

"To be a Bukovinian"

BUKOLINK

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Dear Friends,

At this year's annual assembly entitled: "Memory and Rebirth", I was proud and happy to stand in front of a packed hall of Bukovinians and their descendants as we ended another year of intense activity.

This year's rally was attended by about six hundred members of our organization; it was gratifying to see friends mingle with each other in the lobby of the Tel Aviv Museum and see the audience's reactions to the program. For years, the Holocaust of the Jews of Bukovina was called "the silent holocaust"; Transnistria was known as "the Forgotten Cemetery of Transnistria". We are working to instill the memory of our Holocaust, to expose it to the public and give it its proper place in the story of the Jewish Holocaust.

In this context, we have chosen to present in this newsletter, the "Torentria": Siegfried Jagendorf's foundry in Mogilev. Understanding that there is a very little known about the foundry and that it was almost unique in the history of the Holocaust; the story of the "Torentria" can be compared to the one about Oscar Schindler and his enamel factory in Krakow.

Friends, we are now in the advanced stages of plans for "A Journey on the Path of the Holocaust"-2017, (June 2017). A detailed notice will be forthcoming.

I will not bore you with words; I can only wish you all a Happy 2017!

Best regards,

Yochanan Ron Singer,

President and Chairman

(Following is Knesset Speaker, Mr. Edelstein's letter, [translated from Hebrew] - who was unable to attend.)

SPEAKER OF THE KNESSET

October 31, 2016

Mr. Yochanan Ron Singer
President and Chairman of the World Organization of Bukovina Jews

Dear Mr. Singer,

I received the invitation to your organization's planned event which commemorates the anniversary of the final order to deport all Jews from Bukovina and Bessarabia to Transnistria, with gratitude. Transnistria, in which hundreds of thousands of Jews were concentrated in inhumane conditions, earned itself a most terrible name, "The Queen of Death". The horrors that the Jews of Bukovina suffered there caused Transnistria to be remembered as one of the most disgraceful places during the Holocaust against the Jews in Europe.

I am filled with admiration for the important activities you are doing to preserve and remember the Jewish communities in the area of Romania. Bukovina had been home to a large, thriving Jewish community, and like other Jews in Europe, most were killed during the Holocaust. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the rally, but I salute your continued efforts to commemorate these communities.

"Remembrance is the way to salvation"; in the words of 'Bal Shem-Tov'; to remember those terrible events and those who were taken from us is our moral duty and guarantees that we will continue to exist here; with the understanding that from the ashes we rose in order to rebuild the Jewish people anew in our sovereign homeland.

Sincerely,
Yuli (Yoel) Edelstein,
Speaker of the Israeli Knesset

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"Chronology" of the Holocaust": November 1938

November 2- In the first Vienna ruling, in the wake of the Munich Agreement, Hungary annexed territory from Slovakia (Peldoydek), including approximately 67,000 Jews.

November 9-10- Following the assassination of German diplomat, Ernst von Rath, in Paris by Herschel Greenspan, there were pogroms throughout the German Reich (Crystal Night): 91 Jews were murdered; hundreds of businesses destroyed and 267 synagogues were set on fire. About 30,000 Jews sent to concentration camps.

November 10- Anti-Jewish racial laws were published in Italy.

November 12- A one billion marks fine imposed on the Jews of Germany.

Siegfried Jagendorf: A Jew who saved Jews

The "Torentria" Foundry of Mogilev by Marcel Biner;
from the book: "The Jews from Vatra Dornei)

The "Torentoria" in Mogilev was created by the initiative of Siegfried Jagendorf; a Jewish engineer expelled from the city Rădăuți. He persuaded the Romanian authorities to repair the damaged city's power station. Together with five other engineers and a handful of skilled professionals in various technical areas; electricians, carpenters, mechanics and others, he was able to restore the flow of electricity into the city in less than two weeks. These people were allowed to stay in Mogilev, together with their families. Jagendorf was given permission to operate a workshop and run various repair shops. He and his men discovered an old foundry and metal factory severely looted during the war.

It was November 1941; and within a few months, they had rebuilt the plant, which in addition to a foundry also had a machinery department including tools, presses and forges. By the spring of 1942, they also operated a garage and carpentry shop; where a growing number of people found work in various departments, including young trainees. The place had become a foundry and its official name was now "TORNATORIA DIN MOGHILEV" (the foundry from Mogilev). The plant's management and administration were in the hands of deported Jews. They manned and worked the plant itself; after a while, they added local Jewish and Ukrainian residents who had worked there earlier during the Soviet regime.

The "Torentria" manufactured spare parts for the local shared community's agricultural and mechanical equipment, operated by Romanian units. Work and services were provided to the Romanian authorities, but did not include any war equipment. However, while repairing agricultural equipment may have contributed indirectly to the Nazi war effort, on the other hand, it ensured the survival of the workers. Moreover, thanks to this foundry, many remained alive. The "Torentria" team had a complete array of skilled professionals in various fields: locksmith, watchmaker, engraver, carpenter, camera installer, radio technician, doctor, painters and more. These were known to Romanian and German military personnel and government officials, who brought their private watches, cameras, and radios for repair. When a camera was delivered it was repaired just enough to use for a few days. A radio brought in was a golden opportunity to listen to Radio London, to learn about what was going on in the world and was their only source of outside information.

It is important to mark especially the implications and the huge impact the "Torentria" had on the futures of the young people who worked there. They were educated in engineering technics, three times a week, lectures and training held by the Jewish engineers of the . At war's end and after liberation,

many of those young people learned technical professions and became engineers themselves.

Factory "Rescue"

Given that this factory was remarkable, and unique in the entire history of the Holocaust, it is possible to compare the "Torentoria", on the basis of similar outcome, with the heroism of Oscar Schindler and his enamel factory.

Bukovinian Personalities from the Past

"Lebo Levin, literary artist from Chernowitz" by Ruth Levin



How can I describe the light of a person's lifetime like Lebo Levin in a few sentences when I have not seen him at his best? I, after all, did not even speak his language. Some will say, and rightly so, that the 50 songs he composed is not a little. This is both right and wrong; because Lebo Levin was much more than just another composer. In his book of poems, I have captured only a small portion of his life's work in which he had been a troubadour of Jewish literature and poetry. Yiddish literature was his heart and soul, and his entire life was devoted to it, composed about, read and sung about on the stages of three countries - Romania, the Soviet Union, and Israel.

Dad was born in 1914 in Campulung into a family of Boyan Hasidim. In 1919, the family moved to Czernowitz. The house was full of poetry: his grandfather Joseph sang Hasidic melodies; his grandmother, Feige, had been educated in literature and poetry and was an inexhaustible source of folk songs. His two beautiful sisters, Chaika and Dora also sang. All are buried in a mass grave in the town of Bershad in Transnistria.

At age 19, my father began to perform at Yiddish poetry readings. Young people attended nightly readings of his works and songs of Eliezer Steinberg, Zelig Bardichiver, and the music of Itzik Manger, which penetrated their hearts and souls and remained there forever. Lebo Levin's name was known throughout Romania ... and along with Itzik Manger's songs; he used to sing his songs with a glass of red wine in Czernowitz....

With the outbreak of the war with the Red Army in 1942, he was deported to Siberia on charges of "espionage" an absurd accusation against a Jewish artist whose soul only trembled at the sight of beauty. He had lost his entire family in the camps when he was 27 years old. At the age of 42 in 1956, he was released. So, he went to Moscow to get permission to try to clear his name, and there, at the home of Dr. Charnei Antin-Guterman, the doctor who had saved his life in the camps, he met her daughter Shura. A month later, they were married ... And what was the first thing the released prisoner did in his new home? He bought two thick notebooks and wrote all the texts of the Yiddish writers in them, and all of the Jewish folk songs that he had kept in his memory for 14 terrible years, including, "My dear virtue" - his own mother's bedtime lullaby...

In Moscow, he met the singer, Nechama Lifshitz, and for three years, they appeared together throughout the Soviet Union. In 1962, he was invited to Czernowitz to perform on the 30th anniversary of Steinberg's death. While he was on stage, the audience stood up and cheered for over a quarter of an hour...

I was born, therefore, in Moscow, but always lived in two different worlds: the Soviet school student, yet when I was near Dad, there was a different atmosphere, Jewish, but not in the religious sense. His environment was full of Yiddish songs. Even when he had to stop performing due to an old injury from the camps, music and songs continued to live in our home like living creatures; each song was different, and I knew them all.

In 1972, we moved to Israel. Here, he was surrounded and admired by many fans, including Prof. Zvi Javits, Itzhak Artzi, and Knesset Member Idov Cohen. Dad continued to compose poetry, but not much. The time and place are not as they were ... He wrote:

To whom will you sing now; to whom?
If there is no one to listen,
If you raise your head,
You will sing to the stars.
The stars are yours, yours;
Strange it would be
If they were not, God forbid,
Yiddish understands!

In Israel, Father became acquainted with the poems of a young woman from his city; Selma Mirbaum-Eisinger. She had written in German; and had been a member of the family of famous writer Paul Celan. She died of typhus at age 18 at a Nazi labor camp, yet her poems had miraculously survived. Dad sat for an entire year and translated her songs into Yiddish. He also composed music for six of them. I illustrated the books of poems and sang all of the songs like Job, as Father watched over his cherished works. He still remains the troubadour of Jewish poetry... and unfortunately, troubadours die if there is no one to listen to them. He sang - almost without a voice - even in the hospital, until the day

he died on 7.2.83. I left everything I had done up until then and I began to sing; so that his songs would never die.

Written by his daughter- Ruth Levin, Israeli actress and singer;

Recipient of the Nobel Prize for Yiddish Culture

<http://rutelevin.wix.com/yiddish-artist-staff>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/yiddish/Levin/levin-main.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9eq0dKQUos> archival recording of Leibo Levin:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3XQc-LnV2w&list=PLefE9hQVokT61z1ivXijOM-RoQmYRXTsR&index=10>

The Bukovinian Recipe Corner: Pancakes

"Keizalech": sweet cheese pancakes:

Ingredients:

1/2 pound of white cheese, or creamed cheese

3/4 cup plain flour

1- Bag of vanilla sugar

1- teaspoon of baking powder

A little vanilla extract

A little rum extract

Pinch Cinnamon

1- Large egg or 2 Small eggs

3/4 cup sugar

Mix all the ingredients. In a large pan, heat oil to medium heat.

Spoon large tablespoon full to make pancakes and place in hot oil (flatten slightly)

Fry on both sides.

Remove and place on paper towels to drain oil.

Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle powdered sugar on top and enjoy!

Potato Pancakes: (Latkes)

Ingredients:

4- Large potatoes

2 - Eggs

Salt and pepper

1/2 cup flour

(You can add grated and drained onion if desired)

Peel the potatoes and grate them.

Squeeze out water well and move to another bowl.

Add remaining ingredients and mix quickly. (If the mixture is too thin, add a little flour).

Heat oil in a frying pan to medium high heat, use a spoon to create flat pancakes and fry on both sides. Remove, place and drain on paper towels.

Thanks to Zehava Birnberg and Arthur Rindner

P.S. Dear friends,

I turn to you all again... please send photos, life stories, songs and whatever you think is important to share with other members of our community.

With many thanks and blessings,

Shifra

(Translated from the Hebrew edition by Carol Elias)