

THE IVANSK PROJECT e-NEWSLETTER

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This edition of the e-Newsletter is devoted to a single subject, "The Funeral". The Funeral is an account written by Yitz'chak Goldstein describing the last days of Jewish Life in Ivansk when our people realized that they were about to be exterminated by the Germans. This is a somber and tragic story, and it seemed inappropriate to include unrelated topics in the face of this overwhelming catastrophe.

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This issue of the Ivansk Project e-Newsletter was revised in 2008.

BACKGROUND TO "THE FUNERAL": The Plight of Polish Jews under the Nazis, 1939-1942

by Norton Taichman, Narberth, Pennsylvania

World War II began on 1 September 1939 when the *Wehrmacht* (German army) smashed across Poland's western frontier. The Poles fought bravely but were no match for the might of the Third Reich. Despite pledges of support from France and Britain, Poland stood alone. Her fate was sealed on 17 September when the Soviet army invaded from the east. Following Poland's surrender, the Germans and the Soviets divided the country into roughly equal parts, adhering to a protocol that they had established just 8 days before the onset of war (the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact).

The Germans partitioned their sector into two territories. The western portion was annexed and incorporated into East Prussia. This zone was “Germanized” by the influx of German nationals as well as *Volksdeutsche*, ethnic German minorities living within pre-war Poland. The eastern remnant was designated as the *Generalgouvernement* (General Government) and was to serve as the dumping ground for inferior races. Iwaniska (Ivansk) was located in the *Generalgouvernement*.

The Nazis immediately began to brutalize both Poles and Jews in the conquered territories. Poles were displaced from their homes and their leadership and intelligentsia were murdered or imprisoned. But the Nazis’ full fury was reserved for the Jews. Jews living in the newly incorporated lands, as well as those in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were slated for expulsion to the *Generalgouvernement*. The long-range plan was to enslave the Poles, gain more living space (*Lebensraum*) in the east, drive the Jews as far away as possible (even Madagascar was considered as a possibility) or if needs be, annihilate them.

During 1939-1940 the plight of the Jews in German-occupied Poland steadily deteriorated. The notorious Hans Frank was governor of the *Generalgouvernement* and implemented a policy of intimidation, mass executions, compulsory labor, limitation of free movement, confiscation of property, imposition of crippling taxes, compulsory wearing of the yellow Star of David, and the creation of ghettos to confine, impoverish and isolate the Jewish population. Food became scarcer, and the specter of starvation was very real. Concentration camps were being established, but at this early stage in the war they were primarily employed to incarcerate Polish political prisoners.

In 1940 the German war machine turned westward and quickly overpowered Denmark, Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium and France. The Jews in these countries now came under the Nazi boot. Plans had been formulated to “resettle” these people in the east. But the Nazis began to appreciate that they were saddled with just too many Jews; relocation no longer appeared to be a tenable option. The situation became more acute in June 1941 when the Germans overran Russian-occupied Poland and invaded the Soviet Union: now even more Jews needed to be dealt with. The time had come to destroy the Jews once and for all!

The extermination of European Jewry became the primary responsibility of the *Einsatzgruppen*, special mobile death squads of the SS. These units followed the *Wehrmacht* into Poland, Russia, the Baltic States, and the Ukraine and had a free hand in rounding up and massacring Jews, communists, and partisans. The *Einsatzgruppen* acquired willing accomplices in the Baltic States and the Ukraine. The *Wehrmacht* worked hand-in-hand with the SS in slaughtering helpless men, women and children. Even if a Jew managed to escape the roundups s/he still needed assistance from Christian countrymen to survive; many Poles helped at great personal risk but others looked the other way or betrayed Jews to the Germans. Despite all the Jewish blood that was being shed during 1940-1941, the Nazis believed that the methods employed by the *Einsatzgruppen* (including starvation, incitement of pogroms, mass execution by shooting or by carbon monoxide poisoning in sealed gas vans) were inefficient and taking too long to cleanse Europe of its 11 million Jews. Something had to be done to speed things up.

On the 20 January 1942 Reinhard Heydrich, Chief of the German State Police and of the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, Security Service of the SS) was appointed by Heinrich Himmler to organize and chair a conference in Wannsee, a Berlin suburb. The purpose was to discuss more efficient and systematic means to achieve the *Endlösung der Judenfrage*, “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question”. The meeting took place in a lakeside villa (which the Nazis had confiscated from its Jewish owner) and was attended by 15 high-ranking Nazi officials and administrative functionaries. At the conclusion of the Wannsee Conference a set of principles had been established to coordinate industrial resources (eg, the railways) with the SS to facilitate rounding up and

transporting the entire population of European Jews to death camps in Poland. Adolph Eichmann was given the responsibility of organizing and implementing The Final Solution.

In 1942 the expulsion and destruction of European Jewry gathered momentum. Throughout the German empire entire villages, towns and cities were methodically cleansed of Jews. Never before had any nation committed itself to destroying an entire people. The hapless Jews were crammed into cattle cars and dispatched under unspeakable conditions to the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor and Treblinka. Thousands died on a daily basis. Hitler's dream of a *judenfrei* (Jew-free) Europe seemed at hand. The black smoke belching from the crematoria ushered in a new and terrible Dark Age.

In the autumn of 1942 the Jews of Ivansk learned that it was their turn.

And this is where we enter into the account of "The Funeral".

For more detailed background information on the status of the Jews in Ivansk during the German occupation, read the **Pinkas HaKehillot of Iwaniska** that was published in Issue #2 of The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter (January-February 2004). If you do not have a copy of that newsletter, you can access it at our temporary web site; < <http://www.ivansk.thirdeyevue.net/> >.

In addition, here are two recent, highly recommended publications that describe the Nazis obsession with and their policies against the Jews:

Browning, Christopher R. 2004. **The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942.** University of Nebraska Press (Lincoln) and Yad Vashem (Jerusalem).

Fischer, Klaus P. 2001. **The History of an Obsession: German Judeophobia and the Holocaust.** The Continuum Publishing Group. New York, NY.

THE FUNERAL

As told by Yitz'hak Goldstein.

Written (in Yiddish) by L. Spiro and published in *Letzte Neiyes* on 24 April 1979.
Translated into English by Miriam Beckerman, October 1987.
Rabbi Wayne Allen's suggestions are gratefully acknowledged.

The paragraphs are numbered to serve as reference points for discussion in the *Commentary* that follows the document. Editorial comments are in [square brackets].

1. After Yom Kippur the Rabbi [Rabbi Rabinowicz] called Matis [Yitz'nak Goldstein's brother] and the complete Judenrat and suggested that in the last days prior to the "oiszidlung" [deportation] all the Torah Scrolls should be gathered from the city and be buried in the Jewish cemetery.

2. Immediately after Sukkot 1942, the German gendarme informed us that the following day they were leaving for Rakov, a town twenty kilometers from Ivansk, in order to carry out the “oiszidlung” there. Incidentally, the Madjitzer Rebbe was, for many years, the Rakover city Rabbi. We knew that right after Rakov [Rakow], it would be Ivansk’s turn; therefore, it was decided to bury the Torah Scrolls right there in the Jewish cemetery on the day of the Rakover “oiszidlung”. The Moreh Hora’a [a teacher versed in Jewish law] Reb Yekeleh Aharons Mandelmilkh left one Sefer Torah for himself.

3. The cemetery was two kilometers outside of the city. In order to venture out of the city, it was necessary to obtain a special permit; so the authorities were informed that a dead person had to be buried. The whole shtetl participated in the Funeral, young and old, religious and non-religious, women with infants in their arms, even the sick. In order to reach the cemetery it was necessary to travel a kilometer and a half on the Rakover railway train, then turn right for another half kilometer, on a narrow path. After reaching the cemetery everyone saw the gendarme riding back from Rakov. A great fear fell upon the whole assembly and people started to shove one another – they shrank with fear. Matis calmed them down, saying that the Funeral was being legally conducted.

4. A long grave was dug. The Rabbi stood outside the gate. He was a Kohen. The cemetery was enclosed with a stone wall on three sides and on the fourth side many stones were piled up, so that when there would be the need to enlarge the cemetery more land could be purchased and then closed in.

5. The Rabbi stood behind the stones and started to speak, as though to himself, in Hebrew: “There is a Hebrew law that it is forbidden for a Kohen to stand where there is a dead body; however, it is also written that a Kohen is permitted to come close to a dead one in the case of a family member for example, parents, children, one’s wife, brothers and sisters. When the Torah Scrolls are being buried, it is as though the whole city of Ivansk was being buried and Ivansk is like a member of my family, therefore, God of the Universe! I permit myself to tread on the soil of this cemetery.”

6. With these words he entered through the gate. When he reached the resting place of the Torah Scrolls which were lying beside the open grave, he began the eulogy with the following words: “Look from on High and see, for we were a mockery and derision amongst the nations. We were considered to be sheep used for meat at a feast, for killing and slaughter. For a plague and a disgrace”, and he entered into a conversation with God: “King of the Universe, has Israel sinned more than all other nations? You see that your children are being slaughtered, your daughters are being raped, men are being murdered, women and children are being put to death by all sorts of means. They are being burnt and buried alive. Young children are torn apart into pieces and the heads of nursing infants are smashed against the walls. Synagogues and Houses of Study are being converted into horse stables and where are you, King of the Universe? Your people are being murdered and you stand from the distance and remain silent?”

7. I watched the Rabbi’s face. Suddenly I saw a change come over his face. He became pale, yellow and green. He broke out into a sweat. Tears streamed down from his eyes and he cried out: “God! God!” raising his arms up high. He remained silent for a second. Suddenly he called out: “Could it be that there is nothing in Heaven?” and he was silent.

8. A large part of the congregants didn't understand any Hebrew; nevertheless a loud terrible cry broke out. Each one saw themselves as though at their own funeral. The human mind is incapable of gasping the horror of that moment. A congregation of more than two thousand Jews stood by the open grave. Young and old women with young children in their arms, whose great-great grandfather of their great-grandfathers were born in Ivansk and lived out their lives here and died here (Ivansk is a very old city). They know that tomorrow none of them will be here. They will never again see the shtetl and in a few days time, their remains will be a heap of ash. There stood the Rabbi, a deeply religious man, who sucked his religiosity together with his mother's milk. He was raised and lived all his life in deep faith and piety. He makes his reckoning with the King of the Universe, breaks down and begins to doubt the existence of God.

9. Then the Rabbi turned to the assembled ones, particularly to us, the young ones, and swore on our behalf that all who survive the war should, before anything else, take out the Torah Scrolls and once more establish a Jewish Kehillah in Ivansk. There was still a spark of life in him and he still believed that many would survive the war and these should tell the world what the German nation, with the help of a large part of the Polish population, did to us.

10. The funeral took place on the 13th of October 1942. The next day, October the 14th, the gendarme, together with the local firefighters, surrounded the shtetl. The firefighters knew every corner and every back lane of the shtetl, so that nobody could escape.

11. The Germans issued an order that all the Jews should assemble in the city's market. Three hundred Jews, in particular young ones, managed to escape from the shtetl. A large number of them ran to the forest, a few hid with Polish acquaintances in the shtetl and in the surrounding towns, and for this they were paid well. One hundred Jews were killed on the spot. The Moreh Hora'ah, Reb Yekeleh Aharons Mandlemilkh, didn't want to go out to the spot where they were doing the killing, so they shot him on the spot together with his wife, Chana-Sarah. He was wrapped in a talith and tefillin with a Sefer Torah in his arms.

12. At midnight the Germans led sixteen hundred Jews out of Ivansk. They went by foot twenty-five kilometers till they reached the shtetl Chmeluv [Cmielow]– the closest train station. They were loaded into train boxcars and were brought to Treblinka. From the sixteen hundred nobody was saved.

13. That same day the youth of the Polish underground (amongst them fiery communists who worked with me in the communist party and with whom we had become as close as brothers) spread throughout the shtetl and the surrounding villages and in the forest. They exhibited such efficiency that, in a short time, they managed to find all the hidden Jews and they turned them over to the Germans. From the three hundred hidden ones, two boys saved themselves.

2006, REMEMBERING THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE FROM IVANSK



October 14-15, 1942: Jewish life in Ivansk was extinguished when the Nazis and their collaborators brutally transported the town's Jews to their deaths in Treblinka. Sixty-four years later a group of Ivansker descendants marked the anniversary (according to the Hebrew calendar) of the deportation by gathering in the reclaimed Jewish cemetery and in the town square to commemorate the lives of those who were murdered in The Shoah. The group also paid homage to the memory of our people in Cmielow where they were forced to board the death trains. *(Photos thanks to Jack Bloomberg and Shelly Kesten)*

COMMENTARY ON THE FUNERAL

by Sonny Monheit

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

“The Funeral” is a chilling, eyewitness account of the events leading up to and including that day in October 1942 when the Jews of Ivansk gathered in their cemetery knowing that they were doomed and would be sent to their deaths within hours.

Yitz'chak Goldstein witnessed what happened on that terrible day and lived to tell the story. Goldstein and his older brother Matis formed part of the leadership of the Ivansk Jewish community during the German occupation. In this context it is not clear whether Yitz'chak or Matis was given the unenviable task of leading the Judenrat in implementing German decrees against the Jewish community. The Pinkas HeKehillot suggests that Yitz'chak was in charge of the council, but in The Funeral and in Yitz'chak's Testimony (below) there are several reasons to suspect that Matis may have lead the Judenrat. *If anyone can help resolve this question, we would appreciate hearing from you!*

The Germans entered Ivansk on September 7, 1939 and for a brief period they did not interfere in Jewish matters. But the situation soon deteriorated: this is detailed in the Pinkas HaKehillot of Iwaniska. Briefly, Jews faced humiliation; deportation; exploitation and forced labor; they were impoverished; deprived of their livelihood and property; they were subjected to random arrest and execution; they lived in constant terror. Several Polish townspeople, including the mayor, the priest and a former army officer assisted Jews, providing vital information on German activities and interceding on their behalf to mitigate German brutality. By contrast, a segment of the Polish peasantry was hateful of Jews and encouraged the Germans to confiscate Jewish assets. They even set fire to Jewish dwellings and falsely accused 10 Jews of setting the blaze. Unfortunately, the Germans killed 9 of the accused: only Yitz'chak Goldstein was released and went on to serve his beleaguered people. He cooperated with a young, progressive Rabbi Rabinowicz in establishing a food kitchen for the needy and helping to provide necessities for a group of destitute Viennese Jews who had been deported to Ivansk. In addition, both men urged the young people of Ivansk not to wait passively for the Germans to liquidate the town but to flee to the forests and fight!

1. In anticipation of the pending expulsion, Rabbi Rabinowicz called for a meeting that included Matis Goldstein and members of the town's Judenrat. The purpose was to arrange for the burial of the Torah Scrolls in the Jewish Cemetery, so that they would not fall into the hands of the Germans and thus be destroyed.

We have been told by a current inhabitant of Iwansika that the scrolls were unearthed by Polish people who used them to fabricate footwear.

2. Upon learning that the Germans were about to deport the Jews from the neighboring town of Rakov, the Jews of Ivansk knew that they were next in line for “resettlement”. A decision was made to bury the Torah Scrolls that day, which was 13 October 1942. We are told that a single Sefer Torah was not buried, but given to Moreh Hora'ah, Reb Yankel Aharons Mandelmilkh – a learned teacher and scholar of Jewish Law.

3. The Jews of Ivansk were confined in an “open ghetto” and were not allowed to leave the town without the consent of the German authorities. Fearing that the occupiers might not sanction the burial of the Sefer Torahs, the Jewish leadership devised a ruse to fool the occupiers into thinking that the community was seeking to bury one of its dead.

The shtetl’s Jewish population (approximately 2,000 souls) made its way to the cemetery. We do not know whether the scrolls were transported in a coffin or simply covered in “shrouds”; we have been told that in Ivansk Jews were buried in shrouds without being placed in a coffin. The text states that they “traveled ---on the Rakover railway train.” Although a spur rail line ran from Iwaniska to Rakov, it is inconceivable that the procession actually boarded a train. We have testimony that dead people were borne by pallbearers or by wagon to the cemetery, and thus it is reasonable to assume that the cortege bearing the Torahs may have followed the rail line to reach the graveyard. While we do not know the course of the rail line, it probably paralleled the Rakover Weg (Rakov Road). Today, we can follow the same course on the Rakover Weg, taking a right turn onto an unmarked dirt road to reach the cemetery.

While still on the Rakover Weg the procession encountered the band of Germans returning from the “*Aktion*” carried out in Rakov. Fearing that the Germans would discover their true intent, panic took hold of the Jews. But Matis assured the people that they had received permission for conducting the “funeral” and presumably he also warned them not to reveal that they intended to inter the Torahs. This worked and the people were allowed to proceed to the cemetery.

4. We are not aware of how many Sefer Torahs and other sacred objects were to be buried in the cemetery but “a long grave was dug” to accommodate these treasures.

Oral testimony of former Ivanskens indicates that the cemetery walls were made of red “brick” rather than stone (can anyone help us to resolve this question?). It was relatively easy to climb over the wall. A set of lockable wooden gates served as the entrance to the burial ground. [The cemetery was desecrated by the local population after the Germans were routed by the advancing Soviet army. The graveyard was rededicated by “The Ivansk Project” in 2006.]

5. Rabbi Rabinowicz was a Kohen. Kohanim are not permitted to enter the grounds of a cemetery or to touch the dead unless they are closely related to the deceased. Speaking in Hebrew, the Rabbi Rabinowicz explains why he feels he must enter the cemetery grounds even though he is a Kohen. The Torah scrolls become a metaphor for the Jews of Ivansk and his own family. And so the Rabbi grants himself permission to “tread on the soil of the cemetery”.

6. At the graveside the Rabbi challenges the Almighty. He cannot comprehend why God permits the Jewish people to be degraded, humiliated and slaughtered. Why does God “stand from the distance and remain silent?”

7. The Rabbi is overcome with emotion as he stands beside the open grave. Tears stream down his face. His faith is shaken to the core: “Could it be that there is nothing in Heaven?” “The Rabbi believes that God has forsaken His people”.

8. The text indicates that the Rabbi spoke in Hebrew. If that were the case most of the congregants would not have understood what he was saying. Nevertheless, they sensed his

meaning. All realized that centuries of Jewish life in Ivansk were at an end and that they would be turned into “a heap of ash”.

In the Testimony of Yitz'chak Goldstein that follows this commentary (below), we are told that the Rabbi spoke to his people in Yiddish. Thus it is not clear how Rav Rabinowicz addressed God and his people. It is possible that he addressed God in Hebrew and spoke to his fellow Jews in Yiddish.

9. The Rabbi has a special message for the young people. On their behalf he vows that any survivors should take it upon themselves to: (1) Relate what the Germans and many Poles did to the Jews. (2) Return the Torah Scrolls to the Synagogue. (3) Reestablish the Kehillah in Ivansk (the Kehillah is the traditional Jewish organization that governed community affairs, such as education, social services and religion).

10. & 11. “The Funeral” took place on October 13th, 1942. On the following day the expulsion began. Numerous accounts of brutal expulsions in other Polish shtetls have been published, and no doubt October 14th was a day of intense suffering in Ivansk.

Perhaps the dimensions of what our people suffered can begin to be appreciated by reading an excerpt from G. Renée’s eyewitness account of the roundup of the Jews in Łosice, Poland in August 1942. G. Renée was 10 years old when this happened and she hid with her parents, brothers and other relatives in a crawl space in an attic.

In her words, this is what transpired:

I remember waking up on a Saturday morning. I heard shots. Again I quickly ran to my window [in the attic, outside the crawl space]. That was my observation point. I looked around and saw dead people all around the square. Nobody moved and I couldn't understand that. About an hour later, I heard German voices: “ 'Raus! 'Raus! 'Raus! ” That was the one word that I learned very quickly. That meant “Out! Out! Out!” It was like dogs barking. And there were German voices telling everybody, “All Jews out! All Jews out on the square!” We heard people beginning to cry and chaos. My cousin started yelling to my family. My cousin finally shut the door [to the attic] and said, “All right, now you're in. Nobody out.” He closed the door [to the crawl space], and said, “Nobody's moving out of here. If you're going to die, you're going to die right here.” I started crying, but then he made me shut up. The only opening for air was a porthole under the roof. And I looked out and I saw lots of Jews with little packages walking towards the square. And I also saw my grandfather and grandma coming over, and they were looking up and deciding whether to come up, to come and hide with us or to go away. And finally I saw them walk again, walk away, and I never saw them again. I heard the people yelling and screaming and crying and shooting. And a whole town cried.

[cited in: **Witness: Voices from the Holocaust.** (Edited by J.M. Greene and S. Kumar). 2000. The Free Press, New York, NY. pp 57-59].

In Ivansk the Germans and their collaborators herded the Jews into the market square. It is not clear who actually collaborated with the Nazis: many local people have implicated Ukrainians. Goldstein accuses firefighters, but he did not actually witness these events (he may have assumed that they were complicit based on what happened in other towns). In this context, there are published accounts of Polish “Blue” police as well as Jewish police participating in the roundup and expulsion of Jews.

Approximately 100 Jews were shot in the market square or in their homes that day. Reb Yankel Aharons Mandelmilkh, wrapped in Tallis and Tefillin and holding the Sefer Torah, was murdered with his wife, Chana-Sarah. Three hundred Jews escaped by being concealed by Poles or by hiding in forest bunkers.

12. At midnight on October 15, 1942, 1600 remaining Jews were led out of Ivansk for the last time. They were marched to Chemoluv (Cmielow), a distance of 25 km and then to Ostrowa (Ostrowice) where they were loaded into cattle cars. All but one of the 1600 perished in the gas chambers of Treblinka. Only Israel Seltzer apparently escaped but we are not told what happened to him.

Can anyone tell us more about what happened to Israel Seltzer?

13. Yitz'chak Goldstein states that his former "brothers" in the Polish underground betrayed those who had escaped the roundup and only he and another person survived. However, in his autobiographical testimony (see below) Goldstein implicates farmers and peasants as being guilty of assisting the Germans. Thus, it is not clear who is largely to blame for collaborating with the Germans. In any event, their actions were despicable and these people are worthy only of contempt.

Immediately following the burial of the Sefer Torahs, about 300 individuals fled to the woods surrounding Ivansk where they hid in the underground bunkers that had been previously prepared. They were poorly organized as an underground resistance force and were very soon betrayed, discovered and executed.

SUMMARY

Every year a Yiskor Service is held at the Ivansker Section of Bathurst Lawn Cemetery in Toronto, with a gathering of Ivansker descendants. To this gathering, Henry Lederman memorializes those who perished during the Holocaust, as well as those who passed away up to the present, as he calls out the names of each and every departed Soul.

After studying "The Funeral" document myself, I find new meaning to the significance of the service. Standing before the marble obelisk I cannot help but feel myself being present on that October day in Ivansk in 1942, hearing Rabbi Rabinowicz addressing God and burying the Sefer Torahs. "The Funeral" is linked to the present. The memory of Ivansk will live on and will leave a legacy for future generations.

TESTIMONY OF YITZ'CHAK GOLDSTEIN

Yad Vashem, 0-3/1252. Jerusalem, Israel

The testimony of Yitz'chak Goldstein, which is presented below, provides an account of what happened in Ivansk and to Yitz'chak during the war years. Yitz'chak was in his early 30's when the war began and the next six years of his life were filled with hardship and deprivation. He escaped death on several occasions and survived to record his memoir shortly after the war: his testimony is housed in the Yad Vashem Archives (0-3/1252) in Jerusalem. He also wrote "The Funeral" several years later. Both accounts provide a harrowing glimpse of the tragedy that overwhelmed the Jewish people of Ivansk during World War II.

There is some confusion surrounding Goldstein's first name. In the testimony presented below he is referred to as "Ignacy" Goldstein (Ignacy being his Polish name, presumably the equivalent of Isaac). He is also called "T." Goldstein in the Pinkas HaKehillot of Iwaniska; we do not know what the "T" stands for (perhaps a nickname?). We prefer to call him by his Hebrew name, Yitz'chak.

Goldstein's account of "The Funeral" first appeared in Yiddish in 1979 and was translated into English by Miriam Beckerman in 1987 (her translation is presented above). In recent telephone conversations with Mr. Henry Lederman of Toronto (February 8, 2004 and March 7, 2004), I learned that he received a letter in Yiddish from Yitz'chak Goldstein in 1979 describing The Funeral. Mr. Lederman was a member of the Canadian Jewish Congress at the time and had the letter translated into English by the Congress, even before the Beckerman version. A framed copy of the Congress' translation hangs on the north wall of the Ivansker Mutual Benefit Society House, 3425 Bathurst Street in Toronto.

The English translation of Yitz'chak's testimony leaves a lot to be desired. Grammatical errors and spelling discrepancies abound, and in some places it is difficult to understand what is happening or keep track of the people involved in the story. Nevertheless, the account has not been altered; editorial comments [in square brackets] have been inserted in some places to clarify place names or other details. [Sonny Monheit]:

Ignacy Goldstein, Born 1907

Brothers: Matys, Mojesz [Moses], Mordechaj

Parents: No longer living

Education: Public school, farrier [one who tends to horses]

Since 1957, living in Israel: Helen Blum Street, No 60, 2nd entrance on ground floor.

He lives with his wife and two children. He manages a grocery shop.

[The town or city in Israel where Goldstein lived is not given.]

1. General Jewish Situation until 1939.

I was born and lived in a small town, Iwaniska, Region Opatow, in area Kieleckie [Kielce], until 1939. The town had a population of approximately 6,000. Approximately 60% of that population was comprised of Jewish people. They were employed in many different areas, typically in a poor sector of town. Many were, before the war, searching for food and left for Canada. Since then, a small Jewish Association was created from Iwaniska; one of the goals of the Association [The Ivansker Mutual Benefit Society in Toronto] was to help their friends in the old country. This is the

reason why, twice a year, there was monetary help forwarded for distribution. In addition, various individuals received money and parcels from their families. From this assistance from abroad, approximately 50% of the Jewish population was able to support themselves.

10% to 15% lived from various donations and handouts. 30% of the population was employed in small industry within the town, for example, tailoring. The remainder of the population was comprised of local rich people. My family belonged to this category; we were considered to be the third richest family.

Our wealth (wholesaling of eggs and other agricultural products) was valued at 50,000 zloty. Naturally, the wealthiest family had the most influence and power in Town. They had great influence on the local town.

2. Jewish Organizations Until 1939.

Before the war until 1939 there arrived in Iwanisk from Palestine, Mr. Lichtinger (currently residing in one Kibbutz). He was promoting Karen Kamemet [Keren Kayemet]. Mr. Lichtinger was familiar with the "internal workings" of the Town and promoted local organization as an example of Karen Kamemet. To the best of my knowledge, the beginnings of the organization took place in 1920's. Approximately 1924-1925, Mr. Mordechaj Blumenfeld (he currently resides in Canada) established an organization "Haskala". This was the beginning of a group later called Mizrachi. A Jewish-Hebrew library was established; financial assistance was given and a kitchen was established for the poor. There was also a school established, the "Tamud Tora" [Talmud Torah] where the basics of religion were taught. People had to pay for the school, however, children from poor families had substantial discounts or exemptions.

A few years later (1927-1928) another fanatical organization was established "Haskali". Three young people, Jakob Szapiro (Rabbi son, currently residing in Televiv [Tel Aviv]), Jacob's brother Majzess (currently residing in New York) and my brother Matys (he was helped by Kalmisz Blumenfeld currently residing in Toronto) began work for Karen Kajamet. After a certain time from these efforts "Haluc Haklali" grew. Many young people, (approximately 300) formed the membership. The above named people directed the group.

This group did a fair amount of work for Palestine and approximately 15 people immigrated to Palestine. Some of them were Zylberstein (currently in Ramet-lachak), Szoszana Batman (maiden name, currently residing in Giwataim) and others, the names of which I don't remember.

Until the Spanish War this organization worked very hard but, in 1936, we witnessed leftist influences and a fairly large group of young people (approximately 50) signed up for departure to Spain. This departure did not materialize for many different reasons, but the organization fell apart entirely. Nothing officially happened in 1939.

The above-named Haskala, a few years later, was reborn as Mizrachi and was directed by Ben-Cion Teperman (currently residing in Giwataim). This organization had very few members but they were extremely aggressive. From my youth I remember an incident which was proof of Mizrachi's influence in the religious struggle. In 1928 my father died. He was very religious, while my brothers and I were more progressive. Mizrachi members took advantage of our grief and, in the last moments of our father's life, made us promise to father on his death bed that his sons would follow his religious beliefs and sever our "non-religious" way of living. All of us understood that their actions were deliberate, however, none of us wanted to upset our father in his last moments. This however, did not stop Mizrachi in their eulogy to remind everybody that our non-religious existence sent our father to his grave.

Two years later, the elections voted sejm (senate) [the Polish parliament]. Mizrachi members tried to force everyone to vote for their selected members. One day, the same person who delivered the eulogy at my father's funeral, delivered a speech to influence everyone to vote for their people. At that time, the speaker and my brother Matys had a strong dispute. Matys mentioned that these were difference times from those when my father passed away, and today, neither him and many others would not listen to Mizrachi. This dispute lead to my brother being called various names, however, he had the support of the progressive youth movement in the town. All religious organizations comprised from older very religious sections of the population connected to Rabbis, were very aggressive.

3. Jews in Iwaniska from 1939 to mid-1941.

Germans entered the town on September 7, 1939. At the beginning, there were no special problems and no one was killed, nothing was burned. In Town, there was a small German group of soldiers and generally, they did not interfere with a small town's problems. Matters were, generally, handled by the local Polish police and also local Polish government. Jewish matters were in the hands of the Jewish "Gmina" which was elected and already a working organization prior to the war. The director and leader was the local tailor, who was unable to read or write and was a very poor man. He was a supporter of the local Rabbi from the religious organization, Israel Hirsh Teperman.

Sam Teperman was a quiet man, not too well educated. One cannot accuse him of doing anything wrong as he was incapable of doing anything wrong. However, in the early days of the German government, the Jewish religious organizations wanted to take advantage of Teperman's influence. In addition, with the German's assistance the progressive youths wanted to do the same. The religious groups assisted the Germans with many arrests and sent a number of people to the camps. They had prepared lists of peoples names for the Germans. After a while, Teperman was replaced by a much worse person, Mr. Feder.

By the end of 1940 one of the lists prepared for the Germans was shown to Mr. Bakas (I will explain who he was in a second). He had contacted us and the leadership of Jewish Organization had been taken over by the people from the previous organization Haluc-Haklali, and the leader of this organization was my older brother, whom I mentioned previously, Matys.

As I mentioned previously, life under German Occupation was not too bad. There were some arrests and relocations, but thanks to our contact with the National Army for which some of our people performed functions in German Police for the money, one could buy all sorts of favours. In practice, the power belonged to the Polish Police. Germans, who did not know our territory well, did not mix into the everyday life in our town. This however, came to an end in the second half of 1941. The Germans were asking for more and more money, sometimes for hundreds of thousands of Polish Zlotys and the Polish Gmina had to pay the money for the local natives. It was not always possible to distribute the money equitably.

The co-operation with A.K. [Armia Krajowa, the Home Army] was very strong from the beginning, however this co-operation was not with the entire organization but with one of their divisions. A.K. in our area, was sub-divided into two groups. The leader of the first group was previously mentioned, Mr. Bakas. In 1939 he was mobilized into the Polish army, however, he returned from the war in the latter part of 1939. After his return, the Germans wanted to give him the leadership of the local Polish Police. Before him, the leader was somebody else, however, the local citizens of the Town were not happy with his leadership. They were pleased to see Mr. Bakas [Beks- see *Pinkas HaKehillof*] become the leader. For that reason, both Polish and the Jewish people were

encouraging him to accept this leadership and they were contributing financially in order to assist him in supporting his family.

Mr. Bakas was very helpful the entire time and worked very closely with our group, and although there were some communists, this did not disturb him at all.

At the end of 1940, or in the early part of 1941, Mr. Bakas was sent to the school [presumably run by the SS] near Cracaw [Cracow]. After his return, he related to us all the details of training at the school and the details of the SS. upbringing. He shared with us all the information which he believed could be helpful to us.

In 1943, Mr. Bakas was killed by soldiers from the local army. It is my opinion that this was a pay-back by A.K. organization, members of which were sometimes given into German hands. Another person who co-operated with us was a Polish citizen, Mr. Mirowski [Mirovsky, the mayor-see *Pinckas HaKehillof*] who many times gave us good advice as to how to coexist with the Germans.

The other group of A.K. was directed by Mr. Leon Zagadlowski [Segeldovsky-see *Pinkas HaKehillof*], an Officer in Polish Reserve Army. He claimed that Jews were not friendly towards him in 1939 and therefore, he always expressed his unhappiness with the Jews in the later period. Quite openly he took a stance against Jews in Iwanisk and he also attempted to bring the local Church into the picture. Supposedly, he asked for the co-operation from the local priest, however, the priest rejected his request. From the beginning, Mr. Zagadlowski attempted to transfer the leadership of our organizations to a Polish person and he later received permission from the Germans to do that. Mr. Mirowski, however, had advised us of what was going to happen, and this allowed us to transfer some of our assets outside Iwanisk. This transfer of assets was supposed to take place in three days, but Mr. Zagadlowski somehow found out and he showed up in our organization with another Polish person. A fight erupted and my older brother, Moses, beat him up severely. Zagadlowski was not in good shape and we were concerned as to what would happen next. However, we found out that Zagadlowski had something against the Germans as well, and thanks to this event we smoothed things over.

In the later part of 1941, Mr. Zagadlowski, along with his friends, set a fire in a Jewish neighborhood. Many buildings amongst our buildings burned down. The Jews were blamed for this event. The Germans began to look for the villain who set the fire. Helpful Mr. Zagadlowski prepared a list of 10 names from which to select the guilty party. I was among the 10 people selected, however, at the last moment, Mr. Bakas saved me. The remaining 9 people were shot by the Germans. Among those people were Mrs. Watman and Ajzik Nisenbaum.

4. Resettlement.

This began in the early part of October 1941. We had a good idea that this was coming as two other towns Radomsk [Radom] and Ostrowice experienced the same thing. In Iwanisk a few months before resettlement began, various Jews and Jewish Groups huddled together in order to determine what could be done. The youth was of the opinion that we should not allow Germans to resettle us and they should leave town and go to the forests in the neighborhood. They could not agree whether this should be done in a large group or whether the youth should be sub-divided into small groups. The reason against going in a large group was the stand taken by the Polish population which was not friendly towards Jews. Many Poles used the saying that Jesus Christ sent Hitler over in order to get rid of the Jews. There was a feeling amongst Jews that Poles could not be trusted.

A decision was made to organize a number of small groups. Prior to that, we prepared food and other provisions. We also purchased many guns and ammunition from former soldiers and police, just in case. In our discussions, there participated a young Iwanisk rabbi, a nephew of the famous orthodox Jew from Radom named Chskiel Rabinowicz. Our decision was supported by him. The rabbi was supposed to go with us. From the early days of occupation, he adopted an initiative to participate in our discussions. It was his initiative to organize a kitchen for the poor people. In summary, we decided to go and disburse in the forests in small groups. In addition to guns and ammunition we also prepared potatoes in the woods and forests and underground bunkers for our families. We paid a local peasant, Mr. Subi a lot of money for assisting us in building an underground bunker for my family and the family of my fiancée.

The elder statesmen for the Jewish population in town decided to bury the religious books to protect them from destruction by the German and Polish people. During one of the Tuesdays in October, in a local Jewish Cemetery, the entire Jewish population of Iwanisk assembled. I was also there and I witnessed a very touching and emotional occurrence which I cannot forget even today. The hero of this gathering was our young Rabbi. He was a Cohen and therefore was not allowed to enter the cemetery. He stood outside and waited. All Jewish men shaved their beards in order not to be visible [recognized as Jews] to Germans and they dressed in European clothing and had different hats. Only the Rabbi looked like an old Jew with a beard in his black covering. I was lying on the grass and observed what was happening. Suddenly I heard the Rabbi say himself that "a Cohen is not allowed to be with the dead but there is an exception in the Tanach that if somebody very near dies, for example, brother, wife or child, then it is permitted to enter a cemetery. When somebody buries my religious and sacred books from my town which is as near to me as family I therefore, ask God to allow me to take advantage from the exception and therefore I am allowed to enter the cemetery". With those words he entered the cemetery, and came to the burial ground. He took the place of the men in charge of the ceremonies and he began the speech. I came very close to him and listened to what he had to say. The speech was very touching, tears were rolling down his cheeks and so this had very shocking impression on everyone present. The entire cemetery fell into silence. After a long while, the first person to speak again was the Rabbi. He spoke in Jewish, he directed his speech towards the youth and advised everybody of a religious saying that, if a disaster strikes somebody and this person does not know what to do, then one should sit tight and do nothing and rely solely on God. But in this case, we cannot sit and do nothing, therefore, I am fully supportive that the youth should leave for the forest and woods and should not wait for resettlement. It would be advisable to go in a large group, however, similar to our predecessors who left Egypt, they had two obstacles to overcome, namely, Faraona and the sea [Pharaoh and the Red Sea], in our case, we also have two obstacles, namely, the Germans and the Poles. Therefore, it is advisable to go in small groups. He requested us, the young people, that before departing town we should swear a few things;

1. that everyone of us who after the war remains alive, will relate the news of the unhappy events which took place in our town.
2. after the war the books which were buried will be returned to the synagogue
3. that the Jewish buildings will be rebuilt in Iwanisk
4. that every person who remains alive will repay the Germans and Poles for the lost blood of our brothers.

I have to admit that the events which took place on that day at the cemetery touched me deeply and until today, I cannot forget them.

In accordance with the decision made a few days, before resettlement, we left for the forest. Approximately 300 people, men and women between the ages of 16 - 40, small groups of a few people each. We disbursed into the nearby mountains. We hid in previously prepared underground

bunkers. We fought Germans only in self-defense as our ammunition was very limited. These groups were not joined together and they did not have a leader. This was our major mistake. We were weak and were not able to defend ourselves.

Nearby peasants and Germans were catching us without any major effort and they were destroying us systematically. Rabbi Rabinowicz, together with us, went to the forest. He was lost that same fall.

As I mentioned previously, our family had prepared an underground bunker which was prepared with the assistance of the local peasant, Mr. Subi. In the meantime, however, our mother and youngest brother was hidden in another place along with my fiancée with her mother, and in our underground bunker in the forest were located myself, my brother Matys and my brother Moses. Two brothers, Urmanow, Aron, Sztulburg [Uranow and Aron Sztulburg], Kalman Rotenburg and Rywa Neuman.

In the town of Iwanisk horrible events were taking place. Old and religious people were waiting for a miracle to happen in the last moments and they decided not to do anything. I was told that one of the local people, Jankiel Rymbol from the local religious organization decided not to leave his house. Dressed up in a Talis, he waited in his house for the Germans who, upon their arrival shot him and his wife dead. A similar end came to the secretary of the Jewish Organization, Mr. Prawerman. There were many examples of similar types in town. The remaining Jews were sent by the Germans to Cmielowa [Cmielow] from which place, together with Jews from the town of Cmielowa they were sent to the railway station in Ostrowa [Ostrowice] and from Ostrowa they were sent to Treblinka [Treblinka]. From Treblinka escaped one man, Mr. Israel Selcer [Israel Seltzer-see *Pinkas HaKehillot*].

5. Polish Stand in the Forests.

The experience in the forest was not that pleasant. The local peasants trapped many Jews and they were letting them go into German hands. The Germans also were hunting and trapping and every few days we heard of Germans discovering new underground bunkers. We received news that the wife and child of Mr. Rotenburg were killed. They were hidden by the former secretary, Mr. Winiawski who was a friend of Mr. Rotenburg. Mr. Winiawski was a drunk, but I don't think he was anti-Semitic. However, what has happened to the Rotenburg family, no-one was able to explain.

In general, Polish people acted in many different ways. In our forests before the death of my father there worked Mr. Jan Cosin. We lived with him closely, especially in our youth and kept quite close. After the death of my father, we sold our forest and our mother helped him to obtain a job in another place. A few months before resettlement started to take place, he arrived in our house and requested some monetary compensation. It was very difficult to discuss with him anything, however, we gave him some money just to get rid of him. However, his arrival at that particular time and his general conduct made a very unpleasant impression on us all. When, at the end of the conversation our mother reminded him about our old friendly relationship, Mr. Cosin said that he was very sorry but he felt that whatever was done by us had to be reported to the Germans. This, however, did not stop him from hiding one of our cousins.

The local priest behaved very nicely and pleasantly which I mentioned previously. He had refused to co-operate with Mr. Zagadlowski and at the beginning when we were exposed to losing our entire belongings, we asked the local priest to take over our assets under the Church's control. Then the priest answered that he could not do that as this would put the Church in a bad light and set a bad example for others giving everybody the impression that the Church grabbed and confiscated Jewish belongings. However he advised us that he could recommend somebody very honest in town who would assist us in that matter. He recommended the local miller, Mr. Gajewski.

Mr. Gajewski turned out to be a good man and he shared with us money and other things and he maintained good relationship with us even after the war.

Another example of Polish conduct towards Jews was somebody called Henrik Jagielski. He was a son of a well-known man from Iwanisk. Jagielski, who for political reasons lived in Opatowie [Opatów], had in Iwanisk an uncle with whom he was in close contact. Mr. Jagielski had two sons. Neither of them were sympathetic towards Jews. The second son, Henrik in 1939 in the fall, came back from the army and he was without any work and financial resources. The local youth group helped him and gave him work. In a short time, Mr. Jagielski became the assistant manager at the local fire station and co-operated with Mr. Zagadlowski and, in future and on many times he showed that he was an honest man.

As I said previously, myself, my brothers and some of our friends were located in the underground bunker some distance of 10 - 20 kilometres from Iwanisk. Pola-Suba, the person who built the bunker, was bringing us food and the news. One day he came and advised us that the Germans had found out the location of the bunker. He admitted that while he was building the bunker while being drunk, he told his friend and he even took his friend to help built the bunker and that this particular friend somehow advised Germans as to the bunker's location. In addition, nearby various notes written in handwriting on which the name of Goldstein was indicated. It was written that if somebody from the local village sent Jews to Germans, the entire village would be burned. We understood this as a provocation by Zagadlowski who ordered the local peasants to turn against us. In the bunker the mood was extremely poor. The previous day my two brothers, Matys and Moses went to town to obtain some news and so far had not returned. Mr. Rotenburg found out about the death of his wife and child and Rywka Neuman found out about the death of her mother. The four of us left the forest to go to town and meet my brothers to decide in a group what to do next.

In Iwanisk we had a hiding place. It was a place in our old stable, which had a hidden door and the stable was situated very conveniently. After dark, we entered the town and we wanted to wait until late at night in order to look for my brothers. My brothers were supposed to get in touch with the local priest and this was where we were supposed to go as well. Suddenly, I realized that in a nearby house of one of the Poles was my fiancée with her mother who were hiding in this particular place. I decided to go and see her in order to let her know that we changed our hiding place and that it was quite possible that I would not be able to come and see her for some time. For that reason, I came out of the stable. Suddenly, I heard the steps and different voices. I decided that there were people coming out to get us. I hid under the steps and when the people passed me by and did not notice me, I jumped out and ran down the street. Later on, I found out that Mr. Sztulder jumped out by the rear exit and rolled down the field. It looked like he was safe, however, in the meantime one of the Polish gendarmes, Jan Paluch chased him and brought him back. It should be stressed that the same Mr. Jan Paluch some time earlier, helped by mother and brother with some food and hot milk. Later I found out that all people in the stable were taken and killed. In the meantime, I ran down the street and I was surprised as two of my very good Polish friends met me. I lived very closely with these two guys before the war. They decided to keep me and, in spite of my pleadings, would not let me go as they waited for the gendarmes to come back from the stables. At that moment, Mr. Jagielski came out from the stable. He looked around and told these two boys to let me go. I could not believe my own eyes as I was stopped by my good friends and let go by Mr. Jagielski. After I was freed, I decided to go to Mr. Jagielski's house and hid myself in the attic. I found out that there were a number of Jewish people hiding at this place. One of those people who I remember was Mr. Szmuel Majorowich. (currently he lives in Colombia). At Mr. Jagielski's place, I met my younger brother Moses. We decided to leave for the neighbouring town Staszow and hide over there.

In Staszow, I met people from Rakow and all together we set up a group which left for the neighboring forest. We were hiding there all together but I kept coming back to Staszow in order to find out what happened to my brothers. I found out that they had been stopped by Germans. I made many attempts to get them freed. For that purpose, especially, an attempt was made by Mr. Jagielski, who came to town and tried to free my brothers. I personally almost every day, called from the post-office to Mr. Jagielski. At the post-office worked one lady named Mrs. Skrobacka who came from Poznan. She was a friend of Rywka Neuman. She was the one who let the Germans know about me. When I came one day to the post-office and called as usual to the post-office in Iwanisk, (Thursday, 29 October, 1942) he answered when I asked about my brothers, with one word - "Now." (note, the literal translation is the word "now" however, I think it means "it has happened".) I was extremely shocked and distressed and found out that both my brothers were hanged that same day in the morning. I stood there motionless, without being able to make a single move. At this moment, there was a woman who walked into the telephone booth. She looked very young and was a worker at the post-office. She took the receiver from my hand and put it down. Looking at her eyes, I was able to conclude that she was willing to assist me. At this moment, I heard heavy steps and two men walked into the post office. There were two schuppe [perhaps schuppe is a sort of Yiddish-Polish dialect of the German "Schupo", short for "Schutzpolizei", meaning "police"?] who were stationed in Iwanisk. Standing in the telephone booth I heard the voice of one of the gendarmes - he asked in German - is Goldstein present here? I decided to leave down the stairs and walk into the street. The girl ran down behind me and walked into the street and asked "you are Mr. Goldstein, aren't you?" I confirmed that I was. She let me go to her house and gave me her address (Stodolna Street). She told me how I had to behave and that I would meet her mother over there. Her mother let me in to the apartment. I waited for the girl for some time. After she arrived, she let me know that I could not show my face in town. She asked me that, in case I was caught by Germans, I should not let anyone know that I stayed in her apartment. Even her mother did not suspect that there was a Jew in her house. This was the moment when I wanted to leave as I did not want to expose them. The girl with tears in her eyes said "you can't leave now, this will be certain death". I stayed there until the evening and left and went back to the forest. The name of this girl, to my regret I did not know until now.

To live in, the forest was more and more difficult. Every day, the local peasants were catching Jews and returning them to the Germans. The Germans paid back the peasants for their service in many different ways. At the beginning for catching a Jew, a peasant would get a bag of sugar and one liter of vodka. After a while, the Germans were giving clothing. One day I was found by Mr. Jagielski's brother and he invited me to hide myself at his place in Checiny [????]. I stayed with him for not too long. The lack of money funds forced me to relocate to Judenstatt [Judenstadt; Jewish ghetto] in Sandomierz. I have to stress that in spite of the fact that I was not able to pay Mr. Jagielski for his hospitality, he did not force me out.

Judenstatt and Sandomeirz comprised many people who were financially well off. The Jews were paying off many functionarys [bribing officials] and were buying favours. I stayed there only one month (from December 1942 to January 1943).

The SS began its actions [roundup of the Jews] at midnight and they finished in the afternoon of the next day. Most of the Jewish population was shipped from Sandomierz to Treblinka. Only approximately 300 people (myself among them) were shipped to a camp in Skarzysku Kamiennej in 1943. The name Treblinka was an extremely scary word among Jews. Therefore, there were unbelievable scenes taking place during the shipments.

Almost nineteen months, I stood, in the camp in Skarzysku-Kamiennej (January 1943 to July 1944) [Skarzysko-Kamienna, a forced labor camp (mainly mining): approximately 23,000 Jews died there]. I worked physically and performed many different jobs. I had been able to keep in contact

with some A.K. members from my town thanks to which, in the camp, I had been able to obtain food. In general, the conditions in the camp were extremely poor. There was no crematorium at the camp but once a week a shipment of 30 - 40 people was made, the purpose of which was to shoot them. The leader of the camp was a sadist name Mr. Schubert. I witnessed various scenes, one of them of a Jewish policeman named Sztajnfeld who attempted to push an older women into the truck, however, her twenty year old daughter was holding her frantically. Schubert, after he saw that the efforts of the policeman did not produce any result, after a moment of observation, shot the older women dead. He ordered her daughter to leave and join the rest of the group. The girl started to call Mr. Schubert various names (I did not hear the exact words) and he calmly reloaded his revolver and shot the girl in the head. The people who were shipped out every week were the people unable to work or who skipped one or more days from work. Sometimes older people were sent out as well.

In the summer of 1944, the Russian army was approaching and the younger prisoners were being shipped out towards the town called Piotrkowa Trybunalski [Piotrkow Trybunalski]. I was one of those people shipped to the town. We were ordered to build various defense installations. After three months, we were shipped to another town called Czestochowa where we were ordered to repair and fix various military tanks. When the Russian army approached again, we were shipped out in the early days of January 1945 to Buchenwald [a concentration camp just outside of Weimar, Germany]. From this period at the camps for some reason, I have a memory of one decent German who had the nickname of Sleepy Macks. Quite often he gave Jews additional rations of bread and cigarettes. When we advised him that after the war we would be a witness in support of his decency, he always told us as follows: "People I don't think you understand I'm not doing this because I am afraid, I'm doing this because I am a decent man".

In March of 1945 we were shipped out to Flusburg near Lipsk [near Leipzig, Germany] in order to build a factory V-1 and V-2 [German rockets which became operational in 1944-1945]. In April American planes almost destroyed that installation and we were again shipped into Austria to a town called Mathauseri [Mauthausen]. The hunger on the way to Mathausen was unbelievable but our suffering was coming to an end. When the Americans freed our camp [May 1945], I calculated that I had six to seven days of life left. My weight was 34 kilograms.

The worst chapter of my life came to an end.

Signed by Ignacy Goldstein

Witnessed by Anna Lipska

By its mere existence Judaism is a never silent protest against the assumption of the multitude that force is superior to truth. So long as Judaism exists, nobody will be able to say that the soul of man has surrendered. Its very existence through the ages is proof that conviction cannot be mastered by number.

[Cited in: **Leonard Baker. 1978. Days of Sorrow and Pain: Leo Baeck and the Berlin Jews.**

MacMillan. New York, NY. pp 134.]

MORE ABOUT YITZ'CHAK GOLDSTEIN

David Lederman in Israel provided additional information about Yitz'chak Goldstein:

Norton,

When I interviewed Bela Nissenbaum Milstein [who was born in Ivansk] at her home in Rishon Le Zion, I asked her about Ignacy Goldstein, and this is what she told me: She remembers that he lived in Holon and had a grocery store and had two daughters. He married twice. His first wife was from Ivansk and died in the Holocaust [she was Goldstein's fiancée in his Testimony]. His second wife was from Ostrowice. His brothers were Matys, Moshe and Mordechai. They all perished in Treblinka. His wife had two sisters: Golda and Surele who live/lived in Toronto (Maybe they can tell us more about Ignace?) One of Ignace's daughters was called Sima; she lived in Ramat Gan and died some time ago. She left two children that Bela Milstein remembered but she has no idea were they are living now. I shall keep on searching for more information about Ignacy Goldstein.

PLEASE HELP US!

The names of many people were mentioned in Yitz'chak Goldstein's Testimony.

Do you know any of these individuals?

If you do, please tell us about them. If they are still alive, how can we contact them?

If s/he is no longer alive, do you know any of their descendents or relatives?

Please tell us how to reach them.

Thank you!