



"To be a Bukovinian"

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BUKOLINK

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Dear friends,

As nature takes its course, the original generation of our parents born in Bukovina is gradually fading away and even some of the older, second-generation children have reached their seventies. It is our great pleasure to see that the number of third generation descendants who are interested in the roots, culture, heritage and the difficult Holocaust history that has permeated our community, is growing.

It is to this unique group of friends that we direct, plan and carry out our activities; aimed at exposing the knowledge related to our community, while deepening and strengthening relationships between descendants of the second and third generations.

In the public arena, parallel to activities within our community; we also operate on several levels:

- * Promoting the interests and welfare of Holocaust survivors; (through external frameworks and institutions).
- * Exposing and educating the public at large on the subject of the Holocaust in Bukovina, Bessarabia, Transnistria and Romania.
- * Exposing the public to Bukovina's rich culture from the past and its contribution to the rebuilding of Israel and its culture today.

On June 26, 2017, a delegation of about 50 members set out on a journey on "The Path of the Holocaust"; travelling throughout Transnistria and Bukovina: a course we successfully inaugurated two years ago.

On July 9, 2017, the 2nd annual Holocaust memorial ceremony for the Jews of Romania will be held at Yad Vashem; initiated and implemented by the Yad Vashem Committee at A.M.I.R.; (the United Organization of Romanian Jews in Israel), which I have the honor to head.

The annual assembly of "The World Organization of Bukovina Jews and Descendants" will take place this year on October 15, 2017 at the Tel Aviv Museum. In light of past experience, we will employ a large group of ushers who will stand ready to help our elderly members who may have difficulties.

Yochanan Ron-Singer,

Chairman and President, The World Organization of Bukovina Jews and Descendants

:From Zionism to Zion"

"From Bukovina to the State of Israel

Dr. Meir Avner 1872-1955



Dr. Avner and Adela 1898

Dr. Meir Avner, leader and chairman of the Zionist Organization in Bukovina during the period between the two world wars, represented the Zionists of Bukovina and all of Romania, through his activities as senator and as a delegate to the Romanian parliament. In addition, he was the chairman of the Jewish National Party and founded, wrote and edited a German-language newspaper, the "Osteidische Zeitung" from 1919 to 1937.

Avner was captivated by the Zionist idea during his studies at university and was one of the founders of the first Zionist student associations in Chernowitz in 1891. In 1897, he was sent to the first Zionist Congress under the leadership of Theodore Herzl.

Avner was honored to be present at the realization of Herzl's vision at the ceremony declaring the establishment of the State of Israel by David Ben-Gurion in 1948. Meir Avner and Dr. Shalit were the only two representatives at the ceremony who had also been delegates to the First Zionist Congress and were privileged to participate in the ceremony of the declaration of the state.

General and historical background

Bukovina, in its Slavic meaning, the land of the beech tree, is now divided between Romania and Ukraine and had become a sort of myth during the Habsburg Empire (1774-1918), representing the supra-national concept. During this period, five national minorities lived there harmoniously: Romanians, Ukrainians (Ruthenians), Germans, Poles, and Jews. This myth collapsed during the twenty years of the Romanian rule in Bukovina between the two world wars, from 1918-1940.

The "golden age" of the Jews of Bukovina which lasted for 70 years began in 1848 with the constitution of the empire which granted equal rights to all its inhabitants, and later under the direct rule of Austria (when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was established under the reign of the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef in 1867). The emperors attempted to gather all of the nationalities together through the German culture and language, and here began the national Zionist awakening stemming not from distress but from the need to attain recognition for the Jewish people.

Family background

Meir Avner was born in 1883 in Chernowitz, Bukovina, and died in Tel Aviv in 1955. He was the son of Yaakov Avner and Michla Avner (nee Frenkel), and had 7 siblings. His father Yaakov Avner was influenced by Hasidism and education. His grandfather Joseph Robinson - Avner, worked in a printing press in Chernowitz, where he printed books in Russian and Hebrew, and received an award for this work from the Emperor Franz Josef.

Meir Avner had received a regular Jewish education, was interested in history and philosophy and studied Talmud and Torah; (his great-grandfather had been a rabbi), but also had studied at the public Gymnasium where he absorbed the foundations of political satire that later served him well as an intellectual weapon. He finished his legal studies at Chernovitz University and practiced law during the turbulent years of his political activity.

As a student, he was exposed to the inherent tension between Judaism and the German cultural environment when he encountered a text that referred to the Jews with harsh words. This was a shocking moment for him, from which a leader who fought for his people developed, believing that Zionism without Judaism had no right to exist.

He married his wife Adela (nee Treister) in 1898. They had two daughters and a son; Alma Avner-Menczer who died in Transnistria with her husband Erwin and son Ariel; Natalie Avner-Kremnitzer immigrated to Israel in 1950

with her husband Dr. Lucius Kremnitzer, and their son Dr. Yosef Avner immigrated to Israel in 1934, married Bronka Avner (nee Eisenberg) and had one daughter.

"An old song"

;By Tsilla Avner- Hellman

Meir Avner's granddaughter

I hummed to myself an old Yiddish song
.And my heart filled up and floated like a cloud
And time fell away and so did the words
And it seemed that my parents; long gone
.joined in singing the chorus with me

Suddenly overhead, from a bird's-eye view
souls of light peaked out and emerged
and asked to join in the old refrain
And forget for a moment
.that they had been sacrificed as victims

So together we sang with the angels
.And forgot for a moment that we were survivors
,And when the song was over
and the silence returned
I was left alone, everything else had disappeared....

The Vermplash family from Zestavna, Bukovina



The father Isaac was a furrier, the mother Rosa and their three sons: Yochanan (Avi), Jacob and Samuel were a small, simple, peaceful and happy family that lived in the area of the Teutonic mountains which looked perfectly stable and safe. No one predicted or could know that these tables would move in such a destructive way when Yochanan was twenty, his brother Jacob eighteen, and his younger brother Samuel - fifteen.

In October 1941, during Simchat Torah, they were driven from their homes eastward toward the Dniester River and Transnistria. Part of the way they travelled on wagons, part on trains, but most of the way on foot. The "death march" as my uncle Samuel called this journey, the survivors were later thrown like dogs at the outskirts of the town of Chibulovka: without roof, food, or water; exposed to diseases and the terrible cold of winter.

They were not allowed to enter the village to seek help and soon after Father died of cold, starvation, and exhaustion. Jacob became ill and was unable to function. Despite the prohibition, Yochanan and Samuel entered the village to find bread - and often had to pay a heavy price for it. They went through a lot of hardships in this cursed place, until thanks to a good Ukrainian woman named Yelena their lives were saved.

Yelena, "Righteous Among the Nations" of the Vermplash family

Midnight: Yochanan lies on a padded bench; the events of the past day have robbed him of his sleep. His full bladder bothers him, but he knows that in order to go outside he may have to tread on people sleeping on the floor - eight people in one small room. On the other side of the room, above the fireplace, the silence is broken by the snoring of Yelena's blind mother. The baby in the cradle hanging from the ceiling, above Yelena's bed, coughs slightly. At his feet, Yochanan hears the rhythmic breathing of his brother

Samuel. It had been a difficult day for his brother who had searched frantically for some bread for the starving family. Yochanan knows it was only thanks to Samuel that the family had found this heated room to live in. If there are thirty righteous people who have existed in this world, this poor landlady is certainly one of them, he thinks to himself.

The chunks of wood popping in the oven, accompanied by the whining of the wind outside, are like pleasant music to his ears. The good taste of the hot stew he had eaten was still in his mouth. "Thank God, for He is good and always merciful", his lips whisper. While Yochanan was in the midst of thanking God for their good fortune, there suddenly was a knock at the door and his heart skipped a beat. Maybe it was just thunder, he hoped. He had already heard stories of the militia, who came at night to the homes of residents who gave shelter to the Jews. In these cases, the Jews were thrown out into the snow, where only God could help them, and the landlord would be punished.

The knocking sounded again and this time even louder. They all woke up and looked in terror towards Yelena's bed. Her frightened face was clearly visible in the light of the flickering fire. Only when the thumping was replaced by huge blows did her tall silhouette appear as she slowly rose from her bed. She adjusted the handkerchief on her head and headed for the door with only a thin nightshirt on. Yochanan heard the sliding of the locks and the creak of the door as it opened. A gust of icy wind blew in as he curled into a fetal position to stay warm, pulling his overcoat above his ears. The door slammed shut. Above the anxious silence in the room came the shouting of the soldiers and the silent voice of Yelena imploring, pleading, and again the sounds of quarrels and shouts, which, oddly enough, gradually weakened.

Then there was a menacing quiet that seemed to last forever. The people in the room seemed frozen in sleep and dared not to breathe or break the oppressive silence. Yochanan's heart pounded wildly, and hammers pounded in his head. Just today he had seen a smile on his sick brother Jacob's lips, and his mother, almost as vital as she had been before. The thought of another night outside sent a shudder throughout his shivering body. Tears filled his eyes and began to run down his cheeks. "From the depths I call on you, God," he cried without a voice, and drew some encouragement that Samuel, next to him, was not alone.

At that moment, the door opened and we heard the footsteps of the retreating soldiers, and the sound of Yelena's feet dragging toward the bucket of water that had been drawn from the well this morning. We could hear the light sounds of splashing water from the dark corner for a good long hour. When she finally lay down uncharacteristically on her blankets,

Yochanan noticed her hand wiping her eyes and his heart went out to this woman.

"What did they want?" Suddenly a question was heard in Ukrainian. It was Yelena's mother who had broken the tense silence; "Don't you know what they wanted?" Yelena answered her defiantly in a trembling voice, sniffling back tears and raising the fur coat over her head.

Written by Bruria Lev of the House of Vermplash, from her book "Ofekiminish".



("Love After the Inferno")

"The Recipe Corner"- from the Bukovinian kitchen: Apricot jam
recipe by 'Yulko', Joseph Klein



About two years ago, in July, we went to Bukovina. We stopped in the towns and villages where the Jews had lived, and today one can see gravestones and mass graves ...

In the yards of the houses there are trees laden with cherries and apricots, some of which are made into jams preserved even into the cold winter months.

Ingredients:

1 kg apricots without the pits

800 grams of sugar (can be less, but then the jam is less preserved)

1 lemon

Preparation:

Cut each apricot into four, sprinkle the apricots with sugar. Cut half a lemon into half slices with the peel (without seeds) and put between them. Leave to sit for a few hours - or overnight in the refrigerator.

Cook on high heat to boil (remove the foam created), lower the flame and cook for about an hour, stirring occasionally. Towards the end add juice from half a lemon. Transfer to clean jars to cool and then seal to preserve. Store in the refrigerator.

In Bukovina they used to serve the jam with a glass of water next to it. Enjoy!