrunken, or swollen [from hunger] – these signs of hunger and poverty, were these not the result of not having been able to eat our full for over a year? And I could not stay in Lvov for more than a very few hours – because on that same day, I was under orders to return to Rawa-Ruska. Before I left, we decided that my mother would try to find me work in Lvov, and thereby I would be able to reside amongst them.

And in Rawa-Ruska, the terrifying tension grew and intensified. Schweitzer was carrying on in his usual fashion, as always, contriving assaults and harassments. He swaggers about, and threatens people by saying that the Germans will exterminate all the Jews in the city, and he himself will assist them to dispatch 'these accursèd useless burdens.' All presents and representations that were sent

to the officials were sent through his hand, and he – after he took a portion of it for himself – would distribute these offerings as he saw fit or pleased him. It was in this way, for example, that a quarrel arose between him, and the officer of the guard, Klein and for this reason: he skipped over him, in dividing up these 'gifts.' So what did Klein do? He decided to assault the Jews of the city, traveling for a few days to Lvov, and returning with the *Gestapo* officer Mannsfeld, who opened an investigation into the conditions in the city, and after he left, everyone understood that a great evil was brewing and getting ready to come.

And in the meantime, the trains to Belzec are going and returning, and continuing to travel – filled with entire communities, from near and far, now going through at the rate of three of four trainloads a day. The meaning of this is – fifteen thousand Jews are transported daily to the House of Death. The July sun is searing, and the transported Jews, shoved around and crammed into the cars, covered in sweat, wail and beg for a drink of water. And as soon as someone gets near to them with a bit of water – he immediately is felled by a bullet from the guard. And there were not a few who could not vanquish their compassion, and shamed their souls and fell when abiding by their love of the human being's form. And the columns of smoke from the House of Death in Belzec curl, and rise upward – it is like a Moloch that swallows the thousands of Israel on a daily basis, entire communities, from the vicinity of Cracow, Warsaw, from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and even Greece. In the city, the first of those who fled (the trains) began to appear – these who tore out the restraints on the doors or the bars on the windows on the death-trains, and jumped off while the train was moving. They would come wounded, and cut up. When these sort of escapes became more prevalent, the Germans posted police on the roofs of the train cars, and these police would shoot at the jumpers. The length of the rail line, was strewn with corpses – those who were killed by the jump itself, or from the shooting of the rooftop police. Inside the death-cars, the bodily functions of life were carried out by people driven mad with terror. There were mothers that abandoned their children and jumped – even though they knew they were fleeing from one death to another. And the remnants of the communities that were, at that hour, spared from death and stayed in their locations, did not know the fate of those who were taken away, and when the news reached them that they were taken to a House of Death, they did not believe it. Even when I was in Lvov, when I told about what was going on in Belzec, those who listened to me said that I was exaggerating. And if this was the case in a community near to the House of Death, like Lvov being one – it goes without saying what the viewpoint was in locations that were far away. And over and above this, I would receive letters of request from my acquaintances in Lvov, asking me to travel to Belzec to see how their relatives were doing. What could I answer them?



Page 363: Part of the Rawa-Ruska Émigrés at a Commemoration.

And here, that very train came to Rawa-Ruska and drew to a halt. The Jews that worked at the station brought back terrifying news: the train is standing in the station, and its cars are empty. In the blink of an eye, the streets emptied out, and panic seized the houses – go hide, go hide, but in reality there were no

hiding places. I said we should flee the city rather than stay there. At that point, I walked to Dora's house, that was within walking distance – I went to say goodbye. This was the custom in the ghetto, because before the extermination initiatives, one would go to relatives, friends, acquaintances, and take [formal] leave of them. Dora's parents were taciturn people. As to Dora – they put their trust in the firm where she was employed; as for themselves, they had faith in her father's reputation. I took my leave of them and left. In traversing the city, I saw that it was surrounded by gendarmes. Their helmets glinted in the sunlight. It appeared that I had been too late to effect an escape. I retraced my footsteps, and went to the warehouse where all the rags were stored. In the city, the extermination initiative was already underway in full force and in all of its cruelty. From the distance, the cry of the Jews being dragged were intermingled with the hoarse shouting of the drunken Germans and the shots they were firing. Inside the warehouse of rags, the workers stood and did their job, not knowing anything. And truthfully, they had become inured to the screams of the those being taken, and the shouting of their assaulters, and whoever didn't know, could infer that this was an extermination initiative, and thought of it as a daily occurrence. However I, who knew the truth, the appearance of these workers, who do not know that they are standing face-to-face with annihilation, sobered me up. I told them what was going on, and asked them not to panic. The warehouse itself was in a square that was populated by Poles and Ukrainians, and was shoved off in a corner of a side street. I closed in the workers with doors locked from the outside, and I went in through an inside opening. After directing them to enter underneath the piles of filthy and vermin-infested clothing, and the specialist guarding us, on a pyramid of washed rags that were close to the wall, and we went in under the ragged heap, in a manner that we would be able to discern what was going on out in the street through holes, that led to the terminal. We saw: at every little hour, a group of Jews would go by, men, women and children, and after them came a German guard, beating them cruelly with their rifle butts. All were driven into the square, a distance of about three hundred meters from where we were hiding. Several hundreds of people were so bunched together – the cry of the women and wailing of infants were intermingled with the hoarse shouting of those loathsome gendarmes, and the groups grew larger in number, until the entire square was filled. It was horrifying to see the elderly Rabbi, wrapped in his prayer shawl, wearing his phylacteries, being beaten and buffeted around, but even more horrifying was the appearance of mothers who held onto their babies, to shield them from the rifle butts.

And here we saw the Ukrainian militia enter into the courtyard of the warehouse. They searched every corner of the courtyard, even looking for holes. But not finding a soul, they went their way. And now, the two of us descended from the pyramid, and we too hid ourselves in the sloping heap of rags. My friend, expert at classification, aged twenty-five, had only one question in his mouth that he kept repeating over and over: why, why, why? The seizures continued through the night, and the reverberations of the outcrying pierced the otherwise silence of the city. With the breaking of dawn, I felt that my sorrows, that were heard by me until now, are not urging me on, because I was compromised by fate – I could no longer sit in hiding, and shook myself out from under the heap of rancid rags, and pushed myself through an opening out into the courtyard. I climbed over the fence, and hid in standing corn. The morning dew chilled my fevered face, that was incensed by my sorrow. I was totally focused – on the silence around me. I slithered over to Dora's house, that was not far from here. I reached and sneaked up to the window, listening. I did not have the nerve to go inside.

And here, I heard her parents conversing. I went inside, and Dora's parents received me happily. They told me that Schweitzer and Goldstein were the first ones taken, and that they themselves had been taken, however during the night, they were let out, and instructed to return in the morning. Dora's mother was full of hope, however Dora's sister cried out of despair. Her father, Mr. Tisch, called me into a nearby room and said to me: 'Our death is certain, but I am unable to flee. Because if I flee, they will kill off the entire *Judenrat*. It was Schweitzer who instigated these troubles, and I must bear the consequences of his predations.' He explained to me, that the Gestapo specifically wanted him killed, and he asked of me, that I should go to Dora, and soothe her, and tell that her parents are all right. And in this connection, he gave me a letter to turn over to Dora, if both of us should survive after the extermination initiative. After this, he donned his prayer shawl and phylacteries, and prayed the very last *Shacharit* service of his life. A child of the night, completely whitened, and now he stood and confessed his sins to His Creator, begging forgiveness for his transgressions.

The extermination initiative, which had been halted for a few hours, started up again. I parted from the Tisch family, and went out into the street, like one going out to confront death. In order to reach the place where Dora was hiding, I was compelled to traverse the entire city. In rolling up the sleeves of my shirt, I covered up the insignia, and trusting to my instinct, I walked on, eschewing the use of the Jewish streets. My sense of sorrow was never as intense as it was now, but at the same time, my sense was focused on a purpose, as if I was entirely eyes and ears. I was already on the far side of the city, and here, a young Ukrainian jumped behind me from the corner of a house, grabbing me by the throat, in order to turn me over to those seeking our lives. Without hesitation, I kicked him in the stomach and fled. It was a close call, not falling into the hands of the Germans. Beside a fence, I saw men and women sitting with folded hands – being guarded by Germans and Ukrainians, who stood ready to take them to the gathering place where they were to be admitted. I slithered along and hid myself in tall grass, crawling along in it, until I arrived at another side street, and this is how I reached the building of the firm, in which Dora worked. In the yard, a Polish worker known to me, invited me in. I asked him to call Dora. He replied to me that she had gone into hiding, and I said to him, that he should find out how she is, on behalf of her parents, who are currently securely in their residence, and I also asked him to keep a beneficent eye on her welfare, to save her. I went through gardens and over fences to determine the welfare of my relative. I did not find him in his home – apparently, he had hidden himself in his office. I took a bit of food, to bring to the people hidden in the warehouse. Along the way, I found an iron horse shoe that was thought to be a good luck sign. However, fate was toying with me – I reached the warehouse stealthily, and pushed myself inside, distributed the food among the hidden, and advised them that the initiative was finished. And, yes, even though it was finished, it also ended the lives of thousands of the Jews of the city – the train took them to Belzec. And after seeing – that the train began to move, the hidden ones came out of their holes. Out of ten thousand Jews in the city, only three thousand remained. There was not a family that the Germans had not torn apart, or that did not lose a life, or lives, from its body. A pall of death settled on the community, and enveloped it in mourning. And the remnants went scurrying about the streets, as if pursued, in mourning, a wraith of a human being and his shadow. Here and there lay the bodies of those shot during the height of the initiative. Doors that had been broken through and fragments of shattered windows rounded out the appearance of the destruction and its

results. The thousands that had been seized, between that day and the next, would die in the Houses of Death, and in a tall column of smoke emanating from the smokestack at Belzec, the stench of their burnt flesh will be carried into the air, leaving no trace or memory.

... after the extermination initiative, I was enveloped by a spirit of resignation – did we not know that whoever escaped today, would be caught tomorrow, and whose end is to be transformed into smoke from the smokestack of the crematorium? In our own eyes we saw ourselves as having been sentenced to death, but whose day of execution has been deferred. For is not all of Diaspora Poland to its borders, today just one large cauldron of death for its Jews. Before our eyes, the trains continued to roll to Belzec, and the reverberations of its rolling wheels echoed in our ears: today them, tomorrow you.

With all this, a few of the remnants in the city attempted to escape. However, not one of them believed that he would be so lucky as to survive the war, but said in his heart: let me lengthen my life a bit, and what will be will be! A panicked purchase of passports began, counterfeits, and pretending to be Poles, and sometimes Ukrainians, traveling to Cracow or to Warsaw. There were those, who, in the guise of being non-Jews, registered to travel to Germany. You can understand that the road to rescue in this manner was open only to those whose physiognomy and pattern of speech did not reveal them to be of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that their means and support were conventional. It is clear that the escape of womenfolk was easier than that of men. To all appearances, if a woman appeared with her hair colored yellow, or a man with moustaches grown long in the style of the Slavs – we knew that these were Jews getting themselves ready to flee. These were not days in which the following saying was considered good: –You (male) or you (female) – look like a real Aryan. The *Gestapo* was aware of this strategy, and doubled up its guard on all trains. An identity pass was demanded at practically every step, and men were compelled to show that they were not circumcised. Every suspect was detained and examined, and if revealed to be a Jew, was shot on the spot. Despite all this, there were hordes who did manage to escape on Aryan papers. The following sorts of papers were in demand: papers permitting travel because a husband had arranged a transfer to a suitable country, a birth certificate, visa permits both from before and after the war. These all became available for sale for tens of thousands of gold pieces. As is understood, it was necessary to know the source of the effective forgeries, so that they would not be seized by impostors who flourished in large numbers.

I decided to travel to Lvov to seek the advice of my mother, as to how we might save ourselves. This decision became a compulsion after the news was made known that Rawa-Ruska was '*Judenrein*,' meaning [ethnically] cleansed of its Jews, because, the *Gestapo* suddenly burst into the city, and seized the remaining Jews. Whoever succeeded in hiding, and exited from his hiding place, was immediately killed by the Ukrainian police, or if they feared coming out of hiding, they died in the agonies of starvation. I thought that if the Germans were to continue these actions of extermination in this manner, up until the winter, there will not remain a single living Jew out in the open in all of Minor Poland. To the pain of our soul, this thought actually came to pass, and I erred only in a few months. But even knowledge of this end did not diminish to desire to live. I said I would get to Lvov, and what will be will be. Nevertheless, I would, in these final months, be traveling to Lvov in

connection with the firm's business. I forged a pass for myself, to obtain permission to take a train trip, and on occasion I was assisted in this, but in doing so, I was exposed to unreasonable danger. For this reason, I would travel in cars that were ordered up. It was only by happenstance that I would recognize a German driver, Weichmann was his name. Occasionally, he would exact a fare from me for the trip, and take me to Lvov. During the trip, we would engage in conversation about a variety of subjects. He revealed a favorable disposition to Jews, and drove me with affection. A few days after the extermination initiative in Rawa-Ruska, I came to him and asked him when and if he could take me to Lvov. He said to me: tomorrow, I will gladly take you. I did not have a place to live, and I slept in the office beside the highway. With the coming of dawn, Weichmann stopped in front of the office, and gave a long whistle. I came down, and got into the car, and immediately behind it, a plume of smoke issued forth. Along the way Weichmann asked me: 'Do you know what they are doing to the Jews and where they are being taken?' I replied: 'I know, and to my sorrow, I know more than I need to!' He groaned and said: 'My lad, I am ashamed to be a German. This blot of shame will never be erased from the pages of our history, and our punishment will be a bitter one' I fell silent. When we arrived in Lvov, we parted, and made up to meet at five o'clock in the evening, where beside the Bristol Hotel – there the car would wait to take me back to Rawa-Ruska.

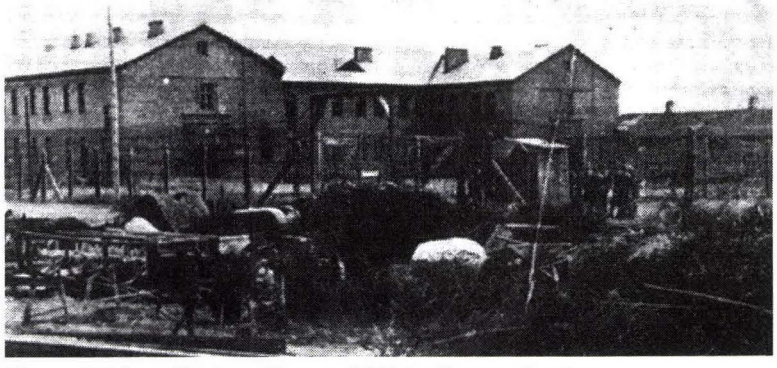
I walked slowly to the Jewish street. The day was in August 1942, and the city was covered in green profusion. The Jews that I saw in the streets seemed exceptionally moved. My mother was happy above all to see me – because she already knew of the extermination initiative in Rawa-Ruska, and told me that her gut-feeling, was that she not be earlier in calling for me to rush to come to Lvov.

Rawa Ruska As an Extermination - Undertaking

By Yekhl Meiseles
Translated from French into Yiddish

For Russian, French, Belgian and Italian Prisoners of War
Stalag - 325

Our landsman, Ephraim Schreiber, who lives in Paris once stepped out as part of a demonstration march in the Parisian streets. The paraders, dressed in the captured clothes from Nazi camps, carried large transparencies [signs?] bearing the letters:



Page 366: Stalag Camp 325 in Rawa-Ruska

One of the marchers who was demonstrating told him that there exists in France a society of French and Belgian prisoners, who in the year 1942 were concentrated into the 'Stalag 325' extermination camp in Rawa-Ruska. From time-to-time, they publish a bulletin,[215] in which memories of those gruesome times are presented. The following chapters are fragments from those mentioned bulletins.

... Rawa-Ruska, the name which must not be permitted to sink away into forgetfulness, and must occupy a prominent place in the martyrology of humanity in the same row as Dachau, Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen and other known places of Nazi bestiality and extermination.

During the course of that unfortunate summer of 1942, in that terrifying extermination and torture camp, lying at the deepest point of former Poland, more than tens of thousands of Russian, French, Belgian and Italian prisoners of war, underwent the worst inquisitorial torture and degradation that human imagination is capable of conceiving.

Philip Masson: ' History of the Second World War, Volume 51, November 63.

In March 1942, the German Senior Commander decided that somewhere, in the Polish Protectorate, he would establish a disciplinary concentration camp, at as great a distance as possible from German borders, in the vicinity of Lemberg:

[Its purpose would be]

1) 'To energetically fight against the epidemic of escapes of French and Belgian prisoners of war from the prison camps in Germany' and;

2) 'To immediately choke off the start of any attempt to sabotage the efforts of the German war economy, by resigning from jobs working together with the German Reich.'

The camp existed in Rawa, and was emptied of Russian prisoners of war, to accommodate the captured French and Belgians, who served as Gaullists, or just general opposition to the Nazi régime, so-called 'hard-heads,' unwilling to help out with the final German 'victory.' By doing so, they paralyze the German war machine, and create demoralization among the other prisoners. 'Therefore, they lose the right to have a decent human existence, in the midst of a cultural European society.'

Approximately twenty three thousand French and Belgian prisoners of war spent the summer of 1942 in that frightful extermination camp. Only three thousand emerged from there alive.

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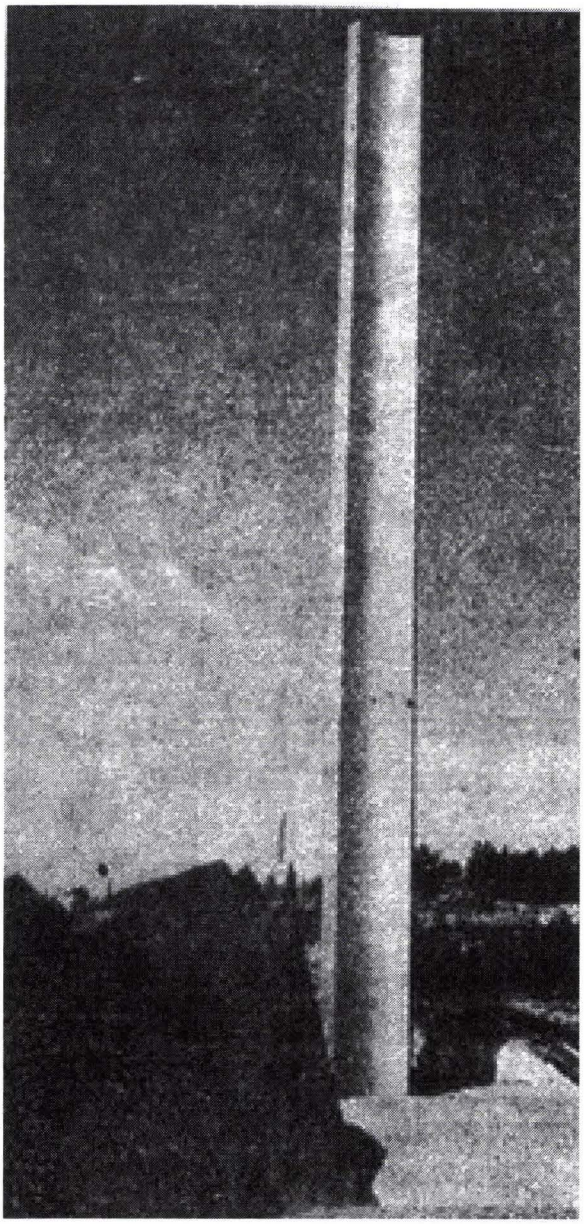
[215] Author's Footnote: Memoire present par "CEUX DE RAWA-RUSKA"!

The Triangle of Degradation and Death

With lightning speed, the word 'Rawa-Ruska' became the word of horror for every prisoner of war in the *Stalags* of Germany and Austria. Prisoners stopped making attempts at escape, and others began to try and get off the list of those to be deported to Rawa-Ruska, being more serious in their labor, out of fear, so as not to suddenly find themselves lying somewhere deep in an unknown land, at the other end of a burned out Europe.



Page 367: The Pillar of Remembrance at Yad VaShem

At that time, Galicia had the tragic privilege of being the most unfortunate venue of human suffering, that had ever been know throughout the entirety of human history. Centuries-long ethnic and nationalistic antagonism of Poles against Ukrainians, and both against the Jews – a thousand times more virulent than that towards each other – now transformed the land into a gruesome arena of death and extermination.

After the Germans had occupied the area of Eastern Poland, their overt ruler over life and death in this area was the'Führer,' that fully absolute dictator Himmler. He immediately designated this area as a '*Judenkreis*,' and transformed it into one enormous ghetto for eradication and extermination. Since 1941, the '*Sonderkommando*' of the S. S. had moved to the systematic eradication of all the Jews in this area, by shooting, drowning, and asphyxiation by gas. In Lemberg alone, in the course of only a few weeks, over one hundred thousand Jews were murdered out of a population of four hundred thousand.

The unfortunate Jewish populace of Rawa, in that summer, fell from 9 thousand to 3 thousand.

In the year 1942, after the adoption of 'The Final Solution, all of Galicia was transformed into one great 'Triangle of Death,' which stretched from Auschwitz to Treblinka and then Belzec.

The eradication of European Jewry now took on the character of a purposefully planned industrial undertaking. In Treblinka, the Jews were murdered by gas, in old sealed freight-trucks; in Auschwitz and

Belzec – using Zyklon B. Their bodies were buried in mass graves. Later on they were incinerated in giant crematoria.

After a trip of 5 days, in sealed cattle cars, selected prisoners of war designated for extermination were brought to Rawa-Ruska in March 1942. We found ourselves in Stalag 325 in Rawa-Ruska, encircled with very heavy barbed wire.

Officially, our camp was called Stalag 325, which became reserved for the prisoners of war from Soviet Russia, and in which more than 290 thousand Russians were exterminated. They were murdered there during the winter of 1941-42, in order to free up the Stalag for the transports of Belgian and French prisoners of war.

The first convoy of French and Belgians was allocated the task of gathering up the bodies of the murdered Russians, and to turn them over to the Jews of Rawa-Ruska, who were forced to carry away and bury them in mass graves, not far from our Stalag.

The fate of the French and Belgian prisoners of war in Stalag 325 was no better than that of the Russians. In order to break their will from offering any resistance, the Germans employed all manner of physical and psychological methods of force that were at their disposal, incorporated into the total extermination.

In April, the Allies received the first reports from their agents about Stalag 325 in Rawa-Ruska. In the broadcasts from Radio London, our Stalag became known as 'The Stalag of Protracted Death.' Only after Radio London threatened repressions, was a Red Cross commission permitted to inspect the camp in August 1942.

The commission discovered that a 'genocide' was being carried out in the camp. Their findings made a shattering impression on everyone who even tasted a mere drop of that knowledge. The commission also became aware, that the Nazi camp Commander had declared: 'I will transform all of Rawa-Ruska into one mass grave!'

... Apart from this, we also became the witnesses to the most terrifying genocide, ever known in human history. Because of our work beside the train track in Rawa-Ruska, we obtained the opportunity to witness the passing through of 4-5 long trains, packed full of Jews from all countries, who were being taken to be gassed in Belzec. From one such train, a young lad shouted out to me:

'I am a Parisian. I am being taken to the slaughterhouse!'

It also became possible for me to be a witness to a frightful pogrom against the Rawa-Ruska Jews. At that time, thousands of men, women, elderly and children, were killed. On a certain night in July 1942, we heard uninterrupted gunfire for the entire night. In the morning, we saw the Germans, with bayonets affixed to their rifles, chasing after, and searching for Jews. Later, we buried these unfortunate victims in mass graves. Many of these bodies still moved with life, on the 'Wolkowica' hill.

Apart from this, feral pigs and wild foxes roamed freely in the surrounding forests. There were many instances where Jews, who managed to save themselves from the Nazi bullets, were brought down by hungry beasts.

In one instance, during the summer of 1942, or 1943, after the ending of the incineration of the bodies in the forests between Rawa-Ruska and Lemberg, the Germans took us on the roads of the '*Toten-Brigade*' to Lemberg. On our way through the forest, we counted not less than 45 mass graves that were crammed full of Russians, French, Belgians, and Italians, in uniform. We were forced to burn them all, and bury the bones in the fields, exactly as we did later with those who were killed in the Janowski camp. At that time, the graves were covered with grass and camouflaged with branches, which were cut down from the trees in the forest.

... On the First of June 1942, a major murder-*aktion* took place directed against the Jewish populace of Rawa Ruska. A thousand men, women and children that had been gathered together from the surrounding cities and towns, were murdered in that *aktion*. When, on the second day, we were led out to do the work, we saw around us that women and children lay dead in rivers of blood. They had been stabbed through and through with bayonets. We buried them in graves 20 meters from the municipal hospital, and 300 meters from the highway to Lemberg, that way that led to the world...

In the fall of 1942, several months after the first visit of the commission from the International Red Cross, our Stalag was moved from Rawa-Ruska to the Citadel in Lemberg.

...'No pity for those who are not of us! Everything must belong to us!' That was their mantra. In the name of that mantra, they exterminated tens of millions of people, and six millions of our nation.

To forget – means to betray humanity! And whoever has within them any form of knowledge [of these times] must not forget until they draw their last breath'...

Translation of the Following Title Page (Page 369)

Inside the black box is an inscription that says "A Memorial Candle to My Father's House

Immediately to the right is the title, "My Father's House."

Towards the bottom is the following biblical quote:

He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children
and the hearts of the children to their fathers...

(Malachi 3:24)

בית אבי



והשיב לב־אבות על־בנים
ולב בנים על־אבותם...

(מלאכי ג, כד)

The House of My Father

By Lipa ben Pesach Altman

I am not a writer, and I am not experienced in the writing of memoirs. However, I will attempt to describe, to the best of my abilities, the home of my father and mother, ז"ל and the entire family – for the sake of those sons and their children who want to know about the roots of our family. I was the oldest child of the family, and after I grew up – here in *The Land* – I became aware of how to evaluate the goodness of that honest and strong, and unusual character of my father ז"ל.

My father, Pesach, was the only child of Beinusz ז"ל Wasuvla; and my mother, Sarah Reizl, was a daughter of the extensively branched Freiheiter family, which had a large bakery in the city. My father was compelled to 'eat *kest*' for two years under the aegis of the parents of my mother ז"ל, but upon understanding his role as a husband and a father, who was responsible for his family – did not want to be dependent on the table of grandmother Shlom'chi, and began to learn the bakery trade. After a short time, he bought a house with a bakery oven in it, across from the courthouse, and became independent.

During the First World War the authorities forced us to work on the Sabbath. My father came before the Rabbi, R' Joseph זצ"ל with the question: 'What is to be done?' The Rabbi ruled [as follows]: One must not be rebellious towards the rulers, work on the Sabbath, but not to derive any personal gain from the profits. In accordance with the Rabbi's behest, my father distributed the larger part of the revenues among the workers, giving a substantial sum for renovating the city mikva, and also to the 'anonymous giving' charity for the poor. My father never spoke of this; I heard this from our neighbors, and our workers. When the Russians drew near to the city, my father took his entire family, consisting of six souls: my brother Shlomo and Chay'cheh ז"ל, and separated for long life, myself and Tzila, and we left the city as war refugees, and reached Prague – the capital of Czechoslovakia.



Page 371: The Altman Family הי"ד

My father was the only one of the refugees from Galicia who, during the weekdays, prayed in the synagogue of the MaHaRa"L. It was important to him to be concerned that on a daily basis, the

afternoon and evening prayers would be recited there, and for this purpose, he did not stint whether for effort or expense.

When my brother, Leibusz ז"ל was born, he needed to arrange for the circumcision ritual, and set it up to take place in the synagogue of the MaHaRa"L, in which an event of this nature had not taken place for decades. There was a great reaction to this event, and because of this, my father was treated with respect and affection, and as a form of recognition, he was nominated to the role of *Mashgiach* to oversee the kashrut of the baking of [Passover] matzos for the city.

My father concerned himself with assuring that I and my brother Shlomo ז"ל should continue our religious [sic: sacred] studies, in the manner we had followed in Rawa, and because there were no teachers, my father would fill the role of *Melamed*, and added to us, an additional 3-4 children from the vicinity, doing this for no monetary compensation.

In the year 1917, we returned to Rawa, and once again, started up the bakery. My father sent me to study with 'Tall' Aharon Leib, the *Melamed*, who did not have the approval of the 'Belz *Hasidim*;' but he took no account of their opinion, because he knew this *Melamed* to be good. During this period, our economic circumstances were good, and my father, in order to discharge the commandment, of in-gathering guests, brought home, almost every day, after morning prayers, guests who came from the courtyard of the *Rebbe* of Belz, receiving them in a most gracious manner. My mother would prepare a good repast for them, and when they left, they received a respectable donation.

My father attempted to educate us in the spirit that, in its time, pervaded all the homes of the Belz *Hasidim*. He would reiterate, and inculcate into us: 'it is your responsibility to make do with less, and to hope that it will always be good, to be in harmony with your environment, to not be envious, and not to hold a grudge, and to deal with everyone in a just manner.'

During the long winter nights, after evening prayers, it was his custom to sit with us in the '*Alte Kloyz*,' by candlelight, and teach us a chapter in the *Gemara*. He helped us to overcome those difficulties that we encountered and, to this group, there were other young boys from the *Kloyz* who were interested in learning would join us.

At the beginning of the twenties, two of my sisters died in the same year. During the '*Shiva*' period, he read to us from the Book of Job, and translated the contents of the issues discussed into Yiddish: it was forbidden for us to complain, and we must, with love, accept the tragedy, because this is the will of God. Another event that is etched into my memory: during the process of reciting the *Selichot* prayers, during the *Ten Days of Repentance*, when the time arrived to recite the prayer, '*Shema Koleynu*,' – he would embitter his weeping, and would recite the prayer as tears ran down his cheeks. My father hoped that the Gates of Heaven would be opened, and, that his entreaty would be willingly received, that making a living would be bountiful, and that he would be able to educate his children in the manner he saw fit. He especially took care to assure that we, the sons, would participate in those prayers asking for the health of our mother ז"ל, whom he held in great esteem.

In the course of the years, as the *Haskalah* began to penetrate the ranks of youth in Rawa, and modern literature took the place of the *Gemara* – I too was taken up in this stream. My father, who sensed this, hounded me in order to uncover what I was doing, in those long evenings, that previously I had spent together with him at the *Kloyz*. When I disclosed that I was reading Graetz's History, and also '*Altneuland*' by Herzl – he attempted to explain to me, and convince me that this was not the way, and would recall their names in the same breath with Jeroboam ben Nebat, the sinner and facilitator of sin. On one occasion, he glanced into Graetz's book, and after he read a little bit of it, said to me: 'this also has to be tolerated.' Yet with regard to other 'disallowed' books, he would not even refer to them by their name, being forbidden to the point of loathing. The gap between us grew, on the same day of *Simchat Torah*, when I did not take an *aliyah* to the Torah (he always received the '*Hatan-Bereshit' aliyah*); when I told him that I had accepted an *aliyah* at the '*HaPoel HaMizrahi*' services, he said: 'You are just completely lost.'

During that same time, my father moved over to worship at the Great Synagogue together with the Rabbi, R' Nahum Twersky ז"ל, who had great respect for him, because the management of the bakery had passed over into the hands of my brothers Shlomo and Leibusz ז"ל, and also the rest of the children had grown up and were of help around the house – leaving my father with free time to devote to spiritual matters. He studied a great deal himself, and during the weekdays, gave lessons, to the working people that were in the city, on the portion of the week, and on the Sabbath days – '*Pirkei Avot*,'.

When I was getting ready to make *aliyah* to *The Land*, he attempted to convince me to cancel my intent to go, since he was against it; despite this, he went, before my trip, and borrowed money on my behalf, and helped me with trip expenses. From *The Land*, I wrote letters home, and in them, I described my visit to Rachel's Tomb, our Matriarch, and to the Western Wall. I felt that by doing this, I caused my father much spiritual pleasure, and again, we grew close to one another. When he became aware that I had settled in Hadera, he entreated me to go to Jerusalem on his behalf (Chaim Szpitz lived there, who was a very religiously observant man; my father hoped that perhaps I might learn from his ways). In a different letter, he entreated me at least to go to Petakh-Tikva, because in Hadera – so he was told – people lived who did not observe the commandments. Even though I did not fulfil his request, we had a very warm exchange of letters all the time, since he took an interest in everything that was going on in *The Land*, and in his letters, he also asked me to help my sister Tzir'l make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel.

In the year 1935, I reached Rawa-Ruska on a visit. To my surprise, my father and two sisters, Chay'cheh and Fradl ז"ל, were waiting for me at the train station in Kamionka, the station before Rawa, where I was supposed to disembark. To my question of: 'Why suddenly here?' – he replied: 'At the Rawa station, there are members of the movement waiting for you, and we, the members of your family, wanted to be the first to receive you.' I saw, in this, a sign of love on his part; and therefore, for the time that I spent in the bosom of my family, the relationships that existed during my childhood returned to their former state, and a very deep and strong bond was created between father and son. And once again, we turned our perspective to many issues that were raised. And this time, in contrast to 1929, when at that time he did not want to be separated from me – he assisted in the

arrangement of all the formal issues connected to my travel to *The Land*, together with my sister Tzila, and even escorted us as far as Lvov, gave us his heartiest best wishes, expressing the hope to us for himself and all of our family to see each other in Jerusalem, speedily in our days.

In those minutes, all the events in which I caused my parents ז"ל sorrow flashed before my eyes, and I was vexed that I had not spared them this grief. This was the last time that I saw my mother and father, and the entire family.

In praise of my mother ז"ל , Sarah Reizl bat Lipa and Shlomo'chi Freiheiter, let it be said that she was a loving mother, devoted to her children and husband. She was a faithful partner to my father in the discharge of the commandment in receiving of guests, and her home was open to all during weekdays, and on Sabbath days.

On Sabbath days, my mother customarily would read before the women from '*Tzena U'Re'ena.*' In my childhood, she made an impression on me with her reading from the Book of Lamentations, when the women would be sitting on footstools listening attentively, while tears ran from their eyes, mourning the destruction of the Temple. The women also thirstily imbibed her telling of the stories of Esther and Mordechai, Ruth and Boaz, as well as tales of all the miracles and wonders of the BESh'T and the other great righteous men of the generation.

The pain was great for our family, and all those who knew her, when she died on 5 Adar 5697 [February 16, 1937], at the age of 57.

The memory of them will never move from before our eyes for all the days of our lives. May their memory be for a blessing, for all eternity!

Regarding My Dear Parents

By Tzila Rosenblatt-Altman

It has been twenty-eight years since I left the city of my birth, Rawa-Ruska. Many beautiful memories from the period of my childhood and youth have been abandoned by a black ominous cloud of sorrow and exhaustion, that has covered them. But I do remember all of the members of my profusely-branched family, who, to my profound pain, did not have the privilege of living a long life, they will remain etched in my heart and remain blessed forever.

Our dear mother, Sarah Reizl ז"ל, was more than just "*A Yiddishe Mameh*:" Not only a beloved mother given over to her children and husband, but also an understanding friend to offer compassion to all members of her family. She was a pleasant and strong woman, advanced in her ideas and deportment. Many came to ask her advice, and she helped them with great understanding. It was even placed upon her to watch over the honor of dear father, who was one of the Belz *Hasidim* – in the face of the children who tended to go off in different directions.

Our father Pesach ז"ל, was an honest and good-hearted man, who, together with our mother, saw to providing help to the needy. He would gather the poor of the city, and teach them *Torah* and *Mishna*.

He did this as an act of fulfilling a Commandment, as a man who had affection for the members of the community at-large, not for the sake of receiving remuneration. When he would conclude a section of study, he would arrange for a '*Siyyum*' feast at a nice restaurant, with the help of R' Leibusz Siebzehner, who invested a significant amount of energy to make this happy occasion a success.

My brother Lipa caused my parents a great deal of aggravation when he made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. During the time of departure, my parents completely collapsed, and only the administration of some medicine restored their energy. After six years had gone by, they managed to earn a bit of 'nachas' from him, when he came for a visit. He spent three months in Rawa, and because of his outstanding comportment, and patient temperament, my parents agreed to let me make *aliyah* to *The Land* as well. I joined him on the day he made his return there.

All the members of the family escorted us in a state of high emotion. We did not know that this was the last time ever that we would take leave of our dear ones.

May their memory be for a blessing!

My Parents of Blessed Memory

By Naomi Issachar-Guzhik

It is about thirty-five years since my sister Bella and I left the home of our parents and made *aliyah* to *The Land.* We wanted to be the vanguard pioneers and bring the rest of the family after us to *The Land*; to our great misfortune, these plans were never realized, and all that remain are distant memories.

The memories from my father's house are good: a good house, full of the happiness of life. There were eight sons and daughters, and therefore many grandchildren filled this warm house. There was no lack of respect from the children and grandchildren for the father and mother as well as feelings of closeness and amity towards them.

Here, I will underscore only one of the characteristics of my father and mother ע"ה: a giving heart. I do not know if my father was rich, but on our impoverished street, he was considered a 'wealthy man.' Accordingly, our house was open to all seeking help or a loan, and everyone seeking advice, or a good word, and not one of them left empty-handed.

On every Sunday, my mother Chana ע"ה, would receive a sum of money for the coming week's household expenses, and by that very same evening, she would be lending money to her neighbors, in order that they be able to transact the market day activities that would take place every Monday of the week. The loans were repaid during the week, and this was how it repeated each week, over again.



Page 373: The Guzhik Family הי"ד

I recall one incident from my father's engagement with the needy that was very characteristic of him. On a Friday, a wagon driver came in to him, and asked for a loan for Sabbath goods. My father responded to his request, and he took an interest: 'what happened this week that you are in need of a loan?' The wagon driver told him that at the beginning of the week, his workhorse died, and as a result, he did not work all week. In reaction to my father's question, and what then? The wagon driver hunched his shoulders. My father gave him a sum of money, in addition to the loan and invited him for Sunday, hoping perhaps to find a solution. The wagon driver had no sooner left the house, when my father also left and went to 'Bendet's Saloon,' and gathered up from his friends 'a serious donation.' By Sunday, he had devised a solution to the wagon driver's livelihood.

With this I will memorialize the tranquil lives of my dear parents.

May their memory be for a blessing!

The Daks Family

By Itcheh Daks

R' Yossi Says:
The Ancients, because they knew their genealogy,
named themselves in reference to the events of their days. But we,
who do not know our genealogy, name ourselves
by our fathers.
(Bereshit Rabbah 37)

If 120 years comprise a life in this world, our family, Daks in Rawa, existed over a span of 5 generations. When we will [again] meet in the *World to Come* (we are already half way there) perhaps we will encounter people from Rawa from all generations – young and old. Because of the fact that our family encompassed a great range, we will occupy a rather large corner of that World; first the faces of the family: the grandfathers and grandmothers.

My father, Chaim-David Daks ע"ה, was a Jewish man of substance – a homeowner. He was born in the year 1870, the son of Leibusz and Pessia Daks. The great-grandfather comes [originally] from Sokal. My grandfather was called Leibusz-Nachman Sokoler. He had the first porcelain business in the city. We, while still small children, every Passover, drank wine from the little blue glasses, which we had inherited from our grandfather. Apart from this, in the Passover ware, were flat plates with the inscription '*Kosher L'Pesach*,' in which we dipped the matzos and hard-boiled eggs in salt water. These wares passed from one child to the next. By virtue of the fact that I was the youngest, I thought that these items would remain with me forever…but even as man plans and thinks, fate laughs.

Additionally, up in the attic, an electric lamp lay around, also a legacy from our grandfather, from those times, when electricity was not yet commonly to be found in the city. The rest of our grandfather Leibusz's family lived in Sokal. Some emigrated to America, and in this manner, spread all over the world.

Our grandmother Pesha'li (my sister Pessia was given her name) was well-known in the city as a righteous woman. She would look after poor people, giving charity anonymously, not 'noisy charity.' Her children inherited her sense of compassion. She produced four daughters – Leah, Dvora, Feiga and Malka – and one son, that is my father.

My mother was a daughter of Itcheh Gimpel's. And who was Itcheh Gimpel's and the old man Gimpel himself? – well, if you are Rawa-born, it would be superfluous to relate.

My elementary level *Melamed* R' Jonah told me, that he had yet heard that grandfather Gimpel was a prominent Jewish man, one of the highly visible people in the city. He was killed in a fire that broke out in the *shtetl*, and had there only been a small can of water available, it would have been possible to save him.

Itcheh Gimpel's, his son, was a Jewish man – of formidable accomplishment, whether in Torah study, or commerce. My *Melamed* R' Jonah, on the Eve of Yom Kippur, would administer ritual lashes to him in the vestibule of the *Zamd-Bet HaMedrash*,' He also recalled the release that he would receive from him, at the time of the Purim feast.

Our grandmother's name was Yenta. To them, the following were born: my mother, Sima-Dina Daks, Ser'keh Just (the mother of Yitzhak and Gimpel Just), Baylah Fischler (the mother of Gittl'eh Fischler). And one son, Zalman Sztakhel, who was called: Zalman-Itcheh Gimpel's.

I remember my uncle Zalman ע"ה very well. He died in the year 1930, having lived entirely for only 45 years. As it is said, too few years, and bad ones. He was burdened with children. He left behind him 8 young children, mostly daughters, one smaller than the next. The great fire, that broke out on the *Zamd* in the year 1926 , consumed all of his assets. The house he inherited from the grandfather went up in flames in that fire. He, personally, ran to rescue the Torah scrolls from the *Zamd-Klyzl*, which was adjacent to him. Since that time, he struggled a great deal to make a living, but always

was good-spirited and a man of faith, believing that the Blessed Lord will not abandon him, but just the opposite, and he looked after everyone in the family. We called him the 'Worrier.'

And it was in this manner, that by us in the family, as was the case in our uncle and aunt's family, we encounter new uses of names such as: Itcheh, Gimpel, Yenta, Dvora and Pessia.

My mother Sima-Dina bore seven daughters and two sons. My little sister Dvora'leh died very young. The oldest sister, Tzeitl ז"ל married Abraham Hoffenbratel ז"ל. He is known to all. [He was] the first teacher and founder of the Hebrew School in the city. There are not many Jewish men of this caliber, literally a cornucopia of scholarship. He was a quiet sage, well-schooled. If there were any people in the city who knew a little Hebrew – it is only thanks to him. He was the Vice President of the community, President of Mizrahi. On each Sabbath, he would give a lesson in explication before the community. It is a pity to have lost him.

His daughter Rivka Hoffenbratel was exterminated with all of my sisters and family.

My sister Chana was married in Niemerow when he would return on Sabbath days from the other sisters: Chana, Rachel, Shayndl all married, and had children. However, they were all annihilated along with all the Jews.

All of the House of Israel shall mourn and weep for the conflagration that God visited upon them.

The House of Zauerbrun

By Bluma Zauerbrun-Lockman

At frequent intervals, I sort through my memories of the city in which I spent my youth, and with my inner eye, I can see my dear parents, and all of my family, who will never move away from my heart, and will accompany me wherever I turn. I cannot find appropriate words in order to convey what I feel in such moments.

My father, R' Leib'leh Zauerbrun, was a Belz *Hasid*, and was active in the life of the community in the city. At various times, he was a member of the community council, and active in a variety of community committees. In his youth, he had been the chief accountant in the bank of R' Yaakov Landau in the city, and also assisted in the management of the bank, and through this, community institutions benefitted from his advice and assistance. With the passage of time, he became a respected merchant, and a man of means, and his economic holdings enabled him to assist the needy, and to stand at their right in their time of distress. He had a good heart, and was a man of good deeds, proud of his Jewishness and his faith.

I can still recall when he would return on Sabbath days from the '*Alte Kloyz*' wrapped in his prayer shawl that had a silver collar, all of him radiating the sanctity of the Sabbath. I would look at him with love and pride.



Page 376: The Zauerbrun Family הי"ד

My precious father, this image of you will live with me forever!

During the Second World War, my father was in Czechoslovakia, attending to commercial matters, and he met his death there at the hands of the Nazis ימ"ש.

My mother, Chana'leh from the Friedman family, was enlightened, with a refined soul, insightful, and possessed of a profound understanding of everything taking place about her. Every damaged soul that came to her house – sensed as if he had been released from their emotional pressure; because my mother knew how to simplify even the most complicated issues, knew how to overcome all of

the difficulties and tribulations that hounded those coming for her advice.

In general, my father was out of the house, taking care of his business, while my mother educated us with love and understanding. In her approach to education, she understood the hearts of her daughters, and we conversed with her as if with a loyal and committed friend. She also instilled in us a love for Zion, and encouraged us to make *aliyah* to *The Land*.

To eternal memory: My sister Gittl-Genya Wolf and her husband Aryeh and their children Noss'keh and Israel, and my younger sister Sima'leh and my only brother, Yehoshua.

You are the holy and pure, who planted in us faith, and with your deaths, you commanded us to life, and gave us the strength to stand up for our lives. May their memories be blessed forever!

The First to Make Aliyah from Rawa-Ruska to the Land of Israel

By Asher Hahn



Page 377: (Top, Left): My Sister, Dishka Zucker, ה"יד

Of all the stories that I heard during the years of my childhood, – one story remains guarded in my memory. The story was told to me by my grandmother Yenta, who was the oldest woman in the city when I was nine years old. And the story was about her mother, Dishka.

The husband of Dishka passed away approximately in the year 1890. And the days of mourning had hardly passed, when Dishka divided up all the wealth that her husband had left her, among the poor of the city, and decided to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. She invited all of the 'musicians' in the city, and deferred all the costs of travel, to enable them to go to the train station, without charge, dressed in her holiday finest, with her regal kerchief on her head – going on foot, in great joy, as if to the Messiah King, with a large host escorting her, accompanied by the sound of the music, as if they were listening to the bells pealing the Final Salvation. This was the first instance of *aliyah* from Rawa-Ruska.

Dishka took up residence in the Kabbalistic city of Tzfat, and lived there for 16 good years, being privileged to live to a ripe old age. She passed away in Tzfat at the age of one hundred and nine years.

Grandmother Dishka left children and grandchildren behind in Rawa-Ruska, and they burgeoned and became rooted in a prolific family of scholars, learned people, *Hasidim* and loyal public servants. All were called by their grandmother's name – 'Dishkis.' The members of the family were: Herzl and Khuli Dishkis, Aharon Chaim, Zechariah'leh Dishkis, Pinchas Ziegl and his wife Yehudit, and many, many others.



Page 377: (Bottom): Tze 'irei 'Agudat Israel'

My grandfather, R'Mordechai Gimpel Hahn, was one of the more respected dignitaries in the *Alte Kloyz* in the city. My grandmother Rachel'leh was a righteous woman. They too, produced a widely branched family.

Their son R' Yosh'i Dishkis, was known as a man of action and a *Hasid,* and he had nine children, most of them married.

Their second son, Raphael Hahn was – by contrast to his brother Yosh'i – was modern and intelligent. Despite never having attended a modern school, he had, through self-education, acquired a broadly-based *Haskalah*, and was fluent in languages, to the point of attaining the distinction of the leading intellect of the city. The speeches that he gave in the various sessions of parties drew a large audience, and motivated the young people to acquire enlightenment by their own initiative, as he did.

Their beloved daughter Feiga married R' Uri Zucker, who was the most beloved by the city. In his talent and honesty, he led the '*Agudah*' in the city, from the day it was founded, until his, and its, last day.

Their dear daughter, Golda my mother, was widowed at a young age, and all of her concern were dedicated to the education of her two children. Her second husband, R' Hirsch Greenwald, was a modest man, good-hearted, and helped her with everything.

My sister Dishka married R' Joseph Saul Zucker, the brother of R' Uri. He was one of the outstanding leaders of the *Agudah* in Lvov, and Eastern Galicia, a scholar, writer, and accomplished speaker.

As a great-grandchild of the first to make aliyah from Rawa-Ruska, and the last such pioneer of our family – I was the one who remained to dedicate this writing to preserve her memory for all eternity.

The Home of My Family

By Zippora Weinreb-Mann

Our house, in which I was raised as an only daughter, together with my two older brothers, Moshe and Zulka – stood in the center of the city.



Page 378: The Weinreb-Hahn Family הי"ד

My mother Rivka, was a *Woman of Valor*; she ran the business, and my father was only an assistant to her. Our home was modest and small, but my mother never complained about it. My friend Penina Ringel tells, that when she worked in Rawa as a seamstress for her aunt Git'cheh Blaustein ע"ה, who was our neighbor, and space was tight there – my mother invited her into our cramped home. And when Penina did not want to work at night, suspecting that she would disturb my mother's sleep – my mother insisted to her to go on working at night, 'because the rhythm of the [sewing] machine is pleasant to inducing sleep.'

My parents were religiously observant, and as understood, wanted to raise their children in the spirit of their own values. My mother even exceeded my father in her adherence to her faith, and to the traditional way of life.

My father, R' Zvi-Hirsch ז"ל, was in harmony with his environment, his ear grasping all that was written in the newspapers, and his heart was alert to the new winds blowing through the Jewish world. It was easy for him to understand the aspirations of the young people and to concur with them. With my father's help, it was easy to overcome the difficulties raised by my mother at every step. The first step – attending the Hebrew school in the city. To do this, parental permission was required. My father was influenced by R' Abraham Hoffenbratel, who, together with him, was one of go out for training, and to make *aliyah* to *The Land*. The worshipers at the '*Eizerneh Kloyz*,' and wandering off alone in a distant land, and I suffered what you suffered. Surely, you forgave me for the received that permission. With my father's help, it was possible to overcome all difficulties, and to join the '*Gordonia*' youth movement, and to go out for training and make *aliyah* to *The Land*.

My dear mother, I know the intense concern for your only daughter, who went off on her own to a distant land. You have certainly forgiven me for the suffering I caused you, having the knowledge that I am the only one left to carry on your sacred memory forever.

My Family

By Yehuda Mund

My father, R' Aharon ben Yehuda Yitzhak Mund ז"ל, a Belz *Hasid*, educated me as a child in the spirit of *Hasidism*, and invested in me, his youngest child, the larger part of his energies to raise me to follow in his ways. He introduced me into the '*Heders*' of the best of the *Melamdim* in the city, as, for example, R' Issachar.

When I grew older, he brought me into the center of *Hasidism* in the '*Alte Kloyz*,' of the Belz *Hasidim*, and there, with the assistance of scholars, those who 'sat' and studied, to inculcate me with Torah and *Hasidism*. The entirety of his aspirations was to see me go in that direction that he had selected [for me].



Page 379 (Left): The Mund Family הי"ד



Page 379: (Right): Chana Mund and Her Children הי"ד

My mother ע"ה, Jocheved, of the Donner family, was the owner of a store in the center of the city, the '*Rynek*,' and was engaged in commerce as were most of the women married to men that were studious and *Hasidim*. She carried the entire burden of supporting us, and we depended on her. During her working time, and afterwards, she also engaged in performing *mitzvot* and good deeds, both visible and anonymously, in order to prepare an honorable place for herself in the *World to Come*.

R' Wolf Donner, my grandfather ז"ל, owned a leather store, one of the wealthier people in the city, married off his daughters to young men clothed in silk, one of whom, the husband of Sheva Donner, was Hertz Mensch. With the aid of his sharp mind, despite not having a secular enlightenment, he directed the office of a lawyer, and was privileged to earn the gratitude of all those who needed his legal expertise. My sisters, Chana, the oldest, and the youngest, Pearl ע"ה, married young men from good families, and raised families to be proud of, in providing much nachas to our parents.

Only I, under the influence of Zionist youth, was pulled to other directions, to the dissatisfaction of my parents. Because of this, I caused them much aggravation, because they always harbored the expectation that I, as their youngest son, would guard their tradition, and comport myself as they saw fit. To this day, I am greatly saddened at the degree of grief that I caused them.

As the sole, solitary individual surviving from my family, I weep for all of them who were exterminated in the Holocaust, and died a martyr's death.

May their memory be blessed, and remain blessed for all eternity!

The Home of My Family

By Yekhiel Meiseles (Yekhl Kessel)



Page 380: Nina Schlager and her Daughter הי"ד

The house of my parents was an ordinary patriarchal one, one among many.

The father of my father, R' Yekhl Shakhna's was a scholar and a religious scribe. He had two sons, one Hirsch, and the second, my father, R' Mordechai Leib זי"ל. The first was an accomplished merchant, while my father was better suited to the *Bet HaMedrash* rather than to the world of business.

My mother, Jocheved ע"ה, born in Dobroszwar[216] beside Kamionka Strumilawa, was the energetic counterpart to my father. Her father, R' Raphael Meiseles, was a scholar and a wondrous *Gaon*, and it was not only once that he was the final ruler in all matters of *Halakha* that were brought up for discussion among the rabbis of the vicinity.

The wedding contract between my parents was set in the 'courtyard' of the *Rebbe* of Belz, on the Saturday night of *[Shabbat] Shuva*, an hour in which the two fathers of the couple-to-be made a request of the *Rebbe*, by way of separate written notes, that he should bless them to be a 'good match' and that their children attain their good fortune.

To the extent that I recall from my earliest childhood, all the years, our household was in a perpetual struggle with poverty. It was my mother who stood up to it, with a focused conviction to overcome it, and she succeeded. Even though she did not know how to read or write a foreign language (only Hebrew – from the *Siddur* and the *Mahzor*, and Yiddish from the '*Tzena u'Re'ena*') she spoke fluent Polish and Ukrainian. In this manner, she ingratiated herself to all the houses of the 'nobility' and

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216 Possibly Dobrotvir today, in the Ukraine.

was always the first one called to bring provisions to their houses. As understood, my father did not help her for physical reasons.

My mother endeared herself to all of the womenfolk of the 'nobility,' who occupied all of the important positions in the town. Over the course of time, the people of the city would come and ask her for 'protection' regarding a variety of issues in the town. Her efforts reached a point that in the year 1914, at the time that the Russians captured Rawa-Ruska, and set fire to the quarter behind the '*Alte Kloyz*,' and stood ready to set fire to the house of Israel-Michal Feder, the head of the community – my mother took advantage of her position and beseeched the highest Russian authority, obtaining an order to stop the arson and the plunder.

There were five children in our house, three daughters and two sons. The oldest, Yente'leh, was married in 1917 to the son of our uncle, David Meir Lempert, and both of them settled in Lvov, and carried on a way of life of a traditional, well-founded Jewish family. They had two daughters – Sarulta and Mania – both highly successful, with a yearning for life, Torah and Enlightenment. When the Holocaust burst, the first daughter was after the birth of her first-born. All were exterminated in the camps of Gorodetska and Belzec. ה"ש"ד.

My second sister, Nana, was what is called a pure-hearted Jewish girl, possessed of a sympathetically warm heart to the plight of the masses. From her parents, she inherited an open [sic: charitable] hand for charity, and she was like her father – who was in addition to others, concerned greatly about R' Sholom of Niemerow, to assure that he not want, God forbid, for anything in his house during the midweek days, and especially on the Sabbath. Nana looked after every needy person in the vicinity. Like our mother, who would place her life on the line, during the days of epidemic outbreaks, that raged about during the years of the war, standing guard beside the beds of the sick, nourishing them to the point that they could get on their feet by themselves.

And the third was my brother Raphael, a *Gaon* with a very quick ability to grasp things – skills that he inherited, it would seem, from my mother and her father. At the house of my father at a very young age, he excelled in a sharp analytic grasp of *Shas* and the *Poskim*, and it was prophesied that he would attain the rabbinate. At the end of the First World War, a great tragedy pervaded the house. After Raphael had returned from Vienna, where he had tarried in connection with our business, he was not the same young man that he had been before. Something had attached itself to him along the way, words like: Dr. Herzl, Zionism, socialism, and the like. Instead of using his free time to resume his sacred studies – he began to distance himself more and more from the *Bet HaMedrash*. In place of this, he began to take an interest in secular studies, and began to associate with groups of young men who were touched by the *Haskalah* and Zionism. This was a severe blow to our mother: all her dreams of having a son who would become a Rabbi – evaporated.

In 1922, he was imprisoned at the instigation of a false accusation regarding the illegal trafficking in tobacco, and sent to the '*Brygidki*[217]' in Lvov, and there, he made the acquaintance of a number of political prisoners. From them, he apparently learned several of the routines of socialism and communism. Upon being released from prison, he took an interest in the Bund, and quickly went over to communism. On one day in 1924, he appeared in the house, packed up part of his personal belongings, and advised that he is relocating to Danzig to open a business. From that day on we did not ever see him. These resulted in terrible times for our mother. She waited weeks and months, with eyes dried out of tears, for a letter to arrive from him, and when the scheduled letter did not arrive – a sense of hopelessness pervaded the house.

My sister Chana, the oldest of the children, was a year older than I. In her youth, she proved to be both accomplished and very beautiful. She was the only one in the family to attend the 'Nazirite' school. To our sorrow, she came down with a severe case of typhus in 1915, and was left deaf, and blind in one eye. In 1938, during *Hol HaMoed* Passover, after a severe case of lung inflammation, she gave up her pure soul. I consoled myself, in a manner, during the years of the Holocaust: at the least, the heavens spared her the sufferings of the Holocaust.

At the end, a few words about my father ז"ל, who lived like a shadow that hovered over what transpired in life. In the final years, he took an interest in the Book of Psalms, in which he found a response and healing to all of the blows meted out by fate, and engaged in charitable activities with the fullness of his capability. He concerned himself with the Rabbis of Potelycz, Magierow, and especially R' Sholom of Niemerow, so that, God Forbid, they would not lack for anything during weekdays, and especially on the Sabbath.

May the memory of all of them be blessed for all eternity! תנצבה!

A Hymn to the House of My Father

By Jaffa Eichenbaum
of the Margulies Family

I incline my head against the breeze of memory about our fathers, whose central concern was to raise and educate us in the spirit of the legacy of our ancestors, in order to perpetuate the continuity of the Chosen People; and despite the fact that the gentile neighbors embittered their lives – our fathers stood fast with an exceptional stubbornness. On each and every day, they would

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217 This is the building of a former Bridgettine nunnery in Lviv (formerly Lvov), Ukraine.

It was founded in 1614 at the behest of Anna Fastkowska and Anna Poradowska for girls from noble families. After the Partition of Poland the Austrian administration decided to secularize the convent. In 1784 the *Brygidki* building was turned into a prison, where death sentences would be carried out on a regular basis until the 1980s.

Taken over by the Soviet Union after Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, the prison was one of three sites of mass murder of political prisoners by NKVD in Ukraine in June 1941 as the Soviets were retreating before the Nazi German invasion. Approximately 7,000 prisoners - primarily Poles and Ukrainians - died in Lviv in that event.

give praise and thanks to the Creator of the Universe, for the bad, just as they did for the good. They continued to inculcate their children with the tradition of their fathers, and the lore of their mothers, in the hope that the eternal existence of Israel not be subverted. I received this kind of an education in the bosom of my family.



Page 381: Todros Margulies ז"ל

It is with trembling and a sense of compassion that I approach the task of describing my family, relatives and friends in our city of Rawa-Ruska. This will serve to preserve their exalted memory, and the lofty and sacred nature of their souls, and for me, it will provide a spiritual closure, and a sense of having fulfilled a responsibility towards them.

Who would have thought 40-50 years ago, that in this century, a Holocaust as terrifying as this, for which there is no comparison in all of our history, in the course of all our exiles, would descend on European Jewry. Who could have conceived of the fact that I would remain the only one, a remnant of a widely branched family, that I will now be required to pass before my eyes, and to rummage in all corners of my memory, in order to raise up the events of that period. I suspect that the description will be meager, and perhaps also blurred.

My Family

Let me begin with my maternal grandfather: R' Leibusz Gerstenfeld. In the city, he was called R' Leibusz '*Baal Habayis*' and why was this? It was because he got married at the age of 13, and in the first Sabbath after the wedding, at the end of prayers, he invited a guest home for the Sabbath. People who saw this laughed, and called out in wonder: Look at the new '*Baal Habayis!*' others who got around on foot from city to city.



Page 382: Yehoshua Margulies and his Wife Shoshana, הי"ד

In those days, as is known, it was the custom in Galicia for poor people to wander about from city to city, knocking on doors in order to gather donations. There were those who traveled in groups, in wagons, while others walked from city to city on foot. The work that they did at home did not suffice in providing support for their families that had many children. There were also those who had a need to marry off a daughter when she reached maturity, and they did not have a dowry; accordingly, they left their families for a number of months, wandering from city to city. For all days of the week, they managed somehow, there being '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*' and just plain compassionate Jews that deal with them; and on the Sabbath days, they would gather in the various houses of worship, and *balebatim* would invite them for the Sabbath repast. It was in this way that my grandfather, 13 years of age, invited a guest home with him for the Sabbath.

By and large, it was not only for the Sabbath that my grandfather invited guests home. He was a wealthy merchant, a great philanthropist with a good heart, and his home was always open to every guest and passer through. In the city, my grandfather looked after the poor of his city, and in the vanguard of winter's approach, he distributed firewood. His dedication to assisting scholars was substantial. He was an ardent Belz *Hasid*. He made frequent weekly trips to the *Rebbe* for the Sabbath. He began to pack his bag for travel on Tuesday, to guard against, God forbid, forgetting on Friday to take it along for the trip.

This was the way life went on, beside tranquil waters, up till the First World War.

When the war broke out, the entire family fled to Czechoslovakia. In the year 1916, after the Austrians re-captured Rawa-Ruska, our grandfather began to submit requests to the authorities for purpose of securing permission to return home. And despite the fact that the regime had not yet permitted refugees to return – my grandfather did receive, by exceptional means, such a permission, and returned. During that period of time, when he uneventfully arrived back in Rawa-Ruska, he suddenly took sick, and left this one, for The Better World. He died at a good old age of 84.

My father, R' Itcheh'li Margulies, was born in the city of Brody. He was a son, born into a venerable and highly respected family. He was of pleasant manner, he was a man of substance within whom both Torah and courtesy blended. Everyone who came in contact with him was enchanted by his rich spirituality. I cannot forget for a minute the physiognomy of his face that was so interesting, with its penetratingly aware eyes, and his deportment that exuded so much grandeur. He educated his children in the tradition of the *Gaon* BaR"I. I remember once, a letter arrived home with an unmarked stamp. The children leapt at the find, and were gleeful at the possibility of using the stamp again; however, our father explained that this is not the way, because the stamp is to be destroyed, because if not done so, this will be an act of theft, which is forbidden by the Torah.

My father did not live long. In the year 1918, at the age of 52, he returned his soul to The Creator of the Universe, and left us with our saddened exhaustion.

Our mother fell sick, and suffered from [sic: odd] sensations, however, she was endowed with fortitude and ambitions, was very gifted, and possessed a very practical and sober sense. She had many who knew her, and many came to seek her advice in connection with a variety of issues. She was *Hasidic*, and great in the performance of good deeds, distributing charity with a generous hand, even beyond her means. I am saddened that I do not have a picture of my parents. Because of their extreme piety, they refused to let themselves be photographed. She gave up her pure soul in the year 1933, at the age of 60.

I had seven brothers, all of them possessed of good traits, honest, and pleasing in their dispositions. The oldest David, and Yankl, died before the Holocaust. David possessed an outstanding Torah-oriented personality. He would inculcate Torah to the masses, and on a daily basis, he would give lessons in *Shas* and the *Poskim*, to those who were in the *Bet HaMedrash*.

Todros and Berisz left home and traveled overseas after the First World War, because of the Polish hooligans. Todros emigrated first, to Uruguay, and then invited Berisz along. The two of them were among the first in the establishment of the life of a Jewish community in Montevideo, and organized an assistance initiative for those among our brethren that reached that location. Berisz, who brought with him experience of being active in the '*Mizrahi*' organization, continued in the same vein, while he was at home, in organizing such a group. He was very active in organizing Zionists, and committed all of his energy to faith and tradition. He assisted in the establishment of prayer houses, and energetically participated in the Yiddish newspaper in that locale, and in order to give a strong and deep accent to the community of Jews that reached there, he put out a weekly national, religious periodical, in order to lead an initiative in the Jewish street for international funds on behalf of the *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel. In this, his impact was great, and he was very successful. The newspaper continues to appear to this day, and this is more than thirty consecutive years. Both brothers died.

Three of the brothers – Mendl, Yehoshua and Chaim – were exterminated in the Holocaust. Chaim, the youngest of them all, made efforts to make *aliyah* even before the Holocaust, but because of the rules of the Mandate government, he did not receive a visa to emigrate, and was not privileged to make *aliyah*. He was intelligent, studied a great deal of Torah, and also acquired secular enlightenment, knew languages, and was diligent in his studies.

My Relatives and Friends

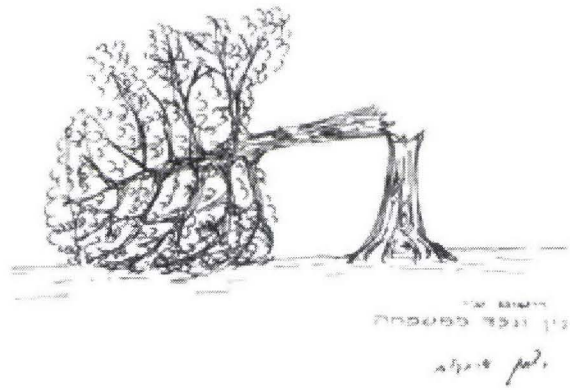


Page 383: R' Berisz Margulies ז"ל

R' Shlomo Szrencel was the cousin of my father. He was a Director in the Faith, and served the community as a *Dayan*. His rulings were always promulgated with justice and honesty, and he became well-known in the city for this. He was greatly respected, because before his eyes, he always saw the maxim: 'Justice, justice, shalt thou pursue.' He lived very modestly with his family, making do with little. The entire family was exterminated in the Great Holocaust.

Our mother had an older sister named Malie Pizder. She died, before the Holocaust at age 80. The Pizder family was respected in the city. There were three sons in the family, all of them family men, having many children. They made an honest, respectable living, from retail commerce. All were exterminated in the Holocaust.

My mother's second sister was Szifra'leh Mund. Her home was always open to anyone in need. She assisted many of the poor, and her primary concern was always for families with many children. She even looked after the elderly and the sick. People



Page 383: (Bottom): Drawing of a Cut Tree

offered praise and applause for the generosity of her heart, and her good deeds, accorded her much respect, to the extent that they called her by the name 'R' Szifra'leh.'

Her husband, my uncle R' Hirsch'eli Mund ז"ל, was an extraordinary scholar, a scion of a rabbinical family, a generous donor to the community and to individuals. He was immersed in everything that he did, and most discreet with what he had to say. His name went out in the city and its vicinity to garner praise, so much so that his name drew the sameresponse even in faraway places. He was the owner of a large commercial establishment, endowed with wealth. He exuded the wisdom of life and modesty. He was a great force in the dispensation of charity and goodness, and he did all of this out of joy and love. He had three sons, all of them steeped in Torah study, and God-fearing men. About them, it can be said that 'The Torah has returned to its place of residence.' They had broad outlets in commerce, being diligent in their good deeds, excelling in their common sense, and the doing of good deeds. The oldest son, R' Yankl'i was exterminated in the Holocaust with his family. R' Daniel'chi died before the Holocaust, R' Simcha'li, to be separated for long life, was in Russia during the time of the Holocaust, and with the end of the war, he reached *The Land*.

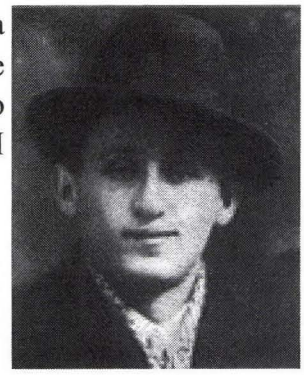
My uncle, R' Moshe Gerstenfeld, my mother's brother, was a beloved man of a pleasant disposition, in harmony with his environment, perceptive, and unusually acute in his take on things. He would pepper life with his constantly positive sayings. His remarks were propagated to a broad array of groups in the city. Occasionally, as he would pass in the street, friends would cluster about him (of which he had many) and ask to hear some new aphorism from him. He was like a brother and close friend to all who knew him, and he made an attempt to help everyone to the best of his ability. He died before the Holocaust. He left behind a wife from the Horszowsky family, and an only son, Ber'l. Ber'l was an honest and capable man, one of the first Zionists of the city, a community activist, taking part in a variety of gatherings, and worked hard along the way for a Jewish homeland. He was exterminated in the Holocaust with his family, and did not live to see the establishment of *The State*.

I remember our city of Rawa-Ruska in which I was born, and lived during my childhood, which I loved so much, participating in its joyous times, and in the times of sorrow. Rising from my memory, are the families, their houses in the streets of the city, and similarly every ornate corner through which I strolled, spending time there with my girl and boy friends, friends of the family, and neighbors.

I will not be able to forget my friends who, to this day, stand before my eyes, each in her own way, according to the characteristics of her personality. All of us were young then, joyous and full of life. I remember our get-togethers at the headquarters of '*Hatikvah*', and in the library with that vibrant youth that yearned for a glowing future. The sounds of the discussions and orations about being a *Halutz* still reverberate in my ears, about the Kibbutz, and the State of Israel-to-come. Few of these acquaintances were privileged enough to fulfil their dreams and hopes, and it is with a pain in the heart that I mourn those who were exterminated in the Holocaust.

There was a good friendship between me and Esther Kurtzer, and her husband Fyvel Rosenfeld. These were capable and modest people. They were preparing to leave Poland, but never made it. My friend Sheva Donner (Mensch) was perpetually contented with her lot. My friend Pearl Mund was full of life and optimistic. Periodically, when I ran into her, and saw her red cheeks with that healthy smile on her face – my spirits were also lifted.

The friend, who was closest to my heart, was Paya Wachs. Paya had a heart of gold, with a well-developed and reserved personality. She was a committed friend to me, and tried to help out the common good to the extent she could. She remains forever etched into my heart and I will never forget her.



Page 384 (Top, Right): Elimelech Fischler, הי"ד

At this point, I will ask for forgiveness and compassion from the members of my family, relatives, acquaintances, and my girlfriends whom I did not mention by name – all were sacred, pure souls, who were murdered cruelly by the hands of the Nazis and their accomplices, may their names be erased. May The Lord take vengeance, and avenge the blood that was spilled.

Let their sacred memory be blessed to the ends of time, and their souls be bound up in the bond of life!

My Father's House

By Tova Fischler-Reinhertz



Page 384 (Top, Left): Abba Sztokhammer and His Wife, Yenta הי"ד

My father, R' Fyvel Fischler ז"ל, was an honest, God-fearing man, of the Belz *Hasidim*. I still remember that my father, and brother Elimelech, would leave us on the holidays, and travel to the *Rebbe* in Belz.

My mother, Baylah Fischler ע"ה, the daughter of R' Itcheh Gimpel's, died during the war in 1914.

My brother, Elimelech ז"ל, was a scholarly young man, and also taught Torah to working children in the evenings. He taught me a great deal as well, especially Hebrew.

My sister Yenta ע"ה was the wife of Abba Sztokhammer ז"ל, who himself was a good Zionist. Both of them helped the members of the movement a great deal, especially from a financial point of view. Yenta was a dedicated wife to her husband, and to providing much assistance.

My stepmother Sarah ע"ה, was a wondrous woman, and I have only good memories of her.

When I traveled off to the Land of Israel in the year 1931, the entire family escorted me to the train, and a prayer was on my father's ז"ל lips, that he too would be privileged to make *aliyah* to the Holy Land. To my great sorrow, he did not accomplish this.

May their memory be blessed forever!



Page 384 (Bottom, Right): R' Fyvel Fischler and His Wife, Sarah, הי"ד

The Home of My Parents

By Yeshayahu Korman-Degani

My parents, Abraham and Rivka Korman, had nine children – six sons and three daughters. My father engaged in the wholesaling of grain and flour. He had a flour mill, the biggest in the area, in the village of Shabel'nya,' along with two other partners: Pesach Altman and David Horowitz.



Page 385 (Right): Joseph Korman ז"ל

My mother was a housekeeper par excellence, working in our house, and in the trade of flour on a retail basis. The house was open to every person in need of help. My father and his friend, Sholom Apperman, who had a linen store, ran a Free Loan Society. They distributed free-interest loans, and, anonymously, helped all the needy who turned to them. My mother would cook up '*yekhelach*[218]' and distribute them among the poor. On every Friday night and Saturday, my brother-in-law, Shmuel Altman, would invite a guest from the synagogue to his table.

My sister Shoshana would dress up in her best fine clothes within her means in anticipation of meeting with their intended suitors. And she also undertook handling the sick among the poor, providing them, on occasion out of her own money, the medicines they needed. Sometimes she would also spend the night beside the ill, in order to provide them with her assistance. She was a member of the '*Hatikvah*' organization, was active in its drama group, and participated in many presentations, together with Dr. Joseph Mandel ז"ל and others.

Also, my brother Naphtali Hertz was one of the first Zionists in the city, and among the founders of the '*Hatikvah*' group. He died young and unmarried in the year 1912.



Page 385 (Left): Reizl Korman ה"ד

All members of my family, the holy and pure, that were murdered, and asphyxiated in the gas chambers, and burned alive, I weep for them and will not ever be able to forget them, forever!

My brother Joseph died in Paris in 26.3.1972 after a severe illness. He was an honest man, of good heart, always at the ready to help the community at-large. His memory will remain guarded forever in the hearts of all that knew him.

Honor their memory!

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218 A diminutive for small portions of soup.

My Father's House

By Leah Rosensweig-Kramer

The single-story house, beside *Ulica* Pi?sudski (known to the older generation as the Train Street), whose doors were open to all – belonged to my father ז"ל, R' Aryeh Kramer, one of the prominent Jews of the city. While still a little girl, I stood on my father's character, knowing that his entire intent was to come to the help of other people. My parents ז"ל, invested their entire effort into obtaining a good education for us, the children.



Page 386: The Kramer Family הי"ד

As the owner of a work house that made fur goods, my father employed young inexperienced workers, and in addition to teaching them a craft, he also inculcated them with a sense of honesty -- not only in carrying out their duties on the job, but also in connection with all things with which they came in contact. Many remember to this day, the quiet man, with the sad eyes, who lived off the hard work of his hands, and did not know any surcease – apart from Sabbath days, which he would celebrate for two reasons: It was the Holy Sabbath to an observant Jew, and a day of rest for a working man.

After years of learning the craft, the workers became independent, or became merchants in the fur trade. They would come to him, to ask his advice, or to engage him – and he would receive them respectfully, and treated them as equals. My father ז"ל was always proud of his apprentices, and there was not a blot of envy towards any of them.

My mother ז"ל conducted herself in this same spirit, as if she would emerge from his perspective and outlook. She always had a personable attitude towards the workers, motherly, demanding from them honesty and responsibility in their work, and her manner was always friendly, as if she was dispensing advice in the capacity of the 'Mistress of the House,' and the wife of the employer. When the workers extended their working hours on the Sabbath [sic: evening] – she generously provided them with a meal: bread with jam and warm tea, to the extent she was able. Every male and female worker in our home felt like an adopted child, and we, the children felt this as well: all the men and women workers showed us signs of special affection, out of gratitude to our parents.

In general, it was not only the workers that had such an attitude, but also the same was true of others to whom our house was open.

Our father, and especially our mother, who was a *Woman of Valor*, and the overseer in the management of her household, never stinted on any expenditures, and concerned themselves with getting the best books for us to study from, and paid appropriate salaries to our educators as tuition.

My father's principal concern was for the future, and the good of his children, and he expressed himself sometimes with such force, that it appeared that if he felt something from the outset – then he would be able to stand in the breech.

As beloved parents, working people, full of responsibility and honesty – may their memory be blessed for all eternity!

The Redlich Family

By Joseph Redlich ז"ל

In the heart of Rawa-Ruska, opposite the old court house, stood the large house in which all the members of the extensively branched Redlich family resided. In general, the way they made a living was profitable, due to their knack for commerce that developed as a result of where we were; and had not the heavens of Europe so darkened over, the Redlich families were destined to take a very respectable place in the burgeoning economic life of the city.

The family elder, R' Ber'l Redlich, whose residence was adjacent to the residence of the Redlich families, was of pleasant disposition, modest, and earned the full regard of his family members. He earned his living from domestic administration, which he ran in the center of the city.

R' Shlomo Redlich, whose good heart became a conversation piece in Rawa-Ruska, applied his hand to commerce in grain, to support the members of his household. The names of his sons are: Leib, Mordechai, Chaim, Joseph and Pesach. R' Pesach was a scholar, and insightful and God-fearing man. He moved his residence to Niemerow, close to Rawa-Ruska. His son Yitzhak, who is to be found in *The Land*, is the smoking ember, rescued from the fire, out of the entire widely-branched family of Shlomo Redlich.

R' Aharon Redlich, the owner of a clothing store, has two sons: Michael[219] and Joseph, and R' Lipa – a son named Hersch and a pretty daughter named Henia'li.

R' Yitzhak Redlich, and his wife, who were in the iron trade, did not have any children. My father, R' Yankl Redlich, lived at the edge of this house. There were ten souls that comprised this family, and to make a living, my father spent most of his hours in the trade of linen, flax and wool. A man of truth, God-fearing, my father was innocent before God and man. He would reveal the apple of his eye to everyone that his gaze penetrated, because he had a big and affectionate soul within him. He was a man of faith, and an ardent *Hasid* – these shaped his character and cast. Even though the burden of making a living fell heavily on his shoulders, he did not fail to go to the *Kloyz*, morning and evening, for communal prayer. He was a regular participant in the lesson that was given during weekday nights and on the Sabbath days in the Kloyz, up to the point that he became part of the

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219 Often pronounced 'Mikhuel' in the accent of the area.

Kloyz environment; and if it did occur, that on a rare occasion, he was not there – a sense pervaded the *Kloyz* that something was missing…

My father ז"ל concerned himself that his sons also suckle, along with their mother's milk, the spirit of Belz *Hasidism*. From the early years of their childhood, he was in the habit of taking them to the courtyard of the Rebbe, where they could while away time in his holy shadow. And indeed, his effort was not in vain. His oldest son, Hirsch'eleh strode in his footsteps, not straying one iota from the *Hasidic* way of life. The wondrous scholarship of Herschel, and his thorough knowledge of so much Torah elicited much admiration from those who knew him, and as he matured, his focused study went on to grow and become stronger. Justifiably, he acquired the descriptor of '*HaMatmid,*' and in Belz he was called 'The *Matmid* of Rawa.' When he came of age, he married Pesha Remel of ־ o֯kiew.

My sister Yehudit married Hersch Szitz, the son of R' Bentz'i Szitz, the Ritual Slaughterer and Meat Inspector in our city, the brother-in-law of R' Israel Dayan זצ"ל.

All of them – my parents and all my sisters and brothers: Hircshel'eh and Yehudit with their families, Sima, Chaim Perl, Yehoshua'leh – all of them were exterminated in the terrifying Holocaust, and I am the only one left to mourn them, and to preserve their memory forever and ever תנצ.ב.ה ! הי"ד!

The Rosenfeld Family

By Naphtali Rosenfeld



Page 388 (Right): My Brother: Yehoshua Rosenfeld, הי"ד

The elders of our family were residents of Rawa for generations on end. I remember, while still a child, when we went to pay respects at the ancestral graves, at the Rawa cemetery, we would also visit the grave of our great-great-grandfather, whose name was R' Sholom ben Naphtali ז"ל. Already 60 years ago, his headstone was already older than one hundred and forty years. In its inscription was written, among other things, 'He received the title of Baron from the King…' It was told, that in the time of the Napoleonic wars, this grandfather had given a large sum of money to the monarchy treasury, and for this, he was thanked with this title. We were always proud of our rich grandfather R' Sholom. It is self-evident that our family tree grew in Rawa for hundreds of years, and therefore had many branches. This is my father's, ע"ה, family.

On my mother's side, almost all were from villages around Rawa. My grandfather R' Nachman Wolker, himself a land manager, and his nephew R' Eizik Kurtzer and R' Leibusz Hareitzer, all were from around Rawa.



Page 388 (Left): His Wife Feiga of the Hauser Family, and Their Two Children, הי"ד

My brothers Yehoshua, Fyvel, and sister Rachel lived in the city until the Holocaust. Also, my sister Gittl, from Belz, at the end, came with her children to the Rawa ghetto, and along with all the others were exterminated in *Sanctification of the Name.* My brother Sholom died in the year 1934. His widow Etki, of the Teichman family, from Rawa, with their daughter Rachel'eh, and also Fyvel's wife Esther Kurtzer-Scheiner, and her parents Michael Wolf and Baylah Gittl, also their son Mendl and his daughter, were all exterminated in Rawa, in *Sanctification of the Name.*

For eternal memory, my sister Rachel's two daughters and their husbands. The husband of the first daughter, Dina, [was] R' Hirsch Strahmer. They had three children. (a daughter is living in Kiryat Gat), the husband of the younger daughter, Chan'cheh, R' Ber'l Keitstein, they had two children. The men were well known in the city.

My brother Yehoshua married the daughter of our uncle, R' Wolwisz[220] Hauser. The father of R' Wolwisz even before the end of the past century, had settled in the Land of Israel. His grave is found in Tzfat.

A few children of my uncle, a son-in-law of my grandfather R' Nachman Wolker, lived in Rawa. One son, R' Eizik was the son-in-law of R' Hirsch Rapoport. R' Eizik's eight-to-nine children strove and put themselves out to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, but did not make it.

Honor their memory.

The Period of My Life During the Nazi Conquest

By Batya Szibak-Reiss

This writing is difficult on me, because experiences of this kind are difficult to put down on paper. Fate has decreed, that I the youngest, will be the only one remaining from my family.



Page 389 (Top): My Brother Mordechai הי"ד

After our home was burned down, we concentrated ourselves, like all the rest of the Jews, on the *'Schul Gasse'* that had been turned into a ghetto. Of my family, after the second *aktion*, my mother Hinde, Abraham-Aharon, and my father Szanura, who had been shot, were seized and all that remained were Zuska. Mota, Yaakov, Tova'leh and myself. It was decided that my sister Tova'leh would flee because of her Christian looks, and she had a good command of both the Polish and Ukrainian languages. After it became known to her about the capture of Jewish girls on the train on the very night she was supposed to leave, my sister refused to try her luck. On that same day, a gentile reached us, and proposed to provide an Aryan birth certificate

220 One of the many endearing diminutives for 'Wolf.'

for me, in exchange for a large sum of money. I left the ghetto to go to 'Tartak.[221]'

The first time I felt the earth burning under my feet was the time that the Germans came to the house of the gentile in the forest, where I was without any credentials. These were the four gendarmes who were known to be murderers of Jews. They inspected all the certificates, and only I was not approached. They conducted this search because a rumor had stealthily gotten to their ears, that this very gentile was a provider of credentials to the Jews.



Page 389 (Bottom): The Reiss Family הר"ד

I appeared to be a gentile because I had dyed my hair blonde. When they left the place, I returned to the ghetto out of fear that they would seize me. My family members prevailed upon me not to give up, and from that very moment, I felt that the responsibility to guard the flickering coal ember of my family had been thrust upon me.

The gentile took me to Kharkov, to his home, and I worked there for a week. The way to get there stretched out for several days by train. All of this time, I sat by myself in a cabin, not near the gentile, who sensed that I would be identified.

After a number of days, of my staying in Kharkov, the gentile returned, with the news in his mouth that his aunt from Austria was coming to take me. I knew that this thing was not possible, however, my circumstances were such that I was compelled to believe in him. I had been given over into his hands. When my suspicions proved to be correct, and he notified me of my return to the city of Rawa-Ruska, in order to extort additional monies from my family, my sole desire was to leap from the train.

When we arrived in Rawa-Ruska, I silently sneaked out, in the cold night, to the sealed off street, and by climbing on the fence, I entered my house. The members of my family did not believe their eyes, because they thought I was dead. My sister Tova'leh was bedridden, ill with Typhus, and my most beloved brother, Mota, was beside her.

My brother Ziska [sic: Zuska] brought me warm soup, and my brother Yaakov gave me a basket characteristic of those carried by Christian girls. At times I felt that this was an amulet for me. They gave me a bit of valuables, to help me save my life yet again. I went over the fence, going back to that strange and frightening area, while my brother Yaakov who escorted me, returned along the way from which he would never come back. I lodged with one of my classmates, who did not recognize me, because I had dyed my hair. On the following morning, I met up with the gentile at the train station, using prearranged signals, because he was averse to being close to me in the event that I should be recognized. I returned to Kharkov, but it had become known in the gentile's house that I was Jewish, and I was forced to leave.

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221 Location of a Nazi slave-labor camp.

During those days, gentiles were gathered up to do labor in Germany. I tried my luck to be so selected, in order that they identify me as a Christian woman, but I was not chosen. The gentile's uncle was taken, and because of this, I asked to change places with him. The inspections before the departure were carried out in the gymnasium on *Ulica* Manyudowa in Kharkov. This was a concentration camp before being sent out to do forced labor. Standing in front of the gate was a Christian woman who said that these inspections were being conducted for the purpose of identifying Jews. A fright seized me.

I reached Germany under the name of Eleonora Rukus. I worked in a rehabilitation facility for German widows. I lived in Germany for three years, under a constant fear of being exposed. Whenever I saw policemen, I was fearful that they were coming to arrest me. I lived this way, until the American conquest. I left to go to Belgium, and there I was arrested as a German, because I had a good command of the German language. I did not use any other language during all the time I was in Germany.

It was only my '*Siddur* of Prayers' that I had requested, that saved me from the suspicion of being German, and thanks to my studies at the '*Bais Yaakov*' school, and in my parents' home – I remembered the prayers. I was set free also from there.

From Belgium, I made *aliyah* to Israel.

The Home of My Parents

For the purpose of preserving the memory of my father and mother, and my six brothers and sisters ז"ל, who were exterminated in the Holocaust, and gave their lives in *Sanctification of the Name* – I will attempt to portray their character.

I was the youngest in the family, and accordingly, I can tell only little about its history. My father, Moshe Reiss ז"ל, was one of those who frequented the court of the *Rebbe* of Magierow, and one of the *Hasidim* who held him in high esteem. My father was a man of fundamental principles, not stinting in the education of his children, and maintained strict surveillance that they not be caught up in the new wind that began to blow after the First World War. He succeeded in educating my oldest brother Zuska ז"ל, setting him on the path that he desired. My brother was one of those "who sat" in Belz. My father and mother took pride in him, and were in the habit of saying, 'more like him should proliferate in all families.' My oldest sister, Hinde ז"ל, suffered no small amount from the extremism of my father and brother, who did not permit her to form friendships with other girls, who were given over to the influence of the Zionist organizations that were established here in the first years of the twenties.

The path taken by my brother Abraham Aharon ז"ל was fundamentally different. He rebelled against the way of life that pervaded the house, and joined '*Mizrahi*.' He learned the fur trade. He was beloved by, and well accepted by his friends.

My brother Mordechai ז"ל went in his own unique way: he was fastidious in his *Hasidic* dress, but he was, in part, modern. He traveled to the city of Cracow to study at the Yeshiva, and together with his study of Holy Writ, he also studied secular subjects.

Yaakov ז"ל, the youngest of the brothers, was also influenced by my brother Zuska. He was fanatic like him, and forbade me and my sister Tova ז"ל from attending '*Bais Yaakov*,' an educational institution founded by Agudat Israel. However, despite her powerful desire to study secular subjects, my sister Tova did not want to aggravate my parents; accordingly, both of us together secretly studied Polish and German.

In my memory, there remains my mother Rivka the daughter of Freida ז"ל, that good persona so highly regarded by all of us. She strove to understand the direction each of us wanted to take, and concurred with our ideas, and was a loyal partner to us all. She assumed the burden of supporting our family, and gave us, the children, the legacy of her love, and concerned herself to see that we were raised to Torah, and to do good deeds.

Their memory will never, ever fade from us!

The Story of One Family

By Chana Cohen
Of the Eisen-Szaffel Family

In the year 1932 I married Kehat-Kusak Szaffel, and we moved to live in Rawa-Ruska. In 1933, a daughter was born to us, Herma, and we lived a fortunate family life, deriving much *nachas* from our daughter. And it appeared to us, that everything was going along as it should.



Page 391: (Top): My Father, R' Aryeh Eisen, הי"ד and my Daughter Herma



Page 391: (Bottom): My Brother, Shmuel Eisen, הי"ד

My father died in 1938. He had the privilege of an ancestor, in that he did not witness the oncoming Holocaust. In the year 1939, Hitler ימ"ש ignited the Second World War – which was the genesis of danger to Eastern European Jewry. During the first German invasion, I was found in Rawa-Ruska near Lvov. The Germans immediately began the pursuit of the Jews, under the pretense of looking for armaments and radio equipment. The populace was taken for forced labor. Several tens of Jews were taken out to be killed, among them Ze'ev Immerl Mesukal, of the family of Abraham Immerl.

In accordance with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty, the Germans pulled back to the Tomaszow-Belz border, 4-5 km from Rawa-Ruska, and the Russian entered among us.

After several months, when the war broke out between Germany and Russia, the Germans again overran Rawa-Ruska. First and foremost, they set up a *Judenrat*, and concentrated all of the Jews, of that location and environs, into a special ghetto that was isolated. Through the *Judenrat*, the *Gestapo* began to demand sums of money, gold, silver and jewelry, and especially men to do work. The men were sent in an unknown direction. The *Judenrat* began to investigate and take an interest in where the transports were going. And it became clear that they were going to the town of Belzec in the vicinity, where the Germans were in the process of constructing buildings. After a while, it became known to us that this was a terrifying concentration camp, in which hundreds of thousands of Jews were taken to be killed. Day-after-day, we saw freight trains, loaded with Jews, traveling in the direction of Belzec. We continued to suffer this way until the year 1942; there was no end to the torture and the fear of being killed.



Page 392: Zisman Steinbach, Asher Steinfeld, Kehat Szaffel

In the year 1942, we were taken – my husband, my brothers and I – to the military barracks. There, I fell sick, and ran a high fever. At the same time, a transport went from Sokal to Belzec. On the way, my sister-in-law Leah, and her daughters Nina and Miriam (Muszka) jumped from the train. Leah and Nina returned to the ghetto in Sokal, and after making a considerable effort, Miriam reached Rawa-Ruska. After the aktion, my husband and brother Shmulik went out to assess the situation, and encountered Muszka. The encounter was very dramatic, and together with her, they returned to the Rawa-Ruska ghetto. The doctors advised my husband to have me taken out of the ghetto, because my health had deteriorated completely. I was taken to the hospital for infectious diseases, under the name Ahafya Kustyuk, and I lay there for six weeks without food or drink. From time-to -time, at the risk of his life, my husband brought me fruit from the ghetto. One day, I received a note from my husband: 'Save yourself. We have no means at our disposal to help you.' On that same day, Dr. Kutsk demanded of me, and one other Jewish woman, Zina Gutman (who remained alive, and is to be found in Warsaw, Poland), to immediately, without delay, leave the hospital. Our physical condition was so bad that we could not go, and not even stand. They brought us our clothing, and urged us to go together, and outside there was snow, and it was freezing. We literally crawled to a nearby stable, and there, we hid ourselves amidst the straw. Because of the high fever, I grew thirsty, and drank the dirty water from the trough. On the second night, a nurse came from the hospital and demanded forcefully that we leave the stable.

Towards evening, we left the stable, and turned towards the train station. On the way, we saw that the ghetto was lit up, and the Ukrainian police and the *Gestapo* were guarding the ghetto. We tried to walk between the fences, in order to support ourselves. Along the way, we turned off to a

Christian acquaintance, to hear from her own mouth if she saw anyone of our family. The Christian woman was terribly frightened by the visit, and we promised her to leave the house. We paid 500 gulden for two cups of warm tea and bread, and she gave us her son, in order that he buy for us the train tickets that left for Lvov. Along the way, we were stopped by the *Gestapo* who took him, and we continued on to the train station. The ticket master in his cage recognized us, and advised us to get out of there. Through considerable effort, we boarded the train, and reached Lvov at two in the morning. Out of doors there was snow and cold that was indescribable. We waited outside until 6 in the morning, for the movement of the tram. We were filthy, our clothing torn and cut, our hair full of straw, and our hair unkempt – things that drew attention to us.

We reached *Ulica* Snowkowska to the Zhukowsky family – Marmolowa. At the beginning, they did not want to receive us, but because of the signs that I have described, they took us inside. My friend Zina Gutman was taken in under the condition that she leave the hose before nightfall. Mrs. Marmolowa rented a room for me in the neighborhood, under the name of Ahafya Kustyuk. I waited until my eyes gave out for my family. While still in the hospital, I had discussed and decided upon a place to meet in Lvov with my husband and brother. I lay sick in bed, because the Typhus was still virulent in me. Mrs. Marmolowa notified me of the arrival of Muszka (Miriam), and the meeting was shattering. When we calmed down a bit, Muszka began to tell: after the liquidation of the ghetto. The members of the family hid in the bunker. The condition in the bunker was indescribable. The wailing of the children was terrible. They gave the children medicinal beverages to make them fall asleep. There were mothers that lost their minds after having asphyxiated their children with their own bare hands. The *Gestapo* took them out of the bunker, and led them off to the synagogue. Along the way, she saw adult men, women and children that had been killed, piles on top of piles. My husband, Kusak Szaffel, was taken to the cemetery, after having buried those who were killed – was shot and killed, on 15.12.1942. My brother Shmulik, who was together with my husband, succeeded in fleeing, but was caught and taken to a camp beside Rawa-Ruska, my sister, and daughter Herma were also taken to that same camp near Rawa-Ruska. Miriam worked at cleaning the ghetto. On 31.12.42 the *Gestapo* came and took my daughter along with other women. Miriam saw how they were shot: my little daughter, ten years old, was very aware, and begged to be left alive. 'After all I am little,' she begged.

Muszka, who reached me, had contracted Spotted Typhus, with lice in her head. I took her into my room without the cognizance of the landlady. For the entire day, she lay hidden underneath my bed, and at night, I took her into bed with me. I caught the disease from her, and fell sick a second time. Miriam came about out of her illness and took care of me, and even Marmolowa secretly brought in a doctor to care for me, and bought medicines for me in the ghetto.

Our brother Shmulik bolstered our spirits and gave us encouragement by saying: 'The objective is to live, in order that you be able to exact vengeance from the Nazis ימ"ש.' Shmulik's circumstances were terrifying and frightful. For a number of days, he was hidden on a Franciscan monastery, in their library, and the priest Viktor provided him with food. The monks revealed his presence and demanded that he be distanced from the monastery. At night, Shmulik roamed around in the cemetery, and in the streets during the day.

I decided that Shmulik should leave Lvov and joined the partisans, and I will sneak onto a transport of Poles and Ukrainians that were being taken to do forced labor in Germany.

On the following morning, I worked up the nerve to reach the Podzamcze train station. Muszka decided to join up with me. We were dressed in Ukrainian clothing, because we were fluent in that language. We waited beside the train station, and from a distance – [we saw] hundreds of *Gestapo* men and Ukrainian police. The marchers arrived, in groups of four-by-four, and Miriam and I slipped ourselves in among the marchers, and boarded the train along with them. When I was in the train car, I saw Shmulik with the priest Viktor, taking their leave from us in the distance. We felt an enormous sense of loneliness; we were two Jewish women among thousands of Poles and Ukrainians. We cried endlessly, and when they asked us why we were crying – we answered: that all our pigs and cows had been plundered (because to a villager, this was more tragic than the death of parents). We had not taken care to prepare food, because we did not imagine that we would reach the train, and the sack thrown over our shoulder was part of our disguise. Despite this we took courage. We took what was given to us, and continued to travel for eight days. Periodically, the *Gestapo* inspected us. Searching us, counting us, endlessly, because many Poles jumped from the train.

We reached Bochum, the location of a coal mine and Krupp works, this being April 1943. Our documents were forged. They arranged us according to work – loading of coal and the pulling of train cars. The work exceeded our strength and the food was execrable. From the potato peeling as cabbage they boiled up a soup, and in addition to this, allocated 350 grams of bread to each man (and I was working in a man's capacity) with a piece of margarine, and this was the daily allocation. For the entire time they intoned against us that we were Jewish, and these intonations reached the point of being slanderous. Nevertheless, I succeeded in overcoming this.

And lo, the day of liberation came. On the 27th of April 1945, the American Army entered the city of Mattenscheid[222], in which Miriam and I worked in the camp for the German Army, and they liberated us all.

I see as part of my obligation to call to memory the loss of the members of my family. My dear mother was taken to the Sokal ghetto, and along the way was shot and killed. My brother Herman died by accidental means in the year 1941. My brother Bernard fled from Russia to Hungary, and there he was taken to a ghetto and exterminated. David, and his wife Michal and Henokh, who were in the Sokal ghetto, were taken during the aktion and sent to Belzec, and there exterminated. My youngest brother Shmulik was killed in a manner unknown to me.

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222 Would appear to be Wattenscheid.

My Family

By Chava Schuman
Of the Strauss Family

My mother Sarah'keh of the Frey family, was born and raised in Rawa-Ruska, and when she reached maturity, she married my father R' Aharon Leib Strauss of the town of Navuria[223]. They settled in the house of my mother's parents, and were with them up to the last day. The residence that was built for the young couple, on a story above the home of the parents, consisted of a large room, and a kitchen, half of which was taken up by the sinks, the oven and baking equipment.



Page 393: The Strauss Family

It was in this modest premises that seven daughters and two sons were born to them, and lived with them: Shayndl, Esther, myself, who is writing these lines, Freida, Minna, Ziss'l, Joseph, Rachel, and the youngest, Yaakov. Of them, only I remain alive, along with Freida and Minna, that succeeded in making *aliyah* to *The Land,* as pioneers, before the Holocaust.

As was the case for most of the Jews in the city, my father ז"ל too, engaged in commerce, in a store of the market that was on a floor of the property that was in our house. Beside him, my mother and children were his help.

The order of my father's day began with going to morning prayers at the First Minyan, with the dawn, and from there, he went straight to his store. There, he spent the entire day, until late in the evening; even his meals were brought to him there, and he ate during his spare moments. His work was hard, compounded by emotional pressure mixed in with physical exertion, amidst unending competition: with the other merchants, with time, and with officials of the régime, and the burdensome taxes. All of this did not eliminate his concern for educating his children, and to take advantage, for this purpose, of all the good educational institutions of the city.

My father ז"ל – was a *Hasid.* He would travel a number of times a year to Belz, to immerse himself in the aura of the *Rebbe*, to fully absorb the scent of the *Hasidic* atmosphere and to absorb inspiration and encouragement so as to motivate him through his daily drab and hard work. He was an alert and

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223 Possibly Nyvy, approximately 3 miles WSW of Rawa Ruska.

aware man, full of Jewish humor, well-accepted by the *Hasidim* and respected by them, because he never stinted in providing for the needs of the charity they asked for. With this, he was not fanatic, and revealed himself to be understanding of the emotional tendencies of his children, their needs and desires in this new time, even though this caused him emotional and community distress. He was prepared to tolerate such suffering, and did not try to distance his children from the progressive youth groups into which they integrated themselves, and through which they found their direction in life.

My mother ע"ה spent most of her time in the house, and was close to all of the issues of her children. If my father was able to overcome the emotional stress that his children caused him, more than once – it was on account of my mother, who, thanks to her deep understanding, knew how to calm down his state of mind, and along with this, to orient matters for the good of the children.

To this day, I find it hard to understand how my mother managed given the totality of her large house, especially in light of the fact that our house was open to all comers: to the boy and girl friends of her children, to the poor who ate at her table, and to the neighbors. Neighbors would come and go, and my mother was prepared to help all of them. There were neighbors who, because of their business, disappeared from their homes for the entire day. These would bring in their pot of food for cooking in the morning, and in the evening, recover the cooked food. A neighbor that died, left behind two orphaned children, and my mother cooked their meals for them for many years, until they got married. At evening, acquaintances would come to our house with various issues of business and family, and if it was possible for our parents to offer support of some kind – there was no end to their happiness. This is the way our house hummed along from morning to night.



Page 394: The Children of the Strauss Family

My sister Shayndl ע"ה, with the help of Tema Bodenstein and Pessia Daks, to be separated for long life, gathered groups of young people together from the vicinity, from all walks of life, and laid the foundation for the Zionist movement in the city. The initiative was educational – through discussions and walks. When about two years had gone by, with the establishment of the '*Gordonia*' youth group by Gimpel Just – the groups under the direction of Shayndl, Tema and Pessia, joined this new movement. But my sister Shayndl, to her great pain, did not attain its goal. She married Shammai Margulies, a *Halutz* that had returned from *The Land* for health reasons. Both hoped that they would yet realize their dream to make *aliyah*, but this was not to be.

The '*Gordonia*' youth group had a large following. Many of its members did this despite the highly conservative religious leanings of their parents who distanced themselves from Zionism. The essence of the membership, to obtain the organized education, endowed the young people with pride, and bolstered their standing opposite the Christian youth, that was concentrated in youth movements organized by the government of the church, to which the Jews had no access. But especially, it enchanted the young people with the ideals put forth by the movement: leaving the Diaspora and making *aliyah* to *The Land*. The young members, who were not as occupied as their parents were with making a living, could take the time to understand essential issues, and the difficult and hapless political situation, that offered no opportunity and false hope. It underpinned their decision to make *aliyah* to *The Land*. Also my sisters and brothers yearned for, the realization of this decision, but they were late in their timing – and *The Annihilator* got to them first.

In the summer of 1939, we sent one of our comrades from *The Land* to our home in Rawa. In order that he bring back with him our sister Minna to *The Land*, since he was a citizen of the Land of Israel. Here are the details of their *aliyah* as she herself wrote them down:

Summer 1939. In the city one can feel the roiling of terrifying rumors waiting to come into being. I am totally committed to preparations for making *aliyah*. Early in the morning of 1.9.1939 we traveled, I and my friend, the emissary from *The Land*, to Lvov, to make the final arrangements for our *aliyah*. In the travel office, we paid the required fees, and after several hours, we were supposed to return in order to receive the requisite papers. We went into a nearby restaurant, and suddenly the radio broadcasts the invasion of Poland by the German Army. Pandemonium broke out! In shock, we ran to the travel office. There was a mass confusion there. They returned the Polish currency to us, and demanded that we pay for the tickets in [U. S.] dollars. And where are we to get dollars? Nehemiah Rekhes, who at that time was found in Lvov, did the best he could to help us: however the price of the dollar went up so high, that our Polish currency was practically worthless. As to the possibility of getting in contact with our home in Rawa – there was none: everything had been cut off. There also was no possibility of returning home. And, here, I had promised my mother that I would return that very same day.

On that very same night, with the onset of the Sabbath, the Germans bombed Lvov, and we spent the whole night in a shelter. In the morning, we saw the huge amount of destruction that had been inflicted on the railroad station and its surroundings. In the meantime, we became aware of the fact that the train [station] in Rawa had also been bombed, and the link to the house – no longer existed. The bombing of Lvov continued relentlessly day and night. We made an effort, at the risk of our lives, to reach the British Consulate. The Consulate promised to help everyone with British papers in hand, but didn't set a time for this. Three weeks went by in Lvov, going from one shelter to the next, until notification came from the Consulate that we will be able to leave by means of a special train, that awaits us at a side station, and will take us to Rumania.

We reached that train. I was cut off from my dear parents, leaving my entire family without knowing what condition they were in. For the entire time, I continued to hope that I will have the chance to take my leave of them in the normal manner.

There is one impression that is left with me, regarding the Sabbath day in our family, and it is etched into my memory like a brilliant picture, remaining beautiful to this day. It was the one day of the week that all the members of the family were found together. On the Eve of the Sabbath, we all sat together, including a guest or two, that our father would bring home for the Sabbath from the synagogue. We sat around a table covered in Sabbath delicacies, and lit by Sabbath candles. The house was heated and warm. All of us dressed in our Sabbath finery, eating, and singing Sabbath melodies between courses. The feast continued and went on until it came to the hour when the children had to attend 'the movement,' and the parents and guests to retire for the night's rest. On the following day, with the return of our father from the *Kloyz*, once again, we gathered around the table and again there was singing and conversation on the progress the children were making in their studies, and a discussion of various family issues. And after the meal – a short rest, and before the afternoon prayers, the *Melamed* would come to test the children in the portion of the week, and to demonstrate their progress in learning to our father. And our father's face shone with *nachas*. And afterwards – receiving guests, friends and neighbors. And after the end of the Sabbath, the *Hasidim* would gather together, at appointed times, in our house for the feast of '*Melave Malka*,' and once again there was song and cheer. After '*Havdalah*' we felt that with the departure of the Sabbath, its sanctity that we so prized was cut away from us, as well as the atmosphere that we so loved, and everything around us took on the drab and sordid form of the six day secular week.

For my entire life, I will weep over the loss of the members of my family, who were exterminated in such a tragic way, among the six million members of our people.

All the members of my family yearned to join us here in *The Land*, but the *Malevolent Hand* raged among them, and they did not make it.

May these words serve as a memorial monument to every one of them – to my Father and mother. My four sisters, and two brothers – for all eternity.

Memories and Realities

By Hella Schipper-Lev



Page 395:(Top): Henna Berger-Schipper and Child

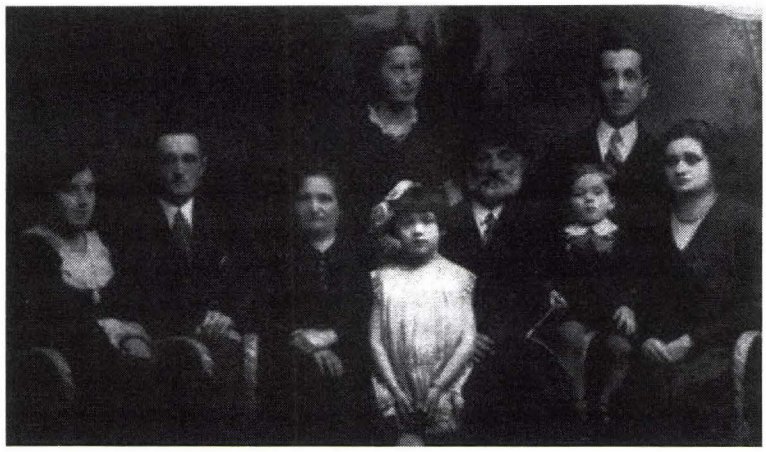
My dear and good home, which I left in the year 1930, has remained forever in my memory. Hearty parents and siblings! Such a harmonious life as we had, I cannot delineate for any time since then.

My parents and siblings, apart from my brother Herman, who in the year 1939 traveled off to America, were killed by the murderous hands. His wife Henna with their child were supposed to have followed him. A couple of months later, Rawa Ruska was assaulted by the German hordes, and Henna and the child were among the first victims. Herman found out about this through the American Red Cross. In the last year of the war, he went off as a volunteer with the American ocean flotilla. He wanted to reach Poland, in order to find out if any of our dear ones remained alive. When he arrived in

Belgium, Germany had already capitulated. Along with his company, he was sent back home.

The daughter of my sister Regina and Abraham Edel, Hella Edel saved herself, spending the war years in Germany as a Christian, and working as a servant-girl for the family of a German officer. At the time, she was 15 years old. Today, she finds herself in Canada. She married an architect and has two talented sons.

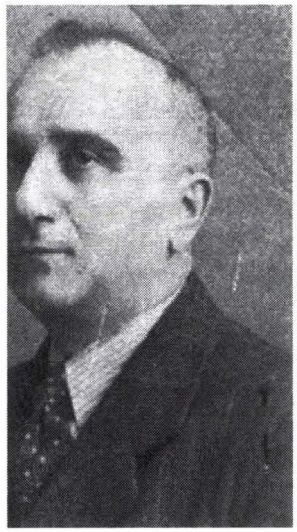
Living in Argentina, we did everything possible to assure that our children would not stray from their Judaism. Our son was one of the first children in the Yiddish-Hebrew kindergarten, and even attended a religious school. It was in this manner that he became interested in a Jewish life.



Page 395:(Bottom): The Schipper and Edel Families הי"ד

Page 397: (Left): Yitzhak-Kurt Stralberg ז"ל*, the son, saved from the Holocaust, but died young on 20 Tammuz 5720, 15.7.60*





Page 397: (Right): Meir Stralberg הי"ד*, Exterminated in the Holocaust*

The Jews in Argentina were occupied with making money, and it was necessary to fight with them,to get them to send their children to the Jewish school. We had people whom we knew among the teachers, and we saw how hard it was for them to live. As to a monthly stipend for them, there was nothing to discuss. We made do with few pesos and managed. The economic situation at that time was very difficult. A worker found it very difficult to set aside tuition money from his earnings. But whoever had to, did everything and sent his child into an ambience where he was raised with a love for the Jewish people and Israel. In the year 1953, our son made aliyah to the Jewish people in Israel. He worked for 8 years on a *Kibbutz*. Now he lives with his family in Nahariya. He is working, and he is satisfied.

Ten years later, when our daughter was born, and began going to school, the situation was different. During the war years, Argentina made very substantial progress, strongly developing itself economically. Jews became rich, and tens among them even became millionaires. Substantial school buildings were put up, integrated schools, Hebrew and progressive, where a bit of Hebrew was learned.

Our daughter came to Israel in 1963, having completed studies at the Seminary (Hebrew). She is a member of *Kibbutz* Neut-Mordechai, and married a teacher there.

In the year 1965 we followed our children. You can understand that we are happy to be close to our children in Israel.

My Home

By Bluma Rubin-Schwert

Regarding my mother and father's home in Rawa, my memory goes back for three generations. As it would seem, one of my grandparents, R' Hirsch'eleh Shokhet-Schwert with his wife, Yenta'leh, of the Mann family, on my father's side – were residents of Rawa for a long time; this being during the time when my great-grandfather R' Simcha Shokhet-Schitz, on my mother's side, was a *Shokhet* in Hungary. He was a very ardent Belz *Hasid*; a couple of times a year, he would come from Hungary to Belz; in Hungary, his wife Fradl'eh bore him four children, all of whom died. When he complained to the *Rebbe* of Belz about his misfortune, so the *Rebbe* advised him to change location to Rawa. My grandfather came to Rawa as a wealthy man, bought a big house, and with the *Rebbe's* influence he became a *Shokhet* there. In Rawa, a son was born to him, an only son, and with good fortune, he lived. They raised him with great care, and married him off to the daughter of a rabbinical family from Strelsk. These were my grandparents from my mother's side – R' Yehuda Jonah Shokhet-Schitz, and his wife Rivka'leh.

Both grandfathers and grandmothers raised families that were well-branched, from the sons and daughters, with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Great-grandfather Simcha, hearing of the outstanding traits of Israel, the son of R' Hirsch'eleh Shokhet, who developed a reputation in the city as an extraordinary 'genius,' made a match for him with his granddaughter, Esther Miriam, my mother-to-be. And so they married – he being 18 approximately, and she being approximately 15.

My grandfather R' Yehuda Jonah was a very wise Jewish man, with a full sense of humor and the wisdom of life, ran a very generous house, like a farm, and most of the children, daughters, sons and grandchildren, who mostly occupied the house under his aegis and support, he married off – deriving great *nachas* from all of them. Also I, my mother and the children, lived under the aegis and support of my grandfather, because my father – being someone who came into the family by marriage, and was under his own control – became a resident of Belz, which my grandfather R' Hirsch'eleh did not permit him to do prior to getting married. And not only myself, the children and grandchildren were raised in the generous house of our great-grandfather Simcha Shokhet; my great-grandmother Fradl'eh died very young, and as a result I did not know her very well. She had a brother Levi, a formidable scholar, whose wife died, and left two orphaned daughters. Accordingly, my great-grandfather Simcha took them into his home, supported them and married them off; one of them, Shayndl, with R' Leib'eleh Freiheiter, and the second, Sima, to ¯o³kiew with a certain Lichter.

We had great respect and extended considerable courtesy to our grandfather R' Yehuda-Jonah and grandmother Rivka'leh, who raised eight children, of which my mother was the eldest. Grandmother Rivka'leh had a brother, Aleksander Zusha Langenauer, a very prominent man in Magierow, and a great scholar. One of his daughters, Chan'cheh married her cousin Ben'cheh Shokhet, my uncle. R' Zusha's sons emigrated in the twenties to Paris. All, with the exception of one, R' Herschel, to be separated for long life, who lives in the Land of Israel today with his children and grandchildren – all were killed in *Sanctification of the Name*, ה"תש. One of them, Wolf ז"ל died in Paris.



צו דער
יודישער בעפעלקערונג
אין ראווא רוסקא.

דער ועד קרן קימת לישראל
אין ראווא רוסקא

Page 399: An announcement concerning the planting of a 'Rawa Ruska Grove' after the destruction of Jewish trees by Arab bandits.

Our grandfather, R' Hirsch'eleh, a wondrous scholar, and a man of great wisdom, though not a great *Hasid,* had five sons and two daughters. Not all the children were alike, being various types.

The eldest-born, my father, literally a genius and renowned through the entire vicinity, because he was a totally committed Belz *Hasid*, caused the Rabbis in Belz to draw him close to them, and did not undertake even the slightest thing without his ruling. Also the youngest, Fy'sheh, who had a reputation as a formidable scholar and *Hasid*, went in the same way, and up to the time that he was killed in *Sanctification of The Name*, remained as a permanent resident in Belz, and one of the men of the courtyard. For this reason, our grandmother Yenta'leh would always say: 'I unlocked with a golden key, and with this one, locked it up again.' By contrast, the other talented children were: Ber'l, Mordechai'leh and Yudl, who, together with all their wives and children, were killed along with all the Jews of Lemberg, but were not any sort of ardent *Hasidim*; also the two daughters were already oriented towards the new modern time. The older one, Roche'cheh, unfortunately, passed away young while in the bloom of youth, leaving behind two orphaned children, and the second daughter Sarah'cheleh married her sister's husband, had a son with him, and did manage, with this only son, Yitzhak Kurt, and with Roche'cheh's two orphans, saved herself from the terrifying Holocaust, in which, regrettably, she lost her husband, Meir Stralberg ז"ל. Being in New York, to everyone's immense sorrow, the greatest misfortune befell her with sudden death at the young age of 32, leaving behind her intellectually gifted son, my cousin, Yitzhak-Kurt Stralberg ז"ל. [Aramaic sobriquet].

Our grandfather R' Hirsch'eleh, who always had good communication with the children, also tolerated the fact that some of his children dressed in modern [i.e. short] overcoats and not in traditional long over garments [*bekeshehs*]. And as it is told, on one occasion, he came to the Old Kloyz to pray with Mordechai'leh, where he was a steady worshiper, and the son was wearing a sweater. In the middle of worship, a tumult suddenly broke out, and what had happened? R' Zusha Mammeh, a fiery Belz *Hasid*, a brother of the familiar Tall Pesha, who did nothing more that go over to Mordechai'leh on that Sabbath, and with a scissor cut around – in half – the sweater, as a behest, because he was not wearing a *bekesheh*. This was not withstanding the fact that such a protest against an unwanted form of dress – was a violation of the Sabbath.

By the way, Mordechai'leh showed great devotion and tolerance for his brother, my father during the time of the Russians. Even during the time of the First World War, the Russians seized Jews, beat and killed them, and forced them to dig their own graves. When my father returned home, one day, after such a seizure, beaten and half dead, and when on the second day he said that he had to present himself again for digging – his brother Mordechai'leh took his place – not knowing whether or not he would return from this work alive.

My father fulfilled the commandment of honoring his father and mother in every way, and in every detail. When our grandmother, his mother, would come into our house and even when it would be full of people and juridical people in the Bet-Din part of the house – he would always stand in her presence, and would not sit down until she disappeared from his sight. We, the children, understood this as being correct, and took it as a lesson for ourselves.

One time, Chaya'leh Zelik'l's brought her granddaughter Reizl'eh, my friend, into our house, so that she could play with me. Reiz'leh was the child of her daughter Pearl'eh, who lived in Lemberg, The lady, Chaya'leh Zelik'l's had a very important pedigree, being of (Jewish) aristocratic lineage going back many generations. When she entered the house, our father rose before her, following the custom he would employ for his mother. We, the children, immediately asked him: 'Why are you doing this? What is this, after all, she is not your mother?' So he answered us by telling us this story:

'On one occasion, the *Rebbe*, R' Issachar Ber זצ"ל called me into his presence, and asked the *Gabbai* to leave, because he needs to speak with me alone. At that time, he asked of me that I should study with his son, R' Aharon'yu, who after his passing, indeed became the *Rebbe* of Belz. You can understand that I immediately agreed to this. However, in the middle of this, the Gabbai comes back in again, and begs his pardon, saying that outside there is a Jewish lady standing outside who is demanding immediate access to the *Rebbe* with a note in hand. 'Who is she? – Did you ask? – 'Yes' – the *Gabbai* replies – She says that she is called Chaya'leh R' Zelik'l's. 'Ai, not Chaya'leh, but R' Chaya'leh!' And to me he says: 'Are you aware that she has a very important pedigree, because she is a relative of mine, but it is I who have that pedigree by virtue of being her relative.' And when she came into the *Rebbe's* presence, the *Rebbe* rose before her.'

Then we understood, why our father had risen before her. In truth, everyone accorded her this appropriate respect, because she evoked a deep sense of personal courtesy in everyone.

We are obligated to accord great respect, and the deepest thanks to the highly respected Jewish man, R' Yankl Ringel, who was a soul brother to my father for his deeds. He was a frequent and much beloved guest in our house. During the time of the Polish-Ukrainian Civil War, when there was a great shortage of life's necessities, from time-to-time, he would bring us sugar, from what he himself had received, in order to make sugar cubes. Also by us, the children, there was a great joy, when R' Yankl Ringel would arrive, because he also did not forget us, and for each child he brought a portion of sugar cubes. My father always was happy when he came, because he loved taking some time to have a clever conversation with him. The sons were the best of friends, and studied together.

During the days of the Polish-Ukrainian invasion, when there were daily battles taking place, and bullets from the shooting penetrated in every home, and the danger of being killed was very great – in those days, on a Sabbath, a bullet of this sort entered our house, and hit the velvet part of the *shtrymel* that our father wore on his head. If it had struck three or four centimeters lower – the bullet would have brought on a certain death.

As it happened, on the second day, Sunday, R' Yankl Ringel came to us. When he heard of this incident, and saw the hole in the *shtrymel*, became frozen like a stone to his spot, in considering the miracle that had happened to my father, and he took my father's prayer shawl and phylacteries, and said: 'You are coming with me immediately, with your entire family, do not remain here for even a minute.' At that time our family had four children.

The Ringel family, at that time, lived in Lemel Lieberman's house, in a center-located accommodation, where the danger from a bullet was not likely. The respectful and decent woman, Glik'l Ringel, that refined person of body and soul, gave us their bedroom during the days of the cold and frosty winter. She took care that we should have everything, and that we would lack for nothing, because in that time, it was hard to come by necessities even for money. At that time, as a child, I did not understand the greatness of that act: but today, today I write with the greatest inspiration about that outstanding family, about their devotion that they showed towards us.

I want to recall a similar matter. In Rawa, the passage of time was marked by the number of fires in the city. Many times I would hear how my grandfather and grandmother would converse about some event; he would argue that it was before the 'First Fire,' and by contrast she would say that it was before the 'Second Fire.'

Incidentally, from among the many curiosities of our city, I remember another one. This is my great-grandmother Golda, the mother of R' Hirsch'eleh Shokhet's, who on one occasion came into the home of my grandfather R' Yehuda Jonah, and saw him writing an address on a postal card. She expressed great wonder and called out: ' I knew you were able to write Yiddish, but that you can write a '*middress*' in a secular language – is truly a wonder. For a while, there was a Jewish man, R' Asher Deitch, and if someone needed a '*middress*' written – he was paid a half Kreutzer to do this, and indeed from this he became a rich man.'

I only remember three fires: one was when, during the First World War, the Russians set fire to the Hiiche *Gasse*, then the one in the twenties which burned down a large part of the '*Zamd*:' And then the third, in the month of Elul of 1932, when the house of the very genteel *Dayan* R' Shlomo Szrencel burned down, who came from Oleszyce to Rawa to take the place of R' Yankl'eh Lezhensker. At that time, he and his whole family were left literally out in the open: as it happens, at that time, his daughter Juta was with him, who was pregnant, who came to her mother for the period of her confinement. R' Yehoshua Rosenfeld, at that time, took pity on him, this being Shayndl Chaim Yaakov's son, one of the members of the prominent Rosenfeld family in the city, and he, and his wife Feiga, a cousin of his and an only daughter of Sarah R' Nachman Wolker's and Wolwisz Hauser. They took the entire Szrencel family into their home, and kept them for quite a long time. They were relatives.

I also wish to recall a highly respected Jewish man, a scholar, who was a friend of my father in his youth, during which time they studied together, but later on went off in two different directions.

This is R' Akiva, the son of Boruch Wasserman. He became a merchant. He, and his refined wife, who came from Magierow, a daughter of the prominent Grauman family, build a traditional Jewish and modern home. They had four daughters, and they had the privilege of marrying off the oldest, my friend, to a smart and skilled merchant, Itcheh Yoer, from Brazil, before his premature death at a young age. She took her sister Iris and her husband there, and they live there to this day. They gave their daughters a very good upbringing, and not like many of the families in the city, permitted them to study. One daughter, and her family, live in Israel.

The respectable mother Leah, with her talented daughter Hella, who already had the documents and ship tickets to voyage to Brazil, were trapped by the outbreak of the war, and to our great misfortune, were exterminated along with all the Jews of Rawa.

A couple of years ago, also before his time – to our great misfortune – the husband of Pearl'eh died, Itcheh Yoer, ז"ל.

My father was given no surcease in the Old *Kloyz*: constantly, stories were conveyed to him about we, the daughters, that we attend the '*Hatikvah*' Society to hear Hebrew lectures, that we borrow books from the library to read. Despite our care to assure that we would not cause our father any grief, nevertheless, things reached his ears, and not once did he tear up a pamphlet, not getting upset – but only asked how much it cost, and paid for it.

Once, being in the library, Dr. Mandel came into the library, took out a wallet with a pack of banknotes, and gave it away to Aharon Hollander, who was the treasurer for all affairs. When Dr. Mandel went away, I asked Hollander as to what purpose did he give over the money, to which he answered: 'For *Keren Kayemet*.' Struck with wonder, I then asked him: 'Does Dr. Mandel personally go about collecting money?' – At this Hollander burst out laughing and said: Every month, the Doctor gives a fixed percentage of his earnings to *Keren Kayemet*, and I do not know if these are small percentages from a large income, or a large percentage of a small income, because for the work that he does for the public good, he abandons his famous offices, which has diminished his profits.

The heart bleeds when my family is recalled, a father, mother, sisters, brothers, children and friends;

The heart aches for all those Torah scholars and people of repute, heads of the community, and leaders, and for all the ordinary Jewish people of the city;

I sorrow for all of them, and we will remember all the tiny children who were murdered, all those lives cut down, all the suffering of those souls given up by being martyrs in that terrifying destruction, that befell us.

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.



Page 402: **In Memory of**
Those Deceased in *The Land* and Diaspora

Magnified and Sanctified
Be the Name of the Lord...

Memorial Candle

Page 403 (Upper Left):***Mattl Bogen of the Kleiner Family*** ז"ל

Deceased 22 Shevat 5717 [January 24, 1957]



From her illness caused by her suffering during the time of the Nazis, which broke her in her youth. She left two small orphans as a heavy burden on her husband, brothers and sisters.

Page 403 (Lower Left):***Shmuel Baumwohl*** ז"ל

Deceased 11 Sivan 5704 [June 2, 1944]



Among the first *Halutzim* to make aliyah, his house and hand being always open to help the public. He was taken from his wife and only son in a tragic manner.

Chaim Blumenfeld ז"ל

Shmuel Blumenfeld ז"ל

Page 403 (Upper Right):***Sarah Altner*** ז"ל

Deceased June 1967



Mourned and Remembered by:

Adi Altner and the Children:

Martin, Diana and **Matilda**

Page 403 (Center Right):***David Bach*** ז"ל

Was saved from the Holocaust.

Resided in Orlando, Florida

Deceased in the year 1968

Hella Barg-Tauchert ז"ל

Deceased Tammuz 5732 [June/July 1972]

Sole survivor of the respected Barg family that was exterminated in the Holocaust.

Survived by an Only Son.

Page 403 (Bottom Right):***Yona (Taub'eleh) Bodenstein*** ז"ל



A member of '*Gordonia*,' Made *aliyah* to *The Land* with the first '*Maccabiah*.' She possessed an emotional and delicate soul, full of life and the will to live. She was hoping to raise a family in her Kibbutz in Kfar HaKhoresh, but there, she was plucked in the bloom of her life on 26 Tevet 5695 [January 1, 1935]

Page 404 (Right Center):***Khienka Brand-Sohn*** ז"ל Deceased in the Year 1950



Raised in a religious home, she made *aliyah* with the first of the *Halutzot* of *'HaPoel HaMizrahi*.' She worked as a kindergarten teacher in the Mizrahi youth schools in Tel-Aviv, and was full of joy and life. She died while giving birth to her only daughter.

Page 404 (Right Bottom):***Gideon***, son of ***Dr. Aryeh Berger*** ז"ל

Taken, in the bloom of youth, at the age of 17, 19 Tishri 5723 [17.10.62]



Page 404(Top Left): ***Sarah'leh Berger-Forgasz*** ז"ל Deceased in New York 24.10.1956



Full of grace and beauty, a good heart and philanthropic. One of the activists in '*Hadassah*' in the United States.

Page 404(Bottom Left): ***Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Berger*** ז"ל

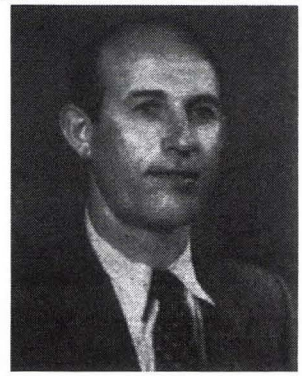
Deceased 3 Menachem-Av 5720 [27.7.60]



Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Berger ז"ל, a person of Torah, science and possessed of exceptional intellectual faculties, was born in Rawa-Ruska, grew up there, studied there, and was thought to be an advanced intellectual in the city. He was only eighteen years of age when he received the authority to decide rulings from his Rabbi. Immediately after the First World War, he went to Berlin. There he attended and finished the Real Gymnasium. At the University of Bern (Switzerland) he studied philosophy and sociology, and received the title of Doctor of Philosophy for his scientific work, that to this day remains familiar and recognized by the ranks of the profession: 'The Society for the Study of Jewish Sociological History.' During all his days, he was the central figure in advancing his area of research. In Sopot near Danzig, he served as the Rabbi for a number of years, and shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, he made *aliyah* to *The Land*. He worked here as a history teacher, and as a pedagogue in high schools: as a Torah-aware science writer. He participated in the general encyclopedia '*Jezereel*' as an expert and organizer in the section of 'Philosophy in Judaism' and in the '*Yavneh*' collection he wrote the memoir 'A people and Nation in Jewish Thought.' He also wrote for a number of newspapers in *The Land*, especially '*HaTzofeh*' and *'HaBoker*.' He was only sixty when he passed away. All the scions of the city, those who knew him and loved him, mourn this great loss. May his memory be blessed for all eternity.

Page 405 (Top Left):***Yehuda Graff*** ז"ל

Deceased in Tel-Aviv in the Year 1955



He saw the fulfillment of his desires with his *aliyah* to *The Land*. Here, he was a dedicated member of the '*Haganah*,' and as a sports enthusiast – a loyal member of '*HaPoel*.' He came to the aid of every new immigrant. He was 48 years old when he died. He left a wife and three children.

Page 405 (Bottom Left):***Tova Graff-Ribak*** ז"ל

Deceased in Tel-Aviv on 16.7.61



Daughter of R' Yaakov and Hodia Graff, of the distinguished members of the city. An alert woman, possessing many skills and full of

energy. She built her house by making strenuous efforts. However, her fate was a bitter one: She suddenly fell sick, and did not rise from her illness. She left behind an only son.

Page 405 (Top Right):***Ze'ev Gelber*** ז"ל
Died in Melbourne, 7 Elul 5726 [2.9.66]



A man of honest attributes and a lover of Torah. He was a Holocaust survivor. He established his family in Australia. At the time of his death, he left his wife behind, and two children orphaned at a young age.

Page 405 (Bottom Right):***Henya Graff-Dubi*** ז"ל
Deceased in Tel-Aviv on 8 Sivan 5724 [19.5.64]



She was an active young woman in all the Zionists groups in the city. She was a steady participant in the 'Drama Circle.' After this, she was the first pioneer to make *aliyah*. Her home in *The Land* was a sort of 'house of the *Halutzim*' for all those making *aliyah* from our city. She was someone who showed them the way, a leader, a mother concerning herself about all that they lacked. A great deal of sorrow was generated by her untimely passing.

Page 406 (Left, from Top to Bottom):
Pinchas Daks ז"ל



Interred at Nahalal at the age of 24, on the Eve of Sukkot 5694. From his youth onwards, he was a member of '*Gordonia*' and as one who fulfilled the behest personally, he was among the first to make *aliyah* to *The Land*. He was faithful to the cause of labor, he was among the first of the Hulda Kibbutz, and of the restoration of its ruins, however, he did not live to see it built up. While still a young man – he knelt and fell on the altar of defense, and did not raise a family of his own.

Abraham Drucker ז"ל
Died in B'nai Brak

Hersch Hart ז"ל
Deceased in Tel-Aviv 7 Tammuz 5722 [9.7.62]



He was active in the Yiddish Theater, and one of the talented stage actors. In Israel, he was the Chairman of the Yiddish Actors Guild.

Page 406 (Top right): *R' Yehuda HaKohen Gross* ז"ל

And our Sages Say: And His adherents emerge like the sun at its zenith. This is a the *Gabbai* of Charity (*Baba Batra* 8)



On 28 Nissan 5732, R' Yehuda *HaKohen* Gross ז"ל passed away at a venerable old age, in his 96th year. R' Yehuda's origin is in Rawa-Ruska which is located in Eastern Galicia. He was the owner of a large food store. He was counted among the leading respectable and accomplished residents of the city.

With the outbreak of the First World War, he went off, along with the stream of Jewish refugees, who fled because of the Russian Cossacks, and as a result of his wanderings, he and his family reached Vienna. There, he took up residence, and renewed his business affairs. He devoted his free time to the study of Torah and to charity.

In the year 5699, he made *aliyah* to *The Land*. When he arrived, he brought two Torah scrolls with him, and lodged them in the '*Jeshurun*' Synagogue of Tel-Aviv. He was a Belz *Hasid*, and he replicated the 'Belz *Kloyz*' in the '*Jeshurun*' Synagogue, in which he was one of the regular worshipers. He directed the affairs of the synagogue personally during the weekdays. After each '*minyan*' he would provide the worshipers with 'drink' and cakes, so that everyone could drink a *'L'Chaim.'* Accordingly, it was difficult for him to make peace with all of the innovations that were introduced into the synagogue: the Sephardic style, and a Cantor and choir, which he was not used to back in his home town in Galicia. He was resistant, but in the fulness of time he made an accommodation, because by nature he was easygoing, and sought tranquility.

He was the last to leave the synagogue each day, because he did not go home before properly arranging all the donation boxes in the synagogue. He was the Gabbai in charge of charity, and despite his advanced age and failing health, he personally involved himself in all charitable matters. He collected and even distributed the monies personally. On every *Rosh Khodesh*, he would send aid to the needy in their homes. For those who refused to take the money, he would extend it in the form of a loan. In the last two years, it was difficult for him to walk, but despite this, every Sabbath he would come to the synagogue in the role of a *Kohen*, and never relinquished the role of the priestly blessing. Applying all his strength, he would ascend to bestow that blessing upon his people, Israel, with love.

He passed away, leaving behind sons and grandsons would were engaged in the study of Torah and the fulfilment of its commandments.

May his memory be for a blessing.

(Excerpt from '*Halikhot*' Tammuz 5731 –
A Publication of the Tel-Aviv Religious Council)

Page 407 (Top Right): ***Rachel Horowitz-Gartman*** ז"ל

Deceased in Tel-Aviv, 13 Nissan 5727 [April 23, 1967]



She was a member of the youth movement '*Akhava*.' When she saw that her papers for *aliyah* have not yet arrived – she made *aliyah* with the 'illegals.' Of delicate spirit, modest and honest, she had a natural intelligence. Her untimely death caused a great pain to all of her friends and her devoted husband.

Page 407 (Bottom Right):***Chaim Hamerlin*** ז"ל

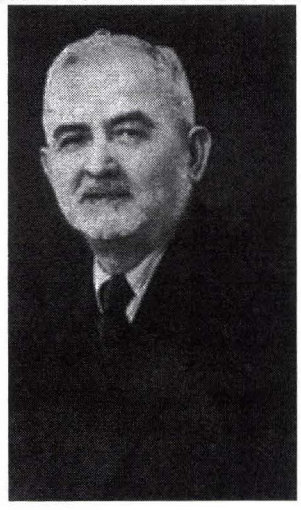
Deceased in Kibbutz Ramat-David, Nissan 5727, 1967



On of the loyal members of the *Gordonia* movement, and one of the first to realize his goal. He made aliyah to the rugged land of waste– Kfar HaKhoresh in the mountains of Nazareth, and it was there that he invested the best of his energy into the building of the settlement and its development. Afterwards, he went over to Kibbutz Ramat-David, and here he also revealed himself to be possessed of energy and support for the broadening of the base of those with little. To this he unconditionally dedicated his heart and mind. The appearance of a malignancy cut off his life prematurely.

Page 407 (Top Left):***Mekhali Hamerlin*** ז"ל

Deceased in Tel-Aviv 20 Kislev 5719, 1958



He was a proud Jew and a dedicated, loyal Zionist. He also gave that sort of an education to his children. At his death, the Rabbi of the synagogue eulogized him by saying: ' A man of noble and traditional bearing has taken leave of us, a man who knew how to relate to the community around him with amity and respect, being modest in all his deeds, and always seeking the good of the general public.'

Page 407 (Bottom Left):***Rivka Hamerlin & Her Husband Abraham Lev*** ז"ל

Deceased in Montevideo [Uruguay] in the year 1968



Riv'cheh, of the Hamerlin family, was of the type of her father and sisters. Having no ability to obtain a certificate for aliyah, she was compelled to travel off to Uruguay, and it was there that she died.

Page 408 (Top Right): ***Shlomo Zalman Wolfuss*** ז"ל

Deceased in Montreal, Canada, 3.2.1970



Page 408 (Top Left): ***Sabina Siebzehner-Rapp*** ז"ל

Daughter of R' Wolwisz Siebzehner. Deceased in Montevideo in the Year 1962



Page 408 (Center Left): ***Fanny Trieber-Gebel*** ז"ל

Deceased in New York 22 Tammuz 5723, 14.7.63



Shmuel Trieber ז"ל

Brother of Fanny, one of the leader of the Rawa-Ruska 'Society' in New York, where he passed away.

Joseph Sperber ז"ל

Deceased in New York

Page 408 (Center Right):***Aharon Wiederhorn*** ז"ל

My Father ז"ל

My father was a *Maskil*. After a long week of work, he would sit for many hours to teach me Torah, and planted the love of learning in me. This love shaped my life.



I remember my father when he would demonstrate his prowess, and amuse me with his dalliance in the rocking chair. I remember him strolling with satisfaction, along with my mother, in the gardens of Paris in the spring. I remember his hard work after his arrival in America, in order to bring over his family there, and afterwards, to make a living.

When people ask me about my feelings for my father, I reply 'I loved him very much,' without being able to provide details to explain, because so many memories of him fill me up about him. And above all, I feel these feelings of affection when I now see these pictures, in place of the living human being; the loss sustained by his passing before I reached maturity, in a measure sufficient to be able to recognize him as an equal, and to be able to speak to him man-to-man.

As Shakespeare said: 'He was a man, taken in his entirety. I will not see the likes of him again.

Dr. Manfred Wiederhorn

Page 409 (Top Left):***Esther Levin*** ז"ל

Deceased in Jerusalem 15 Sivan 5731 [8.6.71]



One of the first to make *aliyah* to *The Land*. She dedicated her entire life to the common good. She was taken from us by an accident in an untimely manner.

Deceased in Buenos-Aires:

Moshe Morgenstern, ז"ל
in the year 1951

Frim'cheh Morgenstern-Glak ז"ל
in the year 1959

Manis Morgenstern

Page 409 (Bottom Left):***Yitzhak Kartun*** ז"ל

The husband of Esther Appelbaum, one of the first communicators in Israel

Deceased in Jerusalem 13 Shevat 5733, 16.1.1973



Page 409 (Top Right):***Menachem Mendl Tritt*** ז"ל

A Holocaust survivor who died in Jerusalem



Page 409 (Bottom Right): ***Jutka Just-Bachman*** ז"ל

Deceased 6 Tevet 5729 27.7.1968



From the eulogy delivered by Lipa Altman:

You were a good person of refined soul. While still young, you assumed the burden of making a living and was a loyal helper to your mother ז"ל. Apart from the worries of making a living, you did not forget to fulfill the *mitzvot* that were accepted in the Just household: *Tzedakah* and the doing of good deeds. You, Jutka, had a unique privilege. You were a Holocaust survivor, made *aliyah* to *The Land*, went through difficult suffering, and started everything over anew – building a family up again from anew. You accepted everything with love and joy in your lot, you were suffused with a full hope that all will be well. You were modest and honest, observing the faith and tradition, and fulfilling *mitzvot*. You have earned a place in the Garden of Eden among the Sacred Matriarchs and Patriarchs.

We will remember you forever!

Page 410 (Top Right):***Fradl Morgenstern bat R' Yitzhak Nachman's-Hedva Raszisz*** ז"ל

Deceased in Petakh-Tikva 7 Elul 5731 [August 28, 1971]



From her earliest childhood, from the public school to the completion of the '*Tarbut*' Seminary in Lvov, she excelled and stood out in regards to a high measure of intelligence as a pedagogue in '*Gordonia*,.' both as an educator in that movement, and also in her conduct of leadership in the *Mizrahi* office branch. All of her demeanor was characterized by: noble bearing, modesty, and assistance to the community at-large. In *The Land*, she had many tribulations, that put her into difficult and bitter life situations that tried her. Yet despite all this, Hedva continued to carry on her way of life and to work in accordance with inviolable tenets of Jewish tradition, those which she had absorbed

from the home of her father and mother.

Her work in the area as a highly valued volunteer educational emissary in *The Land* brought her to become a volunteer as a highly-valued educational emissary to the detention camps in Cyprus.

After returning from Cyprus, she married the choice of her heart, Pinchas Raszisz, who brought her in time to become the 'Wife of the Head of the City' In Petakh-Tikva. With all this, she did not change her approach, and continued to be as straightforward and modest as she had been in the *Kibbutz*. While being in the city, she found a broad expanse in many varied community activities – until she became transformed into the 'First Lady' and Matriarch of the city of Petakh-Tikva.

Regarding her personality, her work she did out of the intimate personal commitment she had to the good of the community. A group of friends published a memorial book about her, a year after she died titled: 'Hedva of Raszisz – From Her and About Her.' In the foreword of that book, it is said:

'A large host escorted her remains to their final resting place.'
'Her coffin was lowered into the grave in silence.'
'A mound of earth covered the fifty-eight years of her life.'
'The circle has come full, and closed.'
'*Yitgadal v'Yitkaddash...*'
'Hedva has departed from us, but the memory of the way she conducted her life was not taken from us.'
'We will remember Hedva with familiarity, and with the trembling of weariness.'

The city of Petakh-Tikva named a street after her symbolically:

'There once was a woman – who carried a great deal of beauty in her soul, and a noble world, and her name was Hedva Raszisz.'

Tova Falbel-Freud ז"ל

Deceased 29 Tishri 5720 [October 31, 1959]

In the year 1933, she made aliyah to The Land as a member of the Zionist youth movement '*Akhava*.' Until she got married, she was a member of the Kibbutz in Rehovot. She was also a very committed and active member of the '*Haganah*.' She was 48 years old when she died, leaving behind a son and daughter.

David Yitzhak Farb ז"ל

Chairman of the 'Anshei B'nai Levi Yitzhak' in New York

Deceased in the month of Menachem-Av 5723, July 1963

Page 410: ***Israel Pearlman*** ז"ל

Deceased in Israel and buried in Jerusalem



Page 411 (Top Right):***Ozer Pearlman*** ז"ל

Deceased in Saõ Paulo in the year 1967



Page 411 (Center Right):***Moshe Freiheiter*** ז"ל

Deceased in Montreal, Canada 11 Tammuz 5723, 3.7.63



Shlomit Freiheiter-Gertel ז"ל

Deceased in Montreal, Canada 18 Menachem-Av 5722, 18.8.62

Page 411 (Bottom, Right): ***Chana Breitbart-Lichter***

Deceased 4 Adar 5733, 6.2.73



Page 411 (Top Left): ***Shmaryahu Freiheiter*** ז"ל

Deceased in Nahariya 29 Kislev 5716 [December 14, 1955]



In 1932, he made *aliyah* as a member of the '*Gordonia*' youth movement and joined the *Kibbutz* at Nes-Tziona. Afterwards, he was one of the settlers of *Kfar-HaKhoresh*. He was suddenly struck with a severe illness, and his brother Moshe took him to Canada for treatment: however, he was not able to remain there, and returned to his household in Nahariya. He died there at the young age of 45.

Page 411 (Bottom Left):***Shlomo Prufner-Wahrhaftig*** ז"ל

Deceased 29 Kislev 5728, 13.12.67



In 1931 he made *aliyah* to *The Land* as a full-fledge member of the labor movement. For many years, he was the forest caretaker in *Kfar-HaKhoresh*. Afterwards, he moved to Rishon LeZion, and he died there after a serious illness.

Page 412 (Top, L): ***Jonah Ziring*** ז"ל



Page 412 (Top, C): ***The Mother: Ariel*** ז"ל



Page 412 (Top, R): ***Leah Ziring-Schorr*** ז"ל
Deceased Kislev 5723[Nov/Dec 1962] Deceased 16 Heshvan 5733 [October 24, 1972]



Leah Ziring-Schorr, Her Mother & Brother ז"ל

I will not be able to memorialize our Leah, giving an outline to her persona, without also recalling her family, because a person does not spring from a vacuum; a person is a product, a legacy. The environment, the family – their influence on her was great, along with its impact on the development of her personality itself.

I did not know the father of Jonah and Leah, but I heard a great deal about him. He was an honest, modest man, a working man of pleasant manner, and he never took his eyes off a book. He would be bent over the fundamental source books after a long and hard day's work. I did have the honor of knowing their mother Ariel ז"ל, who died here in *The Land* 30 years ago, and I was tied to her with love from the minute I saw her. My first meeting with her was in her tiny home, that was on the roof of Sderot-Rothschild. She was not yet completely conversant in Hebrew, but she did have basic knowledge and she spent time looking over *'Makhoz Ha Yaldut'* of Prof. Dov Sadan. Given her strong will, and with the force of her persistence, she overcame the difficulties of the language, and became prepared to communicate her literary criticism of this particular work. She had a powerful desire to learn, to read, to know, to help and to teach, and it was with these characteristics that she related to all questions of community life. She attracted and held a coterie of young and old alike about her – being a mother and friend to them all, to all of their friends and the close comrades of her son and daughter. It is therefore natural for me to recall all three of them – that noble and revered mother, Jonah ז"ל my husband, and Leah ז"ל my sister-in-law. Because they all lived together, they complemented one another.

Jonah – the man would conduct himself affably, with measured steps, who knew how to walk into mud without dirtying his shoes, a model of clean hands and pure soul, who was always accompanied by a smile, and it was only in rare

instances that he would get angry; he never carried a grudge. He was a faithful husband, son, friend and a good comrade, and dedicated father. He was always prepared to help the community at-large, without waiting to be thanked. Leah, was a sister – who revered her brother, and loved her mother. She was committed to her sister-in-law and the children, seeing them as her own children; and it is natural and understood, that her sons were strongly bonded to her, and guarded that intense bond even after their father died. Leah, loved to look after and help the community at-large. When my mother fell ill and took to the bed from which she would never rise again – it was Leah who took care of her, for a series of consecutive months, with dedication and love, Leah – a woman of the community and having community relationships. Leah, who loved her new family with every element of her soul, the family of her husband Joseph Schorr and all of its branches; the children and grandchildren were literally like her own children. Leah the optimist, the hearty jokester, and the generous hand, spreading about her sentiments of encouragement and happiness. Leah, who waited so much for the arrival of my sons with their wives from the United States, so that she could feed them, give them drink, and please them. Our Leah – it is so hard to talk about her as someone who was, for after all, she lived among us.

The mother, my husband Jonah and my sister-in-law Leah are bound together in our thoughts and memories forever.

May their memory be for a blessing!

Leah Tzur

Zundl Ziegler ז"ל
Deceased in Milan [Italy]

Page 412 (Bottom Left): ***Yitzhak Kohl*** ז"ל
Deceased in Saõ Paulo in the year 1967



Dvora Kubler ז"ל
Deceased in Israel

Abraham Kessler ז"ל
Deceased in Paris, 28.6.65

Page 413 (Top Left):***Reizl Rathaus-Reiber*** ז"ל
Deceased in New York and interred in Israel



Page 413 (Top Right):***Abraham Klahr-Berger*** ז"ל
Deceased in Holon 6 Tammuz 5728 [July 2, 1968]



Page 413 (Bottom Right):***Joseph Redlich*** ז"ל



Our pen is too weak to express how great is the burden of sorrow we bear, with the departure of the head of our family, R' Joseph ז"ל.

In the year 5709 he made *aliyah* with our mother, may she be separated for long life. He began to work in an ice factory, and when he saw that this work carried the risk of violating the Sabbath – he went over to do more difficult work, but with the assurance he would not have to work on Saturdays. His hand was always open to donate *Tzedakah* and charity. During the initial years of his residence in The Land, when he began to put down a foundation from an economic standpoint, we already saw in him someone who was a supporter of the community at-large, and especially to the *landsmen* from his city, who were the new arrivals to *The Land*.

He was an ardent Belz *Hasid*. He was among the founders of the Belz *Bet HaMedrash* in Haifa, in which he served as a *Gabbai,* with great dedication, up to his last day.

In the year 5730, during the setting up of the *Seder* in the evening, he was struck by a heart attack; but his heart remained beating within him, and he did not neglect even for a minute those community issues that weighed upon him.

The goodness of his heart was renowned among those who knew him, and knew of him, and his passing on Saturday night of the Rosh Khodesh Tevet 5732 precipitated a great deal of sorrow and heavy mourning among all who knew R' Joseph.

May his memory be for a blessing! תנצב.ה

The Family

Page 413 (Bottom Left):***Chaim Gershon Rumelt*** ז"ל

My Father ז"ל



R' Chaim Gershon Rumelt was born in Magierow in the year 1896, to a rooted *Hasidic* family, whose sons were among the merchants of the city. In his childhood, he studied in a *Heder*, and afterwards became a 'Sitter' in Belz. He went out into the larger world while young, and became aware of it; even with this, he guarded his Jewish heritage that he had absorbed from the home of his parents during childhood.

During the First World War, he traveled to Austria and entered into a business partnership with R' Eliyahu Spritzer-HaKohen. Afterwards, he married his oldest daughter, Mrs. Frimet-Freida, may she have a long life. Three children were born to them, and from an early age on, he concerned himself with conveying to them both a religious and secular education.

In Vienna, he engaged in commerce, and was a member of the *Hevra Kadisha*. Thanks to his loyalty to Zionism, even before the Nazis came to power, his family found a home for themselves in the Land of Israel, which he had built several years earlier during his visit to *The Land*.

He was a God-fearing man for his entire life, always walking in a righteous and just path: he was generous in offering *Tzedakah* and granting assistance to people the he knew and didn't know. He donated to charitable institutions, and dedicated time to Torah study.

He died of a heart attack on 20 Iyar 5733 (15.5.71).

He left behind a wife, a daughter two sons and five grandchildren.

May his memory be for a blessing!

Bella Rumelt-Rosenberg

Page 414 (Top Right):***Abraham Mordechai Ringel*** ז"ל

Deceased 28 Av 5732 [August 19, 1971]

And Habakuk came, and put them on one,
as it is said: 'And a righteous one will live by his faith'
(*Makkot* 24)

My Father ז"ל



The essence of a person's world is faith, and for my father ז"ל faith -- was the backbone of his life. A faith whose subjects were a God and Man: the God as the God of justice, grace and compassion, and Man – as the creation of His hands, whose nature is god from childhood on. This belief guided his path from the beginning of his days. In Rawa-Ruska, that being the place of his initial blooming and flowering, he was educated in Torah, with Jewish values, a love of Israel and a love of The Land of Israel. In the midst of a riven Jewry – between Haredi sentiment and Zionism – he found that which was common to both, and that complemented one another, but only in, and on the way of faith, and his *aliyah* to *The Land* was an outcome of this synthesis.

He was careful in respecting the dignity of every person. From the outset of my life I never heard him say anything harsh about someone. Even if he had a dispute or an issue with one of the people whom he knew – he would always act in the positive way. As was the case with spiritual matters – so he was in financial matters. The word of an individual was as important to him as the testimony of one hundred witnesses, and even if he was occasionally disappointed – it did not weaken his convictions.

Both his modesty and his self-effacing nature matched the level of his belief. I never heard him congratulate himself with regard to some virtue, his expertise or skills; I needed to have recourse to his friends in order to find out that he had a formal rabbinic ordination to be qualified to be a director in matters of faith, and to hold forth in lessons of religious study in his home city. He did not like authority, and deferred many undertakings that were tied to politics, whether religious or secular. He demanded a great deal of himself, he was an autodidact, a porcelain container that didn't lose a drop.

From the perspective of taking a deep interest in scholarly matters, in spiritual and religious matters – he also took an interest in specific subjects on their own merits. He demanded of his sons the same as he demanded of himself. In matters of education, he was a zealot, and not one to be satisfied with the minimum. The principal of our school remembers him as the only parent that demanded that the teachers of his children lower their grades, in order to give them incentive to delve more deeply into their studies, and to acquire added knowledge.

I could go on to enumerate other virtues of my father ז"ל, but I know that if the matter were put in his hands – he would abbreviate even that which I have already written: And – my wish is to honor his will. ת.צ.נ.ב.ת

In great pain, ***Israel Ringel***

R' Abraham Mordechai Ringel ז"ל

By Rabbi Nathan Urtner

While this book was still at the printing press, we suddenly lost (on 28 Av 5732) R' Abraham Mordechai Ringel ז"ל, who was one of the pillars of its content. He sunk all of his might into assuring its rapid and complete appearance, but did not live to see it come to light. He worked hard to memorialize his friends in the book, and it emerges that he himself is one to be memorialized. It was as if his heart prophesied to him what his end was, from the standpoint of 'despite the fact that he did not have the good fortune to see it' (*Megillah* 3). He hastened the preparation of the book, and left to his colleagues the section on memorializing the deceased. And now, with an aching and shrunken heart, they add his outstanding name to that list.

It is inappropriate to go on at length about him, because such a thing certainly was not in keeping with his spirit, modest, self-effacing, and avoiding the limelight for all his days. Despite the fact that he was blessed with capabilities, he did not get pushed to the head of the line. He eschewed public acclaim, and fled from it, literally the length of a bowshot. He loathed praise, this was his style. But, for the living, his relatives and friends, it is an obligation to set down a number of words regarding his persona. It is important that they truly understand what kind of a man he was, so that they learn from his ways, and in this way, they will contribute to the tranquility of his soul in the upper reaches of heaven. And he was a regular in the courtyard of the ADMo"R *Rebbe* Issachar Dov of Belz זי"ע, in whose aura he mingled, to cite in the name of the Ancients: 'And even if there is no accounting in Sheol, and a person earns The World to Come only on the basis of the commandments and good deeds that he does in This World, we infer that a father that influences his son to study Torah, and be God-fearing, so is the teacher to his pupil, and the father and the Rabbi are thus elevated to the World on High every time, more and more, by the study of Torah, the doing of good deeds, that his sons and students do in This World on his behalf.'

This was the true work. It was bestowed upon him to articulate the saying of *Our Sages of Blessed Memory*: 'The direction given through the energy expended by your own hand is greater in worth than the fear of God.' (*Berachot* 8) – plain and simple. He was clean-handed and honest in all his ways, whether in his dealings with God or in dealings between him and his fellow man. He was beloved by all. He took part in their joy and shared in their sorrow. He gave encouragement and advice honestly, as it is written, 'And thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself,' like yourself, literally. And 'Wherever the harmony of creation rests on him, there also, does the harmony of God reside.' (*Avot* 83, מ"א).

He mingled in the courtyard of the ADMo"Rs R' Issachar Dov and R' Aharon זצ"ל of Belz. Even after he made *aliyah* to *The Land*, in the year 5694, and was far from Belz in a geographic sense – he remained both faithful and committed to Belz *Hasidism*, in which he had been immersed for his entire life. He was not just a nominal *Hasid*, he knew, recognized and understood what *Hasidism* was in general, and what Belz *Hasidism* was in particular. It is a shame that he could not put down his thoughts in writing regarding this subject, because it certainly was within his capacity to do so.

He left us at the height of his years and powers, leaving behind his wife Pnina, and three sons who go in his way, may they all be separated for long, and good life. His memory will remain etched forever in the hearts of all who knew him. תצנב.ת

About Our Friend and Comrade Moti Ringel ז"ל

By Gimpel (Just??)

It is hard to grasp that Moti Ringel is no longer among the living. During our childhood years in our home city, we learned for a time with R' Melech Alter ז"ל (*Der Shvartzer Melech*). It was not only once, in our many conversations together, that we recollected this interesting period, and we expressed awe at the wondrous person of this R' Melech, who saw nothing in his life except for the book in front of him, and what was above him.

Moti was deeply immersed in his studies, and he used the sharpness of his intellect to delve into and acquire an understanding of the arguments that he taught to us. Moti was drawn to Torah study out of a fiery thirst and also became affixed to the vision of a return to Zion. Notwithstanding his responsibility to the members of his family, and his strong ties to his surroundings and *'Agudat Yisrael'* where he was an activist from his early youth onwards – he picked himself up and made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. All of his life in *The Land* was one continuous chain of work with his hands, and the raising and education of his sons.

[He was of] refined soul and a good master of tradition. The words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart were always in alignment. He was redolent with Torah, and constantly strove to broaden its boundaries. He delved deeply into conceptual matters and those issues that occupied the modern society, and thirstily drank in all knowledge that he encountered. He was oriented to many philanthropic initiatives, and always stood ready to offer assistance to a friend. He was modest, and eschewed all forms of honor and praise.

During his last years, he dedicated much of his spirit and energy to [the creation of] the *Yizkor* Book in memory of the Jews of Rawa-Ruska. His concern was especially devoted to the quality of the book, and to this end, he looked into many written sources, and extracted from them those sections and details that were tied to the way of life of the Jews in our city. However, his heart did not support him, and his soul left him a short time before this book appeared.

We have lost a Man of Tradition. A concerned patriarch, and a dearly beloved and loyal friend.

The heart aches for this loyal family man, and this dedicated friend who is no more.

For shame that we have lost him...

Regarding Mordechai Ringel ז"ל

By Bluma Rubin-Schwert

I recall the words of my father זצ"ל when he said, that there is no importance attached to the praise that is said about a person after his death; it is usual to offer praise for everyone after they die, and if the deceased is truly praiseworthy – there also is no significance to such words, because those who know the individual – know all there is about him. The words of my father זצ"ל, apply to Mordechai Ringel ז"ל, because anyone who knew him, knew who and what he was, and here, it is adequate to simply recall his name. While still in Rawa-Ruska, Mordechai was a member of our household, and a good friend of my brother, studying together day and night – until they traveled off to receive their ordination. After this, Mordechai joined '*Agudat Yisrael*' and with their help, made *aliyah* to *The Land*.

In *The Land*, he was a fixture in our home; in the last times, he would sit daily with my husband, to be separated for long life, and worked together with him on the '*Yizkor* Book' about our city of Rawa-Ruska; he injected his skill into it, his energy and time, at the expense of his rest: it is to our great sorrow that he did not live to see it finished and printed. In the final days, before his sudden death, he was engaged in working with the lists and pictures of the deceased from our city, and not one of us thought. That writings about him, and his picture would have to appear among all of these.

He was a friend of my brother – and he was like a brother to me.

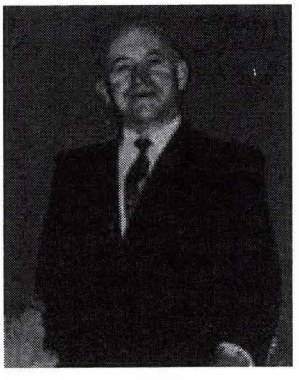
My sorrow, and the sorrow of my family is very great – that this dear man is no longer among us.

Page 415 (Bottom Left):***Shmaryahu Sztrokh*** ז"ל

Deceased in Paris at the young age of 53 on 3 Iyyar 5728, 30.4.65



Page 415 (Bottom Right):***Shmuel Reichler*** ז"ל Deceased in New York in the year 1963



Abba'leh Sztrokh ז"ל

Deceased in Paris, 18.8.64



Page 416 (Top Left):***Zippora & Moshe Stern*** ז"ל

Zippora Stern bat R' Yaakov Weinstock of Ciechanow Deceased 7 Heshvan 5731 [November 6, 1970]

R' Moshe son of R' Elazar Stern
Deceased 12 Nissan 5732 [April 7, 1971]



To the Memory of Beloved Souls that Were Parted Neither in Life or Death

By N. Y.

The Stern home in Tel-Aviv was among the unique of its kind. It was suffused with warmth, heartiness, culture and grace. Their hearts were open to listen to the public, and to help those people in distress. Both were saturated with Torah, knowledge and a tranquil harmony reigned in their ambit. In this house that always had a blooming flower, a pleasant picture, an enjoyable book, they raised their children – and the latter established their own families, that added glory to that rooted tree of the Stern family. They were cut down within a short time of each other – to the heartache of all those who came to their home. The pain and sorrow is great. May their memory be blessed for all eternity!

Page 416 (Bottom Left):***Tova Szyfer-Lemmer*** ז"ל

Deceased in London in the year 1970



Tova married Zalman Finkelstein in Rawa-Ruska while still young, and both emigrated to Paris, set themselves up there quite nicely, in the fur trade. Her husband, Zalman, was exterminated in the Holocaust, and she was saved by a miracle.

R' Moshe Lemmer ז"ל

To whom she married in London, who was deceased 18 Adar 5726, 3.3.66

Page 416 (Top right):***Tova Steinfeld*** ז"ל

Deceased in Tel-Aviv 26 Tishri 5713, 12.10.52



As an alert woman, possessed of good economic and mercantile faculties, she directed an establishment that sold linens in Rawa-Ruska, and carried out the management of her home with great wisdom. She succeeded in making *aliyah* to *The Land* in the year 1937. She died at the venerable old age of 83.

Page 416 (Bottom, Right): ***Miriam Steinfeld*** of the ***Sztarer*** Family ז"ל

Deceased 18 Tevet 5715, 12.3.55

Her Husband ***Asher*** ז"ל

Deceased 1 Nissan 5717, 12.3.56

Beloved and pleasant in life, and not parted in death

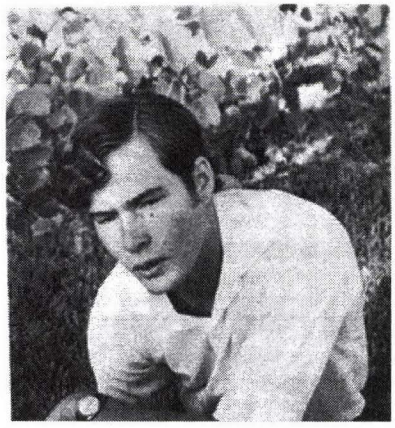


They had a rather large linen goods business in Lvov, and seeing that there was no future for Jews in the Diaspora – they made *aliyah* to *The Land* in 1935, and set up their home in Tel-Aviv. The first misfortune was the debilitating illness that struck Miriam, that cut her down in the prime of life, at the age of forty-eight. Asher was unable to gain control over his pain, and after fourteen months he joined her, and left this world at the young age, being only fifty-eight years old.

Page 417: ***Second Lieutenant Daniel Danziger*** ז"ל

By Y. Tz. R.

Son of Zahava Baumwohl-Danziger, and grandson of Wolf Baumwohl ז"ל. Fell in the line of duty, 14 Sivan 5731 [June 7, 1971] and brought to final rest in the military cemetery of Kiryat-Shaul.



●

Danny, a jovial and pleasant young man by disposition, chose to serve among the best of the young men, in the air force.

Like his grandfather Wolf ז"ל, who was faithful to the Zionist ideal, and left all of his possessions in the Diaspora, and made *aliyah* to *The Land*, so he too, was loyal and ardently devoted to this goal, and discharged his mission with the force of his will and with love, to span the heavens and to measure those heavens of The Land, with great wisdom. With all this, he could stand to recite the lines from the Psalms with the entire earnestness of his heart:

– My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty;

I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

– Psalms 131:1

May his memory be forever enshrined among those of the martyrs of the nation!

To Danny's Memory ז"ל

By Tamar Bodenstein

Two simple words.
More awesome than them all
Two terrifying words...
He was...

He was a lovely lad,
He would learn and play
They said: Go fly – and he went
He stuck to his mission...

In this manner, are lads like him
Transformed into legend – – –
From the well of life – he did not drink his fill
And now – – –
Two simple words that are terrifying...
He was...

אל מלא רחמים

שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה
במעלות קדושים וטהורים, כזוהר הרקיע מזהירים
את נשמות אלפי בני ישראל של הקהילה הקדושה

ראווה רוסקה והסביבה

הוריהם, אחיהם ואחיותיהם, אנשים, נשים וטף

שנהרגו ושנשחטו, שנחנקו ושנשרפו ושנקברו חיים
בידי הצורר הנאצי. כולם קדושים וטהורים,
ובהם גאונים, צדיקים ואדירי התורה.
אבן בעל הרחמים יסתירם בסתר כנפיו לעולמים,
ויצרור בצרור החיים את נשמותיהם. ה' הוא נחלתם
וינוחו בשלום על משכבותם ונאמר אמן.

Translation

O G-d, full of compassion,

Who dwells on high, grant true rest under the wings of the Shechinah (Divine Presence), in the exalted spheres of the holy and pure, who shine as the resplendence of the firmament, to the souls of the thousands of the Children of Israel of the Sacred Congregation of

Rawa Ruska and its Environs

Our Parents, Our Brothers and Our Sisters, Men, Women and Children

That were killed and slaughtered, and asphyxiated and incinerated, that were buried alive at the hands of the Nazi Scourge. All were holy and pure, among them Gaonim, Righteous People, and Avatars of Torah Study. Therefore, may the All-Merciful One shelter them with the cover of His wings forever, and bind their souls in the bond of life. The Lord is their heritage; may they rest in their place of repose in peace; and let us say: Amen.

The Émigrés of Rawa-Ruska in Israel and the Diaspora eternalize the memory of their kin and those whom they knew, who were exterminated by the Nazi Scourge.

The list of names was constructed in accordance with notification by the relatives and acquaintances of the martyrs. It is not possible to aver that all such names appear in such a list.

Relatives and friend have the opportunity to supplement the names of the martyrs in the blank pages that were set up for this purpose.[224]

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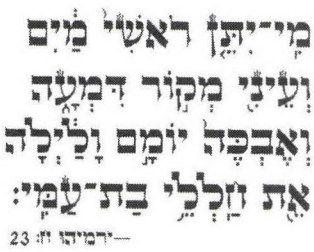
224 This feature, which was part of the original book, has not been replicated in this translation.

Necrology



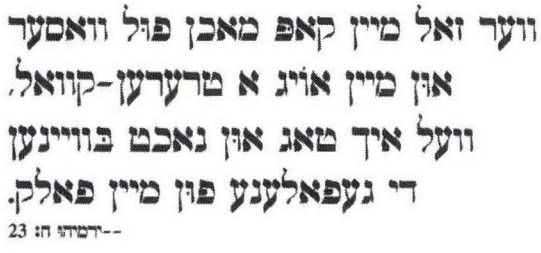
The Names of the Sanctified Ones and Martyrs



מִי־יִתֵּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם
וְעֵינִי מְקוֹר דִּמְעָה
וְאֶבְכֶּה יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה
אֵת זַלְלֵי בַת־עַמִּי׃
—ירמיהו ח׃ 23

Oh, that my head were a spring of water
and my eyes a fountain of tears!
I would weep day and night
for the slain of my people.

--Jeremiah 8:23



ווער זאל מיין קאפּ מאכן פול וואסער
און מיין אויג א טרערען-קוואל,
וועל איך טאג און נאכט בוויינען
די געפאלענע פון מיין פאלק.
--ירמיהו ח׃ 23

[This Rubric is Borrowed from the Dereczin Memorial Book]

Translator's Note:

The order in which these names appear has been made to conform to English alphabetization, and therefore does not follow the same order as they appear in the original Yiddish text. To assist the interested reader, each entry has been given a serial number that corresponds to its place in the original Necrology in Yiddish, found on pp. 421-428.

This Necrology contains many instances of names that appear to be duplicates. However, without the intimate knowledge of this community, it would be presumptuous for an uninformed third party to suggest that such duplications constitute errors (see also the after word of the Editors at the end of the Necrology). Accordingly, special care has been taken to assure that all of the entries in the original document were carried over into the translated version. Additionally, special care was taken to preserve 'nicknames' or 'names of endearment,' that were used to help better identify individuals in that community. While such nomenclature may not serve future generations quite in the same way, it is undoubtedly a sacred obligation to assure that they are brought forward for posterity, as they were used during their lifetimes.

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
				A	
421	R	3	Adler	Nathan	
421	R	4	Adler	Leah	Wife of Nathan
421	R	5	Adler	Baylah	Daughter of Nathan & Leah
421	R	6	Adler	Sarah Gittl	Sztokhammer Family
421	R	16	Alter	Noah	And Family
421	R	9	Altman	Pesach	
421	R	10	Altman	Chaya	Wife of Pesach
421	R	11	Altman	Rachel	Daughter of Pesach & Chaya
421	R	12	Altman	Jocheved	Daughter of Pesach & Chaya
421	R	13	Altman	Shlomo	Son of Pesach & Chaya
421	R	14	Altman	Leib	Son of Pesach & Chaya
421	R	15	Altman	Freida	Daughter of Pesach & Chaya
421	R	17	Altman	Yehuda	
421	R	18	Altman	Leah	Wife of Yehuda
421	R	19	Altman	Reizl	Daughter of Yehuda & Leah
				B	
421	R	20	Babad	Shaul	
421	R	21	Babad	Lifcheh	Wife of Shaul
421	R	22	Babad	Ita	Daughter of Shaul & Lifcheh
421	R	23	Babad	Chana	Daughter of Shaul & Lifcheh
421	R	24	Babad	Yitzhak	Son of Shaul & Lifcheh
421	R	30	Bach	Ber'l	And Family
421	R	31	Bach	Abraham	Son of Ber'l
421	R	32	Bach	Mordechai	
421	R	33	Bach	Sarah-Leah	Wife of Mordechai & Their Children
421	R	34	Barg	Ella-Riva	
421	R	35	Barg	Rachel	Daughter of Ella-Riva
421	R	36	Barg	Wolf-Wilhelm	Son of Ella-Riva
421	R	37	Barg	Joseph	Son of Ella-Riva
421	R	38	Barg	Ruth	Granddaughter of Ella-Riva
421	R	39	Barg	Benedict	Grandson of Ella-Riva
421	R	40	Barg	Regina	
421	C	7	Bauer	Shimon	
421	C	8	Bauer	Leah	née Seif, wife of Shimon
421	L	10	Becker	Chaim-Yaakov	
421	L	11	Becker	Bash'eh	Wife of Chaim-Yaakov
421	L	12	Becker	Chana	Daughter of Chaim-Yaakov & Bash'eh
421	L	13	Becker	Henya	Daughter of Chaim-Yaakov & Bash'eh
421	C	33	Ber	Anshel	From Hrebenne
421	C	34	Ber	Joseph	And his family, from Potok-Mosty'
421	C	35	Berger	Israel	
421	C	36	Berger	Keszi	née Weidhorn, wife of Israel and their family
421	C	37	Berger	Jonah	
421	C	38	Berger	Sarah	Wife of Jonah
421	C	39	Berger	Shimon	
421	C	40	Berger	Rachel	Wife of Shimon
421	C	41	Berger	Karusala	
421	L	1	Berger	Esther	
421	L	2	Berger	Chana-Reszi	
421	L	3	Berger	Yitzhak	
421	L	4	Berger	Moshe	Son of Yitzhak
421	L	5	Berger	Malia	Daughter of Yitzhak
421	L	6	Berger	Rivka	Daughter of Yitzhak
421	L	7	Berger	Chava	
421	L	8	Berger	Shmuel	Son of Chava
421	L	9	Berger	Sarah	Daughter of Chava
421	C	12	Bienstock	Joseph	
421	C	13	Bienstock	Shayndl	Wife of Joseph and their family
421	C	10	Billig	Tzizh'eh	Her husband and daughter
421	C	11	Billig	Reizl	And her husband
421	C	14	Bimbaum	Chaya-Sarah	
421	C	15	Bimbaum	Meir	And his family
421	C	16	Bimbaum	David	Son of Chaya-Sarah
421	C	17	Blatt	Eber	
421	C	18	Blatt	Chaya-Eti	Wife of Eber
421	C	19	Blatt	Ephraim	Son of Eber & Chaya-Eti & his family
421	C	20	Blatt	Hertz	Son of Eber & Chaya-Eti & his family
421	C	21	Blatt/Eber		Sisters of Chaya-Eti
421	C	22	Blatt/Eber	Sirt'l	And her Husband Simcha, & Son Zelig
421	C	23	Blatt/Eber	Henya	And her husband Juntel (from) Werchrata
421	C	24	Blumenfeld	Fishl	From Lubicz
421	C	25	Blumenfeld	Chaya	Wife of Fishl from Lubicz
421	C	26	Blumenfeld	Shmuel	Son of Fishl from Lubicz, Chaya
421	C	27	Blumenfeld	Moshe	Son of Fishl from Lubicz, Chaya
421	C	28	Blumenfeld	Ziss'l	And two other daughters, from Lubicz
421	C	29	Blumenfeld	Moshe	And Family
421	C	30	Blumenfeld	Hirsch	Son of Moshe
421	C	31	Blumenfeld	Mollie Finkelstein	Daughter of Moshe, her husband and child
421	C	32	Blumenfeld	Chaim-Yaakov	And His Family
421	R	27	Bodenstein	Israel	

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
421	R	28	Bodenstein	Dvora	Wife of Israel
421	R	29	Bodenstein	Muni	Son of Israel & Dvora
421	R	25	Bodner	Shmeryl	
421	R	26	Bodner	Chana Reitz'eh	Daughter of Shmeryl
421	R	41	Bombach	Aryeh-Leib	
421	R	42	Bombach	Bina	Wife of Aryeh-Leib
421	L	14	Bringer	Yehoshua	
421	L	15	Bringer	Sarah	Wife of Yehoshua
421	L	16	Bringer	Baylah-Mindl	Daughter of Yehoshua & Sarah
421	L	17	Bringer	Abish	Son of Yehoshua & Sarah
421	R	43	Bultz	Joseph	
421	C	1	Bultz	Dora	Wife of Joseph
421	C	2	Bultz	Duzha	Daughter of Joseph & Dora
421	C	3	Bultz	Israel	
421	C	4	Bultz	Miriam	Wife of Israel
421	C	5	Bultz	Alter	Son of Israel & Miriam
421	C	6	Bultz	Dina	Daughter of Israel & Miriam
				C	
424	R	44	Chermak	Lieber	And his family
424	R	45	Chermak	Simcha	
424	R	46	Chermak	Hirsch	
424	R	42	Chosnik	Shlomo	
424	R	43	Chosnik	Leah	née Herzberg, wife of Shlomo
426	L	38	Constantine	Yitzhak	
426	L	39	Constantine	Alta	His sister and their combined families
				D	
422	C	12	Daks	Chaim David	
422	C	13	Daks	Sima Dina	Wife of Chaim David
422	C	14	Daks	Rachel	Daughter of Chaim David & Sima Dina
422	C	15	Daks	Dvora	Son of Chaim David & Sima Dina
422	C	16	Daks	Pinchas	Daughter of Chaim David & Sima Dina
422	C	20	Dicker	Yitzhak	From Potelycz
422	C	21	Dicker	Chana	Wife of Yitzhak, from Potelycz
422	C	22	Dicker	Rosa	Daughter of Yitzhak & Chana from Potelycz
422	C	23	Dicker	Henya	Daughter of Yitzhak & Chana from Potelycz
422	C	24	Dicker	Malia	Daughter of Yitzhak & Chana from Potelycz
422	C	25	Dicker	Mir'l	Daughter of Yitzhak & Chana from Potelycz
422	C	17	Donner	Zvi Dov	
422	C	18	Donner	Hinde	Wife of Zvi Dov
422	C	19	Donner	Joseph	Son of Zvi Dov & Hinde, and his family
				E	
425	L	1	Edel	Abraham	
425	L	2	Edel	Rivka	née Szyfer, wife of Abraham
425	L	3	Edel	Mordechai	Son of Abraham & Rivka
425	L	4	Edel	Israel	And his family
425	L	5	Edel	Nathan	And his family
425	L	6	Edelstein	Juta	
425	L	14	Ehrenwirth	Yehoshua	
425	L	15	Ehrenwirth	Malka	Wife of Yehoshua
425	L	8	Ehrman	Hirsch	
425	L	9	Ehrman	Shayneh Golda	née Ber, wife of Hirsch
425	L	10	Ehrman	Abraham	Son of Hirsch & Shayneh Golda
425	L	11	Ehrman	Hodel	Daughter of Hirsch & Shayneh Golda
425	L	12	Ehrman	Leah	Daughter of Hirsch & Shayneh Golda
425	L	13	Ehrman	Jonah	Son of Hirsch & Shayneh Golda
421	R	7	Eisenstein	Chana Reszi	
421	R	8	Eisenstein	Lipa	Son of Chana Reszi
421	R	1	Engelmayer	Shlomo	And Family
421	R	2	Engelmayer	Lonya	
425	L	7	Essig	Sholom	from Belzec
				F	
425	L	21	Fand	Zlateh	And her family
426	R	9	Feder	Anshil	And his family
426	R	10	Feder	Yehuda	
426	R	11	Feder	Wolf	
426	R	12	Feder	Simcha	from Lubicz
426	R	13	Feder	Gittl	Wife of Simcha, from Lubicz
426	R	14	Feder	Sima	from Lubicz
426	R	15	Feder	Eliezer	from Lubicz
426	R	16	Feder	Rachel	Wife of Eliezer, from Lubicz
426	R	17	Feder	Esther	from Lubicz
426	R	18	Feder	Chana	from Lubicz
426	R	19	Feder	Ethel	from Lubicz
426	R	20	Feder	Shmuel	from Lubicz
426	R	21	Feder	Chaya	Wife of Shmuel, from Lubicz
426	R	22	Feder	Reuben	from Lubicz
426	R	23	Feder	Hodel	Wife of Reuben, from Lubicz
426	R	24	Feder	Rekhl	Daughter of Reuben & Hodel, from Lubicz
426	R	25	Feder	Boruch	from Lubicz
426	R	26	Feder	Buni	Wife of Boruch, from Lubicz
426	R	27	Feder	Yekhl	from Lubicz
426	R	28	Feder	Leah	née Gottleib, wife of Yekhl, from Lubicz
426	R	29	Feder	Shlomo	Son of Yekhl & Leah
426	R	30	Feder	Pinchas	from Lubicz
426	R	31	Feder	Feiga	Wife of Pinchas, from Lubicz
426	R	32	Feder	Chana	Daughter of Pinchas & Feiga, & her husband Hirsch'l from Lubicz
427	R	33	Feder	Pesha	And her son Shmuel from Lubicz
426	R	34	Feldman	Abraham Moshe	And his wife
426	R	35	Feldman	Shlomo	Son of Abraham Moshe & his wife
426	R	36	Fendrich	Menachem Mendl	
426	R	37	Fendrich	Nechama	née Ruker, wife of Menachem Mendl
426	R	38	Fendrich	Yitzhak	Son of Menachem Mendl & Nechama
426	R	39	Fendrich	Joseph	Son of Menachem Mendl & Nechama
426	R	40	Fendrich	Dvora	Daughter of Menachem Mendl & Nechama
426	R	41	Fendrich	Joseph-Leib	
426	C	1	Fendrich	Chaya	née Billig, wife of Joseph-Leib
425	L	33	Fink	Shlomo	And his family
426	R	7	Fink	Shmuel-Leib	And his family
425	L	34	Finkel	Mendl	
425	L	35	Finkel	Yehoshua	
425	L	36	Finkel	Kurt	
425	L	37	Finkel	Tzivia	
425	L	38	Finkel	Gittl	

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
425	L	41	Fisher	Leibl'i	And his family
425	L	39	Fiszler	Yaakov	from Lubicz
425	L	40	Fiszler	Sarah-Baylah	née Feder, wife of Yaakov
426	R	1	Fleischer	Hirsch-Leib	
425	L	42	Fliesser	Eliezer	
425	L	43	Fliesser	Malka	Wife of Eliezer
425	L	16	Fogel	Minna	
425	L	17	Fogel	David	
425	L	18	Fogel	Yeshayahu	
425	L	19	Fogel	Moshe	
425	L	20	Fogel-Schneider	Chaya	
426	C	15	Freiheiter	Abraham	
426	C	16	Freiheiter	Eliyahu-Yitzhak	Son of Abraham
426	C	17	Freiheiter Leib	Son of Abraham	
426	C	18	Freiheiter Hirsch	Son of Abraham	
426	C	19	Freiheiter	Shlom'cheh	Daughter of Abraham
426	C	20	Freiheiter	Malka Shayndl	Daughter of Abraham
426	C	21	Frenkel	Simcha	
426	C	22	Frenkel	Mordechai	
426	C	23	Frenkel	Sar'l	Wife of Mordechai
426	C	24	Frenkel	Moshe	Son of Mordechai & Sar'l
426	C	25	Frenkel	Eliezer	Son of Mordechai & Sar'l
426	C	10	Frimmer	Mordechai	
426	C	11	Frimmer	Leah	Wife of Mordechai
426	C	12	Frimmer	Gittl	Daughter of Mordechai & Leah
426	C	13	Frimmer	Chana	Daughter of Mordechai & Leah
426	C	14	Frimmer	Zalman	Son of Mordechai & Leah
				G	
421	L	18	Gablinger	Shmuel	
421	L	19	Gablinger	Golda	née Graff, Wife of Shmuel and their children
422	R	12	Geist	Sarah	From Tomaszow-Lubelski
422	R	13	Geist	Sarah	Daughter of Sarah (?) from Tomaszow-Lubelski
422	R	14	Geist	Leib	Son of Sarah from Tomaszow-Lubelski
422	R	26	Gelber	Joseph	
422	R	27	Gelber	Miriam	née Shatzker, wife of Joseph
422	R	28	Gelber	Minna	Daughter of Joseph & Miriam
422	R	29	Gelber	Moshe	And his family
422	R	30	Gelber	Noah	
422	R	31	Gelber	Bluma	Wife of Noah
422	R	32	Gelber	Shmuel	Son of Noah & Bluma
422	R	33	Gelber	Joseph	Son of Noah & Bluma
422	R	34	Gelber	Jonah	Son of Noah & Bluma
422	R	35	Gelber	Feiga	Daughter of Noah & Bluma
422	R	36	Gelber	Nekha	Son of Noah & Bluma
422	R	37	Gelber	Feiga-Bracha	
422	R	40	Gertel	Riva	née Grauer, wife of Aharon Gertel-Wolf
422	R	41	Gertel	Esther	Daughter of Aharon & Riva
422	R	42	Gertel	Gittl	Daughter of Aharon & Riva
422	R	43	Gertel	Moshe	Son of Aharon & Riva
422	R	38	Gertel-Wolf	Glik'l	
422	R	39	Gertel-Wolf	Aharon	Son of Glik'l
422	R	44	Gertel-Wolf	Joseph	
422	C	1	Gertel-Wolf	Reizl	née Halberthal, wife of Joseph
422	R	15	Glock	Pesach	
422	R	16	Glock	Feiga	
422	R	17	Glock	Nuzhi	
422	R	18	Glock	Shmuel I	
422	R	19	Glock	Esther	née Guzhik, wife of Shmuel I
422	R	20	Glock	Chaim	Son of Shmuel I Esther
422	R	21	Glock	Aryeh	Son of Shmuel I & Esther
422	R	22	Glock	Chaya	Daughter of Shmuel I & Esther
422	R	23	Glock	Shmuel II	
422	R	24	Glock	Reizl	Wife of Shmuel II
422	R	25	Glock	Ephraim	And His Family
421	L	43	Gortler	Elazar	from Belzec
421	L	44	Goszess	Israel	
421	L	45	Goszess	Esther	Wife of Israel
422	R	1	Goszess	Moshe	And his wife
422	R	2	Goszess	Hirsch	And his wife
422	R	3	Goszess	Mindl	And her husband
422	R	4	Goszess	Leah	Daughter of Hirsch & Mindl
422	R	5	Goszess	Gittl	Daughter of Hirsch & Mindl
421	L	20	Gottleib	Moshe	
421	L	21	Gottleib	Mollie	Wife of Moshe
421	L	22	Gottleib	Moshe-Aharon	from Lubicz
421	L	23	Gottleib	Reizl	Wife of Moshe-aharon from Lubicz
421	L	24	Gottleib	Mordechai	from Lubicz
421	L	25	Gottleib	Shammai	from Lubicz
421	L	26	Gottleib	Nehemiah	from Lubicz
421	L	27	Gottleib	Henya	Wife of Nehemiah from Lubicz
421	L	28	Gottleib	Isaac	Son of Nehemiah & Henya from Lubicz
421	L	29	Gottleib	Elimelech	Son of Nehemiah & Henya from Lubicz
421	L	30	Gottleib	Eliyahu	from Lubicz
421	L	31	Gottleib	Rachel	Wife of Eliyahu from Lubicz
421	L	32	Gottleib	Feiga	Daughter of Eliyahu & Rachel from Lubicz
421	L	33	Gottleib	Szprinza	from Lubicz
421	L	34	Gottleib	Hirsch	Their Son (?) from Lubicz
421	L	35	Gottleib	Chaim	from Lubicz
421	L	36	Gottleib	Malka	Wife of Chaim from Lubicz
421	L	37	Gottleib	Shmuel	Son of Chaim & Malka from Lubicz
421	L	38	Gottleib	Israel	Son of Chaim & Malka from Lubicz
421	L	39	Gottleib	Shlomo	Son of Chaim & Malka from Lubicz
421	L	40	Gottleib	Israel Chaim	
421	L	41	Gottleib	Yenta	Wife of Israel Chaim
421	L	42	Gottleib	Glik'l	Daughter of Israel Chaim & Yenta, and her husband, Chaim
422	C	8	Green	David	
422	C	9	Green	Ethel	Wife of David
422	C	10	Green	Meir	Son of David & Ethel
422	C	11	Green	Hirsch	Son of David & Ethel
422	C	3	Groder	David	And his Family
422	C	2	Gross	Sholom	And his family
422	C	4	Grossaug	Leib	
422	C	5	Grossaug	Reizl	
422	C	6	Grossaug	Ita'leh	
422	C	7	Grossaug	Wolf	And his family
422	R	6	Guzhik	Zvi Hirsch	
422	R	7	Guzhik	Chana	née Shatzker, wife of Zvi Hirsch

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
422	R	8	Guzhik	Moshe	Son of Zvi Hirsch & Chana
422	R	9	Guzhik	Israel	
422	R	10	Guzhik	Elka	née Gurman, wife of Israel
422	R	11	Guzhik	Issachar	Son of Israel & Elka
				H	
422	C	26	Haberkorn	Joseph Leib	from Lubicz
422	C	27	Haberkorn	Yekhezkiel	from Lubicz
422	C	28	Haberkorn	Jonah	from Lubicz
422	C	29	Haberkorn	Moshe	from Lubicz
422	C	30	Haberkorn	Rivka	from Lubicz
422	C	31	Haberkorn	Zippora	from Lubicz
422	C	32	Haberkorn	Mottl	from Lubicz
422	L	12	Haftel	Yehoshua	And his family
422	L	13	Haftler	Yekhezkiel	
422	C	33	Hagler	Hinde	from Lubicz
422	C	34	Halberthal	Shlomo	
422	C	35	Halberthal	Mollie	née Green, wife of Shlomo
422	C	36	Halberthal	Tehilla	Daughter of Shlomo & Mollie
422	C	37	Halberthal	Moshe	
422	C	38	Halberthal	Rivka	
422	C	39	Halberthal	Yaakov	
422	L	1	Halpern	Leibusz	
422	L	2	Halpern	Golda	née Szpazner, wife of Leibusz
422	L	3	Halpern	Mordechai	Son of Leibusz & Golda
422	L	4	Halpern	Chaim	Son of Leibusz & Golda
422	L	5	Halpern	Rivka	
422	L	7	Hanes	Yaakov	
422	L	8	Hanes	Rachel	Wife of Yaakov
422	L	9	Hanes	Mordechai	Daughter of Yaakov & Rachel
422	L	10	Hanes	Pesha	Son of Yaakov & Rachel
422	L	11	Hanes	Freida	Daughter of Yaakov & Rachel
422	L	18	Hausman	Mendl	
422	L	19	Hausman	Chana	
422	L	20	Hausman	Chaya Sarah	
422	L	21	Hausman	Polet	
422	L	22	Hausman	Hen'cheh	
422	L	23	Hausman	Tszip'eh	
422	L	24	Hausman	Chaya	
422	L	25	Hausman	Miriam	Her Husband, and her two children
422	L	26	Hausman	Leah	Her Husband, and her two children
422	L	27	Hausman	Aharon	
422	L	28	Hausman	Mordechai	
422	L	29	Hausman	Sheva	
422	L	30	Hausman	Abraham	
422	L	31	Hausman	Shimon	
422	L	32	Hausman	David	
423	R	1	Hebenstreit	Noah	
423	R	2	Hebenstreit	Feiga	Wife of Noah
423	R	3	Hebenstreit	Chaim Neta	Daughter of Noah & Feiga
423	R	4	Hebenstreit	Henya	Wife of Chaim Neta
423	R	5	Hebenstreit	Reizl	Daughter of Chaim Neta & Henya
423	R	6	Hebenstreit	Henokh	Son of Chaim Neta & Henya
423	R	7	Hebenstreit	Jonah	Son of Chaim Neta & Henya

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
423	R	8	Hebenstreit	Shakhna	
423	R	9	Hebenstreit	Ethel	Wife of Shakhna
423	R	10	Hebenstreit	Noah	Son of Shakhna & Ethel
423	R	11	Hebenstreit	Lipa	
423	R	12	Hebenstreit	Gittl	Wife of Lipa
423	R	13	Hebenstreit	Leah	Daughter of Lipa & Gittl
423	R	14	Hebenstreit	Noah	Son of Lipa & Gittl
423	R	15	Hebenstreit	Joseph	Son of Lipa & Gittl
423	R	16	Hebenstreit	Mordechai Leib	And his family
423	R	17	Hebenstreit	Shmuel	
423	R	18	Hebenstreit	Sarah	Wife of Shmuel
423	R	19	Hebenstreit	Yitzhak	Son of Shmuel & Sarah
423	R	20	Hebenstreit	Mindl	
423	R	21	Hebenstreit	Leah	
423	R	22	Hebenstreit	Gittl	
423	R	23	Helman	Sarah	And her family
423	R	24	Hendel	Malka	née Metal
423	R	25	Hendel	Leibusz	Son of Malka
423	R	26	Hendel	Hirsch	Son of Malka
423	R	27	Hendel	Rachel	Daughter of Malka
423	R	28	Hendel	Zippora	Daughter of Malka
423	R	29	Hendel	Yehoshua	Son of Lejzor Leib
423	R	30	Hendel	Menucha	Daughter of Lejzor Leib
423	R	31	Herbster	Azriel	
423	R	32	Herzberg	Yehudis	
423	R	33	Herzberg	Chaim Yaakov	Son of Yehudis
423	R	34	Herzberg	Nekha	And her husband
423	R	35	Herzberg	Reizl	Daughter of Nekha and her husband
423	R	36	Herzberg	Joseph	Son of Nekha and her husband
422	L	40	Hirschhorn	Nachman	And his family
422	L	41	Hirschhorn	David	And his family
422	L	42	Hirschtritt	Joseph Eliezer	
422	L	43	Hirschtritt	Reizl	
422	L	44	Hirschtritt	Yitzhak	
422	L	45	Hirschtritt	Shimon	
422	C	42	Hochner	Anshel	
422	L	33	Hoffenbratel	Abraham	
422	L	34	Hoffenbratel	Tshy'the	née Daks, wife of Abraham
422	L	35	Hoffenbratel	Rivka	Daughter of Abraham & Tshy'the
422	C	40	Hollander	Abraham	And his family
422	C	41	Hollander	Shimon Ber	
422	L	14	Holz	Fyvel	
422	L	15	Holz	Chana Sarah	Wife of Fyvel
422	L	16	Holz	Tzivia	Daughter of Fyvel & Chana Sarah
422	L	17	Holz	Gittl	Daughter of Fyvel & Chana Sarah
422	L	6	Holtzhacker	Mordechai	
422	L	36	Horowitz	Pinchas	
422	L	37	Horowitz	Hodia	née Seif, wife of Pinchas
422	L	38	Horowitz	Meir	Son of Pinchas & Hodia
422	L	39	Horowitz	Amalia	Daughter of Pinchas & Hodia

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
				J	
424	C	1	Just	Nehemiah	
424	C	2	Just	Sar'ki	Wife of Nehemiah
424	C	3	Just	Moshe Leib II	Son of Nehemiah & Sar'ki
424	C	4	Just	Sima	Daughter of Nehemiah & Sar'ki
424	C	5	Just	Moshe Leib II	
424	C	6	Just	Rachel	Wife of Moshe Leib II
				K	
424	C	34	Ka"Tz	Aharon	
424	C	35	Ka"Tz	Myt'eh	née Wirth, wife of Aharon
424	C	36	Ka"Tz	Menachem Mendl	Son of Aharon & Myt'eh
424	C	37	Ka"Tz	Sima	née Alter, wife of Menachem Mendl
424	C	38	Ka'Tz	Yaakov	Son of Menachem Mendl & Sima
424	C	39	Ka'Tz	Mordechai	Son of Menachem Mendl & Sima
424	C	40	Ka'Tz	Feiga'leh	And her husband Dikess
424	C	41	Ka'Tz	Bunya	Daughter of Feiga'leh & her husband Dikess
424	C	42	Ka'Tz	Zippora	
424	C	43	Ka'Tz	Sheva	
424	C	44	Ka'Tz	Hirsch Leib	
424	L	1	Ka'Tz	Lana Feiga	Wife of Hirsch Leib
424	L	2	Ka'Tz	Yehudis	Her husband and their children
424	L	3	Ka'Tz	Shayndl	And her husband
424	L	4	Ka'Tz	Joseph	And his children
424	L	5	Ka'Tz	Chaya	And her husband & children
424	L	6	Ka'Tz	Dvora I	And her family
424	L	7	Ka'Tz	Lejzor	And his family
424	L	8	Ka'Tz	Dvora II	
424	L	9	Ka'Tz	Rivka	
424	L	10	Ka'Tz	Hodel	
424	L	11	Ka'Tz	Gittl	
424	C	9	Kahana	Abraham	
424	C	10	Kahana	Esther	Wife of Abraham
424	C	11	Kahana	Leibusz I	Daughter of Abraham & Esther
424	C	12	Kahana	Yekhezkiel	from Lubicz
424	C	13	Kahana	Feiga	née Szaffel, wife of Yekhezkiel, from Lubicz
424	C	14	Kahana	Zissl I	Daughter of Yekhezkiel & Feiga, from Lubicz
424	C	15	Kahana	Sarah	Daughter of Yekhezkiel & Feiga, from Lubicz
424	C	16	Kahana	Krein'cheh	Daughter of Yekhezkiel & Feiga, from Lubicz
424	C	17	Kahana	Hinde Chana	Daughter of Yekhezkiel & Feiga, from Lubicz
424	C	18	Kahana	Yeshayahu	Son of Yekhezkiel & Feiga, from Lubicz
424	C	19	Kahana	Abraham	Son of Yekhezkiel & Feiga, from Lubicz
424	C	20	Kahana	Mattl I	And her husband, Simcha, & children Zissl & Yeshayahu, from Lubicz
424	C	21	Kahana	Rachel I	from Lubicz
424	C	22	Kahana	Reizl	from Lubicz
424	C	23	Kahana	Shayndl	from Lubicz
424	C	24	Kahana	Leah	from Lubicz
424	C	25	Kahana	Sholom	from Lubicz
424	C	26	Kahana	Mindl	Wife of Sholom, from Lubicz
424	C	27	Kahana	Mattl II	Daughter of Sholom & Mindl, from Lubicz
424	C	28	Kahana	Ber'l	from Lubicz
424	C	29	Kahana	Rachel II	Wife of Ber'l from Lubicz
424	C	30	Kahana	Tszip'eh	Daughter of Ber'l & Rachel II, from Lubicz
424	C	31	Kahana	Zissl II	Daughter of Ber'l & Rachel II, from Lubicz
424	C	32	Kahana	Sheva	Daughter of Ber'l & Rachel II, from Lubicz
424	C	33	Kahana	Leibusz II	Son of Ber'l & Rachel II, from Lubicz
427	R	18	Kellner	Abraham	
427	R	19	Kellner	Leah	Wife of Abraham
427	R	20	Kellner	Feiga	Daughter of Abraham & Leah
427	R	21	Kellner	Gittl	Daughter of Abraham & Leah
427	R	22	Kellner	Miriam	Daughter of Abraham & Leah & her family
427	R	37	Kerner	Israel	from Belzec
427	R	38	Kerner	Genya	née Likher, wife of Israel
427	R	39	Kerner	Frieda	from Belzec
427	R	40	Kerner	Yehuda-Zvi	from Belzec
427	R	27	Kessel	Mordechai Aryeh	
427	R	28	Kessel	Jocheved	née Meiseles, wife of Mordechai Aryeh
427	R	29	Kessel	Raphael	Son of Mordechai Aryeh & Jocheved
427	R	30	Kessel	Chana	Daughter of Mordechai Aryeh & Jocheved
427	R	31	Kessler	Juta	
427	R	32	Kessler	Abraham	
424	C	7	Khanaless	Mendl	from Lubicz
424	C	8	Khanaless	Mir'l	Wife of Mendl, from Lubicz
426	L	44	Klager-Zimmerman	Ethel'i	
427	R	1	Klager-Zimmerman	Esther	Son of Ethel'i Klager-Zimmerman
427	R	2	Klager-Zimmerman	Buzha	Daughter of Ethel'i Klager-Zimmerman
427	R	3	Klang	Israel	
427	R	4	Klang	Esther	Wife of Israel
427	R	5	Klang	Rachel	And her husband Uri Berger and their two children
427	R	6	Klahr	Blanca	from Belzec
427	R	7	Klahr	Ber'ali	from Belzec
427	R	8	Klahr	Hirsch	
427	R	9	Klahr	Chaya	Wife of Hirsch
427	R	10	Klahr	Feiga	Daughter of Hirsch & Chaya
427	R	11	Klahr	Yekhiel	Son of Hirsch & Chaya
427	R	12	Klahr	Ber'l	Son of Hirsch & Chaya
427	R	13	Klahr	Joseph	Son of Hirsch & Chaya
427	R	14	Klahr-Berger	Zechariah	
427	R	15	Klahr-Berger	Nekha	Wife of Zechariah
427	R	16	Klahr-Berger	Golda	Daughter of Zechariah & Nekha & their family
427	R	17	Klahr-Berger	Meir	Son of Zechariah & Nekha & their family
427	R	23	Knobloch	Yaakov	
427	R	24	Knobloch	Pesha	Wife of Yaakov
427	R	25	Koenigsberg	Pinchas	from Lubicz
427	R	26	Koenigsberg	Luba	Wife of Pinchas and their family
426	L	40	Kotz	Henya	
426	L	34	Kovler	Moshe	
426	L	35	Kovler	Rachel	Wife of Moshe
426	L	36	Kovler	Hirsch	And his family
426	L	37	Kovler	Shmuel	And his family

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
427	R	41	Kremmer	Yaakov	
427	R	42	Kremmer	Chava	Wife of Yaakov
427	R	43	Kremmer	Shlomo	Son of Yaakov & Chava
427	C	1	Kremmer	Pesha	Daughter of Yaakov & Chava
427	R	33	Krzemenietzer	Merya	
427	R	34	Krzemenietzer	Berta	
427	R	35	Krzemenietzer	Fefa	
427	R	36	Krzemenietzer	Simcha	
426	L	43	Kukler	Yeshayahu	
426	L	41	Kupperstein	Ephraim	
426	L	42	Kupperstein	Chana-Feiga	née Rathaus, wife of Ephraim, and their children

L

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
424	L	15	Lamm	Eliezer	from Lubicz
424	L	16	Lamm	Brein'eh	Wife of Eliezer, from Lubicz
424	L	17	Lamm	Shimon	Son of Eliezer & Brein'eh, from Lubicz
424	L	18	Lamm	Shlomo	Son of Eliezer & Brein'eh, from Lubicz
424	L	25	Landes	Shammai	
424	L	20	Langer	Aharon	
424	L	21	Langer	Reizl	Wife of Aharon
424	L	22	Langer	Jonah	Son of Aharon & Reizl
424	L	23	Langer	Rachel	Daughter of Aharon & Reizl
424	L	24	Langer	Yehuda-Ezra	Son of Aharon & Reizl
424	L	19	Langweber	Shmuel	
424	L	12	Lauterbach	Chana Tzivia	née Wasser, from Lubicz
424	L	13	Lauterbach	Kayla	Daughter of Chana Tzivia
424	L	14	Lauterbach	Rachel	Daughter of Chana Tzivia
425	R	10	Lehrer	Israel	
425	R	11	Lehrer	Chana	Wife of Israel
425	R	12	Lehrer	Yehudis	Daughter of Israel & Chana
425	R	13	Lehrer	Simcha-Baruch	Son of Israel & Chana
425	R	14	Lehrer	Hershl'i	Son of Israel & Chana
425	R	15	Lehrer	Joseph	
425	R	16	Lehrer	Dvora	née Weiss, Wife of Joseph
424	L	40	Leibach	Joseph	
424	L	39	Leichter	Freida	And her family
425	R	17	Lempert	David Meir	
425	R	18	Lempert	Yet'i	née Kessel, wife of David Meir
425	R	19	Lempert	Charlotta	Daughter of David Meir & Yet'i
425	R	20	Lempert	Manya	Daughter of David Meir & Yet'i
425	R	21	Lerner	Nathan	
425	R	22	Lerner	Hinde	née Bultz, wife of Nathan
425	R	23	Lerner	Ziggy	Son of Nathan & Hinde
425	R	24	Lerner	Lula	Daughter of Nathan & Hinde
425	R	25	Lerner	Sala	Daughter of Nathan & Hinde
424	L	37	Lichter	Leib	from Belzec
424	L	38	Lichter	Esther	Wife of Leib
421	C	9	Liebig	Jocheved	Her husband, and three children
425	R	6	Lifschitz	Sholom	
425	R	7	Lifschitz	Riva	Wife of Sholom
425	R	8	Lifschitz	Yaakov	Son of Sholom & Riva
425	R	9	Lifschitz	Nahum	Son of Sholom & Riva
424	L	41	Linder	Yitzhak	
424	L	42	Linder	Ethel	Wife of Yitzhak
424	L	43	Linder	Menachem Maness	Son of Yitzhak & Ethel
425	R	1	Linder	Yaakov Koppel	Son of Yitzhak & Ethel
425	R	2	Linder	Sholom	Son of Yitzhak & Ethel
425	R	3	Linder	Miriam	Daughter of Yitzhak & Ethel
425	R	4	Linder	Rivka	Daughter of Yitzhak & Ethel
425	R	5	Linder	Meshullam	
424	L	26	Lockman	Joseph	from Lubicz
424	L	27	Lockman	Rissl	Wife of Joseph from Lubicz
424	L	28	Lockman Hodia		Daughter of Joseph & Rissl from Lubicz
424	L	29	Lockman Mollie		Daughter of Joseph & Rissl from Lubicz
424	L	30	Lockman	Yitzhak-Leib	Son of Joseph & Rissl from Lubicz
424	L	31	Lockman	Chaim	Son of Joseph & Rissl from Lubicz
424	L	32	Lussberg	Yaakov	
424	L	33	Lussberg	Klara	née Schipper, wife of Yaakov
424	L	34	Lustifer	Chaya	from Lubicz
424	L	35	Lustifer	Henya	Daughter of Chaya, from Lubicz
424	L	36	Lustifer	Berta	And her husband Noah Fischler

M

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
425	R	28	Maltz	Yehoshua	And his family
425	R	29	Mandel	Leib	And his family
425	R	38	Mandel	Zippora	
425	R	39	Mandel	Dan	
425	R	34	Mandelkern	Yaakov Yitzhak	
425	R	35	Mandelkern	Rachel	Wife of Yaakov Yitzhak
425	R	36	Mandelkern	Sarah	Daughter of Yaakov Yitzhak & Rachel
425	R	37	Mandelkern	Hen'cheh	Daughter of Yaakov Yitzhak & Rachel
425	C	18	Mandelkern	Rachel	
425	R	30	Mann-Weinreb	Zvi-Hirsch	
425	R	31	Mann-Weinreb	Rivka	Wife of Zvi-Hirsch
425	R	32	Mann-Weinreb	Zal'keh	Son of Zvi-Hirsch & Rivka
425	R	33	Mann-Weinreb	Moshe Mendl	Son of Zvi-Hirsch & Rivka, and his family
425	C	27	Marz	Adele	
425	C	4	Maus	Chaim	
425	R	26	Mauster	Abraham	
425	R	27	Mauster	Bluma	née Zimmerman, wife of Abraham
425	C	5	Mayer	Nissan	
425	C	6	Mayer	Fradl	
425	C	7	Mayer	Tszizh'eh	
425	C	8	Mayer	Hinde	
425	C	9	Mayer	Chaim	
425	C	26	Mermelstein	Esther	And her family
425	C	15	Metal	Eliezer-Leib	
425	C	16	Metal	Rachel	née Zimmerman, wife of Eliezer-Leib
425	C	17	Metal	Ephraim-Zvi	
425	C	19	Metzger	Baylah Reizl	from Potelycz
425	C	20	Metzger	Dov	from Potelycz
425	C	21	Metzger	Miriam	Wife of Dov, from Potelycz
425	C	22	Metzger	Eidel'eh	Daughter of Dov & Miriam, from Potelycz
425	C	23	Metzger	Hirsch	
425	C	24	Metzger	Fishl	Son of Hirsch
425	C	25	Metzger	Eidel	Daughter of Hirsch
425	R	40	Moness	Herman	

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Description
425	R	41	Morgenstern	Bon'cheh	And his family
425	R	42	Morgenstern	Joseph	
425	R	43	Morgenstern	Shmuel	
425	R	44	Morgenstern	Hirtz	
425	C	1	Morgenstern	Aharon	
425	C	2	Morgenstern	Sender	
425	C	3	Morgenstern	Berisz	
425	C	10	Mundsztak	Mordechai	
425	C	11	Mundsztak	Sarah-Malka	Wife of Mordechai
425	C	12	Mundsztak	Nathan	
425	C	13	Mundsztak	Adele	née Flaffer, wife of Nathan
425	C	14	Mundsztak	Munyu	Son of Nathan & Adele

N

425	C	28	Nadel-Feldman	Miriam	And her family, from Belz
425	C	29	Neithaler	David	And his family

P

425	L	22	Paster	Shmuel Leib	
425	L	23	Paster	Miriam	Wife of Shmuel Leib
425	L	24	Paster	Leah	Daughter of Shmuel Leib & Miriam
425	L	25	Paster	Rachel	Daughter of Shmuel Leib & Miriam
425	L	26	Paster	Pearl	Daughter of Shmuel Leib & Miriam
425	L	27	Paster	Gershon	Son of Shmuel Leib & Miriam
425	L	28	Paster	Elimelech	And his wife, née Reichler
425	L	29	Paster	Mollie	
425	L	30	Paster	Zelig	And his family
425	L	31	Paster	Joseph	from Lubicz
425	L	32	Paster	Malka	Wife of Joseph & their children
426	C	3	Pearlman	Sheva	And her family, from Lubicz
426	R	2	Plever	Moshe Aryeh	from Belzec
426	R	3	Plever	Bash'i	from Belzec
426	R	4	Plever	Zvi	from Belzec
426	R	5	Plever	Dvora	née Schreiber, wife of Zvi, from Belzec
426	R	6	Plever	Chana	Daughter of Zvi & Dvora
426	C	26	Presser	Yitzhak	
426	C	27	Presser	Malka	Wife of Yitzhak
426	C	28	Presser	Shaul	
426	C	29	Presser	Reizl	Wife of Shaul
426	C	30	Presser	Leah	And her children
426	C	31	Presser	Aharon	And his wife
426	C	32	Presser	Henya	And her husband and their children
426	C	33	Presser	Mikhl	
426	C	34	Presser	Shlomo	
426	C	4	Priffner	Mordechai	
426	C	5	Priffner	Fradl	Wife of Mordechai, and their family
426	C	6	Privet	Hirsch	
426	C	7	Privet	Koppel	
426	C	8	Privet	Yehoshua	
426	C	9	Privet	El'keh	
426	C	2	Proffs	Abraham	And his family
426	R	8	Putter	Chaim-Leib	And his family

R

427	C	27	Rapoport	Dov-Berisz	
427	C	20	Rathaus	Moshe	
427	C	21	Rathaus	Golda	Wife of Moshe
427	C	22	Rathaus	David	Son of Moshe & Golda and his family
427	C	25	Ratszimor	Yehuda-Zvi	from Belzec
427	L	36	Redlich	Shlomo	
427	L	37	Redlich	Fradl	Wife of Shlomo
427	L	38	Redlich	Mordechai	Son of Shlomo & Fradl
427	L	39	Redlich	Chaim-Joseph	Son of Shlomo & Fradl
427	L	40	Redlich	Leib	And his family
427	L	41	Redlich	Reuben	And his family
427	L	42	Redlich	Pesach	And his family, from Niemerow
427	L	35	Regenstreif	-	And the family
427	L	6	Reichler	Chaim	
427	L	7	Reichler	Chana	Wife of Chaim
427	L	8	Reichler	Shayndl	Daughter of Chaim & Chana
427	L	17	Reichler	Berisz	
427	L	18	Reindel	Jekuthiel	
427	L	19	Reindel	Rivka	Wife of Jekuthiel
427	L	20	Reindel	Feiga	Daughter of Jekuthiel & Rivka
427	L	21	Reindel	Yehoshua	Son of Jekuthiel & Rivka
427	L	10	Reiser	Joseph	Son of R' Chaim HaKohen
427	L	11	Reiser	Esther	Daughter of Eliyahu, wife of Joseph
427	L	12	Reiser	Rikl	Daughter of Joseph & Esther, & her son Joseph
427	L	13	Reisler	Naphtali-Hertz	
427	L	14	Reisler	Rukhama	Wife of Naphtali-Hertz
427	L	15	Reisler	Yitzhak Shlomo	Son of Naphtali-Hertz & Rukhama
427	L	16	Reisler	Reiz'eh	née Babad, wife of Yitzhak-Shlomo
427	L	23	Reiss	Moshe	
427	L	24	Reiss	Rivka	Wife of Moshe
427	L	25	Reiss	Hinde	Daughter of Moshe & Rivka
427	L	26	Reiss	Ziss'keh	Son of Moshe & Rivka
427	L	27	Reiss	Abraham-Aaron	Son of Moshe & Rivka
427	L	28	Reiss	Mordechai	Son of Moshe & Rivka
427	L	29	Reiss	Yaakov	Son of Moshe & Rivka
427	L	30	Reiss	Tova	Daughter of Moshe & Rivka
427	L	31	Reitzfeld	Todros	
427	L	32	Reitzfeld	Baylah	née Graff, wife of Todros
427	L	33	Reitzfeld	Reizl	Daughter of Todros & Baylah
427	L	34	Reitzfeld	Yaakov	Son of Todros & Baylah
427	L	43	Rekhes	Moshe	
427	L	44	Rekhes	Shoshana	Wife of Moshe
428	R	1	Rekhes	Feiga	Daughter of Moshe & Shoshana
428	R	2	Rekhes	Chaim	Son of Moshe & Shoshana
428	R	3	Rekhes	Shmel'ki	Son of Moshe & Shoshana
428	R	4	Rekhes	Fishl	Son of Moshe & Shoshana
428	R	5	Rekhes	Chava I	Wife of Fishl & their family
428	R	6	Rekhes	Nehemiah	
428	R	7	Rekhes	Chava II	Wife of Nehemiah
428	R	8	Rekhes	Manya	Daughter of Nehemiah & Chava II
428	R	9	Rekhes	Zelig	Son of Nehemiah & Chava II
428	R	10	Rekhes	Chaya	Daughter of Nehemiah & Chava II
427	L	9	Reinert	Abraham	And his family

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
427	L	22	Reinert	Eliezer	
427	C	26	Romm	Moshe	
427	C	15	Rosenber(g)	Ber'l	
427	C	13	Rosenberg	Isaac	
427	C	14	Rosenberg	Leah	Wife of Isaac
427	C	16	Rosenberg	Naphtali	
427	C	17	Rosenberg	Penina	
427	C	18	Rosenberg	Rachel	And their children
427	C	19	Rosenberg	Miriam	And her husband Abraham
427	C	2	Rosenfeld	Yaakov-Shlomo	
427	C	3	Rosenfeld	Itta	Wife of Yaakov-Shlomo
427	C	4	Rosenfeld	Chava	Daughter of Yaakov-Shlomo & Itta
427	C	5	Rosenfeld	Yehoshua	Son of Yaakov-Shlomo & Itta
427	C	6	Rosenfeld	Pessia	Wife of Yehoshua
427	C	7	Rosenfeld	Moshe-Bantzis	And his family
427	C	8	Rosenfeld	Wolf	And his family
427	C	9	Rosenfeld	Abraham	And his family
427	C	10	Rosenfeld	Hirsch	And his family
427	C	11	Rosenfeld	Tova	
427	C	12	Rosenfeld	Breineh	
427	C	37	Rosenthal	Malia	And her family
427	C	23	Rothhandler	Freideh Kressl	
427	C	24	Rothhandler	Chana	Daughter of Freideh Kressl
427	C	32	Rubin	Joseph	And his family
427	C	33	Rubin	Israel	And his family
427	C	34	Rubin	Rekht'leh	Her husband & their children
427	C	35	Rubin	Pesha	
427	C	36	Rubin	Kressl'eh	Daughter of Pesha
427	C	28	Rubin-Bultz	Yaakov	
427	C	29	Rubin-Bultz	Ethel	Wife of Yaakov
427	C	30	Rubin-Bultz	Rivka	Sister of Yaakov
427	C	31	Rubin-Bultz	Breineh	Sister of Yaakov
427	L	3	Ruker	Shimon	
427	L	4	Ruker	Gittl	Wife of Shimon
427	L	5	Ruker	Rachel	Daughter of Shimon & Gittl, & her daughter
427	C	38	Rumelt	Joel	
427	C	39	Rumelt	Feiga I	Wife of Joel
427	C	40	Rumelt	Mordechai	Son of Joel & Feiga
427	C	41	Rumelt	Leah	Daughter of Joel & Feiga
427	C	42	Rumelt	Sima	Daughter of Joel & Feiga
427	C	43	Rumelt	Daniel	His wife and their four children from Olyck
427	C	44	Rumelt	Aryeh-Leib	His wife and their five children
427	L	1	Rumelt	Shmuel	
427	L	2	Rumelt	Feiga II	Wife of Shmuel and their six children, from Magierow
				S	
425	C	31	Sambal	Shlomo	
425	C	32	Sambal	Chaya	Wife of Shlomo
425	C	33	Sambal	Frumit	Daughter of Shlomo & Chaya
425	C	34	Sambal	Shammai	Son of Shlomo & Chaya
425	C	35	Sambal	Yaakov	Son of Shlomo & Chaya
428	C	21	Schein	Chana	And her parents
428	C	20	Schindler	Chaim	And his family
428	C	25	Schlager	Yitzhak	from Warenzh
428	C	26	Schlager	Nina	née Kessel, wife of Yitzhak
428	C	27	Schlager	Feiga'leh	Daughter of Yitzhak & Nina
428	L	35	Schreiber	Aryeh	from Lubicz
428	L	36	Schreiber	Tchipa	Wife of Aryeh, from Lubicz
428	L	37	Schreiber	Yekhezkiel	Son of Aryeh & Tchipa
428	R	20	Schwebel	Abraham	
428	R	21	Schwebel	Leah	
425	C	36	Segal	Zelig	
425	C	37	Segal	Henya	née Feldman, and their daughter
423	L	36	Seif	Menachem Mendl	
423	L	37	Seif	Sima	Wife of Menachem Mendl
423	L	38	Seif	Joseph	Son of Menachem Mendel & Sima
423	L	39	Seif	Yaakov	Son of Menachem Mendel & Sima
423	L	40	Seif	Sarah	Wife of Yaakov
428	L	12	Sfatzer	Hodel-Leah-Hadassah	née Sambal
428	L	13	Sfatzer	Yaakov	Son of Hodel-Leah-Hadassah
428	L	14	Sfatzer	Benjamin	Son of Yaakov
428	L	15	Sfatzer	Pearl	Daughter of Chaim, wife of Benjamin
428	L	16	Sfatzer	Yitzhak	Brother of Pearl And his family
428	L	17	Sfatzer	Hirsch I	Brother of Pearl And his family
428	L	18	Sfatzer	Joseph	And his family
428	L	19	Sfatzer	Hirsch II	And his family
428	L	20	Sfatzer	Leibusz	And his family
428	L	21	Sfatzer	Tzivia	And her family
428	L	22	Sfatzer	Joel	Son of Yaakov And his family
428	L	23	Sfatzer	Chay'cheh	
423	L	33	Siebzehner	Aryeh Leib	
423	L	34	Siebzehner	Freida	Wife of Aryeh Leib
423	L	35	Siebzehner	Yaakov	Son of Aryeh Leib & Freida, And his wife Pearl
425	C	38	Simkowicz	Shmuel	from Lubicz
425	C	39	Simkowicz	Minna	née Gottleib, wife of Shmuel
425	C	30	Sobel	Fradl	
428	C	14	Stern	Israel	
428	C	15	Stern	Malka	née Guzhik, wife of Israel
428	C	16	Stern	Chaya	Daughter of Israel & Malka
428	C	17	Stern	Genya	Daughter of Israel & Malka
428	C	18	Stern	Aryeh	And his family
428	R	11	Szaffel	Baylah-Hinde	from Lubicz
428	R	12	Szaffel	Pesha	Daughter of Baylah-Hinde
428	R	13	Szaffel	Shmuel-Yehuda	Zauerbrun, her husband
428	R	14	Szaffel	Rivka	Daughter of Shmuel-Yehuda & Pesha
428	R	15	Szaffel	Fyvel	Son of Shmuel-Yehuda & Pesha
428	R	16	Shatzker	Eliezer	
428	R	17	Shatzker	Zippora	Wife of Eliezer
428	R	18	Shatzker	Yitzhak	Son of Eliezer & Zippora
428	R	19	Shatzker	Manya	Daughter of Eliezer & Zippora
428	C	28	Szeles	Moshe	
428	C	29	Szeles	Esther	
428	C	30	Szeles	Joseph	
428	C	31	Szfatz Dr.	And his family	
428	C	32	Szfatzner	Yeshayahu	
428	C	33	Szfatzner	Moshe	
428	C	34	Szfatzner	Feiga	Wife of Moshe
428	C	35	Szfatzner	Mordechai Lejzor	
428	C	36	Szfatzner	Bluma	

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
428	L	1	Szfatzner	Shayn'cheh	
428	L	2	Szfatzner	Isaac	
428	L	3	Szfatzner	Brun'cheh	
428	L	4	Szfatzner	Moshe	
428	L	5	Szfatzner	Rosalie	
428	L	6	Szfatzner	Nachman	
428	L	7	Szfatzner	Matilda	Wife of Nachman and their children
428	L	8	Szfatzner	Gittl	
428	L	9	Szfatzner	Joseph	
428	L	10	Szfatzner	Malka	
428	L	11	Szfatzner	Moshe	
428	C	19	Szidkowsky	Rosa	
428	C	22	Schipper	Yitzhak	
428	C	23	Schipper	Mat'tl	Wife of Yitzhak
428	C	24	Schipper	Henya	née Berger And her children
428	L	24	Sperber	Yaakov	
428	L	25	Sperber	Chaya	Wife of Yaakov
428	L	26	Sperber	Ozer	Son of Yaakov & Chaya
428	L	27	Spritzer	Eliyahu	
428	L	28	Spritzer	Nesh'eh	wife of Eliyahu
428	L	29	Spritzer	Simcha	
428	L	30	Spritzer	Mollie	née Privess, wife of Simcha
428	L	31	Spritzer	Shlomo-Wolf	And his family
428	L	32	Spritzer	Moshe-Meir	
428	L	33	Spritzer	Malka	née Green, wife of Moshe-Meir
428	L	34	Spritzer	Kalman	
428	R	22	Sztakhel	Gimpel I	
428	R	23	Sztakhel	Yitzhak	Son of Gimpel
428	R	24	Sztakhel	Zalman	
428	R	25	Sztakhel	Gimpel II	
428	R	26	Sztakhel	Rivka	
428	R	27	Sztakhel	Reizl	
428	R	28	Sztakhel	Kreindl	
428	R	29	Sztakhel	Dvora	
428	R	30	Sztakhel	Baylah	
428	R	31	Sztakhel	Ze'ev	
428	R	32	Sztalhammer	Hersch	
428	R	33	Sztalhammer	Chay'cheh	Wife of Hersch
428	R	34	Sztalhammer	Leib	Son of Hersch & Chay'cheh
428	C	7	Sztark	Ze'ev	
428	C	8	Sztark	Rachel	née Shatzker, wife of Ze'ev
428	R	35	Sztrokh	Boruch	
428	R	36	Sztrokh	Chaya	née Herzberg, wife of Boruch
428	C	1	Sztrokh	Zippora	Daughter of Boruch & Chaya
428	C	2	Sztrokh	Asher	Son of Boruch & Chaya
428	C	3	Sztrokh	Chava	Daughter of Boruch & Chaya
428	C	4	Sztrokh	Israel	His wife & their three children
428	C	5	Sztrokh	David	His wife & their four children
428	C	6	Sztrokh	Moshe	
428	C	9	Sztokhammer	Rachel	
428	C	10	Sztokhammer	Reuben	
428	C	11	Sztokhammer	Pearl	Wife of Reuben
428	C	12	Sztokhammer	Herschel	And his family
428	C	13	Sztokhammer	Abba	And his family

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
				T	
424	R	14	Tauber	Pinchas	
424	R	15	Tauber	Sarah Blima	
424	R	16	Tauber	Leib	
424	R	17	Tauber	Feiga	Wife of Leib
424	R	18	Tauber	Esther	And her family
424	R	19	Tauber	Yaakov	And his family
424	R	20	Tauber	Rivka	
424	R	27	Tegger	Esther	
424	R	28	Tenenbaum	Moshe	from Belzec
424	R	29	Tenenbaum	Bashi	née Leichter, wife of Moshe, from Belzec
424	R	30	Tenenbaum	Sally	Daughter of Moshe & Bashi, from Belzec
424	R	31	Tenenbaum	Rivka	Daughter of Moshe & Bashi, from Belzec
424	R	6	Thaller	Leib	
424	R	7	Thaller	Shosh'eh	
424	R	8	Thaller	Shammai	
424	R	9	Thaller	Yaakov	
424	R	10	Thaller	Mendl	
424	R	11	Thaller	Dvora	
424	R	12	Thaller	Leib	from Lubicz
424	R	13	Thaller	Malka	née Teichman, wife of Leib
424	R	21	Tieger	Yitzhak	
424	R	22	Tieger	Mikhl Chaim	Son of Yitzhak
424	R	23	Tieger	Leah	Daughter of Yitzhak
424	R	24	Tieger	Mollie	Daughter of Yitzhak
424	R	25	Tirass	Rosa	from Lubicz
424	R	26	Tirass	Leah	from Lubicz
424	R	32	Treiber	Rivka	from Lubicz
424	R	33	Treiber	Yaakov	Son of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	34	Treiber	Hirsch	Son of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	35	Treiber	Hirsch	Son of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	36	Treiber	Joseph	Son of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	37	Treiber	Joseph	Son of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	38	Treiber	Eliezer	Son of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	39	Treiber	Dvora	Daughter of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	40	Treiber	Gittl	Daughter of Rivka, from Lubicz
424	R	41	Treiber	Esther	Daughter of Rivka, from Lubicz
				W	
423	C	21	Wachsman	Alexander Sender	
423	C	22	Wachsman	Chana	Wife of Alexander Sender
423	C	23	Wachsman	Shayndl	Daughter of Alexander Sender & Chana, And her family
423	C	24	Wachsman	Israel	Son of Alexander Sender & Chana
423	C	25	Wachsman	Rivka	née Birnbaum, wife of Israel
423	C	26	Wachsman	Bracha	Daughter of Israel & Rivka
423	C	27	Wachsman	Menachem Mendl	Son of Israel & Rivka
423	C	28	Wachsman	Joseph	Son of Israel & Rivka
423	C	29	Wachsman	Chana	née Daks, his wife
423	R	37	Waldman	Leib	
423	R	38	Waldman	Sarah	Wife of Leib, and their five children
423	C	12	Wasser	Joseph	His son, & wife Esther from Lubicz
423	C	13	Wasser	David	His son, & wife Bron'cheh, née Kessler, from Lubicz
423	C	14	Wasser	Esther	Daughter of David & Bron'cheh from Lubicz

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
423	C	15	Wasser	Chana	Daughter of David & Bron'cheh from Lubicz
423	C	16	Wasser	Leib	Son of David & Bron'cheh from Lubicz
423	C	17	Wasser	Shayndl	Daughter of David & Bron'cheh from Lubicz
423	C	18	Wasser	Freida	from Lubicz
423	C	19	Wasser	Shammai Israel	Her Husband, from Lubicz
423	C	20	Wasser	Aharon	Son of Freida & Shammai Israel
423	L	23	Weber	Joseph	
423	L	24	Weber	Baylah	Wife of Joseph
423	L	25	Weber	Aryeh Leib	
423	L	26	Weber	Chaya Esther	née Billig, wife of Aryeh Leib
423	L	27	Weber	Tehilla	Daughter of Aryeh Leib & Chaya Esther
423	C	30	Weidhorn	Yaakov	And his family
423	C	31	Weidhorn	Isaac	
423	C	32	Weidhorn	Freida	née Mundsztak, wife of Isaac
423	C	33	Weidhorn	Genya	Daughter of Isaac & Freida
423	C	34	Weidhorn	Yitzhak	Son of Isaac & Freida
423	C	35	Weidhorn	Asher	
423	C	36	Weidhorn	Tschip'eh	
423	C	37	Weidhorn	Reizl'eh	
423	C	39	Weiler	Leib	
423	L	1	Weiler	Shayndl	née Halpern, wife of Leib
423	L	2	Weiler	Israel	Son of Leib & Shayndl
423	L	3	Weiler	Simcha	Son of Leib & Shayndl
423	L	4	Weinberger	Aryeh	
423	L	5	Weinberger	Chana	Wife of Aryeh
423	L	6	Weinberger	Benjamin	Son of Aryeh & Chana
423	L	7	Weinberger	Chaim	Son of Aryeh & Chana
423	L	8	Weingast	Mendl	
423	L	9	Weingast	Bayl'chi	née Sztokhammer, wife of Mendl
423	L	10	Weiss	Abraham	
423	L	11	Weiss	Sarah	Wife of Abraham
423	L	12	Weiss	Leib	
423	L	13	Weiss	Shlomo	
423	L	14	Weiss	Bryn'cheh	
423	L	15	Weiss	Henya	
423	L	16	Weiss	Chaim Shmuel	
423	L	17	Weiss	Henokh	
423	L	18	Weiss	Elimelech	
423	L	19	Weiss	Feffi	
423	C	38	Weissblitt	Freida	And her family
423	L	20	Weissblitt	Yaakov	
423	L	21	Weissblitt	Chaya Esther	née Siebzehner, wife of Yaakov
423	L	28	Weniger	Hirsch	from
423	L	29	Weniger	Hinde	from
423	L	30	Weniger	Sarah	from
423	L	31	Weniger	Moshe	from
423	L	22	Wirth	Pinchas	
423	R	39	Wolf	Aharon Leib	From Zamek
423	R	41	Wolf	Moshe	
423	C	1	Wolf	Elka	Wife of Moshe
423	C	2	Wolf	Meir	Son of Moshe & Elka
423	C	3	Wolf	Aharon	from Lubicz
423	C	4	Wolf	Rivka	Wife of Aharon, from Lubicz
423	C	5	Wolf	Rachel	Daughter of Aharon & Elka, from Lubicz
423	C	6	Wolf	Chaya	Daughter of Aharon & Elka, from Lubicz
423	C	7	Wolf	Malia	Daughter of Aharon & Elka, from Lubicz
423	C	8	Wolf	Golda	Daughter of Aharon & Elka, from Lubicz
423	C	9	Wolf	Aryeh	from Lubicz
423	C	10	Wolf	Gittl	née Zau(er)brun, wife of Aryeh, from Lubicz
423	C	11	Wolf	Hirsch	from Lubicz
423	R	40	Wolf	Rivka-Feiga	née Altshuler, wife of Aharon Leib
					Z
423	L	41	Zauerteig	Hona	
426	C	37	Ziegler	Chaim Neta	And his family
426	C	38	Ziegler	Eliezer	
426	C	39	Ziegler	Tauba	
426	C	40	Ziegler	Rachel	Daughter of Tauba
426	C	41	Ziegler	Eidl	Daughter of Tauba
426	C	42	Ziegler	Malka	
426	C	43	Ziegler	Tzir'l	Daughter of Malka
426	C	44	Ziegler	Lejzor-Sholom	Son of Malka
423	L	42	Zilber	Dvora	And her family
423	L	43	Zilber	Tzira	And her family
423	L	44	Zilber	Mot'eh	
424	R	1	Zilber	Pearl	
424	R	2	Zilber	Zlateh	
424	R	3	Zilber	Basheh	
424	R	4	Zilber	Berisz	
424	R	5	Zilber	Wolf	
426	C	45	Zimmerman	Herman	
426	L	1	Zimmerman	Rosa	Wife of Herman
426	L	2	Zimmerman	Feiga	Daughter of Herman & Rosa, And her husband Michael
426	L	3	Zimmerman	Esther-Sarah	Daughter of Herman & Rosa
426	L	4	Zimmerman	Yitzhak	Son of Herman & Rosa
426	L	5	Zimmerman	Kuba	Son of Herman & Rosa
426	L	6	Zimmerman	Edmond	Son of Herman & Rosa
426	L	7	Zimmerman	Akiva I	
426	L	8	Zimmerman	Shayndl	Wife of Akiva I
426	L	9	Zimmerman	Meir	Son of Akiva I & Shayndl
426	L	10	Zimmerman	Abraham I	And his family
426	L	11	Zimmerman	Hirsch	And his family
426	L	12	Zimmerman	Pesha	Daughter of Hirsch
426	L	13	Zimmerman	Yaakov	Son of Hirsch
426	L	14	Zimmerman	Ephraim Hirsch	
426	L	15	Zimmerman	Sarah-Ethel	Wife of Ephraim Hirsch
426	L	16	Zimmerman	Moshe-Yitzhak	Son of Ephraim Hirsch & Sarah-Ethel
426	L	17	Zimmerman	Zeinvill	Son of Ephraim Hirsch & Sarah-Ethel
426	L	18	Zimmerman	Fyvel	Son of Ephraim Hirsch & Sarah-Ethel
426	L	19	Zimmerman	Gittl	
426	L	20	Zimmerman	Sosheh	
426	L	21	Zimmerman	Reizl	
426	L	22	Zimmerman	Chan'cheh	
426	L	23	Zimmerman	Mindl	
426	L	24	Zimmerman	Eliyahu I	And his family
426	L	25	Zimmerman	Mendl	

Page	C	R	Last Name	First Name	Descriptor
426	L	26	Zimmerman	Manya	Wife of Mendl
426	L	27	Zimmerman	Chaim	His wife, and children
426	L	28	Zimmerman	Moshe	His wife, and children
426	L	29	Zimmerman	Chaya	Her husband and children
426	L	30	Zimmerman	Abraham II	
426	L	31	Zimmerman	Tzivia	Wife of Abraham II
426	L	32	Zimmerman	Eliyahu II	Son of Abraham II & Tzivia
426	L	33	Zimmerman	Akiva II	
426	C	35	Zucker	David	
426	C	36	Zucker	Rivka	née Feldman, wife of David, their two daughters and grandchildren

א נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ב דַּבְּרוּ
עַל־לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם וְקִרְאוּ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי מָלְאָה צְבָאָהּ
כִּי נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָהּ כִּי לָקְחָה מִיַּד יְהוָה כִּפְלַיִם
בְּכָל־חַטֹּאתֶיהָ:

ספר ישעיה: פרק מ

1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

—Isaiah: Chapter 40



To the Memory of

Page 431 (Top Left): My Brother & His Bride



Page 431 (Top Right) My Sister



Elka Aberbach-Frenkel

Memorialized by
Her Brother: ***Joseph Frenkel***

To the Memory of Our Parents & Families:

Jekuthiel Reindel
Rivka Reindel
Chay'keh Reindel
Joshua Reindel

Benjamin& Sarah Appelbaum
Mendl Appelbaum
Niusza Appelbaum



Memorialized by:
Esther Appelbaum-Kartun
Esther Reindel-Grandes



Page 432: To the Memory of

My Parents
Dov Ber'l & Itta Bach

My Brother
Abraham Bach

And the Memory of the Entire Family



Memorialized by:
Bluma Ach-Bomza

Page 432: To the Memory of

My Father, Israel Bodenstein
My Mother, Dvora Bodenstein
My Brother, Munya Bodenstein





Memorialized by:
Manya Bodenstein-Blum

Page 433: To the Memory of My Mother

Chaya Eti Blatt

My Sister
Sarah Leah



Memorialized by:
Yaakov Metzger

Page 433: To the Memory of



My Grandfather, Jonah Berger
My Grandmother, Sarah Berger
My Mother, Regina Berger
My Sister, Feiga Berger

Memorialized by:
Ber'l Berger

Page 433: To the Memory of

Our Father & Grandfather
Joseph Elazar Hirschtritt



Memorialized by:
Lonya Dionsky-Hirschtritt
Minna Tenenbaum-Hirschtritt & Family
Sheva Just-Zimmerman & Family

To the Memory of

My Father, Moshe Abraham, and My Mother
My Sisters, Feiga & Mir'l

Memorialized by:
Ze'ev Wagner







Page 434: To the Memory of

My Brother, **Noah Hebenstreit**
My Aunt, **Esther Goszess**
Her Son, **Hirsch Goszess**
Leah Goszess
Her Daughter and Child, **Bella**
Shmuel Gelber, the Son of my Brother,
Michael

Memorialized by:
Itta Kimmelman

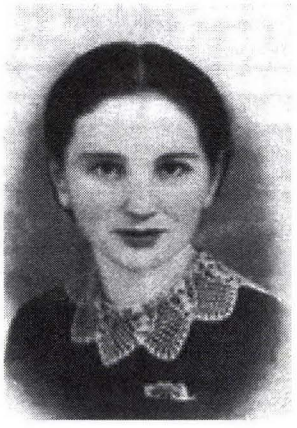
Page 435: To the Memory of

Mordechai Wagner
His Wife, **Henya Wagner**
Esther Zimmerman
Gittl Rammel

From Potelycz



Memorialized by:
Mollie Wagner





Page 435: To the Memory of

Our Father **Akiva Wasserman**

Our Mother **Leah**

Our Sister **Hella**

Memorialized by:

Pearl Wasserman-Juer

Regina Wasserman-Halpern

Minna Wasserman-Yitzhaki

Page 436 (Top): To the Memory of

Our Brother **Shmuel Weiss** & His Sons



Memorialized by:

The Brothers Moshe & Nathan

Page 436 (Middle): To the Memory of

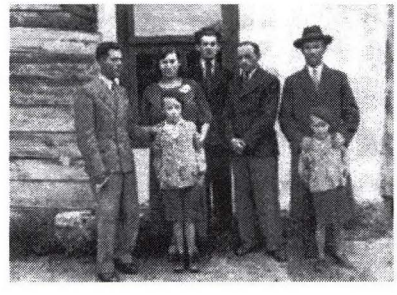
Aryeh Weinberger

His Wife, **Chana Weinberger**

Their Son, **Benjamin Weinberger**

Their Son, **Chaim Weinberger**

Heschel Eisen & His Family



Memorialized by:

The Family of Yaakov Weinberger

Page 436 (Bottom): To the Memory of

My Uncle, **R' Israel Leder** & His Family

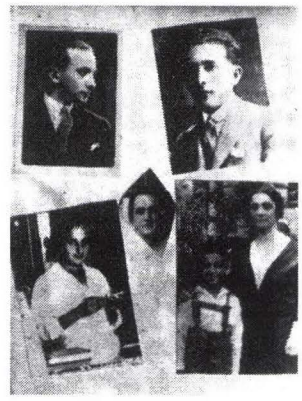


Memorialized by:
Simcha Donner

Page 437 (Top): To the Memory of

My Brothers:
Fyvel Weichselbaum
Shlomo Weichselbaum

My Sisters:
Regina Weichselbaum-Eisner & Her Son, **Julik**
Pefka Weichselbaum
Frieda Weichselbaum



Memorialized by:
Ada Weichselbaum-Sztark

To the Memory of

Our Father, **Aharon Ka"Tz**
Our Mother, **My'teh Ka"Tz**
Our Brother, **Menachem Mendl Ka"Tz**
My Sister-in-Law, **Sima Ka"Tz-Alter**, his Wife
Their Son, **Yaakov**
Their Son, **Mordechai**

Memorialized by:
Golda Ka"Tz-Mohilever
Miriam Ka"Tz-Rosen
Petakhia Ka"Tz
And their Families

Page 438 (Top): To the Memory of



The Horowitz Family הי"ד

My Father, **Menachem Mendl Zeif**
My Mother, **Sima**
My Brother **Yaakov** & His Wife **Sarah**
My Brother **Joseph**
My Sister **Hodia** and her Husband, **Pinchas Horowitz**
Their Son, **Meir**, & Daughter **Amalia**



The Seif Family הי"ד

Memorialized by:
Their Daughter & Sister, Pesha Seif-Koppelman

Page 438 (Bottom): To the Memory of

Our Mother, **Rachel Ka"Tz**
Our Brother-in-law, **Menachem Mendl Fendrich**
Our Sister **Nechama Fendrich, née Ruker**, and their Children



Memorialized by:
Neta Ruker & His Wife Leah, née Ka"Tz

Page 439 (Top): To the Memory of



My Mother, Gittl Thaller
My Brother, Levi Israel Thaller
His Son, Mordechai
My Brother Elkanah & His Wife



Memorialized by:
Chaya Thaller

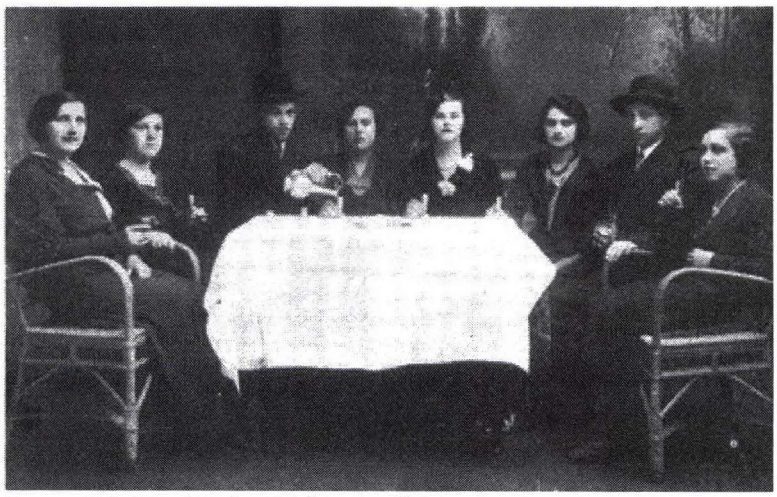
Page 439 (Bottom): To the Memory of



The Khanales Family of Lubicz

Memorialized by:
Moshe Feder, Paris

To the Memory of



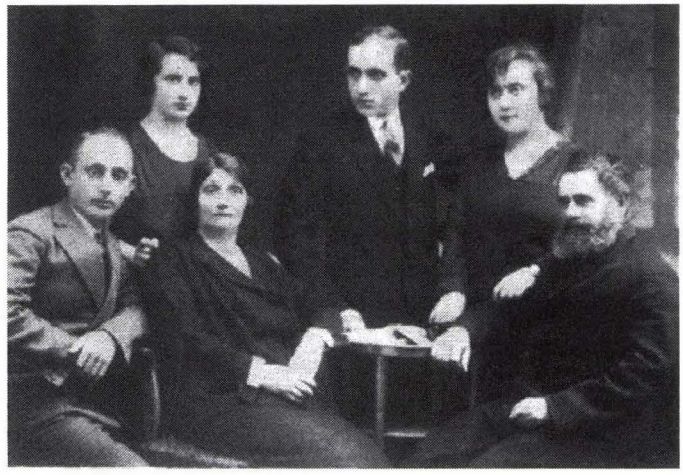
Page 440 (Top): The Maltz Family הי"ד



Page 440 (Bottom, Right):
The Langer Family הי"ד

Memorialized by:
Mollie & Esther Maltz

Page 441: To the Memory of



Our Father
Mordechai ben Ozer Mundsztak
Our Mother
Sarah-Malka Mundsztak
Our Brother
Naphtali-Nathan Mundsztak
Our Sister-in-Law
Adela Mundsztak
And their Three Children



Our Sister
Frieda Mundsztak-Weidhorn
Her Husband and Their Children

Memorialized by:
Yitzhak Mundsztak
Shoshana Mundsztak-Rovner
Rachel Mundsztak-Redler

Page 442: To the Memory of

Leibusz Lempel
Pess'l Lempel née Blaustein, His Wife
Mir'l Lempel, Their Daughter
Pearl Lempel, Their Daughter
Rivka Lempel, Their Daughter
Pesach Blaustein
Esther Blaustein



Memorialized by:
Penina Ringel-Wohliner

To the Memory of

Our Father **Shlomo Sambal**
Our Mother **Chaya Sambal**
Our Sister **Hodel-Leah,** & Her Son, **Yaakov**
Our Sister **Frimet**
Our Brother **Shammai**
Our Brother **Yaakov**

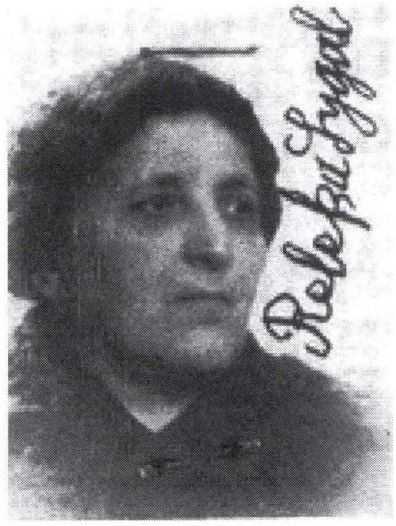
Memorialized by:
Wolf Sambal
Sarah'keh Steinfeld-Sambal
And their Families

To the Memory of

Our Father & Mother
Our Grandfather & Grandmother
Our Uncles & Aunts



Page 443 (Top, Right) R' Benjamin ben Asher HaLevi Siegel ז"ל



Page 443 (Top, Left): Rivka Siegel, His Wife, ז"ל

And the Memory of
Our Brothers & Sisters-in-law





Their Son Dr. **Eliyahu HaLevi Siegel** Their Son, **Ben-Zion HaLevi Siegel**
And His Wife, **Chana-Miriam, née Klinger** הי"ד And His Wife, **Rosa** הי"ד

Memorialized by:
Golda Meyer, New York
Dr. David Siegel & His Family, New York
Sidi Wenig-Meyer & Her Family, New Jersey
Dr. Ziggi Meyer & His Family, New Jersey
Joseph Zvi Rubin & His Family, Tel-Aviv

Page 444: To the Memory of

Rachel Past, Our Sister
Joseph Past, & His Wife **Elka née Wolfuss**
Shlomo Past & His Wife **Bianca née Stiglitz Mesukal**
Malka Montag, Our Uncle's Daughter





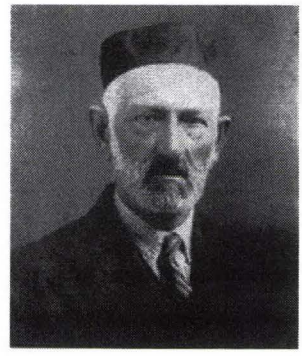
Memorialized by:
Ephraim Post, New York
David Post
Clara Post
Abish Post
Regina Post-Graff
And Their Families

Page 445 (Top): To the Memory of

Hirsch Leib Fleischer, Wife & Children
Chaya Fleischer, Their Daughter
Aharon-Shimon Fleischer, Wife & Children
Mordechai Houseman, Wife & Children







Memorialized by:
Bash'eh Frimmer

Page 445 (Bottom): To the Memory of

Leah Feder, Her Husband and Child

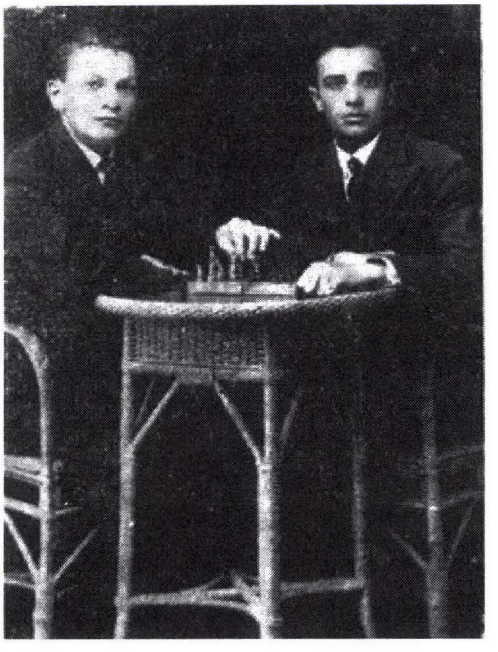
The **Sztrokh Family**



Memorialized by:
The Feder Family, Paris







Page 446: To the Memory of

Our Sister, Henya Feldman-Segal
Our Brother, Shlomo Feldman
Our Sister, Rivka Feldman-Zucker
Her Daughter Bluma
Her Daughter Chana

Memorialized by the Brothers:
Joseph Feldman-Tai
Yitzhak Tai
Chaim Ber Tai
And their Families

Page 447: To the Memory of





Wolf Frimmer & Wife **Henya**
Yaakov Frimmer & Wife **Rivka**
Shmuel Frimmer
Wolf Frimmer
Mordechai Houseman







Memorialized by:
The Frimmer Family, Paris

Page 448(Top): To the Memory of



Abraham Freiheiter
One of the Builders & A *Gabbai* of the '*Klyzl*'

Malka Freiheiter, His Wife,
a Charitable and Gracious Woman

Eliyahu Freiheiter, Their Son
Shlom'chi Freiheiter, Their Daughter
Hirsch'leh Freiheiter, Their Son

Memorialized by:
Dvora Freiheiter-Greenstein
Nechama Freiheiter-Zinger
Lipa Freiheiter, Montreal
Lipa Dror-Altman
Tzila Altman-Rosenblatt
Leibusz Gertel-Wolf





Page 448 (Bottom): To the Memory of
Chaim Zimmerman
Branya Zimmerman, His Wife
Menachem-Mendl Zimmerman, Their Son
Chaya Zimmerman Dakhess from Magierow

Memorialized by:
Yudl & Lucia Zimmerman

Page 449: To the Memory of

My Wife, **Ethel née Zimmerman** and the Children



Memorialized by:
Moshe Klager

Yizkor:

Rachel'eh – Daughter of ***Esther & Israel Klag*** – and husband, **Uri Berger**. In 1941, Uri was mobilized into the Red Army and according to various information, he died while under German imprisonment.

His wife **Rachel'eh**, with their two tiny children, met their gruesome death in the Belzec death camp.

Golda – Daughter of ***Yitzhak & Miriam Graff*** – and husband **Shmuel Gablinger**. All the years, they planned to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, in order to unify their family. They had two very capable little children. During the entire time, the family found it possible to hide themselves; regrettably, because of a betrayal by Poles, the Gablinger family was killed out very close to the end of the war.

ה"ד!

Rachel & Abraham Klag

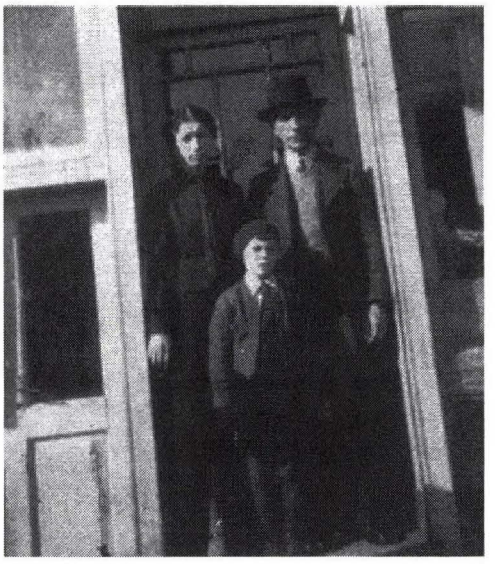
Page 450 (Top): To the Memory of

My Father, **Benjamin Knobloch**
My Mother, **Feiga Knobloch**
My Sisters **Dressl, Matt'l & All the Family**



Memorialized by:
Y. Knobloch, Brazil

Page 450 (Bottom): To the Eternal Memory of



Schraga Fyvel Kessel
His Wife, **Mindl née Ortner**
Their Son, **Meir**
From ***Tomaszow Lubelski***

Memorialized by:
The Family of Abraham Mordechai Ringel, ז"ל

Page 451: To the Memory of
Our Father & Mentor **R' Moshe ben Menachem Mandl Rathaus**
Deceased 28 Tevet 5693 [January 26, 1933]



Our Brother **Aryeh-Leib**
Fell in battle as a soldier during the days of
the First World War in the year 1915 in
the Krasznik District beside Lublin

Our Mother **Golda bat R' Joseph HaLevi**
And **Szprinza Mandel**

Our Brother **David** & His Wife, **Esther**
& Their Children

Our Sister **Chana Feiga**
And Her Husband **Ephraim Kupperstein**
& their Children

Memorialized by:
Ephraim-Fishl, Abraham & Chaim Rathaus, U.S.A.
Menachem-Mandel & Issachar-Dov Rathaus, Italy

To the Eternal Memory of

Our Father **Moshe Rosen** Our Mother **Fradl Rosen**

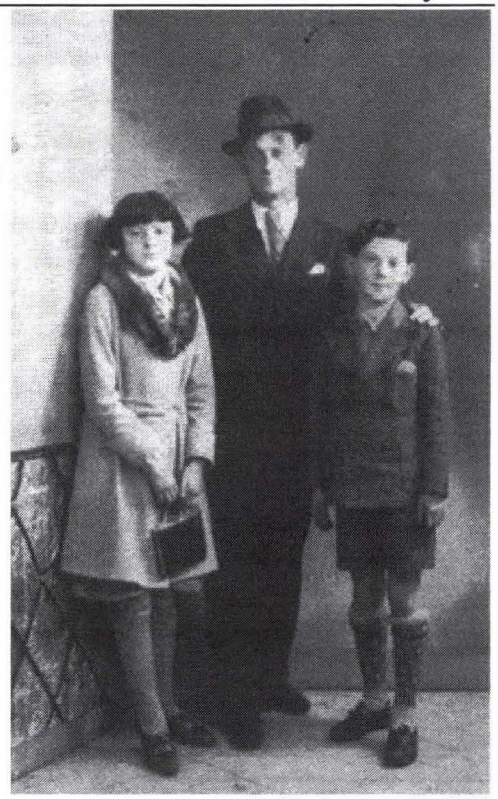
Our Brother **Shmuel Rosen** Our Sister **Golda Rosen**

Our Sister **Rachel Rosen**

Memorialized by:

Katriel Rosen & His Family ז"ל

Page 452: To the Memory of



My Brother **Nathan Szpazner**, died in Paris

His Children, **Matilda, Moshe**, who were killed in the Holocaust

My Bother **Isaac Szpazner**

My Brother **Joseph Szpazner**

My Sister-in-law Wife of Joseph, **Adela Szpazner** née **Kramer**

Gittl Szpazner

Malka Szpazner

David Szpazner

Juta Rieger

Tzivia Rieger

Schuster, the family



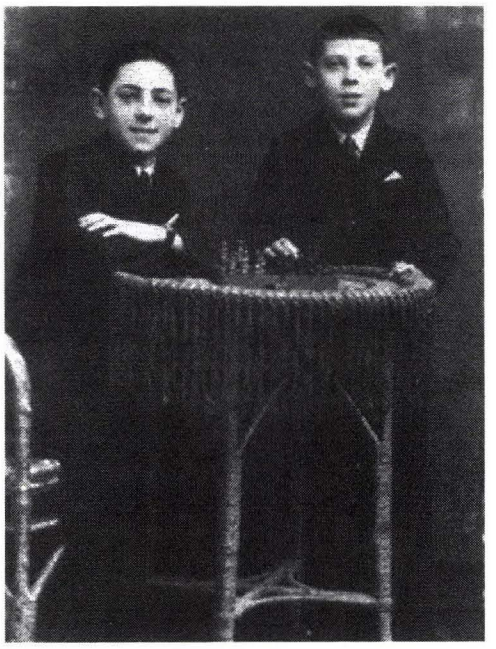


Memorialized by:

Tova Rekhes-Szpazner and the Family

Page 453 (Top): To the Memory of





Aryeh Leib Halpern
Golda Halpern, his Wife, **née Szpazner**
Mordechai-Matesz Halpern, their Son
Chaim-Imek Halpern, their Son

Memorialized by their sister:
Tova Rekhes-Szpazner and the Family

Page 453 (Bottom): To the Memory of



My Sister
And Her Husband

Chana Shapiro
Viktor Meizelman & their Children

My Sister
And Her Husband

Juta Shapiro
Reuben Berger & their Children

Memorialized by their sister:
Rivka Juzwitz-Baumwohl
née Shapiro

To the Eternal Memory of

My Wife	Hudzha Hodel (Leah) bat Shlomo Sambal
My Child	Yankl'eh (Yaakov)
My Father	Benjamin ben Yaakov
My Mother	Pearl bat Chaim
My Brother	Yoss'l (Joseph) & Family
My Brother	Hersch & Family
My Brother	Leibusz
My Sister	Tzivia with her Husband and Child
My Sister	Chaya'cheh
My Uncle	Itcheh ben Chaim & Family
My Uncle	Hersch ben Chaim & Family
My Uncle	Joel ben Yaakov & Family

The Mourner:

Chaim Spatzner, Milan (Italy)

The Diaspora

תפוצות

די יידישע צעשפרייטונג

What Rawa Ruska Once Was

By Leib Lev
Montevideo

Every one [of us] carries in his heart the golden thread, that bound us to '*der alte haym*.' The gnawing yearning for our birthplace smolders within each of us, that place where we first saw light; where we romantically spent our youth.

The poet (I think L. Jaffa) intones the following about *his shtetl*:

'Lo, once again, I see my tiny little *shtetl*,
Here, I see in my dream,
My vanished dream of youth...'

This is especially the case, since the *shtetl* was destroyed with all of our dear ones, relatives, and those close to us.

I am precisely well-qualified to write about the city of Rawa Ruska, because my beloved wife, Hella Szyfer comes from Rawa Ruska, and during the course of more than 40 years of marriage, this ambiance was not unfamiliar to me: because the theme of various exchanges, when my wife would come together with the friends of her youth, was Rawa Ruska. I was influenced by her thousands of tales and episodes, and I came to think of myself as one of the people of your city.

But how does one say it: a guest is here for a while... I also saw something, and I say: a city – a fortress of the *Hasidism* of Belz – in accordance with their dress and piety, one had the impression that they dominated the city. But coming in contact with the local youth, one saw an entirely different world: progressive, Zionism-inclined young people with a clear view of world events and with a



Page 457: ***Active Rawa Ruska Ladies in Brazil***
Sitting: Reizl Bringer-Maltz; Maleh Langer-Maltz
Standing: Baylah Golder-Marin; Zippora Golder-Slowicki; Dvora Golder-Wolf; Esther Maltz-Dicker; Reizl'eh Spritzer

concern for the achievements of the Jewish community at-large. One could spend time with them, discuss interesting themes with them, and derive spiritual pleasure from it.

After my emigration to Uruguay in 1930, into the city of Montevideo, I met up with a significant number of young people from Rawa and its environs. It was evident among them, that they had the same dynamism in building Jewish life there as well, such as Zionist organizations, and community life. They were active on all fronts, from the creation of productive financial institutions, which in the course of time brought great utility and elicited respect from the local Jewish community there. It was Itcheh Holz ז"ל and Berisz Margulies ז"ל who were especially outstanding. The latter laid down the foundation for a modern Jewish publishing house. He was the publisher and editor for the Mizrahi weekly, '*Der Moment*.'

Zalman Bach-Leinwohl was a local activist for a variety of institutions for immigration and support.

In general, the local Jewish community was well situated from a material point of view. Our Rawa *landsleit* occupy a respected place in industry and commerce. Their children – became professionals: doctors, and lawyers. The son of Lejzor Berger ז"ל, Yaakov Berger, occupies a professorial position at the University of Montevideo.

By contrast, there is rather a small number of Rawa *landsleit* in Buenos Aires. I lived there for over thirty years, and never encountered a significant number, and not in any particularly good material circumstances, excepting the landsman Itcheh Mundsztok, who has a sister here, Shoshana Rovner. Mundsztok's son, Mott'l, occupied a prominent position there in television programming. He is a talented young man of high intelligence. Of late, he occupies a leadership position in one of the largest Spanish-Argentine publishing concerns.

Then, [there is] Yoss'l Auerbach-Frenkel and his wife Sabina. They are intelligent people, and are active in Jewish national life. She is separately active in 'WIZO.'

More Rawa [*landsleit*] live in the larger Argentine provincial cities like Santa Fe and Rosario, such as the Halpern family. Almost all are well-situated.

I believe that the chapter about South America has ended for me. It is now 4 years since we made *aliyah* to the land we strived for – Israel, where our children had put down roots many years earlier.

Coming here was an overwhelming experience for us, and simultaneously a satisfaction. When we encountered, no Evil Eye intended, so many Rawa landsleit, who made a very timely *aliyah* before the Holocaust, this indicates that the Zionist concept was for them an ideal of life, which they brought to reality. Even previous to that, is the fact that they, and their children put down roots there by building up the country.

Landsleit in Canada

By G. Just

Several families, who came from our city, are also to be found in Canada. After the Great Catastrophe, a few solitary families settled in there, such as: Wolfuss, Klager, and also a daughter of Abraham'cheh Edel, a daughter of Israel Wachsman, and others.

Leibusz Gertel is found in Montreal, who for many long years, was a Zionist activist, and also, his wife Shlom'cheh Freiheiter ז"ל lived there, the brothers Meir & Pesach Shapiro, Neta Ruker and his wife Leah'cheh Katz, and others.

The Billig sisters live in Toronto (the sisters-in-law to Leibusz Weber ז"ל), and Ida Fogel-Ribitwer.

Benny Shapiro and his wife Esther are to be found in Regina. Benny is a familiar and well-known activist for all of his years. He is very active in the United Campaign, and a Chairman of a variety of institutions in the city. He is also active in the '*Hitakhdut Poalei-Tzion*' Party. He was President of the community from 1959-1960. He had already visited Israel several times, where his married daughter lives. He is a substantial donor to Israel and to many institutions in Regina.

Every time he visits Israel, he and his wife are received very warmly including a variety of the personalities in *The Land*.

The New Home

By Eliyahu-Zelig Altner
New York

It is hard to forget one's birthplace, the young years, no matter where I find myself – all of this stands before my eyes.

I came to America in the year 1927, already more than 45 years old, but I have not forgotten the years of my youth. They are etched into my memory.

I sang with Chaim [the] Hazzan along with Abraham'eleh Klag, Itcheh Gellis, Herschel Eisen, Moshe Schechter and others. We would give concerts in the area.

On the Sabbath we would go for a stroll in the Wolkowica Forest, and the gentile thugs would pelt us with rocks. Also, in the Polish school, where I studied, it was not only once that the Jewish students had to defend themselves.

It was a city of a lot of good, a variety of people, and a substantial young intelligentsia.

The market day does not permit itself to be forgotten, which took place every Monday. The peasants of the area would come into the city to sell their produce, and buy their needs from the Jewish storekeepers who principally concentrated themselves in 'The Ring.'

In the summer, during the hot days, we would go to the branch of the river to bathe, and cool off our bodies.

Here, in America, I am, for several years now, the President of the Rawa Society (*Farband*). In *'der alte haym'* I felt myself among my own, but here, one is just a number. For this reason, those years of youth are recalled with great longing even today.



Page 459 (Top, Left): In the Middle: Eliyahu-Zelig-Adi Altner, President of the Rawa-Ruska Society in New York

On the Right: Elazar Altner, Brother of the President
On the Left: Chaim Rathaus



Page 459 (Bottom): Reception of R' Shmuel (Sam) Essig in Tel-Aviv

My Memories of Rawa in the Year 1906

By Shmuel (Sam) Essig
New York

My parents, at that time, lived in a village near Cieszanow. I traveled in a train from Lubaczow to Rawa. This was on a Thursday. I arrived in Rawa before nightfall. I took a coach for [a cost of] 10 Greitzer, and rode into Rawa. I was traveling to take leave of my family, with my father's sister Mal'eh Steinbach.

My uncle had two other brothers – Neta and Abraham'cheh Steinbach, and two sisters.

My uncle Shammai ז"ל was a homeowner, a wealthy Jewish man, one who donated to charity, and lived in Rawa.

On Friday, towards nightfall, prior to *Kabbalat Shabbat*, my uncle Shammai got himself ready to go to synagogue to pray with his son, Yosh'eh. He put on his silk jacket with a sable *shtrymel*: my

cousin Yosh'eh – in a velvet hat. I, the boy from the village, without sidelocks, with a short overcoat, and a rumpled hat, went along with them. My uncle had a place at the East Wall. I remained not far from the door. Everyone stared at me, and I was asked who I was. I told them, that Shammai is my uncle, and I had come to say farewell to him, because I was going off to America.

Returning home from synagogue, the house was already illuminated by Sabbath candles in silver candlesticks. The tables was covered in pretty *Challahs*. My aunt Mal'eh apportioned fish to everyone, and soup with noodles. After the sumptuous meal, we sang *Zemirot*.

When I write these lines, it seems to me that all of this is happening before me.

Early on Saturday morning, I once again went to synagogue. After eating the *cholent* and noodle pudding. I went out into the street to see Rawa. Near the Municipal Building (Rathaus) – there were many Jews, dressed in their Sabbath finery; women wearing their wigs; boys and girls went for a stroll around the Rathaus. The atmosphere defies description.

After the Sabbath, I took my leave of them. And traveled home to get ready for my trip to America.



Page 461: Right: R' Shmuel-Sam Essig, Senior Secretary and Treasurer of the 'Society.' Chaim Ber Tea, Son of R' Abraham Moshe Feldman, the Hazzan *of the* 'Zamd' Bet HaMedrash, *today in Israel.*



די ערשטע גרינדער פון דער ראווער „סאסייטי" אין ניו־יארק

Page 460: The First Founders of the Rawa Ruska Society in New York

The Rawa-Ruska Men of the B'nai Levi-Yitzhak Society

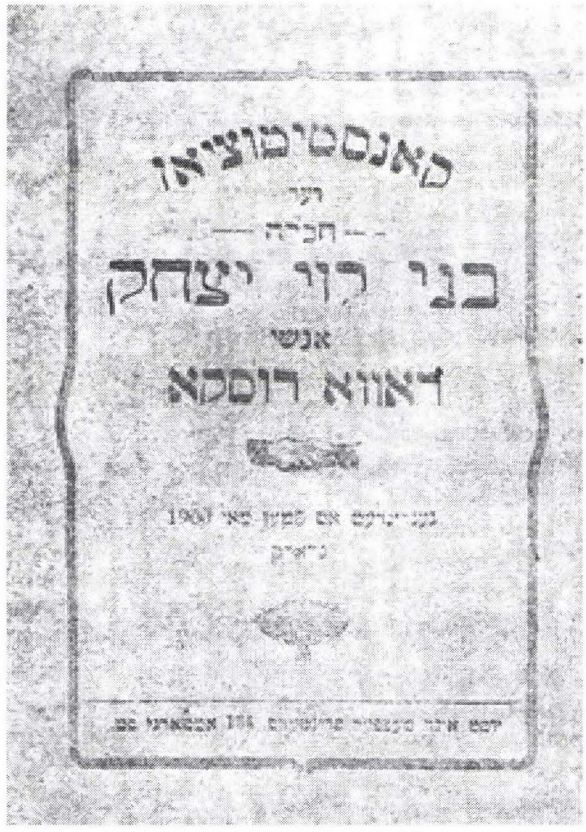
By Shmuel (Sam) Essig
New York

My activity in the Society starts in the year 1911, when I became a member in The Rawa Ruska Society. For the first few years of my being in America, I did not take part in the meetings.

There were a variety of events in the Society. It grew. More and more members started to come to the meetings. Groups were created, who were not in accord with the leadership of the Society.

Something happened, and the Society wanted to carry something out, and my brother Ovadiah said, that I should come to the upcoming meeting. I came, and voted for the Society. It was in this manner that I became interested and began to attend more meetings.

During the meeting, when it came time to nominate new officers for the coming year, Itcheh Gebel, an active member placed my name in the running as a candidate as Vice President of the Society. I was elected at the second meeting, and this is how I became active. In the course of the 59 years, I was President several times. Today, I am the Financial-Secretary. I would like to cease and rest already, but there is no one to take over the position.


מאנסטיטוציאן
חברה
בני רוי יצחק
אנשי
דאווא רוסקא

Page 462: Frontispiece of the Constitution of the B'nai Levi-Yitzhak Society

We have specific obligations to the membership, and so I must maintain my position so long as the Master of the Universe gives me the strength to continue doing this. We do not have any meetings. The elderly cannot come, and the younger ones don't want to come. Our Society has 80 members with families and 35 widows. My goal is to see that everything is in order for the time being, for everyone.

I wish to recollect that a whole array of members had been active, especially Leibusz Morgenstern and David Farb.

The Society in New York

By Chaim Rathaus
New York



Page 463: *From the Right: R' Chaim Altner, Father of the President; R' Berisz Rapoport, Son of the Rabbi, R' Meir'l Rapoport; The Rabbi, R' Meir'l Rapoport and Mr. Korman from Narol, attending the Annual Memorial Meeting in New York.*

The Society, as it is called, '*Hevra B'nai Levi Yitzhak Anshei Rawa-Ruska*,' was founded on May 5, 1900 by Moshe Noyer. The first President was David Ohar.

It is easy to deduce the purpose and reason that led to the founding of the *Hevra*. The people, who emigrated for a variety of reasons at the end of the previous [sic: 19th] century, came here naked and barefoot, poor, without clothing, lacking everything.

In those times, people did not come in groups, [there were] no collection of emigrants from our places. The individual people who came, were solitary. When it came to a society, the largest city was on a par with the smallest village. One did not quickly develop a relationship between one person and another. It was possible to live with a person on the same floor for decades, without knowing them. The isolation was both spiritual and material. Organizations to offer help, such as the 'Joint' or 'HIAS' did not then exist.

The one piece of good luck was that the new immigrants concentrated themselves in one neighborhood, and this enabled the solitary individuals to come together and found a society, in order that they not feel their sense of being lost and isolated too intensely. Because of this, the purpose can be said to have been purely social. However though, there were people from one city, with more or less the same cultural level. Each one needed the other. Also, their longing of the '*alter haym*,' the *shtetl* where one was born, united them. That longing was only able to be expressed to *landsmen*,



Page 464 (Left): From the Right: R' Yaakov Metal, the Society external liaison; R' Chaim Rathaus, R' Chaim Ber Tea, at a Membership Meeting in New York.

people from the same *shtetl.* With them it would be possible to share impressions of the '*alter haym.*'

It appears that the immigrants of that period arrived with a certain 'baggage' of *Yiddishkeit,* by contrast to later immigrants, who had in their ranks a large radical element, and out of a coarse insensitivity, were generally opposed to *Yiddishkeit.*

The name of the Society shows this, because the name Levi Yitzhak was taken from the name of the former Rabbi of Rawa, who served prior to R' Berisz Rapoport. It appears that he lived in the prior generation, and was the Rabbi until the beginning of the seventies of the previous century. The Rabbi, R' Berisz Rapoport was the Rabbi for approximately 30 years in Rawa, and left in the year 5664 [1904].

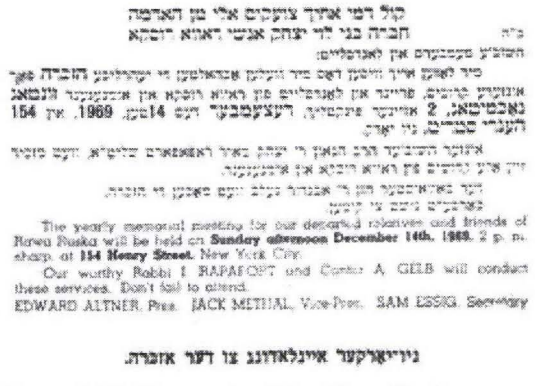
The Society is in existence already for 70 years. It is self-understood, that among the missions of that time, apart from the social ones, were the giving of charity, and helping the needy. And at that time, there were most certainly those who had such need. As already mentioned, in that day, the larger support institutions did not exist. The activity went on for all this time.

In normal times, each person also supported their family back in the '*alter haym*,' and the Society as a whole supported general endeavors in the '*alter haym.*' Also, after the Second World War, they extended a helping hand, to the survivors, who needed it.

Let the many years of activity be recalled, provided by the member Moshe'leh Ka"Tz and others, especially during the time after the Second World War. They did not rest, if they had to help out a *landsman* who was a survivor.

In addition to all these activities, was added the canonical role of '*Hesed shel Emet*,' the work that in the '*alter haym*' was performed by the *Hevra Kadisha.*

In the end, the society's work came to an end, because the older immigrants moved away to other neighborhoods, and there is no new stream of immigrants [to take their place]. The '*alter haym*' was destroyed.



The yearly memorial meeting for our departed relatives and friends of Rawa Ruska will be held on **Sunday afternoon December 14th, 1969**, 2 p. m. sharp, at **154 Henry Street**, New York City.

Our worthy Rabbi I. RAPAPORT and Cantor A. GELB will conduct these services. Don't fail to attend.

EDWARD ALTNER, Pres. JACK METTAL, Vice-Pres. SAM ESSIG, Secretary

Page 464 (Bottom): The New York Invitation to the Memorial Meeting.

At this date, the principal role of the Society is only '*Hesed shel Emet*.' The organization always conducted itself in a democratic fashion. A leadership is elected at a general meeting, all of whom served the Society in a loyal and decent fashion.

Lastly, everything shrinks. Old people go the way of all the living. Today, there still remains a small group, that has contact with the *Irgun Yotz'ei Rawa-Ruska* in Israel, and this gives them the strength to keep the Society going. A new influx of *landsleit*, as had taken place in earlier years, is not to be had.

The Group, at one time, had its own *Bet HaMedrash* with its own Torah scrolls. So long as people worshiped in one neighborhood, everything was active. Today, these Torah scrolls are in the keep of a different group.

In this situation, everything is in anticipation of dissolution. With time, nothing will remain, and it cannot be otherwise. Also in Israel, the *Irgun Yotz'ei Rawa-Ruska* will not last forever. Therefore, the only thing that can remain, is the Yizkor Book that we are going to publish. 'The Book' will remain as an eternal memorial of Jewish life in this little *shtetl*, that was called Rawa-Ruska, from which no new stream of life will ever again emerge, not to Israel, and not to America.

Therefore, the one solace is to build here, in Israel, a new life, and represent the old, Jewish traditions. Instead of the past, with which we cannot so easily part from, we will have a bright and shining future, which will once again forge the golden chain into the far distant future.

The society continues to exist thanks to the tireless work of Shmuel Essig and its President, Adi Altner. R' Shmuel Essig has much experience in leading such a group, and a good heart. He seeks out ways to provide support. We need people of this sort, and they are not always available, and he, no Evil Eye intended, is already eighty-five years old. May God will that he remain in good health, and continue with his work for many more long years on behalf of our Society. He is no longer formally employed, so he has time for us.

The President, Adi Altner, is a good-hearted man. He would do it all himself, if he could. He is an idealistic man. He gives of himself to other organizations, and is of great use to the community.

There is nothing to be ashamed of in the 70-year work of the Society, and also not of our *landsleit*. There could always be found someone who would be prepared to offer a shoulder. It was an address for activity on behalf of the '*alter haym*.' A large amount of Israel Bonds were purchased. We help out anyone we can. Especially, very much help was given to the Rabbi, R' Meir Rapoport, apart from money, with both honor and respect.

The work that we invested in the education of the children was not in vain, as can be seen when they went out into the larger world. They augment that great edifice that was called Rawa Ruska, adding wood to the fire, in order that future generations will be able to warm themselves. No one wants to begin history starting from the present, and remove the chapter of Rawa Ruska from the longer historical chain, because no one can. It would be a falsified and fictionalized history.

The Jews of Rawa in Uruguay

By Itcheh Erdman
Montevideo



After the First World War, when the Jews of Rawa also began to emigrate to various lands of the world, many of our townsfolk came to Uruguay, and principally settled in Montevideo. Here, through work and commerce, they created economic positions, raised families and built homes. I, also, was among them.

Four sons were born to us. The oldest, Shimshon, completed his studies to become a medical doctor, and with his wife Kelly (Wilensky), made *aliyah* to Israel. Also, our third son, Michael, traveled to complete his studies in Israel, where he got married and is very fortunate and satisfied. Our second son, Saul, with his wife and child, as also our youngest son, Israel Jonah, who was born in the same year as the State of Israel, are preparing to make *aliyah* to Israel, and to join up with their brothers.

The tradition and learning, that we had obtained in Rawa-Ruska, made an impact on our lives and activity in Jewish life here, as well, in Uruguay. I had the honor of being the head of the community in Montevideo, President of the Revisionist movement, a Director-member and Senior-Secretary of the Jewish National Bank, the '*Banco Palestina Uruguaja*': a co-worker in the *Keren-HaYesod-Magbit*, and Bonus-Committee in the Old Age Home, Secretary of the local Joint-Committee and 'HIAS,' also Vice-President of the Zionist Land-Organization in Uruguay and was a delegate to the 29th Zionist World Congress in the year 1951. We did all this, because we were brought up in the one-time, and today annihilated, home, Rawa Ruska.

A small group from our birthplace city emigrated to Montevideo, and here we will recall a part of them, who are no longer among the living: R' Todros Margulies and in addition, his brother R' Berisz ז"ל. Berisz was a councilman in the community, and for over two decades – the publisher of the religious weekly newspaper, '*Der Moment*.' For a segment of time afterwards, his children, the son, Yitzhak and daughter Feiga, carried on that same work, but afterwards, they could no longer do the work, and the output came to a halt.

Noah Steinfeld ע"ה was a councilman for many years in the community, and was a co-worker at the Loan Bank, out of which the '*Banco Palestina*' grew, and up to his last day, he was the First *Gabbai* of the synagogue. His home was open to all. He named his business 'Rawa-Ruska,' as an expression of compassion and memorialization for the city of his birth.

Lejzor Berger (Rittner) ע"ה had a successful bookkeeping practice, and was an active member in the *Keren Kayemet* Commission.

And – to long life for them – a couple of longtime local residents: Zalman Leinwohl-Bach, who came here from Germany yet before the Second World War, worked as a leader of a Jewish mercantile cooperative, and afterwards as a representative of the 'Joint,' a councilman in the community, Old Age Home, Orphanage, and active among the German Jews in Uruguay.

Abraham Lieberman, was the Secretary of the *Hitakhdut Poalei-Tzion*, Secretary of the *Keren-Kayemet*-Land-Bureau and was a delegate to the Zionist World Congress.

Yeshaya Szporer, a member of the General Zionists, councilman in the community. And a member in the '*Banco Palestina*.'

Shia Szporer and his wife Bash'eh Lieberman left us and made *aliyah* with their children to the Land of Israel.

The spirit of Rawa-Ruska, and the upbringing from there that we absorbed and took with us in our poor material effects, elevated us, and influenced our lives in all places, and in all walks, went wherever fate led us to.

Irgun Yotz'ei Rawa-Ruska & Vicinity

By Gimpel Just

With the end of the Second World War, the nature of the terrifying Holocaust became widely known, in which six million members of our people were exterminated, including among them, the Jews of the Rawa-Ruska community and its vicinity.

In the meantime, a few remnants of survivors managed to reach the Land of Israel, who had been saved from the Holocaust, who had the knowledge to tell about the terrible murders, and the picture became revealed that frightened everyone of us, and we understood how great the cataclysm was that had overtaken the scions of our city and its vicinity. We understood, that it was on us, those who remained among the living, to memorialize them, and to not permit this execrable transgression to be forgotten, that which the murderous Nazis facilitated, along with their accomplices.

Individuals, émigrés from our city, began to meet in specific houses. To discuss and plan for the creation of an organizational framework for the émigrés from out city in *The Land* and the Diaspora, and to concern themselves with preserving the memory of our dear ones, and also to provide substantive help, and a word of encouragement to the survivors making *aliyah*.

On Monday, 28 Kislev 5710 [19.12.1949], the first conclave was arranged in Tel-Aviv of the émigrés of the city and its vicinity, and a program of memorialization was arranged for our martyrs. This program caused hearts to tremble. It was an occasion that would not be forgotten. Weeping rose up from every corner of the auditorium. In this First Memorial Service, Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Berger ל"ז eulogized our martyrs. His words brought all of these dear souls up in our memories, who just only [what seemed like] a day or two ago, were alive. We were reminded of all the chapters of our lives, of every wrinkle of our family relationships, in its struggle for survival, in its prayers and hopes. For the first time, the *Kaddish* was recited as a formal requirement.

It was at this gathering that the foundation was laid for the *Irgun Yotz'ei Rawa-Ruska* & Vicinity in Israel, and this organization was designated to be the focal point of the émigrés from our city, spread

out across all the countries of the world. Various committees were elected to undertake a variety of tasks. The Tenth of Tevet, the day of the general recitation of the *Kaddish*, was designated as the Memorial Day for our martyrs. From that time on, we are careful to annually observe such Memorial gatherings, and to eulogize our martyrs, as well as those who pass away in the fulness of time – both here in *The Land* and in the Diaspora.

The Bulletins

Out of a desire to preserve the connection between those émigrés in Israel and those in the Diaspora, we began to publish a bulletin, From the month of November 1960, in which the first edition appeared, to December 1968 – we put out 6 editions consisting [in total] of 400 pages, in which there were 90 pictures. These folios, into which a small number of members invested a lot of work – elicited deep feelings for the memory of the past, and earned a great deal of regard from those émigrés of our city in *The Land* and the Diaspora. Despite the fact that most of the effort involved in publicizing these bulletins were done by volunteers, since the matter was tied up in creating unassuming outputs, the members in *The Land* and Diaspora donated their contributions willingly. Thanks to these bulletins, it was possible that a scion of our city became aware of the survival of a friend or member of his family; they even served as a vehicle to communicate sorrow and consolation, in the instance of a loss, or the conveyance of congratulations and blessings in the instance of happy family occasions. They were the source of our pride, because we were among the few such organizations that knew how to create such instruments of communication. The bulletins were sent to various institutions, to archives in The Land and the Diaspora, and in return we received letters of appreciation.

Our Connection to Hitakhdut Yotz'ei Polin – In The Land

In Tevet 5721 [January 1961] a book appeared in The Land, in Yiddish, by the *Hitakhdut Yotz'ei Polin,* the émigrés from Poland to Israel, about the organizations (*Landsmanschaftn*) in Israel. A substantive short excerpt appears in it, about our organization and its activities.

Efforts of Memorialization

The *Gemilut-Hasadim* Fund in the Name of Our Martyrs. We established this Fund for interest-free loans and modest payment terms. For the needy, an outright donation was given once or twice. The loans and donations come to, even this day, tens of thousands of *Lirot.* [225]

The Tree Grove in the Name of the Community of Rawa-Ruska and Vicinity in the Forest of the Martyrs. On 27 Nissan 5720 [24 April 1960] on the day that the announcement was made in the Knesset in Jerusalem, proclaiming Holocaust Memorial Day and the Day of Heroism, we went out, along with throngs of Israelis, to the Forest of the Martyrs on the way to Jerusalem, and there,

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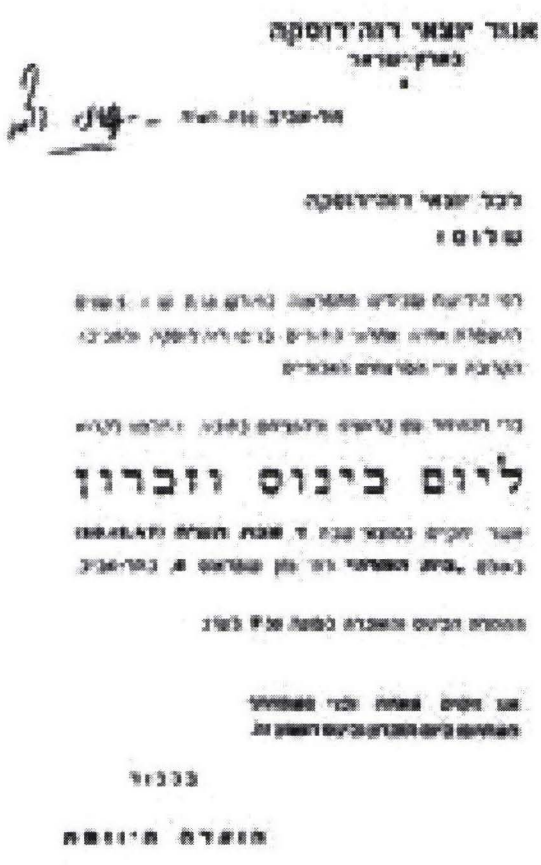
[225] The Lira was the prevailing Israeli currency at the time this was written.

we planted a grove to memorialize the martyrs of Rawa-Ruska and its Vicinity. It was a very emotional occasion, when ten pairs of our men and women members from *The Land*, and outside of it, planted the first ten of the saplings. We felt that we had erected a living monument to our martyrs.

In the Holocaust Cellar. On 27 Nissan 5722 [1 May 1962] we put in place a memorial tablet in the Holocaust Cellar in Jerusalem, in memory of the community of Rawa-Ruska and its Vicinity, that was exterminated in the Holocaust. Representatives and officials from the Diaspora participated in this event. In this, a permanent marker was put in place, to bear witness and be a permanent memorial.

In the example set by other organizations, we also began to think about publishing a Yizkor Book, that would memorialize our community, its institutions, and its people. At our annual gatherings, we documented details about the Holocaust, gathered pictures about the appearance of the city, and its body, and centralized lists about its people. Organizations and way of life. A great deal of hard work was put into preparing this book, and it is only for the sake of the stubbornness of specific individuals, that this work was completed, that rounds out an important chapter in the history of the organization.


אגוד יוצאי רוה'רוסקה
בארץ-ישראל

לכל יוצאי רוה'רוסקה
שלום!

ליום בינוס וזכרון

Page 467 (Top Left): Facsimile of the Invitation to the First Memorial Gathering in Tel-Aviv



Page 467 (Bottom): *A Memorial Service in the 'Holocaust Cellar' on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Memorial Tablet in Memory of Our Martyrs*

From the Right: *Tova Rekhes-Szpazner; Mendl Tritt; Chay'keh Fiszler-Kremerman, Mordechai Szmider; Bluma Schwert-Rubin; Joseph Zvi Rubin; Lipa Altman; Gimpel Just; Zvi Kremerman; Itcheh Erdman, Montevideo, Community Head & President of the Jewish Bank; Sheva Just-Zimmerman; Mottl'eh Schechter-Zimmerman & Esther Eilbaum-Kartun.*

Our Members in the Diaspora

In Israel there can be found approximately 250 émigrés from our city, and about 50 from the nearby vicinity. Most of them live in all of the cities in *The Land*, and a minority in the settlements and *Kibbutzim*. Most of our landsleit in the Diaspora are concentrated in the United States, largely in New York, the rest of our landsleit being found in Montreal, Toronto and Regina (Canada); In Montevideo (Uruguay); In Buenos Aires, Santa Fe & Rosario (Argentina); São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, & Porto Alegre (Brazil); In Mexico; In Paris, Nice, Lille and Lyon (France); In the Hague (Holland); In Antwerp & Brussels (Belgium); (Italy); In London & Sheffield (England); In Johannesburg (South Africa); In Sydney & Melbourne (Australia).

For all the years of the existence of our organization in *The Land*, the following have served, and continue to serve, with great dedication, in various committees: Dr. Aryeh Berger ז"ל, Yaakov Yuval-Baumwohl ז"ל, Abraham Mordechai Ringel ז"ל, Leah Schorr-Ziring ז"ל, Moshe Stern ז"ל– and to be separated for long life: Hertz Graff, Muni Grauer, Dvora Greenstein-Freiheiter, Lip Dror-Altman, Gimpel Just, Ida Lev, Bluma Lockman, Yekhiel Meiseles, Dr. Nahum Mandel, Zvi Margulies, Zvi Netzer, Yitzhak Fiszler, The Lawyer Chaim Zadok, Matt'eh Zimmerman-Schechter, Esther Kartun, Yehoshua Zvi Kramerman, Bluma Rubin, Joseph Zvi Rubin, Eliezer Rekhes, Zvi Renner, Moshe Yaakov Steinfeld, Mordechai Strauss, Regina Scheiner-Grauer and others...

It is our hope that our progeny will also read this book, and that with its help, they will both recognize and cherish our forbears, and our beloved ones memorialized within it.

We the Last

By Y. Meiseles (Yekhl Kessel)

We, the last of the Rawa Jews, a few
minyanim that remember her in her bloom
In a fleeting few decades
When our bones will rest in the "Garden of Eden"
Who will there be who will know anything of us?

It was not of the richest or largest of cities
It was actually very poor in material worth and monuments;
But do eagles forget their nests
On the mountain in an incinerated forest
Where their mothers shielded them from winds and pouring rains?

On the Wolkowica, that old collapsed cemetery
Where tens of generations of our forbears lie in eternal rest;
That burned-down shack of R' Shlomo-Zalman
Which did not know the appearance of an ill-gotten coin.
Who will they recollect at that time?

In the study houses, with their eternal debates
As to which *aliyah* to give to the Torah – second, sixth, or *Maftir*
And by contrast, commerce with the gentiles in their caps,
Flax and eggs, potatoes or a quantity of wood
Who will there be who will be able to tell of this?

Rabbis and *Rebbes*, Scholarly Torah students
Dedicated learners, bent over their *Gemaras* until the Third Watch;
Rummagers in the labyrinth of casuistry, minds as acute as a sharp blade
Who forget to eat or that one needs to sleep
Who will then carry the memory of them over the expanse of the world?

We, the last of the Rawa Jews, a few
minyanim that remember her in her bloom
In a fleeting few decades
When our bones will rest in the "Garden of Eden

Index of Illustrations

Page xv: The Eternal Candle Symbol. . . . xvi
Page 011: A General View of the City. . . . 3
Page 014: Statistical Table Showing Population Data 7
Page 016: Yaakov Yuval-Baumwohl ז"ל. . . . 10
Page 017: A Municipal School of the Dominicans for Girls. . . . 11
Page 019: An Invitation to the 25th Anniversary Celebration 15
Page 020: R' Yaakov Landau ז"ל, The First Banker in the City 17
Page 021: Ze'ev Baumwohl ז"ל, among the first of the Zionists in the City. . . . 19
Page 022: Map of the City. . . . 23
Page 023: The Market Square (*Rynek*) 24
Page 024: Sima Romelt and David Freiheiter הי"ד 26
Page 025: The Lieberman Family ז"ל.. . . . 28
Page 027: R' Shlomo Aryeh HaLevi Zukhman ז"ל. . . . 31
Page 029: Rawa Ruska Youth Group. . . . 38
Page 031: A Row of Houses at the '*Rynek*,' 41
Page 032: The '*Keren Kayemet*' Committee of the City. . . . 42
Page 033: *HeHalutz* Training of *HaMizrahi* of Rawa Ruska. . . . 45
Page 034: The *B'nai Akiva* Group 47
Page 035: Members of the '*HaNoar HaTzioni*' Orchestra. . . . 46
Page 036: Aryeh Stern הי"ד. . . . 47
Page 037: (Top): The Young Girls of '*Gordonia*'. . . . 48
Page 037 (Bottom): The '*HaPoel*' Soccer Team in Rawa-Ruska. . . . 48
Page 038: The Youth Arm of '*Gordonia*' in the City. . . . 51
Page 039: The '*Gordonia*' Leadership in 1932. . . . 53
Page 040 The Orchestra of the '*Gordonia*' Movement in the City. . . . 54
Page 041: (Top, Left) R' Nehemiah Just ז"ל 56
Page 041: (Bottom, Left):The Family of Akiva & Shayndl Zimmerma. . . . 56
Page 041: (Bottom, Right): The Just Family, ז"ל. . . . 55
Page 043: R' Yaakov Graff ז"ל. . . . 59
Page 044: R' Baruch Post and his wife, Hadassah 61
Page 046: The *Hasidim* of the City Travel to Belz. . . . 64
Page 047: My Parents: Abraham Abish ben Yaakov Rubin and Wife. . . . 67
Page 048: A Sketch by Leah Kramer-Rosenzweig. . . . 67
Page 049: R' Yankl'eh Lezhensker-Tepikh ז"ל. . . . 69
Page 051: Hat Making Workers. . . . 72
Page 053: Chaya the Tailor's Workshop. . . . 76
Page 054: The First Youth Organization, '*HaShomer*' – 1921 77
Page 055: The '*Dror*' Group of '*Gordonia*' & Group Leader 78
Page 056: '*HaNoar HaTzioni*' Group in the City. . . . 80
Page 057: A '*Gordonia*' Group in Rawa-Ruska. . . . 81
Page 066: Frontispiece of the Book, '*Eyn Dim'ah*' Part Six 97
Page 074: Frontispiece of the Publication, '*Massa Tzafon*' 114
Page 077: (Top, Right): Frontispiece of '*Ateret Tiferet*' 118
Page 077: (Bottom, Left): Frontispiece of '*Torat Menachem*' 119
Page 078: The Name of the 'Society' in New York. . . . 121

Page 079: The Rabbi, R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky הי"ד. 123
Page 081: R' Eli Spritzer and his Wife Nesha 128
Page 083: The Hasidim Travel to (the Rebbe in) Belz 131
Page 085: Rabbi R' Ahareh'li Szwert הי"ד. 133
Page 086: Frontispiece of the book, '*Derekh HaMelech*.' 139
Page 088: Blessings from the ADMo"R R' Yehoshua זצק"ל of Belz. 143
Page 090: R' Joel son of Rabbi R' Yitzhak Nahum Twersky הי"ד. 144
Page 091 : R' Simcha Haberman הי"ד. 149
Page 093: Frontispiece of R' Haberman's Book, '*Mar'eh HaHodesh*'. 154
Page 095: R' Yoss'li Jarczwer הי"ד 157
Page 097: Reception of the *Rebbe* of Belz. 162
Page 099: Frontispiece of the book, '*Zaharei Khama*'. 165
Page 101: R' Aryeh son of R' Noah Gottleib הי"ד 170
Page 103: A page, the sole surviving remnant out of thousands of pages. 173
Page 105: Pg 105 (Top): Michael Nesser, (Bottom): Aharon & Esther Nesser of the Blaustein Family. . .. 178
Page 107: R' Nachman Kleiner הי"ד. 181
Page 108: Page 108: R' Saul Levin 183
Page 111: My Brother-in-Law, Shimon Haftel הי"ד. 189
Page 112: (Top, Left): A Training Group of Youth of Agudat Isr. 190
Page 112: (Top, Right): The Ringel Family ז"ל. 190
Page 112: (Bottom, right): The Woliner Family ז"ל. 190
Page 113: (Top, Left): Frontispiece of the book, '*Limudim B'Nissim*'. 192
Page 113: (Bottom, Right):Announcement of a *Siyyum* Event 192
Page 114: (Top, Left):R' Mendl Zeif & friend, R' Mendl Khanales from Lubicz הי"ד. 194
Page 114: (Bottom, Left): Tze'irei 'Agudat Israel' 1933 193
Page 115: (Top, Left): Shmuel, Shema'leh Rekhess ז"ל 196
Page 115: (Top, Right): R' Moshe Rekhess הי"ד. 195
Page 115: (Bottom): 'Hannah and Her Seven Sons' – A Play 196
Page 116: (Top, Left): R' Leibusz Shapiro הי"ד. 197
Page 116: (Top, Right):Israel Hahn הי"ד. 196
Page 117: *Pirkhei Agudat Israel*, with Mordechai Szparber in the Center. 198
Page 118: (Bottom, Right): A Group of *B'nai Akiva* Youth. 200
Page 118: (Left): Leib Kastner and his Wife Sarah & Daughter. 200
Page 119: The *Mizrahi* Activists in the City. 202
Page 120: A Reception for R' Berisz Margaliot ז"ל. 201
Page 121: Rabbi Dr. Shimon Federbush, ז"ל. 203
Page 122: The Rabbi, R' Israel Schwert זצ"ל. 205
Page 123: (Top, Left): My Sister Czarna הי"ד 206
Page 124: Frontispiece of the Book, '*Ohr HaYashar*' 208
Page 125: The Municipal Court Building of the City. 209
Page 129: (Top, Right): Dr. Joseph Mandel הי"ד. 216
Page 129: (Bottom, Left): My sister, Esther Mandel הי"ד. 217
Page 131: Narutowicz – A Street and Park. 220
Page 136: Zionist Activists with Dr. Joseph Mandel 227
Page 140: Ben-Zion Ginsberg הי"ד. 232
Page 141: '*Hitakhdut*' – The Activists. 234

Page 142 (From the Left): Weber, Haberman, & Sztokhammer 234
Page 147: The Train Station. 240
Page 150: '*Gordonia*' Youth. 240
Page 152: The Great Synagogue. 241
Page 155: The *Gemilut-Hesed* Fund in the Baron Hirsch Bldg.. 253
Page 157: Hebrew Students Receive Author Moshe Satoy 256
Page 158: Facsimile of a Report Card from the Hebrew School. 257
Page 159: The Kindergarten in Rawa Ruska. 259
Page 160: The Kindergarten Receives Author Moshe Satoy. 260
Page 161: All Party Activists at Reception for Moshe Satoy 262
Page 162: A Theater Production of '*Herschel Ostropolier*' 261
Page 163: (Top Right): Dr. Ziegelbojm הי"ד. 262
Page 163: (Bottom Left):Shimon Margaliot הי"ד. 264
Page 164 (Top): The Play, 'Tevye the Dairyman' by the 'Hatikvah' Society. 264
Page 164 (Bottom): A Purim Play, Regina Graff-Post , Director 265
Page 165: R' Leibusz Siebzehner, הי"ד.. 266
Page 167: R' Shimon Ruker and His Grandson הי"ד. 267
Page 168: (Left): Mendl Kurtzer הי"ד. 269
Page 168: (Right): Hillel Axler הי"ד. 269
Page 169: (Left): Yudl Schwert הי"ד. 270
Page 169: (Right): Aryeh Reinert הי"ד 270
Page 170: R' Lejzor Ka"Tz ז"ל. 272
Page 176: Young Men from Rawa.. 278
Page 177: The 'Bosalia' Group , Sarah Gittl Holz, Group Head. 280
Page 180: The *Rynek* and the Municipal Building. 283
Page 185: R' Pesach Beinusz's Business Card. 289
Page 186: (Left): R' Hirsch Ber Donner ז"ל:, and his wife Hinde. 291
Page 186: (Right): Yaakov Shlomo Gold הי"ד. 291
Page 188: Asher Rubin and His Wife, Chaya'li הי"ד. 292
Page 189: R' Chaim Becker הי"ד 295
Page 190: The Railroad Street in 'Wiela Jasna'. 296
Page 195: The *Betar* Group in the City. 303
Page 196: The '*Margaliot*' Group of 'Zionist Youth' 304
Page 197: Young Girls of *Gordonia,* Group Head: Sheva Zauerbrun. 307
Page 199: Young Lady Members of *Gordonia* 308
Page 200: Naphtali Donner ז"ל. 309
Page 201: Children Being Driven Into the Death Wagons 310
Page 203: The 'Sokal' Sports Hall 312
Page 204: Boruch Hammerschmidt -Kesler ז"ל, died in Paris, 14.11.1964 315
Page 211: The *Rebbetzin* of Magierow and Her Daughter. 323
Page 217: The *'Gordonia*' Group of Magierow 334
Page 220: Reinkind's Villa in Nemierow. 338
Page 221: Untitled Drawing of Trees by a Stone Fence. 340
Page 224: Golda'leh Grauer הי"ד, Tortured in Treblinka. 341
Page 228: A Drawing on the Holy Ark in the Lod Synagogue.. 344
Page 229: Children saved from the Holocaust, lighting candles. 345
Page 230: Holocaust Survivors at a Memorial. 348

Page 231: The Gymnasium. . . . 349
Page 237: The Prayer. . . . 357
Page 241: The Wolfuss Family הי"ד. . . . 362
Page 246: The last page of the diary of R' Yehoshua Wolfuss ז"ל. . . . 369
Page 253: The Annual Memorial Gathering – 5723 [1963] 378
Page 254: A Reception for Survivors. . . . 379
Page 277: The Expulsion of the Jews of the City to Belzec. . . . 410
Page 280: A Grove of Trees Planted In Memory of the Martyrs. . . . 414
Page 296: The '*HeHalutz*' Contingent of '*HaNoar HaTzioni*' 446
Page 297 : The *Shtetl* – An Impression by Leah Rosenzweig-Kramer. . . . 445
Page 308: Alexander Sztrokh as a Partisan 457
Page 309: Untitled Graphic 458
Page 311: A Yizkor Gathering of *Landsleit* on Mt. Zion. . . . 463
Page 315: My Father הי"ד. . . . 467
Page 316: My Brothers הי"ד. . . . 468
Page 317: (L to R) My Son, Yaakov, My Wife Reitza Graff. . . . 469
Page 319: Menachem Mendl Bogen הי"ד. . . . 475
Page 324: A Reception for Friends as Guests. . . . 478
Page 325: A Memorial Tablet to the Community of Rawa Ruska. . . . 482
Page 326: Myself, in the Habit of a Priest. . . . 483
Page 327: My Parents: Ozer & Golda Grauer הי"ד. . . . 484
Page 329: The Émigrés of Rawa-Ruska, in a Wood 488
Page 331: A Reception for our Townsfolk. . . . 491
Page 345: Henia Meiseles of the Szpeikher Family of Kossow k. . . . 508
Page 348: The 'Villa' of Tova Lieberman in Nemierow. . . . 514
Page 349: The Annual Memorial Assembly. . . . 517
Page 351: Young Men of Rawa in the Russian Army in the Year 1941. . . . 519
Page 352: An Annual Commemoration Event. . . . 520
Page 355: The Wagner Family הי"ד. . . . 523
Page 357: Moshe Levin הי"ד. . . . 523
Page 358: Ada Weichselbaum Donates a Torah Scroll 524
Page 363: Part of the Rawa-Ruska Émigrés at a Commemoration. . . . 535
Page 366: Stalag Camp 325 in Rawa-Ruska. . . . 539
Page 367: The Pillar of Remembrance at Yad VaShem. . . . 541
Page 369: Title Page, "*My Father's House*". . . . 544
Page 371: The Altman Family הי"ד. . . . 545
Page 373: The Guzhik Family הי"ד. . . . 550
Page 376: The Zauerbrun Family הי"ד. . . . 553
Page 377: (Top, Left): My Sister, Dishka Zucker, הי"ד. . . . 554
Page 377: (Bottom): Tze 'irei 'Agudat Israel'. . . . 555
Page 378: The Weinreb-Hahn Family הי"ד 557
Page 379 (Left): The Mund Family הי"ד 558
Page 379: (Right): Chana Mund and Her Children הי"ד 558
Page 380: Nina Schlager and her Daughter הי"ד 559
Page 381: Todros Margaliot ז"ל. . . . 562
Page 382: Yehoshua Margaliot and his Wife Shoshana, הי"ד 562
Page 383: (Bottom): Drawing of a Cut Tree 564

Page 383: R' Berisz Margaliot ז"ל 564
Page 384: (Top, Left): Abba Sztokhammer and His Wife, Yenta הי"ד 566
Page 384: (Top, Right): Elimelech Fischler, הי"ד 566
Page 384: (Bottom, Right): R' Fyvel Fischler and His Wife, Sara 566
Page 385 (Left): Reizl Korman הי"ד 567
Page 385 (Right): Joseph Korman ז"ל 567
Page 386: The Kramer Family הי"ד. 568
Page 388: (Left): His Wife Feiga (Hauser Family) & Children 570
Page 388: (Right): My Brother: Yehoshua Rosenfeld, הי"ד 570
Page 389: (Top): My Brother Mordechai הי"ד. 571
Page 389: (Bottom): The Reiss Family הי"ד 572
Page 391: (Top): My Father, R' Aryeh Eisen, הי"ד and my Daughter 574
Page 391: (Bottom): My Brother, Shmuel Eisen, הי"ד 574
Page 392: Zisman Steinbach, Asher Steinfeld, Kehat Szaffel. 575
Page 393: The Strauss Family. 578
Page 394: The Children of the Strauss Family 579
Page 395: (Top): Henna Berger-Schipper and Child 581
Page 395: (Bottom): The Schipper and Edel Families הי"ד. 582
Page 397: (Left): Yitzhak-Kurt Stralberg ז"ל, the son, saved 582
Page 397: (Right): Meir Stralberg הי"ד, Exterminated in the Holocaust 581
Page 399: An Announcement - The Planting of a 'Rawa Ruska Grove 585
Page 402: In Memory of the Deceased 589
Page 403: (Upper Left):Mattl Bogen 590
Page 403: (Upper Right):Sarah Altner ז"ל 590
Page 403: (Bottom Right):Yona (Taub'eleh) Bodenstein ז"ל 591
Page 403: (Lower Left):Shmuel Baumwohl ז"ל 591
Page 404: (Top Left): Sarah'leh Berger-Forgasz ז"ל 591
Page 404: (Right Bottom):Gideon, son of Dr. Aryeh Berger 591
Page 404: (Right Center):Khienka Brand-Sohn ז"ל 591
Page 404: (Bottom Left): Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Berger ז"ל 592
Page 405: (Top Left):Yehuda Graff ז"ל 592
Page 405: (Top Right):Ze'ev Gelber ז"ל 593
Page 405: (Bottom Left):Tova Graff-Ribak ז"ל 593
Page 405: (Bottom Right):Henya Graff-Dubi ז"ל 593
Page 406: (Left, Top) Pinchas Daks ז"ל 594
Page 406: (Left, Bottom): Hersch Hart ז"ל 594
Page 406: (Top right): R' Yehuda HaKohen Gross ז"ל 594
Page 407: (Top Left):Mekhali Hermelin ז"ל 595
Page 407: (Top Right): Rachel Horowitz-Gartman ז"ל 595
Page 407: (Bottom Left):Rivka Hermelin 595
Page 407: (Bottom Right):Chaim Hermelin ז"ל. 596
Page 408: (Top Left): Sabina Siebzehner-Rapp ז"ל 596
Page 408: (Top Right): Shlomo Zalman Wolfuss ז"ל 596
Page 408: (Center Left): Fanny Trieber-Gebel ז"ל 596

Page 408: (Center Right):Aharon Wiederhorn ז"ל 597
Page 409: (Top Left):Esther Levin ז"ל 597
Page 409: (Top Right):Menachem Mendl Tritt ז"ל 598
Page 409: (Bottom Left):Yitzhak Kartun ז"ל 597
Page 409: (Bottom Right):Jatka Just-Bachman ז"ל 598
Page 410: (Top Right):Fradl Morgenstern - Hedva Raszisz 598
Page 410: Israel Pearlman ז"ל 599
Page 411: (Top Left): Shmaryahu Freiheiter ז"ל 600
Page 411: (Top Right):Ozer Pearlman ז"ל 600
Page 411: (Center Right):Moshe Freiheiter ז"ל 600
Page 411: (Bottom Left):Shlomo Fripner-Wahrhaftig ז"ל 600
Page 411: (Bottom, Right): Chana Breitbart-Lichter 600
Page 412: (Top, Left): Jonah Tziring ז"ל 601
Page 412: (Top, Right): Leah Tziring-Shuar ז"ל 601
Page 412: (Top, Center): The Mother: Ariel ז"ל 601
Page 413: (Top Left):Reizl Rathaus-Reiber ז"ל 602
Page 413: (Top Right):Abraham Klahr-Berger ז"ל 602
Page 413: (Bottom Left):Chaim Gershon Rumelt ז"ל 602
Page 413: (Bottom Right):Joseph Redlich ז"ל 603
Page 414: (Top Right):Abraham Mordechai Ringel ז"ל 604
Page 415: (Bottom Left):Shmaryahu Sztrokh ז"ל 607
Page 415: (Bottom Right):Shmuel Reichler ז"ל 607
Page 416: (Top Left):Zippora & Moshe Stern ז"ל 607
Page 416: (Top right):Tova Steinfeld ז"ל 608
Page 416: (Bottom Left):Tova Szyfer-Lemmer ז"ל 608
Page 416: (Bottom Right): Miriam Steinfeld of the Sztarer Family. 609
Page 417: Second Lieutenant Daniel Danziger ז"ל 609
Page 431: (Top Left): My Brother & His Bride. 627
Page 431: (Top Right) My Sister 627
Page 431: (Bottom): Reindel & Appelbaum Families 627
Page 432: (Top, Left): To the Memory of My Brother Abraham Bach 628
Page 432: (Top, Right): To the Memory of My Parents - Bach 628
Page 432: (Center, Left): To the Memory of Brother Munya 628
Page 432: (Center, Right): To the Memory of Bodenstein Parents 628
Page 433: (Top): To the Memory of My Mother & Sister 628
Page 433: (Center): To the Memory of the Berger Family 629
Page 433: (Bottom): To the Memory of Joseph Elazar Hirschtritt. 629
Page 434: (Top, Left): To the Memory of the Goszess Family 630
Page 434: (Top, Right): To the Memory of Noah Hebenstreit 630
Page 434: (Center, Left): To the Memory of Shmuel Gelber 630
Page 435: (Top, Left): To the Memory of Wagner Family Members 631
Page 435: (Bottom, Center): To the Memory of Leah Wasserman 631
Page 435: (Bottom, Left): To the Memory of Hella Wasserman. 631
Page 435: (Bottom, Right): To the Memory of Akiva Wasserman 631
Page 436: (Top): To the Memory of Shmuel Weiss & His Sons 631
Page 436: (Middle): To the Memory of Weinberger & Eisen Families 631

Page 436: (Bottom): To the Memory of R' Israel Leder & His Family 632
Page 437: (Top): To the Memory of the Weichselbaum Families 632
Page 438: (Top, Left): To the Memory of the Horowitz Family הי"ד. 633
Page 438: (Top, Right): To the Memory of the Seif Family הי"ד. 633
Page 439: (Top): To the Memory of Thaler Family Members. 633
Page 439: (Center): To the Memory of Elkanah Thaler & Wife 634
Page 438: (Bottom): To the Memory of the Ka'Tz, Fendrich Families 634
Page 439: (Bottom): To the Memory of the Khanales Family. 634
Page 440 (Top): The Maltz Family הי"ד 635
Page 440: (Bottom, Right): The Langer Family, הי"ד.. 635
Page 441 (Top): To the Memory of the Mundsztak Family 636
Page 441 (Bottom): To the Memory of the Weidhorn Family 636
Page 442: To the Memory of the Lempel & Blaustein Families 637
Page 443 (Top, Left): Rivka Siegel, His Wife, ז"ל 638
Page 443 (Top, Right) R' Benjamin ben Asher HaLevi Siegel ז"ל 638
Page 443 (Bottom, Left): Dr. Eliyahu Halevi Siegel & Wife הי"ד 638
Page 443 (Bottom, Right): Ben-Zion HaLevi Siegel & Wife הי"ד 638
Page 444 (Top, Center): To the Memory of The Past Family - I 639
Page 444 (Left, Bottom): To the Memory of The Past Family - II 639
Page 445 (Top): To the Memory of Fleischer & Houseman Families 640
Page 445 (Bottom): To the Memory of Leah Feder & Sztrokh Family. 641
Page 446: To the Memory of Feldman Family Members 642
Page 447: To the Memory of The Frimmer & Houseman Families 642
Page 448(Top): To the Memory of The Freiheiter Family 643
Page 448 (Bottom): To the Memory of The Zimmerman Family 643
Page 449: To the Memory of Ethel Zimmerman Klager & Children 644
Page 450 (Top): To the Memory of The Knobloch Family 644
Page 450 (Bottom): To the Eternal Memory of the Kessel Family 645
Page 451: To the Memory of the Rathaus & Kupperstein Families 645
Page 452: In Memory of the Szpanzer, Rieger & Schuster Families 646
Page 453 (Top): To the Memory of the Halpern Family 647
Page 453 (Bottom): In Memory-Shapiro, Meizelman, Berger Families. 647
Page 457: Active Rawa Ruska Ladies in Brazil 648
Page 459 (Top, Left): In the Middle: Eliyahu-Zelig-Adi Altner. 653
Page 459 (Bottom): Reception of R' Shmuel (Sam) Essig in Tel-Aviv. 653
Page 460: Right: The First Founders of the Rawa Ruska Society in New York 655
Page 461: Right: R' Shmuel-Sam Essig, Senior Secretary 654
Page 462: Frontispiece of the Constitution of the Society 656
Page 463: From the Right: R' Chaim Altner, Annual NY Memorial. 657
Page 464 (Bottom): New York Invitation to the Memorial Meeting. 658
Page 464 (Left): Membership Meeting in New York. 658
Page 467 (Top Left): Invitation to the First Memorial Gathering in Tel-Aviv 663
Page 467 (Bottom): A Memorial Service in the 'Holocaust Cellar'. 664