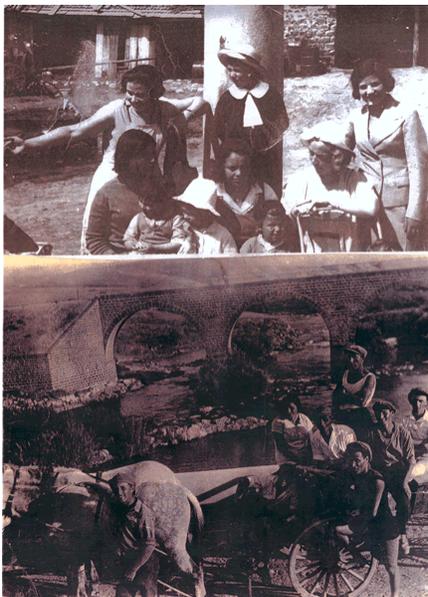


Lola's story Berlin in the 1920s (part 2)

Berlin in the early 1920s was a great place for a young liberal and adventurous person like me. It was easy to make friends from many backgrounds since so many were new to the city and looked for friends. Most who I befriended were not Jewish. Most were bohemian artistic types.

We, the young newcomers to the city, encountered a very progressive society with what we now call “politically correct” attitude (at least on the surface). No one would dare call us “dirty Jews” or “filthy foreigners” to our faces. There was a trend of dealing frankly with provocative and controversial material in the theater and in movies which were made in Berlin at that time. To supplement my income while going to nursing school I worked as an extra in the movies. Some of the roles I got were to dance with a group of young girls dressed in see thru dresses or half naked.

Solomon eventually arrived in Berlin and we moved to an apartment we rented in a great central location. With the help from his well connected relatives in Germany he was able to obtain a well paying job as a manager in a small factory. During vacations we would travel all over western Europe by trains. Life was really fun for us during our first year in Berlin!



Soon I found myself pregnant. I was only 17 when our daughter was born. She was born on Rosh Hashanah of 1923. We named her Shoshana since she was born on Rosh Hashanah. In German her name was Zoozana and for short Zoozie. (**PRONOUNCED: ZOO-zee**). She was born about a year and a half after we arrived in Berlin. We waited to get married after she was born

since we had to do it in Lithuania (where we were both born) . We were not German citizens and could not marry in Germany.

Being very young and knowing little about cooking and taking care of a house I was lucky with Solomon. He was a man before his time! He worked hard at the factory and when he came home he wanted to do all the cooking. He was also very organized and extremely detail oriented. He loved to clean and to put things in order.

Zoozie was an easy baby. I traveled with her to visit my family in Riga on a regular basis. Many times my mother and my brother Yitzhak (who was an artist and could take time off) would join us on the way back to Berlin. Mother would take care of Zoozie which unable me to finish my studies in nursing school. I did not have to work. Solomon knew how much I liked traveling and he let me travel with my mother and Zoozie every winter to health spas in the South. My mother was very delicate and had some health problems. She did much better in warmer climates during winters.

My sister Jenia was becoming very involved with the Zionist Youth movement Hechalutz. She had no free time for travel. My husband's family would also visit us. His father Zalman Gordin passed away many years before. His mother Frida nee Goron would come often with his two sisters Berta Gordin and Rosa Zilberman and his middle brother Aharon Gordin. She had very wealthy relatives from her father's side (Goron) in Berlin. They owned a very fashionable fur coats store. We were very close with them.

Salee Gordin Is Born

On July 18 1926 our son Sylvan (Salee) was born. We called him Sili. After we immigrated to Palestine he changed his name to Salee, "my rock" in Hebrew. We traveled so much to visit my parents that for a while he was attending a nursery school in Riga!

In early 1929 my sister Jenia immigrated to Palestine. She was to join a new kibbutz to be name Afikim. At this point of time the new member of Kibbutz Afikim who cam from areas control by the Soviet Union and from Latvia were temporary in Degnia. They were in training to farm the land. They moved to their permanent location in 1932. We all truly missed her. She wrote wonderful letters about her love for Eretz Israel and the kibbutz members.

Later that year my parents decided to also immigrate to Palestine and live in Tel Aviv, next to my second brother, Lova. Father needed to take a year to sell everything in Riga so they

would have money for their Retirement in a new country. Mother decided not to wait for him. She did not want to be in another cold winter in Riga.

It was September of 1930. Zoozie just started second grade in a very prestigious school in Berlin. I announced to Solomon that I am taking the kids to Riga to see their grandmother before she leaves. For the first time Solomon refused my request to take both kids to Riga. He said that Sili can go with me but Zoozie must attend school she is already in second grade and her studies would suffer if I will take her out of school whenever I wish to travel. He will take care of her while I am gone.

In Riga I could not let go and say goodbye to my mother. I was afraid that I would never see my mother again. I sent a telegram to Solomon. "Mother is very apprehensive about the trip. Sili and I will join her on the train ride to Italy." From Italy I sent another telegram. "Sili and I will join mother on the boat to Palestine."

First Visit To Palestine

We stayed in Palestine for about a year until after my father arrived there and my parents were settled in their new apartment. During that year we had a great time. We traveled everywhere but most of the time we stayed either with my mother and the family of my brother Iovav in the Tel Aviv or with my sister Jenia who temporary lived in kibbutz Degania getting ready to move to the new Kibbutz Afikim which was not yet on its permanent land. We met many amazing young people in Kibbutz degania. They were idealistic, full of energy and enthusiasm about building their agricultural communes. They shared humble lives. They lived devoid of any greed. They chose agricultural setting back in nature to build their new Kibbutzim/communes. They were creating a new society. A very progressive Society based on sharing everything including the clothes and books they came with from their native countries. The women were what we today call faminsts. Together with the men they were farming the land, and creating communities with strong socialist values were all decisions about the communal life were put to vote and everyone in the commune had equal rights to everything they owned and also in all of the decision making for the members of the commune. During the day they would work their fields and take care of livestock and at night they sang, danced had cultural meetings and fell in love. They were all young. They rejected all the conventional and provincial values of the older generations who they left behind in the shtetls and cities of eastern Europe. They were

strong and confident young people. I really felt at home with them and as a nurse I was welcomed as an honorary member since I helped members who had medical issues.



A year passed and my father came. My parents rented a place in southern Tel Aviv and were doing well. It was time to return to Berlin. I knew that my daughter, as much as she loved her father, would never forgive me for leaving her for such a long time. I did miss her a lot.

Berlin in the early 1930's

We returned back home in the fall of 1931 to a very different Germany. The Nazis were gaining power. They came second in the election that took place that year. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 marked a major turning point in Germany also: following prosperity under the government of the Weimar Republic, foreign investors withdrew their German interests, beginning the crumbling of the Republican government in favor of Nazism. The number of unemployed reached three million. The Jews were now blamed for everything bad! Some Jews were able to ride out the financial storm by keeping emergency funds saved and they were wrongly seen as causing the downturn (Jews were always associated with control of banks and finance in the eyes of antisemites..)

My brother Benny, who had big dreams when he first arrived in America, was devastated by the Wall Street crash. He lost hope with the “American Dream”. He announced to his wife that he would go back to Latvia to open an American style hotel. His wife called him “a crazy

dreamer”, she said that she would never go back to Europe. She told him that she would not be a single mother in such a bad economy. She cant take care of a 3 year old and have a job at the same time. If he wanted to go back to Europe he must take their daughter with him.

Benny brought his wonderful 3 year old daughter to us in Berlin. Her name was Gladys (When she grew up she changed it to Syd). She was a clever and charming toddler and she adjusted very fast to life in Germany She lived with us for more than a year and was a beloved younger sister to our children .

We traveled many times to visit my brothers in Latvia. Yitzhak had a girlfriend named Matala (Mania) Ejven. She was a teacher and a firm Bundist (Bundism was a secular Jewish socialist movement opposed to Zionism, They believed that Jews should be contributing citizens of whatever country they lived in). They had been together for some years, Mother was very upset that they were not married. Yitzhak was already in his early thirties and she felt that he was unfair to his girlfriend.

Benny called his hotel “Hotel Colombus”, it was a very nice hotel, but my brother was naive. At that time there was much corruption in Latvia. Benny refused to pay any bribes or protection money. After almost two years, the hotel failed and Benny and his daughter returned to New York. They returned just in time. A few months passed and...

Nazi Germany

“..people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.” Herman Goering

Under the [Dawes Plan](#), the German economy boomed in the 1920s, paying reparations and increasing domestic production. Germany's economy retracted in 1929 when Congress discontinued the Dawes Plan loans. This was not just a problem for Germany. Europe received

almost US \$8 billion in American credit between 1924 and 1930 in addition to previous war time loans.

Germany's [Weimar Republic](#) was hit hard by the depression as American loans to help rebuild the German economy now stopped. Unemployment soared, especially in larger cities. Repayment of the war reparations due by Germany were suspended in 1932 following the [Lausanne Conference of 1932](#). By that time, Germany had repaid 1/8 of the reparations. People were devastated about how the Weimar Republic dealt with the economy.

Falling prices and demand induced by the crisis created an additional problem in the central European banking system, where the financial system had particularly close relationships with business. In 1931, the [Creditanstalt](#) bank in [Vienna](#) collapsed, causing a financial panic across Europe.

On the 30th of January 1933 — [Nazi leader Adolf Hitler](#) was appointed [Chancellor of Germany](#) by [President of Germany Paul von Hindenburg](#). March 1 1933 – Hundreds are arrested as the Nazis round up their political opponents.

March 5 1933— [German election, 1933](#): National Socialists gain 43.9% of the votes.

March 8 1933— [Nazis](#) occupy the [Bavarian State Parliament](#) and expel deputies.

March 12 1933— [Hindenburg](#) bans the flag of the republic and orders the Imperial and [Nazi flag](#) to fly side by side.

March 15 1933— [Hitler](#) proclaims the [Third Reich](#).

March 20 1933— *Dachau*, the first Nazi concentration camp, is completed (it opens 22 March).

March 23 1933 – The *Reichstag* passes the *Enabling Act*, making Adolf Hitler dictator of Germany.

March 26 1933— Aur minister *Hermann Göring* denies that Germany's Jews are in danger.

April 1 1933 – The recently elected Nazis under *Julius Streicher* organized a one-day boycott of all Jewish-owned businesses in Germany.

April 7 1933— The *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* is passed, forcing all "non-Aryans" to retire from the legal profession and civil service.

April 21 1933— Germany outlaws the kosher ritual shechita.

April 26 1933— The *Gestapo* is established in Germany.

April 27 1933— The *Stahlhelm* organization joins the Nazi Party.

- May 10 1933– The Nazis stage massive public [book burnings](#) throughout Germany.
- May 26 1933— The Nazi Party introduces a law to legalize [eugenic sterilization](#).
- Nazi Germany forms the *Expert Committee on Questions of Population and Racial Policy* under Reich Interior Minister [Wilhelm Frick](#).

Propaganda should be popular, not intellectually pleasing. It is not the task of propaganda to discover intellectual truths.”

— [Joseph Goebbels](#)

June 1933 Zoozie was in fourth grade. She was a top student at a very competitive school. Very intelligent, well read and mature beyond her years. Every year she would get an award as the highest achieving student. As

the end of the school year was nearing, she was called to the headmaster's office.

She went happily thinking that she was getting another award. As she entered the office the headmaster was sitting with a huge open book which had the names of all the students who attended the school. "Susana Gordin", the headmaster said "you are a Jewish Girl". she drew a bold line on top of her name. "Susana, you already had too much education for a Jew, you are not to come here ever again." She had someone escort Zoozie out of the school.

Sili had just finished first grade. He was a very energetic and inquisitive kid with a wild and rebellious streak. A very happy, optimistic and confident child who charmed everyone he met. He was very comfortable to start a conversation with adults who he did not know, eager for knowledge, he would ask every Nazi who he encountered; "why do you hate Jews?"

With his big blue eyes and his tiny nose, he did not look to them Jewish. Most answered him.

When hearing or seeing from our apartment windows Nazi youth marching in goose steps he would run down and joined them imitating their funny walk and their Nazi salute or Heil Hitler salute by extending his right arm in the air with a straightened hand and in a mocking tone would yell “Heil Hitler”.

He heard our German (Jewish and non Jews) friends telling us to not worry, “Hitler is just a clown who would say and do anything to appeal to the ignorant amongst the German people. Racist remarks work on them. They forget their real problems which Hitler does not address” or “It is just a crazy talk, In the long-run sanity will prevail, after all it is Germany, the most cultural place on earth.” Our Goron relatives said that the wives of high ranked Nazis are still buying fur

coats from them but they come secretly from the back door of the store “ They don't seem to hate us; It is just a propaganda tool to get more votes” (Eilats notes many years later (in 2021) I found members of the Goron family who matched the DNA of my brother, my cousin Anat and I as second cousins. They told me that their mother and her siblings left Berlin in 1939 and survived the Holocaust.)

We knew better! It was time to leave Germany! My husband was offered a good job in Holland which he was eager to take.

I refused!! My father kept writing to me that we must leave Europe. He had very bad feelings that the Jews were facing a very grave danger. He already spoke to some people in the right places and he could get papers for our entire family to immigrate to Palestine/ Eretz Israel. (Eilat's note; Many years later I found out that the family in Eretz Israel

paid a huge amount of money (50,000 Lira?) for the so called “capitalist visas to Palestine” for a family of 4. The money was secretly collected from every member of Lola’s and and Solomon’s family and Lola did not know)

We agreed to go. One problem we faced was that in Germany you signed a long contract with your landlord. We would have to pay a huge amount of money if we left years before the contract expires. We did not have such money. We decided to leave secretly. The owners can put you in jail if you don't pay. We told our landlady that we were sending our furniture to be restored. We put our belongings inside the furniture and sent them by boat to Palestine.

Zoozie had many friends whom she insisted that she must see for the last time. She even went to the daughter of the landlady the night before. The girl promised her to say nothing to the mother for a few days. She must have kept the promise.

We left Berlin by train going South, the next morning. Sili found an empty seat next to a young man in Nazi uniform. In no time they became “friends”.

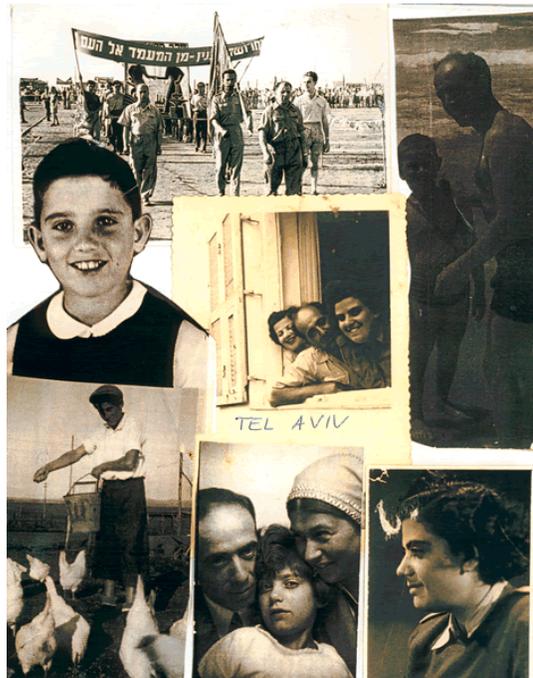
The Nazi guy asked Sili what was our final destination. Sili answered “Palestine”.

The Nazi guy said to him “I would love to join you and visit Palestine.” Sili replied “ they will never let you in. They hate Nazis in Palestine!” They both laughed at the idea.

Palestine, September 1933 part 3

As our ship reached the beautiful shores, a large crowd was waiting for us. I looked for my parents and sister and brother but could not find them. Finally, a distant relative came to us and took my husband aside. It turned out that my father had food poisoning and died 3 days before we arrived.

Father had arranged for a beautiful apartment for us in Yafo. Everything was ready and waiting but my wonderful father, Yehuda Chait, always a very healthy man was gone.



Mother was devastated. They had been together for more than

fifty years! She was sick for many years and assumed that she would go first.

Mother passed away in less than a month.

My sister Jenia moved in with Baruch (Buzik) Viniar. He was also a member of kibbutz Afikim which was on permanent grounds since 1932. Buzik came from Russia (now the area is in Ukraine) and arrived to the Kibbutz on the same day that Jenia arrived. Sometime later they were married. My brother Lova was more traditional. He was very upset with her after she told him that she moved in with Buzik. He said “ if there is free love in Russia where Buzik came from why do you need to be doing it here?” Marriage was unimportant to Jenia or most other member of the kibbutz. There was a rabbi that would come to the kibbutz asking couples who lived together to get married on the spot, so they did it. She was married to Buzik with a coin since they did not have a ring.

Zenia and Buzik had a baby and they named him Yehuda after my father. Tragically the baby became sick and died when he was a year old. Later they had a son Rami (born in 1938) and a daughter Nava (born in 1942) My brother Yizhak married his girlfriend Mania and in a few years had two daughters, Asna and Yehudit, named for our parents. Benny was back with

his wife in New York and in 1940 they had a daughter named Yehudit (Judith) named after our father Yehuda.

My husband Shlomo found an administrating job in Solel Boneh (*Paving and Building*) founded in 1921 in [British-ruled Palestine](#), today the oldest, and one of the largest, [construction](#) and [civil engineering](#) companies in [Israel](#). I worked as a nurse for a very busy clinic in Tel Aviv. We adjusted well to life in Palestine. We loved the diversity of languages and cultures of people who came from all over the world and for the most part got along with each other. There were Jews from Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Western Europe, The U.S , Yemen. Iran, Egypt and North Africa, amongst many other places. Their were Muslim Palestinians and Christian Palestinian and there were the British who ruled the country. As a nurse I met people of all backgrounds and befriended them. I learned English and Arabic. I had a talent for languages and my two children seem to inherit it.

They learned Hebrew fast and made many friends attending Balfur school in Tel Aviv.

At first we continued speaking German at home but soon realized that there was no love for the German language which was associated with the

Nazi culture even when spoken by Jews.

Sili would be playing outside and yelling me MUTI (mother in German) when he needed something. The neighborhood children would repeat in unison MUTI MUTI Halevai veTAMUTI (mother mother we hope you will die!) Soon we stopped speaking German to each other and it was all Hebrew. We loved the beach and every free moment we walked to the seashore and during the summer we had many guests from the interior of the country who came to visit us in the big city with its splendid beach. They will stay with us overnight since no one could afford hotels at that time.

My husband Shlomo has been a socialist since his early youth. He loved the country which was built on socialist values. Once a year During May first he would walk first in the parade representing the socialist builders of Israel. I had many friends from Moshavim and Kibbutzim but also some friends from the so-called High Society and Bohemia of Tel Aviv.

At that time in order to get a loan from the bank people needed to bring cosigners who share the responsibility for making sure **payments** are made on time. We cosigned for a loan for someone very close to us who needed some fund for his business .He was unable to pay it back. We had to pay back and were unable to hold on to our apartment. We became homeless and my boss let us live in the clinic. During the days on weekdays it was a busy clinic and Sili who was a young and active boy, was unable to sit still. He was not permitted to be around. We gave him money to get lunch and dinner and he would return at night to sleep and early in the morning he would leave for school. He had some good friends who shared food with him and with the money he would buy tickets for movies and

every day after school he would be watching movies for many hours. He was 11 year old and his studies suffered. He was becoming a street kid. Eventually we were able to get an apartment and we had a room rented by young person to help with the payments.

Since Sili was unsupervised for some years at age 14 he decided that he had all the schooling he needed and went to work in a garage in Jaffa fixing cars. Together with him worked in the garage an Arab boy and they became good friends. One day they were fixing a car and while Sili was on the wheel the car went in reverse and crushed the arab kid, The kid was taken to the hospital and released by mistake that same night. The kid died at home the next morning.

Not knowing that it was all a tragic accident people had the wrong idea and some Jews congratulated Sili for killing an Arab! Sili was devastated. He was put on trial and found not guilty but the family feared retribution from the Arab community. We sent him to school in far away Degania and from that point he was changed forever. He still had a wild strick but he wanted to study. For years he attended schools. After Degnia he went to a boarding school in Ben Shemen. He was kicked out for wild behavior and from there went to the famed agriculture boarding school Mikveh Israel, For his undergrad degree he attended The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He received his master degree and his teaching credential from The Hebrew University faculty of agriculture in Rehovot, Eventually he got a PhD and was a professor at the Hebrew University in Rehovot and a researcher in the Vulkani institute, the Waitzman institute and Cornell University in New York.

Zoozie was also studying for many years. First in Pitman secretarial school. Than Nursing school R N degree in Jerusalem eventually she receiving a master degree in Social work from Colombia University in New York! In 1958 She returned to Israel with her six year old daughter Anat to head a new program of placing blind kids in main stream schools attending classes with seeing kids.

Back to the late 1930s

World War 2 and the Holocaust

British Mandate of Palestine

Starting in July 1940, the Italian bombings in the [British Mandate of Palestine](#) were primarily centered on [Tel Aviv](#) and [Haifa](#). However, many other coastal towns such as [Acre](#) and [Jaffa](#) also suffered. On 9 September 1940, a bombing raid on Tel Aviv caused 137 deaths

As in most of the Arab world, there was no unanimity amongst the Palestinian Arabs as to their position regarding the combatants in WWII. Some signed up for the British army – into the mixed [Palestine Regiment](#) unit, but others saw an Axis victory as their best hope of gaining Arab control of Palestine. During the war, the British forbade entry of Jews into Palestine escaping Nazi persecution, placing them in detention camps or deporting them to other places such as [Mauritius](#). However, over 30,000 Palestinian Jews fought for Great Britain during World War II, within the regular British army, [Palestine Regiment](#) and the

[Jewish Brigade](#). David Ben Gurion, leader of the Jewish Agency, which was the mainstream Zionist organization in Palestine, had said "We will fight the White Paper as if there is no war, and fight the war as if there is no White Paper. By 1940, The Haganah and other underground Jewish militias ordered complete cease fire with the British, in favor of the joint war effort against the Axis, but continued smuggling attempts of Jewish refugees from Iraq and Europe into [British Palestine](#).

By 1939 my sister Rachel with her husband and 3 children lived in South Africa. Brother Abe and family and brother Benny and family lived in the Baltimore area. My sister Jenia and family and my brother Lova and family were in Eretz Israel (as my family) Only my brother Yizhak, his wife Matala Mania nee Ejevns born in 1907 and their two daughters

Judith born in 1937 and Asna born in 1934 were in Europe in Riga, Latvia. Yizhak was an artist and his wife a teacher.

Some of my first cousins came to Eretz Israel during the 1930s. Three of the four daughters of my mother's brother Leib Kriger immigrated to Eretz Israel. Zina (Levin) Gita (married Ben Zion Levitan) and Rachel (married Elchanan Broide). Their parents and sister Miriam (Khazan) lived in Kaunas. Leib was a wealthy man. He was well educated in religious and also in secular studies. He came to visit his daughters in Eretz Israel in the mid 1930s. He traveled all over Israel to visit many relatives (some second cousins from the Kriger, Fridman and Feldman family also immigrated to Israel in the 1920s and the 1930s) He knew more about the history of Israel than most of us young people who lived there. He and his wife Sheina nee Levin passed away in Kaunas shortly before the war started. My mother's sister Rivka Segal lived in Ponevitzes, Lithuania with her husband and the two children Arie and Metuka. Arie managed to be on the last boat to Eretz Israel before the war started.

	2	<p>The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was signed between the Soviet Union (USSR) and Nazi Germany·a non-aggression pact, signed in August 1939. The treaty also contained secret protocols dividing Poland and the Baltic states into German and Soviet spheres of influence.made possible the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, and eastern Poland.</p>
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On 1 September, Germany invaded Poland and on the 17th the Soviet Union invaded Poland as well. On 6 October, Poland fell and part of the Soviet occupation zone was then handed over to Germany.

On 10 October, the Soviet Union and Lithuania signed an agreement whereby the Soviet Union transferred Polish sovereignty over the Vilna region to Lithuania, and on 28 October the boundary between the Soviet occupation zone and the new territory of Lithuania was officially demarcated.

On 1 November, the Soviet Union annexed Western Ukraine, followed by Western Belarus on the 2nd.

In late November, unable to coerce the [Republic of Finland](#) by diplomatic means into moving its border 25 kilometers (16 mi) back from [Leningrad](#), Stalin ordered the [invasion of Finland](#). On 14 December 1939, the Soviet Union was expelled from the [League of Nations](#) for invading Finland. In the east, the Soviet military won several decisive victories during [border clashes](#) with the [Empire of Japan](#) in 1938 and 1939. However, in April 1941, the USSR signed the [Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact](#) with Japan, recognizing the territorial integrity of [Manchukuo](#), a Japanese [puppet state](#).

1		<p>An ultimatum was presented by the USSR to Latvia.</p> <p>Molotov, speaking on March 25, 1940, essentially announced Soviet intentions to annex the Baltic States, stating, "... the execution of the pacts progressed satisfactorily and created conditions favorable for a further improvement of the relations between Soviet Russia and these States." Improvement of the relations being a euphemism for Soviet takeover.</p> <p>In March and April 1940, immediately after Molotov's speech, the Soviet press commenced attacks on the Latvian government. Next, the NKVD orchestrated a series of strikes in Riga and Liepāja. When those failed to develop into a general strike, the Soviets blamed that failure on the "irresponsible element which spoils the good neighborly relations."</p> <p>Fearing Soviet action, on May 17, 1940, the Latvian government secretly issued emergency powers to the Latvian minister in London, Kārlis Reinholds Zariņš, designating Alfreds Bilmanis, the Latvian minister in Washington, as his substitute</p>

1

Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940: June 15, 1940: Soviet troops invade Lithuania and position troops to invade Latvia.

- June 15, 1940: Soviet troops [attack the Latvian border guards at Masļenki](#), killing three border guards and two civilians, as well as taking 10 border guards and 27 civilians as hostages to the Soviet Union.
- June 16, 1940: the Soviet Union invades Latvia and Estonia.]
Soviets delivered ultimatums to Estonia and Latvia, to be answered within 6 hours, demanding: (1) the establishment of pro-Soviet Governments which, under the protection of the Red Army, would be better capable of carrying out the Pacts of Mutual Assistance; (2) the free passage of Soviet troops into Estonia and Latvia in order to place them in the most important centers and to avoid possible provocative acts against Soviet garrisons. Unable to resist on their own, with no external assistance available, under threat of the bombing of cities and heavily outnumbered, Latvia and Estonia capitulated.
- June 17, 1940: Soviet troops invade Latvia and occupied bridges, post/telephone, telegraph, and broadcasting offices.
- June 17, 1940: [Andrey Vyshinsky](#), [Deputy Chairman](#) of the [Council of People's Commissars](#) of the Soviet Union (and

		prosecutor of Joseph Stalin's show trials in 1937–1938), introduces himself to President Kārlis Ulmanis as Soviet special env
5		Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union , becoming the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).
1		<i>Occupation of Latvia by Nazi Germany:</i> Nazi troops occupied Riga . The military occupation of Latvia by Nazi Germany was completed on July 10, 1941 by Germany's armed forces . Initially, the territory of Latvia was under the military administration of Army Group North , but on 25 July 1941, Latvia was incorporated as Generalbezirk Lettland , subordinated to Reichskommissariat Ostland , an

	administrative subdivision of Nazi Germany. Anyone not racially acceptable or who opposed the German occupation, as well as those who had cooperated with the Soviet Union , were killed or sent to concentration camps in accordance with the Nazi Generalplan Ost .
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During the German occupation, Latvia was included in the Reich Commissariat Ostland (Reichskommissariat Ostland), a German civilian administration covering the Baltic states and western Belorussia.

Detachments of German *Einsatzgruppen*, together with Latvian and Lithuanian auxiliaries, massacred most Latvian Jews. Ghettos were established in the larger cities of [Riga](#), Dvinsk, and Liepaja. Several hundred Jews in the Riga ghetto organized resistance against the Germans. Small groups sought to escape from the ghetto. The Nazis deported thousands of German and Austrian Jews to the Riga ghetto in 1941 and early 1942. Einsatzgruppen

and Order Police murdered most of them.

Immediately after the establishment of German authority at the beginning of July 1941, the elimination of the [Jewish](#) and [Roma](#) population began, with major mass killings taking place at [Rumbula](#), a forest near Riga, and elsewhere. The killings were committed by the [Einsatzgruppe A](#), and the [Wehrmacht](#). Latvian [collaborators](#), including the 500–1,500 members of the [Arājs Kommando](#) (which alone killed around 26,000 Jews

) and other Latvian members of the [SD](#), were also involved

30,000 Jews were shot in the autumn of 1941 with most of the remaining Jewish people being rounded up and put into ghettos. In November and December 1941 the [Riga Ghetto](#) became crowded and to make room for the imminent arrival of German Jews, who were being shipped out of the country, all the remaining 30,000 Jews in Riga were taken from the ghetto to the nearby Rumbula Forest and shot

German, Austrian and the present-day [Czech Republic](#) Jews, now located in the Riga ghetto were put to work and placed on very reduced rations. The [Kaiserwald concentration camp](#) was built in 1943 at [Mežaparks](#) on the edge of Riga which took most of the inmates from the ghetto. In the camp the inmates were put to work by large German companies. Before the Soviet forces returned, all Jews under 18 or over 30 were shot, with the remainder moved to [Stutthof concentration camp](#).

During the years of Nazi occupation, special campaigns killed 90,000 people in [Latvia](#), approximately 70,000 of whom were Jews and 2,000 Gypsies. Those who were not Jews or Gypsies were mostly civilians whose political opinions and activity were unacceptable to the German occupiers. Jewish and Gypsy civilians were eliminated as a result of the Nazi "theory of races" as set out in the Nazi [Generalplan Ost](#) plan.

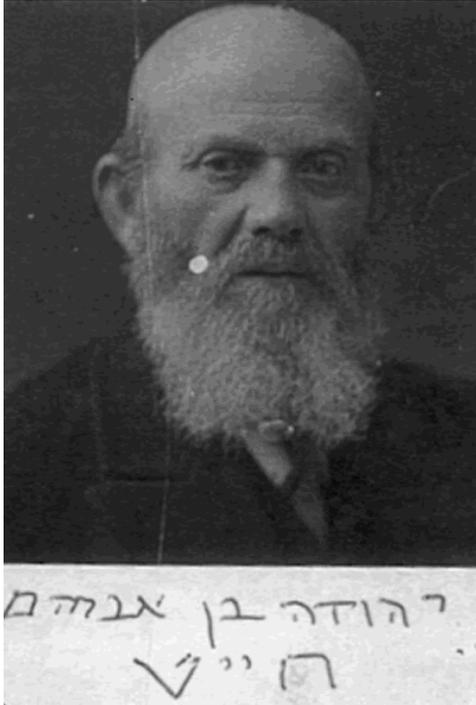
During the war years we heard rumors of concentration camps and mass killings of Jews and others but had no information about our relatives in Europe. No letters came, no

phone calls were answered. Some of us asked the red cross to investigate their fate. We received ambiguous answers which did not make clear of their whereabouts at current time.

In 1944, in an attempt to destroy evidence of mass murder, the Germans forced prisoners to reopen mass graves in Rumbula and burn the bodies. Once the work was completed, the Germans then killed these prisoners. In the summer of 1944, the Germans murdered thousands of Jews then held in Kaiserwald and its subcamps. Those remaining alive were later deported to the Stutthof concentration camp in Germany.

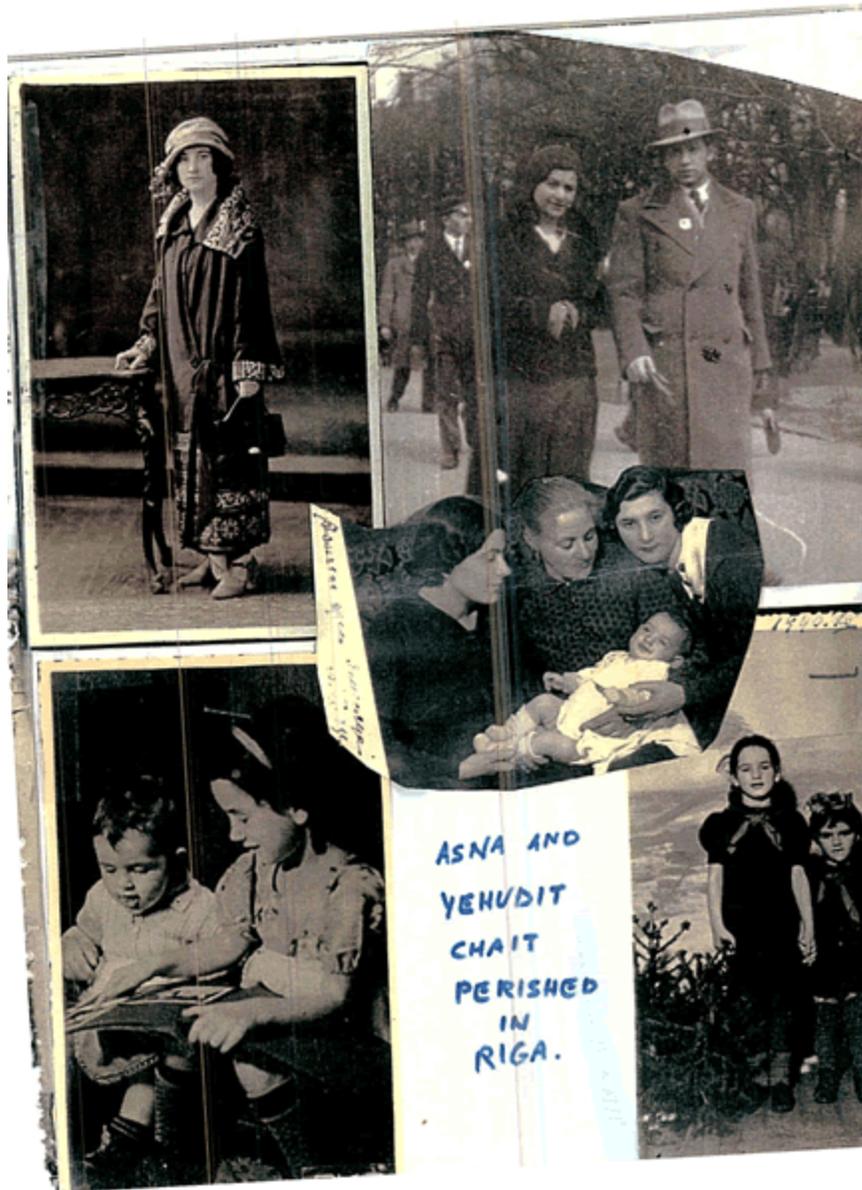
On October 13, 1944, the Soviet army liberated Riga.

Almost all of Riga's Jews had been murdered by the Nazis.



For my family in Latvia After June of 1941 all letters stopped arriving from Riga. We had no idea what was happening to our beloved relatives and friends in Europe under Nazi control. Yet we heard of mass transporting and mass killings of Jews from a few who escaped from the occupied territories to Switzerland and Portugal. As I told you before We asked the Red Cross to investigate what has happened to Yitzhak. The reply was that they could not find any information about his whereabouts. We were horribly worried.

Sometime by the end of 1944 after more than 3 years of silence we received a letter from our brother Yitzhak. He was critically wounded and lifted to a hospital in the Soviet Union. His beautiful wife Matla Mania born in 1907 to Yaakov and Rocha Ejevenes and daughters Asna born in 1934 and Yehudith born in 1937 were murdered by the Nazis in Rumbula forest next to Riga. See below pictures



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From our cousin Arie we found out that his mother, our aunt Rivkah Segal, her husband Moshe Segal , their daughter Metuka and her finance perished in Poneitzes, Lithuania.



pictures of Metuka segal with

friends. on top a picture of her mother Rivka Segal.

From our first cousins Zina Levin (mother of Nomi), Gita Levitan (mother of Dr, Avi Levitan, Ariela Yacobi, Nava Tal and Rachel Broide (mother of Idit and Ayala) we found out that they received a letter from their sister Miriam and her husband. They were able to escape deep into Russia during the first days of the war in the end of June of 1941. Some years later they were able to leave the Soviet Union and join Miryam sisters in Israel; So did our second cousin Israel Fridman who later met and married Dr. Sonja Wolf. they had a daughter Ester

Notter see cf.: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonja_Friedmann-Wolf

Israel's mother Asna Rivka nee Even, her husband Yehuda Leib Fridman, Their daughter Rachel with her husband Boris Westerman and their son Binyamin Westerman all perished in July of 1941 in Birzai Lithuania at the hands of the Nazis. Their daughter Chana married Herman Peer who she met in Birzai in the 1930's during his visit from America. In the U S they had two sons Yizhak Jeffrey Peer who was a pilot in the IDF, and Lesley. Chana's Brother Yonatan Fridman came to Eretz Israel before the war he had a daughter named Asnat. The youngest sister Batia was born in Birzai in 1913. She was a Zionist, She also made Aliyah to Eretz Israel in the 1930s. She was a member of Kibbutz Yagur. She married Ben Zion Koblantz. They had 3 Children; Ester, Asnat (named after Batia's mother and Yizhak. (Eilat's note; Batia passed away in 2011 at the age of 98.



The 3 sister of the Fridman family From left Chana Peer, Rachel Westerman and Batia Koblantz. Picture taken in Birzai c1925

Our mother's first cousin in Kurland Simcha, widow of Mendel Korman, perished in Latvia in 1941 with her children; Daughter Sara and her husband Asher Wexler with their children Mendel born in 1928 and twins Rezel and Binyamin born in 1932. Son Moshe Kurman born in 1895 with wife Luba all perished in 1941. Their daughter Rachel (a pharmacist) wife of Moshe Safra (they first met at our home in Riga) Made an Aliyah to Eretz Israel in the 1930s ,They had a daughter Leah who later married Herzel Giladi (a hero of the Jewish underground during the British mandate in Palestine.)

My brother in law Aron Gordin was killed as a soldier in the Red Army. his wife and sons Booby and Sili survived by escaping deep into the Soviet Union. My husband's

other brother, Lova Gordin, survived but his wife and two kids perished in Riga. So many of our relatives and friends perished. Almost all that survived (Including my brother Yizhak and cousins Miryam Khazan and Israel Fridman) could not leave the Soviet Union until 1960. Our brother Yizhak married Eeda and had 2 daughters; Sima born in 1947 and Asia born in 1950.

My sister Jenia and I visited our brother Yizhak and his family in Riga a few times during the 1950s. He was now a religious Jew. (the rest of us were secular and never set our foot in a synagogue as adults). He was getting in trouble with the Soviets for teaching Hebrew to young Jewish children. He was sent to Siberia for Zionist activities. He became sick and after many pleas to the Soviet authorities he was permitted to leave the Soviet Union in 1960 with his family. They settled in Haifa.

Back to the second half of the 1940s; Some survivors that escaped to the west tried to immigrate to the U.S. and to Eretz Israel that was under British control. It was very difficult to get visas to either places before 1948 when Israel became Independent and 1950 when the US eased the restriction on admission of Holocaust survivors.

Many survivors felt that Jews can only be safe in their own country. They wanted to come to Eretz Israel were Jews lived in larger numbers and the hope was that they can establish an independent country..

“In 1939, as a consequence of the [White Paper of 1939](#), the British reduced the number of immigrants allowed into Palestine. World War II and the [Holocaust](#) started shortly thereafter and once the 15,000 annual quota was exceeded, Jews fleeing Nazi persecution were interned in detention camps or deported to places such as [Mauritius](#). Starting in 1939, a clandestine immigration effort called [Aliya Bet](#) was spearheaded by an organization called [Mossad LeAliyah Bet](#). Tens of thousands of European Jews escaped the Nazis in boats and small ships headed for Palestine. The [Royal Navy](#) intercepted many of the vessels. Illegal immigration resumed after World War II. After the war 250,000 Jewish refugees were stranded in displaced persons (DP) camps in Europe. Despite the pressure of world opinion, in particular the repeated requests of US President [Harry S. Truman](#) and the recommendations of the [Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry](#) that 100,000 Jews be immediately granted entry to Palestine, the British maintained the ban on immigration.”

illegal immigration by [Jews](#), most of whom were [refugees](#) escaping from [Nazi Germany](#) and later [Holocaust survivors](#), to [Mandatory Palestine](#) between 1920 and 1948, in violation of the restrictions laid out in the British [White Paper of 1939](#), which dramatically increased

”
between 1939 and 1948”

My children Sali and his girlfriend Rachel and my daughter Zoozy and her friends would join many other youth at the beach where those illegal ships landed and sent secret messages to the Jewish public. After the immigrants were secretly taken ashore they would mix with Israeli born and they would all start dancing the Horah together. They

would hope that some would escape inland before the British arrived. They would teach the others a few Hebrew sentences and when the British came everyone answered the questions the same way "I am from Eretz Israel" . One time they arrested my son and his girlfriend. The next day they realized that they are "true Israelis" and let them go despite the fact that they refuse to answer any other questions.

"Over 100,000 Jews attempted to illegally enter Mandatory Palestine. There were 142 voyages by 120 ships. Over half were stopped by the British patrols. The [Royal Navy](#) had eight ships on station in Palestine, and additional ships were tasked with tracking suspicious vessels heading for Palestine. Most of the intercepted immigrants were sent to [internment camps](#) in [Cyprus](#): (Karaolos near [Famagusta](#), [Nicosia](#), [Dhekelia](#), and [Xylotymbou](#). Some were sent to the [Atlit detention camp](#) in Palestine, and some to [Mauritius](#). The British held as many as 50,000 people in these camps . Over 1,600 drowned at sea. Only a few thousand actually entered Palestine."

My son Sali met Rachel in Mikveh Israel where they were both students. It was a great love affair and when they were done with the school they moved together to Bitzaron, the moshav where Rachel's parents were amongst the founder and had a farm and orange groves. After living together on the parents farm and Rachel turning 18, the parents urged them to get married.

Finally they agreed to get married and on October 1947 they had a huge wedding with 500 guests at the moshav's Beit Ha'am across the street from the parents farm.

Only With the [establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948](#), Jewish displaced persons and refugees from Europe began streaming into the new sovereign state.

Just a few days after our son Salee married his beautiful bride Rachel (Daughter of Bela Shulman and Meir Gurevitz), On November 29 1947, we danced in the streets of Tel Aviv after [the United Nations adopted Resolution 181 \(also known as the Partition Resolution\)](#) that would divide Great Britain's former [Palestinian mandate into Jewish and Arab states in May 1948 when the British mandate was scheduled to end.](#)

The [General Assembly resolution on Partition](#) was greeted with overwhelming joy in Jewish communities and widespread outrage in the Arab world. In Palestine, violence erupted almost immediately, feeding into a spiral of reprisals and counter-reprisals. The British refrained from intervening as tensions boiled over into a low-level conflict that quickly escalated into a [full-scale civil war](#)

From January onwards, operations became increasingly militarized, with the intervention of a number of [Arab Liberation Army](#) regiments inside Palestine, each active in a variety of distinct sectors around the different coastal towns. They consolidated their presence in [Galilee](#) and [Samaria](#). [Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni](#) came from Egypt with several hundred men of the [Army of the Holy War](#). Having recruited a few thousand

volunteers, al-Husayni organized the blockade of the 100,000 Jewish residents of Jerusalem. To counter this, the [Yishuv](#) authorities tried to supply the city with convoys of up to 100 armored vehicles, but the operation became more and more impractical as the number of casualties in the relief convoys surged. By March, Al-Hussayni's tactic had paid off. Almost all of [Haganah's](#) armored vehicles had been destroyed, the blockade was in full operation, and hundreds of Haganah members who had tried to bring supplies into the city were killed. The situation for those who dwelt in the Jewish settlements in the highly isolated [Negev](#) and north of Galilee was even more critical.

While the Jewish population had received strict orders requiring them to hold their ground everywhere at all costs, the Arab population was more affected by the general conditions of insecurity to which the country was exposed. Up to 100,000 Arabs, from the urban upper and middle classes in Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem, or

Jewish-dominated areas, evacuated abroad or to Arab centers eastwards.

This situation caused the United States to withdraw its support for the Partition Plan, thus encouraging the [Arab League](#) to believe that the Palestinian Arabs, reinforced by the Arab Liberation Army, could put an end to the plan. The British, on the other hand, decided on 7 February 1948 to support the annexation of the Arab part of Palestine by Transjordan.

Although a certain level of doubt took hold among Yishuv supporters, their apparent defeats were due more to their wait-and-see policy than to weakness. [David Ben-Gurion](#) reorganized Haganah and made conscription obligatory. Every Jewish man and woman in the country had to receive military training. Thanks to funds raised by [Golda Meir](#) from sympathizers in the United States, and [Stalin's](#) decision to support the [Zionist](#) cause, the Jewish representatives of Palestine were able to sign very important armament contracts in the East. Other Haganah agents recuperated stockpiles from the Second World War, which helped improve the army's equipment and logistics. [Operation Balak](#) allowed arms and other equipment to be transported for the first time by the end of March.

Ben-Gurion invested [Yigael Yadin](#) with the responsibility to come up with a plan of offense whose timing was related to the foreseeable evacuation of British forces. This strategy, called Plan Dalet, was readied by March and implemented towards the end of April A

separate plan, [Operation Nachshon](#), was devised to lift the [siege of Jerusalem](#). 1500 men from Haganah's Givati brigade and [Palmach](#)'s Harel brigade conducted sorties to free up the route to the city between 5 and 20 April. Both sides acted offensively in defiance of the Partition Plan, which foresaw Jerusalem as a [corpus separatum](#), under neither Jewish nor Arab jurisdiction. The Arabs did not accept the Plan, while the Jews were determined to oppose the internationalisation of the city, and secure it as part of the Jewish state.⁴mThe operation was successful, and enough foodstuffs to last two months were trucked into Jerusalem for distribution to the Jewish population. The success of the operation was assisted by the death of al-Husayni in combat. During this time, and independently of Haganah or the framework of Plan Dalet, irregular fighters from [Irgun](#) and [Lehi](#) formations massacred a substantial number of Arabs at [Deir Yassin](#), an event that, though publicly deplored and criticized by the principal Jewish authorities, had a deep impact on the morale of the Arab population and contributed to generate the [exodus of the Arab population](#).

At the same time, the Arab Liberation Army was roundly defeated at [Mishmar HaEmek](#) in its first large-scale operation, coinciding with the loss of their [Druze](#) allies through defection.

Within the framework of the establishment of Jewish territorial continuity foreseen by Plan Dalet, the Haganah, Palmach and Irgun forces intended to conquer mixed zones. The Palestinian Arab society was shaken. [Tiberias](#), [Haifa](#), [Safed](#), [Beisan](#), [Jaffa](#) and [Acre](#) fell, resulting in the flight of more than 250,000 Palestinian Arabs.

The British had, at that time, essentially withdrawn their troops. The situation pushed the leaders of the neighboring Arab states to intervene, but their preparation was not finalised, and they could not assemble sufficient forces to turn the tide of the war. The

majority of Palestinian Arab hopes lay with the [Arab Legion](#) of Transjordan's monarch, King Abdullah I, but he had no intention of creating a Palestinian Arab-run state, since he hoped to annex as much of the territory of the [British Mandate for Palestine](#) as he could. He was playing a double game, being just as much in contact with the Jewish authorities as with the Arab League.

In preparation for the offensive, Haganah successfully launched Operations [Yiftah](#) and Ben-'Ami to secure the Jewish settlements of [Galilee](#), and [Operation Kilshon](#), which created a united front around Jerusalem. The inconclusive meeting between [Golda Meir](#) and Abdullah I, followed by the [Kfar Etzion massacre](#) on 13 May by the Arab Legion led to predictions that the battle for Jerusalem would be merciless.

On 14 May 1948, [David Ben-Gurion](#) declared the establishment of the [State of Israel](#) and the [1948 Palestine war](#) entered its second phase with the intervention of the Arab state armies and the beginning of the 1948 **Arab–Israeli War**.

Our entire family joined the Israeli arm forces. Our daughter Zoozie was a nurse in the Jerusalem region. I as a nurse volunteered for service in The central area Our son Salee and his wife Rachel volunteered to fight in the Negev. Negev



Israeli soldiers in [Nirim](#)



Israeli soldiers in [Negba](#)

The Egyptian force, the largest among the Arab armies, invaded from the south.

On 15 May 1948, the Egyptians attacked two settlements: [Nirim](#), using artillery, armored cars carrying cannons, and [Bren carriers](#); and [Kfar Darom](#) using artillery, tanks and aircraft. The Egyptians' attacks met fierce resistance from the few and lightly armed defenders of both settlements, and failed. On 19 May the Egyptians attacked [Yad Mordechai](#), where an inferior force of 100 Israelis armed with nothing more than rifles, a medium machinegun and a [PIAT](#) anti-tank weapon, held up a column of 2,500 Egyptians, well-supported by armor, artillery and air units, for five days. The Egyptians took heavy losses, while the losses sustained by the defenders were comparatively light.

One of the Egyptian force's two main columns made its way northwards along the shoreline, through what is today the [Gaza Strip](#) and the other column advanced eastwards toward [Beersheba](#) To secure their flanks, the Egyptians attacked and laid siege to a number of [kibbutzim](#) in the [Negev](#), among those [Kfar Darom](#), [Nirim](#), [Yad Mordechai](#), and [Negba](#). [The

Israeli defenders held out fiercely for days against vastly superior forces, and managed to buy valuable time for the IDF's [Givati Brigade](#) to prepare to stop the Egyptian drive on Tel Aviv.

On 28 May the Egyptians renewed their northern advance, and stopped at a destroyed bridge north to [Isdud](#). The Givati Brigade reported this advance but no fighters were sent to confront the Egyptians. Had the Egyptians wished to continue their advance northward, towards [Tel Aviv](#), there would have been no Israeli force to block them.

Further information: [Operation Pleshet](#)

From 29 May to 3 June, Israeli forces stopped the Egyptian drive north in [Operation Pleshet](#). In the first combat mission performed by Israel's fledgling air force, four [Avia S-199s](#) attacked an Egyptian armored column of 500 vehicles on its way to [Isdud](#). The Israeli planes dropped 70 kilogram bombs and strafed the column, although their machine guns jammed quickly. Two of the planes crashed, killing a pilot. The attack caused the Egyptians to scatter, and they had lost the initiative by the time they had regrouped. Following the air attack, Israeli forces constantly bombarded Egyptian forces in Isdud with [Napoleonic](#) cannons, and IDF patrols engaged in small-scale harassment of Egyptian lines. Following another air attack, the Givati Brigade launched a counterattack. Although the counterattack was repulsed, the Egyptian offensive was halted as Egypt changed its strategy from offensive to defensive, and the initiative shifted to Israel.

On 6 June, in the [Battle of Nitzanim](#), Egyptian forces attacked the kibbutz of [Nitzanim](#), located between Majdal (now [Ashkelon](#)) and Isdud, and the Israeli defenders surrendered after resisting for five days. My daughter in law was pregnant but continued serving in the army. After a few weeks of heavy and dangerous duty she had a miscarriage. She continued serving with my son in the same unit. She was responsible for communication with the headquarter, In the end of July she found herself pregnant again. At this time she asked for vacation and was done with her army service

since the pregnancy was high risk. My son was still serving in the Negev. Though the United Nations brokered two cease-fires during the conflict, fighting continued into 1949. Israel and the Arab states did not reach any formal armistice agreements until February. Under separate agreements between Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria, these bordering nations agreed to formal armistice lines.

Rachel was staying with me in Tel Aviv during the last weeks of her pregnancy. She was seeing doctors in Rehovot Beit Yoldot hospital in the months before. On the 26th of March (1949) she started labor. My son was far away in the Negev still serving in the army and we had no way of communicating with him. We notified all of Rachel's relatives by phoning the kibbutzim and Moshavim where they lived (not many people had private phone lines in Israel at that time) . Rachel's first cousin Eli Bender age 16 said that he will hitch hike to the Negev and find Salee and get him to come back with him to Rehovot which was easier to get to from the negev at that point of time when much of the roads were closed and there was no public transportation due to the war. I told Rachel that we have time since it is a first time giving birth. We took a taxi to get to Rehovot, She was in Labor for more than 24 hours. Salee arrived one hour before she gave birth to you Eilat on the evening of the 27th of March. you know why you were called Eilat? Your father was with the Negev Brigade on March 10 at 15:00, the Negev Brigade reached the abandoned police station at Umm Rashrash (a few weeks later the area was renamed Eilat where the city of [Eilat](#) was later built).

At the end of 1949 our brothers Abe and Benny came for a visit to Israel from America. It was almost 40 years since we have seen our brother Abe. I was 5 and Jenia was 3 when he left

Lithuania in 1911. We took them in our brother Lova's car to see all the major sights all over Israel. Immediately we felt like a very united and loving family

Notes by Lola's granddaughter Eilat Gordin Levitan.

Lola told me her story up to 1949-1950 when she started the 3rd chapter of her life in a new continent with a new husband. She knew that I was familiar with the part of her story after she left Israel and settled in New York city. Yet she did not want to share with me some details which we all knew. She was fearing that she will have to answer some unpleasant questions.

As she told me at the end of 1949 her brothers Abe and Benny came for a visit in Israel. It was almost 40 years since Abe have seen any of his siblings beside Benny who came to the US in the 1920s. Lola was only five and Jenia was two or three when Abe left for America. The visit of the brothers was wonderful. The siblings (Abe, Beno, Lova, Lola and Jenia) traveled together in Lova's car all over Israel visiting relatives and sightseeing. They got along great. Lola's adventurous nature took over. It was time to take care of herself. Her son was married and his wife Rachel was pregnant with a second child. He was studying in the Hebrew University while his family was living in the farm that belong to his wife's parents. His wife Rachel opened a preschool in the farm to supplement their income. Lola's daughter Zoozie worked as an RN in Beilinson hospital and was about to be married to Yoske Gefen. Shlomo and I owned a nice apartment on the top floor in Nachmany Street 48 in Tel Aviv.

Lola was 44 and still a beautiful and vital and fearless woman. She felt that it is time for her to move on and start taking care of what she wanted and needed. Her children and her husband are doing well and they will be fine without her. She needs to find a new quest in her life. The problem she faced was that she was never able to tell the all truth to the people she loved.

How could she tell the husband who loved her so much that she is done with the marriage and is moving to another continent? She was unable to say it to her husband or to her kids. She reverted to her old ways telling them about a short trip. She only told them that she is going to visit her brothers and she is also found a position to be a speaker in Jewish organizations in the US where she will go to Jewish centers to speak about the new country and the wonderful progressive society in Israel in order to collect funds for Israel . Lola had a true joie de vivre. There was childlike quality about her, in the best of way – she was enthusiastic about everything she has done. She loved meeting and hosting people of all backgrounds. Her joy for life was almost magnetic and caused other people she met to be happier and feel loved when she was around, She had a spirit of optimism and she was seeing/bringing the best in people. The worst thing she would say about anyone she ever met was that they were provincial with small town mentality. Her open mindedness, vitality and curiosity made her loved by anyone who knew her, she truly had an amazing spark.

. Here is how Gladys the daughter of Lola's brother Abe described meeting her aunt Lola for the first time. “ We all gathered at our fathers house to meet his sister who arrived

from Israel the night before. We accepted an old lady who will hardly speak English. Down the stairs came a beautiful woman dressed in fancy tailor suit looking like a movie star just a few years older than us! She said to us in perfect English “How are you darlings I am so happy to meet you” Immediately she handed presents to each one of us and we were all so charmed by her”

After a period of very successful project of telling the story of the establishment of Israel in Jewish centers in order to collect funds for the new country, Lola decided to start taking care of her own needs. She knew that New York was the only city she would feel at home. She took jobs as a private nurse to a wealthy woman who was sick. She had a place to stay and a nice salary. When the woman passed away she found other such jobs with people who needed 24 hours care. After a while she had a nest egg. She started working in a hospital during day shifts.

She met physicians and other staff members who asked her for dates but those who were her age were already married. She met 22 year old William Moher. He was from an Irish Catholic background. His mother was her patient at the hospital. After his mother passed away they started dating. He was assuming that she was divorced. Eventually they moved together to a very large apartment .It was on the 10th floor of 600 w 161 street in Washington Hights. Lola lived with Bill at the same address for almost 40 years until her death in 1989. During those years Washington Heights' upwardly mobile White residents began to leave in great numbers, while the lower-income Latino population saw great increases. There was much more crime in the area in later years but Lola refused to leave. They were always hosting guests from Israel in their large apartment. Beside the 2 and a half bedrooms they had a family room, a living room a dining room and a hall way. Each of those

rooms had sofas that could open to double beds and television sets which made it so Lola could have 3 families visiting at the same time. She was the most gracious hostess She would arrange for tickets for Broadway shows and Radio city. She loved kids and she would give her credit cards for Macy's or Blumingdales to buy presents for the kids.

Lucky for Bill who also loved children her daughter Zoozie came with her two year old daughter Anat to New York in 1954 and lived with them for 4 years. Zoozie was busy studying for her masters at Columbia University in New York. Lola and Bill took care of Anat and Bill was like a father to her for the rest of his life.

In 1960 my mother my two brothers and I stayed with Lola and Bill in New York while my father was doing his sabbatical in Cornell. He would fly or drive every second weekend to visit us in New York. There was a constant stream of visitors from Israel at the apartment. Bill was always very tolerant and kind to all of us.

Eventually my grandfather Solomon found out about Bill. For the sake of the grandchildren he corrected the situation and gave her a divorce. It turned out that she was a bigamist for quite a while.

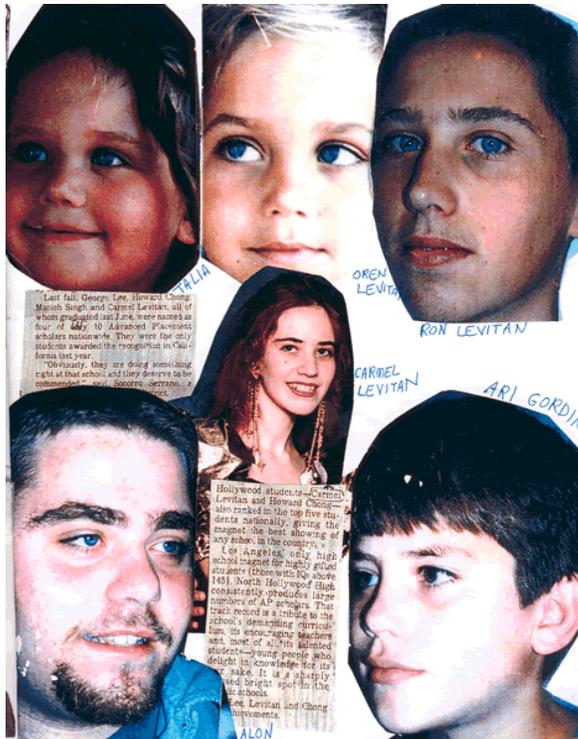
My grandfather forgave Lola. In later years he would meet her during her many visits to Israel. During his one visit to New York he came to see her in her apartment. No one could ever stay mad at her. She had a certain magic about her. We all knew that it is wasteful to argue with her, whatever Lola wants Lola gets. Unlike the rest of her family Lola (and Bill) did not want to own real estate. With the money Lola was able to save she purchased a beautiful apartment for Zoozie in Muzir Street in Tel Aviv in a new building complex (Shikunei Nave) When Anat attended the Hebrew University Lola Purchased an apartment for her in Jerusalem. Lola red loved her big apartment where she could host so many people. She refused to leave when the area suffered for much crime. While going shopping she would carry old purses with a few dollars in case she was rubbed (she paid for everything

with a credit card she hid) Her adventures nature was there until
the end and she loved meeting new people from different cultures.
She did not fear petty criminal and was willing to take the risk
living next to them.



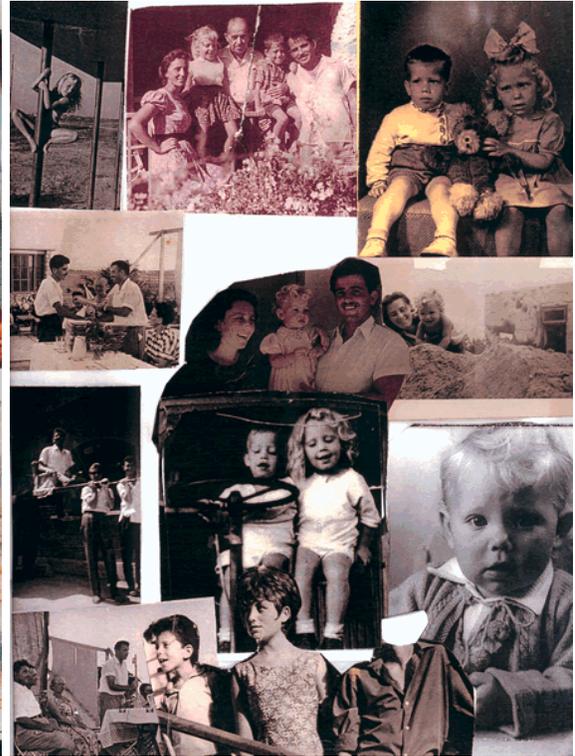
Lola with her first great granddaughter Carmel, Lola's son Salee, his wife Rachel

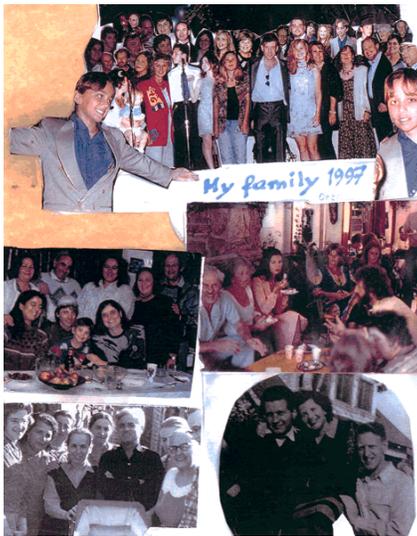
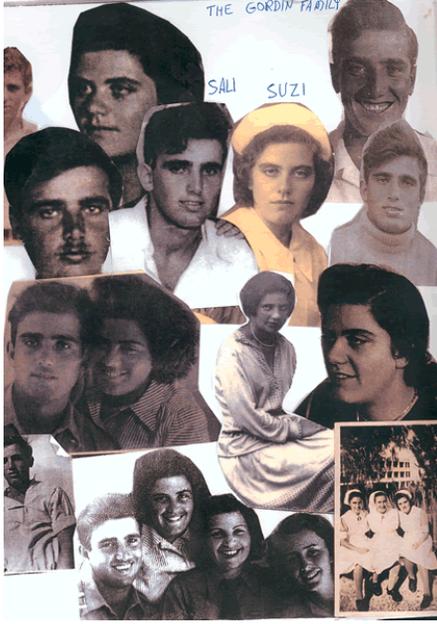
Granddaughter Eilat



Six of Lola's great grandchildren. (Talia, Oren, Ron, Alon and Carmel Levitan, Ari Gordin

Missing from the picture her seventh great grandchild who was born in 2019.









They all appear older. Your mother's birth seems to be in 1906 when her mother was 42 . Lola seems to be born as Chana in 1903. Abe is Abraham Nechemia born in 1890. Lova is correct in 1895 ; Lithuania, LitvakSIG Census & Family Lists from Various Districts, 1795-1900 collection



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Notes by Lola's granddaughter Eilat Gordin Levitan.

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on and start taking care of what she wants. Her children and her husband are doing well and they will be fine without her and she needs to find a new quest in her life. The problem she faced was that she was never able to tell the all truth to the people she loved. How could she tell the husband who loved her so much that she is done with the marriage and is moving to another continent? She was unable to say it to her husband or to her kids. She only told them that she is going to visit her brothers and she is also found a position to be a speaker in Jewish organizations in the US where she will go to Jewish centers to speak about the new country and the wonderful progressive society in Israel in order to collect money for Israel which was so needed. Soon after [its establishment in 1948](#), the emerging state of Israel found itself lacking in both food and foreign currency. In just three and a half years, the [Jewish population of Israel](#) had doubled, increased by nearly 700,000 immigrants. Consequently, the Israeli government instigated measures to control and oversee distribution of necessary resources to ensure equal and ample rations for all Israeli citizens.

In addition to the problems with the provision of food, national austerity was also required because the state was lacking in foreign currency reserves. Export revenues covered less than a third of the cost of imports, and less than half of the consequent deficit was covered by the Jewish loan system known as *Magbiyot* ([Hebrew: מגביות](#), lit. *Collections*). Most financing was obtained from foreign banks and gas companies, which, as 1951 drew to an end, refused to expand the available credit. In order to supervise the austerity, Prime Minister [David Ben-Gurion](#) ordered the establishment of the [Ministry of Rationing and Supply](#)

Lola had a true *joie de vivre*. There was childlike quality about her, in the best of way – she was enthusiastic about everything she has done. She loved meeting and hosting people of all

backgrounds. she had a joy for life, always an optimism seeing the best in people. The worst thing she would say about anyone she ever met was that they were provincial with small town mentality. Open mindedness, vitality and curiosity which made her loved by anyone who knew her, she truly had an amazing spark