

Chanan lapid

Hans-hermann lesser

1911 – 1983

Memories

From GERMANY to JERUSALEM



Interview with Pnina Liebner 23/9/74

Pnina: "Today we'll hear a little from Chanan Lapid. I'll give him the opportunity to talk about himself; how he came to Israel, how he became a Zionist, how he came to Ein-Hashofet, and in general what the important milestones in his life were, as he sees them. I think that the only way we will be able to hear everybody's stories, about how they all came here, from many different countries, and built the kibbutz".

Chanan: "When I was 12 years old, I came back from a trip to Italy during my summer vacation, with my parents and my brothers. When we had just gotten to Venice and were on our way to Germany, on the train, there was a young woman sitting across from us. She was dressed very strangely, with a long leather coat, and she was always cold. She didn't say a word. We tried to talk to her, tried to find a common language, but all she did was give my father a note and say: "telegram, telegram". My father understood and sent the note by telegram at the next train station. Later on, somehow we found a common language, Yiddish, German, a little English or French, I don't remember exactly. She told us that she was from Kibbutz Tel-Yosef, and that she was traveling to Holland for a year to study trade. That was the first time that we had run into Zionism. When we came home, our parents said: "what do you think, would you like to wear other people's clothes? That wasn't even her coat, she got it from a warehouse

Six months later, I was supposed to have a bar-mitzvah. My mother tried to influence me not to have one, not to go to the synagogue. She didn't want to have anything to do with Judaism. We only spent time with "goyim". The only Jewish people that came to visit us were a part of our family. Every evening I prayed to the Catholic God, until finally, I wondered what I was doing. If that woman is a Zionist, and she lives in the land of Israel, and I am Jewish, why am I praying in the ways of the Catholic? I hid my problems all of the time.

I was born in the town where Ida Cholavski was born, and where another important person from Germany, 'Hindenburg', was born as well. When I went to school at the age of 6, the teacher asked me what my religion was. I told her that I didn't know. She asked "Are you Catholic". I said I didn't know. "Are you Protestant?" " I have no idea", I replied. "What church do you go to?" I said that I went with my nanny every Sunday to the San Frugel Cathedral Church. She said to ask my father, and to tell her who I was the next day. That's when I found out for the first time that I was Jewish.

I remember how my mother came into the room one day when my brother was sick, and said "Germany has lost the war". I didn't really understand what had happened. We went with the nanny to a big play at the theatre and sat in the balcony. Notre Dame came in, Pilsudski came in Paderewski, but he didn't give a concert, he was the president of Poland. We removed the black stripe from the red, black and white flag. What remained was a red and white stripe, which was the Polish flag. In this manner, we got bread from the black market, because we were identified as Polish. This couldn't continue for long. All of the Germans left the town, and so did we. I left Posen at the age of 9 and a half, and I got to a small town 60 kilometers from Berlin (Brandenburg). When I went to school, it was very difficult. They made me feel like I was an "ostyude" (outsider). I was very insulted because my father was an officer in the army. He was in the war twice, once for 6 months and once for 4 months at the end of the war. This was, of course, the First World War (1914-1917).

We came to Berlin for the first time when I was 3 years old (in 1914, at the beginning of the war). That's when my memories start. We left Pozen because we were afraid of the Russian airplanes of the Czar. Until the battle of Tannenberg, which was commandeered by Hindenburg, we didn't go back to our town. In the meantime, my father was at the frontlines in France, in Metz. We, (with the whole family, including our grandmother) went to a place 100 kilometers from the frontline in order to see our father if, by chance, he got a vacation. I got lost there once, I remember. They looked for me and found me in the end.

Every day at school, I got beaten up. The gentiles sent the strongest boy to beat me up. Even though the majority of the area was Protestant, the strongest boy was Catholic. I was a large boy and I could have hit him back, but I didn't feel good about the situation. Even the teachers walked around wearing swastikas under their coats. In my class, there was a Chinese girl that was sent there by the Chiang Kai-shek government of Taiwan. She was part of the Chinese Consulate. She had a family tree that went back 2000 years. She told me that they were in France during the war, and later wanted to get a Prussian education. In my class of 45 children, there was the nephew of General Von Mackensen, one of the highest commanders of Kaiser Wilhelm, who lost the war.

I left school at the age of 16. There was a crisis in the family, and my father left the house. I started studying for 4 years in a printing press. I thought that I would like to study journalism in German. Although my German was the best in my class, they insisted on calling me "Ostude". I also wrote poetry, and I was very good at it. But I decided that I needed to learn a profession. I knew some of the German workers. The whole city was red (Communist), except for the Yunkers (German Aristocrats), and the shops that put out Wilhelm's flag during every celebration. The rest of the city was red, and had red flags. It was known that the workers in the printing press were the elite of the workers. They were the most intelligent among the workers that read books, and knew something about politics.

I was very involved and active. I worked for 12 hours a day, including an hour walk in each direction to and from the printing press. In the evenings, I took advantage of the time and took courses, and I started to take an interest in art. All of a sudden, they realized that I had a graphic inclination. At school and at home, nobody had noticed this. I learned how to write calligraphy, letters from the 8th century until modern times. After I learned there for 4 semesters, I started to learn English, sketching, typing, stenography, and literature, each one for a semester. I didn't know where my life would take me, but I knew that I could always use the knowledge wherever I went.

That was how it was all my life. All together I worked at the printing press for 8 years. In the end I was an expert. I even took a course in calculation, and learned how to calculate how much it would cost, and how much time it would take to print books on one type of paper or another, using different types of letters. I was very interested in it all. I acquired a book from our city library that was printed in the year of Albrecht Doerer, which was printed by Gutenberg. It was fascinating to see what kind of paper it was printed on, what letters. Of course, it was bound with gold.

For the second time, I ran into a very strange circumstance. I moved to Berlin to work, and it was to my advantage. I left the small town that I had lived in, in which people knew of my associations with the Socialist movement. I was a member of the "Vanderfugel". In the Vanderfugel we had hikes and trips. They preached against smoking and drinking. We used to take trips with men and women; we danced, jumped into water without clothes. We saw no sin in this. I was accepted as a gentile like everyone else.

One day, my boss, the manager of the printing press, called me into his office. He told me that he knew that I had done an outstanding job running the printing press during the time that he had left for 6 weeks, for his father's funeral and a hunting vacation afterwards. In the shop there were 25 workers, and we worked two shifts. He wanted to nominate me to be the head of a Nazi organization at the workplace. Before that, he wanted to verify that I was a pure Aryan from both sides. I told him, "Mr. Shultz, I can promise you that I'm a pure Jew from both sides for generations".

Of course, after one month, he sent me away, even though he had previously promised to pay for the rest of my studies, since he had no sons. He sent me away without papers, saying that he was afraid that someone would find out that he had a Jewish worker. He eventually gave me the papers, after six months. (Gideon says that the papers were a record of his training, and were also needed to get unemployment compensation.) The first thing that I did was to go to Poland, because most of the Jews went to Paris.

There were many incidents in Germany, even within our family. One had been a lawyer who lost his job and couldn't find a new one, so he committed suicide (This was in reference to the husband of Margaret Hollander). Some of my gentile friends from work, who were socialists, were killed and thrown into the Schprau River. Neighbors of ours, who were gentiles, got packages in the mail that they had to pick up, which contained the ashes of their male family members. I had a small studio, that wasn't far from the Red house, the center of the Communist party. I heard the sounds from the machine gun from the last battle, where the Nazis took over the Communist house in Berlin.

I was happy that I was able to run away to Poland, and my goal was to read newspapers. In Germany, it wasn't allowed to listen to foreign radio broadcasts. The Nazis would come to houses, unannounced, to check what radio stations people were listening to. Friends of my parents, who stayed in Poland and didn't have children, sent me to Warsaw for six months. I looked for a job there, and I met the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw. He sent me to a Jewish printing press, and it was the first time that I saw Jews with "straimel" (orthodox). This was during the harshest winter that I ever saw, between 1933 and 1934. I even sent a letter to a Polish Commerce Minister, who was Jewish and was married to a gentile, but it was to no avail. After I saw that a black Mercedes with a swastika on it, which belonged to the German Consulate was driving around freely in Warsaw; that Goering, the Propaganda Minister, came to Poland to go hunting; and that there was a worrisome atmosphere, I began to think about my future, and what to do next. I got a train ticket that cost 100 zloty, which allowed me to travel throughout Poland, and to look for work.

I went to Katowitz, and was taken in by a nice family, who took me out of the hotel, gave me a place to sleep, and gave me food. They really helped me, but most people didn't help. They sent me from one place to another. Sometimes the reason that people were nice was because they thought, "here comes the hozzen (groom). So I left quickly from those families.

When I went to Bietzko, I looked for a job at a printing press that printed a newspaper in German. I came to the printing press, and there was technical problem with a machine. Everyone was standing around it, and the manager asked what I wanted. I told him in little Polish that I wanted to talk to him in private. I told him that I was a refugee, and that I was looking for work. He asked me "Are you crazy? I get all of the letters and supplies from Germany to print this newspaper for the Germans. This is all of my income". This man was Jewish. I had no idea that the Germans were so deeply involved in Poland, and I ran away from Bietzko as fast as I could. In Warsaw, I met a Jewish man who had a factory for springs. He said that within six weeks he would be able to make hand grenades and small bombs, in case anything happened. I answered that he should know that if anything happened, it'll take only two weeks and all of Poland will be finished. I didn't have very much work. Here and there I found something, I drew a small picture for somebody, I made candy wrappers. I lived with a Jewish family, with an old woman and her divorced daughter. I decided to leave, and go back to Germany to find a way to go to Israel. This was my decision with which I returned to Berlin. I worked at a printing press that was owned by a Jew. He kept me there for a year until he found someone else that was willing to work for less money. I found myself unemployed again. I went to an unemployment office for Jews and they referred me to another job. I learned some new skills there, how to make small signs, and write cursive letters with a brush on the windows of shops. They were very impressed of my work. There was a gentile who wanted to hire me to work for him, but I didn't want to. Meanwhile, my papers were already at the Jewish Agency, and the whole ordeal took more than a year. My mother tried to influence me not to move so far away.

She said "go to Spain". Someone who came back from there said that there are rich Jewish families there, that it is possible to find work. I told her that I wouldn't go to a place where there was once an Inquisition. She said, "Do me a favor and do it for your brothers. Maybe they can all move there and find work". Later on, my brother Erich was ready to travel with a gentile friend in his car to Spain for business, but Franco's war had just begun, so they didn't go.

My mother wanted to buy a house in Danzig, and to sell our house. I told her not to, because the first thing that Hitler would do is to take Danzig back. She protested that I am always against all her ideas, and that I always knew better. She was a part of a generation that was hard to communicate with.

In fact, since I was sixteen years old, I was independent, even though I lived at home and ate supper at home. The food was always cold, because it was prepared at lunch time. My mother never thought to prepare hot food for me and my brother Erich, who worked at an automobile shop until the evening as well. Her life was always organized the way that she wanted it to be.

My brother Erich asked me to get him papers from the Jewish Agency as well. I brought him papers to fill out, but he said that he just found a job, so he didn't want to move to Israel any more. I went to several Zionist organizations in Berlin, such as the "Tzionim Clalim (General Zionists) and the "Halutz". I started to learn Hebrew in Berlin in 1935. I used to have a lot of gentile friends, but because of the Nuremberg Laws, I had to stop being in contact with them. I took a long trip with two women to the country. We slept in a farm that belonged to the Finance Minister of the Nazi Party. There was a large military exercise near it. This was the last trip that I took in Germany, to finish an era and to say goodbye to the place where I had grown up, and been educated as a gentile. This began a new era in which I began to live as a Jew. In 1936 I heard Yiddish for the first time, and I almost fell off my chair. I said, "What kind of a language is this? Is it bad German?"

Everyone was scared of the year 1936, because the Olympics were supposed to be in Berlin that year. We knew that the last time that the Olympics were supposed to occur in Germany was during WW1 in 1916.

In 1935, Hitler decided to take the Rhineland back. We wondered what he was doing. Would he rein over that area again? One day I went to the market to buy some eggs and meats, because I used to make myself breakfast. I already lived in my own room in Berlin, and once a month I went to visit my mother in Bad-Hartzburg. All of a sudden, I realized that I couldn't find any meats or eggs or butter in the stores. It was impossible to find any in the whole city. People whispered one to another that they were conserving for the army. We knew that Hitler was getting ready for a war. There were orders to put black paper over the windows so no light could go through (blackouts). The Zeppelin, "Hindenburg," went over Berlin for the very first time before it went to America and burned. I donated two marks towards the completion of building the "Hindenburg" before Hitler came to power, and I still felt a true German.

In the Halutz movement there was a young member who said that he didn't like what was going on here. He heard about the movement of "Hashomer-Hatsair", in the year 1935. I told my brothers and friends to hurry up, whoever wanted to leave, should leave in 1936, because it would be easier to leave because of the Olympics in Berlin. The Germans had already started building a large stadium, and started decorating the city. All of a sudden, in 1936, I got a message that I had to leave Germany within the next 3 days. This was because the British government was closing the border to Israel, and not allowing entry. I quickly went to visit my mother who was living in the mountains, and was managing a rest house for Jews. I invited my father to come from Leipzig, and I saw him. He told me: "I can't leave, I was an officer at the German army, and they won't take me. Don't worry about me". I traveled with about 500 Jews from Berlin to France. We crossed the border, and the whole Jewish community accommodated us at about 10 PM. They gave candy and cigars to everyone, the children and the elders. I wrote a postcard to send home to my mother, saying that I crossed the border and was fine. They transported us through the port for animals. We were there for four hours in the sun, while they read names. I felt how it was to be a Jew that was running away.

I boarded the ship, and saw that the name of it was the Patriot. It was the ship that later sunk by the port in Israel. I got to the land of Israel."

Pnina: "What was your name then, you weren't then Chanan Lapid?"

Chanan: "I was given 4 names: Hans Herman, and because I was Jewish and had a brit, Hyam Hiersh. My last name was Lesser. Later I found out, because my father always said that we had cousins whose last name was Liezer, which translates to Eliezer, which can be Elazari. They changed their names. (Gideon thinks that the original name was Liezer, and the Lessers changed their name in order to be more successful in their business. This was because Lesser was a common German name - there were four pages of Lessers in the Berlin phonebook. Gideon also explains that Chanan said that he changed his name to Lapid because he wanted to keep the first letter of his name as L. He didn't want his last name to be Eliezer even though it is the direct translation of the name Lesser, because it is considered to be a Sephardic name).

I went to Jerusalem and got acclimated there. I knew letters in English and "loazit", and thought that I would manage. In the meantime, I found all kinds of jobs. I worked with an electrician, and made antennas for rooftops. I found out that they were looking for someone to work at the post office to finish making the drawings for how to set up telephone lines. I worked there for six months. Afterwards, I did all kinds of jobs, drawing small pictures, typography and making insignias. At the end, I had a job to draw signals with a brush. But one day when I was on my way home, I saw that fifteen Jews had been killed on the spot by a bomb. I decided that I had to join the Hagana. When I joined the Hagana, I mostly did guard duty in the Yemin-Moshe neighborhood in Jerusalem, because the Orthodox Sephardic Jews didn't go out on Friday nights. Every Friday night I was there, and I walked around near the Tower of David, to see the wonderful view. I also drew a picture of it, which I brought to Ein-Hashofet, and gave it to Molly as a present when I met her.

I was given the option to guard kibbutzim during a month. I thought it would be a great opportunity to get to know what life on a kibbutz was like. Before this I was in Tel-Yosef and in Ein-Harod for about a week. I was also in Givat-Brenner for a few days. But all of these kibbutzim were part of the "Kibbutz-Hameuchad" movement. I took a vacation from work, and my boss agreed. About 15 of us, who didn't know each other beforehand went to Haifa. We gathered at the train station, and were waiting for a car that was supposed to take us to the kibbutz in the afternoon. In the meantime, one guy bought a newspaper, and we read in it, that there had been a large attack in Juara. (This was the hill next to where Ein-Hashofet currently stands. At the beginning the kibbutz was actually founded on the hill of Juara.). This was in July 1938. I didn't really know Hebrew well at the time, so they told me what had happened. I said that this was even more reason to help them. But when we finally got into the car, we found that there were only 8 of us. Seven had gone back in the direction of Jerusalem. First we got to Kibbutz Hazorea, where we picked up goods, bread and supplies, and then we drove to Juara. At Juara, my job was to guard the road to make sure that it was safe. I went to check the small bridges, to make sure that there wasn't any gunpowder under them. My Hebrew wasn't very good. At the kibbutz, they told me that I need to know two things. If you see light from the south, you have to yell "Rivka Signal, Rivka Signal". Then Rivka would look at the signals and record them, because she knew Morse code. This is how I met Rivka Driber. She spoke with the British Outpost on a radio, and by using Morse code as needed. Afterwards, I was supposed to guard the women working in the vegetable garden, for use in the kibbutz. We had a water tank which I guarded from the top of it. I had to notice when the water filled up, and yell "Serenka Water, Serenka Water," so that the lady named Sarenka would turn off the water. At the kibbutz, I was astounded by the wonderful view, and from the people. There were a few people who knew English, so it was easier for me.

I had to go back to Jerusalem after a month, in order to take care of the belongings, in a room that I still had there. I had decided to move to the kibbutz. My friends in Jerusalem said that I wouldn't last there. They said that they would keep my clothes, because when I decided to leave the kibbutz, they wouldn't even give me a button. This was the view that people had of kibbutzim. I said to them that I would definitely stay in a kibbutz, but I wasn't sure if I would stay in Juara. So I packed up my belongings into two suitcases, and I left them in Jerusalem. I finally got them back after 5 years. Yehoshua Leibner brought them to me to the kibbutz. I gave the sheets and everything to the communal clothes warehouse. Somebody there asked my permission to use the sheets, to make white shirts for the women in the kibbutz, even though I wasn't yet a kibbutz member. They hadn't seen such high quality sheets before. I agreed, and they gave me a different set of sheets to use. This wasn't important to me at all. I stayed in the kibbutz as a guest, but at a certain point, I was tired of having to do nightly guard duty all of the time. I started to work as a Sheppard, and I really liked it. I was a Sheppard for 4 years, but they never let me milk the sheep. Every year, I asked again, but they never agreed. When I met with shepherds from the area, from Kfar-Yehoshua, they laughed, "What, you don't know how to milk? You have already been working for 4 years". One day, I came home, and there was a general assembly in the kibbutz about needing to send a person to the army. They didn't want to have a drawing in order to choose. This was the summer of 1942, in the middle of the war. Molly was already pregnant. I told her "The Nazi's won't catch me again without a gun". This was clear to me. My mother had managed to escape before Italy entered the war, through Italy, through Suez, to China, to Shanghai. This was the last possibility. My brother Erich had managed to get to Australia 3 months before the war began. My youngest brother, Reinhard, left the house two months after I did, in 1936. The family was dispersed throughout the world. My father stayed in Europe. He was called to the police station 5 times. Each time he had his medal of honor on his chest (this medal was an Iron Cross for bravery, of second degree. This was because he was Jewish and couldn't receive a first degree medal). They asked him, "What are you doing here? Go home". Until one day a new officer came, and he never came home again.

From Service in the Jewish-Brigade
to the Kibutz



I decided to volunteer to serve in the British army. The kibbutz members agreed. This was before the Battle of El-Alamayn. The British had already begun to build a new road, not far from here. This was at Wadi-Milech, the road to Zichron-Yaakov. Its purpose was to serve as a retreat road in case something happened, and the Germans got to Palestine.

This was part of the establishment of the Jewish Brigade in the British army. Now, after 30 years, we can tell a few things about it, without the fear of revealing any secrets. After I volunteered to be a soldier, I had to wait close to 4 months, until the neighboring kibbutzim, and the rest of the kibbutz movement organized a few more recruits, that became a group of people who were supposed to be together, from the first to the last day of service in the army. (*The time is the fall of 1942, a few months before Dalit was born on March 12th, 1943. My mother told me that before he left to be recruited, they went to visit friends in Haifa and stayed overnight with them. They went to a concert and had a nice time to celebrate before starting his service. G.*) At the end, after 4 months, we were 5 members who got together in Tel-Aviv. One of the 5 people had a broken hand and he had a cast (*I assume that he left the group. G.*) In a medical exam by British doctors in Sarafand (*now called Zrifin, near Lod, a large army base even today. G.*), they checked all four of us. One person couldn't see in one eye, so he was sent home. A second person couldn't bend his index finger, needed to pull the trigger on a rifle, so he was sent home too. The third person couldn't hear the soft whisper of the doctor, and he was sent home too. So I was the only person who was drafted from this group to go into the army.

In Sarafend, I passed all the training as everybody else there, except for the fact that we stayed there for 4 months instead of 2 months. This was mainly because of some Polish members of our company who served in the army of General Anders, and they wandered with the Polish army that went through Russia, and came through Teheran on the way to Cairo. In Palestine, they defected, and went to kibbutzim and re-enlisted again to the British army. There was a need to translate for them the instructions from English to Hebrew to Yiddish, and then to Polish and it slowed down all the training.

We learned all this (*probably the formal marching exercises*. G.) starting with the left foot, as they did in previous training turning to the back 180 degrees, they did exactly from the opposite direction of rotation. The same was with the saluting instruction. In the end, we got used to all these things. When they heard to "cease fire", they understood: "dus uf pfer zu shitzen, to Shitz fire" (*to fire*. G.) by the Englanders ping ur ariter (*in Yiddish, "not clear to me"* G.). The equipment that we got- the rifles- was from the year 1914, from the First World War. We realized that after three years of fighting the war (1939-1942), the British were not ready at all to fight this war with Hitler. The same was with tanks, and the rest of the military organization. I also found out that I was, on the average, 15 years older than the rest of the soldiers. All of them were young boys, (*he called them "zuzikim" young in Yiddish*. G.), of the age of 17 to 18 years old. But in regards to all the Austrian and German born and educated members of the company, the British always used them in the official flag ceremonies, and I got a longer rifle so I'll be able to perform the marching ceremonies nicer. The commanders noticed that we were always the better polished and organized persons in the unit. I have a small ring on my finger; you can see that it's marked with the word Palestine. This is actually a coin of one Shilling that I got as a prize for being in first place of the whole regiment, in target shooting. Later on, when we needed to guard a camp of Italian prisoners of war, an Italian soldier made a ring out of the coin, and I have it to this day.

I'll never forget my first leave after 6 weeks in the service. Because of the curfew that was established then in Palestine, from 6:00 PM till morning, when we got our "after duty" pass at noon, in Sarafend, I only made it to kibbutz Yagur (*past Haifa*. G.). It was in the middle of winter, and it was heavily raining. I started to walk on the road to Yoqneam, continuing to the old road from Kibbutz Hazorea to Ein-Hasofet, in between the hills, and past the Arab villages. After 3 hours and 45 minutes, I got to the dining-room in Ein-Hashofet. I remember that Molly was in a bed resting the last few months of pregnancy with Dalit, and I couldn't just show up in our one room apartment. I was also very hungry, since I missed both lunch and supper. I walked into the kitchen, and there was Bracha Shazar, and she made me scrambled eggs.

I remember this omelet to this day. It was very tasty and it was such a warm welcoming. It was out of the ordinary for me.

Back to Sarafend, it was the first time that we, the Yekkim (*what the Jewish people who came from Germany were called. G.*) weren't looked down upon, as we were in Palestine by other fellow Jews. (*They laughed at the Yekkim, about the way they could speak, or write the Hebrew language. G.*) Later on, it was the same when they laughed at the Romanian Jews, and now with Moroccan Jews, as it was with each time period of a wave of immigration to Israel. At the time it was the "Guard House", it was a "holy place" for the British in the base, with a flag pole, some prisoner cells, and a small cache of fire arms, and munitions near the main road to the base. I was on a night guard duty 10:00 to 12:00PM, and I was told that from 10:00PM it is prohibited for anything to pass the road in front of me, either a car or a person, without verifying identification. I needed to stop any person that came check identification, and ask why he was there. At 11:45PM, I heard a "puck, puck, puck," sound of a motorcycle, and I shouted at the rider: "Stop, stop, stop right there!", but he didn't stop, and continued to ride on the road. So I loaded a bullet into the rifle, and this action he heard. At night you hear it very well, and he stopped on the spot. Here, an officer approached me and I told him to come near me, so I can see who he was and recognize him, and asked for the security code for this date. He said it and simultaneously said to me, "Are you crazy to stop me in the middle of the road? What are your instructions?" So I told him to "stop anyone that passes the road here, except for submarines and airplanes". This joke was well known all across the base at Sarafend, everybody laughed at it, and I was famous within that night.

Later on, I was standing for a rifle check in front of the large exercise field, my son now knows it well too, (*I was in that same base during my training to become an artillery officer in 1970. G.*), and during the rifle check I was looking straight in the eye of the British officer. He told me: "What are you doing, looking me straight in the eye? look at my hat, at the symbol of the king of England". I looked up and I saw, oh, a few flocks of storks, so many of them. I said, Oy va: avoi, (*good heavens, in Yiddish. G.*) what is the date today? Storks are related to children, to babies. And it was a Friday.

Friday, we were all born on Friday for three generations, three boys (*must be the Lessers: Ziegfrid? Max? Erich? Hermann? G.*), except for my younger brother Reinhard who was born on Sunday. It didn't take long before we returned to the barracks, and there was a messenger from the office, and he said: "Chanan, you had a telephone message, Mazal Tov, you have a baby boy!" Oh, what a great joy, I was the only soldier from the whole regiment in Sarafend who had a baby boy then. It was a great happiness. I invited everyone to drink beer, and to eat cakes in the "Nafi" (*the refreshment cantina for soldiers. G.*) I asked to get a leave to go home, but I wasn't granted it immediately. They said: "you are a soldier now and you have to wait until you get a vacation". But anyway, after 3 days, I got permission to go to visit Molly in the hospital (*During that time, the mother would remain one week in the hospital after giving birth. G.*) I found out later that it was Dalit that was born, and it was a great joy, and everyone was fine."

(This is a story that my father told me a few times. he was in target shooting training that day that he was told that he had a son born to him. He said that he didn't care anymore about how well he will shoot and he just shot the three bullets fast to get it done quickly. He was told that he had a son born, and when he went to Afula to visit my mother, he asked about his son and he gave his name to the clerk. The name was then Lesser before they changed the name to Lapid. In the confusion of getting to the hospital, my mother registered with the name Molly Urovitch, her maiden name, and when he tried to find a son with that name there, he was told that there is no such baby in the hospital. They did find the error, and he was then told that he had a baby girl, Dalit [a name recommended to my parents by Rochke, my mother mentor from Montreal. A modern Hebrew name at that time, a variation of the name Dahlia - the flower] in addition, my father told me that he brought my mother a large bottle of perfume, or Eau de cologne water, to the hospital. Unfortunately, it happened to get broken, and the whole wing smelled from it for days. G.)

Chanan: "As I was telling you earlier, the British included me in the list of soldiers to be sharpshooters, as a German born person. They thought I must have been a good sharpshooter.

But the rifles being made in 1914 weren't calibrated well. These rifles still had the grease from storage in the boxes, but anyway I was able to hit three bull's eye hits in the target. I had a Jewish commander from the British army, whose name was Leichester, (the English say it Lester), and he asked me how I was doing. When I said my name, Lesser, he was astonished. He asked, "Don't you have relatives in England?" I said, "no sir, I am sorry". He thought that he found his own relative, and he wanted to give me "Protectzia" (*protection G.*), to help me out.

After two months in Sarafend, we decided to have a big party. One person who was in Juara (near Ein-Hashofet) earlier, was supposed to become an officer, and went through some training in the Palmach (*the pre state time commandos-for the Israeli Hagana, army. G.*) He called my name, and suggested that I prepare a party. He knew me from Ein-Hashofet. I made all kinds of large signs and decorations. When the British administrators in the office heard about it (that I know how to make signs), they immediately got some work for me to do the next day. I had to write the signs on the door of the officer, and to mark our company No. 28, and so I made some signs in Sarafend. In the meantime the rest of the company continued the marching exercises. It was the idea of the British sergeant major, who was a real cruel person, but not towards me. He recognized immediately from the beginning, that I can do the marching exercises well, and because I was older than the rest of the soldiers, I ended up drawing signs. I saw that it was becoming a routine, and there was a risk that I'll be staying there to make signs, while the rest of the company will complete their training in Sarafend, and go on to their places in the army, for their continuing service. I wrote a letter to the officer, and requested to fully return to the training program with my company, and this is how I completed the training, and I got out of Sarafend. (*This base was the largest British compound in Palestine, used for preparing soldiers for their missions elsewhere in the region, and a logistical center. G.*)

We were transferred to a small airport near Haifa. We had to guard the airplanes. (*This airport near the port of Haifa is still in use today as the Haifa municipal airport, for domestic flights and also to fly to Cyprus and to Jordan*).

There I saw for the first time the B-25, a "flying fortress", this plane took part in combat in Tunisia, and always returned safely, and we would wait for it to return safely, and it was a very impressive sight. One day, we got a message that a journalist (an American photographer) thinks that we aren't that good at guarding this airport. He will come to take photographs at the airport. It was planned by the American security agency to check on some installations. There was also a risk that the German paratroopers, who were already in Syria and in Lebanon, countries which were under French mandate, but the Vichy government was under German control, and it was a possibility to have a German invasion. When we were on guard, we were always doing the round patrol around the base, which took an hour and a half to walk, and which ended near the tent of the British commander. This commander used to take a dip in the morning, in a makeshift pool which was just a hole in the ground that was padded with a tarp from a tent. When we ended the night patrol, we had to add some water to the pool, after our first round at night, and it was customary and an "honor to our people" to add some water and to pee in that pool, and to end our shift this way.

It is hard to believe what was happening here in the middle-east during the time that millions were being killed during this difficult world war. There was such chaos, and unorganized effort, "bullshit" as the British were calling it.

So, one day appeared, near the airport, a person dressed like an Arab with five goats. The whole area was just white sand, and you couldn't see anything else but sand there. What is this Arab doing with five goats on these sand dunes? We shouted at him, "Ta all hunn ta al hunn" (*come here, in Arabic. G.*) He came and we started to check him and to beat him, and of course this was the American photographer that he thought of this way to enter the base of the airport. But we were members of kibbutzim, and there were a few members from kibbutz Yagur (*which is about 10KM away from there. G.*) who were young, of age 17, but they pretended to be 18, so they can be drafted. We immediately saw that something was strange with this man. This isn't how you walk with goats for grazing.

At the end, we were moved to another base in Kurdani, (*a few KM to the north, between Haifa and Acre. G.*) Over there, we had to guard some empty storage hangers. We actually didn't know what we were guarding there; all we knew was that we were to guard the large storage rooms. And once, when I heard a loud noise, and I looked inside one building, I noticed that there was nothing there except for some empty boxes and the cats were just able to catch a mouse. The members of the unit started to complain to the officer, it was a Jewish officer, and after that we got all kind of new assignments. We had a chance to escort the train from Haifa, all the way to Turkey. At that time, the English government wanted to bribe the government of Turkey which was neutral, and they didn't want the Turks to fall into the hands of the Germans. So they sent them canned food, cigarettes, ammunition, and a lot of cans of gasoline. We had to go all that way, for two weeks - this is how long the trip took - there and back, and we had to watch all these cans of gasoline. There were some long stops in Tripoli and in Beirut, and the cans started to leak from all the grinding of the train. One time, we got separated, and the corporal of the five of us told me and another soldier to guard 2 cars of the train, while they went and guarded 3 other cars on another train. I didn't have any more food, and in one station in Lebanon, I was talking a little French. I managed to get some food that we bought. The Arabs there knew that we only had 5 bullets in our belts for the rifle. During previous trips like that, some soldiers lost some bullets from these old belts from 1914 and the soldiers were left with no bullets. This way, with five bullets, it was easier to keep an eye on the bullets. So the Arabs living near, where the train was passing, knew that the soldiers only had five bullets. They let us know that at night the Arabs will have a "Fantazia" (*Fantasia, a raid in their terms. G.*) They wanted to raid the train. I told them, they can take whatever they want to take from the train except from the two cars that I'm guarding. I'll guard them with all my strength and ability. They agreed. I went along and checked the whole train, about 50 cars, and I saw the 5 drunken black-skin drivers of the train. At night, as we were standing on the tracks, I heard a caravan of people who were already shooting in the air with joy, and they started to steal goods from the train. When one person tried to crawl under one of my train cars, I stopped him with my bayonet and he was trembling with fear, and I was afraid too.

I knew that if I do something, then I have 4 bullets to shoot at them, and one bullet to shoot myself. I also found out earlier that the Arabs managed to open all the seals and ropes that were tying the tarp over the cans of gasoline. We were sitting on those tarps to guard the train cars. During the day, it was so hot that you couldn't touch the tarp, and at night it was very cold, "cats and dogs" and sometimes it rained, and we didn't have any protection, such as a personal tarp, gloves or scarves. We were always considered by the British as "bloody natives" and we didn't deserve those amenities.

On one of these trips it was my turn to be able to leave the train as the other soldiers watched our belongings, and I went all the way to the village of Cedar and I saw the woods of cedars. I thought to myself that this is all that was left from the time of King Solomon, the wood beams that he used to build his boats with, and also to build the second temple in Jerusalem. This was very impressive to me, to see the little remaining woods which were very beautiful, and well kept. I was very impressed by that. When we all returned to the train station, obviously the train wasn't there. We needed to catch a ride and go to the next train station, and meet the train there. In Haleb (Aleppo Syria), I had a rare chance to meet with Jewish people among the population there. We went to the old city, which was very similar to the old city in Jerusalem, all the buildings and the channel of sewer in the middle of the street. We got to a closed area with a fence, it was on Shabbat, and an old woman told us: "What do you want in here, go away from here, it isn't here, it is there in the other street". She thought that we were looking for street whores. We explained to her that we speak the holy language of the bible, we are from the land of Israel, and she started to mumble in Hebrew in addition to her Arabic language, and at the end she asked about one of our members, "what is this gentile doing here smoking on Shabbat?" We explained to her that not all the Jewish people in Israel are religious, and do observe the Shabbat. We are from kibbutzim. When she heard that, she let us in, inside the fence, and allowed us to enter a beautiful house. The men weren't there, they should have been at the synagogue or at the coffee house, play cards and gambling. They gave us cantaloupe to eat and cold drinks.

We told them a little about the country of Israel, and they were very impressed. Afterwards we tried our luck, and we went to the synagogue of the more affluent Jewish neighborhood. We met a young guy there, and after we walked with him for half an hour in the streets, he finally invited us, after we pressured him, to his room. It was a very nice apartment with many rooms and servants and a lot of nice furniture. He had a small room. We were there for two hours and still, he didn't offer us any food. That was the difference compared to the poor women we met earlier. We told him about Israel, but he thought about going to school at the university in Haleb or Damascus, and didn't even think about returning to Israel from Syria.

In the meantime, the Jewish officer of our unit started a dog unit that was planned to be used to find mines. I heard that one dog was bit by a snake above the eye, and he got such swollen glands that they thought to kill him the next day. I asked the dog handler if I can see the dog, so I can take care of it. I knew how to treat animals from my experience with the sheep in the kibbutz. I tried to use medicines like "katran and ichtiol" and by the next morning it helped and all the swelling went down. Immediately the story spread that we have a "wonder doctor", a veterinarian. They took me out of the guard duty. Then we were guarding the Italian paws, and I had to work with the dogs. I became in charge of the dogs. This didn't last very long, because they transferred us to Jerusalem, where there was no room for the dogs. We needed to give the dogs away.

I want to tell you that we did take true battle training. It took place near the Carmel, not too far from Ein-Hashofet, and I got some leave afterwards to go home. My friends wanted to come to the kibbutz to sleep there at night. I prepared for them a hot shower. We needed to heat the water heater (*It was a kerosene lit water heater that they used in the kibbutz that is only heated prior to taking a shower and isn't kept hot on a thermostat, as it is nowadays. G.*) I arranged it ahead of time in the kibbutz, and they prepared a nice party for my unit, and it was a happy evening. I also prepared rooms for the officers but they didn't want to sleep away from the unit. It was the first time that the people in Ein-Hashofet saw a group of Jewish soldiers, and everyone were very proud about it.

We wanted to write a thank-you note to the kibbutz but we were afraid that the British will know what was going on. We were the first to undergo real combat training, and later on, few months later, when the Jewish brigade was formed, my regiment had sent the soldiers that were fighting the Germans there for two weeks. I was saddened by the fact that many of my friends were killed during that battle. We didn't know what was happening. Everything was kept secret. One day, I was asked to go to some office and an officer was saying: "All the soldiers confuse me with him, and salute me instead of saluting him. This can't continue this way. It's either that you leave or that I'll need to leave the unit... but I will stay here", he added. This was a hint that they are planning to transfer me to a different unit. They gave me a short leave to go home, and Molly escorted me back to Jerusalem, and from there I got instructions to go to Egypt. Nobody knew where I was going, even Molly didn't know. My trip was so secret that even the military police in Cairo kept me more than half a day there, and checked on the place where I had to go. I couldn't reach there that day, and I was told to go to a place called Turah, and that I'll get more instructions from there. Slowly but surely I got to that secret place. It was a place where some people worked in caves under the ground. Some of the caves were quarries as deep as 1.5 KM, all under ground. There were some signs on the walls, an antique red line. When I asked about it, I was told that from here the ancient Egyptians took the blocks of stones to build the pyramids. That means that Jewish slaves worked here, and transferred all the blocks of stone to the nearby Nile and then it was taken to build the pyramids. Across from us, in the distance of some 30 KM from the base, on the other side of the Nile River, there was a step looking pyramid, which later I tried to climb on. I learned that it was the oldest pyramid in the world (*I think that he refers to the pyramid of Cheoppes G.*)

One day, an officer came in, and he was a specialist in archeology and geology, and he saw our place. He told us all to leave the place immediately. He was an Arab with a long stick, who climbed on a ladder, and he knocked on the stone ceiling three times with a hammer, and the whole ceiling caved in 5 tons of rocks fell down, and it ruined all the furniture in our office. It was my good fortune that he detected the danger and it didn't fall on us.

Pnina: "What did you do there in the caves?"

Chanan: "In the cave was a center for printing maps for the whole world. We had maps of Germany, Poland, the Danube, Turkey, Africa, France, and my job, which was arranged by my friend, Yehuda Amichai (*a noted author in Israel who served with my father in the army. G.*) was to send proofs to offices, to many places in the world. It was sent to Washington DC, to South Africa, to India, even to Israel (*Palestine of the time. G.*) They thought that in case something will happen to the center, these proofs will allow more immediate printing of the maps. I had to send proofs of 5-6 colors, each color separately and there were special instruction to what enlargement ratio was needed in each destination. The instructions were quite complicated, and were changed many times. I know that the fact that I was successful in it, and the fact that I was "spared alive" from this operation is a miracle. One time when I was on leave, the person who replaced me, got all confused and made an error in the shipment. The officers wanted to make me responsible for the errors. I stated that I didn't sign those shipments, and the commander still wanted me to be responsible for my department. (*The Israeli army during the Yom-Kippur War crossed the Suez Canal near the small salt lake and with a round going maneuver captured the Egyptian base of Fayed, that had a huge logistical center, and millions of ammunition crates stored inside these same caves, for protection from air raids. I know for a fact that many convoys of trucks hauled away all the military supplies back to Israel for weeks during the time after the war. G.*)

One time, a Scottish officer asked a local carpenter to make a cabinet for the church they had on base. The carpenter somehow met me, and said that he didn't know how to write the letters that were needed to be engraved in it. I gave him a template that I made of Gothic calligraphy, and he used it successfully. The officer really was in tears to see the finished cabinet and within two weeks after he found out that I prepared it. I got a leave to go home for a visit. Molly was very happy to see me, and she was happy that I had managed to come home. Usually we would get to go home 3-4 times a year and our children didn't know us at all.

It was also the case with Dalit that many years afterwards said: "you know, Abba (father), when you were in the army, I didn't have a father".

One day, we had to prepare many maps of Turkey. We thought that now will be the advancement through Turkey to attack the Germans. Actually, it was an attempt by England to deceive the German intelligence. In the end, when the British and American forces advanced in France on D-day, there was an immediate need to send maps from our storage place to the battle zone, as the troops advanced so fast that they couldn't get enough maps from England. We worked day and night to prepare maps for this shipment. I also want to mention that a year before D-day (*that occurred on June 5th, 1944. G.*), the Americans wanted to do, and Churchill whet specifically to America to-convince the Americans that if the Mediterranean region will not be in the allied hands, then there is a risk that the Russians will capture the whole Mediterranean area and it will be too late for England and America to rule that area. Because of this delay by Churchill, millions of Jewish people perished specifically in that last year.

One more "curios" (*story. G.*) that indeed happened in Africa. On Wednesday night, the Italian forces in Africa had a movie show, and it was forbidden to bother them then, because the British soldiers had their movie on Thursday, and the Italians didn't attack the British then. It was an undeclared agreement. It all happened as millions of American soldiers were engaged in battle and died in Burma, and the pacific arena. In the whole world, a lot of people were suffering, and it is hard to believe that such an agreement was happening during that time.

Towards the end of the war, I was secretly asked if I am willing to take a young person disguised in uniform to Israel. As it turned out, as some prisoners of war were released and arrived from Odessa, Russia, to Cairo, those were some POWs of .the Jewish brigade. A young boy who was hiding in Breslau, arrived with them, (*now Vroztlav in Poland, G.*) and he met the Russian tanks and saved his life. He was in Cairo, and had an uncle in Haifa. The Jewish community in Cairo helped him, and took care of him.

I knew that this was dangerous to do, and if I got caught transferring him, I would probably get four years jail term. I was a few months away from my release from the service, but I agreed to take the risk and to do it. I went through a lot of trouble to actually do it. It was my leave to go home. I couldn't find him on the first day, so I wasted one day. He was on a tour, on a boat on the Nile. Afterwards, he showed up and he had laced his shoes the same way that the German soldiers did their shoes (*X pattern instead of straight lines as the British laced their shoes. G.*)

I couldn't go with him like that to the train station. He had to change the lacing, and he couldn't do it easily from being so nervous. He was 16 years old, and spoke only German, and no other language. I had instructions to bring him with the truck convoy and not by using the train across the Suez Canal and we waited many hours there. It wasn't too far from where there was a military police station, and it was very dangerous for us. All of a sudden, an officer showed up, and asked us what we were doing there. I told him that I didn't even know the other person, but he understood, he was from Israel, and he said that we couldn't stay there, and instructed us to come with him, and he helped us. Somehow I managed to transfer him by the train to Israel. When I returned from the short vacation that was left to be at home, the Jewish officer at the base asked me how was my leave, and I said that it was wonderful. "Is your family all right? Is your daughter OK?" I enjoyed it, the family was fine, everything was fine, the food was good and everything was good. Then he said to me: "But after all, how was the trip ?", and he winked in his eye. He said: "I am the one who sent you on this mission".

During the war of independence in Israel (1948), when the troops reached the Negev, they didn't know how to proceed after Beer-Sheva. The whole Negev was in front of them. All of a sudden they received some parcels. When they opened the parcels, the soldiers found some maps, and they were accompanied by a letter signed by a NCO (Non Commissioned Officer), with my signature. This is how they were able to move on, and take the Negev all the way to Eilat of today. This is how I had a great feeling of accomplishment, that I have done something for the country of Israel. (*My father had mentioned to me that on some leave's trips, and possibly using*

some convoys, he smuggled maps to Palestine, and those were the topographic maps that later on were used during the war of independence in Israel. He had taken a risk to smuggle the maps during his service. G.)

Now I would like to return to the time of my service in Egypt. I had some meetings and sighting of people there. First, I witnessed the king from Saudi Arabia, King Ibn Saud, who came to visit king Farouk of Egypt, and it was a big event. From the morning, there were people riding horses, 10,000 soldiers took part in it, and there was a lot of traffic. I had another very important meeting that was very dear to me. It was the meeting in Cairo with the Leibner family (*Yehoshua and Pnina Leibner, the interviewer of this recording. G.*) who were returning home from their Jewish agency mission in South Africa. I met them in a hotel, as a soldier, and I was very excited to see them happy and healthy, and it was a very touching reunion for me.”

Pnina: “This is true; it was a touching experience to meet there.”

Chanan: “I said earlier that I was a NCO, non commissioned officer and this is kind of funny, as I was probably the only person in the British army who didn’t change upwards or downwards in his ranks in two years. I also had two additional stripes on my sleeves for good behavior, and this is probably also unique among the soldiers from the Jewish Brigade.

There is another short episode that I would like to tell you. About what had happened to me in the hospital, when I needed to be hospitalized for three weeks, because of very high fever that I had. They thought that I had Malaria. During the first week there, I had a visit by a young woman from the Jewish community, and she told me that she came to visit Jewish patients, and sick soldiers, and asked me whether I need anything like soap, or cigarettes, or stationery to write a letter, or anything else. It was very moving, and I started to cry. It reminded me something that happened to me. I remember that I went with my mother when I was a child, four years of age, to visit in the hospital during the first world war, to give the soldiers these same items: socks, soap, cigarettes, and to help them out. She went in the service of the Jewish community, with other women who did it, and also the gentile people did this service. And why do I remember it so vividly at the age of four?

There were a lot of soldiers with a head injury. They didn't wear helmets yet
(*there was a lot of trench war and sniper casualties in that war. G.*)

Did I see German soldiers? Yes, for sure I saw them during the Second World War, when I saw German POWs (prisoners of war). I had a chance to guard two German soldiers who were captured in the Mediterranean Sea after they were floating for three hours in the water, and they were sick, and we needed to take them to the hospital. I had to guard them, and I spoke with them in German. One was so weak, and he fell asleep immediately. When I was given coffee in the middle of the night, he woke up from the smell of the coffee, and he said: "cafe, cafe, cafe, oh" and he opened his eyes, and asked me to give him some coffee. I told him that he is a prisoner of war, and I didn't share the coffee with him. Then he noticed the Jewish Magen-David on my uniform. At that time I didn't know what had happened in Auschwitz, and we didn't know anything about it. I felt that I needed to walk with a rifle with bayonet to follow him to the bathroom, so he will not escape from the window or something. I enjoyed playing the roll of the master as I guarded them. It was a good feeling that I had as I guarded the Germans, to be a Jewish soldier. A second time, I was on duty with a friend of mine, who was also from Berlin, it was also in Egypt. I saw German soldiers POWs doing some work with shovels. There were a few hundred soldiers working there, and I started to speak in German: "Oh, Maxe, zir me rahn, ach do leibe tante was sis der best so overshum yarten, mit der afte Fritz mer sein, na ver sish non andre .:"
(*I couldn't transcribe the German well, as it isn't clear to me, Pnina is laughing, because she understands German. G.*) I will translate it now: "Hey Maxe, look here, it's like in the zoo. What are all these men doing here with the old man Fritz?" Explanation: mentioning the old King Fritz of Prussia, 200 years ago, who built the German army. He was always shown on a stamp next to Adolph Hitler. "If he could have seen you working here, he would have turned in his grave". The Germans there were completely astonished. They were quiet and they didn't understand what had happened, that all of a sudden, a British soldier who is guarding them, with a symbol of Magen-David on his uniform, walks out there with a friend, and he is speaking in a juicy Berlinish accent of the German language.

They couldn't explain that at all. Later on they continued to work but they did know how to explain it. And I had been given some satisfaction from that incident.

Now I want to show you a picture in the second book of the "Hashomer-Hatzayeer" book in which I'm shown with my friends in the army during a trip to Egypt. It's stated under the picture 'infantry soldiers in British uniforms at the train station of Rehovot (*south of Tel Aviv*. G.) On the way to Egypt at the time of the forming the Jewish Brigade in the British army, 1944'. I'm there in the window on the right, raising my hand. I remember when this photograph was taken."

Pnina: "With all honors to you."

Chanan: "I certainly was at the opening day at the museum in Cairo, when they renewed the exhibit of the golden items, of Tut-en-Camone, after the war. It was stored during the war in a place of which I don't want to talk about now. When I saw the gold mask of Tut-en-Camone, I was really impressed with the simplicity of the way that the ancient Egyptians made these artifacts. It was an unbelievable sight to see with my own eyes, of how they made it. I was so influenced by it, and by the wall paintings that I saw, that I started to draw in Egypt, during my service there, and it was the first push that I had to continue to draw, when I returned to the kibbutz.

I would like to say one more thing. I think, I'm the only person for sure that was given a farewell party by the soldiers there. It was the low ranking soldiers of with which I served there, and this was the first time that they had such a party. But I didn't say goodbye to the officers. I had a feud with the Jewish officer after he lowered the rank of a good friend of mine. This friend went through hell in Siberia. He was a Polish POW there, and they thought that he was a German spy. The officer didn't treat that person rightfully. It affected me very much. But I had another friend, and this is what I would like to mention, that he showed up from the first day of service with his violin, and this was the only thing that was left for him from his parents and from his home.

His father was making a living by wandering and buying old clothes and shoes (*Alte Zaachen, alte Shiech. Yiddish. G.*), and one day he brought this violin home with the other items. To all the places that we were ever going, if it was to Turkey on our trips there, and all the way to Alexandria (*in west Egypt. G.*), this friend always went with this violin. Our officer let him take lessons in the music conservatory in Cairo, and the last thing that I heard from him, 10 years ago (1964), was that he is playing in the Royal Symphony Orchestra in Holland. He was a very dear friend of mine; late in the service we even shared the same room.

After my army service ended, in 1946, I returned home to Ein-Hashofet. A short period afterwards during the war of independence I found myself again in the army base in Juara, near Ein-Hashofet. I had the number 7 in the drawing to be drafted. With other members from Ein-Hashofet we were guarding the post at Beit-Raps (*a high hill south east of Ein-Hashofet, where we were guarding against the Jordanian army of general Kaoockgi and the Arab village of Cafrain, nearby. G.*), and in Givat-Ali (*the forested hill north of Juara, named after an artist who lived in Ein-Hashofet, a shepherd too, like my father, who died in a collapse of a cave that he wanted to explore. On this hill, the Ein-Hashofet cemetery is located, where my father is now buried. G.*) and the area near it, where I was guarding the hill with a friend to protect Ein-Hashofet. After I was doing all this guard duty I had this terrible disease that I caught a year later, and I couldn't do it anymore. But in 1951 I was officially drafted to ZAHAL, Israel Defense Forces, and I was sure that I'll be getting some duty to guard some storage places, or something to write and prepare signs, and I knew that any simple soldier that served in the Jewish Brigade was given an automatic promotion to become an officer in ZAHAL. I went through the corridor after the medical exam was done, and I was given my personal file. When I looked at my file it stated that I was supposed to become a Major in the army. When I reached that office, I was given a release from the army and I was very surprised about it. (*The reason for his release was based on his health condition. G.*) In essence, I received a release from the army three times.

First I received a release from the German Reichsvare. Otherwise, I would'nt have been given a visa to immigrate to Israel in 1936. The second time, it was from the Jewish Brigade in the British army (*served 1942 -1946. G.*) and now for the third time - from ZAHAL.

In the year 1947, the kibbutz prepared the 10th anniversary of Ein-Hashofet. I was asked to prepare diagrams and charts of each contributing branch in the kibbutz. How much did it earn and how many workers, (*how many heads of cows\sheep or fields and orchards, statistics. G.*)”

Pnina: “I think that I was the one who asked you to prepare all these charts as I was in Charge of the preparation for the event.”

Chanan: “That is possible. I said that I am a little out of touch after my army service, and I would need some training. The kibbutz sent me to a meeting and a course of the kibbutz organization artists in Naharia, and there I met all the artists and I became a member too.”

Pnina: “did you participate in some art exhibits?”

Chanan: “Not too often. During one exhibit, that I took part, it was in the old Tel-Aviv museum. I remember that exhibit, in which we were 65 members in the artist organization, and it was supposed to be sent to New-York and your husband, Yehoshua Leibner, was organizing the exhibit. From the whole exhibit, only two pictures were bought, one was mine. Later on there were some small exhibits that I took part in, but most of my work was to serve the kibbutz in all the holidays, and celebrations in the old dining hall. I prepared large posters and hung them up. Later I received some hours instead of my regular work, to do my art. But most of the artistic work that I had done was performed after the regular working hours. Many times I drew my posters at home, and I needed to put the poster papers on the front door, and to draw it that way, and leave it to dry under my bed. But I was very happy that I could express myself in art, and my purpose in this was to educate the people in the kibbutz a little about modern art.

Obviously, I encountered a lot of resistance to that. Some people attacked me harshly about it (*verbally. G.*) because at the time, the kibbutz was a very socialist community (*and people were looking for realistic type of drawings. When I spoke with my mother tonight on the phone, she mentioned that at one time, Chanan made some modern decorations for Passover holiday, and he had to explain his drawings, and to defend his artistic approach to the kibbutz general assembly, as he didn't draw the ten plagues in a clear and realistic manner. G.*) I would like to conclude the interview about my life story, and to say that I enjoy seeing the kibbutz around me, as it is developing, and growing to be such a nice place to live in. Shalom to all.

Pnina: I would like to thank you very much, Chanan. It was very interesting, and it will be an interesting story to all other members who will listen to this recording. It is not only some interesting stories, but you had brought up some issues that none of the people who recorded their life history have brought up earlier.

Chanan and Molly Lapid

Family history and memories

Talking to Gideon about the Lesser and Urovich family history

August 3rd, 1980. Translated to English - October 15, 2001



Chanan: I would like to start the family story with my great grandmother of my mother's side, who lived to be 99 years old. She wanted to live long enough to see her first great grandson being born. When my brother Erich was born, she said that now she can die. She died within 14 days after his birth. She told my mother this wonderful story about the family, about where she came from, and how it was. She was born in Stockholm, Sweden and her mother was Mrs. Cohen, who worked at the king's palace as a room servant, or in charge of the room service. During that time, it was a period in which there was no current king in Sweden, and they asked one of the generals of Napoleon to become the king of Sweden. At that time, few Swedish officers became POWs under troops of the officer Bernadot. General Bernadot is the one that became the king of Sweden, and he was in charge of the country. He left his young wife in Paris. She was learning the Swedish language, and he was working there to take care of the country's business.

This great grandmother, Berta Guttentag was born in the year 1810. She got married to a man by the name Guttentag who learned how to become a jeweler. He did work with gold jewelry. He was a handsome man. After he completed his studies, it was customary to go from place to place, and get some work to do in his profession, to get the practice. He stayed at some hostels or homes, and he learned to know the country and many places in it. If there was need for such work anywhere, they did some work for the people of those places. He came to Stockholm, and he met Berta. He was originally from Bresslau. (Chanan is showing me the family tree, and says that he is missing the grandparent's names of uncle Richard Honig. The grandchildren of Berta are: Albert, Paul, Martha and Else. Martha married my grandfather Georg Honig. They were married in Gniezno. Then my mother was born, followed by Uncle Richard after two years. Martha died from infection and high fever after giving birth to Richard. Her husband, Georg Honig was left with a baby and with a two year old daughter. The younger sister of Martha, Else, helped him with the children. She was a beautiful woman, but she didn't have any money for dowry, as it was given to Georg with Martha (who wasn't so beautiful...). So Else married Georg and helped him to raise the children.

They didn't have any more children. We called Else, Omelle (grandmother in German).

Now I want to tell you briefly about the house and family of grandfather Honig. He was born to a family that his father's name was Wolf (Zeev), and the grandmother, I don't know her name, but I know that she was from the family Kahnn. They didn't have the name Cohen, but it could have been derived from that name. Wolf was a merchant of wheat, and he traveled in the forests in Poland and in Russia. He contracted pneumonia, and died at a young age. The grandmother was left alone with two young children, and they hardly had anything to eat. Georg, at a young age was already giving tutoring lessons at school, in order to earn money for his studies, and for books, and to help his mother for food. His sister remained physically small, very small. Her name was Flora and she never got married.

Flora was born in the year 1862 (I'm not sure exactly at what year), and she died 1930 (three years before Hitler came to power in Germany). She left behind a very small house at the city of Visa-Lesno (the new name for Gniezno). I wanted my mother to sell it, so she can give me money to immigrate to Israel, and there were rules in Poland that prohibited that already. She didn't want to listen to my advice to sell it, as I thought that the condition in Poland will be just the same as in Germany. I couldn't use that money to make Aliya (to immigrate to Israel), and somebody else gave me money (a friend of my parents, who had a factory in Gniezno).

My grandfather (Georg) had diabetes, and it was the time before insulin was available, and he died in the middle of the First World War in 1916. Insulin was discovered one or two years afterwards.

Now, of the Honigs on the family tree chart, there were two children. My mother, her name was Wally Margareta and her younger brother Richard Honig (Margaret Bach, my cousin in Santa Monica, is named after her). Uncle Richard, as we called him, was born in 1890, and he lives to this day, I hope (*at the time of this interview G.*). He turned 90 years old this year. He was married to a woman called Kate Hilfron. Her father was a very smart person (I knew her parents).

Kate died approximately in the year 1968 (*I recall the Honig's visit to Israel. I think that it was before 1963, the year that my uncle Reinhard from Los-Angeles first came to visit us G.*).

(The thing that struck me was that Uncle Richard was a very large and tall person, with a round and almost bald head, while his wife Kate was very short and disfigured person. She had a hunch, and walked with a black cane. She was very intelligent and participated in the conversations attentively. She had very deep going eyes [mabat choder]. They visited Ein-Hashofet for about a week, when I was about 10 years old. I recall the long conversations that my father had with his uncle. At the time my father was already ill with his lungs, and they didn't walk too much out of the house. The Honigs visited in Turkey and in Jerusalem during that trip. She is the sister of Margot Hollander [who lived in Jerusalem all her years in Israel since 1933 when she emigrated with a large Jewish population from Germany as a result of the Nazi capture of government in Germany. Her husband who was a lawyer in Germany committed suicide in Germany during the Nazi uprising, and she came to Palestine with her daughter Eve, Chava. They lived in Rehavia [a wealthy neighborhood in Jerusalem on Ramban, 46 street]. She came to visit us in Ein-Hashofet once or twice a year, as she went to Haifa, and came by taxi to Ein-Hashofet for an afternoon. I was impressed by the fact that she used to hire a taxi for 4-5 hours to come to Ein-Hashofet, and the driver would wait in the car and rest until she was ready to go back to Haifa. She was always staying in Pansion Shulamit, [a very small hotel in Haifa that I don't know if it still exists]. Margot was a woman of authority; or at least she was trying to give that impression all the time. She spoke of her research work on various subjects, which I don't remember well, but I think that it was about education or health studies. When she came to Haifa to present some of her work results, Chanan couldn't stand her "important intellectual statements" about research, and he used to joke about it at times. Margot was a short woman, and she was dressed elegantly with gold jewelry. She would speak a lot and breathe heavily. She wasn't so heavy, but I remember that she had a very large double chin, like a sack of a pelican beak. It was her, who sent me the violin that I have to this day, the violin that was bought for Chava to play.

It is a German replica of a Jacobus Stainer from Mittenwald region; an old instrument with deep tone and a very dark colored instrument. It has curved contours, and a one piece back which is rare. I played my entire career on this instrument. Later on, Uncle Richard sent me all his violin music sheets that I still have. One of the pieces is dated by him in 1908. Chava married Haim Hyman [an engineer I think], and they had two sons: Ariel and Benny. I didn't remain in touch with them, but Kay had seen Benny at Hadassah hospital. He was injured during his army service, and she received training as a dental assistant there. Chava was confined for many years to a hospice in Rehovot, as she was affected by multiple sclerosis. Margot was always visiting her and she died before her mother. Haim wasn't in touch with us during all these years, so we lost the communication with them after Margot passed away G.).

Uncle Richard has three boys; Richard, named after his father as the gentiles do. In order for him to be able to study at the university in Guttingen, he converted to Christianity, to become Protestant. The very same thing occurred to Tante Kate that also converted that same year. So my cousins, Richard, Jurgen and Werner Honig were raised as Christians. I don't have a good contact with my cousins. *(I met Richard for the first time when he came with his wife to visit Israel in the 60', and I saw him two more times. One time he came to Tempe for an engineering conference, when he was working at RCA labs, Inbal was one or two years old so it was about 1983. I saw him one more time in Los Angeles during a memorial for my uncle Reinhard in 1989. Jurgen also came to that memorial. I didn't meet Werner who lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, but I met a person at the university of Arizona orchestra who was from there, and she also played with him in the orchestra at Halifax. What a small world. I learned from Selma recently that he passed away last year. Richard is also very ill now G.).*

Wally Honig married Max Lesser, and now I'll tell you about the Lesser family. The great grandfather started to make large nails, of the size of 12 inches, about 30 cm for the construction of the army barracks and fortifications in Posen. They made some money from this production and with that they started to do sharpening of agricultural plows.

And from this point, something very strange happened. Two cousins had the same profession, and in Posen it caused some confusion, as the customers would mix one place with the other. So then they decided to change the name Lyser to Lesser. In regards to the family name Lyser, when you translate it to Hebrew, Lyser becomes Laiser, and Laiser becomes Eliezer and Eliezer is Elazari and I'm not a sepharadic descendent Jew, I am ashkenazi Jew. So I decided to change my name to Lapid. Since My grandfather, was the first who was born to a family, his name was Siegfried Lesser. My name is after his brother Hermann Lesser, who passed away before I was born, and then there was Alexander Lesser, from what I recall, he was related to the Lesser relatives that live in Ramat-Hashofet, (Hadassah Lesser) their grandfather. He got married, and this is a strange thing, with a woman that he met, Amalia Levin. We were in very good relations with the Levins. I had a lot of grandmothers who were all alive when I was born. There were 15 years in the family. Amalia was a widow and she remarried a widower. One had 8 children and the other had 7 children. From these children, two of the children were married, and that was uncle Heinrich and Tante Levin, who were sister and brother to Amalia. There is a story that the great grandfather was always going to the city registrar, to announce that a child was born, and they need to register him in the city lists. So they gave him a list, and I don't know if he knew how to read, and he didn't go further from the letter "A", So he had the children: Amalia, Aurelia, Agate, Anat, and more with the name starting with the letter A And I knew them. My parents took me to see these old people All the time, and it was horrible. We (the boys) really didn't want to go there to visit them. Amalia died in the year 1917 during the First World War. They had four children, 3 boys and one daughter. My grandfather Siegfried and his two brothers, my older brother Erich, myself, and Dalit were all born on Friday (*Shirly, Dalit 's daughter was also born on Friday. G.)*

Now, of the four children, Max is the oldest; born 1878. He died during the Holocaust somewhere and sometime after the year 1939-1940. Uncle Ludwig died during my time in Germany, prior to the time that Hitler took power and Felix died very young, in the year 1925, when my brother Erich was 16 years old. He was born in 1882. Ludwig was in between them, was born about 1880. He died about 1930.”

Gideon: “Did you remember Ada?”

Chanan: “Yes, do you know Perlis, the Lawyer from Tel-Aviv? his Uncle married Ada Lesser in Bresslau. His name was Baerr. They had two children, Gertrude and Walter, I don’t know if they are still alive (*as it turned out, we were later approached by Walter Baerr, the son of Ada, who lived in Phoenix Arizona. He made contact with my mother. Kay, me and Inbal went to visit him later in Phoenix. He was a happy person, who lived as a comedian and artist, and was in the entertainment business. We met him and his wife at their home. Later we lost touch, as we moved away from Phoenix for a few years G.*)

My father was married in 1908 and Erich was born in 1909, and lived until 1962. I was born as Hans Hermann in 1911, and Reinhard was born in 1913 and married Selma Liff. Their children: Margaret - married Danilo Bach, Nora - married Stuart Laiken, Eric and Robert (*He is updating the family tree to add the names of Nathaniel Bach, who was born 1980 G.*)”

Gideon: “When did Reinhard and Selma get married?”

Chanan: “I think 1-2 years after we got married. We got married at the same date as Molly's birthday, on March 25, 1939.”

Gideon: “How did you get to know each other?”

Molly: “I came to visit from kibbutz Crete, they weren’t yet called Kfar-Menachem, and I came to Juara. There, in the small dining room, all of a sudden I saw a tall man. They were playing chess. He was wearing white pants and a light colored sport jacket and pipe in his mouth.

My friend Rochke introduced us. I remember that he brought his small photo albums to show me all the small photos from Germany of scenery from there. I returned to Hadera (where Ein-Hashofet main group was living at the time before they moved to Juara). I spoke with a friend of mine, Fanny and I told her: "I saw a young man that I would like to see him again". Later, when I returned again in September, Chanan was still there at Juara, a guard from the Hagana. We started to go out together. That was 2 months after we first met. So the two of us, slowly – slowly..., he was guarding the tower in Juara. We climbed the tower, and we were guarding together. We went to the bustan (a garden of wild fruit trees left by the Arabs nearby, with a rifle)."

Molly to Chanan: "Do you remember?"

Chanan: "I was guarding Molly..."

Molly: "There are some pictures that he took of me picking flowers. It was so romantic. I remember that I was working in Juara in the evening; they were going to take us in an armored car from Juara to the new settlement of Ein-Hashofet (about 1 KM away). It was dangerous to travel at night, and Chanan was coming to guard us on the way to Ein-Hashofet."

Chanan: "These were happy days".

Molly: "Those were the days" (Laughing).

Chanan: "At that time I said to Molly, 'if we are getting married, I don't want any children'. In time, in this crazy world, we can't have any children."

Molly: "It was just before the beginning of the Second World War. But later on, we saw that the rest of the members at Ein-Hashofet, war or not, continued to live their lives, and had children. We decided to have children too. Dalit was born in 1943.

Abba was already a soldier; I was pregnant when he joined the British army (Nov. 1942, G.)"

Chanan: "After the independence war, towards the end of the war, Molly was pregnant again with Gideon (1949), and finally Noam was born in 1954.

Gideon married Kay Alter (born December 13, 1952) in August 24, 1976. Dalit married Zvi Harel in December 1966. Tal was born July 10th, 1967, Shirly in March 13th, 1970, and Natalie June 23rd, 1976. Later Adi was born on Nov. 1981.

We can say that you were all born to Ashkenazi family roots belong to shevet (the camp of) Levy. This is what I remember from my father saying that. As the great grandmother was from a family Levin (which is Levy, I presume).

I forgot to tell you something about the grandmother Berta Guttentag. They had a shop for jewelry, and gold artifacts in Breslau, and when the director of the museum in Berlin wanted to know if the items at the museum were of true porcelain, he would contact them, and ask them to provide their opinion. She was the authority, and was knowledgeable about these things. From her, we had at our house 2-3 reproductions from the time of Rembrandt that the artist printed by himself. And these were authentic originals that he signed. My mother didn't give those away (to us) and it was destroyed in the Krystal-Nacht torching that the Nazis did to Jewish property and synagogues. I remember that it was at our house in Brandenburg, some very nice pieces of scenery.

About Berta it was said that she married the man Guttentag who was handsome, but he wasn't a very smart man. So she was the one that did all the business management at the store. She was a person from an honorable and respected family for many generations, and everybody respected her. She was a chevremanit (*Eshet-Chail*, Hebrew for a respected woman as it should be G.) From her there exist the famous (long) nose of Chanan Lapid, Uncle Richard and Erich Lesser, blessed his memory."

Gideon: "This line isn't clear in the family tree."

Chanan: "This is the place for the grandparents of Uncle Richard. I don't know their names."

Gideon: “Now lets us talk about Molly's side of the family.”

(My mother didn't want to speak to the microphone so Chanan started to tell what he knew, and she added more details. G.)

Chanan: “The family came to Canada (to Montreal), in the beginning of the century from the city of Dashev in the Ukraine. The name was Horovitz, and when they registered the family name at the city hall, the clerk wrote it Urovitch and this is how it remained in Canada. At first, the father, Herschel, came by himself to Canada, and he worked in a beer factory as a night guard and watching the beer large cooking containers. When he saved enough money, he returned to Russia, after a year or two, to see the family. (The family then was father Herschel, mother Rivka, son Nathan and Daughter Dora).

During this visit, Golda was born and afterwards the father returned to Canada for another three years before they immigrated to Canada. When Herschel came for the visit, he was either put in jail for his return to Russia or was quarantined, as the Russians were afraid of spreading diseases. After his return to Canada, he saved money to send for bringing the family there. The older son, Nathan, had trachoma in his eye, and he was left behind in Russia. The mother had to travel on the ship alone with her children (2 daughters: Dora and Golda). She brought all the cooking pots, made from copper to Canada. (There were all kinds of utensils, and other kitchen items that are still at the house of Arthur Cape, the son of Golda). There were pitchers for water. Golda planted plants in those, in her kitchen, and placed it by the window. She took all these pots (my mother wasn't using those), I remember, and Golda coated it with lacquer.

Six months afterwards, Nathan arrived to Canada with an uncle and his family. They all came to live with them in Montreal. There was no room for all, so they gave the beds to the new family, and they slept on the floor. They also kept food items to store under the beds. *(My grandmother, Rivka was called Bobe all the time, grandmother in Yiddish. G.)* She lived to the age of 94 (1875-1969).

The grandfather, Herschel, was born also in 1875, (three years before Max Lesser was born, it was the same generation), and lived to the year 1952. He was 77 years old. They were from a small town called Dashev, near Kiev in the Ukraine. He died of prostate cancer.

His name in Hebrew was Zvi Urovitch, and they never needed to know that my name was Hyman Hirsch in Yiddish also Zvi (it isn't allowed for the orthodox Jews to marry a person with the same name).

(Two more children were born in Canada, uncle Solly - about 1913 and my mother Molly -March 25, 1915 G.)

Nathan was married to Eva, a woman from Poland. They had Lawrence and twins: Frances and Jerry. Dora married Easi Rogatko, and had two daughters: Gita and Riva. Gita married Sydney Shapiro, and they have a daughter: Susan. Riva is now married to Marvin with 3 children."

Molly: "Riva was born when I was on the way to Palestine, in 1938, and I was babysitting Gita a lot before I left, so her parents could go to a movie or something. I would sleep there for the night. I remember that I took Gita to her first concert in the Symphony, when she was 7 years old. She listened so intently. Golda married Jack, Jacob-Cape (Kapelovich), and they had two boys: Murray and Arthur. Arthur married Marina, and they have an adopted daughter: Melinda. Solly married Florence and they had two boys: Daniel and Joseph. Daniel married Elaine and they have 2 daughters."

Chanan: "Tell us about the player piano that you played with your feet."

Molly: "We had at our house a piano player that my father brought. You place a special paper roll, and you push the pedals. There were a few classical recordings: Chopin, one from Liszt - Hungarian Rhapsody, Mendelssohn-Rustle of Spring, Bizet - a part from Carmen that I was playing over and over again. In the end, during the Second World War, they sold the piano for a soldiers club use. When I was a little girl, my mother would take me to the park on the mountain to hear the concert band. She loved singing and music. She once heard Enrico Caruso in a live performance, as she stood by the arena. She could hear him singing outside. He was a very famous singer.

I remember that we would sit there on the bench, during these concerts, and it was a very nice event every time. About Gita and Sydney - He is an accountant and Gita worked for many years at the YMHA (Young Man Hebrew Association). She worked with small children there. They had one daughter, Susan. Gita had RH negative type blood, and she couldn't give birth to another child at the time. Riva's first husband was a talented person. He received scholarships at school in the field of engineering. He worked at CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway). The kids are: Jordi, Jami and Jeoff with Marvin Novick, they have a girl Jillian. *(Kay and I visited them in 1977 and we met all the children. G.)*"

Gideon: "When did you change the name from Lesser to Lapid?"

Chanan: "After the war of independence, three years afterwards – which is 1951. In the army I was a Lesser."

Gideon: "Which means after I was born, if it was 1951?"

Molly: "No, Wasn't Gideon born as a Lapid?"

Gideon: "I was born in 1949, so maybe it was in 1948 or something."

Chanan: "Maybe he was born Lesser."

Molly: "Maybe so."

Chanan: "Yes, I changed it for both Dalit and for him, I changed the name, you reminded me."

Kay: "In the birth certificate it says Lapid."

Chanan: "Yes, after I formally changed it, it went back retroactively. Also in my documents it is changed too. *(It isn't clear exactly when the name was changed! G.)*"

Gideon: “Now we are back to the family of my father.”

Chanan: “Paul Guttentag was working at a bank. He died young, about the age of 43 or 45. He left behind two girls, Eva who now lives in Rotterdam Holland, and Ursula (called Ursul-Shmursul). She was married, and served at the ATS - women soldiers of the British army. Her husband was in the Royal Engineers, from India. They went to live in India, and he worked in an engineering firm there. They have a daughter who now came to Germany to learn the hotel business and administration. Now, this uncle that I remember - Albert, called uncle Alibi... (not clear what he said here). He was a brother of the grandparents, and a close relative. He was married twice, first with a Jewish, I forgot her name, and they had a son Erich.

He was a bachelor, and he was hardly able to work at a brewery. He held some shares of the business, and this is how he was working there as an accountant. During the time of Hitler, he was fired, because he was Jewish. He committed suicide in the Alps. He didn't know how to manage his life. Long time before that, Uncle Alibi was married to a woman by the name, I forget, a Christian woman, and they had a girl called Gerda Guttentag (called Girdle), who lived in Munich. She was married a person called Zeid from Breslau. They owned to cinema theaters. They had a daughter who later visited Reinhard in California (he only had troubles from her...). She was a single person, originally a teacher in Switzerland. She had some kleptomaniac disorder. After the war, the parents showed up in Munich, and they were again in the movie theaters business, and he is one of the richest people. They have a very large villa near some lake. They didn't want to recognize their cousin in Holland, and they aren't in touch at all.

Girdle really loved me when she was a young girl. She always wanted me to marry her. It was very amusing; I still have some pictures that we were photographed together. Uncle Alibi, when I visited him, two to three times totals. Once when I was nine, when I went with my mother to visit the grandmother (Berta) who already moved to Breslau, and there I saw the grandfather's store which was filled with watches, in a round glass cabinet.

There were pendulum clock and other clocks. It was written: "Fine Jewelry shop of the king of Sacsony". At his house, he had a small villa in a working neighborhood. It was built with a large room on the first floor and a small kitchen, and above were the bedrooms. When I was there he always wanted me to sit at the far end of the room, and he would whisper something at the ear of tante La (Lorence or something, was her name). And she would bring a rabbit that was placed in a cylinder hat, and he did "hocus focus filibus" some magic tricks which impressed me a lot. He had a very small garden in the shape of a triangle. If you made two steps, you will be at the other end of it. It had a water fountain which he turned on with a faucet and it sprayed water from all direction. It was beautiful, but it was wasting water, and he said that he didn't want to waste so much water. Later, when I was 17, during the funeral of the grandmother (Berta Guttentag - 1928), we were visiting there, and the uncle didn't remember where to turn on the faucet again. I showed it to Reinhard, and I turned on the water and it was so exciting. They were all so happy to see it. He always repeated his "hocus focus", the same one, and it was very funny. And he was a simple fellow, with such a generous heart. Later, he and tante La and their daughter, went every Sunday to the Christian cemetery and there was a grave stone with the marking: ... in German, I didn't understand all of it ... stating "Our Guttentag ... Born ... Died ___ blank year. The relatives suggested writing 19_ on it and he refused, saying that he may live longer than that. So every Sunday they all walked to the grave, bought flowers and placed it on the grave. They would stand there and cry a moment and then went home.

My grandfather Georg Honig studied URA, law to become a lawyer. He was a judge in a small town and he had a position, senator or something like that. As I told you earlier, he paid his school expense and books by tutoring the rich kids, at a young age. He knew, as my mother was saying, the Prussian book of laws, from the first to the last page by memory. He knew the page number of each item and the row where it was printed (*photographic memory. Inbal can memorize school books like that too. So this is where the genes came from.* G.) Richard Honig converted to Christianity at the age of 16, and he also learned law. He was a professor with distinction and honors.

There were only three professors "in the world" who learned the Roman time and Islamic law. During Hitler, he was removed from an office at the University of Guttingen, and he received tenure at the university of Istanbul Turkey to teach there. When he knew that the second world was approaching, he sensed that it was coming.

Istanbul was always the center of all intelligence activities. He managed to escape and traveled for the first time from Istanbul, a year and a half after he was in Turkey. He came to Berlin and visited the parents of tante Kate, the Hilfrons who lived in the street across from the great synagogue in Berlin, which was burned down (*during Krystal-Nacht G.*) They had a huge apartment with beautiful rooms. They didn't leave that apartment for a long time. Margot Hollander gave me recently some postcards to read, from the time that she was young, and it was the same address from the year 1917. Once, when we came for a visit to Berlin, we stayed with them at that place. He was a very smart person, Mr. Hilfron. There were some pictures on the apartment walls from the time that uncle Richard didn't have a job (1923). He couldn't find a job. It was before he finished his law studies. It was the time after the First World War, and there was big inflation period in Germany. So he started to draw art, and he was good at that.

(This is the end of the tape that I recorded on August 1980, during the first visit that Kay and I made from Arizona. The Honigs moved to Princeton, New Jersey where he was teaching law. They raised their family in the US, as I wrote earlier. Uncle Richard returned to Guttingen at the end of his life, and died there. G)."