



## "To Be a Bukovinian"

### BUKOLINK

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,Dear friends

On the eve of "Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes' Remembrance Day", I prefer to call this day; "in commemoration of the Holocaust and the rebirth"; after the grave .event had struck our people, and wiped out more than a third of the world's Jews

On the eve of World War II, 16.5 million Jews lived in the entire world. The Jewish people in Europe were a live and productive people; adapting to all conditions, a treasure of a vital life force almost unmatched in other nations throughout the .world

On the eve of the war, about 800,000 Jews lived in "Greater Romania", the third largest Jewish community in the world. At the end of 1944, only half of the community remained, indicating that 400,000 Jews had perished in the Fascist Holocaust of the 'Antonescu' government, acting under the protective auspices of .the Nazi regime

This time, the destruction was decisive, and encompassed more than one-third of the Jewish community. Many of those who had given their entire being, spirit and culture to the Jewish community had disappeared and were gone forever. This is .not just about quantity; but quality as well

The destruction among the educated, within the spiritual leaders, was greater even than among the general public. All the communities that were re-established after the war had to start over from scratch, but without the great spiritual leadership .they had had before; the destruction had been to the core

On the eve of this Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel, it is only natural that our thoughts may wander to somewhere in our own world of personal memories or to .the difficult historical experiences that have afflicted our world so dramatically

The Holocaust of the Romanian Jews has been denied by the Romanian Communists, and yet even until today no one has been able to remove it from our .memory

The original Bukovina community was wiped out in its entirety; the vast majority of the community forced out of what became a cursed land for them, or was left behind in tens of thousands of mass graves surrounded by barbed wire with many .whose burial place is unknown

Most of the surviving community members emigrated to Israel and the rest dispersed around the world. Here in Israel the community reorganized itself, started to rehabilitate and above all took its place in the world of industry, .business, intellect, education, academia, law, and so on

We have been blessed with successive generations and descendants who have successfully integrated into all areas of society in Israel and throughout the world. .This is our answer to all the oppressors and anti-semites; both past and present

,Best regards

,Yochanan Ron Singer

,Chairman and President

The World Organization of Bukovina Jews and Descendants

## **,Lighting a Memorial Torch in Rishon Letzion**

### **Shimshon Schweppel - "Remember and do not forget"**

On the eve of Holocaust Martyrs 'and Heroes' Remembrance Day on April 23, 2017, six Holocaust survivors lit torches in order to commemorate the victims .of the Holocaust in the city of Rishon Le Zion in Israel

Mr. Shimshon Schweppel, born in Chernowitz, lit a torch to commemorate those who were uprooted from their homes, tortured, humiliated, starved and did not survive, and in the honor of those survivors, who, after their perilous journeys, and terrible hardships, succeeded in immigrating to Eretz Israel after .the Holocaust

Mr. Schweppel was deported from his home in Chernovitz in 1941 to .Transnistria, where most of his family did not survive the hunger and disease

In April 1944, the Red Army liberated the camp where he was imprisoned and .after endless wanderings, he managed to return to Chernowitz

In 1947 he sailed from Bulgaria to Israel, yet on their way their ship was captured by the British and the Jews were exiled in Cyprus until 1949 when .they were finally allowed to come to the new state of Israel

Shimshon established a lovely home in Israel, raising three children, four .grandchildren and two great-grandchildren

## **"The dress that was returned to its owner"**

**by Hannah Dayan of the Machlowitz family**

My mother, Sali-Sarah nee Kliger, was born in 1910 in Horod, a town near Kosow in Galicia, Poland. Her family dealt in commerce and rented rooms for .vacationers

My father, Wolf-Ze'ev Machlowitz, who was my mother's cousin, was born in .Stanesti, Romania. He worked in a textile factory

The couple married and moved to Chernowitz, where their eldest daughter Shifra /Sidika was born. My mother, who spoke Polish, German and Yiddish, .worked as an interpreter and a typist in the court in Chernowitz

One of my first memories is of a little dress that Mother kept carefully and tenderly. It was a pink dress of fine woolen fabric embroidered with tiny flowers at the top. When I grew up my mother told me that this dress had belonged to Bella, (our cousin), when she was a baby. And when my mother had given birth to her first born eldest daughter, Shifra / Sidika, she had received the dress from Aunt Sabina, Bella's mother. Sidika died in the Bershadt ghetto in Transnistria of a combination of pneumonia and German measles which she had contracted during the terrible journey through the freezing snow and cold that .took place during the deportation from Chernovitz to Transnistria

When I was born in the ghetto, Mother did not dress me in the dress, even though there was barely anything to dress me in. In the ghetto we suffered from terrible hunger and Mother exchanged various items she had for a slices of bread; but even when these items had run out she did not touch the dress. The dress accompanied us throughout our stay in ghetto Bershadt, and then in Medias, where we lived for a while after the Holocaust on our way to Eretz .Israel, and until the birth of Esti; Bella's eldest daughter in Israel

I remember, as if it were today, when we were informed of Esti's birth, my mother said to me: "Now is the time to part with the dress and return it to its ."owner; it no longer belongs to us

I realized that the dress had done its job. It had given Mother the strength to hold on to life! Keeping that dress had also kept the memory of her beloved .home alive

Through my mother I realized that it was not always the one or two potatoes that keep you alive; but the values. I realized that keeping the dress was a symbol of hope. Keeping the dress also preserved the feeling of love that makes a human being a human being. She kept feelings and hope that would

have been so easy to lose in the reality in which my mother and we had lived  
.during those years

As I got older I also realized how smart my mother had been not to dress me in that dress. She had kept my independence, as myself, and told me that I had not come into the world in my sister's place; nor in order to replace her, and .that I had a right to exist for myself

When Esti was born, Mother felt that the dress had done its job. There was no giving up here; it seems to me that with Esti's birth and the transfer of the dress to her, my mother had managed to separate herself from her home in a .sense - a farewell to the past; but with continuity into the present

The dress went on, from my sister Sidika, and from my home, to Esti, and from Esti to her daughter, Yael, and then later on to her great granddaughter - Nina-  
.Neta

**Bella, Esti and her great-granddaughter in the pink dress**



## "The Land in Malin is Still Moving" by Bella Shire

One day I was thinking of the song, "And she that stood", I was walking with my sister in a park in Ramat Gan. We were walking among the rows of pansies, petunias, silver baskets and hibiscus shrubs. "Tell me," I said. "Malin had a very beautiful park, right?" Malin is a city in Ukraine where my father worked when my sister was seven before I was born. I had heard the city about from my parents' stories. One time my mother and sister had come for a visit and lived there for two months in a two-room apartment they shared with another couple and their young .son

That's right," my sister said. "A park, a grove, and at the end of the grove - a .crater", and then she smiled bitterly

"What?" I asked?

.Don't you know about the crater?" she asked"

"No".

"So...." she said, and she is what she told me.

She had been a bad eater. And in the fresh air in the woods her appetite would be aroused and there she would agree to eat strawberries with whipped cream that Mother had brought in a jar. Mother was happy. One day, when they returned from the trip outside, my mother and her housemate sat down to rest. The children were put to rest in the other room. A local neighbor came to visit. The conversation was quiet and in Yiddish, but my sister heard it and understood. The year was 1956, and the neighbor told them what had happened in Malin during World War II. The Jews of the city were gathered in a grove, placed on the edge of the crater, shot and buried there. The Germans did not check to see if everyone had been killed. Ukrainians who lived nearby said that after a few days the soil covering the crater .was still moving

The next day, when she went with Mother to the park, my sister was afraid to enter the woods. When asked why, she said: "Over there, there is a crater." and explained .to Mother what was in the crater

.Didn't you think she could hear you?" Father asked later"

"I was sure she was asleep"

We will all go to the crater", my parents told my sister, "and everyone will put a" small stone there in memory of the people who died ". After everyone had laid a

stone, my sister agreed to continue to come to the grove. But she would not eat there anymore

I listened to her. Babi Yar was known about; but I had never heard about the killings in Malin. I received a shocking example of, "Those who rise up against us will try to destroy us"

But I also thought of, "And the Holy One, Blessed be He, will save us from their hands". "...will save us..." What

Then I understood - from the standpoint of the Haggadah, it was considered, "will save us", because this verse deals with the 'People', not individuals. At the level of the entire 'People' it is correct to say "survived" and continue to survive. The promise of salvation is conditional because you are part of an entire group. In a sense you cannot be contained alone because you cannot contain an entire people. Does this explanation provide consolation? It's a matter of opinion and perspective

We entered the eucalyptus grove in the park. My sister added another detail to the neighbor's story: a lot of unexploded grenades were still rolling around in the area. One of the Ukrainians had found a Jewish boy who had survived the massacre. "Hey, kid, grab a toy," he shouted, throwing a grenade toward the child

.Not a German, a Ukrainian ..." I murmured"

Remember our neighbors in the old apartment in Chernovitz?" My sister asked;"  
?"Grandpa Philip and Grandmother Millia

.I remembered a nice couple who spoke Ukrainian

Their daughter was known in the market, and people said that when the city was in the hands of the Nazis she would identify a Jew who came to buy food, and would say to the sellers: 'It's a yid, don't sell to him

"And what happened after the war?"

Nothing; good neighbors. When I was five years old, the chimney collapsed into our apartment. I was alone. Mother had gone out to buy groceries, and the door was locked. Grandpa Philip dismantled the window and pulled me out; wrapped me in a blanket and together we waited for Mother to come back from the market

Bella Shire is a writer. Her book "Met Yeladim" (The New Library, 2011) won the Ramat Gan Prize in the field of fiction and was nominated for the Sapir Prize



.Bella Shire; (in front); with her sister and her parents, in a park in Chernovitz