

Edward Herman



A few days ago, while falling asleep, I started visualizing a gas chamber crowded with naked men, women and children.

Another dream that I remembers now is from the orphanage in Vac, Hungary. I would fall asleep crying into the pillow, feeling very alone, I missed my parents very badly. I would dream of being together with them. Before falling asleep I would recite the prayer which I was taught by my maternal Grandfather in Warsaw “Shema Yisrael Adonay Elohenu, Adonay Ehad” (Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One”). I felt at peace after reciting the prayer.

I will be 80 years old this year. I was born in Warsaw, Poland on December 6, 1931. When I was about one and a half years old we moved to Katowice. The reason for the move, from what I heard from my late mother, was my late father’s jealousy. My mother was a very beautiful, and a very bright woman. There were many men in Warsaw who were very interested in her, they would flirt with her and send her flowers. Because of this my father decided that he had to take her out of Warsaw, and so we moved to Katowice. We lived there for 6 years until I was seven and a half years old.

On **Plac Wolnosci 6**, my father had a dry goods wholesale business. On **Mariacka street** was the synagogue that I attended during the holidays and on **Dabrowki 5** was the **Berek Joselewicz School** where I completed my first grade; I still have a copy of my school certificate.

Towards the end of August 1939, just before the outbreak of WW2, my father took us (my mother, myself, and my younger sister Helen, who was born in Katowice) in the family car to Warsaw. I never saw Katowice and my home again. A few days after we left Katowice, Germany invaded Poland, which was the beginning of WW2.

My mother, my sister, Helen, and I, stayed under German occupation in Warsaw, with my maternal grandfather at **Zamenhoffa 37**, which was later part of the Ghetto.

Germany made a pact with the Soviet Union; Poland was defeated, divided, and occupied by both the Germans and the Soviets. My father, together with other young men went towards eastern Poland, hoping to join the Polish army in order to fight the Germans. He ended up in Eastern Poland, under the Soviets. He came back for a few days to Warsaw, wanted us to go with him to the East, but my mother did not want to leave her large family in Warsaw. My father then decided to go back by himself to the Soviet occupied Poland.

My mother's aunt and family (husband and 2 daughters) lived on **Dzielną 27**, I visited them often when I was in the Ghetto. They lived across the street from a notorious prison, Pawiak. To get to their place I had to pass a checkpoint, manned by a Polish policeman. Once, when I was going there, I was beaten by the policeman for no reason. Also whenever German guards would bring prisoners to **Pawiak**, they would jump off the truck and beat everyone in sight. Whenever I heard the truck coming, I would run together with everyone else and hide.

On **Krochmalna Street**, was Dr. **Janusz Korczak's** orphanage. Korczak was a well known author of children's books, a pediatrician, an educator and a hero. I saw there, in the Ghetto, a beautiful play performed by the orphans

Treblinka was the place where most of my mother's family perished.

After being smuggled out of the Warsaw Ghetto, I was given false Polish Christian documents. Because I had brown eyes, dark skin, and black hair and looked Jewish among the blond Polish children, I was in constant peril. My mother and my sister were blond and looked very Christian.

We lived in **Dzialoszyce**. When this village was surrounded by German soldiers and Polish police, all the Jews were told to assemble in the town square for deportation, and anyone sheltering Jews was told they would be shot. I was there with my aunt Jane, and managed to escape with the help of Mr. **Gajewski**, a fireman, who put on his helmet and uniform, and took me to the railroad station which was swarming with police and German soldiers. The Germans were planning to search every home in the village. Mr. Gajewski, was reprimanded by his boss for wearing his uniform. He saved my life. My aunt was waiting for me at the station; we took a train and escaped to Krakow..

Then we lived in **Nowy Wisnicz**. The Germans issued an order for all Jews to assemble in the public square for deportation. To save me, my mother arranged for me to stay in an attic with a Polish prison guard. She paid him generously for this. A few days after all the Jews were deported from this location, I was told to walk, by myself to the railroad station which was quite far. I left the attic very early in the morning, and remember that it was still dark with no one else on the unpaved road. At the station I met a Christian man, who my mother knew, **Jozek Gajewski**, the brother of the fireman in Dialoszyce, who took me by train to Krakow. For a while I lived in Krakow under forged Christian papers.

In **Bochnia** I lived with the late Marcel Waller, a friend of the family, who provided me with forged papers indicating that I was a Hungarian Jew. At that time Hungarian Jews were safe in Poland.

My mother realized that if I stayed in Poland we would all be in grave danger. She understood that in order for me to survive I had to leave Poland. She entrusted me to a rabbi who had lost his wife and children in Poland, who had family in Hungary, and who promised to take care of me if my mother would help him get to Budapest.

She traveled to Piwniczna, a small mountain village near the Slovakian border and established contacts with local mountain guides who were very familiar with different border crossings into Slovakia. The guides agreed, for significant monetary compensation, to smuggle the rabbi, two other young men and me, into Slovakia. I was eleven and a half years old. Like the mother of the biblical Moses, who to rescue her son was forced to give him up, in September of 1943, my mother had to let me go without her, not knowing if I would survive.

I remember clearly the river and the bridge in **Piwniczna**. The Christian Polish kids with whom I was playing, and who did know that I was Jewish, were telling me while laughing that the population of the village was watching and enjoying seeing the village Jews thrown into the river and drowning. We made our way through the mountains to Slovakia, but on

the way there we were arrested by the Slovak police, who took away all of our money. Upon learning about what had happened, the local Slovak Jewish community paid a ransom for us, and obtained our release. From Slovakia our plan was to go to **Budapest, Hungary**, where the Jews were still free (even though Hungary was an ally of Germany).

As we were crossing the border into Hungary, we had 2 guides; who for safety reasons divided us into two groups. I went with the Rabbi, and the two other men and their guide went separately. We were to meet up again at a railroad station in Hungary. The other group was captured and after many hardships, survived the war via Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

The rabbi and I managed to cross the border safely, took a train to Budapest, arrived there around noon, and met his family. We had lunch at their home, and then they arranged for me to go with a teenage boy to a coffee house frequented by Jewish refugees from Poland. The boy took me there and just left me. This was one of the most painful moments of my life, being completely abandoned, and very alone. My only possessions were the clothes on my back. I did not speak the language, I had no money and I knew that if I was arrested by the Hungarian police, I would be sent back to Poland to a certain death. I was only a child, eleven and a half years old.

My father was deported by the Soviets to Siberia, eventually joined the Anders Polish Army in the Soviet Union, and ended up in Palestine. After the war he wrote to Poland to try to locate us, but was erroneously notified that we had all perished. He then remarried in Palestine and had a son, Yitzhak (my brother) who now lives in Toronto, Canada, and to whom I am very close. When my father found out a few years after the war, that we were alive, he obtained an annulment of his second marriage, and in 1949, 10 years after our separation, we were reunited with him in Israel.

HERMANS LECZYCA TREE

Sura Ruchla (Salomea) Herman (1863 - 1942 Warsaw ghetto),
daughter of Fajwel Herman and Berta Landau
her husband:

Salomon Herman (b.1872 in Krośniewice d.1903 Łęczyca), son of Boruch
Herman and Frymeta Czamańska

their children:

Jahet Gitel (Justyna b. January 20, 1885 in Łęczyca- died in 1942
Warsaw ghetto

wife of Henschel Henryk Przedborski (1871-1938), mother of:

Samuel Przedborski, died in Warsaw in 1987?

father of:

Halina Przedborska Tuszynska, mother of
Agata Tuszynska

Bronisława Kuszner Marzynska, died in US, 1987

wife of Boris (Boleslaw) Kuszner, died in 1943 after escap[ing Warsaw
ghetto

mother of Marian Marzynski, b,1937

father of:

Bartosz Marzynski, b.1967

Anya Marzynski Dalais, b.1973

Franciszka Majewska, died in Warsaw, 1987?

mother of Zbigniew Majewski

Madzia Kuszner, died in 1942 (Warsaw ghetto)

mother of: Henryk, died in 1942 (Warsaw ghetto)

other children:

Izrael Fajwel b. June 16, 1888 in Łęczycza

father of : _____

Bronisław Herman, b.October 1, 1897 in Łęczycza

father of Adam (died in Warsaw in 2006?)

Florentyna, b.December 5, 1899 in Łęczycza.

mother of: _____