

THE IVANSK PROJECT e-NEWSLETTER

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- **“No More Tears”** by **Eva Abbo**

Eva (Lederman) Abbo's book, “No More Tears” is a fictional account of the lives of four generations of a Polish-Jewish family. The story is based on her own family history in Poland and Colombia, including her Ivansk ancestors. You'll want to read Eva's saga.

(Thanks to David Lederman (Israel) for providing many of the photos used in this article)

- **Book Review: “They Called Me Mayer July”**

by **Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett**

Mayer and his daughter Barbara's beautifully illustrated book describes his boyhood in Opatow (*Apt*) just before the Holocaust. Mayer's memories serve as an incredibly rich resource about what life was like in Apt and other neighboring shtetlach, including Ivansk which was just a few kilometers down the road.

- **I Saw the Extermination of Jews in Iwaniska** by **Andrzej Martynkin**

Andrzej Martynkin was only 8 years old when he watched the Nazis deport the Jews from Ivansk. The memories of that autumn day in 1942 still haunt him.

- **Wrestling With Reality: Challenging Dr. Norman Weinberg's Response**

by **Norton Taichman**

Dr. Weinberg (Executive Coordinator, Poland Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project) has written a letter questioning Norton's allegations that the PJCRP should be held to account for mismanagement of The Ivansk Cemetery Project (see The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter, No 28, Jan – Feb 2008). Norton confronts Dr. Weinberg by challenging his assertions.

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No More Tears. A Story That Reminds Us Why We Must Never Forget

by Eva Abbo

Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA



My Paternal Great Grandparents
Meir Wolf & Feige Sara Lederman
Both were born in Ivansk.

My name is Eva Lederman Abbo. I am a descendent of the Lederman family which once lived in Ivansk. I was born in Bogotá, Colombia on February 29, 1948. My birth date is an important contributing factor to my interest in the Second World War, which dramatically affected my family as well as millions of other innocent people. I have written a book, "No More Tears" based on the history of my family before, during and after the war.

My paternal grandparents **Neftali Lederman** and **Esther Gitel (Rothstein) Lederman** were Ivanskers, as were my father, **Jacobo Uszer Lederman**, his two brothers (**Israel** and **Abraham Lederman**) and his sister (**Perla Lederman**).

My mother's family came from Janovice, Poland. My maternal grandparents **Leon Brik** and **Raquel Wolf Brik** had 7 children including my mother, **Dora (Debora) (Brik) Lederman**. My mother had 3 brothers (**Abraham, Max, Mendel**) and 3 sisters (**Blanca, Esther and Berta**).

I have two sisters, **Perla Lederman Akerman** (married to Bernardo Akerman) and **Sara Lederman**, and one brother, **Max Lederman** (married to Vivianne Corkidi). All of us were born in Bogotá, Colombia.

My grandfather, Neftali Lederman, was a man of great vision. He foresaw the signs of upheaval in Poland before the start of World War II and was determined to look abroad for new opportunities for himself and his family.

Like many of that day, he first went to Palestine in 1929. But he was uncomfortable with the British rule, which did not offer favorable circumstances to raise his family. He decided to leave for the New World. He boarded ship in Port Said, Egypt, and set sail for Barranquilla, Colombia. My grandfather accepted the risks and hardships of the journey, determined to provide a better life for his family.

Upon arrival in Colombia, disembarking passengers were met at dockside by immigration and customs officials who asked all travelers to present their passports and visas, but my grandfather had neither a visa nor any other valid documentation. In the clamor and confusion, my grandfather gambled his future and approached one of the many workers who were busily unloading groceries from the ship. The stevedore was **David Mayer Rubinstein**; it turned out that David was also from Poland, was fluent in Yiddish and was willing to help my grandfather. What a marvelous coincidence!



My Paternal Grandparents
and Their Family
Late 1920s. Ostrov (Ostrowiece)

My grandparents, Neftali & Esther Gitel Lederman (both seated) were born in Ivansk. Their children were born in Ostrov.
L to R: Abraham, Perla, Jacobo & Joseph.
The man standing between my grandparents is not identified.



A Family Celebration in Bogotá, circa 1936

The family has gathered for a festive meal in the home of my grandparents, Neftali and Esther Gitel Lederman who are seated at the head of the table. Nefatli's four brothers and their wives attend the gathering. The ambience of the celebration testifies to the material success that Neftali and Esther Gitel (as well as other family members) have achieved in Colombia.

Note photos of my great grandparents, Meir Wolf and Feige Sara Lederman on the far wall.

David told my grandfather to pretend that he was just another one of the hired laborers and to hide his belongings in the grocery sacs that were being carried from the ship. Then, my grandfather followed David down the gangplank. The port authorities knew David well and assumed that my grandfather was David's coworker. Both men casually passed through the gates. And that was the beginning of the story of my family's life in Colombia.

By the way, in those desperate times it was not unusual for Jewish immigrants to try to enter Colombia under false pretenses; they had no other choice, and in many instances they succeeded.

David and my grandfather shared many things in common. They became great friends; years later they became family. My mother's sister, Blanca Brik married David's son, Jaime Mordejay Rubinstein.

David had developed good relationships and numerous connections with Colombian people, and he encouraged my grandfather to take advantage of the economic opportunities that were available to newcomers. This is what my grandfather was looking for. Soon he moved to Bogotá and began working to fulfill his dreams for a better life.

In Bogotá he started selling articles of men's clothing, such as shirts, socks, handkerchiefs, etc. It was very difficult for the new immigrant to seek out a living. The language barrier and the new surroundings were significant obstacles. Moreover, he often granted credit to gain customers, and in many instances he had to wait for extended periods to receive payment. Nevertheless, he persisted and his business prospered.



**My Parents, Jacobo & Dora Lederman
Bogotá, 1944**

The photo was taken to mark their engagement.

One of Neftali's first priorities was to establish the means to bring his immediate family, as well as his brothers and sisters with their families, to Colombia. In 1931 he was reunited with his wife and four children who boarded ship at the Port of Gdynia on the Baltic and sailed to France where they transferred to a second vessel bound for Barranquilla, Colombia.



My Parent's Wedding, Bogotá, 1944
Back (L-R): Matilde Lederman*, Dora & Jacobo Lederman
Middle: Berta Lederman, Blanca Brik,
 Perla Lederman*, Jaica (Lederman) Majerowitz*,
 Esther Gitel Lederman*, Raquel Brik,
 Esther Brik, Berta Brik
Front: Perla Majerowitz, Perla Lederman,
 Florencia Lederman

* Signifies those who were born in Ivansk

Later some of my grandfather's siblings and their children, as well as a few friends arrived in Colombia. My grandparent's home became known as a place where European Jews could get help and assistance. They were dedicated to doing good works, and they personally purchased and developed the land that became the first Jewish cemetery in Bogotá. In my book I describe the home life that my grandparents established in Bogotá, including their religious commitments, cultural interests and the wholesome environment they created for their family.

It was during times such as these that I was born. As a young girl I listened to the stories of Jewish immigrants arriving in Colombia from different countries. Most were survivors of the Holocaust. I could not comprehend the horrific stories of persecution; stories that marked my life forever. As a maturing storyteller, I couldn't believe that people were capable of inflicting so much pain and sorrow on others.

I was educated at Bogotá's "Colegio Colombo Hebreo", a Jewish school attended mostly by children of Jewish-European immigrants. In 1964 I began medical studies at the Javeriana University in Bogotá; there, I was exposed to many diverse groups of people with different religions, beliefs and ways of living.

In 1968 I married **Freddy Abbo** and for 10 years we settled and raised a family in Maracaibo, Venezuela. Freddy is a successful real estate builder-developer. He is descended from a prominent *Safet* family of French consuls in Palestine, who were able to title land to Jewish settlers before the creation of Israel. The Abbo's house still exists in Safet. Every year during Lag Baomer, thousands of people join the procession carrying the *Torah* from the Abbo's house to the Meron Mount.

In 1979, in view of the unstable perspectives of the Venezuelan government, we immigrated to Boca Raton, Florida, and in 2004 we moved to Fort Lauderdale.

Freddy and I have one daughter and two sons: **Ileana, Larry** and **Edward**.

Ileana is married to Eran Berenstein; she is a fashion designer and he is a periodontist. They have three children: Michael, Alexandra and Ariella Berenstein.

Larry is married to Susana Rudman; he is a builder- developer and she graduated in International Relations and Latin American Studies. They have two children: Jonathan and Daniel Abbo.

Edward is also a builder-developer and has two children, Daniella and Michael Abbo.



Above: **My Husband, Fred and I**
(Florida, 2001)

Upper Right: **My Family**
(Florida, 1998)
(L-R) Ileana, Eva, Freddy, Larry & Edward

Lower Right: **My Grandchildren**
(Florida, 2008)
(L-R) Ariella, Daniella, Michael, Alexandra,
Daniel, Jonathan & Michael

And now I'd like to tell you about my book, "**No More Tears**".

During our early years in Florida I became haunted by the memories of my childhood, as again I witnessed many Jewish people coming to America bearing deep scars of indescribable fear, sorrow and deep pain from the loss of family and friends. I had to do something to "control" my own feelings and that's when I began to write "**No More Tears**".

I decided to tell the story of my family as a means of expressing my awareness and my interest in the lives of those Jews who had gone through so much in Europe and who were resilient and brave enough to begin anew in their adopted homeland. It is a tale of ordinary people living extraordinary lives, emerging from chaos, turmoil, fear and uncertainty of the Second World War.

I based the plot of my story on the history of my maternal grandparents from Janovice, and my paternal grandparents from Ivansk. Much of what I put onto paper reflects the bits and pieces of what I learned from my parents and other relatives. However, this was not sufficient to weave the entire account, so I introduced material borrowed from the narratives I heard from other immigrants as well as ideas formulated from my own imagination. While the principal characters are taken from my family, I did not use their real names. I have never been to Poland but wanted to create an atmosphere that was true to the shtetl and to the cities where my family lived. To do this, I researched the history and geography of Poland as well as the culture of the lost world of the shtetl.

No More Tears

A Story That Reminds
Us Why We Must Never Forget



Eva Abbo

The saga sets out an emotional parallel between its characters over time and two continents, following them through economic difficulties, separation, terror and despair to finally arrive at a life of acceptance and freedom. By tracing the story of survival of my grandmother and her seven children I wanted to create a window into the culture and beliefs of my people who were persecuted and denigrated by the Nazis. The family faced the hardships of living alone in the shtetl after my grandfather had sailed to South America. They confronted formidable adversities and imminent destruction. Luckily, they escaped the war, leaving behind family members who have no known grave.

As mentioned earlier, life outside the shtetl was full of unknowns. Slowly the family integrated into their new surroundings learning the language and customs. The arrival of the succeeding generation firmly established the family in Colombian society. My family's dreams of attaining equality and opportunities were fulfilled and they fully participated in the promise and creative potential of their new world.

It took me two years to realize that my manuscript was following a pattern, and ten years to finish the book. At first, I had no thoughts of publishing "No More Tears". But I gave Dr. Katarain a copy of the manuscript (he owned one of the best publishing houses in Latin America, "Editorial Oveja Negra", the same company that published "100 Years of Solitude" by Nobel Laureate, Gabriel García Marquez). Dr. Katarain loved my story and encouraged me to deepen my research. He felt that a lot of Jewish people would relate their own stories to that described in my book. And in 1995 "No More Tears" appeared in Spanish and soon was on the shelves of libraries in South America and in the United States.

During my research I found that many religious concepts that I learned in school were not accurate, so I decided to insert notes in the text on the meaning and significance of various Jewish customs, observances and holidays. I felt this added depth to the descriptions of our culture and traditions. I think that's one reason why Jewish schools in Colombia and Panama have made my book required reading.

I invite you to consider reading the English translation of "No More Tears". Any profits from the sale of my book will be donated to **WIZO** (Women's International Zionist's Organization) and to **JAFCO** (Jewish Adoption and Foster Care Options).

You can obtain a copy of "No More Tears" by sending your request to:

Eva Abbo

3324 Water Oak Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312, USA

Please include your check made payable to Eva Abbo in US funds as follows:

For US residents: \$23.50

For Canadian residents: \$25.50

For all others: \$28.50

Pricing includes postage and handling.

Book Review

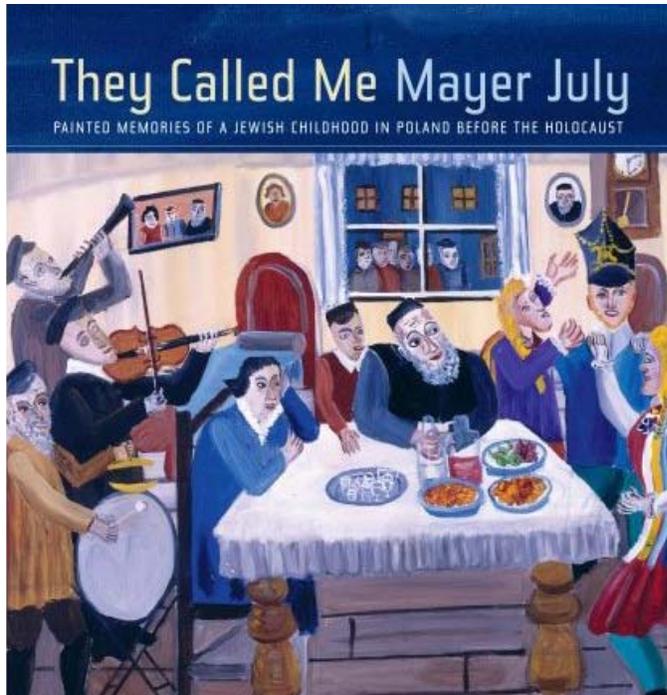
They Called Me Mayer July

Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust

Authors: Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.

Publisher: University of California Press, Berkely, CA, 2007

Reviewed by: Norton Taichman



For almost two years I've been anticipating publication of Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's, "*They Called Me Mayer July*". Now their book is displayed on the coffee table in our living room, where everyone is invited to browse its vibrantly illustrated pages.

Mayer left Opatow (*Apt*) for Toronto in 1934 when he was 17 years old, but the shtetl never left him. The town and its people; its joys and its sorrows remained alive within him, and at the age of 73 he taught himself to paint so that he could transmit his childhood memories onto canvas. His paintings may be "primitive", but they sparkle with color and are extraordinarily rich in detail.

Mayer bids us to accompany him into his mother's kitchen; prepare the meal and set the table for *Shabbos*; join the congregation in worship in the shul; attend cheder and his Bar Mitzvah; *Shlug Kapures* on Erev *Yom Kippur*; sit as a guest at his grandparent's *seder*; stand with the bride and groom under the *chupah*; assemble with the mourners at both Jewish and Gentile funerals; explore the town's alleys, shops and market square; discover how shoes, *dreydl*s and horsehair brushes are made; overhear his mother gossiping with her friends; peek inside the women's mikve; wash the laundry in the stream; and enjoy the performance of a traveling circus. We also get to meet dozens of unforgettable characters (many branded for life with descriptive, unflattering nicknames) who roamed the streets and courtyards of the shtetl. For example: the *shoykhet*, butcher, organ grinder, chimney sweep, milk lady, water carrier, porter, "*Shilklappe*" (the "knocker" announcing the beginning of *Shabbos*), and yes even the prostitutes. These and more. An extraordinary experience!

The narrative that accompanies Mayer's illustrations is equally engaging, thanks to his daughter Barbara, an author in her own right. Relaxing in a deep, cozy armchair it is a pleasure to read Barbara's skillful and loving transformation of her father's memories into prose. Her straightforward, uncomplicated, tender style deftly draws us deeper into his world. Here is a sampling:

"Spring! After a hard winter, the trees started to bud and the willows were already green. We could start taking long walks in the meadows, *di lonkes*. We would test the water in the creek and lie down

on the grass. We enjoyed the luxury of being able to stretch out again in the open air and bask in the sunshine. We would breathe deeply and feel our lungs expand. It was a feeling of euphoria.”

In comparison to neighboring shtetlach, Apt may have seemed like a relatively large town, but in reality it was no different than the others in character. That’s because these Jewish communities were populated by the “same” inhabitants who “marched to the same drummer”. And that’s why Mayer’s memoir is such an invaluable resource for understanding what life was like in Ivansk.

Running southward from Apt, the *Ivansker veyg* (the road to Ivansk), was a pulsating artery back then; all sorts of people and all sorts of interesting things happened on that highway. Mayer was very familiar with Ivansk and its people who lived down that road. Just over the horizon:

“There used to be a joke that when the *Ivansker maydyn*, Ivansk maidens, were sent out at night to close the wooden shutters, they did not return until the next morning. The people from Ivansk were also called *Ivansker maysim*, Ivansk corpses. No one knows why.”

Many Ivanskers share familial bonds with Apters (my father was an Ivansker and my mother’s family came from Apt). Following the move from Poland to Canada, both communities continued to keep time to the same drumbeat. In Toronto, my grandparent’s home was on Beverly Street, across the road from “*The Apter Centre*” and just around the corner from The Beth Jacob Synagogue (*The Henry Street Shul* or *Der Polisher Shul*), which was home base for many Ivanskers. As a teenager I shuffled between The Apter Centre and The Shul during *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, skipping out from services to schmooze with my Apter boy friends. But I was primarily interested in viewing the impressive collection of Apter maidens. That’s the way it was in Toronto, and no doubt it was no different in Poland.

Both Mayer’s and my mother must have attended the same culinary institute in Apt because his mother’s recipes included the cuisine of my childhood, foods that I have not eaten in over 50 years. For instance, I can still smell the “*ugebrente zup*” (in our house it was called an “*anbrendle*”), a flavorful, heart-warming, deep brown zup made with boiled potatoes, burnt flour, and “*kriskalech*” (little squares of egg noodles). This happily bubbling invention was especially welcome on dark, cold winter nights. Next winter my wife has promised to try to make some.

As in Poland herring was also a staple in our Canadian diet, but today supermarkets carry only cut-up, pickled herring stuffed into jars minus the head, tail and fins. Minus everything! It doesn’t even look like herring. You haven’t tasted a genuine, honest-to-goodness schmaltz herring unless it still looks like a herring and is fished out of a 20 gallon barrel at the corner grocery store. On Sunday afternoons I could always count on schmaltz herring as the “*forespeish*” (first course) for dinner (“lunch” was called “dinner” back then). Like Mayer’s father, my dad was honored with the head while my brothers and I vied for the tail. I have not tasted the tail end of a herring since then. And occasionally there was the unforgettable “*kratsborscht*” (scratch borscht), which my father prepared as in Poland. The ingredients included slices of fresh herring, vinegar, sugar, onions and the *piece de resistance*, the milt (sperm and seminal fluid sac) of a male herring. The milt was “scratched” (macerated) on a vegetable grater and when added imparted a creamy white color to the borscht. Freshly baked hunks of “Sherman’s” rye bread were used to soak up every drop of the juice. The taste is permanently etched somewhere in my mind, but after learning what the milt really was I never ate a *kratsborscht* again.

“*They Called Me Mayer July*” is an exceptionally welcome contribution to our knowledge of shtetl life before it was obliterated in *The Shoah*. It’s a book that every Ivansker will treasure. Go out already and buy a copy; you won’t be disappointed. In the USA it retails for about \$40.00, but it’s less than \$30.00 on amazon.com or other web sites.

I Saw the Extermination of Jews in Iwaniska

by **Andrzej Martynkin** (Warsaw, Poland)

Translated from Polish by Margaret Daniel (Philadelphia, USA)

[Editor: Andrzej Martynkin, a retired sports reporter, was 7 or 8 years old when he witnessed the expulsion of the Jews from Iwansk. Almost 70 years later the terror and brutality of that day continues to haunt him. Of course, the eyes and the mind of a child decipher things differently than those of an adult, and specific details dim with time. Still, Mr. Martynkin felt compelled to share his recollections by submitting a letter to the Gazeta wyborcza, one of Poland's most influential newspapers. Mr. Martynkin was responding to an article, "Who Were Collaborators?", which dealt with the inscription on the monument in the Iwansk Cemetery (see: The Iwansk Project e-Newsletter, No. 28, January-February 2008). Mr. Martynkin's correspondence appeared in Gazeta in October, 2007; thanks to Margaret Daniel for translating his letter into English.]

In December 2007 Iwanskiers (David Blumenfeld (Israel), Grzegorz Gregorczyk (Poland), Henriette Kretz (Belgium), Audrey Taichman (USA) and Norton Taichman (USA) met with Mr. Martynkin in Warsaw seeking additional information about what happened on 15 October 1942. Mr. Martynkin is a handsome, warm, likeable person who speaks English with facility. He readily earned our respect and gratitude. His memories add to what we know about the town before the war as well as that day when the Nazis and their collaborators deported our people to their deaths.

The English translation of Mr. Martynkin's letter to the Gazeta is printed in "regular font" and constitutes the foundation of this e-News report. Relevant segments of his oral testimony are inserted into the text within square brackets in "italicized font".]

Widziałem zagładę Żydów w Iwaniskach

Gazeta wyborcza, 2 October 2007

I Saw the Extermination of Jews in Iwaniska

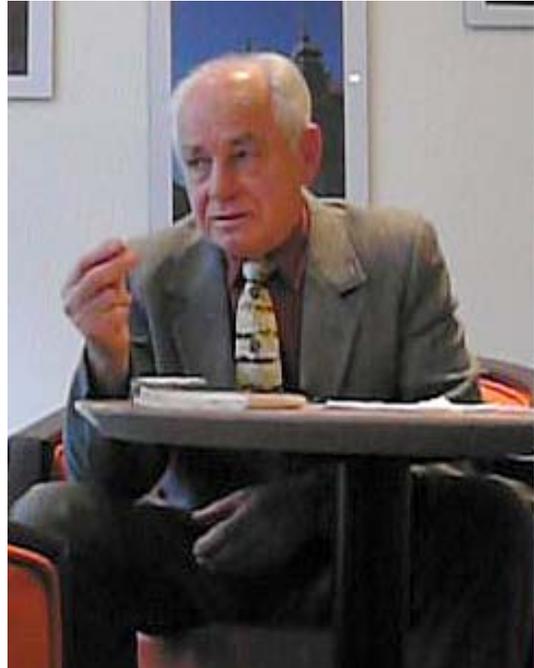
I read the article written by Paweł Reszka, "Who Were Collaborators?" (Gazeta, 31 September 2007) about the extermination of Iwaniska's Jews and the obelisk that was raised by the descendants of the Iwaniska Jews. The inscription on the obelisk says, "On this final day, the 15th of October 1942 Jewish life in Iwaniska was brutally interrupted when the Germans and their collaborators deported Iwaniska's Jews to Treblinka."

Does the word "collaborators" refer to the Iwaniska's Poles or - as other people think, among them Andrzej Omasta, coordinator to the "Renovation of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland", who was in charge of the restoration of the cemetery and the construction of the obelisk - to the group of Ukrainians who were helping Germans to 'export' Jews from the ghetto?

I visited Iwaniska a few times during the occupation where my uncle lived. He was my Mom's older brother. He looked Jewish.

During the occupation my uncle was stopped many times by German officers. He had to show his papers to prove his Arian heritage. To avoid any further problems he left Warsaw and moved to Iwaniska. He opened a store in Iwaniska with farming tools and goods. The shop was on the ground floor; on the first floor were the living quarters. The building was situated near the market Square on the Staszowa highway. The house is still there. During the occupation I came to Iwaniska from Warsaw twice with my grandmother. I was there a few times with my parents in the winter. I even did some skiing. Germans were confiscating the skis but not from the children.

[I was a few times in Iwaniska, perhaps 5 or 6 times, during the summer, fall and winter. I was there on the day of the extermination. I was at that time 8 years old. My mother's older brother, Marian Tuschinski "escaped" from Warsaw because he looked Jewish but nobody from my family was Jewish. I don't know why he went to Iwaniska. He worked in a shop dealing in agricultural and iron goods, such as cups and plates and lived together with my grandmother above the shop. I don't know why my mother (who is now 98 years old) took me out of school that October to go to Iwaniska (I've asked her, but she does not remember).



My uncle's shop was on the road to Staszow, maybe 100-200 meters from the market square. Today, I have no relatives or friends living in town. My uncle was an engineer, an educated man who associated with important people in the town. I remember visiting the home of the Chief of Police on the road to Opatow where 5-6 people often gathered including the priest. In the evening they would often play bridge.]

In Iwaniska I had many friends. Nobody worried who was Polish or Jewish. In my age group we were all just friends. About 1,500 Jews lived in the center of the town. There were no walls built to separate us. Everybody could go about their business as they pleased. I never heard any Polish families forbidding their children to play with the Jewish kids.

[I played with everybody of my age. I remember especially two of them: one was the son of the man who worked in my uncle's shop. He was much older than me (17 or 18 years old) and I thought he was a "god". The other was my age who lived on a big farm, "The Planta".

We played together with Jewish children; we swam together in the small river (in some places it was over our heads). In summertime we wore shorts, T-shirts and played football. We liked to play "hide and seek" at the train station, which was on the road to Opatow near the road that goes to Klimontow [Klimontov]. It was a narrow gage railway. I recall that the daughter of the station chief was very beautiful.

I don't remember who was Jewish or who was not Jewish. Unlike Warsaw and other towns, there was no ghetto in Iwaniska at that time. The people seemed to be able to go anywhere. Jews had to wear "stars" in Warsaw but I don't remember whether they wore them in Iwaniska.

The Planta was a very big farm, very good soil. It was about 1 mile from the market on the right (east) side of the road to Staszow. The farm had stables, horses, cows, peach trees, everything! I spent a lot of time in The Planta; the home was 2 stories high, very grand, like a palace. Of course, as a child my memory makes it even grander. Two or three children of my age lived there. During

the war The Planta was taken over by the Germans who forced the families to move out. Some of these people apparently moved to Canada after the war, and about 5 years ago they held a reunion. But I did not hear about the reunion until after it took place, and I did not get a chance to find out if any of my boyhood friends were amongst them.]

In this article, there are many quotes of Ignacy [Yitz'chak] Goldstein's memories. He was one of very few Jews who survived and who was hiding in the nearby woods for few months. According to him, the neighborhood peasants were catching the local Jews and were handing them to the Germans for a small reward of sugar and a liter of vodka.

Ignacy Goldstein told the story about a man [a Pole], who with a group of his friends burned the Jewish quarters before the deportation. Later, when the Germans were looking for those who did it, he pointed to ten Jews. Nine were executed. [see: The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter, No 3, March – April, 2004 for Goldstein's testimony]

I was only seven years old then, but I have vivid memories of the fire. I was the first to alarm the household about the fire. My bedroom window was facing the Jewish neighborhood. Only a very narrow alley separated us. I woke up and I saw huge flames a few meters tall. We hid like many others in the nearby rectory. The whole neighborhood was destroyed. The fire was visible, smoldering for days and the smoke was coming from the cellars for weeks. Later on we were rooting through the smoldering ruins but we were afraid to go down to the cellars. I don't remember anybody talking about nine people being executed. I would have heard about it. That kind of event could not be ignored.

[Iwaniska was a very small place and the fire was very big news. It started during the night. My bed was near the window across the road from the burning houses; so I was one of the first to see the flames. My family escaped to the church grounds. I am not sure who started the fire, but I heard that the Jews caused it when they were making soap. I think the fire happened shortly before the extermination.]

[Editor: We know of 2-3 fires in Iwaniska that occurred before the war (circa 1900-1939), but it is not clear whether Yitz'chak Goldstein and Andrzej Martynkin are referring to the same conflagration.]



My uncle who came to Iwaniska from Warsaw was an engineer. He became very quickly a part of the local elite keeping company with rector of the local church, pharmacist, railroad stationmaster, and the commander of the police.

According to Goldstein, the police commander was among those who were helping Jews. However, one night he was murdered. They were saying that he collaborated with Germans. Tragic mistake? These things happened often during the occupation. We will never know the truth.

[The police chief's name was Bacus. I do not know why he was murdered. If he was helping the Germans then Polish partisans killed him. If he was a member of the Polish partisans, then the Germans killed him.]

There is mention in the article that the Goldstein memoirs are probably the only one that shed light on what happened in Iwaniska just before the liquidation of the ghetto October 15th 1942.

There is one more account of the events – mine.

What I have witnessed I will never forget as long as I live.

It was just before noon, I was playing around the train station running between the train cars with a bunch of kids. Suddenly somebody was shouting; “*The Germans are coming!*” We ran several meters ahead towards the market square; the Germans were already there. They were driving the Jews out of their homes, threatening them with the machine guns, yelling, pushing and hitting them with gun handles. You could hear the crying and lamentation of people leaving in a hurry carrying with them the small bundles of their belongings. Small children and infants were in their parent’s arms.

Instead of running away we stayed there and watched this human tragedy as if it were a show. We were not aware of the danger. The scene was not without brutality. Three feet away from me a German officer shot an elderly Jew in the back of his head. As the man was falling down the German fired one more time into his back. The man was alive for a while scratching the dirt on the ground with his fingernails. His teeth were biting into the earth. He was bleeding profusely.

I did not run away from the market square even after witnessing that scene.

[It was early afternoon in late autumn, and for us children this was the first time we saw something like this. It was a very cruel event but for children the words “deportation” and “collaboration” had no meaning. Many young people were watching but older people stayed inside. I think the young people just could not understand what was happening and were not afraid to be there. To us children it was a very “interesting” event.]

I moved to the side, I heard more shots but in that moment my grandmother grabbed my arm and pulled me away from the scene. She gave me the speech about the danger of the situation telling me that the same fate could have happened to me. She locked me in my room for several hours.

I never saw my ghetto friends again.

[After about 2-3 hours the Jews were taken away and I left the house. It was calm like a normal day; no soldiers remained so I went outside like other children. The next day the mood was terrible because we had lost our colleagues. The mood of the people was bad. They knew that some day in the future it would be possible that the Germans would return to deport them.]

I cannot state that the Ukrainians and Russians were collaborating with the Germans. I was too young to know. However, I saw many times some patrolmen who had oriental looking eyes and were wearing German uniforms. We called them ‘*Kalmuki*’.

[I cannot tell you if the “local firefighters” collaborated with the Germans; it happened so long ago that I can’t really remember. The Ukrainians have been implicated. We know that some former soldiers of the Soviet Union came to the German’s side and became part of army units that killed Jews. The “Kalmuki” were Asian soldiers from Eastern Russia.]

Haunted by the memories I visited Iwaniska a few times after the war.

I went to all the places where I played with my friends. They were never the same again. The charm was gone and local noise was silenced forever after October 15th.

Wrestling With Reality: Challenging Dr. Norman Weinberg's Response

by Norton Taichman (USA)

In the previous issue of The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter (No. 28, Jan-Feb 2008) I described the storm that developed in Poland because the word "collaborators" was inscribed on our monument in the Ivansk Jewish Cemetery. I also reported that the obelisk had not been positioned in its proper place and was not constructed according to specification. Further, the Yiddish message on the plaque at the entrance to the cemetery was inscribed backwards. I held the Poland Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project (PJCRP), and more specifically Dr. Norman Weinberg (Executive Coordinator) and Mr. Andrzej Omasta (Manager of Projects) responsible for these blunders, and I expect the PJCRP to repair the damage it has caused.

Someone sent a copy of that e-newsletter to Dr. Weinberg who has since issued a rebuttal, which he copied to me and Gary Lipton.

There are two sides to every story. So, I have reprinted Dr. Weinberg's letter below.

After you have read Dr. Weinberg's letter, I will comment on his contentions.

To: 'H.G.' [Ed: Name Withheld]
Cc: Gary Lipton; Norton Taichman; 'M.G'. [Ed: Name Withheld]
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2008 9:24 AM
Subject: RE: Ivansk Defamatory Newsletter About PJCRP

Dear 'H':

Thanks for your message and for pointing out the Ivansk Newsletter, <http://www.ivanskproject.org/Newsletters/28.pdf>. I would like to explain our side of the story.

Ivansk is the only project I know of, out of some 17 PJCRP restorations (two of these will be completed soon), where I have had such complaints. I have acknowledged to Ivanskers some mistakes were made by us and I offered to personally help cover costs to correct errors, but after an investigation which Rabbi Michael Schudrich had agreed to lead. So far Ivanskers have not responded, except to publish their negative comments and accusations in the most recent Ivansk Newsletter.

Regarding their complaint about the wording in the monument about "collaborationists", I received the following message which Norton Taichman also received, from our project manager Andrzej Omasta on Sept. 2, 2007:

"I have not yet informed you about this as Piotr Kadlezik told me this is JC Warsaw problem. This is already taken care of and soothed out. On Friday there was a very serious article in Gazeta Wyborcza (the biggest daily newspaper in Poland) with both my and Piotr comment that explains what was meant by the words "collaborationists". Ghetto in Ivaniska was liquidated both by the Germans and by

Ukrainian/Russian units that were part of the Wehrmacht. Norton Taichman in his comment for the newspaper also clearly explained what was meant so this should really no longer be a problem. Also the mayor of Ivansk, that I have talked about this on a few occasions, understands the problem.

All permissions and documents for the monument building were given to Piotr Kadlcik and his position is clear that this text is not anti-Polish.”

I also wrote to Norton and Gary on Sept. 24, 2007 to explain misconceptions and restate my position:

1. Andrzej Omasta is not an employee but an independent consultant. The PJCRP has no employees.
2. The Union of Religious Communities got involved because there were issues they needed to straighten out (---about the word "collaborationists"). The Union was consulted and the Union decided that this was for them to resolve, not the PJCRP or Ivanskers. There are “politics” involved. You can certainly contact Chairman Piotr Kadlcik directly for his position.
3. I do not live in Poland nor know what went on first hand with the day to day negotiations and other aspects of the Ivansk project. I continue to have the greatest respect for Andrzej Omasta who has been involved in successful completion of many projects. I offered personally to help financially with the reversed stone inscription but you have not responded.
4. Quite some time ago, I also offered for you and us to take the whole matter, all the problems, before Rabbi Michael Schudrich for his mediation, if he agreed. Rabbi Schudrich agreed, but you have not responded.
5. I repeat, I am very sorry the Ivansk restoration project cost more than was projected. I am sure you realize, whenever a project takes years instead of months to complete, estimated costs will go up.

As always, contrary to what some people may believe, I continue to receive NO consulting fee or salary, take NO remuneration of any kind for my expenses, and Hannah and I personally donate to cover overhead costs of the PJCRP and to donate significantly to almost every restoration project, as we did for Ozarow and as we did for Ivansk. And, I spend a huge amount of my available “retirement” time on PJCRP work and the Petition to the German Government--and this Newsletter is what certain Ivanskers come back with as their response.

Instead of focusing on correcting the mistakes that were made, in the spirit befitting the great mitzvah Ivanskers have done, such as following through on my offer above, certain Ivanskers prefer to continue blaming me and others, even threatening legal action, and as a result hurting other projects with their words.

All the best to you and your family

Norman

I propose to critically analyze and challenge many of Dr. Weinberg’s assertions. I intend to show that he has ignored core issues of the controversy and that his lax approach in monitoring the conduct of his Project Manager and in attending to the business end of the PJCRP explains why we are in the present predicament. In my opinion nothing he said in his letter absolves him or Mr. Omasta from responsibility for what has happened.

General Comments

Dr. Weinberg refuses to accept or cannot comprehend why he is being held to account for what happened in Ivansk. Rather than addressing the specific issues of the dispute (as enumerated in “Wrestling With Reality”, e-Newsletter #28), he beats around the bush attempting to hide behind a veil of half-truths and irrelevancies.

Nowhere does Dr. Weinberg acknowledge that his Project Manager, Mr. Omasta deliberately told us that he had secured official authorization for our memorial inscription. In fact, Mr. Omasta never submitted or received approval from the authorities. Dr. Weinberg also ignores that this has caused serious and perhaps irreparable damage to our relations with the people of Iwaniska. Nowhere does Dr. Weinberg mention that Mr. Omasta disregarded instructions as well as halachic guidelines when he placed the memorial over the graves of our ancestors. Both Mr. Omasta and Dr. Weinberg were very well aware that monuments cannot be placed over the graves of the dead. Nowhere does Dr. Weinberg concede that Mr. Omasta took it upon himself to radically alter the design that we had commissioned for the monument. In short, Dr. Weinberg’s rebuttal lacks substance and credibility; it fails to address why things turned out the way they did. He cannot escape the fact that he and his Project Manager are obligated to remedy their mistakes.

Specific Comments

Below I shall comment on several assertions within Dr. Weinberg’s letter (these will be considered in the order in which they appear in his rebuttal):

Item 1. “Ivansk is the only project I know of, out of some 17 PJCRP restorations (two of these will be completed soon), where I have had such complaints.”

Dr. Weinberg needs to be reminded of the letter he received from Mr. Piotr Kadlcik on 20 December 2007. Mr Kadlcik, the President of the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland, minced no words in describing how the PJCRP bungled the cemetery restoration in *Losice*. Below is an unedited copy of that letter (I have not included the photos attached to the letter):

Mr Weinberg,

The old proverb says that the one picture is worth 1000 words. In order not to write so many thousand words, I am sending you just 5 photographs of work done by PJCRP at Losice cemetery. I have plenty more that shows quality of work done by the company picked by you and your coordinator Mr Omasta.

I am not going to bother you with the technical description of vandalism and unprofessional work coordinated by your organization at the Losice. Such report will be prepared shortly, together with the request of necessary permits that suppose to be obtained by Mr Omasta in order to drill rare (painted as you can see) matzevot and attach them to the wall of the so-called lapidary- sometimes, as you can see - upside down.

As to my present knowledge, due to the fact that PJCRP is not legally registered in Poland, there are no legal ways to settle this situation, but for the time being I believe that Mr Omasta can be held responsible, as on numerous occasions he called himself a PJCRP person and project coordinator - also in front of the town authorities. As soon as I will obtain more details, I will provide you with the information about steps taken by Warsaw Jewish Community.

I remain sincerely,

Piotr Kadlcik

President

Union of Jewish Communities of Poland

Dr. Weinberg also seems to have forgotten that things did not go well in Ilza. Copied below is an e-mail from Brenda Dales (Toronto), the Coordinator of the Ilza Cemetery Restoration Project:

From: [Brenda Dales](#)
To: [Norton S. Taichman](#)
Sent: Sunday, April 13, 2008 12:54 PM
Subject: Concerns Encountered During Ilza Cemetery Project

Hello Norton

I am responding to your request for a summary of our experience with the PJCRP in restoring the Ilza (*Driltz*) Jewish Cemetery. I will be brief because it is very painful to recall all the failures that were committed during the course of our project. Let me list just a few:

1. The funds deposited by the Ilza Landsmanshaft with The Foundation of Jewish Philanthropies in Buffalo, New York were to be used by Dr. Norman Weinberg with our authorization. After receiving initial notification that our account was debited, we asked Dr. Weinberg for an itemized accounting, which he promised to provide on a number of occasions. These details were never forthcoming until we finally just gave up. He never asked for our authorization for any payments which he made at his own discretion.

2. In restoring our cemetery we were anxious to recover as many matzevot as possible. One year before construction started, my husband and I visited the cemetery and discovered numerous fragments lying in the graveyard. Mr. Omasta assured us that the stones would be held in safekeeping until they could be mounted in the new wall of the cemetery. This was not done.

When we inquired as to their whereabouts suddenly no one knew anything about them. Mr. Omasta continuously assured us that they were being kept in secure storage, including the city hall. The stones have disappeared, but we have pictures of these fragments to prove the authenticity of what I am saying.

As if this were not enough, throughout the entire project Mr. Omasta kept telling us that he knew where several matzevot, which had been taken from the cemetery, could be found. He said that he would have them returned to the cemetery. The number estimated at one point was between 60 to 150 matzevot. When we pushed him to produce these matzevot his story changed. Finally, he said that the stones were buried under roadways and that when/if the roads were repaired, the stones would be recovered.

3. We forwarded the text of the inscription (in four languages) that was to be placed on a memorial in the cemetery to Mr. Omasta. We also included technical instructions about the design of the plaque. When we turned up for the rededication ceremony (in May, 2006) we found that in addition to the memorial inscriptions, the technical instructions were etched into the granite! The error has not been corrected and the plaque remains an embarrassment.

At the rededication it was also apparent that there were many hairline cracks in the cement capping of the wall, allowing water to seep into the structure. This could eventually result in collapse of the wall. Mr. Omasta told us that this was no problem as the wall was under warranty. As far as I know it was never fixed.

During the entire course of the project it became clear that there was a serious lack of credibility on the part of Mr. Omasta because his stories kept constantly changing. When we expressed our concerns to Dr. Weinberg he always supported Andrzej Omasta.

As I said, these are just a sampling of what it was like to work with the PJCRP. It is hard to adequately express the **frustration** and **disappointment** that we were forced to endure as a result of our dealings with this organization.

Clearly Dr. Weinberg's claim that he has not received complaints from other groups is at odds with the facts. If necessary, I will contact all the PJCRP Project Coordinators for their opinions of the quality of their PJCRP-sponsored restoration projects. It would not be surprising if Losice, Ilza and Ivansk turned out to be the norm rather than the exception of doing business with the PJCRP.

Item 2. “I have acknowledged to Ivaskers some mistakes were made by us and I offered to personally help cover costs to correct errors, but after an investigation which Rabbi Michael Schudrich had agreed to lead. So far Ivaskers have not responded, except to publish their negative comments and accusations in the most recent Ivask Newsletter.”

The only “mistake” that PJCRP has acknowledged is the foul-up of the Yiddish inscription that was entered backwards on the plaque at the entrance to our cemetery (see **Item 7** below). Mr. Omasta insisted that his “expert” approve the Yiddish inscription (of course, we were charged for this). Dr. Weinberg offered to replace the plaque, *but despite admitting that the fault was with the PJCRP, he expected that we would share the burden.* We rejected this inappropriate and inadequate offer.

And yes, Dr. Weinberg suggested that Rabbi Michael Schudrich mediate our differences (see **Item 8** below). Rabbi Schudrich is listed in various PJCRP publications as a member of the “PJCRP TEAM”, and I believe he is a personal friend of Dr. Weinberg. Further, Dr. Weinberg has declared that Rabbi Schudrich trusts Mr. Omasta. Rabbi Schudrich is the Chief Rabbi of Poland, and we hold him in very high regard as the spiritual leader of a re-born Polish-Jewish community. But it is hardly rational or appropriate to propose that he serve as a neutral arbitrator in our dispute.

In fact, we really don’t need a referee to work things out. The evidence is unequivocal. Dr. Weinberg needs to swallow his pride and acknowledge that his PJCRP must put things right.

Item 3. The paragraph that begins with, “*I have not yet informed you about this as Piotr Kadlczik told me this is JC Warsaw problem.*” is a copy of Mr. Omasta’s attempt to explain “the problem” concerning the word “collaborationist” that was inscribed on our monument.

At this time this information is of dubious relevance to our dispute since we already know how the “word” has inflamed the passions of many Poles. It may be worth noting that Mr. Omasta’s optimistic predictions that the problem would disappear have not materialized; instead, the wound continues to fester, causing consternation on all sides.

It is important to point out that a crucial element is missing from Mr. Omasta’s meandering explanation of what transpired; he conveniently fails to tell us that he did not submit the inscription on our memorial for official approval *as required by Polish law.* His deceitfulness was compounded when he told us that he had secured permission for the wording on the inscription. Mr. Omasta is an artful dodger, but he is fooling no one. Had he done what he was commissioned and paid to do, none of this would have happened.

Dr. Weinberg can’t even bring himself to acknowledge this fundamental fact.

Item 4. “**Andrzej Omasta is not an employee but an independent consultant. The PJCRP has no employees.**”

I do not have the expertise to appreciate the significance of whether Mr. Omasta is a PJCRP “employee” or an “independent consultant”; nor do I understand how this would alter the PJCRP’s responsibility for what has happened. In various publications, on its web site and even in Dr. Weinberg’s letter of rebuttal, Andrzej Omasta is referred to as “*The PJCRP Project Manager*” or as “*The Executive Field Coordinator (Warsaw)*”. No matter what Mr. Omasta is called, he and Dr. Weinberg took on the responsibility for ensuring that proper legal procedures (eg, permits) were followed, that religious traditions (eg, placement of monument) were respected and upheld and that all phases of the work were carried out with due care and in accordance with instructions or specifications agreed upon. Individually and collectively both failed to do their job. And perhaps

most germane to this issue, the PJCRP is a charity; by failing to carry out its fiduciary duties it violated its moral obligations to serve the best interests of those who donated funds to support the reclamation of the Ivansk Cemetery.

Item 5. “The Union of Religious Communities got involved because there were issues they needed to straighten out (---about the word "collaborationists"). The Union was consulted and the Union decided that this was for them to resolve, not the PJCRP or Ivanskers. There are “politics” involved. You can certainly contact Chairman Piotr Kadlcik directly for his position.”

This statement is yet another tangential attempt to avoid taking direct responsibility for the mess *that the PJCRP created*. We agree: “The Union” is a key player in defending the sanctity of Jewish cemeteries in Poland. But that does not mitigate the fact that the security of our cemetery; our relations with the townsfolk of Iwaniska and the credibility of some Polish-Jewish organizations have been compromised. Dr. Weinberg ignored our warnings about Mr. Omasta’s business practices and ethics, and even in the face of all the evidence he still persists in asserting:

“I continue to have the greatest respect for Andrzej Omasta who has been involved in successful completion of many projects.”

And for the record, we did indeed contact Piotr Kadlcik soon after the “collaborationist” issue was publicized by the Polish news media. It was Mr. Kadlcik who revealed that Mr. Omasta did not submit or obtain official approval for the memorial inscription. Moreover, Mr. Kadlcik has criticized the PJCRP for its unacceptable workmanship in Losice (see **Item #1** above), encouraging us to pursue the PJCRP to rectify its failures in our cemetery.

Item 6. “I do not live in Poland nor know what went on first hand with the day to day negotiations and other aspects of the Ivansk project.”

I am astounded that the Executive Coordinator of the PJCRP would admit to having little or no knowledge or control of what was actually happening on the ground in Poland. Dr. Weinberg signed a contract with us representing himself as the leader of the PJCRP. This lack of interest in monitoring what was taking place in Poland explains why so many things went wrong and clarifies why our warnings about Mr. Omasta failed to arouse alarm.

Item 7. “I offered personally to help financially with the reversed stone inscription but you have not responded.”

See also **Item 2** above. In fact, Gary Lipton communicated with Dr. Weinberg and was told that the PJCRP would only cover a portion of the cost of replacing the plaque at the cemetery gate. Ivanskers were expected to be equally responsible for replacing the “reversed stone inscription”.

Item 8. “Quite some time ago, I also offered for you and us to take the whole matter, all the problems, before Rabbi Michael Schudrich for his mediation, if he agreed. Rabbi Schudrich agreed, but you have not responded.”

See **Item 2** above for an explanation of why we felt it was inappropriate to ask Rabbi Schudrich to serve as mediator.

Item 9. “I repeat, I am very sorry the Ivansk restoration project cost more than was projected. I am sure you realize, whenever a project takes years instead of months to complete, estimated costs will go up. “

The issue of cost overruns has not been discussed before, and Ivanskers deserve an explanation.

In November 2004 I met with Mr. Omasta in Warsaw to discuss the dimensions of the restoration project. When we had agreed on the “package”, I specifically asked Mr. Omasta for an estimate of the *TOTAL* cost of the restoration, from start to finish. With his permission I taped our conversation and recorded his response: he quoted a figure of \$31,000.00 (US). This served as the target for our funding campaign. The project was completed in 2006, less than 2 years later, but the price was over \$81,000.00!

Estimates are “best guesses”, and circumstances beyond anyone’s control can indeed affect the outcome. Given that Mr. Omasta had already restored several other cemeteries it was not unreasonable to expect that he would come up with a pretty accurate figure. But the actual cost was almost 3 times higher than the original estimate. I do not accept the argument that material or labor costs climbed that fast and that high during construction. At least two factors help to account for the discrepancy between estimated and actual costs:

1. I suspect that Mr. Omasta’s guesstimate was not based on what he knew the project would actually cost. He “low ended” his estimates knowing that once the project was underway, we would not let it go unfinished. Mr. Omasta was paid an hourly wage plus expenses. He was given carte blanche to claim reimbursement without having to justify what he was doing (more on this below). He had every incentive to “milk” whatever he could from those who put their trust in him.
2. I also suspect that the lack of disciplined business practices by the PJCRP contributed to the failure to control costs. Dr. Weinberg did not adhere to the terms of the contract which he signed with us. Funds were not to be paid from our account without being pre-approved by myself or Gary Lipton. Also, itemized invoices and receipts were to be provided for all expenditures. These are sound, standard business practices.

But the PJCRP never fully stuck to these arrangements: we received a monthly summation of incoming funds and disbursements from The Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies. (It is my understanding that the PJCRP is an affiliate of The Foundation which served as an “umbrella” fundraising and holding organization for donations applied to our cemetery.) But we always had to phone or write directly to Dr. Weinberg to secure details of actual expenses. Even so, he almost always grouped expenses into general categories without providing the particulars. Further, we rarely were given the opportunity to review and pre-approve expenses, and were often caught by surprise when funds were expended without approval for unanticipated or questionable purposes. As a way to lessen the impact of these “bolts out of the blue”, I repeatedly asked for a list of all potential expenses that might be encountered during the restoration so as to anticipate what lay ahead. Dr. Weinberg never complied. As a consequence of all these obstacles, it was impossible to maintain accurate, up-to-date records or control the hemorrhage from our account. I strongly suspect that Dr. Weinberg did not supply itemized expenditures or receipts because Mr. Omasta did not have to provide them to him. Mr. Omasta was given a free hand to conduct business on his own terms.

As stated, the original estimate for the job was \$31,000.00; it did not take long before actual costs approached \$50,000.00, and there was no end in sight. I spoke with Dr. Weinberg about controlling escalating costs, and his standard response was to go back to our landmen for more money. At that time it became clear that the situation would not change no matter how much we protested or questioned PJCRP business practices. I explored the idea of severing ties with the PJCRP, but we knew of no other agency that would take on the job at this stage of the project. We were locked in. Instead of \$31,000 the project ended up costing over \$81,000.

Item 10. “As always, contrary to what some people may believe, I continue to receive NO consulting fee or salary, take NO remuneration of any kind for my expenses, etc ”

Dr. Weinberg has inspired many Polish-Jewish descendents to remember and honor their ancestors by reclaiming the abandoned cemeteries where they lie buried. And for this the Jewish community owes him a debt of gratitude. We have never questioned his motives for sponsoring the restoration of Polish-Jewish cemeteries, and we have never accused or even hinted that he has profited in any way from his position in the PJCRP.

But we are calling into question his failure to manage the PJCRP in a business-like manner and to fulfill his obligation to keep on top of what was happening in Poland. We also deem him to be a poor judge of character who, despite overwhelming evidence, still does not appreciate the dimensions of the harm and grief caused by Mr. Omasta in Ivansk and in other projects. He continues to stand firmly behind this man. What more needs to go wrong before he changes his mind?

Item 11. “Instead of focusing on correcting the mistakes that were made, in the spirit befitting the great mitzvah Ivanskers have done, such as following through on my offer above, certain Ivanskers prefer to continue blaming me and others, even threatening legal action, and as a result hurting other projects with their words.”

This final paragraph is perhaps the most instructive portion of Dr. Weinberg’s rebuttal. He transforms the “victim” into the “perpetrator” suggesting that by revealing what has happened in Ivansk we are guilty of sabotaging other cemetery restoration projects. Somewhere it is written that “actions speak louder than words”. The PJCRP’s self-proclaimed intentions radiate noble sentiments, but mismanagement and unacceptable performance nullifies all the promises. The restoration of our cemetery became a nightmare, and we have a duty to expose what occurred in the hope that it may prevent other groups from being subjected to a similar experience.

Resolution of the Quarrel with the PJCRP

My colleagues and I want to put this matter to rest; we call upon the PJCRP to:

- Pay to dismantle the current monument and replace it with one as detailed in our original design, omitting the word “collaborators” from the inscription.
- Pay for positioning the monument near the entrance of the cemetery so as not to cover our ancestor’s graves.
- Pay for replacing the plaque at the entrance to the cemetery.

We are hopeful that the PJCRP will address its responsibilities and take necessary steps to resolve this dispute without delay. We stand ready to discuss the matter with Dr. Weinberg providing he is willing to address all outstanding issues and is prepared to compensate for the damage the PJCRP has caused. *For as long as it takes, we will continue to seek redress by every means available to us. We will not let go until the PJCRP puts things right!*

A copy of this article is being sent to Dr. Weinberg.

Reader’s comments are always welcome.