

MY STORY

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1. Roots

My father's family – Lieben – lived in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, for a very long time. My ancestors were called “Menaker” – the Hebrew designation of the man, who removes the un-kosher parts of beef. The name still appears in the Hebrew inscriptions on the gravestones of my grandfather and of my uncle Salomon (“Mani”) at the Jewish cemetery in Prague, Olsany. An undocumented family legend has it that our forebears were expelled from Prague with the rest of the Jews by the empress Maria Theresa (1717 – 1780) and settled in the then village Lieben. After the death of the empress, her son Josef II. allowed the Jews to return to Prague and on this occasion they received German surnames – in this case “Lieben” for the village they came from. This village, in Czech “Liben”, is today part of Prague. (Research at the former Jewish cemetery in Liben is not possible, since it was destroyed during the Communist regime).

The family was strictly orthodox and in my childhood one of the very few such religious Jewish families in Prague. The existing family tree bears as the first documented date the birth year of the grandfather of my grandmother Yeshayahu Jeiteles – 1810.

My grandfather Gabriel Lieben, who died before I was born, manufactured gloves.

My mother, nee Gruenbaum, came from a similarly religious family from the vicinity of Schwabach – Fuerth – Nuernberg in Bavaria, Germany. The existing family tree begins in 1783, but there is a tradition going back to 1635 and a further one, according to which the family descended from the bible commentator Rashi (1040 – 1105) from Troyes in France.

My grandfather Abraham Gruenbaum had a gold-leaf manufacture. He was one of the founders of “Agudat Israel” and active in many other areas of Jewish communal life. In this connection, he visited Palestine at least twice. During his last trip in 1921 he became seriously ill, was treated at the “Shaare Tzedek” hospital in Jerusalem by the famous Dr. Wallach and by the well-known Schwester Selma. My grandfather was one of the founders of this hospital. He died and was buried on the Mount of Olives. His descendants found his grave in 1967 after the 6-day war. Two generations later, children of my brother Abraham (named after this grandfather) – great-grandchildren of our grandfather - were born in this same hospital, attended by the same physician and the same nurse, and then a great-great-grandson, too!

Both pairs of my future grandparents, who were not acquainted, were sometime in 1918 in the spa of Marienbad. A marriage broker learned that the Prague family had an unmarried son and those from Nuernberg a single daughter and connected the two families. Dr. Eugen Lieben, then aged 32, married on November 22, 1918 Hannchen (“Hansi”) Gruenbaum. They made their home in Prague.

My parents had three sons: Arthur – Abraham, born 1922, Rudolf (“Rudi”) – Gabriel, born 1924 and me, Max – Mordechai, born 1926. According to Jewish tradition, my brothers got in addition to German names also the Hebrew ones of our late grandfathers. I got the Hebrew name from the hero of the Purim holiday, celebrated in that year a week after I was born.

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2. Childhood

My whole wider Prague family lived in the Old Town – my grandmother Ernestine (Tina), nee Jeiteles, her three sons, her daughter and their families, in all 12 grandchildren of my grandparents. Then there were two brothers of my grandmother and seven cousins living in Prague and their families. It was quite a large clan, totaling in the time of my childhood some 50 persons. All of them lived at a walking distance of at most 10 minutes from each other – the reason being of course, to be able to walk on Shabbat and holidays to synagogue. “Synagogue” is in this case too bombastic a word: the family had a private prayer room, called the “Lieben-Shul” where in addition to members of the Lieben and Jeiteles families only a very few “outsiders” prayed. The prayer room was located in an apartment in the building of the “Hevra Kadisha” (the Jewish Burial Society) at Josefovská Street, called earlier and now again Wide Street (Siroká ulice). In two rooms of the same apartment a single brother of my grandmother, Dr. Berthold Jeiteles lived.

So most relatives (mainly the males) met twice daily at prayers. Saturday noon the daughter and the three daughters-in-law visited grandmother together with the children. She lived in an old house, called “Three Feathers”, at the corner of Dlouhá and Týnská streets. (There is a colorful sign with three Feathers over the entrance to the house, even today). In the winter we were offered minced meat loaf (which I did not like), in summer strawberry cake. Later the men and older cousins came, who in the meantime had a study session in the prayer room, to collect their families.

Our Prague grandmother was an impressive lady, evoking respect wherever she went. She always wore elegant, but old-fashioned clothes, her head covered by an embroidered dark hat, called “Kapotthuetchen”. (I knew only one other woman with such a hat). One anecdote about her: one day a new maid came. Grandmother asked her what her name was, the answer was “Rosa”. Grandmother said: “I will call you Anna – I cannot get used to another name, I always call my maids Anna!”

As usual in those days, I was born at home. This house – at the other corner of Dlouhá and Týnská Street was also quite old. To reach the toilet you had to cross an open veranda, freezing cold in winter. Originally there was only one tap with a cast iron sink in the kitchen, for bathing water was heated in large pots on the hearth, a wooden trough was put on two stools in the kitchen and everybody bathed there, one after the other. One of my first memories, it was probably about 1932, is the installation of a bathtub with a coal-burning boiler in a recess of my parent’s bedroom. The recess was curtained off, there were blue plums printed on the cloth.

There was gas for cooking and lighting, supplied through pipes from the municipal gas works. In the center of the ceiling of each room, a pipe hung with a gas lamp at its end, which had to be lighted toward evening and gave quite strong light. Also in the beginning of the thirties, I remember that we got electricity. Plaited white wires were fixed on porcelain isolators, nailed to the walls. The turning switches and the lamp sockets were also made of porcelain – there was no plastic yet. The first lamps had graphite wires inside, not metal, and burned our very often.

Street lighting was also by gas. I remember a man with a long rod going through the streets in the evening, which, aided by the rod, opened at each lamp a small tap and lighted the gas. In the morning he came again and closed the taps. Later on the lamps were remotely lit and extinguished and there were no gasmen any more.

In those times two languages were used in Prague, the majority of the population were Czechs, a minority Germans. In this respect the Jews were divided – there were such who knew only Czech and others of German culture. Our family belonged to the latter category. Though we knew some Czech – the maid, the janitor and the personnel in many shops spoke Czech only, but the language we used most was generally German, books and newspaper (“Prager Tagblatt”), too. My father was a classicist and taught Greek, Latin and philosophy at the Deutsches Staatsrealgymnasium at Stephansgasse, Prague II. During all her years in Prague my mother had learned but a few words in Czech, just what was necessary for the daily life.

In addition to teaching Father was also active in historical research and published various papers. He also did much in the framework of the Jewish community, culturally and in connection with welfare services. He helped many Jews, mainly those who had fled from Eastern Europe to Prague. Later there were those, who had escaped the Nazis in Germany and Austria. He usually came home from school for dinner at noon, then he read the newspaper and afterwards he received his “patients”, some of which had waited for him quite a long time. They talked with him and got his advice, sometimes money or meal tickets for the Jewish Soup Kitchen or other help.

According to the testimony of many of his pupils he was an excellent and popular teacher. One illustration from his teaching career follows. One of his students in a matriculation class asked him: “You have by now taught us for years the best and most beautiful of human culture, ideas and ideals. Do you believe that you have achieved anything?” And his answer: I have been teaching some 25 years, every year on the average three classes and in each class, say, 30 students. That would be a total of 2250. Now let’s assume that half of them did not even listen to what I was speaking about – that leaves some 1100. Let’s say that one-half of these forgot everything after one month, of the remainder again one half forgot everything after a year and from the rest again one half forgot everything after ten years. There remain more than one hundred of my students, who retained something of the high ideals I wanted to give to them. So I have multiplied myself by a hundred – surely not a small achievement!”

My mother had studied at a so-called “Higher School for Girls” and during WWI also at a course for nurses. She actually worked as such at a military hospital. In Prague she “only” worked at home – shopping, cooking, laundering, cleaning, knitting, embroidering – and she was the one who assumed responsibility for the daily details of our education, home work etc. Through her quiet and steady work she created the environment in our family, which enabled father to pursue his activities. Up to the Nazi era there was a live-in maid and when we children were still small, a nanny.

We children grew up in both languages, but German was the language we knew better and it was also the teaching language of most of my school years. In addition, since about age three we learned Hebrew reading and writing with a rabbi (in Ashkenazi pronunciation, for use in religious ritual – we did not speak Hebrew as a living language). Later we also learned the so-called “Rashi-script”, needed for the study of Talmud commentaries. We also studied, in parallel to regular school attendance, a daily hour of bible, Talmud and other Jewish subjects.

Until the actual dissolution of Czechoslovakia in Munich in autumn of 1938 we used to go every year during the summer for a few weeks vacation in the country. It happened like this: A van stopped in front of our house, crates, suitcases, baskets with pots, pans, other kitchen

utensils and some foodstuff were loaded – since we obviously could not use non-kosher house-ware because of ritual restrictions. My mother sat beside the driver, the maid and we children on top of the baggage. We traveled to a village some 20 – 30 km from Prague, where we rented a farmer's house, who in the meantime lived with his family in a barn on the farm. Father in summer usually stood in for the school principal and came only on weekends. For us city children it was naturally always a happening – a brook, frogs, goats and all kinds of other new experiences of country life. For mother it must have been quite strenuous – she had to cook and manage there too, under much less comfortable conditions than in Prague.

I spent my first 4 school years at the Deutsche Volksschule, Masna Street. My most vivid recollections from there are two: the one of the Catholic priest, who taught religion to Catholic children and dispensed pictures of saints, also to us, religious Jewish children, for whom because of our previous conditioning these pictures were an abomination. I disposed of them secretly as fast as possible. The second recollection concerns the German-language actors, who visited our school quite often and recited classical poems and ballads – “Die Buergschaft”, “Der Ring des Polykrates”, “Der Taucher” and many, many more. The family council decreed that at least one of the family has to know correct Czech and so I was sent for the school year 1936-37 to the Czech-language fifth grade of the Jewish elementary school at Jachymova Street. My knowledge of Czech increased indeed, but in all other subjects I was quite weak – usually I hardly understood what it was all about. But this Zionist school influenced my worldview considerably.

Than two more years in German, at the Nikolander Realschule. While there, in autumn of 1938 the Sudeten areas of Czechoslovakia were occupied by the Germans according to the Munich treaty, Slovakia left and became a Fascist vassal state of Germany. Finally on March 15, 1939, the Nazis, who declared this area as “Protektorat Boehmen und Maehren”, occupied Bohemia and Moravia. At this time we began to feel the growing anti-Semitism, until then latent below the surface – now it was fomented both by German Nazis and Czech Fascists.

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3. Under the Nazi Regime in Prague

In June 1939 Jewish students were forbidden to attend public schools. The following school year I was again at the Jewish school, by now in the eighth grade. Again I did not learn much, but gained friends who were not religious and so I was slowly attracted to a Zionist-Socialist youth movement – the “Maccabi Hatzair”. After this school year Jewish children were not allowed in any school anymore – at the ripe age of 14 I ended my formal education. My father, like all Jewish teachers, was forced into premature retirement.

In the meantime much had happened around me. My mother's entire family succeeded to escape in time from Germany – to the USA, England and Palestine. (Some of them went through Prague and so we were continually informed about developments in Germany). In Prague there were also some who made it. But from my Prague grandmother's descendents it was only my brother Arthur – Abraham, who emigrated in March 1939, two weeks after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. My father decided – against the standpoint of his siblings – to send my brother to Palestine. He traveled by train on the Pessah holiday after my father sought the advice of the Dayan, the religious judge, as to the permissibility of traveling under these circumstances. Abraham is the only one of my grandmother's grandchildren – in addition to me – who survived the Holocaust.

After the Nazi occupation my father was arrested, he apparently appeared on a “blacklist” because of his public activities. After a few weeks he returned home, emaciated and lice-infested. We children were not told about his time in prison. Among others Adolf Eichmann was one of his interrogators.

Our uncle “Mani” (my father’s brother), a physician who had published papers on experiments proving that ritual slaughter is not less human than the slaughtering used by Gentiles, was arrested too. He was sent to the concentration camp Dachau, after about a year his wife got a message from there that he died on March 20, 1942, “from enteritis” and was cremated. “The ashes may be obtained at the Prague Gestapo offices against payment...” This was done and so this uncle of mine is the only member of the family with a grave and a tombstone. As we well know today, not his ashes are buried there.

**See note*

My father also pondered emigration. After many unsuccessful attempts to get a visa to all kinds of countries, finally my mother’s siblings in England sent us a “permit”, bearing the names of my parents, my brother Rudi and mine, including an invitation by an English university, promising a teaching position for my father. My parents hesitated for a long time – there was my grandmother, then aged 75, all his siblings and their families who had no way to emigrate, there was the retirement plan, paid for many years, all the possessions, thousands of books... Nobody dreamt about the Holocaust at that point in time and nobody foresaw, what the Germans planned for the Jews in the following years. Then, on September 1, 1939, WWII started and emigration stopped entirely.

For a time Jewish children studied illegally. Since it was forbidden to meet in larger groups, three or four of us met at an apartment and studied various subjects, partly tutored by Jewish teachers. The Jewish community organized this, father took part in this framework as a pedagogical adviser. That did not last long either. From the end of 1941 transports started leaving Prague, children went away and slowly the study groups dispersed. At this time I was an active member of the above mentioned youth movement without my parent’s knowledge, who would have forbidden it. We met wherever possible: there were sports grounds of the Jewish club “Hagibor” in Strasnice, where the meeting of Jewish youth, camouflaged as games, was still possible for a time. My brother Rudi was also in the “Maccabi Hatzair”, as a youth leader. For a time we were still allowed trips to the suburbs and near villages, finally we met – and also played – at the famous old Jewish cemetery.

We were always encouraged to read. Now it became more than just entertainment or pastime. We read everything we could lay our hands on and then we discussed it at our meetings – novels, philosophy and whatnot. Since schools were forbidden to us, my father got me an apprenticeship with a (Gentile) electrician. In the beginning he felt strange, to be seen with his son in work-clothes – it did not fit his status as an academic. But later he got used to it and felt even proud. That did not last long either – after a few months Jews were forbidden to be apprentices. Then the Jewish community organized re-training courses and for a few months I learned there electrical engineering. For a time I worked at a workshop of the Jewish community, where backpacks and bags were made from blankets and other available material, for people sent on transport.

In the meantime the Jewish youth movements, cooperating with the Jewish community, organized the so-called “aid service”. Boys and girls visited the people summoned for transport and helped them with the preparations. Often these were elderly and sick people, who were not even able to decide, which of their belongings to pack in the hand luggage allowed by the Nazis – is it more important to take the family photographs or would another

warm dress be more important? We young people with our down-to-earth views could often help. And on the day when they had to report we came and helped them to carry their bags. Later, when mail from acquaintances, relatives and friends from ghettos in Poland and also from Theresienstadt began to arrive, we had addresses. We, still in Prague, collected food and other items important for survival, sometimes bought on the black market and sent parcels. Some of these even arrived (we received a few written confirmations), most did not.

Father at that time worked for the Jewish community in one of the storerooms, where by Nazi orders possessions of deported Jews were stored – and then distributed to Germans. His job was in the book warehouse where he had to assemble, on the orders of an architect, for example 3.5 meters of red-bound books, destined for the living room of a Nazi VIP – the content of the books was not important. These warehouses were located in former synagogues, fitness halls and other Jewish institutions.

During all this time the Germans published successively all the by now well-known decrees, laws and restrictions. All property was registered, bank accounts closed, radio sets had to be surrendered, then gold and other valuables, sewing machines, cameras, bicycles, skis, woolen clothing, furs and an endless list of other items taken by the Nazis from Jews. Only in the old part of the town Jews were allowed to reside, at least two persons per room and since we had always lived in this area and our apartment was “too large”, we had to let a room. It was forbidden to enter public establishments like restaurants, cafes (except a Jewish one), cinemas, theatres, museums, parks etc., also the newer parts of the town. For the use of public transportation one had to have a special permit and even then one had to stand on the rear platform of the second tramway car. In shops there were special hours for Jews, afternoon, when - because of the war economy - almost no goods were left.

Finally came the yellow Jewish star, which had to be sewn on the outer garment at the left side. This obviously completed the social, economic and cultural isolation of the Jews.

Our Czech neighbors behaved in various ways – there were anti-Semitic collaborators who welcomed the Nazi measures. There were others who helped or at least tried to help. The majority was “neutral” – they had their own worries and restrictions and their empathy did not include Jews.

We corresponded regularly twice weekly with my brother Artur, until the war broke out, then more sporadically through relatives in neutral countries who forwarded the letters. Finally, up to our transport to ghetto Theresienstadt there were only a few lines every few months, transmitted through the International Red Cross. He saved our letters from these times – because of the censor they contain only family news and a few “encoded” general news.

As mentioned before, since the end of 1941 transports were leaving Prague. The first ones went directly to Poland, later ones to ghetto Theresienstadt. From there most were further deported to Poland, but in the beginning we did not know that. Since father and partly also mother were working for the Jewish community, we remained in Prague longer than all our relatives and most other Jews.

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3. Ghetto Theresienstadt

The townlet of Theresienstadt (in Czech Terezin) was founded at the end of the 18th century as a fortified town, it is located about 60 km north of Prague. Nearby is the so-called “Small Fortress”. The Nazis chose this place for the concentration of the Jews – walls and moats surround it, which makes for easy guarding.

As one of the first of our family our grandmother, father’s mother, was deported there. She died in the ghetto aged 78 in August 1942 from disease, hunger and heartbreak. Then all the rest followed and finally we, too, were brought there on July 8, 1943. I was then 17 years old. We were ordered to report with hand luggage only at a collection point in Prague – the wooden barracks of the former “Radio Fair”. There were straw mattresses on the floor, quite a shock for us, who had lived until then in their apartments. After one day we were brought by train to the ghetto. Immediately after our arrival we four were separated – father was in a barracks for men, mother in one for women, Rudi and I lived each in a different so-called youth home. There were rooms about three by four meters with 3-tiered wooden pallets with straw mattresses. I lived with 11 boys of my age in such a room. The youth homes were set up by the Jewish ghetto administration with the aim of keeping the youth in a better environment than among the grown-ups. We had to work, of course. For a time I was in a carpentry, for a short time an electrician, on and off in the vegetable plots and for the longest time at the transport of building materials. The latter must be explained: the sole vehicles inside the ghetto were funeral coaches, brought to Theresienstadt from the liquidated communities all over Europe. There were no horses, but ten to twelve men pushed the coaches manually. On these vehicles everything was transported in the ghetto – old people, small children, bread, building material, corpses...

In the summer of 1943 I was employed at the building of wooden barracks outside the ghetto walls. We did not know their purpose, which caused many rumors. Until one evening – while a curfew was imposed on the ghetto, as always when new transports arrived – a large group of children was brought to the barracks. A rumor had it that they were destined for an exchange in Switzerland. From the ghetto voluntary teachers and nurses were mobilized, who lived with the children in total isolation. Some of these volunteers were my friends and acquaintances. In spite of the strict quarantine we got news from them, some sounding very strange. The children had come from the Polish town of Bialystok and were in bad physical condition. When they were brought to the public showers in the ghetto they refused to enter and repeated again and again the word “gas, gas...!” Their attendants finally convinced them that these are indeed showers – and not gas chambers, as the children thought, apparently from the experiences in Poland. After a time the children and the personnel were deported. (After the war I learned that this transport went to Auschwitz for annihilation – and not to Switzerland).

After 2 or 3 months in the ghetto my brother and I decided to create better living conditions for our parents. We found an entrance to a cellar, full of refuse and stones, which we cleared after work hours, using a loaned wheelbarrow and a shovel. Then we “schleussed” (the ghetto slang word for stealing) wood, from which we built a window, a door, two beds and a small table. A few weeks later the “private apartment” (the room) was ready. Retroactively we even got a building permit and our parents moved in. Rudi and I visited them almost daily after work, to drink “Ersatz” coffee with them. Other relatives also came sometimes, it became sort of a family center in the ghetto. One of my cousins even celebrated his engagement there.

Being workers, Rudi and I got bigger food rations than our parents, sometimes we managed to “organize” additional food and so we could help them a bit.

Moreover, each of us was in the framework of the youth movement in a commune, where additional food was distributed to the members. Especially sick members were helped with bread, sugar etc. from the common provisions.

I want to add that during the whole time in the ghetto father ate only kosher food – he did not touch meat and the little, which was distributed, he exchanged for bread or other food. He did not try to influence us boys, maybe he accepted that we had to eat whatever was available because of the hard physical work. But maybe he suspected that we both were not religious any more, though we tried to keep it secret from the parents.

Life in Terezin was ruled by a single word: transports. Unceasingly transports were arriving from various countries and unceasingly transports were leaving, “to the East” as we knew. There were no reliable news sources, only rumors. Most of the ghetto prisoners did not know a thing about the “final solution” – the extermination camps in Poland and other places, killer commandos etc. The rumors had it that life “in the East” was very hard, with hunger, diseases and hard work, but that was all we knew. The Nazis succeeded for a long time to hide the truth. A telling illustration of our naivete and ignorance is the following: we had a code with comrades from the youth movement leaving on transport, enabling them to inform us about conditions there, so as to bypass the German censor. One day we got a postcard from a friend, who had left Theresienstadt with a transport – in German block letters, with a maximum of 25 words as was the rule. As sender’s address it said “Work camp Birkenau” – we had never heard of this place before. And our friend Rudi Rosen wrote about innocuous matters like “I am with friends, we work...” and signed “Rudi Namut”. *Namut* means in Hebrew (which many of us had learned in preparation for Palestine) “we will die”. I remember sitting with a group of friends in an attic, studying the postcard and analyzing it. Our consensus: conditions in “Birkenau” are evidently very hard, possibly Rudi R. is sick and depressed and these are the reasons for the pessimistic encoded signature. A short time later another postcard from him arrived, again from Birkenau. In this card he slanted certain letters in the opposite direction than the rest. These letters spelled out the German word “Gastod” (death by gas). We tried again to decode the meaning and came to the conclusion that Rudi R. works in a plant for poisonous gases and through work accidents people die from poison gas. None of us could think of gas chambers, where masses of people were being killed systematically... (Note: Rudi Rosen survived).

Life in Theresienstadt was very hard, even measured against the quite low standard of living during the last years in Prague. There was vermin – fleas, bedbugs and exceedingly bad hygienic conditions. But there were differences: the worst off were old people without families. They got very small food rations and had no way to get hold of additional food. They, naturally, also suffered from all kinds of diseases and life in general – they lacked the stamina to stand in line, to barter and so on. Not to speak of their social isolation! This section of ghetto prisoners had also the highest mortality rate, they were much hungrier than the rest. Younger, healthy people of working age had it better. The best situated were naturally those, who worked with food – cooks, bakers, transporters of potatoes and other foodstuff and also agricultural workers. Somewhere in the middle were artisans, who could sell their know-how for food.

We, members of the Zionist youth movements, (illegal according to the Nazi laws) organized after working hours all kinds of activities, to make the most of our free time even under ghetto conditions. There were Hebrew lessons, much reading and discussions and some sport and competitions. One of the very positive activities was the action “Yad Tomehet” (Supporting Hand): Usually two young people together visited old and sick prisoners to help them – to

clean, to air bedclothes and to provide various services, sometimes even “only” to sit and talk to them.

In 1944 I, too, was one of the many employed by the Nazis at the so-called “Beautification Project”. To counter rumors in the West and in the neutral countries regarding the treatment of Jews by the Germans, the ghetto was “beautified”. Houses were whitewashed, the population density was lowered (through deportations to the East), playgrounds, a coffeehouse, a bank, shops etc. were erected. A delegation of the International Red Cross visited the ghetto and its members were indeed fooled by this “Potemkin” ghetto. None of the ghetto inmates who talked with members of the delegation dared to tell the truth – one could not know which of the visitors was an SS-man in civilian clothes - or a Swiss or a Swede.

There was a rich cultural life in the ghetto – lectures, performances, concerts etc. Our father also lectured. I personally did not take part in many such activities; I believe that I did not find the time for it. I had a girl friend with which I spent much time – walking while discussing books, Zionism, Socialism, the youth movement, kibbutz and thousands of other subjects. In spite of the inhuman conditions – we were young, boys and girls fell in love, there was humor and even hunger and misery were subjects for jokes.

But finally the vast majority of us were deported. My brother Rudi and I were in the first of 10 transports in autumn 1944, sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. We left Terezin on September 28, in cattle cars – about 2500 men and boys (of these about 370 survived). The wagons were locked, only two small barred windows were near the ceiling. SS-guards sat in the brakeman cabin of each car. Sometimes we heard shooting – the SS-men shot at prisoners who had somehow managed to escape from the train. Since I was one of the more slender prisoners in our car, I was lifted a few times on the shoulders of others to look out the windows. When I saw the name of a train station, a town or other signs, somebody among us always knew the place. So we followed our route on a mental map – first north, then east in the direction of Silesia. The train stopped often, we had only little food brought from the ghetto, no water.

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5. Auschwitz – Birkenau

After a very long journey the train stopped finally, it was evening. The doors were opened and from outside orders were shouted at us: “Get out everybody, fast, fast, leave all luggage in the wagon, you will get it later!” The picture in front of our eyes was like a nightmare: in the background we saw four huge smokestacks, emitting flames and dense reeking smoke, nearer to us were long rows of low huts, even nearer a double barbed wire fence, whose wires were mounted on porcelain isolators, evidently electrified. At regular intervals in the fence there were watchtowers with armed guards, reflectors were panning in all directions. The fence itself was illuminated. In front of the fence was a chain of armed SS-men, some with leashed dogs. And then there was a row of men in striped uniforms, shouting at us in broken German. Until then we had never seen prison garb, we wore still our own clothes from home. Some, who did not jump fast enough from the wagons, were beaten with sticks. Then we stood along the rail line, between the train and the striped prisoners and were urged to go ahead. Successively we were crowded into one line, in front of us was a dais with a few SS-men and above them strong lights. Talking was forbidden.

Suddenly one of the striped prisoners approached me – I did not recognize him – and whispered (in German) into my ear: “Pretend to be older!” In front of me were only about ten people. I thought fast – if the prisoner, unknown to me, gave me this advice in spite of the risk, it must be important! When I got to the platform I saw in front of me a very good-looking SS-officer (later I learned that it was the infamous physician Dr. Mengele) in an elegant

uniform and highly polished boots. One of the other SS-men at his side asked me: "How old?" I tried to stand straight and tall and answered loudly in a military fashion: "21". (I was 18 and quite small and of slight build). "Healthy?" was the next question and I said: "Yes Sir." Mengele directed me with a flick of the gloves he held in his hand to his right side, where a group of others already stood. My brother followed me. Others were sent to the opposite direction – we did not know the difference. When there were about 30 prisoners in our group we were led away between the fences, escorted by two SS-guards. After some 150 meters we were ordered to stop. "If you have any valuables – watches, rings, money etc., hand them over now, otherwise they will be taken from you later by force" said one of the guards. My brother and I did not have anything, but others surrendered their possessions. This was evidently a small private business of the SS-men. One of us new prisoners dared to ask, where our friends, sent to the other side, were headed. "They are going to a camp for easier work" was the answer. So we had survived our first "Selektion", without knowing it.

We were led into a large room, bearing a sign "Entlausung" (Delousing). All around the walls were numbered pegs. An SS-man, standing on a dais, ordered: "You are now going to the showers. Hang all your clothes on the pegs and don't forget the number – the clothes will be disinfected, after the shower you will find them again. Keep shoes and belts". There comes another scene to illustrate our naivete: We were conditioned always to keep identification with us. Left in the clothes – so we thought – the paper would be damaged during disinfecting, what shall we do? I decided to ask. By then I did not yet understand the camp "etiquette" and did not fear the SS, as we did soon after. Stark naked I went to the SS-man and stood straight with my hands at the non-existing trouser seam and asked: "Shall we leave our ID in the clothes or take it to the shower?" The SS-man laughed in an odd way and said: "Leave it in the clothes." I did an about-turn and so the identity cards stayed there. Of course – we never saw our clothes or the identity cards again.

"Old" prisoners shaved our whole body and poured a stinging disinfectant on us. We went through hot and cold showers, afterward we got underpants, mine were made of a tallith (prayer shawl) and various used clothes. Finally we were outside - moist and cold, it was already dawn. Without hair and in motley clothes we were changed so much that we at first did not recognize each other – we started to laugh.

A Kapo (camp foreman) led a group of us through the camp to one of the huts, at the entrance we stood in line. We were to be allocated to a hut or organized for work or given mess-tins, I don't remember which. All around us everything was flat, we saw only huts, the wet muddy earth, the illuminated fence with watchtowers and the smokestacks, spewing flames and smoke, penetrating everything. The line proceeded slowly. Suddenly I saw on the muddy road between the huts a boy in prisoners garb and recognized him from afar – it was a remote cousin of ours, then about 16 years old, who was deported from Theresienstadt with his parents one year earlier. (His father, Dr. Simon Adler, was a teacher of Jewish religion in Prague. He was stout and wore spectacles. Probably he never before had worked manually. His mother was of slight build, also wearing spectacles, not an athletic type either). As the boy approached, I called out to him in a whisper (disregarding the prohibition to talk) his nickname "Wolfi". He looked in my direction, recognized my brother and me and came over. He told us that he had a job to do as "Pipel" (camp slang for a messenger boy). We should remain in our place, he promised to return shortly. We made our way slowly to the rear of the line, so as not to reach the hut before his return. He indeed came and took us to the side for a talk. (Our Kapo permitted it – as camp functionaries they were colleagues). I asked him about his father – in answer he pointed a finger to one of the smokestacks and said: "He is there." When I asked about his mother, the answer was the same. This was hard to understand. We knew that we are in Silesia and in school we had learned that there was coal and steel industry there, the smokestacks we thought to belong to this industry. "Your parents work at a steel

mill?" I asked unbelievably, since I could not imagine what they could do there. "What steel mill are you talking about?" he replied, "don't you know where we are?" – and so we heard for the first time the word "Auschwitz" and what it meant. His parents were, of course sent immediately after their arrival and the selection to the gas chamber and then cremated. That was the meaning of his answer... Suddenly we understood that our friends who arrived with us the previous evening and sent "to a camp for easier work", were not alive any more.

Wolfi enlightened us about life and the regime in a concentration camp. He gave us one advice: to leave Auschwitz as fast as possible, nobody could survive here, there may be a chance elsewhere. The idea was not, to climb over the fences, almost nobody succeeded in that. As he explained: all the time work groups were sent out of Auschwitz to plants and other work and we should make an effort to get into such a group. (Note: Wolfi survived).

We stayed in Auschwitz-Birkenau about ten days. During this time we learned of the violent, brutal and bleak reality, the hierarchy and the whole regime of concentration camps – ghetto Theresienstadt was not in the same category. Early in the morning, in deep darkness, we were woken, had only little time to use the indescribably dirty and stinking latrines, to wash a bit at a cold-water tap and to drink some "ersatz" coffee, brought from the central kitchen. Then roll call started. We had to assemble in rows in front of our hut and were counted by the block elders and Kapos, who had to report the result to the SS. If the number did not tally – and for various reasons that was almost always the case – the counting started again and again and again. We stood for many hours freezing, wet and hungry in the cold. Many prisoners fainted from weakness. At noon we got almost inedible soup made of undefined vegetables and turnips. In the evening each prisoner got an eighth of a loaf of bread and a bit of jam, margarine or sugar.

We worked at various jobs in the camp – digging, spreading gravel etc., but sometimes we had also to do senseless and superfluous work like carrying bricks from one end of the camp to the other and back again. We were supervised by Kapos, some of them very brutal and violent, who evidently enjoyed beating us with rubber sticks or pieces of cable. All over were staggering so-called "Muselmen" – emaciated prisoners, who had given up all hope and only waited to die. There were many dead bodies, on the paths, in front of the huts and also some, who had run onto the electrically charged fences and so committed suicide. Everywhere and always was the penetrating stench from the crematoria. During this time we went through three more selections, running stark naked in front of SS-physicians who sent obviously sick or weak prisoners to the gas chambers. In between we had to drill often to lift and replace our caps to order.

Shouting through the fence I conversed with an acquaintance from Prague, Dr. Otto Heller, who was in an adjoining camp. He was a physician and the father of my girl friend. He told me that she and also his wife worked as nurses.

Every morning at roll call we tried to learn, if some work group was destined to leave Auschwitz. Finally, after some 10 days it happened: we saw that in front of the next hut each of the prisoners got a blanket, a loaf of bread and some other food – sure signs for their imminent departure. My brother and I and two friends coordinated our plans and – when we were sure that no Kapo or SS-man saw us – each of us ran over to this group. Naturally the roll call did not add up and we were counted a few more times. But in the end we were led to the railway. We entered the by now well-known cattle cars and were locked in, the train left. Again we could follow our route – through Moravia and Austria to the Munich area. The train stopped after some 3 days at a small station called "Kaufering". Leaving the car, we saw that two prisoners had died on the way, from other cars were bodies unloaded, too.

6. Kaufering

We were marched through a forest and arrived at a clearing. There was a small camp with entirely different huts from those in Auschwitz. A ditch on the ground, about one meter wide, half a meter deep and 15 or 20 meters long was covered by two slanted wooden roof plates, covered by tar-paper. At one end of this half-underground hut was a window – there the block elder had his room, separated from the rest by blankets. At the other end was a door, from which three steps led into the ditch. Each such hut housed some 50 prisoners – about 25 on each side of the ditch - on the ground, covered by sparse straw. The ditch served for walking and when sitting, the prisoners put their feet in it.

Electrically charged double barbed wire fences surrounded the camp. Nearly all “functionaries” of this quite new camp – block elders, Kapos - were “old prisoners”, who had spent years in German concentration camps.

At the first roll call after our arrival the camp elder – Arnold, a Gentile German criminal – told us that we are in Kaufering 4. There were 11 such camps, branches of the nearby Dachau main camp. Then came the usual threats regarding discipline and order etc. Starting immediately with our drill, we had to take our caps off and on for a long time, until we satisfied our “superiors”.

One of the first days artisans were asked for – I reported as an electrician, my brother as a carpenter. He stayed only for a short time with this easier job, carried out mostly under a roof, then he had to work with the majority of the prisoners at a building site.

I worked as an electrician for a longer time. Since the food rations were minimal, everybody who could tried to “earn” some additional food. For a time I “manufactured” small metal containers out of sockets of burnt-out light bulbs. I sold them for bread to “rich” prisoners, who used them to keep margarine or ersatz honey. These were distributed in the evening and so they could save them for the next day. This small racket of mine stopped after a short time – there were not enough buyers and with the steadily diminishing rations and the accordingly rising hunger theft became rampant, so everybody ate his rations on the spot.

Then I found another way to get more food. Fierce winds and storms often broke the electricity poles of the huts. In such a case we electricians were allowed to leave the camp and to fell a tree in the forest for a new mast. I made use of that: sometimes I went, with a saw and an ax, to the SS-guard at the gate and reported: “ Prisoner 115214 to the forest to bring a pole”. This was duly noted, I went and felled a tree of a size, which I just could carry. I removed the branches and the bark and returned. “115214 back with a pole” I reported. Then I cut the tree into firewood, which I sold in the evening to block elders – who paid with bread or soup. This additional food I naturally shared with my brother and our two friends. The whole procedure was quite dangerous – if an SS-man would have caught me, severe punishment would result.

One day I was fired from my job as electrician and sent to the building site, too. Almost all prisoners of the Kaufering camps worked at the erection of huge underground halls intended for the manufacture of weapons or aircraft. We were guarded by SS-men, the work was organized by the so-called “Organisation Todt”, the contractors were two firms: Moll and Holzmann. In the beginning I worked felling trees. Tall trees were cut and the branches and the bark removed. Since I was still healthy and in good condition, I was often ordered to climb the tree before the sawing began and to tie a rope, used later to pull the tree in the desired direction. And then I had – with many others – to lift the tree on the shoulder and carry it away.

On other days I was ordered to carry iron rods or to feed the concrete mixer. The latter is a especially vivid example for the brutality we had to endure. A group of 20-30 prisoners,

supervised by a Kapo and guarded by an SS-man was led to such a huge machine. Some 30 meters in front of the machine was a track with a railroad car loaded with 50-kg sacks of cement. We had to form a circle, touching the car and the mixer. Then came the order to start moving. At the car a sack was loaded on our back, which we emptied into the concrete mixer - then on again for the next load. So it went for many hours. The Kapo sat in the center of the circle and watched us: when one of us stumbled and fell, the Kapo kicked him out of the way, to assure the orderly progress of work. When too few prisoners were left, others were brought in. In the evening all had to return to the camp – the wounded, the unconscious and the dead had to be carried by the others. The number of prisoners returning from work had to tally with the number of those, who had left in the morning.

Only a very few prisoners could endure these conditions for a longer time. After a time I was lucky: because of the dark winter weather reflectors illuminated the entire building site. Once the lights near the concrete mixer went out. The supervisor from the Organisation Todt looked for an electrician and I reported. After repairing the lights I didn't have to return to my former work and stayed on as an electrician at the building site.

In the first days of December 1944 my brother Rudi fell ill and could not work anymore. After some 3 days I returned from work and the "Stubenaelteste" Dr. Hanus Kafka, a physician from Prague and our friend, told me that he believed that my brother had galloping consumption and had not much time left. He died that same evening without regaining consciousness. That was on the second evening of Hanukkah. One of our cousins, Leo, died without an evident disease when he learned that at the selection in Auschwitz his older brother Felix volunteered to go with their parents. By now Leo knew of course that all three were killed in the gas chambers. He blamed himself and reported sick, stopped eating and working and only prayed...

At that time more and more prisoners fell ill. In addition to the constant weakness, hunger, dysentery and many other diseases typhoid fever broke out. Lice spread the epidemic, under the circumstances one could not get rid of them. The death rate rose daily. The block elders reported the deaths only a day or two later so as to get the bread and soup rations for the dead prisoners, too. Then the bodies were laid in front of the huts, from where they were collected every morning by the "death commando", dragged away and buried in mass graves outside the camp. For a time I, too, worked in this detail.

Kaufering 4 became a quarantine camp, nobody went to work anymore. All sick prisoners from the other 10 Kaufering camps who were not able to work came to us. Among them were some of our friends e.g. Zeev Sheck and his brother, who died after a few days. As far as possible I helped the newcomers, but there was not much I could do.

In March 1945 it became clear that the Germans will be defeated very soon – we prisoners knew that we had to make every effort to hold on, to survive. There were daily new rumors about the nearing frontline, we saw the seemingly unending flights of allied planes, destroying Munich, not far from our camp. The almost finished underground halls built by us were totally destroyed, too.

I contracted typhoid fever and recovered somehow. On April 24, a roll call was held, we were told that the Dachau main camp was already in the hands of the International Red Cross, which was to take charge of us. All those able to walk would be marched there, the remainder should stay in the huts and would be brought there by train. We already heard the approaching artillery and so the story sounded plausible. But after our experience travelling with the SS, Dr. Kafka and I decided to risk the march, my bad condition notwithstanding. Maybe there would be a chance to escape in the forest, should the SS want to kill us, as we feared.

* * *

7. Death march and liberation

We started to walk, supporting one another. In the beginning those who could not go on were beaten, later we heard shots – stragglers were being killed. In the evenings we were led off the road into a field or a meadow, where we spent the night in melting snow and water. We did not get any food, we had the snow to drink... Before leaving the camp I had “organized” a few potatoes, which I carried in an improvised knapsack, hanging on my shoulder by a piece of electrical wire. The first evening I put this treasure under my head and wound the wire around the neck. Throughout the night I made sure that the wire – and the potatoes - were still there. When I woke in the morning I saw that someone had succeeded to steal all the potatoes from under my head without removing the wire. In the following days I could only chew grass stalks, protruding from the snow, or suck pebbles, it gave the illusion of eating.

Six days later we arrived at the gate of the Dachau main camp, but there was no Red Cross to be seen. The SS used this bluff to keep us docile during the march. After a long wait it became clear that they would not let us in, they said that the camp was full. We had to march on until we arrived at a small camp called Allach. There we fell totally exhausted into a hut, on top of the bodies of prisoners, who had come earlier. In the morning we saw through gaps in the walls that the guards had left the watchtowers – the SS-men had fled. There were shots very near to us. My friend H. Kafka and I feared the panic in the hut should it be hit and decided to find cover outside. The only deeper place was the latrine, so we submerged ourselves there up to our necks – shells were flying over our heads in all directions. Evidently we were in the midst of the frontline – from one side the Germans were shooting, from the other (as we learned later) the Americans. After a time the shooting abated and then we saw an olive-colored tank approaching along the forest. Since the German tanks were gray we knew that these were our liberators. To describe my thoughts and feelings at this moment is impossible. “I am free, I have survived, the Nazis are gone...” was mixed with the memory of all those who did not live to see liberation. It was May 1. 1945.

After the first US army front units came a medical one, composed almost entirely of black soldiers. We were disinfected, showered, examined by physicians and given new clean clothes (from SS stores). For a few days I was in an American field hospital, until I recovered some strength. In the meantime various groups of liberated prisoners started to organize according to their countries of origin and lists were made of who wants to get to which country. Naturally I wanted to go as soon as possible to then Palestine, but first I had to return to Prague. Though I knew the fate of almost all my relatives and of many of my friends from the youth movement, I hoped that some had survived and the natural meeting point was Prague. So I traveled with many, most of them Gentile, former prisoners in a convoy of American trucks of the Czechoslovak army to Pízen, where I arrived on May 25, 1945. From there I went with a goods train to Prague – the railroad did not function yet regularly.

* * *

8. Back in Prague

Of all my relatives I found only a brother of my grandmother, aged 73, Dr. Berthold Jeiteles. As a well-known scholar he was protected from transports to the East and survived in ghetto Terezin. He refused to acknowledge the fact that so many of his family and acquaintances were dead. “After WWI, too, people returned after years from Russian captivity – all our relatives live somewhere and will come back” he said. (After many efforts he succeeded to join his niece in the USA and lived out his life there.)

Of dozens of members of the families Lieben and Jeteles (my grandmother's family), with whom I grew up in Prague, only three survived in Europe - great-uncle Berl Jeteles, the daughter-in-law of a cousin of my father and I. Three emigrated in time, before the Holocaust - my brother and two sons of another cousin of my father.

In these first days of liberty I was interested mainly in finding out who of my relatives and friends had survived – and in food. Not only the physical, but also the psychological hunger after all these years was enormous. It went so far that I often ate a full meal at a restaurant and afterwards I said to the waiter: “The whole thing once again, please”. And when I was invited for a meal – there were some, who had returned earlier and already had an apartment – I ate beforehand at a restaurant so as not to arrive too hungry and to consume too much, in these times nobody had too much food.

For the first two or three weeks I lived with the Lauschers. Mrs. Lauscher was my teacher for a year and also knew my parents well. She was lucky – she stayed with her husband and their little daughter at ghetto Theresienstadt until liberation.

In June of 1945, when I was still quite emaciated, I met a gentile who had known my parents, Premysl Pitter. Risking his life he had visited Jewish families (before the deportations) and helped them with food and otherwise. (Later I learned that he hid Jewish children in two children's homes he managed. But the parents of the children reclaimed them before their deportation - they did not want to be separated from them). In May and June 1945 P. Pitter seized four formerly German castles in Bohemia and opened rest homes for Jewish children from the liberated ghetto Theresienstadt. He suggested for me to lead a group of children there and at the same time recover myself. I accepted and stayed there for a few weeks. Then differences of opinion developed between the other (Gentile) educators and me: they pulled in the direction of Czech patriotism, I toward Zionism and Palestine. I saw that I could not have my way and left. (Later, in autumn 1945, Pitter housed in these homes children of Gentile “Sudeten” German families, before these were deported with their families to Germany. Many Czechs were hostile to Pitter because of this humanitarian attitude).

Then I worked for a time at a small workshop for the manufacture of electrical control panels in Prague and lived together with my friend Karel Sussmann, who had returned from the camps, too, at an apartment, which we rented together with Hanka Heller and her daughter. Hanka was the widow of Dr. Otto Heller, whom I had last met in Auschwitz – he did not survive. At this time emissaries from the Zionist youth movements from Palestine started to be active. Their task was to re-activate the movements in Europe and to convince the remaining youth and children to immigrate to Palestine. In Slovakia many more Jewish children and youth had survived than in the Czech lands and that's why the youth movements reorganized there much faster and more intensively. I was persuaded to become the manager of a youth and children's home in Bratislava (Pressburg), a so-called Middle Hakhsharah (“Mi-Ha” in short) of my movement, the Maccabi Hatzair. It was started in the summer of 1945, when the first children came. There was already a manageress, Chavah, with whom I was to cooperate. So, in February of 1946, I traveled to Slovakia.

* * *

9. Slovakia

The Mi-Ha was located in a villa, which had belonged to Jews. There was also a small garden. The furniture consisted of iron beds, the blankets, bed-linen etc. were US army surplus, donated by relief organizations. The food situation at that time was not yet very good, but nobody went hungry. Here, too, various organizations helped. The children were of different ages – there were some aged six or seven up to youngsters of 16 or 17. The two of us, Chavah and I cared for all the children's need – health, culture, schooling and much more. Some of the children came to the Mi-Ha after hiding in forests and monasteries or from concentration camps and were very neglected. We had to explain to them, why one should not steal and that there was no need to hide a piece of bread under the pillow – because after this meal there will be more... And we also taught them, from the geography of Palestine through the Hebrew language to Jewish history. None of us two had the least training for such educational work. But because both of us were still very young and had lived through the previous years under similar circumstances to those of our wards, we were able to speak their language. During our time there some of the children immigrated to Palestine and others came...

A short time after my arrival in Bratislava we two fell in love and married. Naturally we wanted to go as fast as possible to Palestine, to a kibbutz, but the movement had nobody to take our place and so we stayed on and on. After about one year in Bratislava I was sent to manage another Mi-Ha in Zilina and we met only sporadically. Later Chavah came there, too.

In 1947 the responsibility for the two homes was transferred to other members of the movement and we two worked at its national center in Bratislava. In this activity I had to travel throughout Czechoslovakia – after WWII there were two or three Jewish children in one town, four or maybe twelve in another. And we wanted to reach as many of them as possible and to convince them to immigrate to the newly founded State of Israel.

In February 1948 a son was born to us, Eli. And finally, finally in April 1949 we were allowed to leave Czechoslovakia for good.

* * *

10. Israel

On May 5, we arrived by boat in Haifa. Before that we had corresponded with Kibbutz Kfar Hamaccabi near Haifa, where we were headed. A member of the kibbutz, Tsvi Batscha, whom we knew from Czechoslovakia where he was an emissary of the movement, fetched us from the port and we went by bus to the kibbutz. The first surprise in Israel was the green vegetation all over – in our imagination it was much more of a desert. Later, when we traveled to the South, we saw the desert too, of course. Our nearest friends and Chavah's sister, who had come before us, welcomed us with all the love and friendship – but the members of the kibbutz did not show much enthusiasm. Though we had long ago announced our arrival, no living quarters were ready for us and for the first two weeks we lived – with our one year old baby – in a wooden furniture container, which was fitted with a window and a door. The permanent inhabitants of this container were on vacation. Then we were allocated a room in a wooden hut. Neither our child, nor children of other newcomers had places in the children's homes - so they stayed, under very primitive conditions, with the parents. Then we found that none of the women who worked in the children's homes wanted to work with these

newcomer's children. Finally, a room was fitted as an improvised nursery. There Chavah cared for three small children, without the least experience or training.

I worked in various branches of the kibbutz economy – as a builder, carpenter, electrician, sometimes in the cowshed, the vineyards or carp ponds. Generally I was happy with this life – but Chavah had it much harder. Not physically, we were used to such hardships and ready for them. But the cultural and communal life we had expected was, in this kibbutz, disappointing. And the care for the children was on a much lower level than what we were led to believe.

When we arrived Chavah was pregnant. The woman charged by the kibbutz with keeping in contact with the newcomers, reacted to this fact with the remark: "That's bad!" – not very encouraging for a young idealist. In November 1949 our daughter Nurit was born. With time Chavah's discontentment with the atmosphere in Kfar Hamaccabi and especially with childcare grew and for a whole year we discussed the question, if to leave the kibbutz. In the end I gave in – I saw that Chavah would be forever unhappy there. In autumn of 1951 we left Kfar Hamaccabi and moved to Kiriat Tivon.

The beginning was economically hard. We had only the clothes and some books we had brought from Czechoslovakia and four iron beds the kibbutz got for new immigrants, which we could take with us. In 1953 a poliomyelitis epidemic raged in Israel (that was before the Salk vaccine) and our son Eli contracted the disease. After a very hard time, which he spent mostly in a so-called iron lung at a Haifa hospital, where Chavah sat with him almost continuously, we placed him in a home for the rehabilitation of handicapped children. But the disease had destroyed his lungs. He died in December 1953.

In November 1954 our second daughter Liora was born. At that time Chavah studied ceramics and works in this profession since then, creating and teaching.

For ten years I worked as an engineer in woodworking factories and also designing wooden toys at a factory located in Kibbutz Alonim near Kiriat Tivon. The place closed and I found a job in a precision mechanics workshop. After 8 years I found more interesting work as mechanical designer at a newly founded plant for physical and medical instruments and machines. Reaching the age of 65, the usual age for retirement of men in Israel, I was asked if I wanted to go on. I agreed and since then I work 5-6 hours daily.

Both our daughters married after their military service - today we have one grandson and two granddaughters after their service and two granddaughters still in high school.

* * *

Kiriat Tivon, March 2000

Max M. Livni (Lieben)

**Note (added July, 2010, M/L):*

I received information (new to me) from the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial. The current report from there contains a document stating that Salomon Lieben was selected as unfit for labor and sent with a group of other prisoners (some 2 weeks earlier than the death date mentioned by the a/m message from the concentration camp) to castle Hartheim in Austria. There they were killed in a gas chamber on arrival.

Hartheim was a Nazi "euthanasia" extermination center where insane, unfit and otherwise "burdensome" people, also Germans, were killed.

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