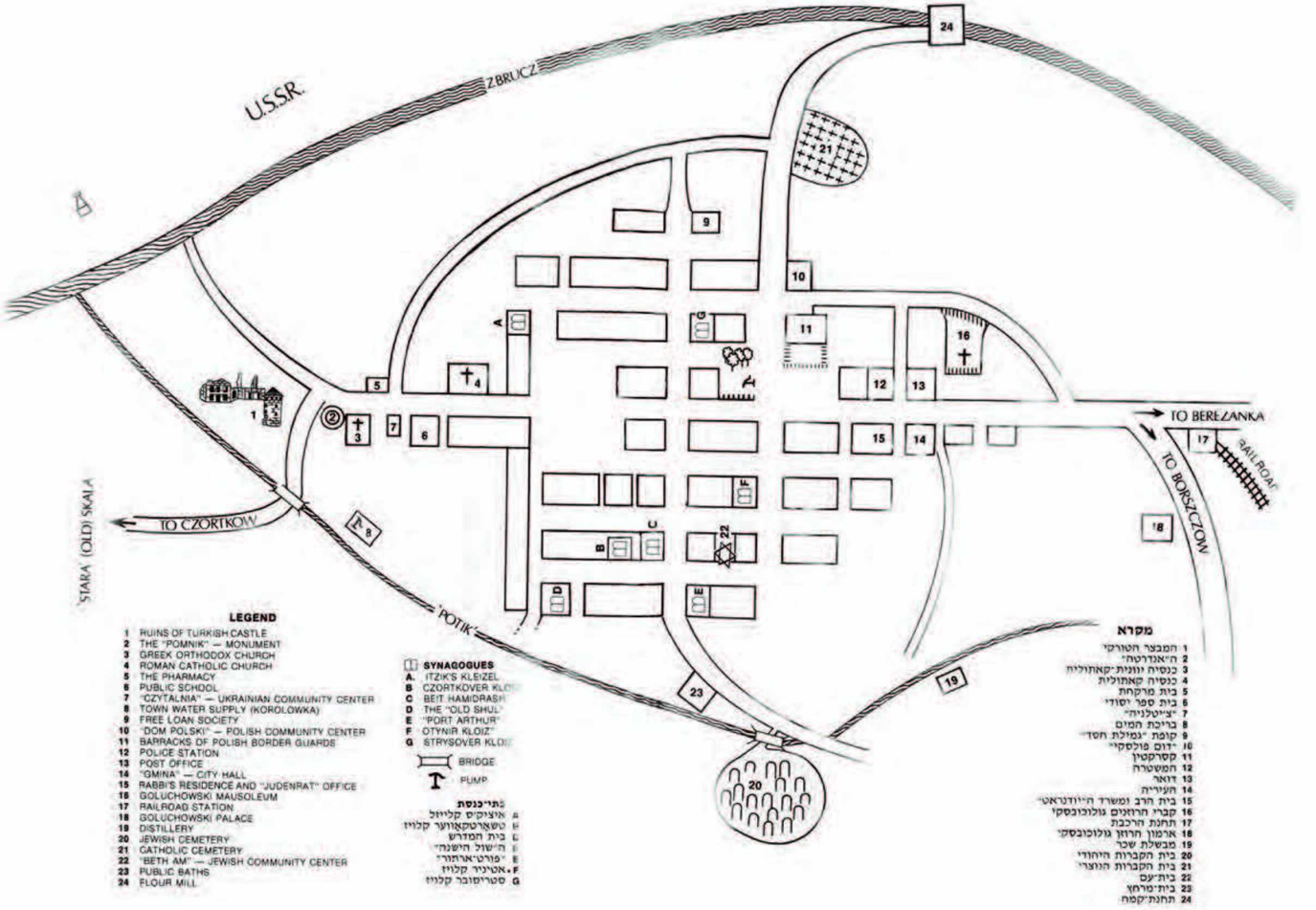


LEGEND

1 RUINS OF TURKISH CASTLE
2 THE "POMNIK" — MONUMENT
3 GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
4 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
5 THE PHARMACY
6 PUBLIC SCHOOL
7 "CZYTALNIA" — UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY CENTER
8 TOWN WATER SUPPLY (KOROLOWKA)
9 FREE LOAN SOCIETY
10 "DOM POLSKI" — POLISH COMMUNITY CENTER
11 BARRACKS OF POLISH BORDER GUARDS
12 POLICE STATION
13 POST OFFICE
14 "GMINA" — CITY HALL
15 RABBI'S RESIDENCE AND "JUDENRAT" OFFICE
16 GOLUCHOWSKI MAUSOLEUM
17 RAILROAD STATION
18 GOLUCHOWSKI PALACE
19 DISTILLERY
20 JEWISH CEMETERY
21 CATHOLIC CEMETERY
22 "BETH AM" — JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
23 PUBLIC BATHS
24 FLOUR MILL

SYNAGOGUES

A. ITZIK'S KLEIZEL
B CZORTKOVER KLOI
C BEIT HAMIDRASH
D THE "OLD SHUL"
E "PORT ARTHUR"
F OTYNIR KLOIZ
G STRYSOVER KLOI

BRIDGE
PUMP

בתי-כנסת

A איצ'יק'ס קלייזל
B טשאָרטקאָוער קלויז
C בית המדרש
D ה"שול הישנה"
E "פורט-ארתור"
F אטיניר קלויז
G סטריסוּבער קלויז

מקרא

1 המבצר הטורקי
2 ה"אנדרטה"
3 כנסיה יוונית-קאתולית
4 כנסיה קאתולית
5 בית מרקחת
6 בית ספר יסודי
7 "ציטלניה"
8 בריכת המים
9 קופת "גמילת חסד"
10 "דום פולסקי"
11 קסרקטין
12 המשטרה
13 דואר
14 העיריה
15 בית הרב ומשרד היהודנראט"
16 קברי הרוזנים גולוכובסקי
17 תחנת הרכבת
18 ארמון הרוזן גולוכובסקי
19 מבשלת שכר
20 בית הקברות היהודי
21 בית הקברות הנוצרי
22 בית-עם
23 בית-מרחץ
24 תחנת-קמח

SKALA
ON THE RIVER
ZBRUCZ



A HISTORY OF THE FORMER SKALA JEWISH COMMUNITY

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מפת מחוז טרנופול שבו שכנה סקאלה

Map of the State of Tarnopol in which Skala is located

FIG. 2

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The Skala *Yizkor* book, *Sefer Skala*, was published in 1978 by Holocaust survivors from Skala who were living at the time in New York and Tel Aviv. They were members of the Skala Benevolent Society (SBS). The Skala Benevolent Society (SBS), the *landsmanschaftn* was founded by American immigrants from Skala. It originally was designed to address the needs of American immigrants from Skala, later to provide loans to Skala, and then to preserve the bonds of the families whose roots were from Skala. More details on SBS are contained in the chapter by Jacob Herzog in this book.

The book's aim was to perpetuate the memory of the Jewish community of Skala that tragically had been destroyed by the Nazis and their collaborators. While a few chapters of the book previously have been translated, most of the book's chapters were only available only in their original Yiddish or Hebrew. Members of the Skala Research Group (SRG) decided to have the book translated because we felt it was imperative that we and future generations have access to the book's content in a language that we could understand.

The Skala Benevolent Society (SBS) has been an inspiration to all of us in this endeavor. In particular, we have had the pleasure of working closely with Max Mermelstein, current President of SBS and editor of the original *Yizkor* book. He has been a fountain of information and resources and has provided guidance, editorial review, and assistance for this translation and other SRG projects over the years. We are deeply grateful for his encouragement and friendship.

The Skala Research Group (SRG) was organized in 1999 by Denise Azbill, whose initial leadership is much appreciated. It is an informal association of people who are interested in their families' history in

Skala. SRG is supported by JewishGen, a website that provides resources for Jewish genealogical research. SRG is a member of Gesher Galicia and the Suchostaw Regional Research Group, which are also supported by JewishGen. At the time of publication of this translation, SRG has 85 members, all of whom have relatives who once lived in Skala or nearby villages such as Lanovitse and Berezhanka. While our focus is on family history and genealogy, we naturally have great interest in the Jewish history of Skala, including the depredations of the Holocaust.

Many people contributed to this book. Among the translators from Yiddish and Hebrew were Professor Leonard Wolf, Jerrold Landau, David Farer, Paul Blank, Lancy Spalter, Sheldon Clare, and Max Mermelstein. The use of several translators partly explains the different spellings for the same person. However, even in the original edition of this book, there were spelling differences either in English and/or Yiddish. Editors included Max Mermelstein, Beverly Bord, Toba Hausner, Diane Tyler, and Tony Hausner. Photo editing was done by Eva Zang Tkatch, with contributions from Yoshi Jaeggi and Helene Kenvin. Sharon Theimer and Deanne Giarraputo typed a number of sections. We are greatly indebted to them all for their wonderful work.

We appreciate all the support of Pamela Weisberger, President of Gesher Galicia, the organization that provided a vehicle for handling donations to this project. We thank YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, which made available copies of photos previously donated to its archive by Max Mermelstein. We also are grateful to the many individuals from SBS and SRG who contributed funds, without which the translation and publication of this book would not have been possible.

This translation of the *Yizkor* book will provide the reader with valuable insight into the once vibrant Jewish community of Skala. Another excellent source of information about the town and its history is the Skala website at www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/SkalaPodol. The articles on this wonderful website have been researched, written or edited, and designed by our Web Leader Helene Kenvin. The website is maintained by our Webmaster Max Heffler, who has done a marvelous job. We are also greatly indebted to Susana Leistner Bloch who did an

outstanding job with the original web site for Skala. The Skala website contains articles about the town's Jews: their history, their emigration to America and Israel, and their valiant struggle during the Holocaust. There are photographs of our relatives from Skala, of the town as it looks today, and much more.

We invite you to come and learn about the vanished Jewish community of Skala. For further information, please contact me at thausner@gmail.com.

Tony Hausner
Shtetl Leader of the Skala Research Group

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

The idea of perpetuating the memory of Skala's Jewish community and telling future generations about its rich past and tragic demise was discussed as far back as the 1950s, when the few dozen survivors of Skala made it to their next rest stop, whether in Israel or in America. However, it was not until November 19, 1960, at the annual Memorial Meeting in New York for the "Martyrs of Skala," that a decision was formally taken to prepare and publish a *Skala Yizkor Book.* At about the same time, the Israel Society of Former Residents of Skala decided to do the same thing. An America-Israel Book Committee was formed and a call went out to all of our home-town survivors to participate in the project by giving testimony, evidence, memoirs, pictures and documents as well as the necessary financial means to attain our goal.

Long and hard were the birth pains of this book on Skala.

To begin with we had thought that the most difficult aspect of publishing the Skala book would be financial. Soon, however, we realized that the biggest difficulty was the lack of historical materials and other documentary sources. It became clear to us that the most important sources for the history of Jewish life in Skala lay in our memories, in the memories of the small handful of Skala's Jewish survivors in America and in Israel.

This awareness, that we, the survivors, are the only and the last carriers of the 600-year history of the destroyed Skala Jewish community strengthened our resolve that the spiritual inheritance of Jewish Skala, her mores and ways of life, her communal, cultural and charitable institutions, her personalities and characters, her folklore and humor and the awesome pain and sorrow of her destruction, must be noted and perpetuated.

After many years of ceaseless efforts, struggles with apathy, differences of opinion as well as disappointments, the Skala Book became a reality, thanks to the devotion, persistence and the stubborn resolve of a few individuals.

The content of the Skala Book is not as rich as we had hoped and wanted it to be; this is so not only because of the already mentioned lack of historical sources, but principally because of the cruel fate of the Holocaust years which tore away from us practically all of Skala's leaders and public personalities who surely knew more about Skala and were probably more gifted writers than we, the survivors.

To the credit of those who participated in the Skala Book, we must note that not one of us is a professional writer and that each contribution is, to the best of our ability, true and authentic testimony to the lively, creative Jewish Skala of the past as well as to the final pain and suffering.

In preparing this Skala Book, we kept in mind that our children as well as other interested readers do not read Yiddish, *our* mother tongue, and therefore almost one half of the important historical articles in the book as well as the picture captions are printed in both English and Hebrew. This, we hope, will help our children and grandchildren to draw closer to the memory of our birthplace, the town of Skala, and to the spiritual inheritance of the Jewish way of life in Eastern Galicia–a way of life which perished in the flames of the Holocaust.

Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld)
Chairman, Editorial Committee

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I. CHAPTERS IN THE HISTORY OF SKALA

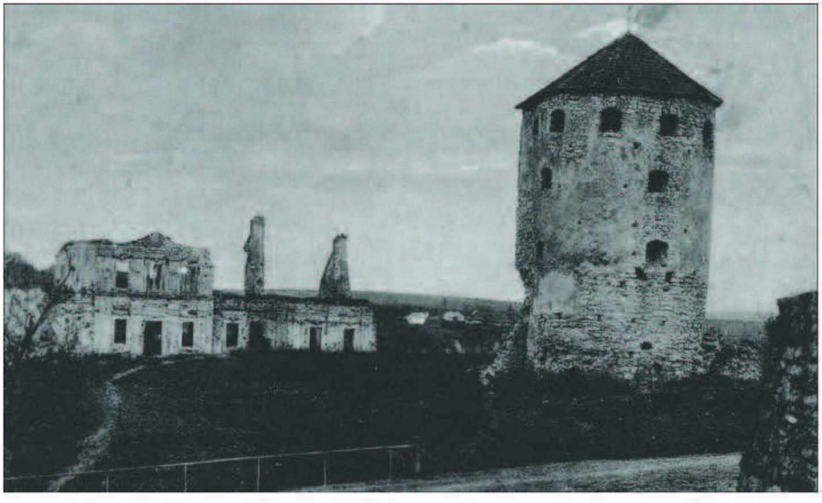


FIG. 3: *Ruins of the Turkish fortress–historic landmark in Skala*

THE HISTORY OF SKALA

Gedalia Lachman

1. THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FROM ITS INCEPTION UNTIL 1914

The town of Skala lies in western Podolia on the right (western) bank of the river Zbrucz. This river flows in an almost straight north-south line, winding through a picturesque valley, narrowing and widening in turn, and empties into the larger river Dniester about 35 kilometers south of Skala. At the mouth of the river lies the town of Okup, birthplace of the Baal-Shem- Tov.

Skala and its environs typify the Podolian (Southeastern Galician) landscape, known for its beauty, lush colors, and fertile soil. It is an area of hills and valleys, dense forests and broad fields; a land rich in water, with a temperate climate. Summer is comparatively hot and rainy, while in the winter heavy snows are often accompanied by bitter cold. Particularly delightful, however, is the Podolia region in the other two seasons of the year: in the bloom of the warm, fragrant spring, and in the flaming red and gold treetops of the fall.

In this beautiful landscape is set Skala, with its characteristic small-town center and the rural suburbs that surround it on the north, west, and south. The town is built on a high hill whose slopes descend steeply eastward into the Zbrucz river valley, and westward into the narrow gulch-almost a canyon-made by a nameless stream called simply "Potik." The southern projection of the hill is a protruding, sharp rock, protected by the river valley and by the depression of the stream. From this rock rise the ruins of the ancient fortress, with its past so significant in Polish history.

Beyond the fortress and the stream lies Old Skala (Stara Skala), cut through by a dirt road leading north to Husiatyn and northwest to Czortkow, while west of the stream is the rural suburb of Zapotocze. Only from the south and southwest are there no natural barriers in approaching the town, and in those directions are roads leading to Borszczow, Mielnica and Zaleszczyki on the banks of the Dniester.

Skala exemplified a "mixed" settlement characteristic of Galicia- a Jewish town surrounded by suburbs, populated mostly by Ukrainian peasants with a sprinkling of Polish families among them. A border-town, Skala was always vulnerable to attacks by various invaders, and was destroyed more than once in their wake, passing from one power to another.

The history of Skala begins in the thirteenth century. A Ruthenian-Ukrainian duke built the fortress on that side of the hill best protected by its steep slopes. However, by the end of the same century it was destroyed by the Tar-tars. The Polish King Kazimir the Great conquered Podolia in 1331 and presented Skala to Duke Kozibrodski. This duke rebuilt and restored the fortress, and it is thought that even then a small number of Jews had settled in the vicinity of the fortress, supplying its needs. In 1395, Witold, Grand-duke of Lithuania, led a campaign against the Polish duke Kozibrodski, conquered several fortified settlements including Skala, and settled therein some of his own subjects. Upon Witold's death in 1430, the Poles retrieved the Skala fortress, and until 1772 the entire region was part of the Polish kingdom.



FIG. 4: *A view from the Turkish fortress across the river Zbrucz*

Skala was open to endless conquest and destruction by Tartars and Wallachians (Romanians), as

witnessed by various written decrees of privilege addressed from time to time by the Polish rulers to the residents of Skala, freeing them from certain levies of the royal treasury "because this border-region suffers heavily from enemy attacks." These privilege grants are preserved in the archives of the Polish kingdom from the years 1510, 1518, and 1539.

The 1570 census, taken during the reign of King Zygmunt August, shows that Skala was a county-town (Starostwo), had 232 houses, 10 of them Jewish, for which the Jews paid one zloty (gold-piece) rent, whereas the Christians paid only ten groschen. In 1615 the Tartars again devastated Skala, burned it and led its inhabitants–men, women, and children–captive to the slave markets of Crimea. In 1621 Duke Lubomirski established his military camp on the ruins of the fortress, and prepared to attack the Turks and Wallachians from there. A mission from the enemy arrived in camp, ostensibly to talk peace but actually to spy. The mission was detained until the return of the supreme commander, Hetman Chodkiewicz, who had set out from the Skala fortress, leading his army to victory over the mighty Turkish army near Chocim on the Dniester River, 35 kilometers south of Skala. The town was rebuilt and enjoyed relative peace for about twenty years.

During the reign of King Jan Casimir, the town was conquered several times by the Tartars, Wallachians, Turks, and the Cossacks of Bohdan Chmielnicki, and was again totally destroyed, its inhabitants either slaughtered or taken captive. Though the Skala fortress was damaged, it was restored again and again. From the census taken in 1665, we can conclude that there were then only 15 families living in the town, and, though reinforced by walls and turrets, the fortress stood empty. The last census of the Polish reign, taken in 1765, shows that in the town of Skala dwelled only Jews, employed as innkeepers, tenant-farmers, small traders, and peddlers. The ruined fortress was rebuilt as a palace for the country-squire Adam Tarlo, but burned down when struck by lightning a few years later, and was never again restored. Its fortified walls stand on their foundation to this day.

In 1772, the year of the first partition of Poland, Skala passed, along with the entire region, to Austrian control. In 1809, Napoleon Bonaparte turned over the area of Tarnopol, including Skala, to Tsar Alexander I of Russia, but after the Congress of Vienna the district reverted to Austria.

In the nineteenth century, Skala was the most opulent possession among the many estates of the Counts Goluchowski, a family of Polish nobles (Szlachta) of great influence in Galicia as well as in the court of the Austrian monarch.

Between the two world wars, Skala was a Polish frontier town. In September, 1939, Skala, together with eastern Galicia, was annexed by the Soviet Union to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. From the end of June 1941 until the end of March 1944, it was occupied by Nazi Germany.

It is safe to assume that a Jewish settlement existed in Skala as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as we have knowledge of Jews living then in neighboring localities. First mention is made of Jews in Skala in the 1560 census, according to which ten Jewish families resided in the city. The Jewish settlement grew in the period following, and in the census of 1765 they numbered 362 souls. This latter source states that in the town lived only Jews, employed as tenants and petty merchants. Despite the twists of fate that befell the town, and particularly its Jewish community, the Jewish settlement developed continuously, both in number and in prosperity, from the eighteenth century until World War I. Several factors contributed to this, among them the fact that Skala was a frontier town with both a customs-house and the potential for large-scale smuggling which contributed to the development of legal as well as illegal commerce. Moreover, the Jews of Skala benefited from the benevolent attitudes of the Counts Goluchowski, landholders of Skala, among them Agenor Senior (1812–1875), governor-general of Galicia and minister of the interior of Austria. (His brother, the philosopher Joseph Goluchowski, was a close friend of the great Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, and became famous for his plan to solve the Jewish problem by establishing a

Jewish state in the Caucasus.) Agenor Goluchowski, Junior (1849–1921), son of the senior Agenor, was a diplomat-statesman, and for several years held the post of foreign minister of Austria-Hungary. His son was the last count who lived in the ancestral palace of Skala and attended to the affairs of the enormous estate. These Polish noblemen conducted extensive commercial transactions with the Jews of Skala.

The economic and professional structure of the Jewish populace was quite diverse, ranging from porter and peasant to wealthy landowner, from market-peddler to well-to-do exporter with business abroad. In the nineteenth century, two wealthy Jews acquired farming estates in the vicinity of Skala: Yehoshua Drimmer, in the village of Bosyri, and Eliezer Seidman, in Krzywcze. Of importance to the economy of the Jews of Skala were several oil presses for the production of lubricants, which were also exported abroad. Raw materials for the manufacture of these products were imported from Russia. A brewery owned by the Counts Goluchowski was leased to two Jews; its product too was sold abroad. Likewise, a large flour mill of the Counts' was leased to Jews. Jews also owned distilleries for whiskey and liqueurs, which were marketed throughout the region. Two Jews imported coral necklaces from Italy, destined finally to be smuggled into Russia for sale there. The export of eggs to Western Europe was also controlled by Jews, and continued so, in sizable proportions, until World War II. In the beginning of this century, export of beans, peas, chickpeas and flax began to develop in Skala. These products were bought mostly in Russia and transported to Germany,



FIG. 5: *Feiwish-Lieber Stock, Jewish land owner in Podfilipie*

Switzerland, Italy, France, England, Spain, and even to the United States, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

There were, as well, large exporters of wheat, rye, oats, and barley, providing, of course, steady employment for hundreds of families in the community: buyers of grain from peasants, carters, drivers, watchmen, porters, clerks, and ... smugglers. Money-changers did excellent business with these smugglers. Certain products were duty-free, and were thus transported openly over the border at the Zbrucz River. Great quantities of cattle feed were bought in Russia and sold to farmers and farm tenants in Austrian Galicia. Poultry dealers bought geese in Russia, whose flesh, fat and livers were much in demand among the population. Various other products were bought and sold, wholesale and retail, by the experienced merchants of Skala. Large shops for fabrics, woolens, clothing, leather for shoes and boots, notions, groceries, and stores for hardware, tools, metals, and farm implements simple and sophisticated, displayed their wares to the entire area. One hardware dealer was the agent of several manufacturing companies in Vienna, Prague, and Brno. Again, much of this merchandise was smuggled into Russia, where anything that carne from the West would be gobbled up. A few well-to-do Jews dealt in building materials and lumber for construction and carpentry. Many of the "Polish roads" and railways were in need of large quantities of stone and gravel, as paved roads were unknown at the time. This material was taken from local stone-quarries, and the merchants of Skala shipped it to Tarnopol, Stanislawow, and Zloczow.

Most dealers in fabrics, clothes, leather goods, shoes, and boots drew the bulk of their income from fairs in the neighboring towns. They would split their week in two, spending three days at the fairs, and two tending their stores at home.

Craftsmen held an important place in town: tailors, several of them famous throughout the district, shoemakers with fine reputations, tinsmiths, glaziers, carpenters, and locksmiths, some expert and famous bakers, and even blacksmiths, a craft which

requires great physical stamina and was ordinarily the province of Ukrainians alone.

A fascinating chapter in the history of economic activities of Jewish Skala was written by the smugglers, whom the Jews called "peckel-machers." This dangerous but profitable operation evolved in Skala over generations, and though few actually engaged in it, the smugglers gained notoriety, even in distant towns, by the fear they instilled in both the Russian frontier guards and the Austrian gendarmes. The border seethed with life by night. In the winter, when the river was frozen, smuggling was more difficult than in summer. To name all the kinds of goods that were smuggled would be quite a task-anything that required payment of duty and was in wide demand became an item for smuggling. This meant profits for merchants who ordered the goods from distant places, as well as for the storekeepers connected with the smugglers and the money-changers and money-lenders. Corals, snuff, cigarette paper, whiskey, liqueurs, fabrics, skins, and furs-this is but a small sample of the types of smuggled goods. Smuggling included the danger of running into the border guards, of violent clashes, and of being apprehended and sentenced to long prison terms. Bands of smugglers competed, even fought with each other, for customers and sources of supply; the competition led to acts of revenge, even to murder. Many years before World War I, one such case was known in Skala. The story circulated for quite a while among Jews and Gentiles alike, and was widely reported in the press all over Galicia.

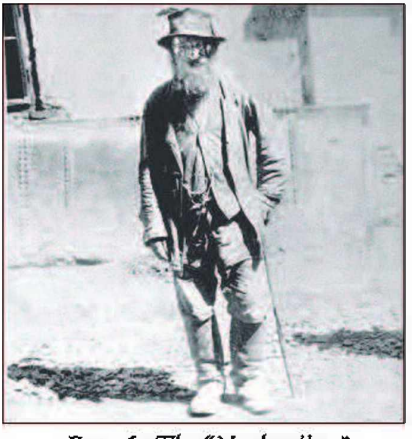


FIG. 6: *The "Nachsteller," the oldest town porter*

The smugglers were also involved in carrying people across the border, from Russia to Galicia. A surge of such refugees flooded the

border in 1905, at the time of the Russo-Japanese war, when young Jews began to flee conscription into the armies of the hated Tsar. These refugees were assisted by their brethren in Skala, and while most emigrated to the United States, some Joined the second "Aliyah" to the land of Israel and others remained permanently in Skala.

Nearly all the Jews of Skala devoutly adhered to their religious tradition; few were secular "free-thinkers." Hasidism was deeply rooted in their hearts; in this very corner of Galicia, the Baal-Shem-Tov himself was born and lived. Here Reb Israel of Rosanoy crossed the border in his escape from Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. He founded the Sadogura dynasty, and his following in Skala was quite large. The rebbe of Wizhnitz, however, also had a large community of followers, and frequent disputes between the two groups led to open displays of animosity. Of course, Skala therefore had separate sets of religious function-aries: two rabbis, two slaughterers, etc.



FIG. 7: *The Drimmer brothers: Captain Shlomo Drimmer, deputy Chief Rabbi in the Polish Army during the 1930's, and Rabbi Yehuda Drimmer, the last Rabbi of Skala*

Of the town's famous rabbis, mention should be made of Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, a well-known religious authority of the early nineteenth century and author of the treatise *BethShlomo;* his son, Rabbi Abraham Drimmer, author of the *Beerah Shel Miryam;* and his grandson, Rabbi Nuta Drimmer, who wrote glosses on his father's work. The son of this last, Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, studied law at the University of Krakow, and attained the position of deputy Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army with the rank of captain. In September, 1939, he was detained by the Soviet army and died in prison. Rabbi Nuta's

younger son, Rabbi Yehuda Drimmer, inherited his father's rabbinical position in Skala, and during the Nazi occupation was appointed to the "Judenrat." In September 1942, he was deported to the Janowska camp in Lwow where he met his death.

Skala had an abundance of synagogues. The old "shul" dating from the sixteenth century was burned in 1911; the new structure begun on its ruins was never completed. This was a massive building of hewn stone and arched windows, which never reached completion and stood desolate for decades. In one corner, a small synagogue was set up where simple folk prayed. On the High Holidays-on Rosh Hashanah before the shofar was blown and on Yom Kippur before the "Neilah" prayer, the town's two rabbis, one a Czortkower Hasid and the other a Wizhnitzer, would come, each in his turn, accompanied by the elders of the community, to the old "shul," where they would preach to the worshippers and call out the blasts of the shofar.

There were about ten other prayer and study houses and small synagogues: the Czortkower, Wizhnitzer, Otynyer, "Itzik's Kleisel" and "Port Arthur"–a synagogue built during the Russo-Japanese War that looked a little like a fortress. Skala also had some *misnagdim* (opponents of Hasidism) but their influence was negligible; and the secular Jews in general tried not to publicly offend the sensibility of the religious.

As for education, all the children obviously went to "heder" or to the community "Talmud-Torah." Gifted boys studied independently in the house of study or under the tutelage of the town's rabbis, all outstanding teachers. Children of the affluent and of "enlightened" secular Jews studied in gymnasiums, mostly at Czernowitz in Bukowina. The townspeople held these students in great esteem, as did the students themselves. A Hebrew "Tarbuth" school, founded in Skala in 1906, attracted a large student body thanks to its talented teachers, Siwak and Tennenblatt. Social and cultural activities included lectures, celebrations and parties, as well as amateur theater performances which delighted the audiences of the day. Old-timers among Skala's former residents may still

remember the successful presentation of the drama "God, Man and the Devil."

Skala's Jews took interest in political movements, and in this area as well, there was little agreement. The community was primarily divided into Zionists and Socialists, and the differences in outlook were evident not only in heated debates but also in quarrels and animosities. On the other hand the Jewish community was on good terms with the Gentile population, and little anti-Semitic sentiment was felt. Jews were in the majority until the late nineteenth century, and made up just under half the population before World War I. Skala's Jews were represented on the town council in proportion to their numbers, and the office of deputy-mayor was for many years reserved for a Jew. In this post, Woolf Itzik Freifelder became especially famous, and was admired even among his Gentile colleagues. Even as one against many, his view would be adopted by the council and the Ukrainian members would concur by saying:

"Let it be as Mr. Walko says," and there was no need for a vote to be taken.

2. THE FIRST WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of World War I, panic seized the Jews of Skala, who feared the onslaught of the Cossacks as the river Zbrucz was the only natural barrier between them. A few affluent Jews managed to escape to the West, despite the prohibition and surveillance of the Austrian police. The front moved back and forth, and in late August 1914, Skala fell to the Russians, however not to military forces but to civilian authority. Tolerable relations were established with the Russian officials, but in the summer of 1915 an edict of expulsion was issued upon all Jews living in the border area. Skala's Jews were exiled to Czortkow and were forced to march there under the guard of Cossacks who did not hold back their lashes. In Czortkow they were herded into the courtyard of the grand Rabbi, and the next day were transported to the town of Kopyczynce. A few days later they were permitted to return to Skala, but only a

week passed and they were ordered again to vacate their houses for good and to relocate at least eight kilometers from the border. Possessions were hidden with Christian neighbors, houses were shut, and the wanderers scattered in every direction, to nearby towns and villages, where they remained in miserable, impoverished conditions. To make matters worse, a cholera epidemic broke out, and hundreds fell victim. A year later, when the Jews of Skala were allowed back to their homes, they found utter destruction. The Russian soldiers had removed windows and doors, floors and ceilings, anything that would serve as fuel or as reinforcement for the trenches and strongholds. The Ukrainian townspeople finished off the looting, and practically nothing was ever returned. The returning refugees, attempting to rebuild their lives, made some temporary repairs on their homes. New sources of income soon opened up: Jews from Russia, in need of all manufactured goods, were willing to buy, with gold and silver, any merchandise they could obtain. The Jews of Skala bought up whatever they could, from near and far, and sold to their Russian brethren. Certain items, such as candles, cigarette paper, blades for straw-cutting and cheap ornaments were especially in demand. Likewise, lively trade went on in the other direction: from Russia came supplies of flour, sugar, salt, tobacco, and matches, to the Galician populace and to the forces at the front. Among Skala's Jews were a few contract-suppliers, some of whom really "hit it rich" and were known as war profiteers. Toward the end of the war, the central Powers occupied large portions of the Ukraine, as far as Odessa on the Black Sea and as a result commerce flourished even more.

It goes without saying that at such unstable times one cannot expect too much in the way of cultural activity, especially as most of the educated youth had been conscripted into the Austrian army or had managed to settle in the Austrian capital of Vienna.

3. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

At *the end of World War I*, with the fall of the Hapsburg Monarch,

Galicia underwent two years of uneasy transition, and was finally annexed to the new Polish Republic. At first, a "Ukrainian Democratic Republic" was set up, which was not very friendly toward Jews. In addition, penetrating Petlura gangs from across the border terrorized the Jews of Skala, though their assaults were less severe than those in the Eastern Ukraine. It should be noted that on one occasion, Jewish youths in Skala fought with the Petlura gangs and forced them to retreat.

The West Ukrainian authorities did not interfere with the economic foundations and livelihood of the Jews. Trade in fuel oil, brought from the wells of Drohobycz and Boryslaw, began to flourish. Jews had to take on Ukrainian partners, for only under Ukrainian names could licenses be obtained to purchase the fuel and to transport it to Skala by rail. Russian Jews would transfer the petroleum in barrels to the Eastern Ukraine. The Jews of Skala accumulated considerable sums of money, but when the Ukrainian government fell, this currency became worthless and the new-found wealth was lost.



FIG. 8: *Polish Army parade in the center of town (1930s)*

In 1920, the entire area was occupied by the Red army. A "Revcorn" (Revolutionary Committee) was set up in Skala, and the Bolsheviks severely harmed Jewish business and livelihoods. Their rule lasted but seven weeks, and when the Poles defeated the Soviets, the Zbrucz became the new border between Poland the Soviet Union. In the early months of the Polish rule, the Jews suffered at the hand of the Polish forces of General Josef Haller. Rampaging soldiers harassed, molested and injured Jews cutting their beards and sidelocks. Many of Skala's Jews were among the wounded. Eventually, however, the civilian administration gained control and life returned to normal.

During this period, most of the Jewish community had to struggle to survive, and searched for ways, however uncertain, to eke out a meager living. To be sure, a class of well-to-do, even wealthy, Jews did develop, but the numbers of poor were quite endless. In between was the "petit bourgeoisie" class: merchants who sold fabrics, footwear, tools, construction materials and sundries to the Christian populace. From the latter, Jews bought agricultural products: grain, beans, fodder, and eggs, large amounts of which were, in turn, exported to Western Europe and overseas. On Wednesdays the weekly fair took place, attracting thousands of peasants from surrounding villages. Skala's merchants, for their part, would bring their wares to the fairs held in other towns: fabrics, clothing, leather, boots and shoes, sheepskins, and fur hats. In the little town of Ulaszkowce (Lashkewitz), a large annual fair was held, publicized all over East Galicia, and there Skala's merchants held prominent places. (There was even a Jewish folk saying: "As noisy as the Lashkewitz fair!") There was no conspicuous change after the war in the activities of the Jewish artisans of Skala. Wagoners and carriage-drivers provided a vital service to the townspeople, transporting passengers to the railroad depot, to the cities of Borszczow and Czortkow, and to nearby towns. The Jewish huckstresses of the market added variety to the peculiarly Jewish panorama of the "shtetl"; their customers were almost exclusively peasant women. There were also Jewish farmers,

though few in number, and two of them were quite wealthy landowners.

The free professions were scarcely represented: two doctors, three dental technicians, a few teachers and "magisters," graduates of law schools who remained unemployed because Skala had no courthouse, who attempted to further their studies or to find work in Borszczow. Religious life and services were quite adequately attended to: two rabbis (for the two opposing Hassidic sects, Czortkower and Wizhnitzer); rabbinical arbiters, ritual slaughterers, supervisors and sextons. Then there were "melamdim," traditional



FIGS. 9A: *"Beth Am" the former Jewish community center building in the 1990s.*



FIGS. 9B: *The Beth-Am Jewish community center in Skala. Until 1939 the "Beth Am" housed the Hebrew Tarbut School, the Community Library & all Zionist youth organizations. Its main hall (2nd floor) and balcony (3rd floor) were used for public meetings, lectures, exhibits, weddings, Purim balls, Hanukah parties and stage shows of Hebrew school children and the Yiddish amateur theate*

Hebrew teachers for various grades, Talmud instructors, some of them fine scholars and outstanding pedagogues of exceptional abilities, all of whom, however, lived on meager incomes. To complete the picture, there were the clerks, who served as secretaries and bookkeepers in the export companies, in business, in communal offices, in the free loan society, in the flour mill, and so forth.

The Beth-Am Jewish community center in Skala. Until 1939 the "Beth Am" housed the Hebrew Tarbut School, the Community Library & all Zionist youth organizations. Its main hall (2nd floor) and balcony (3rd floor) were used for public meetings, lectures, exhibits, weddings, Purim balls, Hanukah parties and stage shows of Hebrew school children and the Yiddish amateur theater.

For about a decade, a Jew served as chief city clerk, an occurrence rare in Poland between the two world wars. Finally, not included in the above list, is a large number of Jews whose precise occupations cannot be described, the so-called "Luft menschen" - counselors, mediators, petition-writers to government offices, matchmakers, etc. At the bottom of this socioeconomic ladder were the poor, day- or hour-laborers, servants, water-drawers, and, of course, beggars. The business of smuggling, fully described earlier, continued a few years after World War I, and provided significant income and profits for quite a number of merchants, middlemen, money-changers, packers, carters and smugglers. As the years passed, however, the Soviet Union sealed the border hermetically shut, while the Poles, themselves, began to impose severe punishments on offenders, denying them access to the border region, even after serving their prison sentences.

Quite a large percentage of Jewish families having no means of support would certainly have approached starvation if not for the two types of assistance offered them: first, the interest-free loans from the funds of the "Gemilut Hasadim" (Free loan society) established by local businessmen, most of whom were Zionists. This loan society was founded through the generous contributions of former residents who had emigrated to the United States, Skala's

"landsmanschaftn," and through contributions from foundations in other countries. Second, parcels of clothing and money were sent to families by their relatives abroad. The anti-Jewish policies of the Polish government and the manifestations of anti-Semitism by the populace, starting during the infamous Grabski-period and continuing up to the crisis of the Thirties, brought, as they did elsewhere, economic decline to Jewish Skala. As a result, bankruptcies among Jewish merchants, particularly in the fabric and clothing trades, became frequent. The situation continued to worsen late in the Thirties, so that when the Soviets invaded and occupied Skala for almost two years, the already shaky economic structure of Jewish Skala collapsed entirely.



FIG. 10: *Jewish community leaders, standing from left to right: Todres Zimmerman, Eliezer Fish, Fischel Garfinkel, Nissan Ollinger, Abraham Bilgorei, Shlomo Rosenbaum, Motel Hausner, Motie Gottesfeld, Moshe Wiesenthal. Second Row: Motie Weidberg, Ben-Zion Fiderer, Abraham Lederman, Chaim Roiz (Brenman), Israel-Lieb Freifelder, Moshe Feuerstein, Moshe Weidberg. Bottom Row: Feivel Gottesfeld, Yulik Frenkel, Mendel Kelman*

ZIONIST YOUTH GROUPS IN SKALA (1931)



FIG. 11: *"Hashomer Hatzair" an egalitarian Zionist youth group on an outing–late 1920's.*



FIG. 11: *The all-girls branch of Gordonia" – a Zionist youth organization in 1929 photo.*



FIG. 12: *"Hechalutz" a labor Zionist youth group in early 1930's photo.*



FIG. 12: *"Hanoar Hatzioni" – a General Zionist youth group*

As for educational institutions in Jewish Skala, the children received their primary education at the "Pulaski" public school, the only one in town. After studying there for seven years, they turned to a life of work helping their parents, and only a few would continue their studies in secondary schools out of town. In 1933, a private high school with a two-year course was founded, where children of Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians prepared for the graduating

exams in Borszczow or Czortkow, but this school was closed at the outbreak of the war. However, in addition to attending morning



FIG. 13A: *"Farewell" to Munio Fiderer and his wife as they leave (on aliyah) for Palestine (1933)*

classes in the Polish school, children of traditional families studied as well in "heder," while those of the more "enlightened" class studied at the Hebrew "Tarbut" school, which housed both kindergarten and secondary classes. This school enjoyed a fine reputation, and was cared for and by community and Zionist



FIG. 13B: *Members of ""Braterstwo," (Brotherhood), a workers organization founded in Skala in 1927-28. It was a left-leaning Jewish trade Union group in 1927-28 first anniversary photo. Accused by Polish authorities of pro-Communist activities, the group was later banned.*

leaders who assured it a sufficient budget. It was blessed with good teachers-Roiz, Lederman, Ochshorn, Tepper and others. Chaim Roiz, an excellent educator, was admired by hundreds of students and held in great esteem by the entire community. The kindergarten and Hebrew teachers organized cultural events, literary evenings, theater performances-all conducted in pure Hebrew. No wonder, therefore, that Hebrew was spoken well in Skala's streets and homes. The school was housed in a fine, three-story building called "Bet Am" (people's house) which was erected in 1921, on a side-street populated by simple folk. One who gave of his energy and time more than any other person to the establishment of the Tarbut School was Moshe Weidberg, who later perished in the holocaust. Besides the classrooms, this building housed in its basement a meeting place for the Hashomer Hatzair Youth; a library and reading room on the first floor, and a large public auditorium on the second floor. Just before its destruction, the "Bet Am" library contained 5,000 books: about 2,000 in Yiddish, 2,000 in Polish, 800 in Hebrew and 300 in German. The founder of the library was Moshe Wiesental (Moshe Brachas, now in the United States), who organized and managed it the first few years of its existence. In the effort of enlarging and expanding the library, he was joined by Shlomo Schwarzbach and Feivel Gottesfeld, who



FIG. 14: *Graduates of the night-school course in Hebrew, with the teacher Shraga Ochsorn (1932)*

offered dedicated assistance. They were subsequently joined by Abraham Bilgorei, who actually managed the library until it was closed and its books confiscated by Soviet authorities in 1939. An impressive exhibit of selected books in every language was held in 1933, a festive event for all who attended.

Group activities were held by voluntary, apolitical organizations, by political parties and youth movements. Complex human relationships caused divisions into opposing groups, though not necessarily due to political, religious or class differences. One fierce feud, between Yaeger, the executive secretary of the municipal council, and Moshe Feuerstein, a member of the municipal council and for a time the chairman of the Jewish Community Council, was widely publicized. Each side marshaled many supporters and even the heads of the Polish community became involved in the controversy. Such disputes were never known for the polite manner in which they were conducted, and, at times, bitter animosities raged.

Due to the initiative and dedication shown by the leaders of the local Zionist movement, a free loan society and a people's bank were set up, the principal capital for which was obtained from the Joint Distribution Committee in the United States. (Of these leaders, Israel Freifelder and Motie Weidberg perished in the holocaust, and Ben-Zion Fiederer emigrated to Israel before the war and died there after a long life.) These institutions brought immense benefits, often actual rescue, to hundreds in distress. In like-fashion, assistance was offered to the sick by the "Yad Charutzirn" society in the form of modest financial support and in attendance at bedside. For many years, the head of this society was Shemayah Lachman, and after his death in 1930, he was replaced by Chaim Meiselman, who later perished in the holocaust.

The outstanding figure in the "Chevra Kadishah" (Society for the burial of the dead) was Shlomo-Peretz, the one-eyed sexton of the Czortkower house of prayer. He was unique and colorful, endowed with a phenomenal memory. He remembered the dates of

hundreds of memorial days and knew the location and history of all the tombstones on the ancient, four-hundred-year-old cemetery.

Politically, the community of Skala was divided, primarily into Zionists and anti-Zionists. The religious Zionists demonstrated their presence only during elections to the Zionist Congresses by voting for the "Mizrachi" list. They had neither a local organization nor a youth movement. The "secular" Zionists, however, could boast of their adult chapters and, more significantly, of the activities of their youth groups: Hashomer Hatzair, Gordonia, Buslia, Hanoar Hatzioni and Betar. Relations among members of the various youth groups were generally friendly, though occasionally heated debates erupted on the "promenade" about events in the Zionist movement and in Palestine, particularly during the shekel-campaign and elections to the Zionist Congresses. Relations became strained after the split in the Zionist movement and the secession of the Revisionists, who had quite an active chapter in Skala.

Youth groups vied to earn honors in their efforts on behalf of the Jewish National Fund and to obtain "certificates" (British emigration permits to enter Palestine) for members who completed their "hachshara"-extensive agricultural training. The "aliyah" of each "chalutz" (pioneer) became a festive event for the whole town. Members of all Zionist groups would accompany him to the depot in a stirring, farewell procession. Scores of "chalutzim" emigrated to the Land of Israel between the two world wars, including members of the middle class. At the start of the third "aliyah," Russian emigrants, among them Mordechai Fingerman and Yitzhak Buchalter (Bahat) passed through Skala, stirring up some Zionist fervor among the residents, and receiving some



FIG. 15: *Religious section of Book Fair exhibition in Skala Community Center (1933)*

assistance for their journey. Some of Skala's Zionists emigrated to the land of Israel with the fourth "aliyah" particularly in the Thirties. Together with the survivors of the holocaust, who reached the land of Israel after the war, over 80 people from Skala live now in Israel.

A sizable number of the working-class and poor residents of Jewish Skala belonged to an anti-Zionist organization known as "Braterstwo" (Brother-hood). The Polish police suspected members of this organization of Communist leanings; there were actually cases of arrests and trials, and some suspects escaped across the border to the Soviet Union.

In the early 1920's an amateur theater troupe was founded in Skala, which remained active until the beginning of World War II, displaying talents which earned the praise of visiting critics. Even some of the local Polish and Ukrainian "intelligentsia" used to attend the performances of this Jewish amateur theater. The director, Sholem Muhlmut, himself a talented actor, was joined by Lieba Adelman, Motel Hausner, Welvel Wasserman and Moshe Bilgorei, all of whom perished in the Nazi Holocaust, as well as Berish Weidberg, who died in New York several years ago, and Arye Schwartzbach, Esther Weidberg, Moshe Wiesenthal and Leib Schwartzbach who now reside in Israel and in the United States.

4. SKALA UNDER SOVIET RULE

At *dawn on September 17, 1939*, the Red Army crossed the Zbrucz, and Skala, along with all of East Galicia, remained under Soviet rule until the end of June 1941. Actually, all the Jews of Skala welcomed the Red Army, with sighs of relief and even genuine excitement, so great was their fear of Nazi occupation which had already approached Lvov (Lemberg). A few weeks later things had changed: merchants had lost all sources of income, their stores emptied and closed. Practically all the breadwinners became state employees, working in all sectors of the economy, including hard physical labor in agriculture, stone quarries, and at road and rail construction.

Some families who became completely destitute left in search of means of survival for other cities, especially Lvov (Lemberg). They were followed by Zionist activists who feared communist persecution. On December 25, 1939, without any warning, 17 Jewish families, most of them not really affluent, were served edicts of "nationalization." Denied time to pack any possessions or clothing, they were driven from their homes and all their property was confiscated. Yet, not a single Pole or Ukrainian was similarly treated, though some of them were more well-to do than those "nationalized" Jewish families. A few Jews were arrested, true to Soviet custom, in the dead of night, and, with no trial whatsoever, disappeared without a trace. In April 1940, the families of these prisoners were themselves arrested, while the relatives of the "nationalized" families were sent off to Siberia. One event, as strange as it was tragic, will always be remembered by Skala's residents: late in 1939, a Jew by the name of Motel Fisch was arrested by the Soviet police and disappeared for a long while. Though his wife and child were picked up and deported to Siberia, the man himself was freed a few months later when even the Bolsheviks were convinced of his innocence. Fisch began to see to the release of his wife and son, but his efforts, which he kept up until June 1941, were in vain. The war began, he perished in the holocaust, and his wife and son returned from Siberia and emigrated to Israel.

Sad is the summary of the 21 months of Soviet rule in Skala.

The Jews were impoverished, their property gone and their sparse livelihood shaky. All of the original Jewish cultural institutions and their achievements came to naught. Zionist activists were persecuted, and many, though not in actual danger of their lives, lived in constant fear. This, then, was the situation before Jewish life in Skala went up in flames with the Nazi onslaught on the Soviet Union, June 22, 1941.

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THE TOWN ON THE RIVER ZBRUCZ

Benzion Fiderer



FIG. 16: *Benzion Fiderer*

The town of Skala in southeastern Galicia (currently the Western Ukraine) is located on the banks of the River Zbrucz, which until the First World War was the border between two empires: Austria-Hungary and Czarist Russia. At the outbreak of the Second World War and the Holocaust, approximately 2,000 Jews lived in Skala, and an equal number of Ukrainians and Poles.

THE FOUNDING OF SKALA – ITS FIRST JEWISH SETTLEMENT

Skala (a rock or cliff in translation) indeed stands upon a cliff, surrounded by valleys and plains, forests and flatlands dotted with villages, estates and farms, large and small, owned by nobility and peasants.

According to historical sources, it may be assumed that Skala was founded as a high fortress by a Ukrainian-Ruthenian nobleman sometime in the 13th century. However, in that same century, the Tatars destroyed that fortress.

Several decades later, the Polish king, Kazimierz the Great, occupied the entire district of Podolia and rebuilt the Skala fortress

on the heights. It is conjectured that by then the first Jews had settled in Skala, evidently immigrants from the northwest, namely the Silesian and German provinces.

For many years there was constant warfare throughout Podolia, Skala included. There were raids by the Tatars, Lithuanians, Wallachians (Romanians), Turks and the Cossacks of the murderous Bohdan Chmielnicki. A peaceful decade was rarely seen.

How did those first Jews who settled in Skala occupy themselves? They were keepers of village inns, small-scale shopkeepers and tradesmen, buying and selling goods to and from Turkey and the Ukrainian provinces.

In the era of the old Polish kingdom, the Jews received, for the payment of large sums of money and head-taxes, certain "privileges" that let them support themselves and maintain their communal life more or less undisturbed. Actually, it was less rather than more because the situation and the "moods" changed with the regime changes. The Polish-Catholic clergy frequently preached hatred of the Jews that led to frequent attacks by the incited mobs. It goes without saying that at various times the Jewish community of Skala also suffered from such horrible events. Despite everything the Jews in Poland, including Podolia and Skala on the River Zbrucz, increased and prospered.

A great political and economic change took place in 1772, when the Polish kingdom was divided among Russia, Prussia and Austria. Galicia (with Podolia) fell under Austrian control. In 1809, Napoleon Bonaparte turned the region of Podolia, including Skala, over to Russia. However, at the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1812, after Napoleon's defeat, those regions were returned to Austria.

In the first decades of Austria's control over Galicia, the Jews had to endure various limitations and vexations and suffered heavy taxation, particularly during the days of the "pious" Empress Maria Theresa.

The lot of the Jews in Galicia and all of Austria changed considerably for the better after 1848, after the revolutionary

tumults and tempests, when Jews were granted the rights of citizenship. This was followed by improvements in a variety of realms: economic, political, and social, especially in their communal life, which became autonomous.

SKALA UNDER AUSTRIA

U*nder the rule of the* Austro-Hungarian monarchy, during the 1860s, particularly after the Austro-Prussian war, a period of relative peace and prosperity followed to the degree that over time Skala had several very wealthy people and even some estate owners. We mention them first because it shows how the Austro-Hungarian constitution led to noticeable changes for the better, also with regard to Jews. Over the course of many generations Jews were forbidden to own properties such as landed estates, fields, and forests. Suddenly there was such a change: Jews were permitted to be land owners, just like the Christian aristocrats. Yehoshua (Shike) Drimmer was one such property holder. He was a great scholar and a Kossower Hassid (later a Vizhnitser Hassid). His brother, the very learned great scholar, Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, was the city's rabbi. Shike was a sort of private banker. He had a great deal of cash on hand, which he used to lend with interest to landowners and merchants. In addition, he was an important merchant of dry goods and the owner of the Bosyri estate, not far from Skala.

The second one was Elazar Seidman, a Czortkower Hassid, who also had a great deal of money, a huge dry-goods business and the Krzywcze estate, not far from Skala. His heir was his son-in-law Shmarye Melzer, also a fervent Czortkower Hassid. After some time, Shmarye Melzer entered city politics, and in 1900 became the head of the Skala Jewish Community Council.

MERCHANTS AND SHOPKEEPERS

Skala was a mercantile and an industrial city. The Skala Jews were lively and imbued with an enterprising spirit. There were ether-oil

enterprises in Skala that produced oil from anise and caraway. The oil and the seeds were exported abroad, where they were converted into distilled spirits, perfumes and toilet soap. The anise and the caraway were imported from Bessarabia and brought to Skala on gentile-owned horse-drawn wagons because in those days there were no other means of transportation. The oil enterprises were owned by Shmarye Melzer and his son Moshe-Dudi, in partnership with Herschel Auerbach, and his brother-in-law Azriel Goldschein; Yisroel Brimer; Nute Drimmer, later the Rabbi of Skala; Herschel Ashkenazi; Velvel Buchsbaum in partnership with his sons Moshe and Itzi Buchsbaum; and Yitzchak Schwarzbach, who later immigrated to America.

The residue of the boiled anise from the oil enterprises was used to fatten up cattle and their milk was sold in the city by retailers. Count Goluchowski of Skala built a beer brewery in Skala which was leased by the brothers-in-law Aharon Brimer and David Weidberg. Some years later, when the brewery burned down, they abandoned that business.

The Count's larger water mill was leased by Mendel Kahn and Wolf Itzik Freifelder (the only Jewish deputy-mayor of Skala before the First World War). After them, the mill was run by Hirsch Karmin. The Count also had a small mill that was leased by Moshe Stock.

Skala had many bead sellers, among them Yona Velvel Schrenzel and his son Shaikele Schrenzel. Both were great Talmudic scholars and fervent Czortkower Hassidim. Yona Velvel used to travel to Italy to buy beads, wearing his black "*kapote*" (long overcoat) and his velvet hat. The beads were then smuggled into Russia.

Avrahamche Scheinberg, with his brother-in-law, Moshe Itche Buchsbaum had a spirit refinery and distributed liquors throughout the district. The egg exporting business was also developed in Skala. The first egg exporter was Kalman Bilgoraj, followed by Berish Feffer of Husyatyn.

At the beginning of the 20th century the export of legumes, corn and grain developed in Skala. The grain and legumes came

primarily from Russia, where string-beans, peas, clover and seeds were plentiful. These were exported to many European countries, such as Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, England and Spain. The Skala exporters were the only ones in Eastern Galicia whose foreign trade of these goods reached America, Cuba and Puerto Rico. The chief exporters were Yisroel Seidman and his partners Yosef Weintraub, his son-in-law Eliezer Scheinberg and Ephraim Klinger; and Sholem Hermele in partnership with Benzion Fiderer. All of these manufacturers, producers, importers and exporters were Hasidic Jews with long black *kapotes* (see above) and velvet hats, and satin *caftans, fur-hats* and velvet cloaks without buttons for the Sabbath. Velvel Wasserman and his brother Chaim also conducted considerable business in grains, but only domestically.

Important fabric and dry-good stores were also found in Skala, such as the large store of Elazar Seidman. After Elazar's death, this store was taken over by his son-in-law Shmarye Melzer. Moshe Leib Drimmer's large store was passed on after his death to his two sons-in-law, Chaim Yisroel Ehrenberg and Sanye Libergal. Other stores were both wholesale and retail, and storekeepers from the entire area used to come and buy wedding clothes from Ehrenberg and Libergal, Leib Lunenfeld, Zalman Hausner and Moshe Weidberg.

After the First World War, when textiles were scarce in Russia, several new fabric and dry-good merchants appeared in Skala: Baruch Tabak, Meir Zissye Tabak, Todres Zimmerman, Mendel Feuerstein, Chaim Feuerstein, Dudi Schrenzel, Nachman Brettler, Shlomo Weidenfeld, the brothers Mottye and Moshe Weidberg, Yaakov Yusem, Fishel Garfunkel, Leib Schtachel, Feibish Wiesenthal, Meshil Kohn, Avraham Gelbstein, Chaitsia Yoczes, Herschel Edelstein. Boruch Olinger, and Shlomo Lemberg.

HARDWARE STORES

Ozer *Marmarosh ran a large* retail and wholesale hardware business. He had connections in Vienna, Prague and Brno (Brunn) for purchasing various delicate and expensive hardware that were to be

smuggled into Russia. The smugglers used to buy the goods from him on credit, and he profited well thereby. He was a remarkably wealthy man. Early every Friday, he used to go to the post office to pay his bills. If a poor shopkeeper came to him on a Friday afternoon to borrow a few crowns that he lacked to pay his bills, he would lend him the money. However, Ozer reproached the shopkeeper: "How can a man be so feckless as to go to the post office when it is already time to kindle the Sabbath candles?" In contrast, he took care of his business by eight o'clock in the morning. He immigrated to the Land of Israel in his old age. Menachem Schiff also had a large hardware and tin business. He would order iron and tin by the wagonload and sell it wholesale and retail throughout the entire region. He was a son-in-law of Rabbi Avraham Drimmer of blessed memory. In addition to these, there were other hardware merchants: Herschel Weintraub and his son-in-law Mendel Brandes, Eliyahu Doliner, Binyomin Rubel and Moshe Doliner.

Zayde Schwarzbach had a large lumber business. He also conducted large-scale business with stone and gravel which he sold to the government and to the administration of the railway system. He conducted his business in partnership with his son-in-law Benzion Fiderer. They delivered goods as far as Stanislawow and Złoczów. Moshe Wasserman in partnership with his son Eliezer also had a lumber business. So did Yaakov Wasserman. After the First World War they became wealthy from that business.

A considerable number of Skala Jews did business with Russia, purchasing grain and other products. However, since these merchants did not have enough money for their business, every Sunday they used to borrow Russian rubles from a money changer who bought and sold rubles. They conducted business in Russia during the week and on Fridays brought their wares to the customs house, paid what they had to, sold the merchandise, and returned to the money changer the rubles they had borrowed on Sunday. Some of the merchants also brought back bran from Russia, which was tax-free, and sold it to the estate owners or their managers who

used it to fatten the cattle. Some of the merchants also brought back geese from Russia and sell them locally.

Local grain merchants were Itzikl Gertler, Berl Bitterman, Itzi Gelbard, Zalman Herscher (Reines), Nathan Herscher, Dovid Eli Weidenfeld, Boruch Frisch (son of Yona Avraham), Moshe Efraim Menczel, Yaakov Ber Trasawutski, Zayde Weingast and his son Matis, Yona Schor, Mechel Jagendorf, Fishel Gemeinerman, and others. They bought grain from the peasants who brought it from the neighboring villages to Skala. A small number of them went to the villages to buy the grain there.

Fishel Gemeinerman was a very smart Russian Jew. He used to do business with a Polish priest, who was a bitter anti-Semite who could not bear to look at a Jew. Nevertheless, since the priest did not want to sell his grain to the *Kulko Rolnicze* (a Polish cooperative) because they did not want to pay him, so he sold his grain to Fishel Gemeinerman.

The merchants of ready-made clothing in Skala were Ovadya Schwarzbach, with his two sons, Hershele and Yankele; Avraham Jagendorf and his son Simcha and later his son-in-taw Yitzchak (Mitzi) Fuss; Shmuel Leib Weissman and later his son-in-law Shmuel Hesheles; Hershel Auerbach with his son Yankel and son-in-law Yisrael Applebaum; Berish Flott, Meir Schatner, and Yosef Blutstein (Reichel's). The ready-made clothing was sold mainly at market fairs and in the neighboring villages: Mondays in Borszczow; Tuesdays in Mielnica or Probuzna; Wednesdays in Ozeriany, in addition to the local fair in Skala; Thursdays in Korolowka. Michel Gottesfeld (nicknamed Tkacz), with his brother Shmuel Gottesfeld (father of the famous American- Yiddish writer and dramatist Chone Gottesfeld) were cloth dealers who sold their goods at fairs.

Leather businesses were owned by Yosef Jaget, Moshe Dovid Schwartzbach with his sons Mordechai and Velvel, Dovid Somer with his son Alter, Shimon Sternschein and his son Natan. Binyomin Gottesman, Dovid Fisch, Itzik Leib Walach, Zecharya Wiesenthal and his son-in-law Abish Stern, and Moshe Weinfeld.

Before the First World War, haberdasheries (notions) were owned by the brothers Avraham and Feivish Frenkel and the brothers Mendel and Chaim Fueurstein. After the war they were owned by Zisye Feinsilber in partnership with his brother-in-law Mottel Goldschein, Chaim Rappaport. Yisrael Leib Freifelder, Leib Gottlieb and others.

Before the First World War, groceries were owned by Sender Tabak, Shulem Libergal, and Yosef Weidman. After the war they were owned by Yerachmiel Kassirer, Shlomo Weinraub (Alter's), and Mendel Schnitzer, Yisrael Peker, Meir Kreitner, Chaim Jagendorf, Shaul Bosyk, Miriam Bayle Kassirer, Chaim Leibowicz, Yitzchak Mann, Uziel Stock, Max Sternberg, Menachem Preschel and others.

Inns, taverns, and confectionaries: As far as I recall, the following people were proprietors of inns (guesthouses) in Skala: Tauba Mirel Schwartzbach, Malia Weisinger, Dvora Leibowicz, and Reizia Fiderer. Taverns were owned by Moshe Jagendorf, Yisrael Kassirer, Sanie Kelman, the Goldhirsch brothers, and others.

Confectionaries were owned by Itsye Sandberg, Nachum Elkes, Mendel Kelman and Avraham Sandberg (now in Argentina). Itsye Sandberg's confectionary also served as a type of youth club. Young people gathered there to eat ice cream, tarts, whipped cream cakes, and other treats. While there, they would carry on heated discussions on political and cultural topics and problems facing Israel. Jews used to buy seltzer bottles from these confectionaries in honor of the Sabbath, to be enjoyed after the "*kugel.*"

TRADESMEN

Tailors: Moshe Meiselman (son of Yisroel Zelig's) was the best women's tailor, not only in Skala but in the entire region. Other women's tailors were: Daniel Schissler (immigrated to Argentina with his family), Shlomo Schindler, Esther Schatner and Sossye Herscher.

Yaakov Yossye Weinraub was an exceptional tailor. Other tailors

were Yosef Schneider (son of Chaim Ber), Shmuel Schneider (son of Chasia) with his son-in-law Yaakov Zeichner, Avraham Weinraub, Shayke Kleinman, Moshe Weinraub, Zayda and Avraham Schitzer, Yitzchak Kressel (the porter's son-in-law), Yankel Roffe, Mottel Weinraub, Mendel Bosyk, Avraham Fleischman, Mordechai Leib Kirshner (nicknamed chocolate), Moshe Gottesfeld, Chaim Schwartzbach, Shmuel Schwartzbach and Mendel Schneider.

Shoemakers: Avraham Schitzer, Todres Schitzer, Reuven Schuster, Avraham Bosyk, Mordechai Bosyk, Yehoshua Hersch Bosyk.

Tinsmiths: Yosef Herzog, Itzik Sandberg (from Iwankowa), Yoel Epstein, Shalom Epstein and Reuven Sandberg.

Carpenters: Avraham Rabinowicz, Nachman Reles, Yosef Ratses (son of Moshe Yonah), Itzik Weitman and Yeshaya Blutstein.

Locksmiths: Mordechai Kremnitzer, Avraham Kisilevsky (Eliyahu Kircshner's son-in-law) and Yaakov Schwarzbach (son of Shalom).

Glaziers: Shimshon Gottesfeld, Azriel Gottesfeld, Shimon Schneider, Feivel Gottesfeld and Perl.

Bakers: Moshe Mosner and his son Leibish, Yiddel Brener, Itzikl Hechtenthal (from Berezhanke) and his son Velvel, Eli Herscher, Hersch Schwarzbach (son of Yisroel Shimon), Chaim Lindman and Zayde Silberbush.

Musicians: Yitzchak Yaakov Kleinman and his son Yonah and their band.

THE HASSIDIC DEPUTY-MAYOR

T*he population of Skala was* diverse. As noted, there were some 2,000 Jews and about the same number of Ukrainians and Poles. The three nationalities lived in peace for a long time, as it was in the interest of the regime in Vienna that they do so to the advantage of the internal politics and the economy of the land. This situation existed until the First World War.



FIG. 17: *Wolf Itzik Freifelder, deputy-mayor of Skala prior to World War I*

As long as Austria ruled in the area Jews did not experience any overt anti-Semitism and lived in amity with the Christian population.

All three nationalities were represented in the municipal administration. There was always a Ukrainian mayor and a Jewish deputy-mayor, Wolf Itzik Freifelder, who was a fervent Vizhnitzer *Hassid*, intelligent and a very shrewd politician. He was involved in all city politics and was highly respected by the district officials.

HASSIDIM, RABBIS, AND THEIR "QUARRELING" TSADDIKIM

Up to the First World War, Skala was a Hassidic town. There were Vizhnitzer, Czortkower, Husiatyner, Otynier, Horodenker, and Kopyczynitzer Hassidim. The Czortkower and Vizhnitzer had their own rabbi and "shochet" (ritual slaughterer). The Vizhnitzer side was stronger and had Rabbi Avraham Drimmer of blessed memory as their rabbi. He was the son of the great Talmudic scholar Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, who was the rabbi of Skala for over 40 years. He was the author of the *"Beit Shlomo,"* three volumes of questions and responses well known in the rabbinic world. After the death of Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, the Vizhnitzer Hassidim appointed his son Rabbi Avraham, who was also a great scholar and studied day and night. At the end of the 19th century, the Czortkower Hassidim, who were still weak at that time, decided that they wanted at least a rabbinical judge, so they installed Rabbi Yehuda Binyamin Laufer from Berezhany to serve in that role. That was the beginning of a real quarrel, with each side believing it was right.

There were also *shochtim* (ritual slaughterers) from each side. One party would not use the meat slaughtered by the other nor any of the other's implements. Both sides became deadly enemies of each other, leading even to denunciations and blows.

The dispute between the two sides lasted for a very long time. It was not only by maintaining separate rabbis and *shochtim*, but also by separate Hassidic prayer halls and of course, separate synagogue sextons.

PRAYER (STUDY HALLS), CHEVRA KADISHA (BURIAL SOCIETY) AND THE SEXTONS (BEADLES)

Skala Jews worshipped in a variety of synagogues and prayer quorums, each one according to his own Hassidic inclination or social status. There were two Czortkower and one Strysover synagogues. Both Czortkower synagogues were destroyed during the First World War and only one was rebuilt. After the war, worshippers from the old Czortkower synagogue created their own *"minyan"* (prayer quorum) in the home of Shmaryahu Melzer, the well-known wealthy community leader and Czortkower Hassid.

The Vizhnitzer synagogue, also damaged during the First World War, was never rebuilt. Its congregants established a Vizhnitser *"minyan"* in Rabbi Drimmer's house. There were also some who worshipped in the Otynier synagogue. In the mid-thirties another Vizhnitzer *"minyan"* was established in the home of Velvel Stock.

In addition, Jews would also worship in the city's Beis Midrash, in "Itzik's Kleizl," and in the "Port Arthur" Synagogue.

The city's large synagogue, which dated back to the 16th century, burned down in 1911. A new building was begun on its ruins but never completed. Massive stone walls had been erected with tall semi-circular windows, but the building remained unfinished. Inside, between the thick walls, "a small synagogue" was established in which ordinary Jews worshipped.

Where there were houses of worship, there also had to be *"shamashim"* or beadles. Here is the list: Chanina, who in his old

age was a trusted supervisor in the building-stone business of Zayde Schwarzbach, Avraham Eli the *shamash* of the great synagogue, Aharon the *shamash* of the "Beis Midrash," Berl the *shamash* of the Strysover "Kloiz," Leizer the *shamash* and his son Shlomo Peretz of the Czortkower "Kloiz," Yossel the *shamash* of the Vizhnitzer synagogue, and Uri the *shamash* of the Otynier synagogue. In Skala, the "*shamashim*" also served as waiters at all Jewish celebrations. Chanina used to work hard at weddings; he first chopped the fish and then served them. After the festive meal, he used to ask for some sour cream to eat to demonstrate that he had not tasted any of the meat served.

The *shamashim* also served in the "Chevra Kadisha"–the Burial Society. When they once asked the *shamash* Avraham Eli the difference between a wedding and a funeral, he would answer: "One drinks whiskey at both, but at a wedding one gets to eat honey-cake and at a funeral one is given cheese to eat."

The *shamash* Avraham Eli also liked to offer a "rubdown", for a "sixpence," he used a birch broomlet, in the bathhouse on Fridays. The most respected of all the *shamashim* was Shlomo Peretz. He was blind in one eye and had eczema on both hands. He was a scholarly person with a sharp mind and a solid memory. He remembered the *yahrzeits* (anniversaries of death) of all of the Jews in town and the locations of their graves. He was also the waiter at all celebrations and the chief of all the undertakers.

SMUGGLERS, WAGON DRIVERS AND PORTERS

I*t goes without saying that Skala*, as a border town, had a number of smugglers or "*Peklmachers,*" as they were known. These were daring risk-takers, strong and tough Jews, apparently not afraid of danger. Of course, they were an insignificant minority among the toiling Jews. The "*Peklmachers*" used to smuggle all sorts of goods from the Austrian side of the border into Russia and vice versa. The smuggling was profitable because the border taxes were not paid on the merchandise that was smuggled back and forth. Sometimes a

quarrel would break out among the "*Peklmachers*" because of competition or other issues, leading to bloody blows, court trials or prison. Most of the "*Peklmachers*" had ties with the guards on both sides of the border by means of bribery. Sometimes, if they did not succeed in bribing the border guards, they ended up battling with them.

The "*Peklmachers*" also used to smuggle from Czarist Russia into Austria groups of Jews fleeing from there to the West, especially to America. Among them were also young Jews fleeing to avoid service in the Czar's army.

As mentioned, the "*Peklmachers*" were tough. If a quarrel broke out among them, there was no stopping it. Sometimes it led to murder and the sentencing of the killer to long years in prison, which deeply disturbed the community and had strong reverberations throughout the region.

Skala also had a number of drivers of both horse-drawn wagons and fiacres (small hackney coaches) that shuttled passengers to and from the train station and also to nearby towns and villages.

The porters and wagon drivers were colorful folk. The porters generally worked in various grain warehouses and wholesale warehouses and carried heavy loads on their shoulders. They were specialists in their trade. They also worked at the railroad station unloading grain that had been brought from Russia.

One of them was named Avraham Binimei (a nickname derived from the Ukrainian oath "*Biyhma,* I swear by the Almighty"). He used to go about in wide trousers. When asked why he needed such wide trousers, he would reply, "Wide trousers are healthy for the legs and healthy for the trousers." Other porters were Shalom Treger Bosyk, Moshe Lewenkron (the Nadan), Shikele Treger (Gerber), Ben Zion Schusterman (nicknamed "Godyekhes"), Yossel Gottesfeld (son of Shmaye), Yossel Schneider, the chimneysweeper, Beryl Kronstein (nicknamed Kedarlaomer), Berl Malamut (son of Mishka Leye), Ahron Herscher, son of Basye, Max Kleinman and others.

THE POLICEMAN WITH A BEARD AND "*PEYOS*" (SIDE LOCKS)

For *a long while before the First* World War, a Jewish municipal guard "ruled" in Skala. His name was Moshe Yonah. He was a pious man with a long beard and side locks. Every Saturday morning he went to the (*mikva*) ritual bath where he loosened his beard and side locks, for during the week he wore his beard covered up and his side locks pinned with hairpins. On Saturdays he wore a long black *kapote* to prayers in the synagogue. During the week, he was dressed in an old worn uniform of a gendarme and also an old gendarme's cap. Usually he carried a stick. If a real gendarme had to make a house search, Moshe Yonah accompanied him. When someone had to be arrested, he also went along with the gendarme. When someone had to be summoned by the munici-pality, he did it. He also used to distribute summons issued by the district administration.

For his official functions, Moshe Yonah used to wear a sword that had only the handle. He used to carry the summons in the upper pocket of his gendarme's coat and he knew how to frighten the naive Skala Jews of those days.

Moshe Yonah knew every Jew in town and made good use of his knowledge. When he came across some Jew who was not especially smart, he would tap the pocket in which he carried the summonses and the Jew would understand that Moshe Yonah was carrying a piece of paper that spelled trouble. He would then go to Moshe Yonah and ask what it was that he had for him. Moshe Yonah would reply, "Avram, have you pulled off some monkey business?" The frightened man would thrust a crown into Moshe Yonah's hand, certain that he would take care of the matter immediately, though in fact the man had done nothing wrong. That is how in those days, the simple Jews were frightened, lest they might have committed some misdemeanor.

If my memory does not betray me, there was in those days in Skala another Jewish municipal guard named Yiddele Kapuste. He had a short beard and a long, cracked sword. The fringes of his

tzitzit (ritual fringe) hung out of his faded gendarme's coat with its tarnished brass buttons. The last Jewish municipal guard in Skala was Elihayu Meiselman, son of Zissel. He functioned until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Since we are dealing with those types, we cannot omit another Skala "character" namely the "well-known" Yeshayahu Moshe. This was a half-witted, half-insane fellow who showed up at all ceremonies: weddings, circumcisions and funerals. Yeshayahu Moshe, a broad-shouldered, squat man with a tangled beard, was homeless and lived wherever he could: in the bathhouse, the anteroom of the synagogue and sometimes, especially in summer, in the cemetery, in the room where the deceased were washed. Generally, he was a silent man, but if he opened his mouth, he could be abrasive. He collected alms, food in his own pot and on the eve of Fridays or holidays, bits of gefilte fish and "chala" from housewives who gave him his "portion" out of pity and also out of fear. Yeshayahu Moshe also knew everyone in town, all the news, town gossip and every "apparent" secret. Sometimes he would hum; sometimes he would sing and smile.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR: THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION AND EXPULSION

W*hen the First World War* broke out from the time of mobilization in August 1914 until the Russian occupation of Skala, the fear was intense. People were very afraid of the Russian Cossacks and there was reason to be afraid, because the Cossacks were indeed murderers. Every Jew wanted to flee. There was panic. The Austrian authorities and the police did not let them flee. With great difficulty a small number of Skala Jews got out, but most remained in Skala. Later, when the Austrian army crossed over to Russia and went as far as Dinovitz, they suffered a defeat there and withdrew after a short while. Then the Russians occupied Skala without firing a shot. As luck would have it, Skala did not see any Cossacks because the Russian army did not move through Skala but through

Husyatin. Several weeks passed before Russian administrative officials came to Skala. Little by little people got used to the Russian soldiers and Russian officials. That was how they lived until the summer of 1915. Then the Jews of Skala were expelled along with Jews from all other border towns. It was rumored that all the Jews will be expelled into Russia. However, first they went on foot to Czortkow, with Russian Cossacks following on horseback, driving them along and ensuring that, Heaven forbid, no Jew would escape.

In Czortkow, all the Skala Jews were driven into the courtyard of the Czortkower Rebbe to lodge there for the night. Early the next morning they were driven to Kopyczyńce. A few days later, an order came to Kopyczyńce that the Jews were to be allowed to return home. Eight days later there was another command that the Jews must leave Skala. Eventually, they were permitted to live where they wished but no closer than eight kilometers from the border. Not a single Jew was left in Skala. They dispersed wherever they could, leaving their possessions hidden with the Christian inhabitants of Skala. For a year, they suffered and struggled, living in nearby towns and villages. All suffered great tribulations, including a cholera epidemic in which many people died, among them several hundred Skala Jews.

After about a year, an order was issued permitting the Jews to return to Skala. Upon return they found that many Jewish homes were destroyed. The Russian soldiers simply took the houses apart, removing the doors, windows and floors and other flammable material for heating. The tin roofs were taken to be used in the trenches. Naturally, everyone undertook to repair the broken houses as much as possible, to make them habitable. Some of the tin roofs were retrieved from Ukrainian peasants with the help of the police. Thus have the Skala Jews returned to their former homes in the nearby village of Ivankow.

RUSSIAN RULE AND JEWISH LIVELIHOOD

As *indicated above, Skala* was not occupied by the Russian military but by administrative civil servants. There were a few Russian policemen, an "Uriadnik" (chief) and a representative of the district office in Borszczów. The representative was named Fidler, who was not a bad man. When a Jew befriended him, he used to do favors for the Jew.

At the beginning of the war it was difficult to earn a living. However, as time passed, people adjusted to the constraints. Whoever had a store could profitably sell his merchandise. Russian Jews came across and paid gold and silver for every rag until the goods were all gone. So people traveled from Skala to other towns and bought whatever goods were available. They profited from the goods without even looking at them since the buyer took the goods elsewhere and sold them again at a profit. There were cases where worthless goods were bought and a profit of 25-30 percent was realized. In one case someone bought boxes of candles and the last buyer, who actually opened the boxes, discovered that the candles had no wicks.

There was a lot of business at the time with cigarette papers. In Austria, there was no shortage of cigarette paper and it was of good quality; but there was also cigarette paper of poor quality that no one in Austria would look at. It was lying around there for years on store shelves and got moldy. In Russia, there was always a scarcity of cigarette paper. When the border was opened, cigarette paper was in great demand and after the merchandise changed hands, with each person taking a percentage of the profits, those poor quality goods were discarded in Russia.

There were similar cases involving other goods. For example, small files for sharpening straw-cutters were in great demand in Russia and were not available anywhere, so shoemaker's files and large files were bought, but discarded in the end. To make a living Jews traded in everything. Russian goods were taken to the fronts. Flour, sugar, salt, matches, tobacco, and other goods from Russia were brought back to Galicia. Later, when the front moved and Galicia was freed from Russian occupation, various war goods were

imported from Austria, such as paper suspenders, paper purses, paper ribbons, various broach pins, beads and similar items that were sold to Russia, part of which was occupied by Austria as far as Odessa. The goods were transported to Odessa and to Uman. Jews came from Kiev, Berditchev and many other cities and towns to buy up the goods to earn a percentage of profits. There were Russian Jews who came and said, "I have a thousand rubles. Prepare for me a package of merchandise worth a thousand rubles." All this happened at the end of the war when the Jews had returned to Skala.

REGIMES CHANGE: UKRAINIANS, BOLSHEVIKS, POLES

W*ith the collapse of the* Austro-Hungarian Empire, a Ukrainian (West Ukrainian) nationalistic, supposedly democratic state was established in East Galicia. This happened at the end of the First World War in 1918.

Jews suffered a great deal in that Ukraine. Since the Jews needed to earn a living and there was a scarcity of kerosene in Russia and Galicia, they began to trade in kerosene. They formed partnerships with local Ukrainians because, to get the kerosene, it had to be brought from Boryslaw or Peczeniżyn. Since one could not travel without a permit from the Ukrainian government, the Ukrainians obtained travel permits in their name in order to bring kerosene. Such permits were obtained from the Ukrainian Ministry in Stanislawow and the kerosene was brought in by the tankful.

It is difficult to describe how the kerosene was brought to Skala by train. All the train stations en route were in great disarray. Every station official had his own authority. Freight trains did not run at all, only passenger trains, and even those did not have a regular schedule. When you had to attach a tanker to a passenger train, you had to pay the stationmaster, who ordered the tanker to be attached to the passenger train and then he permitted it to pass. Well, the engine driver also had to make a living. He argued that the load was too heavy for his engine to haul, and he too had to be paid. Then,

at each station they had to make sure no one was detaching the tanker and leaving it at the station, for such things did indeed happen. Then you had to travel to search for the tanker, pay the stationmaster and the engine driver again, to make sure the tanker continued to its destination.

At that time, the train station in Skala was not yet functional, so the tankers were brought as far as Terezin (a station before Skala). Russian Jews came to Terezin with horse-drawn wagons and barrels and took the kerosene to Russia. The business was very profitable. When the kerosene trade ended, the merchants had so much money they did not know what to do with it. Eventually, the money lost its value and only a small part of it was saved.

After a brief military skirmish between the newly established Polish state and the West Ukrainian "Republic," Polish troops occupied the entire area and Ukraine ceased to exist.

The entry of Polish troops into Galicia brought with it a wave of suffering and sorrow for the Jews: persecutions, attacks, a pogrom in Lemberg and in other places. Jews were rounded up and forced to do hard labor. Jewish beards and "peyos" were cut. Jews were thrown from moving trains and subjected to other violence. All these violent acts were perpetuated by "Hallertczyks," soldiers from the district of Poznan under the command of the Polish General Haller.

Eventually, after protests, interventions from abroad and investigatory commissions, the situation improved to some degree.

In the summer of 1920, during the offensive of Leon Trotsky and Tuchachevsky against Poland and Galicia, Skala experienced a Bolshevik occupation. The occupiers were a ragged, undisciplined bunch that caused the people a lot of pain and suffering, but fortunately they remained in Skala for only seven weeks. The Bolsheviks conducted so-called confiscations, which meant they took away anything that pleased them or came within their reach. The "Revolutionary" fighters for a new social order first of all took away from the people by any means without excuse or pity.

Once again, Galicia, including Skala, became part of the Polish state. Deeply-rooted Polish anti-Semitism raged again, overtly and covertly. However, Jews made every effort to adapt. In Skala, some Jews tried to do business, becoming small shopkeepers and engaging in trade. Some became involved in local manufacturing of hides, linens, pelts, boots and traveled with this merchandise to sell it at fairs in nearby cities, including the famous annual fair at Lashkowce.

Due to the heavy taxes the Polish regime imposed on Jews, the repressions, and all sorts of exclusionary anti-Semitic laws, the political and economic situation of the Jews deteriorated from day to day. In Skala, for example (just as in other cities) the number of poor continued to grow steadily relative to the few wealthier Jews and many struggled to make ends meet.

Jewish students had little hope for a better future in Poland, given the anti-Semitic exclusion policies in the Polish universities. They looked for ways to immigrate to North and South America and also to the Land of Israel.

In spite of everything, there was a very rich and vibrant cultural and social life in Skala and elsewhere in Galicia with political parties and secular and Hassidic groups. Jews refused to despair and maintained their station in life and their self-respect to the extent possible.

THE BEGINNING OF ZIONISM IN SKALA (A GRANDFATHER ARRESTS A GRANDSON...)

U*ntil the beginning of the* 20th century, Zionism had practically no presence in Skala, a pious Hassidic city. Then, all of a sudden, the first Zionist orator appeared in Skala. A grandson of Wolf Itsik Freifelder (the deputy-mayor of Skala), Yisroel Leib Freifelder, who was by then a self-conscious Zionist, involved himself with the newly arrived orator and tried to help him.

There was excitement among the pious townsfolk. Some tried to impede the speaker and break up the meeting. What did the

Hassidim and the opponents of the Zionists do? Since the orator did not have a permit from the district government to speak at a public meeting, Wolf Itsik Freifelder sent the municipal guard, Moshe Yonah Ratses, to arrest his grandson Yisroel Leib and place him in the municipal jail where he was kept overnight and then freed in the morning.

Gradually, a Zionist Society was established that developed into a thriving and dynamic organization, despite the strong opposition of Hassidic circles.

Around 1908-09 a Hebrew school was established in Skala, first with local teachers, then two teachers from out of town: one named Tennenblat and the second, Siwak. The opponents of the school cried foul, claiming that the children were being led off the "righteous path." Nonetheless, the school grew and prospered.



FIG. 18: *Skala Jews celebrating in 1920 the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration favoring the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine.*

During the First World War, Zionist activity was weakened; Skala was occupied by the Russians until August 1917. After the war, Zionist activity slowly resumed, and the Zionists decided to

take over leadership of the community. This was, at the time, the aim of all Zionists in Galicia and a difficult struggle ensued with the Hassidim, who had full control over the communities of Galicia and ruled them with a high hand.

Thanks primarily to four people at the head of the Zionist organization in Skala–Yisroel Leib Freifelder, Moshe Feuerstein, Motie Weidberg, and Ben Zion Fiderer–a Zionist community council was elected on the first vote.

With the help of the American Joint Distribution Committee, the Zionist organization in Skala built a large, impressive Community Center call "Beth Am." The most active person in the construction of Beth Am was Moshe Weidberg of blessed memory. That Community Center housed meeting rooms for the Hebrew Tarbut School, the library, and a large hall for public lectures, celebrations and the Zionist Youth Clubs.

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND ACTIVISTS

At about that time, a Free Loan Society and a people's bank were established in Skala. The founders and leaders of the two institutions were the four above-mentioned activists: Yisroel Leib Freifelder, Moshe Feuerstein, Motie Weidberg, and Ben Zion Fiderer.

At the outset, the Free Loan Society was funded with money collected in Skala. Later, the "Skala Relief Committee" in New York helped. The Free Loan Society provided interest-free loans for business people with limited resources.

The bank was established with the help of the American "Joint," which at the beginning provided little money. After a year, when an outside comptroller checked the books and saw the bank was being run properly, they began to send more money, until it became an important financial institution in town and many Skala Jews benefited from it. Jews could get loans up to 600 zlotys per person, a considerable amount at that time. Naturally, everyone had to provide two guarantors to safeguard the money. The interest paid

by lenders was minimal, just enough to cover the expenses for office rent, the bookkeeper's salary, etc. The bank functioned until the Second World War. Every year the accounts were audited and bookkeepers always found everything in order.



FIG. 19: *The office and administration of the "Gemilat Chassadim Fund" (Free Loan Society-early 30's) Seated left to right: Eliezer Fisch, administrator; Ben-Zion Fiderer and Israel-Leib Freifelder. Standing in the middle: Motie Weidberg. Other two men not identified.*

At the beginning, some people in town thought it was a private bank established by its founders. Velvel Wasserman tried to establish a competitive bank and approached the "Joint" requesting funding for his enterprise. The "Joint" people did not understand what was going on, as they knew a bank had already been established in Skala. They secretly sent someone to Skala to investigate. Wasserman and his partners (I don't remember who they were) were turned down, and that was the end of the competition.

There was in Skala an old, run-down bathhouse. Most of its bathtubs were wooden, though a few were made of tin. If someone wanted a bath it was made in the steam room, and Mykola (the gentile bath attendant) was the only employee. He would carry the heated water from the water boiler and pour it into the tub. People undressed in a cold room and left their clothing on a bench. Some tied up their clothes with twine; the smart ones brought a bag with them to hold their clothes. Some hung their shirts on rafters in the steam room so they could scald in the heat. Until the First World War, the bathhouse attendant was Hirsch-Wolf, a fine and respectable man. The entrance fee on Fridays was six groshen (cents) and a rub-down with a birch-broom was 10 groshen (cents).

After the First World War, the entire structure was rebuilt and a modern public bath erected with the help of the "Joint" and contributions by local Jews. The new modern bathhouse included cabinets and porcelain tubs, first- and second-class steam rooms, drawers for clothing, sofas to rest on, and a tile *mikva* (ritual bath). Some Jews complained that the rebuilt bathhouse had no rafters to hang a dirty shirt on.

In general, that is how Skala on the River Zbrucz in eastern Galicia looked before the great conflagration of the Holocaust. It was a colorful, creative Jewish community. During the peaceful years under the Austrian monarchy, before the First World War, it was a prosperous community that enjoyed freedom and equal rights according to the constitution.

Under Polish rule after the collapse of the Austrian Empire, there was a noticeable decline, including the spread of bitter anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, the Jews of Skala continued to exist even though many faced serious economic, political and social problems. This is how it was, until the outbreak of the Second World War, when the Nazi occupiers and their Ukrainian collaborators, may their names be blotted out, destroyed the community and cut off the lives of the Jews. May the memory of our holy martyrs be sanctified forever.

II. THE HOLOCAUST



FIG. 20: *Memorial tablet to the martyrs of Skala (and environs) dedicated in 1976 at the cemetery in Holon, Israel*

THE DESTRUCTION OF SKALA

Gedalia Lachman



FIG. 21: *Gedalia Lachman*

Two dates are indelibly inscribed in the history of Polish Jewry: On September 1, 1939 the Germans invaded Western Poland; on June 22, 1941 the Nazis invaded Eastern Poland, after 21 months of Soviet rule in that part of the country.

The conquest of Skala on July 8, 1941 by the Hungarian Army was preceded by two weeks of fear, anxiety mingled with groundless hopes and expectations of miracles that would never occur. Amid tearful scenes of parting, dozens of young men were drafted into the Soviet Army. Their families sensed that they would never see their sons again. Officials of the local Soviet Administration left the town. They were joined by those local residents who had served under them in official capacities or who had supported the regime and now feared the vengeance of the Germans and the Ukrainians. In the absence of any official authorities, underworld elements came out in the open and looted warehouses, the brewery, and other abandoned property. In their wake came the supposedly decent

Ukrainian peasants, who carried off anything that fell into their hands. Fearful, the Jews withdrew unto themselves and hid in their houses. In place of the *Reisoviet* (Regional Soviet Council); a local council of Ukrainian notables was established and its members looked forward to the arrival of the German "liberators" in order to receive their official appointments.

Skala was first occupied by Hungarian troops, who were then allies of the Germans. Immediately after the Hungarians arrived, trouble began. They hated the Ukrainians but utilized their services in order to round up the Jews for forced labor. An order was issued whereby all able-bodied Jews had to report daily for the disposition of various tasks, primarily the reconstruction of the bridge over the river Zbrucz, which had been destroyed by the retreating Soviet Army. On July 25, the Hungarians ordered 15 Jews, led by Rabbi Yehuda Drimmer, to appear before them. The names of the 15 had probably been supplied by the Ukrainians who knew the town's Jewish leaders quite well. The Hungarians demanded that the Jews deliver 50 kg. of leather for shoe soles, 10 kg, of boot leather, 10 pairs of boots, 10 kg, of coffee, 10 kg, of pepper, and other provisions, all within two hours. Hostages were taken, and Jewish representatives were informed that the lives of the hostages would be forfeited if the demands were not met. The hostages were ordered to dig their own graves. Quickly the Jews proved that they would be responsible for one another. They voluntarily gathered and delivered the requested ransom.

During the last week of July, the Jews of Skala witnessed a terrible tragedy. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia the Trans-Carpathian region of Ruthenia had been ceded to Hungary. According to the Trianon Agreement the Jews from this area were no longer considered Hungarian citizens. Thousands of Jews, young and old alike, were expelled from their towns and villages. They were herded by the Hungarian soldiers over the former Polish-Soviet border, across the river Zbrucz. On the way Ukrainian peasants and policemen abused them, stole the rest of their possessions, and drove them mercilessly in the direction of

Kamenetz Podolsk-in the Soviet Ukraine, a distance of 20 to 30 kilometers from Skala. The Jews of Skala mobilized to aid their brothers in distress. They collected food and clothing, and bribed the soldiers to give the exiles a brief respite from the march while they remained in Skala. During this rest period hot food was provided, urgently needed aid was given to the injured, and carts were rented from peasants to facilitate the transport of the exiles to their destination. Uziel Stock, a powerful Jew in both body and spirit, offered significant help to these exiled Jews. He was one of two or three Jews who possessed a horse and wagon which he used to collect and bring food to the refugees. He ferried the elderly and the ailing across the border and defended the Hungarian Jews from the assaults of Ukrainian hoods. The expulsions continued, and for many days refugees poured through Skala.

In the midst of this suffering, shocking incidents began to take place in Skala itself. A young boy from Budapest begged the Hungarian soldiers to treat the Jews with more compassion. As a punishment for his audacity, he was tied upside down to a tree in the town square for two hours. From time to time he fainted, but the soldiers only poured water over him and continued to abuse him. Another victim was an aged rabbi who had used the few moments of rest for prayer. When the order to resume the march was given, the Rabbi did not move immediately. He was reciting the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer. The Hungarians beat him brutally. Only the imploring of his daughter and the offer of a bribe secured his life.

The fate of the exiles was sealed when the Germans relieved the Hungarians of their authority over the entire region. The Germans ordered approximately 3,000 Hungarian Jews held in Orynin to gather in a field under the pretext that they would be returned to their homes. Most of them were murdered by volleys of machine guns. Only a few escaped this slaughter. Three young survivors reached Skala and told of this massacre perpetrated by a unit of the infamous *Einsatzgruppe.* For a time the three stayed in Skala. When the danger intensified with the approaching Holocaust, the *Judenrat*

obtained forged documents for these three which enabled them to return to Hungary. They hoped to go to an area familiar to them which was not under the direct control of the Nazis. In fact, all three survived. Today, two are in Israel: Zvi Zelkowitz is a member of Moshav Nordiya and Ya'acov Katz lives in Acre. The third survivor lives in New York.

II

The hostility of the Hungarian regime in Skala was mild compared to the one which followed it. Even the Hungarians, among whom were sensitive and civilized people, had hinted that we would long for them after their departure. At the end of July, the German Army and civilian administrators arrived. The *Zollgrenzschutz-the* border and customs police-was stationed in Skala, although the Soviet-Polish border had been moved far to the east as a result of successful German military conquests. The soldiers of this unit patrolled the old border, the town, and the nearby rural areas. The headquarters of the civilian administration were located in the great estate of the Count Goluchowski, who had already fled during the Soviet occupation. The Germans established a *Liegenschaftsverwaltung* (Land Estates Administration) in the Count's castle. It employed Ukrainian peasants and imposed forced labor upon the Jews, whom the *Judenrat* had to deliver on a daily basis. Like the officers of the *Zollgrenzschuiz* the German civil administrators also demanded whatever goods and supplies came to mind. The *Zollgrenzschutz* included several officers who "distinguished" themselves by terrorizing the Jews of Skala. The senior German officer was Major Braun. He was rarely seen in the streets and maintained very little contact with the *Judenrat.* Most of the time he occupied himself with playing his violin. Eyebrows rose when he invited Mendel Bosyk, the talented violinist from our community, to accompany him. Braun's attitude toward the suffering of the town's Jews may be described as ambivalent. He personally did not utilize his authority to our detriment, but he also did not prevent the

officers under his command from abusing and persecuting the Jews.

Braun's deputy was Captain Hera, and it was he who terrorized the *Judenrat* and the Jews. This cruel and ruthless officer served as local commander and governed all aspects of our daily lives. Hera had, however, no authority over our deaths. That was the domain of the Gestapo, commanded by the *Judenreferent* (officer in charge of Jews), Kelner. Hera excelled primarily as a looter and blackmailer. He possessed neither conscience nor feeling. During frequent outbursts of anger, he would beat his victims cruelly, occasionally using the butt of his pistol. Other officers of the *Zollgrenzschutz* infamous for their abominable behavior were Arthur Engel, Wilhelm Feiffer, and Grauer. Engel frequently engaged in openly looting Jewish property and, usually accompanied by Feiffer, was a "permanent guest" in Jewish homes. While Engel regularly used dogs and a whip, or his fists, Feiffer was a rather light-hearted soul who never actually touched anyone. He was just a petty thief who desired everything he saw. All these thieves diligently remitted the properties they stole to their families in Germany. The Jews who worked in the back yard of the *Zollgrenzschutz in* their horse stables, cowshed and chicken houses, and as domestics in their apartments-often prepared the boxes for packing and shipping. They knew that Hera lived in Chemnitz, Saxony; Engel was a welder in Juterbog; Wagner was a resident of Troppau; and Grauer was a pharmacist from Baden. Grauer was a violent and dangerous giant of a man who, for some unknown reason, was in the habit of attacking tall, sturdy Jews. Once he attacked Motel Goldstein for no apparent reason. The enlisted men followed the example of these officers. Those who were not evil were simply not interested in our fate. Only a few treated "their Jews" who worked on the farm of the *Zoll-grenzschutz* in a humane manner.

Even before the Germans were entrenched in Skala the first victim fell–ironically, not at the hands of the Germans. One evening a hand grenade was thrown into the house of David Hersher, who was my neighbor in Stara-Skala. His wife Rosa, nee Weintraub, was killed. The murderers were Julian Struczinski, a

young Ukrainian who lived next door, and Milko Skoroda, a blacksmith who lived across the street.

III

Immediately upon the entry of the Germans into town, the Judenrat[1] was established. The local commander received from the Ukrainians a list of all those Jews who were known as leaders in the community. These people were invited to the commander's headquarters. Abraham Bilgoraj (the only surviving member of the Skala Judenrat) described this fateful meeting. The commander welcomed the Jews with wild shouts, ordered them to stand by the door, and informed them that no mercy could be expected from the Germans and as long as they were useful to the German people they would live; otherwise, they would die. Bilgoraj was appointed secretary of the Jewish Council" that was ordered to convene within two hours. The group of local leaders met at the house of the young

[1] *Original Editor's note:* At a special symposium of *Yad Vashem* held in Jerusalem in spring 1977, Professor Raul Hilberg defined the character and the functions of the Judenrat as follows:

"Jewish Councils established under German authority were agencies literally charged with responsibility for carrying out the German will. In German eyes, the councils were an instrument to be used in the implementation of a policy in the course of which Jews' life was first constricted and then extinguished. The councils moved Jews into Jewish houses and Jewish districts, registered the inhabitants, supplied forced Jewish labor for German enterprises and projects, expended resources and money for ghetto walls, confiscated Jewish property for German use, and provided statistics required by German offices. There was nothing subtle or unconscious in these overt acts, which often were demanded of the council in peremptory fashion, and which were to be performed promptly and with exactitude.
The councils, however, were not only tools of the German administration. They assumed that they had to care for the Jewish population, especially its most immediate needs for food, space, education, or health. In fact, the Jewish leaders under the Nazis were not personalities newly arrived at the field of action; frequently, they were the prewar chairmen of communities, or deputies and stand-ins for those who had fled from or "deserted" their posts. In many cases, the councils strove to do what they could in nightmarish situation of uncertainties, violence, and acute shortage. Their principal problem, however, was the basic contradiction between Jewish hopes and German commands. Ultimately, any benefits provided by the councils for the community were short-lived whereas those measures-however innocuous-that had to be taken in compliance with German directives were integral steps in a "destruction process that spelled out eventual doom for the entire community.

Rabbi Yehuda Drimmer, and from their ranks seven members of the *Judenrat* were chosen: Mordechai (Motio) Weidberg as chairman, Rabbi Drimmer, Meyer-Zusla Tabak, Nisan Olinger, Joseph Yaget, Abraham Bilgoraj, and Eliezer Fish as secretary.

The members of the *Judenrat* appeared before the German commander, who defined their duties, presented his demands, and imposed the first edicts on the Jewish community: the *Judenrat* would immediately organize an *Ordnungsdienst,* a sort of police that would enforce the instructions of the *Judenrat;* every Jew had to wear a white armband with a blue Jewish star on his right arm and anyone failing to comply with this order would die. Quotas set by the commander regarding forced labor were to be met on a daily basis. Furniture, linens, kitchen utensils, and china had to be supplied immediately and everything was to be of the finest quality. The *Judenrat* would meet these demands in their entirety and without delay. Failure to do so would most assuredly result in death.

In order for the German administrators to know the precise number of workers, the *Judenrat* was required to prepare and submit a list of the entire Jewish population of the town which at the time numbered 1,424 souls. These Jews continued to live in their homes, in the center of town, on the main streets and side streets, and even in the rural suburb of Stara-Skala (Old Skala). No ghetto or Jewish area (*Judenviertel)* was established. However, an order was issued which forbade Jews to enter non-Jewish areas. In August 1942, Jewish homes were marked with a large Star of David drawn on the outer wall or hung in a window, for identification purposes.

Thus, the *Judenrat* began to carry out the orders of the *Zoll-grenzschutz* Commander. In one day he was supplied with all the articles and goods he requested. It should be noted that the majority of the community understood the wisdom of giving up these goods voluntarily. However, as the blackmail and demands increased, the *Judenrat* was faced with opposition from the community and turned to the *Ordnungsdienst* to confiscate the goods and articles required by the Germans. The *Judenrat* appointed a "Finance

Committee" to assess the financial capabilities of every Jew in Skala, and on this basis taxes were imposed on everyone in order to create a fund to pay for the confiscated articles and goods. In this way, the burden was distributed equally among the entire community. After Passover in 1942, Max Sternberg, Yehiel Schwartzbach and Sammy Hescheles were co-opted as members of the Finance Committee.

The Germans' relentless use of forced labor threatened the increasing instability of the community. The *Judenrat* was ordered to supply 40 to 50 workers every day for the *Zollgrenzschutz* farm and residences and nearly twice that number for the agricultural estate. The fear of forced labor that prevailed in the community was due primarily to the abuse and severe beatings by the guards which accompanied the work. Quite often, people hid to avoid the work. When the quota of laborers was not met, Hera and his soldiers would shower blows on the members of the *Judenrat* and the *ordnungsdienst.* The *Judenrat* was thus caught between the threats of the Germans, on the one hand, and the suspicion and enmity of their own community, on the other. It was a long time before the people understood that there would be no escape from the demands of the Germans.

IV

In the beginning of October 1941 the regional headquarters of the Gestapo was established in the city of Czortkow. One of the SS murderers was appointed *Judenreferent* for the entire district. Simultaneously, a German civilian administration began to operate, and at their command a regional *Judenrat* was established in Czortkow. The latter's primary task was the imposition and collection of taxes to meet the Nazi demands. The mass murder of dozens of Jewish intellectuals in Czortkow caused great distress. It was reported that they had been arrested, transported to a nearby forest, and executed en masse before a large burial pit. The regional *Judenrat* was also summarily executed and a new *Judenrat* was appointed and ordered to fulfill the demands of the murderers with

more efficiency. Jews who lived in rural areas were expelled from their homes; poor and empty-handed, they joined their brethren in the neighboring towns. Their property and possessions had been taken over by Ukrainians who had collaborated with the Germans. In this way the population of Skala swelled to 1,550 souls. The Jews who had joined us in April of 1942 came from the rural villages of Burdiakowce, Losiacz, Gusztyn, Cygany and Turylcze. Some Jews from the villages of Muszkatowka Wolkowce, Niwra, and Germakowka also came to Skala. As the town's population grew, the means of livelihood shrank. The continued blackmail emptied the coffers of even the affluent, and starvation began to afflict the poor.

At the end of November 1941 the German *Arbeitsamt* (Labor Office) ordered that a list be compiled of all Jewish men and women between the ages of 16 and 60. Each *Judenrat* was forced to supply a contingent of people for forced labor at the camp of Borki-Wielkie near Tarnopol. Ostensibly, they were to be relieved every six weeks by another group. The *Judenrat* of Skala tried to evade this edict and argued that all able-bodied men in town were already locally employed at the farm of the *Zollgrenzschutz* or on the estate. The arguments went unheeded however, and 50 people were selected by the *Judenrat* and sent to Czortkow on December 2, 1941.

At this time, there was still an atmosphere of gullibility or naiveté that pervaded the town. People didn't know what was meant by a labor camp. Thus, though people did not wish to go, they could be coaxed into volunteering. The fifty who prepared to go to Czortkow were under the impression they would have to work and then be free to go when their replacements arrived. As they approached their destination, the fifty met the laborers from other towns who advised them of the conditions of the forced labor. They suddenly knew that they were in danger and began to run in all directions. Twenty-two people from Skala also fled and hid. The *Judenrat* was ordered to find the escapees and return them to the

camp; otherwise the Gestapo would go after them. The situation was serious, but fortunately, a tragedy was averted.

Along with their brethren from other towns, twenty-eight Jews from Skala were imprisoned in Borki-Wielkie. These prisoners were assigned terribly difficult tasks. It was winter and they worked up to their knees in mud building a roadbed for railroad tracks. The work was usually accompanied by severe beatings, torture and murder perpetrated by Ukrainian policemen whose cruelty knew no bounds. The terrible conditions of starvation and dissipating strength threatened the lives of the camp inmates. Their families pleaded with the *Judenrat* to save them but the long road toward their release was full of obstacles. The *Judenrat* sent an emissary to Borki-Wielkie to establish some sort of contact with the camp commander. During his stay there he was able to help the needy and intervene occasionally on their behalf. Most essential was the distribution of regular weekly parcels of food, clothing and drugs. This actually saved lives. At the same time, all means were employed to secure the prisoners' release. Even as these efforts went on, the camp in Borki-Wielkie claimed its first victims from our town. Moshe Stock, son of Uziel Stock, was killed in a work-related accident. His father, daring as usual, was the one who was transporting food parcels to Borki-Wielkie from their families in Skala. When he arrived at the camp, Stock discovered his son's death. He removed his son's body from the camp and alone in the dark traveled over dangerous, snow-covered roads to bring his son home to Skala for a proper Jewish burial.

The community had barely recovered from this blow when another edict was issued in February 1942. It demanded an additional shipment of slave-laborers for the Borki-Wielkie camp. This time the *Judenrat* knew that in spite of threats and warnings no one would volunteer to go. Everyone had seen that those in the first group had fled and nothing had happened to them. The *Judenrat* tried to bribe the *Arbeitsinspektor* (labor inspector) into canceling the edict, but all efforts failed. At the command of the Nazis and with the aid of the *Ornungsdienst*, the Ukrainian police first seized Jews

from their regular jobs and later raided Jewish homes, seizing anyone they could lay their hands on. A few families of those captured bribed Ukrainian policemen and were able to secure their release on the spot. But the majority was transported under armed guard to the regional concentration center for forced labor in Borszczow. On the way a few more prisoners escaped, but 18 men were eventually sent to Borki-Wielkie. The Nazi authorities were not satisfied with this number and demanded still more people for forced labor. Fear gripped the community, but at the last moment the regional *Arbeitsinspektor* was transferred and for the time being the edict was postponed.

The winter of 1941-42 brought with it another edict: All winter clothing made of fur was to be requisitioned and anyone evading the edict would be put to death. Some dared to hide their furs with Ukrainian acquaintances in the mistaken hope that at the end of their tribulations the furs would be returned. Other valuables were also hidden with gentiles for the "time being" -their owners were killed and the gentiles inherited everything. For some Ukrainians, the Biblical saying "you murdered and also inherited" actually came true. In this manner the difficult winter passed-the Jews of Skala froze, starved, and trembled with fear, but the spring would bring even more horrifying troubles.

V

On April 2, 1942, the first day of Passover, all the *Judenrats* were ordered to compile lists of men between the ages of 12 and 60. All those on the list were then ordered to report to Borszczow that same day in order to receive official "identity papers." (The Nazis were notorious for planning their most loathsome deeds to coincide with Jewish holidays.) The order applied also to the members of the *Judenrat* and the *Ordnungsdienst.* This fact, and the scope of the undertaking, aroused the suspicion of many, but disobedience meant the death penalty.

On the morning of April 2, hundreds of people, most on foot, the elderly riding in carts, set out in the direction of Borszczow a distance of 15 kilometers. (As the journey was necessary for the preservation of life, the Rabbi sanctioned the travel on a holiday.) At the designated time and place the first 160 people arrived and were received by the Ukrainian police. Those who had assembled were directed to large halls where "clerks" were waiting to process them. But when the Jews from all the neighboring towns arrived, hell broke loose. They were surrounded by Gestapo henchmen and Ukrainian police who, with the aid of dogs, brutally herded the Jews to the railway station and from there to the Borki-Wielkie labor camp. Among the prisoners were 84 Jews from Skala-a relatively small number compared to the other towns. Those who had lagged behind were lucky. Thanks to Serka Kasierer, the bitter news of their brethren's fate reached them before they arrived in Borszczow. This brave woman had been sent by Abraham Bilgoraj to warn the latecomers to flee and save themselves. Indeed, we fled in terror through the fields and forests and reached our homes tired, depressed and mournful over the tragic fate of our brothers who were dragged into bondage so ironically during the Passover holiday, the festival of freedom.

Deep concern and additional financial burdens were thus placed on the shoulders of the affected families, the entire community and the *Judenrat.* The *Judenrat* redoubled its efforts to ease the pain and suffering of the camp inmates by supplying them with basic necessities and encouragement, but it simply was not in their power to save them. Chaim Brettler, emissary of the *Judenrat,* extended his help to the camp inmates-by serving for months as the link between the inmates and the *Judenrat.* He also brought them money, food and other aid. On several occasions he interceded with the cruel camp commander on behalf of inmates who were under the threat of death. During this period the *Judenrat* also succeeded in ransoming or exchanging weak inmates for relatives who had volunteered to take their places: All this, of course, through huge bribes.

At this time a second innocent victim fell in Skala. A dreamer named Leib Schechter lived in our town. He was a learned and pious man, but strange in his ways. With the arrival of the Nazis, Schechter began to write letters to the regional authorities protesting the unjust treatment of the Jews. One day an SS man named Bretschneider appeared at the *Judenrat* office and demanded to be taken to Leib Schechter. He took Schechter to a small wooded area near the cemetery, shot him, and ordered the *Ordnungsdienst* to bury him. This murderer was arrested several years ago and was brought before a court in Mannheim, Germany, but he died in jail before the trial could be completed.

VI

E*ven under the terrible conditions* which pervaded Eastern Europe at this time, there were still vibrant communal self-help efforts. One organization noted later by Holocaust historians was the "Yiddishe Social Eleinhilf" (Social Self-Help Organization) which existed in the areas of the Nazi Conquest outside of eastern Russia. I turned to the central office of this organization in Crakow where a fellow townsman named Zvi Zimmerman (destined to be a member of the Israeli Knesset) worked and, as a result, I was appointed to head this organization in Skala. The *Judenrat* supported this activity, and its first tasks were the creation of a public kitchen in the basement of the "Port Arthur Synagogue," distributing bread daily to the poor and collecting clothing for those interned at Borki Wielkie. Helping me in my work were Chaim Hirsch and Chaim Meiselman. Initially, it seemed that we were to play an important part m the attempt to save our people from cold and starvation. But our efforts were not crowned with notable success, as a new outbreak of barbarity occurred in the middle of May 1942.

The *Judenrat* received another order to send men to the forced labor camps, and it was clearly understood by all that this time the *Judenrat* would not be able to comply. The people were no longer naive or gullible. The *Judenrat* informed the commander of the

Zollgrenzschutz that they could not meet the quota. The commander ordered all members of the *Judenrat* the *Ordnungsdienst* and a few others to appear at his headquarters. About 50 of us assembled there. Suddenly, we were surrounded by armed guards and marched to the City Hall. Chaim Yaget, who had replaced his ailing father Joseph Yaget in the *Judenrat,* attempted to escape and Hera shot him in the leg. Afterwards, in spite of his wound, this brave young man continued to organize food shipments to the camps. Our group was kept in a large room of the City Hall. During the night several of our number escaped. In the morning Hera took a head count of prisoners, freed about 30 and sent 20, including myself and my comrades from the "Yiddishe Sociale Eleinhilf" to the Gestapo prison in Czortkow. The commander of the prison, an SS officer named Weber, treated us to murderous beatings with a large wooden stick. I absorbed most of the blows, as I was chosen by my fellow inmates as their spokesman because of my knowledge of the German language.

For a few days we worked at back-breaking labor in the prison yard where two SS men, Martin and Kochman, ran their own reign of terror. Kochman had a huge dog named Bullo; whenever he pointed his finger at one of us, the dog would leap at the poor prisoner's face. Martin had a different "hobby": he would make us lie down on the floor and dance with his heavy boots on our backs. There were 120 Russian prisoners-of-war also incarcerated. Most of them had been commissars and many appeared to be Jewish. Every day they were compelled to walk in a circle with their hands over their heads for up to 10 hours. Those who failed to do so, or who fainted, were killed by the Ukrainian policemen with rifle butts or stomped to death by heavy boots. Within a few weeks they all died.

The *Judenrat* made desperate attempts to ease our sufferings by sending us food and by interceding on our behalf at the regional *Judenrat* level. Through bribes and the payment of a huge ransom, 11 people were saved from the Gestapo prison. The rest of our group and Jews from other towns were shipped off to a labor camp.

At the end of June, a new edict was issued. The *Judenrat* was ordered to send 75 young women to a labor camp near the town of Jagelnica. The *Judenrat* argued that there were no women available to work outside the town and only 6 women were provided instead of the 75 that had been requested. Hera organized a night raid and rounded up more women than were originally required. Again negotiations had to be conducted and again a ransom paid. In spite of these efforts, 20 young women were eventually sent to the labor camp.

VII

On *January 20, 1942, under* the chairmanship of Reinhard Heidrich the Wansee conclave convened. The minutes of this meeting were kept by Adolf Eichmann. Unknown to the free world, this group drew up plans for the ``final solution" of the Jewish problem. The first stage of the final solution, due to begin during the summer of 1942, was the destruction of one-half of the Jewish population–those who had been crowded into ghettos and Jewish areas for more than a year. At the same time, the labor camps were to be kept fully supplied with manpower and new labor camps were to be built.

These two stages operated simultaneously: one for forced labor and one for death. Then the *Arbeitsamt* registered the Jews and divided them into two categories: those fit for work and those who were not fit. Accordingly, all men between the ages of 16 and 60 were ordered to appear in Czortkow to receive identification cards signed by the Gestapo's *Judenreferent.* As usual, the Jews of Czortkow were the first to fulfill this demand. Led by the members of the *Judenrat* and other institutions, they appeared before the authorities on August 18, 1942. Some of them received the "redeeming" documents, but about 200 others were sent to the labor camp at Kamionka near Tarnopol. The *Judenrats* of all the towns in the district learned from this terrible lesson. A large bribe

succeeded in having identity papers signed en masse for people who were supposed to have appeared there in person.

Meanwhile, the machine-like efficiency of death deportations, the so-called "actions," had started to function. Shocking rumors spread about mass murders in every part of Galicia. During the "action" in Czortkow thousands of Jews were caught and sent in freight trains to unknown destinations. Two names struck fear in the heart of every Jew: The camp on Janowska Street in Lvov, and the death camp in Belzec.

The head of the "Jewish Section," the Gestapo officer named Kelner, would often "visit" the *Judenrat* in Skala and usually leave laden with valuable articles and gifts that the Jews of the town had paid for in blood and money. On September 25, 1942, Nisan Olinger, a member of the *Judenrat* in Skala, delivered a "gift" to Kelner in his office in Czortkow, as Kelner had requested. That same afternoon, Kelner himself appeared in the *Judenrat* office in Skala to make sure the "gift" had been sent to him. While he was there, he wanted to know whether Skala could absorb Jews from neighboring communities. The *Judenrat* replied that during the month of March, Jews from neighboring villages had already settled in Skala, and the Jewish area was now severely crowded. Kelner ordered two members of the *Judenrat* to accompany him on a tour of the Jewish area to verify this report. He also demanded additional gifts: a large amount of heavy shoe leather and 12 gold coins. After the tour, Kelner expressed his satisfaction and promised the *Judenrat* that "everything would be all right" (we were informed later that Kelner had repeated this deceit in every town in the district.) Upon his arrival in Czortkow, where Olinger was waiting for him with the large "gift," Kelner repeated his promise. That evening, when Olinger came home from Czortkow, he reported Kelner's optimistic words. The "good news" spread through the town and the Jews naively thought that this time they would be able to celebrate the festival of Succot with relative ease. Many felt so relieved, in fact, they did not take the usual precaution of sleeping in bunkers or in hiding' places.

The "action," began at six o'clock in the morning on Saturday, the first day of Succot, September 26, 1942. We, the few Jewish families still residing in the rural suburb of Stara-Skala, were the first to glimpse the impending tragedy. Just before dawn we heard the muffled roar of automobile motors on the highway between Skala and Czortkow which passed near our homes. We had already been warned by our neighbor Michael Jagendorf, who worked in the pig sty of the *Zollgrenzschutz that* something was going to happen that night. He had been awakened by Wilhelm Feiffer, who had developed a liking for Michael and told him to go immediately to the farm under the pretext of taking care of the animals. We sat near our windows in the dark and waited. From down the road came a long line of vehicles full of armed men. Their headlights were dimmed and the whole line was moving slowly toward the town. We fled and hid in nearby fields and bushes, each of us in a different spot. (My mother was saved for the time being, but I was later discovered by Ukrainian policemen who took me, badly bruised and beaten, to the town from which I eventually managed to escape).

The town was surrounded by 150 gendarmes of the "Schupo" (Schutz-Polizei), the "Kripo" (Kriminal Polizei), and Ukrainian policemen who were led by Kelner and three or four other Gestapo officers. When they entered the town, Kelner summoned the *Judenrat* and the *Ordnungsdienst* and ordered them to accompany the men who were carrying out the "action" and to supervise the collection of furniture and all movable goods from the raided apartments. The town was carefully combed from one end to the other. Doors were broken down with axes and poles. Every house was searched from attic to cellar with the keen attention of hunting dogs. Well-camouflaged bunkers were discovered, and dozens of people removed, beaten and taken to the barracks of the former Polish Border Guards, now surrounded by a barbed wire fence. (This fence had been erected by the Nazis earlier that spring. They had spread a rumor then that the camp was being prepared for prisoners-of-war or French laborers.) The search parties were

accompanied by Ukrainian peasants, who quickly packed the loot into carts and transported it to improvised warehouses. Ironically, these were the synagogues that had been abandoned for some time. The Ukrainians also looted for themselves. Kelner and two of his assistants, the Gestapo men Pahl and Frantz, directed the "action." They acted like wild men-screaming, beating and shooting. Nearly 30 people were killed during the "action," many of them elderly, ill or those who attempted to hide or refused to be led like sheep to slaughter. At that time Pahl murdered an old woman who fled into a cellar of the *Judenrat* building. Abraham Bilgoraj saw Pahl commit several other murders of this nature. (This criminal is being tried in Mannheim and the court proceedings have been dragging on for several years.) Pahl and his men also conducted brutal body searches on the prisoners in the barracks and robbed them of any remaining valuables.

The hellish fire of the "action" raged out of control throughout the day and into the evening. Only then did the "action" quiet down and a deathly silence came over the town, disturbed by an occasional shot, the shouts of the murderers as they discovered someone coming out of hiding or the sighs of those languishing in the barracks behind the barbed wire. It was a clear moonlit night, and heaven looked down on the murder of innocent people and was silent.... On Sunday, the second day of Succot, the "action" continued but only a few people were found. Our Ukrainian neighbors once more showed their traditional hatred of the Jews, when those who collaborated with the Nazis searched bunkers and turned in those who still hid there.

The "action" ended at noon of that Sunday, and the results were devastating; nearly 700 people were captured or killed, yet Kelner's appetite was not satisfied, The dead and the living were gathered and counted, and the *Judenrat* was ordered to bury the dead in a mass grave in the cemetery, At 11 o'clock, a final count was taken by the Nazis. Members of the *Judenrat* were lined up and informed that the number of those taken during the action was too small (less than 50 percent of the population); therefore, the *Judenrat* too was

to be punished. Rabbi Drimmer, Eliezer Fish, and Meyer-Zusia Tabak were added to the "shipment." Tabak saved himself by paying a high ransom. However, Drimmer and Fish and two members of the *Ordnungsdienst* whose behavior did not please Kelner were taken away. At noontime hundreds of people of all ages were marched off to the railway station. Their guards severely abused them every step of the way. The Jews were loaded into crowded freight cars, 75 to 80 in a car, and transported to a then unknown destination. After a few days a message was received from the Janowska Camp in Lvov. The prisoners had been taken there and the "selection" had taken place: the women, the elderly, and the children were sent to their death in Belzec and the rest awaited their fate in Lvov. The death camp of Belzec was shrouded in mystery: very little that went on there filtered out, and no record remained. The Nazis razed the camp to the ground and burned the skeletons of hundreds of thousands of corpses before the Soviet Army occupied the area 10 the summer of 1944. Half of our people from Skala perished at Belzec. Very few of those transported to Belzec survived, except for those who dared to jump off the trains (one who survived is our fellow townsman, Abraham Brandes-Trasawucki).

The tragic news from the Janowska camp was no better. The men were forced to run up and down a hill carrying loads of bricks. Those who stumbled or fell behind were killed. Rabbi Drimmer, Eliezer Fish, and Joseph Meiselman were among the first to be killed and the others were murdered later or sent to the extermination camp of Belzec, But, as long as some of our people were still alive in the Janowska camp, they received some aid through whatever ways we could devise, A Polish woman who worked in the camp agreed to pass messages and requests from the inmates to the surviving Jews of Skala. There was also a young Polish man who, for a price, agreed to bring food once a month to the same Polish woman, who would then smuggle it, a little at a time, into the camp. It was later learned, from the few who succeeded in escaping, that these food deliveries sustained many of

our tortured fellow townsmen who also shared the food they received with others.

Several attempts were made to escape from the Janowska camp. Moshe Bilgoraj attempted to escape but was caught by a "Kapo" (camp police) who brought him back to the camp but did not turn him over to the murderers for immediate execution. He and Shlomo Schwartzbach were among the last victims to die in the camp.

VIII

T*he "action" ended and half* our Jewish community was gone. The other half were hiding in bunkers, mourning in awful silence, awaiting an unknown fate. Only after a few days had passed did the survivors dare to come out of their hiding places in order to pick up the pieces, to somehow restore their plundered apartments, and to face a life of terrible poverty and decline. After this great tragedy, there was no longer any doubt. More upheavals were ahead, and we were nearing our end. At the end of the day's forced labor, some of our people would lock themselves in their hiding places, or flee to a gentile friend's home for a restless night's sleep. Others succeeded in staying with their gentile acquaintances for several days and prepared hiding places for themselves should the hour of need arise again.

The "action" and the labor camps had already destroyed over 1,000 souls in the Jewish community of Skala. Very few families were spared. The survivors were lonely, broken people: widowers, widows, and orphans who hoped merely to somehow continue their miserable existence. Who could have known at that time that a plan existed for the "final solution"-the total destruction of all Jews in occupied Europe within a specified period of time, and that by the middle of the summer, 1943, Europe would be declared *Judenrein* (free of Jews).

Less than two weeks after the "action," the next stage in the destruction of the Skala Jewish community began. Through the regional *Judenrat,* an order was issued to the surviving Jews of

Ozieran, Mielnica, Korolowka and Skala to leave their hometowns by October 22, 1942, and to move into the central "ghetto" that would be established in Borszczow. Anyone defying the order would be shot. Once more, the local *Judenrat* attempted to offer ransoms and bribes in order to cancel this edict, but without success. Every sensible person understood that the concentration in Borszczow was designed to facilitate further mass murders. Those who were left penniless, those without friends among the Poles or Ukrainians, those who were, overcome by despair and accepted their inevitable fate-all packed their remaining belongings and moved to Borszczow. Only a few dozen people remained in Skala and each one of them grasped at a different straw in the wind: one group worked as laborers on the farm of the *Zollgrenzschutz* and as domestic servants of the officers and soldiers; another group, the "veterans" at the estate, continued to work in the *Liegenschaft* (state farm); and there were individuals who did not belong to any group, who, for large sums of money and through intermediaries, were able to obtain certificates issued by the Gestapo which designated them as "important to the German economy" *(Wirtschaftswichtige Juden)* as collectors of rags, bones, scrap metal, etc. However, among these some had "hard" certificates thought to be safer, and some possessed "soft" certificates which hardly promised the bearer any safety at all. In a short time, in fact, the latter proved to be of no value. Those Jews with the letter "W" (for *Wirtschaftswichtig)* marked on the lapels of their garments, could move around freely without being attacked by the murderous Ukrainian policemen or the Nazis. The fruit of their labor was meager, however, and soon their German employers "forgot" to ask for the supply of collected materials. They simply became "protected Jews," but this too lasted only a short time.

Those Jews who stayed with gentile friends did so through the payment of large sums of money, the deposit of their belongings and the promise that all their non-movable property would be turned over to their protectors at the end of the war, when the survivors would disperse to distant lands to rebuild their lives.

Several dozen Jews, most of them survivors of decimated families took refuge in the forest where they prepared camouflaged hiding places underground. Under conditions of constant fear, the remnants of our Jewish community passed the winter of 1942-43.

On March 6, 1943, all the remaining Jews in Skala, except for the workers on the estate and the farm of the *Zollgrenzschutz,* were ordered to leave town and join the concentration of Jews in Borszczow. The last members of the *Judenrat* and others who, out of utter despair, accepted the edict, packed their meager possessions and moved to Borszczow. Everyone else found hiding places in bunkers, in the ruins of houses, in homes of friendly gentiles, or in the forest. A deathlike silence fell over the town. The looted, empty houses stood staring through their broken windows like eye holes in the skulls of corpses.

The blood-thirsty Ukrainian police, many of them from "prominent" families of Skala, patrolled the streets and alleys by day and night in search of those still hiding. Ukrainian thugs and murderers assisted the police and all received encouragement from their "intelligentsia," the priest Derewienko and Dr. Modna. Both incited the mob to complete the annihilation of the last remaining Jews. The Ukrainian murderers were joined by others, who came from an unexpected source-some Uzbek deserters from the Red Army gained the confidence of the Germans and were added to the *Zollgrenzschutz.* During the summer of 1943, the hiding place of Dr. Steuerman and his family was discovered by the Uzbeks beneath the Strusover Synagogue. All of them were shot on the spot.

The days and nights of the spring, summer and fall of 1943 crept by. From time to time volleys of rifle fire broke the silence of the night. Again and again, Jews hiding in bunkers were discovered, brought to the cemetery and murdered in cold blood. Horror stories spread about the cruel deaths of men and women slaughtered by their gentile "protectors" when the latter had tired of hiding them. The bodies of these victims were found strewn over the fields. One morning the police raided the estate farm and killed

all the Jewish workers. On the night of October 19, 1943 the workers of the *Zollgrenzschutz* were rounded up and sent the next morning to the Janowska Camp. All perished in Belzec, except for one girl who hid in the attic of the *Zollgrenzschutz* building.

During the same period, the refugees from Skala who had been crowded into the ghetto of Borszczow suffered enormous hardship. The hunger, crowding, and poor sanitary conditions caused an outbreak of typhus which brought death–perhaps a charitable death–to many ghetto inhabitants. The outbreak of the disease was kept a secret from the Nazis, lest they use this as an excuse to kill everyone without distinction or delay. On the eve of Purim, in March 1943, the Ukrainian militia fanned out into the streets of the Borszczow ghetto, arresting scores of men and women of all ages. The prisoners were kept in a local jail for no "apparent" reason and gradually were released for ransom payments. Every one of the prisoners was exposed to typhoid and contracted the disease to which many succumbed.

In April 1943, on Passover eve, another massacre followed in which several hundred Jews perished. During this so-called Passover "action," the victims were first brought to the Jewish cemetery where they were brutally machine gunned before open pits. Many were buried alive in mass graves, while still writhing between life and death. Their blood gushed forth from the graves in such volume and with such force that it was necessary to dig new graves and new trenches.

During the festival of Shavuot, on June 9, 1943, the murderers attacked the remnants of the ghetto for the last time. They broke into even the most sophisticated bunkers and hiding places. They took the last Jews (about 800 souls) to the Jewish cemetery and murdered them all, among them the last remnants of the Jews from Skala. The ghetto of Borszczow, in fact the entire region, was declared *Judenrein* (free of Jews). Until the liberation of the area by the Red Army in March 1944, no Jew who had survived the slaughter could walk about freely in broad daylight.

Yehoshua Cukier and Lonek Young from Borszczow. Their struggles and their deaths are described in *Sefer Borszczow* (The Borszczow Book).

There was literally no place where the pursued could hide for an extended period of time. Gentiles who harbored Jews were punished by the murderers, thus their hospitality turned to fear and the Jews were forced to leave these hiding places. They went to the forests where their chances of survival were dim. Some Jews went of their own free will to small agricultural work camps in the area, such as Dobraniowka, near Jezierzany, Others sought sanctuary at the camp in Lisowce, near Tluste, which had a good reputation, thanks to two German officers who had taken pity on their captives and saved many Jews from the hands of the Gestapo. This was the only camp in which nearly 200 Jews survived the Holocaust. All the other camps were destroyed and their occupants murdered in July 1943.

IX

D*uring those nine months* (June 1943 to March 1944) the Ukrainian policemen and their civilian accomplices searched out hundreds of Jews, caught them in the hiding places or while out at night looking for food and murdered them. Many who had sought refuge in the forest were killed by the Ukrainian fascist-partisans, who belonged to the infamous gangs of Stefan Bandera. His headquarters were located in a nearby forest. The sufferings and travails of the "Jews of the forests" was a bloody chapter, described in this book by one of the survivors. Another episode was the heroic but hopeless struggle of the Jewish partisans (among whom were a number of men from Skala) led by Yehosha

The winter of 1943-44, the forces of freedom and liberation are on the march toward certain victory. The grinding wheels of Nazi oppression and murder are being pushed back. Even the monstrous hearts and minds of the war criminals are filled with fear and anxiety for their own fate. Still, up until the last moments of their

accursed lives, they are feverishly occupied with planning the destruction of any victims within their grasp. Even as liberators moved to free us, the suffering and death continued in the camps.

On January 13, 1944, Sarni, a city in the southeastern part of prewar Poland, was the first to be liberated. The Red Army advanced southward in the direction of Tarnopol and the river Dniester on the old Romanian-Polish border. By March 24, 1944, the chains of Soviet tanks clanked through the deserted streets of Skala. The Jews, dead or hiding, and the Ukrainians cowering in fear of the punishment they could now expect for their crimes. Within a few hours after the town was liberated, the survivors began to come out of their bunkers, their hiding places with friendly gentiles, and out of the forests. They looked more like skeletons than human beings, dressed in tattered clothing with rags on their feet instead of shoes, some limping on their walking sticks. This is what remained of our community after 600 years of existence and four years of the Holocaust: less than 150 survivors out of a total of 1,550 Jewish residents of Skala before the Holocaust. Moreover, this number was arrived at only after the return from the Soviet Union of those who had fled to the east at the beginning of the war or were deported there by the Soviets.

X

T*he last few days of March 1944* witnessed the beginning of a slow recovery from the shock of the Holocaust. There was, however, great concern among the few survivors over the small number of Russian troops in Skala. There were rumors that across the river Zbrucz, in the region of Kamenetz Podolsk, an entire SS division had been encircled by-the Russians but was still fighting. Early one morning, heavy fighting broke out and the small contingent of Soviet troops retreated to the north in disarray. Within a few hours Skala was again occupied by hoards of Nazi SS men and dirty, hungry and disorganized German troops. Whoever succeeded in joining the retreating Soviet troops was saved. Others hid in every

possible place, once more people took to the forests. Four more of our people were killed by the Germans or the Ukrainians-Benjamin Gottesfeld, Finio Frenkel, Chaim Gottesfeld, and the little girl, Bracha Tabak. A week passed and our liberators returned with reinforcements and pushed the Nazi divisions back in the direction of Buczacz.

The news of Skala's liberation reached our brothers in Palestine at the beginning of April. Upon our arrival there several years later we were shown a clipping from the newspaper *Mishmar (sic)* dated Friday, April 7, 1944 (14 days in the month of Nisan, 5704). Under the headline "Skala Liberated," the story read: "The complete destruction of the encircled German Divisions is expected. It is reported from Moscow that Skala southeast of Tarnopol-has been liberated. Fifteen German divisions have been trapped in this area. In those battles, the Soviet Army has captured a considerable amount of war booty. Southeast of Tarnopol, the armies of General Zhukov have repulsed counterattacking enemy forces after heavy fighting in which the enemy has suffered heavy casualties." We read this news and shed bitter tears, remembering that even during this moment of liberation four from our decimated community were killed.

Not for one moment did the survivors of the Holocaust consider rebuilding their lives on that blood-soaked earth. They did however, deem it their moral duty to assist the Soviet military and civilian authorities in eradicating the nests of Ukrainian fascists in the forests, apprehending local murderers and giving testimony against them in their trials. Some survivors were drafted into the Soviet Army and contributed to the defeat of the Nazis. The survivors also did everything they could to repay the kindness of those few gentiles who risked their lives to save Jewish lives.

In the meantime another survivor of the Holocaust was murdered by the *Banderovtzi* (Ukrainian fascist terrorists). This was yet another reminder to the survivors that they must abandon this cursed land. Soon after, the dispersion began. Some moved to the liberated part of western Poland and concentrated in the area

annexed from Germany, namely Upper Silesia. Members of prewar Zionist movements sought to reestablish the activities of their groups among the survivors. They formed kibbutz aliyah groups in the cities of Warsaw, Lodz, Krakow, Katowitz, and in the towns of Upper Silesia. Desperate efforts were made to gather Jewish orphans, including those who had already been absorbed by communist boarding schools, to bring them across the Polish-Czech border to Austria and southern Germany. A number of survivors from Skala found temporary residence in the D.P. (Displaced Persons) camps In Germany and Austria. From there they started out for all corners of the free world–some to the United States and Canada, others to the Land of Israel. According to the statistics (see page 143), 13 survivors emigrated to Canada over 60 settled in the United States, 4 stayed in Poland, 49 emigrated to Israel, and the balance are scattered in other countries.

Over thirty years have passed and our numbers have steadily declined. Some have passed away, physically and spiritually broken. The Holocaust, its aftermath and nightmares shortened their lives and sent them to their graves before their time. In the United States and Israel annual memorial meetings are usually held on the anniversary of the "action." Now fewer and fewer of our townsmen appear. We look at each other and discern the wrinkles of old age and the sorrow that has gnawed at our hearts throughout these years and will be with us until our time comes.

EPILOGUE

W*e, the surviving remnants of* the Jewish Community of Skala residing in Israel and in the Diaspora, took upon ourselves the sacred duty of preserving the memory of our martyrs and assuring that the Holocaust of our home town shall never be forgotten. A memorial tablet has been erected on Mount Zion and placed among the hundreds of name-tablets of Jewish communities destroyed during the Holocaust. The society of former Skala residents in New York contributed a considerable sum of money

toward the erection of a Kupat Holim medical clinic in Netanya in memory of our destroyed community. In the book *Landsmanschaften in Israel,* we published a memorial article about the history of our community from its beginning to its extinction. In the Holocaust memorial section of the Holon Cemetery near Tel Aviv, a tombstone was erected in memory of the martyrs of Skala and the neighboring villages. The Berl Katznelson High School of Kfar Saba "adopted" our community through a special certificate presented to *Yad Vashem* in Jerusalem. A similar gesture was made by the Shabazi School in Moshav Even-Yehuda, where I was invited to give a series of lectures to the school children (most of them from Yemen) about Skala, its Jewish community, its life and tragic demise. These lovely children were deeply moved by the terrible tragedy that befell their brothers in the distant Diaspora. They composed poems, wrote stories, and drew pictures from their imagination about the town and its extinction. Before his untimely death, our unforgettable townsman Shlomo Bilgoraj, himself a talented painter, saw and admired the children's work.

At the Katznelson School, Holocaust studies have been included as part of the course in Modern History of the Jewish People. All eleventh-grade students hear a series of 35 lecture-discussions and reminiscences about the Holocaust. I illustrate the horrors of the Holocaust through a description of the destruction of the Jewish community of Skala.

The students get to know our town with all its lights and shadows, its joys and sorrows, its personalities and leaders, and every stage of its extermination. They write extensive term papers on the Holocaust and the authors of the best of these are given books about the Holocaust, awarded at the end of the school year by the "LachmanWeiss Foundation." This Foundation was established years ago by my family to preserve the memory of the Holocaust.

Before I retire, I intend to tape-record the history of Skala to make sure that the coming generations of students in my school[2]

[2] *Original Editor's note:* For more than twenty years, the author has been the principal of the

will hear the story of our town; its life and tragic destruction, long after all of us are gone.



מגילת הנצחה

בית־הספר ... במדינת ישראל

מעתיר בזה תודתו, כי ביום ... לחודש ... תשכ"ז קיבל עליו את המשימה הקדושה

להנציח את קהילת ... ובארץ שלנו)

שנחרבה בשנות השואה על ידי קלגסי חנאצים חטמאים וגרוריהם.

תלמידי בית הספר, בשיתוף עם הרשויות החינוכיות ועם ארגוני הקהילה בארץ ובתפוצות, ובעזרת הוועדה הארצית להנצחת הקהילות שעל יד ידושם בירושלים, יעשו כמיטב יכולתם וימשיכו בפעולה שהחלו בה להעלות לזכר עולם את הקהילה היל בחייה ופעלה, עד לשואה וכן בסבלה, מאבקה וכליונה בתקופת החורבן.

מורה בית הספר ...

נציגי התנועות המארחות: מן ... ב' ...

ב"כ ועד הקהילה: ...

מגילה זו נתקבלה ביד ושם לטשמרת עולם.

FIG. 22: *Memorial scroll proclaiming the adoption of Skala by the Berl Katznelson High School in Kfar Saba, Israel in 1968.*

Berl Katznelson Regional High School in Kfar Saba.

DOCUMENTS: CRIMES PERPETRATED BY THE GERMAN-FASCIST OCCUPIERS AND THEIR COLLABORATORS

This document was written in Skala Podolska. The information contained here was provided in July 1944 *by persons who survived the war and its horrors.*

The Coordinating Commission[1] for the verification and confirmation of the crimes committed by the German-fascist occupiers of the region of Skala Podolska in the state of Tarnopol, established and deposited the following:

Upon the entry of the German forces into the town of Skala Podolska, a local administration began to function carrying out the orders of the "Arbeitsamt" (labor bureau), of the "Kreishauptmann" (regional chief), and of the Gestapo in Czortkow, as well as of the German police in Borszczow and of the German border garrison in Skala Podolska. The main purpose of the orders of the above-mentioned organs of the German-fascist occupation authorities was to persecute, torment and destroy the Jewish inhabitants of Skala Podolska.

In July and August of 1941, between 28,000 and 30,000 Hungarian Jews-men, women and children-forcibly expelled from Hungary, were driven through Skala. The Germans and their collaborators led them across the river Zbrucz to the town of Orynin in the county of Kamenetz Podolsk. In the dense stretches of forest between Kamenetz Podolsk and the town of Dunayowce, in the so-called "Las Czarny" (black forest), the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators shot more than 23,000 Hungarian Jews. The remaining Jews in Orynln were told by the Germans that they

[1] Established by the Soviet-Russian military authorities

could return to their homes. However, on the road between Orynin and the village of Poklaki, the returning Jews were shot and thrown into prepared mass-graves. This heinous, murderous act was perpetrated by the Germans and their Ukrainian henchmen.

Beginning in December 1941, the German invaders started to round-up able-bodied Jews and to transport them to concentration labor camps in Borki Wielkie, Stupki, Kamionka in the county of Tarnopol, and Janowska in Lwow. Out of 400 Jews from Skala sent to those camps, only 5 or 6 survived. All the others were shot, hanged or perished from starvation, disease and unbearable torture.

In the summer of 1942 the Gestapo assumed complete control over the Jews. Gestapomen, criminal police and local German forces, as well as their Ukrainian collaborators, surrounded the Jewish quarters of Skala and thus began the "liquidation" of the Jewish inhabitants. During this so-called "action," buildings were demolished in order to detect hidden Jews. Those that were found were forcibly placed into freight cars and "shipped" to the horrible death-camps in the woods of the village of Belzec near Rawa-Ruska. There they were exterminated by SS men in gas-cells or through mass electrocution. On September 26-27, 1942 almost half of the Jewish population of Skala Podolska was thus exterminated. In addition some 33 old and sick men and women, who could not be transported by railway to Belzec, were shot in their beds or in the streets of Skala.

On October 22, 1942, the remnants of the Jews of Skala were expelled to the town of Borszczow. From then on until June 1943 most of them perished during the so-called "liquidation" pogroms carried out intermittently by the Ukrainian police under the direction of the Gestapo, A small number of Jews were hiding in subterranean "bunkers" that they built for themselves in the forests of Skala, Cygany, Zelince and a few found shelter among their non-Jewish friends.

From the beginning of March 1943 until December 1943 a Jewish resistance group was active in those forests. This group of about 65 men was under the command of Osias Zucker and Leon

Young (both from Borszczow). They operated and fought under very difficult conditions of hunger, typhus and inclement weather and with very limited light arms at their disposal. At the end of December 1943, outnumbered and surrounded by heavily armed, large German army units, they all died in battle while inflicting many casualties on the Germans.

At the same time the Gestapo turned over full authority over concealed Jews to the Ukrainian police who sought them out and murdered them with the help of informers and collaborators from among the local peasantry. The Ukrainian police and their accomplices carried out frequent searches in the homes of suspected non-Jews looking for concealed Jews. Those found were led to the Jewish cemetery in Skala Podolska, stripped of their clothes, shot and buried in mass graves.

In the forest of Skala Podolska 197 Jews perished in this manner.

One hiding place was set on fire and 21 men, women, and children choked to death or were burned alive.

All these crimes were well known to the non-Jewish population of Skala.

They were investigated and verified by the county prosecutor of Skala. The perpetrator of the criminal act of burning and murdering 21 people-the forester Czepesiuk-was sentenced to death. The informer of the Ukrainian police, Lyczak, was sentenced to 25 years in jail. Others were exiled to remote labor camps. Many other crimes are still being investigated.

List of the crimes and of their perpetrators is hereby attached:

CRIMES PERPETRATED BY THE GERMAN-FASCIST OCCUPIERS AND THEIR COLLABORATORS IN SKALA PODOLSKA, STATE OF TARNOPOL*

No.	Crime	Date	Location	Deaths	Crime Perpetrators
1	Citizens murdered with hand grenades[2]	July 12, 1941	House No. 592 in Skala	1	Ukranians: Struczinski and Skoroda
2	Citizen shot to death[3]	April 13, 1942	Street behind German headquarters	1	Gestapoman Bretschneider
3	Two citizens shot to death[4]	May 22, 1942	Main street of Skala	2	German border guards: Grauer and Schultz
4	Citizen shot to death [5]	Sept. 23, 1942	At the entrance to the "liegenschaft" (state farm)	1	Gestapoman Bretschneider
5	Half of the Jewish inhabitants of Skala including refugees from neighboring villages were rounded up and transported to the death camps of Belzec, near Rawa-Ruska	Sept. 26-27, 1942	Skala Podolska	695	Gestapo unit under the direction of Pahl, Rosen-hof and Fischer; German border guards and Ukranian police
5a	Citizens shot to death during above roundup	Sept. 26-27, 1942	Skala Podolska	33	Same as above
6	Citizens of Skala murdered in concentration and labor camps	From Dec. 1941 through July '43	Borki Wielke, Stupki, Kamionka and Janowska (Lwow)	127	German SS troops and Ukranian police

** Verification for all the crimes listed here was by eyewitness accounts*

[2] Roza Herscher
[3] Leib Schechter
[4] Meg-Chaig Kohn (Dybuk) and Hersch Schor-Trasawucki
[5] Chana Grunman

No.	Crime	Date	Location	Deaths	Crime Perpetrators
7	Mass murder of Skala citizens expelled to the ghetto of Borszczow during the so-called "Purim action"	March 17, 1943	Borszczow Jewish cemetery (Makowa Mogila)	80	Gestapoman and Ukranian policemen under the direction of Gestapo officer Kellner: the Ukranian police-chief Semenczuk and his deputy Hawryszko
8	Mass murder of Skala citizens during the so called "Passover action" in Borszczow	April 19, 1943	Borszczow Jewish cemetery	59	Same as above
9	Mass murder of Skala citizens during the so called "liquidation action" in Borszczow	June 5-9, 1943	Borszczow Jewish cemetery	98	Gestapomen under the command of Rosenhof; Ukranian police under the command of Semenczuk and his deputy Hawryszko
10	Citizens of Skala shot to death	June 28, 1943	Skala Jewish cemetery	28	Ukranian police and German gendarmes from Borszczow
11	Citizens of Skala shot to death	June 29, 1942	On the streets of Skala and Skala Jewish cemetery	14	Ukranian policemen: Sirma Jakowyszyn with the help of local collaborates Lyczak and Duchinski
12	Citizens of Skala shot to death[6]	July 29, 1943	Hiding places in Skala	3	Ukranian policeman Nakoniczewski and collaborators Petryszyn and SZczerban

[6] Motel Goldschein, Golda Leibart and daughter

No.	Crime	Date	Location	Deaths	Crime Perpetrators
13	Citizens of Skala shot to death[7]	Aug. 10, 1943	"Liegenschaft" (state farm) in Skala, backyard of Synagogue and main street	31	Gestapoman Fischer; Ukranian police under the command Semenczuk with collaborator Petryszyn
14	Citizens of Skala shot to death[8]	Sept. 3, 1943	Market place of Skala	3	Ukranian policeman Nakoniczewski and collaborator Petryszyn
15	Citizens of Skala murdered[9]	Sept. 18, 1943	Forest, 3 km north of Skala	11	Ukranian police
16	Mass murder of citizens	Sept. 25, 1943	Forest, 3 km north of Skala	129	German SS troops
17	Citizens apprehended in the forest and deported to the death camp of Janowska (Lwow)	Sept. 25, 1943	Forest, 3 km north of Skala	28	German SS troops
18	Citizens of Skala shot to death[10]	Sept. 30, 1943	Village of Berezanka near Skala	1	Ukranian policeman Lesiuk
19	Citizens who worked for the German border police deported to the Janowska death camp (Lwow)	Oct. 19, 1943	Skala Podolska	42	German border patrol
20	Citizen shot to death[11]	Oct. 30, 1943	Forest north of Skala	35	Ukranian policemen, among them Jukubyszyn and Bezpaluk
21	Citizen shot to death	Nov. 6, 1943	Jewish cemetery of Skala	1	Stach Mazor– collaborator

[7] Families Bosyk, Herscher, Dr. Steuerman, Bloch, Leibowicz, Jaegendorf Wladdzio, Kasirer, Badler, and Segal (from Borszczow)
[8] Bretschneider Aron, Szejndel, and Edzia
[9] Regina and Moshe Jaegendorf, Roza and Berl Blutstein, Rachel and Izak Steiner and son Moshe, Dvora Jagendorf, Sheva Fuss and two children: Simcha and Nusia
[10] Mordechai Bosyk
[11] Motio Blutstein

No.	Crime	Date	Location	Deaths	Crime Perpetrators
22	Citizens shot to death[12]	Nov. 18, 1943	Jewish cemetery of Skala	25	Ukranian policeman among them Jakubyszyn
23	Citizens shot to death	Dec. 30, 1943	Jewish cemetery of Skala	4	German gendarme Frizenwalde and Ukranian policemen
24	Citizens burned alive in their hiding place	March 1, 1944	Forest north of Skala	21	Ukranian policemen Jukubyszyn, Rembochs and the forester Czepesiuk
25	Citizens tortured and murdered[13]	Dec. 25, 1943	Village of Iwankow	3	Ukranian bandits in the forest
26	Citizen murdered[14]	March 20, 1943	Distillery of spirits in Skala	1	German soldier

[12] Hersch Helman, wife and child and Yehudit Yusem
[13] Ben-Zion Gertler and family
[14] Eliahu Miller (Boserer)

LIST OF MARTYRS:
SKALA RESIDENTS WHO PERISHED DURING THE HOLOCAUST YEARS
(1941–1944)



FIG. 23: *Violin.*

	First Name	First Name 2	Family Name	Family Name 2	Maiden Name	Gender	Age	Place of Death	Date of Death
1	SOSIE		ACKERMAN			F	51	MUSZKATOWKA	
2	MANIA		ACKERMAN			F	18	MUSZKATOWKA	
3	WOLF		ACKERMAN			M	41	MUSZKATOWKA	
4	BRANE		ACKERMAN				38	MUSZKATOWKA	
5	SHAYE		ACKERMAN			M	17	MUSZKATOWKA	
6	ABA		ADLER			M	62	SKALA	Sep.1942
7	DEBORA		ADLER			F	55	SKALA	Sep.1942
8	JUDITH		ADLER			F	39	SKALA	Sep.1942
9	ZANVEL		ADLER			M	7	SKALA	Sep.1942
10	ZISEL		ALBRECHT				68	SKALA	Sep.1942
11	MIREL		ALBRECHT			F	42	SKALA	Sep.1942
12	MECHEL		ALBRECHT				17	SKALA	Sep.1942
13	JOSEPH		ALBRECHT			M	14	SKALA	Sep.1942
14	MEIR		ALBRECHT			M	9	SKALA	Sep.1942
15	MOSES		AMZIS			M			
16	ROZA		AMZIS			F	34	BURDIAKOWCE	
17	SARA		AMZIS			F	6	BURDIAKOWCE	
18	ISRAEL		AMZIS			M	4	BURDIAKOWCE	
19	FEIGA		AMZIS			F	2	BURDIAKOWCE	
20	IRA		ASCHENDORF			M	44	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
21	DINA		ASCHENDORF			F	42	SKALA	Sep.1942
22	MEIR		ASCHENDORF			M	14	SKALA	Sep 1942
23	PEARL		ASCHENDORF			F	9	SKALA	Sep 1942
24	SARA		ASCHENDORF			F	7	SKALA	Sep 1942

25	MUNISH	ASCHENDORF		36	SKALA		Sep 1942
26	CHANA	ASCHENDORF	F	38	SKALA		Sep 1942
27	SARA	ASCHENDORF	F	2	SKALA		Sep 1942
28	MECHEL	ASCHENDORF		12	SKALA		Sep 1942
29	MOSES	ASCHENDORF	M	25	U.S.S.R.		
30	RACHEL	AUERBACH	F	69	BORSZCZOW		1943
31	LEIB	AUERBACH	M	72	SKALA		Sep 1942
32	MIRIAM	AUERBACH	F	69	SKALA		Sep 1942
33	JACOB	AUERBACH	M	40	JANOWSKA C.C.		1942
34	FRIMA	AUERBACH		27	SKALA		Sep 1942
35	CHANA	AUERBACH	F	3	SKALA		Sep 1942
36	ELI	AUGENBLICK	M	46	BORKI C.C.		1942
37	LEA	AUGENBLICK	F	44	SKALA		Sep 1942
38	ZUNIO	AUGENBLICK		21	GUSZTYN		
39	ARON	BANER	M	60	SKALA		Sep 1942
40	NECHAMA	BANER	F	54	SKALA		Sep 1942
41	BASIA	BANER		27	SKALA		Sep 1942
42	TONIA	BEKMAN	F	23	SKALA		1943
43	MENACHEM	BELER	M	71	SKALA		Sep 1942
44	MALKA	BELER	F	68	SKALA		Sep 1942
45	SARA	BELER	F	40	SKALA		Sep 1942
46	JOSEPH	BELER	M	34	BORKI C.C.		1942
47	MECHEL	BENZION		47	SKALA		Sep 1942
48	CHAYA	BENZION	F	42	SKALA		Sep 1942
49	MENDEL	BENZION	M	20	SKALA		Sep 1942
50	FRIDA	BENZION	F	15	SKALA		Sep 1942
51	JOSEL	BENZION	M	43	BORKI C.C.		1943
52	JOCHEVET	BENZION	F	40	SKALA		Sep 1942
53	MENDEL	BENZION	M	12	SKALA		Sep 1942
54	FRIDA	BENZION	F	8	SKALA		Sep 1942
55	JACOB	BENZION	M	3	SKALA		Sep 1942

87	SZULIM		BIRNBACH	M	12	SKALA		Sep 1942
88	SOSIA		BIRNBACH	F	8	SKALA		Sep 1942
89	LEA		BIRNBACH	F	28	SKALA		Sep 1942
90	CHAYA	FEIGA	BITTERMAN	F	77	SKALA		Sep 1942
91	ZYSIE		BITTERMAN	M	44	BORSZCZOW		1943
92	BABE		BITTERMAN	F	40	BORSZCZOW		1943
93	SAMUEL		BITTERMAN	M	15	BORSZCZOW		1943
94	PEARL		BITTERMAN	F	11	BORSZCZOW		1943
95	SOSIA		BITTERMAN		81	SKALA		1943
96	SOSIA		BLEIMAN		52	SKALA		Sep 1942
								AUG
97	JOSEPH		BLOCH	M	59	SKALA		1943
98	LEA		BLOCH	F	56	SKALA		Sep 1942
99	CHAIM		BLOCH	M	24	TLUSTE		1943
100	BERL		BLUTSTEIN	M	72	SKALA FOREST		1943
101	ROZA		BLUTSTEIN	F	69	SKALA FOREST		1943
102	MOTIO		BLUTSTEIN	M	29	SKALA		1943
103	JUDITH		BLUTSTEIN	F	25	SKALA		1943
104	HENIA		BLUTSTEIN	F	55	SKALA		Sep 1942
105	FRIMA		BLUTSTEIN	F	30	SKALA		Sep 1942
106	ISRAEL		BLUTSTEIN	M	15	SKALA		Sep 1942
107	SALOMON		BLUTSTEIN	M	27	SKALA FOREST		1943
108	HERSCH		BLUTSTEIN	M	52	BORK1 C.C.		1942
109	SOSIA		BLUTSTEIN	F	50	SKALA		Sep 1942
110	GICIA		BLUTSTEIN	F	65	SKALA		Sep 1942
111	ISRAEL		BLUTSTEIN	M	31	SKALA FOREST		1943
112	MEIR		BLUTSTEIN	M	73	SKALA		1942
113	CHAJE	BRANE	BLUTSTEIN	F	66	SKALA		1943
114	EPHRAIM		BLUTSTEIN	M	40	SKALA		1943
115	SZAYE		BLUTSTEIN	M	40	SKALA		1943
116	FREIDE		BLUTSTEIN	F	36	BORSZCZOW		1942

117	FEIGE		BLUTSTEIN	F	13	**BORSZCZOW**	1942
118	LEA		BLUTSTEIN	F	10	BORSZCZOW	1942
119	CHAIM		BLUTSTEIN	M	8	BORSZCZOW	1942
120	MALKA		BLUTSTEIN	F	61	SKALA	Sep 1942
121	BRONA		BLUTSTEIN		36	SKALA	Sep 1943
122	WOLF		BLUTSTEIN	M	7	SKALA	Sep 1943
123	LEIZER		BLUTSTEIN	M	15	USSR	
124	CHAIM		BONES	M	38	SKALA	Sep 1943
125	DEBORA		BONES	F	32	SKALA	Sep 1942
126	SOLOMON		BONES	M	5	SKALA	Sep 1942
127	FRYMA		BONES		58	SKALA	Sep 1942
128	SZYJE	HERSCH	BOSYK	M	43	BORSZCZOW	1943
129	PESIA		BOSYK	F	41	BORSZCZOW	1943
130	CHASKEL		BOSYK	M	14	BORSZCZOW	1943
131	SHULIM		BOSYK	M	6	SKALA	1943
132	SHAUL		BOSYK	M	45	SKALA	1943
133	SHEINDL		BOSYK	F	44	SKALA	1943
134	SAMSON		BOSYK	M	21	SKALA	1943
135	MORDCHAI		BOSYK	M	60	TRUJCE	1943
136	BEILE	YITE	BOSYK	F	40	SKALA	Sep 1942
137	BLIMA		BOSYK		18	BORSZCZOW	1943
138	SIMA		BOSYK	F	19	SKALA	1943
139	MENDEL		BOSYK	M	51	SKALA	Sep 1942
140	GENENDEL		BOSYK		44	SKALA	Sep 1942
141	BLIMA		BOSYK		20	SKALA	Sep 1942
142	HERSCH		BOSYK	M	18	SKALA	Sep 1942
143	ABRAHAM		BOSYK	M	71	SKALA	1942
144	GICIA		BOSYK	F	69	SKALA	1943
145	MENDEL		BOSYK	M	34	SKALA	1943
146	LEIZER		BRAKSMAYER	M	62	SKALA	Sep 1942
147	HENZIA		BRAKSMAYER	F	56	BORSZCZOW	1943

148	MALKA		BRAKSMAYER	F	30	SKALA	1943
149	DVORA		BRAKSMAYER	F	26	SKALA	1943
150	LEIB		BRAKSMAYER	M	18	SKALA	1943
151	JACOB		BRAKSMAYER	M	25	USSR	
152	JACOB	BER	BRANDES	M	58	SKALA	Sep 1942
153	BABA		BRANDES	F	52	SKALA	Sep 1942
154	HERSCH		BRANDES	M	33	SKALA	MAY 1942
155	SOSIA		BRANDES		24	SKALA	Sep 1942
156	CHUNE		BRANDES		16	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
157	MOSHE	LEIB	BRANDES	M	41	SKALA	Sep 1942
158	LIFSHE		BRANDES		35	SKALA	Sep 1942
159	MARIEM		BRANDES	F	9	SKALA	Sep 1942
160	MENDEL		BRANDES	M	51	BORSZCZOW	1943
161	SOSIA		BRANDES		44	BORSZCZOW	1943
162	ABRAHAM		BRANDES	M	21	SKALA FOREST	1943
163	FRYDZIA		BRANDES	F	19	SKALA FOREST	1943
164	MENDEL		BRANDES	M	35	BORSZCZOW	1943
165	SABINA		BRANDES	F	30	BORSZCZOW	1943
166	BERISH		BRANDES		4	BORSZCZOW	1943
167	JACOB		BRENER	M	47	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
168	RYWKA		BRENER	F	35	USSR	
169	ABRAHAM		BRETSCHNEIDER	M	53	SKALA	1944
170	SZEINDEL		BRETSCHNEIDER	F	47	SKALA	1943
171	HERSCH		BRETSCHNEIDER	M	20	SKALA	1943
172	ARON		BRETSCHNEIDER	M	15	SKALA	1943
173	EDZIA		BRETSCHNEIDER		15	SKALA	1943
174	CHAYE	RATZE	BRETSCHNEIDER	F	65	SKALA	Sep 1942
175	NACHMAN		BRETTLER	M	61	SKALA	1943
176	HINDE		BRETTLER	F	62	SKALA	1943
177	CHANA		BRIKNER	F	48	NIVRA	

178	ARON		BRIKNER	M	17	NIVRA		
179	PEPA		BRIKNER	F	15	NIVRA		
								SEP
180	MOSHE		BRILLER	M	72	SKALA		1942
181	ETA		BRILLER	F	63	BUCZACZ		1943
182	CHAYA		BRIMER	F	50	SKALA		Sep 1942
183	ZENIA		BRIMER		18	SKALA		1943
184	GOLDA	HENIA	BRIMER	F	91	SKALA		Sep 1942
185	ABRAHAM	ISAK	BUCHSBAUM	M	73	SKALA		Sep 1942
186	SLUVA		BUCHSBAUM		70	SKALA		Sep 1942
187	MAJER		BUGA	M	49	SKALA		Sep 1942
188	CHAIM	ISRAEL	BUGA	M	70	SKALA		Sep 1942
189	KLARA		BUGA	F	45	SKALA		Sep 1942
190	BETKA		BUGA	F	40	SKALA		Sep 1942
191	HERSCH		BUGA	M	40	SKALA		Sep 1943
192	ESTHER		BUGA	F	35	SKALA		Sep 1942
193	MOSES		BUGA	M	9	SKALA		1943
194	CHANA		BUGA	F	66	SKALA		Sep 1942
195	BERL		BUGA	M	40	KAMIONKA c.c.		1943
196	HERMAN		BUGA	M	30	GERMAN P.O.W		
197	JOSEPH		BUGA	M	66	SKALA		1941
198	LEIB		BUGA	M	63	SKALA		1943
199	CHANA		BUGA	F	61	BORSZCZOW		1943
200	PINCHAS		DEUTSCHMAN	M	43	USSR		
201	DONIA		DEUTSCHMAN	F	20	USSR		
202	MARIEM	LEA	DISENDORF	F	66	BORSZCZOW		1943
203	MOSHE		DOLINER	M	45	SKALA		1944
204	MALKA		DOLINER	F	40	SKALA		Sep 1942
205	SZULIM		DRESCHER	M	60	STUPKI c.c.		1942
206	CHANA		DRESCHER	F	60	SKALA		Sep 1942
207	ISRAEL		DRESCHER	M	22	BORSZCZOW		1943

208	**BARUCH**	DRESCHER	M	11	SKALA	Sep 1942
209	JEHUDA	DRIMMER	M	35	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
210	NECHAMA	DRIMMER	F	18	SKALA	Sep 1942
211	SHLOMO	DRIMMER	M	38	USSR	1942
212	PESIA	DRIMMER	F	39	BORSZCZOW	1943
213	RYWKA	DUNAJER	F	37	SKALA	Sep 1942
214	MILO	DUNAJER	M	13	SKALA	Sep 1942
215	ETA	DUNAJER	F	1	SKALA	Sep 1942
216	ARON	EDELMAN	M	60	SKALA	Sep 1942
217	YENTE	EDELMAN	F	59	SKALA	Sep 1942
218	MOSES	EDELMAN	M	30	BORSZCZOW	1942
219	ARON	EDELMAN	M	64	SKALA FOREST	1943
220	GOLDA	EDELMAN	F	60	BORSZCZOW	1943
221	LIBA	EDELMAN		35	SKALA	Sep 1942
222	RYWKA	EDELMAN	F	59	BORSZCZOW	1943
223	MOSHE	EDELMAN	M	35	TURYLCZE	1943
224	ELI	EDELMAN	M	30	TURYLCZE	1943
225	TONIA	EDELMAN		25	TURYLCZE	1943
226	HERSCH	EDELSTEIN	M	68	BORSZCZOW	1943
227	LIBA	EDELSTEIN		64	BORSZCZOW	1943
228	DORA	EDELSTEIN	F	30	BORSZCZOW	1943
229	SARA	EDELSTEIN	F	75	SKALA	Sep 1942
230	CHAYA	EDELSTEIN	F	40	SKALA FOREST	Sep 1943
231	ALTER	EDELSTEIN	M	15	SKALA	1943
232	MENDEL	EHRENBERG	M	71	SKALA	Sep 1942
233	ITA	EHRENBERG	F	71	SKALA	Sep 1942
234	DVORA	EHRENBERG	F	45	SKALA	Sep 1942
235	MEIER	EHRLICH	M	58	CYGANY	
236	GITEL	EHRLICH	F	56	CYGANY	
237	BRANA	EHRLICH	F	19	CYGANY	

238	MOTIO	EHRLICH		M	17	CYGANY	
239	SIMA	EHRLICH		F	16	CYGANY	
240	NENDEL	EISENFELD		M	67	CYGANY	
241	RATZE	EISENFELD			63	CYGANY	
242	ZEIDE	EISENFELD		M	70	SKALA	1942
243	SZYFRA	EISENFELD		F	68	SKALA	1942
244	NACHUM	ELKES		M	43	GLUBOCZEK c.c.	1942
245	SOSIA	ELKES			43	SKALA	Sep 1942
246	PEPA	ELKES		F	17	SKALA	Sep 1942
247	WOLF	ELKES		M	15	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
248	SIMA	ENGELBACH		F	76	SKALA	Sep 1942
249	ELI	ENGELBACH		M	42	BORKI c.c.	1942
250	FRIMA	ENGELBACH		F	35	SKALA	Sep 1942
251	LEIZER	ENGELBACH		M	7	SKALA	Sep 1942
252	CHAIM	ENGELBACH		M	72	SKALA	1942
253	MARIEM	ENGELBACH		F	69	SKALA	Sep 1942
254	SHEINDEL	ENGELBACH		F	41	SKALA	Sep 1942
255	RACHEL	EPSTEIN	ASHENDORF	F	52	SKALA	Sep 1942
256	FEIGA	EPSTEIN		F	43	SKALA	Sep 1942
257	IZAK	EPSTEIN		M	40	BORKI c.c.	1943
258	YOEL	EPSTEIN	MEIR	M	46	BORSZCZOW	1943
259	BRANE	EPSTEIN			42	BORSZCZOW	1943
260	ETKA	EPSTEIN		F	21	BORSZCZOW	1943
261	URN	EPSTEIN			17	BORSZCZOW	1943
262	ZYGMUND	FEINSILBER		M	44	SKALA	1943
263	SARA	FEINSILBER		F	40	IVANKOW	1943
264	MORDCHE	FEINSILBER		M	14	IVANKOW	1943
265	EDITH	FEINSILBER		F	12	IVANKOW	1943
266	BELLA	FEUERBERG		F	46	SKALA	Sep 1942
267	BERL	FEUERBERG		M	8	SKALA	Sep 1942
268	BEILA	FEUERBERG		F	70	SKALA	Sep 1942

269	HERSCH		FEUERBERG	M	67	SKALA		Sep 1942
270	KRENIA		FEUERBERG		65	SKALA		Sep 1942
271	ISRAEL	LEIB	FEUERBERG	M	71	SKALA		Sep 1942
272	CHAYA		FEUERBERG	F	52	SKALA		Sep 1942
273	CHANA		FEUERBERG	F	33	SKALA		Sep 1942
274	SZEINDEL		FEUERBERG	F	20	SKALA		Sep 1942
275	JACOB		FEUERBERG	M	18	SKALA		Sep 1942
276	SHULEM		FEUERBERG	M	8	SKALA		Sep 1942
277	JOSEPH	BER	FEUERBERG	M	46	BORSZCZOW		1943
278	SZEINDEL		FEUERBERG	F	42	BORSZCZOW		1943
279	SARA		FEUERBERG	F	20	SKALA		1943
280	MORDCHE		FEUERBERG	M	18	BORKI c.c.		1943
281	SOSIA		FEUERBERG		18	BORSZCZOW		1943
282	RUBIN		FEUERSTEIN	M	33	SKALA FOREST		1944
283	MENDEL		FEUERSTEIN	M	32	SKALA FOREST		1943
284	ROZA		FEUERSTEIN	F	30	SKALA		Sep 1942
285	ELKA		FEUERSTEIN	F	25	SKALA FOREST		1944
286	LEIB		FEUERSTEIN	M	26	BORSZCZOW		1943
287	SUCHER		FEUERSTEIN		62	BORSZCZOW		1943
288	HENIA		FEUERSTEIN	F	60	BORSZCZOW		1943
289	BENZION		FEUERSTEIN	M	27	BORSZCZOW		1943
290	SHMIL	JOSEPH	FEUERSTEIN	M	19	BORKI c.c.		1942
291	CHAIM	IZAK	FEUERSTEIN	M	55	BORSZCZOW		1943
292	GITEL		FEUERSTEIN	F	52	BORSZCZOW		1943
293	DORA		FEUERSTEIN	F	29	SKALA FOREST		1943
294	ESTHER		FEUERSTEIN	F	24	BORSZCZOW		1943
295	CHANA		FEUERSTEIN	F	72	SKALA		Sep 1942
296	MOSHE		FEUERSTEIN	M	38	STUPKI c.c.		1942
297	LEIZER		FEUERSTEIN	M	76	SKALA		Sep 1942
298	SZEINDL		FEUERSTEIN	F	69	SKALA		Sep 1942
299	ZELIG		FEUERSTEIN	M	51	BORSZCZOW		1943

300	TAUBA	FEUERSTEIN		F	42	BORSZCZOW	1943
301	IZAK	FEUERSTEIN		M	23	BORSZCZOW	1943
302	ROSA	FEUERSTEIN		F	52	BORSZCZOW	1943
303	MOSHE	FEUERSTEIN		M	61	BORSZCZOW	1943
304	BRANA	FEUERSTEIN			59	BORSZCZOW	1943
305	MAX	FEUERSTEIN		M	34	BORKI c.c.	1944
306	NUSIA	FEUERSTEIN		F	23	BORKI c.c.	1944
307	ARON	FEUERSTEIN		M	2		
308	JACOB	FEUERSTEIN		M	25	USSR	
309	GEDALIE	FEUERSTEIN		M	58	SKALA	Sep 1942
310	MENIA	FEUERSTEIN			57	SKALA	Sep 1942
311	HINDA	FEUERSTEIN		F	72	SKALA	Sep 1942
312	CHAYA	FEUERSTEIN		F	37	SKALA	Sep 1942
313	PINCHAS	FEUERSTEIN		M	75	LOSIACZ	
314	ESTHER	FEUERSTEIN		F	56	LOSIACZ	
315	ABRAHAM	FEUERSTEIN		M	17	LOSIACZ	
316	JOSEPH	FEUERSTEIN		M	32	GUSZTYN	
317	CHAIM	FEUERSTEIN		M	65	IVANKOW	1944
318	SOSIA	FEUERSTEIN			63	IVANKOW	1944
319	BERL	FEUERSTEIN	MOSHE	M	29	IVANKOW	1944
320	ELKA	FEUERSTEIN		F	22	IVANKOW	1944
321	MENDEL	FEUERSTEIN		M	70	SKALA	Sep 1942
322	SZAYE	FIDERER		M	44	BORSZCZOW	1943
323	FRIEDA	FIDERER		F	40	SKALA	Sep 1942
324	SIMON	FIDERER		M	19	BORKI c.c.	1943
325	BERL	FIDERER		M	22	USSR	
326	CHAVA	FIDERER		F	14	SKALA	Sep 1942
327	MECHEL	FIDERER			12	SKALA	Sep 1942
328	ROZA	FIDERER		F	75	SKALA	Sep 1942
329	RACHEL	FIDERER		F	51	SKALA	Sep 1942
330	LEIB	FIDERER		M	53	SKALA	Sep 1942

331	SOSIA	FIDERER		50	SKALA	Sep 1942
332	CHAIM	FIDERER	M	15	SKALA	Sep 1942
333	CYREL	FINKELSTEIN	M	30	SKALA	Sep 1942
334	CHAIM	FINTENSTEIN	M	38	SKALA	Sep 1942
335	BRANE	FINTENSTEIN		38	SKALA	Sep 1942
336	LEIZER	FISCH	M	43	JANOWSKA c.c.	1942
337	JENTA	FISCH	F	38	SKALA	1943
338	HERSCH	FISCH	M	1	SKALA	1943
339	DAVID	FISCH	M	58	BORSZCZOW	1943
340	SARA	FISCH	F	58	BORSZCZOW	1943
341	ZISEL	FISCH		28	BORSZCZOW	1943
342	PINCHAS	FISCH	M	75	BORSZCZOW	1943
343	CHANCIA	FISCH	F	72	BORSZCZOW	1943
344	MOTEL	FISCH	M	42	BORSZCZOW	1943
345	CHANA	FISCHER	F	61	SKALA	Sep 1942
346	PEARL	FISCHER	F	33	SKALA	Sep 1942
347	SARA	FISCHER	F	14	SKALA	Sep 1942
348	JOSEPH	FISHOF	M	61	LOSIACZ	
349	BEILA	FISHOF	F	57	LOSIACZ	
350	SALA	FISHOF		18	LOSIACZ	
351	GITEL	FLEISCHMAN	F	58	SKALA	Sep 1942
352	MOSES	FLEISCHMAN	M	31	BORKI c.c.	1942
353	BRANA	FLEISCHMAN		61	SKALA	1943
354	SARA	FLEISCHMAN	F	24	SKALA	1943
355	CHANA	FLEISCHMAN	F	59	SKALA	Sep 1942
356	IZAK	FLEISCHMAN	M	21	USSR	
357	JACOB	FLEISCHMAN	M	19	STUPKI c.c.	1943
358	FEIGE	FLEISCHMAN	F	23	SKALA	Sep 1942
359	ROZA	FLEISCHMAN	F	2	SKALA	Sep 1942
360	SZEJNDL	FLEISCHMAN	F	24	SKALA	Sep 1942
361	SAMUEL	FLEISCHMAN	M	2	SKALA	Sep 1942

362	CHANA		FLEISCHMAN	F	50	SKALA	Sep 1942
363	MOTIO		FLEISCHMAN		55	BORKI c.c.	1943
364	MEIR		FLITENSTEIN	M	37	BORKI C.C.	1942
365	CYREL		FLITENSTEIN	F	33	SKALA	09.1942
366	SARA		FLITENSTEIN	F	10	SKALA	09.1942
367	ESTHER		FLITENSTEIN	F	6	SKALA	09.1942
368	BERISCH		FLOTT	M	60	BORSZCZOW	1943
369	BRANE		FLOTT	F	59	BORSZCZOW	1943
370	PEPE		FLOTT		33	SKALA	1943
371	ISRAEL	LEIB	FREIFELDER	M	59	KOLOMYJA	1941
372	HINDE		FREIFELDER	F	55	KOLOMYJA	1941
373	ABRAHAM		FRENKEL	M	72	SKALA FOREST	1943
374	FEIVISH		FRENKEL	M	24	SKALA	1944
375	KLARA		FRENKEL	F	65	SKALA	1943
376	HERSCH		FRENKEL	M	35	SKALA	1943
377	JULEK		FRENKEL	M	39	SKALA FOREST	1943
378	BARUCH		FRISCH	M	73	SKALA	09.1942
379	SALOMON		FRISCH	M	38	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
380	BABA		FRISCH		28	SKALA	09.1942
381	IZAK		FUSS	M	45	SKALA	1943
382	SZEJWA		FUSS		39	SKALA FOREST	1943
383	NUSIA		FUSS	F	13	SKALA FOREST	1943
384	SIMCHE		FUSS	M	7	SKALA FOREST	1943
385	FISHEL		GARFUNKEL	M	49	LOSIACZ	1944
386	SARA		GARFUNKEL	F	33	LOSIACZ	1944
387	FEIVISH		GARFUNKEL	M	13	LOSIACZ	1944
388	NUSIA		GARFUNKEL	F	8	LOSIACZ	1944
389	BEILA		GARFUNKEL	F	72	SKALA	09.1942
390	IZAK		GELBARD	M	49	BORSZCZOW	1943
391	BERL		GELBARD	M	15	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
392	SARA		GELBARD	F	9	SKALA	09.1942

393	ABRAHAM	GELBSTEIN	M	60	BORSZCZOW	1943
394	TERESA	GELBSTEIN	F	58	SKALA	09.1942
395	FISCHEL	GEMEINERMAN	M	59	SKALA	1943
396	BABE	GEMEINERMAN	F	58	SKALA	1943
397	CHAIM	GEMEINERMAN	M	31	GLEMBOCZEK	1943
398	BENZION	GEMEINERMAN	M	20	BORSZCZOW	1943
399	MALKA	GEMEINERMAN	F	19	BORSZCZOW	1943
400	TAUBA	GEMEINERMAN	F	17	BORSZCZOW	1943
401	RACHEL	GERTLER	F	69	SKALA	09.1942
402	BENZION	GERTLER	M	39	IVANKOW	1944
403	DORA	GERTLER	F	40	IVANKOW	1944
404	MINA	GERTLER	F	3	IVANKOW	1944
405	CYREL	GILES	F	41	SKALA	1942
406	HENOCH	GILES	M	20	KAMIONKA C.C.	1943
407	BETKA	GILES		18	SKALA	1942
408	HUDIA	GINSBERG		37	SKALA	09.1942
409	EMIL	GINSBERG	M	7	SKALA	09.1942
410	JOSEPH SZYJE	GINSBERG	M	58	SKALA	09.1942
411	CHAJA	GINSBERG	F	57	SKALA	09.1942
412	ETA	GINSBERG	F	37	BORSZCZOW	1943
413	BARUCH	GINSBERG	M	29	SKALA	09.1942
414	MALKA	GODFRIED	M	65	SKALA	09.1942
415	ZLATA	GODFRIED	F	30	SKALA	09.1942
416	HERSCH	GOLDBERG	M	37	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
417	FRYMA	GOLDBERG	F	36	SKALA	09.1942
418	KALMAN	GOLDBERG	M	10	BORSZCZOW	1943
419	LEIBISH	GOLDBERG	M	42	SKALA	09.1942
420	SZEVA	GOLDBERG		41	SKALA	09.1942
421	SAMUEL	GOLDBERG	M	13	SKALA	09.1942
422	CHAVA	GOLDBERG	F	9	SKALA	09.1942
423	LEIZER	GOLDBERG	M	3	SKALA	09.1942

424	AZRIEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	65	BORSZCZOW	1943
425	SZEJNCIA		GOLDSCHEIN		62	BORSZCZOW	1943
426	CHANA		GOLDSCHEIN	F	31	BORSZCZOW	1943
427	AZRIEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	51	BORSZCZOW	1943
428	ETHEL		GOLDSCHEIN	F	48	BORSZCZOW	1943
429	ISAK		GOLDSCHEIN	M	23	SKALA FOREST	1943
430	ABRAHAM		GOLDSCHEIN	M	20	STUPKI C.C.	1943
431	SIMON		GOLDSCHEIN	M	15	BORSZCZOW	1943
432	SAMUEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	12	BORSZCZOW	1943
433	CHASKEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	55	BORSZCZOW	1943
434	TAUBE		GOLDSCHEIN	F	55	BORSZCZOW	1943
435	ROZA		GOLDSCHEIN	F	32	BORSZCZOW	1943
436	IZAK	MEIR	GOLDSCHEIN	M	30	BORKI C.C.	1943
437	ZYSIO		GOLDSCHEIN		28	LUBLIN P.O.W.	Unkn.
438	HENIA		GOLDSCHEIN	F	24	BORSZCZOW	1943
439	ISRAEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	23	BORKI C.C.	1943
440	PRYWA		GOLDSCHEIN	F	20	BORSZCZOW	1943
441	SZULIM		GOLDSCHEIN	M	19	BORKI C.C.	1943
442	SAMUEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	60	SKALA	09.1942
443	WOLF		GOLDSCHEIN	M	49	BORKI C.C.	1942
444	MOTEL		GOLDSCHEIN	M	41	SKALA	1943
445	LEA		GOLDSCHEIN	F	40	SKALA FOREST	1943
446	BENJAMIN		GOLDSCHEIN	M	12	SKALA FOREST	1943
447	DAVID		GOLDSCHEIN	M	10	SKALA FOREST	1943
448	MANES	HERSCH	GOLDSTEIN	M	49	BORSZCZOW	1943
449	CHANA		GOLDSTEIN	F	40	BORSZCZOW	1943
450	RUBIN		GOLDSTEIN	M	17	BORKI C.C.	1943
451	MECHEL	WOLF	GOLDSTEIN	M	74	SKALA	09.1942
452	MOSHE		GOLDSTEIN	M	44	SKALA	1942
453	SZEINDEL		GOLDSTEIN	F	40	SKALA	09.1942
454	ELKA		GOLDSTEIN	F	20	SKALA	09.1942

455	SARA	GOLDSTEIN	F	16	SKALA	09.1942
456	DINA	GOLDSTEIN	F	14	SKALA	09.1942
457	KLARA	GOLDSTEIN	F	10	SKALA	09.1942
458	IZAK	GOLDSTEIN	M	35	SKALA FOREST	1943
459	CHANA	GOLDSTEIN	F	33	SKALA	09.1942
460	BRANA	GOLDSTEIN	F	11	SKALA FOREST	1943
461	YIDEL	GOLDSTEIN	M	8	SKALA FOREST	1943
462	CHAIM	GOTTESFELD	M	40	SKALA	1944
463	AZRIEL	GOTTESFELD	M	77	SKALA	09.1942
464	LEIBISH	GOTTESFELD	M	51	LOSIACZ	1944
465	LAURA	GOTTESFELD	F	48	SKALA	09.1942
466	MISIA	GOTTESFELD	F	12	LOSIACZ	1944
467	RACHEL	GOTTESFELD	F	59	SKALA	09.1942
468	JOSEPH	GOTTESFELD	M	34	BORKI C.C.	1942
469	SARA	GOTTESFELD	F	36	SKALA	09.1942
470	SZEINDEL	GOTTESFELD	F	1	SKALA	09.1942
471	PESIA	GOTTESFELD	F	62	SKALA	09.1942
472	SZPRINCIA	GOTTESFELD	F	35	SKALA	09.1942
473	FRYMA	GOTTESFELD	F	33	BORSZCZOW	1943
474	BRONIA	GOTTESFELD	F	4	BORSZCZOW	1943
475	MOSHE	GOTTESFELD	M	33	BORKI C.C.	1943
476	JOSEPH	GOTTESFELD	M	59	SKALA	09.1942
477	BABA	GOTTESFELD		55	SKALA	09.1942
478	BRANA	GOTTESFELD	F	20	SKALA	09.1942
479	BENJAMIN	GOTTESFELD	M	49	SKALA	1944
480	BENJAMIN	GOTTESMAN	M	55	BORSZCZOW	1943
481	ROZA	GOTTESMAN	F	55	SKALA	09.1942
482	JUDA	GOTTESMAN	M	19	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
483	CHAIM	GOTTESMAN	M	15	SKALA	09.1942
484	SAMUEL	GOTTFRIED	M	52	SKALA	1942
485	CHAVILCIA	GOTTFRIED		49	SKALA	09.1942

486	JOSEPH	GOTTFRIED	M	20	SKALA	1942
487	ZENIA	GOTTFRIED	F	17	SKALA	1942
488	LEIB	GOTTLIEB	M	45	STUPKI C.C.	1942
489	MIRL	GOTTLIEB	F	39	SKALA	09.1942
490	FRYDA	GOTTLIEB	F	17	SKALA	09.1942
491	BRANA	GRUENBERG	F	35	BURDIAKOWCE	UNKN.
492	GUSTA	GRUENBERG	F	31	BURDIAKOWCE	UNKN.
493	SARA	GRUENBERG	F	28	BURDIAKOWCE	UNKN.
494	ABRAHAM	GRUENBERG	M	59	SKALA FOREST	1944
495	HENIA	GRUENBERG	F	21	SKALA FOREST	1944
496	YOCHEVET	GRUENBERG	F	57	SKALA	1942
497	MOTIO	GRUENMAN	M	40	BORSZCZOW	1943
498	CHANA	GRUENMAN	F	35	SKALA	1942
499	CHAIM	GRUENMAN	M	5	BORSZCZOW	1943
500	MALKA	GRUENMAN	F	4	BORSZCZOW	1943
501	ISRAEL	GRUENMAN	M	2	BORSZCZOW	1943
502	NESIA	GRUENMAN	F	75	SKALA	09.1942
503	YOEL	GRUENMAN	M	43	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
504	MARIEM	GRUENMAN	F	34	SKALA	09.1942
505	CHAIM	GRUENMAN	M	14	SKALA	09.1942
506	ABRAHAM	GRUENMAN	M	12	SKALA	09.1942
507	GENIA	HALERSTEIN	F	20	SKALA	09.1942
508	SAMUEL	HALERSTEIN	M	1	SKALA	09.1942
509	SALOMON	HAUSNER	M	85	U.S.S.R.	UNKN.
510	MOTEL	HAUSNER	M	39	U.S.S.R.	UNKN.
511	SHAIE	HECHTENTHAL	M	37	BORSZCZOW	1943
512	HENIE	HECHTENTHAL	F	35	BORSZCZOW	1943
513	NACHUM	HECHTENTHAL	M	6	BORSZCZOW	1943
514	CYREL	HECHTENTHAL	F	4	BORSZCZOW	1943
515	BEILE	HECHTENTHAL	F	33	SKALA	09.1942
516	ABRAHAM	HECHTENTHAL	M	40	U.S.S.R.	UNKN.

517	SZEJVA		HECHTENTHAL		4	BORSZCZOW	1942
518	RACHEL		HECHTENTHAL	F	29	SKALA	09.1942
519	ESTHER		HECHTENTHAL	F		SKALA	1941
520	CHAIM	DAVID	HECHTENTHAL	M	68	SKALA	09.1942
521	ZLATA		HECHTENTHAL	F	66	SKALA	09.1942
522	DINA		HECHTENTHAL	F	71	SKALA	09.1942
523	SARA		HECHTENTHAL	F	39	SKALA	09.1942
524	ROSA		HECHTENTHAL	F	9	SKALA	09.1942
525	IZAK		HECHTENTHAL	M	2	SKALA	09.1942
526	BUZIA		HECHTENTHAL		4	SKALA	09.1942
527	MOTIO		HELLER	M	53	MUSZKATOWKA	UNKN.
528	ZISEL		HELLER	F	50	MUSZKATOWKA	UNKN.
529	MEILECH		HELLER	M	18	MUSZKATOWKA	UNKN.
530	HERSCH		HELLER	M	20	MUSZKATOWKA	UNKN.
531	ISAK		HELMAN	M	58	SKALA	09.1942
532	SARA		HELMAN	F	49	SKALA	09.1942
533	JACOB		HELMAN	M	16	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
534	HERSCH		HELMAN	M	30	SKALA	1943
535	TAUBA		HELMAN	F	24	SKALA	1943
536	JUDA		HELMAN	M	1	SKALA	1943
537	ASCHER		HERSCHER	M	84	SKALA FOREST	1943
538	SARA		HERSCHER	F	68	SKALA	09.1942
539	ROZA		HERSCHER	F	36	SKALA	1941
540	CYREL		HERSCHER	F	65	SKALA	09.1942
541	FEIGA		HERSCHER	F	30	SKALA	09.1942
542	BASIA		HERSCHER	F	55	SKALA	09.1942
543	SZAJE		HERSCHER	M	36	SKALA FOREST	1943
544	ARON		HERSCHER	M	34	BORSZCZOW	1943
545	SHLOMO		HERSCHER	M	30	U.S.S.R.	
546	ZALMAN		HERSCHER	M	64	SKALA	09.1942
547	FRIMA		HERSCHER	F	48	SKALA	09.1942

548	CHANA		HERSCHER	F	18	SKALA		09.1942
549	RYWKA		HERSCHER	F	16	SKALA		09.1942
550	JENTA		HERSCHER	F	13	SKALA		09.1942
551	PEARL		HERSCHER	F	83	SKALA		09.1942
552	RACHMIL		HERSCHER	M	40	BORSZCZOW		1943
553	FEIGA		HERSCHER	F	37	BORSZCZOW		1943
554	SARA		HERSCHER	F	11	BORSZCZOW		1943
555	BERL		HERSCHER	M	7	BORSZCZOW		1943
556	NATHAN	NUSIE	HERSCHER	M	60	SKALA		09.1942
557	SOSIA		HERSCHER	F	52	SKALA		1943
558	PEPA		HERSCHER		21	SKALA		1943
559	ISRAEL		HERSCHER	M	14	SKALA		09.1942
560	ELI		HERSCHER	M	40	SKALA		1942
561	ZISEL		HERSCHER	F	39	SKALA		1943
562	FELA		HERSCHER	F	16	SKALA		1943
563	FRYDZIA		HERSCHER	F	7	SKALA		1943
564	MOTIO		HERSCHER	M	5	SKALA		1943
565	ETA		HERSCHER	F	68	BORSZCZOW		1943
566	WOLF		HERSCHER	M	39	JANOWSKA C.C.		1942
567	SALOMON		HERSCHER	M	63	NIVRA		
568	RACHEL		HERSCHER	F	60	NIVRA		
569	PINKUS		HERSCHER	M	35	NIVRA		
570	CHAJA		HERSCHER	F	32	NIVRA		
571	SALOMON		HERSCHER	M	70	NIVRA		
572	ROZA		HERSCHER	F	67	NIVRA		
573	CHAIM		HERSCHER	M	43	NIVRA		
574	MAYER		HERSCHER	M	40	NIVRA		
575	JOSEPH		HERZOG	M	78	SKALA		09.1942
576	RUCHEL		HERZOG	F	75	SKALA		09.1942
577	JENTA		HERZOG	F	37	SKALA		09.1942
578	SARA		HERZOG	F	2	SKALA		09.1942

579	EPHRAIM		HINDES	M	49	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942	
580	GOLDA		HINDES	F	46	SKALA	09.1942	
581	SOSIA		HINDES	F	13	SKALA	09.1942	
582	SARA		HIRSCHORN	F	38	SKALA	09.1942	
583	MALKA		HIRSCHORN	F	3	SKALA	09.1942	
584	SARA	LEA	HIRSH	F	64	BORSZCZOW	1943	
585	FISCHEL		HOCHMAN	M	53			
586	LEA		HOCHMAN	F	50			
587	SCHEINDEL		HOCHMAN	F	75			
588	MOSHE		HOCHMAN	M	20			
589	KLARA		HOCHMAN	F	18			
590	YETKA		HOCHMAN	F	13			
591	MIRIAM		HOFENZELER	F	58	SKALA	09.1942	
592	CHANA		HOFENZELER	F	23	SKALA	09.1942	
593	SIMA		HOFENZELER	F	21	SKALA	09.1942	
594	FRIDA		HOROWITZ	F	45	SKALA	09.1942	
595	JOSEPH		HOROWITZ	M	64	BURDIAKOWCE		
596	SLUVA		HOROWITZ		59	BURDIAKOWCE		
597	SALOMON		JAEGER	M	54	BURSZCZOW	1943	
598	HALINA		JAEGER	F	41	BURSZCZOW	1943	
599	EDMUND		JAEGER	M	7	BURSZCZOW	1943	
600	SIMA		JAGENDORF	F	54	SKALA	09.1942	
601	CHAIM		JAGENDORF	M	61	SKALA FOREST	1943	
602	REIZIA		JAGENDORF	F	59	SKALA FOREST	1943	
603	DVORA		JAGENDORF	F	68	SKALA FOREST	1943	
604	MOSHE		JAGENDORF	M	72	SKALA FOREST	1943	
605	REGINA		JAGENDORF	F	54	SKALA FOREST	1943	
606	VLADEK		JAGENDORF	M	36	SKALA	1943	
607	MAX		JAGENDORF	M	39	JEZIERZANY	1943	
608	ESTHER		JAGENDORF	F	35	JEZIERZANY	1943	
609	TAUBA		JAGENDORF	F	11	JEZIERZANY	1943	

610	CHAIM	JAGET	M	33	S.S. PATRIA	1944
611	DEBORA	JAGET	F	32	S.S. PATRIA	1944
612	YENTA	JAGET	F	8	S.S. PATRIA	1944
613	CHAYA	JAGET	F	22	S.S. PATRIA	1944
614	YOSEL	JAGET	M	73	BORSZCZOW	1943
615	ESTHER	JAGET	F	70	BORSZCZOW	1943
616	NATHAN	JAKEROWICZ	M	42	SKALA FOREST	1943
617	DINA	JAKEROWICZ	F	37	SKALA FOREST	1943
618	SONIA	JAKEROWICZ	F	8	SKALA FOREST	1943
619	BENZION	JAWITZ	M	66	SKALA	09.1942
620	CIPE	JAWITZ	F	62	SKALA	09.1942
621	MIREL	JAWITZ		37	SKALA	09.1942
					ZYLINCE	
622	SHMERL	JAWITZ	M	28	FOREST	1944
623	MOSHE	JAWITZ	M	19	STUPKI C.C.	1943
624	LEIZER	JOCZES	M	41	SKALA FOREST	1943
625	KLARA	JOCZES	F	40	SKALA FOREST	1943
626	SARA	JOCZES	F	3	SKALA FOREST	1943
627	ELI	JOLES	M	58	SKALA	09.1942
628	SOSIA	JOLES	F	57	SKALA	09.1942
629	SERKA	JOLES	F	29	SKALA	09.1942
630	MIREL	JOLES		27	SKALA	09.1942
631	MOTEL	JOLES	M	22	BORKI C.C.	1942
632	MEIR	JOLES	M	14	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
633	JACOB	JUSEM	M	64	SKALA	09.1942
634	CYREL	JUSEM	F	63	SKALA	1943
635	SONIA	JUSEM	F	39	SKALA	09.1942
636	SZEJNCIA	JUSEM		30	SKALA	1943
637	YEHUDIT	JUSEM	F	25	SKALA	1943
638	LIPA	JUSEM	M	17	BORSZCZOW	1943
639	CHANA	KAHANE	F	65	SKALA	09.1942

640	SARA		KAHANE	F	40	SKALA		09.1942
641	SOSIA		KAHANE	F	36	SKALA		09.1942
642	ISRAEL		KASIRER	M	44	SKALA		1941
643	ROZA		KASIRER	F	41	SKALA		1943
644	RUBIN		KASIRER	M	19	SKALA		1943
645	CHANA		KASIRER	F	17	SKALA		1943
646	DAVID		KASIRER	M	68	BORSZCZOW		1943
647	RACHEL		KASIRER	F	50	BORSZCZOW		1943
648	SLUVA		KASIRER		42	SKALA		1943
649	BARUCH	MOZES	KASIRER	M	64	SKALA		09.1942
650	CIPA		KASIRER	F	55	SKALA		09.1942
651	MIRIAM		KASIRER	F	5	SKALA		09.1942
652	BABA		KASIRER		73	SKALA		09.1942
653	GEDALIE		KASIRER	M	38	JANOWSKA C.C.		1942
654	MIRIAM		KASIRER	F	34	SKALA		09.1942
655	SCHEINDEL		KASIRER	F	4	SKALA		09.1942
656	FEIVEL		KASIRER	M	53	SKALA		1943
657	SERKE		KASIRER	F	52	SKALA		1943
658	MARIEM	BEILA	KASIRER	F	55	SKALA		09.1942
659	RACHMIEL		KASIRER	M	55	BUCZACZ		1943
660	MIRIAM		KASIRER	F	50	BUCZACZ		1943
661	EFROIM		KASIRER	M	21	BORKI C.C.		1943
662	DOV		KASIRER	M	18	BORKI C.C.		1943
663	BETKA		KASIRER		8	BUCZACZ		1943
664	JACOB		KEIS	M	45	SKALA		09.1942
665	DVORA		KEIS	F	44	SKALA		09.1942
666	MOTIO		KEIS	M	55	SKALA		09.1942
667	CHANA		KEIS	F	54	SKALA		09.1942
668	LEIB		KEIS	M	31	SKALA		09.1942
669	BASIA		KEIS	F	30	SKALA		09.1942
670	RACHEL		KEIS	F	25	SKALA		09.1942

671	FRIDA	KEIS		F	22	SKALA	09.1942
672	SZEJNDL	KEIS		F	15	SKALA	09.1942
673	JACOB	KEIS		M	13	SKALA	09.1942
674	ZALMAN	KEIS		M	35	BORKI C.C.	1943
675	YETTA	KEIS		F	34	SKALA	09.1942
676	NUTA	KEIS		F	9	SKALA	09.1942
677	MOTIO	KEIS		M	7	SKALA	09.1942
678	NECHE	KEIS		F	4	SKALA	09.1942
679	YAKER	KEIS			40	BORKI C.C.	1943
680	ROZA	KEIS		M	35	SKALA	09.1942
681	MOTIO	KEIS		M	15	SKALA	09.1942
682	MALKA	KEIS		F	8	SKALA	09.1942
683	DVORA	KELMAN		F	83	SKALA	09.1942
684	GOLDA	KIMEL		F	44	BORSZCZOW	1943
685	LUSIA	KIMEL			19	BORSZCZOW	1943
686	REGINA	KIMEL		F	14	BORSZCZOW	1943
687	MECHEL	KIMELMAN			51	MUSZKATOWKA	1942
688	NECHA	KIMELMAN		F	49	MUSZKATOWKA	
689	HERSCH	KIMELMAN		M	18	MUSZKATOWKA	
690	JACOB	KIMELMAN		M	81	SKALA	09.1942
691	MECHEL	KIMELMAN			60	SKALA	09.1942
692	LIBA	KIMELMAN		F	53	SKALA	09.1942
693	SZMELKE	KIMELMAN		M	61		
694	YETTA	KIMELMAN		F	58		
695	ROSA	KIMELMAN		F	21		
696	FABIAN	KIMELMAN		M	20		
697	SONIA	KIMELMAN		F	16		
698	MORDCHE	KIRSCHNER	LEIB	M	60	SKALA	09.1942
699	ELIEZER	KIRSCHNER		M	31	U.S.S.R.	
700	JENTA	KIRSCHNER		F	60	SKALA	09.1942
701	HERSCH	KLAPPER		M	27	SKALA	1943

702	DAVID		KLAPPER	M	21	SKALA		1943
703	CHAIM	JOSEPH	KLAPPER	M	36	SKALA		1943
704	ZIPORA		KLAPPER	F	35	BORSZCZOW		1943
705	PESIA		KLEIN	F	45	SKALA		09.1942
706	NUTE		KLEIN	F	35	SKALA		09.1942
707	JENTA		KLEIN	F	36	SKALA		09.1942
708	MECHEL		KLEIN		2	SKALA		09.1942
709	SALOMON		KLEIN	M	47	BORKI C.C.		1943
710	BRANA		KLEIN	F	40	SKALA		09.1942
711	SHEINDEL		KLEIN	F	21	BORSZCZOW		1943
712	LEIB		KLEIN	M	14	SKALA		09.1942
713	FRYMA		KLEIN	F	12	SKALA		09.1942
714	ELKA		KLEIN	F	10	SKALA		09.1942
715	ROZA		KLEINMAN	F	27	SKALA		09.1942
716	YONA		KLEINMAN		22	SKALA		09.1942
717	BRONIA		KLEINMAN	F	21	SKALA		09.1942
718	SZIYE		KLEINMAN	M	40	BORKI C.C.		1942
719	RYWA		KLEINMAN	F	45	SKALA		09.1942
720	SARA		KLEINMAN	F	22	SKALA		09.1942
721	ABRAHAM		KLEINMAN	M	2	SKALA		09.1942
722	MESHULEM		KLIGLER	M	36	BORSZCZOW		1943
723	LEA		KLIGLER	F	32	BORSZCZOW		1943
724	JOSEPH		KLIGLER	M	13	BORSZCZOW		1943
725	DORA		KLIGLER	F	3	BORSZCZOW		1943
726	PINKAS		KLIGMAN	M	49	LWOW		1941
727	BARUCH		KLINGER	M	74	BORSZCZOW		1943
728	VITIA		KLINGER	F	72	BORSZCZOW		1943
729	MENDEL		KLINGER	M	29	SKALA FOREST		1943
730	IRENA		KLINGER	F	26	SKALA		1943
731	ALTER		KLINGER	M	65	SKALA		09.1942
732	CYLA		KLINGER	F	64	SKALA		9.1942

733	RACHEL		KLINGER	F	75	BORSZCZOW	1942
734	MANIA		KLINGER	F	45	BORSZCZOW	1942
735	GITEL		KLINGER	F	43	BORSZCZOW	1942
736	ZEIDE	HERSCH	KLINGER	M	70	SKALA	9.1942
737	FRIMA		KLINGER	F	68	SKALA	9.1942
738	BABA		KLINGER	F	69	SKALA	9.1942
739	MEIR	CHAIM	KOHN	M	49	SKALA	1942
740	MESHEL		KOHN	M	71	BORSZCZOW	1943
741	GITEL		KOHN	F	70	BORSZCZOW	1943
742	YEHOSHUA		KOHN	M	24	SKALA	1943
743	LEIB		KOHN	M	42	SKALA	9.1942
744	MINA		KOHN	F	36	SKALA	9.1942
745	SIMCHA		KOHN	M	7	SKALA	9.1942
746	HERSCH		KOHUT	M	44	BORKI C.C.	1943
747	BABA		KOHUT	F	51	SKALA	9.1942
748	SOSIA		KOHUT	F	39	SKALA	9.1942
749	CHAIM		KOHUT	M	22	BORSZCZOW	1942
750	SARA		KOHUT	F	17	SKALA	9.1942
751	SZEVA		KOHUT	F	12	SKALA	9.1942
752	CYREL		KOHUT	F	9	SKALA	9.1942
753	MOSHE		KOHUT	M	5	SKALA	9.1942
754	SHAUL		KOHUT	M	32	BORKI C.C.	1942
755	SOSIA		KOHUT	F	30	SKALA	9.1942
756	ROZA		KORNBLIT	F	62	BORSZCZOW	1942
757	FEIGA		KORNBLIT	F	39	BORSZCZOW	1942
758	JOSEPH		KOWAL	M	62	SKALA	9.1942
759	SARA		KOWAL	F	60	SKALA	9.1942
760	GEDALIE		KOWAL	M	32	BORKI C.C.	1943
761	CHAIM		KOWAL	M	39	BORSZCZOW	1943
762	SOSIA		KOWAL	F	35	BORSZCZOW	1943
763	MEIR		KOWAL	M	14	BORSZCZOW	1943

764	DINA	KOWAL	F	8	BORSZCZOW	1943
765	MECHEL	KOWAL	M	37	SKALA FOREST	1942
766	CHAJA	KOWAL	F	30	SKALA	9.1942
767	BETKA	KOWAL	F	5	SKALA	9.1942
768	MEIER	KREITNER	M	82	BORSZCZOW	1943
769	CHAVA	KREITNER	F	80	BORSZCZOW	1943
770	CHAIM	KREMNITZER	M	36	U.S.S.R.	
771	SOSIA	KREMNITZER	F	73	BORSZCZOW	1942
772	IZAK	KRESSEL	M	60	SKALA	9.1942
773	FEIGE	KRESSEL	F	58	SKALA	9.1942
774	MEIR	KRESSEL	M	16	SKALA	9.1942
775	MIREL	KRIEGSFELD	M	46	BURDIAKOWCE	
776	BENZION	KRIEGSFELD	M	47	BORKI C.C.	1942
777	CIPA	KRIEGSFELD	F	40	SKALA	9.1942
778	SZEJDEL	KRIEGSFELD	F	7	SKALA	9.1942
779	SOSIA	KRIEGSFELD	F	4	SKALA	9.1942
780	JACOB	KRIEGSFELD	M	1	SKALA	9.1942
781	JOSEPH	KRIGSFELD	M	64	SKALA	9.1942
782	HERSCH	KRIGSFELD	M	34	BORKI C.C.	1943
783	BENJAMIN	KRONSTEIN	M	51	SKALA	1943
784	RACHEL	KRONSTEIN	F	36	SKALA	1943
785	RATZE	KRONSTEIN	F	4	SKALA	1943
786	KOPEL	KRONSTEIN	M	36	SKALA	1943
787	SARA	KRONSTEIN	F	32	SKALA	1943
788	SZEJNDEL	KRONSTEIN	F	3	SKALA	1943
789	ZELIG	KRONSTEIN	M	79	SKALA	9.1942
790	SARA	KRONSTEIN	F	77	SKALA	9.1942
791	BERL	KRONSTEIN	M	43	SKALA FOREST	1943
792	CYREL	KRONSTEIN	F	35	SKALA	9.1942
793	MOSHE	KRONSTEIN	M	7	SKALA	9.1942
794	MINA	KRONSTEIN	F	6	SKALA	9.1942

795	ROZA	KRONSTEIN	F	4	SKALA	9.1942
796	HIRSCH	KURTZ	M	36	BORSZCZOW	1943
797	RONIA	KURTZ	F	35	BORSZCZOW	1943
798	TODRES	KURTZ	M	5	BORSZCZOW	1943
799	SOSIA	LACHMAN	F	62	TLUSTE	1943
800	MAJER	LANDAU	M	60	LOSIACZ	
801	MALKA	LANDAU	F	56	LOSIACZ	
802	JOSEPH	LANDAU	M	21	LOSIACZ	
803	BERL	LANDAU	M	18	LOSIACZ	
804	WOLF	LANDAU	M	16	LOSIACZ	
805	LUWISH	LANDMAN	M	53	SKALA	9.1942
806	IDIS	LANDMAN	F	50	SKALA	9.1942
807	SZEINDL	LANDMAN	F	16	SKALA	9.1942
808	CWETL	LANDMAN	F	15	SKALA	9.1942
809	YOEL	LANDMAN	M	12	SKALA	9.1942
810	ZEIDE	LANDMAN	M	7	SKALA	9.1942
811	SZYFRA	LAVNER	F	51	SKALA	9.1942
812	GOLDA	LEIBARD	F	47	SKALA	1943
813	CYLA	LEIBARD	F	12	SKALA	1943
814	MOTEL	LEIBOWICZ	M	42	BORKI C.C.	1942
815	MARIEM	LEIBOWICZ	F	37	SKALA	9.1942
816	DVORA	LEIBOWICZ	F	76	SKALA	1943
817	SAMSON	LEIBOWICZ	M	29	STUPKI C.C.	1943
818	CHAIM	LEIBOWICZ	M	46	SKALA	1943
819	SZEINDEL	LEIBOWICZ	F	43	SKALA	1943
820	MOTEL	LEIBOWICZ	M	20	SKALA	1943
821	JACOB	LEIBOWICZ	M	16	SKALA	1943
822	SALOMON	LEIWANDMAN	M	44	U.S.S.R.	
823	SAMUEL	LEIWANDMAN	M	23	SKALA FOREST	1943
824	ROZA	LEIWANDMAN	F	21	SKALA	9.1942
825	SAUL	LEIWANDMAN	M	19	KAMIONKA C.C.	1943

826	BLIMA	LEIWANDMAN	F	17	SKALA	1942
827	SAMSON	LEIWANDMAN	M	49	BORKI C.C.	1942
828	BRANA	LEIWANDMAN	F	45	SKALA	9.1942
829	SARA	LEIWANDMAN	F	20	SKALA	9.1942
830	BELA	LEIWANDMAN	F	18	SKALA	9.1942
831	JACOB	LEIWANDMAN	M	13	SKALA	9.1942
832	SIMA	LEIWANDMAN	F	10	SKALA	9.1942
833	SALOMON	LEMBERG	M	73	SKALA	9.1942
834	CYREL	LEMBERG	F	55	SKALA	9.1942
835	MOSES	LEWENKRON	M	50	U.S.S.R.	
836	CHANA	LEWENKRON	F	49	U.S.S.R.	
837	MOSES	LIBLING	M	25	SKALA FOREST	1943
838	MALKA	LIBLING	F	22	SKALA FOREST	1943
839	SARA	LIBLING	F	5	SKALA	9.1942
840	BEILA	LIBLING	F	3	SKALA	9.1942
841	ETA	LIBLING	F	54	SKALA	9.1942
842	CHAIM	LIEBERBAUM	M	49	SKALA	9.1942
843	FRIDA	LIEBERBAUM	F	48	SKALA	9.1942
844	JACOB	LIEBERBAUM	M	21	SKALA FOREST	1943
845	SARA	LIEBERBAUM	F	17	SKALA	9.1942
846	LIBA	LIEBERBAUM	F	14	SKALA	9.1942
847	CHAVA	LINDMAN	F	51	SKALA	9.1942
848	CHANCIA	LINDMAN	F	24	SKALA	9.1942
849	PINKAS	LINDMAN	M	4	SKALA	9.1942
850	MOZES	LUBLIN	M	72	SKALA	9.1942
851	LEIB	LUNENFELD	M	40	SKALA	9.1942
852	BRONIA	LUNENFELD	F	35	SKALA	1942
853	JACOB	LUNENFELD	M	12	SKALA	9.1942
854	HERSCH	LUNENFELD	M	5	SKALA	9.1942
855	BERL	MALAMUT	M	46	BORKI C.C.	1942
856	SARA	MALAMUT	F	44	SKALA	9.1942

857	SOSIA	MALAMUT	F	18	SKALA	9.1942
858	NECHE	MALAMUT	F	12	SKALA	9.1942
859	RYWKA	MALAMUT	F	8	SKALA	9.1942
860	ISAK	MANN	M	56	SKALA FOREST	1943
861	SZYFRA	MANN	F	55	SKALA FOREST	1943
862	RACHEL	MANN	F	24	SKALA FOREST	1943
863	CHANA	MEIERHOFER	F	69	SKALA	9.1942
864	CHAIM	MEISELMAN	M	50	SKALA	1943
865	ETA	MEISELMAN	F	48	SKALA	9.1942
866	JOSEPH	MEISELMAN	M	20	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
867	BETKA	MEISELMAN	F	14	SKALA	1942
868	ESTHER	MEISELMAN	F	40	SKALA	1942
869	YACHNA	MEISELMAN	F	6	SKALA	1942
870	SARA	MEISELMAN	F	4	SKALA	1942
871	KEILE	MELER	F	83	SKALA	9.1942
872	JENTA	MELZER	F	55	BOSZCZOW	1942
873	SARA	MELZER	F	13	BOSZCZOW	1942
874	MOSES	DAVID MELZER	M	70	U.S.S.R.	
875	RACHEL	MELZER	F	59	U.S.S.R.	
876	LUZER	MELZER	M	45	U.S.S.R.	
877	IZAK	MELZER	M	33	U.S.S.R.	
878	MARKUS	MELZER	M	52	U.S.S.R.	
879	SZPRINCIA	MELZER	F	48	PODHAJCE	
880	SALEK	MELZER	M	14	PODHAJCE	
881	MOSHE	EPHRAIM MENCZEL	M	65	SKALA	9.1942
882	RYWKA	MENCZEL	F	62	SKALA	9.1942
883	BARUCH	MENCZEL	M	39	SKALA	9.1942
884	ETA	MENCZEL	F	12	SKALA	9.1942
885	KUNIE	MENCZEL	M	49	SKALA	1943
886	MIREL	MENCZEL	F	46	SKALA	9.1942
887	SAMUEL	MENCZEL	M	21	SKALA	9.1942

888	RIWA	MENCZEL		F	19	SKALA	9.1942
889	FISCHEL	MENCZEL		M	33	U.S.S.R.	
890	ISRAEL	MENCZEL		M	31	GERMAN P.O.W.*)	
891	NECHE	MENCZEL		F	30	U.S.S.R.	
892	MEIR	MENDLOWICZ		M	45	BORSZCZOW	1943
893	YENTA	MENDLOWICZ		F	40	BORSZCZOW	1943
894	LEICIA	MENDLOWICZ		F	19	BORSZCZOW	1943
895	FRYMA	MENDLOWICZ		F	16	BORSZCZOW	1943
896	MOTIO	MENDLOWICZ		M	12	BORSZCZOW	1943
897	JACOB	MENDLOWICZ		M	7	BORSZCZOW	1943
898	ISRAEL	MENDLOWICZ		M	53	BORKI C.C.	1943
899	ROZA	MENDLOWICZ		F	50	SKALA	9.1942
900	ZEIDE	MENDLOWICZ		M	82	BORSZCZOW	1943
901	CHANCIE	MENDLOWICZ		F	80	BORSZCZOW	1943
902	WOLF	MENDLOWICZ		M	41	SKALA FOREST	1943
903	YENTA	MENDLOWICZ		F	38	SKALA	1943
904	BERL	MENDLOWICZ		M	16	SKALA	1943
905	FEIVISH	MENDLOWICZ		M	13	SKALA	1943
906	SAMUEL	MENDLOWICZ		M	8	SKALA	1943
907	DAVID	MESSING		M	55	SKALA	1942
908	SARA	MESSING		F	52	BORSZCZOW	1942
909	MOSHE	MESSING		M	20	JANOWSKA C.C.	1942
910	JACOB	MESSING		M	19	BORKI C.C.	1942
911	SZYJE	MILLER	BERL	M	63	SKALA	9.1942
912	BABE	MILLER		F	60	BORSZCZOW	1942
913	ELI	MILLER		M	27	SKALA	1943
914	PEJSACH	MILLER		M	25	SKALA	1943
915	SHAUL	MOJDLOWICZ		M	34	KAMIONKA C.C.	1942
916	SOSIA	MOJDLOWICZ		F	35	SKALA	9.1942
917	ISRAEL	MOJDLOWICZ		M	5	SKALA	9.1942
918	MARIEM	MOJDLOWICZ		F	4	SKALA	9.1942

919	FATEL		MONDSCHEIN	M	66	SKALA		9.1942
920	MASIA		MONDSCHEIN	F	62	SKALA		9.1942
921	CHANE	SARA	MORGENSTERN	F	66	SKALA		9.1942
922	BARUCH	MOSHE	MORGENSTERN	M	42	BORSZCZOW		1944
923	SARA		MORGENSTERN	F	37	BORSZCZOW		1944
924	MALA		MORGENSTERN	F	4	BORSZCZOW		1944
925	BLIMA		MORGENSTERN	F	3	BORSZCZOW		1944
926	BRANE	YENTE	MORGENSTERN	F	73	SKALA		9.1942
927	MOSES		MORGENSTERN	M	45	SKALA		1942
928	RYWKA		MORGENSTERN	F	42	SKALA		9.1942
929	PEARL		MORGENSTERN	F	6	SKALA		9.1942
930	MOSHE		MOSNER	M	72	SKALA		9.1942
931	PESIA		MOSNER	F	70	SKALA		9.1942
932	SARA		MOSNER	F	40	SKALA		9.1942
933	SAMUEL		MOSNER	M	17	SKALA		9.1942
934	TOSIA		MOSNER	F	8	SKALA		9.1942
935	RYWKA		MOSNER	F	34	SKALA		9.1942
936	SHULIM		MUHLMUTH	M	44	SKALA		1943
937	RACHEL		MUHLMUTH	F	35	SKALA		1943
938	JACOB		MUHLMUTH	M	10	SKALA		1943
939	FRYDZIA		MUHLMUTH	F	2	SKALA		1943
940	MOSES		NADLER	M	33	NIVRA		
941	CHANA		NADLER	F	30	NIVRA		
942	ABRAHAM		NAGLER	M	33	NIVRA		
943	CYREL		NAGLER	F	32	NIVRA		
944	HERSCH		NAGLER	M	7	NIVRA		
945	SHRAGA		OCHSHORN	M	34	SKALA		9.1942
946	SARA		OCHSHORN	F	32	SKALA		Sep. 1943
947	ZWI		OCHSHORN	M	7	SKALA		Sep. 1944

948	BARUCH	OLINGER		M	45	SKALA	1943
949	MINA	OLINGER		F	43	SKALA	1943
950	LEA	OLINGER		F	13	SKALA	1943
951	FISCHEL	OLINGER		M	10	SKALA	1943
952	NISAN	OLINGER		M	47	CZORTKOW	1943
953	SIMA	OLINGER		F	45	BORSZCZOW	1943
954	MUNIO	OLINGER		M	15	CZORTKOW	1943
955	MOSES	OLINGER		M	39	SKALA	9.1942
956	KLARA	OLINGER		F	32	SKALA	9.1942
957	MANIA	OLINGER		F	2	SKALA	9.1942
958	DEBORA	OLINGER		F	79	BORSZCZOW	1943
959	MALCIA	OLINGER		F	52	BORSZCZOW	1943
960	CHAIM	OPER		M	46	SKALA	9.1942
961	TAUBE	OPER		F	42	SKALA	9.1942
962	ISRAEL	OPER		M	8	SKALA	9.1942
963	CHANA	OPER		F	6	SKALA	9.1942
964	GITEL	PANZIRER		F	66	SKALA	9.1942
965	YENTA	PERL		F	55	BORSZCZOW	1943
966	CHUNE	PERL		F	16	BORKI C.C.	1943
967	IZAK	PLITT		M	57	BORSZCZOW	1943
968	SIMA	PLITT		F	55	BORSZCZOW	1943
969	SAMSON	PLITT		M	24	BORKI C.C.	1943
970	RYWKA	PLITT		F	22	SKALA	1944
971	NATHAN	PLITT		M	19	BORSZCZOW	1943
972	ETA	PLITT		F	17	BORSZCZOW	1943
973	MARIASIA	POPERS		F	48	SKALA	9.1942
974	MENACHEM	PRESCHEL		M	46	STUPKI C.C.	1943
975	RACHEL	PRESCHEL		F	45	SKALA	9.1942
976	CHAYA	PRESCHEL		F	16	SKALA	9.1942
977	CHAVA	RABINOWICZ	CHAYA	F	62	SKALA	9.1942
978	MOSES	RABINOWICZ		M	26	U.S.S.R.	

979	HARRY	RAPAPORT	M	23	U.S.S.R.	
980	CHAIM	RAPAPORT	M	45	BORSZCZOW	1943
981	SZYFRA	RAPAPORT	F	38	SKALA	9.1942
982	BUZIA	RAPAPORT	F	13	SKALA	1943
983	PINKUS	RAPAPORT	M	11	BORSZCZOW	1943
984	ISRAEL	RAPAPORT	M	7	SKALA	1943
985	ETHEL	RAPAPORT	F	2	SKALA	9.1942
986	LEIZER	RAPAPORT	M	28	GERMAKOWKA	
987	MALKA	RAPAPORT	F	64	GERMAKOWKA	
988	ISRAEL	RAPP	M	86	SKALA	9.1942
989	IDES	RECHTER	M	75	SKALA	9.1942
990	MORDCHE	RECHTER	M	40	BORKI C.C.	1943
991	LEA	RECHTER	F	13	SKALA	9.1942
992	MOSHE	RECHTER	M	12	SKALA	1943
993	FRIMA	RECHTER	F	7	SKALA	9.1942
994	MEILACH	RECHTER	M	36	SKALA	1943
995	ROZA	RECHTER	F	35	SKALA	9.1942
996	BEILA	RECHTER	F	12	SKALA	9.1942
997	MALKA	RECHTER	F	10	SKALA	9.1942
998	LEIZER	RECHTER	M	9	SKALA	9.1942
999	ARON	RECHTER	M	7	SKALA	9.1942
1000	SOSIA	RECHTER	F	4	SKALA	9.1942
1001	SHULIM	RECHTER	M	2	SKALA	9.1942
1002	MOTIO	RECHTER	M	73	SKALA	9.1942
1003	WELE	RECHTER	M	70	SKALA	9.1942
1004	NACHMAN	RELES	M	77	BORSZCZOW	1943
1005	RACHEL	RINGEL	F	60	BORSZCZOW	1943
1006	CHAYA	RINGEL	F	35	SKALA	9.1942
1007	JOSEPH	RINGEL	M	7	SKALA	9.1942
1008	SARA	RINGEL	F	5	SKALA	9.1942
1009	JACOB	ROFFE	M	56	BORKI C.C.	1942

1010	CIREL		ROFFE	F	52	SKALA	9.1942
1011	NECHAMA		ROFFE	F	20	SKALA	9.1942
1012	BERISH		ROSENBAUM	M	66	BORSZCZOW	1943
1013	SARA		ROSENBAUM	F	63	BORSZCZOW	1943
1014	ROSA		ROSENBAUM	F	25	BORSZCZOW	1943
1015	PINCHUS		ROSENBAUM	M	34	BORSZCZOW	1943
1016	LEA		ROSENBAUM	F	34	BORSZCZOW	1943
1017	HADASSAH		ROSENBAUM	F	5	BORSZCZOW	1943
1018	ZYSIE		ROSENBLATT	F	50	SKALA	9.1942
1019	RECHME		ROSENBLATT	M	48	SKALA	9.1942
1020	MOSHE		ROSENBLATT	M	19	SKALA	9.1942
1021	MALKA		ROSENBLATT	F	17	SKALA	9.1942
1022	BARUCH		ROSENBLATT	M	16	SKALA	9.1942
1023	PEARL		ROSENBLATT	F	13	SKALA	9.1942
1024	MANCIA		ROSENBLATT	F	69	SKALA	9.1942
1025	SIMON		ROSENBLATT	M	41	WOLKOWCE	
1026	ROZA		ROSENBLATT	F	13	WOLKOWCE	
1027	MOSHE		ROSENBLATT	M	8	WOLKOWCE	
1028	BARUCH		ROSENBLATT	M	2	WOLKOWCE	
1029	MALKA		ROSENBLATT	F	31	TURYLCZE	
1030	USHER		ROSENBLATT	M	4	TURYLCZE	
1031	SARA		ROSENBLATT	F	30	SKALA	9.1942
1032	ISRAEL		ROSENBLATT	M	33	SKALA	1943
1033	FREIDA		ROSENBLATT	F	34	SKALA	1943
1034	SARA		ROSENBLATT	F	9	SKALA	1943
1035	SIMA		ROSENBLATT	F	6	SKALA	1943
1036	PEPA		ROSENBLATT	F	3	SKALA	1943
1037	CHAVA		ROSENFELD	F	30	SKALA	9.1942
1038	ROZA		ROSENFELD	F	20	SKALA	Sep. 1943
1039	ISRAEL	HERSCH	ROSENHAUCH	M	45	SKALA	9.1942

1040	FEIGA	ROSENHAUCH	F	42	SKALA	9.1942
1041	JUDA	ROSENHAUCH	M	21	SKALA	1943
1042	SIMON	ROSENHAUCH	M	20	SKALA FOREST	1943
1043	SZIYE	ROSENHAUCH	M	17	SKALA FOREST	1943
1044	CHAIM	ROSENHAUCH	M	14	SKALA	9.1942
1045	SOSIE	ROSENHAUCH	F	5	SKALA	9.1942
1046	BEILE	ROSENHAUCH	F	5	SKALA	9.1942
1047	FRIMA	ROSENWALD	F	55	SKALA	1943
1048	MARIEM	ROSENWALD	F	35	SKALA	1943
1049	LUSIA	ROSENWALD	F	7	SKALA	1943
1050	SAMSON	ROSENWALD	M	83	SKALA	9.1942
1051	DVORA	ROSENWALD	F	78	SKALA	9.1942
1052	FRYMA	ROSENWALD	F	36	SKALA	9.1942
1053	FEIGA	ROSENZWEIG	F	70	SKALA	9.1942
1054	SAMUEL	ROSENZWEIG	M	45	BORKI C.C.	1943
1055	FRIDA	ROSENZWEIG	F	42	SKALA	9.1942
1056	RACHEL	ROSENZWEIG	F	5	SKALA	9.1942
1057	CIPORA	ROSENZWEIG	F	46	SKALA	1943
1058	SALOMON	ROSENZWEIG	M	51	SKALA	1943
1059	SARA	ROSENZWEIG	F	44	BURDIAKOWCE	
1060	BERTHA	ROSENZWEIG	F	51	BURDIAKOWCE	
1061	LEIB	ROSENZWEIG	M	56	BURDIAKOWCE	
1062	FRIMA	ROSENZWEIG	F	50	BURDIAKOWCE	
1063	ALTER	ROSENZWEIG	M	24	BURDIAKOWCE	
1064	NUSIA	ROSENZWEIG	F	23	BURDIAKOWCE	
1065	CHAIM	ROSENZWEIG	M	16	BURDIAKOWCE	
1066	SAMUEL	RUBEL	M	65	BORSZCZOW	1943
1067	CIPA	RUBEL	F	60	BORSZCZOW	1943
1068	SALA	RUBEL	F	32	BORSZCZOW	1943
1069	ROZA	RUBEL	F	33	BORSZCZOW	1943
1070	LIBA	RUBEL	F	65	SKALA	9.1942

1071	BENJAMIN	RUBEL		M	35	IVANKOW	1943
1072	ESTHER	RUBEL		F	35	BORSZCZOW	1943
1073	SARA	RUBEL		F	1	BORSZCZOW	9.1942
1074	KRENIA	RUDEL		F	17	SKALA	9.1942
1075	ELI	RUSMAN		M	60	SKALA	9.1942
1076	CIPA	RUSMAN		F	55	SKALA	9.1942
1077	SZEINDEL	RUSMAN		F	30	SKALA	9.1942
1078	HINDE	RUSMAN		F	25	SKALA	9.1942
1079	ISRAEL	RUSMAN		M	16	SKALA	9.1942
1080	ZLATA	RUSMAN		F	80	SKALA	9.1942
1081	GITEL	RUSMAN		F	18	SKALA	9.1942
1082	CHAIM	RUSMAN		M	29	SKALA	9.1942
1083	MACHLA	RUSMAN		F	32	SKALA	9.1942
1084	SOSIA	SALZMAN			47	SKALA	91942
1085	MOTIO	SALZMAN		M	20	BORKI C.C	1942
1086	RYSIA	SALZMAN		F	18	SKALA	91942
1087	RUBIN	SANDBERG		M	44	SKALA	1943
1088	RACHEL	SANDBERG		F	40	BORSZCZOW	1943
1089	SARA	SANDBERG		F	18	SKALA	1943
1090	BARUCH	SANDBERG		M	15	BORSZCZOW	1943
1091	MOSHE	SANDBERG		M	4	SKALA	1943
1092	BETKA	SANDBERG		F	4	SKALA	1943
1093	IZAK	SANDBERG		M	45	SKALA	1943
1094	SARA	SANDBERG		F	43	SKALA	1943
1095	CYLA	SANDBERG		F	17	SKALA	1943
1096	ZENYA	SANDBERG			15	SKALA	1943
1097	ARON	SCHAPIRA	SAMUEL	M	52	SKALA	91942
1098	HENIA	SCHAPIRA		F	50	SKALA	91942
1099	JACOB	SCHAPIRA		M	22	SKALA	91942
1100	LEA	SCHAPIRA		F	18	SKALA	91942
1101	FEIGA	SCHAPIRA		F	65	KOROLOWKA	1943

1102	SARA		SCHARFSTEIN	F	46	SKALA		91942
1103	SCHEINDL		SCHARFSTEIN	F	17	SKALA		91942
1104	CHAIM		SCHARFSTEIN	M	58	CYGANY		
1105	NISAN		SCHARFSTEIN	M	18	CYGANY		
1106	SARA		SCHARFSTEIN	F	11	CYGANY		
1107	GITEL		SCHARFSTEIN	F	52	CYGANY		
1108	MEIR		SCHATNER	M	59	SKALA		09/1942
1109	ESTHER		SCHATNER	F	51	SKALA		09/1942
1110	GITEL		SCHATNER	F	33	SKALA		09/1942
1111	CHAVA		SCHATNER	F	29	SKALA		09/1942
1112	NAFTALI		SCHATNER	M	21	SKALA		09/1942
1113	MOSES		SCHATNER	M	1	SKALA		09/1942
1114	ESTHER		SCHECHER	F	73	SKALA		09/1942
1115	SUCHER	BER	SCHECHTER	M	72	BORSZCZOW		1942
1116	PEREC		SCHECHTER	M	40	BORKI C.C		1942
1117	LEIB		SCHECHTER	M	58	SKALA		04/1942
1118	SARA		SCHECHTER	F	58	SKALA		09/1942
1119	BERL		SCHECHTER	M	16	SKALA		09/1942
1120	MOSHE		SCHECHTER	M	13	SKALA		09/1942
1121	SAMUEL		SCHECHTER	M	28	SKALA		1943
1122	PEARL		SCHECHTER	F	38	SKALA		1943
1123	HUDEL		SCHECHTER	F	2	SKALA		1943
1124	CHAYA	SARA	SCHEFFER	F	72	SKALA		09/1942
1125	SALOMON		SCHEFFER	M	75	SKALA		09/1942
1126	WOLF		SCHEIDERMAN	M	45	SKALA		09/1942
1127	ABRAHAM		SCHEINBERG	M	74	SKALA		09/1942
1128	BRONIA		SCHEINBERG	F	72	SKALA		09/1942
1129	NACHUM		SCHENKERMAN	M	54	BORKI C.C		1942
1130	CYREL		SCHENKERMAN	F	53	SKALA		09/1942
1131	CHANA		SCHENKERMAN	F	25	SKALA		09/1942
1132	SZEIVE		SCHENKERMAN	F	18	SKALA		1943

1133	PEPE		SCHENKERMAN	M	23	U.S.S.R	
1134	SALOMON		SCHER	M	35	BORSZCZOW	1943
1135	SOSIA		SCHER		31	SKALA	09/1942
1136	EPHRAIM		SCHER	M	11	SKALA	09/1942
1137	BERL		SCHER	M	8	SKALA	09/1942
1138	CHAYA		SCHER	F	4	SKALA	09/1942
1139	ETA		SCHER	F	61	SKALA	09/1942
1140	SARA		SCHER	F	28	SKALA	09/1942
1141	MIREL		SCHER	M	4	SKALA	09/1942
1142	MINA		SCHER	F	32	SKALA	09/1942
1143	CHAIM	LEIB	SCHER	M	36	LUBLIN P.O.W	
1144	PESIA		SCHIFF	F	74	SKALA	09/1942
1145	GUSTA		SCHIFMAN	F	21	SKALA	1943
1146	SALOMON		SCHINDLER	M	59	BORSZCZOW	1943
1147	HINDA		SCHINDLER	F	58	BORSZCZOW	1944
1148	HERSH		SCHINDLER	M	31	BORKI C.C	1943
1149	RONIA		SCHINDLER	F	26	BORSZCZOW	1943
1150	LEA		SCHINDLER	F	21	BORSZCZOW	1943
1151	ROZA		SCHINDLER	F	27	SKALA	09/1942
1152	ZEIDE		SCHITZER	M	54	BORSZCZOW	1943
1153	SOSIA		SCHITZER		55	BORSZCZOW	1943
1154	TODRES		SCHITZER	M	19	BORSZCZOW	1943
1155	SARA		SCHITZER	F	74	BORSZCZOW	1943
1156	SAMUEL		SCHITZER	M	68	SKALA	09/1942
1157	BRANA		SCHITZER	F	52	SKALA	09/1942
1158	UREN		SCHITZER	M	32	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1159	BERL		SCHITZER	M	20	BORKI C.C	1943
1160	ETKA		SCHITZER	F	15	SKALA	09/1942
1161	ZISEL		SCHMERER		37	SKALA	09/1942
1162	JACOB		SCHNEIDER	M	46	SKALA	09/1942
1163	SIMON		SCHNEIDER	M	48	SKALA	09/1942

1164	RYWA		SCHNEIDER		F	46	SKALA	09/1942
1165	SARA		SCHNEIDER		F	15	SKALA	09/1942
1166	BEILE	MENIE	SCHNEIDER		F	45	SKALA	09/1942
1167	ARON		SCHNEIDER		M	18	SKALA	09/1942
1168	MOSHE		SCHNEIDER		M	16	SKALA	09/1942
1169	ZEIDE		SCHNEIDER		M	75	SKALA	09/1942
1170	SARA		SCHNEIDER		F	35	SKALA	09/1942
1171	JOSEPH		SCHNEIDER		M	49	BORKI C.C	1943
1172	RIVA	LEA	SCHNEIDER		F	44	SKALA	09/1942
1173	JACOB		SCHNEIDER		M	12	SKALA	09/1942
1174	ZELDA		SCHNEIDER		F	6	SKALA	09/1942
1175	CHAIM		SCHNEIDER	MORGENTAU	M	45	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1176	ROZA		SCHNEIDER	MORGENTAU	F	42	SKALA	09/1942
1177	DAVID		SCHNEIDER	MORGENTAU	M	21	SKALA	1943
1178	LEIB		SCHNEIDER	MORGENTAU	M	18	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1179	RACHEL		SCHNEIDERMAN		F	41	SKALA	09/1942
1180	JACOB		SCHNEIDERMAN		M	20	STUPKI C.C	1942
1181	MENDEL		SCHNEUER		M	34	BORKI C.C	1943
1182	PEPE		SCHNEUER			26	BORKI C.C	1943
1183	IDA		SCHNEUER		F	4	BORKI C.C	1943
1184	MENDEL		SCHNITZER		M	57	SKALA	09/1942
1185	BRANE		SCHNITZER		F	56	SKALA	09/1942
1186	TAUBA		SCHOR		F	76	SKALA	09/1942
1187	DAVID		SCHRENZEL		M	51	BORSZCZOW	1943
1188	MUNIO		SCHRENZEL		M	20	SKALA FOREST	1943
1189	NUSIA		SCHRENZEL			14	SKALA FOREST	1943
1190	BERISH		SCHRENZEL		M	44	SKALA	1943
1191	NECHAMA		SCHUSTER		F	41	SKALA FOREST	1943
1192	DAVID		SCHUSTER		M	23	SKALA FOREST	1943
1193	ESTHER		SCHUSTER		F	19	SKALA FOREST	1943
1194	SAMUEL		SCHUSTER		M	13	SKALA FOREST	1943

1195	GOLDA		SCHUSTER	F	15	SKALA FOREST	1943
1196	BENZION		SCHUSTERMAN	M	50	BORKI C.C	1942
1197	HUDEL		SCHUSTERMAN	F	72	SKALA	09/1942
1198	DAVID		SCHWARTZ	M	41	SKALA	1943
1199	RACHEL		SCHWARTZ	F	44	SKALA	1943
1200	BEILA		SCHWARTZ	F	14	SKALA	1943
1201	SARA		SCHWARTZ	F	10	SKALA	1943
1202	MOSHE		SCHWARTZ	M	8	SKALA	1943
1203	CYREL		SCHWARTZ	F	4	SKALA	1943
1204	SHLIMA		SCHWARZAPEL	F	36	SKALA	09/1942
1205	CYREL		SCHWARZAPEL	F	7	SKALA	09/1942
1206	SLUWA		SCHWARZAPEL		4	SKALA	09/1942
1207	MOSES		SCHWARZAPEL	M	38	JANOWSKA C.C	1943
1208	FEIGA		SCHWARZAPEL	F	36	SKALA	09/1942
1209	BENZION		SCHWARZAPEL	M	14	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1210	SUZIA		SCHWARZAPEL		11	SKALA	09/1942
1211	MALKA		SCHWARZAPEL	F	7	SKALA	09/1942
1212	ABRAHAM		SCHWARZAPEL	M	35	SKALA FOREST	1944
1213	RIVKA		SCHWARZBACH	F	72	SKALA	1944
1214	SOLOMON		SCHWARZBACH	M	43	JANOWSKA C.C	1943
1215	ROZA		SCHWARZBACH		מ 37	SKALA	09/1942
1216	ESTHER		SCHWARZBACH	F	5	SKALA	09/1942
1217	ISRAEL		SCHWARZBACH	M	43	BORKI C.C	1942
1218	RACHEL		SCHWARZBACH	F	39	SKALA	1942
1219	MOSHE		SCHWARZBACH	M	15	SKALA	1942
1220	SLUVA		SCHWARZBACH		12	SKALA	1942
1221	WOLF	LIBSTER	SCHWARZBACH	M	57	SKALA	09/1942
1222	RIVKA		SCHWARZBACH	F	48	SKALA	09/1942
1223	JOSEPH		SCHWARZBACH	M	21	ZYLINCE FOREST	1943
1224	BETKA		SCHWARZBACH	F	18	SKALA	09/1942

1225	DZIDZIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	11	SKALA		09/1942
1226	BEILE	WITIA	SCHWARZBACH	F	75	SKALA		09/1942
1227	PESIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	71	SKALA		1943
1228	DORA		SCHWARZBACH	F	7	SKALA		1943
1229	CHAIM		SCHWARZBACH	M	36	JANOWSKA C.C		1942
1230	NESIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	40	SKALA		09/1942
1231	HERSH		SCHWARZBACH	M	46	SKALA FOREST		1943
1232	CHUNE		SCHWARZBACH		19	SKALA		06/1943
1233	MAX		SCHWARZBACH	M	17	SKALA FOREST		1943
1234	BETKA		SCHWARZBACH	F	17	SKALA		1943
1235	FEIGA		SCHWARZBACH	F	67	BORSZCZOW		1943
1236	MORDCHE		SCHWARZBACH	M	58	BORSZCZOW		1943
1237	RACHEL		SCHWARZBACH	F	57	SKALA		09/1942
1238	MENDEL		SCHWARZBACH	M	29	STUPKI C.C		1942
1239	BARUCH		SCHWARZBACH	M	15	SKALA		09/1942
1240	JACOB		SCHWARZBACH	M	67	SKALA		09/1942
1241	ZELDA		SCHWARZBACH	F	58	SKALA		09/1942
1242	SARA		SCHWARZBACH	F	30	BORSZCZOW		1943
1243	BEILA		SCHWARZBACH	F	20	BORSZCZOW		1942
1244	LEA		SCHWARZBACH	F	36	BORSZCZOW		1943
1245	HERSH		SCHWARZBACH	M	63	BORSZCZOW		1943
1246	BRANA		SCHWARZBACH		59	BORSZCZOW		1943
1247	SALKA		SCHWARZBACH		34	SKALA		1943
1248	MENDEL		SCHWARZBACH	M	33	IVANKOW		1943
1249	JACOB		SCHWARZBACH	M	31	SKALA		1943
1250	SAMSON		SCHWARZBACH	M	21	SKALA FOREST		1943
1251	MOTIO		SCHWARZBACH	M	26	POLISH ARMY		
1252	MEIR		SCHWARZBACH	M	19	SKALA FOREST		1943
1253	ETA		SCHWARZBACH	F	39	SKALA		09/1942
1254	BEILA		SCHWARZBACH	F	5	SKALA		09/1942
1255	CHANCIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	76	SKALA		1942

1256	MOSHE		SCHWARZBACH	M	38	SKALA FOREST	1943
1257	LEA		SCHWARZBACH	F	32	KOLOMIA	1942
1258	IZAK		SCHWARZBACH	M	7	SKALA FOREST	1943
1259	CHAYA	HUDEL	SCHWARZBACH	F	70	SKALA	1942
1260	CHANCIA	GITEL	SCHWARZBACH	F	49	SKALA	1942
1261	YECHIEL		SCHWARZBACH	M	42	CZERNOWCE	
1262	RYWCIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	38	CZERNOWCE	
1263	MAX		SCHWARZBACH	M	8	CZERNOWCE	
1264	ETA		SCHWARZBACH	F	1	BORSZCZOW	1943
1265	WOLF		SCHWARZBACH	M	60	U.S.S.R	
1266	DAVID		SCHWARZBACH	M	45	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1267	BEILA		SCHWARZBACH	F	43	SKALA	09/1942
1268	ABRAHAM		SCHWARZBACH	M	14	SKALA	09/1942
1269	CHAIM		SCHWARZBACH	M	12	SKALA	09/1942
1270	SALOMON		SCHWARZBACH	M	6	SKALA	09/1942
1271	MOSHE		SCHWARZBACH	M	53	SKALA	1943
1272	CZARNA		SCHWARZBACH	F	48	SKALA	1942
1273	BETKA		SCHWARZBACH	F	21	SKALA	1943
1274	TONIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	18	SKALA	1943
1275	DAVID		SCHWARZBACH	M	40	SKALA	1942
1276	SARA		SCHWARZBACH	F	34	SKALA	09/1942
1277	SONIA		SCHWARZBACH	F	8	SKALA	09/1942
1278	RACHEL		SCHWARZBACH	F	40	SKALA	09/1942
1279	MENDEL		SCHWARZBACH	M	35	RUMANIA	
1280	TAUBA	MIREL	SCHWARZBACH	F	56	U.S.S.R	
1281	HERSH		SCHWARZBACH	M	35	U.S.S.R	
1282	NUNIA		SCHWARZBACH		23	U.S.S.R	
1283	RIVKA		SCHWARZBACH	F	65	BORSZCZOW	1943
1284	JOACHIM		SCHWEBEL	M	35	GUSZTYN	1944
1285	SUZIA		SCHWEBEL		34	GUSZTYN	1944
1286	PEPA		SCHWEBEL		62	GUSZTYN	1944

1287	ELISA		SCHWEITZER	F	65	SKALA	09/1942
1288	MIRIAM		SEIDLER	F	55	SKALA	09/1942
1289	MALKA		SEIDLER	F	35	SKALA	09/1942
1290	SARA		SEIDLER	F	4	SKALA	09/1942
1291	MOSES		SEIDLER	M	30	U.S.S.R	
1292	GOLDA		SEIDMAN	F	44	SKALA	09/1942
1293	WOLF	IZAK	SEIDMAN	M	3	SKALA	09/1942
1294	AZRIEL		SEIDMAN	M	47	BORKI C.C	1942
1295	SIMON		SEMEL	M	45	SKALA FOREST	1943
1296	PEARL		SEMEL	F	44	SKALA	09/1942
1297	JACOB		SEMEL	M	3	SKALA	09/1942
1298	LAZAR		SILBERBUSH	M	71	TURYLCZE	
1299	YENTA		SILBERBUSH	F	67	TURYLCZE	
1300	FRYDA		SILBERBUSH	F	22	TURYLCZE	
1301	ZENIA		SILBERBUSH	F	30	TURYLCZE	
1302	DAVID		SILBERBUSH	M	7	TURYLCZE	
1303	MOTEL		SILBERBUSH	M	65	TURYLCZE	
1304	RACHEL		SILBERBUSH	F	62	TURYLCZE	
1305	DOLO		SILBERBUSH		17	TURYLCZE	
1306	ZEJDE		SILBERBUSH	M	53	U.S.S.R	
1307	SALOMON		SOFER	M	74	SKALA	09/1942
1308	ALTER		SOMER	M	54	UNKN	1942
1309	ABRAHAM		SOMER	M	28	KAMIONKA C.C	1943
1310	JOSEPH		SOMERMAN	M	65	NIVRA	
1311	ETHEL		SOMERMAN	F	58	NIVRA	
1312	SOSIA		SONENKLAR	F	69	BORSZCZOW	1943
1313	FEIVISH		SPERLING	M	37	SKALA	09/1942
1314	LEA		SPERLING	F	36	SKALA	09/1942
1315	JUDA		SPERLING	M	13	SKALA	09/1942
1316	PINKUS		SPERLING	M	6	SKALA	09/1942
1317	SAMUEL		STECKMAN	M	40	SKALA	1943

1318	SALOMON		STECKMAN	M	37	BORKI C.C	1942
1319	ETA	LEA	STEINER	F	66	BORSZCZOW	1942
1320	HERSH		STEINER	M	40	BORKI C.C	1942
1321	SARA		STEINER	F	12	BORSZCZOW	1942
1322	MENDEL		STEINER	M	39	IVANKOW	1943
1323	MEIR		STEINER	M	37	BORKI C.C	1943
1324	JUDA		STEINER	M	34	BORKI C.C	1943
1325	SZAJE		STEINER		29	BORKI C.C	1943
1326	LEIZER		STEINER	M	27	BORKI C.C	1943
1327	MOSHE		STEINER	M	41	BORSZCZOW	1943
1328	BRONIA		STEINER	F	37	BORSZCZOW	1943
1329	PEPA		STEINER		5	BORSZCZOW	1943
1330	SOSIA		STEINER		2	BORSZCZOW	1943
1331	NUTA		STEINER		74	SKALA	09/1942
1332	SIMA		STEINER	F	69	SKALA	09/1942
1333	LEIB		STEINER	M	40	SKALA	1943
1334	IZAK		STEINER	M	42	SKALA FOREST	1943
1335	RACHEL		STEINER	F	27	SKALA FOREST	1943
1336	MOSHE		STEINER	M	4	SKALA FOREST	1943
1337	ABA		STERN	M	43	TLUSTE	1943
1338	MIRIAM		STERN	F	44	TLUSTE	1943
1339	ROZA		STERN	F	20	TLUSTE	1943
1340	WOLF		STERN	M	17	TLUSTE	1943
1341	MOTEL		STERNBERG	M	47	SKALA	1943
1342	SCHINEIA		STERNBERG	F	43	SKALA	1943
1343	LOTKA		STERNBERG	F	19	SKALA	1943
1344	ZYGMUNT		STERNBERG	M	15	SKALA	1943
1345	GITEL		STERNSCHEIN	F	39	SKALA	1943
1346	NATHAN		STERNSCHEIN	M	41	U.S.S.R	
1347	MENDEL		STERNSCHEIN	M	16	SKALA	1943
1348	SIMA		STERNSCHEIN	F	11	SKALA	1943

1349	GITEL		STERNSCHUS		F	77	SKALA	09/1942
1350	JOSEPH		STERNSCHUS		M	38	BORKI C.C	1942
1351	MEIR		STEUERMAN		M	51	SKALA	1943
1352	ZOSIA		STEUERMAN			50	SKALA	1944
1353	LUSIA		STEUERMAN			18	SKALA	1943
1354	UZIEL		STOCK		M	50	BORKI C.C	1943
1355	ETA		STOCK		F	48	BORSZCZOW	1943
1356	MOSHE		STOCK		M	23	BORKI C.C	1942
1357	SARA		STOCK		F	16	BORSZCZOW	1943
1358	RYSIA		STOCK		F	12	BORSZCZOW	1943
1359	CYPRA		STOCK		F	60	BORSZCZOW	1943
1360	SUSKA		STOCK			40	BORSZCZOW	1943
1361	ROZA		STOCK		F	23	SKALA	1943
1362	BENJAMIN		STOCK		M	21	BORKI C.C	1943
1363	CHANA		STOCK		F	14	BORSZCZOW	1943
1364	JENTA		STOCK		F	61	SKALA	1943
1365	SIMA		STOCK		F	38	SKALA	1943
1366	FOGE		STOCK		F	72	BORSZCZOW	1943
1367	IZAK		STOLER		M	55	SKALA	09/1942
1368	SZEJNDL		STOLER		F	50	SKALA	09/1942
1369	SARA		STOLER		F	15	SKALA	09/1942
1370	FRIDA		STOLER		F	61	SKALA	09/1942
1371	JOSEPH		SZIREL		M	37	BORSZCZOW	1943
1372	YENTE		SZIREL		F	32	BORSZCZOW	1943
1373	CHANA		SZIREL		F	3	BORSZCZOW	1943
1374	FEIVISH	LIBER	SZIREL		M	2	BORSZCZOW	1943
1375	MOTIO		SZKOLNIK	KRESSEL	M	27	SKALA	09/1942
1376	KALMAN		SZKOLNIK	KRESSEL	M	1	SKALA	09/1942
							CYG ANY	
1377	MEIR	ZISIE	TABAK		M	59	FOREST	1943
1378	LIFSHE		TABAK		M	83	SKALA	09/1942

1379	SARA	TABAK		F	51	BORSZCZOW	1943
1380	BRACHA	TABAK		F	3	SKALA	1944
1381	CHANA	TAUBER		F	54	BURDIAKOWCE	
1382	LEA	TENNENBAUM		F	41	SKALA	09/1942
1383	FEIGA	TENNENBAUM		F	12	SKALA	1943
1384	FREIDA	TENNENBLAT		F	85	SKALA	09/1942
1385	JUDA	WACHS		M	51	BORKI C.C	1942
1386	SARA	WACHS		F	47	SKALA	1943
1387	HENOCH	WACHS		M	19	SKALA FOREST	1943
1388	LUSIA	WACHS			13	SKALA	1943
1389	SARA	WACHS	HECHTENTHAL	F	72	SKALA	09/1942
1390	FRIDA	WACHS		F	39	SKALA	09/1942
1391	SHULIM	WAGNER		M	7	SKALA	09/1942
1392	F.	WAGNER			4	SKALA	09/1942
1393	MECHEL	WAGNER			54	LOSIACZ	
1394	GOLDA	WAGNER		F	52	LOSIACZ	
1395	IZAK	WALACH	LEIB	M	53	SKALA	1943
1396	BABA	WALACH			48	SKALA	1943
1397	MOSHE	WALACH		M	17	SKALA FOREST	1943
1398	DOV	WALACH		M	14	SKALA	1943
1399	WOLF	WASSERMAN		M	59	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1400	SARA	WASSERMAN		F	57	SKALA	09/1942
1401	HENRYK	WASSERMAN		M	28	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1402	DAVID	WASSERMAN		M	20	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1403	MECHEL	WASSERMAN			36	BURDIAKOWCE	1943
1404	PESIA	WASSERMAN		F	35	BURDIAKOWCE	1943
1405	CHAIM	WASSERMAN		M	54	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1406	MANIA	WASSERMAN		F	49	SKALA	09/1942
1407	SAMUEL	WASSERMAN		M	16	SKALA	09/1942
1408	MEIR	WASSERMAN		M	12	SKALA	09/1942
1409	CHAIM	WASSERMAN		M	86	SKALA	09/1942

1410	RYKIEL	WASSERMAN		55	SKALA		09/1942
1411	AVRAHAM	WASSERMAN	M	69	SKALA		09/1942
1412	ROZA	WASSERMAN	F	66	SKALA		09/1942
1413	CHAYA	WASSERMAN	F	40	SKALA		09/1942
1414	RACHEL	WASSERMAN	F	36	SKALA		09/1942
1415	SHAPSE	WASSERMAN		35	BORSZCZOW		1943
1416	MOSHE	WASSERMAN	M	72	SKALA		1941
1417	CYREL	WASSERMAN	F	69	SKALA		1943
1418	JACOB	WASSERMAN	M	72	BORSZCZOW		1943
1419	MARIAM	WASSERMAN	F	70	BORSZCZOW		1943
1420	WOLF	WASSERMAN	M	44	SKALA FOREST		1943
1421	SALA	WASSERMAN		40	SKALA FOREST		1943
1422	FRYDZIA	WASSERMAN	F	14	SKALA FOREST		1943
1423	TOSIA	WASSERMAN		9	SKALA FOREST		1943
1424	LEIZER	WASSERMAN	M	44	RUMANIA		
1425	REGINA	WASSERMAN	F	40	RUMANIA		
1426	NUSIA	WASSERMAN		16	RUMANIA		
1427	MIECIO	WASSERMAN		11	RUMANIA		
1428	ETHEL	WECHSLER	F	37	SKALA		09/1942
1429	JUDA	HERSH WECHSLER	M	40	SKALA		09/1942
1430	CIPA	WECHSLER	F	14	SKALA		09/1942
1431	NUSIA	WECHSLER		12	SKALA		09/1942
1432	RIWCIE	FEIGE WECHSLER	F	68	SKALA		09/1942
1433	MOZES	WEIDBERG	M	56	BORSZCZOW		1943
1434	DWOSIA	WEIDBERG	F	51	SKALA		1943
1435	DAWID	WEIDBERG	M	19	BORSZCZOW		1943
1436	HERSH	WEIDBERG	M	18	SKALA		1943
1437	AVRAHAM	WEIDBERG	M	16	SKALA		1943
1438	MOTIO	WEIDBERG	M	59	BORSZCZOW		1943
1439	SARA	WEIDBERG	F	37	BORSZCZOW		1943
1440	CHAVA	WEIDBERG	F	4	BORSZCZOW		1943

1441	MALCIA	WEIDBERG		F	37	LEMBERG	1941
1442	SALOMON	WEIDENFELD		M	57	BORSZCZOW	1943
1443	SZYFRA	WEIDENFELD		F	55	BORSZCZOW	1943
1444	OSIASZ	WEIDENFELD		M	25	GERMAN P.O.W	1943
1445	RACHEL	WEIDENFELD		F	69	SKALA	1943
1446	BARUCH	WEIDENFELD	MOSHE	M	61	BORSZCZOW	1943
1447	DOBA	WEIDENFELD			59	BORSZCZOW	1943
1448	FIDUSIA	WEIDENFELD			28	BORSZCZOW	1943
1449	HINDA	WEIDENFELD		F	21	BORSZCZOW	1943
1450	MATEL	WEIDENFELD		M	18	BORSZCZOW	1943
1451	MOSHE	WEINFELD		M	56	SKALA	09/1942
1452	MONIA	WEINFELD			52	SKALA	09/1942
1453	LEIZER	WEINFELD		M	29	BORKI C.C	1942
1454	REGINA	WEINFELD		F	27	SKALA	09/1942
1455	LEA	WEINFELD		F	19	SKALA	09/1942
1456	SIMA	WEINFELD			19	UNKN	
1457	NUSIA	WEINFELD		M	16	BORSZCZOW	1943
1458	MOSHE	WEINGAST		M	43	SKALA FOREST	1943
1459	KLARA	WEINGAST		F	36	SKALA	1943
1460	RONIA	WEINGAST		F	45	SKALA	09/1942
1461	JENTA	WEINGAST		F	35	SKALA	09/1942
1462	ZEIDE	WEINGAST		M	67	SKALA	1943
1463	MINA	WEINGAST		F	30	BORSZCZOW	1943
1464	EDZIA	WEINGAST			26	SKALA	1943
1465	YENTA	WEINGAST		F	21	SKALA	09/1942
1466	SOSIA	WEINGAST			20	SKALA	09/1942
1467	MATES	WEINGAST		M	41	BORSZCZOW	1943
1468	SZMERL	WEINGAST		M	14	BORSZCZOW	1943
1469	MIRIAM	WEINRAUB		F	34	SKALA	09/1942
1470	NACHMAN	WEINRAUB		M	11	SKALA	09/1942
1471	ESTHER	WEINRAUB		F	76	SKALA	09/1942

1472	MOTEL		WEINRAUB	M	41	BORKI C.C	1942
1473	MOSHE		WEINRAUB	M	54	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1474	DVORA		WEINRAUB	F	53	SKALA	09/1942
1475	BENJAMIN		WEINRAUB	M	26	UNKN	
1476	SZULIM		WEINRAUB	M	20	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1477	CHAYA		WEINRAUB	F	18	SKALA	09/1942
1478	FEIGA		WEINRAUB	F	54	BORSZCZOW	1942
1479	ZENIA		WEINRAUB	F	26	BORSZCZOW	1942
1480	MALKA		WEINREB	F	74	SKALA	09/1942
1481	MOZES		WEINSTEIN	M	34	SKALA	1943
1482	MIRIAM		WEINSTEIN	F	35	SKALA	1943
1483	BRANA		WEINSTEIN	F	74	SKALA	1943
1484	ABRAHAM		WEINSTEIN	M	40	SKALA	1943
1485	MALKA		WEINSTEIN	F	42	SKALA	09/1942
1486	RACHEL		WEINTRAUB	F	69	BORSZCZOW	1943
1487	HERSH		WEINTRAUB	M	70	SKALA	1942
1488	MOSES		WEISBROT	M	22	BORKI C.C	1943
1489	YACHNE		WEISBROT	F	19	SKALA	09/1942
1490	SARA		WEISBROT	F	2	SKALA	09/1942
1491	ZALMAN		WEISINGER	M	41	BORSZCZOW	1943
1492	PESIA		WEISINGER	F	42	BORSZCZOW	1943
1493	SARA		WEISINGER	F	3	BORSZCZOW	1943
1494	MALA		WEISINGER	F	77	SKALA	09/1942
1495	TAUBE		WEISINGER	F	41	SKALA FOREST	1944
1496	MEILECH		WEISINGER	M	50	U.S.S.R	
1497	MECHEL		WEISINGER	M	19	SKALA FOREST	1944
1498	ABRAHAM		WEISINGER	M	19	SKALA FOREST	1943
1499	MECHEL		WEISINGER	M	63	JEZIERZANY	1943
1500	FRIMA		WEISINGER	F	62	SKALA	09/1942
1501	RISIA	LEA	WEISMAN	F	78	BORSZCZOW	1943
1502	URN		WEITMAN	M	12	SKALA	09/1942

1503	MECHEL		WEITMAN		M	32	U.S.S.R	
1504			WEITMAN				U.S.S.R	
1505			WEITMAN				U.S.S.R	
1506	IZAK		WEITMAN		M	56	SKALA	09/1942
1507	FREIDA		WEITMAN		F	55	SKALA	09/1942
1508	SAMUEL		WEITMAN		M	23	BORSZCZOW	1943
1509	RACHMIL		WEITMAN		M	16	SKALA	09/1942
1510	DAVID	IZAK	WIESENTHAL		M	74	SKALA	1941
1511	BABA		WIESENTHAL			76	SKALA	09/1942
1512	HERSH		WIESENTHAL		M	50	BORSZCZOW	1943
1513	REGINA		WIESENTHAL		F	49	BORSZCZOW	1943
1514	ARON		WIESENTHAL		M	21	BORSZCZOW	1943
1515	ISRAEL		WIESENTHAL		M	18	BORKI C.C	1943
1516	FEJWISH		WIESENTHAL		M	59	BORSZCZOW	1943
1517	CHANA		WIESENTHAL		F	58	BORSZCZOW	1943
1518	SALOMON		WIESENTHAL		M	30	BORSZCZOW	1943
1519	ETHEL		WIESENTHAL		F	21	BORSZCZOW	1943
1520	ALTER		WIESENTHAL		M	20	SKALA	1943
1521	ZECHARYA		WIESENTHAL		M	73	TLUSTE	1943
1522	BRACHA		WIESENTHAL		F	72	TLUSTE	1943
1523	ARON		WIESENTHAL		M	64	CYGANY	
1524	MIRIAM		WIESENTHAL		F	60	CYGANY	
1525	WOLF		WIESENTHAL		M	18	CYGANY	
1526	ROZA		WIESENTHAL		F	14	CYGANY	
1527	TZIPA		WIESENTHAL		F	10	CYGANY	
1528	MALKA		WIESENTHAL		F	57	CYGANY	
1529	CHAIM		WIESENTHAL		M	18	CYGANY	
1530	LEIB		WIESENTHAL		M	21	CYGANY	
1531	SIMA		WIESENTHAL		F	17	CYGANY	
1532	DINA		WITZER	KARMIN	F	27	SKALA	09/1942
1533	SAMUEL		WITZER	KARMIN	M	1	SKALA FOREST	1942

1534	MENDEL	WITZER	M	32	U.S.S.R	
1535	NACHMAN	WOHL LANDAU	M	60	SKALA	09/1942
1536	ESTHER	WOHL LANDAU	F	60	SKALA	09/1942
1537	JOSEPH	WOHL LANDAU	M	32	U.S.S.R	
1538	JACOB	ZEICHNER	M	39	BORKI C.C	1942
1539	LIBA	ZEICHNER	F	43	SKALA	1943
1540	CHAYA	ZEICHNER	F	13	SKALA	1943
1541	SAMUEL	ZEICHNER	M	7	SKALA	1943
1542	MINA	ZEICHNER	F	3	SKALA	1943
1543	CHANA	ZIMMERMAN	F	51	SKALA	09/1942
1544	MOSHE	ZIMMERMAN	M	29	JANOWSKA C.C	1942
1545	RACHEL	ZIMMERMAN	F	25	SKALA	09/1942
1546	ETKA	BILGORAJ	F	42	SKALA	09/1942
1547	MIRIAM	BILGORAJ	F		SKALA	09/1942
1548	DVORA	BILGORAJ	F	28	SKALA	09/1942
1549	SARA	REIBEL	F	74	SKALA	09/1942
1550	HENCIE	STUP		46	SKALA	09/1942
1551		STUP	M	15	SKALA	09/1942
1552		STUP	F	13	SKALA	09/1942
1553	PINA	STUP	F	19	DOBRANIOWKA	1943
1554	MENDEL	SILBER	M	35	SKALA	09/1942
1555	HENCIE	SILBER		26	SKALA	09/1942
1556	FREIDE	SHAPIRA	F	68	SKALA	09/1942

THESE MARTYRS I REMEMBER AND MY SOUL MELTS IN SORROW[1]

Chaim Brettler



FIG. 24: *Chaim Brettler*

From April 1942 I was in close contact with the Borki Wielkie and Stupki camps. This was just after the Passover registration of men in Borszczów during which a large number of Skala Jews were captured and sent to those camps: that is, to Borki and Stupki. My links to those camps lasted until the end of September 1942, after the large-scale "aktion" in our city of Skala. As the representative of the *Judenrat*, I delivered food and clothing to those unfortunate people. From time to time, I was also able to extract people from there–literally from the talons of death.

In the following lines, I wish to describe, according to my abilities, the bloody scroll of death, the ghastly facts which literally make one's blood congeal in one's veins. Facts seen with my own eyes; images that will follow a man to his grave. Some of us, par-

[1] Psalm 42: 5. This is also used as the introduction to the Elegy of the Ten Martyrs recited at Musaf on Yom Kippur. The exact translation is difficult.

ticularly those lucky ones of us who survived the time of the dreadful Holocaust in another, freer world where the hand of destruction could not reach, cannot conceive of what took place. Reading the lines of fire and blood–blood of one's own brothers–they may well ask themselves why and to what end should one rip open nearly closed wounds and reveal horrid images that will rob the eyes of sleep. To all of them one must say that the duty of a memorial book is to awaken and to remind, and, having these painful images before one's eyes, we will never forget or forgive.

I have made a list of all the Skala Jews who were hauled away to the camps, giving for each of them all the details that are known to me.

Since the liberation and since Yizkor Books have begun to appear, dry lists have appeared concerning the extermination in the camps, ghettos and forests, in which everything is set forth in numbers: so many shot; so many gassed and so on. This does not take into account that with such an approach we do a great injustice to our martyrs, because we transform them into nameless statistics. Let the account reflect every martyr's personality. I hope that each of us who reads this will see a person with a body and a soul with every name–a person who is an entire world unto himself, and not just a dry number. May it be as our prophet Ezekiel said, "I will clothe these dry bones with a body and a soul."[2]

At the beginning of the Second World War and the entry of the Red Army which occupied the eastern regions of Poland, we temporarily avoided the terrifying German occupation with all of its consequences. However other tribulations began. What is notable is that though we had the good fortune to have our own mayor, and perhaps even because we had such, the full force of the law descended upon the heads of the Jews: the arrests of Jews, the nationalization of Jewish property, and the deportation of Jews. Leaving aside the fact that in Skala we had Ukrainians, active nationalists, and open enemies of the Soviet Union nothing hap-

[2] The prophecy of the dry bones is in Ezekiel 37.

pened to any of them. These conditions of being terrified of every morning dragged on until the second phase of the war, when the two world-destroyers ceased kissing each other on the lips and one murderer fell upon the other. Then the *blitzkrieg* toward the east began. The Soviet armies retreated in disarray, being shot by the same Ukrainians who had had good situations with them, and who had waited only for the day of the Soviet defeat. Jews went about confused. Even though they lived beside the border and had every opportunity to escape with the retreating Russians, nobody (except activists) did that, because, having had a taste of the Red Garden of Eden, the Jews thought that there could be nothing worse. Sadly, they were mistaken. In Soviet Russia, no one was gassed.

The intervening time between the change of regimes was comparatively calm in Skala. In other towns and villages the enraged Ukrainians carried out pogroms against the Jews. The rulers of Skala were more restrained. The newly-created Ukrainian militia did indeed conduct searches of Jewish houses and some Jews were beaten, others were arrested, but except for a solitary case when a grenade was thrown into Dudi Herscher's house in the old city, which killed his wife Roiza and wounded his little daughter, there were no other victims.

With the entry of the Germans the evil decrees began: dragging of people to compulsory labor, the plundering of Jewish homes, etc. It was at that time that the *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) was founded. It was made up as follows:

Mordechai (Mattye) Weidberg, president
Yosef Jaget
Meir Zusi Tabak
Rabbi Yehuda Drimmer
Avraham Bilgoraj
Eliezer Fisch
Nissan Olinger

During the first months of German rule, their duty was to provide and deliver various articles to the Germans: to the Gestapo,

the guard and border Police as well as to the Ukrainian police so as to prevent, to the degree possible, the robbing of Jewish homes. It began first with the confiscation of Jewish houses, furniture, utensils, leather and so forth. This immediately evoked opposition to the *Judenrat* on the part of the population that had had those things taken from them. Then a second problem arose: the question of providing Jewish compulsory laborers for all the German and non-German workplaces. If the workers were not given over on time, the Germans or Ukrainians went out into the streets and there was no shortage of tribulations. With the introduction by the work division of the *Judenrat*, the chaotic hunt for laborers stopped to a large degree. A certain protocol to the calls for labor was also established. If a prosperous Jew had to present himself for work and was willing to pay, then poorer Jews would willingly take his place for a certain payment. In this fashion, the Jews created stable work situations with the Germans on the city farms (*liegenschaft*) and on the highways. They worked in the same places and did not have to fear being caught. These, however, were the easier problems: financial problems and the issue of working at the same workplace and remaining with one's family. Jews maneuvered with the Germans using the old Jewish weapon–money–and with the adage of "Give me the souls and you take the money"[3], as they dreamed of surviving the tribulations, not realizing that greater, more dreadful suffering and pain lay before them.

FORCED LABOR CAMP

Already in the first months of the German regime, the Jews were crushed under the burden of the local evil decrees of the Germans, of the Ukrainians, as well as of the Judenrat, which, under pressure from the enemy, had under certain situations carried out decrees such as the "fur aktion" and the almost daily tribulation of having to gather and deliver the goods and money that the Germans

[3] Genesis 14, 21.The phrase used by King of Sodom in negotiating the return of the captives who were rescued by Abraham.

requested. The Judenrat thought that thereby they would curb the appetite of the Nazis. At the same time, the Germans, with their well-known precision and following a pre-arranged plan, began to carry out their devilish goal of gradually destroying the Jews. They created a network of camps throughout the entire eastern region; so that they could gather young work-capable people in order to accomplish important projects through their efforts. At the same time, they knew that it would then be easier to annihilate them since they were concentrated at designated points. For the Jews of the Tarnopol region and other places, the Germans "cleared out" the property of a Jewish estate owner named Weisglass in the village of Borki Wielkie near Tarnopol. There was also another camp in the neighboring village of Stupki. I said "cleared out" because previously there had been a camp there for Russian war-prisoners who were "liquidated"–which means that they were murdered by the Germans.

They chose the village of Borki Wielkie because there was a train connection there. It was easy from there to lay rails for a direct line to Russia in order to improve the connection to the front. That rail line was to be created with the work of Jewish slave laborers.

The first week of December, 1941, the *Judenrat* received an order to provide fifty forced laborers at the gathering point in Czortków. The *Judenrat* had to obey that command and had put together a list of unmarried men, aged eighteen to thirty-five. It was very difficult to be the supreme decision maker as to who should or should not go. The choices as to who would go or not were made as fairly as possible. Those who were chosen were required to present themselves to the *Judenrat* on a Sunday evening. They were told that they were to be transported to a camp. Nothing was denied. Everyone appeared punctually at the specified time. The *Judenrat,* anxious that there should be no trouble, had asked for fifty-four instead of fifty in case anyone would fail to show up for any reason. Seeing that they all had come, and that no one was missing, the *Judenrat* immediately excused the four extra people, particularly

young bachelors from the poorer class, though they freed no one for money. Here are their names:

1. Yaakov Schneiderman, the son of Vevel Basserer who had a paralyzed mother.
2. Binyamin Stock, the son of Avraham Stock, who used often to take on work in order to help his family.
3. Henech Giles, who had no father.
4. David Klapper, a refugee boy who had no family.

Monday morning everyone went out to the already waiting wagons that were directed by Eliezer Fisch and started on their way to Czortków. The weeping and wailing of the old people and other family members cut one to the heart. The comforting words of the *Judenrat* promising Eliezer Fisch that he would certainly know their later fate were no help at all. Arriving in Czortków, they found transport vehicles from the entire district waiting. A considerable number of our people (22) then succeeded in escaping and the remaining 28 were sent, with the entire transport to Borki-Wielkie.

Here are their names:

Mendel Feuerstein (from Gusztyn)
Munye Schrenzel
Avraham Goldschein
Shalom Grünberg
Aharon Wiesenthal
Avraham Schwarzapel
Yisrael Blutstein
Benzion (Benye) Feuerstein
Benzion (Benye) Gemeinerman
Yehoshua Kohn
Moshe Stock
Nissan Plitt
Yisrael Goldschein
Yeshaya Steiner

Naftali Shatner
Yaakov Schwarzbach
Pesach Miller
Yitzchak Feuerstein
Yisrael Fleischman
Yehuda Rosenhauch
Shmuel Weitman
Shmuel Menczel
Binyomin Kasirer
Shimshon Leibowicz
Hersch Bretschneider
Hersch Schindler
Yaakov Lieberbaum

When Eliezer Fish came back from Czortków with the news, the families of the captives, hearing that others had run off, raised a vehement complaint. It was impossible to soothe the embittered ones or to point out that shouting alone would not help. The *Judenrat* went to work immediately to gather clothing and food for those transported. Several wagons were gathered by Ezriel Stock and Fishel Gemeinerman, who at that time still had the horses they had had earlier; horses with which they had done a variety of jobs for the *Judenrat*. Having sons in the camp, they were personally interested in the journey so that they might be able to see their children. Nissan Olinger of the *Judenrat* came along for the journey, so that he could be present on the location to analyze the situation and see what could be done.

There, in Borki, Nissan Olinger ran into other members of the *Judenrats* from the surrounding towns. Together, they sought a way to free the people. However, things do not happen as quickly as they are talked of. Meanwhile, people were driven daily to hard labor. It was frightfully cold. They were given almost no food. As had been said earlier, they worked especially on laying the railway tracks to Russia. One had to chop the rocky, frozen tract under the direction of supervisors. The smallest interruption could give rise to

fearful blows. But, seeing familiar faces every week, the provision of food and the exchange of clean clothes and linens for dirty ones, gave fresh strength to those unfortunates to endure and renewed their hope that they would one day be finished with the accursed camp.

One day there was a tragedy–a tragedy within a tragedy. Moshe Stock was suddenly killed while going out to work one day at the excavation site. A mound of earth slipped and buried him alive. By the time the other workers succeeded in clearing the earth away, he was dead–the first camp victim. The impact on the others was dreadful. It was only now that they could realize how close death was, and how important it was that it not be at the hands of the Germans or the Ukrainians. Their hearts broken, they carried him back so he could be buried somewhere. Then his father Uziel arrived with packages, hoping to see his son. He saw him dead. Hearing that they were preparing to bury him somewhere, he uttered a heartbroken cry, "No! I will not leave my Moshe here. I will take him home." That is what he did. Who would dare to tell the unfortunate father that he should not do that, and not drag his way for 36 hours over bad roads alone with his own thoughts. The first camp Jew was being carried home dead, driven by his own father...

The funeral in Skala made a very deep impression on everyone. The wailing was especially great among the families of those who had been sent to the camp. But, as has been said, what the earth covers must be forgotten. Everyone had to go on with his daily work and be prepared for new sorrows and blows. In the course of the following several weeks, Nissan Olinger succeeded in freeing the entire transport (all 27) in three groups. It cost plenty of money. There was no difference made between rich or poor. The *Judenrat* paid for those who were unable to pay.

Things should have been well, but already in February 1942, still before the final portion had been freed, there came a second edict regarding a fresh contingent for the camp. After receiving the new command, the *Judenrat* knew at once that this time their call to go

to the camp would not be respected. And rightly so. They had seen that nothing had happened to all those who had fled from the first transport. Who of his own free will would report himself to the camp? Efforts were made via the *Judenrat* to ransom them from the labor inspector. When that did not succeed, the Ukrainian police, with the help of the *ordungsdiener* (order keepers) captured Jews at the work places as well as in their hiding places and brought them to community buildings to deliver them to Borszczów for the transport. A considerable number of people were caught, but the relatives of the captives freed a certain number by various means, including, of course, paying the Germans or the Ukrainians. The next day, the rest of them were sent to Borszczów accompanied by Ukrainian police and members of the *Judenrat*. Arriving at Borszczów, they were locked up along with the prisoners from the entire district, but again, some of them succeeded in escaping. In the afternoon the entire transport, guarded by Ukrainian police, were brought to the train station and loaded onto waiting transport cars. The following vision still stands before my eyes: while accompanying the transport to the train along with Avrahamche Bilgoraj, Ezriel Seidman broke loose and began to run off. Here, the district commander of the Ukrainian police, Sementchuk from our city, gave an order to the policeman Mikhilichya, who at that time was a policeman in Skala: "Shoot!" He began to shoot after him, and then he brought him back. The transport, again, was sent to Borki-Wielkie taking with it the following eighteen people from Skala:

Moshe Fleischman "Terk" (died May 1942)
Mordechai Weinbaub
Yisrael Schwarzbach (Lipe's)
Shaul Kohut
Meir Flintenstein
Moshe Gottesfeld
Binyamin Stock
Moshe Zimmerman (ransomed August 1942, died later

in the Janowska Camp[4])
Gedalia Kowal
Shmuel (Munye) Rosenzweig
Meir Steiner
Zalman Keis
Yosef Benzion
Yitzchak Epstein
Shimon Fiderer
Yaakov Tseichner (freed April 1942; taken again during the Passover Registration).
Ezriel Seidman (freed August 1942; died two days later in Skala).
Yakir Keis

Antagonism between the Jews and the Judenrat grew after this transport. Without paying heed to this, the Judenrat had to perform its functions in the city, such as maintaining contact with the people in the camp, ensuring that packages were delivered on time in the same manner as before, hoping that with time they might again succeed in freeing the people. But that did not last very long and a new trouble developed to such a large extent that it almost paralyzed the entire rescue undertaking. The new trouble was the Passover registration. One must not forget that the registration orders came a few days after the liquidation of the village communities in our district. The Jews, who had lived in the villages for generations, working their own fields and had carrying on productive village lives, were mercilessly uprooted from their homes. Having to leave everything, they were driven into the surrounding towns. Skala was also flooded with tens of Jewish village families. The *Judenrat* had to concern itself with providing meager dwellings while the danger of a ghetto decree loomed, which was desired by our Ukrainian neighbors.

A pall fell upon the Jews already during the last few days before the eve of Passover when the *Judenrat* announced that on the first

[4] In the text, this is called the Yanover Camp.

day of Passover all the men aged 14 to 60 must present themselves to the "labor office" in Borszczów in order to receive a work card. One literally felt in the air that a new tribulation was on its way. Jews ran about, confused, not knowing whether it would be better to go or not to go. Some who had families or even friends in the *Judenrat* ran to them for help or advice. Others completely lost their confidence in the *Judenrat*. Finally, a great inquiry about the cards ensued; that is, establishing whether the card holder is employed at an authentic work place in the town and whether the employer needed him. The price of the cards rose, especially when the employer was a German. The card transactions were carried on through the *Judenrat* and outside the *Judenrat*, until almost the last minute. The Jews who were not registered did what they could. Some did not present themselves at all, knowing that if the Germans called, it would not be good. There were others who did not tell their young ones of their family to go. But there were several Jews with white beards and *peyos* who went, being certain that no matter what happened they would not be bothered. Fearful Jews, even young ones, presented themselves.

As one arrived in Borszczów, one immediately saw that one had entered into a calamity, but it was too late to turn back. The town was sealed off on all sides by the German and Ukrainian police, because at the same time all the men of the same age in the district were called up. Whoever failed to escape at the last moment was caught by the murderers and driven with blows from rifle butts to the gathering place near the former district office. In the panic and confusion a small number of the driven crowd succeeded in escaping thanks to good work permits. The rest were brought to the tobacco shop and there where they were locked up until they were sent away to the camps at Borki-Wielkie and Stupki. And that is how that first Passover looked under German rule. The brutes transformed that festival of freedom into a dark day of slavery. That day, in addition to a large number of village Jews, the following Jews of Skala were hauled away:

Benzion Gertler, Stupki (freed August 1942, killed in Iwankow, 1944).

Leibish Gottesfeld, Borki (freed June 1942, dragged off to the Janowska camp, killed in Losiacz, 1944).

Yaakov (Yankel) Roffe, Borki, perished there.

Yosef Sternschus, Borki, shot there.

Uri Aschendorf, Borki (freed in September 1942), killed in the Janowska Camp.

Nachum Elkes, Borki (later Latczki, perished there).

Hersch Blutstein, Borki (shot in May 1942).

Yitzchak Mann, Stupki (freed July 1942, killed in the Skala Forest).

Chuna Perl, Borki (perished there).

Menachem Preschel, Stupki (perished there).

Yehuda Wachs, Borki (perished there in June 1942).

Yaakov-Ber Trosowocki, Borki (exchanged for his son in June 1942. Killed in Belzec).

Zayde Schitzer (exchanged in Stupki for his son Todros (Tani) August 1942, killed in Borszczów).

Todros (Tani) Schitzer, killed in Stupki.

Avraham Trosowocki, in Borki from June 1942 (freed in September, then escaped from the Janowska Camp, now in New York).

Eliahu Joles, Borki (exchanged via his son in July 1942, sent to Belzec).

Mordechai Joles, Borki, from July 1942 (committed suicide there in October 1942).

Hersch Kohut, Borki (perished there).

Yisrael Wiesenthal, Borki (perished there).

Moshe Weinfeld, Borki (freed September 1942, sent to Belzec).

Eliezer (Zyunye) Weinfeld, Borki (perished there in September 1942).

Moshe Salzman, Borki (exchanged for his son in July 1942, died in New York).

Mordechai Salzman, Borki, from July 1942 (perished there).

Yosef Gottesfeld, Borki (perished there).

Yosef Mondschein, Borki (perished there).

Nachum Shenkerman, Borki (shot there in June 1942).

Avraham Schwarzapel, sent twice to Borki (escaped 1943 killed in the Skala forest).

Benzion Schusterman, Borki (shot there in July 1942).

Mordechai Leibowicz (Krywicz), Borki (perished there).

Yaakov Schneider, Borki (exchanged for his son in July 1942, sent to Belzec).

Moshe Schneider, Borki, from July 1942 (perished there).

Yehoshua Hersch Bosyk, freed August 1942 (killed in Borszczów).

Yosef Shmuel Feuerstein, Borki (perished there).

Moshe Feuerstein (Chana's) Stupki (shot there in July 1942).

Fishel Gemeinerman, Borki, exchanged for his son in July 1942 (caught in the forest aktion and murdered).

Chaim Gemeinerman, Borki, from July 1942 (died in Haluwaczek).

Uziel Stock, Borki (freed in September 1942, caught again in Borszczów in May 1943 and perished there).

Yitzchak Plitt, Borki (exchanged for his son in July 1942, died in Borszczów).

Shamai Plitt, Borki, from July 1942 (perished there).

Peretz Schechter, Borki (shot there in June 1942).

Efraim Hindes, Borki (freed September 1942, killed in Belzec).

Yisrael Goldschein, sent twice to Borki (perished there).

Yitzchak Goldschein, Borki (perished there).

Shimon Rosenblatt (Wolkowicz), Borki (perished there).

Eliyahu Engelbach, Borki (shot in June 1942).

Shlomo Steckman, Borki (shot in June 1942).

Mordechai Rechter, Borki (perished there).

Yitzchak Feuerstein. Borki, sent twice to Borki (escaped, killed in Borszczów).

Leibish Landman, Borki (September 1942, sent to Belzec).

Berl Malamud, Borki (perished there June 1942).

Yosef Schneider, Borki (perished there).

Moshe Weisbrod, Borki (perished there).

Melech Rechter, Borki (perished there).

Yisrael Mendlowicz, Borki (perished there).

Shalom Drescher, Stupki (perished there).

Hersch Krigsfeld, Borki (perished there).

Mordechai Fleischman, Borki (perished here)

Moshe Messing, Borki, exchanged for his brother in August 1942

(sent to the Janowska Camp).

Yaakov Messing, Borki, August 1942 (perished there).

Eliahu Augenblik, Borki (shot in June 1942).

Wolf Herscher, Borki (freed in August 1942, sent to the Janowska Camp and perished there).

Zayde Goldschein, Borki (perished there in May 1942).

Yehoshua Kleinman, Borki (perished there).

Yaakov Tseichner, sent twice at Borki (perished there).

Feivish Kasirer, Borki (exchanged in August 1942, shot in Skala 8/10/1943).

Shimshon Leibowicz, sent to Borki and Stupki (perished there).

Shlomo Schindler, Borki (exchanged for his son, in July 1942, died in Borszczów).

Hersch Schindler, Borki from July 1942 (perished there).

Berl Schitzer, Borki (perished there).

Yosef Wiesenthal, Borki (exchanged in July 1942, shot during the Purim aktion in Borszczów).

Mordechai Wiesenthal, Borki from July 1942 (perished

there).

Benzion Krigsfeld, Borki (perished there).
Shimshon Leinwandman, Borki (perished there).
Shlomo Klein, Borki (perished there).
Avraham Bilgoraj (from Losiacz), Borki (perished there).
Sali Bilgoraj (from Losiacz), caught in Borszczów).

It is hard to convey what happened that day in Borszczów and even more difficult to convey what was going on in Skala when individuals who had succeeded in escaping began to appear in the late afternoon. Each one told a different story. Women ran about weeping, waiting for the return of their relatives, or at least for a sign that they had succeeded in escaping. The panic lasted until morning when all the escapees returned and the great tragedy was described. Elderly and sick people had been caught and it was impossible to free even one of them. They were sent to Borki-Wielkie and Stupki in the following days.

I TRAVEL TO THE BORKI CAMP

The *Judenrat*, not knowing what to do on the spot, met with the families of the deportees to provide them with clothes and food. The latter, in those days, was almost impossible to find. Despite that, they were able to prepare four large wagons with bundles and I rode for the first time to Borki-Wielkie with that transport. My mission was not only to accompany the bundles and return; but to stay there and to see what could be done on the location, and to give whatever help was possible, particularly for the aged and sick, because it was clear that they would be the first to break down. Arriving there on Saturday afternoon (just a week since the round-up in Borszczów), I saw our people working on the road that leads to the camp. They stood almost knee deep in mud. The first one I saw was Yudel Wachs–half dead. When I asked him if he wanted anything, he looked up with eyes in which the light was extinguished, and made some movement with his lips which I did

not understand. When I gave him a piece of bread, he grasped it and swallowed it down, not considering that the foreman might notice. I myself was astonished upon seeing his situation, thinking that we, at home, were living in a paradise and were not aware of it. Thinking such thoughts I drove to the camp to wait there until the people were brought back from their work when I would be able to distribute the bundles. As I was standing at the gate, looking on at this vale of tears, I saw Uziel Stock working at paving the camp courtyard. Here, I have to pause again regarding Uziel; a father whose son was the first camp victim, and now a cruel fate had brought him, a 49 year old Jew, to the same place, where his son had walked daily, where every step, every place, reminded him of his great catastrophe. And yet he himself was unbroken. When he approached me, he asked nothing for himself; and made no complaints. His first words to me were, "Do something for Yaakov Ber (referring to Yaakov Ber Trosowocki). He has reached the end of his strength. I keep him near me and do his work, so that no one will notice his condition." It was true. Later, I saw how he did the work of two in order to spare him.

I became involved with a Jewish family in Borki, that of Meir Lunschitz. He was the only Jew surviving there, because at the time of the German invasion in 1941, the local Ukrainians conducted a pogrom in all the villages of the region, killing the men only, and leaving the widows and orphans alive. He, Lunschitz, a Jew in his thirties, worked in the Borki camp as an overseer on the same level as the Ukrainians. Through him, I made my first contacts with the camp and also sent and received news regarding our people.

Through him (Lunschitz) and through others, I got to know those I needed to know, and thereby to be in constant contact with our people; and not to be impeded in bringing help to a camp Jew or providing easier work for him. There was still a Jewish organization "instance" there, in addition to the Germans and the Ukrainians. In Borki, there were three Jews from among the first camp inmates. One of them, Margolies, was an extremely intelligent Russian. Since he spoke perfect German, he assisted in

the camp administration. The murderer Minkus, the camp director, relied greatly on him. Margolies, with a Jewish heart, helped a great deal–and not for money. He was the only one who did not make use of his superior situation for his personal interests. The other two, Rotman and Engelkreiz both from Lemburg, were entirely different, especially Engelkreiz. Those who miraculously survived will certainly remember the blows of thick sticks on the shoulders of the unfortunate Jews. Luckily, I knew Rotman from before the war, so he behaved well with me. I was in daily telephone contact with the *Judenrat* of Skala. I informed them of the situation of Yaakov Ber Trosowocki. A week later, his son arrived to replace him. This was the first instance of an exchange of one person for another. There was also the danger that, in the course of the exchange, the camp director would detain both of them. This is the reason why it took some time to get the camp director's approval before I could get Yaakov Ber exchanged and taken home. He did not know that in the meantime his eldest son Hersch had been shot in Skala.

JEWS SHOT AT THE LATRINE

After the first case of an exchange, I conducted many others (see the list). Meanwhile there were daily cases of deaths and shootings. I had never before experienced face-to- face such a dreadful image, which follows me until today.

On a sunny afternoon at the beginning of May, I was going to the Borki camp together with my friend Hersch Fenster from Ozeryany to meet with Margolies about some matter. Passing the barbed wire, we saw Nechemia Hechtenthal, an old bachelor, from Ozeryany being carried on a camp blanket. He had an illness in his foot, which is why he was being carried. At the same time Hersch Blutstein (Koppel's) and Yaakov Feuerstein (Eliezer Feuerstein's son,) who lived in Ozeryany, were being brought outside the wire fence to the "latrine," a huge, deep ditch for garbage into which dead Jews were also thrown. Nechemia Hechtenthal was thrown down at the edge of the ditch. The other two were also put down

there. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian police were in no hurry to do any shooting. I did not see Nechemia's face because he was lying down. Yankele stood astonished, and Hersch Koppel, with his long black overcoat tied with a string (he was captured in Borszczów wearing these clothes), calmly took out a prayer book from somewhere and striking his chest with one hand recited the *Al Chet* prayer[5]. Just then, gunshots rang out and all three of them fell into the "latrine" (outhouse), finding their graves there.

Can people in normal times understand such acts of bestiality? There, in that vale of tears, death in all of its forms was a daily event. Most people died of hunger, or for simply losing their strength from the heavy labor. The first thing needed to maintain their health was food, and obtaining such was fraught with great difficulties. First of all, at that time, the situation in that place was very bad, even among the gentile population. And when the packets were ready, first of all there were difficulties with delivery: wagons were needed (Jews had already had their horses confiscated), and then there were troubles on the roads. Just the same, everything possible that could be done was done to provide food regularly. For a certain period of time, I was able to have bread baked in Skala, where the situation was much better. It was some small help. But the destroyers proceeded with their plan of extermination, whether at home or in the camps. In the camps, the methods were frightful. There were victims every day: some were shot; some fell at work; some, trying to find a place to rest for a day or two in the camp hospital, were caught up in a "liquidation" of the hospital and shot. I will not describe the hospital "liquidation" which, among others, claimed the lives of five victims from Skala.

On June 5, 1942, an inspection was carried out in the camp. The devils were searching for sick people, weak people, and those unfit for labor. They were taken outside the camp and promptly shot. The killers had dragged together a considerable number of Jews. Among them, five from our town of Skala:

[5] The confessional recited on Yom Kippur, as well as when death is approaching.

Eliahu Augenblik from Gusyatin
Nachum Schenkerman
Eliyahu Engelbach (Shlomo Peretz's)
Shlomo Steckman
Peretz Schechter

On that same morning, they were all "liquidated."

THE DECAPITATED HEAD IN A SACK

T*he next morning at around* 6:00 a.m., Leibele Brandes of Korolówka, a foreman and a very decent young man, came to see me. Terrified, he let me know that the murderer, Minkus (may his name be blotted out), had been running about furiously during the roll call and now, he, Leibele, had been sent to bring me at once to the camp. He said, as if to himself, "Perhaps I was unable to find you at home." This was a hint that perhaps I ought to run away. However, with a palpitating heart, I went with him, being certain that some new catastrophe was approaching. I arrived at the camp and approached Minkus. I could see at once that he was aflame with murder. Seeing me, he roared: "Margolies!" When the latter stood before him, the villain uttered a command once more, "Show him!" Margolies went away and came back bearing some sort of a sack which he emptied out at my feet. I saw a human head freshly severed from a body. Then he yelled to me, "Pick up the head from the ground, look at it carefully and tell me whose it is." I lifted the head and, though the features were altered, I could see that this was the head of the man shot the day before, Eliahu Engelbach. I told him that. He said something to Margolies, and then promptly rode away. I was left alone with Margolies, who then told me what had happened. After the shooting, someone who knew that Eliahu Engelbach had gold teeth had gone out at night to the pit, found the body and cut off the head to make it easy for him to carry it away and knocked out the teeth with some sort of heavy object.. The head was found in the camp in the morning. It cost a good

deal before we were able to hide the shameful event and avoid an investigation.

In the Stupki camp, which considered itself the easier of the two, the situation was more or less the same. Perhaps there were a few fewer shootings and the camp director, Paul Siller, an Austrian, was perhaps a little less murderous.

It is probably worthwhile to provide an answer to the question of all those who were not there, "Why did the camp inmates not escape?" Having been in daily contact with the camp inmates and knowing what their mentality then was at the time, I can state with certainty that the camp inmates of 1942 all (with the exception of a few individuals) never even thought of escaping because they did not want to bring down misfortune on their fellows in tribulation through their deeds, and especially not on their families at home. On the contrary, the camp Jews were very angry at the escapees, because in every case when someone escaped those who remained were punished, especially the weak and the sic

Here, I will cite a case, and I am sure that those who were in the camp at that time will confirm it. With the first transport from our region to Borki, Hersch Lindman (Chaim the Baker's son), a former resident of Skala, was also brought from Czortków. After a certain time in the camp, he disappeared. The next day, ten Jews were shot as a punishment, including Leibele Blutstein (Leah the dairywoman's son). After that, the Czortków *Judenrat* was ordered to present him (Hirsch) or someone else. If not, they would suffer the consequences. His father Chaim Lindman was brought with the next food transport. His suffering there is indescribable. No longer a young man, in addition to heavy labor, he had to suffer from his fellow camp prisoners for the ten victims which his son had caused. He also suffered hunger more than the others. Once when I came to the railroad bridge in Borki, where some of our people were working, Chaim Lindman saw me, approached me, and said, weeping, "It is bad enough that at my age I have to work so hard, but I suffer even more because of others. I know what my son has done, but it is not my fault. I have a request for you. Though I have

most recently lived in Czortków, I am a Skala native. Provide me with bread, because the little that the *Judenrat* sends me is not given to me and I cannot survive on the camp rations alone." After that, I used to regularly give him bread and whatever I had.

A little while later, once, as I was returning from the camp to the Lunschitz's (where I lived). I found Hersch Lindman waiting there or me. When I reminded him of the danger at being there, he said he regretted his deed which had cost the lives of ten people, and that he wanted to rescue his father who was suffering because of him. He wanted to replace his father, but he feared that the Czortków *Judenrat* would turn him (Lindman) over to the authorities. He would be hanged and his father would not be freed. Rather he would turn himself over to me and I would take care of everything. At first, I did not want to get involved, not being certain of him. I told him to wait. The next day I spoke with his father and told everything. His father was against it because he knew the situation. I then discussed the situation with several of the camp Jews from Czortków and other places. All of them warned me not to do it, because if he should appear they would immediately turn him over to the Germans so that he could no longer betray anyone. I want to stress that this was how quiet, respectable people whom I had known before the war, talked. One of them, a foreman, told me,

"You know, I have the opportunity to escape almost every day. I do not do it so that others, including my family, will not have to suffer. Do not mix in." And that is how it was left. I told Hersch everything and helped him to leave Borki.

It was a similar situation with Moshe Feder of Tluste. Once the following took place: a father and son, village Jews who had wandered into Skala were caught there during a registration, escaped from the Stupki camp. It was a miracle because, finding myself on the square while it was happening, I was able to prevent a disaster involving shooting as well as the sending of a pursuit after them. Both of them, father and son, survived the war.

In the month of May 1942, after one had gotten used to the tribulations involving the registration and the difficulties that ensued, two fresh blows were received. The first, which surprised even the *Judenrat*, took place as follows: The commissariat of the Skala border guard headed by the scoundrel Herre, may his name be blotted out, informed the *Judenrat* that on a certain day all the *Judenrat* officials, administrators and all others who worked in different branches of the Council must present themselves so that the Germans could ascertain who was employed and who was not. Everyone came at the designated time. The murderer, Herre, began to select the people and retained a certain number of them. No intervention helped. He sent those he had selected to prison in Czortków. He also shot and wounded Chaim Jaget, may G-d avenge his blood, a member of the *Judenrat*. The people in Czortków were tormented for two weeks and only after the intervention of the regional *Judenrat* and the payment of a considerable sum of money, did the two members of the *Judenrat*, Meir Zusia Tabak may G-d avenge his blood, and Avrahamche Bilgoraj may he live, who had not left for Czortków, succeed in ransoming some of the captives. The rest were sent to Kamianka or Romanowa Siela, a very bitter camp with a Jewish "director," Yisraelik of Berezhany, a sadist. If two camps were not enough, there emerged a third one to which the following people were brought:

Mendel (Ziania) Klinger (ransomed in August 1942, died in the forest action).

Berl (Bubi) Buga (perished there in the camp).

Henech Wachs (escaped, summer 1943, perished in the forest).

Henech Giles (perished in the camp).

Munia Sommer (perished in the camp).

Shmuel Weinstein (perished in the Skala forest).

Shaul Weinstein (perished in the camp).

Almost at the same time there was a roundup and those captured were sent to Borki and Stupki. The following are their names:

Avraham Goldschein (captured twice for the camps: Borki and Stupki. Perished there).
Yaakov Scheiderman Stupki (perished there).
Shaul Mojdlowicz, Stupki (perished there),
Avraham Schwarzapel, caught twice for Borki, escaped 1943 (perished in a bunker in the forest in 1944).
Fishel Fisch, Stupki (ransomed 1942, died in New York).
Mendel Schwarzbach, Stupki (perished there).
Shalom Goldschein, Borki (perished there).
Yeshaya Steiner (caught twice for Borki, perished there).
Yehuda Steiner, Borki (perished there).
Eliezer Steiner, Borki (perished there).
Yisrael Peker, Stupki (ransomed September 1942, now in Israel).
Yaakov Fleischman, Stupki (perished there).
Yisrael Drescher, Borki (escaped 1943, perished later).
Moshe Jawitz, Stupki (perished there).
Leib Gottlieb, Stupki (perished there).

In this manner, the days and weeks went by in these camps in which deaths from hunger, shootings and other unusual fates were daily occurrences. Keeping in mind that our Skala people were only a small number among the thousands of Jews who perished there, it may be possible to form an image of what truly transpired in that vale of tears in that whole region and the fearful conditions that prevailed there. Even though the situation at home in Skala was not much better, help came from there on a weekly basis in the form of food, clothing and money for the camp inmates. In this manner a certain number of them were ransomed or exchanged.

The work of plucking people free from the beastly paws would have continued in this manner, but the German exterminator

proceeded to carry out greatly destructive actions in the city: first, in order to annihilate Jews in great masses; second to liquidate all helpful work for the camp inmates by destroying their families and thereby paralyzing every organized assistance on the part of the *Judenrat*, thus leaving the unfortunate people to their own fates.

The large-scale aktion was carried out in Skala during the first days of Sukkot, 1942, with the grievous tally: 695 captured men, women, children and old people. The younger, work-capable people were selected out and sent to the Janowska Camp. The others were promptly sent to the gas chambers of Belzec. Thirty-three were shot on the spot.

The liquidation of the Skala Jewish community took place a few days later. Those remaining were deported to Borszczów for later annihilation.

It is painful that the vast majority of those who were miraculously rescued from the murderous hands in the camps died various unnatural deaths later. Only the following survived:

Shalom Grunberg (now in New York)
Avraham Trosowocki (now in New York)
Moshe Salzman (died in New York)
Fishel Fisch (died in New York)
Yisrael Peker (now in Israel)
Yisrael Fleischman (now in New York)
Binyamin Kasirer (now in Israel)

SURVIVING IN THE FOREST[1]

Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld)

With generous hand a pair of twins
Had G-d bestowed upon us: a
Slaughter and a spring; The garden
Was in bloom, the sun was shining
And the slaughterer was slaying...

"The City of Slaughter"
–By Chaim Nahman Bialik



FIG. 25: *Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld)*

That's how I remember the spring of 1943. It was the morning of the second day of Passover (April 16), when I emerged from the dark and stale bunker[2] after the "action"[3] in the ghetto of Borshchov. The bright sunshine hurt my eyes. I walked over to the window of our crowded ghetto apartment, cautiously pushed aside a corner of the shade and saw a farmer's wagon drawn down the street by two horses. Piled upon the wagon helter-skelter were blood covered human corpses with stiff limbs sticking out on all sides, terribly distorted faces and extinguished eyes. The horses were slowly pulling the wagon and its macabre cargo, leaving behind a trail of blood.

[1] This chronicle translated from the original Yiddish by the author is dedicated to the blessed memory of his cousin Nechemia Stock.
[2] Every hiding place in the ghetto or later in the forest was called a bunker.
[3] A euphemism used by the Germans for the mass roundups and executions of Jewish men, women and children in Nazi occupied Europe

The streets of the ghetto were nearly deserted. Only from time to time, groups of Ukrainians with beaming faces were seen carrying away bundles of Jewish owned goods and furnishings. With aching heart I opened the window a crack and a mild breeze brought to my nostrils the fresh smell of spring and of awakening nature. This was the beginning of the end in the ghetto of Borshchov. The only thing I could not understand was why the sky was so blue and the sun so bright; why a flood of darkness and fire did not engulf this ugly, disgusting world.

After the Passover "action" in the ghetto of Borshchov[4] all our hopes and illusions about our possible liberation by the victorious Red Army were shattered. Notwithstanding the devastating defeats of the Germans at Stalingrad, the front lines were still very far away from us. In the meantime the beastly enemy was systematically destroying us. Every one of us who was still alive knew that he was condemned to death, and that it was only a matter of days, weeks, or perhaps months, before he would face the moment of execution. Only our animal instincts drove us to desperately seek a way to survive, to hide and to avoid the brutal end.

It became obvious to us at the time, that it was no longer possible to hide and survive in the ghetto, where almost everyone had some sort of bunker or hiding place that eventually proved, to be worthless. As the Passover massacre confirmed, bunkers and other hiding places had been discovered and compromised en masse. Some of the Skala survivors in the ghetto of Borshchov, especially the young, started to look for ways to escape. Although it was forbidden under the threat of death to leave the ghetto, Skala Jews, singly and in small family units, began to sneak out. Where did they go? Back to Skala of course, where some had hopes of finding shelter with friendly gentiles. At the beginning of this clandestine exodus, once they reached Skala, they surreptitiously

[4] During this massacre close to 800 Jewish men and women were rounded up by the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators and brazenly, in broad daylight, machine gunned and buried in a mass grave on the local Jewish cemetery

moved back into their own empty and abandoned homes to temporarily hide in their familiar attics and basements.

On the eve of the Shavuot holiday, at the end of May, 1943, almost six weeks after the Passover massacre, I too decided to sneak out of the Borshchov ghetto and return to Skala. My main purpose at the time was to find a friendly peasant in Skala, dispatch him to Borshchov with his wagon and horses in order to smuggle out of the ghetto my ailing father and bring him back to Skala. One day I spotted in the market place of Borshchov a peasant from the nearby village of Gushtyn, who agreed for a sum of money, to smuggle me out of the ghetto in his wagon and take me to Skala.

My father accompanied me to the marketplace where the peasant was waiting for me. We nervously walked through the ghetto streets in silence. I saw tears and desperation in my father's eyes. The combination of my mother's passing, barely four months earlier, at the end of February 1943, and his subsequent illness during the typhus epidemic in the ghetto, had left him physically and emotionally devastated. We had no news from my brother Joshua, who was then in a German POW camp, and now my father was about to part with me too, his only remaining son. I was beginning to have a change of heart about my decision to leave and said to him: "What do you say, Dad, should I go?" He looked at me with his sad blue eyes and said: "My child, do what your heart tells you to do." I knew that the only hope to save my father and myself was outside of the ghetto. After we hugged and kissed I got into the peasant's wagon. The horses pulled away and the wagon rolled ahead. Seconds later, when I turned my head, I still saw my father in the distance following me with his eyes. That was the last time I saw my father. I was then only 17 years old.

Unbeknownst to me, a day or two prior to my surreptitious departure from the Borshchov ghetto, two of my first cousins, Malcia and Nechemia Stock, also sneaked out of the ghetto and made their way back to Skala. We met there in the depressing emptiness of the house our two families shared, since it was built in the 1920's, up to our expulsion from Skala 7 months ago. Meeting

and joining up with these two cousins I grew up with and felt very close to, slightly lifted my very depressed and miserable mood. My first and most important task upon arrival in Skala was to contact a local peasant and arrange for him to drive to Borshchov next morning and bring my father back to Skala, which is what I did. Unfortunately, next morning when the peasant arrived in Borshchov, the ghetto was already surrounded by German and Ukrainian murder squads, and the so-called "Shavuot action" was already in progress. It started on June 5, 1943, the second day of the month of Sivan on the Jewish calendar. Over the course of that week, several thousand ghetto residents–men, women and children from Borshchov, Skala, Mielnitsa, Korolovka, Jezierzany and surrounding villages–who had been crowded into the ghetto in the Fall of 1942, were systematically rounded up, marched under guard to the Jewish cemetery, machine-gunned in broad daylight and buried there in mass graves.

That week–during one of the periodic pauses in that massacre–my cousin Nechemia and I decided to go back to Borshchov, sneak back into the ghetto and find out what happened to our dear ones, my father Solomon, his mother Eta and sisters Sarah and Rysia. Somehow we could not believe that our loved ones were no longer alive. The open, empty bunker in which all four were hidden and the plundered rooms covered with feathers up to our ankles confirmed our worst fears and our tragedy. Heartbroken and resigned from life, we returned to Skala. Miraculously we were not apprehended and shot on the way to or from Borshchov.

For a week or two, deeply depressed and despondent, we roamed Skala at night seeking a roof over our heads and a place to hide in the empty basements and attics of our former homes. What we found there were only other single survivors like ourselves. Fear and hunger drove us from one abandoned house to another and from one attic to another. On the hard, cold floor we slept one night, we were afraid to spend another night. We were afraid to go back to the same peasant who had given us a piece of bread the night before, as a neighbor or even he himself might turn us over to the

murderers. Our lives were cheap and worthless. Often, looking out through the cracks of our hiding places we were envious of the domestic pets and animals and of the birds, which unlike us were un-perturbed and free to move around in the light of day.

However, our bloodthirsty enemies did not rest. As soon as they found out that surviving Jews were hiding in basements and attics, they started to pursue and kill us. The heavy boot steps of Ukrainian policemen hunting for Jews echoed day and night through the empty, lifeless streets of Skala, heralding the nearing end. Every crack of a rifle shot signaled another extinguished Jewish life and that the same fate awaited us, a minute, an hour or a day later. Driven by the raw instinct of self-preservation and fear, we decided in the middle of a star-studded summer night at the end of June, to abandon the basements and attics we were hiding in and escape to the forest near Skala. We had no idea what to expect in the forest, where and how to hide there and how to survive, but our instincts told us that the wide expanse of forest trees and underbrush would shield us from the human beasts that pursued us.

We were a handful of just-orphaned and depressed young men and women, all survivors of massacred families. At 17, I was the youngest in the group. My cousins Malcia and Nechemia were respectively 18 and 20 years old. Then there were the Schwartzbach brothers, Meir 19 and Zunie 20. Dora Feuerstein at 28 was the oldest. We were standing in the open doorway of our house and looked out in silence into the clear and starry night. The deadly quiet of the empty Jewish streets and houses with open doors and smashed windows, cast their frightening shadows. From the nearby orchards and fields came the scent of trees in bloom and the sweet smell of honeysuckle. With parched mouths and subdued breaths we listened to the heavy steps of the German and Ukrainian night patrols and to the pounding of our own hearts. When the steps of the night patrols faded in the darkness and the moon hid behind a passing cloud, we tiptoed single file, passed the synagogue building and empty houses, down narrow streets and through orchards, making our way to a steep ravine where a narrow stream, called

"potik" in Yiddish, snaked its way to the river Zbrucz below.

After crossing the stream we started to climb up the hill on the other side of the ravine, where standing on the edge, one next to the other, were farmers' dwellings and barns. Suddenly the dogs of the neighborhood picked up our scent and started to bark from all sides. Lights appeared in some windows and sleepy, angry peasant voices were heard in the darkness. A cold sweat covered my body from head to toe. I was out of breath, exhausted from days of hunger, anxiety and depression. My weak legs refused to budge and I got stuck in the middle of the hill, unable to move. Then I heard someone calling my name in a hushed voice and felt a friendly hand on my shoulder. It was my cousin Nechemia, who picked me up and pulled me up the hill. We swiftly moved together in the darkness, away from the peasants' houses and barking dogs. As we got further away, walking through the open fields, the black contours of the forest grew sharper and larger before our eyes. At night, from a distance, the forest looked very threatening, filling our hearts with apprehension and fear. But the fears that drove us into the forest were much stronger and more tangible than the visual impressions. As soon as we reached the forest and got used to its inner darkness, exhausted, we collapsed on the hard, wet forest floor, and huddled together, dozed off between the trees and the underbrush.

It took several weeks before we got acquainted with the forest and adjusted to our new environment. Our scarred souls and terrible experiences that we brought with us from the Borshchov ghetto massacres and the street executions in Skala were so fresh in our minds that the first few weeks we lay in the forest underbrush and hardly dared to move. Every rustle of the trees, or whistle of the wind or call of a bird, made us freeze up, hold our breath, and strain our eyes and ears like hunted animals. But the thirst and hunger on the one hand and the cold, rainy nights on the other, forced us out of the forest at night in search of some shelter, food and water. The strong and courageous among us ventured out at night to the edge of the forest, and from there sneaked across the

open fields to a friendly peasant in the nearby settlement of "Mazury"[5] or even beyond into the farming area of old Skala in order to buy or beg for some bread, cooked beans or a bundle of corn flour. At night we also began to meet other survivors who like ourselves, managed to get out of the Borshchov ghetto, came back to Skala and eventually, also made their way to the forest. That is how our forest colony grew from a few dozen people in June 1943 to about 150 men, women and children by mid-August, 1943, who spread out over various sections and ravines of the forest and held on for a while to this last refuge.

Various scenes and moments from those first days in the forest are etched in my memory. I still feel in my bones the long, cold and rainy nights when we lay huddled on the forest floor, our drenched clothes stuck to our bodies, praying quietly for the rain to stop. It was wet and cold inside and out and the feeling of desperation and hopelessness was overwhelming. The pangs of hunger hurt and our parched mouths demanded relief. We could not fall asleep in the mud so we sought shelter every few hours in an abandoned shepherd's hut at the edge of the forest. As soon as dawn began to break we abandoned the hut and went back into the wet density of the forest. Finally, one morning after almost ten days of uninterrupted rain, an embarrassed sun peeked through the tree branches. We then removed our clothes, wrung them out and left them hanging on the trees to dry slowly in the sun. Meanwhile, our empty stomachs persistently kept demanding their due, but the fear of the unknown forest paralyzed our minds and bodies.

We looked at each other in desperation and silence not knowing what to do. The answer was provided by my cousin Nechemia. He picked himself up from the wet forest floor, threw a drenched jacket over his shoulders and disappeared among the trees. Where he went we did not know. For hours we waited anxiously, not knowing what happened to him. Finally, we heard the rustle of trees and Nechemia reappeared. Without a word, he pulled-out from his

[5] A settlement of Polish colonists from Western Poland encouraged by the government to settle in our predominantly Ukrainian region, in order to "Polonize" it.

bosom a bundle wrapped in a coarse peasant cloth. When he opened it, we saw it was a round cornmeal pudding. With hungry eyes we looked at it in disbelief. Someone gave him a pocket knife and Nechemia cut the cold pudding into small, even, triangular pieces, the way one cuts a birthday cake. With trembling hands each of us picked up a piece of the pudding and swallowed it in a second. This was our first "meal" in the forest.

From ghetto dwellers we quickly turned into forest people. Nature, which at the beginning was very harsh to us, turned out to be kinder than the human beasts that pursued us. Slowly we got to know the forest and with time every path and ravine became familiar. The forest birds and wildlife also got used to us and accepted us as harmless cohabitants. We learned to emulate the various sounds and cries of the birds and used them to signal each other in the thickness of the forest when we called or sought each other.

During the summer months we erected in different sections of the forest primitive shacks that provided us with some shelter in cold and rainy weather. At the same time, we constructed several underground bunkers in which to hide in time of need. In this respect we had already acquired some expertise, first in Skala and then in the ghetto of Borshchov. This experience was quickly adapted to the conditions of the forest and each bunker we built was large enough to accommodate from six to ten people. By mid-summer our group had grown to 15 people. Some members of our original group had left and new ones replaced them.

All built under the forest floor, the bunkers contained concealed ventilation channels and small fireplaces in their forest walls that enabled us to kindle small fires and cook at night. Most importantly, they were so camouflaged by trees, bushes and leaves that it was quite difficult to spot them. Building hiding places and underground bunkers in different sections of the forest for different seasons of the year was our ongoing preoccupation during the summer and early fall. This was undertaken thanks to the wisdom and guidance of the leaders of our group, Nechemia Stock and

Chaim Gottesfeld, who understood that it was too risky to dwell in the same place for extended periods of time. We therefore moved every few weeks from one section of the forest to another, and from one hiding place to another. We were also very careful not to kindle fires in the same section of the forest in which we were hiding, because rising smoke could be seen from afar and would compromise our location. Often, when we managed to gather mushrooms from the forest floor or received some corn flour from a generous peasant, I was charged with the task of going deep into the forest to start a fire and cook there a meal in a World War I trench. In the winter, when the forest was blanketed with snow and it was difficult and dangerous to move around the forest, we cooked only at night. That is, when there was something to cook!

In spite of our desperate situation, hopelessness, hunger and exposure to the elements, life in the forest also had a positive side to it. After our confinement to the stale and choking ghetto bunkers, the wet and cold basements and hot attics, first in Skala and then in Borshchov, the forest provided us with some physical relief and a temporary release from constant fear and tension. The shimmering trees under blue skies, the refreshingly scented forest air and the chirping birds were like a soothing balsam to our aching hearts. The warm sun, the mild summer breezes and the illusion of freedom in nature, especially during the summer months, strengthened us physically and emotionally.

The appearance of Soviet partisans in the forest had also enhanced this feeling and provided us with some rays of hope. Small partisan units of four or five men were passing through our forest on their eastward moves to Russia. We watched them with admiration and eyed their automatic weapons with envy. Generally the Russian partisans tried to avoid us and refused to accept any of our young men into their ranks. Only two of our men, Moshe Salzman and my friend and classmate Samuel Augenblick, succeeded in joining one of the passing units. Augenblick distinguished himself fighting the Germans on many fronts and returned to Skala at the end of the war. Salzman also survived the

war, settled in Israel and died there. In the armed Soviet partisans we saw the first swallows of freedom. They filled our hearts with new hope, while at the same time spreading fear among the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators, who initially stayed away from the forest.

One summer day, in addition to the Soviet partisans, we also met in the forest a group of our own Jewish partisans, members of the so-called "Ashendorf Band"[6], which was formed in the ghetto of Borshchov and was active in a forest near the village of Cygany[7]. The "Ashendorf Band" also included two young men from Skala, Joseph Schwarzbach and Shmeryl Yavetz. The others were young Jews from Borshchov, Mielnica and other communities in the area. Some of them wore captured German army uniforms and all carried rifles and pistols. The courageous and determined faces of our boys carrying weapons raised our spirits and ignited fresh sparks of hope in our hearts. We spent a long time with our Jewish partisans, listening to their battle stories, admiringly touching their weapons, and dreaming of freedom and vengeance.

In the summer of 1943 after the great German debacle at Stalingrad, the Soviet armies along the entire eastern front and the partisans behind the front lines had inflicted heavy losses on the German forces. The appearance of partisans in our area and the intelligence the Nazis must have had about Jews freely roaming the forests apparently alarmed them and prompted them into action. Late in August a small German reconnaissance plane appeared over our section of the forest. Circling low above the tree tops, the Germans threw a few grenades that exploded with a big bang, but caused no harm. A few days later a stranger in peasant attire carrying an ax appeared in the forest. He pretended to be a woodcutter and started up conversations with Jews he met. But it was obvious that he was a German agent and his appearance, along

[6] Named after its founder, Ing, Wolf Ashendorf, from Borshchov.

[7] The story of their resistance and heroic end is told in the Hebrew volumes: "Sefer Milchamot Hagetaot", pp.666-67, and "Milchamot Hapartizanim Hayehudim Bemizrach Europa", pp. 240-242.

with all kinds of rumors that reached us, created an atmosphere of anxiety and tension in our ranks.

Approximately a week before the Jewish New Year at the end of September 1943, on a mild sunny morning, large German army units surrounded the Skala forest. With drawn bayonets, lines of German troops systematically combed every section of the forest. Minutes after we managed to get into our bunkers, we heard their heavy steps and rifle shots above ground. Those from our group, who managed to get into one of our two bunkers in time, were saved. Others who did not and ran ahead of the advancing troops were killed on the spot.

The slaughter in the forest continued until dusk. When darkness fell and silence enveloped the forest, we ventured out of our two bunkers. With me in the first bunker were my cousin, Malcia Stock, Joseph Blutstein with his wife Sarah and their four year old daughter as well as Chaim Gottesfeld with his wife Blima and their infant daughter Beile. The children, as if perceiving the great danger, kept quiet and slept through the ordeal. In the second bunker were Abraham and Sarah Frenkel, Frieda Frenkel and her daughters Mira and Rita, Moses Dunajer, Yehudit Schrantzel and her daughter Nusia and my cousin Nechemia Stock. Aside from those inside the two bunkers, other members of our group who miraculously survived were Finio Frenkel and Ryva Schwartzbach with her two teenage children David and Suzy and an infant. All others who did not manage to get into one of the two bunkers were killed.

It took us several days after the slaughter to find the bodies of the victims and to bury them among the evergreen trees not far from where we were hiding. First we found the bodies of Solomon Blutstein and Munio Schrentzel. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, following the odor of decomposing bodies, we found behind an evergreen tree, the bodies of Julyk Frankel and the orphaned, 11 year old girl, Fancia Tannenbaum. The bodies of Hersch Schwartzbach and his son, my dear friend Max, were found at the edge of the forest where German bullets hit them and where

they were buried by peasants. Many of our people had been camping in the other sections of the forest. Most of them were either captured by the Germans or killed, as they had no bunkers to hide in.

After the bloody forest massacre all our hopes to survive the Nazi nightmare were dashed again. The rains and the deteriorating fall weather that set in added to our desperation and hopelessness. As the trees were shedding their leaves heralding the approaching winter, we were driven underground for shelter from the inclement weather and the murderous Nazis.

In mid-October 1943, in the middle of a forest clearing shielded by the thickness of young evergreen trees, we started to build our underground winter quarters. To accomplish this task, we borrowed the necessary tools from friendly peasants in the nearby, Polish "Mazury" colony. For many days, starving, cold and depressed, we labored, first removing trees and then digging three large openings in the ground, 5 to 6 feet deep by 14 to 16 square feet wide. At night, in another section of the forest, we cut down and brought over young birch trees to provide roofing for the three bunkers. On top of these "roofs" we spread thick layers of earth and replanted the young evergreen trees we had temporarily removed. Then we covered the ground between the replanted trees with layers of brown dead evergreen foliage, matching the rest of the forest floor. A small window-size opening through which a human being could squeeze was installed and served as the bunker door and only source of light. Inside we covered the damp ground with dry leaves and pieces of old cloth and burlap. As our new winter quarters were quite crowded, each person was allocated 9 to 12 inches of space to lie on. Inside the bunkers one could only sit or lie down. It was impossible to stand up or to move around, but it was warm.

At the end of October 1943 we moved into our winter quarters. In the weeks that followed, our underground colony expanded as we were joined by other survivors who were forced to abandon their hiding places in town or with peasants and escape into the forest. Thus in the winter of 1943-44 our underground colony numbered

28 souls. Among them, in addition to the author of this chronicle were the following men and women and a 2-year-old child.

1. Blutstein Joseph
2. Blutstein Sarah
3. Blutstein Mayer
4. Blutstein Shayndl
5. Dunajer Moses
6. Fisch Fishel
7. Frenkel Pinio
8. Frenkel Frieda
9. Frenkel Mira
10. Frenkel Rita
11. Frenkel Sarah
12. Fleischman Israel
13. Gottesfeld Chaim
14. Gottesfeld Blema
15. Gottesfeld Beile (child)
16. Greenberg Shulem
17. Kleinman Benzion
18. Reinisch Edzia (from Borshchov)
19. Stachel Leon
20. Stachel Etta
21. Stachel Munio
22. Stachel Samuel
23. Stachel Gezia
24. Shapiro Lena
25. Stock Malcia
26. Stock Nechemia
27. Schrenzel Yehudit



FIG. 26: *Three who survived the holocaust in the forest near Skala. Seen from left to right in this 1946 photo are: the author (Max Mermelstein) and his cousins Malcia and Nechemia Stock*

Living underground on small rations of bread, beans and water and without sanitary facilities or water to wash with, we were inundated with lice. Part of our daily routine in the bunkers was to de-louse ourselves and the rags on our backs. Another vital task was the weekly or bi-weekly expedition to fetch bread-and-water. At

night, four or five men, one from each family, ventured out of the forest to the "Mazury" settlement or to the forester Radchuk to fetch provisions. Each expedition was fraught with danger and life threatening risks–first and foremost to those who went, but also to those who remained behind in the bunkers, because the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators were always on the lookout for Jews. Every step and every move on the way out of the forest and each nightly visit to the house of a peasant or forester, had to be made with the greatest caution. Exiting the section of the forest in which our bunkers were located had to be done in a way so that no visible marks or footsteps were left behind. When approaching the "Mazury" settlement at night it was necessary to wait and listen in the darkness to make sure the peasants' dogs were not barking more than usual; otherwise it was an indication that strangers were present there, often murderous ones.

When the expedition went to Radchuk the forester, extreme caution had to be exercised before entering his house, since he often had dangerous visitors like Ukrainian policemen or henchmen of the infamous Bandera bands. When such visitors were in his house, he warned us not come in by placing a flour sieve in his window, a signal agreed upon in advance. This kind and poor forester and his wife sustained us during the most difficult winter months by supplying us with bread and water, while shielding us from the murderers.

These night expeditions were especially difficult and dangerous during the winter months when the forest was blanketed with snow and every step in the snow left our human imprints. To solve this problem we had to be inventive. In order not to leave behind our imprints in the snow when exiting our bunkers and returning to them, we stuffed small burlap bags with straw, spread them on the snow in front of our path, and with the help of primitive wooden crutches we walked over the stuffed burlap bags. Step by step, standing on one bag we pushed another bag ahead of us, and leaning on our crutches we carefully walked from the top of one bag to the other. That's how we exited our bunkers from the depth of

the forest and made our way onto publicly used, well trodden paths, leaving the stuffed burlap bags behind in the underbrush until our return.

The bread and water we were able to secure were carefully rationed, so that our meager supplies would last for up to two or three weeks. During the long winter months our daily diet consisted of small slices of black bread, which were often either half baked or moldy. Water was also rationed, because we had neither the necessary containers nor the ability to bring enough drinking water into the bunkers. Along with these meager supplies each expedition often returned with good news. Slowly and gradually we realized that our deadly enemy was losing the war. Whether we would live to see him defeated was questionable, as it was very difficult if not impossible in our situation to hope and dream about deliverance and freedom. Sometimes we asked ourselves, why would destiny select us to be the chosen ones? In what way were we better or more deserving to survive than our parents, brothers and sisters, who were mercilessly murdered? Questions like these always troubled and depressed us.

However, even people condemned to death cannot always remain in a depressed state of mind. Even in the depths of our affliction, when our lives hung in the balance, we often tried to forget our troubles for a while and to overcome our depression. We talked a lot; we joked and even sang old, melancholy folk songs. One of the popular bunker dialogs went like this: "What would you like to eat for dinner tonight–fried eggs with fresh buttered rolls, or crispy grilled duck on a hot plate of mashed potatoes?" Everyone who participated in this popular sport tried to outdo his partner with vivid descriptions of Jewish dishes we had not seen in years. Just mentioning them brought back fond memories of better days and tantalized our starving taste buds.

The long, winter nights when the forest was chained in ice and covered with blankets of snow were often sleepless and melancholy. Lying in the bunker, talking in the flickering twilight of a kerosene lamp, old Yiddish melodies and folk songs burst forth from our

aching hearts. I remember one song in particular, chanted by Israel Fleischman, in his deep, yearning voice that always brought tears to my eyes. Following is a free translation of the lyrics that apparently came from a Yiddish musical entitled "Motie-Meylach the Carpenter", once staged by the Skala Amateur Theater:

"My mother raised me with great tenderness,
Always caring, she hovered above me;
Ready to take my place,
If anything should threaten her child.

Nights she stayed awake,
Keeping a vigil at my bedside;
Imploring G-d not to punish her;
And to this day I feel her tender touch.
For it's good to have a home;
Who can better appreciate this than I,
When one is buried alive and
Everyone keeps his distance from me.

Most befitting our mood and condition was the last stanza of this song, and it seemed to me at the time that the unknown author had written those lines expressly for us.

In addition to our underground colony, two other bunkers were constructed in different parts of the forest, in which small groups of men, women and children tried to survive. Unfortunately, the cruel arm of the Ukrainian Police reached them there and they were murdered in the most gruesome way. One of the bunkers in which 12 to 15 Jews were hiding was discovered and destroyed at the end of October 1943. The Ukrainian militiamen discovered the bunker after apprehending Max Bretschneider, from the nearby village of Cygany. They beat and tortured him until he led them to the bunker in which he once hid himself

The Ukrainian militiamen first fired some shots into the bunker in order to intimidate and force those inside into coming out.

When none did, they threw bundles of burning straw into the bunker. When choking from the smoke, people started to climb out of the bunker, they were shot one by one on the spot. Among those who perished at the site were the following martyrs: Moshe Schwartzbach (son of Zeide) and a child, Aron-Shmuel Schapiro, Moshe Weingast, Israel Blutstein, Isaac Goldstein, Chaya Edelstein, her son Shaye, Berl Schwartzbach and a Mr. Segal from Borshchov. Benzion Kleinman and Menia Schapiro, who miraculously survived, later reported this tragedy.

The second bunker in the forest was discovered early in March, only three weeks before our liberation. The Jews who had almost survived the Nazi nightmare were instead gruesomely murdered. As told by Shulem Greenberg, the only survivor of that bunker, three Ukrainian policemen, Rembocha, Yakubyshyn and a third unknown to him, were led to the bunker by a young Ukrainian, a son-in-law of the forester Chepesiuk. The bunker was located not far from the Chepesiuk residence and the young Ukrainian either spied on the hiding Jews or noticed one of them in the area. The Ukrainians brought along bundles of straw, set them on fire and pushed them into the bunker. The choking smoke forced some of the unfortunate people to come out of the bunker and as they did, the Ukrainians shot them in cold blood. Those who remained inside were burned alive. Shulem Greenberg, who came out of the bunker, was forced by the Ukrainians to stand at the entrance and stir the smoldering straw so that the fire should not die. Among those who perished inside the bunker were Greenberg's father Abraham and sister Henia, Elka Feuerstein, Taube Weisinger, Abraham Weisinger, Yitzhak Goldstein, Moshe Wallach, Nathan Weinraub, Dena Schwartzbach, Alter Rosenzweig and Nuske Rosenzweig, the last two from the nearby village of Burdiakovtse. Shulem Greenberg survived miraculously by offering the murderers money and while leading them to its ostensible hiding place in the Jewish cemetery, he managed to slip away and escape.

It was the end of December, 1943. A white crisp snow covered the ground and hung from the evergreen trees reflecting in the sun

with millions of glittering sparkles. A quiet melancholy enveloped the forest section we were hiding in. It was warm inside the bunker and to quench our perpetual thirst we were busy "producing" water from the snow. We made hard snow balls, pushed them into some glass containers, shook them, breathed into them and waited patiently until the snowballs melted into a few spoons of water to wet our parched throats. The job was slow and frustrating, but we didn't tire. From time to time one of us stuck his head out of the bunker to fetch a few handfuls of snow so that the job at hand could continue.

Suddenly, as my cousin Nechemia Stock stuck his head out of the bunker, he heard some steps in the snow and saw in the underbrush, just a few feet away, the boots of a Ukrainian policeman. He froze for a second, then slowly lowered himself into the bunker and white as a sheet stammered: "Police, let's get out of here". He jumped out of the bunker and started to run in the opposite direction, away from the policeman, and we followed him running between the snow covered trees. Several rifle shots exploded over our heads, but a few minutes later the forest returned to its deep silence. Apparently a single Ukrainian policeman accompanied by a forester, went into the forest shortly before Christmas to get a Christmas tree and accidentally stumbled into the evergreen section where our bunker was located. When we noticed him and started to run, he became frightened, fired a few shots from his rifle and quickly withdrew. Much later we were told about this encounter by the forester, but at the time we were certain that our bunkers had been discovered and that more than one policeman had come looking for us. We therefore decided immediately to leave our bunkers and seek temporary shelter elsewhere.

It was bitter cold and the snow was knee deep. Half naked, barefoot, bundled up in rags, we left our bunkers heading in the direction of our old, abandoned bunkers near the "Mazury" settlement, where we survived the great September massacre. Only after our liberation we were told, that about two months after the

above incident and our abandonment of the bunkers in the section of the evergreen trees, German soldiers were hunting for wild boar in that section of the forest, stumbled on our abandoned bunkers and blew them up with hand grenades. Fortunately, we were no longer there and were thus saved by Providence from certain death.

Moving into the old bunkers near the "Mazury" settlement we realized that we could hide there only temporarily for several reasons: Firstly, because they were too small and had partially caved in; secondly, they were too close to the Polish settlement and were in a section of the forest with sparse birch trees devoid in the winter of their foliage; and thirdly, we suspected that those bunkers had already been discovered and exposed by someone. Therefore, we decided immediately to look for a suitable site on which to construct new bunkers. This task was undertaken by Nechemia Stock, Chaim Gottesfeld, Finio Frenkel, Joseph Blutstein and the brothers Samuel and Munio Stachel. After wandering through the forest for several nights, they found a suitable site and in the middle of the winter, around the first days of January, 1944 started to work. They borrowed axes, picks and shovels from friendly peasants in the "Mazury" settlement and in the course of one week, through superhuman efforts, achieved the impossible. In pitch dark forest nights, in snowstorms and biting frost, without food or hot drink, they felled trees, dug up the frozen ground and with their last strength constructed new bunkers. It's now impossible to comprehend and describe the efforts and perseverance of these men. Returning to our temporary quarters in the gray winter mornings covered with snow and ice and with stiff limbs, they usually collapsed from exhaustion. Observing them at the time, I believed that only The Almighty gave them the strength and perseverance to do what they did.

In mid-January, 1944 we moved into the new bunkers from which we eventually emerged into freedom at the end of March 1944. Those two and a half months seemed like eternity, and were most difficult and trying. At that time we suffered very much from starvation because we were afraid to leave any footprints or marks in

the snow and our periodic expeditions to Radchuk for bread, became less frequent. During that period, whenever our people returned from those rare expeditions, they always brought back good and encouraging news of German defeats and Russian victories that filled our hearts with renewed hopes that were often dashed by terrible and devastating events. One night at the beginning of March 1944, members of our expedition returned from Radchuk with Shulem Greenberg and his tale of horror related above.

In the second half of March 1944, distant rumblings of heavy artillery and the noise of engines began to reach us at night. Every night those rumblings became louder and closer. Wide awake in our bunkers, we listened to the sounds of war and the nearing front lines, the way one listens to a fine symphony concert. We were beginning to hear the footsteps of freedom and deliverance, even though our hearts were heavy with great apprehension and fear. We were afraid to hope and reluctant to rejoice yet. We were cautious and remained inside our bunkers, waiting to see what the day might bring.

One morning we heard an airplane flying low above the treetops. Cautiously, I and a few others stuck our heads out of the bunkers. Following the noise of the engine, we spotted on the wings of the small aircraft, the red Soviet star. I started to feel dizzy and my heart was pounding. Was it a dream or reality? We were all confused and did not know what to do or to say to each other. The rest of the day we remained inside the bunkers and only at night did our group leaders, Chaim Gottesfeld and Nechemia Stock, venture out of the forest into the "Mazury" settlement. They returned within the hour with the overwhelming news that Soviet troops were already in Skala. That night nobody closed an eye. We were up all night, talking, crying and thinking.

A new dawn descended on the forest. That morning the icy winter gave way to the approaching spring. The snow got wet and heavy and started to fall off the trees. Barefoot, bundled up in our rags, we came out of the bunkers, and slowly filed out of the forest.

Only after leaving the forest and seeing the others in broad daylight–28 human skeletons walking in knee deep snow like ghosts from another planet–did I begin to comprehend the scope of our great tragedy.

CHAPTERS FROM A DIARY[1]

Sophie Zimmerman



FIG. 27: *Sophie Zimmerman*

JANUARY 25, 1943

My husband succeeded in finding a poor peasant who lived near the border and was prepared to take my child and me in for a few months. Since that peasant did not live too far from the former border with Russia, he was accustomed to smuggling and hiding his "deeds" from a "malicious" eye. Presently, he was lazy, gullible and superstitious. It would be enough for a peasant to tell him that somewhere a gentile had been imprisoned for hiding a Jew, that all of his energy and courage would drain away in the blink of an eye and he would regret the entire matter. He would have sent me out the door had he not, fortunately, been a lazy person who always puts things off until later–and later he would come to his senses again.

He was loyal and devoted. He went into town every week to buy us provisions to keep us from hunger. This excursion was one of his passions, but he was in no hurry. He had time. After going a certain

[1] Written during the months and years of the Holocaust. The full original is found in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

distance, he would sit down, catch a little doze, and then continue on his way. It made no difference that his wife quarreled with him. He let her talk and said that it all affected him as little as last year's snow. His wife was a complete contrarian. Like all her Ukrainian brothers and sisters, she was pleased that an end was being made of the Jews. She kept us because she was poor but she was not pleased with whatever she earned from us because she neither wished to, nor could, help Jews. It was a matter of great shame to her if anyone knew that she kept Jews. She quarreled about us constantly with her husband. She was good to us whenever she received a nice present from us, but that lasted for only a little while. The next day she no longer recognized us and was angry and quarrelsome once again. It pleased her most when we were without food. Then she grew angry and went away for the entire day so that we might suffer hunger. But when she saw that we had what to eat, she also brought in food. That is how she was. She caused us great anguish, shortening our years. But her husband was a pillar of strength for us. Unbeknownst to her, he brought us whatever he could.

Our habitation consisted of a dark little room. It had only a small window through which daylight barely penetrated. We had a narrow bed made of some boards knocked together, a box that served as a table, and a small stove on which I cooked. Each day, we had to struggle to keep from being heard. When there was someone in our landlord's house, we dared not make a movement or utter a sound. We would often sit immobilized for hours on end until we heard that the guests had gone because we were threatened by the greatest danger. The best of neighbors, if they heard that there were Jews there, would have immediately reported us to the Germans who would go immediately to the Gestapo. There were German border guards in our village, guarding the former Polish-Soviet border. The watch went by our little house almost every two hours. When I saw them, my heart filled with fear that perhaps someone had seen us and was coming for us.

That is how the short but endless winter days dragged on–

fearful, dark days, without a single glimmer of hope. The one thing I dreamed of was that my husband might come to me bringing some news of the world. He came regularly once a week and stayed with me for two days. He brought us provisions, books and newspapers. On those two days, I was not so sad.

I knew that each time that he went away it was a risky undertaking and that he could very easily lose his life. But we had no other choice. To remain with me made no sense to him because there were still a few Jews in hiding. Not coming to me meant that my child and I would suffer hunger. My landlady was disgruntled every time my husband came, until finally she warned him not to come. We pleaded with her, giving her new presents, and the result was we were the "victors." Two months went by in this way until finally the news came that the Russians had broken through the front and were approaching us.

MARCH 5, 1943

I *was happy, but I did* not believe that a miracle could happen to us. I could hardly permit myself to think of it. My landlady became very genial toward us. She brought us milk and eggs and said that she would keep us for the duration of the war, even if the liberation should be delayed. We knew her well and knew she was a "fine respectable woman." That is what we called her from the first moment that we got to know her.

A short while went by and brought an end to our expectations and hopes. The Russian offensive was delayed and with it the hope of being rescued from a certain death was buried. We were desperately saddened and disappointed. My landlord was confused. He had thought that he would be able soon to end his "business," and now he could see no end to it. Meanwhile, winter dragged on and spring arrived. There was no change in my life. I thought that I would have to leave my prison, come what may, for I could not stand it any longer. Outdoors, all of nature beckoned to me. Our landlords spent almost all of their day's outdoors, warming

themselves in the spring-time sun. Through my small window, I looked out on the lovely blue springtime sky. The brook that flowed around our house had wakened from its winter freeze and flowed by, murmuring quietly. The woods near the brook began a new life. Thousands of voices of countless birds echoed through the woods which turned greener day after day, sprouting with life. Only my child and I were shut in and could see no way out. My husband came, bringing with him fresh, bloody news. We were on the eve of new pogroms. The nationalist Ukrainians, to whom most of the intelligentsia belonged, became restless, calling upon the Gestapo to accelerate the end of the Jews. Every three or four weeks there were new pogroms, which snuffed out thousands of young lives over the course of a few days. As soon as she heard that a pogrom was impending, my landlady went to Borszczów to see how Jews were being slaughtered. She made things dark for us when she returned. When she came back, she described to us exactly what had happened, with all of her natural crudeness. Finally, she told us that we should leave because she was afraid to keep us any longer and what would she do if the area would become *Judenrein.* Her husband was very terrified and said that if the Jews were finished off, he would take us out into the forest, and beyond that it would not matter to him at all.

We had very "good" perspectives. We could see the day of utter disaster nearing. There was no end to the pogroms. Nearly all of our acquaintances were gone. There were new victims from our family all the time. I was already completely anguished and resigned. Often I wanted our lives and our sufferings to end. However, it seemed a pity for my child. He was blossoming like a beautiful flower and I wanted to protect him from a horrible death. I often thought that it would be best if I were to put an end to his life while he slept, so that he would not have to experience the dreadful moments of despair when one looks death in the eye. Such thoughts disappeared quickly and I created new illusions for myself. Perhaps I could smuggle my child away and we would survive. After considerable trouble, my husband and I succeeded in persuading

our peasant to dig us a ditch some distance from his house. We would lie there and he could bring us bread and water daily. That was our outlook and that was our hope for the future.

Meanwhile, our situation grew progressively worse. It was our sixth month in hiding. That month, the dreadful news came of the complete annihilation of the last remnant of the Jews of Skala. Our peasant now never lingered in our room. He just went in and out.

He was in constant anxiety about us. He did not know if he could continue to keep us. Meanwhile, neighbors came, and all they talked of was the way Jews were being killed. They talked about it with such equanimity and detachment as if the subject was the cattle slaughter houses of Chicago. They were completely insulated from all human feeling, and did not demonstrate the slightest sign of pity.

Right after such a conversation with our neighbors, to which I listened with great bitterness, my landlady came to me to deliver a new lecture. She began with the same old little song. Where would I be able to hide? She was afraid. She wanted nothing. She did not want money. She did not want to keep people who were going to be destroyed. I bowed my head. I pleaded. I begged for a couple of days of life–which she would allow me to stay there with my child. What I could promise after that I did not know, but my child was crying; he did not want to die and I was driven mad seeing my child's terrified eyes and trembling face. He could not take in the thought that he would die in the midst of his lovely childhood dreams. I tried more than once to persuade him. It would only last as long as the blink of an eye and life would be ended. And then my child would begin a lovely life in another word. I told him that he had a crystalline white soul that was as yet unspotted by sin or sinful thoughts. I told him that there in the higher worlds he would be a child angel who would stand beside the Throne of Righteousness of the Highest King and that he and his friends would be the witnesses at the Day of Judgment when the murderers who had murdered so many pure innocent children would be judged.

However, my child was not born into a deeply believing era. He

was a child of the modern era and was more earthly. He wanted to be precisely at the earthly judgment. He had been born; he wanted to live, not die. Maybe it was the fault of the parents who had raised the children in a different spirit and had not raised them to be martyrs, because who could have foreseen that a time of bestiality and darkness would be coming.

JULY 15, 1943

W*e pushed our way through* another month of life and who could want any more? After all, it is a long time to be alive. An entire undisturbed month, sleeping and passing the time. But it happened otherwise. Precisely now, during the days when the extermination of the Jews was being completed, an unexpected, and for me, tragic, event took place. A neighbor had seen my husband coming in to us. He accused our landlord of harboring Jews, and then went to report that to the Germans. It was evening, and my child was asleep. I woke him up and, fearfully, I told him what had happened. My husband was in Skala and I was afraid to remain here any longer, because it meant certain death. The peasant was very disturbed. He took us out to an open barn that did not belong to him and from there we decided to go by night to Skala. However, it was not so easy to push our way through 15 kilometers at night with a small child. We had to pass through two villages before we reached our destination. It was a very dangerous road. All roads were being watched because Russian troops were active, or at least that is what was said. However, I had no other choice, and we left the village. It was a lovely bright summer night. I, with the child holding one hand and a small package in the other hand, was going home. But how strange that home-going was. After such a long time of pain and humiliation, I had so long yearned and hoped for the day when I would be able to walk on G-d's earth as a free person and not as an outcast who walks with a palpitating heart on uncharted ways so that I might meet no enemy.

We went across the field–the peasant first and we following him. We stopped frequently. My guide put his ear to the ground, listened and then, concluding that it was quiet, we went further. Thus did we drag our way throughout almost the entire night until we were finally on our familiar well-known paths. However, from afar, we saw two silhouettes. We drew back, hiding in the corn. The two silhouettes approached. We heard German spoken. These were two night guards on their way to the border. Finally, they passed by and we, weary and frightened, pressed on to the city. We continued on our way through the field which led to the house where my brother lived. I knocked on the door and the window but no one answered, until finally I heard the voice of my brother, who was hidden in the attic with the rest of the family. He came down quickly. Seeing each other after so long a time and in such a dark moment, I wept bitterly. My brother told me that today there had been a terrible pogrom in Kopyczyńce and tomorrow there would be one in Borszczów and possibly also in Skala, so I had come back at an opportune moment. My husband knew nothing. He did not sleep at my brother's. He would know only tomorrow what had transpired. By tomorrow, anything could happen. Finally, after a long wait, my husband showed up, but how great was his dismay–where should we hide ourselves?

Meanwhile, the pogrom in Borszczów had begun. All the Jews hid, and we had no place to go. But my husband did not panic. He ran to a peasant and asked him to put us up for a few days. Later, he led us there. We were now in a "fresh" habitation. This was a small, low attic in which you could only lie down for it was impossible to sit up. The attic was open. My husband brought bread and we began to live a new life once more. The day passed calmly. My brother and his family went to a peasant. On the second day, my husband went into city and we arranged that if something happened in the meantime–that is, in the event that a pogrom should break out–my husband should hide wherever he happened to be and I would stay here, because one could get shot by moving about. As soon as my husband was gone, the peasant's

wife told me that the whole town had dispersed because someone had telephoned that the Gestapo was coming. She advised me to go hide at once in the forest because she did not want to keep me. She was afraid. In any case, it was useless to hide. She knew, from what her neighbors said, that not one Jewish soul would be left. That was how she "consoled" me. I begged her and asked her not to drive me away until my husband would come for me. If I should be discovered I would say that I had crept up here myself. She calmed herself and let me be, but I grew increasingly uneasy. I could see that was liable to turn us in herself in order to wash her hands of us.

Finally, the day passed quietly by and my husband came. He said that his sister had come from Borszczów. She had fled in the course of a pogrom. He learned of the new tribulations and decided that very night to approach the previous peasant, to see if perhaps he would take us in again. I had no choice and agreed to everything though I knew that on the roads there had been countless victims who had been killed either by the military or by the peasants whom they encountered on their way.

JUNE 18, 1943

I*n the morning, it was the* same thing. My new landlords declared categorically that I must leave their attic. Fortunately; there was a sudden heavy rain that poured down endlessly all day long. The roof was broken and the rain washed pitilessly down on us. It was all the same to me–let it rain; let it pour, let there already be an end to this dreadful; tormented life.

My landlords did not rest. Seeing that there was no end to the rain, an idea occurred to the peasant's wife. She told us that the Gestapo was already there, and she wanted to take us to a stranger's empty attic that was not far from her. My child, hearing that the Gestapo was already there, turned very pale and, trembling, clung to my neck with his small fingers and said, "Momma, tell me, does it take long for one to die? Tell the truth. Momma, does it hurt a lot?" I did not reply. He understood me, kissed me, and then put

his head in my lap. "Momma, I want to sleep. Do not wake me, no matter what happens." In a few moments, being completely exhausted from fear, he fell asleep. I pleaded with my landlady to let us stay until evening when my husband would return. I laid the child down on the straw and sat there alone, entirely stunned and in despair.

Who knew whether my husband would return to me. Above all, who knew whether he was still among the living? Perhaps the same thing happened to him as had happened to thousands of his sisters and brothers? I saw myself as entirely helpless. I could see that luck had turned completely away from me and something was pursuing me. I sat, listening intently and I heard steps, but the steps went by and I remained with my despairing thoughts. At last I heard familiar steps that were so intimately dear to me. I heard the small door of the room open, and I knew for sure that I had been rescued. That was my husband. He opened the little door that led to me in the attic. The child, as if instinctively, woke up, saw his father and flung himself around his neck and, weeping, said, "Why, daddy, don't you want to rescue us and take us to a peasant in the village?" It was as if his life was in the palm of my husband's hand. My husband wept bitterly and consoled him. Incidentally, I want to remark that in the most dreadful of circumstances my husband was never confused, and if he was ever himself in despair he never told anyone that. On the contrary, he expressed the hope that we would succeed in being rescued. That alone made my heart feel lighter. Leaving aside all of our difficulties, we were imbued with confidence and renewed strength for the struggle. My husband told me that the peasant with whom I had been earlier was willing to take me back but only after a few weeks, because now he was still afraid ... the entire town was abuzz, saying that he was harboring Jews. For now he had a second place that another peasant acquaintance had recommended to him. The place was with a young peasant widow who was prepared to keep us for two months. I could hardly believe our luck. We decided to leave Skala that very night.

My husband went to the peasant's house. He was told to give over the few things that we had given him to hide. The peasant's wife laughed at us and said that we no longer need them, so it is better that she have them. Having no recourse, we left Skala without anything at all. The peasant did not even want to lead us out of his door, so that he could see that we left his attic as quickly as possible. Thus did we start our second night of wandering.

JULY 3, 1943

W*e found ourselves in a field* far from any community. I sat with my child among the tall stalks of corn that hid us. My husband went to the peasant to let him know that we were on our way to him and that he should go to meet us. I remained completely alone with my child in the field, but I was so apathetic that it made no difference to me. I lay down on the damp earth and listened. Around us it was quiet, without the slightest sound being heard. It was a bright, warm summer night. I let my thoughts rest, thinking about almost nothing at all. But nature was doing what it did, and involuntarily had the effect of balm on my wounds. Memories followed memories. I remembered other beautiful summer nights as if they were yesterday. Nature was unchangeable with its laws and its beauties. It reminded me of the night when we schoolchildren were making a night outing. We were a crowd of happy, carefree children. Our dear, respected teacher went along with us and was almost as joyful and childish as all of us. We delighted in the lovely night. We sang hymns and songs about the beauty of the world. Our voices rang and echoed far over the fields. But I was not able to dream that way for long. The contrary thoughts came and the truth stood before my eyes like a dark light. I had been cast out on the dung heap of life. My husband had gone once again to beg a safe corner for us. A considerable amount of time went by. I began to get progressively uneasy, and, with increasing fear and a palpitating heart, I waited for my husband's return. It was already long past midnight when I heard footsteps and in a short while I saw my

husband together with my former congenial landlord. As always, he was barefoot, in ragged trousers and wearing an open shirt which completely revealed his chest. I could see that he was a little distressed, and I saw the reason at once. His wife had under no circumstances wanted us back. My husband had promised to give her whatever she might want until finally he had persuaded her, and my landlord had come for me. The moment I saw him, my mood was lightened. I had someone to depend on. He took my child on his shoulders and my husband and I followed after him. Finally, we approached his little house that stood beside the road. But here one had to be very careful, for the night watchmen passed by often. We sent the peasant ahead to spy out whether we could go on. He made a sign, and we went quickly along the road and disappeared under the trees. Suddenly, we saw two Germans who were on their way to night duty. Had it been one moment earlier, we would have been lost. We waited until they had entirely disappeared, then we approached the little house. The peasant woman opened the door and we went into our well-known room. But now, it no longer seemed to me a dark little room, but rather the dreamed-of palace of an enchanted prince. We were the happiest people on earth. We had our little bed again and once again we were able to hope that now we would be able to rest. And perhaps that miracle would occur to us about which we did not dare to dream. Two days passed in such a bright mood. The landlady gave us a little bread and milk. She treated us reasonably well. But that was a situation that did not last long. Finally, her good mood burst and the wolf crept anew out of the sheep's skin. She began to torment us with hunger. Very simply, she did not want to sell us any bread with which we could satisfy ourselves, leaving aside the fact that we paid her inflated prices. She did not want our honey and she left us her poison. There were now renewed quarrels with her husband. She compelled him to work, and what work meant to our landlord was very clear to us. He fulfilled all of her wishes in order to avoid quarrels that were almost linked to a catastrophe. Each time that she quarreled with him we automatically became his allies, and she threatened

both him and us that she would make an end to us both. We became uneasy once again because we knew that our lives depended upon her caprices and from her venomous nature. All that kept us from hunger was our blessed little stove. The moment she left her home and went out into the field, we took advantage of the providential moment. Our landlord quickly brought us a couple of potatoes and a little milk that he stole from his wife. We lit a fire and ate quickly our stolen food. For the first time I understood the meaning of the adage "stolen waters are sweet." Never in our lives had food tasted as good as those stolen bites. However we did not always succeed in our undertaking peacefully. For the most part that happened because our landlady returned, interrupting our plans. I quickly hid our food that had just become warm, and I doused with water the fire in the stove so that nothing suspicious should fall from it. The darkness also helped us, as that she could not see clearly what we were doing. I praised the fate that had given us a dark little room.

But an end came even to that idyll. The long summer days dragged on but did not bring any change. Every day we waited to hear favorable news, but instead of that we learned each day of fresh murders which were carried out everywhere where there still were Jews. We were completely in despair because we had asked for only a month's time. Time was not standing still. Every tormenting, hungry day brought nearer the time when we would have to leave our new "home." The peasant also came every day with new stories. He saw that there was as yet no end to the war. And what was yet to come? He was afraid that his wife would not want to lengthen our stay with them. He was also afraid, for he thought he was the only one who was harboring Jews. Very often, just as soon as we were awake, our landlord would come to us with new stories. He had dreamed of a priest and a church, he knew for certain that he would be arrested and so forth. It did no good for us to take the trouble to tell him that a dream was often meaningless. He was, however, superstitious, and refused to be persuaded. And so, almost every day, in addition to our difficult struggle, we had to deal with small

foolishnesses which robbed us of the little rest for which we had paid so much. "A rooster had crowed and a disaster would come within a week." He was only calmed if a week went by without some event.

MARCH 25, 1944

T*oday is the happiest day in* our lives. Is it true? Is it possible? Has G-d heard our fervent prayer? Has the long-yearned for moment come? Has our hope which our hearts have desired for so long become a reality? The day was near. It was no longer the dream of one condemned who was yearning for freedom. We heard the most beautiful, splendid music, which enchanted us and filled our hearts with a superhuman feeling of spiritual good fortune. That was the pounding of the canons near us which spoke to us of a new life. After hundreds of days and nights locked under the most frightful circumstances, after so many countless days when the Angel of Death was our only guide to life, the day of liberation was now approaching.

We lay in our attic full of hope. Suddenly, we heard nearby gunfire above our heads. It was two opposing airplanes battling each other nearby and above us. Bullets were flying above us. We flung open the door of our hiding place and ran breathlessly down to the stable. The shooting stopped after a few brief moments. We calmed ourselves. Suddenly, we heard footsteps. It was peasants moving quickly and nearly shouting. We had guests. The Bolsheviks were already in our village. How did that happen? We could hardly believe our own ears. A peasant woman ran by and said the same thing. We began to believe, and we wept like children, saying *Mazel Tov* to each other and kissing each other. We felt newly born. A little time went by. Neither of our landlords showed up. What could that mean? Perhaps it was one more exaggeration. Once again we were sad. But finally, the landlady came up. She was pale, grim, with tears in her eyes. She begrudged us our luck. "What does it mean?" she asked, "that you have packed

up? The Bolsheviks are not here yet. Those are some kind of foreign soldiers–not Germans, but also not Russians. Don't celebrate yet." That was how she spoiled our joy. But we could see that she was lying. Our landlord had gone to see for himself but he had not returned. Night fell. We sat and waited. Finally he came up and brought us the happy news. But he, too, was sad. The Ukrainians had lost, and the Poles were rejoicing. He felt like a strikebreaker because he had rescued us. But we no longer paid attention to his moods. We were somewhere else with our thoughts. We were beginning to weave a new life. We did not sleep all night. Early in the morning our landlord took us into our little room so that we could wash ourselves and pack. We had gone just a little way when our peasant came in, pale and anguished. There were three Germans in his stable. They were begging him to keep them in his attic until nightfall–the same attic that we had just left. We laughed and were happy to have finally survived to see that. In the afternoon a messenger came from my brother with a letter for me. In the evening my husband went off to my brother and from there they would go to Skala. I would come later with my child, because we were very frightened of the Ukrainians, and things had to calm down first. I was not in any particular hurry. The first impression had passed. I was happy. We had parted from our long-time companion–the fear of death. But something pained me and kept me from thinking of joy. Where would we go? Our town was no longer our beloved hometown. The people there were strangers who had seen how cheap our blood was. There crept into me the kind of thought that occurs to people returning from a funeral after burying their nearest and dearest. This was a sad and endlessly painful feeling. I would prefer never to encounter our neighbors, the Ukrainian murderers. However, there was a voice from the depths that called to us and said that we had to return to our posts to fulfill our holy duty–the duty of revenge for our innocent blood. We were not to move away until we had taken revenge. That could not be a gift, and would not be a gift.

THE YANOVSKA DEATH CAMP IN LVOV

Abraham Brandes-Tracy

On the second intermediate day of Sukkot 1942 around eleven in the morning the entire transport-train, in which the Nazis carried several hundred Jews from Skala, arrived at the Kleparov station in Lemberg. Several of us, who were familiar with the region, recognized the station through the small window. In a few moments, a crowd of S.S. people and Ukrainian police appeared. Just then the door of our train car opened.

The command of the killers was "*Laus! Raus!*" All of us began to jump out of the car and the killers welcomed us with fierce blows. The command was to line up in rows of four. At the same time, the killers opened several other cars from which they drove out people from other towns that had been designated to go to the camp. Thus, all the young working men of our district lined up in rows of four. Dreadful cries of the mothers, fathers and children heard from the other cars. When we realized that this was the moment when we would be separated forever from our nearest and dearest, it made a fearful impression on us.

Our hearts were oppressed and anguished. It was impossible then to control oneself. Only the frightful blows of the killers compelled us to control ourselves. I will forever see before my eyes the bright image of our entire young people who had, as if on purpose, blossomed during those dreadful days. Very shocking was the image of the young girl, Leah Shapira, who called mournfully for her brother Yaakov with unintelligible words.

Am I in any way capable of describing that moment in writing? How brightly the sun shone. How lovely, as if to spite us, the day was. And how great was our pain and anguish! Can I express that? Immediately, the command came, "Caps off! The whole column,

stand still!" At once a taxi drove up and a commander of the killers emerged, who passed among us, looking his victims over. He selected some people immediately out of their rows and gave orders to have them driven back to the other railroad cars.

On the spot, we were given orders to bandage those among us who had been beaten. At that moment, Dr. Rosenblatt of Borszczów approached me. He asked to be given some water to rinse out my mouth and smeared my wound a bit with iodine. Of course, my face was swollen and my shoulder hurt terribly because of the two blows. However, when I saw my little brother biting his lips and groaning dreadfully with tears in his eyes, as well as Meir Joles in such a state, I forgot my own pain.

Immediately thereafter, several of the killers ran up to us and informed us that two of their number would come among the rows carrying baskets, and each of us had to put in whatever money, valuables, documents, knives, mirrors, purses and so on that we had. In short, we had to give up everything. Anyone who did not obey the command would be shot at once if he was found with something. Indeed, everyone put out whatever he had. Then we received the command to undress until we were naked. Compelled by heavy blows from the killers, the command was quickly carried out. There immediately came several camp inmates who took all of the clothing away. Others soon brought camp clothing which was distributed among us. This "clothing" mainly consisted of remnants and rags from the Russian prisoners.

We received shoes with wooden soles in which it was frightfully difficult to walk. Soon, one of the killers came by and began to make a speech about the discipline in the camp. He told us that if anyone escaped from his work or from the camp, ten others of us would be shot in his place, either people from his same town or members of his work-brigade. Therefore, each of us had to watch the others to prevent that from happening. Further, he said that if anyone was found with money he would be shot immediately. Also, anyone who did not behave well or work well could receive various kinds of severe punishments up to the point of death, and so on.

That was how several hours passed. Then we were taken in groups of five to the square in the camp and left alone. Our first entry onto the camp square made a very bad impression on us. Various haggard looking people with pale faces were wandering about. When we had gone a little further we saw that some corpses were being carried, of people who had fallen and had been shot at work near a construction site where new barracks were being built. The S.S. people, Ukrainian police and Kapos went about carrying whips in their hands.

My younger brother and the Joles boy met me with great weeping. I could not control myself at that moment, but, with a dreadful pain in my heart and tears in my eyes I tried to do so for the sake of the two children. In truth, my tears choked me and I could make no answers or even open my mouth, especially when the two children, as if they had planned it cried out: "Why did we not travel onward with our dear ones?" Nothing I said to them helped. I told them, "Dear children, whose fault is that? And what can we do about it? The end, no matter what, will be the same." Yet, in that moment, I could not imagine that I was just speaking words. We had only just then looked around to see where we were and what the expressions on our faces were. But, sadly, what could one have done? Various people we knew went by. We nodded at each other. Good, we have survived... I made the tragic accounting.

And now I understood that I was the father of two children, because they were both left entirely without guidance. I turned to them and said, "Come, let us look around and see how the camp looks. We will get to know something about the camp." I, with them and several other Jews from our district, approached some Jews who, in truth, no longer had a human appearance, and we began to make some inquiries.

The news of life in the camp was frightful. I asked if help from home was permitted. Sadly, there was nothing to be said on that score. It was not to be imagined that we might expect help from home. First of all, there was no one from whom one could get help, and second, it was too far away. Then I asked about a place to sleep.

Again, we got a sorrowful answer. I told them that I had already been in a work camp, but we had had quite different living arrangements. We had received help from home, and we had a sleeping place for 35 to 40 people. They replied that we had been in paradise, because in this camp there was absolutely no place to sleep. There were in the camp some eight to ten thousand people and only one barrack. A new, large barrack was just now being built. It was the same answer regarding food. "Children," one of them called out, "Woe is to us ... to all of us together here, where we have ended up." They described what happened to people; the way one endured torment to the point of death. Every time there was a new transport of people, the old ones were taken away to Belzec.

It was then that we learned something about Belzec where, evidently our dear and loved ones had been taken. We learned how they had taken many people to the Janower Cemetery where they were shot, and we heard much other dreadful news. I absolutely did not know what was happening to me as I heard this news. I encountered many people from my home district. We looked at each other. I also met people with whom I had been at Borki. From them there was only one word to be heard. "Would it be that we could go back once more in the Borki camp?" That is how it was. There was nothing to be done. To search for a bed somewhere was absolutely useless, so we decided to sleep in the new barracks which had only their four wails and a roof. No windows, no doors, no floor. No talk about any reasonable place to rest. That is how time passed until evening. Then the throngs of camp inmates returned under guard from their work.

THE FIRST "MEALTIME"

O*ne had to stand in long* lines for a piece of bread and "coffee." However, none of us had anything into which to put the coffee, so, we had to give away one of our three pieces of bread as a way to buy a little pot into which to put the coffee. The Kapos ran about,

beating people. That was how we entered a barrack that had no door and no window. We shoved aside the wood chips and pebbles under foot and laid ourselves down to sleep on the bare earth. The three of us clustered together. Unable to restrain ourselves, unable to speak a word, we simply wept. G-d alone knows the truth that that entire night I did not close my eyes. Tears involuntarily welled up in my eyes. The misfortune was huge! At five in the morning the bell began to ring. The Kapos ran about murderously beating people in order to drive the crowd out of the barrack. There were many who could not even get up, because they no longer had the strength; worn out by their slavery. Clearly, these were people who had been in the camp from earlier, and already tasted its bitterness for a long time.

We got up and went to wash at the faucets where the cold water flowed over the tubs. Right after we washed we got into long lines to get our "breakfast." The breakfast consisted of black, bitter coffee and a 50 gram piece of bread. Soon, the bell began to ring once more and the Kapos began to shout "Roll call! Roll call!" Many people did not even have time to get their "breakfast". Soon, there was a second command that all the new people who had come into the camp yesterday were to gather at a designated spot. The others took their places in "brigades." Each brigade had its own place in a very large circle in the midst of which there was a podium with the bell and near it a larger podium for the camp commander.

All of the brigade commanders had their own way of mustering their brigades. However, since we did not have a brigade commander, we did not do anything but stand. Then an S.S. man came up to us and gave a command, "Work column, stand still! Caps off!" Thus we stood and watched as each brigade commander reported how many people he had. The S.S. commanders began to read out various names of people who were to step out of their rows and take their places near the podium with the bell. Then the S.S. leader recited the number of ways in which they had "sinned" and how each of them was to be punished. For example, there was one person who had not performed some work diligently enough, so he

received 50 lashes. Another one had not left his bed quickly enough after his Kapo had awakened him, so he received 25 lashes. Someone else had been found to have several *zlotys* so he would have to be shot. Someone else, at work outside of his barracks, had begged for a piece of bread. His punishment: to be "tied." This was the worst and gravest punishment. Another one had been caught trying to escape. He would have to be hanged.

That was how dozens of punishments were meted out every day, with everyone having to look on with the command "Caps off! Stand still!" The camp was surrounded by two rows of barbed wire. There were tall watchtowers at every corner upon which the armed guards stood.

After the murderers had carried out their punishments and given various instructions, the command was issued that all the brigades should go to their work. Only we, the new ones, should remain. After the others had gone off to work under guard, the camp director came to our brigade with several S.S. people and appointed a bachelor from Ozeryany as brigadier. A second person from Mielnica was appointed as deputy brigadier. Then the camp director inspected us to see that everyone had the yellow patches on their chests and shoulders and that the red bands on the back and front of the trousers were clearly painted on with oil paint. Then he issued a command to the brigadier and deputy brigadier to make two lists of the new people, giving their names, birth dates and place of birth. That lasted until about nine o'clock. Then nine Russian policemen appeared the so-called Askari, and nine S.S. people. They were all well-armed with automatic rifles and other weapons. They ordered us to line up in rows of five and then to move keeping time in march step. They led us out of the camp in an unfamiliar direction. On our way, they demanded that we sing something. Thus did we go under guard, not knowing where. We marched along various small lanes until we they led us to a large valley. A very narrow path led up a steep hill, where there was a brick kiln.

THE FIRST VICTIM FROM SKALA

W*hen we arrived at the brick* kiln, they ordered each of us to take four bricks and carry them up the hill. There, on top of the hill, they placed several people to lay the bricks. The murderers stood themselves along the entire length of the path. Two people with machine guns stood on top of the hill, and two more at the bottom. The rest of the murderers beat and drove the crowd mercilessly. "*Laus*! *Laus*!" Thus did we all, one following the other, run up the hill with the bricks, and again down the hill empty-handed to get new ones. It seemed at first that this work was not too difficult, because four bricks weighed approximately 16 kilograms, but it quickly became clear that it was not easy because we had to run the hill quickly. The murderers shot one shot in the air in order to instill in us a great fear. Thus, without having any choice, we ran. I recall precisely that it was when I was running down for the fourth time, the first victim of Skala, Shmuel Piakernik's son, was already lying on the ground, struggling with death from a bullet that had apparently hit him in the lungs. He was struggling hard, next to a small gutter. The murderers were standing by and enjoying themselves, not wanting to shoot him. I ran up again with the bricks, and when I ran down again, there was already a second victim, from Mielnica. The first victim was still struggling with death, but was already in the gutter. He either rolled in there himself or the murderers tossed him in there. He passed away after great suffering…

HUMOR FROM THE DARK DAYS

By Chaim Brettler

Jews are well-known as a people with humor. In every situation and time a Jew can make jokes and even laugh. That is why the juicy Jewish expressions "laughing through the tears," "it is painful to laugh," and other similar expressions are well known to us. Here I want to give a few examples of that kind of humor when each of us was sitting with both of our feet practically at the edge of the grave. I want to add that these are not imagined stories but authentic facts.

In the first period of the German occupation, when the Nazis murderers merely robbed Jewish property and wealth leaving their physical extinction for the time being until later, their first wrath was wreaked above all on Jewish furniture and kitchenware. Every day, they demanded pots, plates, barrels and so on. The *Judenrat* undertook to provide all the things required so that the villains would not undertake, go through Jewish houses on their own. The task of providing kitchenware was especially difficult because one had to deal with the housewives who uttered outcries over every pot. Some of them cursed or ran to complain to the *Judenrat*, just as if that were a serious problem. In addition, every *"ordnungsdiener"* (order keeper) was ready to do any kind of work to avoid bringing any pots. These difficulties continued until the L-rd took pity and sent an angel (I mean a pot-taker) in the form of Chaim Jagendorf (Shife). Himself not a very dutiful workman, he voluntarily took on the painful task of providing kitchenware. Paying no attention to the wailing and cursing of the women, he carried out his work honorably, and the pot-scarcity ended. He concentrated on Passover dishes, so he avoided the rooms and went directly to the attics. Our Mattye Weidberg, chairman of the *Judenrat,* who frequently reassured the housewives who used to come to complain

about him, liked to talk with Chaim about the "matters." Especially when it was an easier day, Mattye, would begin his conversation as follows: "Oh, Chaim, Chaim, Are you in trouble. Every Jew is praying to survive until the salvation, and if the salvation comes, the women will take you out to the marketplace and hang you for the pots, plates, barrels and who knows what else that you took." Then one day, Chaim plucked up his courage and asked Mattye, "What will you do, Mr. Weidberg? You have taken money, jewelry and furs from the Jews, and sent people away to the camp." Mattye replied at once, without smiling, "I? I will escape with the Germans." Hearing that reply, Chaim was stunned. Mattye Weidberg would run away with the Germans?! For several days he went about in silence until he went one day to the *Judenrat*, approached Mattye, and said: "Herr Weidberg! Yesterday I talked things over with my wife, Reise, and we have decided that when the liberation comes, we will sell our house and buy new pots for all the women. And you, if you want to run away with the Germans, go ahead and run!"

THE JEWISH REGIME

T*he winter of 1941-42* was very difficult for the Jews. Everything was lacking, beginning with freedom and ending with a piece of bread. The Creator did not spare his Chosen People two things: troubles and snow; and these two were bound together. Every day the Jews were driven to clear away the snow, and every day there were troubles. Merely providing the required contingent for the bitter labor was fraught with all sorts of difficulties, particularly after the second camp transport where a large number of the captives were involved in clearing away the snow. That created a great schism between the Jews and the *Judenrat*, producing a crisis of confidence between the former and the latter. I want to relate here an event that took place which will directly show the discord of that time.

On a Thursday, at the end of February in 1942, a number of trucks with Hungarian soldiers on their way to Russia arrived from somewhere. However, the road to the bridge was overblown with snow and they could not drive through. They turned to the community for workers to immediately clear the way, and the mayor Kowalyszen immediately requisitioned people from the *Judenrat* emphasizing that one must not let the soldiers wait for too long as troubles might ensue. The *ordnungsdienst* was sent to bring the necessary people because the sooner the villains drove away the better. However it was easier said than done. Upon hearing that there was some sort of disturbance in the *Judenrat* involving the Germans and that the *ordnungsdienst* was looking for workers, almost all of the men hid. If anyone was indeed found, he refused to go. All reassurance on the part of the *ordungsdienst,* pointing out that this was not a camp and that all that was wanted was to prevent the soldiers from creating trouble if the work was not done on time, was to no avail. Nothing helped. And when Moshe Bilgoraj may G-d avenge his blood, who was running from house to house, came to the house of Moshe Weingust and found him at home, he refused to go. Despite all of Bilgoraj's reassurances (they were friends) Moshe Weingust said, "How can I believe you, since you work for the 'Jewish regime? And I do not believe them." When Bilgoraj, weary and upset, replied, "If words and reassurances do not help, I will have to drag you." Moshe Weingust replied, "I know that you can do what you like with me, as with other Jews. But Moshe, do you know when I will know that you really have authority? When you go to Mattye Weidberg's house and take Black Metri (meaning the gentile Dimitri Muliarczyk, an absolute idiot who was always seated in front of Mattye Weidberg's house)." That argument worked. Moshe Bilgoraj did not take him, but, deep in thought, he hurried off to search for other laborers.

THE FUR *MITZVAH*[1]

T*his happened on the famous* Sunday in December 1941 when all the Jews had to turn in all men's and women's fur garments to the *Judenrat*. The "fur *aktion"* included all sorts of furs, including collars, hats, and even gloves. With the warm clothes of the Jews, the Germans (of cursed memory) planned to clothe their soldiers on the Russian front and in that way combat the fearful "Uncle Frost." The command to deliver the clothes came at the last moment so that the Jews would not have time to sell the things. A panic ensued in the city. Every Jew tried to sell or to give to some gentile at least a part of the valuables. Therefore, during the first hours, almost nobody showed up at the *Judenrat* and the anxiety there grew because, according to the order, the punishment for not turning the things over was death.

One of the first to show up was Shlomo Sofer, may G-d avenge his blood, bringing his possession–his ratty fur hat. When Mattye Weidberg saw this state of affairs he said, with a wry smile, "You are bringing fine present for the German army." Turning to secretary Fisch, he said, "Inscribe a fur *mitzvah"* (meaning to write in the rubric "*pelts mitesh," a* hat).

[1]A mitzvah is literally a religious commandment. However, the term is used colloquially for a good deed.

How We Saved the Torah Scrolls

Esther Yagendorf



Fig. 28: *Esther Yagendorf*

The first shameful act of the Germans, when they entered our town of Skala, was to gather up all the Torah scrolls in a horse-drawn wagon, as they rode from synagogue to synagogue. They put the scrolls into a room in a courtyard where we were doing forced labor, such as preparing straw for their cattle. The Torah scrolls rolled around that courtyard.

One day the Nazi commandant entered and told my husband, "Gather up this filth, and bury it in shame." We were to bury the holy scrolls in a large square ringed with stones in Velvel Wasserman's courtyard, where cattle droppings were dumped. We replied, "Yes, sir Commandant."

When he had gone, my husband asked Hirsch Bretschneider, another forced laborer, "How can we do such a thing? My heart will not permit it. We will yet see what we can do."

Two days later, the Nazi came back shouting at us and demanding to know why his command had not been obeyed. My husband replied that we had to wait until the frozen ground

softened up. "In short", the commandant said, "By tomorrow morning, that filth must be gone." We ran about seeking a hiding place. We found a little attic that no longer had its stairs. Working ourselves almost to death, we shoved the heavy Torah scrolls up into it.

On the day when the Russian army liberated Skala from the Germans, we were too weary and too worn out to check if our holy Torah scrolls were still where we had hidden them. When we had calmed down somewhat, my husband and several other Jews removed thirty-nine Torah scrolls from that attic. They were all in good condition; even their coverings had survived. We placed them in the Strisever Kloiz.

At the beginning of June, 1945, we cobbled several chests together and put the scrolls inside them while we were packing to leave Skala. One Saturday morning, someone came from the train station and told us to put our baggage into the train, because it would be leaving that evening. People ran about looking for wagons, packed their possessions, and drove to the train. We were all weary and weepy, as we thought of our dead friends and relatives, and of leaving our town.

My husband and Yisrael Peker reminded us that the Torah scrolls had not yet been brought to the train station. We got out, found a wagon, put the chests containing the scrolls into it, and tearfully followed the wagon with lowered heads as we wept our way to the train, remembering all the people we would never see again. The moon was shining on our last night there. I was overwhelmed by what had become of our lovely and lively town. That was my last glimpse of the place where I was born.

ONE WANTS TO FREE ONESELF OF THE GREAT FEAR OF DEATH, BUT THAT IS NOT ALLOWED

O*ne evening in March of* 1943, all of us slave-laborers sat in Moshe Weidberg's house waiting to hear some news. Aharale (Yitzchak Yaakov Klezmer's grandson) had just arrived from Borszczów. He

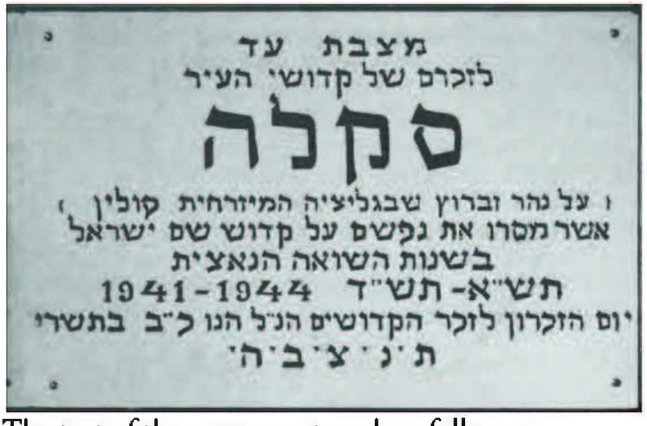
sometimes even burst into song for the young people, because he was a very accomplished singer. He told us that the Jews in Borszczow were living in terror.

While he was being questioned about Borszczów, Hirsch, Yisrael Shimon's son, entered. Seeing Aharale, he said, "Oh, Aharale, it is so sad here; one does not see a soul anymore. I come running here frequently so that I might hear something, and now I have found you today. Sing something for us so that we might forget our great sorrows for a few minutes." Aharale needed little encouragement to sing *"Mayn Shtetele Belz"*. Hirsch sat, delighted and said, "Ah, if only I could accompany him on my fiddle." And, indeed, for a few moments we forgot where we were.

Suddenly, the door opened, giving us all a fright. Moshe "Zubeh" (a grandson of Yoel Katzav) walked in and shouted, "Why are you sitting here singing? There is an *aktion (a massacre)* beginning right now in Borszczów!" We dispersed. In one moment, the entire house was emptied. That was *Taanit Esther*, and indeed there was a large *aktion* in Borszczów, during which many Skala people were killed.



FIG. 29: *Former residents of Skala in Israel at the unveiling of the memorial tablet for the martyrs of Skala on Mt. Zion, Jerusalem*



The text of the monument reads as follows:

A Monument of testimony
In memory of the martyrs of the city of Skala
On the Zbrucz River in Eastern Galicia, Poland
Who gave their lives in sanctification of the name of Israel
During the years of the Nazi Holocaust
5701–5704 1941–1944
The memorial day of these martyrs in 22 Tishrei
May their souls be bound in the bonds of eternal life.

List of Skala Residents[1] Who Survived the Holocaust and Their Newly Acquired Residences[2]

Augenblick, Samuel *New York, USA*

Apfelbaum, Israel *Paris, France*

Apfelbaum, Chana *Paris, France*

Apfelbaum, Hadassah *Paris, France**

Banner (Gelbard), Esther *Givatayim, Israel*

Bilgoraj, Abraham *Givatayim, Israel*

Bilgoraj, Gitel *Givatayim, Israel*

Bloch, Shaul *Israel*

Blutstein, Leizer-Urn *USSR*

Blutstein, Meyer *Montreal, Canada*

Blutstein, Sonia *Montreal, Canada*

[1] As of 1978

[2] Of the original 145 survivors on this list, only 26 whose names are followed by an asterisk (*), were still alive when this book was printed in 2010.

Blutstein, Joseph *Winnipeg, Canada*

Blutstein, Sara *Winnipeg, Canada*

Blutstein-Gottesfeld, Beile *Winnipeg, Canada**

Brettler, Chaim *Margate, N.J. USA*

Bretschneider, Menahem *Givatayim, Israel**

Dunajer, Moses *Miami, USA*

Edelman, Aron *Israel*

Edelman, Simcha *Holan, Israel*

Edelstein, Munio *New York, USA**

Epstein (Edelstein), Sholom *New York, USA*

Fiderer, Samuel *New York, USA**

Feuerberg, Abraham *USA*

Fiderer, Samuel, *New York, USA**

Fisch, Chaskel *Haifa, Israel*

Fisch, Fischel *New York, USA*

Fisch, Hinde *Haifa, Israel*

Fisch, Yitzhak *New York, USA*

Fleischman, Israel *New York, USA*

Frenkel (Hyman), Frieda *Los Angeles, USA*

Frenkel (Schafirofl), Mira *Los Angeles, USA*

Frenkel, Moses *New York, USA*

Frenkel, Nunia *New York, USA*

Frenkel (Stein), Rita *Los Angeles, USA**

Frenkel (Krantz), Sara *Los Angeles, USA*

Gottesfeld, Arthur *New York, USA**

Gottesfeld, Bluma (murdered after liberation by Ukrainian bandits)

Gottesfeld, Sheincie *New York, USA*

Gottesfeld (Heller), Fancia *New York, USA**

Greenberg, Sam *New York, USA*

Greenberg (Feuerstein), Mala *New York, USA*

Hausner, Mrs., S, *Israel*

Hechtenthal, Wolf *Israel*

Hechtenthal, Meyer *Winnipeg, Canada*

Herschowitz (Lamensdorf) Cesia, *New York, USA*

Herscher, David *Philadelphia USA*

Herscher, Nena *Philadelphia, USA**

Herscher (Feuerstein), *Haya Israel*

Herschkowitz (Lamensdorf), Cesia *New York, USA**

Herschkowitz, Meyer *Israel*

Herschkowitz, Genia *Carmiel, Israel*

Herschkowitz, Dusia *Carmiel, Israel*

Herzog, Meir-Leib *Haifa, Israel*

Herzog (Blutstein), Shein del *Haifa, Israel**

Hescheles, Samuel *New York USA*

Hescheles, Sara *New York USA*

Hescheles, Victor *New York, USA**

Jagendorf (Tannenbaum), Bell, *New York, USA*

Jagendorf (Rosner), Chaya *New York, USA*

Jagendorf, Esther *New York, USA*

Jagendorf (Nenner), Esther *Beersheba, Israel*

Jagendorf, Mechel *New York, USA*

Jagendorf (Heller), Yehudit *New York, USA**

Jagendorf (Kaminer), Zenia *Ramat Aviv, Israel*

Kasirer, Benny *Haifa, Israel*

Kasirer, Joseph, *Tel Aviv, Israel*

Kasirer, Moses *Haifa, Israel*

Kasirer, Pepa *Tel Aviv, Israel*

Kirschner, Urn *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Kirschner, Joseph *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Kleinman, Ben-Zion *Israel*

Kleinman (Schapira), Menie *Israel*

Kleinman, Max *Israel*

Kremnitzer, Motik *Rehovot, Israel*

Kremnitzer, Moses *Rehovot, Israel*

Lachman, Gedalia *Kfar Sora, Israel*

Landau, Wolf *Toronto, Canada*

Lebard (Shafran) Frieda *Kiryat Bialik, Israel*

Liebling, Leib *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Mosner Leibush *Montreal, Canada*

Melzer, Shimon *Israel*

Messing, Mechel *New York USA*

Miller, Hersch Petach *Tikva, Israel*

Pecker, Israel *Bnei Brak, Israel*

Pecker, Tzirel *Bnei Brak, Israel*

Plitt, Max *New York, USA*

Plitt (Schnitzer), *Chaya N, Y, USA*

Ringel, Mendel *Tel Aviv, Israel*

Rosenblat, Berl *Petach Tikva, Israel*

Rosenwald, Shrnil-Srul *USA*

Sandberg, David *New York USA*

Sandberg, Liba *New York USA*

Saltzman, Moshe *Israel*

Schechter, Yente *Israel*

Schneider, Mendel *Israel*

Schneider, Chaya *Israel*

Schneider, Shlomo *Israel*

Schnitzer, Abraham *New York, USA*

Schechter, Yente *Israel*

Schrentzel, Yehudit *Canada*

Schatner, Shaul *Wroclaw, Poland*

Schapira Eliezer *Israel*

Schapira, Joseph *New York, USA*

Schapira (Gottesfeld) Rena *New York USA**

Schwarzbach, Babe *Rehovot, Israel*

Schwarzbach (Weingarten), Chaya *Los Angeles, USA*

Schwarzbach, David *New York, USA**

Schwarzbach, Fryma *New York, USA*

Schwarzbach (Flyn), Henie *Toronto, Canada**

Schwarzbach, Israel *New York, USA*

Schwarzbach, Jacob *Rehovot, Israel*

Schwarzbach, Leon *New York, USA*

Schwarzbach, Meir *Rehovot, Israel*

Schwarzbach, Ovadia, *Israel*

Schwarzbach, Rywa *New York, USA*

Schwarzbach, Rywka (Died after liberation in Skala)

Schwarzbach (Sala), Sarah *New York, USA*

Schwarzbach (Karpfen), Suzy *New York, USA**

Schwarzbach (Kruger), Toby *Toronto, Canada*

Seidman, Abe *New York, USA*

Seidman (Hescheles), Dana *New York, USA*

Seidman (Sandberg), Dora *Poland*

Seidman, Fawunio *Poland*

Seidman, Marcus *Poland*

Seidman, Rywka *Carmiel, Israel*

Silberbusch, Gusta *USA*

Schneider, Mendel *Israel*

Schneider, Chaya *Israel*

Schneider, Shlomo *Israel*

Schnitzer, Abraham *New York, USA*

Schrentzel, Yehudit *Canada*

Sommerman, Dr, I, *Israel*

Stachel, Leon *Vienna, Austria*

Stachel, Etta *Vienna, Austria*

Stachel, Gizia *Vienna, Austria**

Stachel, Munio *Vienna, Austria*

Stachel, Samuel *Vienna, Austria**

Stock, Nechemia *Montreal, Canada*

Stock (Rothstein), *Malcia Miami, USA**

Tabak, David *Mays Landing, N.J. USA*

Tabak, Sara *Mays Landing, N.J. USA*

Tabak (Zuroff), Renata *New York, USA**

Trasawucki (Tracy), Abraham *New York, USA**

Wagner, Moses, *Montreal, Canada*

Weidberg, Berish *New York, USA*

Weidberg (Pollack), Lucy *New York, USA**

Weidenfeld (Mermelstein), Max, *New York, USA**

Weitman, Nathan, *Ramal Gan, Israel*

Weinraub, Motel *Ramal Gan, Israel*

Yaget (Eckhaus), Ziata *Zichron Ya'acov, Israel**

Zimmerman, Zygmunt *New York, USA*

Zimmerman, Sophie *New York, USA*

Zimmerman, Daniel *New York, USA**

"A Night in a Soviet Jail"

Esther Banner-Gelbart



FIG. 30: *Esther Banner-Gelbart*

They imprisoned me together with hundreds of other Polish prisoners in a jail in the city of Orsha. We, the Polish prisoners, were considered political prisoners, and thus were separated from the other prisoners. After countless interrogations, mostly done in the middle of the night or the wee hours of the morning, a group of us women were called to hear our sentence. After the verdict was read, we weren't returned to the same cell, but, rather, we were moved to another cell that was barely large enough for 10 prisoners. We were 25 women, squeezed together, without any mercy, into one cell, and we were only able to stand upright, crowded and suffocating all day and all night. This all happened during the scorching days of summer, and, when we had no more strength to withstand this torture, we started to scream as loud as we could. We were no longer afraid, for we had already despaired. There was nothing to lose, for we were far away from our dear ones and we were cut off from the outside world. Alas, our screams only reached the ears of the prison guards. The administrators of the prison came, and in a silent, secretive way that was typical of Soviet Russia,

they quickly put an end to the matter by transferring some of us to another cell. However, they warned us that, once we were in this new cell, there would be no going back, and we agreed to this. I was among those people who were transferred to this new cell in the middle of the night, in total darkness.

The door closed behind us and we found ourselves within a big dark cell. It was lit by only one small bulb. My first impression was that this cell wasn't so bad. We hoped that there would be the possibility to sit, or maybe even to lie down. Suddenly, from the ground began to rise up half-naked bodies, many of them bearing tattoos of all different kinds. We understood that we had been tricked. They had brought us into a cell filled with a group of women who were part of the criminal underworld. Shortly afterwards, we realized that there was also amongst this group a monstrous, androgynous creature, half man and half woman, who was dressed in the clothes of a man. To our astonishment, it was explained that that this creature was brought into the women's cell because of the fear that, if she would be placed in the men's cell, they would take advantage of her for sexual purposes.

Initially, this group of prisoners greeted us with a sense of curiosity. But once they knew who we were and where we were from, they began to bombard us with insults and threats, using disgusting, obscene language, such as is spoken among elements of the criminal underworld. I want to stress that most of the people who were suffering along with me were Polish women, and I was the youngest among them and also the only Jew. Having no strength left, I sat on the floor and began to cry bitterly. All my pain, despair, disgrace, and lack of hope were expressed in this cry. Women came to me and held my head in both arms to hug me. I was so frightened and panicked that the screams that came from my throat were, evidently, strong enough to awaken some human emotion in the heart of the jailer guarding the corridor next to the cell door. He opened the door and warned the prisoners to dare not abuse us. However, the others ganged up on this jailer and he was forced to retreat and close the door behind him. Luckily, I caught a

high fever and they transferred me to the prison infirmary.

The writer of this account was an active member in the Zionist Youth Movement in Skala; she was also married to an active Zionist and was sent by the Soviet authorities into exile [Siberia].

Our Remnants After Liberation

Chaim Brettler

On March 23, 1944, the longed-for liberation arrived–but it unfortunately came too late. Only a small number of Jews survived. On March 24, those who miraculously survived–ragged, emaciated and abandoned, barely able to drag their suffering feet–began to arrive. Seeing other afflicted brethren, the wellsprings of tears opened once more as if to rinse off a bit the heavy stones that had pressed fearfully on their weak hearts. As we, for the first time as free men, saw the city emptied of Jews, we absorbed the great disaster for the first time. Our gentile neighbors went about with lowered noses, staring at us "degraded" creatures. The so-called better ones among them made seemingly sympathetic expressions, wondering "from where had the Jews reappeared? They, the Jews, would certainly take back the things that had been given to us and which we have made use of for so long." They had been certain that no one would survive to demand anything back. On the very first day, the worst of them did not show themselves in the street, fearing revenge.

We began to search through the half-ruined Jewish houses for some place into which we might go. We chose wholly intact houses, those that had been occupied by them or by local Ukrainians during the German occupation. Others of us went to the "good" gentiles to ask for our things back in order to cover our half-naked bodies as well as to get some foodstuffs; hoping that, in a peaceful situation, they might to get their strength back and to begin to rebuild a new life over the ruins. But that did not last long.

Already, on Monday, March 26, rumors circulated that the Russians were going to pull out under the pressure of a local German offensive. It was also easy to see, from the faces of the

Ukrainians. When the frightened Jews asked the Russian officers (Jews) stationed in Skala, they laughed and reassured us saying that everything was in order and that we had nothing to fear. We believed them (what choice did we have?) seeing how the Russians were organizing themselves and taking apartments for their officers. Things went on this way until Wednesday, March 28. At about 10:00 a.m., we saw that the Russians had suddenly packed up and were hastily leaving the town. The panic and dread of the few Jews was great. Each person did what he thought best.

Some ran once again to hide with gentiles they knew, knowing full well that they were entrusting themselves into their hands. They were weakened and in no condition to flee, so they simply had no other choice. A certain number of individuals, I among them, went off with the departing Soviets. I recall something of that bloody Wednesday: I had stood in the confusion of flight near Frenkel's house, deliberating about what to do. Then Chaim Gottesfeld approached me and we both considered what to do: to flee with the Soviets or to hide somewhere in the town.

Then all at once we saw a German tank that was coming from the street of the *Dom Polski* turn into the main street in that direction of the old city. Not losing a moment, we both ran. When we reached the *Beis Midrash*, Chaim Gottesfeld, worn out, seated himself on the cement near the *Beis Midrash*, unable to go any further. I wanted to help him get up. He replied, "Go save yourself. Nothing is going to help me." (He was indeed shot then). I ran to the synagogue and from there, together with Russian soldiers who had left the town and then returned. On the way, I succeeded in taking with me Fishel Fisch, who died recently. The first stop was Losiacz, 12 kilometers from Skala. There I found the Heschele family and Nechemia Stock. There too, I learned about the great disaster that had overtaken my uncle David Tabak. He was among the few who had succeeded in saving himself and his family (a wife and two small girls). The younger girl was shot in her mother's arms while they were fleeing in a Russian transport truck. Thus, there was one more victim just after the liberation. In pain, we fled

further–at first on foot, and later we pleaded with Russian officers who brought us to Kopyczyńce. When we arrived in Kopyczyńce, we asked about any Jews (some few Jews were living with the dentist Yosef Teig). They laughed at us when we recounted to them all our news, but it later turned out that we were right. We spent the night at Teig's and in the morning, Thursday, we left the town together with the Kopyczyńcers and arrived in Chorostków. We stayed there for several days and when more Jews arrived, we fled once more and went to Podwołoczyka. There we heard that the Russians had retaken Skala. Not having any money with which to buy food, Fishel Fisch and I worked in a military bakery and supported ourselves in that fashion. We remained there for several weeks and then we returned by the same military road to Skala, arriving at home on a Friday afternoon. Because we were hungry and ragged our fellow Jews seemed to be "counts" in our eyes -- dressed cleanly, provided with places to live and jobs and so on, while we were obviously in a downtrodden state. However, that did not last long. Through Dora Sondberg, I informed Gedalia Lachman where I was and what my situation was. Dora quickly brought clothes, linens, boots and other things from Gedalia. On Saturday morning I went to the bath, leaving my "nice" clothes behind with their dirt and emerging from the bath a new person in fresh clothing .On that same Saturday I was called to the Russian Security Organ where the head (Golubyev, I think) spent nearly two hours with me getting details about particular people and their behavior during the German occupation (particularly about the Ukrainians). He wrote it all down and finally told me to write down all the details and give them to him.

I immediately went to work at the train station and thereby remained in Skala. I worked at the train station for only a little while because I was taken over to the Voyenkomit, that is the military kommandatur, whose prime task was to enlist all the men from ages 18 to 50 for military duty–of course, after a physical examination. I had a responsible job there and was able to do all sorts of things. From the beginning, before I came there to work,

several Jews were sent to military duty: Leibish Mazner, who went as far as Husiatyn, later presented himself in Tarnopol (died in Canada, 1969); Shalom Epstein, who was discharged after several months of military service (now in New York); Mendel Ringel (now in Israel), Moshe Donajer (now in Miami) and Avraham Feuerberg (died in America).

For me, the chief goal of the work was revenge on the local enemies; to pay back, even partially, our destroyers, the Ukrainians, who had practically bathed in Jewish blood during the occupation. They did not even think it was necessary for them to run away and were certain that their Jewish victims would not turn them in for they were no longer alive, and as for their own, the gentiles, there was no need to fear them because they were no better than themselves. Therefore, I did everything I could to put the organs of the regime work. The Ukrainians, headed by the little priest[1] (may his name be obliterated) also did not rest. They worked with all their might to keep their Slavic brothers from having an attitude toward all such things, utilizing the excuse that, "after all, the Ukrainians are productive workers. It may be that in certain cases they were compelled, by the Germans, to do certain things. But who did that hurt? The Jews."

We, for our part, opposed them with such arguments that might appeal to our liberators. For example: we showed, in black and white, that all those intractable anti-Semites were at the same time haters of the Soviets who wanted an independent Ukrainian state on both sides of the Zbrucz, and in order to achieve that they had bound themselves with the Germans and were still linked to them. They are the murderers of your people and ours. Our arguments worked.

With the coming of civilian rule we went right to work. And now I must call to your attention the good achieved by Berish Weidberg, may he rest in peace, who died here in America. In those times, we shared our tribulations. We hid together and survived the

[1]Here, 'little' is used as a derogative term.

catastrophe. After the liberation Berish Weidberg was active more than anyone else in the punishment endeavors against the killers. He himself had gathered sufficient material proof, and he persuaded others to do likewise.

As a consequence of our activities, the following were condemned to 25 years in prison:

1. Dr. Katarina Modna
2. Milke Skoroda (the killer of my parents)
3. Mikhaill Kunka
4. Jan Litsaak
5. Stefan Dukhinski
6. Milka Krowczyk (Kwasniak's son-in-law)
7. Petra Sapjanjok
8. Mikhail Wielikanowicz
9. Josef Fischer
10. Cypoliuk of Cygany (the killer of my uncle Meir-Zusye Tabak, may G-d avenge his blood) died under investigation arrest.
11. Adam Jabak. Captured in Czortków, condemned.
12. Siekierewicz–the killer of Aharon Schapira of Podfilipia.

Others who were shot for a variety of reasons were:

1. Joska Staritcki–a Ukrainian policeman
2. Miroslov (Slowka) Majdanjuk
3. Mikala Czepesiuk (the foreman of Engel the Nazi).
4. Jarema. He was an armed Banderovchik[2] bandit. When he was captured, he took the rifle from his shoulder and tried to shoot. He was shot down on the spot.
5. The younger Kunke, who threw the grenade into Dudye Herscher's house, killing his wife.

[2] The name of a Ukrainian gang at the time.

Active Ukrainians from the surrounding villages were also shot or sent away.

Various details emerged regarding the destruction of the Jews during the course of the investigative hearings. But it would take up too much space to list each entry. I will however offer a unifying fact because it shows just how many secrets we will never know regarding the annihilation:

The total annihilation of the Jewish communities in our district began on Saturday, June 5, 1943. There was a large *aktion* in Borszczów in which many people from Skala were killed. I was in Skala at that time, and I sent a messenger the next day, Sunday, to Borszczów in order to find out who among my family had survived. I received the reply from Magister Tauber that my father-in-law Chaim Rappaport, may God avenge his blood, survived but his mother had been shot on Saturday. My aunt, Meir Zusye Tabak's wife Saltsia had also been shot. On the other hand, there was a mystery regarding Meir Zusye. He succeeded in ransoming himself from a Gestapo man and he had disappeared someplace. He was not to be found among the dead or among the living. Only later did I learn from gentiles from Cygany that they had seen Meir Zusye on that dreadful Saturday in the village of Cygany and that the gentile Czyfaliuk had killed him. I knew the killer from before the war and it was hard for me to believe that he, Czyfaliuk, could indeed have done that. I just thought (though I did not believe) that if I survived, I would check that out. A year after the murder, when we began to demand an accounting from the town's Jew killers, I began to publish and demand that Czyfaliuk of Cygany be arrested in order to find out the truth. However, it was a difficult matter. Cygany was separated from Skala by seven kilometers of forest (the so-called Cygany Forest), and that is where the Banderovchiks raged so that going or driving through it was fraught with mortal danger. Finally, they succeeded in arresting him. I remember it as follows: One afternoon when I approached his courtyard he was standing, raking in the straw after threshing. Before he had time to say anything, I noticed that he was wearing

Meir Zusye's trousers! His first words to me (he knew me) were: "I did not kill your uncle." Without further words, he was driven through the woods to Skala. To this day I do not know how we got through the woods without being disturbed. At the first of several night hearings, the murderer denied everything. However, he became better, and not only admitted that he had killed Meir Zusye but also that on that unfortunate Saturday he had caught and killed 18 Jews. He spied on Jews who had escaped the Borszczów slaughter. He brought them into the forest, robbed and murdered them. He said that he had killed Meir Zusye as well as a little girl. To this day that has been a mystery, because Meir Zusye had no children. Certainly, that must have been someone else's child, a Jewish child. Who knows whose it was? I have waited for a favorable opportunity to take that gentile murderer into the forest to make him show me where he had buried the Jews. That opportunity, however, did not present itself. The murderer died after 20 days in jail, taking his bloody secret with him. And therefore it was impossible to give the murdered victims a Jewish burial.

There were also other cases. A Soviet officer came to investigate the bestial murders that took place during the German occupation. Since he could not find any Jews, the Ukrainian priest Derevenko, got rid of him with the banal excuse and lie that 2,000 Soviet citizens had been killed during the occupation, without mentioning that all of those killed were Jews. When I met that Soviet officer in a restaurant by chance, I heard about that vile crime and the lies of the priest. I told the officer the truth. When the priest, Derevenko, was asked about that, he twisted about and babbled, pleading with me not to put him in a "situation." When that did not work, Derevenko, with the silent approbation of the local administrators, brought forth a new story: knowing that the Jewish birth certificates had been destroyed so that there could be no proof of anything, he demanded that the birth certificates be presented or at least a list be compiled that would show how many Jews were in Skala. He was certain that nobody would be able to do this, and that his claims

would therefore not be rejected. To his consternation, I was able to recreate from memory a list of all the Jews of Skala with their names and ages, and thereby stupefy the anti-Semitic priest. A copy of that list is in this Yizkor Book.

There were also several cases when arrested Ukrainians, well-known nationalists who had cooperated with the Nazis, were suddenly freed without explanation, and we were in no way able to find out why. The pain and helplessness was great until we learned who it was who had meddled in their favor. During the course of an investigation conducted by higher authorities, Nikolai Vlasov, the head of the N.K.V.D., an old party member whom the Ukrainians had bribed, was arrested and convicted.

The few surviving Jews were not organized from a material perspective. Several of them worked. Others did business, so that nobody lacked an income. However, it was a life without a purpose. We had to be constantly among our Ukrainian murderers; without any future for our little children or our youth, having to be propped up constantly by the Soviet powers. We were completely uncertain of our future. That is, the Soviet power would make use of you so long as it had need and after that set you aside...

The Jews waited for a miracle and it came in the form of the repatriation; that is, an agreement was made between the Soviet Union and the provisionary Polish Communist regime that all former Polish citizens who found themselves in the Soviet Union and Ukraine had the right, if they wished, to make their way to Poland. Repatriation committees were created in all of the cities and Jews began to register. Of course, the Soviet powers looked with disfavor upon those who signed up, particularly if they were Jews and made angry accusations: "We liberated you and gave you back your human and civic rights and you are returning to your murderers?" A valid question to which there was no convincing answer at that time. The government made difficulties for some of the Jews for whom they had need. Things went more or less in an orderly fashion in Skala, and in the first days of July in 1945 all the Jews left Skala and made their way to Poland. Only then was it seen

that the Soviet warnings were correct. Jews could not remain in the anti-Semitic "new" Poland. The wandering began once more until every person made their way to a free country, pitched their tent there, organized themselves anew and brought generations into the world. Let us hope that our townsfolk, wherever they find themselves, will continue to exist.

THE SURVIVORS (A POEM)

Chaim Grade

It happens at midnight when the bats flutter about,
The spiders of dreams and darkness spin their web–
A woman jumps out of bed and shouts: Mother!
It could be that the old woman still lives,
The face full of wrinkles, like many beams of light.

It happens that a woman sees a girl with braids,
She recalls–the Germans were treading on the steps.
Was she not taken away when everyone else was?
She sees in the bunker the harmed heads…
Her little daughter would have now been a bride.

It happens from time to time in the quiet.
Sometimes on an April day
When the survivors weep in public;
When the yahrzeit candles put on their bloody show
With eyes that are already dusty in the grooves.

Also those who do not see things in the night,
And who during the day hide behind a face that laughs
Like everyone who walks around burdened by a yoke
And who have already made peace in their lives
With stoning, burning, killing and strangulation[1].

[1] These are the four forms of court executed death sentences mandated by Jewish law (at the time when the Sanhedrin was active).

At the Trials of the Nazi Murderers in Germany

Chaim Brettler

While compiling a list of all the men, women, and children from our destroyed Jewish community of Skala, who were murdered in the most terrible ways, I decided it would be appropriate to tell what happened to those who murdered us. During the last year of the war, when the Russian army liberated us from the Germans, some of our few survivors turned a number of Ukrainian and Polish murderers of Jews over to the Soviet authorities, who arrested them and imprisoned them. They were the local murderers. They had not even tried to flee from justice, because they were sure that no Jew had survived, and that no one would ever hold them responsible for their crimes. Nobody thought it would be possible to take vengeance on the German murderers.

I will tell everything I know about how the German killers were tried for their anti-Jewish crimes in our town. These trials were small in number and limited in scope, but they were better than nothing.

I read an advertisement placed by the World Jewish Congress in the Jewish daily newspaper, the Forward[1], in 1965. The notice announced that atrocities the Nazis had committed against the Jews in Czortkow and its vicinity were under investigation. The article mentioned specifically Nehemia Stock and Meir Blutstein, of Montreal, me, and several others, whom they sought as witnesses.

One of the Nazi criminals being investigated had been infamous in Skala. His name was Artur Engel. Five years later, in 1970, these witnesses, and also Mrs. Riva Schwartzbach, testified personally at

[1]An American Yiddish daily newspaper.

Engel's trial in Hamburg, where they confronted him, face to face, with his evil deeds.

We witnesses were frequently invited to the German consulates in New York, Philadelphia, and Montreal to testify about what we had witnessed. I was interviewed with great care, and my testimony was compared to that of other witnesses, and also to the personal data about each of us in the files of the West German Wiedergutmachung Authority.[2]

All Engel's phony excuses that he had merely been following orders fell apart during the investigation of his cold-blooded murder of Chone Schwarzbach on 19 June, 1943. There was no "Juden Aktion" or organized massacre of Jews by the Gestapo, that day. Engel alone, as the "master of the town", shot and killed Chone Schwartzbach in broad daylight.

The Hamburg court informed me in September, 1969 that the investigation against Engel was complete, and that his trial was scheduled to begin the following February. I was further advised that if I were willing to testify at the trial, I must fill out an attached form and return it to the court. I of course completed the form and sent it off. Several weeks later, I received a summons to appear in Hamburg on February 4, 1970.

I had mixed feelings about the coming trial. I felt satisfaction that I would have the opportunity to look at the murderer sitting in the defendant's dock, trembling in fear for his hide, but I also felt a nagging pain. All the frightening images of the destruction would again appear before my eyes, in which the murderer was always the dominant, vivid presence. There he goes, stiffly erect in his arrogance, walking through the Jewish streets, accompanied by his fellow murderers, Herra and Feifer and their German shepherd dog "Betti", waiting for the command to attack Jews and tear them to pieces. Engel's appearances were always fearsome, whether he was making trouble in the "Judenrat", dragging people to forced labor,

[2] The German word refers to reparations and restitution the West German government agreed to pay after the war to Holocaust survivors for the pain and suffering they endured in Nazi concentration and labor camps.

or plundering Jewish homes. Jews, their property, and their lives were all in his hands. In a single word, Engel was the Hitler of Skala.

I impatiently awaited the day of the trial, if with some apprehension about what this encounter would mean for me when I would relive the frightening years of the Holocaust. My thoughts were in Skala day and night. I arrived in Hamburg on February 3rd, 1970. The weather was like my mood: wind and snow slapped me in the face. As I rode a taxi through the streets of Hamburg to the hotel, looking at the newly rebuilt streets, the stores full of goods, and the prosperity the Germans enjoyed, I compared Hamburg to the Polish cities and towns the Germans had destroyed and emptied of their Jews. My heart clenched in pain. Nazi Germany had indeed been defeated, but for us, Hitler won.

I arrived at the hotel thinking these depressing thoughts, where I met, in addition to the previously mentioned Nechemia Stock and Meir Blutstein, Mrs. Reva Schwartzbach, the unfortunate mother of the murder victim, Chone Schwartzbach. Her surviving daughter, Susie Karpfen, accompanied her to testify against the murderer of her son. Her court testimony with all the pertinent details was very painful and left a deep impression on all who heard her that day.

The following day, Wednesday, the fourth of February, Nechemia Stock, Meir Blutstein, Rywa Schwartzbach, her daughter, and I arrived at the court to bear witness against the crimes committed against Skala and against us personally. Sitting in the defendant's chair I saw a middle-aged, overweight, fat Gentile wearing a brown suit, having the face of a drunk, and whose blue, watery eyes looked like those of a pig. This creature could hardly answer the questions the court posed him. He burst into tears when he found it convenient to make that impression. I asked myself if it were possible for this bag of guts to be Artur Engel, the cold-blooded murderer before whom an entire town trembled. Is this what happens to a mighty army when you take their soldiers' caps off? Seeing his pitiful state in that German court, among armed

guards and facing a jury, I was proud of our martyrs, his victims. They were less decrepit than he was at the moment of their deaths.

The presiding judges, the defense attorneys, and the jury interrogated me for a few hours. Engel denied some of the accusations with a grimace and wet eyes; he had to admit others. His shrewd lawyers helped him. They confused the witnesses with all the judicial circumventions at their command in order to weaken the impression of murder. Engel at first denied that the Jewish witnesses had proved murder beyond a reasonable doubt. His lawyers then claimed that, firstly, Engel shot only one Jew, and that was at a moment when he thought Chune Schwartzbach was about to assault him. Engel maintained that he had killed the Jew in self-defense, and that he had acted on the basis of his instinct for self-preservation. To this he added that he now regrets having killed Chune Schwartzbach.

I realized how hard it is to be a witness thirty years after the events. In addition to the pain of reliving the Holocaust, the lawyers pepper a Jewish witness with questions from every angle, in hopes of unnerving him. If a shrewd lawyer succeeds in throwing a witness into a quandary, the witness is in embarrassed agony, while the murderer can go home if the witness's testimony fails to persuade the court. This actually happened in Engel's trial. The murderer was freed, even though he admitted that he shot Chune Schwartzbach.

I think this was our own fault. Every Jewish witness who wants to aid in the prosecution should ask for a lawyer to advise him of his rights and to defend him when he needs help. The accused murderers have this right, and so should we. It is not surprising that many Jewish witnesses who are at first willing to testify against Nazi war criminals change their minds when they realize how it feels to be cross-examined. Jewish organizations who deal with this situation must consider this issue and provide witnesses with legal help they need at those hard moments.

About that time, the Mannheim prosecutor's office opened an investigation of two members of the Czortkow Gestapo–the

murderers Albert Brettschneider and Richard Pauhl. Of these two, the first, Brettschneider, had a bloody account to settle with Skala, because he killed Leibele Schechter, as well as the wife of Matia Gruenman, may G-d avenge their blood. Both murders were individual murders Brettschneider committed on his own initiative, rather than within the context of an organized aktion, or massacre ordered by the higher officers.

We knew the second murderer, Pauhl, very well, because of his role in shooting thirty-three victims during the Sukkot massacre during that Jewish holiday in 1942. Pauhl also administered the property of Skala Jews who had been shot, deported, or left alive. He worked in this capacity for the entire Czortkow district.

The investigation of Pauhl originated in the trial of Kelner, may his name be blotted out, the "Jewish Referent" of the Czortkow Gestapo, and also from Paul Tomanek's trial. Tomanek had been one of the commandants at Kaminka Camp, and later, in 1943, at Czortkow. Their trials had been very large. Hundreds of witnesses from the whole region testified. The trial was more complex than the earlier one had been. Several Skala witnesses went to the trial from Israel and America. Avraham Bilgoraj and Gedalia Lachman did not go to the trial in Mannheim, but gave testimony from Israel. Leibele Schwartzbach, Max Mermelstein, and I were the Skala witnesses from America, Schwartzbach made his deposition at the German consulate in Philadelphia. He did not attend the trial.

I arrived in Mannheim on 3 March, 1972. I entered the court at 9 that morning. Before me sat the accused murderer, this old gray Gentile, Brettschneider, who had suddenly become a Volksdeutscher[3] from Russia. The other defendant, Pauhl, was also a Volksdeutscher, but from Bukovina.

I testified for an entire day that Friday from nine until five, apart from a thirty minute lunch break. I continued on Monday, March 6, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Their lawyers used every means

[3] Volksdeutscher: an ethnic German from one of the East European countries whose family had lived among Slavs for generations. Many of them became Nazis when the German armies occupied the areas where they lived

to refute the charges, first by denying the accusations, and, when that failed, they presented the excuse that their clients, the murderers, had merely been "following orders". These lawyers cross-examined me, quoting declarations other witnesses had made, and having no consideration, neither for the circumstances under which the witnesses saw a specific murder, nor for the fact that more than thirty years had passed. The murderers themselves, who had killed so many people, either could not or would not remember each murder they had committed.

Max Mermelstein spent a half a day before the judges. The defense attorneys used the same methods to break him down that they had employed with me, but he did not yield.

My impression of the murderers was that Brettschneider, a stereotypical peasant, sat silently during the entire trial and left everything to his lawyers. Pauhl, in contrast, was like quicksilver. He searched his files to find ways to ambush witnesses or even his own lawyer with an error. He himself began to ask questions. I refused to answer him, and the presiding judge upheld my right to decline direct conversation with my former tormentor. Pauhl remained the cold blooded murderer we knew. The trial was long and painful, and I do not know if it has ended even yet. When I was in Israel in the summer of 1975, Dr. Yosef Kermish of Yad Vashem told me that Brettschneider's trial ended when that murderer died. I do not know about Pauhl's trial.

There is another murderer with whom Skala Jews have a bloody account to settle, although he was not in Skala. This man commanded Stopki Camp. His name was Paul Siler. He ran that camp with a high hand. Many Skala Jews were murdered there. Because of the initiative of the Center for Documentation in Vienna and its director, the well-known Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, Siler was arrested in 1964 and sentenced to seven years in jail for his war crimes. Although such a sentence might be viewed as significant according to Austrian "conceptions", for us Jews who were his victims, it was a meager consolation. There is no sentence, no matter how harsh and severe, that would be able to undo even a

few of his murders. His seven-year sentence was merely symbolic. Our accounting with the murderers is not yet over.

GERMAN PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE TRIALS

Articles in the German press about Artur Engel's murder trial were not merely neutral. Between the lines, one could detect a sort of "compassion" or even "sympathy" for the accused. The headline of the Hamburg newspaper "Hamburger Abendblatt" (in large letters) shouted out that Engel had fired a "warning shot" in order to stop Chune Schwartzbach from escaping. We witnesses were quoted only briefly and perfunctorily, in order to fulfill an obligation. The article announcing the innocent verdict that released the murderous sadist Artur Engel was accompanied by a large article claiming he had merely administered a hard blow, implying that he had not intentionally killed Chune Schwartzbach, and that he was therefore innocent of first degree murder. That the prosecution demanded that the verdict be appealed was mentioned only incidentally at the end of the article.

Irony? The Hamburger Abendblatt stated in large type that Engel the murderer behaved like a courteous "knight" toward the victim's mother. He offered the gray-haired, weeping mother, Rywa Schwarzbach, a chair for her to sit on at his own trial for murdering her son.

The German press devoted more space to, and quoted more often, the murderer's and their defenders than they did the witnesses who had survived. Very often, articles referred to the trials as "the Jewish trials" to help Germans form their opinion on the subject: that Jews will neither forget nor forgive, but will forever demand their "pound of flesh".

What follows are Articles in a Hamburg (West German) newspaper on the trial of the Nazi murderer Engel (1970). [Translator's note: the newspaper is *Hamburger Abendblatt*. Date is Wednesday, February 4, 1970. The article on second page includes photos of Artur Engel and Chune Schwartzbach.]

HANSESTADT HAMBURG

Mittwoch, 4. Februar 1970

Ehemaliger Zollsekretär wegen Ermordung eines Juden vor Gericht

„Ich wollte ihn mit einem Warnschuß zum Stehen bringen"

In der Serie der Prozesse um nationalsozialistische Gewaltverbrechen in den besetzten Gebieten während des zweiten Weltkrieges steht seit gestern der 62jährige frühere Zollsekretär Artur Engel vor dem Hamburger Schwurgericht. Er soll am 19. Juni 1943 als Angehöriger des Zollkommissariats Skala in Ostgalizien den 16jährigen Juden Chune Schwarzbach, der seine Arbeitsstätte aus Furcht verlassen hatte, mit einer Pistole von hinten erschossen haben. Für den Prozeß sind drei Wochen vorgesehen. 22 Zeugen, darunter jüdische Tatzeugen, sind geladen.

Ein mittelgroßer Angeklagter mit einem bäuerlichen Gesicht. Geboren in Posen, später sogenannter Zwölfender bei der Reichswehr; vor dem Kriege vom Zoll übernommen. Nach dem Kriege kam er nach Hamburg und wurde beim Zoll im Freihafen eingestellt. Verheiratet vor drei Jahren. Acht Monate Untersuchungshaft. Heute befindet sich der des Mordes angeklagte Artur Engel auf freiem Fuß. Familienstand: Verheiratet, zwei Kinder.

Bereits eine halbe Stunde nach Verhandlungsbeginn erlitt der Angeklagte einen Weinkrampf. Nicht wegen der schweren Beschuldigung, sondern als die Rede auf seine Frau kam. Die Verhandlung mußte unterbrochen werden. Später wurde Artur Engel wesentlich ruhiger.

Der Vorsitzende fragt: „Haben Sie während Ihrer Ausbildung auch Zeitungen bekommen? Den ‚Völkischen Beobachter' oder den ‚Stürmer'?"

Der Angeklagte: „Nein, nur die ‚Berliner Börsenzeitung'. Den ‚Stürmer' kannte ich gar nicht."

Einsatz in Skala

Während des Krieges wurde Engel mit seiner Einheit in die Kleinstadt Skala versetzt: „Wir hatten keine militärischen Aufgaben, sondern sollten die Grenze vom damaligen Generalgouvernement zur Ukraine kontrollieren. Wegen Spionage und der Partisanen, die von einer Grenze zur anderen überwechselten. Mit politischen Dingen habe ich mich nie beschäftigt. Auch bin ich kein Judenhasser. Ich bin ja in Posen mit jüdischen Kindern aufgewachsen und war mit ihnen im Sportverein."

Der Vorsitzende: „Haben Sie vorher einmal etwas von der sogenannten Kristallnacht gehört?"

Der Angeklagte: „Gehört habe ich erst später davon. Ich habe diese Sachen mißbilligt."

Blenden wir zurück nach der galizischen Kleinstadt Skala — 4000 Einwohner, davon etwa 2000 Juden. Der Angeklagte war Zollbeamter z. b. V. Kein großer Mann — aber auch kein kleiner. Denn schon bald regierte die Furcht in ganz Polen — die Furcht vor jedem Menschen, der eine deutsche Uniform trug.

Der Vorsitzende: „Wie viele von den 2000 Juden blieben zuletzt noch übrig?"

Der Angeklagte: „Das kann ich nicht so genau sagen. Viele hielten sich versteckt, viele wurden von der Gestapo nach irgendwohin abtransportiert."

Der Vorsitzende: „Haben Sie nie von Vernichtungslagern gehört?"

Der Angeklagte: „Nein, das habe ich alles erst nachher erfahren. Ich habe einmal erschossene Juden auf den Straßen gesehen."

Wertsachen requiriert

Der Vorsitzende: „Was haben Sie denn dazu gesagt? Fanden Sie das Rechtens?"

Der Angeklagte: „Um Gottes willen ..."

Der Vorsitzende: „Zeugen werden hier aussagen, Sie hätten Ihren Schäferhund auf jüdische Menschen gehetzt."

Der Angeklagte: „Das stimmt nicht. Mein Hund lief hinter allem her, was sich schnell bewegte. Außerdem war er zwölf Jahre alt und kam schon nach zwanzig Metern außer Puste ..."

Der Vorsitzende: „Zeugen werden hier aussagen, Sie seien in die Wohnungen jüdischer Familien gegangen und hätten dort Wertsachen requiriert. Mit diesen Dingen hatten Sie unzählige Pakete nach Haus geschickt."

Der Angeklagte: „Das stimmt nicht ..." Er spricht von Verwechslungen mit Kameraden. Der eine Kamerad ist tot — der andere lebt in der „DDR" und hat Engel in seiner dortigen Aussage schwer belastet.

Zur Tat fragt der Vorsitzende: „Warum haben Sie den jüdischen Jungen in den Kopf geschossen?"

Der Angeklagte: „Es sollte ein Warnschuß sein und war eine reine Reaktion von mir. Ich stellte eben fest, daß er von der Arbeit weglaufen wollte, und ich wollte ihn zum Stehen bringen."

Der Vorsitzende: „Bei einem Warnschuß schießt man doch in die Luft oder in den Boden. Wir wissen übrigens genau, wo Chune Schwarzbach gearbeitet hat. Beim Ausbau eines Reitstalls, dessen Boden mit Grabsteinen vom jüdischen Friedhof ausgelegt war. Wenn Sie den armen Kerl hätten entweichen lassen — wäre Ihnen dann etwas passiert?"

Der Angeklagte: „Wahrscheinlich nicht."

Der Vorsitzende: „Sie sollen nach der Erschießung des Jungen zu seinem Vater gegangen sein, der auch im Pferdestall arbeitete, und zu ihm gesagt haben: ‚Los, hol deinen Jungen ab.'"

Der Angeklagte: „Das kann ich nicht ausschließen."

Der Vorsitzende: „Eine Zeugin will gesehen haben, wie eine Ukrainerin dem sterbenden Jungen noch Wasser einflößen wollte. Sie sollen das verhindert haben."

Der Angeklagte: „Das ist unsinnig." Er verspricht sich in Widersprüche. Früher hat er bei der Polizei ausgesagt: ‚Ich glaubte, in Notwehr gehandelt zu haben. Der Junge lief auf mich zu, da hob ich die Pistole ..."

„Es tut mir leid"

Der Vorsitzende fragt noch einmal: „Warum haben Sie überhaupt geschossen?"

Der Angeklagte: „Das kann ich heute nicht mehr sagen. Ich wollte nicht töten, und es tut mir sehr leid, daß es passiert ist."

Einer der Geschworenen: „Das Gesetz der Menschlichkeit ist Ihnen an diesem Tage wohl völlig abhanden gekommen."

Der Angeklagte: „Tscha — vielleicht ..."

Der Prozeß wird heute fortgesetzt. Am 3. Februar werden zwei Richter, der Staatsanwalt und der Verteidiger nach Tel Aviv fliegen, um dort zwei Zeugen zu vernehmen, die wegen Krankheit nicht reisefähig sind.

Karl-Heinz Christiansen

Schwurgericht: Vorsitzender Landgerichtsdirektor Wolf-Dietrich Ehrhardt, Oberstaatsanwalt Rolf Hannig, Verteidiger Dr. Hajo Wandschneider.

FIG. 31

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„Wir sollen nach der Arbeit alle erschossen werden!“

Im Judenmordprozeß sagt die Mutter des Opfers aus

Die alte Dame mit dem silbergrauen Haar hatte Tränen in den Augen. 27 Jahre habe sie auf diesen Tag gewartet, sagte sie und bedankte sich bei den Richtern, daß sie kommen durfte und aussagen. Aussagen über den Mord an ihrem ältesten Sohn Chune, der damals, vor 27 Jahren, in dem kleinen Städtchen Skala (Ostgalizien) vor ihrem Haus hinterrücks erschossen worden war.

Der Mörder ihres Sohnes, der ehemalige Zollsekretär Artur Engel (62), der hinter ihr auf der Anklagebank des Hamburger Schwurgerichts saß, schob ihr einen Stuhl hin. Für wenige Sekunden traf der Blick der 69jährigen Jüdin Riwa Schwarzbach diesen kleinen, unscheinbaren, unterwürfigen Mann. Der ganze Schmerz einer Mutter, die ganze Tragik einer gnadenlosen Zeit lag in diesem Blick. Vier Söhne und ihr Mann wurden damals von den Deutschen ermordet.

Die heute in New York lebende Zeugin schilderte dem Gericht jenen schwarzen 19. Juni 1943 in Skala. „Mein Sohn Chune arbeitete für den Zollgrenzschutz. Am Vormittag des 19. Juni, es war ein Sabbat, kam er ganz aufgeregt nach Hause. ‚Wir sollen nach der Arbeit alle erschossen werden‘, sagte er, ‚ich bin geflohen.‘“

Nach einer längeren Pause berichtete die alte Dame mit stockender Stimme weiter. „Sekunden später klopfte es auch schon an unserer Tür. Ein Mann brüllte: ‚Hier ist Engel. Machen Sie auf. Wir suchen Ihren Sohn.‘“ Chune lief durch ein Loch in der Wand nach oben, auf den Boden. Alle Häuser waren durch solche Löcher miteinander verbunden.

Riwa Schwarzbach brauchte eine ganze Weile, ehe sie weitersprechen konnte. „Die Deutschen fanden meinen Sohn nicht und gingen wieder aus dem Haus. Kurz darauf sah ich — ich stand am Wohnzimmerfenster — wie Engel und ein anderer Zollbeamter meinen Sohn abführten. Er muß ihnen direkt auf der Straße in die Arme gelaufen sein. Da krachten auch schon zwei Schüsse. Mein Junge stürzte zu Boden.“

Wie die Zeugin weiter berichtete, war Engel zu ihrem Mann, der auch beim Zoll arbeiten mußte, gegangen und habe gesagt: „Geh und beerdige deinen Sohn, den Hund. Ich habe ihn soeben erschossen.“ Engel habe in Skala keinen guten Ruf gehabt. Zeugin: „Ich hörte, daß er oft Juden geschlagen und seinen Schäferhund ‚Betty‘ auf Juden gehetzt hat.“ Richter: „In Skala war keine Gestapo, nur der Zollgrenzschutz. Wie ging es den Juden dort?“

Zeugin: „Die meisten wurden abtransportiert. Wir hatten immer Angst. Angst vor den Zollern, vor der ukrainischen Polizei, vor allen christlichen Bürgern.“ Dennoch habe sie niemals erwartet, daß Engel ihren Jungen erschießen würde. „Er hat doch nichts verbrochen, der Junge.“

Wie berichtet, verteidigt sich Engel damit, daß er nur ein Warnschuß hatte abgeben wollen. Er habe den Jungen an der Flucht hindern wollen. Er sollte stehenbleiben.

Noch einmal dankte die alte Dame dem Gericht, daß es sich mit der für sie so traurigen Sache befasse. Richter: „Sie brauchen uns nicht zu danken, Frau Schwarzbach. Es ist unsere Pflicht.“

Der Prozeß wird heute mit der Vernehmung weiterer jüdischer Zeugen fortgesetzt. frk



חנא שוורצבך

Chune Schwarzbach



Artur Engel

FIG. 32



Fig. 33: *Moxie–the "senior" water carrier in town with his horse and water barrel in 1927.*

In Memoriam Chaim (Munio) Fiderer z"l[1]

Gedalia Lachman



Fig. 34: *Chaim (Munio) Fiderer*

With grief and sorrow we eulogize and remember the noble figure of a dear and admired friend whose life was dedicated to public service with integrity, dedication and devotion. It is sevenfold more difficult to accept the demise of our fellow townsman who inherited from his noble-spirited father, Benzion Fiderer of blessed memory, the chairmanship of the Skala Society in Israel. The years he served in that position, he saw as his main task the perpetuation of the memory of the Skala victims of the Holocaust. The bitter and merciless fate took away from us within a short period of time, two members of our Society in Israel: Shlomo Bilgoraj and Munio Fiderer, It was as if a mysterious hand wanted to perpetuate the memory of the two together with the memory of their Skala brothers–the Holocaust victims, as "beloved in their life and not separated in their death".[2]

In my minds' eye floats a scene from those distant days, when I was a student in Skala and Munio Fiderder was an officer in the

[1] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be for a blessing).
[2] II Samuel 1:23, referring to the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

Polish artillery corps; we were walking in a crowd of Skala youth up the lovely alley, known in Yiddish as "oyven toyer" and in front of us was walking a young couple, impressive in their beauty and splendor.

Zishka Freifelder with her fiancée Munio Fiderer; she in her elegant clothes and dignified gait, as behooves the daughter of Israel- Leib Freifelder, leader of Skala Zionists; he, in his army uniform and boots with attached spurs that emitted rings of a military march. We, the children of an oppressed people, hated and slandered as cowards, were proud of him, even though we knew that he didn't volunteer and was drafted into the ranks of the anti-Semitic, Polish army. We also knew that this strong, young man was representing us with dignity and pride.

Years went by and in 1931 Munio Fiderer completed his studies as an architect at the Technical School in Prague and then immigrated in 1933 to the Land of Israel. Here he worked as an architect and joined the public service as a senior official. In this position he earned the respect and esteem of all, because of his integrity, decisiveness impartiality and thoroughness in solving complicated municipal problems. At the same time he was also involved in voluntary work on behalf of the "fledgling State",

A letter of appreciation sent to Munio Fiderer by the Presidium of the "Mobilization and Rescue Fund" at the termination of its activities in August 1950, read as follows: "We consider it our personal duty to honor you and to express to you our deep appreciation for your great help in executing with total dedication and diligence, the tasks we undertook. Therefore, please accept this expression of our deep gratitude and honor for your essential contribution to our efforts".

For many years we worked with Munio and under his guidance, as members of the Skala Society in Israel, organizing and conducting our annual memorial meetings–and participating in the joint efforts with our American counterparts, to publish the Skala Memorial book. Munio's single greatest idea was the erection of a monument on the cemetery of Holon, Israel, to commemorate

the Skala victims of the Holocaust.

He toiled endlessly and with great diligence, typical of him, for the execution of this project, which eventually came into being, but regretfully, he didn't live to see its dedication and unveiling. Standing on that day in front of the monument, we lowered our heads in memory of the souls of our loved ones, including the soul of Munio Fiderer–friend, colleague and mentor, whose memory will forever remain in our hearts.

Vignettes From a Notebook of Memories

Chaim (Munio) Fiderer

I. The Clear Spring

A *river flows through the city* of Skala. However, it was the spring flowing down the hill that was the true blessing for the locals.

The spring's water was clear, very tasty, clean and especially cold during the summer months. It was a real source of restoration for the thirsty spirits of many of the local Jews. They would leave for the spring on Saturdays after sleep, at the hot hours of the searing summer, to quench their thirst, which arose from eating the tasty, spiced "cholent" (meat stew), and the "kugel" (noodle pie) filled with pieces of fried chicken skin.

The water for the Jewish residents of the city was supplied by the "vasser-firerss" (water leaders), who made a living this way. To transport the water they used wagons, on two wheels, and on them a large wooden basin, with a single horse harnessed to each wagon. They looked poor, skinny and exhausted. The Jews who toiled at this hard line of work–Itzik, Motti, Yerachmiel and others–were, usually, strong men, with thick beards and calloused hands. Despite their great efforts, they barely managed to make a meager livelihood. Especially difficult was their work during the cold, long Podolska winter, when the weak, skinny horse found it difficult to pull the wagon from the spring, up the frozen hill, and to the middle of the city. When this happened, the haulers had no choice but to "lend a shoulder," and help the horse by pushing the wagon forward, so it wouldn't slip and roll backwards, together with the horse. They couldn't afford a sled. The water they would bring to apartments in two large, capacious wooden buckets called "one time water" (a mol vasser), and the price was set according to the

"times." In the apartments, the water was emptied into tin barrels and was drawn for use with metal pitchers, usually made of dark copper.

Self-respecting housewives usually had month- or week-long subscriptions, according to which they got their portions regularly, every day, winter and summer, without concern as to whether or not the hauler would come, as payment was settled at the end of the month or week. This arrangement also guaranteed a sure supply on Fridays or holiday evenings, when consumption was much higher. As opposed to this guaranteed arrangement, grim and bitter was the condition of housewives who bought their water on a daily basis. They were left more than once, on days of bitter frost, or on holiday evenings, without a drop of fluid because the haulers didn't manage to bring a big enough quantity of water. And, then, they had to borrow from their neighbor a pot of water. There existed a nice custom: just before the major holidays, and especially before Passover, when the water haulers were given special bonuses, some gave more and some gave less, according to their ability to pay. For Passover, the haulers would "make Kosher" the basins and buckets, to the satisfaction of even the most meticulous customers and, of course, the town Rabbi.

The haulers would announce their presence on the street with the typical monotonous, call: "viv... viv... viv... haita... haita... haita," over and over again.

Despite the abundance of water in the town, the inhabitants were accustomed from a young age not to use a lot of water. The reason for this was that there was no sewer system in town, and not all houses had a proper toilet. What did they do? They did what they had to! In the rainy and snowy seasons, there wasn't a problem, as everything disappeared on its own, washed away by the rain or under the snow. During the dry half of the year, the problem really was serious and complicated: some of the town's population used the public restroom, which was not exemplary when it came to excessive cleanliness and a pleasant fragrance. The others in the town had a primitive bathroom and that's how they

lived their lives.

As for the foul water, the sewage, after repeated uses to save water, was simply poured out, throughout the year, straight into the street, whether from the ground floor or from a higher floor, from the balcony. And woe to whomever happened to pass by at that same moment: his end was like that of "Haman"–he left "mourning, with his head covered"...

II. THE BOYS AND THEIR TEACHERS

W*ho amongst us –in old or even* in middle age– won't remember the old "Cheder" and the sequence of his studies in it? I wouldn't be lying if I said that there were cases, and not a few, where this "Cheder" –supposedly a house of teaching– was also the only room, the humble abode, of a teacher of children and his family. Often, this room was also used by the Rabbanit, the Rabbi's wife, as a sort of "workshop" to earn a secondary, meager living, such as plucking feathers for other women, baking sweets for Purim, or roasting potatoes for the children and other similar things. There's no need to emphasize that the "Chederim" weren't located in the center of the city nor were they in luxurious houses, that there were no restrooms in them and the children relieved themselves outside, between the houses, which were about 3 feet apart.

There were a few teachers of very young children in town. However, the names of only two have remained in my memory, those with whom I did my first year of "Cheder" and with whom I acquired the foundations of my education: the first, Zusia "Melamed" [literally: the one who teaches"], and the second, Yudel "Melamed." The first had a tiny wife, with a large hump. The next step in my education was studying Chumash at the age of 4-5 with teachers of a higher rank. Of them I remember Shlomo "Ha'Cheresh" [literally: "the Deaf"] and Aharon from Kutziobintzik. The event of beginning to study Chumash was accompanied by celebration. At the age of 6-7 there was another step forward in the child's education: he was seen as old enough to study Rashi's

interpretation of the Chumash.

FIG. 35: *Four classes of students at the Skala Hebrew, Safa Brura, between 1920-1930 with teachers Chaim Roiz and Avraham Lederman*



At the age of 7-8 came the first studies of the Talmud. With progress in studying the Talmud, the child already being a "Gemara Bokher" (a Gemara youngster), and it was time to give him over to more experienced hands, that is to say, a teacher of fine reputation and knowledge, such as Yosef Leib or Shlomo Aharon "Ha'Soma" [literally: "the blind"). The parents of talented and perceptive boys, tried to eventually hand their children over to a well learned Jew, R. Avraham the "Bizinober" to complete their knowledge of the Talmud, the Prophets and the Writings.

Almost all the teachers had their own idiosyncrasies. The teachers of the very young students hung their whips (morality switches) on the wall as sort of scarecrow to frighten these young ones. Aharon the "Kutziobintzikite" didn't just drink a cup of tea, but rather quenched his thirst from a deep mug containing four cups at once, but with only one cube of sugar. Shlomo the "Deaf" would visit on Fridays the parents of his "home-owning" students, as he would call them. He always did this on purpose, at lunchtime, when "kugel" (the noodle pie) was being eaten. He was especially keen for sweet "kugel," but didn't mind spicy kugel with stuffed entrails, either.

Yosef-Leib-Melamed and his associate Shlomo Aharon the "Blind" especially enjoyed jabbing the students between the ribs with bony fingertips, a very painful jab, which left black-and-blue marks. Such "treatment" would later lead to an argument with the parents over the reason that led to their child receiving such an "honor" from the teacher.

The studies at the "Cheder" started at 8:00 AM and, for lunch, the children went home. From around 3:00 PM, studies went on until 6:00 PM in the summer, and until 8:00 PM in the winter, with a break for "varemes" (supper), which each child would bring from home. In the winter, each child came equipped with a lamp, to light his way home in the evening.

Things were different for the children who attended the Polish public school in the morning: These students came to the "cheder" only in the afternoon, except for Sundays, during which time they

were diligently to be found in the "cheder" the entire day. Shabbat was a day of vacation from study.



FIG. 36: *The "Port Arthur" synagogue in Skala*

We should remember a tradition that was wide spread amongst the "melamdim" on Shabbat. In the afternoon they would visit the important "home-owners" (the rich), the parents of the students, and quiz their children in Chumash that they had learned during the week. The student would recite by heart the lesson in Chumash or in Talmud, in accordance with his age, and the parents would melt from such great pride. The "melamed" also had some expectations: a glass of hot tea, or cold beer, a plate of lentils or of nuts, in addition to Shabbat fruit and all sorts of desserts.

III. THE MODERN HEBREW SCHOOL

T*he foundations for the modern* school were established in 1906 by public activists, who, at the beginning, served also as teachers.

Despite the many obstacles the Chasidim put in the way of its development, in 1908, it had 89 students, both boys and girls. In the same year, the first two outsider teachers were hired, M. A. Tenenblat and Ben-Zion Sibak. This school moved to its new abode at the home of Herschel Ashkenazi.

In the same year, this school in Skala was accepted to be part of the network of schools in Galitzia known as the "Safah Brura" [literally: "Comprehensible Language"), at whose head stood Shlomo Schiller. He was also the district supervisor. Management of the school in our town was given to M. A. Tenenblat.

The choice of teachers was very successful and this affected the development of this educational institution. M. A. Tenenblat was the student of several Yeshivas, acquired a general education in Vienna and became one of the outstanding educators. At the same time, he was also nurturing his tendencies for journalism and his articles were published in "Ha'Mitspe" [literally: "the Observatory"], "Ha'Olam" [literally: "the World"], "Ha'Zman" [literally: "the Time"] and others. After a while, he devoted himself to journalism alone. He was the European reporter for the New Yorker "Forverts" (Forward). From 1921 he managed the Vienna branch of "I.T.A." (The Jewish Telegraph Agency) and from 1935 he managed the "I.T.A." in Eretz Israel, in Jerusalem, and, together with this, he continued to write.

In his last years he devoted himself to doing Talmudic research and was the author of several studies, which received very good reviews and positive esteem in the world of Talmudic literature. M. A. Tenenblat was honored by the municipality of Jerusalem as a "Yakir Yerushala'im" [literally: "Precious to Jerusalem"], a sign of appreciation, earned by a select few, for their contribution to the cultural level of the eternal city.

The second teacher, Ben-Zion Sibak, was a pupil of the Lithuanian Yeshivas, his country of origin. He was well rounded and overflowing with knowledge, an expert both in Torah study and also in general studies. He was an excellent educator and reached significant achievements among the founders of Hebrew

education and the Zionist movement in Galicia.

IV. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS OF AN ANCIENT CEMETERY

An ancient cemetery was in the city of Skala, as old as the community, itself. Cemeteries are, as is known, a faithful witness to the history of the Jewish population wherever they are, and so too in Skala. The tombstones in the ancient cemetery in Skala stood as a hundred witnesses for the existence of the community for hundreds of years. The ancient tombstones were different from the tombstones of later years–the differences were noticeable both in their shape and also in the way the stone was processed and the protrusion of the letters. Due to the great age of most of them, it was no longer possible to decipher the content of their engravings, except for a few tombstones on which the writing wasn't blurred. It was determined with absolute certainty that one of them was erected in 1581 [5331 in the Hebrew calendar]. However, it isn't impossible that this tombstone was not even the most ancient.

Among the Jews of Skala grew various legends and stories about the deceased buried in this ancient cemetery–stories of Talmudic scholars, rabbis, great Jewish leaders, Tsadikim [literally, "righteous people"], holy people, miracle workers, who found their eternal resting place within this fenced perimeter.

V. SHTREIMEL-WEARING "DEMONS"

I*n the spacious building of* the "Port-Arthur" synagogue (Port Arthur shul) there were also side rooms, used as a shelter for the hospitalization of refugees, wayfarers, poor, or just for those without a roof over their heads. In the building there was also a soup kitchen, cafeteria, meeting hall, rooms for Torah studies, a restroom and the like.

One of the permanent residents in a small room in the building was an odd, slightly eccentric type named Hirsch "Ketzele" ("the kitten"). He was a scrawny fellow, slim, the color of his face dark,

and his face elongated, with his thin, beard pointed on its edge. His chin was black as tar, his sunken eyes were like blackberries, often thoughtful and sparkling... lonely was this man. His hobby, or lunacy, was telling about his encounters in dark nights with shrouded, shawl-baring dead who came to pray at midnight. Moreover, Hirsch "Ketzele" insisted that in the nights he'd also meet demons and ghosts and speak with them as one would to a friend, and, furthermore, the demons wore shtreimels from black animal tails, just like his own shtreimel, which he would wear on his head. The form, appearance and motions of the demons Hirsch "Ketzele" would describe in meticulous detail.

His stories, figments of his imagination, charmed his young listeners, who'd listen as if they were in trances, as they followed his lithe and nimble motions... It's no wonder he was sought after and we were attracted to him as butterflies are to the light.

VI. A SUGAR CUBE AND ONE "KREUTZER"

E*ntirely different was another* character: the famous She'aya Moshe. When I first met him, he was already aged, old, with a long beard. She'aya Moshe was "personality," a concept, perhaps a living symbol of idiocy and naivety.

The entire city remembered him, his smiling eyes, with his face expressing kind-heartedness and contentment. He never bothered anyone and, surprisingly–even the children never bothered him; everyone simply left him alone. Moreover, people made an effort to honor him at every opportunity with a sugar cube, which he saw as the pinnacle of happiness and life's joy. It was characteristic of a man whose mind never progressed beyond childhood.

Only one thing in the world could upset him, namely, if someone handed to him more than an acceptable handout–more than a "Kreutzer." He rejected the handout and lashed out at the giver that he was being rude. He would assert in his broken pronunciation: "bisht alain a keptsin" ("you yourself are a beggar"). He knew how to pray and would join in prayer at the synagogue,

although it's doubtful he knew when and what was being prayed.

She'aya Moshe was very sensitive about maintaining personal hygiene. Every Friday he would visit the bathhouse of the city and its steam bath (sauna). He was alone and childless, without relatives or a benefactor. Out of compassion, the old Rabbi, Yosef Yoel Schwartzbach, took him in and tended to all his needs. He fed and clothed him, housed him in his apartment and took care of him, as he would a child. I remember, while visiting my grandfather, Rabbi Yosef Yoel, when I was still a young boy, and seeing how he cared for him. I couldn't possibly understand the nature of their relationship. I understood She'aya Moshe was not his son, since She'aya Moshe had a thick beard like that of my grandfather and his appearance was like my grandfather's. All the explanations I got did not set my mind at ease. I would ask why he lived with my grandfather, but slept in the big room upon the "Bank-Betel" ("bed-bench," during the day a bench, during the night a bed), a piece of furniture, that could be found in almost any Jewish home. Despite the concern for his welfare and the faithful care given by my grandfather, She'aya Moshe would (apparently out of habit) occasionally disappear from home and go out asking for handouts for pocket money, for shrouds and for a tombstone which he was preparing for himself while still alive. As he didn't actually need the money, he refused on principle to accept any handout greater than one "Kreutzer," though he would gladly forgo money and settle for one or two sugar cubes, at most. His pockets were always full of sugar, and to sweeten a cup of tea he would drop in no fewer than six cubes.

If someone offered him more than two sugar cubes, he would refuse to accept them. He, apparently, was afflicted with cholera in Borschov in 1915, at the time of expulsion, and died in a foreign land. The beautiful tombstone, which waited for him many years in front of the house of the torah, tefillin and mezuzah scribe, Rabbi Yaakov Lifa the Elder, remained orphaned, without achieving its purpose of marking the grave of this innocent and kind man.

VII. The Partnership of Beggars, "Limited"

I*n Skala, there was also a place* for unusual female characters whose reputation preceded them. These were Treindel "Kepele" and her accomplice "Di Gadiecke." The first, Treindel "Kepele," why was she so named? Because of her tiny, shriveled head. She was a small woman, who barely reached the height of a ten year old girl, and maybe even less than that. Her voice was high-pitched and screechy. Her friend and associate in "business," nicknamed "Di Gadiecke" was the opposite of her. A woman built like a telephone pole, with a masculine, deep, and annoying voice.

This was the Limited Partnership of a pair of beggars, a "match" made in heaven. One completed the other, and one didn't budge without the other. This lovely pair had an original method of extorting greater handouts than usual. They started by going door to door, as was the accepted custom, simply collecting handouts of small change on Thursday, or slices of Hallah on Friday. The regular and accepted fee of a simple handout was half a "Kreutzer" or perhaps a whole one. They didn't settle for that, and to receive a greater handout, they took a certain tried and tested approach, which was as follows:

They would go out, every day, to the train station and spy as they watched who got off the train, and for whom they got off. From the locals, who were returning home from their travels, they immediately asked for a "contribution," on the spot. From unfamiliar people, they asked for nothing, but took note of who they were and which family they were staying with.

Precisely at lunchtime, when the guests and the hosts were seated around the table, the two beggars appeared, according to a premeditated plan, a clever ruse. The guest or guests they greeted with "welcome" and an outstretched hand to receive a "present." At the same time, they also blessed the hosts that they should "enjoy the guests," and they stayed rooted in their places without moving.

Of course, the hosts drew out their wallets and opened their

hand, and, in order to make a good impression on the guest, they would give a generous handout and even something "extra" in the name of the guest to show honor to him. If the handout put the two irritating beggars' minds at ease, they left peacefully. But pity him who would give a mere coin, which didn't satisfy them, that is to say less than a "Zeckserel" (ten Kreutzer). They may have thanked them with a smile, but, on the doorstep, as they were leaving, one would "whisper" to the other, in a way that could be heard on the other side of the street, "apparently this guest isn't worth more to the host" (the home owner). It's easy to understand the confusion that rose amongst those seated due to that witty remark.

Not once did it happen that the guest was a fiancé (groom) or groom-to-be, there to meet the bride, or a matchmaker there to suggest a match to a girl or boy–if so, who would dare disrupt and risk a match because of one "Zeckserel"?

This ruse of the two beggars was clear to most of the townspeople and they were quick to pay the "ransom" and get rid of these nuisances. They would rather hear from them blessings and flattery on account of the guest than to suffer their insults.

In Memoriam Dora Sandberg z"l

Gedalia Lachman



Fig. 37: *Dora Sandberg*

She was born in Skala on December 1, 1922 to her parents Sarah (nee Reles) and Yitzhak Sandberg. First, she was enrolled in the local Pulaski Public School until the 7th grade, where she was an outstanding student. Then she studied for two years in a private gymnasium and at the same time was enrolled in the Hebrew "Tarbut" school, where according to her teachers, she won much recognition and praise. Dora had also outstanding talent in drama and at school sponsored plays would recite Hebrew poems with much skill and understanding. Her essays would also appear in the newspapers of both schools, the Polish and Hebrew.

For two years Dora studied in the Polish high school in the nearby town of Borshchov and also there was singled out for praise as an outstanding student and an organizer of social events at which she would recite poems, sing and play music. After the Soviet occupation of the region in the fall of 1939, Dvora enrolled in the highest class of the high school in preparation for her matriculation exams. The school principal, Zayontz, a Polish nationalist with liberal views and friendly toward Jews, was imprisoned by the Soviet authorities and was about to be deported to Siberia, along

with others, among them Jews.

Dora organized a protest of all school students and on their behalf submitted a petition to the local secretary of the Communist party, to free the imprisoned principal. The image of this daring, young girl, pleading with tears in her eyes, for the freedom of her teacher, made apparently such an impression on the local communist leadership, that they relented and became satisfied with sternly rebuking the school principal and warning her young "interceder", never to do this type of thing again. Dora completed her matriculation exams with distinction and received good grades in all the subjects.

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941, found Dora in her parents' home in Skala. A unit of the German border guards stationed in Skala, took over for its own benefit a local agricultural farm that included a pigpen, cows, horses, chicken coops etc. Then the officers brought over from Germany their families who needed maids and servants for them and Dora was drafted to become one of the servants in their houses. For almost a year and a half Dora was carrying the burden of heavy and harsh household work, all the while, standing tall and keeping her self-respect vis-à-vis the Germans to the extent that they would warn her of planned roundups and hide her from the hands of the Gestapo and other predators.

Dora and her family (her parents and two younger sisters) survived the roundups and executions until October 19, 1943, at which time the Gestapo arrested even those Jews who worked for the German border guards, including Dora's family, and sent them to their death. Dora managed to hide in the attic of the German quarters, went into hiding and since it was no longer possible to live openly, she worked nights for a Ukrainian family and like a hunted animal was always hungry and cold. Sometimes, she would lie sick and feverish in the cowshed of one or another of the "compassionate" gentiles. Thus, she spent the winter of 1943-44 until the liberation of Skala by the Red Army at the end of March 1944.

After the liberation, Dora met and married the pharmacist, Favunio Seidman, a survivor from the nearby town of Borshchov. `When the Holocaust survivors, who were former Polish citizens, started to move westward, Dora and her husband also moved to Poland and settled in the town of Bytom in Silesia. The couple remained childless. The terrible past weighed heavily on Dora's life. Her broken heart never recuperated from the terrifying images and memories that filled her days and nights. In the course of those years, we managed to exchange letters in which I tried to convince her to come to Israel and leave the bloody land of the past. Even though she expressed a strong desire to follow my advice, she could not fulfill her dream for many reasons. However, when she heard that the Skala survivors in the United States and Israel, were planning to publish a Skala memorial book, she started to write her own memoir at a fast pace, as if suspecting that her end was near. On July 8, 1964, she died suddenly of a heart attack and was laid to rest in a foreign land. She was only 42 at her death.

Skala–My Shtetl Skala

Dvora (Dora) Zandberg

Skala lay on a rocky hill, surrounded by the bends of the winding Zbrucz River. Birches, acacias, tamarisks, poplars, elm trees and white oaks lined the road of access to the town, as a continuation of the neighboring woods, groves and the tended mansion of Count Goluchowski. The oldest site of Skala was the fortress whose ruins–vestigial witnesses of the wars with the Turks–with gaping protuberances, crevices, deep cavities and underground tunnels, were terrifying. At the feet of the fortress on one side, immersed in vegetable gardens and bushes of wild berries, there were small, modest houses, mostly whitewashed with thatched roofs. This is the Stara Skala (Old Skala) village.

Few Jewish families lived in this suburban village: Jegendorf, Lachman, Herscher, Bitterman, Brandes, Julis, and Kermin. On the other side of the fortress the town of Skala spread out; its center had been established and inhabited for many years only by Jews. Its rocky soil gave the town a pleasant, clear façade that made it different from most other typical villages of Eastern Poland, that in the rainy days of autumn were so furrowed by horseshoes and wagon wheels that you could sink up to your knees in mud. The small houses of the town of Skala, closely adjoining each other, had tin or dark-red tiled roofs. On the uptown crossroads at the center of town, rose the three-story house of the Frankel brothers. Most of the houses had only a ground floor with some two-story houses interspersed.

Shops and stalls with a variety of wares and dry goods occupied all the front rooms along the main road. The latches are moved, keys screech in the locks, the doors open and here and there a Jewess emerges, her hair covered by a kerchief or still by the

nightcap. She retreats, sprinkles some water on the shop's floor, sweeps and scans the surroundings. Beila Kassirer, Chaim Jegendorf's wife, the wives of Pecker and Mann already invite their first customers in. The wives of Schnitzer, Frankel, Sobel and Weintraub are expecting the peasant women to rush in with fresh produce for the market.

In most houses behind the store, there is a small, windowless room, a kind of dark alcove or a recess separated from the shop by a curtain, where in fact the family life takes place. That is where they cook, eat and sometimes also sleep. There, by a sooty kerosene lamp, the father teaches his son *Chumash*[3] and *Rashi*[4], adolescent girls tire their eyes at a randomly acquired romance novel; eyes shimmer and concealed emotions of first loves blossom in those dark cubicles.

It is time for the *Shacharit*[5] prayers.... streets and alleys fill with figures wrapped in black *kappotas*, cloaks fastened with a sash. These hurrying early risers start their workday with the Lord's work. Their images come to my memory today and stand before my eyes: Nachman Brettler, a tall, lean Jew wrapped in a long, dark coat enters the synagogue while his lips mutter the first lines of prayer. Round-faced Benjamin Gottesman, with his reddish beard and slightly bulging belly, walks steadily and from time to time goes faster moved by the importance of the holy mission to which he is headed. Here comes Yerachmiel Kassirer, the rich wholesaler who provides goods and groceries to almost all the town's retailers. His lips move while he



FIG. 38: *Two town notables: Herschel Auerbach and Zalman Hausner*

[3] Torah: The five books of the Bible.
[4] Rashi: Rabbi Schlomo ben Itzhak, commentator of the Holy Scriptures.
[5] Early morning prayer.

hurries, sprints in, kisses the *mezuzah* and disappears into the dark hallway. One of his customers, Chaskel-Shimon, follows his footsteps, an old Jew with a waxy, yellow complexion and a patriarchal long beard. Another moment, and there is Joel Edelman, bent, with a somewhat sparse yellow-white long beard and reddish eyes. This morning his son Aharon Edelman will not miss his prayers–also bearded but carefully trimmed, strongly built, an expert of renown in the cattle trade. From the steps of their house his wife Golda follows him with warm eyes, always prim and neat, a model housewife. (I always admired her sparkling, shining high shoes. We lived on opposite sides of the street).

Chaim Engelbach, owner of a beer store, humble and unassuming, short and shy, hastens into the synagogue. He prays with great devotion. He probably asks the Creator for good matches for his two daughters, Pessia and Sheindel. They, too, are small, very skilled and diligent and good friends with most of the town's girls. Almost running, not to be late, the two "kings" of iron and metal trade cross the street–the old Herschel Weintraub, a short, stout and swift Jew and his son-in-law Mendel Brandes, sensible, with a red face and a bluish nose. In their wake is the good baker Eli Herscher, their neighbor from across the street, whose bread's quality is well known in town. He actually smells of fresh bread. Herschel Edelstein, particular and always well groomed, prays with purpose and enthusiasm. His heartfelt prayer is understandable–he too has daughters...Leaning on his cane, Baruch Moshe Weidenfeld, a very tiny man, almost a dwarf with a very intelligent expression, limps slowly. He is very respected in town for his intellect and insight. Feibush Wiesenthal, purplish, with a pleasant, clear voice, generally pleased with himself, joins those going to the *Beth Hamidrash*[6]. He will not refrain from boasting about the achievements of his son Shlomo–the student. At the entrance to the synagogue, Eliezer Weingast manages to exchange a few words with Eli Herscher about today's prices of grain and flour. They are joined by Meyer Kreutner–tall, broad-shouldered, with a long,

[6] House of religious learning and prayer.

thick beard, and always white from the flour; even his coat is covered with flour. Moshe Mosner, the other baker, will obviously not be missing from this group. Tobacco-monopoly representative in Skala, Baruch Olinger, paces slowly with his hands crossed behind his back. Black-bearded Alter Sommer, who provides boots for the peasants all year round, hurriedly fastens his sash on the street. This Jew made money and added a floor to his parents' house, planned for him by Nachman Stoliar, also known as Nachman Relles, the wall of whose house abuts the synagogue and can thus step out at the last minute.

Among the last to come, though not late, we can see Aharon Banner and his neighbor, Abraham Blutstein nicknamed "Pontik" who always boasts about his son-in-law, the lawyer Kligler, whom he "acquired" for his only daughter Leah'ka. The tall, erect figure of brown-bearded Kalman Bilgoraj, respectable, strict with himself and with others, catches the eye. Short Mendel Schnitzer, smart and reserved, moves next to him. And the "*farbittiner*," harsh and stubborn, isn't he here? Of course he is. And Berl "*kappota*" has also much to say.

Do you think, my dear ones, that these nicknames are meant to offend? There were many nicknames: "*kappusta*[7], *roiter*[8], *golem, tabeke, Petlyura, Bil'am*," and many more. Who can enumerate or remember all? Offensive? God forbid. They were passed on from fathers to sons like property and belongings, like misfortunes and concerns, from generation to generation, yet without a hint of disrespect and without intention to offend.

A wedding is an exciting event in town, especially when the groom comes from another town. There is so much to do, so many preparations! During the entire week before the wedding, either Chana-Sara or Pessia take the helm. They are the ones who bake the famous honey cakes and apple cakes and cook and fry the stew. Pessia is thriftier whereas small, humpback Chana'le likes to show

[7] Cabbage.
[8] The red one.

off; no wonder the honey cakes and sponge cakes are served on large trays to show the guests that the in-laws are not–God forbid–tight-fisted. On the day of the wedding, from the early hours, the neighbors and other "*yiddenes*"[9] await the arrival of the guests. The appearance of the carriage that brings the groom followed by a line of carriages and carts that bring the rest of the family is the climax for the curious, the gossips, and just folks and a source of amusement for the children.

It is market day today. Let us also go early in the morning to the main street and let us see the carts loaded with all kinds of products and merchandise. There is Zisio Feinsilber (diabetic and in a precarious condition) and Mottel Goldstein, married to Leah Wasserman (parents of a red-haired, sweet brat named Yumek); these two are the kings of footwear, assisted by their gentle and honest salesman, Shaye, the son of Bassie who sells delicious pumpkin seeds in the market. Sometimes he stays at the store and they travel to the market alone. The two Schwarzbach brothers are known not only as leather and boot sellers; they are also famous for their spouses, Ruchtche and Tchiptche, the portliest women in Skala. Heschels sells ready-made clothes; his assistant and salesman, Yankel Schwarzbach, invariably goes with him. He dresses the peasants, promptly and diligently, in the garment they favor and persuades them that it is nice and fitting and makes sure it will be sold. Obviously, the Edelman brothers, noted cattle traders, will not miss any market. Regardless of weather, heat or cold, rain or snow, they attend all fairs. Sometimes the revenue must sustain them for a whole week!

Other people push themselves onto the market carts: sometimes Mayer-Chaim, a weird, eccentric Jew; even the bathhouse keeper (the *Tikkerin*), or a pauper leaving at dawn to beg at the market; on market day the merchants are more generous and throw a coin for the needy. Each town (Korolovka, Ozeryany, Borshchov) has a special day for the beggars. There is a tacit agreement: on

[9] Jewish women, Jewesses.

Wednesdays, the fair day, Skala opens its gates to all beggars, while on Fridays only to its own local paupers. From early in the week, people set aside small coins of 5, 10, and 20 *groshen,* because on Friday the door does not close. And charity is not only money. Pious women will give the needy some fat, a slice of *chalah*[10] for Shabbath and so on. When I was a small girl, I would stare at the "feast" of the dirty, ragged tots, clinging to the apron of their beggarly mother who, sometimes, carries another sleepy baby in her arms. They swallowed the fresh *chalah* with so much appetite!

Some poor women, on reaching old age, would go into "retirement." Food and hot meals would be brought home to them. For years I took care of old Katta. She lived in a gloomy hut near the bathhouse. Blind on both eyes, she would identify me from afar by the sound of my steps; or perhaps it was instinct or a guess, because she was also deaf. Every time I went in, my heart throbbed: would I still find her alive?

With the background of these small huts that seem about to collapse with the burden of years, towers prominently the "Beth Ha'am." Its immediate neighbors are Noote Steiner, the butcher, who boasts a broad, curly beard, swift and active despite his advanced age, and Hersch, the "hoarse" (*der heizeriker)* who could count a goat among his scarce belongings; not far was the house of Moshe "*P'gere*"[11] (a short, dreadfully thin tailor who suffers from asthma and a chronic and annoying cough–the source of his nickname).

On the ground floor of the Beth Ha'am are three ample rooms; one holds the library whose caretakers were two intelligent young men, Shlomo Schwarzbach and Avrum'tzie Bilgoraj. The two other rooms housed in the morning the kindergarten and in the afternoon the Hebrew school. The upper floor had a large hall with a stage and curtains. In this hall the elections and weddings took place, as well as performances of the amateur drama group whose

[10] Jewish braided bread.
[11] Carcass.

outstanding actors were Leba Edelman, Motel Hausner, Motel Fisch and others. There were also parties and performances organized by the teachers of the Hebrew school and the parents committee. We were always especially thrilled by the preparations for artistic presentations in which some of my friends excelled: the recitations of Hinda'le Weidenfeld and Genia Sandberg, and the character acting of Eliezer Weidberg.

The Hebrew "Tarbut" school, between the two World Wars, attracted almost all the Jewish youth. Its teachers were: Royz, Lederman, Krentzler, Temer, Chaya Feuerstein, Tzipora Jager, Baruch Ginsberg and Shraga Ochshorn. The kindergarten teachers were: Ms. Lederman, Ms. Blumenthal, Ms. Weingast and others. Especially interesting were the lectures of the teacher Ochshorn, a thin, ashy, almost waxen-faced young man, who opened for us and exposed us to the troves of the Hebrew language and its rich literature.



FIG. 39: *Classes at the Tarbuth School in Skala during the 1930's with teachers Ginsberg and Koller, and the principal, Shraga Ochsborn*



The Jewish children were thus compelled to attend two schools: the public state school and the Hebrew school; only in the late evening and night could they do their double homework. And yet, the afternoon Hebrew school was not taxing to us at all.

Let us go for a moment into the kindergarten. It's the time of the midmorning meal. Each child sits in his place, spreads on his small table a napkin with his initials and on top of it a sandwich and an apple that were held in a small basket. When guests come in, the children rise prodded by the teacher and welcome the guests in Hebrew: *Shalom*.

In my mind's eyes appear the trustees of the Hebrew school: Freifelder, Herzl's "double"; all his gesticulations reflect Jewish pride and dignity. His trimmed Assyrian beard attests to his pleasure in resembling the great leader. After him, swinging on his slightly flat feet but with a great deal of self respect and a grave expression, is Motya Weidberg in a black suit; behind his thick spectacles, his intelligent, piercing eyes look with a sparkle of subtle irony. Skala owes this man the establishment of important institutions like the Hebrew school and kindergarten, and he is the one who chose the teachers and educators.

Each season and its events. We derived a veritable pleasure from the summer excursions, especially the full-day outing of "*Lag Ba-Omer*"[12]. Let me evoke the names of my friends who shared those wonderful outings: Tonya and Peppa Herscher, Hinda Weidenfeld,



FIG. 40: *Kindergarten of the Tarbuth School in Skala (1936)*

[12] The 33rd day of Omer–the time between Passover and Shavuot–a day of celebration.

Nussia Weinfeld, Rocha'le Mann, Rozia, Ruptsio and Andzia Kassirer, Kuba Feuerstein, Yosse'le Meiselman, Simsha'le Bosyk, Bumtsio Brandes, Edzia Jagendorf, Chaya Feuerstein, Peppa Kassirer, Buzio Lachman, Braksmajer, Rosenbaum and Eliezer Weidberg, may he live long.

In the winter there was no greater pleasure than sled riding. Several pairs of long sleds would start out from the house of Moshe "*P'geire*," the tailor, downhill to the bathhouse, or from the point near Shimsha'le to the flourmill. (Here I must mention the mill's lessees, the Seidman brothers–Markus from the Gushtin estate who was sensitive to the needs of the orphans and widows and always sought to aid, and Pinchas Seidman from Borshchov, as well as their nephews Mordechai-Noote and Faiva'le[13]).

Let us walk into the house of the Master of the Estate, old Rabbi Drimmer. I remember the Rabbi's most faithful students from the late 1920's: Chaim Yaget, Isaak Melzer, Yeed'l Drimmer and Chaim Meir Relles. On the passing of his father, Yeed'l Drimmer took over his Rabbinical position and Chaim Meir Relles continued his studies and emigrated to Italy where he completed his studies at the Rabbinical and Philosophical Seminar[14].

The house of Shmariyahu Melzer, the estate owner, is a true haven for the poor. The noble and pious old man, after the *Shacharit* prayers, would invite for breakfast every person that looked hungry. He was sensitive to poverty and suffering and he was willing to support, ease and assist the needy.

The traffic on the street increases. Shmuel "*der Roiter*" (the Red) is already driving some VIP to the train station. This coach driver croaks unceasingly in his hoarse voice: "*macht eich leicht*[15]" (make yourself light); this requisite is anyway conveyed by each of the

[13] The author's husband. They married at the end of World War II.

[14] Rabbi Dr. Chaim Relles (Dora Zandberg's uncle) was saved during the Holocaust from the Italian Fascists and from the Nazis and spent some time in a closed refugee camp in Switzerland. After the war he served as Rabbi in Ancona and Chief Rabbi of Trieste. In the 1950s he emigrated to the U.S. and officiated as Rabbi of the Conservative Congregration in Superior, Wis. In summer 1971 he returned to Italy and was appointed Chief Rabbi of Trieste.

[15] In Yiddish.

springs that pokes out of the shabby seats of his "*fiaker.*" And yet no one relinquishes the *Roiter*'s services.

Hirsch "*Kabban*" (pig in Ukrainian), with a broad, sly smile on his face, fetches his regular passengers from their homes. His coach covers the Skala-Borshchov route back and forth. His patrons are those who participate in the public life of town: Jaeger, Moshe Jagendorf and his sons, Max and Wladzio, Moshe Feuerstein, Fiderer, Fisch, Hausner and the youngsters who study at the *Gymnasia*[16] in Borshchov. "Kabban"'s coach never lacks room for suitcases and packages, while the "*tsfir*" (the high seat next to the coachman) is always available to unexpected passengers. Indeed, an unscheduled "passenger" is a true find. Now and then two passengers occupy the "*tsfir,*" leaving no room for the coachman; he then drives standing, bent, sometimes leaning on the passengers' knees. Before climbing a gradient, he gets off the coach to ease the horses' load. The Grinberg brothers bought exclusive rights on the Skala-Czortkow line. For those rides there is a fixed timetable.

Between the "Stara Skala" village and the town on the hill there are water springs. The water is carried uphill to town by water bearers "*wasserfirer,*" each to his own customers. Ours was old Motya, then Yankel and in the end, Moishe. The emaciated horses pull the huge barrels full of water, and their owners support them, repeating constantly: "*Hayta, Vista, Vyo*" ("right, left, forward," the peasants' jargon for their horses), and prod the subdued beasts to make a further effort. Above the street's clamor rose their melodious and persistent call: "Fresh Water, Good Water." These were unique Jewish types, especially striking during the winter when the freezing cold went below -20°C. Who can forget the wrapped up "wasserfirer" in the tall fur cap, his neck covered by a sweater and sometimes swathed in a rag lined with ice drops and the frost covers his nose and lips? Their hands show from wet, fingerless gloves and huge, straw-woven overshoes shield their felt boots. The wooden barrel and pails are covered by an ice sheet and decorated by icicles, resembling a crystal artistic creation that reflects the winter sunrays.

[16] High school.

And the poor little horses in their ragged saddlecloths shared their owners' fates with patience, endurance and devotion.

From one moment to the other the street becomes livelier. The baker's apprentice runs with "bagels" and bowls of caraway seeds and Rachel Moishe's with meat cuts and slaughtered chickens ordered in advance. Bracha Sanya's calls on her regular customers with glazed bowls of her famous dish, "Granshl" (minced giblets). Chaya-Branne and Mirka "Kappusta" scurry from one to another bringing dairy products and selected live chickens of superior quality. Their large aprons are smartly folded and tied to store inside all the good stuff your heart desires.

The way back uphill was much less comfortable and pleasant. But, what better purpose could the farmers' sleighs serve when returning from the flourmill? Our jolly group was sometimes lucky to find a solution when these sleighs were coming back empty after the farmers delivered the grain to the mill. Having no choice, the farmer would agree to take along the "free riders" on his sleigh. However, if his horses had to drag sacks of flour it was more complicated because the farmer would only agree that we tie our sleds to his sleigh and we would have to run along. On this road we would very often run into old Meir-Hersch, a porter-coachman well known in town. A dwarfish, broad-shouldered Jew, with a long, floured beard (too much flour was sprinkled on it), who probably carried thousands of sacks on his bony back in his lifetime. Meir-Hersch knew us well. Spotting us from far away, he would start to swear, curse and whip his horses. Eventually he would calm down and relent. In appreciation of the toiling Jew and his pitiful mares, we would try to make it easier on them. We just loved to drive him mad because his outbursts and anger were as funny as they were bizarre. One other sight was always moving: Shalom Milmut lived by the side of the track; he himself was an interesting Jew, an amateur, talented theater director whose youngest son Koubus (Yakov) was a poor, paralytic boy, sitting always by the window and looking sadly and enviously at the amusement and inexhaustible joy

of a bunch of impish, playful kids, taking pleasure in the blessings of winter and snow before the melting time of the spring.

Shimsha'le is a different story. Who in Skala does not know Shimsha'le? He was a short, slight-looking Jew, who sold lemons. It was a hard livelihood; as the saying went: "A Jew buys a lemon or an orange either when *he* is rotting or when the fruit is rotten." Subtropical fruit were a precious commodity in our remote area and their price was exorbitant by the standards of the poor people in town. Shimshale's "palace" was a shabby hut consisting of one small room. Its roof almost touched the ground. A few shaky stairs led down to its interior. No wonder that during heavy downpours the water inexorably made its way into the hut and flooded the clay floor. Shimshale's wife, Brantze, and their three children had a permanent job: to sweep and scoop up the water from the floor and take it outside.

Today I see you, Skala, like in a mist. Did you really once exist?...

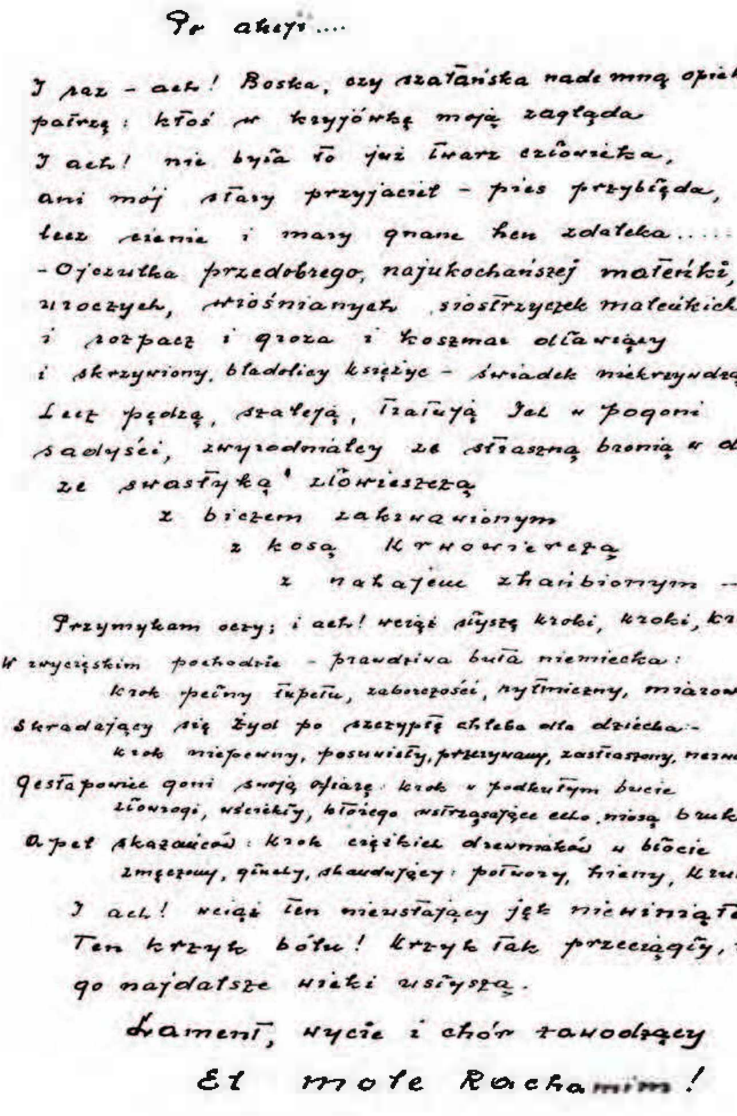


FIG. 41: *A poem in Polish by Dora Zandberg in her original script*

My Father Motie Weidberg–Last Leader of the Skala Community z"l[1]

Bruria Schwartzbach



Fig. 42: *Bruria Schwartzbach*

My father was a symbol of that time period, between the two World Wars, whose main imprint were the programs of Petlyura[2] and Machno[3].

[1] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be for a blessing).

[2] Simon Petlyura (1878-1926) was chairman of the short-lived Ukrainian national government after WWI. In 1919, the Soviet army ousted the Ukrainian government, and the retreating Ukrainian soldiers perpetrated mass killings of Jews throughout Ukraine. It is estimated that as many as 50,000 Jews may have been murdered and that Petlyura did little to stop the mob violence, instead fleeing to Poland and maintaining a government and army in exile. In 1926, Petlyura was assassinated in Paris by a Jew, Shalom Shwarzbard. At the trial, the Jewish tragedy in the Ukraine was amply documented, and Shwarzbard was acquitted of the murder.

[3] Nestor Makhno (1888-1934) was a Ukrainian leader during the Russian Civil War. He led 15,000 armed troops in the independent Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine (also known as the Anarchist Black Army). Makhno's forces won victories against the Germans, Austrians, Ukrainian Nationalists (the army of Petlyura) and the White Army. They also confiscated land belonging to pacifist Mennonites. Makhno's forces were accused of conducting pogroms against Jews in Ukraine; however, some have disputed these claims, noting that a considerable number of Jews served in his army. In 1921, Mahkno was driven by Trotsky's Red Army into exile. He died in Paris in 1934.

In his youth, he studied in a traditional "heder" [religious study room] and, at a young age, because of his sharp mind, excelled already in his studies. During those days, the spirit of enlightenment that was sweeping across the world had also reached our Jewish streets of Skala. My father, like others, was impressed with this new spirit; he "gazed and was wounded"[4]. He began to read more at night, first in secret, so that the adokim [religious zealots] wouldn't accuse him of being an "apikoros" [heathen] or "mitnagged" [anti-Hassidic]. He continued reading with diligence and persistence, even though it caused him great personal anguish and many other problems because of the environment that was not conducive to such behavior. With great thirst he absorbed Bialik, Mendele and Peretz [Jewish writers], and, also, Schiller and Goethe, in German. Thus, he gained entrance into the spiritual treasures of the elite.

My father was among the founders and pillars of the Zionist movement in Skala, and it was through their initiative that the first Hebrew speaking school in our town was established. At first, it was difficult to find a home for this school because the adokim [religious zealots] were opposed to it. Eventually, as a result of the urging and influence of my father, my grandfather agreed to house the school for a certain period of time in one of the apartments in his house. My grandfather agreed to do this even though it saddened him that his sons had left the "Tent of Israel" [become secular], and he continued to be staunch in his observance of the commandments.

During the years of the First World War, the Jewish residents were expelled and exiled from the Skala border region. We went to Russia and my father was exiled to Siberia.

Despite the difficult circumstances and conditions, my father

[4] This Talmudic expression is found in Tosefta Hagigah 2:3, "Four Who Entered the Garden." According to this story, Ben Zoma, Ben Azzai, Elisha Ben Abuye and Rabbi Akiva were, evidently, seeking greater understanding of the mysteries of the world. With the exception of Rabbi Akiva, they were all adversely affected by this encounter, including Ben Zoma, who "gazed and was wounded." This Talmudic story is elaborated upon in Milton Steinberg's "As a Driven Leaf," (New York: Behram House, 1939).

was not only able to keep his composure, but, in fact, he was a shining example for others similarly exiled in Siberia. He kept his values pure and his pride in being Jewish until the day he was released, which happened during the "Svoboda" [Russian word for "freedom"], the Revolution. With the rise of the Bolsheviks to power, my father made a solemn oath to return to Skala, come what may. Upon our return, we were refugees, like so many others during those days, and it wasn't easy getting along and striking roots in that same place all over again.

Once again, my father invested himself, quietly, but with great devotion, to the affairs of the community. He reestablished the Hebrew school with the help of Chaim Roz[5], one of the Russian refugees, an outstanding teacher and a Jew of great stature and influence. My father involved himself in community affairs which promoted the establishment of a communal bathhouse and several mutual aid societies. He was also one of the first people to initiate the establishment of the *Beth-Am*–the Jewish Community Center. In this endeavor, his brother, my uncle Moshe z"l, also participated.

My father attended synagogue on Shabbat and on Holidays. Even though, on a certain level, he was a free-thinker, given the atmosphere of the town, where most of the residents were traditional in their observance, it would have been impossible, as well as uncomfortable, for him to separate himself entirely. In addition, my father loved the melodies and tunes of the prayers. He would lead services and also blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. However, in the little synagogue he attended the service, he struggled with those who were boastful of their *"yichus-avot"* [family lineage], and he even made fun of them. He rebelled against the status-quo. Because of my father, the most prestigious "aliyot" to the Torah [being called to the Torah], were given instead to "amcha"–the common people. Those with power and influence complained against this, but my father prevailed.

My father was, by nature, kind and patient with others; he was

[5] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be a blessing).

also tolerant of people's opinions that were different from his own or his world outlook. Young people gravitated towards him, and loved to talk with him, wherever he would be found. One of these people was Herschele Schwartzbach [a young communist]. Returning home for Shabbat from the flower mill, where he worked the night-shift, he would walk over to our house to have discussions with my father. For hours and hours they would have heated discussions. With brilliant mind and a witty, sharp intellect, my father would contradict and negate all of Herschele's arguments. But, at the same time, he knew how to validate these arguments, and my father related to Herschele respectfully and sincerely. At the time of the Russian-Soviet occupation, Herschele was the mayor of the town.

His personal life was not, by any means, a bed of roses. Despite this, however, he tried to hide and disguise these terrible situations, and he did this by singing an old melody from a "better" time, but with words that were changed. These new words became engraved in my memory, most probably by way of my mother.

As I have said, father had a very sharp intellect and a creative mind. He knew how to give good advice to others concerning different issues. Sometimes, he also knew how to circumvent the oppressive laws of the Polish republic that affected the lives of the Jews. He invented all kinds of schemes in that area. But, concerning himself, he never used any tricks or schemes, as there was nobody who possessed higher morals or a more clearly defined conscience. Behaviors that were, in his eyes, acceptable when it came to the depressed Jewish community or in order to urgently assist a fellow Jew in dire need–these behaviors were not considered to be acceptable when it came to his own personal affairs.

He used to hum a tune for the "Vanity of Vanities" psalm, a melody show whose words I still remember: "What is the length of a man's days? He lives 70 years, but not longer..."[6]

[6] "Vanity of Vanities" refers to the biblical book of Kohellet (Ecclesiastes). However, the quote that follows is not to be found there. Instead, there is a similar quote in Tehillim (Psalms) 90:10.

He didn't know at that time the trials and tribulations that were in store for him or that he wouldn't even live to the age of 60. Prior to the Soviet-Russian occupation of Skala, Dr. [Avraham] Stop, z"l[7], who later became a member of the Israeli Knesset, offered his assistance to my father by securing a "certificate" (British permit) to migrate to the land of Israel. However, this never materialized, and father found himself under the murderous Nazi occupation.

Did anyone suspect that a terrible Holocaust was yet to come? During that darkest and terrible period father never lost his spirit. Facing one of those depraved and vicious Nazis, he expressed hope and confidence that they would eventually be defeated, and that *am yisrael* [the people of Israel], tortured and fallen from grace, would one day return to their glorious past.

This was his revenge over the Nazis, and he hoped for a better and brighter future. It was with this vision that he went to his death! May his memory be blessed forever!

[7] Dr. Avraham Stop (1897-1968) was a member of the 2nd Israeli Knesset from 1951-1955. He received a doctorate at the University of Poland in history and philosophy in 1932, and migrated to Palestine in 1939. As a member of the Knesset from the General Zionist party, he served on the House, Finance and Labor committees. Dr. Stoop was involved in many public activities in Europe and in Israel, and he published many articles on Judaism and Zionism.

Reflections on the Personality of Israel-Leib Freifelder z"l[1]

Jacob Herzog

It was in 1906 or the winter of 1906–07. I was a young man of 15 or 16. The Zionist Youth organization "Hashahar" (the Dawn) decided to set up an evening school for young people who wanted to study. We rented a room from Berl Moshe, called the "shtrikdreyer" (rope maker from flax); we borrowed school benches from Wolf Itzik Freifelder (an uncle of Israel Leib) and the evening school became a reality. I was one of the students. The subjects we were studying were German with Feivish Karmin the teacher; Hebrew with Yehuda Weidenfeld; Mathematics with Yitzhak Landman, and Humash (Torah) with Israel-Leib Freifelder.

One episode from those days is deeply engraved in my mind.

It was during the week, we were learning "Vayetzeh"–the weekly portion of the Torah reading in Genesis (28-10). Reading aloud the opening verse "Jacob **departed** from Beersheba and went **toward** Haran," Israel Leib raised the following question: why is the text redundant? Wasn't it obvious that if Jacob **departed** Beersheba, he **went toward . . .** He then continued to explain and to demonstrate his own answer to the question in a most animated and magical way. "You have to understand–he said- that Jacob our forefather when he **departed** from his land and place of birth , was not an ordinary Jew, like the Diaspora Jews of our time; Jacob was a strong and proud Jew and when he **departed** from one place and **went toward** another, he walked like a proud Jew should walk. . ."

To demonstrate his point, Israel-Leib showed us then, how in his opinion, Jacob our forefather walked. As we all remember, Israel-Leib Freifelder was a tall man, strong, erect and handsome, in fact,

[1] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be a blessing).

he looked astoundingly similar to Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement. We will always remember this image of Israel-Leib Freifelder, marching before our very eyes, back and forth in the classroom, erect with his head held high and with a puffed-up sense of pride. It was an image that made a great and lasting impression on us.

May the above reflections of adoration help preserve the memory of this unforgettable friend and wonderful Jew.

Chaim Roiz-Brenman (z"l[1])– The Celebrated Teacher

Ester Banner-Gelbart

It would be impossible to remember our city of Skala without remembering the Hebrew Day School and its wonderful teacher, Rabbi Chaim Roiz (z"l). A distinguished educator, in the period after the First World War, Roiz was a prominent figure in Skala, an important part of the cultural life of the town, as well as the Zionist Hebrew movement. Not only was he a scholar and proficient in many subject areas, Roiz was also an experienced and accomplished leader, filled with energy, and able to influence people with his charming personality, his politeness and his spirituality.

Indeed, the modern Hebrew Day School existed in Skala prior to the arrival of Chaim Roiz. However, it was only after Roiz's arrival and his integration into the Hebrew education system, that the school, *"Safah Berurah"* developed an exemplary curriculum, with a well thought out scope and sequence of study for its students.

Rabbi Chaim Roiz was born in the town of Felshtin [Gvardeiskoye], in eastern Ukraine, across the border. There, his father, Rabbi Moshe Zelig, was the recognized *halachic* authority. As would be expected, Roiz received a traditional education, with an emphasis on the study of the Talmud and on the Rabbinic Law Codes. Gradually, however, Roiz turned to books of the enlightenment and to the new Hebrew literature, and he even taught himself secular studies. He was also amongst the first activists in the *Tzeiri Tzion* [Young Zionists] in Felshtin.

At the beginning of the 1920s–the years of the Russian revolution and the chaos on the bloody Ukrainian soil, Roiz

[1] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be a blessing).

escaped with his life and crossed over the border together with two sisters. He managed to arrive in Skala, which was, already, at that time, under Polish authority. Roiz's brother was murdered in Felshtin by the followers of Petlyora[2], as they took vengeance upon the Jews and caused the destruction of many Jewish communities.

Rabbi Chaim Roiz desire was, in fact, to migrate to the Land of Israel, but something went awry. The "Certificate" (the entry document to Palestine that was given by the British Mandate government) that was promised to him, was delayed in its delivery, and this caused him to stay in Skala, where he remained for the next seven years. In addition, he had a relative in Skala, Moshe Shapira, the director of Padfilipie, the estate that belonged to Velvel Stock.



FIG. 43: *Chaim Roiz*

The intellectuals of the town, the public servants and the devoted Zionists immediately recognized the talents of Roiz. They urged him to stay in Skala, at least "for a while," and to put down roots in the life of the community and its people. Roiz agreed to their request. Among his accomplishments, Roiz was very influential in establishing the *Bet-Am* [community center], and improving the Hebrew Day School, where he elevated studies to a higher level. He educated many students, both boys and girls. These students

[2] Petlyura (1879-1926) was chairman of the Ukrainian government after WWI. In 1919, the Soviet army ousted the Ukrainian government, and the retreating Ukrainian soldiers perpetrated mass killings of Jews throughout Ukraine. An estimated 50,000 Jews may have been murdered, including 600 in Felstein. It is believed Petlyura did little to stop the violence, instead fleeing to Poland and maintaining a government and army in exile. In 1926, Petlyura was assassinated in Paris by a Jew, Shalom Shwarzbard. At the trial, the Jewish tragedy in the Ukraine was documented, and Shwarzbard was acquitted of the murder.

admired and adored him, and emulated his love for the Hebrew language, the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. Consequently, as a direct result of Roiz's influence, many of these students immigrated to the Land of Israel and became *halutzim* [pioneers]. Truly, because of his kind personality and lofty values, Rabbi Chaim Roiz was adored and honored by all the people in Skala, regardless of their social status.

After being in Skala for seven years, when Roiz finally realized that he would never receive the immigration "Certificate" to the Land of Israel, he emigrated to Montreal, Canada, where he had some relatives. In Montreal, he received employment as a Hebrew teacher in the "*Talmud Torah*" school. For three years Roiz toiled virtually without any salary, as the school consistently lacked finances. He barely managed to survive by giving private lessons.

In 1935, Roiz returned for a short visit to Skala. When he arrived, he was greeted by the entire community, and there was joyous celebration. Roiz's visit to the school, which was then under the directorship of Shraga Ochshorn, was a particularly festive occasion. Roiz gave a lecture to the students and the other invited guests, and he even taught some Hebrew songs that he learned in the Land of Israel, where he had visited before arriving in Skala.



FIG. 44: *Former students and admirers of Chaim Roiz welcoming him back to Skala on Aug. 10, 1935, when he visited the town en-route from a World Zionist Congress in Europe, which he attended as a delegate from Canada.*

Upon returning to Canada, Roiz again devoted himself to teaching and giving private lessons, as he was accustomed to do. From 1952 until health problems caused him to retire in 1960, he was the Principal of the *"Talmud Torah."* There, too, he had an admiring and adoring community, both because of his devotion to his profession and because of his exceptional personality.

After a difficult and prolonged illness, Roiz died in 1966. His students and friends in Montreal established a library in his memory at Kibbutz Gesher Haziv in the Western Galilee in order to perpetuate his name. May his memory be for a blessing!

Rabbis and Other Members of the Clergy in Skala

Benjamin Ressler

Rabbis

There is no doubt that the religious community of Skala had rabbis and rabbinical judges almost from the beginning of the Jewish community. Most likely the names of those functionaries, their activities and deeds in those long-forgotten, fog-enshrouded times were inscribed in ledgers. But to our very painful and sad regret, those ledgers have disappeared, together with the Jews of Skala whom the Nazi killers destroyed.

However, the two families of Skala who held rabbinical seats in the town continue to live in memory: the Drimmer and Laufer families. How and why Skala had two rabbis-from the Vizhnitzer or Czortkówer *chasidim* is told in articles by Bentsion Fiderer and, may he live long, Gedalia Lachman.

The oldest and most multi-branched of the two was the Drimmer family. They were widely known throughout the entire district and in many Galician cities through Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, a great *gaon, halachic* decisor and author of the book "*Beit Shlomo*." Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer was, indeed, called by the name of his book "*Beit Shlomo*."

Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer occupied the rabbinical chair already during the times of the Kossower and Vizhnitzer *rebbes*. Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer was also a relative of the Rizhnitser *tsaddik* Rabbi Yisroel (the story of a meeting of the Rizhnitser with Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer will be told later).

During Reb Shlomo Drimmer's tenure in the rabbinate there

was also in Skala the old *dayan* Rabbi Leibish (Reb Leibish *dayan* was close with Rabbi Chaim Kossower).

After the death of Reb Shlomo the chair of the rabbinate (from the Vizhnitzer Hassidic side) was taken over by his son, Reb Avraham, also a great expert and distinguished scholar. In his later years Reb Avraham became weak with a lung ailment. Therefore, a *minyan* (prayer quorum) of those close with him would gather in his home to worship on the Sabbath.

After Reb Avraham, his son Reb Natan-Nuteh inherited the rabbinate. He was also a distinguished scholar. He was an affable person. He began to take note of the "new" times and even tried to attract the "moderns" and the worldly folk–especially the Zionists who worked for the settlement of the Land of Israel. He was also drew near to the Chalutsim (Zionist pioneers) who were preparing to make *aliya*, but he pleaded with them to follow the injunctions of the Torah and perform the *mitzvot* (command-ments).



FIG. 45: *Funeral procession of Rabbi Noote Drimmer, scion of famous rabbinic family, that served the Community since 1848. He was the father of Shlomo and Yehuda Drimmer, the last Rabbis of Skala.*

Reb Natan-Nuteh had two sons. The older one, Shlomo was a military rabbi in the Polish army with the rank of Captain and died in Russia. When and how is not known.

Reb Natan-Nuteh's second son was Reb Yehuda. He inherited the rabbinate and it was his bitter destiny to serve as Skala's last rabbi. He, along with many other Jews of Skala, was dragged off to the Janowska Camp in Lemberg, where he perished at the hands of the wicked Nazis and their Ukrainian helpers.

TEACHERS (*MELAMDIM*)

A teacher in his *cheder*–the teachers of young children were very important institutions in every holy community, and likewise, in Skala. Not always, and not everywhere was the *cheder,* the classroom, at an appropriate level. Economic reasons and immovable traditions ensured the continuance of ancient practices. Not every Jew who undertook to teach was a pedagogue with the necessary training. Nevertheless, there were among them certain exceptional people from whose *cheders* there emerged pupils with considerable knowledge.

The custom in Skala and in the larger and smaller communities in the district was the same as it was in countless Eastern European Jewish communities. Here, let us mention the various Skala teachers.

Elementary teachers, who taught the children the *alef-beis* and Hebrew reading: Reb Michael (After the First World War he settled in Korolówka), Reb Zusye (Menczel), Reb Abba (Adler), Reb Itzikl (from Łosiacz) Lewenkron, Reb Bentsion Jawitz, Reb Chaim Hoffer.

Chumash and *Rashi* Teachers: Reb Shlomo Sheffer (the Deaf One), Reb Aharon Grünfeld (the Katsyubintshiker), Reb Yosef Werczninanski (who later settled latterly in Borszczów), Reb Yosef Leib Melamed, Reb Sholom Zimmerman (Deaf Shlomo's son-in-law). Reb Avraham Bitterman (died in Israel), Reb Alter Weinraub.

Gemara Teachers: Reb Moshe Kremnitzer (Lissawoder), Reb

Yosef Blumenthal (the "little Yellow One"), Reb Shlomo Aharon Weinfeld, , Reb Moshe Grolower, Reb Shlomo Weinraub (Alter's), Reb Issachar Ber Schechter, Reb Avraham Morgenstern (the Budzanower), Reb Zayde Bitterman, and Reb Leibish Feuerstein (Noteh's).

RITUAL SLAUGHTERERS *(SHOCHTIM)*

Skala always had more *shochtim* than perhaps it needed. However, since Skala had two large Hassidic groups (Vizhnitz and Czortków), there were, of course, first and foremost, Vizhnitz *shochtim* and Czortków *shochtim*. There were also a few Hassidim from the sects of other Rebbes; however, since they were a minority without their own rabbi (like the Vizhnitzers and the Czortkówers had) they yearned to have at least their own *shochet*.

Their *shochtim* were: Reb Alter (the father-in-law of Reb Yankel Broynstein), Reb Herschel(the son-in-law of Reb Eliezer Eliahu Weidberg, later a *shochet* in Bukovina)., the "Vienna" *shochet*, Reb Shlomo Shochet, Reb Feibish Liber Stock, Reb Issachar Ber (Schechter); Reb Yankel Shochet (Broynstein) and Reb Yisrael Feder of Tluste. (His arrival in Skala produced a sharp quarrel around 1925).

In the years when Hassidism was at its height and the Hassidic sects were engaged in heated quarrels as regarding their *Rebbes*, *shechita* became a sharp weapon in the hands of the two sides. One party would not eat food whose *shechita* was conducted by the other side. They did not "mix." They even avoided marrying each other.

THE VERDICT OF RABBI SHLOMO OF BLESSED MEMORY[1]

Yitzhak Even

The *Sadigora Rebbe*, Rabbi Avraham Yaakov, once told the following story about his father the Rizhiner *Tzadik* Rabbi Yisrael. The Rizhiner once spent some time in Skala after fleeing from Russia, where there was a libel against him.

When in Skala, the Rizhiner went around in his room with discomfort one Friday. He smoked and smoked, not removing the pipe from his mouth. Suddenly, he told his assistant, "Go already and summon the Skala rabbi. If not, I cannot attend the Sabbath evening service." This was very difficult for the assistant, but if the *Tzadik* requests, one goes.

The Skala Rabbi, Rabbi Shlomo, did not ask a lot of questions. Already dressed in his satin frock and *streimel* in honor of the Sabbath, he went to the *Tzadik*. The Rizhiner greeted him with, "Welcome Skala Rabbi, please forgive me." When the rabbi sat down, the Rizhiner said, "Do not be in a rush, Skala Rabbi, for I too must go to the services. However, a Torah judgment is taking place here." The Rizhiner told the following: "There was a great, warm Hassid–G-d fearing and also very wealthy. He never transgressed even the smallest prohibition."

That Hassid once obtained a business venture from the regime, from which he was set to earn a large fortune. Since he did not have sufficient money on hand to give the required guarantee deposit to the government, he permitted himself to borrow the money to fund the guarantee from the fund for which he served as the trustee for

[1] Excerpt from Yitzhak Even's Yiddish book, "From the Rabbis' Court," pages 115-117.

the security deposits of widows and orphans. He knew that the money was safe, for the business would be a source of great wealth.

The minister with whom the contract was signed was a great anti-Semite. Knowing that the signer was an Orthodox Jew, he designated Saturday as the day that the contract was to be signed in order to vex him.

The Hassidic merchant's eyes darkened when he saw the letter from the landowner. He quickly concluded the business and gave over the guarantee deposit, completely forgetting that the contract was to be written on the Sabbath. Then the landowner warned him that if he did not come on the designated day, the agreement would be null and void, and the money on deposit would be forfeited.

The Hassid utilized all means in order to defer the signing to another day. However it was to no avail. What should he do? If he were not to sign the contract, the entire guarantee deposit would be forfeited. It was not his own money. With that money, the drudgery of poor widows and the toil of wretched orphans would be lost. Should he sign? G-d should not punish him for even contemplating such a sin. For so many years he had avoided even the thought of sin, he had passed through difficult tests many times, and now suddenly he was to become a Sabbath violator. And for what? For money? No, he would not violate the Sabbath.

Suddenly it seemed to him that he had arrived home and found the entire city in a terrible turmoil. He saw in his imagination how the poor widows fell upon him on the street from all sides, shouting with bitter wailing: "Thief, robber, give us our hard-earned money!" His ears heard the weeping of the hungry, torn and helpless orphans.

His mercy overcame him. He desecrated the Sabbath and signed the contract.

Now I ask you, rabbi of Skala, decide for me if this can be considered a case of coercion, and we can make use of the principle that "The Merciful One forgives in cases of coercion" (that is: there is no punishment if the sin was performed out of compulsion), and the Hassid is not to be punished for violating the Sabbath; or if this

is to be considered as a monetary affair rather than a case of threat to life, and, therefore, he cannot be considered as someone who was acting under coercion and is therefore liable to punishment.

After a lengthy debate, Rabbi Shlomo decided that this is indeed a case of "coercion," since he did not do this for his own needs, but rather for the widows and orphans. Therefore, he is exempt from punishment.

The face of the Rizhiner lit up with great joy. "You are the type of judge about whom the *Gemara* says, 'Anyone who judges a case honestly becomes a partner with the Holy One Blessed Be He' (A judge who judges a case honestly, meaning not with dead words, but rather uses clear thinking and takes into account the circumstances, is considered as G-d's partner). The Heavenly court agrees with your decision."

Later it became known that the Sabbath violator was indeed a Hassid of the Rizhiner who had already passed on to the world of truth. When he was in the *mikva* (ritual bath) in Skala that Friday, the Rizhiner felt that the soul of that Hassid had no peace, and could only come to rectification through a rabbinical decision from a great rabbi.

THE NUCLEUS[1] OF "HECHALUTZ"[2] IN SKALA

Moshe Beitan



FIG. 46: *Moshe Beitan*

The seeds of Zionism that were planted in me by my Hebrew teacher, Avraham Lederman and his daughter, Henyah, sprouted in my heart and began to blossom. The yearning to Zionist deeds removed every obstacle to my goal. During that summer (in 1924), the first group of Zionist pioneers arrived in the nearby village of Tzygany to attend an agricultural training farm known as "hachshara." I was one of their permanent visitors, who came every Shabbat to listen attentively to their discussions about building and restoring the land of Israel, the spiritual revival of the Jewish people, the ingathering of the exiles and the

[1] This is a literal translation of the Hebrew term "*garin*," referring specifically to the original members of a Zionist group.

[2] An association of pioneering Zionist youth organizations, whose aim was to prepare and train its members to settle in Palestine and to establish there agricultural collectives known as "kibbutzim" and "moshavot." Established in 1918 by Joseph Trumpeldor, it spread all over the Jewish Diaspora and, at its peak, between 1930-1939, the Association counted 100,000 adherents, with 16,000 of them attending *hakhsharot* (agricultural training farms) in preparation for pioneering life in Palestine.

establishment of a workers' society, based on the principles of equality and justice. A large and vibrant movement was being created for that purpose and even in our town "things began to move."

A stream of Jewish immigrants from Bolshevik Russia brought, at the time, many young people to Skala, among them enthusiastic Zionists eager for action. A spiritual and ideological bond was quickly formed between them and local Zionists, and together they began to organize the local youth that became the nucleus of "Hechalutz" in Skala. I was among the first to join this organization, even though I was the youngest. I eagerly participated in all their activities that became an outlet for my aspirations and the fulfillment of my dreams.

Among the founders of "Hechalutz" in Skala were my friends Mordechai Fingerman and Yitzchak Buchhalter (Bahat), who, later on, became a member of my family. Our "Hechalutz" branch was established with great enthusiasm and energy. A spacious apartment was rented and decorated with appropriate pictures and slogans. Diverse social and educational activities were launched. We also received considerable help and encouragement from the local community and Zionist leaders, especially the highly esteemed Motia Weidberg, Israel-Leib Freifelder and Moshe Feuerstein–all of blessed memory. They helped and encouraged us with whatever they could, and, within a few months, they provided for us, on the ground level of the "Beit Am" (Community Center), spacious rooms and some furniture. We thus took possession of our permanent home that became known as the "Beit Hechalutz" (House of the Pioneers).

The best of Skala's youth joined our chapter, both teenagers and young adults. A turbulent, dynamic period in our lives had started. We established a few groups of "wood-choppers"–the only kind of work that we were able to adjust to and to succeed in. During the winter days, there was plenty of work available, although the local gentiles, who usually performed this kind of work, complained a bit about the unexpected "competitors." In spite of this, we managed

quite well. We were equipped with saws and axes and we had in our group a young friend, a locksmith by profession, who would sharpen our tools. We thus acquired a true taste for productive labor that earned us a fair amount of money, although the difficulties in adjusting to physical labor were numerous, including the opposition of our parents, which weighed heavily upon us. However, the joy of working together as a group enabled us to overcome them and we persevered through the winter months of 1924-25.



FIG. 47: *Young men and women from Skala and other communities in Galicia, at an "Hachshara" (Zionist training farm) in Iwanie Puste (late 1920's) to prepare for agricultural settlement in Palestine, including the author (Moishe Beitan).*

With the arrival of spring, we began to look around for a suitable site in the surrounding villages for a "hachshara"–an agricultural training farm. We contacted the central committee of "Hechalutz" in Lvov, and they provided us with proper advice on how to proceed. The most active and senior members of our group were

Michael Nachman, Berish Stock, Moshe Fisch, and Feivel Gottesfeld. In the meantime, Fingermen and Buchhalter (Bahat) left Skala on their way to the Land of Israel, accompanied by their girlfriends they acquired in the town, one of them being my oldest sister, Malkah.



FIG. 48: *Members of Hanoar Hatzioni, a General Zionist youth group dancing the "hora" at the entrance to the estate gardens of Count Goluchowski (local landowner).*

By directive of the central committee of "Hechalutz" we were paired up with a group of young pioneers from the neighboring town of Mielnitsa, and after the Passover holiday, we left for an agricultural training farm in Iwanie Puste, a village in our part of Galicia. For me, this was a very unique period of time, a life-forming continuation of my personal and spiritual development and one of my informal "universities," with no grades or degrees.

THEATER IN SKALA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JEWISH LIBRARY

Jacob Herzog

What I am about to describe took place in 1909. In truth there were earlier attempts to organize some sort of theatrical performance during dance evenings.

In 1909, I came home after a prolonged absence from the city. After the High Holidays I became aware that the Hebrew School was in need of financial help.

One Saturday, Moti Weidberg, Chaim Weidberg, Moshe Weidberg, Moshe Weinraub, Avraham Bosyk, Chaim Gottesfeld, and I gathered in Zayde Sobel's house.

Both of the teachers of the school, M. A. Tennenblatt and B.Z. Szywek, were there. We considered various projects for raising some money for the school. My suggestion to organize a theatrical performance was accepted.

A few days later we met at the teacher Tennenblatt's house. I brought along some scripts and we agreed to perform Jacob Gordon's "God, Man and Devil." We assigned roles right on the spot.

The voice of G-d and the prologue: Avraham Bosyk Satan (the Devil): Ariel Mazik-Eich
Hershele Dubrover: Benzion Szywek
Pessenyu, his wife: Mrs. Tennenblatt
Leizer Badchan: his father: Moshe Weinraub
Freidenyu and Tsipenyu, their wives: Mrs. Szywek and Miss Arye
Chatskell Drachma: Moshe Weidberg
Dobe, his wife: Chaim Gottesfeld
Mottele, their son: M A. Tennenblatt

The role of Dobe was played by Chaim Gottesfeld because we could not find another woman.

The roles of the four angels were played by little girls.

In those days a sick young man, Meir Berger, lived in Skala. He was a Skala native who came from New York to recover in his home town. I used to visit him often and he was very delighted when I told him about our plan to perform Gordon's play. He was knowledgeable and experienced in Yiddish theater. Right on the spot he performed the whole play and sang the melody of "*Mizmor LeDavid*" the way the famous actor David Kessler of New York used to sing it. We went right to work on the rehearsals, rented the Ukrainian reading hall (the Czytalnye) and prepared the necessities for the performance.

We had a great success with the performance. The hall was packed and many people were left outside because of a lack of seats. The impact on the town was great. It was a success also from a financial perspective. From the profits, the school received eighty *reinish* (a significant sum of money for those days).

It was decided to repeat the performance in the city to satisfy those who had been unable to see it the first time.

We met once again at Zayde Sobel's home to consider the matter. One of the group requested that half of the proceeds of the second performance should be designated for a library in Skala. After considerable debate the suggestion was acted upon.

We organized the second performance and the response to it was no less than for the first. The income of 76 *reinish* was divided in two–that is, 36 *refinish* for the school and 36 for purposes of the library. We ordered books from Warsaw. That is how we created the first Jewish library in the town.

There are now only two left of all those who participated in the performances: M. A. Tennenblatt in Israel, and myself, Y. Herzog in New York.

Before I went to America, I participated in one more performance in our theater in Skala–"The Zvi Family" by David Pinski.

According to the news that I used to receive, the amateur group continued with its activity. When I came to Skala in 1929 as a guest, Dimov's "*Shma Yisrael*" was being performed. The stage then was a better one (in "*Dem Polski*") as well as the public hall. I believe that the performance was very successful.

Of those who participated in *Shma Yisrael* still alive are Mina (Komblit) Frenkel and Yisrael M. L Herzog in Israel, and Moshe Weisenthal in New York.

Postscript: In New York, two Jewish actors who came from Skala performed for many years, Isadore Keshire (Kasirer) and Ch. Gertler. Keshire was linked to the Morris Schwartz Art Theater. Both of them, Keshire and Gertler, were friends of the author and dramatist Chone Gottesfeld, a native of Skala.

FOLKLORE AND HUMOR IN THE LIFE OF SKALA YOUTH

Gedalia Lachman

The cultural life of the Jewish community in Skala was characteristically diverse and multicolored. The generation of the grandfathers and fathers was traditionally religious, but with no trace of fanaticism. Of course there were Hassidim[1] and Misnagdim[2] each with their spiritual leaders, devoted worshipers, separate Synagogues and houses of study. They both prayed piously and fervently three times a day and the holy spirit of the Sabbath and Holidays reigned in the streets and alleys of the center of town, where the gentiles had no presence whatsoever; no houses, no apartments and no stores. Everything there was purely Jewish.

The young folk, even the free thinkers and agnostics among them, did not dare to openly show their true views and feelings. Who among them would have dared in public to smoke a cigarette on the Sabbath? And if someone actually did commit such a sin, it was only done behind closed doors and behind lock and key. Even the young men and bachelors among the free thinkers and progressives, out of respect for their elders and for the sake of appearance, were accompanying their fathers to Saturday and holiday prayers in the synagogues, although they did not pray there much. As soon as they heard the worshippers reciting the "vayehe binsoa ha'aron vayomer Moshe" (wherever the Ark would journey, Moses said) that preceded the removal of the Torah from the Ark to be read in the synagogue, most of the young men surged toward the door out into the street to stroll. Only the old folks remained inside

[1] Members of a sect in Judaism characterized by emphasis on mysticism, joyful prayer and religious zeal.

[2] Opponents of Hasidism.

for the Torah reading.

The young folk also avoided travel on the Sabbath, not because of their piety, but because rail travel from Skala was primarily used for business purposes or, G-d forbid, if someone was ill and needed the services of a specialist-doctor in Tarnopol, Stanislawow or Lvov. Moreover, since Sunday was a strictly observed legal holiday in Catholic Poland, there was no reason for anyone to travel on the Sabbath. On the other hand, short distance travel between Skala and Borszczow (a distance of 15 kilometers) or Skala and Czortkow (a distance of 35 kilometers) was the monopoly of Skala fiacre[3] drivers, all of them simple Jews, but none who violated the Sabbath. Of course, you may ask, what about automobiles? The answer is that such a machine was a great rarity in Skala and nobody owned one. However, if once in a blue moon, such a device appeared on the street, young and old ran from all sides to gape at it as a flaming wonder.

From that, you will perhaps understand, that even if a stubborn outrager wanted to commit a little sin, he had to look high and low for such an opportunity and had to suffer the punishment of the damned in this world. One rarely even bathed in the river Zbrucz on the Sabbath. Before noon-time the water was too cold even for the would-be violators and in the afternoon, people typically took a nap. Toward evening people appeared on the streets for the traditional long walk that extended from the Polish church all the way up to the edge of town; from the lovely promenade that began near Hershl Ashkenazy's house along the tree-lined road toward the village of Ivankow. That Saturday afternoon walk was a traditional part of the life of Skala youth, even on warm summer evenings in the middle of the week. The main street resounded with the echoing voices of maidens and youths and when Pessye Yousem exploded in loud laughter near Itsye Sandberg's store, one could hear it echoing all the way up at the post office.

[3] Horse-drawn carriage

Strolling was always done on the left side of the street, beginning at Azriel Gottesfeld's house. At the barracks of the border guards, some couples turned toward the "new street" leading to Count Goluchowski's chapel, opposite Leyzer Wasserman's lumber yard. The strollers were never alone; they were flanked on both sides of the road by enormous trees whose crowns reached high up in the sky from where the strollers compared to them appeared like ants.

While the young strollers "ruled" the left side of the street, older Jews usually walked slowly on the opposite side, speaking slowly and with deliberation, pausing from time to time or sitting down on one of the benches en-route. However, the true "parliament" resided at the "great rock" near Shlomo Lemberger's house. Long and intense debates took place there, some laced with humor and a good deal of politics. One of the principal speakers there was Aharon Banner, but at 10 o'clock in the evening, the Skala streets emptied. The reason for that was that in the decade prior to World War II, the relations between Soviet Russia and Poland became very strained and antagonistic and on the border zone between the two countries, which included Skala and extended for 15 kilometers in depth, strict rules and regulations were imposed. Whoever was suspected of being hostile to the Polish regime or was involved in smuggling goods across the border, was subject to expulsion from our border area or incarceration for months and years.



FIG. 49: *The Roman Catholic Church–dominant landmark in Skala*

In 1931 the Ukrainians in our region started an organized resistance to the Polish Government. Their underground nationalistic movement conducted acts of sabotage; they ignited and torched haystacks of grain that belonged to Polish landowners or colonists. In response, the Polish government introduced new repressive

measures, among them a 10:00 PM curfew hour. Elie Meiselman (one of two town guards, who were Jewish) was instructed to turn off every night all the three large gas lamps that lighted the main street. This was the signal that everyone must at once leave the streets and it was enforced by the military border guards. Anyone caught on the street after 10:00 PM, and the sergeant in charge was an anti-Semite, the offender was thrown into the city jail for the night.

I, too, spent once, a night in jail for this offence. It was just my good luck that I was with a band of young people who made merry throughout the night. Together with me there were Ephraim Goldhirsch, Chaim Brettler, Laybele Schwarzbach, Shabtai Wasserman, Fishele Fish, Edzie Wasserman and even two gentiles. Chaim Brettler was always a great clown and he drove the two gentiles crazy, teaching them twisted Yiddish expressions, curses and tales from "Tevye the Milkman." By dawn, the two were capable of repeating "gseese lemise, lechayim aruchim vetovim, kiss all the relatives in the ass, and if I am a relative, kiss me too."



FIG. 50: *On the promenade "Oib'n Toser" by the park of Count Goluchowski*

In the morning we were all released and decided to take revenge on sergeant Shcheblewski who had imprisoned us. The commander of the border guards, Major Kokoshka, was presented by us with a long list of complaints against the sergeant for imprisoning us. We claimed that he illegally imprisoned us and our evidence was that Elie Meiselman had not turned off yet the three gas lamps on the main street–the best proof it was not yet 10:00 PM . It was later rumored in town, that sergeant Shcheblewski was reprimanded by the major . . .

That same year, in the summer, we arranged a festival in the park near the railroad station to raise funds among Jews and gentiles for one of the charitable funds in the community. Accompanied by Brurya Weidberg and Laybele Schwarzbach, we went from house to house. When we came to Shcheblewski's house, it was clear to us that none of us would dare to knock at his door, as he would tear us apart like a hearing . . . Yet, I said to the others, "Let's go in, Jewish chutzpah is well known, what's the worst that can happen to us?" Can you imagine what our countenances were like when the sergeant gave us a contribution of five zlotys? Not even Shmarye Melzer (one of the wealthiest Jews in Skala) would have given us that much. So go, form a judgment about a gentile . . .

There was another "problem" the young people of Skala had to face–though not all of them. It was called "soaping in for the basin." You need to know that in Old Skala (Stara Skala), beyond the Turkish fortress and the stream, lived eight Jewish families, surrounded entirely by Ukrainians. Among them was Elye Yolles and his two daughters–quite good looking girls–Sylvia and Marie. They too used to stroll with us all the way up the promenade until the edge of town and before the curfew hour neared, they had to be escorted back to their home. On a nice, warm summer evening, it was just another stroll, but in the mud of fall and in the winter when it snowed and stormed, it was not much of a pleasure. So the young men in our group, resorted to all sorts of tricks to avoid this gentlemanly duty; they feigned a sudden toothache, a stomach ache, a sick grandmother, a twisted ankle and all sorts of other excuses.

Eventually, there remained one or two fellows who had to accompany the girls home. Since nearby, where they lived, stood a large hexagonal fountain with a fresh water basin, the "victim" was referred to as the one "soaped-in for the basin." At one time it was Simcha Edelman, another time it was Mendel Schwarzbach or Fishele Fish. Even the cunning Chaim Brettler fell once into the trap, when the other fellows ganged up on him and "soaped him in."

THE ROCK OF SHLOMO LEMBERG

Esther Banner-Gelbart

When I recall my parent's home, especially my dear father, Aharon Banner z"l[1], I also remember my father's group of friends, and how they would regularly assemble to sit on the big rock by the house of Shlomo Lemberg z"l. It seems to me that my late father spent half of his life sitting on that rock. He was a "Shomer Mitzvot" (an observant Jew), and well-versed in the Bible, Talmud and other Holy Books; yet, he was also a progressive man, well read in secular literature. It was his custom to ardently read all the newspapers that were delivered to the town; moreover, he would look through the books that I brought home from our library, whether they be in Polish or Hebrew. When my ultra-orthodox grandmother, Faige Marmorosh, scolded him and bitterly remarked that he was reading the books of heretics and heathens, my father calmly responded with a cutting answer that has become engraved in my memory: "since my daughter will not study the Talmud, I need to read the books she reads in order we should have a common language. Is that clear?"

Indeed, my father had a common language not only with people his own age, but also with those younger than him. I remember how he used to stroll around, for hours at a time, with Yaekel Aurbach, Hayim Hirsch, Nisan Olinger and Louvish Stock, and they always had something to talk and argue about. Every evening, my father would tarry until late into the night on that same rock by Lemberg's house. Who was not to be found at the rock during these hours? Herschel Auerbach, Meir-Zisie Tabak, Nachman Brettler, Zecharye Wiesenthal and Herschel Weintraub. Also Motie

[1] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be a blessing).

Weidberg[2] would sometime pass by to join the group and participate in the discussions, with the characteristic, quivering smile on his face. Was there any topic that these spontaneous discussions did not touch upon? Was there any subject that was not debated? General politics and issues concerning Eretz Yisrael, problems in the Community and even the deplorable conspiracies that were being plotted there in secrecy. Moreover, they were not even oblivious to the "insolent" young couples who dared, "Heaven help us" walk around with arms around each other, hugging and being in close physical contact . . .

Yosef Morgenstern-Shachar (now in Israel) told me that he remembers my father expressing doubts about the prospects, existence and future of agriculture in the Land of Israel. "Behold, who will milk the cows on Shabbat? who will plow the fields, plant and sow? Jews, by nature, don't know how to work and are assumed to shun away from hard, physical labor, preferring clean and easy work" he argued. Interjecting, Meir-Zisie Tabak would remark, that "If there were in Eretz Yisrael gentiles from villages like Ivankow and Burdiakovitz[3]) it would be possible to sell them second-hand goods, which cannot be sold to smart Jews . . ."

There, on that same rock–as if it was at the ancient "rock of claimants" in Jerusalem from which announcements of property lost and found were made–they would try to predict the results of presidential elections to the Jewish Community Council. During those heated, but amicable discussions and arguments, there would be lots of guessing and predictions, clarifications and estimates as well as revealed and hidden influences, concerning the elections to the Polish Sejm (Parliament), the Zionist Congress and other public institutions.

I am convinced that significant issues and problems in the life of the Skala Community, were decided or solved there, on that rocky stone. The rock is certainly still to be found in the same place on the street, while those–who once visited it, leaned or rested on it,

[2] Leading Zionist and last chairman of the Skala Jewish Community Council.
[3] Ukrainian villages around Skala.

shared on it the concerns of their hearts, dreams and hopes for redemption–are no more than extinct spirits, but never to be forgotten.

AT THE MILL

Fradl Stock



FIG. 51: *Fradl Stock*

Rachel took the basket that mother brought back from the Lashkevitz fair, placed in it her red bathing suit, a bar of aromatic soap, took her parasol and said, "Mother, I'm going to bathe at the mill."

"Who are you going with? Don't you dare go there by yourself, do you hear? At the mill the water pulls strongly... I'd rather you go bathing in the Zbrucz..."

"I'm going with Hannah, the whole town is going today..."

"Don't go too deep into the water, do you hear? Hold on to the poles..."

Mother gave her two slices of bread and butter along with two coins for cherries and called after her not to be late in coming home. Hannah was already waiting for her in front of the house. They passed on their way through the market, bought cherries and merrily continued on the long walk to the mill. The road was covered with a deep dust, thin and fine like flour, and the shoes

turned white from the summery dust. All along the way they met people, either going to or from the mill.

Rachel was wondering, "It looks as though the whole shtetl is going to bathe today... yes the whole shtetl..."

"My mother wants me to go only to the Zbrucz, along with all the misfits. At the mill the waves break against your back and it's a real pleasure... I don't like it at the Zbrucz, the water there seems to be standing in one place."

After passing by the Greek-Catholic cemetery and the head millers' house, they caught the knocking sound of the mill. When they came to the small bridge under which the water was rushing onto the wheel of the mill, Rachel felt a slight pinch in her heart, the kind of a pinch one feels prior to a long journey, a kind of pinch you don't know what it wants from you.

The water under the bridge was boiling, foaming as Rachel watched from behind the railing. A green, quiet stream of water, the "Zbrucz," was flowing from the other side, turning under the wheel into the water of the mill. She looked into the mill where in the darkness the grain was merrily being ground into flour. It smelled of rye, barley and corn.

They passed by the shack of the customs' officers watching the border. Sitting in front of the shack was Burko, the Post Office official, wearing a light trench coat, watching the Jewish girls going to bathe and whistling "The Lost Happiness." With a passing glance Rachel noticed that his hair was light, although she had thought it was black... light as the color of his trench coat. When Burko saw Rachel, he called after her: "gorgeous." Rachel didn't turn her back, but was fired with pride. Hannah was choking with laughter.

There were many people already at the water's edge and the lawn with the trees in front was covered with bundles of clothing. Girls in bathing suits and women wrapped in sheets holding naked babies in their arms were standing at the shore and in the water.

Rachel noticed their neighbor Etty with her baby Yoselle, naked in her arms, who was screaming because soap got into his eyes. Etty

tried to calm him down, but the child was frightened by the noise of the mill and was screaming his head off.

Women standing nearby were wondering, "How can you take such an infant into the water?'

"The doctor recommended," Etty retorted while calming the baby.

Asher's wife and her baby were happy, "Ah, what a pleasure... mine, he should live and be well, enjoys bathing..." She hugged the child's naked body, pressing her face to the child's wet, dripping face and hair, mumbling through her clenched teeth, "he, he, he..."

When the child was babbling cutely, showing its new teeth, clapping hands against its breasts and yelling "Boo, boo, boo," the mother lifted it high with enjoyment, "Good boy, and good boy, long may you live!"

That's how, time and again, children were carried into the cold water, while they were wiggling, screaming, shivering with their tongues out and crying while being dipped in the water.

On the other hand, children that got used to the water and were frolicking *in* it were crying when taken out, because they were cold and their blue bodies were shivering. So they stretched their hands and torsos towards the water while water mixed with suds from the aromatic soaps was still dripping from their heads.

Rachel folded her clothes, placed them next to a tree, took her soap and went into the water. Girls in pairs and in clusters of three and four were bathing, repeatedly dipping in the water, amid exclamations of "ah, ah" that mingled with the noise of rushing water. With arms folded and wading deeper into the water with every step, Rachel felt as though her heart was rising higher and higher into her mouth. Hannah was bathing already and beckoning Rachel to join her, but Rachel wanted to go further where the water was deep.

Sanie Kelman's wife was arrogantly stretching out at the furthest pole as usual, while the waves were inflating the sheet she covered up with. Everyone else was afraid to go where she was. The waves from the wheel of the mill were hitting her fat back with force.

When she noticed Rachel wading deep into the water, beyond her, she yelled, "Rachel, don't go so far! I'll tell your mother, I'll tell your mother..."

But Rachel didn't hear and went further behind bushes, where she knew of a hidden rock, half submerged in the water. She sat down on the rock, held on to the pole with one hand and stretched out. The mill was clattering and its deafening noise mingled with the screams of young girls and naked children.

Rachel pulled up one of her legs to look at it. Water was dripping from the white limb. She suddenly glanced at the dark windows of the mill and a thought crossed her mind: "Who knows, perhaps Burko is observing her from there?"... She pulled back her leg into the water and took a deep dip up to her neck, so that her tied-up braids got wet. "He is probably bathing now... in his light trench coat... swimming around, whistling... the vagabond..."

She frolicked in the water, pushing it back and forth, enjoying its heavy smoothness. "Such a smoothness," she thought. "The clouds must also be so smooth. Round and smooth, round and smooth. They rest on your band, round and smooth and suddenly disappear into nothingness... Gorgeous."

When she came out of the water, Hannah was already waiting for her and was about to leave, afraid her mother would worry. The sun was slowly setting behind the trees. Almost all the women were out of the water already. The noise and screams were dying down. Some were eating their bread and butter sandwiches and everything looked so fresh. The women were all smiles and smelled of the water, the mill and their faces were tranquil. They were in a good mood, ready to embrace the whole world. The quarrel one had only yesterday with a neighbor was forgotten, and both wanted to make up. The tasty corn bread with cumin and the sweet cherries were devoured with appetite and shared with strangers.

They started on their way home, some walking along the main road, others taking shortcuts through the Greek-Catholic cemetery. When men were approaching, they modestly pulled down the kerchiefs over their brows. The men walked by briskly, fresh,

strong, arguing good-naturedly about Zionism, and heading home for the evening meal.

The entire shtetl had bathed. The entire shtetl smelled of water, the mill, fresh corn bread and cherries and everyone was friendly.

Rachel was going home with Nekhe and the wife of Mendel. Just before leaving, she took a last glance at the mill. From the small, darkened windows, the night was beckoning. Something was whistling, something was moving between the waves racing ahead of the wheel.... "At night, they say, the water is boiling hot, but people are afraid to bathe at night..."

They stopped halfway and looked back. Nekhe was saying that her strength is coming back. The trees at the nearby cemetery were rustling uh-ha, uh-ha.... and it appeared to Rachel that the returning strength was pulsating ``uh-ha, uh-ha.... gorgeous."

Nekhe was quietly telling Mendel's wife that she was going to cook young potatoes and dumplings for the evening meal, while her companion was saying she would cook young peas.

They are healthy...

Rachel thought that Burko was following her in his light trench coat, yet she didn't look back for fear it wasn't true, but her walk became restless. She turned around the parasol, handle-down, arrogantly swinging the folds.

The returning strength was pulsating in the tips of her fingers, ``Uh-ha, uh-ha."

FRADEL STOCK *(1890–1942)*

Fradel Shtok (also spelled Stock) was born in the East Galician town of Skalle (German and Polish Skala, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later part of interwar Poland).

She was one of the few Yiddish women authors in the early twentieth century. Arriving in the United States at seventeen, she began writing poems and stories. Indeed, she was one of the first poets to develop the sonnet form in Yiddish. When her book of stories, published in 1919 and titled simply ``Gezamelte Ertsaylungen (Collected Stories),'' was badly received, she switched to English, but with no greater success. The lexicon of modern Yiddish literature (Leksikon Fun der Nayer Yidisher Literatur) claims that she died in a mental hospital around 1930. However, the Abe Cahan Archive at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, contains a letter she sent Cahan on October 20, 1942, along with a new story, which was then published in the Jewish Daily Forward on November 19, 1942. No further information about Fradel Shtok has come to light.

The settings in her sole book of Yiddish genre stories alternate between her native shtetl and New York–a typical dichotomy in Yiddish literature.

THE ARCHBISHOP *(1919)*[1]

While the townsfolk knew that the archbishop was coming, no one in Skalle made a big fuss about the news. It was only when pine gates were set up at the entrance that people began talking about it in the street.

Mótkele the Redhead, whose brother was a big cheese at the town hall explained: "Do they really have a clue? They think archbishops are a dime a dozen! Imagine how long it takes to climb that high! First you gotta study for the priesthood–you're not born a priest. Then you become a canon, then a supreme canon, then an elder, which he knows and which he's already forgotten – Ah, a blessed man. And then you become a bishop. And it's not till a long, long time later that you become an archbishop.

"Why was an archbishop coming to Skalle? Nobody knew for certain. One person said that an archbishop visited Skalle only once every fifty years. Another person said that an archbishop came by only when the Christians were about to build a church. Henekh the Marriage Broker, who was standing nearby, glanced at the old Catholic church. He figured it wouldn't be such a bad idea: the town really needed a new church. He spit superstitiously, but he secretly mused: "A new church.

The town'll become more genteel, more civilized." For Henekh knew how many matches had been nipped in the bud purely because Skalle was uncivilized.

In short, the idea kept growing on Henekh, and so he tried to convince everyone that it was a fact, that it couldn't be truer. And

[1]The following story by Fradl Stock is from the Yizkor book but also was published in an anthology "No Star Too Beautiful" and translated by Neugroshel is copyright and cannot be reprinted.

the Jews started believing him, because if Henekh wanted to talk you into something, he did so hands down.

Alter asked: "Well, so what's gonna happen with the town clock? What's the town gonna look at?"

The fact of the matter was that Alter wanted to get rid of the town clock. His home was next to the Polish church, and being a usurer, he had nothing to do. So he spent all day looking at the town clock, but by now was totally sick of looking at it. He felt that if it hadn't been for the clock he could have eaten one meal after another–only the clock didn't allow it. For instance, when he drank his cup of cocoa in the morning and the dial face said eight, it seemed to him that the hands would be approaching twelve, which was the reason he wasn't hungry and couldn't finish his lunch so soon.

Meanwhile a few other people were worried, because their own timepieces kept pace with the town clock, and if it were removed, their timepieces would have nothing to keep pace with. And if all the clocks in town stopped working, how would they know? Without a clock, you can kick the bucket and not know when.

Now Shloyme the Deaf Man pointed out that it would bring good luck and prosperity for Skalle if a new church was "constructed."

"Prosperity from a church, Shloyme? Please explain."

Avrom the Chatterbox was delighted that he had tripped up Shloyme.

The deaf man didn't like getting tripped up, especially by Avrom. So he snapped: "Goo aargue with yourseelf!" (Shloyme drawled because he came from a different region). He looked at Henekh and addressed him but he actually meant Avrom. "Whyy in the world didn't hee geet itt–goyish miind! Wheen you construck a chuurch, you doo need engineers–aarchitecks, that is Plus woorkers. They'll bring in the woorkers from other towns; peasants from the four corners of the world'll come to our fairs. Doo youu geet it noow–goyish mind?"

He meant Avrom, but he said all that stuff to Henekh, who caught his drift and held his tongue. In short, the Jews looked forward to the arrival of the archbishop as they did to the coming of the Messiah (if you'll forgive my mentioning them in the same breath). Bórekh promised Sluk the dowry after the archbishop's visit. And when Henekh had to pay tuition for his son, he begged Shloyme to wait until after the visit.–God bless us!

A bit later it was rumored that the town rabbi would welcome the archbishop with a Torah scroll. A few curious men pounced on the beadle. Shloyme Perets, in the street and asked him whether it was true. Shloyme winked his blind eye (which could spot a bad coin faster than a seeing eye) and he snuffled: "How should I know?"

"They're putting up a gate at the beginning of the street and another one right by the pharmacy, and Dvoyre is standing there."

Alter's daughter Godel asked him: "What's Dvoyre doing by the pharmacy? Tell her to come home for lunch."

Godel explained that Dvoyre was standing there with her friend Shayndl; they were watching the construction of the gate.

"If she's with Shayndl, that's fine. Shayndl is a decent girl." And he went home.

By now, though, Dvoyre was standing without Shayndl, as she was watching the construction. And she didn't even give Lutsuk a second thought. Well, when Lutsuk came out alone, he came out alone–was it her fault? Was it her fault that the gate was being constructed by the pharmacy? And if he greeted her and doffed his hat, shouldn't she respond?

"It's too bad," said Lutsuk. "So many young pine trees shattered!"

"Yes, too bad." Shouldn't she have responded?

When Lutsuk looked at her, she looked away.

She stood there for a minute, then fled. She felt as if the entire marketplace could see that she yearned for the Christian.

She then had an urge to go to the wineshops. There she counted the young trees, one, two, three, four, five. "So many young pine

trees shattered!"

A Gentile was walking home in a new straw hat with a peacock feather. He was strumming a mandolin and singing a Ukrainian folk song: "Hey there under the mountain." And the feather's greenish-blue eye sang along.

Dvoyre felt alien among the trees, with the Gentile who was walking home all alone to his village, but she wasn't afraid. She had an urge to go back to the marketplace, to the shops, with their Jewish merchandise.

T*he days wore by and the* weeks wore by, and Dvoyre lived through her days and nights with the words: "So many young pine trees shattered!"

She felt it was sinful to think about the Gentile. In her depression she helped her mother, Brayne, darn socks. Her mother didn't have a clue but she wouldn't let Godel do anything spiteful to Dvoyre.

Alter, as usual, stood at the window, gazing at the town clock, intent on what he wanted from life. At eleven, for instance, the roast wasn't ready as yet, but it *was* ready by twelve noon. He argued that with God's help couldn't he live to see the roast done a bit earlier today?

His wife Brayne replied that everything required a little effort, otherwise...

Alter caught the hint and he broke in: You couldn't see any steam on her; the fat wasn't oozing from her double chin. And as corpses ate, that's what they looked like–was she listening or not?

Of course she was listening, and she replied that he ought to set his mind on more important things, there was a marriageable girl in the house–the mother groaned that her world was so dark and wretched.

Alter was at a loss to reply, but he didn't want to be tripped up. So he exclaimed: "What can I do? She's turned down Mayer Zisi. How come, girl, how come? Who can we talk to, who?"

Dvoyre was used to all this, she was used to hearing Mayer Zisi's name no matter where she happened to be. He was a good man, a fine man, Mayer Zisi with his big Adam's apple and his hammered shoulders.

She was used to seeing her mother shake her head:

She didn't want to? Didn't want to? She had something to boast about–a girl was a precious thing. Mayer Zisi had a problem, a boy had a problem–oh, sure! It was a reasonable thing, it couldn't be more reasonable! ... A reasonable dowry here, a reasonable dowry there, a reasonable legacy at death–God forbid! Our own cousins–what could be more reasonable?

But Dvoyre was already used to it.

It was harvest time. The reaped wheat and rye lay in stacks in the field and people walked across the hayfields to go swimming in the river, the swimming and the summer sunsets gave Dvoyre a tan. Lutsuk's voice haunted her everywhere –on the paths, among the stacks of wheat and rye, far, far, reaching all the way to the mill. And she was ashamed to undress in front of his voice, which followed her, burning her back, echoing her footsteps – wasn't her gait beautiful, wasn't it graceful! Peered into her eyes, from all mirrors, beautiful eyes, Dvoyre? Undo her braid, long hair, Dvoyre? No, short hair, a short braid wasn't beautiful, smear salves in her hair, soak it in the juice of yellow flowers, then the braid will grow, grow, grow. And can you sing, Dvoyre? Sing, softer, softer, don't squeal, it's not appropriate for a Jewish girl. Just a sigh, very soft, shh, keep it to yourself.

So many young pine trees shattered! ...

The Gentile was walking home all alone to his village, strumming his mandolin so beautifully and singing: "Hey there under the mountain."

Become a Christian and die!

Next Tuesday morning Moyshe-Yoyne beat the drum, telling the merchants to close their shops. Anyone who failed to do so would be fined. The Jews realized that he was coming today.

That morning, Alter had yelled at Godye, warning him not to go

and look, for it was rumored that military personnel would be present, and he might get crushed. Later on, during the big commotion, Alter ran into him and he shouted: "Go home! A Jew mustn't look at him! I'm going to synagogue."

But later on, they bumped into one another where a Jew mustn't look.

The marketplace was mobbed. Well, now everyone had seen that it was no simple matter. Yugan, the school principal, hadn't gone to spend the day getting drunk in Móyshele's tavern. At the crack of dawn, when the rooster had crowed, Yugan had sneaked in for no more than one drink.

The peasants, who had driven in from the surrounding countryside, were all in their Sunday best, and you could have said that their heads had swelled because of the great honor done to their town.

Dvoyre was standing near Hanzel's shop, gazing at the ring of spectators formed by the policemen. They were under the command of Commissioner Prakavitsh, who was riding his horse, with his fearful police mustache flying apart and with a pine sprig in his lapel. And Moyshe-Yoyne the Drunkard, who had hung up his drum, reeled after him, shouting: "Keep back! Keep back!"

Dvoyre, upon seeing the throng of Christian strangers in her Jewish marketplace, felt like a householder visited by unknown guests, who turn everything upside down, who bring along alien things and linger for a while.

She was looking forward to their returning to their lairs, their cottages, their fields. This was not their place.

Nobody knew why the police had formed the spectators into a ring. A jokester swore that the ring was meant to keep the pigs from going through.

It was getting late, and Yugan the school principal was still hurrying around, drenched in sweat.

Everyone was now looking at the priests, fat and skinny, tall and short, their bodies indicating the kinds of brains they had, fat or skinny.

But noisiest of all was the canon, who was the local priest and who had the face of a yearling heifer. His own cook said that he was an honest priest.

Suddenly, the crowd began to stir and mill, to hustle and bustle. Someone announced that he was arriving.

Who was arriving? Apparently the archbishop–no, it was the town rabbi. They were going out to receive the archbishop right there, there. "Cut it out, stop shoving, you–I mean, Alter."

"Who is it, who is it, Mottye, can you see him? The archbishop–I mean the rabbi?'

"Ah, ah, if you'll forgive my mentioning them in the same breath. What crap! An ox has a long tongue, but he can't blow a ram's horn!"

"What business is it of yours?"

"Shush! There you have it! Jews have found a time to fight. Shush, quiet, they're singing. Who's singing, what's singing? Are you deaf or something? The beadle's singing. There's the rabbi, he's walking with a minyan and he's got a Torah scroll. Itsik and Velvel are holding him by his arms. The beadle is singing: "Shloyme Perets with his Blind Eye"? What is the beadle singing? The imperial anthem, he's singing the imperial anthem."

"Alter, now then! Lemme have a look!"

Alter didn't retreat from the box he was standing on. He stayed there and even though he recognized Shloyme's voice, he pretended not to hear, then he answered deliberately, harried, dazed by the noise:" What's the big deal? Huh? An archbishop? Ain't you never seen no archbishop before?"

A minute later, however, Alter himself was so dumbfounded that he gave Shloyme *a* tiny space on the box. "Stand there, slowly, don't tread on my foot. Wow! Wow! The rabbi's coming"

Dvoyre came running over. "Papa, let me stand on your box!"

He let her climb up, and she watched.

The rabbi with the beautiful beard was walking under a canopy, escorted by two fine congregants. He was carrying a Torah scroll. Four young men in silk caftans bore the four poles of the canopy

over the Torah.

The archbishop stood facing them – an old, gray priest sporting a high, square hat and escorted by priests who were holding crosses and wearing lace robes with expensive silver embroidery. Two priests in strange high, angular hats and white stoles were carrying the statue of Jesus.

As the rabbi approached the archbishop, both groups halted.

The Torah versus Jesus.

The marketplace grew so still you could have heard a fly soaring past. There were as many people as grains of sand on the earth, and they all suddenly hushed up.

Shh.

The archbishop bowed his head to the Torah.

"O*h, jews! I can't stand it*! The Messiah is coming!"

"Did you get a load of that? He bowed his head!"

"Of course, how could he not? The Torah is older, we're older."

Dvoyre stood there as if in a dream.

If they walk across an iron bridge, they'll fall in, and if we walk across a cobweb, we won't fall in.

She peered at the old, bent rabbi holding the Torah. Its old velvet mantle was embroidered with gold, and both the velvet and the gold had faded long since. But noble and respectable like an old, rich woman, with a silk cloth, her genteel and aristocratic nature lying in the creases in her face, lying in the dust of the velvet folds.

"Dvoyre, why don't you want Mayer Zisi, why don't you?"

T*he glad tidings spread throughout* the town; He had bowed his head, he had bowed his head.

And, as she hurried home, those words hurried after her: "Of course, how could he not? The Torah is older, we're older."

AT THE POST OFFICE IN SKALA[1]

Chone Gottesfeld



FIG. 52: *Chone Gottesfeld*

On the first day I spent in my "shtetl" I was burning with curiosity to go to the post office at the time when the mailman comes out carrying the letters. The scene of the long time ago, when people used to gather in front of the post office to wait for the mailman, was never erased from my memory! I see it as if it were happening now. People used to come there an hour before the mailman emerged in order to have time to chat.

Everybody came there: oil manufacturers, owners of dry-good stores, merchants, young married men living with their in-laws who had plenty of time and were certain they would not return empty-handed, because they subscribed to a daily German newspaper: "The New Vienna Free Press" or the "Vienna Daily"; young bachelors, Zionists who were expecting Zionist journals or Hebrew pamphlets, as well as Socialists, waiting for a Socialist newspaper. Even I, who was at the time a very young boy, also used to receive mail. I subscribed to book catalogues and free sample issues of German and Hebrew newspapers offered by the publishers.

[1] A chapter from the author's Yiddish book "My Journey Through Galicia," New York, 1937.

However, all of them did not come to the post office only to pick up their newspapers or letters; they came, because that was the gathering place of people from the various parties and groups in town. For the merchants, the place was a sort of bourse and for the young Zionists, progressives and free thinkers, it was a place of contention where one struggled for ideas and opinions.

One of the Zionist opponents was a young man who lived with his in-laws, battled them with wit. He could make clever remarks and tell a joke about Zionists who sang "od lo avdo" (a line in the Zionists' Hebrew anthem asserting that, ''we didn't lose yet our hope to be a free people in our land") that would produce great laughter, that for a while rendered the young Zionists speechless. There was not one of them who was capable of answering wittily and on the spot. On a second occasion, they came already better prepared to face their opponent. They brought along a young man, son of the "shoykhet" (the ritual slaughterer), who was writing articles for Hebrew journals. He was not as witty as the Zionist opponent, but was quick and sharp. Before the other man could produce a joke, he let him have it to the solar plexus. And when it came to speaking seriously, the "shoykhet's" son was much better.

In those days people did not quarrel yet about Socialism. There were only a few socialists, but they themselves didn't precisely know what that meant. They were looking at the time for a Socialist speaker who could clearly explain the idea to them. The Zionists even offered them the use of their meeting hall for the speaker. In other towns, Zionists and Socialists were already at odds as to the differences between them, but here there was still peace and tranquility between them. The Zionists themselves were curious to hear a Socialist speaker, but in my time, it was difficult to arrange. One had to be brought from Lemberg and provided with travel expenses, something the few local Socialists could not afford. Twice a day, in the morning and at noontime, did such party meetings take place in front of the post office, until the mailman appeared interrupting their debates.

The mailman, often a Jew, and sometimes a Pole, was on good

terms with everyone. He would emerge with a sack full of letters that was hard for him to carry and was grateful when half of his load was taken off his hands right there outside of the post office. He even allowed the people to look through the bundles and pick out what belonged to them. All that I remembered very well and for that reason I was drawn to the post office to see how it looks like there now.

On that first morning in Skala, I did not manage to get to the post office, because many of my friends came to greet me and kept me from going there. In the course of the day however, I tore myself away by force and went to the post office. I was accompanied by my cousin Kalman and a couple of friends but I did not tell them what it was that attracted me there. They thought I wanted to see the post office building and assured me that there is nothing worthwhile seeing.

Finally, I am at the post office. The building of course did not interest me. It was pretty much as I remembered it, but it appeared to me to be much smaller, just as all the houses seemed to me now to be smaller than before. I looked about on all sides and expected to see people, but none were there. "What are you looking for?' they asked me. "I am looking for the people who come to pick up their mail from the post office." They looked at me astonished and asked: "Why would people come rushing here for the mail?" ''Why not?" I replied. "It's still early"–someone said–the mailman wouldn't come out for another fifteen minutes."

Another bystander asked me if I wanted to go inside the post office to see what it looks like there. "No"–I replied;–"I'll wait outside to see how it looks when the mailman emerges from the post office."

"I tell you there is nothing to see," my friend assured me, but I thought he must be wrong. As far as I was concerned, there was something to see. Then several Jews appeared, all wearing old, shabby clothes. They introduced themselves to me and when I realized who they were, my heart ached.

One of them, a man with a gray beard, ran right up to me. "I

was told you went to the post office, so I came running here," he said. I looked at him and his gray beard, and had no idea who he was. "It's me, Nachman Moshe," he said. I immediately remembered him. This was the man who had once been slapped at the post office for insulting another Jew who was an opponent of the Zionists. "I remember you quite well," I said to him: "I even remember when you were slapped at the post office."

"Why do you use the polite (Yiddish) form of "you" speaking to me?" he inquired. "How can I use the word "du" (in Yiddish) addressing a gray-bearded man?" I replied. "If you would have remained here as I did, you too would have had a gray beard," he told me.

"And what about the slaps? Does one get slapped even now at the post office?" I asked. "Those times are now gone," he said, "and there is no one left to deliver those slaps any more, nor is there any reason. We are all Zionists now and at the first opportunity we would all go there (referring to the land of Israel)."

"And what about the Arab pogroms?" I asked. He laughed. "What are you laughing at?"

"A Galician Jew is afraid of pogroms?" he retorted. "On the contrary. If Arabs make pogroms, we need to go there to fight them."

As I was thinking about his response, the mailman came out of the post office. He held several letters in his hand and did not stop, but hurried away. The Jews followed him. I stood there observing the scene. The first thing I noticed was that the mailman had only a handful of letters for the entire town; secondly, the rudeness of the Polish mailman, who didn't stop even for a minute to tell the Jews whether he had some mail, for them or not. In my time, if a mailman would have behaved in that fashion, he would have been torn apart and would have never risked it, to begin with, Breathless, the Jews returned from the mailman without letters. "There was no point in my running–one of them said–I was expecting a letter from a relative in America, but if one doesn't write, nothing arrives

"I knew I wouldn't get any mail," said another man to me. "My relatives in America haven't written me in years. They have entirely forgotten about me. Nevertheless, I go to the post office every day, perhaps someone had remembered me; perhaps, I have no other hope . . ."

"And I tell you," a third one spoke up. ``If they knew over there, how important one of their letters is to us, they would write us more often. They just don't know . . . "

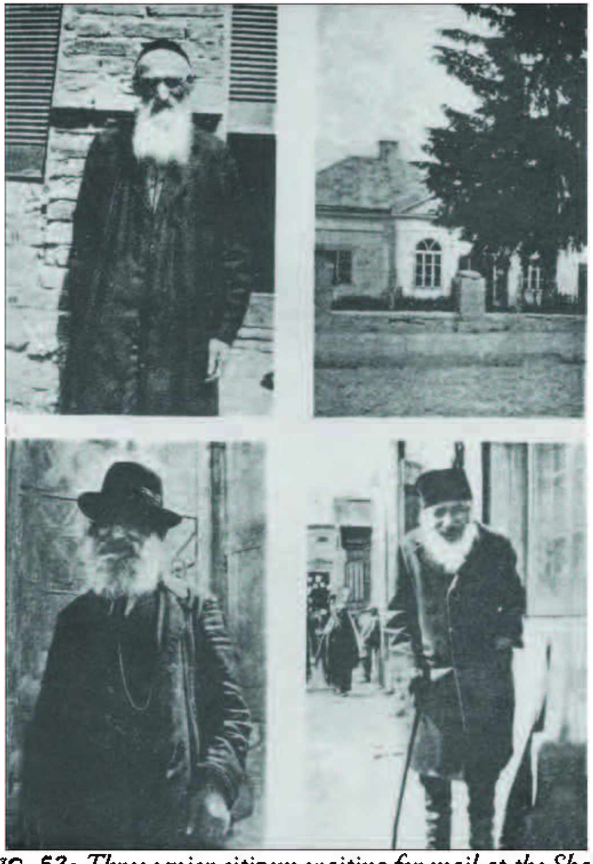


FIG. 53: *Three senior citizens waiting for mail at the Skala Post office (1930). Clockwise are seen: Gedalie Tabachnik, Srul Feuerstein (Yosis) and Moshke Gottesfeld*

"What would you get from letters?" I asked. ``If they would send money, I would understand, but what good is a letter?"

"A letter is also good," said my friend, who had once been slapped at the post office. ``What good is it without money?" I asked. "One gets credit from it," said my friend. ``Once I received a letter from a relative, I got money to get a start in business and what not, but over there they don't know what a letter from America means," chimed in someone else.

I walked along with those Jews from the post office and everyone of them stirred me up in his own way, telling myself that upon my return to America I'll explain to them back home, just what a letter from them means here.

Our conversation was interrupted by a women dressed in rags who was coming toward me. She introduced herself and told me that her husband was in America and that she had not heard from him in years. She also told she has three children who suffer from hunger and cold. She begged me to contact her husband and persuade him to have pity on her. She wept bitterly and asked me why her husband is so heartless. How can a father forget his own children? In order to comfort her, I wrote down her name in my notebook, although I knew there is nothing I can do for her. I knew her husband. He was mentally ill and was in an insane asylum.

Before that woman left, a second one appeared, also dressed in rags and crying bitterly. She has a son in America who doesn't even write her a letter. "I worked myself to the bone to raise him; I begged and borrowed and pawned everything in order to send him to America, so that he could become somebody, and now he doesn't even write. Why is he like that? What sins did I commit that my child, my own flesh and blood, should forget me? What harm would it do to him if he would write me a letter? He doesn't have to send me money, I forgive him, I'm already used to go hungry, At least let him write me to save me from the embarrassment before people that I have a son who doesn't write me."

Skala Characters of Yesteryear

By Chaim Brettler

As *is known, every Jewish city* had its specific types and personages–serious or comical–stories of who were transmitted from generation to generation. Only people from the specific city would especially enjoy these stories. I will try here to present a series of personalities from almost all strata of Jews from the near and distant past when Skala pulsated with life and had a pleasant appearance.

I hope that in reading these lines, youthful memories and a forgotten yearning toward our hometown will be awakened among the youth. They will also lead the reader out of the vale of tears–from the ruined town with its murdered Jews to the Skala of yesteryear.

Baruch Leib, the Vizhnitz "Patriot"

T*he following tale is not merely* a tale, but a fact that was known in all the circles of Vizhnitz Hassidim outside of Skala.

Baruch Leib, an idler but a fervent Vizhnitser Hassid, feeling himself not altogether whole, went off to Vienna to be healed. Counting on staying for a long while in Vienna he did not forget, when packing, to take everything that a Jew needs when he embarks on a journey–*tallis* and *tefillin*, a *streimel*, a silken *kapote*, and … a large supply of toilet paper. After he was there for a considerable while, Baruch Leib realized that his toilet paper was used up. He did not think long about it; he went to a paper store. The *Yekke* (German Jew), though a Jew, did not understand anything but the word "paper." He displayed all sorts of paper before him: writing paper, packing paper, flower paper, and wallpaper. Baruch Leib was not satisfied and shook his head broadly. The *Yekke* (German Jew)

looked at the "eastern Jew" and could not think of what to do. Then he asked Baruch Leib where he came from and Baruch Leib replied, "Skala on the Zbrucz" Hearing that, the German Jew stood trembling. Skala was known in Vienna because of the Skala Count Goluchowski who was the Interior Minister of Austria-Hungary. Skala, after all, was on the Russian border and this "eastern Jew" wanted some kind of incomprehensible paper. Very perplexed he thought that the man was no doubt a Russian spy. Ah ... the beard, the *peyos*, the plush hat and the *kapote?* Well, a spy disguises himself. That was it!

The German Jew immediately called the police. The police did not have much success. During the investigation, Baruch Leib held to his story: He was from Skala and he wanted to buy toilet paper and nothing else.

At this point the investigator had a thought (a police thought). He would pose a question to Baruch Leib. If he was really from Skala, then let him say to whom Skala belonged. What the investigator had in mind was this: if the "Jew" knew that Skala belonged to Count Goluchowski, then he is not a spy, but just some kind of confused fool and he would free him. However, if he did not know the right answer then he must certainly be a dangerous spy. At this point the investigator took him to task. "You claim that you are from Skala. Then tell me clearly to whom does Skala belong?" And Baruch Leib promptly answered, "In the beginning Skala belonged to Vizhnitz until there was an uprising of several libertines who split off to Czortkow"–clear as the day.

The end of the story: After remaining for a while under investigation arrest, Baruch Leib was brought back to Skala under police escort.

"BUT HE IS SINGING *TITBORACH*"

As *everyone knows, until* the great schism between Vizhnitz and Czortkow, all the Hassidim were from Vizhnitz, It goes without saying that the Vizhnitz prayer rite was the only one. When the

quarrel broke out the new Czortkower Hassidim instituted the Czortkower prayer rite. But the trouble was that, having worshipped all their lives in one particular order it was very difficult to change over to the new rite. It came to blows on more than one occasion. In order to avoid desecrating the Holy Name, a policeman was posted there, especially on holidays, to maintain order.

Among the Vizhnitser it was the custom to sing *Titborach* on the Three Festivals[1], The Czortkowers did not do so until a misfortune took place. On one of the days of Passover, the leader of the *Shacharit* service forgot himself and began to sing the *Titborach.* When a tumult ensued, one of the householders, wishing to avoid violation of the holiday went out to the policeman (the policeman used to stand outside, not daring to go into a holy place), crying "*Panye, Panye!*" pointing to the prayer leader. The astonished gentile did not understand the situation at all. He said to the excited Jew in Polish, "But he's doing nothing bad," at which the excited Jew shouted, "He's singing *Titborach.*"

"GOOD MORNING NUTMEG CHIMNEY"

R*eb Moshe Dudi Meltzer* (May he rest in peace) the wealthy man of the city, and Reb Leibish Nota's (Feuerstein may he rest in peace), were approximately the same age, and in their youth studied in the same *cheder.* Leibish had a much better comprehension than Moshe Dudi. As luck would have it, however, Moshe Dudi was a landowner, one of the largest Jewish landowners in Galicia. On the other hand, Leibish was a poor man throughout his life. Later on with intercession of his relative, the head of the town council, Moshe Feuerstein, he lived in the bathhouse. It goes without saying that no one paid the slightest attention to him.

[1] The Three Festivals (or Three Pilgrim Festivals) refer to Passover, *Shavuot, and Sukkot. Titborach* is a section of the prayer service that is optionally recited at one point.

One day, Leibish was passing by Moshe Dudi's house, just as the rich man was standing outside. Seeing Leibish he called out a cheerful, "Good morning, Head Turner," (Leibish used to hold his head to one side). The expression "Head Turner"[2] was not meant as an insult, G-d forbid; but rather as an expression of youthful camaraderie. But the poverty stricken Leibish immediately replied, "Good morning Nutmeg Chimney" (having in mind the tall chimney of his distillery). He continued on saying "You know, Moshe Dudi, that I am a better scholar than you, and my pedigree is no less than yours. So what is it? I am a poor man, living in the bathhouse, so I am called Head Turner. As for you on the other hand, everyone greets you with a respectful 'Good morning'. Be aware that they do not mean you. They mean the nutmeg chimney. They are telling a lie, but I am telling the truth."

"HE PROPHESIED AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT HE PROPHESIED": A STORY ABOUT A TRAIN

O*ne day, Leibish's Nota's came* to Moshe Dudi on a particular matter. This time, Moshe Dudi admonished him seriously and intimately, saying "Leibish, you are a scholarly Jew. If you put yourself together and become a person, you would not have to live in the bathhouse." At that, Leibish replied as follows: "Our life on our lowly earth is compared to going to a train. Count Goluchowski rides to the station in an expensive chariot. You, Moshe Dudi, ride there in a fine coach. A prosperous Jew goes there in Yisroel Yoel's Fiaker[3]. A simple Jew rides there in a horse and wagon while I, Leibish, take up the sack over my shoulders and go on foot. It is true, all of you come to the train more quickly and better rested than I do while I arrive last, weary, and soaked in sweat. Once in the train, however, we are all alike. When alive, we all live in different manners; however, once we are in the earth, we

[2] The Yiddish *Dreikop* literally means Head Turner, but is often used as an insulting term for someone who drives people crazy.
[3] A Viennese horse-drawn carriage.

will all lie there alike."

BARUCH FEUERSTEIN, THE DIRECTOR

I*n our town, a good many years* ago, there was a Jew, Reb Baruch Feuerstein, whom the town Jews called Baruch the Director. The name fit him perfectly. He was an influential Jew, respected by the landowners, and Jews trembled before him with deathly fear.

That which I am about to recount happened to my grandfather, Reb Baruch Tabak, of blessed memory, who, when he was 16 years old, came to Skala as a scholar-boarder at the home of his father-in-law, Reb Zayde Drimmer of blessed memory. Having been only a short while in town and barely knowing anyone, he passed by Reb Baruch the Director's house just as he was majestically sitting outside in a chair. Seeing my grandfather, he called out, "Young lad! Come over here!" (At that time, my grandfather did not yet have the beginnings of a beard, so he thought he was still a bachelor). When my grandfather approached him, he commanded him, "Go carry out the tub." When my astonished grandfather did not move from the spot, the strongman shouted, "Do you hear what I said you?"

My grandfather, though still a young man, was not frightened and replied to the Director: "Was it appropriate for you to ask me to carry the tub. You are not sick, and you can carry it yourself."

The Director jumped to his feet in anger and asked the bystanders, "Who is this impudent fellow?" Someone from the crowd replied, "He is Reb Zayde Drimmer's youngest son-in-law." At that, the Director promptly calmed down, saying, "Young man, you will remain a local resident, since you knew how to reply to me." Since then he never bothered him again.

A VILLAGE JEW BECOMES A *HALACHIC* DECISOR

In *Orach Chaim*[4], the section of Passover, section 429, it is stated

[4] The name of one of the four sections of the Code of Jewish Law (*Shulchan Aruch*).

"We asked about and expound for 30 days prior to Passover." That means that, for 30 days before Passover one elucidates and discusses the rules governing Passover. In his *Mapa* glosses on the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law) the *Rema* (Reb Moshe Isserlis) remarks that it was the custom to purchase wheat and to distribute it among poor people. As one sees from the words of the *Rema* it was only a custom. Nevertheless *maot chittin*[5] became a hallowed responsibility to provide poor people with Passover necessities, so that they could truly feel themselves as freemen. Thus, was it established throughout the Diaspora, from earliest times to the present day as a noble, humane injunction that is fitting for Passover, the festival of freedom.

We in Skala also carried out the annual *maot chittin* collection. Here, I want to talk about one of those Passover eves.

The rabbi of Skala, Rabbi Avraham Drimmer of blessed memory, used to occupy himself greatly with *maot chittin*. He was, along with my uncle, Reb Yisroel Drimmer of blessed memory went around the city collecting money every year. They also used also to ride to the surrounding villages, particularly to Cygany and Losiocz, where a considerable number of Jewish families lived. Aside from money, they would collect potatoes, beets, and the like from them.

In Cygany, they used to stop at Yisroel Cyganyer's house, which also used to serve as the village synagogue in which communal services were held. In the meanwhile, Yisroel let it be known to the village Jews that they had honorable guests among them. The people came and donated generously. Once, one of the Jews came to the rabbi with a question: saying, "Rabbi, I beg you, please test my son." When the rabbi asked what the boy was studying, the proud Jew replied "He is already studying "*leshaym*" meaning no doubt the devotion recited prior to the putting on of *tefillin*. The rabbi said, "Call him in!" The youth came in. The rabbi, seeing before him a nearly grown man asked the father, "How old is the

[5] Money for the purchase of wheat for the needy for Passover, and more generally, money raised for the purchase of all needs of the needy on Passover.

lad?" The father replied, "He is in his eighteenth year." The rabbi, irritated, shouted, "You mean to say that he will only now begin to lay *tefillin*?" "Yes, rabbi," the Jew innocently replied, "You see rabbi, until now, he was the youngest in the village so that he carried the *tallises* of the Jews to the synagogue on the Sabbath. I would not let him become *Bar Mitzvah* because after the *Bar Mitzvah* one is not permitted to carry on the Sabbath. Now, since Sender has another boy who has grown up, that boy will be able to carry the *tallises*. Now do you understand?"

THE REMAINS OF THE SABBATH LOAF

Chaim Yisroel Buga was known in Skala as a quoter of sayings, a joke maker, a prankster, and a merry fellow. This was especially true in the years before the First World War when he was wealthy. Sometimes he would engage in mockery, particularly with beggars.

As is known, every Sabbath morning poor women went from house to house gathering Sabbath loaves. Each woman had either a tied apron or simply carried a sack into which to throw the collected pieces of the loaves.

Chaim Yisroel, the prankster, who used to take pleasure from his own tricks, on one Saturday made a wave to an entering woman, "Excuse me, but let me have change of a loaf." When the confused woman, carrying her sack, did not understand, he clarified what he was saying as follows: "When in the course of the week you gather alms and someone wants change from a whole silver *reinish* you give it to him, is that not so? Today is the Sabbath, and if you gather up *chala* loaves, give me the change of a loaf."

TEACHER-MERCHANT-PRESIDENT AND THE WATER CARRIER

Shlomo Weinraub, known as Shlomo, Alter's was a Torah scholar. Before the First World War, he was known in Skala as a *Gemara* teacher and indeed a very good one, as the parents of the students said of him. He was a stern Jew, meticulous about everything and

demanding obedience. If one of his students did not follow or did not understand the portion of the *Gemara*, then Shlomo used to drill it into him. He was unsparing....

At the outbreak of the First World War, Shlomo left Skala as a refugee. Upon returning to Skala after the war, he abandoned his teaching and became a merchant, opening a grocery store. He did not abandon his sternness or his punctuality; he simply carried these over from the students to the worshippers in the Port Arthur Synagogue, where he reigned as president-"dictator." You will no doubt ask "How is it that a holy place should be called Port Arthur, with the name itself reminiscent of barracks and of a 'Russian thief?'" There is a story about that. Since the place was built just after a great fire, it was built of the finest materials: stone, bricks and a tin roof–practically a fortress. Skala "politickers" who followed the Russo-Japanese War and the battle of Port Arthur named the place "Port Arthur" on account of its massiveness. The name endured for generations. Here one needs to add: Shlomo was worth everything. He was the first to give money; he was the prayer leader and Torah reader, and on *Rosh Hashanah* he blew the *shofar*– all without remuneration. Because of him the Port Arthur synagogue could exist, because almost all of the worshippers were not people of means. The congregation understood this and not only respected Shlomo, but also simply feared him. His word was a command.

On *Simchat Torah,* Shlomo, the president, used to invite the entire congregation to his home for *Kiddush.* His wife would serve all sorts of holiday foods as well as brandy. The enthusiastic congregants sang and danced until almost time for *Mincha* service.

One of Shlomo's "underlings" was Matia Rechter, a water carrier. One *Simchat Torah* Matia sat for a long time at *Kiddush.* His wife, Veli, went about worried, not knowing where her Matia might be. Meanwhile, the day was passing, the holiday meal was getting cold, and Matia had disappeared as if he had fallen into the water. Suddenly, Matia appeared, drunk, and humming a holiday melody, uttering a hearty, "Happy holiday, Velinyu." She replied

angrily, "A bleak holiday at your head. To where did you disappear? I was beginning to wonder who knows what." But Matia paid no attention to her anger, and cheerfully he quoted a passage from *Ata hareita.*[6] "Sing, Velinyu, *vayhiyu na omreymu leratzon lifnay adon kol."* Hearing Matia pouring out quotations almost like a rabbi, Veli said quietly, "I did not know what to think. And the food is getting cold." Matia replied, again with a quotation, "Recite, Velinyu, *Malchutko malchut kol olamim, umemshaltecho bekol dor vador."* At this Veli said prettily, "Tell me, Matia darling, that you were at Shlomo's and swallowed Torah along with stuffed cabbage. May they sit well with you. Wash and come to the table."

SMACKS FOR THE KAISER'S BREAD

D*uring the time of the* Russo-Japanese War in 1905, every Jew of the *kloiz* became an impressive political analyst and military strategist, especially when Reb Moshe Brauer, an "open-minded person," used to read and analyze the news from a paper in the Czortkower Kloiz. The listeners would become aroused and engage in debates. Almost all of them had the opinion that the Japanese, with one crossed eye in the forehead, would make rubble out of the Russian thief. The Russians would suffer a defeat.

However, Reb Shlomo Aharon, a teacher and an irascible person who came from Russia, was not at all convinced of a Japanese victory. On the contrary, he was certain that the Cossacks with swords would chop up the Japanese like cabbage, would grind their bones, and throw them to the *kutshmes*[7]

Hearing such things, Reb Meir Yoshe's (Kopeliusz), a retired Austrian soldier, honored Reb Shlomo Aharon with a few smacks. A commotion ensued and they shouted at Meir, "Is it possible, does

[6] A medley of verses recited prior to removing the Torah scrolls from the ark for the *Simchat Torah* processions. The verse quoted in the next sentence is "And may our utterances be pleasing before the Master of all." The verse quoted a few lines down is "Your kingdom is a kingdom for all eternity, and Your rule is from generation to generation."

[7] This sentence uses several words which do not seem to be standard Yiddish, and are likely slang. Not translated literally.

it make sense? Does one lay a hand on a Jew, a scholar, is it possible?" Meir was prepared with an answer: "Yes, it is a *mitzvah* for him. He (Shlomo Aharon) gorges himself on the Kaiser's bread, so he should not talk against him and be his enemy..."

NOTHING IS NEW UNDER THE SUN

When the railway line was built in Skala in the 1880s, Jews waited in suspense, speculated, and gestured with their fingers in order to understand the "wisdom" behind the thing... Those who had not seen this innovation previously especially broke their "minds"–as it is called a train, an iron destroyer with burning eyes, running like a wind, blowing smoke–a mortal danger. Can one conceive of the noise and the turmoil that ensues when the train comes for the first time? Kith and kin were at the station. Even bearded Jews, scholars who were careful about wasting time from Torah study, came. Is it a small thing, a trivial matter, a train!

Yossel the Yellow (Blumenthal) was also among the crowd gathered at the station. He was born in Borszczow, and, therefore, was somewhat worldly, and nevertheless faithful to the Torah.

The train finally arrived at the train station with a whistle and a puff of smoke, pulling a full column of wagons. Then the amazed Jews saw a wagon with horses in the middle of the column of wagons. When Yossel Blumenthal saw the horses, he waved his hand authoritatively and said, "Nothing is new under the sun; the horses drag an ordinary wagon from the front; the horses drag a train from the middle..."

"TALLER" AND "SHORTER" FEUERSTEINS

Baruch Rozenbaum, Reb Mendel Moshe Leib's son-in-law's son, worked in Reb Yisrael's Zajdman's warehouse. Once, he was conversing with a gentile about the family pedigree of the Feuerstein family (he, Baruch, was a grandson of Reb Moshe Leib Feuerstein). He claimed that the name Feuerstein came to them

from Kaiser Josef II. How did so many Feuersteins end up in such a small town as Skala? The answer is that Reb Aharon Meshulam Feuerstein, who was the director of the registry, would, for a set price, register in the roster as 'Feuerstein' Jews who arrived from Russia or other places and needed a fictitious name. No family relationship exists between them.

When the gentile asked Baruch if Yisrael Yosi's, who was also named Feuerstein, is from his family, Baruch replied in the negative. Seeing that the uncircumcised person with a gentile mind did not understand the situation, he attempted to explain with reason, in Ukrainian, "You understand, Ivan, we are taller and they are shorter?" The confused gentile asked, "In what way are you taller and they shorter?" Baruch Feuerstein responded, "We worship in the Czortkower Kloiz and they in the *Beis Midrash*."

YESHAYA KROHN THE MIRACLE WORKER

Yeshaya Krohn, Shaika the scribe's son, was a well known personage in Skala due to his strange profession, or professions. First, he was a great writer[8], with fine penmanship, Hebraic expressions and with flourishes. He utilized that skill frequently. He possessed an entire box with addresses of very wealthy people and other personalities in Germany and also in Vienna. He also knew when all of these tycoons and great people observed *yahrzeit* or celebrated some sort of joyous occasion. At every occasion, especially for Rosh Hashanah, he would send a letter with the finest blessings to all of his honorees. To the wealthiest people, such as Rothschild, he would circle and ripple the title along the entire side. He would indeed receive money from those epistles.

That activity formed only a portion of his livelihood, only when he was at home and in the city. Yeshaya would often trouble himself to travel to far off villages and towns when nobody knew him, accompanied by an assistant, Shlomo Sofer, and present

[8] The term used here often implies some sarcasm.

himself as a "Fine Jew"[9], a miracle worker.

With a silk *Radziwolka*[10] over his *kapote*, a *spodek* on his head, a Turkish pipe in his mouth, and a cane with an ivory[11] handle, flat shoes and socks that extended above the knee–he presented the vivid image of a Rebbe.

His custom, for example, was as follows: He would arrive in a town on Thursday night, and stay overnight at one of his Hassidim. On Friday morning, when the woman of the house was occupied with the preparations for the Holy Sabbath, and with preparations for him "May he live," his assistant went in to ask about the fish "May it live"–one must have fish in honor of the Sabbath. If the woman of the house would answer him with embarrassment that to her sorrow, there was no fish in these places, the assistant would return to the "Rebbe" and shortly come out from him, saying "The Rebbe, may he live asked that we go to the river of the town to catch a fish in honor of the Sabbath." (He was certain about this, for when he arrived in the town the previous evening he tossed a sack of live fish into the river). He, "May he live" ordered, is it not to be pertinent! The head of the house went to the river, and, wonder of wonders, he caught fish. Does one need a better sign? If "May he live" wants it, he can do it. He had a sign–the next Friday Jews went to the river to catch fish and came home with empty.

Now I will tell about another sign that Yeshaya was known for in the places where he traveled.

In a certain village, there was a wealthy lessee who was also a great miser. The lessee's wife was an evil woman. Not only would they not give any donations to poor people, but they would not let any Jew through their threshold. When Shaika heard about this heartless couple, he decided to teach them a lesson and to return them to the path of good. On a cold winter afternoon, when the snow was blowing fiercely, Shaika set out to the lessee. He remained sitting in the sled and sent Shlomo his assistant into the tavern to

[9] This term "*Guter Yid*" can mean a Hassidic Rabbi.

[10] Meaning uncertain. A *kapote* is a Hassidic frock and a *spodek* is a fur hat.

[11] Literally "bony," which I interpret as ivory. The word I translated as "handle" (*golke*) is also not clear.

ask if the "Rebbe" could enter. The lessee responded immediately, "You know, we do not let any vagabonds in" Shlomo assured him that he was not a vagabond, but rather a Rebbe, a *Tzadik*, and the only thing that he requests is that he be permitted to enter to recite the *Mincha* and *Maariv* services. The owner agreed, saying, "Let him come in, go to the back room, recite his prayers, and then immediately leave." After receiving the permission, Shlomo went out, returned with the "Rebbe," and entered the back room. There Shaika suddenly saw a cat warming itself by the heater. He decided that now was the appropriate time to teach the evil people a lesson. He unbuttoned the cover of the feather bed, caught the cat, threw it into the open cover, rebuttoned it, and began to recite his prayers. He concluded his prayers and, while already in his coat, he had a conversation with the lessee, "In any case, I forgive you for embarrassing me, but you must repent on account of the concerns of my holy forbears." He boarded the sled and set off. As he was traveling, he said to Shlomo, "We will travel to a nearby village, to the lessee, and wait for them to come to us." In the meantime, the miserly lessee made up the feather bed, went with his wife into the bedroom, turned off the lamp, and immediately went to bed. Then, after he had warmed up, the lessee's wife began to shriek: "Help! Woe is me! Something is crawling around in the featherbed." The man, terribly afraid, tried to calm her down, that it was her imagination. It did not help. She continued to shriek that something is running around. The lessee got out of bed, lit a candle, and started shouting woe; the entire feather bed was shaking. He shouted again, "I will have you in the ground, you evil thing, for you embarrassed a good Jew, a good deed on you." Seeing however that the thing running in the feather bed did not hear, and that his wife was full of terror, the lessee said to her, "Get dressed and go prepare the sled. I will go to the good Jew, fall before his feet and beg forgiveness from him."

Terrified and afflicted, they arrived in the first village, traveled to the local Jewish innkeeper, to ask him if he had seen some Rebbe.

The neighboring innkeeper answered happily, "The Rebbe is with me." The terrified couple felt a stone lift from their hearts. They both went to the "Rebbe" with a wail. Falling at his feet, they began to weep to him, "Holy *Tzadik*, we have sinned greatly, have mercy upon us and remove the curse from us. We tell you that we will conduct ourselves differently." Shaika sat in thought and finally said, as if to himself, "So, if Jews repent, one must forgive them." To the lessees he said, "Go prepare the sled, I wish to travel home with you." Upon arrival, the "Rebbe" ordered, "Let me into the bedroom. Nobody should open the door until I come out. I must pray." He went into the room, closed the door behind him, unbuttoned the bed cover, and let the cat out. Right after, "May he live" came out with a shining face and said, "Believe G-d, you can go to sleep." He also spent the night there. The wife of the lessee went into bed, and it was pleasantly quiet. Witnessing the "portent" with their own eyes, they already looked differently at the "holy" man. They rewarded him, and from that time, they were changed people. The lessee became a fervent follower of Shaika and also a host of guests. (I heard about the portents of Shaika from his assistant Shlomo Sofer, may G-d avenge his blood, when I studied in *cheder* with my dear Rebbe, Reb Avraham Morgansztern of blessed memory, the Bodzanower *Melamed*).

MORE MIRACLES

W*hen Shimon Gottesfeld* (Glezer) married Esther Yosi's (Wiesenthal), they had no happiness for the first years of their marriage. This was because they had no children. Esther did everything that one was to do in such a situation. First, as a member of the Wiesenthal family, fervent Czortkower Hassidim, was wont to do, she ran with notes of request and donations to the Czortkower Rebbe. She was not unburdened, however; her wishes remained closed.

This was until one time, during a moment of bitterness, she said to her brother: "Perhaps I should go with a note of request to the

Visznitzer Rebbe and then I might be helped through him?" "Heaven forbid," her brother shouted with trembling, "You must not dare to do such a thing, I refuse to allow you." So, she had to obey.

Once, the Horodenker Rebbe, Rabbi Yechiel Michael of blessed memory, came to Skala. Esther could no longer withstand the trial, and she went to the Rebbe, where she poured out her bitter heart. The Rebbe wished her that she should have a male child. Miracle over miracles, that year she became pregnant and bore a son (our Feivele Gottesfeld, today in Haifa). The joy was great and even her family had to admit that she had done something good.

Obviously, she then joined the Horodenker Hassidim. Two years later, when the Horodenker came again to Skala, Esther took the child by the hand and set out joyously to the Rebbe. Upon reading the note and recalling the incident, the Rebbe said, "I prayed for this lad"[12]. His Hassid Moshe Kohn, who was present and was amazed at the Rebbe's sharpness of memory, said, "He has such a head, he will take down the foolishness!"

THE VIENNER *SHOCHET* AND THE CONGEALED *CHALLAH*

The "Vienner" *Shochet* was one of the religious functionaries in Skala. As with all other *shochtim*, he performed his holy work honorably. Why was he known as the "Vienner" *Shochet*? It could be that the collar of his shirt was already buttoned with a button and not bound with loose ribbons; and also perhaps because he wore boots with bootlegs on his feet rather than shoes with socks up to the knee. It could also be that he set his beard and *peyos* with *akrip*[13]. Or perhaps there are other reasons.

Skala jokers told the following awesome story about that "Vienner" *shochet* and his wife.

[12] A quote from I Samuel, when Chana brought the child Samuel to Eli the priest.

[13] *Akrip* could mean boiling water, but I believe that here it means some lotion or potion that hold the beard and *peyos* in place.

Every Thursday, the *shochet* would be busy with cattle in the slaughterhouse until late at night. It already became the eve of the Sabbath. He came to his house tired, had something to eat, and immediately fell into a deep sleep.

His wife would get up a few hours before dawn on Friday in honor of the Sabbath, to heat the oven and bake *challah* and other good things in honor of the holy day of rest.

During those days, wives would leave the kneaded dough under the feather bed, especially in the wintertime, so that it could rise very well in the warmth. On a winter Friday, when the *shochet's* wife got up for her work, felt that there was an extreme cold in the house and that her husband was sleeping like a corpse, she took the dough out from her cold bed and laid it in her husband's warm bed. She lit the oven and went red-faced to her husband's bed to nip off a piece of dough and throw it into the fire to fulfill the commandment of taking *challah*[14]. She began to lift up the *shochet's* feather bed, attempted to nip off a reasonable peace, but, oh no, nothing came. She nipped and nipped, but she could not break off a piece of dough. Terrified, the *shochet's* wife screamed, "Woe is me, a misfortune happened to me, a disaster happened to me." The *challah* has congealed, and it was completely impossible to tear off a piece of dough. She used force and made a very strong nip. Then the *shochet* shouted out, "Do you really have nothing better to do than to pinch me in my rear end, in the cold and in the dark? A shame!"

Then the shochet's wife realized her mistake, and nipped off the real dough in the trough...

[14] The Torah commands that when dough is prepared, a portion is to be taken off and given to the priest. When the Temple does not exist, this commandment is fulfilled by taking off a small piece of dough and burning it. This commandment is called "taking challah." See Numbers 15: 17-21.

BELIEF IN *TZADDIKIM*

T*he following story took place* when the great fire broke out in Skala in 1899, which almost devoured the entire town. As is known, this fire began at the home of Wolf Meir David's (later Moshe Wasserman's) house and the flames quickly spread to other houses. The outcry literally pierced the heavens. Peretz (Eliahu Herszer's grandfather) went out and calmly counted the houses. When astonished people asked him what he was doing, he answered, "I have a blessing from a Rebbe that if more than seven houses do not burn, then mine will be the eighth." What was the end of the story? In the "merit" of his faith, his house indeed burnt down with its contents.

THE LANDOWNER ITZIKL EVANKOVER BECOMES A MONEY MINTER

Louis Menchel

Some lines and episodes of the life of my great-great-grandfather Reb Itzik Menczel, or, as he was called, Reb Itzikl Iwankower, can give a partial portrait of life in Skala of more than 130 years ago.

Around the year 1844, Reb Itzikl Iwankower was a landowner, as well as a very scholarly, pious, charitable Jew. He gave money generously to aid the marriage of orphan girls and was also a very hospitable man. Beyond that, he was a fervent *chasid* of the Vizhnitser Rebbe, Reb Mendeli, and was under his influence.

Reb Itzikl Menczel (Iwankower) had acquaintances as well as a particular influence in the circles of Kaiser Franz Josef's courtiers.

In the year 1845, there was a lack of ten *kreuzer* pieces (*zekserlekh*–"sixers") in the money market. This greatly disturbed the Skala civic banking business. The Jewish Iwankower proprietor then went off to the finance minister in Vienna with a request for ten *kreuzer* coins. At that time, the regime lacked the metal to make the "sixers" so he authorized my ancestor Itzik Menczel to mint a certain number of "sixers" under the control of the regime. The "sixers" were made of a red metal and were current for a period of twelve years.

The "sixers" were then called the red "*Itziklekh*."

As has been said, our grandfather, Itzik Menczel was a fervent Vizhnitser *Hassid,* so he traveled to the rebbe on every Sabbath that coincided with *Rosh Chodesh*[1].

[1] *Rosh Chodesh* is the beginning of the Jewish month, marked by special prayer services and other observances. It occurs for one or two days, depending on the length of the month (If the preceding month is 29 days, *Rosh Chodesh* is on the 1st, whereas if the preceding month has 30

At that time, a number of Vizhnitser *Hassidim,* headed by my grandfather Itzikl Menczel, gathered together in Skala. In the year 1848, he built a *kloiz*[2] in which the Vizhnitser Rebbe's prayer rite and customs were strictly followed. The synagogue was called "Itzikl's Kleizl."

The related families that descended from our great-great-grandfather, Itzik Menczel the landowner of Iwankow, were Mendel Menczel, Mendel Kahn, Mendel Kelman, Mr. and Mrs. Kopel Weintraub, and Sarah Wiesenthal.

days, *Rosh Chodesh* is on the 30th and the 1st). *Rosh Chodesh* will coincide with the Sabbath two or three times a year.

[2] A *Kloiz* is a small, informal, *Hassidic* prayer hall.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND MY FATHER'S *SHTRYMEL*

Jacob Wisenthal [z"l][1]

[Born in Skala, 1891; died Miami Beach, Fla., 1982]
[Grandfather of Helene Schwartz Kenvin]
Translated from the Yiddish story[2]
published in the Skala Yizkor book (1978)



FIG. 54: *Jacob Wiesenthal*

When I was a young religious school student before the First World War, in Skala and other communities in eastern Galicia there suddenly appeared a distressing decree. All children

[1] z"l means zichrono l'vracha (may his memory be a blessing).

[2] Shkola means school. A shtreimel is a fur hat worn by Hasidic Jews on the Sabbath and holidays. A fendung is a German legal writ issued to ensure that someone complies with a court order. A bailiff will go to the person's house with the fendung, to see if there is anything of value that can be confiscated. In modern times, rather than actually taking items, the bailiff usually puts stickers on them indicating that they do not belong to the person any more. Anything needed for daily life cannot get taken. The fendung gives the person time to do what the court has ordered. If the person fails to comply with the court order, the stickered items are forfeited and sold.

going to senior-school must attend a state-run elementary school. Private tutoring with a teacher -- which until now was permitted– was not enough. One had to go to a *shkola*!

The Austrian king Franz Josef was really a gracious king.[3] He was good to the Jews; but to go to a *shkola* -- he should not have done this. The king's education-ministry had maintained: You have all rights and freedom; so send the children to the *shkola*!

Among pious scholars, the Hasidic Jews, there was a turmoil. Sending children to *shkola* means they must sit without a yarmulke, with a bare head, and crucifixes hang on the wall? They will hear unclean trash, where Christian children babble on, and who knows what else? Perhaps they will have to go to *shkola* on the Sabbath and, God forbid, desecrate the Sabbath? That will not happen! Let be what will be, Jewish, pious children will not go to *shkola*, and that's it!

My father, Reb Hirsh Eliahu, may he rest in peace, was also among the naysayers who said absolutely not. The state education committee eventually became used to the decree and my father was punished by being fined by them. A fendung was issued, which meant that something had to be removed from his house.

Moshe Yonah, the Jewish policeman who came to direct the fendung, deliberated and decided that the best thing to take from the house was my father's *shtreimel*. But Moshe Yoneh the policeman, a Jew with a beard and side curls, who wore a fur hat and long coat on the Sabbath and the holidays, found a trick by which he could get out of the dilemma.

How could he allow a Hassidic Jew like my father go on the Sabbath and holidays without a *shtreimel*? So every Sabbath eve and holiday, Moshe Yonah brought the *shtreimel* back to my father's house and after Sabbaths and holidays he picked it up and returned it to the police station. That is how Moshe Yoneh enforced Franz

[3] Many Jews thought Franz Josef of Austro-Hungary was good to the Jews because he had a Jewish mistress. His edict that all Jewish youth must attend public schools may have been a well-intentioned attempt to universal education; but it was a source of dismay to religious Jews.

Josef's statute for appearance's sake: either the king had the *shtreimel* or my father had it.

In addition, in order to carry out and direct the king's decree, Moshe Yoneh took care of tombstones. He also took the trouble every Friday evening to examine if the *eruv* was intact, so that Jews could carry items on the Sabbath. Moshe Yoneh also watched so that no one should, God forbid, desecrate the Sabbath in public. A woman should, God forbid, not carry a handbag or an umbrella. Moshe Yoneh had to only give one look, open his mouth: A woman who dared to do such a thing immediately ran away like a bow and arrow. But seldom, seldom did someone like that dare ... not in Skala ... not in those times. Was there really such a place as Skala? Perhaps it is just a dream...

Three Funny Characters of the Distant Past

By Benzion Fiderer

An Egg for Every Soul

There was with us in Skala a Jew whom everyone called Shmuel Poisik. He was an intelligent Jew, but not very wealthy. Unfortunately, he had to spend several months a year going into Russia to collect some rubles. Once he went to Kamenetz for Passover, where he worked for a baker at baking matzos. One day, a wagon with a pair of fine horses rode up to the bakery. Someone entered the bakery and purchased a considerable quantity of matzos. They packed the matzos into two large boxes for him. Before he set out for home, he asked the baker, "Perhaps you know some Jew here who could be a '*provoditel*' for the *Seder*? I need a '*providitel*' (that means a person who can conduct the *Seder*); He will have a good Passover with me, and I will accommodate him well." The match was made with Shmuel Poisik, who said that he was prepared to be the '*providitel*' for the *Seder*. He then went with that Jew to his place.

When he went there, he was given honor as if a rabbi. On the eighth day of Passover, the wife said to him, "I have heard that today one recites *Yizkor*, but I cannot enumerate the souls." He answered her that for every soul, she must beat an egg into the cheese pastry, and "I will calculate the souls." You should not ask how many eggs the wife beat into the cheese pastries, and how good the cheese pastries were. The head of the household had been a "cantonist," who had been snatched as a child and served 25 years in the Czarist army. Afterwards, such people were given a piece of land, but such "cantonists" knew very little about Judaism.

THE DOCTOR AND THE TOWN FOOL

Skala already had two doctors, approximately two dental technicians, as well as teachers, university students, and other members of the intelligentsia. One of the doctors was Dr. Zeidner, who had studied medicine in Vienna and had become "Germanized." He spoke German and *Deitschmerish*[1]. He had a beard and carried a pair of tweezers in a black ribbon. He was not overly cunning, and was somewhat sloppy in the way he carried himself. The town jokesters would call him "Shaya Moshe" after the name of the town fool.

There was a story that pious women who worked as a distributor of charity died. She used to take pity on the true Shaya Moshe, and given him some food, a shirt, or a few coins.

Once the "orphaned," bearded, true Shaya Moshe met Dr. Zeidner on the street. He stopped him and waved to him, "What have you done? Did you send her to the cemetery? She must be withering away there in hunger. Tell me at least, should I take her a roll with radish to save her from starvation?" "As you wish," answered Dr. Zeidner, "It cannot hurt, goodbye... goodbye... I'll see you later."

THE TAX OFFICE MUST KNOW EVERYTHING

A *Skala haberdashery store had to* give an accounting of its income to the tax office. This was called a "*posia.*" The storekeeper was Reb Yehuda Hirsch Kohn. The *posia* had to be written in Polish, and since Reb Yehuda Hirsch Kohn was not overly proficient in the Polish language. He turned to Reb Motia Fueurstein, who was fluent in both Polish and German. He earned his livelihood from such writings, and incidentally, he was very intelligent and enjoyed making a joke. In the accounting, one had to answer various questions which were printed on the form. Among the various

[1]According to Uriel Weinreich's dictionary, this word means: "Too much like German (said of modern German words of phrases sporadically used in Yiddish but not accepted by cultivated stylists)."

questions which Feuerstein asked Reb Yehuda Hirsch, he slipped in a question in Polish: "Da Katorega Rabina Fan Jedzia?" meaning, to which Rebbe do you travel? Reb Yehuda Hirsch was beside himself as to why the tax office wished to know to which Rebbe he travels, for he used to travel to the Czortkower and at times to the Horodenker. He began to muse, "Should I state that I go to Czortkow? I indeed travel to Horodenka as well?" Fueurstein remarked that here, one must tell the truth, for this will be going to the office. Reb Yehuda stated, "Write, da Czortkowa i da Horodenki" (to Czortkow and to Horodenka).

A Gas Lamp and an Oil Well

Jacob Sofer

I *clearly remember the great wonder* and excitement in Skala when the first gas lamp was installed and turned on. It was a large lantern with filaments that shone and twinkled with a greenish light, just like daylight. That gas lamp attracted young and old to it every evening. At the beginning, one could not stop wondering at the remarkable invention. There were Jews who specifically read their correspondence or an old newspaper by the light of the street lamp just to see how strong the light was and how good their vision was. Orthodox Jews gathered around the lap to look heavenward for the ceremony of the Sanctification of the Moon (It was brighter for the dance of "*Shalom Aleichem. Aleichem Shalom… Siman Tov Umazal Tov*")[1] For the white group[2] the lamp was an attraction. By its light, one could make jokes, dispute, and make practical jokes.

But the gas lamp was as nothing compared to what took place in Skala when the "good news" spread that the town would become rich because an oil well had been discovered. How was the oil well discovered? The story was as follows: a new well had been dug and it soon appeared that the water that we drank from that well tasted of kerosene. It was a clear sign that there, underground, the black "treasure" was flowing. So Skala could become a type of Borislow, where "black gold" flowed. The question was, to whom did that treasure belong and under whose ground did it flow? And if that ground belonged to the town or to the community, then prosperity would not be lacking for the Jews in any case would not be lacking.

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[1] Phrases from the monthly ceremony of the Sanctification of the Moon *(Kiddush Levana)*.

[2] The meaning of 'white group' is uncertain, but it seems to be a term for the people who would enjoy spending their time in conversation and camaraderie. It may be an opposite of the 'black garbed group'–i.e. the Orthodox.

Is kerosene a small matter!

There were those who argued that if it was not kerosene, then that water with a taste was "mineral water" and Skala would become a spa like Truskawiec or even Karlsbad. After all, were there not nearby forests as well as mountains, and an old castle too? A ready-made spa! There was no lack of musicians. Yitzchak Yaakov and his musicians would make things cheerful, and Jews and non-Jews would come from near and far and bring much prosperity to the town. People would be revitalized and cure their weak stomachs with Skala's "mineral water". All that was needed was a couple of hotels and restaurants to accommodate the guests, but that was a small matter. There would be livelihood for all.

But very soon, the kerosene and "mineral water" matter fizzled out. The story was as follows: the Skala water merchants with their horses and barrels, who carried water from the wells to the householders, saw the spring as a bitter competitor which would detract from them their meager morsel of bread. They decided to rid themselves of the nuisance in a way that would render the spring water undrinkable and unusable. At night, they poured several pails of kerosene into the well to be rid of it. Later, the ruse of the poor water sellers became clearly evident, and Skala laughed ... In those days, Skala could still laugh, and there were those who could laugh.

THE GREAT TORAH "OYFRUF" IN SKALA[1]

Yitzhak Alfasy

In the Hassidic world, the city of Skala was renowned because of a great event that took place there in the year 5604 (1844), one hundred and thirty-two years ago. One Sabbath that year, none other than the young Reb Mendeli, later to be the first Vizhnitzer Rebbe and the founder of the first Vizhnitzer rabbinical line, was called up to the Torah. The 14 year old Reb Mendeli, an exceptional, insightful genius, was the groom and that was the Sabbath on which the groom was honored by being called to the Torah a few days before the wedding. The groom was the youngest son of the saint of that generation, Reb Chaim of Kosow. Who was the bride? She was Miriaml, the daughter of the Rizhiner Rebbe, Yisroelche. Two great pillars of Hassidism joined their families in matrimony.

Why did the *aufruf* (the calling up to the Torah before the wedding), take place in Skala? The story is as follows: The Vizhnitzer rebbe had fled from Russia because of a denunciation against him that he sat on a golden throne and carried on as if he was a Jewish czar, that he was disrespectful of the Czar, and other such accusations. Having crossed over peacefully to Austria from Russia, the Rizhiner spent a little time in Skala. The family was still in Kishinev, Bessarabia.

Tens of rebbes, good Jews, rabbis, Torah greats, and thousands of Hassidim from near and far came to the *aufruf* in Skala that Sabbath. It goes without saying that the father-in-law on the groom's side, Reb Chaim of Kosow, also came to Skala.

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[1]Excerpted from "*Tiferet Sheb 'malchut" (Glory in Kingship)* by Yitzhak Alfasy, pp. 144-146, Tel Aviv in 1941, published by Ariel, the Library of Hassidic Research, Tel Aviv, 5721 (1961). Told over by Chaim Brettler

There had never been as much crowding in Skala as there was at that time. There were guests in every house. People also slept in attics, in rooms, in *Beis Midrashes*, and in the courtyard. The hotel in which the two celebrated *tsadikim* and the groom were staying was constantly besieged by crowds. People wanted to catch a glimpse of the customs of the *tsaddikim*–how they presided over their tables, how they said words of Torah and so on. It was literally impossible to enter. Those who merited that privilege were later surrounded in order to hear some word from them. On the weekdays, musicians played constantly and the singing and dancing never let up.

On the Sabbath on which the *aliya* took place, the hotel in which the in-laws and the groom were staying was besieged by thousands of Jews. The surrounding streets and alleys were black with mobs of Hassidim and the ordinarily curious Jews who wanted to watch the groom and the in-laws go to the synagogue. However, the relatives and the groom simply could not get outside. There was simply no way to clear a path for them. People stood on roofs and fences, and clung to trees, neither inside nor outside. The in-laws, the rebbe Reb Chaim and the rebbe Reb Yisroelche, decided to recite the service in the hotel and to read from the small *Torah* which the Rizhiner Rebbe always carried with him. While they were worshiping inside, a huge crowd gathered outside, wrapped in *tallises* and reciting their prayers so loudly that they could be heard from one end of the city to the other. That sort of Sabbath service had never before been heard or seen in Skala, and indeed, was never again.

The next day, the Rizhiner made a huge feast in honor of his in-law Reb Chaim of Kosow. Before the Grace After Meals, the Rizhiner made a gesture to the Kosower, "My in-law, you know that it is a *mitzva* to praise the groom in the presence of the bride, and to praise the bride in the presence of the groom, and to point out their good attributes." At that point, the wife of the Kosower Rebbe appeared at the side door and made a request the Rizhiner, "Let the father-in-law place his hands on the head of my son the

groom and bless him because a saintly man is like a priest performing the priestly blessing." At that, the Riziner responded to her, "There is no need to put one's hands on his head. It is enough to make a blessing orally. It is explicitly stated in the holy Torah regarding the priestly blessing, 'Thus shall you bless the Children of Israel, say unto them'[2]. It says 'say unto them', meaning that one should bless with the mouth and not necessarily with the hands."

During the course of that feast, the Kosower rebbe, Reb Chaim, saw that the Rizhiner *tzadik* ate almost nothing. So he asked him, "Why does the in-law eat so little? Is it perhaps the taste?" The Rizhiner replied as follows, "Before we came down into this world we made a condition with our body, that we could not be bound with it unless it was content to be satisfied with little. Well, so the body agreed and kept to its agreement and condition."

At this point, the Kosower rebbe let go of the spoon in his hand and stopped eating. The Rizhiner asked him. "Why is the in-law not eating?" The rebbe, Reb Chaim then gave him the following reply, "Normally it is my custom to eat as much as my body demands and requires. So what is it? Now a matter that has always baffled me has become clear. When a Jew comes home from Friday evening services, two angels accompany him. He welcomes them heartily with '*Shalom Aleichem*'. But before he makes the *Kiddush* blessing, washes his hands, and seats himself at table to eat, he says to the angels, '*Tseitchem leshalom*' (go in peace). Now the matter has become clear to me: A Jew cannot eat in the presence of angels."

The Rizhiner smiled and was very pleased by his in-law's intelligent reply.

As everyone knows, the wedding took place in Kishinev where the bride was, with her mother and brother. The father, Reb Yisroelche, was afraid to travel there lest the Czarists put him in prison. He accompanied the groom Mendeli and his relatives only as far as the border. They especially chose a different border crossing, Husyatin rather than Skala. Countless Hassidim

[2] Numbers 6, 23.

accompanied them the entire way from Skala to Husyatin.

More and more Hassidim joined them along the way, and the singing and playing of musical instruments did not stop until the groom and his relatives crossed the border into Russia. They all crossed, except the father of the bride, the Rizhiner, who stayed on the Austrian side of the border river.

Later, Hassidim would repeat over and over again the tale of the great *aliya* to the Torah in Skala, and of that exalted Sabbath.

A Folk Song

Benjamin-Wolf Ehrenkrantz (1826–1883)
[1]

This 19th century wandering Yiddish poet and song writer was better known as Velvl Zbarazher. According to Gedalia Lachman, who as a youth learned this song from Asher Herscher of blessed memory, "simple folk used to sing it in our area of Galicia." It is a satirical portrayal of shtetl characters and of the dominant Orthodox- Hassidic establishment at the time.

G-d sits on his throne
Not far from the Garden of Eden;
Crowds of Tsadikim [2] come before Him
Eager to speak with Him.
What do you want, my children"–He asks?
What troubles you?"
Then everyone separately started
To utter his plea.
Then G-d bowed his head
And nobody moved from where he stood.
G-d then regarded them with His eyes,
And smiled and said not a word.

Here comes the Rabbi with the Yoreh Deye[3]
Experiencing great pleasure,

[1]The song by this Yiddish bard was popular in East Galicia among simple folk and recalled by Gedalia Lachman, who learned it from his neighbor Asher Herscher z"l
[2] Righteous Jews
[3] One of the four sections of the "Shulchan Aruch"–code of Jewish Law.

He curls his peye [4]
And strokes his gray beard.
"I have studied with Your children"–he says,
"Teaching them to fear You,
"Showing them the great wonders
"Of Your holy Torah".

Refrain:
Oh G-d, I would like to ask You,
To repay me now.
The Garden of Eden is not enough for me,
I want three hundred and ten worlds[5]

Next comes the Cantor with his thumb on his waistband.
"I know the skill well"–he says
"I have a voice like an organ.
"I have prayed with devotion
"And read the Holy Torah
"On the Sabbath, on Rosh Chodesh and the High Holy Days
"For you, oh living G-d".

Refrain:
Here comes someone else,
Swinging a large lantern.
"I was–he says–a shamash[6]
And also had to sweep the synagogue.
I roused the people to come to selichot[7]
Served at weddings and circumcisions;
I only performed holy services,
And everything I wear is ragged.

[4] Side curl.
[5] A reference to the Mishna "Uktsin" stating that in the world to come, G-d will grant every righteous person 310 worlds, obviously meant to be interpreted homiletically.
[6] Synagogue sexton.
[7] Penitential prayers recited every day during the High Holidays season.

Refrain:
Here too comes running the mohel[8]
And says he is a fine and skillful practitioner,
"I know–he says–the trade well,
"To cut, suck the blood and remove the foreskin[9]
"Reciting the blessing myself
"And at all the circumcisions of the poor,
"I was the master of the trade".

Refrain:
Then someone at a distance stands still,
Without underwear, please pardon;
"I was not poor–he says,
"Nor debauched, Heaven forbid.
"I beg you G-d, give me a handout,
"Show no preference,
"I have never performed a good deed,
"But I show you that I am nevertheless a Jew.

Refrain:
Here comes another one running
In a fur hat with thirteen corners,
Wearing a caftan with its ties undone
And torn into pieces.
A follower of the Hassidic Rabbi
As everyone had recognized
By his fine clothes.
He danced and jumped like a goat
Shouting, "make way for me, you infidels"
Humming a song and scratching himself along the way . . .

Refrain:
Looking over the Hassid from head to toe,

[8] Circumciser.
[9] Three fundamental requirements of the circumcision procedure.

With his holy face.
On top of his Shtreimel[10]
Lies a Matzo shmura [11]
And on the corners are Chanukah candles,
A mezuzah on his nose;
And four cups with a twist of dough
And Peyos that are endless!
On his forehead two pairs of tefillin
And a shofar on his tongue
And in his mouth a full cup
From Kiddush and havdalla for the holy drink.
And from Shavuot left over a dairy crepe
And from Passover a kneidl
And a piece of bread with honey for a blessing,
And the head of a sheep [12]
And a dreidl from Chanukah
And the lips that are covered
With the blood of circumcision,
And the feet adorned
With chalitze[13]
And a Purim hamentash holding to his chest
And a stuffed cabbage from Simchas Torah;
And then he makes a courageous leap
Before the living G-d.

Refrain:
The good Lord looks at his face
And that of the entire crowd of
Perhaps fifty thousand,
Who all came with the same request!
And the Lord G-d shrugs his shoulders and

[10] Fur hat.
[11] Unleavened bread made with special stringencies for the Passover Seder.
[12] A symbolic food for the Rosh Hashana meal.
[13] A ceremony to release a woman from the obligation of levirate marriage in which the woman removes the shoe of her brother-in-law and spits before him.

With difficulty repressing His laughter,
Not knowing what to do with them says:
"How can I repay you all
"Even though I am G-d Almighty ?
"What do you need so many worlds for?
. . . So all of them left empty handed!

THE SKALA BENEVOLENT SOCIETY IN NEW YORK

Jacob Herzog



FIG. 55: *Jacob Herzog*

Jews from Skala began arriving in the United States about 1890; many of them were still boys. They arrived to escape joblessness and poverty in Skala, but poverty was what they found in New York, although less extreme than that which they had left behind them. Jobs existed, but they were hard to find, and they paid little. In the days of President Grover Cleveland, the American economy was in recession.

One summer night, suffering from heat of a kind they had not felt back in Skala, some young men climbed several stories to the top floor of a tenement at 46 Delancey Street to reach Mendel Edelstein's apartment. They shared the latest news from home. They were all lonely "greenhorns", with their bodies in New York, but their hearts back in Skala, among their families and friends.

They were members of the "progressive" group. They had assembled to discuss the need to create a benevolent society, or

landsmanschaft, to help immigrants from Skala. They decided to contact the other young people from their town, those who were no longer so "green", and to build this organization with them.

While these people looked for and organized the veteran immigrants, a lonely young Skala native died penniless in New York. There was no Skala Burial Society to bury him. The young men of Skala passed the hat until they raised the needed funds, and their friend was duly buried. The Skala Benevolent Society was born as they returned from the cemetery that day.

The Skala Benevolent Society, known as the Skalar Unterstutzung Verein, came into being in 1892. Only American citizens could legally charter such an organization, but none of the few Skala natives then in New York had yet acquired citizenship. The Skalars therefore asked three young men from benevolent societies representing other towns to sign for them. The Skala organization was officially founded and functioning in June, 1893.

We do not know exactly what the Skala Benevolent Society did in its early days, because nobody kept records. People simply gathered together, had heartfelt discussions, talked about the news, shared letters from Skala, and went home. The Skala Society sent either fifty or a hundred dollars to help the town's residents after the great Skala fire at the end of the nineteenth century to Shmaria Melzer to distribute among the victims. We do not know exactly how he divided up the money.

After a while, a group of older Skalars wanted to build a Skala synagogue, as immigrants from other towns had done on the Lower East Side. They did indeed create such a synagogue and gave it a Torah scroll. In time, however, the younger, more recently arrived, more "progressive" Skalars distanced themselves from the older ones who were involved with the synagogue. The Skala organization disintegrated. Three years later, however, fresh faces arrived from Skala, a new enthusiasm infused the Skala organization, and the Skala Benevolent Society revived.

By the turn of the year 1914-1915, after the early months of the First World War, when Russian and Austrian armies were fighting

in the province where Skala was located, some of the more recently-arrived Skalars held a meeting and decided that their hometown needed all the help they could give it. They decided to found a Skala Relief Committee. Some of these people were also members of the Skala Benevolent Society. The Relief Committee wanted the Benevolent Society to direct all its efforts at helping Skala, rather than each other in America. The older leadership opposed this change, but eventually the entire membership of the Benevolent Society subscribed to the new program of relieving the suffering the war caused Skala. From then on, all efforts of the organization went to gathering and providing money for Skala.

The initiators of the relief works arranged two theater and two dance evenings. They also gathered money from Skalars to put aside for the time when they would be able to send it back to the old country. Everybody worked faithfully and with urgency. Everybody who had to travel paid his own way to raise funds. Every dollar collected went in its entirety to Skala. A woman's relief fund, called The Skala Progressive Ladies, was also created, and it made a substantial contribution to the relief work.

No letters came from Skala even after the war ended in November of 1918, because combat between Russian and Polish armies still continued in that region. We did not know what was going on there.

About that time, our fellow Skalar, the writer Chone Gottesfeld appeared before the committee and told us that the organization called "People's Relief" was about to send Max Fein, a well-known labor leader, to the Ukraine. Because he would be in Kamenetz Podilsk, a town near Skala, Gottesfeld said that he would ask Fein to bring some money to Skala and give it to whomever we specified. The committee sent a thousand dollars.

After Max Fein distributed this money, several letters arrived whose writers claimed that they had been cheated, and that the money should have been sent only to them. We paid little attention to these letters, because we knew who had written them.

A short time later, Yaakov Melman, a member of our committee,

traveled to the Ukraine to bring his relatives to America. We sent $1500 with him. He sent his brother-in-law from Kamenetz Podilsk to Skala to deliver it, because those roads were too difficult and dangerous for him to travel himself.

More letters arrived complaining that Melman's brother-in-law had exchanged the dollars for rubles and other currencies, and that it was wrong for him to have done so. Our committee then tried sending financial assistance to individuals in Skala, but we soon learned that this too was not a good way to provide relief. In the end, the committee decided that we would have to establish a special committee in Skala itself, to whom money would be sent, and who would be responsible for distributing this money fairly and honestly. The organization in New York suggested the names of people in Skala they wanted to serve on the committee.

Shlomo Schwartzbach of Skala was the first secretary of this committee when it was organized in Skala. Avraham Bilgorai took over when Schwartzbach left. The new local committee cooperated well with the local relief committee. We received clear, precise requests and instructions from Skala as to how we could help them–a fine example of professionalism.

The Skala committee informed us that the Joint Distribution Committee, with whom it worked, wanted to create a charitable fund, and to build a new mikveh, or Jewish ritual bath, in Skala, because the old one had fallen into disrepair. The Skala representative of the committee also asked us to help them build a community center.

To those ends, the local relief committee volunteered five hundred dollars and asked the Joint to match that grant. The Joint agreed to give five hundred dollars. We later collected another eight hundred dollars to build a new mikveh for Skala. Although we had promised to give more if more were needed, the Skala committee asked for no more funds. We twice sent two hundred dollars to the town's charitable fund. We sent several additional contributions toward the building of a new community center in Skala.

Every year, until the outbreak of the Second World War, we sent

five hundred dollars to the committee in Skala as a donation to be distributed to the poor for Passover, and at Sukkot we sent an additional two hundred and fifty dollars.

MY TRIP TO SKALA IN 1929

I *took my family to visit the place* of my birth in March of 1929, eighteen years after moving from Skala to the United States. The organization in New York had given me five hundred and fifty dollars to distribute in the town. I had scheduled three weeks for my visit, but I stayed for seven.

The terrible devastation I found in Skala shocked me; the place had been much better off a generation earlier. Almost no family had an income. Most of them had poor stores with meager merchandise or empty shelves. The anti-Semitic Polish government imposed high taxes on people who had little money with which to pay those taxes.

The only positive developments were that several youth organizations were active, as was the Gemilut Chassadim, the cooperative bank which the American organization had helped create. I saw the mikveh we had financed, and the public hall, or Beit Haam, worked well. Skala had a good Hebrew school, a kindergarden, and a library stocked with Hebrew, Yiddish, German, and Polish books. Cultural life was good; the only problem was the lack of economic opportunity.

I gave the committee the money I had brought a week before Passover. I was deeply impressed by the fairness and the precision with which the committee's members worked. They read the list of names and decided how much money to give each family. They distributed the money the next day. Of the eighty households receiving help, only one complained to me about his sum, and he was not correct. I was able to report to our organization that the Skala committee operated honorably and efficiently.

I met with the school committee and with the library administration. The school committee told me that they were in

need, and that an extra ten dollars a month would help them a great deal. The library administration also asked for a little money with which to buy new books. I told both these groups that I would do what I could for them when I returned to New York. I returned home in a somber mood. The situation of Skala and her Jews depressed me.

At a meeting of the Skala Women's Organization, I told the members about the misery of Skala, and I presented these requests to them. With the assistance of Mrs. Yaakov Wiesenthal, whose name was Ida, and Chana Harnik, wife of Mendel Cohen, we were able to arrange for me to send $10 to the school every month. Some opposed wasting money on books when people had no bread, but other members managed to raise twenty-five dollars for the Skala library.

THE SKALA BENEVOLENT SOCIETY DURING WORLD WAR II

W*e were cut off from news of* Skala for the entire six years of the Second World War. We tried to establish a connection through the Red Cross, but we received no news, and we had no idea what our relatives and friends were enduring there.

When the war ended and we finally heard something from Skala, we immediately sent twenty-five food packages through the Joint. The Joint eventually returned our money to us and told us that the food was somehow stuck in Russia.

The first hard information we received came from the town of Bytom, Poland. We were told that all the surviving Jews from Skala had been brought to Bytom. We received a list of all known living Jewish Skalars. Only one hundred and eleven names were on that list–all that remained of the few thousand who had once lived in the town where I was born. All the others were dead. We were shocked. We sent food packages to those in Bytom who asked for them.

We soon heard that almost all the Skala Jews had left Poland, some to refugee camps in occupied Austria, others to Italian camps,

and a few had managed to get to the Land of Israel, then called Palestine. We managed to make contact with a few of them, and some refugees came to America. The Skala Assistance Organization decided to give a hundred dollars to each Skala refugee to help him get started in the United States. A few accepted the money, but most declined it. Most of the new immigrants from Skala joined our organization and began participating in its activities.

The Jewish community of Skala no longer existed.

We therefore directed our activities to helping Israel. We campaigned for the United Jewish Appeal of 1947, raising $5500, and we twice gave two and a half thousand dollars to build homes for new immigrants in Israel. We contributed as much as our means allowed us to. We donated two thousand dollars in 1958 to the Histadrut Campaign to build a clinic in Netanya. This clinic was to be named for Skala.

We began working on our Yizkor book in 1961. Members responded very strongly, especially among those most recently arrived.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS: RIGHTEOUS GENTILES WHO SAVED SKALA JEWS

Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld)

Of the approximately 1700 Jews who lived in Skala between September 1939 and September 1942, only about 145 survived the Holocaust, including 27 who survived the war period in the Soviet Union.[1] Only 118 Skala residents–men, women and children–have miraculously survived the horrors of the Nazi genocide; 28 by hiding in the nearby forest[2] and 90 who were rescued by a handful of compassionate, brave and courageous gentiles.

According to "YAD VASHEM"–the State of Israel Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority–a "Righteous Gentile" is one who risked his own life to save the life of one or more Jews during the Holocaust period. The individuals and families of gentiles and their life-saving deeds described in the following chapters certainly fit that honorable designation. At great risk to their own lives and the lives of their families, those gentiles provided desperate Skala Jews, running for their lives, with places to hide in their homes, attics or barns. They also fed and protected them to the best of their abilities and gave them hope and courage to survive the Nazi nightmare.

To rediscover, identify and acknowledge those "Righteous Gen-

[1] After Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, about 70 Skala Jews found themselves in Russia. 43 of them perished there during the war, among them Red Army soldiers and others, who managed to escape to the east with the retreating Russians as well as those, exiled to the Siberian gulag by the Soviets as "enemies of the state" during their occupation of our region between September 1939 and June 1941.

[2] For a full account of this subject, see my chapter in this book entitled "Surviving in the Forest" on pg 181.

tiles" and their noble deeds is the purpose of this monograph. To research and write on the subject 65 years after the end of World War II, when most of the survivors and their saviors are no longer with us, was undoubtedly a most challenging and frustrating task. Yet, we owe this debt to the memory of those brave men and women as well as to our history and tradition of "hakarat hatov"–of acknowledging with gratitude–even at this late date, the deeds of those who came to our rescue in the most critical and perilous days of our desperate struggle to survive. In researching and writing this piece, I received the invaluable help and encouragement of a number of our survivors and their children. To all of them I hereby express my deepest gratitude.

What follows are alphabetically, the results of my endeavor: the names, backgrounds, photos (where available) and deeds of those "Righteous Gentiles" as well as the names of those Skala Jews they saved. Regretfully, for obvious reasons, this is by far, not a full or exhausting account of the subject matter, but the best one could write under the circumstances.

ATAMANIUK, STEFKA and ANTOSHKO, a very kind and compassionate Ukrainian couple, who lived with their son Petrus, near the Jewish cemetery, at great risk to their lives, rescued 12 (twelve) Skala Jews, the largest number saved by any single gentile family in town. Those saved were: *Bilgorei Abraham and his wife Gitel (nee Schnitzer) Frenkel Moshe and his wife Nunia (nee Schnitzer). Plitt Chaya (nee Schnitzer) Sandberg David and his wife Leba; Schwartzbach Leon, his mother Ryvka, his wife Sala (nee Frenkel) and son Israel; Jaegendorf Zhenia.*



FIG. 56 : *Stefka Atamaniuk, who with her husband Antoshko and son Petrus, saved 12 Skala Jews.*

From the summer of 1943 through early April 1944, the twelve (12) were hidden by the Atamaniuks, some



FIG. 57 : *Stefka Atamaniuk (in 1998 photo) in front of her Skala home*

in their own attic and others in the attic of their nearby relatives. They provided the twelve with food and drink, cleaned after them and sheltered them, until their liberation. With unprecedented courage, devotion and sheer guts, Stefka and Antoshko Atamaniuk, poor farmers and odd job laborers, have with the help of their young son, accomplished their "mission impossible." They had many Jewish friends in town and stood-by them in their time of greatest need. Sadly and ironically, fate has been very cruel to this wonderful couple. After the war in 1950, their only son Petrus, was killed by the KGB and Antoshko passed away in the 1960's. Widowed and heartbroken Stefka lived until the Spring of 2001, when she passed away.

In the course of our numerous visits to Skala, between 1990 and 1998, my wife Clara and I always visited Stefka Atamaniuk, bringing her money and scarce medications from her ever grateful survivors in America. She lived alone in a dilapidated two-room shack, consisting of a small kitchen, a medium size bedroom and an adjoining outhouse. The abode was lit by one electric bulb, hanging from the ceiling on a loose wire. Yet, the place was clean and she was always neatly dressed. Stoically, bent by age and sorrow, she always received us with kindness and warmth.

On our last visit to Skala, in the summer of 1998, as we entered her poorly lit home and sat down in the kitchen to speak to her, we noticed through the open bedroom door a middle aged woman lying, stretched out on a bed. When I asked her, who this woman was and why she is in her house. Stefka explained, that the woman is a partially paralyzed, distant relative, she is taking care of. "How do you manage to do this at your age and with your own poor

health?" I asked. Her quick and short reply was: "If I cannot help someone in need, life is not worth living." This–I believe–aptly sums up the character and motivation of this unique Ukrainian couple and their truly heroic deeds. May their memories be blessed and remembered as the most noble and genuine of righteous gentiles.

BATUR, ALEXANDER, a Ukrainian day laborer and subsistence farmer, who lived in old Skala with his wife and two children, saved *Abraham Tracy and his brother-in-law, Mendel Ringel*, hiding them in the attic of his stable, from November 1943 through March 1944.

Abraham Tracy was the only Skala Jew, who miraculously survived the infamous Janovska death camp in Lvov by jumping out, half naked, from a moving freight train, taking him and other inmates in the winter of 1943 to their death in Belzec. After walking nights in freezing weather through snow-covered fields, Tracy made his way back to the Borshchow ghetto, where he was briefly reunited with his sister. Afraid to remain in the ghetto, he proceeded to Skala and sought safety by hiding in basements and attics of empty, former Jewish dwellings. After the liquidation of the Borshchov ghetto in June 1943, during which his sister with her two children were killed, Tracy linked up with Mendel Ringel, his only surviving relative, and both continued in their desperate quest to find a hiding place to survive in.

In November 1943 Ringel recalled that he had once worked with Alexander Batur in a flower mill. Next night he and Tracy decided to visit Batur. What happened next is told by Tracy in his memoir[3]:

"When we reached Alexander's house, he was outside gathering wood for his fireplace. When he saw us, he quietly signaled us to follow him to his stable. He then went into his house and returned later with a hot pot of corn mush for us to eat. When we asked him

[3] "To Speak for the Silenced", Jerusalem–New York, Devorah Publishing, 2007.

for suggestions as to where we could hide, he offered the attic in his stable. We were surprised by his offer, since he had no large property or space and had two children....The attic was small and the ceiling low, but there was plenty of straw and Alexander gave us rags to cover up with. He also cautioned us to keep very quiet, for even the slightest cough could alert his neighbors. To reach the attic we had to climb up a ladder. Every morning after bringing us food and feeding his animals, he would remove the ladder and hide it, so that no one could go up to the attic and find us, while he was away at work. Twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening, we were allowed to come down and stretch our legs.... On March 24, Batur informed us that Russian tanks arrived in town."

BABYICHUK, FEDORKO and PARASKA, a kind and gentle Ukrainian couple with two children, living in a modest farm house in the village of Gushtyn, north-west of Skala, saved the lives of *Berish Weidberg, his daughter Lucy Pollak and Chaim Brettler.* From October 1943 through the end of March 1944, the three were hidden by the Babyichuks in an attic above their barn. In spite of the fact that Fedorko's mother and his single brother also lived with them in the farm house, he and Paraska were determined and dedicated to the task of saving the three Jews, placing in jeopardy not only their own lives, but also the lives of their extended family members. Moreover, they also had to feed three additional mouths, although the financial burden was also shared by Weidberg and Brettler. Why and how did they do it?

It all goes back to a long and special relationship the Babyichuks had with the Weidberg family that dates back to the turn of the century, when Simcha Weidberg, father of Berish and grandfather of Lucy, had business dealings with Fedorko's father. In June of 1943, after the liquidation of the Borshchov ghetto, when the handful of survivors hiding in Skala were faced with daily roundups and executions, it was natural for Berish Weidberg to turn to his trusted friends Fedorko and Paraska to ask for their help. In spite of the great risk involved and a crowded house, the Babyichuk's did

not hesitate and offered shelter not only to Berish and Lucy, but also to their friend, Chaim Brettler.



FIG. 58: *Paraska and Fedorko Babyichuk. In the attic of their barn in Gushtyn, Berish Weidberg, his daughter Lucy Pollak and Chaim Brettler were saved.*

In the attic, above their barn, the Babyichuks' fashioned a hiding place for the three with plenty of straw bedding, where the three hid during the day, while at night they were invited to come down to their living quarters to share a hot meal, the latest news and hour long conversations, often past midnight. At the end of December 1943, when there were some rumors in the village about hidden Jews, the three left the Babyichuks' household for two weeks, but returned on January 13 and remained there hidden until their liberation at the end of March, 1944.

Recalling the kindness and generosity of the Babyichuks, Lucy Pollak, who was a teenager at the time, remembers with deep emotion how Paraska used to divide her meager daily milk supply, between her and her two children. "The couple–she said–were the nicest people I ever met".

MARTIUK, PETRO and AHAFIA, a high profile, prominent Ukrainian couple in Skala, saved the life of *Gedalyahu Lachman*[4]. By profession an architect and master builder, Petro Martiuk was a leading figure in the Ukrainian community of Skala and served as chairman of "Prosvita" (Enlightenment)–a Society for the preservation of Ukrainian education and culture. In the 1920s and 1930s,

[4] As co-editor of the Skala Memorial book, Gedalyahu Lachman, provided the basic research on the history of the town and its Jewish Community, authored several leading chapters, including on the destruction of Skala and on the folklore and humor in the life of Skala youth.

prior to World War II, Petro Martiuk, maintained friendly personal and business relationships with Skala Jews. Professionally, he was involved in the construction of the "Beth Am"–the Jewish Community Center in Skala, and also employed Jewish craftsman in his construction projects.



FIG. 59: *Ahafia and Petro Martiuk, the saviors of Gedalyahu Lachman (in 1958 photo).*

From the early Fall of 1943 through the end of March 1944, Lachman was hidden first by the Martiuk family, in their own barn. After the Police came snooping around their barn, they arranged with their friend and neighbor, Paraska Prokopovich, who lived alone in a house down the road, to hide Lachman in the attic above her house, while the Martiuks, supplied all the food for him.

The relationship between Lachman, a young university educated scholar and intellectual in his late twenties, and the middle-aged Martiuks with three teenage sons, dates back to the mid-1930s. At that time, Lachman established in Skala a private gymnasium[5] of which he was the director and only instructor. The private school was designed to prepare students whose parents could not afford to pay the high tuition of out-of-town institutions for university entry. The school, which was at the time, Lachman's main source of income, attracted both Jewish and Gentile students, among them the three sons of Petro and Ahafia Martiuk . In the course of time, the Martiuks' became great admirers of Lachman, appreciating his great

[5] A school for secondary education in parts of Europe, preparing students for Universityentry.

intellect, seriousness, personal charm and effectiveness as a highly successful educator.

After the September 1942 roundup of Skala Jews, in which Lachman's mother was seized and sent to her death, the Martiuks' reached out to Lachman, often inviting him to their house for meals and conversations and eventually offering him a place to hide in their barn. On those occasions, Lachman also taught the Martiuk sons Latin grammar and conversational German. To this day, his former students, Stephan Martiuk, who lives in Toronto, Canada and Vasyl Martiuk, who lives in Skala, fondly remember their favorite teacher , paying tribute to his memory by contributing two short memoirs to the book published in Israel by the Lachman family in 2008 to mark the 25th anniversary of their fathers' passing.

SKAWINSKI, WLADYSLAW, a Polish farmer with his Ukrainian wife KATARZYNA, and mother-in-law, MARIA KAPACILA, who lived in a small house in Old Skala with three children, saved the largest single Jewish family of six to survive the Holocaust in Skala. The six were: *Hescheles Samuel, his wife Sara Hescheles, their married daughter Dana and her husband Abus Seidman, son Victor Hescheles and niece, Cesia Lamensdorf.* From July 1943 through March 1944, Skawinski and his family, risking their own lives, provided a safe haven to the



FIG. 60: *The Skawinski family (in 1948 photo), who saved the Hescheles family of six: Sitting (left to right): Katarzyna with baby Ryszard in her lap and husband Wladyslaw. Standing (left to right): son Michal and daughter Stasia.*

Hescheles family by hiding them in an attic of their chicken coop and providing them with a hot meal every day.



FIG. 61: *Maria Kapacila, mother-in-law and full partner in the rescue of the Hescheles family.*

As a poor farmer, Skawinski had to supplement his income by using his horse and wagon to transfer goods from the Skala railroad station to local merchants and driving some of them with their goods to weekly fairs in nearby towns. One of his steady clients was Samuel Hescheles with whom he developed over the years a very close and friendly relationship; it was the kind of a relationship, that when Skawinski decided before the war to build an extension to his house and had no money to purchase the needed building supplies, Samuel Hescheles provided him with the necessary line of credit.

After surviving the liquidation of the Borshchov ghetto in June 1943, the Hescheles family miraculously managed to escape back to Skala, walking under the cover of night through fields and forest. After reaching Skala they established contact with Mr. Skawinski, who came the next day with his mother-in-law Maria Kapacila, to meet them in the forest, bringing along two pails of food for the starving family. What happened next is vividly related by Victor Hescheles, the youngest member of the surviving family:

"When my father started to plead with Mr. Skawinski to take us into hiding, he responded, that he would gladly do it, but wouldn't have enough room and food for all the six of us. Instead he suggested, that he would take three of us and ask his neighbor to take the other three. At that point, his mother-in-law turned to him and said: 'Son, if God has so far kept them together, we have no right to separate them now; either we take all of thern, or we take none.' Then Skawinski looked at this mother-in-law and said: 'so what does mother say?' Her immediate response was: 'we take them all.' .... They were the angels who saved our lives.

"The following night Skawinski met us again in the forest and took us back to his house, putting us up for the night in the attic of his chicken coop. Late that night he came up to the attic telling us he had a dream to build a blind wall in the attic for us to hide behind, in case the police would come looking for us. Fortunately, he had on hand the building supplies necessary to put up the wall, which ironically my father helped him purchase before the war. After telling us about his dream, Skawinski proceeded the same night to erect the blind wall with the help of his son Michal and the three men in our family. At day break the wall was finished.

"One day, three months later, Skawinski received an anonymous letter, telling him to get rid of the Jews, because he and his family would also be killed, if the Jews were found on his property. When we saw the letter, we decided to go back to the forest in order not to place in jeopardy the lives of our host and his family. Back in the forest, we met other Skala survivors. Some of them had underground bunkers and we moved into one of them. Shortly thereafter, German troops surrounded the forest and killed scores of them, mostly those who had no bunkers to hide in. Frightened and desperate we left the forest at night and went back to the Skawinski attic. Shortly before we were liberated, the Ukrainian police along with some Germans, came looking for us, but we were safely hidden behind the blind wall. They searched for hours and finally left after beating up Mr. Skawinski. On March 24, 1944 we were liberated by the Russians".

SOKOLOWSKI, SIDOR, a Polish farmer who lived with his wife and daughter in the tiny village of Trujce (pronounced Trooytze), near Skala, rescued from the Nazis the family of *Benjamin Gottesfeld, his wife Sheyntzie, daughter Fanya and son Arthur*, by hiding them behind a chicken coop under his barn, from June 1943 through March 1944.



FIG. 62: *Sidor Sokolowski, the savior of Fanya Gottesfeld-Heller and her family of three: mother Sheyntzie, father Benjamin and brother Arthur.*

The circumstances and conditions under which this courageous man risked his life to help a desperate Jewish family in distress, in spite of the fact, that his wife was less than willing to accept the risk involved, are vividly described by Fanya Gottesfeld-Heller:

"My late father barely knew Sidor Sokolowski, having met him only a few times before the war, yet he was willing to provide us with a tiny hiding space in his barn, share with us the little food he had and risk the exposure by suspicious neighbors. The dugout he made for us to hide in was small and narrow and we always remained there in a crouching position that created a domino effect; when one of us moved, all the four of us had to move. There was no air, no light and no water in our hiding place. We did not know day from night and we only knew the change of seasons because winter was freezing cold and summer brought the sweltering heat. The mice and lice were our constant companions.

"Sidor also had to make life and death choices that often miraculously saved our lives. When he caught typhoid fever from us, he stayed home instead of going to a doctor, because doctors knew that Jews in hiding had lice, and lice were the carriers of the disease. Going to the doctor would have raised suspicions and put us all in danger. He also chose to share with us the little food he had, but somehow we survived on the meager rations he was able to provide us with.

"Sidor never explained to us his deep resolve to help us survive. He was simply a good Christian who saw it as his duty to try save another human life. Rescuers like Sidor teach us that, even during the nightmare of the Holocaust, some human beings had the ability to act humanely and make the right choices instead of remaining

bystanders in the face of evil".

In 1997, Sidor's daughter Hania traveled to Israel, where in the presence of Fanya Gottesfeld-Heller, her brother Arthur, other family members, friends and the international media, the memory of her father Sidor was honored for his compassion and bravery, at an emotional ceremony in the Yad Vashem Garden of the Righteous in Jerusalem. On behalf of her late father, Hania accepted there the Yad Vashem medal of honor.

UHRINSKA, MUNCIA, a humble, single Polish woman of 40, living with her old mother in a small farm house on the outskirts of Skala, had in two incredible acts of compassion and courage, extended a life-saving hand to two desperate Jewish girls: *Geisler Frieda (nee Leibart) and Schechter Yenta.* In the summer of 1943, the two girls have miraculously survived two massacres in Skala and came to Muncia's house in the middle of the night, pleading for help. The two girls did not know each other and were also total strangers to the their savior.

From August 1943 through March 1944, Yente Schachter was hidden by Muncia in her attic, while Frieda, who came to her three months later, was invited by her to a small room, next to her own, without the knowledge or consent of her mother. Muncia was a poor woman. Her entire household consisted of a small garden, one goat and five chickens and her meager, daily meals she shared with her mother and the two girls, consisted of bread with fruit jelly from her garden and flour dumplings with skimmed milk.

The two girls were not Skala natives. From where and when Yenta came to Skala, we don't know, but assume she was a survivor from one of the neighboring towns or villages. Frieda Geisler was born in Chortkow and lived there before the war with her parents and younger sister. She had deep family roots in Skala and often came to Skala to visit her maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Hersch Auerbach as well as her aunt and uncle, Chana and Israel Apfelbaum and their daughter.



FIG. 63: *Muncia Uhrinska , the incredible savior of two Jewish girls in 1988 photo.*

In a moving testimonial to Muncia Uhrinska, published in the Chortkov Memorial Book, Frieda wrote the following about her savior:

"After escaping from Chortkov when the town became 'Judenrein' (emptied of Jews), I fled to Skala with my mother and sister and a blind chance led me to Muncia's humble abode at the edge of town. When I told Muncia, that I lost my parents and only sister and am now alone and penniless in the world, she took me into her house like a mother who welcomes a lost daughter. For six months–the toughest of my life–I found a safe shelter in her house. In spite of the most difficult living conditions at the time, this wonderful woman, did everything possible to help me, providing me with a clean bed, motherly love and sharing with me her last crumb of bread.

"After two weeks with Muncia, I discovered that in the attic of her house, another Jewish girl was hidden. It turned out, that three months before I came to Muncia, the girl, Yente Schachter, was shot in her eye during a pogrom in Skala on August 10, 1943. Taken for dead, she was thrown on a wagon and taken with other corpses to the Jewish cemetery. After the corpses were unloaded and the wagon returned to town to pick up the remaining bodies, Yente regained consciousness, crawled away from the pile of dead and hid between the tombstones. After darkness, bleeding and blind in one eye, she reached Muncia's house and together with me was hidden there until our liberation at the end of March 1944. It should be noted that for the 'crime' of saving Jews, Muncia could have paid for her courage and compassion with her own life."

* * *

In addition to the saviors of Jews described in the preceding pages, there were a number of gentiles in Skala, during the Holocaust period who, while not risking their lives to save Jews, responded with acts of compassion and kindness to help Jews in distress. Those acts also deserve honorable mention in this monograph. Among those gentiles were:

KOVALYSHYN, OLENA (nee Martiuk) was a kind and compassionate woman from a prominent Ukrainian family in Skala, who reached out during the Holocaust to Michael Edelstein and his father Sholem. From July 1943 through March 1944 Olena Kovalyshyn provided the two Edelsteins with food, while they were hiding first in the nearby forest and then in the basement of an abandoned house in town.



FIG. 64: *Olena Kovalyshyn (nee Martiuk) who helped save Michael Edlestein.*

Speaking of his struggle to survive, Michael Edelstein said: "while most of our gentile acquaintances refused to help us, Olena Kovalyshyn never turned us down. Whenever we sneaked up to her house at night in quest of food, she always gave us bread, porridge and fruits to sustain us. Moreover, immediately after our liberation, when my father was weak and unable to walk, Olena cared for him in her home until he recuperated."

Olena Kovalyshyn passed away in 1988. Ten years later, in the summer of 1998, on his first visit to Skala since the end of the war, Michael Edelstein and his family met Myron Kovalyshyn, Olenas' son and his family. He also placed a wreath of flowers on his saviors' tomb and to make up for Olenas' goodness, has been helping Myron Kovalyshyn and his family ever since.

RADCHUK (no first name available), a poor Ukrainian forester, who lived with his wife in an isolated farm house in the forest, is another gentile, who deserves favorable mention in these pages.

During the winter months of November 1943 through March 1944, twenty eight of us were hiding in an underground bunker in the forest, a few miles from Radchuks' house. During that entire period Radchuk was our only reliable source of bread that his wife baked for us. We used to pick up the bread from his house on designated nights once a week or every second week, pay for it and return undetected to our bunker. Those night expeditions were quite dangerous, because Germans or Ukrainian police often paid unexpected visits to his house. Under the circumstances, Radchuk made every effort to alert and protect us from such dangerous encounters by placing warning signals in his windows on our scheduled night visits. Radchuk was also our only contact to the world beyond the forest, providing us with news from the battle fronts and with hope for our eventual delivery from this nightmare.

POLISH COLONISTS. There was a small village at the edge of the Skala forest, called Mazury. It was established after World War I by the new independent Government of Poland and was designed to polonize our predominantly Ukrainian province with Polish settlers from the west. Those settlers who were Roman Catholics were often ostracized by the Greek Catholic Ukrainians and sometimes persecuted by the German and Soviet authorities during their occupation of our region in World War II. As a persecuted minority, some of the Mazury colonists showed sympathy and compassion toward the condemned-to-death Jews hiding in the nearby forest.

I vividly remember the late June of 1943, when my two cousins and I, along with a handful of other young men and women, escaped to the forest during a week-long rainy weather spell. We were cold, wet and starving for days. Our first "meal" in the forest, was a slice of cold corn pudding we all shared, that my cousin, Nechemia Stock of blessed memory, brought from the Mazury

colony after sneaking out of the forest and knocking at the door of a Polish colonist, a total stranger. Later that summer, my cousin Malcia Rothstein (nee Stock) made a deal with a woman colonist to knit sweaters with wool provided by her in exchange for bottles of milk, a rare luxury at the time.

In the fall of 1943, after German troops raided our section of the forest, killing scores of Jews, we decided to build underground bunkers for the winter. The Mazury colonists were those who lent us the necessary construction tools–saws, picks, shovels and hammers–no questions asked. Those tools eventually made our survival possible! Regretfully, the names of those individual Polish colonists lie buried in the graves of the survivors who dealt with them at the time, but their deeds are still remembered with gratitude.

* * *

The Talmud teaches us that, "whoever saves a single life is as if he saves the entire world". To paraphrase this Talmudic proverb, I dare say, that the gentiles who saved scores of Skala Jews is as if they had saved "many worlds"–the worlds of our children, grandchildren and countless future generations of survivors. May all those compassionate and courageous gentiles be remembered and blessed forever!

SKALA TODAY

This chapter consists of photos taken between 1990 and 2009.



FIG. 65: *Plaque in Ukrainian and English at the entrance to the restored Skala Cemetery*



FIG. 66: *Among the surviving tombstones in the Skala cemetery is that of Rabbi Noote Drimmer of blessed memory, who served the Jewish Community between 1918 and 1930. He was the grandson of the late Rabbi Shlomo Drimmer, world-renowned Talmudic scholar and author, who started the 110 year- old Rabbinic dynasty in Skala in 1832, which came to a tragic end in 1942.*



FIG. 67: *Some of the surviving tombstones in the restored Skala Cemetery.*



FIG. 68: *Surviving tombstone of the late Aron Meshulam Feuerstein, prominent Communal leader and keeper of its civil records, who passed away in 1932.*



FIG. 69: *Partial view of Skala cemetery after its restoration and fencing in 1997*



Fig. 70: *River Zbrucz, next to Skala, frequently served as border throughout history, such as between Galicia and Russia prior to World War I*



FIG. 71: *Deserted side street in Skala, where Jews once lived*



FIG. 72: *Recently built hotel and spa*



FIG. 73: *Spa formerly a mikveh*



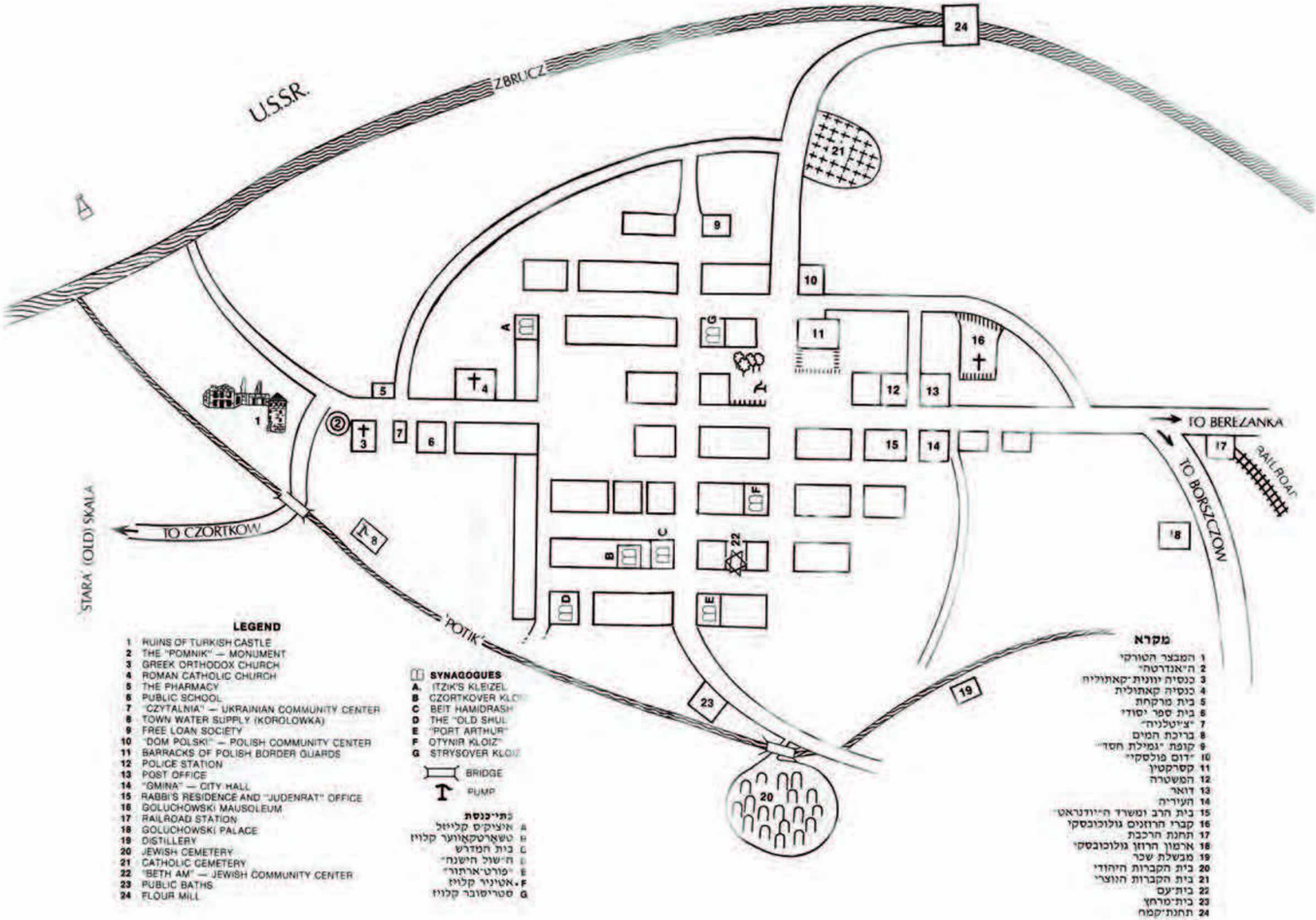
FIG. 74: *Memorial to the Victims of Borschov Ghetto*



FIG. 75: *Memorial to the Victims of Borschov Ghetto*

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Figures 56-57, 65-67, 69, 74-75 Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld)
Figure 63 Zehava Palnitzky
Figure 64 Lancy Spalter
Figure 68 Rachel Brill
Figures 72-73 Paul Blank


U.S.S.R.
ZBRUCZ
TO CZORTKOW
STARA (OLD) SKALA
"POTIK"
TO BEREZANKA
TO BORSZCZOW
RAILROAD
LEGEND
1 RUINS OF TURKISH CASTLE
2 THE "POMNIK" — MONUMENT
3 GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
4 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
5 THE PHARMACY
6 PUBLIC SCHOOL
7 "CZYTALNIA" — UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY CENTER
8 TOWN WATER SUPPLY (KOROLOWKA)
9 FREE LOAN SOCIETY
10 "DOM POLSKI" — POLISH COMMUNITY CENTER
11 BARRACKS OF POLISH BORDER GUARDS
12 POLICE STATION
13 POST OFFICE
14 "GMINA" — CITY HALL
15 RABBI'S RESIDENCE AND "JUDENRAT" OFFICE
16 GOLUCHOWSKI MAUSOLEUM
17 RAILROAD STATION
18 GOLUCHOWSKI PALACE
19 DISTILLERY
20 JEWISH CEMETERY
21 CATHOLIC CEMETERY
22 "BETH AM" — JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
23 PUBLIC BATHS
24 FLOUR MILL
SYNAGOGUES
A. ITZIK'S KLEIZEL
B CZORTKOVER KLOI
C BEIT HAMIDRASH
D THE "OLD SHUL
E "PORT ARTHUR"
F OTYNIR KLOIZ
G STRYSOVER KLOIZ
BRIDGE
PUMP
מקרא
1 המבצר הטורקי
2 ה'אנדרטה'
3 כנסיה יוונית־קאתולית
4 כנסיה קאתולית
5 בית מרקחת
6 בית ספר יסודי
7 "יציטלניה"
8 בריכת המים
9 קופת "גמילת חסד"
10 "דום פולסקי"
11 קסרקטין
12 המשטרה
13 דואר
14 העיריה
15 בית הרב ומשרד ה"יודנראט"
16 קברי הרוזנים גולוכובסקי
17 תחנת הרכבת
18 ארמון הרוזן גולוכובסקי
19 מגשלת שכר
20 בית הקברות היהודי
21 בית הקברות הנוצרי
22 בית־עם
23 בית־מרחץ
24 תחנת־זיקוק
בתי־כנסת
A איציק'ס קלייזל
B טשארטקאוור קלויז
C בית המדרש
D ה'שול הישנה'
E "פורט ארתור"
F אטיניר קלויז
G סטריסובר קלויז