

To Bear Witness



The Memoir of
Irene Grumach Shirun
1937-2021

Irene Grumach Shirun - storyteller
Jill Levenfeld - scribe

February 2, 2022
2.2.22

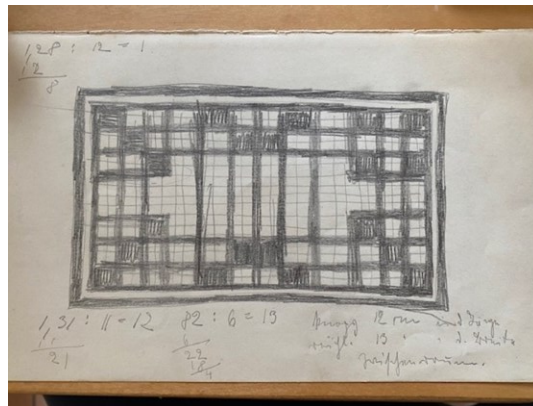
A special calendar date which has been named
Two's Day;
a palindrome
derived from the Greek, palindromos,
which literally means
"running back again"
palin ("back," "again") and dromos("running").

This memoir is dedicated to Irene's courage
running back again
to find meaning in her life as she shares her story.

The “tear and repair” of life

Irene’s memoir holds both the trauma and resilience in the “tear and repair” of her life. As a young girl, she loved to watch her Mother repair damaged carpets. During the war, Irene’s Mother labored in carpet restoration which involved the stitching of holes, and exposed fringes as she would repair the tear. Having trained as an artist, she would skillfully sketch a plan including geometric calculations for each rug repair.

Irene would sit by her Mother’s side mesmerized by the movement of the back and forth of her darning needle along the rug’s frayed edge. Her eyes loved to follow the rug’s new pattern of order that emerged.



*A sketch done by Irene’s Mother
mapping out her rug repair*

Irene once shared with me that as a young girl she would find refuge in her make-believe world of the repaired rug’s orderly design, with imaginary friends running along the parallel rows of straight stitches. The darning of those unraveled threads brought comfort and calm to her chaotic young soul, as she escaped to play in her alternate world. Irene described her life with no visible order. Yet, she found solace in the possibility of restoration even if life outside remained unmended.

The writing of this memoir helped “repair” the “tear” of Irene’s inner world as she set out to weave her own tale. She said to me on many occasions how therapeutic this process was, and grateful that I cared to bear witness

to her story. I watched Irene surprised as she became a witness to her own narration. The expression in her eyes became less heavy as she unpacked the burden from her layered life story.



An etching drawn by Irene's mother of the two of them engrossed in a story

Introducing the Storyteller and the Scribe

Irene Grumach Shirun:- storyteller

Jill Levenfeld:- scribe

Irene's story:- the inspiration that bound us together

Irene narrated and I transcribed, and so her memoir grew.

After a long three and a half years of work, Irene's memoir is set for completion on her first yahrzeit, February 2nd, 2022; exactly one year after she took her last breath. Irene would have loved this date since 2.2.22 is a palindrome of symmetry and balance.

This unusual calendar date is called Two's Day.

I am smiling for the two of us.

How I met Irene

Our relationship began in 2009, thanks to Amcha, an organization that provides support to Holocaust survivors living in Israel. Irene felt indebted to Amcha's care and support as she felt they saved her life.

When I met Irene, she was learning to live with her recent leg amputation, cancer and depression while navigating life in a wheelchair. I had completed Amcha's extensive training as a volunteer and began meeting Irene weekly.

We spent our first nine years (2009-2018) building this very special relationship. Irene's spirits were lifted when I would come to visit. She had felt quite alone in this world, with no children or grandchildren having been widowed for 9 years when we met. Often she asked me to accompany her to the various cultural and social programs at Beit Moses. She loved being "seen" with me in the public spaces of the "house" and enjoyed introducing me to her friends. She valued the quality of the residents who lived in the house, most of whom came from Europe or America.

Irene and I loved to talk about the books we were reading. We held similar political and religious views, especially regarding our connection to Jerusalem. We deeply loved the city yet were very concerned about her future. We shared a love for travel with an appreciation always of "coming home". This concept of *home* as an integral part of identity was a topic of constant discussion.

Our writing process

We engaged in a very powerful process of memoir writing as storyteller and scribe, meeting regularly over two and a half years which we began in October, 2018. The telling and transcribing were based on truthfulness and trust, vulnerability and reliability. This is Irene's story as she told it to me.

I would come to Beit Moses weekly with my laptop and we sought out a quiet place in the house where Irene would feel free to talk.

Often, I would ask questions for clarification and gently prod for more background detail if necessary.

As Irene told her story, she began to understand her past with more clarity, cultivating the courage for expression. Through our writing process, Irene came face to face with the trauma of her wartime childhood. She often would stop and *reflect on her reflection* (quite astounded by her own memories) as she shared her deep loss, the darkness of her suffering,

her vulnerable relationship to family, her life values, and love for learning.

It was interesting for me to notice what she was prepared to share. The sheer telling of her story released her from her past, as she grappled to find meaning.

Back in 1985, Irene had started to think about documenting her life. However, she became paralyzed by the process as it was emotionally too difficult.

She had felt ready to pick it up again, decades later, and asked me to help her in this process of digging deep into the loss and distress of her life. We developed our own dynamic of telling and listening as her story unfolded—her describing, my scribing, together ascribing great meaning to the process.

Irene's memoir transformed into this living testimony bearing witness to the magnitude of her life.

The power of story

Irene loved good stories. She didn't just *read* books, she inhaled her books as they transported her to another realm. Books would linger long in her mind as she felt connected to the characters, the storyline, and the life lessons discovered between the pages.



A drawing by Irene's mother of Irene completely absorbed in a book

Irene had her own powerful story to tell, and became motivated to face her past to make meaning of her life. These stories were seared in her soul, as she searched to decode their meaning.

Memory often has its own story to tell. Irene remembered the minutia because every detail mattered. The act of remembering preserved what had been lost in her life, and she set out to regain those memories.

Being a proud “yekeh”, Irene selected her words with precision. For instance, grammar mattered greatly , so when it came to writing the age of a person, she wanted me to spell out the number. She thought it was improper to indicate the age numerically. She had a flawless memory of names, streets, places, and dates.

I was flabbergasted by the amount of information she could recall by memory. At a very young age, she stored away endless stories about family members most of whom she had never met. Irene was three years old at the beginning of the war which spanned the next five years of her childhood until she was eight. She shared her war memories with incredible detail of important events that took place in her Father’s life that she embodied as her own.

Every story needs a good smoke

Irene loved to smoke her cigarettes. Storytelling was always improved with a smoke in the garden for our storyteller (although not easy for her scribe). Inevitably, our session together would end up outside. Oddly, she felt connected to her Father through her smoking.



Irene, young and older, enjoying her cigarette

As a young child, she watched him for years carefully snubbing out his cigarette in a small snuffer box.

On a long puff of her cigarette, Irene explained to me how she had learned to replicate the same techniques of how her Father smoked and snubbed out his cigarettes. Her lungs filled with nicotine and often she would have to catch her breath after horribly long coughing attacks. Irene knew that ultimately those cigarettes would put an end to her life, but it was a crutch for her, as life-essential was her wheelchair.

Sadly, Irene died before we managed to complete our writing process. After countless hours of storytelling with no chance to say goodbye, I was left with over 140 unedited pages of Irene's memories on my laptop. The state of her memoir reflected the chaos of her life.

She saw "shambles" looking back at her past which sadly had carried forward into her present life. Regarding the shape of her memoir, she had no interest or capacity to organize her stories in a cohesive format before she died. I was tasked to edit and structure her memoir, which I have done with tender care as I carry her words forward into the future. I greatly honor her memory in the hope of preserving the integrity of her narration with its intentional meaning. For the format of this memoir, I chose to divide her story into vignettes.

Making space for sadness

This memoir made space for Irene to acknowledge and validate her life's sadness, dredging up a lot of painful moments as she uncovered difficult events. At times I wasn't sure if revisiting the past was beneficial for her wellbeing.

I came to visit her one day during the first year of our writing, and she wanted to share with me what happened that night. She always suffered from insomnia. She would wake up in the middle of the night and watch television, have a smoke, and face her demons. That particular night she had thought about ending her life. Bravely, she fought against the temptation although shared with me her thought process of choking herself with a plastic bag that she had hid under her pillow. This was a call for help which took courage revealing to me her tormented mind.

She had learned how to live with the threat of death. Suicidal thoughts became part of her life since her childhood. She lived in the shadow of death, carrying the weight of her Father's trauma, and nearly took it on as her own.

Irene also had to learn to navigate the two worlds that her Mother straddled. Her Mother was born a Christian, yet married Irene's Jewish Father which meant that Irene was brought into this world as a *mischling* (half breed; a pejorative term used by the Nazis that denoted a person who had both Aryan and non-Aryan blood). Literally torn in half, Irene tried to find wholeness. Yet, she understood that she had a bifurcated identity.

She lived her life to please her Father, burdened with tremendous guilt imposed by his stress and expectation. Her stories give us a peek into her deprived childhood and the emotional imprint marked on her soul. This is her firsthand retelling of anecdotes that she handpicked, often presented in a disjointed and incoherent manner.

We don't have all of the pieces of her story, only the perspective from her inner world that she chose to reveal. She sought order yet lived in chaos. The timing of the writing of her memoir sadly intersected with Corona during the last two years of her life adding to her emotional instability.

Honoring all who give life

Irene cared very much about honoring her parents and her ancestors while she struggled to discover her own brave voice to tell her OWN life's perspective. Approximately ten pages of Irene's memoir are dedicated to her family's genealogy. She gave time and attention to the previous generations "*honoring them for her life in this world*". She had understood from many stories told to her that her ancestors provided for her a model of living. She learned from them how to survive wars, family crises, turmoil and great loss.

Irene's life story also reveals these universal themes of loss and suffering. She carried the stress, not just of previous generations but also of her parents. She defined this as survivor syndrome marked by the struggle to find her own voice.

She fought her own depression, and suicidal tendencies since she was 7 years old.



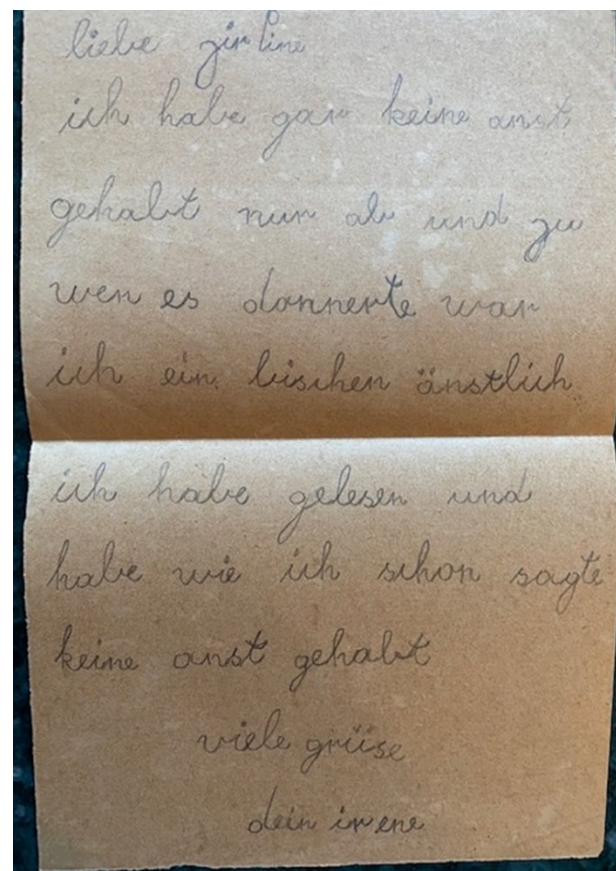
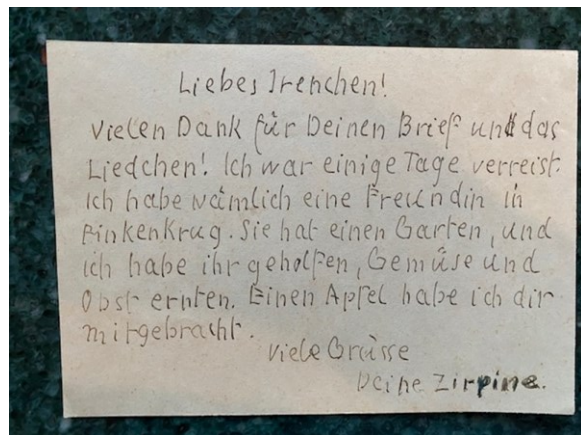
Pigtailed pondering Irene

Despite her despondency, I found it inspirational that she could find the capacity for empathy, imagination, and perpetual learning.

From muse to mouse

Her Mother, an artist, encouraged Irene to develop her creative muse. For example, Irene engaged in a correspondence with an imaginary mouse, Zirpine, over a year and a half during the worst of Berlin's bombings. Each morning when Irene awoke, a letter was waiting for her from Zirpine. Irene learned how to write, thanks to this engaging correspondence (and clever

parenting) that triggered her imagination and curiosity. She was motivated to write by this exchange of letters as she developed this friendship and learned from Zirpine how to cope and hope during difficult times.



Zirpine correspondence to and from Irene

Irene's rich imaginary world, which began with Zirpine and Berchen, her special teddy bear, remained constant throughout her life. She sought to find purpose in life while caring for others. She faced her adversity, day by day, yet never gave up, inspired from these early lessons in resilience.

She aimed to live her life through the lens of *Bildung*: that education is not just about learning; it is what you do with the learning that matters and how to live a worthy life.

Meaningful connections

Irene appreciated deepening our connections outside Beit Moses.

She loved to be taken out for coffee, or to enjoy a piece of cake, even better with a cigarette or two. In lieu of international travel, she shared her Berlin memories with me in our Jerusalem cafes.



*Coffee, marzipan, and a smoke at
Grand Cafe in Jerusalem*

When I told Irene of my travel plans to Berlin (March, 2014) she encouraged me to visit her childhood home on 53 Schlueterstrasse. It was a very meaningful pilgrimage for me, and for Irene to bear witness to her Berlin days.

While in her courtyard, I was particularly haunted standing by the door that led to the shelter of her many nightmares.



*The shelter door in the courtyard of
53 Schlueterstrasse in Berlin*

During that same visit to Berlin, I went to her Charlottenburg synagogue for Shabat. When she was eleven years old, she had gone weekly to that synagogue to pray beginning in the 1950's. When I returned from my trip, I showed Irene these photographs, and she decided to plan a summer trip to revisit her Berlin roots.



The Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue in Berlin

The Pestalozzistrasse "shul" was one of the few pre-war synagogues in Berlin still in use today, which made Irene proud. While I was sitting on the same wooden benches from Irene's childhood, I recalled the story she told about Herr Jacob, the shamash of the shul who had helped Irene learn the prayer book. She tributed him for her connection to liturgy and prayer. Throughout her life, Irene appreciated biblical texts, the language, the historical context and the messaging of their stories.

Irene continued her academic pursuit of ancient texts ultimately becoming “Professor Grumach,” a title she loved and had worked very hard to obtain.

I have memories of the first time calling Irene on the phone to schedule our first meeting. She picked up the phone and answered the call, “Professor Grumach, here”.

Another meaningful outing together (March, 2016) in Jerusalem was to the Israel Museum to “meet” the Egyptian mummy on display reconnecting to Irene’s days of scholarship as an Egyptologist. I remember Irene being very happy that day.



*Visiting the mummy at The Israel museum ; and then enjoying a smoke
in the sculpture garden next to the eternal smoker*

We voted together on election day (April 9th, 2019) which was very emotional for Irene. She described why: “For me, it will always be a real privilege to vote. At age eighty having survived the war, it is very emotional to cast a vote that always holds the possibility for change.”

She understood the miracle of democracy although was quite troubled by our electoral system.

Nonetheless, she was delighted to see all of the wheelchairs and walkers from Beit Moses out on the streets on election day. She loved the idea that the residents of Beit Moses leaned liberal (not always able to stand straight or at all), yet cared deeply about their civic responsibility to exercise their democratic right to vote.

In my eyes, they stand very tall.

Bearing witness

We tell stories to make sense of life, the world and our place in it.

Bearing witness to Irene's storytelling was very impactful, especially meeting Berchen; her true companion to life.

Berchen is not *just* a teddy bear. He was a faithful witness to Irene for her entire life. Berchen held her life together, and she held him when life became unbearable.

Berchen was the holder of her secrets, embraced her pain and her hope.

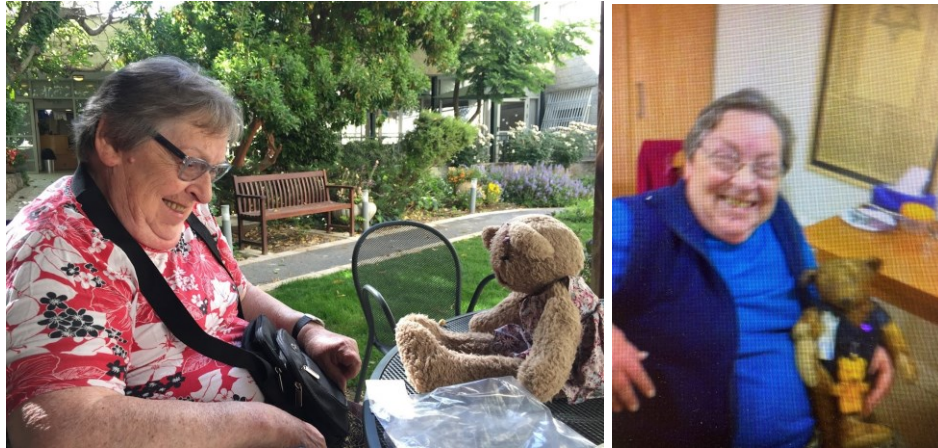
German born as a Steif collector's item, Berchen began his life with two-year-old Irene in Charlottenburg ultimately journeying to Jerusalem where he perched proudly on Irene's bed until the day she died. She gave him a voice as a way to help soften the edges of her world. She wrote letters and poems, on his behalf.

Irene and her Mother spoke their heart more easily if it was in Berchen's name, first person. Irene carried forward that tradition speaking to Berchen in a demeanor reserved only for him.

Irene often would praise Berchen for his intelligence. There was no question in her mind, he was very, very smart, and she said so frequently.

I asked Irene one day if she thought he would like a companion. I took a risk and bought Berchen a hand-made stuffed bear at an art fair. Irene took one look at her, and immediately declared, "Her name will be Lotte".

She was very happy with my selection, and thrilled that Berchen would have a partner. These two bears, Berchen and Lotte, became loving companions bearing witness to Irene's long life.



Irene meets Lotte; Irene smiling always when Berchen is near

Life on your side of the window

The last year of Irene's life intersected with the onset of Corona that showed up here in February 2020. Irene died exactly one year later. She had adapted to Corona living and the new house rules, which meant that I was not allowed to enter Beit Moses to visit Irene in her room. However, we were lucky enough to be able to meet twice a week during that Corona year "at the window".



Meeting at our window during Corona on my birthday when Irene surprised me with a birthday present from Irene's Father's study- a map of Terra Sancta; the holy land

Our meetings required planning as we never knew in advance what “window” would become available, since they were in high demand during Corona days. I would stand outside looking in from “my side of the window” of the lobby of Skilled Nursing (seudi) and would wait until Irene would be wheeled over by one of her lovely caregivers. Irene would dress appropriately, so she wouldn’t feel chilled in front of the open window in bad weather. Because we were masked, it was often difficult to hear one another. It took effort but we loved to meet face to face. We did our best continuing to share stories and life perspectives especially during these trying times. Yet, Irene rarely complained along with many other survivors at Beit Moses who often said, “Corona is not the Shoah.”

Irene appreciated the staff at Beit Moses and spent time getting to know them. She liked to relate to the nurses, the caregivers, and the cleaners with the respect and gratitude deserved. She knew them by name and would inquire about their families. She cared about them as people, not just as the aid caring for her. She had a special relationship with Yussif, who is one of the Palestinian nurses working at Beit Moses.

One of my last meaningful exchanges with Irene, before she died, took place at “the window”. We were talking about our Israeli/Palestinian conflict wondering if it will ever be resolved. She spoke about her belief in reconciliation (in the spirit of tear/repair). She witnessed the collapse of life in Berlin, but also lived long enough to see the West and East of Germany reunified. She maintained hope for the possibility of resolution even here in the Middle East.

We often talked about the complexity of Jerusalem, especially the East/West divide. Many of the staff at Beit Moses are Palestinian who come from the East to work in the West. Irene had often commented about their kindness; Palestinian nurses who bring compassion to their job despite their dire political realities. Often health care professionals find the ability to build relationships while putting aside the deep resentment that exists between enemies.

I asked her, "Do you think this modeled behavior could ever be replicated outside Beit Moses? There is so much hatred and racism felt on *my side of the window* where I stand with my two feet. *On your side of the window*, in your wheelchair, you live in a more fragile state. So is this the way it is:

On your side of the window; the more vulnerable, the more grateful?

On my side of the window; the more hatred, the less trust?"

I added, "How can we ever get beyond the hatred?"

She replied with humbling wisdom from *her side of the window*;

"When I think of Yussif, I feel full of gratitude.

How can you hate the enemy who changes your diaper?"

I stood there speechless standing on my two strong legs feeling Irene's groundedness despite her living life on one leg.

Irene had no reason to hate, especially in her vulnerable state.

Kindness wheeled her through the wide corridors of her life. She understood the importance of the expression for love and empathy to those who tenderly care.

When dear Yussif heard about Irene's death, I was told that he sat down and cried unabashedly. He saw Irene not only as a Jew but as a caring soul who had a life story worth honoring.

Irene's Memoir

Writing my memoir demands me to face my past. For most of my life, I have not been able to access many of my feelings which seemed to be wrapped tight in multiple layers of memory. Now, I am ready with the desire to share them, as I recount the story of my life.

Motivation for writing my memoir

In 1985, Hanan, my husband, and I travelled to Germany for a commemoration at the invitation of Mayor Jaunich of Ahlen. The Mayor invited survivors back to the town who had been born there. Hanan was born in Ahlen in 1914. His German name was Hans Shirun. He changed his name to Hanan in 1937 when he left Germany at age 23 for Palestine, hoping that his parents would follow.

Tragically, he never saw them again.

This was the first time that Hanan went back to Ahlen, connecting to his past. I was glad I could accompany him. I didn't expect that this visit would ignite in me an interest to uncover my own past.

Fifteen years after we travelled to Ahlen, Hanan died. Looking back, I am most grateful that we were able to travel back to Germany while Hanan was still alive.

The Mayor organized a commemoration, while we were in Ahlen, for our families to participate. It was very moving. I was so impacted that when I returned home Hanan suggested that I begin to write MY memoirs.

The date was November 27, 1985, when I began to take my first notes.

Following Hanan's advice, I began this writing process, head on without research. For a long time I had wished to put my memories to paper, though I had not found the courage.

Several events occurred that motivated me to write. Although, as often is the case, my motivation was accidental. Going back to Ahlen was one of those.

Other random moments sparked my motivation to sit down and write: One of those moments was a random conversation that took place years ago

with the wife of one of my students, Amichai Ophel. His wife, Varda, took part in a seminar taught by Yehuda Bauer about the Jews of Berlin from 1943 to 1945. I found it particularly interesting that she was studying those war years of Berlin that I had lived through. This triggered my memory and desire to face my past.

Another motivation to write was brought about by a meeting with Josef Walk from The Leo Baeck Institute. Thanks to an initiative of our friend Hermann Simon in East Berlin who deals now with the history of the Veitel Hanel Ephraim Project which includes information from my Father's writings. So delighted that Josef approached me requesting access to Father's papers in order to research Simon's writings. Finally, at last!

The final memoir motivator was the blessing of meeting Jill Levenfeld who listened actively to my life story over twelve years. She has met me regularly since Amcha matched us up in 2009.

Jill offered to visit my childhood home in Berlin the Spring of 2014. At that time I was in a wheelchair with my amputated leg and couldn't really envision international travel. Her stories and photographs from her trip were very impactful which encouraged me to consider traveling again, particularly back to Berlin.

In March 2018, Jill returned to Berlin again. At my suggestion, she met up with Uta Esther Hadad while she was there. They have become close friends which brings me great joy.

Uta is a doctoral student from the European University Viadrina Frankfurt Oder who approached me in October 2017 regarding her academic research. She requested my permission to access Father's papers archived in CAHJP (Central Archives of the Jewish People). Her dissertation focuses on the Jewish libraries in Berlin during the war, which will help bring light to Father's work.

I surprised myself and did manage to travel five consecutive summers to Berlin to revisit my past, meeting faces and in places of significant memory. These trips were wonderful experiences at this later stage in my life. Never did I expect that I could manage the travel and am so grateful that I was able, body and mind.

I also had planned a trip to my birthplace, Königsberg, but twice the trip was canceled in 2019 and 2020 due to Covid. This was very unfortunate.

Although I never did get to visit my birthplace, the trips to Berlin were very significant for me to revisit my past. This led me to sit down and write my memoir. I asked Jill in October 2018 to begin the process at the start of the New Jewish Year. This timing seemed very appropriate as I began to put voice to a lifetime of many untold stories.

Together we spent two and a half years talking and transcribing. I am ever so grateful to Jill for our years of intimate and very emotional conversation which led to much inquiry and sharing of my life stories ultimately shaping this memoir.

The multiple layers of memory

The visit to Ahlen weighed heavily on Hanan and me; so much that it is still difficult to find words to articulate the experience. Our feelings have been quite inaccessible wrapped up tight in multiple layers of memory. This difficulty stems from the fact that our visit to Ahlen uncovered the many personal memories we had buried during our lifetime. Suddenly it all became real.

We were eight different families who survived the war, and had been invited to come back to Ahlen. Hanan represented just one of these surviving families. Today they are scattered across the globe. They came from Ahlen, Spain, Munich, Haifa, Jerusalem, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Buenos Aires. Their post war destinies reflect the whole history of the Jewish people. It was informative and very impressive to read the historical work of Hermann Gummersbach, the Seminary's Director in Ahlen.

Still living; something frozen

Still a living memory yet so much has frozen in time. We came to commemorate their memory yet something felt frozen. The town residents came to greet us survivors. Living inhabitants met with their old acquaintances. A ceremony took place dedicated to the memory of those who were dead. Something froze in us as we looked at the names of the

dead on the memorial plaque at the synagogue. Their lives cut short ever so tragically.

While in Ahlen someone called me Mrs. Saenger (Hanan's surname) instead of the Hebrew name of my husband, Shirun. First time for me ever to be addressed by Hanan's family name. There were 10 old ladies from Ahlen, at the reception, who had come to give honor to my parents- in- law. They shared living memories of Hanan's parents with Hanan as they shared their stories.

In parting, they gave me their hand, and said tenderly,
"All the best for you and your country."

Even before this trip to Ahlen, I had visited one summer, Obenbreit, which was the birthplace of my Grandfather, and Hanan's Father. While there, I had the fortune of meeting Ms Laura Baer, quite accidentally, who could still tell me about the family.

We will never forget these people and their shared memories which help us access our past.

These were the reasons that I sat down to write. This requires a huge effort for me to document my own history of very personal reflections that go back to my early age of being a toddler. In the background of my memoir, are the important family papers housed at the Beith Hamidrash le'rabanim Lehranstalt and Eisenacherstrasse which according to Josef Walk, belonged to Yad Vashem and are accessible to all.

Tying my memoir to my Father's papers

I didn't want to give my Father's papers away without tying my memoirs to his life. I wanted to take a look at them again, hoping that I could write an article, or perhaps a book but here exactly lies the problem. I am not able to write, not even a single letter, and surely not something historical. I lack all feelings for expression and description.

My emotional experience growing up during the war muted my writing voice. Unlike Marie Baum, for example, who managed to publish her

autobiography in July 1939. The work was entitled; Rückblick auf mein Leben (Looking Back at My Life)

Marie Baum was one of the first German Jewish women to receive a doctoral degree from the University of Heidelberg

Marie Baum describes in her memoir:

"I grew up in an old city, Braunschweig, with many historical landmarks which bestowed in me a growing feeling *to live in a visible order*"

For me, I feel the opposite. I grew up amongst ruins and death and holes. Berlin, during wartime, had no living order. I look for my past and realize I have none. My past is in shambles.

It is a strange phenomenon as I have total recall of the details of my past, yet a feeling of complete disconnection. This is what I hope to describe in my memoir.

Memoir writing has therapeutic benefit

My memoir writing here has great therapeutic benefit, even if little history emerges. Perhaps, though I am now a FUNCTION of history.

So as I sit and begin these memoirs, I will try doing the impossible, something I have wished to do for a long timethat is to write freely. I will relate to the various stages of my thinking as I write about my past WITHOUT feeling obligated to look up sources.

This commemoration in Ahlen, accompanying Hanan to his past opened up a window to my own inner world. There was a particular evening scheduled during that week where we met with journalists. There were ambiguous feelings amongst the survivors towards their visit. I valued that evening together in Ahlen so very much which ironically gave me the opportunity to talk about my Berlin childhood.

Survivor's syndrome: "their" stress became mine

I returned home to Jerusalem with a positive feeling of historical objectivity after our experiences in Ahlen. Weeks later after being home, it became easier for me to fall asleep now that some of the stress has been relieved. I

carried the trauma of my parents all of these years, and shared their burden because there was never a possibility for them to cry out with any expression of emotion during those years of my younger childhood. Since their stress became mine, it has made it very awkward for me to find my voice of expression. This seems to be a good definition of survivor's syndrome. And one that I have carried all of my life.

I am hopeful that in the writing of this memoir, I will hone in to my own voice separating from their stress and trauma.

Grounded in my Ancestors

My Father's family, like many in Germany, had been living over five generations under German rule.

First generation of our family was Elias Yakob Grumach from Flatow who took the family name in 1812.

Second generation was his son, Joachim Nachum.

Third Generation was Grandfather Natan.

Fourth Generation, Ernst Grumach, my Father who was born in 1902.

Fifth Generation, is me- Irene Grumach born in 1937

The Final in this Family line of Grumachs

Each of these generations requires research.

My Father, Ernst Grumach, a tireless worker in every field left a family tree; rich material with many notations and archival excerpts about life in these Jewish communities.

The name "grumach" is actually a Scottish name, originally something like Gruomac. Many Scots were living in West and East Prussia for centuries. There had been a lively trade between Scotland and the Baltic ports of Koenigsberg, Elbing and Danzig. Many Scottish merchants settled in these towns due to religious persecution of the Calvinists at home."Scotsmen, Jews and peddler" used to be talked about in one breath.

There must have been a Groumac who was a trade partner and friend and thus the affinity. My late cousin Werner Grumach, in Melbourne thought

that the clan came from the Northernmost part of Scotland. Another opinion has it that the clan lived near Loch Lomond. I went to Scotland in 2005 and visited Glasgow. I made an excursion to Lake Lomond. The landscape was beautiful and I imagined our clan's beginning. At least I have been there to feel our roots.

Here I will only describe what I remember and have understood from conversations along with my own study of Father's papers beginning with Great Grandfather Moritz but leaving out the Prussian Emancipation Edict of 1812; the so called *Judenedikt* which gave full legal equality to Jews in Germany.

Dr Ruth Leiserowitz is currently documenting a history of Jewish communities in East Prussia also with the help of this material. The title of this publication written by Leiserowitz is The Jews of Konigsberg at the turn of the 20th Century.

This material relating to the Jewish communities long perished has great value. Great grandfather Moritz was a religious man and acted as Hazan (Cantor) to the community. Aunt Helen remembers unhappy visits with him because he did not pay attention to the girls. She and her sister Betty went unnoticed. Also my Uncle Leo Lewald remembered him as well. Apparently Moritz, as a religious man, wore a Kippah , owned and ran the sawmill in Wartenburg. In 1975, Aunt Helen wrote a letter describing that they also owned a flour mill.

Great Grandfather Moritz had two sons, Louis who inherited the Sawmill, and Grandfather Natan whose education had been funded and so he did not get any more inheritance.

Their daughter, Eda married the pharmacist, Eisen, who lived in an East Prussian provincial town. Walter, one of her sons, lived in Leipzig where we visited him in 1979. Walter also had a daughter named Rosa, who had died. When I met Eisen, he gave me a Siddur with Rosa's name on it. Hanan and I have kept this siddur with us, and use it.

Les Grumach came to visit me from Canada and I gave it to him, along with a beautifully bound siddur in ivory, with the name Eda Eisen embossed on

the cover, with a dedication in Jewish German (Yiddish?) by her Mother- in law.

“Bildungsbürger”- Education as a lifelong process

I am very fond of a German term called “Bildungsbürger” which means education as a lifelong process. I feel this concept connects me to my Grandfather Natan. This idea of education as a lifelong process is what I desire for my life, and what propels me forward, while connecting me to my past.

I recently learned this word from the lexicon of literature authored by Schulte and Sasee. This term, coined by these authors in the 1920's, describes my Grandfather very well: a German citizen of a solid education.

(Bildungsbürger: an educated social class of the bourgeoisie emerged in mid-18th century Germany based on an educational ideal of idealistic values. The universities established in Germany, including Humboldt University became a model for modern universities in other countries. Many claim that Germany owes its reputation in technical expertise, scholarship and administration to the Bildungsbürgertum.)

Often I think about *Bildungsbürger* as a value to uphold. You can still find with the old “Yekkes” this educational ideal, the kindness and warmth that defines them. It is what I yearn for, and was an integral part of my childhood milieu, and family background. I can clearly remember “it” in our home and at our parties; in the coffee and in the warm friendship.

Yet it all stopped when the War started. I long for the BILDUNGSBÜRGER which has been absent in our lives, post war and makes me very distressed.

Grumach family history in East Prussia

Grandfather Natan and his brother, Louis grew up in Wartenberg, a typical East Prussian township. In 1927, Wartenberg was the home of 7,000 people (the only other town in the district was Allenstein) . According to an article written in 1964, apparently the town celebrated their 600th Jubilee year. A photograph appears of Wartenberg; the market and town hall in the

middle of the square, large Gothic church and a little lake “Muehlenteich” — there were two sawmills owned by Louis Grumach. This was mentioned in this same article which talks about life there in the 1920s.

This is where Grandfather Natan grew up. He was born on October 23rd 1863. He seemed to have spent four years at the elementary school in Wartenberg. He holds two degrees from the Merchant Academy earned by the age of 13 years old (!) .

In 1878, he finished his studies at the Gymnasium in Kulm (Chelmno) at the Quarta class. He enrolled as a “Untertertia” student at the Gymnasium in Allenstein by the age of 15, with a two year delay apparently because he had transferred schools.

Kulm was situated geographically on the Weichsel river. In the 1880’s there were 17,900 inhabitants in Kulm. It is similar to Wartenberg in appearance but bigger with a Renaissance Town Hall in the middle of the marketplace which sits above the Weichsel river —far more charming than Wartenberg.

The transition for Grandfather Natan to move to Allenstein was obviously not so easy.

In Kulm on July 1st there were 44 students. That Autumn, Grandfather had already moved up among the 14 students in Allenstein, ranked as number 5.

The order changes a few times later but he is then ranked number one. His degree in drawing and sports was mostly good enough—Hebrew and English were offered as electives. In the same class we find on Christmas the remark: “Grumach has not taken part in the Latin examinations which fell on a Saturday”.

On his high school report card, dated Christmas 1881, his poor behavior was noted: “not without negative remarks”.

Grumach missed several lessons in religion and was punished for four hours and put in isolation because of his unruly participation at the drinking festival, and nightly wanderings.

This side of Grandfather seemed to me very age appropriate for a 19 year old young man. Yet, he was always described as a man of outstanding

character. Perhaps he rebelled against his Orthodox family. He took his matriculation in Allenstein in 1883 around Easter.

Grandfather Natan's impression of the town can be seen in a manuscript written in his own hand in 1908. Traveling through East Prussia, Grandfather wrote to a man named Mr. Neiman in Berlin, describing Kulm.

"My recollections from 30 years ago about Kulm from the year I was enrolled at the Gymnasium: – It was a friendly town, nicely sized, situated high above the Weichsel river, offering lovely views. I remember that along the promenades were old fortress walls. I don't remember though if there was a castle"

So I have not erred in my estimation of his appreciation of the mountains as I reread my Grandfather's memoirs of those days in Kulm. He recalls the nice views which deeply impressed him, as for the most part, Eastern Prussian towns were rather dull.

He wrote, " In Kulm, we find fewer churches and castles of no special interest, yet more views over the Memel rivers, the sea and Allenstein that one can see from the nearby restaurant, Belleview. The view opens up quite impressively onto the Ale valley. Apart from that there are new parts of the town and surrounding nature is noteworthy. Going by steamer over the Pregel river and over to Pillau is nice to wander around the Kurische Nehrung which I love because of its similarity to the desert. Though I have seen much, I still rejoice that I made a tour of the Nehrung from Zarcau by Cranz via Miden on foot."

He also recommended "a detour to Russia (right on the border to the most northern place in Germany) especially worthwhile to go to a place called Krottingen. However North of Memel is such an awful nest and also partly burnt down. I recall certain unfortunate adventures with the Russian border police there."

So we have a sort of new picture of Grandfather Natan, not so orderly and not so committed to education (BILDUNGSBÜRGER). A real romantic, he loved nature, adventure and new landscapes.

His education was not planned although the family hoped he would become something “serious”. His talent was not yet so obvious.

Grandfather Natan wrote something like a “Baedeker” which means travel guide. He is actually “the ideal educator” yet less conventional than I would have imagined.

Maybe this comes from the literature he read; for that you would have to read other travel books to compare or older romantic books about East Prussia like Gregorvius.

He had apparently visited Rome and Paris which was probably uncommon in those days. Based on his travels to Italy and France, he redefined his understanding of East Prussia. I would love to know more about those trips.

He was known as a very lawful man; once when they were in the mountains in South Germany (Riesen Gebirge) the children picked some berries in the woods. When they brought them home Grandfather Nathan asked them if they had permission to pick the berries, which they had not. He insisted that they return to the woods and throw them back where they belong.

He traveled from Russia on the train and had been offered a cigarette. He was asked if one pays customs for it. If they said no, he would throw it out the window.

After his studies he became a lawyer and notary. His family lived in Tilsit. Natan, his wife and their three children which included my Father Ernst and his two sisters Betty, and Helen who was ten years older than Father.

Grandfather Natan was a very successful lawyer, dedicated to the ideals of education. When my Aunt Helen became seven years old he wanted to encourage her to read. So he gave her a book about Greek mythology and rewarded her with one German Mark if she would complete the entire book.

Unfortunately Grandfather Natan died at a young age, around 45 years old, on November 7th, 1908

My Father, (Ernst), was 6 years old when his Father (Grandfather Natan) passed away.

On Father's 6th birthday, the family was left without any form of "parnasa". His future studies had been paid for so he expected no further income from the sawmill.

This date of November 7th became mythical as it recurs again and again in our family history.

In 1966, I had a dissertation exam on November 8th. At the time, I called my Father mentioning the serendipity of the date. He was delighted because his birthday was always celebrated on that day.

And as irony has it, my Father died a year later on November 7th 1967.

My Father's childhood

When Father was a school boy at the Gymnasium in 1917, he had been asked to write an essay on the reasons for being a proud German. My Father refused to write the essay. They called his Mother who came to the school and they expelled Father from school. This was called a "consilium abeundi"—expulsion; advice to leave. Since he had been expelled from school, not attending class, he was free from his school schedule.

At this time, Hannah Arendt and my Father met at a cousin's wedding.

She was twelve; he was seventeen years old; He was her escort. They liked each other very much. He would go to Hannah's classroom, and stand by the window and whistle for her.

Hannah, as a twelve year old young girl, would stand up and say to her teacher, "I have a migraine headache" and she would leave class.

Father would meet her and they took long walks together. Hannah wrote in a letter to Gershom Scholem that for those five years, Father was her first love.

Later when Father studied at the University in Marburg as a student of Heidegger he told Hannah how impressed he was by Heidegger. Hannah at the time was a young woman of nineteen years of age. In 1924, she decided to also come to study in Marburg. While there, Heidegger fell in love with Hannah Arendt.

Hans Jonas, another student at Marburg, was Arendt's friend. She was sworn to secrecy to never utter a word of Heidegger's romance with Arendt. They had been lovers for about four years.

Heidegger became a Nazi at the same time that Arendt immigrated to the US. They resumed their relationship in the 1950's. Despite their differences, they remained good friends.

Heidegger never mentioned their affair. His wife learned about it only after Arendt died in 1975.

The history of Mother's family

My maternal grandparents and great grandparents

My Mother's name is Margarete Breuer

She was born October 8, 1899 in Koeniggraetz Kreis Labiau

My Mother's Grandparents' name was Bode and the couple lived in Nemonien, in East Prussia.

My Mother's Grandfather was a forester and all I know about him is when his daughters did not get up in time in the morning, he would shoot a bullet through the ceiling as a wake up call.

My Mother's Grandmother was a pious woman; she had become widowed and lived with my Grandparents in their home.

Good Friday was a very important religious day, marked as a day of mourning. She believed therefore that it was not a day for children's play.

My Mother recalls, as a young child, not being allowed to play on Good Friday which was hard for her as a young girl.

My Mother's parents' names were Hermann and Helene Breuer. In their early years, the couple lived in a village called Gilge on a tributary of the Memel river in North East Prussia near the Russian border.

My Grandfather, Hermann Breuer, was a teacher and played the organ in Church.

The Church services in the village were very simple and that is what my Mother remembered fondly all her life.

When my Mother tried to sing to me, I would cry as a small child. It annoyed me to hear my Mother sing right into my ear, and so she stopped. So we had no music in the house.

During the War, and after, my Mother did not go to church because she was angry at the German Church for their attitude towards supporting the Third Reich.

She was alienated from Church tradition yet when she was dying wanted to somehow mark her connection to being Christian. She was living in Jerusalem at the time of her death, and had requested for her funeral the prayer Vaterunser (Our Father). She had an appreciation for the simplicity of the church service which she recalled from her childhood.

Mother's wishes were met, as she was buried in The Alliance Church International Cemetery (also known as the Templer Cemetery) on Emek Refaim, around the corner from Beit Moses.

My maternal Grandparents

My Grandparents lived in Gilge, a very small village with no infrastructure. There was no road leading up to their house, and the river went right up to the door.

So in Spring and Autumn when the ice broke , a Doctor could not physically approach their house. My Grandparents had five children –tragically, three of my Mother's siblings died because the Doctors couldn't reach the house. My Grandfather suffered from rheumatism so in later years they moved to Schaaken nearer to Königsberg.

My Grandfather was very good at gardening and knew how to graft new roses by fusing them onto the existing rose bush. He was also a very good Beekeeper and would make honey. My Grandmother also used to work in the garden waking at 5:00 in the morning. By the end of her day, she would come back into the house, physically tired from the work, and quite moody. This is what my Mother remembered. My Mother also loved gardening which is something she inherited from her parents.

My Grandfather was my Mother's teacher at school in Schaaken. He was more strict towards my Mother, than other students for fear of appearing to favor his daughter. This was hard on my Mother.

Later on when we were in Berlin in 1941, my Grandparents visited us. I recall my Father and Grandfather in the garden working together in our home on Schlueterstrasse. I too played in the garden with them, as a young child of four years old. I remember working in the soil with a red spade, which broke while I was gardening with them. They went out to the store and bought a new one for me; this one was blue.

Grandfather, a very literate and educated man, wrote letters to us after they had retired and moved to Königsberg. I still have those letters in my possession. They included even greetings to our neighbors, the Glaser sisters whom he had gotten to know during his visit to Berlin when he stayed with us. He would end his letters signing off with "Greetings and warmest regards for the Glaser ladies."

Grandfather died in 1942 from liver cancer.

My Grandmother was revered in the community as the Church Cantor's wife, an important role. She was a very discrete individual although misinterpreted by some.

When she would come to a place where people wept, she would pretend as if she did not notice. This gave the impression, among the villagers, that she was indifferent.

And this is something that I may have inherited!

My mother, Margarete, was called "Kantersch Gretke" (The Cantor's Grete) which is how people referred to her. She had an older sister named Kaete.

When my Mother was about ten years old, she was sent to Königsberg, for middle school. The year was approximately 1910. She boarded with a distant relative named Tante Lieschen Wetzky.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, my Mother was fourteen years old. She was very patriotic. She and her classmates followed the orders and refused to speak any foreign languages. She was instructed to

say to her Tante Lieschen when she would leave home in the morning: Auf Wiedersehen.

Tante Lieschen, who was a character, would reply earnestly, Adieu.

(Speaking French was a violation of the order)

One day, my Mother boarded the train to Königsberg, and when she got off at the train station, she saw a Jew for the first time in her life. She noticed this man standing in a corner at the train station, wrapped in something white, (a tallit- a prayer shawl) as he moved backwards and forwards. My Mother understood he was praying and she was filled with respect.

My Mother, while at school, befriended many Jewish girlfriends who had come from Russia to Königsberg for their education. Similar to Mother, they left what was familiar, and settled into a new life in Königsberg, as boarders.

Mother was fond of Jews all of her life, during a time when this was not socially acceptable. Mother ultimately would marry a Jew, my Father, which clearly didn't frighten her.

I don't know anything about my Grandfather's parents, other than my Grandfather's Mother not only sewed his clothing but also spun and wove the cloth. So he came to teach at the Seminary from his simple background, always with great respect for education. My Grandparents were very respectful when my Mother brought her future JEWISH husband to meet them.

They were impressed that he held a doctorate degree, and very much admired that.

My Mother's schooling

My Mother went to school in Königsberg up to the "Aeinjaehriges" (which means "one year") and allows the student to pass army service in one year.

Mother always had a talent for painting so enrolled in the Königsberg Academy for the Arts where she was trained to become an Art Teacher.

We have a reproduction of one of the paintings of her teachers. His name was Eduard Bishoff, who was sent to war and fortunately returned.

An exhibition called "The Returned" in Königsberg took place in 1919 where his work was presented .

After the Academy, my Mother began teaching as an Art teacher in a school somewhere North of Königsberg, however she did not have the temperament for teaching. She could not remember the names of her students, and could not call them to order. Once an Inspector came in and found her reading to her class. On the school excursions, my Mother would sit with the Jewish girls and listen to them sing Yiddish songs. One day, she decided to quit her job without telling her parents. Later my Grandfather came to her school to visit, and was told that she had left to never come back, which caused quite a scandal.

In the late 1920's my Mother met my Father. There are pictures of them both sitting side by side peacefully next to a large dog.

In 1932, my Mother went to live for a year in Kovno in Lithuania and supported herself from the earnings of carpet repairs. She must have had a very happy year living with two friends, named Kati, and Echen "Erich" Kohn. They had a very good carefree time together. Echen, later, was to die of hunger in the Ghetto Vilna. My parents married in 1933.

The postcard that saved Father's life, and began mine!

I am thankful for the postcard that Mother sent Father during the 1930's which ultimately brought them together. My Mother had met my Father before she left for Kovno. During her year away in Lithuania, she sent him a postcard to say hello. Father was battling with severe depression to the point that he wanted to take his life. This postcard literally saved his life.

Soon after, Mother left Kovno and returned back to Germany.

They married March 3, 1933 which is a date I love to write as 3.3.33.

I loved this date and felt the balance in the numbers, but two months later their lives changed forever, with no balance or equilibrium ever to be found in our future.

My Father was expelled from his teaching job at the University of Königsberg and then for four years my parents lived off of a little Jewish

bookshop which had been owned by my Father's Mother. Few people bought presents, like a Hebrew Dictionary or a Bible, only if they were to emigrate to Palestine.

In 1937, my Father was called to the Lehranstelt Fuer Die Wissenschaft des Judentums --Beit Hamidrash for Judaica Studies in Berlin which at that time took up scholars who had been expelled from teaching.

I was born in March 1937 and in May 1937, we moved to Berlin.

One of the first impressions for my Mother about life in Berlin is that women could go out without a hat. In Koenigsberg, she had to wear a hat in public because it was a provincial town.

My Father taught for five years at the "Lehranstelt" (The Beit Hamidrash) until the Nazis closed it down in 1942.

My Father recollects that those five years were the happiest of his life. He felt the growing persecution and war atmosphere, yet at the Lehranstelt scholars entered this "Jewish island", engaged in academic work while detached from the outside.

"Don't talk so loud" : A known reality for Jewish teachers leading up to 1942 became part of the conditioning of academic life. Sooner or later all of my Father's colleagues left the country . My Father also tried to leave Berlin, as he was a good teacher in classics and philosophy, yet he had not published enough, and was too young at thirty five years old. I have a file full of applications that he had filled out for Universities overseas. Sadly, no offer was made to him.

There is an article about Father and his colleagues in The Leo Baeck yearbooks of 1967. He was said to have a pedagogical talent and his students loved him. In 1942, the Beit Hamidrash was shut down by the Nazis. The previous Autumn of 1941, Father was called to the RSHA (Gestapo Center) and interviewed about his life, career and opinions.

The Library of Stolen Books

Father had experience as a librarian when he had worked at Konigsberg University. As forced labor, The Nazis appointed Father as head of the

group responsible for The Library of Stolen Books from the collective libraries of the Beit Hamidrash, the Jewish community, and the Orthodox Rabbinic Seminary.

The Nazis purged private and public Jewish libraries all over Europe and confiscated up to 2 millions books. These collections were brought to three centers- Offenbach , Prague and Berlin.

For the Berlin Library , Father selected a team initially of seven colleagues to document and catalogue the stolen collection. The Nazis took over the Freemason Lodge on Eisenacher Strasse for their library of stolen books..

After the war, it was returned back to the Freemasons and I remember for one set of high holiday services, I went to pray there.

During the war years, Father's group of scholars worked under forced labor imposed by the Nazis. These "librarians" initially were exempt from deportation. Father enlarged the group up to 25 scholars at a certain moment in 1942. Including their families, this group amounted to 60 people. These "librarians", including my Father, were permitted to return home at the end of their work day to their families to sleep at home.

Every morning, when Father left for "work", Mother spit on the sleeve of his left arm for good luck. This was her way of praying that he would return home safely by the end of the day. There was such fear and uncertainty during those years that she thought each day might be their last.

During those war years, when Father went to work in the morning, Mother never knew if he would come back that same night.

One evening, Father returned a half hour later than usual. I recall Mother, so afraid while nervously waiting she had turned white as a sheet.

"Living Shadows"

February 28, 1943, was the day of "Fabrikaktion"- which is the term for the roundup of the last Jews deported from Berlin. This applied mostly to the Jews who were still in Berlin working in forced labor in the factories. They were arrested that day at the factories, on the street, or from their homes.

The Nazis came to our flat that day to take my Grandmother. My Father had a document of exemption for himself, his colleagues and family members because of his work at the Library. Father explained to the Nazi that this was illegal. He went with the Nazi, escorting his Mother to the Collection Point where all the Jews were being round up.

The Nazis wanted to take me as well but my Mother who was very firm said, "Das kind mischling, das kind bleibt hier", which means:

"The child is a Mischling (the product of a mixed marriage) and she stays here!"

I was very frightened - it was a week before my 6th birthday.

I was particularly scared because I had already witnessed the deportation, right before my eyes, of our neighbors, the Glaser Sisters and our lady tenant.

So when they took Father and Grandmother, I stood in the door of the courtyard, crying and shouted, "Pappi do not go with them YOU WILL NOT COME BACK."

Then my Mother took me into the house, sat me on her lap, and read to me from one of my favorite books, Emil and the Detectives by Erich Kastner. I cherished this book which became part of my library, following me to Israel. When my Mother read "Emil" to me, I would become so involved in his adventures, that I would detach from my own traumatic reality.

Miraculously, Father came back that evening, and Grandmother (Oma) returned about three days later. I remember taking her from that place and riding in the electric cable train. We had to stand on the platform of the train car, because Oma, as a Jewess, was not allowed to sit INSIDE the train.

I remember when we returned home, Oma went down to rest while Mother went to the grocery store. I wanted to please Oma and make her coffee in the kitchen. Evidently I made a lot of noise, unintentionally, which made my Mother very cross at me.

By the end of the next week (March 1943) most of the Berlin Jews had been deported. My Father was in utter disbelief that he and his colleagues had not been taken. He wrote on that day that he was the happiest man in

Berlin. Yet, that did not last long as all of his colleagues later were deported to Auschwitz except Dr. Breslauer, who like my Father had a Christian wife.

My Father never forgot these people and later in one of his letters wrote:

I believe, “ We the living are shadows. Only the dead are really alive.”

My beloved Grandmother, Oma Rika

Rika Mendelsohn was born in Allenstein in 1865. She was the youngest of five children born to Louis and Helene Mendelsohn.

In 1872, when Rika was seven years old, the family moved to Berlin. Her Father had owned a nice shop in Allenstein but they decided since Germany won the war with France, they would be better off in Berlin. Life in Allenstein was very provincial, and Berlin was expanding at that time.

Her Father brought a huge amount of money, 30,000 Thaler (the currency at the time). Sadly, her Father proceeded to lose it all. He lent a lot of the money, and never was repaid. He had hoped to open a shop in Berlin but did not succeed in doing so.

His family in Berlin ridiculed him for being a simple man. Rika and her family moved about five times during the course of her childhood in an attempt to save money. Her Mother suffered so much from their financial instability, and poverty. One day she went to bed and never got up; she died three days later.

Rika wrote her memoirs in 1940 in Berlin, and they are with me; I transcribed them and it is full of her detailed life in Allenstein.

Oma Rika wrote lovingly about life in Allenstein a hundred years ago. It seemed to be a lost world; yet her words travel back as a keepsake for the scholars who are busy writing the history of the Jewish people from East Prussia.

I made a trip to Allenstein in 1999. I traveled, first, to Warsaw, to make contact with the Jewish Travel Bureau asking for information about Allenstein, today known as Olsztyn. They sent me to the Jewish Historical Museum in Warsaw and gave me a city plan of Allenstein from the 1900's

where I could find the shop of my great Aunt. I could even identify the building and their shop which was called Gebruder (Brothers) Simonson.

The owners were Louis and Ernestine Lewald, Grandparents of my cousin Esther. My Father used to spend a lot of time with the Lewalds.

Rika, was a teenager at the time, and quite poor, married my Grandfather Nathan Grumach . He became a respected lawyer in Tilsit. They had three children- two daughters and a son Ernst, my Father. They were doing well in Tilsit until unfortunately, Nathan died in 1908 on my Fathers 6th birthday. Rika raised the children on her own, and had very little money. Sadly she became destitute and depressed for the rest of her life culminating in her deportation and death in 1943.

When I was five years old in 1942, the Jewish schools were all closed. I was very annoyed by this as I desperately wanted to go to school and begin my education. Apparently I told my Oma that I wish we could find a school that would take me as a “sternenkind”. This term literally means “star child”; a child who could reach heaven before being allowed to see the light of day.

Oma and I had a very close relationship. I only recently discovered a diary written by Oma that is now in my possession. She mostly wrote about me, our games, and our conversations during the war years from 1940.

The unravelling of life

During the war, Mother occupied herself with embroidery and carpet repairs. I might add that watching her repair those rugs left a lasting impression on me as a pattern of order emerged from the chaos of unravelled threads.

Part of that time my Mother was busy with her sister who had then already been widowed from her husband who had been killed in the war. She was left with two small children, Karlchen, and Kaetchen. Karlchen died in the Second World War, and Kaetchen was hard of hearing, so did not get a proper education.

My imaginary friend, Zirpine

In the meantime the Jewish schools had been closed shut.

On my fifth birthday, my Father decided to officially become my teacher, in lieu of a formal education.

He was very happy at this opportunity and began to teach me how to read and write. I remember being taught by Father. We started school on our little terrace in our flat. I was given a little book on how to write the letters of the alphabet... which apparently is still in use today. The book taught me how to write German script; each letter how to write correctly. I can still remember the little rhyme even today. It went like this:

Auf Auf punkten Drauf.

Translation:

On, on and dots above

My Father would look over my work as he taught me the letters. I thought I was very clever in completing one exercise as I learned how to write the letter T. In order to save time, I drew a row of vertical lines and in one stroke, I drew a single line horizontally to cross all of my T's. My Father saw my technique and did not accept it, and made me do it again.

He also taught me a poem from a little book which I still possess. I can recite it with perfect recall.

By einem vilte gunder milt

Var eish yungst szu gaste

Translation (that doesn't rhyme in English):

A gracious host, to their guest,

offers a red apple plucked from

the green twig off the apple tree.

Mother also wanted to instruct me daily. She adored the English language and wanted to give me lessons to learn a second language. This became too much for a five year old!

I recall one day climbing up on a piece of furniture, running away from Mother, with the English book in hand. I must have felt overburdened by their expectation of me to learn so much.

Mother had another motivator. She wanted to converse in English with me, as she read so much English literature. All of her English speaking friends had left Berlin during those war years. She was craving intellectual companionship.

By 1942, Father could not continue to teach me as he had no time. So he and my Mother invented an imaginary friend who was a mouse.

They named her Zirpine Zirpevich, who would regularly write me letters. A very clever educational tactic to encourage me to write. Zirpene came into our lives for a single nanosecond. If we would have blinked, we would have missed it. A little mouse literally scampered across the floor and stood on the stove top. We were all amazed, including my Grandmother. We saw her once and she never appeared again. That didn't seem to matter to us. She became part of our family.

Every evening I put a piece of bread near her hole in the floorboard. In the morning, I would find a thank you letter. I was so very excited and would write her a reply immediately . From that day onwards, a new ritual began. I corresponded with Zirpine daily.

I learned much about Zirpine. She had a family, and she liked to dress well. Sometimes I gave her a piece of material that she could use as an apron or a dress. So sometimes I sent her a piece of fabric for her apron.

I remember once Zirpine was ill, or rather I was ill (!) in my Mother's bed. I prepared a drawer in my room with some bedding in hopes that she would come out of her hole. I wanted to take care of her, but she never came out to sleep in the bed I prepared for her.

I have a collection of these letters along with a piece of fabric and lace that I thought Zirpine would like for a wedding dress one day. One of her letters was thanking me for the lace which she used in making a wedding dress for her relative.

Zirpine taught me how to read and write. She also would model good behavior that my parents encouraged. Once or twice in the letters Zirpine wrote to me that there was a bombardment last night and added:

“I did not cry, how brave of me.”

She then would praise ME for not crying in the shelter during the bombings.

The correspondence lasted for about a year until I was about 6 years old. My parents probably sensed that I would soon figure out who the author was behind all of the letters. Zirpine’s letters were written in handwritten script. Actually two different handwriting styles - my Mother’s cursive writing, and some type written letters by my Father. Some letters were even illustrated by Mother.

They composed a final letter to me, in Zirpine’s name. “I am forced to leave Berlin because of the heavy bombardments.”

At this time, many Berliners were fleeing the city in search of safer places. So did Zirpine.

My imaginary village

As an only child, I created an inner world for myself. I conjured up in my mind a community, like a DP camp. I imagined a circle of orphaned children from the various concentration camps, and other surviving persons. They all lived in a village around a leader of the community. I imagined a Rabbi for our leader, since I was craving Jewish life. I made up the name for the Rabbi and called him Rebbi Yehuda. I invented this imaginary community creating a parallel reality of support for myself, yet I did not appear in the story. Everything I experienced in my real life, I put into the characters. I recall at the time, wanting my Father to become more religious. I wrote it all down and then threw it out.

Remembering goose liver

One evening in the Autumn of 1943, we had goose liver sandwiches for supper. This was a real luxury. I remember that the three of us were together eating in the kitchen. Then a very loud siren went off.

In our building on 53 Schlueterstrasse, there were two shelters off of our courtyard-- one for the Jews and one for the Aryans.

This was the first big bombardment that covered Berlin in smoke.. We sat in the Jewish shelter for hours. I remember being so frightened, and crying while watching the lamp violently rock back and forth.

Mother was saying, "it's nothing it's nothing".

"Nothing" felt very scary. It seemed like the bombing would never end. The building was shaking and everyone in the shelter was feeling unnerved. My crying escalated. I was the only child in the shelter.

One of the neighbors sitting with us screamed at my Father , "Shut her up". From then on, I was so afraid of the bombings. After many hours, we were finally able to return home. We walked up to the courtyard and the sky was red from all of the bombs in the air . The center of town was completely destroyed. Unter Den Linden Boulevard was unrecognizable- that gorgeous avenue lined with Linden trees that runs from the City Palace to Brandenburg Gate. Completely destroyed. This first air raid targeting Berlin became known as The Battle of Berlin.

Berchen, my teddy bear, would usually accompany me down to the shelter. But that night of the raid, I had accidentally left Berchen upstairs. I was not allowed to run up and get him, even though I was sick about him being alone.

A Jewish couple who lived in our flat had never made it a habit to come downstairs to the shelter for the bombardments. That particular night they came down , shaken and white. I was without Berchen who would have provided me comfort. They used the term "Christmas trees" to describe this particular bombardment which meant the bombers dropped bombs up and down the street to light up our neighborhood for a more precise hit. That is why for the first time this Jewish couple joined us that night of the relentless bombing. We were all very scared.

After those heavy bombardments, Mother decided it would be less stressful if we were in a better shelter.

Imagining a cake made of 15 eggs

For the next six months, every evening we went to the Catholic Hospital to seek refuge in their shelter which was run by the nuns.

Although Mother was a Protestant, these nuns at the Catholic Hospital were very kind to us. These special nuns worked together in the public shelter to make it a sane and safe place for all.

Father did not go with us because of his work and stayed closer to home

Every evening to get to the shelter, Mother and I took the Underground. This was exciting for me. At the train station, a friendly conductor invited me to change the numbers on the board as he announced the destination and time of the various trains coming into the station.

Every night, Mother and I would sleep in a little room at the Catholic Hospital. When the siren went off, we would go with the Nuns, and the sick patients down to the public shelter. I felt very safe and protected because I knew we were going to be with the nice nuns in their shelter.

Many years after the war, Mother shared snippets of memory of how we skirted the bombardments. Mother was very proud of me while down in the shelter.

There was a woman at the Catholic Hospital shelter who regularly sat on our bench in the shelter. She would take up more room than usually allotted for one person. She made herself very broad with her elbows, so that she could sit more comfortably, not leaving room for us.

Mother was very practical and taught me how to manage life in the shelter as we spent hours and hours down there. She instructed me to hurry down to the shelter when the sirens rang so that there would be room to sit on our bench. I put my feet up against the wall to save enough space for the two of us.

I learned a lot about life, human nature, and survival skills in the shelter.

I remember once looking through cookbooks while down there. I found calm and a feeling of fullness while reading a cake recipe that called for 15

eggs. That recipe has filled my imagination all of these years even if it never filled my belly during those war years.

After a half a year of finding shelter with the nuns, the Hospital itself was bombed. The nuns no longer had room for us so we returned to our shelter at home for the continued air raids.

"You have kissed a Jew in the open street"

The atmosphere on the streets was terrifying. No contact could be made with Jews in public spaces, physical, social , commercial or otherwise.

Ration cards or food coupons were banned to Jews. Occasionally, when my Father came home from work, he would find food coupons in his pocket. Kind people had risked their lives since the giving of food coupons was dangerous and very illegal. Father was ever so grateful for these generous acts of humankindness.

I remember one morning during the bombardments when my Mother and I said goodbye to Father in the street. Mother gave Father a kiss. A strange man followed us after we left Father. I recall him and my Mother talking intensely. Later on I learned that he had said to her, "You have kissed a Jew in the open street."

This was strictly forbidden.

He suspected that my Mother had surreptitiously given my Father ration cards, or cigarettes when she kissed him. It is forbidden of course to hand anything to a Jew. My Mother replied, "You are talking nonsense!"

He followed us into the Underground. Suddenly I saw that he was looking at us in a very hostile way. I started to cry. Mother knew that if he found out where we lived we would be deported.

She went to the Police at our Underground station, and said to the police "This man harassed me" and the man said "Yeah, she kissed a Jew in the street, and could have given him something." The Police took the man into a separate room, at which point the Policeman waved to my Mother and said , "Go, Go" .

Mother felt so relieved that she wanted to pamper me. She took me for an ice cream which of course I have never forgotten.

25 Kilos of life

The Nazis ordered the deportation of all Jews from Berlin. "Postcards" were sent to the homes of Jews to prepare them for their deportation

Jews were given clear instructions by the Nazis regarding the provisions they could take with them. One suitcase was permitted up to 25 kilos in weight.

Mother began helping her Jewish neighbors and friends pack their things. There was great confusion as to where they were going and what they should bring. Mother, as a Protestant, was allowed to go and visit these friends to help them. Little did they know what was ahead.

Mother was defiant in helping Jews under attack. She went to the "offices" of the Nazis to make requests on behalf of others. She often came out of the offices in tears after she was refused.

In one case, I remember going with my Mother to these offices. The Nazi officer said to her, "I will grant your request as long as you "christen your child". Mother and I left that office so quickly knowing this was not an option.

I was very frightened as I had heard about christening from Frau Zilberstein, the cleaning lady in our building. She would come to us once a week to clean. Frau Zilberstein and Mother had a special relationship and got along very well with Mother. She was over 60 years old and therefore permitted to work. She was Jewish but married to a Baptist husband , and therefore exposed to Christian traditions. Frau Zilberstein had told me a child is christened when she is thrown into a swimming pool which petrified me. Fortunately my parents did not want me christened.

Mother also told me about Tante Krantz, a distant Jewish relative of my Father's. Tante Krantz had received the "postcard" for deportation to Theresienstadt. She spoke to my Mother and told her she had no interest in going there, and wanted to take her life. She asked for my Mother to be

there the day of deportation. Tante Krantz was in bed in a coma, and the Nazis started tugging at her, to pull her out of her bed.

Mother said, "You see she is dying. Let her be"

They said, "Alright we will leave her but you must come to Gestapo Headquarters and bring the declaration of death."

Mother went very bravely to the office not knowing what might befall her. She delivered the death certificate as asked.

First she had to get a permit by the Nazi gatekeeper , then proceed to another Nazi office to get a signature. Once all of this was done, Mother was allowed to go home.

Father was absolutely convinced that he would never see her again.

Suicide as a preferred option

Meier Spanier and his (second) wife lived in our building. They were very good friends with my parents. I remember visiting their big flat near the castle of Charlottenberg. At some point though, they were forced by the Nazis to leave their big flat, and move to a very small flat with two little rooms in our building on Schlueterstrasse.

Meier was a scholar of German literature and a friend to all of the younger poets at that time, like Richard Dehmel. Later in life, Meier became the Director of the Jewish Girls School in Berlin.

In September of 1942, the Spaniers were informed by postcard that they would be deported to Theresienstadt and having no interest in that, they took their own lives. They both decided they would rather die than be deported.

They left books of great poets, and his own papers with my Father so he must have known of their plans. Many decades later, I gave it all to the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem.

They would have liked to commit suicide with pills but did not have enough. So Mrs. Spanier gave her husband the poison so he could die more peacefully. Then Mrs Spanier hung herself.

She must have been a strong woman. That was always my impression of her. I remember going up to their flat for coffee, quite often, and being afraid of her. She was rough with me although it was a form of playfulness to her. They had a son but he had moved to America before the War. They had applied for a visa to join him, but the War broke out and it was too late.

A sad day for us that I have not forgotten. Their landlord sat in our living room, literally wringing her hands. She kept going up to their flat, in disbelief, as she peered into their flat. After their suicide, though, their two little rooms were sealed off.

I remember their dead bodies in the flat, and the ordeal involved to remove their corpses.

Jews who had attempted unsuccessfully to kill themselves were taken to the Berlin Jewish Hospital. They would arrive most likely , in a state of coma, and then die there at the Hospital. Most left suicide notes indicating that they knew about their imminent arrest and probable deportation but opted for suicide. Deportations in early 1943 were particularly cruel and brutal.

Approximtely 7,000 people, *just in Berlin*, committed suicide the eve of deportation in 1943. That is a tremendous number.

This Jewish Hospital in Berlin was located on Iranische Strasse. In order to perform these burials, the Nazis appointed a Rabbi in Berlin. This Rabbi's name was Martin Reisenbuergur.

He conducted 14 burials a day!!!! He recited "El Maleh Rachamim" *14 times everyday*. This went on for about a year.

Martin Riesenburgur wrote his memoirs which I have read (The Light that Never Fails),

<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/article/19970420/NEWS/304209968>

<https://saieditor.com/?p=512>

An entry book from the Berlin Jewish Hospital during the war years was salvaged . I saw it at an exhibition when I was in Berlin visiting. It was displayed at the Great Synagogue located on Oranienburger Strasse. The

entry book showed two full pages in beautiful handwriting, a list of the names of the deceased and the cause of their death:

Sehlfmittelvergiftung was written for most who died.....which means “poisoned by sleeping pill”.

One wonders where all these people managed to find sleeping pills since the pills had become very rare on the black market.

Books become your Friends

I craved books as a great escape. I loved to read and looked forward to receiving new books. Father would bring home books from the Library although this was strictly forbidden.

Every Sunday morning, he would sneak into our house a collection of miniature books. I would crawl into his bed on Sunday morning with such anticipation to receive these beautifully illustrated books each week.

One particular series of miniature books , he brought home, was called Sonne und Regen

(Sun and the Rain). These books evoked in me such excitement for reading. The text and the illustrations were mesmerizing. I loved these books as friends.

I remember one week Father broke the pattern and gave me my book on a Saturday. The following day, Sunday, I had hoped I would get another book, as that was the weekly tradition.

Father was very upset with me when I asked on Sunday for my book. He said I was misbehaving. He used the term, “ungezogen” (naughty). A year later, when I was 6 years old, Father brought home a copy of the book, Dr Doolittle. I was reminded where these books came from when my eye noticed on the front page a seal embossed:

“Zune gogen geminde Beuthen’

From the Library of Stolen Books.

Property of Beuthen Jewish Community.

I imagined the child in Beuthen who had read from these very same pages of Dr. Doolittle, wondering if this family survived the war. Today, Beuthen is known as Bytom which is part of Poland.

Dr. Doolittle became a favorite book of mine, and stayed with me into my adult years, even accompanying me to Israel. Yet, I was quite aware this book really was not mine. I knew I wanted to give it to another child in distress. The plight of Ethiopian Jews was a central issue to Israel in the 1990s. I decided to donate the book to an Absorption Center in Mevaseret Zion, where many young Ethiopian children were acclimating.

I hope that books can bring comfort to these children, the way Dr. Doolittle had provided an escape for me into the safe pages of an imaginary world, during very hard times.

Oma had not vanished; I have found her again

Oma, my dear Grandmother, was an anchor in my life. March, 1943 had been traumatic when the Nazis came into our flat to take Oma away. A few days later to our great relief, Oma returned. Yet in July, 1943 the Nazis entered into our flat again and took Oma away for good. This time was forever

When the Nazis barged in, I was playing in the living room. I heard the loud voice of a man shout out, "Here lives Rika Grumach, born Mendelsohn;
HER WE WANT

DIE WOLLEN WIR HABEN

I knew that these would be our last moments with Oma. I remember Oma kissed me goodbye and that I did not cry. I have always been perplexed as to why I held back those tears.

Oma put on her coat and walked out in a most dignified manner, carrying her packed suitcase of no more than 25 kilos in weight. That's what the Nazi deportation postcard had stipulated. This farewell scene has been replayed in my mind countless times.

I suppose my Mother took Oma to the truck standing outside, and I was left alone. Father was at the library. I tried to have a little mourning ceremony but found that either too boring or did not know how to do it.

So I abandoned that idea, and took my Teddy Bear, Berschen and went back to play. But since that day, I have believed that I must be a very cold person

Many years later I went with Hanan to see a film Shoah, by Claude Lanzmann. During the screening, at some point, I could not take it any more and had to leave in the middle. I left Hanan there. I went home to write and found myself writing about the day of my Grandmother's deportation. I wrote, "When Oma was deported, I was not sad".

In 1998, I went to Theresienstadt for the first time. As ironic as it sounds, it was a chance for me to say HELLO to Oma, not goodbye. It was so good to be with her. At that time, Hanan was here at Beit Moses, for his first year, and unable to travel. I spent ten days in Germany and the Czech Republic, and visited Theresienstadt for one day. I got there and found a map with old German street names. I had known from postcards sent to us while Oma was there, that she lived on Park Allee (Boulevard).

My Father had told me that Oma had sent him a few postcards from Theresienstadt saying things like "thanks for the parcel".

I found her house which was a peasant's house, ground floor, first story, with a courtyard. The staircase was closed and seemed to be empty.

I felt that all I could do was go to the doorpost and give a kiss to her. I said "Oma, I have been here. I made sure to say that in Hebrew --

כאן אני סבתא

In Theresienstadt, there is a memory hall where you can light candles. In the corner of this hall, one of our Israeli presidents set up a table to demarcate the area as a memory corner. There I lit a candle and said Kaddish.

Oma had been deported in July, 1943 and managed to survive Theresienstadt for four months, staying alive. The usual amount of time for old people was three months. In the beginning, she was in very good

spirits. Then she became terribly depressed, as she had often been in her life. At last she was put in a mental hospital, ironically bringing dignity to the end of her life.

Hannah Arendt said it best. She had known my Oma well from the days they shared in Koenigsberg.

She said to Father as a way of comfort, "At least Muttchen (Mommy in German) died in bed, covered with a bed sheet". At that time nobody in the camps had such a luxury dignifying death.

It was a very comforting experience for me to be able to "meet" Oma in Theresienstadt, 55 years after her death, providing me with closure.

Oma had not vanished. I have found her again.

Quite a relief for me, considering how I have tortured myself replaying that moment of her deportation again and again. Only with the help of my friend, Jill, have I come to understand that I did grieve.

Holding on to Berchen when Oma was taken away allowed me to feel the loss. Writing this memoir has helped me better understand the huge trauma I experienced as a young girl. All of these years, I couldn't forgive myself for not expressing grief for my losses. Yet, through this writing process, I see that I did grieve. Berchen was there to hold *me*, and *my* grief.

Berchen makes life bearable

Berchen has accompanied me for eighty two years of my life, since I was two years old. Berchen holds me together, and I hold him and thus life has become more bearable. I think back to the early days when we adopted Berchen into our family. Deep thanks goes to my parents' friends who fled Berlin in 1939 who left Berchen in our possession. He lived with us on 53 Schluserstrasse until 1951.

I gave Berchen a nickname, Ber. Because I had no siblings, Ber became my life's witness. He was a special bear, manufactured by Steiff, a collector's item today. Ber was made of mohair and his vintage "knopf-im-ohr" --"button in ear" identifying him as a unique one of a kind. This Steiff

seal of quality and authenticity is also reflected in his fine character. To me, he is ever so personable.

I have taken good care of Ber, throughout my lifetime. As a young girl, I worried about his health. If I had a belly ache, I would assume he had one. I even gave him a suppository once when I was constipated. Another time, when my hair was growing long, I thought Ber needed a haircut. As a young girl, I didn't understand why his fur did not grow back after my careful cut.

Berchen brought me comfort during the entire war. Especially during the Battle for Berlin in April 1945 when we were in the shelter for ten days. The Soviet ground forces completely cut off Berlin from the outside world. The battle continued until May 2nd and was one of the bloodiest in history.

I was 8 years old at the time, camping out downstairs in the shelter with those who had not yet been deported. Most had already disappeared. I remember that no white bread was allowed for Jews to eat. Berchen and I were hungry, yet he comforted me.

Through many of the ups and downs of my life, Berchen was my witness and anchor. Here are just some of the significant events of my life, which Berchen lived through, and supported me.

In 1958, my parents divorced. I was 21 years old. Mother knew how difficult this was for me. She wrote a note to me in Ber's voice trying to comfort me. Mother (Muti) and I would often exchange communications, letters and poetry in Ber's name. He has authored many, many communications even in difficult times. We would give voice to Berchen, as a way to help soften our hard reality.

In November of 1966, I visited Mother who was living in Berlin at the time. I had just graduated from the University of Basel with my doctorate.

Mother wrote a letter of congratulations to me from Ber. She dressed him up in a cap and gown. Berchen looked so smart as he knew this was a big day in my life.

In 1969, Ber took his first voyage on the sea via Spain to Israel

In 1972, My Mother moved to Israel. Berchen accompanied her on this journey as she left Germany to settle in Jerusalem for this last chapter of her life.

In 1973, we experienced yet another war, together, this time in our own homeland. Berchen made me feel safe. Hanan and I volunteered for the Mishmar Ezrachi (Civil Service) on our streets in Jerusalem. We earned a medal of distinction yet Berchen wore the medal proudly.

From the years between 1978 until 1984, Berchen moved to Beit Moses with Mother. They lived there together for 6 years before she died. Little did Berchen know that he would again live in Beit Moses with me, snuggled on my bed, for another 14 years.

In 1991, during the Gulf War, Hanan and I found comfort in our sealed room on Abarbanel Street with Berchen. We took a funny picture with our gas masks. Ber appears in the picture, next to us, as he kept our spirits high.

In 2012, Berchen returned to Beit Moses. He came back just in time to bring comfort and snuggles for this last chapter of my life. These were difficult days of sirens blaring again in Jerusalem warning of possible Gazan attacks. The threat of war looms again .

Eighty two years in all; Ber will always be my witness.

I continue to bring voice to Ber. I sent this blessing to Jill on the birth of Lia, her first granddaughter born in July, 2020. I chose to write this blessing to Jill, in first person, from Berchen's perspective. I love to keep his voice alive; a tradition that my Mother started.

Jill's blessing includes a drawing that my Mother made for me and Hanan at our wedding, fifty years ago. Berchen stands proudly, holding flowers, under our chuppah, (wedding canopy) which still brings a smile.

Berchen continues to share his blessings of happiness, fifty years later.



A hungry seven year old

Those unforgettable days in July of 1943 following Oma's deportation, left their indelible imprint. I had hoped Oma would return and that the Nazis would have miraculously released her again. I remember I wasn't sad, just more annoyed that she was no longer in Berlin with me to read together. That meant no more books that she would ever read to me. We were in the middle of a book that I loved; The Good Soldier Schweik. My parents refused to let me read it on my own because the book had erotic scenes.

I remember I would be in bed, while my parents were outside on the terrace laughing. And I was not allowed to read Schweik and actually thought of taking my life. I was depressed.

I channeled my frustration into writing. At seven years old, I wrote my first book. I remember the writing process and the book itself, although the book got lost. I would sit down and write in my little room, at my "pult" (a bench with a desk).

In the Autumn of 1944, after we learned that Oma died, I decided to write. Perhaps it was the way I could grieve. I dedicated my book to Oma and called it Schweik. Oma was the central character in my Schweik version.

Oma, in my imagined story, had a big appetite. Hoping, subliminally, that a large appetite could bring Oma back to life. In my storyline, Oma could eat whenever she wanted; food was always available.

Reading the original Schweik with Oma, I liked most the character named Lieutenant Biegler who had an endless appetite, and ate a lot.

I enjoyed reading the many scenes in the book of the soldiers fantasizing about the food they missed from back home.

This made a great impression on me as a hungry seven year old. To this day, food memories are very strong leaving their imprint on my taste buds.

At the height of the war, we were scrambling for a single piece of bread.

In my book, my Biegler character ate 100 pieces of bread and 50 geese in one meal. He had a stomach that was bottomless, and could eat all he wanted without ever getting sick.

Looking back at my younger self, it was therapeutic for me to write this book as a way to grieve Oma's death. Better that than ending my life as I had struggled as a young girl living through these horrors. Oma left me with the love for literature and reading which became central to my life.

Seeking a safe home

Mother and I were permitted to visit Father in the Library. There was a Nazi at the entrance downstairs who allowed me to go upstairs to the section in the library of children's books. I would sit at a table and read, while Mother and Father would visit.

I was amazed by this large bookcase filled with books ; all stolen by the Nazis from Jewish libraries around Europe.

One day, I sat by the window upstairs to read a beautifully illustrated book. It was a sad story about a Gypsy girl whose name was Mikela. She was abandoned and had no home. She walked from place to place. She met a person who helped her find a home. A kind family took her in and shared their love. Mikela's friend was so worried for her as he understood the fate of a Gypsy. His worry for her turned into deep anxiety, he laid down in a field of corn and died.

I don't know why I liked this book so much, especially with such a tragic ending . When I sat by the windowsill that day, I had not managed to finish the whole thing. Father had seen me reading it. For my birthday (which was coming up), he brought the book home as a present.

I think back to this book and reflect that I could identify with Mikela who was loved and cared for, who sought a safe home. Perhaps this gave me strength. Yet , one of the themes of this book was worry for survival which resonates deeply.

Garden of whispers

Random memories of visits with Father at the Library.....

At the Library, there was a garden on the premises, where the Nazis could not listen in on our conversations. When Father could get away from his work, he would go to the garden. Mother and I were permitted to visit him there.

I recall in 1942 on Yom Kippur, their group of librarians actually snuck away from their work to pray Kol Nidre in the small library hall. This was a secluded space in the building that the Nazis did not know about.

Sadly, by the next Yom Kippur, the entire library group had been deported and killed. In March of 1943, all of Father's colleagues were taken away. Still incomprehensible that Father was the only one not taken. Father was devastated. The shame and guilt shadowed him for the rest of his life, and he never really recovered from it.

I remember this date very clearly; July 20th, 1944. Although I was only seven years old, I committed this date to memory. I understood the significance of this day when conspirators laid a bomb near the Fuhrer in an attempt to kill him. The bomb detonated in East Prussia exploding, though, in the wrong place.

I recall on that day Mother meeting someone in the street and talking discreetly about the incident. I was with her at the time as we were on our way to visit Father at the Library. I remember that visit with Father very clearly. Mother took him to the middle of the garden at the Library so she could share the news. Father would not have known about the attempt on

Hitler's life since he was at work in the Library, and they were prohibited from listening to the radio. Mother had been worried about the possible repercussions for Father.

Rationing Toilet Paper

I remember reading in the newspaper about the Nazi's legal process in arresting those conspirators. The first trials were held in August, 1944. Hitler was furious and had ordered that those found guilty should be "hanged like cattle".

The Gestapo executed 5,000 people, and arrested 7,000 people who were implicated in this and previous plots to overturn the Nazi regime.

Even though I was seven years old, I read these articles with great interest. I had wondered why my parents would allow this. I understood at some level that I was too innocent of an age to be reading about Nazis and Hitler.

I read the newspaper in the bathroom when I was on the toilet. The reason being, was that we used newspaper as toilet paper since it was rationed.

Mother kept us nourished

Mother had been forced to work in the Laundromat beginning in late 1944 simply because she was married to a Jew. The Laundromat was situated in Berlin. She would spend full days there and was often so hungry she would cry at work. I believe it was about six months that she had to work there.

Andy's mother and Nora stayed in our home, and took care of me. We would go out for our lunch because there were few restaurants that served cabbage soup. We had to bring our own soup bowls and three spoons. It was the most awful soup and Nora insisted that I have two bowlfuls and I hated it. That was the meal of the day.

I never felt hungry during the day because Mother always left her food portions for Father and me. What I didn't understand is that Mother would go hungry.

Mother gave so generously, and it became one of the huge misunderstandings in our family. She was left feeling hungry and my Father was well fed considering the circumstances. When someone asked my

Father were you hungry during those war years, my Father would answer, no. It would make my Mother so sad since she had given up her portions in order for him to not be hungry.

Mother would often go to the Nazi offices to see if she could get more food coupons. As a non Jew, of course she was allowed to receive them. No milk or meat rations would be given for Father and me. Mother would give her portion of meat and milk to us. Additionally, Mother would get the ration cards that were permitted for Jews. Mother would be harassed by the Nazis. They would curse her and call her "Judenzau" which meant Jewish pig, because she was married to Father.

She would also go to the Black market sometimes to buy chicken. She would trade an item from home since they had no money. Once she traded an old tablecloth to get one small chicken. I vividly remember her coming home with this chicken. Mother then removed the innards.

The residents of Schlüterstraße 53

Our building was in the middle of the block on Schlüterstraße 53 .

Many people were deported from there: Mr.Bloch, Miss Lask, the Misses Glaser, Eva Brummer, Oma Rika, and Mrs.Neumann. Dr. Meier Spanier and his wife took their own lives before deportation.

Herbert Strauss, also lived in our building. As mentioned above, Strauss escaped with his fiancé, as they literally slipped through the fingers of the Gestapo. They went underground and managed to flee Berlin via Switzerland in the middle of the war.

Five mixed couples survived: Grombachers, Jacobys, Hellers, Modlingers and my parents.

Our building was quite a Jewish house, yet not a real Judenhaus; there were also many Aryans who lived in our building.

Among the Aryans was Frau Weisenthal, who preferred to sit with us in the Jewish shelter, although later we learned that she was a Nazi. In our

building there were separate shelters, one for the Jews, and the other for the Aryans.

“Just don’t think”

Another family living in our building on 53 Schlueterstrasse was the Freyers. An Aryan family with four children. They were not Jewish...three grown up, and the little one was my age whom I played with in the garden.

The Freyers were good people. They weren’t all bad Nazis. They had moved into an apartment in our building, where Jews used to live, and had been deported.

At a time when we had little water, the Freyers had a bathtub full of water (which was a real luxury) . Yet Mr Freyer wanted fresh water. He took his pail and went to get clean water from the central pump. He was hard of hearing; the Russians might have called him to stop, yet they shot and killed him. A tragic death during that summer of 1945.

His dead body was brought back to his wife, and they buried him that day in our garden. Later they dug out his body and organized a proper burial in the cemetery.

That day we went to visit Mrs. Freyer. As a young girl I had an image of what a grieving wife would look like from the books that I had been reading. I expected to see Mrs. Freyer wearing black, sitting on the couch.

Instead I was surprised to find her mopping the floor. I must have looked askance.

She said to me, “Just don’t think”.

The exception to the rule

During the war years, I would go out for walks when I was about eight years old. That summer of 1945 every door was open, we spent a lot of time outside, in the courtyard, still a very neighborly feeling.

One day I met outside a little boy my age named Dieter. I brought him home. Mother enjoyed the idea of this friendship but was afraid that his parents would not approve. So Mother went to his parents. She spoke to

Dieter's Mother and said, "Our children are becoming friends, but I would like to tell you that we are Jews." His mother replied , "and we are Social Democrats."

And that was that.

Dieter Jorgen became my best friend.

When I was about seven years old, I met another boy on the street. His name was Dietrich Sonme. He was a very large boy about twelve years old. He used to beat up the other kids on the street.

One day he walked me home to our courtyard. We approached our house and he saw the yellow star on our door.

He said with huge surprise, ``ARE YOU JEWISH??"

I said, "Yes, but please don't beat me up because of that."

Surprisingly, he replied , "No I wouldn't do that"

He never hurt me, and we continued to be friends

Nora and Andrusha

As mentioned, near the end of the war, Nora came to live in our building, with her son Andrusha. She became best friends with my parents while Andrusha (Andy) and I grew up together like siblings.

Nora, born in St Petersburg, was not Jewish. They were Germans but grew up in St Petersburg. They were forced to leave during The First World War and migrated to Berlin. Nora had a sister, a niece, and a nephew. Her sister Thea, had a child named Sasha. When he became of age, he was enlisted into the Army and tragically died in battle, in Russia. Nora's husband and daughters had moved to London before the war.

Nora moved to her flat in Berlin, traumatized by the death of Sasha and often cried out for all to hear how this terrible war took our Sasha away.

When I heard Nora's wailing, I thought to myself , "one doesn't do that".

My parents never expressed emotion. Perhaps my parents never had the opportunity as it was dangerous. They never never never mourned the death of anyone publicly. Denial, it is not. They were very aware of their

losses and hardships, yet also aware of the risks of living under the Nazi regime. Simply saying the word “concentration camp” (KZ) could be grounds for deportation so we learned to keep quiet.

Nora’s husband was Jewish. His name was Ernst Schaefer. Their son, Andrusha (Andy) was born in 1938 into the war as a premature baby. Andy’s Father was based in London, and had come to Berlin in 1945. I remember him arriving in an American uniform as he was a lawyer, and came as a translator for the Nuremberg trials. Here are the records he translated:

Trials of war criminals before Nuremberg War Crime Tribunal

October 1946- April 1949

https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/NT_war-criminals_Vol-VI.pdf

Nora left for London with Andrusha, in 1948 which was devastating for me, as he was like a sibling. Andrusha, today known as Andy Sheppard, is 81 years old, a journalist, and lives in Dublin, Ireland with his second wife.

Here is a description of Andy’s life: <http://aei.pitt.edu/78264/1/Sheppard.pdf>

Andy kept up the friendship with me despite the geographic distance. He came to Jerusalem to visit me here at Beit Moses in 2009. He also came one summer to Berlin to see me on one of my recent trips to Berlin with Ephraim.

We shared many memories together.

Most specifically, the ten interminably long days in the shelter while Berlin was being bombed by the Russians until they came to our street.

It was May 1st, 1945.

We remembered the same event; liberation which took weeks. The Russian soldiers were assigned to our neighborhood for their posting.

One day in our neighborhood, the Russian soldiers slaughtered a sheep for all of the residents in our building. It was very nice and warm.

Andy remembers the actual slaughtering of the sheep right before our house on the pavement.

Mother took part, at least once, in a sheep slaughtering. I recall the sheep being killed from the bombardment, falling to the ground. The sheep laid still. The women of the neighborhood went out with knives to cut some meat.

The same happened once with a horse, and I recall Mother cutting meat from a horse who had fallen. My Mother served horse meat that night. We were so hungry that we ate it. I remember that sweet taste to this day.

My soft nightgown

The Americans gave first right to the Russians to liberate Berlin on the First of May, 1945.

On this day, May 1st, 1945; I vividly remember our neighborhood grocer at the corner put out a white flag. For our street, that meant the War was over and we could come out from the shelter.

Andy and I were so excited to be able to play in the street, and be out of the shelter. I remember sitting with him on a cannon and an abandoned car that had been left behind.

After not being in our flat for ten days, everything looked and felt different. I remember how soft my nightgown was when I put it on after not having worn it for at least 10 days.

I remember the streets being decorated by red flags by the Germans. This was an easy thing to do. All they did was remove the swastika from the white square in the middle of the red flag, and reclaimed their flag.

"Just give me your watch, and you can go"

On that first day of liberation, May 1st 1945, my Father was arrested by the Russians, and taken to a camp near Berlin. This had been the first time after all of those wartime years under the Nazi rule.

Father was forced to sleep there, and the next morning he went to a Jewish looking Russian officer. He told him that he was a Jew and did not want to stay there anymore.

Father had prepared well for this day and studied Russian for these exact moments. He had wanted to say to this Russian officer:

“Hitler has taken everything from me so leave me the watch”.

But all that came to mind was the Russian imperative: “Take”

The Russian was a little bit surprised and took it.

My Father walked back home, which took all day through ruined Berlin.

It was known that the Russians stole watches and bicycles. They went up and down the main avenue, Kurfuerstendam (known as Kudam) and assaulted people who would pass by.

That was when I learned from the grownups to be aware of the Russian soldiers on stolen bikes disobeying traffic rules. They would ride into traffic on the wrong side of the street. Kudam was also filled with little ponies called panje horses.

In the neighboring house to ours, every woman living in that building was raped. But in our house, the women were lucky and had been spared.

Thanks to Andy’s Mother, Nora who spoke Russian well. She talked to a Russian officer and told him that this was not acceptable in our house, and so it did not happen.

Years later I asked Nora how she did that ? Instinctively she answered,

“I just did it; I knew that I had to.”

No white bread for Jews

That same night of Father’s arrest on May 1st, 1945, my Mother was protecting all of her women friends who were camping out in our living room. She was watching over these women to make sure that they were not raped by the Russian soldiers. I would just like to mention that all of these women had been very friendly during the war. I remember that evening, being sent up to a flat on the second floor to look for one of the women who had disappeared up there. I also heard a lot of drunken shouts, and I was afraid.

On May 2nd, Father came home. There was one woman in the house Frau Weisenthal who was not friendly. I learned that she was a Nazi. Frau Weisenthal was always checking everyone in our building. She was particularly suspicious of two ladies who would come into our building to work. These two ladies were housekeepers for a Jewish man called Bloch. And when they would come into the courtyard with their bags, Frau Weisenthal would insist on looking in their bags to see if they had bought white bread for Mr. Bloch. This of course was forbidden. Frau Weisenthal would wait for their arrival and threaten them.

Sometime after, Frau Wiesenthal asked my Mother if she would take her in to protect her. Mother refused because Frau Wisenthal was a Nazi.

I remember another disturbing moment. I was outside on the street, walking under a window and from the first floor a woman came out to the open window wanting to shout –yet a man pulled her back in . I understood that was something bad was happening to her, I don't know what.. maybe rape or an arrest. I felt so powerless as an 8 year old, witnessing the evil in this world but incapable of helping. I did not say a word to Mother, Nora or Andy.

Food cravings

My Mother had the old stove working in our kitchen, so we had something warm to eat all through the siege. During those first weeks we had no provisions other than a single bag of flour. Somehow, three times a day Mother made soup consisting of only flour and water. I recall many weeks of just eating that horrible soup.

The grownups were so thin that they had to sit on cushions since they had little padding left on their bottoms. On a rare occasion, Mother would make blintzes or pancakes for supper. This was a rare delicacy, but she would make it with cod liver oil, which filled the house with an awful smell! Mother rationed carefully the one bottle of cod oil that remained. It had a very smoky flavor and served as a butter substitute.

I craved sweets during the food rations of 1945. To this day, I have a sweet tooth.

Being hungry as a child really stays with you. My body will always remember that feeling of food deprivation and insecurity. Preoccupations with food, wondering what might be available, and the psychology of hunger permanently locates itself in the body. I have a keen appetite and my relationship to food connects me back to these wartime experiences from my childhood.

Tiergarten stripped of trees

It was a great help that Mother had repaired the stove (June 1945) in the kitchen and we could cook all of the time. It did require wood though to stoke the fire.

I remember one day going with Mother, Nora and Andy to Tiergarten which is one of Berlin's incredible parks spread over 300 acres. Always imprinted in my earliest memories as a favorite place to visit. Decades after the war, Tiergarten returned to its full beauty with countless trees and open spaces that I have gone to revisit again and again.

However in June of 1945, all of the trees had been chopped down. We went into the Tiergarten to find wood for the stove to cook and heat the house.

One day, we found a very long log that needed to be cut. Mother and Nora were in the midst of chopping it when a Russian officer approached and said he would help us, as long as he could sleep with Nora. Of course they refused! We had to chop the large log on our own and transport it home, which was physically very debilitating.

Mother also managed to do our laundry thanks to a big laundry basin and jug of liquid soap that she managed to bring home from the laundromat, as a parting present in June of 1945. It enabled all of us to wash ourselves for the next few months because during that summer there was an outbreak of illness, dysentery, and related illnesses. Because we were clean, we were immune.

I recall during those first weeks after liberation, Mother and Nora (Andy's Mother) killed 360 flies a day because there was no organized trash collection. Flies everywhere, food shortages, and post war trauma.

Mother seemed to be able to care for our household with such grace.

Two Ernst's: Schaefer and Grumach

Andy's Father was named Ernst. As a child, he could not pronounce his own name Ernst. So he would refer to himself as *An*. He grew up to become quite an intellect, and a great reader of German literature. He read the work of Thomas Mann, and sometime in the 1950s, Thomas Mann came to England. He was received by the German immigrants in London at the time, Ernst Schaefer being one of them. I heard years later, from a lady who had been at this event in London that Ernst spoke with great charm, which I can imagine.

I recall another war story told about Ernst Schaeffer, when he was younger he fought as a soldier during the First World War. He lay seriously wounded from battle, in a field, presumably dead. Someone came along gathering the corpses, and leaned over Ernst's body. He suddenly saw this body come alive, raising his arms, and embracing him. This man was obviously quite shocked and saved Ernst's life.

We were all very impressed by Andy's father, Ernst Schaefer, who came to Berlin from England in an American uniform. This was the only way one could be allowed entry during that summer of 1945.

I also was impressed that he was a lawyer who served as a translator, stationed at the Nuremberg trials.

Yet, as a young girl, I was most impressed that he arrived with chewing gum in his pocket!

He gave it to Andy and the kids on the street joyfully shouted out "Andy's father is an *Ami* (which means American), and he has chewing gum."

Fortunately, these street kids weren't bothered by the fact that the Americans had been the enemy, and were just simply delighted to chew gum for the first time.

These two "Ernsts" (Schaefer and Grumach) met for the first time only after the war in the summer of 1945. Their wives, Nora and Grete, had become very very very close.

I also remembered Ernst Schaefer as the “Jewish lawyer from Germany living in London”. He was engaged in helping Jewish immigrants in England—and would regale us with endless stories.

One young immigrant, destitute, depressed, and had no resources to sustain herself. Out of despair, she threw herself in front of the train. Ernst’s organization came to help her. He was a special man who sought to help those in need. He was very learned, and exhibited such fine qualities of decency and dignity.

Father, on the other hand, was dealing with a very different post-war reality. After the Russians liberated Berlin, the Americans came and took over the library of stolen books. They set up a library in Offenbach near Frankfurt which at the time was an empty factory. Father was busy writing and reflecting as his trauma increased as he processed his own war experiences.

Making up for lost time

In the summer of 1945, I finally was able to attend school. I was eight years old.

My Father was so anxious for me to begin my formal education.

He was tormented by the twelve years of lost time in his *own* academic career path, due to the war. I was made very aware of this as it determined the decisions he made for MY academic path, for the rest of my life.

For 12 years Father was not permitted to teach simply because he was a Jew. From 1933 to 1945 , he was not allowed to teach at the University. He could only work at the bookstore.

From 1937 until 1941 he had to forgo his professional aspirations and instead taught Greek, Latin, and philosophy at The Beit Midrash for Liberal Rabbis, headed up by Leo Baeck.

In 1941, he was no longer able to work at all.

The Nazis imposed on Father forced labor for the next four years until 1945, which forever damaged him.

Consequently, Father did not want me to lose any time. He forced me to jump two grades, which meant that at the age of eight I entered the Fourth grade.

In that same year in Autumn, I began the Gymnasium at eight years old! My Father wanted me to move ahead quickly to make up for lost time.

This was a terrible decision, and left me very unhappy. I can remember two positive memories from social interactions in the classroom.

There was only one other Jewish girl in the school, although the other girls were kind to me. Once there was a loud noise and they referred to it as a “judenschule” (loud the way Jews pray). They realized that they might have offended me as a Jewish girl and said, “Oh so sorry, “Spaetzchen” , which means something like “Please little birdie, we meant no harm.”

One day a group of kids in school realized I might be able to help them with the crossword puzzle in the newspaper. Because one of the questions presumed Jewish knowledge. They approached me sweetly and asked if I could help answer the question about Av, one the Jewish months on the calendar.

“I never walked down that street again”

The kids in my class were ten years old, and some even older. This was at a time at the end of the war when many kids were grouped together into one class irrelevant of age or intelligence.

I was quite unhappy. The other kids in my class were much bigger, and some pushed me around. The Aryan kids had been in some sort of school framework during the four years of the war. They had social skills and were familiar with play. I had no idea of the games kids played, or what to do during recess. My Father wanted me to have school friends and so I forced myself to bring home a girl named Ingrid Hein. She came over one day, and then proceeded to steal my stamp collection.

My Father forced me to collect stamps. He seemed to think he knew what was best for me. He wanted me to grow up fast. He had bought several stamp albums for me to fill with the stamps from letters that would arrive for

him. I did not enjoy collecting the stamps. There was no discovery in it for me since he forced it upon me.

That afternoon when Ingrid came over was a day I will not forget. We began to look at my stamp collection, and then I left my room for a moment. When I returned, I looked at the page where there had been a beautiful stamp from a particular exotic country, and found it not there. I told my parents and the next time she came, they sent me away. They talked to Ingrid and asked her to return the stamps the next day which she did. It made me feel so awkward.

Ten year old Ingrid came to my birthday, along with other street kids who were eight years old. I just wanted to play like an eight year old, in the garden, digging in the soil. Yet, my Father did not allow me to behave like an eight year old. He said my new friends should not see me playing in the soil.

I was so unhappy and remember crying a lot. I used to beg my parents to plead with them to place me in my age appropriate class. It was so hard for me socially, yet I was academically able since Father taught me the material at home. I managed to keep up, yet wished they had listened to me. My struggles to socialize tormented me causing much inner distress and turbulence.

The name of my school was called Feuerstein Bismarck Schule situated on SybelStrasse. Until this day, even on my last trips to Berlin, I refuse to walk down that street because of bad memories.

I stayed at that school for nine years, until I matriculated at age seventeen. I never felt integrated. I never learned to socialize. I never understood or could appreciate the experience of attending school.

"They have gone to Palestine"

When I was eleven years old, things did get better. I was sent to a Jewish religious afternoon school - a class with about thirty Jewish children. There were two of these classes in all of West Berlin. There was a teacher named Herrman Klein who taught us twice a week. Each time in class, during the year 1948, I recall our teacher reading off the names from the roll call, and

there was always someone missing. The kids in the class would inform the teacher : “Those kids have gone to Palestine”. After so many of the horrors we experienced, it was exciting to imagine the establishment of the State of Israel.

I loved going to religious school with a class of kids of all ages. I wasn't the youngest child, and liked very much being with all Jews. My new friends had lovely names like Rita Silberstein and Gunter Zeligson. I felt the sensation of a romantic feeling towards these children.

I started to go to PestalozziStrasse synagogue on Friday nights, and Shabat mornings, every other week . At first I was very shy, and sat in the very very back of the synagogue. There was mixed seating since it was a liberal synagogue. The shamash was named Herr Jacob, and was harsh with me insisting that I sit in front.

I am grateful to Herr Jacob because he helped me learn the prayer book. He told me which page we were on so I could find my way through the prayers. Thanks to him I kept going back on Shabbat mornings, and loved it. But for some reason, I didn't continue going to synagogue and to Hebrew school.

Let there be light

School buildings were bombed during the war. After the summer of 1945, there were very few educational facilities that remained functional. So every other week I would have school in the afternoon. In 1948, there was a blockade and the Russians cut off West Berlin. They called it “The Berlin Blockade”. This meant no access to the roads and all food was flown in by planes. Our electricity was rationed; only two hours of light every day, alternating day or night.

The non-Jewish girls in my class whose homes were also without light, knew that the synagogues on the Jewish holidays would keep their lights on, because of Jewish observance. These girls would ask for the calendar dates of our holidays so they could enjoy those evenings when the street would be illuminated from our synagogue lights.

Post- war luxury-- coffee, liver pate and English books

Mother loved coffee, and had not drank a single cup of coffee in five years. She had told me that only after 1945, parcels of coffee were being sent by mail from family in America. She was so thrilled to receive a package from my Father's sister who sent us a whole tin of coffee. Mother couldn't believe it when it arrived....She had started to wonder if she would ever again see a coffee bean.

Then coffee showed up in our local store, after the Russians lifted the blockade on West Berlin in May of 1949. Trucks again travelled in from West Germany with food and flowers.

Coffee was now available locally. I remember my Mother talking about somebody she knew who drank so much coffee he could not sleep for three nights.

And there was a certain liver pate (dorsh leiber pastate) that everyone was talking about. It also became available after having disappeared from our shelves for years.

Books too were scarce. I remember vividly during those war years Mother read and reread all of her favorite English books. English literature gave her a feeling of peace and order.

After the war, the British Council set up a lending library on our street. Mother went so often that once the librarian told us she felt so helpless each time that Mother came because she had read absolutely everything in the library! Each time she would try to find Mother something new. Mother particularly loved English romances that transported her to the British countryside. She also loved detective stories. I recall a few of her favorite authors; Ngaio Marsh, a New Zealand crime writer;

Dorothy Leigh Sayers, an English mystery writer, and Marjorie Ellingham.

I was about 13 years old and Mother made me read aloud to her every evening in English. I would read the detective books to her, although I did not really understand what I was reading. Though, I do remember Winnie the Pooh that I would read to her, and we both exploded with laughter. Mostly we sat in the kitchen because it was warm. There was no central

heating in our flat. Father was working at home those days. Later our friends who were American soldiers brought Father a small heater.

The Fate of Father's sisters

My Father never spoke of his family. There was so much loss; sadly I know so little. Since my parents never talked about their families, I was surprised to find letters amidst my Father's papers. A correspondence of many letters between my Father and his sisters was written before Oma moved into our flat in Berlin. The tone between my Father and sisters was not very nice as they argued between each other regarding the responsibility of taking care of their Mother (my Oma).

In the process of gathering material for my memoirs, I show Jill a photo in Father's file of his Grumach family. This gives me a little peek into his once intact family.

The year of the photo was 1903. Father was one year old. They lived in Tilzit. He poses with his two sisters and his parents. Tragic to think of their fate. These three siblings would never feel family cohesiveness.

Sister Helen married a wealthy man, Fred. While they were still in Germany, he was able to buy visas for the two of them. They emigrated to New York. Helen became a dermatologist. Fred died young. I remember that he loved to bake.

Father's other sister, Betty, married Max during the war. They did not manage to get a visa. Betty was deported in March, 1943 and both were killed in Auschwitz

Father's Mother, my beloved Oma, had been deported four months after Betty in July, 1943. Oma died in the Autumn of that year in Theresienstadt.

Father suffered from a lot of family loss that he never spoke about.

Father had one immediate family member alive; his sister Helen. She came to visit us in 1953, in Berlin and stayed in our flat. My Father was quite nervous about her visit to Berlin that year. I am sure it was quite awkward for them both, with so much loss, lives so different, and so many years apart.

I was grateful to Aunt Helen who cared to keep in touch.

I recall right after the war, she had sent me puzzles. I imagine how nice that must have been for me as a young girl to receive a gift in the post. There had been so many shortages, and chaos in our lives that a parcel of puzzles from Aunt Helen in America must have lifted my spirit.

Decades later, Father had sent Helen his published books which made her proud and slightly jealous, I recall. Father also sent books from East Prussia to her as I imagine she liked to read German.

In 1968, I went to visit Aunt Helen who was living with Max Solomon in New York. I was thirty one years old. Helen never wanted to share memories of her childhood. She never spoke about her sister Betty who was killed in Auschwitz, nor did she share stories from her childhood when she and her brother Ernst were young.

Max was interested in politics and was an honest man. He took me around New York and to a small Jewish deli.

In 1973, Helen reached out again and came to visit us in Israel. She came with Max to celebrate their marriage. Mother organized a beautiful wedding reception for her in Jerusalem. I had wanted to eat from the lovely food but had gotten sick from eating spoiled food the day before. I remember looking at this great food, unable to enjoy it.

Father's post-war transition

Back in the Autumn of 1945, Father began to write letters to his friends overseas about his war experiences. He chose to write his memoirs in the format of letters while the trauma and horrors of the war were still so acute.

He was despondent, and suffering from severe depression having lost twenty one librarians and their families. All of his colleagues had been deported with their families, and were murdered in Auschwitz. In addition to the psychological effect of the war, we had to worry about our financial stability.

Buying and Selling Art

My parents, being resourceful, began to buy and sell art from people who were emigrating. Father would hear about someone who was leaving Berlin, would go to their flat and buy their art.

He began to acquire quite an art collection including Max Lieberman and other French expressionists. Father knew of Americans interested in the European art market who turned to him to locate valuable pieces. His currency was cigarettes which he accumulated thanks to these Americans who would send him parcels as they traded art for cigarettes.

During this tormented period of his life, Father continued to sell art for three more years until 1948.

Many decades later, we began to understand the great value of these pieces. In 2006, an artist sold one of these French expressionist pieces for an unexpected price of 300,000 euros.

Mother, as an artist, enjoyed working together with Father very much. She loved looking at art for art's sake. She would have liked to have spent more time as a family studying the art. Yet Father was always stressed, and in a hurry when they went as a family to examine the art. He had only the potential resale value in mind. He had no mental space available for leisure.

Time was of essence and he was always in a bad mood.

Father's miserable mood

We came to expect Father's miserable mood. He cloistered himself up in his room making himself completely unavailable. He was angry and depressed and was singularly focused on his writing.

One particular letter he wrote in August of 1945 was to a Rabbi whose name was Dr Weiner. At a very vulnerable moment, Father emptied his heart to the Rabbi as his suffering had become so severe. Father agonized over the harsh reality that all of his colleagues were dead, while he remained alive. Quite apathetically, Dr Weiner replied to Father's letter in a most perfunctory tone: "Thanks for the interesting letter."

These were very difficult times for everyone.

Father would sit at his desk for hours, with the heater warming his room. The pipe leading to the stove heater would often get clogged. Mother would offer to come up to fix it but he would not allow her in . He hated any disturbances, noise, or disruption that would interfere with his writing.

One day, Father was at home when Frau Zilberstein came to clean our house. It is often noisy when cleaning a house.

Father became so upset by the disruption in the house while she cleaned. He could not contain himself any longer and screamed at Frau Zilberstein that she must leave immediately. He literally threw her out of the house. She was never prepared to come again, despite the special relationship she had with Mother.

From then on, Mother had to clean the house with no other recourse.

Because of Father's zero tolerance for noise, I would have to walk in the house in my socks. As long as I can remember, Father would make me take off my shoes when walking in the house, since the click clacking of my shoes on the floor was too much for him to endure.

After the war, one day we went to the woods to enjoy the quiet of nature. We came across a man listening to a transistor radio. I remember my Father's inappropriate reaction screaming at this man to turn off the radio as it was disturbing him. The transistor radio had just been invented (in 1947) and was a wonderful way to listen to the news and enjoy music. Most everyone, except my Father, was so pleased with this new innovation.

My search for roots

At a very young age, I was very interested in the history of Berlin but did not advance far because I lacked the power of reconstruction. During my school years, when I was 15 or 16 years of age, I did not like the way history was taught in the classroom. The teacher taught history in a way that seemed not to be mine, alienating me from my own identification to my personal history. My wish to study Judaism and Orientalism stems from my curiosity to search for roots. I felt at the time I did not have the living imagination of the history of the institutions, nor the organization of social

life. Later on when I was 19 years old I revisited my connection to identity and family. My first visit to Israel, in 1956, brought me to the house in Tel Aviv of my Father's cousins, Toby and Leo Lewald. This encounter left a very deep impression that later led to me moving to Israel.

My search for identity also led me to the Bible and for the history of the Jewish people. I struggled to deepen those roots when I was 15 years old which caused a new source of stress. My Father made this difficult for me as he lacked the ability to put before me concrete solutions. So my search for roots found its way to Ancient Egypt. Father's leaning towards philological learning helped carve my path. I then lived in the torture of work on the details of past Ancient Egypt which did not bring me great fulfillment, yet I honored Father's wishes.

I was delighted to complete my dissertation in 1966 in Basel, Switzerland on the Egyptian teaching of Amenemope and its relation to the Bible. This brought me tremendous stimulation. I connected to the philological details more instinctively in the context of tradition which became the focus for my profession as an Egyptologist.

Scholarship requires investigating your sources, and reading material as you develop your thinking. I have become aware of the huge discrepancy between my focus on research and my difficulty for expression, which almost killed me. I only realize now as I reflect through this process of writing my memoir how much I have suffered. My lack of creativity and slow academic progress created huge obstacles interfering with my professional success.

My post-war anxieties

This was a time when I could not manage to fall asleep because I was so afraid of death. People had vanished and my parents had started going out at night, at long last for concerts. Yet, I would toss and turn in my bed, so full of fear. Once I sat in the kitchen crying when my parents went out. So I went upstairs, one flight, to Nora's flat looking for comfort. I rang the bell, and my Mother opened the door since she had been visiting Nora. I blurted out to my Mother, crying " I'm so relieved to see you, I was sure you had died"

Another time, Mother went to the store, and I stood at the kitchen window praying that she would come back. Father came and saw me there, ever so frightened.

To calm me, Mother told me when I went to sleep that I would find a present by my bed in the morning. I awoke to find a little miniature arm chair of porcelain with white and blue painted details. These gestures were so kind of Mother, although her presents did not ease my sleep.

During those war years, Mother must have understood very well what I was feeling yet she was responsible for the entire functioning of our home, along with emotional support.

As the non-Jew in our house, she was the one who would go to the various offices to take care of us. She kept the order in our home, while caring for many others through difficult times. I don't know how Mother managed it all.

During those war years before Oma was deported, my Mother was taking care of her as well. Oma was always melancholy and very depressed. Mother would tell her "Pull yourself together". Oma was very grateful to Mother and thanked her for her upbeat way.

Mother pulled us all together.

After the war, Mother took care of lodgers who lived in our flat. She was responsible for their care too. She brought calm to their frayed nerves as well. I remember one of those lodgers terrified one evening, "I hear their boots...they are coming to get us".

We all were reliving the trauma of the war. Anxiety was pervasive in our home.

The good fortune during those three years between 1945 - 1948 was that my parents, at least were still married. We had lunch together which gave me the impression that we were still a family. Lunch was joyous since we could eat proper foods again, and not just dribble soup off the spoon. We were not used to eating rich foods.

One meal, I do recall feeling sick after eating goose meat. We all were adjusting to the times.

There is no visible order

There is no visible order to my memories since our entire life was overturned by the war. Everyone we knew either emigrated or was deported. Our friends, colleagues and family all vanished. Our world collapsed as the city had been destroyed right before our eyes.

This had a very negative impact on my childhood which caused a complete turn inwards. My Grandmother, Uncle and Aunts, and really warm friendships and social gatherings which I remember from an early age....all of that disappeared. Only on a rare occasion, like a meteor, someone from those early days- like Gershom Scholem or Hannah Arendt- would “turn up” leaving an impression of something wonderful but unreachable.

The crumbling of my parents' marriage

In 1948, Father became Professor at the University of Humboldt, in East Berlin. There was not yet a West Berlin campus, so his work was in the East.

Father became very involved in his work at Humboldt. He became part of the faculty of the Classic's department and apparently was a very good pedagogue. Once, Mother and Nora attended a lecture that Father gave at the Seminary and they were very impressed. Father also became an Editor of a new Goethe edition in the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

Yet on the family front, our life began to unravel. This was the beginning of the break up of our family. Father dreamt of a new future and sought out new friendships with colleagues at the Academy. He travelled to Weimar and Schillertown for his work in their archives.

Mother lived in the past while hoping to restore their marriage.

Father had met a woman Professor named Lieselotte Blumenthal. Her field of specialization was classic German literary studies and was a member of the Goethe Society in the Weimar.

When Father was in Weimar for work, he would go to her home in the evenings for dinner. She was a good cook, and made delicious food, and

would come home and tell Mother about it. Mother hated the idea that they were eating together, concerned that this was a romance.

The Professor's husband, Hermann Blumenthal, had died in 1941. Hermann had been a specialist in Library studies at the Weimar State Library.

Father's relationship with Lieselotte persisted for years. I became very friendly with her daughter Elke whom I met in 1951. We are dear friends to this day. Elke and I share many interests as she, too, is an Egyptologist

I had spent the summer of 1951 with Elke when Professor Blumenthal was ill and in a sanitarium. I stayed with Elke that summer in Weimar, and got the chance to get to know Renate Fischer-Lamberg who then lived in Weimar. Renate would become my Father's second wife.

In 1951, Renate became my Father's assistant for the work on Goethe. That summer their romance started. This went on for 7 years until 1958.

Renate came to visit us sometimes in Berlin and would stay in our house. Mother liked her yet had no idea of the extent of their relationship. In 1952, when Renate was staying with us, I fell ill with a very very inflamed appendix. I had to be rushed to hospital for emergency surgery that same day.

We moved in 1951 from Schluterstrasse to a little house on 60 Berliner Str. This flat had a garden, located in Wilmersdorf which was a residential district in Berlin. That summer of 1951, Nora's daughter Katya came from England to stay with us. I felt like we were all one big happy family.

Renate was Father's lover although the divorce with Mother was official only in 1958. Mother learned about Renate at the time of my matriculation. Mother was crying over lunch while Father gobbled up his food.

Father tried to deflect attention to me.

"How was your school day?" Father asked me.

"How was it supposed to be?" I replied angrily.

I have memories of horrible lunches.

At 17 years old, I took my matriculation exams for University in 1954.

I was really too young to decide what to do with my life.

It was 10 years after the war and I was in East Berlin feeling like an outsider. I did not like Egyptian culture or literature. I had only studied the Hebrew language with Ephraim Wust, and a friend Dorit. We were quite the threesome learning Hebrew in Berlin.

Father was soon going to decide my academic future and I was all of 17 years old.

Renate's discovery of Father's legacy

Renate had been living in Berlin in 1991 when she found Father's papers. This would ultimately evolve into Father's archive. This archival collection would find its home in The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP.) The File number is P205 -

http://cahjp.nli.org.il/webfm_send/745

At the time of discovery, however, it was not clear to Renate that I would want Father's papers.

She called me up asking if she should throw all of these papers in the fire and burn them. She imagined for me how difficult it would be reliving the past. However, I replied to Renate that it was important for me to preserve the papers and his memory.

I have looked through the papers and wondered how I should organize them. I realize making footnotes will create some difficulty. I can live without them. Even for the writing of this memoir, I do not intend to include footnotes. I will not miss them here. And Father's papers are marked and are in order which seem easier to handle. I have been irritated much of my life by my insistence for order and am letting go of my academic discipline.

During this same year of 1991, I was undergoing great psychological turmoil in my life. I was severely depressed. I was desperate for help.

One evening during the Gulf War, quite accidentally, I learned about Amcha. By chance, I turned on the television to watch the news, and there was a program about Amcha. I contacted them immediately.

Amcha is a wonderful organization established in 1987, providing support to survivors living in Israel. After the Eichman trial (in 1961) it was made clear that survivors had not recognized the huge burden they carried from their war experiences. This was the first time Israel was intensely confronted by the trauma and terror from the personal stories shared. The trial, and testimonies broadcasted publicly by radio opened the floodgates. Yet, it took two more decades until organizational support was established.

Yoram Amit, Amcha's head psychologist in 1991, was most supportive and took me in immediately. They helped me greatly during those very difficult years providing emotional support which I knew I needed.

I told Yoram about Renate and her latest discovery of Father's papers.

I told him I wanted to throw it all away.

As a psychologist, he would not give me advice but he did suggest that I might want to make contact with a historian.

I was introduced to Otto Dov Kulka, Professor of History of the Shoah. He had survived two years in Auschwitz so he certainly understood my conflicted innerworld. He lived in Jerusalem and was a Professor at Hebrew University.

He came to visit, and had a look at Father's papers.

He said, "Some of these papers should be in Yad Vashem, but you shouldn't separate it out "

I called Renate and thanked her for this amazing discovery and asked her to please send all the papers to me.

Keeping Father's papers together, as suggested by Professor Kulka, was an excellent idea. Father's personal and professional history was preserved in one archival location. Father's papers also helped me gather my own history. I kept all 27 files together. There also was a substantial amount of material on Jewish thought from the 19th century.

I received the files from Renate, and organized for CAHJ (The Central Archives in Jerusalem for the History of the Jewish people) to come and pick them up. A lovely chauffeur arrived in a large van. He took the 27 files

of my Father's papers. He was a very empathic man and took my hand understanding that I was handing over to him my legacy.

The Director of the Archives, Yohai Ben Gdalya , later called me and said, "Professor Shirun Grumach, your papers are the most interesting we have!!!!"

"What's of interest? I asked. "Mostly the library that your Father built", he replied. "Also the material covering the Beit Hamidrash for the Liberal Rabbanim."

I was very moved to hear this, and pleased that I had not destroyed the papers.

Morphine addiction

Amongst Father's paper, was a ten page article that he wrote In 1940 about the Library. He wrote this during the war, citing possible changes to improve the quality of the Library for the future.

Also found amongst Father's letters, was a section of lengthy description about the Nazi officers deployed at the Library. They were all officers who had ruined careers. He wrote about them in detail- who they were, their ranks, and most important that they all were "morphinists"- meaning they were all addicted to morphine. They would travel to Denmark regularly to get their stash. An English spy was based in Denmark, and learned through these Nazi morphinists all about the Library as they told the spy all about it.

After the war, Father meets up with an Englishman whom he had known during the war years. Father conversed with him about his forced labor in the Library, while the Englishman smiled at him. Father asked him, "Why are you smiling?" He replied, "We knew all about your work because we followed you daily – I was one of those Englishmen spying on the Nazis."

Those Nazi morphinists shared many stories about the work of the library since the drugs served as performance enhancers, fueling them to talk.

After it was first introduced into the market in 1938, Pervitin, a methamphetamine drug newly developed by the Berlin-based Temmler pharmaceutical company, quickly became a top seller.

The first half of 1940, the Nazis dispensed millions of methamphetamine tablets as they believed that drugging could help achieve victory over the Allies. During the short period between April and July of 1940, more than 35 million tablets of Pervitin were shipped to the German army.

Father's testimony

In 1991, I also gave copies of Father's papers to Herbert Strauss. I thought he would benefit from the correspondence between colleagues, and particularly Father's letters after the war.

Before Father's forced labor during the war, Strauss had been one of my Father's students. Renate had saved one of the lesson books and also sent that to Strauss.

Strauss with his fiancée, Lotte, escaped from their flat in our building, in the middle of the night in October, 1942.

My Father had been very upset by their escape. He was concerned about their wellbeing, as well as possibly endangering Father's life, by association.

The Strausses, together, spent the next six months in hiding while planning for their escape out of Germany. In May, 1943, they fled to Switzerland.

Both Herbert (*Über dem Abgrund*^l) and his Lotte (*Über den grünen Hügel*) separately describe the years of persecution in their memoirs.

In 1946, Strauss emigrated to New York and taught there as professor of history at the City College of New York. His social science research focused on Jewish emancipation and the history of emigration, and the politics of persecution.

In 1989, there was a conference organized to mark ten years for the Beit HaMidrash (Jewish Studies) in Heidelberg. I attended this Conference to hear Strauss speak. I met Renate there as well.

Strauss died in New York at the age of 86.

This is the link to the "Strauss papers"

<https://archive.org/stream/herbertstrauss07reel7#page/n324/mode/1up>

Father provided a very important testimony that Dov Schidorsky put together in a critical work, which appears in this link below.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25548663>

Schidorsky included Father's testimony to the confiscation by the Gestapo of the Jewish private and public libraries, forced labor and inhuman conditions that prevailed in the Berlin Library division of the RSHA (Reich Security Main Office).

Father testified along with several other Jewish scholars about their work under concentration camp-like conditions during those war years.

Who tells the story?

It is very important for me that research of Father's involvement in the library is done thoughtfully and accurately.

I was approached by Anna Holzer-Kawalko, a Polish historian . She wrote an article about Father that was published in Leipzig and in the Leo Baeck year book called Contested Heritage/ Jewish Cultural Property after 1945

https://www.academia.edu/42623523/Contested_Heritage

I was quite upset by Anna's presentation, as well as the irony that her work was published under Leo Baeck's name (considering the personal relationship Father had with him).

Anna was invited to come to Jerusalem, and present her lecture at Hebrew University in December 2019, which I attended with Ephraim and Jill.

The lecture was entitled ; Restituting Culture: Between Books and Artworks. The Restitution Dialogues: A Transnational Conversation on Cultural Loss, Return and Renewal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uhrb-8caWQE>

I was very disheartened by Anna and her research hypothesis. She had an untrue and preposterous claim that Father cooperated with the Nazis.

She entitled one of her articles:

Jewish intellectuals- from robbery to restitution.

I think this is a very inappropriate title. Anna claimed that Father's involvement is ambiguous. She also claims his relationship is ambiguous to the Jewish community. Anna inferred that Father would have been willing to leave the Jewish faith. She wrote about his work in the library and that he had double loyalties.

Finally, she insinuated that Father should have put pressure on the Nazis to protest the deportation of his Mother to Theresienstadt. Oma died several months after she had arrived in Theresienstadt, and Anna claimed that perhaps Oma could have been saved had Father pressured the Gestapo to release his Mother's deportation.

Simply preposterous.

Thankfully, Uta Esther Hadad, had approached me two years earlier, in October 2017. Uta, a doctoral student from the European University Viadrina Frankfurt Oder, requested permission to access Father's papers archived in CAHJP. (Central Archives of the Jewish people).

Uta and I developed a close relationship over the last 4 years sharing stories and histories about Father, his work, and the enormous loss of Berlin's Jewish libraries.

I have been ever so grateful to Uta who is completely devoted to the research preserving the memory of Father as she gives academic credence to her work. Her dissertation is entitled: "Forgotten Places of German-Jewish culture regarding the fate of Berlin's Jewish libraries"

Uta is nearing the completion of her dissertation, which will reflect a truthful and accurate record of history, for which I am most grateful.

Keeping secrets in the shadow of the Shoah

For seven consecutive years (1991- 1998) I met Yoram Amit weekly at Amcha. He became a huge support in my life. I feel indebted to him, and Amcha for saving my life. I have left instructions in my will as an expression of gratitude to support Amcha so that they will continue to be a resource for others.

I was feeling professionally overwhelmed in 1994. I had been appointed head of the Institute at the University. After one year in the position, I became unable to function as I was severely depressed. I was forced to resign from being the head of the department.

In 1995, Hanan, my Doctor and I decided that hospitalization would be the best solution for my emotional unrest. I was hospitalized in Talbieh for five weeks. Hanan worried about me very much. He visited me daily and took good care of me.

In the hospital during those five weeks, I felt safe. I loved it there. I loved the way they helped me. I was not in a closed ward. They medicated me until I felt stable enough to see friends.

My dear friends and colleagues, Sarah Groll and Ephraim Wust came to visit with me, and take me out to the cafe.

After five weeks, I was ready to return back to life.

Much later, I realized that I was exactly the same age as my Father, 58 years old, when he had his emotional breakdown.

I felt as if I carried Father's war wounds in my soul, which ultimately became my own. I was very fragile, irrational, full of angst, and retreated into my interior self. This is very common post-shoah behavior.

Dr Martin Orbach, psychiatrist and my psychologist, Yoram prescribed medication for me to calm my nerves. It was a specific treatment schedule that they wanted to make sure I could follow.

During this treatment period, a new Doctor came to see me. He decided to change my dosage.

Two weeks later, when I saw Dr Orbach and Yoram, they were very upset and asked me, WHO TOLD YOU TO CHANGE THE DOSAGE?

I was too afraid to divulge the identity of the Doctor as I did not think it was right for me to interfere.

I knew how to keep secrets. That was one of my post-shoah "talents".

Although I knew this was irrational, I did not want to be responsible for the demise of this Doctor. That day had been Shabat.

In my head was the following scenario:

I was certain that even though it was Shabat that they would go to his house and arrest him. This would be the end of his career and I would be responsible for “ruining the life of a Jewish family”.

For my own peace of mind, it was more natural to not share it.

Having grown up in the shadow of the Shoah, I learned quickly how to keep secrets.

“Of course you are Jewish”

I was told in Basel, in 1963, by Rav Leo Adler , that I was not Jewish.

This Orthodox Rabbi said he would convert me TOMORROW if I upheld all of the mitzvot. I told him that I could not keep the laws of Shabat, since I often spend my Saturdays writing correspondences to friends, family and colleagues. He replied that I should write my letters another day, since Shabat is a day for learning.

This was unacceptable to me, so I chose to convert liberal.

Andy came to the rescue! My dear childhood friend, Andi and his Mother, Nora, travelled to London after the war to reunite with Andy’s Father. We stayed with them every summer.

Andy’s Father, who was Jewish, sent me to a former Berlin Rabbi, who lived in London. I told him my story and he responded with great compassion unlike the Orthodox Rabbi in Basel.

The Liberal Rabbis said to me, “OF COURSE you are Jewish! We will organize a conversion with a little ceremony for you. That next Rosh Hashana, a liberal Rabbi came to Berlin from London, and converted me.

I did have compassion for the Orthodox Rabbi Adler, though. He had a very difficult shoah story. Rav Adler was from Wuerzburg in Southern Germany. He had gone to a Yeshiva in Kovno and married the daughter of the Rabbi. They had a child named Mark. Rav Adler left for Shanghai, when the Nazis came to power. Yet during this time, his wife was deported to Siberia, with Mark. This newborn baby suckled for three years on her Mother’s breast because there was nothing else to eat. Somehow Rav Adler, his wife and

Mark were reunited after the war. They went to America and had two more boys. The youngest was Samuel and the middle was David. They lived in New York and sometime afterwards Rav Adler and his family moved to Basel.

The summer of 1966, I was nearing the completion of my doctorate in Basel. Mother and I decided to go on holiday in Switzerland. We decided to visit Rav Adler who was very respectful to her and understood that even though she was Christian, she had gone through a lot with my Father.

Rav Adler, in the end, knew that the orthodox conversion would be necessary in Israel . When he heard that I did the liberal conversion, he said, ““What a pity; Never mind when you go to Israel and marry, you will go to the mikveh again and have to convert there”.

Indeed, that is exactly what I did. When I married Hanan, I had to convert YET AGAIN, because the liberal conversion in Berlin was not accepted by the Rabbinate herel. So we did the conversion here with a good man named HaRav Gotholt in Jerusalem. He was an open minded Orthodox Rabbi. He understood that I had a Jewish upbringing. My takeaway from our conversation was that “whiskey is not kosher on Pesach”!

He also married us in 1970.

Father's Egyptian collection:

I have carried the burden of Father's Egyptian collection for about 25 years. When my Mother went to Beit Moses in 1998, we took her belongings and stored it with The Stern Brothers. One of those boxes stored turned out to contain Father's Egyptian statues, and other collector items.

We separated out that box and stored it in our flat. We occasionally removed them from the attic and displayed some of the statues. Ultimately we decided to store it with the other boxes at Stern Brothers.

About three years ago, I decided to give the entire collection to the Bible Lands Museum. It's a relief to know these items from Father's collection have now found their proper home and will be appreciated by many. It is quite miraculous that Father's collection had not been absconded by the Nazis, and successfully made it out of Germany.

My colleague, Angela, in Leipzig, told me a story about Elka, our fellow Egyptologist. Elka was equally relieved to get certain Ancient Egyptian manuscripts, artifacts and documents out of Germany, before the Nazis. Elka also expressed great relief that the collections of Kafka and Brod are safely archived at our National Library here in Israel (NLI)

Esteemed value of “the book”

In 2007, I left my flat on Abarbanel Street, to move to Beit Moses.

Although books are central to my life, I decided not to take a single book with me. I was too burdened by them.

My flat on Abarbanel had been stuffed with books and at a certain point, it just became suffocating. In 1991, I decided to rent an additional flat nearby on Keren Kayemet L'yisrael, across from the Gymnasia high school. I didn't even consult with Hanan. I knew it was an important decision to remove the books from our midst. The flat was a two room furnished space, and a balcony. I had bookshelves installed all around the flat.

I felt so relieved to ease myself away from my library of literature. We also used this flat for guests. I never slept there. For a few years we rented this space. Then we rented half a flat together with friends. Finally, I took all the possessions to storage at Stern Brothers. I still have boxes at Sterns in storage of countless letters that I wrote to my Mother. This was during the period of my life when I lived in Basel from 1963 and we exchanged letters over three and a half years. I am not curious to read them as this was a difficult period of our lives. I just want to get rid of them.

“Take care of our boy”

As mentioned, I went to Germany with Hanan in 1985 at the invitation of Ahlen's Mayor. The result was the beginning of writing my own memoir. For Hanan, this trip was very impactful as he revisited his childhood memories.

We rarely talked about his past. I thought I had known most of the stories. We met in 1969, and married in 1970- neither of us had been married before. Neither of us had siblings. And we never had children.

Hanan left Germany for Palestine in 1937. He went to Kibbutz Kfar Giladi to join the youth there, as he had completed the “Hachashara” (training) in Germany.

His parents had moved from Ahlen to Berlin after selling a very prominent business while barely receiving any remuneration. They came to visit their son Hanan in Kfar Giladi in 1938 and had plans to make Aliya a year later. Their intention was to buy a farm on the Kinneret. They went back to Berlin, after their visit, and could never leave again. They perished in Auschwitz in 1944.

Hanan’s parents had sent a postcard to an Aunt and Uncle in 1942 saying they were being deported and asked to take care of our boy. Hanan later got this postcard. Hanan learned about his parents’ death at Kfar Giladi, along with others who heard at the same time that their parents perished.

When he learned the horrid news, he just didn’t want to believe it. They sat around the campfire and sang Israeli songs. He went to Haifa in order to confirm the news about his parents. At some point he knew it had to be true, but he was determined to go to Haifa to hear the words uttered in order to believe it.

During the war, Hanan had a dream about his Mother who was caught in a fire. He believed that the timing of his nightmare was not random, and it must have been the day that his Mother was burnt to ashes.

Father’s ongoing conversation with Goethe

After the war, Father produced two volumes that were published in 1949 on Goethe’s writings on stoicism. Later, he became the Editor of a new edition of Goethe which continued to motivate his thinking.

In the 1960’s, Father and Renate married. They began an academic project that culminated in their published work in 1965 entitled *Goethe; Encounters and Conversations*.

Together they researched all of Goethe’s writings and catalogued each diary entry according to the specific date and hour.

They recorded his daily diary entries and every guest he received.

Every day at lunch Goethe had guests in Weimar. They would talk about art among other things. He would pull out a special folder with his latest collection of drawings, never a reproduction, and would explain the art to his guests.

He kept a record in his diary of all of these lunches

Father and Renate used this information to build their work of interpreting Goethe's encounters and conversations.

They created fourteen volumes over the last fifty years.

Ten volumes thus far have been published.

Renate is now 95 years old (!) and still editing these volumes. The project appears in digital form and can be accessed by Goethe scholars around the world. All of Father's lectures and letters can also be found online at the Deutsche research project site.

I appreciated that Father's attention was focused on a specific place, time or event on the calendar which gave him inspiration. As his daughter, I personally valued his research approach to this project on Goethe. Specifically because I recall in 1964 when I was in Basel, Father was keenly interested in the particulars of my life at that time.

I was a student at the University and Father had sent me a birthday card. He wrote in the letter that he surely remembered when I was a little baby girl, yet today he sees me as a grown, learned woman. In his mind he merged our past and the present of my life as it was unfolding. Guided by perspective and hindsight, he reflected back in time in order to appreciate the present moment of me studying Egyptology.

Father's complex relationship with Heidegger

As a philosopher, Father was greatly influenced by Martin Heidegger. In the 1920's he had studied in Marbach with Heidegger. In 1929, Father published his dissertation on "*Antik Stoa* " which means *Greek Way of Thought*. In the dedication, Father wrote about Heidegger's influence on his thinking.

Actually, Father had learned Greek in order to understand Heidegger's philosophy. Hannah Arendt had told me that Father had learned the fundamentals of Greek quite quickly.

Heidegger, an existentialist, produced an enormous work called *Sein und Zeit* meaning: *Being in time*. A phenomenological work that became his magnum opus "returning to the things themselves".

Father was clearly drawn to this existential idea of returning back to understand the present.

I wanted to "return back" attempting to read "*Being in Time*" as I was curious about Father's fascination for Heidegger yet I didn't get very far, and it wasn't because I didn't understand the German!

After Heidegger openly became a Nazi, Father became a student of another great existentialist, Karl Jaspers. Heidegger joined the Nazi party in May of 1933, ten days after being elected the Rector of Freiberg University promoting anti-Jewish legislation. Heidegger supported Hitler and his views.

Husserl, was a well known phenomenologist at Freiburg University . Because he was a Jew, he was forbidden to use the library, and was fired by Heidegger. Husserl never succeeded in emigrating and died in 1937 in Germany.

After 1945, Heidegger was forbidden to teach due to his associations with Hitler, yet by 1951 the teaching ban was lifted. He was granted emeritus status in 1953 and was allowed to teach again.

In the 1960's, Father and Renate went to a lecture that Heidegger also attended. He was quite polite to Father and was pleased to see him.

Heidegger had much influence on Hannah Arendt although she felt that intellects who became Nazis were very twisted. She was criticized however for being a follower of Heidegger's existentialism teaching.

Let's not forget, Heidegger was also her lover.

Hannah Arendt coined the term, "banality of evil", after watching the 1961 trial of Eichmann. She believed that evil acts are not necessarily

perpetrated by evil people. Instead, they can simply be the result of bureaucrats dutifully obeying orders. She felt that the Jews collaborated with the Nazis as they applied for visas to emigrate from Germany. She was of the opinion that it would have been better for the Jews to do absolutely nothing.

Many Jewish friends were very annoyed at Arendt like Gershom Sholem who disassociated from her.

Father also sent her an angry letter expressing his disdain for her philosophy on the banality of evil especially since she fled Germany. She removed herself from the evil regime, and sought her own freedom. Seemingly, an inherent hypocrisy in her own system of beliefs and action.

“You have surely fallen in love”

In 1952, I was studying Modern Hebrew in an evening class, once a week. I met Erberhart in class. We were both sixteen years old. I had not yet experienced love. We sat side by side every week in our evening lesson. He was a nice boy with glasses who knew Grammar well.

The first evening we went home together, we rode in the same cable car. I had to get off a few stops before Erberhart. When I looked back, I saw Erberhart smiling at me, waving goodnight.

I used to count the days of each week until our Hebrew class. I liked him very much. We became close friends and he would come to our house.

I remember he came to my party celebrating my matriculation. One of the nice old teachers who knew me well, attended the party and shared this observation. She said, “You have changed completely since the first days of class. You look so happy. You have surely fallen in love.”

Indeed I had. Yet, we were too young for a romance. I had never been kissed but Erberhart was a child.

University at eighteen

I was only eighteen years old when I began my studies at Humboldt. The year was 1954. Again, I faced hard challenges. The whole experience at University was quite difficult. I studied with four other students. All in all it

would be for a five year period. I was different from them in many ways. Again, I found myself the youngest in the cohort.

I came from West Berlin, they came from the East. I did not know anything about politics; they were well versed. I was Jewish; they were not. I was a Professor's daughter; their parents were of the working class. Most of them were sure that I had "proteksia" and that was the reason that I got into the University.

There were a limited number of places for students in the course. Only five students were accepted to this five year program, and we were quite a diverse group. I was studying Egyptology, one was an avid Communist, two others were more mildly Communist, and the fifth student was a Christian believer.

Last time I saw them was in Berlin in 2014 when we had a reunion. And since that visit three have died. They all went on to be Egyptologists in East Berlin ... apart from a few who worked in Leipzig.

They were more or less forbidden to travel to the West until 1989 when the Wall fell. After 1989, we met at congresses, and always had a meal together. We always kept in touch. The communist lady published a book which I have not read. Her work focused on the beginnings of Egyptian culture.

"You look just like Enno"

I travelled to Israel in the summer of 1956 for the first time when I was 19 years old. At that time in my life I was two years into my studies of Egyptology at Humboldt University.

Before coming to Israel that summer, I had travelled with my Father to Crete.

Father went to Crete every year because he was very interested in the Minoan script. He published his own writing on this script. He would spend the summers in the museum of Herakleion.

In 1954, I wanted to study Orientalism. My Father's colleague, Fritz Hintze, had developed a course in Ancient Egypt at Humboldt University in East Berlin. I decided to enroll. I was living at home for those two years of study.

The summer of 1956, Father invited me to join him in Crete. I made a deal with him. I agreed to go as long as afterwards I could continue to Israel. He was always afraid that I would go to Israel and stay! He was right!

I met Father in Herakleion and we had a few very interesting and adventurous weeks travelling to many different places by bus and donkey. My father spoke Greek fluently. We would arrive at a village and there would be no women on the streets, visible to the eye. They were of course at work. The men were sitting at the cafes. We were invited to join them. They asked my Father about his profession. They knew that Father was a Professor. They asked me what I was studying. I replied "Ancient Egypt". These remote mountain people knew everything about our field, and said, "Oh yes the "pyramides". It was odd, though, that no women are seen in public spaces. That is my strong memory from that summer of being with my Father in a cafe where women never sat.

For a few days, we stayed in a monastery where they told us during the war the Abbot had a radio which was a real commodity. The Abbot of the monastery would sit in the basement and talk secretly with the British.

It was exciting to be at the ancient excavations of Phaistos. There was a very holy atmosphere at Phaistos which was one of the most important centers of Minoan civilization. It was the most wealthy and powerful city in southern Crete. The Phaistos Disk is a Minoan religious inscription that is associated with holy sites, prayers and offerings for good health.

My Father didn't explain very much to me. He walked around excited exclaiming " Wonderful, Wonderful" yet didn't share more. I also didn't ask him very much. I am sorry for that. I wasn't really prepared intellectually to talk about seals of the scripts.

I left him in Crete and took a ship from Athens to Haifa. Father suggested that I check out his family in Israel. He had written ahead that I would be arriving by ship from Athens. Their names are Kort (also called Toby) and Leo Lewald. They are brothers to each other. Leo is Esther's Father.

When I disembarked from the ship in Haifa, suddenly I heard my name being called out. My cousins, Toby and Leo, had sent a taxi driver to take me to Tel Aviv.

My first impression of the journey from Haifa to Tel Aviv was noticing the many Eucalyptus trees and Hebrew inscriptions along the way. The taxi driver took me to an office on Allenby Street where two brothers came out when I arrived. Leo excitedly greeted me and said, "You look just like Enno!" (My Father Ernst's nickname). I felt the family bond immediately.

I was very impressed by Tel Aviv life.

Toby kindly put me into another taxi, off of Sheinkin Street. He put my suitcase in the taxi and the driver took me to their home. Miriam, his wife, was waiting there for me.

These two cousins of mine had taken me into their home as if I was their daughter. This for me was a monumental experience as I have never had any siblings or had known my cousins. I experienced such wonderful days with Leo, his wife Miriam and daughter Esther who at the time was 10 years old. I felt the sense of a much larger family structure; one that I had never known. Miriam had seven sisters and lots of family. Every morning relatives would come to the house to say hello to "Doda Miriam". It was here in Israel that I learned to know what it is like to be part of a family. During the war years, we had NO contact with them yet when I arrived and met Father's two cousins, I felt immediately part of their family.

Feeling Jewish while holding sand in my hand

I had longed for my parents to come to Palestine and experience the thrill of this new nation. I also thought that it would have been great for their marriage.

Leo, Irene (Big Irene), and Esther took me to the Herzliya beach for a swim in the Mediterranean Sea.

I sat in the sand and was transformed. I held the sand in my hands and said to myself, "This is Eretz Yisrael".

To be Jewish here, in Eretz Yisrael, you don't have to go to synagogue to define your identity. You can go swimming on Friday evening/ Erev Shabat and still feel very Jewish.

From that moment on, I knew that I would make Israel my home. It would still take some time. Thirteen years later after that fateful summer, I finally made Aliyah in 1969.

Back to the summer of 1956

I had planned to attend a summer school program run by the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem but that did not work out for me. I had really craved a city experience especially in Jerusalem,

I think back and realize I must have been very brave that summer. More disappointments, more changes. My cousins lived in a small apartment, fit for the times in the late 1950's and there was really no room for me to stay with them in Tel Aviv.

I went to Kibbutz Maayan Zvi to work there, and study in the Ulpan. I worked in the cotton fields at the Kibbutz, near Zichron Yaakov's fish ponds and banana plantations.

I went to the fields every day to work.

I really am a city girl. I craved city life and to be back with my new family. At the kibbutz, I slept in a tent, and worked hard in the fields with Israelis. First time ever for me to speak Hebrew, daily. Learning the language was challenging. I was nineteen years old, and it was the first time ever away from Berlin, and Israel was so different. Father was also very fearful that I would decide to stay in Israel, and not come back. That summer for me was the first step towards breaking away from my parents, and my life in Berlin,

The fields were adjacent to the highway, under the mountain range, and so I would watch the cars go by, heading to Tel Aviv. I wished so much that I could hitch a ride and see my cousins as the work in the fields was exhausting.

The week was long, and I would look forward to Shabat when I would be invited to my cousins.

One day while working in the fields, a Polish Jew of twenty nine years old, named Yaakov approached me. He had fled from the Warsaw Ghetto when he was sixteen years old, in the middle of the uprising, having said goodbye to his dying Mother. He could no longer do anything more for her.

Yaakov spent the rest of his youth in the woods. He had told me once what it was like to live in the woods. You learned quickly that whenever you meet someone, you'd never turn your back on them. Instead you would walk backwards, as you moved away, never sure what they might do to you.

We fell in love in the fields. He was ten years older than I was. He was very practical and reliant on his survival skills. We would sit down in the hot sun, and he constructed an awning from an old sack so that we would have shade.

It was the first time in my life to meet a man. There was a great attraction. My Mother had told me once that when I would love a man, I should belong to him. I did not love Yaakov but was very attracted to him. I was not mature enough in age or life experience to know the difference.

All of the "Yekkes" in Tel Aviv were very modern in their thinking about romance. My Aunt had told me that if a young woman sleeps with a man, that is very understandable. Yet, when I brought Yaakov to meet them that first Friday, they opposed the romance vehemently. My Aunt wrote me a letter and said, "Just do not marry him".

They felt very responsible for me. I did not understand what they did not like about Yaakov. Although he had no formal education, he was very clever. He had learned in the DP camp while in Italy. He became trained to repair Olivetti typewriters at the time.

From Italy, he immigrated to Australia.

Yaakov was a bit vulgar, and dressed loudly. These were things that I did not pick up, yet I understood that these behaviors were not part of my upbringing or my personal style.

He also was not really a nice person. On Yom Kippur I spent the sacred days with my family. When I came back, he told me this story. The afternoon of Yom Kippur he had taken water and dribbled it in front of someone who was fasting. It wasn't nice at all. The summer was nearing the end, and I would be leaving back to Humboldt to complete my third year of studies.

Toby and Doda Miriam took me on a road trip during Sukkot to visit the North and the Kineret. It was difficult for me to part with them. We were all sad to say goodbye to each other

Returning to Germany was difficult. My parents were in a very stressed situation. The first letter from Toby and Miriam arrived months later. I wanted to go back very much as I had learned over that summer how nice family life could be.

Yaakov also sent me a letter asking to marry me. I wanted a nice family life. I did not enjoy my studies in Berlin and the stress at home was great. Yet, I didn't really want to marry Yaakov. I knew this was not the right thing to do.

Yaakov decided to come to Berlin in 1957. Nobody knew about him. We got engaged. My Father was very much against it. He finally gave in.

Both my Mother and Father were in the process of their own separation, and didn't want to be burdened by me. They liked the idea that someone else could take care of me, and have less worry.

I had my suspicions that our romance was not meant to be. Some of those telling moments: One day, we went to East Berlin. In those days ONLY East Berliners could buy products. Anyone from the West was prohibited from any commercial purchase, and ran the risk of being arrested. Yaakov went straight away to a kiosk and wanted to buy meat. Naturally, they asked for his I.D. card. He had none. He thought this was ridiculous yet I could have gone to prison for his arrogant noncompliance.

By the end of the year, Yaakov moved to East London and lived in a little boarding house. He lived in extreme poverty. My Mother told me that this is no life for me, and that I will be poor the rest of my life.

My parents were divorced at the time, and felt I had lost my place in the family. I decided to go to London for a few weeks to explore what it would be like to live with Yaakov. He was working in a factory. I went to the British Museum. I was twenty years old, and felt very lost. Life felt strange. I remember walking about the railway station with Yaakov feeling very poor and very alienated. In addition Yaakov was not very nice to me.

I went to visit Nora, her husband and Andy who lived a good life in North East London. Their lifestyle as German immigrants was very familiar to me. I returned to Berlin. My parents had been divorced for a few weeks. We pretended to be a happy united family for a short while. After that Mother and I moved out. She had taken a flat and was not happy. That summer of 1958, I got sick with jaundice.

I was sent for a cure, in the woods near Frankfurt.

I wrote a postcard to Yaakov that we should break up. He sent a reply by postcard expressing his appreciation. He would never forget me or my family, yet understood my decision. So we were disengaged in January, 1958.

What I had not understood about Yaakov is how important it was for him to feel part of a family, since he had no one left alive. The great irony was that my family unit had dissolved at this same time. I was left with a similar feeling, as his, of a crumbled family structure.

Lost in Translation

I finished my studies in 1959, at the same time my Father left his work in East Berlin. I already had a job in the East, but had to leave it as well. We were forced to work only in the West.

So for the next two years, I studied to be a Russian translator in a college program for translators in West Berlin.

I translated articles from Russian to German, about the hard life for Russian emigres in the Soviet Union. Anti communists had appeared in West Germany. This historic unrest reminded me of the great novel I read when I studied Russian in high school; The Captain's Daughter written by

Alexander Pushkin. A historical account of Catherine the Great, when the Cossacks rose up in rebellion against the Russian empire.

I was drawn to this job of translating as I wanted to do something completely different from the study of Ancient Egypt. My academic degree though was from East Berlin and did not count for anything in the West. I thought I would need another job and always liked Russian.

I decided in 1961 to go to Jerusalem for the academic year as a guest student at Hebrew University to study Jewish Philosophy, Mysticism and Coptic taught by the world renowned scholar Hanz Yaakov Polatsky. I became very interested in the study of Semetic languages.

During this year, my Mother came to Israel for a visit. Father came for a short while as well. For a fleeting moment, it felt to me that they were together again. Mother enjoyed the family. As an artist, she loved to paint the great landscapes. She loved the play of light and tried to capture that in her drawing.

We sat together one day in a cafe in Jerusalem, after Father had left, and Mother began to cry uncontrollably. I tried to comfort her. While Father was here visiting, she finally was able to envision what home could feel like. After such a lovely visit with all three of us together, she understood what she never had; a sense of home. She wished that she would have moved to Israel with Father, and that we could have built a home for ourselves here.

Yet, Father didn't want to go to Palestine before or after the war. Ideologically, he was against the Zionist notion of birthing a new nation state. Father felt there was no need for "new countries" especially after witnessing the signed Paris Peace Treaties with France, two years following the end of the war.

Looking back, I wonder if he was right.

Father did appreciate his connection to Jewish heritage and was interested in his own Jewish ancestry. He had created a family tree which was archived amidst his papers. His genealogical research from the 19th Century of our family became a great resource for Jewish communities in

East Prussia who were interested in the Jewish history of these smaller towns. This is what I had always hoped would happen!

During this time, Mother was clinging to the past while Father was moving forward. We didn't have much money as Father's salary was in East Berlin currency which didn't amount to much. My friends at the time were going to Cinema, but we didn't have enough money to go. Mother found refuge in her books but was mad that she had never gone to theatre in earlier years when it could have been possible. As a non Jew, Mother was permitted during those war years to attend theatre. Yet she refrained out of respect to Father, and her friends who also were married to Jews.

Only after the war did Mother realize how deprived she was culturally. She forfeited her cultural passion for her sense of justice. She loved the arts, though, and missed out on her own artistic development. Her books thankfully provided comfort.

Do not turn people away from crossing the river when you have room in your ferry boat.

At the close of my academic year in Jerusalem (1962), I decided to move to Basel returning to the field of Egyptology. Seigfried Morenz, my advisor at the University in Basel, suggested that I study the Coptic language. But when I got there, I began to learn about the teachings of Amenemope written in Ancient Egypt; a doctrine of general principles for living written 3,000 years ago. It seemed timeless as I began to study the detailed thirty chapters of instruction for a happy life in Ancient Egypt. Amenope was most likely the scribe.

I studied the chapters of these Egyptian "wise sayings" which seemed to find its way into the Tanach; in Proverbs Chapter 22. There are recurring themes in both texts which I examined during the next three years in my dissertation. Some scholars say that the Hebrew text was influenced by the Egyptian text; others say the opposite is true.

It has been said, "For the ancients, wisdom is wisdom, no matter who says it".

My advisor suggested that there was room for a doctorate, especially because of my knowledge of Hebrew and the Old Testament. I also had more interest in this topic than Coptic. I took his recommendation.

Looking back, I am very grateful to Seigfried Morenz, my advisor who opened up new worlds for me, in academia, and in religion. Learning about Amenope Doctrine in 1963, especially in the context of Jewish text, was fascinating. Some of the verses from this doctrine include:

“Do not go to bed fearing tomorrow.

Be strong in your heart, make your mind firm

Look at the cup in front of you, and let IT suffice your need.

Do not turn people away from crossing the river when you have room in your ferry boat.

Mark for yourself these thirty chapters, they please, they instruct, they are the foremost of all books.”

I regret that I didn't pursue further my studies in that direction.

Finally in November 1966, I finished my doctorate. I felt incredibly lucky to study and then successfully finish my degree. Nobody had died and not a single interruption interfered with my academic experience.

My Father, though, had different plans for me, after I earned my Doctorate. Like when he insisted that I study at Humboldt in 1954, he made another demand on my academic choices. His lost years in the academy informed his decisions for my academic course. Reflecting back, I think I would have been happier studying Comparative Literature, German Literature or maybe even philosophy. Yet my Father did not leave me with a choice.

I had graduated with honors; Summa Cum Laude, and was desirable. I started a job in Heidelberg, mostly to please my father who found this job for me. I was hired to catalogue the Coptic papyri from the papyrus collection of the University which I did from January 1967 to August 1969.

1967: a year to remember

Very important events occurred during this year: The Six Day War, my Father's visits to Heidelberg, and his untimely death.

My Father came to visit me in late spring 1967, following the Six Day War. He had been very proud of the Israeli victory, although he never identified as a Zionist. He sent me a newspaper article including a photo of Moshe Dayan walking to the Old City. Father wrote in his letter to me, "You know how proud I am of them."

Father came to visit me, again, in Heidelberg during the summer of 1967. I could host Father in my flat. I organized a gathering in my home inviting Professors from the University's departments of Ancient Egypt and Greek. He was so very pleased with me, at last recognizing me for my academic accomplishments. He was especially proud that at 29 years of age, I held my doctorate.

Father died suddenly, a few months later, in October 1967 so I had given him that joy in his life.

Father had been asked to present a lecture at a conference in London. Sadly, while in London he died of heart failure. His Doctor back at home was a good man. When he heard of Father's death, he said, "I feel tremendous guilt as I wondered if your Father should have made that trip to London. He was so emotionally fragile. Yet if your Father had not accepted the invitation to speak at the conference, it also could have caused a setback."

The night that Father had died in London, was the second night of Rosh Hashanah. Father had been staying with Nora (Andy's mother) in their flat. Fortunately he had not been in a hotel.

Renate came to London immediately, and Mother came to comfort her.

The British community was very kind to us as we went through the paperwork of Father's death, and transporting his body to Berlin. I was very impressed how kind they were to Renate and me, repeating the phrase, "We are very sorry for your losses."

In Berlin, “lehavdeel” (in stark opposition), the woman at the funeral parlor was culturally so different. She repeatedly said how sad she was that Father died, although had never met him, mispronounced his name, and expressed endless fake grief.

After Father’s burial in Berlin, I went back to Heidelberg until the end of my contract in 1969. I thought perhaps I would go to the United States but finally decided on Israel and made Aliyah that year, on October 20th, 1969.

Father was buried in Berlin leaving by his side a place for Renate (She still is alive!). Father requested in his will and testament that he would like his daughter or a Jewish friend to say Kaddish for him. He had remembered saying it for his Father who had requested it of him. Father was only 6 years old when he had lost his Father.

So, Erev Yom Kippur, 1967, in Berlin, I said Kaddish for Father.

I also had to comfort my Mother who still deeply loved him, despite the fact that they had been divorced for years. When Father died, he was married to Renate. Mother had said to me at the time of his death, she would have wished for him a few more years.

“Do you want to do homework together after classes?”

I settled into life in Jerusalem in 1969. I went to Hebrew University to reconnect with academia there. I attended a lecture by my favorite Coptic Professor Polatsky, and met my husband- to- be at the lecture!

Hanan was a Semetic scholar at Hebrew University, after many long years living on Kibbutz. In 1969, he was a student at the University, and was attending the lecture by Polatsky, to hear fluent Coptic.

Hanan, by chance sat next to me at the lecture. He turned to me and said, “Do you want to do homework together after class?” I was surprised that he hadn’t turned to any of the male students to ask them to join. By August 1970 less than one year later we were married, right after Tisha B’av.

Our wedding took place in Ofeka, in the garden of cousin Esther's father. 20 people attended.

Hanan was fifty six years old, I was thirty three years old.

We tried to have children but it didn't happen.

That Fall and Winter of 1970- 1971 was extremely difficult. I was newly married; started my work at the University teaching for the first time in my life, in Hebrew. One of my jobs was in Haifa which required me to travel to Haifa University one day a week, from Jerusalem. I taught Egyptian wisdom and texts connected to the Tanach. The other half of my job was teaching Egyptian Art in Jerusalem, which I knew exactly nothing about.

We lived in Hanan's flat for singles, on Metudela Street.

Hanan was working at Hebrew University at the Biblical Institute (מפעל המקרא). His biblical project was creating a new edition to the Tanach. His specialization was the Assyrian prayer book from the Christian communities of the 10th and 11th Century. He would examine quotations from the Bible in a comparative study of the reconstructed Assyrian biblical text.

During this period, when we were both working very hard, Hanan's nephew, Peter Kramer, came to visit us. At the time Peter was a student and stayed with us for four weeks in our very very small flat. We had exactly a room and a half with no privacy. It was a very very difficult month. Peter would become a psychiatrist in New York. He later wrote a bestseller book on antidepressant drugs called Listening to Prozac.

Peace with Egypt

My Egyptologist colleagues and I embarked on our first trip to Egypt, right after peace was declared with Israel (March, 1979).

We went to the Museum in Cairo to see up close so many artifacts which we had studied. This was professionally so thrilling for us. There was a stone with an inscription with the name of Israel underlined on the stone with chalk.

They showed us early findings that are connected to our Passover Seder tradition.

I began to think about my own Seder traditions.

During my childhood, we had not been able to conduct a Seder in those wartime years.

After the war, families had been destroyed, deported, and devastated.

There were few families intact after the war, and none had the means or ability to organize a Seder in 1945. The Jewish community helped organize a community Seder.

In 1948, I was once invited with a family to participate in their Seder.

I went alone.

In 1949, I recall participating in the Community Seder and felt such a sense of belonging to a legacy of tradition that made me feel connected.

Mother moves to Jerusalem

In 1972, my Mother moved to Israel. She lived right near us in a rented flat. She discovered old and new friends from Konigsberg.

That same year, a new Institute for Egyptology was founded at the Hebrew University. They hired me full time in 1974 so I no longer had to travel to Haifa.

In 1980, after ten years of academic work at the University, I was promoted to Senior lecturer. I received tenure which gave me financial security.

Hanan was still working at the Biblical Institute at Hebrew University.

We both worked on the same campus at Givat Ram.

We moved to Rehavia, close to campus, on Abarbanel Street in 1976.

My Mother lived on Rhov Radak for six happy years in Rehavia, very close to us. She then became ill in 1978 with Parkinson's Disease. She moved to Beit Moses in 1978 when the House then was called "Baka".

Little did we know that she began a tradition of residence for our family at Beit Moses.

Mother lived here for 6 years from 1978 until she died in 1984.

Hanan lived here for 2 years from 1998 until he died in 2000.

I have lived here for 14 years since 2007.

Mother died in Jerusalem on February 10th, 1984. Fortunately, she was able to be buried in the Christian Cemetery on Emek Refaim Street. It is called The Alliance Church International Cemetery. The caregiver there, Meir Aharoni, has taken good care of Mother's grave all of these years. He has planted roses and rosemary at her graveside.

Written on the stone is :

Margarete Grumach

8.10.1899

Königgratz Kr!labiau

10.2. 1984 Jerusalem

Ich WerdeBleiben

Im hause des Herrn

Imerdar

Twice a year, I visit her on her yahrzeit and birthday. It is incredible to think that Mother lived a full life of 85 years- born in Königgratz, a Bohemian town, lived and died in Jerusalem.

Being polite in Ancient Mesopotamia

I liked being a Senior Lecturer. Sounded very decent. For a few years I worked on my second book.

I enjoyed writing an article with Sarah Groll Elke on Politeness in Ancient Mesopotamia, which was published in February of 2003. We examined politeness spoken in everyday language through the study of 3,000 letters written in the old Babylonian dialect of Akkadian. We were interested in two aspects of politeness; terms of address and greetings and politeness in requests.

https://www.assyriologie.uni-muenchen.de/personen/professoren/sallaberger/publ_sallaberger/wasa_2003_politeness-letters.pdf

Hanan falls ill

In 1997, Hanan became ill. I cared for him at home. I did not want to give him up to a Beit Avot (assisted living facility). For one full year, I managed with mainly Russian caregivers who helped me and Hanan in our flat. One very good social worker from the ארגון יוצאי מרכז אירופה (Association of Israelis of Central European Origin) suggested that I take some time off. She recommended that Hanan would be very comfortable at Beit Moses and organized a room for him.

I decided to travel, by myself, that year, in 1998, to Dresden, Terezin, and Prague.

I first went to visit Renate for a few days in Dresden. I then went to Prague on my own. When I returned from the trip, I saw that they were taking better care of Hanan in a wheelchair at Beit Moses, then it was possible at home.

He never came home again. In June 1999, Hanan celebrated his 85th birthday here at סעודית , the "Nursing Care" wing at Beit Moses. I have photographs from that day. So ironic, as I am living here now in the very same wing.

I went on another trip to Warsaw, and Allenstein , a former German city where our family hailed. Today it is called Olsztyn (Polish) This is where Esther's Grandmother lived. At the end of that trip, I stopped in Berlin to see Renate.

In the year 2000, I travelled to Helsinki and Leningrad.

Hanan died in November 2000. He had been hospitalized at Shaare Zedek with pneumonia. I had asked the Doctors not to prolong his life and they respected it.

He died at 86 years old and was buried on Har Hamenuchoth, with a minyan of friends and family. Seventy people came to our flat on Rhoav Abarbanel for the shiva during that week. I want to be buried next to Hanan, as a Jew, not next to my Mother in a Christian Cemetery.

In the year 2001, I retired officially, and received my pension.

Esther and her husband Aharon, and Ephraim have taken good care of me

A pain in my thigh

In 2004, I felt a pain in my thigh which also showed up as inflammation in the bone. I was sent to an orthopaedic specialist on Mt. Scopus at Hadassah. He said I had an infection.

I suffered from that “infection” for the next four years. I went to my Doctor, not even an orthopedist, and he insisted that we do a biopsy on my leg. I was told I have cancer.

The “expert” Doctor had misdiagnosed.

Another expert from Ichilov recommended removing the swollen leg bone. They put metal in my leg. It made me so ill that I almost died. I was on life support, ventilated, and had to have dialysis.

After four weeks in the hospital, another Doctor recommended that they remove my leg.

Rosh Hashanah 2007, I had moved into Beit Moses understanding that I could not live on my own any more.

In December 2008, they amputated my leg. After the amputation, I had a very long stay in Ichilov. Then they transferred me to Mt Scopus for rehabilitation. Masha, my Russian aid, took me back to Beit Moses. After a few weeks, they made available this large room for me which I am so happy that I received. I haven't left it since! How fortunate for me that for the last 12 years, I have been here at Beit Moses, receiving so much care and attention. Since the amputation of my leg, I am always in my wheelchair. I have learned how to navigate life with one leg.

One of the many challenges living with amputation is the sensation of phantom pain. This is a very well known bodily experience in which pain can be felt in the amputated limb. The pain is so intense and feels like a quick zing or flash that runs up my leg. I can locate exactly where the pain is, always felt only in my amputated leg.

Studies show that the pain results from a mix-up in the nervous system. Even though a body part is amputated, remarkably, the nerve connections to the brain still remain in place.

The limb is gone, but the pain is real.

One wonders similarly, is the trauma of war ever over?

Like phantom pain, the war might be over yet the sensations of memory remain vivid and ever so real.

Boots and underwear

Andy came to Jerusalem to see me in Beit Moses, in 2009. We had such a lovely visit sharing our war memories. I found it fascinating that each of us remembered different memories, but together we created wholeness from our fragmented childhood.

I found a photo in my files when I was 8 years old, sitting on the fence with Andy at the Berlin Zoo. In 1945, after the war, there was a decision to detonate the bomb shelter that was at the Zoo. It was an immense engineering feat. Everyone in Berlin, at the time, heard about this plan, and with great curiosity came out to watch. I remember it being really exciting and it wasn't about our city being bombed. Quite the opposite, it was about our city being saved from the bombs.

Andy and I enjoyed looking at this photo together, which captured that moment. In the picture, we sit together with huge smiles on our faces. None of us during wartime had much reason to smile.

Historic that day felt to us, however the bomb squad could not manage to detonate the bombshelter. They tried again and again and did not succeed. So they left it there. It protrudes like a big hill at the Zoo as a reminder for us who will never forget what remains unearthed.

I remember wearing boots right after the war. I received a parcel from the Joint Distribution Committee, (through AJC). In my parcel were boots and underwear. I remember waiting in long lines to receive the package.

Every month I would get a parcel. They also distributed eggs. I stood in these lines for hours.

We were often hungry so those eggs were a real commodity, although we were craving meat. We reminisced about the day the Russians came and slaughtered the sheep in front of our house. We seemed to be in a constant state of hunger. During the siege. Andy also remembered those horses

running loose on the streets. We could still conjure up the memory of Mother cutting the pieces from the slaughtered, sweet meat.

Mother worked so hard to keep up our household and the food supply as she worried about Father and me. It must have been a constant concern for Mother.

Curious about my birthplace

I am most excited to take this trip to MY birthplace, Konigsberg.

I am scheduled to go in June, this year!

I'm planning to make contact with Michael Weick. Michael is ninety years old and connected to my past.

Michael was born in Konigsburg and stayed in East Prussia through the war, until 1947. He was forced to leave East Prussia for Berlin, when the Russians enforced a policy of getting rid of all Germans from the East

Michael stayed with our family in 1947 in Berlin. He played the violin beautifully. He was brought up Jewish. It is called geltungst yudeh.

As a Jew, he had been expelled from the academy. He was forbidden to study music as a German under the Russian regime. He moved to Stuttgart where he lives today, still playing the violin.

Michael wrote a very accurate historical account about the history of Konigsberg. It was translated into Polish.

I am more curious now in my eighty's to learn and discover more about my birthplace, than ever before .

I sit and share these memories with Jill at a local cafe here in our neighborhood on Derech BethLehem.

Meir, the head of the Christian cemetery on Emek Refaim walks by our table and stops to talk with us. Meir knows me well since Mother is buried there and had organized her burial. I have such fond feelings for him, and for his kindness in honoring Mother's memory.

Meir said to me, "You know, Irene, we have a space for you, next to your Mother."

“Thank you Meir,” I replied, “Yet, I am Jewish unlike Mother. I plan to be buried next to my husband at the cemetery at Har Hamenuhot.”

Closing a circle of life that began in Konigsberg and will end here in Jerusalem.

You can't hide

I read a book recently that connected me to Father's wartime pass. The book was written by Anders Rydell, called The Book Thieves: The Nazi Looting of Europe's Libraries and the Race to Return a Literary Inheritance

It is a very accurate record describing the Nazi plundering of Jewish books, and the Nazi college in Munich where they researched about the Jews and their books. This was all happening at the time of Father's work at the Berlin Library. The Nazis at the Munich college would compete with the Berlin library in order to obtain the most valuable books to plunder.

Sigmund Seligman from Amsterdam, for instance, was a private collector of precious manuscripts. His great grandson had been deported to Theresienstadt but not killed because the Nazis needed to rely on him to help catalogue his family's valuable collection of manuscripts.

The Berlin library, at the end of 1943, had been bombed heavily so the books needed a safe shelter. The entire collection was divided by the Nazis, and stored in three different safehouses; Bohemia, Silesia and Theresienstadt. These were difficult days to work in the library. Father described the building as uninhabitable, with barely a working shelter.

There were bombardments during the day and night. The Nazi officers, during those shellings, found their protection in the remaining good shelter that had not been destroyed.

Father wrote about all of this after the war. His surviving colleague, Dov Schidorsky, gave testimony in the courts and described the inhumane conditions.

Mother remembered during one of the bombardments, that Father came home covered in ashes from the soot.

One wonders how anyone could come out of this sane. I recall in 1958, when Father was 58 years old, he had a serious bout of depression.

Renate told me recently that she recalls in 1958 Father still believed he was being hunted down by the Nazis. Ten years had passed since the worst of the war experiences, yet the trauma was fresh as if it was yesterday.

This is what Father had told Renate, that dreadful year of 1958. "I am going up to the attic, and you have to help me get wood and nails so I can lock myself up and hide away upstairs so I won't be taken away. They surely won't be able to find me there." Renate took him to the hospital recognizing that he needed help. He was hospitalized for a very long time.

It is more than ironic that I became severely depressed when I turned 58 years old, just like Father. I too was hospitalized for a very long period of time. I spent five long weeks in hospital as depression ate my soul.

I managed to live with it, just like Father. When I think of the people who strongly influenced my life, it is Father.

One of my earliest childhood memories is Sunday mornings in bed together. Mother would be in the kitchen making breakfast. I would snuggle in bed with Father. He would compose rhymes for me in song. It was a playful time together where he would amuse me with short rhymes that he would invent.

At a very young age, I called myself *Eyneh*, because that is phonetically how I understood my name to be. The derivative of this word grew into *Eyneshen*...which means little Eyneh.

This short rhyme has stayed with me forever as I feel Father's love and nurture.

Eyne

Eyneshen

Mein shveneshen

Mit deyn Kleinen beinenshen

Translation:

Eyneh
My Eyenshen
My swan with little legs.

POSTSCRIPT

I chose to end Irene's memoir with her memory of this tender moment of her Father's rhyming of her name to a swan with little legs. Her very own swan song. The swan song, derived by the Ancient Greeks, was understood to mean that swans sing most beautifully before they die.

"Eyneshen, Mein shveneshen" are words that comforted Irene as she held her Father's memory tight, while honoring "bildung". He taught her how learning can be integrated in one's life to deepen the understanding of oneself. This was a lifelong journey, for both of them.

At the end of her life, Irene was motivated to read Goethe, her Father's greatest literary influence. Over her lifetime, she had always wanted to tackle reading Goethe, yet was deterred by the length of the work- 700 pages! She was determined to read his autobiography before she died.

She read it in the original German. This manuscript was published in 1846, was entitled, From my Life: Poetry and Truth. "This account of Goethe's own life details the influences from his early years of friendships, mentors, intellectuals and famous personalities of his time in the context of historical events.

There are several volumes of Goethe's recorded table talk, more than twenty thousand letters, and the reminiscences of the many visitors who met him throughout his sixty-year career. He is remembered as an exemplary poet but above all an educator. He had first to learn through experience, the wisdom he taught."

"The concept of *Bildung*", that Irene lived by, "implied a cultivation of the self and of maturity. *Bildung* was central to Goethe's thought, and he, in turn, made it central to German culture. Goethe's work stems from his

understanding of education and the difficulty of knowing one's own self in living a worthy life.”

This idea “of living worthy” occupied Irene and her Father’s thoughts, and life. Her Father studied Goethe in hopes of discovering the meaning of life.

He and Renate together began their oeuvre in 1965 researching Goethe’s thought process, his correspondence, conversations that transpired, topics discussed, what books he was reading, and what might have influenced his writing.

Irene had often wondered why her Father came up with this particular idea for his research of Goethe. She had told me that her Father, during the war, had not kept a diary of his own which is why immediately after the war he wrote letters to record and reflect his own personal and professional encounters. Sadly, he knew that there had been few wartime diaries left behind.

Irene thought that this could have explained Father’s fascination for Goethe’s diaries as Father peered into each entry as a mirror into the past, listening in on Goethe’s lunchtime conversations.

She believed that it was Goethe who inspired him existentially to get through those horrible years of the war. Therefore, at the end of Irene’s life she was intrigued by Goethe as the poet, the thinker and the creator. She also discovered her Father as she turned every page.

Reading Goethe reinforced *her* decision to document her own personal and professional life, despite the emotional upheaval. She has left us with her memoirs, a mirror into *her* past, as we listen in to her tender and tormented soul. She shares her vulnerabilities living in uncertain times, as Goethe and her Father had modeled.

This memoir will remain as a legacy to Irene’s full and complicated life. We will remember her kindness, her passion for books, her courage to battle her depression, and her brave voice that has left us with this incredible story.

