



Levonah Chapter Hadassah-Israel and ESRA Holocaust Memorial Joint Event, 8th April 2021.

By Marion Stone

This event, organized by Modi'in's Levonah Chapter Hadassah-Israel and ESRA Modi'in branch on Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day, seemed to be particularly dramatic as it featured the true stories of some survivors, and others who didn't survive.

The evening was opened by ESRA's Rhona Berzack, who introduced Deputy Mayor of Modi'in Shlomo Pazy. Pazy's message was that we must remember that the Holocaust took place and we must never forget to pass on the important lessons from generation to generation.

Six candles were then lit by Mimi Nadelbach, herself a survivor, and each candle was dedicated to a family, whose representative told their story.

1. Miriam Bruce, for her late mother, Marta Wise

I am honored to light this candle on behalf of my mother, שתבדל לחיים ארוכים. My mother was born in Czechoslovakia in 1934 to an orthodox family. Before the war, she lived happily with her parents and seven siblings in a prestigious neighborhood of Bratislava. Theirs is a story of moving from place to place and living in disguise, and miracles on the way, for their survival.

Miracle 1 took place in Auschwitz when my mother was selected for the gas chamber, and Cousin Eva was sent on. Just then the camp was attacked by Soviet planes and in the confusion the two selected lines were pushed back together. They were put into the

family camp at Auschwitz Birkenau and then to the medical experiment block of brutal Josef Mengele where they were subjected to horrific treatment and pain.

In January 1945, with the approach of the Soviet Army, the Nazis sent the majority of the inmates on what would later be known as the death marches, but Eva who was sick with dysentery couldn't walk and my mother refused to leave her. The gates to the camp were locked and the camp was set alight, but out of a perfectly blue sky came a downpour of rain that put out the fire. The second personal miracle.

A few months after liberation they reached the family home in Bratislava, where they were reunited with their parents and all their siblings except their little sister Judith, who had been murdered in Auschwitz. Her two uncles and their entire families were also murdered. The family left for Australia in 1948.

My parents have three daughters, and in 1998 they fulfilled their dream of coming on Aliya, and now live in Israel, *Baruch Hashem*, with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren -- or as my mother likes to say, her victory over the Nazis! My mother until recently, guided at Yad Vashem and would travel with groups to Poland every year, and speak around the world (including at the UN).

2. **Sandra Knisbacher, for Helen Robinson, nee Helena (Henya) Jakobovics**

My mother, was born in 1927, in Hostovice, Slovakia. When the Nazis took over Czechoslovakia, this area was given over to Hungary during the war. Like many Jews in Europe whose families originated from a different country, they did not have citizenship, and were deported to Poland, in the early 1940s, where they lived and worked in the fields. They managed to get home, but were soon sent to Auschwitz.

The three sisters managed to stay together, first at Auschwitz and then at various labor camps. Upon liberation in April 1945 by British and US forces, the sisters returned to Kolbosov, hoping to be reunited with other family members. They lived in a group house with other survivors.

On the last night of Chanukah, December 1945, there was a pogrom, and all the occupants of the house were murdered, except my mother, who miraculously was saved by hiding under the bed covers, in the same bed where her murdered sisters lay. One can only imagine the trauma my mother experienced in her young life.

After a short stay in Prague, and helped by The Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), she went to relatives in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Her mother met her father, Arnold, a native-born American, and they were married in 1949.

My mother passed away in January 2015, a testament of survival. She was privileged to see her three children married, with children of their own and grandchildren. *Yehi Zichra Baruch.*

3. **Sheri Miller, for her Mother**

My mother was born in Vienna, Austria in 1929. She described the first 11 years of her life as being a fairytale, a little girl's dream come true! Suddenly, in January 1940, Gestapo agents turned up at the door and took her father without explanation. Somehow my grandmother ascertained that he was taken to Buchenwald without any idea of his expected return. She was urged to pack up her two children and flee the country. My grandmother would not hear of it! She was determined that she was not leaving without her husband! Through these days of fear and uncertainty, she took upon herself to fast Mondays and Thursdays, visiting her mother's grave weekly and apparently sending bribes to the powers that be. In addition, she wrote to my grandfather's half-sisters in Brooklyn to request their sponsorship affidavits. With *Hashem's* help the papers arrived and shortly thereafter by pure miracle my grandfather was released from Buchenwald weighing 40 kg, standing 6 feet tall. Part of that Miracle was the fact that only men with families were eligible for this one time offer to leave the country (with their entire family). If my grandmother had heeded the advice of those around her, my grandfather would have perished with so many others.

That very night they boarded the train to Genoa to board the SS REX that took them to Freedom in America. My mother lost 17 aunts and uncles and many cousins that made Holocaust Remembrance Day not just one day a year, but every day of her life.

4. **Doreen Morris, for Rav Shlomo Schickler z"l**

My maiden name is Schickler. Rav Shlomo Schickler was my uncle. Shlomo had six siblings, three sisters and three brothers. Shlomo was the third oldest (born around 1900), followed by my father, David, who was born in 1901. They lived in a town, Wizntiz, famous for its Hasidic community and about 90% Jewish at the time. In the early 20th century it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Between the world wars it became part of Romania but was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. After the breakup of the Soviet Union it became a town in the Ukraine.

Education for their sons and daughters was very important to the parents, Recie (Ruth) and the father, Zvi, who had a flour, and grocery shop. All the boys had to help in the shop but Shlomo was exempted as it was felt he was extremely intelligent and so should focus on his learning.

The children were young when both their parents died within a year of each other, in approximately 1912/13. The two oldest siblings, who were only teenagers at the time, took over as “parents” to avoid the family being split up and placed in foster homes. During World War I, they fled from Wiznitz, to escape the Russians.

Meanwhile, shortly after the parents had died, in 1913, a renowned Rabbi from Glina, a nearby shtetl in Eastern Galicia, noticed Shlomo and was most impressed by his knowledge and commitment. He decided to take Shlomo under his wing and Shlomo eventually became a Rabbi and was a Rosh Yeshiva in Poland. He married Toibe but they had no children. They lived close to Lviv (now in the Ukraine).

World War II broke out. A cousin of Toibe’s in the USA managed to get a visa for them to travel to the USA but it arrived too late. Shlomo, his wife and her parents were executed by the Nazis in 1941/42.

5. **Susan Philipp, for parents Rosa and Moritz (Moshe) Stern, z”l**

It is an honor and privilege for me to light a candle in memory of my dear parents, whom I still mourn every day. My family lived in Germany. We were a large family, most of whom, perished in various camps. My parents owned a dry goods store. During Crystal Nacht, our house and store were completely destroyed and our family fled to Karlsruhe, where my father found work with one of his brothers in a bank. Shortly thereafter, my father was taken to Buchenwald, a forced labor camp. He returned to Karlsruhe a year later; a mentally and physically broken man.

A few months later, together with 1,000 other Karlsruhe citizens, our family was deported to Gurs, a concentration camp in the Pyrenees Mountains in Southern France. My sister, Beate z”l. and I were rescued by the O.S.E., a French underground Organization which saved many Jewish children. We were hidden for the duration of the war in abandoned castles and Catholic convents; never staying in one place more than a few months, always just a step ahead of the gestapo.

My parents were transferred to Drancy, near Paris, and from there, to Auschwitz, where they were murdered.

After the war, in 1945, we lived in London for two years. From there, we moved to the U.S. until I made Aliyah in 1992.

My sister z"l, devoted her adult life to speaking about our childhood and the Holocaust to every school, church, civic group and university as often as she could. Something I was never able to do.

I am blessed with three children, 13 grandchildren and three and a half great grandchildren. My sweet revenge!

6. **Gabe Shamir, for his father, Tibor Grunberger**

My father, Tibor Grunberger (Galambos) רפאל אליהו בן יונה צבי, was born in Debrecen Hungary in 1923. The family was in the shoe business. The Shoah hit Hungarian Jews relatively late in 1944, but many were killed primarily outside of Budapest. My father was in a forced labor camp from where he escaped along with other some other youth. He was captured and sent to Bergen Belsen and, once English liberators closed in, he was sent to Terezstad.

He weighed 84 pounds at liberation and spent weeks recovering in a sanatorium. He lost his mother in Auschwitz and his sister in the Stutthof camp after she was sent there from Auschwitz. My father's father survived the war in a forced labor camp.

My mother, Eva Krausz (Galambos) אסתר בת משה, was born in Debrecen in 1927. My Father's sister and my mother were best friends growing up. My mother, and her mother and sister, were sent to Vienna in what we believe to be a Kasztner train. All three survived working in a munitions factory. My mother's father survived working in a forced labor camp. My mother was one of the lucky ones, her entire nuclear family were alive, though most of her extended family perished.

In 1956 during the Hungarian Revolution, my parents, along with my brother and I, escaped to Austria. After two years in refugee camps, we were granted permission to come to the Boston in the United States. I no longer have family in the United States - they are all in Israel!

Rabbi Jeffrey Shron sang *El Maale Rachamim*.

The evening's main speaker, **Liesje Tesler**, was introduced by Stuart Morris.

Here are her mother's and father's stories:

Leny (Helena) Simon and her family were living in a Dutch village, Almelo, near the German border. Until 1940 they felt no signs of anti-Semitism. With help from the underground, they went into hiding and lived in an attic room and were safe for a while. But then, hiding families were being discovered by the Germans, so they were moved temporarily before they were discovered. Life in hiding was very difficult, and tensions were high, and eventually, Liesje's mother suffered a nervous breakdown.

A doctor working with the underground suggested that she get out of the house and walk in fresh air at night. For this, an underground volunteer accompanied her to ensure her safety. His name was Sem (Shimon) van Spiegel, and they became good friends, and eventually married.

Sem was always involved with the Deventer Jewish community. During the war he did whatever he could that was needed to help in the underground. He didn't look Jewish, which was a great advantage for the partisan volunteer. He was tall and fair haired. He was given more responsibility, such as stealing identification papers from unsuspecting citizens-and becoming a local leader. He lived in constant fear of being found out.

On May 5th 1945, Holland was liberated, but all Sem's family were no longer alive. Sem had saved hundreds of lives and has been awarded in Israel and in Holland for his brave deeds.

Sem's memoirs of his experiences were found after his death and each grandchild received a copy. Leny and Sem with their children went to live in the USA after finding that Holland was filled with too many bad memories. 15 years later they followed their children to Israel.

Liesje's mother, Leny, is today 101. She has three daughters, all of whom wanted to make up for the family's losses during the Shoah. 115 direct descendants were at her 100th birthday celebration (not all of them were able to be present or there would have been more). She has 23 grandchildren, 87 great grandchildren, and 5½ great, great grandchildren, and it is gratifying to know that her daughters' plans were successful.

After this gripping narrative, Ellen Shemesh, Levonah Chapter Hadassah-Israel co-President introduced Liesje's oldest grandchild, 29 year old Amir Bet Yaakov. Bet Yaakov, a high ranking IDF officer with a degree in electronic engineering and M. A. in industrial engineering, soon to be promoted to Major, read a poem 'Yizkor' written by Abba Kovner, a poet and partisan of the Vilna Ghetto:

YIZKOR (WE SHALL REMEMBER)

BY ABBA KOVNER

*Let us remember our brothers and our sisters
The homes in the cities and houses in the villages*

*The streets of the town that bustled like rivers
And the inn standing solitary on the way.
The old man with his etched-out features
The mother in her sweater
The girl with the plaits
And the children.*

*The thousands of communities of Israel with their families
The whole Jewish people*

*That was brought to the slaughter on the soil
Of Europe by the German destroyer.*

*The man who screamed out suddenly and died while screaming
The woman who clutched her baby to her breast and whose arms tumbled down.*

*The baby whose fingers groped for her mother's nipple
Which was blue and cold*

*The legs, the legs that sought refuge
And there was no escape.*

*And those who clenched their hands into fists
The fist that gripped the steel*

*The steel that was the weapon of the vision
The despair and the revolt.*

*And those with staunch hearts and those with open eyes
And those who sacrificed themselves without*

Being able to save others.

We shall remember the day

The day in its noon, the sun

That rose over the stake of blood

The skies that stood high and silent

We shall remember the mounds of ash

*Beneath flowering parks.
Let the living remember his dead for
Behold they are here*

*Before us
Behold their eyes cast around and about.
So let us not rest
May our lives be worthy of their memory*

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Carol Lipman thanked everyone who has contributed a dedication and she read out the names and their messages.

Rose Scharlat, co-President of Levonah Chapter Hadassah-Israel, offered a final thank you to everyone who had planned, contributed and attended the evening, with special mention to Ruchama Berkovitch for her work in researching and coordinating material for the event.

Finally, Hatikva was sung by Jonny Sklar, who accompanied himself on his guitar.



*Donations, Tributes, Memorials and
Commemorations*

*Bonnie
Bachenheimer*

*The Bachenheimer and Freudenthal
Families*

Zvi Berkovitz

*In Memory of Chaim and Sara
Berkovitch, survivors of Auschwitz and
their parents, brothers and sisters of the
Berkovitch and Shpiegel families who
perished in the Holocaust.*

Melvin Berwald

*To the grandparents I never knew -
Febus and Marie Rimalower*

*Rivkah and Sruely
Cooper*

*In memory of all those who perished in
the Holocaust. In our hearts their
memories will last forever.*

Fonda Dubb

*In memory of all my family who died in
the Shoah*

*Jackie and David
Graham*

*Jackie and David Graham have
remembered five year old Machiel
Cohen, poignantly from Amsterdam.
His name was allocated by the Yellow
Candle Organization from the UK*

Hanna Fein

*In memory of my family who perished
in the Holocaust*

*Alan and Marissa
Goldman*

In memory of our parents

*Dov and Elayne
Greenstone*

*In memory of your family members
who were murdered in the Holocaust*

*Sherie Miller
Heineman and
Family*

*In memory of my Great Grandmother
Racher Viznicer Kranz HY"D*

Carol Karsh

*Dedicated to the brave Dutch citizens
Jeanette Gnirrep and Egbert Star who
saved my dear friend Bertie Levkowitz
and her family Lizkor Daniel Natan
Karsh*

Rita and Lou Katz

*In memory of all those who lost their
lives in the Shoah*

Elena Keen

*In memory of her family members who
perished in the Shoah*

Jackie Klein

*Adele (Dolly) Gosler-Reens
In memory of those who died three
weeks before the liberation of Bergen
Belsen*

*Sandy and Mitch
Knishbacher*

*In loving memory of my mother, Helen
Robinson*

Jean Kruger

*In memory of my grandparents, Yankel
and Libby Zelinsky who perished in the
Shoah*

Julie Levi

*In memory of Bernard Ahrend who
survived the horrors of the Holocaust*

Linda Levine

*In memory of my husband Baruch
Simcha*

*Terry and Howie
Mischel*

*In honor of our son in law Yosef
Ginsbury who has just completed the
guide course at Yad Vashem*

Shelley Morris

*In memory of those who perished in the
Holocaust*

*Zamira and Jackie
Rajchgod*

*To the Melamed and Rajchgod families
who were murdered by the Nazis. May
their memories be for a blessing*

Ron Robinson

*In memory of my mother - Holocaust
survivor - Helen (Henyka) Jakubovic
Robinson, and her family that perished
in the Holocaust.*

Ron Robinson

*In memory of the Jewish Martyrs
massacred in Ulic and Kolbasov,
Slovakia - December 6, 1945.*

*Gary and Rose
Scharlat*

*In Honor of the righteous gentiles who
hid and saved Dr. Bernard Schanzer,
Henry Schanzer, Chana Schanzer, and
their mother Bella Schanzer.*

Hedy Shron

*In memory of my parents who survived
the Holocaust; Yakob Yakubovitch and
Gizi Yakubovitch*

*Harriet and Harvey
Spitzer*

*In memory of those we lost in the
Holocaust*

Ellen Zalman Stein

In memory of Cathy and John Pais

Marion Stone

*In memory of Avraham Yaakov Shiffer
and his family who were murdered by
the Nazis in their village of Govarova,
Poland 1939.*

*In memory of his daughter Hannah,
and her husband, Bert Lev, who died in
a camp around Yom Kippur 1943*

Victor Paul Trevor

*In memory of my father Mendel
Trechter who died in the Shoah in the
Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp*

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