



Just Us



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Remembrance Issue No. 5, May 2016
Commemorating the 23rd Annual Holocaust Remembrance
Program

Introduction

by **Hon. Martin Shulman**

On Tuesday, May 10, 2016 [2nd of Iyyar 5776], the Jewish Lawyers' Guild, Supreme Court, Civil Branch, New York County (Gender Fairness Committee) and the New York County Clerk's Office sponsored our 23rd annual Holocaust Remembrance Program.

In my introductory remarks, I recounted the poignant words of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, spoken at a similar program held at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum shortly after Passover quite a few years ago--words that are so relevant for our time:

The Passover story we re-tell is replete with miracles. But unlike our ancestors in their Exodus from Egypt, our way is unlikely to be advanced by miraculous occurrences. In striving to drain dry the waters of prejudice and oppression, we must rely on measures of our own creation—upon the wisdom of our laws and the decency of our institutions, upon our reasoning minds and our feeling hearts. And as a constant spark to carry on, upon our vivid memories of the evils we wish to banish from our world. In our long struggle for a more just world, our memories are among our most powerful resources.

May the memory of those who perished remain vibrant to all who dwell in this fair land, people of every color and creed. May that memory strengthen our resolve to aid those at home and abroad who suffer from injustice born of ignorance and intolerance, to combat

Program Co-chairs: Hon. Martin Shulman and Hon. Deborah Kaplan

Remembrance Issue Editor: Loren Schwartz

crimes that stem from racism and prejudice, and to remain ever engaged in the quest for democracy and respect for the human dignity of all the world's people.

This special edition of “Just Us” is the fifth such newsletter in which we publish the stories of survivors told in conjunction with the Candle Lighting Ceremony. Like last year's stories, this year's were movingly read by Administrative Judge Peter Moulton. As powerful as any such a presentation may be, the nature of the spoken word is such that it is easily “lost in the wind,” and it is for this reason we publish these special editions of “Just Us.” Each of the more than six million Jews lost in the Holocaust had a story to tell, but tragically so many of those stories are lost to us, which is, of course, all the more reason it is vital we preserve the memories that remain. And, as we lose the survivors themselves to the vicissitudes of aging, we turn naturally to the second and third generations who speak for them as we all need to speak for them. So, this special edition presents the stories of another group of courageous individuals who survived the Holocaust, and it also highlights the remarks of this year's Keynote Speaker, Mr. Elly Kleinman, a child of survivors, who is the founder and president of the Amud Aish Memorial Museum and the Kleinman Holocaust Education Center, established to document the history of the Holocaust with a purpose of perpetuating the legacy of those who adhered to their Jewish faith and practice during and after the Holocaust.

This year's Rotunda Exhibit, on loan from the Aish Amud Memorial Museum, was entitled “Faith and the Holocaust.” With artifacts and displays focused on questions of faith and related rabbinic rulings in the ghettos and in the death camps, it allowed the viewing public to obtain “insights into history and pride in the Jewish response to adversity.” (Ami Magazine, May 18, 2016, p 79).



**Rabbi Yeshayahu Greenfield and son Adir Greenfield
with display related to their family.**

Candle Lighter: Suzanne Jacobson in honor of her husband Bernard Jacobson and Family

Bernard Jacobson was born in Hamburg, Germany. His paternal grandfather and great grandfather were well known Rabbis who served in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Lands and Germany. His paternal uncles were professors and professionals and part of the very fabric of German intellectual society. The women were



Bernard Jacobson in school in Hamburg

well educated but upon marriage did not work outside the home. Bernard's father, a decorated WWI soldier who fought for Germany, was interned as a prisoner of war in France. He returned home after the war to find university was no longer an option and became a wholesale purveyor of hides, fur and animal fibers, traveling throughout Europe in search of these goods. Bernard and his siblings and cousins attended the local Jewish school, the Talmud Torah Reale Schula.

In 1933 the world changed for the Jacobson family. Many members emigrated to Palestine, having been forced out of their professions. Letters were exchanged inquiring about daily life, jobs, the boycott of Jewish businesses, and how much capital was needed to start anew. My husband, a child at the time, remembered only rowdy demonstrations.

In 1937 the family moved to Antwerp, Belgium. Bernard and his brother were enrolled in a Flemish school where he became the star Flemish speaker. Life continued until May 1940 when Germany invaded Belgium. Bernard's father was arrested and imprisoned in San Ciprian, a town on the French-Spanish border. Bernard's mother and the children, including Bernard's younger brother born in Belgium, moved to a hotel in De Panne, on the North Sea, with their maternal family, while my mother-in-law negotiated her husband's release. During this period the family kept moving ahead of

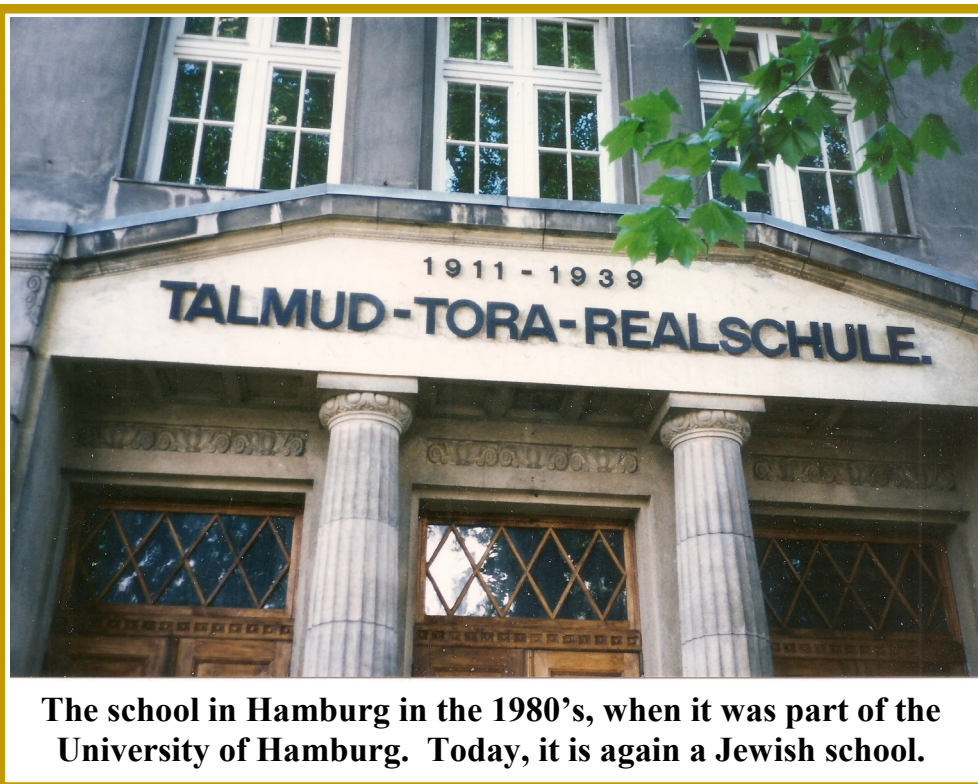
the troops to other cities on the Sea, including Dunkirk.

When Bernard's father was released, the family returned to Antwerp and life resumed until 1942 when the Germans occupied Antwerp. Shortly after, they were forced to Brussels, learning the Germans used Antwerp's port as a staging ground for an unsuccessful attack on Great Britain. Once again life continued, Bernard's father traveling by train to his work in Antwerp and the children attending an integrated French school where they were treated well. In summer of 1942, Bernard's father was arrested while on his way to work and was never seen again. Years later we learned from a book published by the Belgian government that he had been killed at Auschwitz.

Bernard's mother found a hiding place for the family in a garage behind someone's home where they remained for almost a year. They returned to their apartment, so as to not compromise these unknown courageous people, after my mother-in-law obtained papers from the Swiss, who represented the British, claiming the family was British. My mother-in-law, a British subject because of her father's birth in London, had only assumed German nationality upon her marriage. These papers saved my husband and his family when shortly after, they were turned in by the notorious "Jew Jacques," incarcerated in a Gestapo cellar, and then in May 1943 transferred to Mechelen (Malines) Concentration Camp where they remained for about nine months. Many detainees were sent to death camps but Jews from Allied Countries were untouched. Manfred, Bernard's younger brother, became quite ill and was sent to a local convent to be cared for by the sisters who also smuggled out Bernard's mother's letters when she visited. My husband and his older siblings spent their days cleaning the transport cattle cars and when possible hid tools underneath the straw used to line the cars. They had heard stories and were young and defiant. More importantly, they were never caught.

In February of 1944, they were transported by train and truck to Vittel, a French resort town used as an internment camp for American and British prisoners of war. The camp was run by the German military and guarded by Senegalese prisoners. Internees were housed in hotels and Bernard and the family received British Red Cross packages containing cigarettes, a major currency exchanged for fresh fruit and vegetables and on occasion, meat sold by the townspeople.

The French Free Forces liberated the camp on October 23, 1944, sending the Germans running



away boots in hand. Shortly after the Americans took over, and the family was sent on vacation where they were fed sumptuous meals. From there they were sent to Paris and then to Belgium, their adopted country. Bernard was 17 at the time and had had no formal education since grade school. He and his siblings were assigned work in the British PX where he remained until 1946 when he secretly made Aliyah in a rather unusual manner. His Zionist group secured identity papers of British Jewish soldiers, and he traveled from Brussels to an Italian port, sailed to Alexandria, and traveled by land to Palestine, eventually showing up at an uncle's door in Petach Tikvah. During his years in Israel, 1946 - 1955, a second chapter of his life, he helped found a Kibbutz, Mismar HaNegev, fought in the Palmach Division which freed Jerusalem, and worked on the Zim Cruise Ship Line.

Life began anew when he emigrated to the United States in 1955 to join his nuclear family until his passing in 1997. He earned a masters degree with honors, married, worked and established a family. His brothers, who shared the same unusual life experiences, understood, and were his best friends.

His oral testimony is preserved at the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute and his family history at the Leo Baeck Institute: The Jacob Jacobson Collection: The Hirsch and Jacobson Family Papers, 1776-1988. In closing, the Jacobson family lives on with our daughters and their families in California, the remainder of the family throughout the US, and our extended family throughout the world.

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IS	JACOBSON	Marcus, Amram	4.6.24	R Vittel E.81
	JACOBSON			

A book published by the Belgian government shows the deportation of Bernard Jacobson's father from Malines concentration camp to Auschwitz, where he was murdered.



SAR High-School Choir captured some of the ceremony's emotion with their songs "Vi Ahin Ich Geyn" ("Tell Me Where Can I Go?") and "Rochel M'Vokoh" ("Rachel Weeps for her Children").

Candle Lighter - Sami Steigman

I spoke about my life for the first time on March 11th, 2008, to a class of sixth graders. When I received a letter from one of the students that ended with the line: “Sami, your story was overwhelming and I promise I’ll pass your story on to my children,” it changed everything.

Since that moment, I have made it my life’s mission to reach as many young people as I can.

I am a victim, not only of the Holocaust, but after the war, I knew anti-Semitism and persecution in Romania. I have also known betrayal. I am a survivor, not only of the Holocaust but of many, many life challenges. At age 57, I became homeless and lost everything. To this day, I am not allowed to see or be in contact with my grandchildren. These things are very painful to me. Staying positive in the face of adversity is a CHOICE, even amidst the most devastating experiences.

I was born in Czernowitz, Bukovina on Dec 21, 1939. At that time it belonged to Romania. Later, it became part of the former Soviet Union and today it is in Ukraine. I grew up in Transylvania in a small town called Reghin. I did not know the language. I was in Ukraine with my parents in Mogilev-Podolsky, a labor camp in an area called Transnistria, from 1941 till 1944. Interestingly enough, we were deported by the Romanians and NOT by the Germans. Life was very difficult in the camp. We were starving and the Russian winter is bitterly cold. For a loaf of bread, my father gave away his winter coat. And, there came a point when I was dying of starvation and my life was saved by a German woman who lived on a farm nearby. The woman brought food to the SS and Ukrainian guards. When she saw me dying of starvation (there were physical signs: a big head, swollen stom-



Sami Steigman

ach and swollen feet) she decided to give me milk, at the risk of her entire family's lives. When I got a little color, she would pinch me (in Yiddish, we call it a knip), and say: "Those are my rosy cheeks!" I never knew her name, so I was very happy to see at the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Va'Shem a stone marker and a tree honoring the unknown ones.

Being too young to work, I was subjected to medical experimentation at the camp. Fortunately



Sami and Betty, Sami's little sister, and their parents Nathan and Reghina.

for me, I have no recollection of those years. However, I feel to this day, every single day, the effects.

The camp was liberated by the Red Army, and in 1961 my family went to Israel. I served in the Israeli Air Force, though not as a pilot. I came by myself to the US in 1968 without knowing the language and without money. I lived in Milwaukee, where I got married and got divorced, and in 1983 I returned to Israel. But in 1988, I decided to come back to the US and New York is my final home.

Through the conference claims I sought compensation for what I endured during the Holocaust. The application, dated February 8, 2002, asked "Were you subjected to medical experiments by the Nazi Regime?" I answered YES and provided the following "proof":

“My parents told me that I was subjected to Nazi medical experimentation but did not go into specifics (too painful to remember). All I know is that I suffered all my life from neck, head and back problems. The severity was so great that I had days and weeks that I could not sit, lay down or walk (not all at the same time). My headaches were so severe that I was crying in pain. My parents and the other witnesses are all gone, therefore, I hope that this information will suffice.”

Obviously, I had no proof and was not expecting an answer. To my surprise I got one on Jan 26, 2004. To my shock, I got paid based on their records. It was not a substantial sum, so, financially, it did not make a big difference in my life. But there are two paragraphs that are invaluable to me:

“Based on the information and evidence you provided, **your eligibility has been established as a victim of medical experiments.** Fully aware that no amount of money can compensate you for the severe injustices that you suffered, we do hope that you will regard this payment as



Reghin, Romania, 1947. Sami is lower left with other Jewish children and young people, some of them passing through the town on their way to Palestine.

a **symbolic acknowledgement** of those injustices".

I wish to honor my beloved parents - my father Nathan and my mother Reghina and 35 paternal family members murdered by the Nazis. I also want to acknowledge my uncle Max, who was a refugee in Shanghai. Thanks to China, the only country that took in Jews, 25,000 were saved. Although I don't know about them, I also want to honor the maternal family members and all the other victims who perished in the Holocaust.

In sum, my life is dedicated to reaching as many young people as I can. I encourage them to promote tolerance, and to make the world a better place for themselves, their children and grandchildren. My advice to the young people is to NEVER GIVE UP. NEVER LOSE HOPE, and enjoy the life you've been given. Never be a perpetrator of any crime or of any harm to another.

But most importantly, NEVER, EVER BE A BY-STANDER. The greatest tragedies in human history, the Holocaust and all other genocides, happened because the world stood by and did nothing. As a bystander, you are part of the problem. I want you to **be part of the solution.**

Candle Lighter: Rudy Rosenberg

Rudy Rosenberg was born in Belgium in 1930. His family watched the growth of Hitler and his Nazi anti-Semitic policies with increased concern, hoping that Belgium's neutrality would be respected by Germany. But in May 1940, Hitler invaded Belgium, Holland and France. Rudy Rosenberg watched and remembered the anti-Jewish vitriol that seeped into occupied Europe, even into previously benign Belgium.

In 1942, Rudy and his sister Ruth and countless Jewish students were forbidden to continue their schooling. The family was left with limited options - either try to flee to unoccupied Switzerland or hide in convents or Christian camps or private homes. If they remained in Belgium they knew it would only be a matter of time before German troops arrested and deported them to concentration camps.

In June 1942, the Rosenberg family purchased fake identity papers so they could flee to Switzerland. Unfortunately, they soon learned that this escape route was both dangerous and impractical. Rudy's parents found a



Rudy Rosenberg with Doina Alamazon and Justice Peter Moulton

safe hiding place in a hotel in Ardennes for Ruth and Rudy. For a fee, Rudy's mother, Frieda, and his father, Hillel, each hid in private homes in suburbs of Brussels. For safety reasons, Ruth and Rudy left the hotel and joined their father in his hiding place.

Six months later, in March 1943, Rudy went to hide with Frieda in her basement space and there they remained for 17 months. They were liberated on September 3, 1944. In total, the family spent 27 months - 823 days - in hiding.

Eventually Rudy left Europe and came to the United States where he joined the US Army during the Korean conflict. Frieda and Ruth joined Rudy three years later.

In 1991, Rudy wrote and published "And Somehow We Survive," an account of the struggle of his family to survive. In 2013, he published his memoirs, "Unorthodox Life," which is truly compelling reading.

Candle Lighter: Sol Rosenkranz, accompanied by his son, Joel Rosenkranz

Sol Rosenkranz is a quiet man. Until he started volunteering at the Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles in the 1970s, he rarely talked about his wartime experiences with anyone outside his family.

Sol is also modest. Only in recent years did he tell how he arranged for the escape of six of his family members - including his mother -the night before the liquidation of the Krosniewice ghetto in 1942; this action prolonged their lives, if only for six months.

Sol is a dedicated person. He has provided Holocaust education to thousands of students and others in his 20 years as a docent and visiting speaker with the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City. And finally, Sol is a fortunate man, having reached the impressive age of 98 without debilitating infirmities, and with a clear mind and an on-going eagerness for life.

Sol was born in Grabow, Poland, February 16, 1918, and two years later moved with his family to the nearby and larger town of Krosniewice, where his family had a hide-tanning business. Of nine members of his immediate family, only two survived, Sol and his older brother Henry. From 1942 until 1945 Sol survived six labor camps: Kara then Czestochowa in Poland, Buchenwald then Reinsdorf in Germany, Litmorice in Czechoslovakia, and finally Theresienstadt, where he was liberated by the Russians on May 8, 1945.

Sol was introduced to fellow survivor Sala Kuperwasser in the Bergen Belsen displaced person camp shortly after the war and they married just before sailing to New York. He soon apprenticed in the garment district, learning how to cut and sew garments, and in a few years opened a slip-cover business in Brooklyn, where he and (now named) Sally settled with newborn son Joel (b.1947). Mel followed in 1950 and Rita in 1956.



Sol Rosenkranz

In 1968, with his brother-in-law Felix, also a survivor, Sol started Bel Air Fashion, a manufacturer of ladies garments that employed dozens of cutters, first at 141 West 28th Street in the garment district and then at 327 West 37th Street. When competition from manufacturers in Eastern Europe using non-unionized labor - including Poland - made working conditions too difficult, Sol closed the business a few years later. Sally had health issues and required a temperate climate, and they re-located to Los Angeles in 1974, where they remained until Sally's death in 1996. Sol immediately returned to New York, found an apartment on the Upper West Side, and began actively volunteering at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, continuing to do so, on occasion, even today. His daughter, Rita, and grandson Daniel, age 11, live steps away from him - literally across the hall; and son Joel resides across the Park on the East Side.

Sol received a typically thorough Jewish education in Cheder in Krosniewice and the fluid ease with which he chants prayers, with a distinctly Eastern European lilt, is music to the ears to his fellow worshippers at Ohav Shalom on the Upper West Side. Mostly Yeshiva- trained and sometimes half or one-third Sol's age, they love him dearly, admire his self-effacing style, and see him as a link to their collective past.

Candle Lighter: Cynthia Weissman in honor of Regina and Hersch Weissman

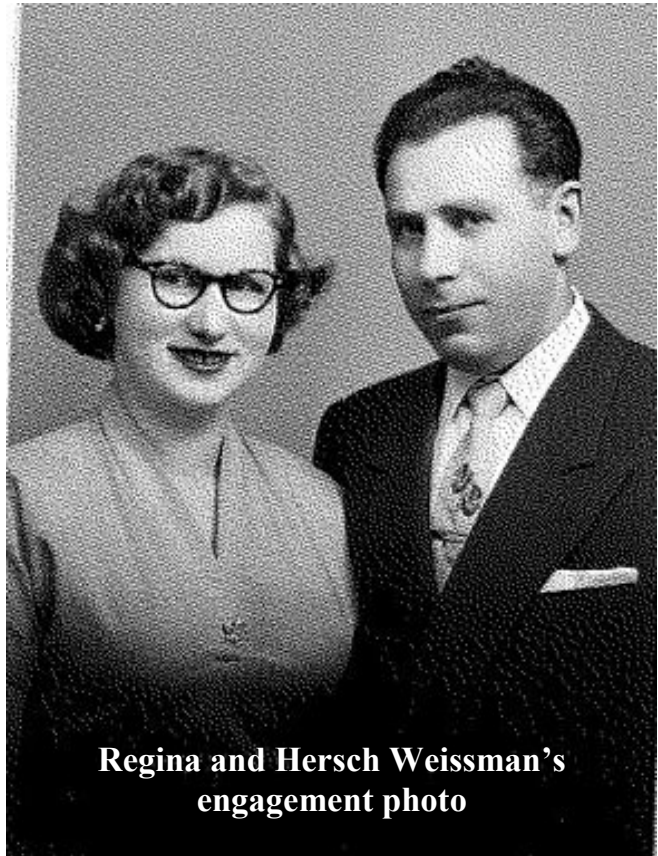
Note: Cynthia Weissman's mother, Regina, is still alive. Her father, Hersch, is not.

Today, I light a candle to honor my mother and father, survivors of the Shoah, the few relatives who managed to survive but have since passed away, and my grandparents and numerous relatives who tragically perished in the Holocaust.

My mother, Regina, was born in the summer of 1936 in the small village of Dembitza, not far from Cracow, to Celia and Pinchas Ruck. She was the older of two surviving daughters born during the onset of the Nazi occupation of Poland. Though times were difficult, she grew up in a loving household with adoring parents and grandparents nearby.

By 1940, the Jews of the village were taken to a ghetto. Most men, including Pinchas, were taken to

a labor camp. When he tried to escape to return to his wife, he was shot and killed. Celia and her two daughters, ages five and two, escaped to the countryside, which Celia knew well, and hid in the woods. Because survival was so difficult, especially for small children, my grandmother placed the two girls in non-Jewish homes. The baby, Gilda, was informally adopted by a family, who refused to surrender her at the end of the war. My mother was shuttled among several homes. She was fortunate to look “Aryan”, with thick red hair in pigtails. On one occasion when Nazis raided a home she hid under a mattress as the Nazis knifed it. Miraculously she survived. There were other close calls, too many to detail.



Regina and Hersch Weissman's engagement photo

My grandmother, a shrewd and resourceful woman, survived by concealing her Jewish identity and working in a variety of positions, including as a cook in a Gestapo headquarters. As the story goes, she even prepared gefilte fish, as many know a traditional favorite among Jewish foods.

In 1945, the three were reunited, but though family resided in the United States, they were not allowed to emigrate there because of a quota. The plan was to travel to France and then Cuba, but upon arrival in Paris they were told the Cuban quota had been filled, stranding them in Paris for three years. The children were enrolled in an ORT school and orphanage for Jewish children while my grandmother learned the trade of sewing machine operator.

Finally, in 1951, they left Europe for the shores of America on the SS Liberte with tickets paid for by HIAS and the Joint Distribution Committee. They arrived in New York City on May 10, 1951, exactly 65 years ago to this very day. My mother continues to share her feelings of disbelief and joy at passing the Statue of Liberty as she entered New York Harbor, as well as her enduring love for the United States, which offered her so much.

My father, Hersch Weissman, was born in 1926, the fourth of nine children born to Moshe Aharon and Leah in the small village of Kuropatniki, Ukraine. Although the family encountered anti-Semitism in various forms in the early 20th century, it was not until the Nazis invaded that the true horrors began. In 1943, the Nazis ordered villagers, including my father, to be presented for transport to a concentration camp or the closest labor camp, Tarnopol. My father escaped, along with two sisters and one brother, while his parents, Moshe Aharon and Leah, and their other young children, Mechel, Israel, Sara, Chaya Devora, and Mendel Libush were taken to a concentration camp and murdered. The one brother, Eli Simcha, who had escaped, was later lured out of his hiding place by the promise of bread, and shot by the Gestapo.

Remaining Jews were forcibly relocated to the Rohatyn Ghetto for a short time. My father was forced into hard labor, stone quarrying, at multiple labor camps. At one camp, he encountered a truly evil commandant who took joy in torturing Jews and sorting them by appearance: left - liquidation; right - hard labor or some other cruelty. In July 1943, Jews tried to escape, but were shot by Ukrainians and Germans. Those remaining were forced to dig a mass grave and line up to be shot. The skies miraculously opened as my father was shot in the face and fell into the grave. The rain caused the Nazis to disperse, enabling my father to jump from the grave and manage another escape. He later hid in filthy bales of hay covered in animal waste to prevent "Nazi" dogs from finding him.

My father was lucky enough to reunite with his two sisters, and they lived the remainder of the war in the forest. My father built bunkers, stole food and hid until the Russian army arrived. The three made their way to a DP camp in Germany where they lived for four years, then immigrated to the US and settled in Brooklyn in 1951. My father put himself through school and learned his trade of manufacturing restaurant equipment. He married my mother in 1954.

My father constantly read the immigrant newspapers searching for information on missing family. He saw a notice seeking witnesses to return to Europe for the Nazi trials. My father returned to Germany, leaving his young wife, to testify. During a proceeding, my father noticed another man sitting in the back of the court. My father recognized him immediately as a "real butcher", who had joyously murdered so many. My father notified the authorities, and returned again to Germany in 1957 to help convict "Toumanek," who received 15 years in prison.

Upon his return to the US, he and my mother raised three children, Paul, Mark, and me, hoping



Regina & her granddaughters

to ensure family and Jewish continuity. They provided financial assistance to those less fortunate, who were having an even more difficult time adjusting to life in the United States. He and my mother eventually moved to Fair Lawn, New Jersey where they founded the first Orthodox Congregation in Fair Lawn.

We lost my father in an accident in 1975 while only in his 40's, but my mother raised the children to be successful, community-oriented individuals, one a doctor, one a financial professional, and one an attorney. She remarried in 1980, and in this way, "gained" a few more children. Though facing some health issues now, she still enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren. The family is blessed to have these remarkable and resilient individuals as our parents and grandparents.

Candle Lighter: Charles G. Moerdler in honor of Hermann Moerdler and Erna Anna Brandwein Moerdler

My father, Hermann Moerdler, was a leader of the Social Democrats in Saxony, Germany. Together with his colleagues, including the late Willy Brandt, beginning in the early 1930's, they were among the first to publicly protest the rise of Nazism. My father learned in early 1934 that his

persistent vocal opposition had made him a marked man. Together with my mother, the former Erna Anna Brandwein, we moved to Paris, where I was born. Foolishly, they listened to the entreaties of my father's parents that all would be well if we came back in 1935. We returned to a Germany that was already Hitler's willing captive. Again, my father could not stand mute, a trait I seem to have inherited; he spoke his mind, loud and clear. The protests that ensued became increasingly ugly and the demonstrations ever more prone to confrontation. In late 1937 and early 1938, with the incessant rise of Nazi savagery and its public display without protest from the German populace, it became clear that personal danger was imminent. A Gestapo woman's violent anti-Semitic assault had injured my eyes. We began to run; first to the Sudetenland, then to Prague, and then in a mad dash across the European continent, usually one step ahead of the emissaries of barbarity.

Meanwhile, on October 28 and 29, 1938, Hitler's minions swept through Saxony and much of eastern Germany rounding up tens of thousands of German Jews who it was supposed were of Polish heritage, including my maternal grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. Hitler believed that Poland had insulted Germany by demanding that German residents in Poland obtain permits. In response, he deported, at bayonet point, tens of thousands of German Jews across a hostile Polish-German border to a tiny Polish village called Zbaszyn. Without documents, this mass of people, young and old, drifted with no funds and few possibilities slowly across Poland, seeking refuge and escape.

America and most of the world stood mute in the face of this terror, savagery and man's inhumanity to man. The tribulations of my family and thousands like them were too horrific ever to fully appreciate unless you were one of them. One aspect of their plight - abandonment, terror and desperation - is aptly summarized in a recently discovered postcard that is now on display in the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Written in November 1938 by one of my uncles to a relative in Palestine, it noted how Polish Jews had helped his little family escape from Zbaszyn to Cracow, that his wife and child had been separated, that they were penniless and in need of funds and desperate to escape. They did not escape. My elderly grandparents did not survive. In time, following the September 1939 invasion of Poland by Germany, all of my deported family members were arrested and sent to one or another of the death camps.

As for my father's family, most -including my paternal grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins -- were unable to leave Germany in time. They perished at Treblinka, Auschwitz and like crucibles of death. Two young cousins who had succeeded in hiding from pursuers managed to flee to Palestine.

One member of the Wiesenthal branch of my mother's family survived Mathausen to later go on to exact a

measure of justice, while two other members of my mother's family survived the camps and the subsequent Displaced Person Camps to emigrate to America.

My mother and I were fortunate. Because I was born in Paris, I held a French passport. That somehow enabled my mother to obtain from Adolf Eichman's Einsatzgruppe a Durschlasschein -- literally, a Free Passage Document. As you may remember from the movie Casablanca, that was the precious exit visa through German lines. It allowed my mother and me, but not my father, to cross through German lines, but not without incident. For example, as we crossed the Polish-German border, the Polish troops shot at us and the Germans returned fire, with us caught in the middle. My eyes, which had earlier been injured in Chemnitz by the Gestapo woman, became completely crossed in fright, a condition that later required several operations and has since required me to wear glasses. My mother's earlobe was hit. There were more incidents, but others suffered even more, with even greater permanent injury, or death, as they sought to escape.

Through my mother's enormous courage and sacrifice-carrying, schlepping and encouraging a frightened four-year-old --we finally made our way to Gdansk or Danzig and in 1939 to a Swedish ship that ultimately took us to England. There the terrors of war were reduced to ducking incendiary bombs and V-1 and V-2 rockets in London. England was, however, a most caring and hospitable ref-



Charles Moerdler

uge. In late 1946, on yet another Swedish ship, my mother and I came to America to start a new life. My father did not make it. He somehow made it to Riga, Latvia, before the Nazis caught up with him. He disappeared, apparently having met the same fate as his parents, siblings and their children -- the death camps.

This is a very truncated story of the experiences of a Holocaust childhood that is a permanent scar. It is recounted both to honor my mother, my father and my family, but also to underscore the teaching: NEVER FORGET. To quote Pastor Martin Niemoller:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Let me, however, end on a positive note. My mother was fond of saying, following the birth of my sons and daughter, that they were the best, last laugh on Hitler. He had vowed to annihilate us. My children are proof that he failed, as had so many of his predecessors in butchery. Today, from one surviving bearer of the name Moerdler, there are 20, and another is on the way.



Hon. Martin Shulman speaks at the Ceremony.

Candle Lighter: Julie Hauptman Cohen in honor of Eva Loose Hauptman and Kurt Hauptman

Note: Julie Hauptman Cohen's mother, Eva, is still alive; her father, Kurt, is not.

The recounting of first-hand personal accounts takes on even deeper meaning as the survivors age and the torch continues to get passed to the second and third generation and to all of us who share a common humanity. *Zachor*, we must remember. We publish a seventh story of survival read to the assembled during the Holocaust Remembrance Program as told by Julia Cohen, a member of the third generation-- daughter and granddaughter of survivors--and Court Attorney to New York Supreme Court Justice Shlomo Hagler.

Hon. Martin Shulman

Julia (Julie) Hauptman Cohen is the daughter of Eve Loose Hauptman and the late Kurt Hauptman. Both of her parents are only children. Her mother's parents were Lisl Midas Loose and Franz Loose who lived in Furth, Germany where Eve was born. Franz was an ophthalmologist who was originally from Karlsruhe, Germany. At some point in the mid 1930s, Lisl, Franz and Eve (who was approximately two years old at the time) went on holiday to the Black Forest. After Franz returned to Furth to work, Eve suddenly developed whooping cough and had to be quarantined. Lisl met a British gentleman who was a well know movie producer, named Sid Lewis. They became friendly and he implored Lisl that her family had to flee Germany as soon as possible.

Upon their return to Furth, Lisl and Sid Lewis convinced Franz that he, Lisl and Eve needed to leave Germany promptly. Sid would help them emigrate. Lisl was hesitant to leave her parents and Franz to leave his widowed mother. Sid told them that they could subsequently arrange for their parents' passage. Sid helped with the arrangements and Lisl, Franz and Eve left with very few belongings and no funds.

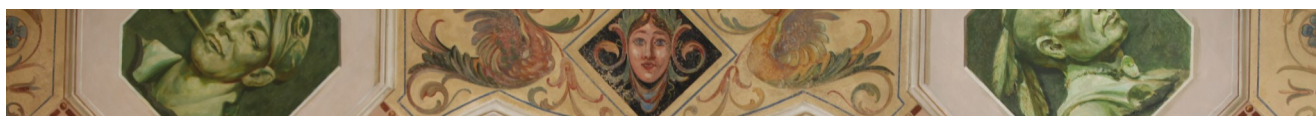
They stopped overnight in Holland and then traveled to London. There, Franz secured a job in a hospital and Eve started the equivalent of kindergarten. They lived in London for about one-and-a-half years until they were able to obtain permission to enter America. A distant relative of Lisl's was related to the *New York Times* Sulzbergers. They became the Loose family's sponsors, which

involved the Sulzbergers promising to be financially responsible for them. With the paper work in order, Lisl, Franz and Eve took a ship to New York. Subsequently, Lisl's parents were able to make it to the United States, but tragically Franz's mother, Julia, died at Theresienstadt.

Lisl, Franz and Eve moved into a one-bedroom apartment on the West Side of Manhattan. Franz had to learn both English and medicine. He supported the family as best he could by working in the Library at Columbia University, and Lisl took odd jobs. Eve, who had a heavy British accent, started first grade in a New York City public school.

A friend of Franz's from Germany, Julius Ottenheimer, a cardiologist, helped Franz study for the medical boards. Franz passed on his first try and was able to open his own ophthalmology practice as well as obtain surgery privileges at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital. The Sulzbergers, especially Iphigene, maintained a relationship with Franz and Lisl for many years and in fact used Franz as their family ophthalmologist. They were most impressed that Franz promptly paid back the support they had advanced. Lisl remained friendly with Iphigene and spent time over the years at the Sulzberger estate. Iphigene served as a reference for Julie's application to attend the United Nations International School.

Kurt Hauptman was born in Vienna Austria. Kurt's father, David, one of many siblings, was born in Poland and his mother, Ida Hauptman, one of five siblings, was born in Vienna. Ida and David owned two shoe stores in Vienna which were confiscated by the Nazis. David was arrested by the Nazis with the rest of his family and sent to a concentration camp. During this time, Ida and Kurt escaped Vienna and took a ship to Cuba. David was eventually released from the concentration camp and followed Ida and Kurt to Cuba. They had a distant relative in Scranton, Pennsylvania who sponsored them to emigrate to the United States from Cuba. Ida and David opened a wholesale leather goods business in Scranton. One brother and one sister of David's emigrated to Canada. That brother adopted the daughter of one of David's siblings who was killed in a concentration camp. Ida's siblings and mother came to New York, except two sisters who emigrated to Israel.



Keynote Presentation by Elly Kleinman, Founder of the Kleinman Holocaust Education Center and The Amud Aish Memorial Museum



Elly Kleinman giving the keynote address.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at your Holocaust Remembrance Program. It is important to me. I grew up surrounded by the Holocaust. My parents survived the Holocaust, and they met and married in a Displaced Persons camp after the war. I remember I was around eight years old when I first started hearing stories about what had happened to my family – my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who didn't survive. And even today I learn something new each time my mother speaks about it.

One thing I have learnt as the son of survivors: the further we move from the event, the more Holocaust remembrance and knowledge continues to evolve, as new sets of issues come to the fore, as new generations come to listen and participate in Yom HaShoah commemorations or, in observant communities like mine, Tisha B'Av.

They listen to two narratives. The first is the story of what the perpetrator did to the Jews. The second is the story of the victim. The institution I represent here today, Amud Aish Memorial Museum, which will open in Brooklyn in 2017, tells the story of the victim, and in particular the untold story of the observant Jewish victim: their lives before, during, and after the Holocaust; their faith and belief systems; and the story of traditional European Judaism. Regardless of our various persuasions in the rich expressions of Judaism today, they were our common ancestors.

The rigorous scholarship of how the Holocaust happened is critical to our understanding of this tragic period in Jewish history. But the story from the victims' perspective is the harder one to tell. It is personal. And the sheer extent of the mass slaughter flattens out the individuality of the person. It is hard to get to the person behind the powerful façade of the victim. For this and so many other reasons, the survivor and their humanity have become so important to us. They have given us their life stories, and in many cases their faith and belief systems that contrast against the unbearable victimhood they experienced. The survivor is our most immediate personal connection to the Holocaust. But, they are leaving us. We will be the last to have known them.

Yet we know, collectively as the Jewish people, that survivors of the Holocaust will always represent the fragile golden thread that came back to life, a metaphor of Fire to Light, the Amud Aish - the biblical Pillar of Fire that was a guiding light for Jews in the wilderness. It is this life force - this movement from Holocaust to rebirth - that inspires the very name of our new museum.

Curators from the museum have created the exhibit you see today in this historic Rotunda, entitled appropriately "Faith and the Holocaust." It explores the meanings that Jews gave to their experiences, under unimaginable duress, as they strived to maintain their sense of religious identity. The inner life of the observant Jew during this tragic period is documented in practices which unfolded in the ghettos, camps, and in hiding: a twelve-year-old boy in a ghetto asks his Rabbi if he can perform the mitzvah of donating tfillin, sensing he may not live to the age of thirteen; A Chevra Kadisha (Holy Burial Society) is formed within weeks of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen as they gathered the dead, recited the Kaddish and provided proper Jewish burial, unthinkable only weeks earlier.

You will also see integrated into the exhibit a series of Shailos and Teshuvos (questions and answers), a normal exchange that has taken place between Jews and their Rabbis over time immemorial. In the exhibit we see Shailos and Teshuvos in a world turned upside down: intimate dialogues between imprisoned and forlorn Jews and their fellow prisoner Rabbis. In this context, the practice becomes a precious source of empirical knowledge about the questioner's inner-most thoughts about survival, ethics, and moral behavior - yes thoughts about moral behavior in Auschwitz. They also capture a Rabbi's worries as he attempts to give succor and advice to the forlorn as he himself is similarly facing almost certain death.

Amud Aish Memorial Museum is therefore part of the evolving character of Holocaust remembrance in that it gives voice at long last to the lives of observant Jewish victims who comprised a significant portion of Eastern European Jewry. This is a giant step forward for the general Jewish memory of the Holocaust in all its diversity.

So, ladies and gentlemen, the story keeps evolving as do the audiences. In that spirit join me tonight on the occasion of this 71st commemoration in passing on the legacy of Holocaust Remembrance: L'Dor V'Dor, from Generation to Generation, from Fire to Light.

Faith During the Holocaust



Museum board member Yaakov Hirsh peers into a display case housing tefillin smuggled into a concentration camp and a child's tzitzit found after the war by his father-in-law, a survivor.



Ceremony attendees appeared moved by the exhibits loaned by the Amud Aish Memorial Museum. The museum's mission has led to its being entrusted with personal archives long kept private by Orthodox families anxious for assurance that their documents, and the faith and observance they record, would be respected if shared. Their confidence in the museum helps restore many vital untold stories to our knowledge of the Holocaust.