

New Cracow Friendship Society, Inc.

3905 Arthur Avenue North, Seaford, N.Y. 11783

CRACOW

FRIENDSHIP

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



NEW YORK CITY

MARCH—APRIL 2022

ISSUE 319

President

STEVEN RADWAN

Vice President

BERNICE SLUTZMAN

Treasurer

JACK GINGOLD

Secretary

RACHELE ZUCKERMAN

Comptroller,

MARIA HELFMAN

Board of Directors

DOLORES FINDER BERKOWSKY

SUSAN KRUL CAREN

RENATA FARAHNIK

ANNA SCHEUMANN GALLEGOS

LEON HILFSTEIN

SIMONE HILFSTEIN SCHEUMANN

BONNIE KANTOR

IDA LEWIS

ARTHUR SPIELMAN

SYDELLE SPIELMAN

ELIZABETH SZANCER

Founders

RICHARD ABRAHAMER, z.l.

ELIAS FRIEDMAN, z.l.

BEN GEIZHALS, z.l.

ROMAN GUNZ, z.l.

MAX HILFSTEIN, z.l.

VICTOR LEWIS, z.l.

STEVE MORROW, z.l.

ZIGMUND MORROW, z.l.

EMIL SIEGMAN, z.l.

DAVID TWERSKY, z.l.

MANEK WERDIGER

SAM WERTHEIM, z.l.

LARRY ZELLNER, z.l.

Founding President

STEVE MORROW, z.l.

President Emeritus

ROMAN WEINGARTEN, z.l.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

We've reached out to many of you asking for your email. Here's why it's so important:

- Stay up to date: a timely way to inform you of important in-person and virtual events, relevant world news, and other activities impacting our organization
- Access and leverage our enhanced publication: while we will continue to publish our physical newsletter, our e-publication will include links to relevant videos, news and editorials
- Stay connected: email is an ideal channel to stay in touch efficiently and effectively with our expanding NCFS community; provide feedback, suggestions and ideas to help ensure we stay relevant

In short, please provide us with your email as soon as you can, and /or please let us know if you have questions and/or concerns. Please contact us at NCFS Membership <membership@newcracow.org>

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

May 1, 2022 12 Noon on ZOOM

IMPORTANT VOTE ON AMENDING BY-LAWS

VISIT THE WEBSITE: www.newcracow.org to register

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE: www.newcracow.org

CONTACT US AT: info@newcracow.org

תחי מדינת ישראל ועם ישראל

LONG LIVE THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

President Steven Radwan

Editor Bernice Slutzman

www.newcracow.org

Email: Newsletter@newcracow.org

EDITORIAL

Since our last issue our world is again engaged in warfare. One wonders, to borrow the words from Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, will we ever see “peace in our time?” Unfortunately we know all too well how that turned out. The Society immediately notified members, through emails, how we would be aiding the people of Ukraine. The text of that email appears below.

Dear member,

As we are all aware, the plight of the Ukrainian refugees is serious. Many have successfully fled to Poland seeking safety.

We are partnering with the JCC Krakow to provide aid to these people, many of whom are our Jewish brethren. We ask that you join in this endeavor by making a donation to this undertaking. Please go to our website: newcracow.org and click on DONATION. You can stipulate that your funds are to go to aid the Ukrainian refugees. If you prefer to send a check, please it to the following address:

*New Cracow Friendship Society
3905 Arthur Avenue N
Seaford, NY 11783*

In the memo portion of the check please indicate that it is for Ukrainian Aid.

*Thank you,
The Board of Directors
New Cracow Friendship Society*

I would like to add that if you want 100% of your donation to be sent to the JCC Krakow, send a check to the Society's address: 3905 Arthur Avenue N, Seaford, NY 11783. Be sure to include Ukrainian Aid in the memo section.

Commemoration 2022 In keeping with the tradition begun soon after the creation of the Society, the Commemoration of the Liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto was held on Sunday, March 13, 2022.

Once again, due to Covid 19 we were forced to do our observance on Zoom. Through the efforts of several of our members, a meaningful and reverent program was created. The texts of remarks delivered by some of our speakers appear in this issue. It is our fervent wish to be able to return to in-person gatherings. For those unable to log on, the presentation is available online on YouTube. For information contact the Society at info@newcracow.org

By-laws Revision As you have seen on the front page and will read in the President's Message, in order for the Society to grow in the years to come, our area of membership must also grow. As a result proposed changes to the By-laws have been suggested and accepted by the Board. In order for them to take effect, the General Membership must approve of these changes. They are as

follows:

We propose the following wording change to our By-Laws found in the second paragraph of the Preamble, And Article 2 Membership

Preamble change:

Present wording:

Any person of Jewish extraction and their families, who lived in the Region of Polish Galicia of which Cracow was the provincial capital and supports the idea of the Society....

Proposed new wording:

Any person of Jewish extraction and/or their descendants who lived in the internationally recognized borders of Poland during the inter-war years (1921-1938/39) and vicinity including the borders created by the Treaty of Versailles of (1914), and Silesia, and supports the ideas of the Society....

The Article 2 Change:

Present wording:

Any person of Jewish extraction and their families, who lived in the region of Polish Galicia...

Proposed new wording:

Any person of Jewish extraction and/or descendants, who lived in the internationally recognized borders of Poland during the inter-war years (1921-1938/39) ...

These changes to the By-laws were researched very judiciously. The new wording takes into account all the areas and cities that had high Jewish populations and were also known places with a history of Jewish culture.

While we researched many sources, two of these sources became the deciding ones:

The first one is the “Historical Atlas of Central Europe” 3rd Edition. By Professor Paul Robert Magocsi Chairman of Central European Studies at the University of Toronto. Renee Steinig, who is a member of the NCFS, and Board member of Gesher Galicia recommended this book because Professor Magocsi is one of the leading experts on Poland's History in the world, and Poland is well represented in the Atlas.

The second source is someone we all know of and who has been immensely helpful when asked by the NCFS. The Director of the Galicia Jewish Museum, Jakub Nowakowski (Kuba), who also is a noted Historian.

Here is a synopsis of the Director's explanation:

1921 is a date that might serve as a good marking point. While Poland regained independence in November 1918, the country engaged in a number of conflicts for another two to three years which impacted its borders. So, for example, on November 12, 1918, the city of Poznan was still considered to be a part of Germany, but after the uprising of 1918/1919, it became reunited with Poland. Additionally, the final definition of the Eastern border was only confirmed in 1921. After 1921, there were no changes to the borders until 1938, when Poland annexed part of Czechoslovakia, which included the area known as Silesia, which was part of Poland, pre-partition. The explanation that Jakub Nowakowski (Director of the Galicia Jewish Museum) gave, based on Poland's history, the geographic

borders of the interwar years (1921-1939) back the purposes we used for defining our membership qualifications, as well as Professor Magocsi.

It is our hope that you will register and log on for this most important meeting and vote. It will be for the betterment of the Society.

The Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I hope you all attended this year's "Commemoration of the Liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto." I would like to thank Simone Hilfstein-Scheumann for getting the ball rolling and coordinating with other committees in creating such a moving and meaningful ceremony. I would like to thank Cantor Barry Kanarak for his heartfelt, and mournful renditions of all the traditional "Zemirot" (tunes) we know so well, that have become an essential part of this annual ceremony. I would also like to thank Cantor Daniel Singer, and the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue for granting us permission to use his magnificent rendition of "Es Brent." Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to all of the speakers that gave us such insights into the horrors of what their parents went through during the Holocaust, and the families who lit candles this year that included Survivors, 2Gs, 3Gs, and in some cases 4Gs. Hopefully, next year's Commemoration can be held in person.

In addition to planning the Commemoration, the Board has been working hard to promote the growth of the Society. I am happy to announce that the NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY has officially been accepted as a member of the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO) joining the ranks of other well-known Holocaust organizations. The AHO is "an international network for the advancement of Holocaust education, remembrance and research." Our Society is now linked with other notable organizations such as Yad Vashem, Classrooms Without Borders, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center of Holocaust Studies/Jagiellonian University, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, and hundreds of other like-minded organizations.

In that spirit of continued growth, the Board is also proposing a change to the Bylaws to permit additional members to join us. In 1965, when our Society was first formed as a "Landsmanshaft", our membership was limited to survivors of the Holocaust from Krakow and Vicinity (and their spouses, even if they were from cities or towns other than Krakow). At that time in New York City, there were dozens of these Landsmanshaften that represented every town or city with survivors of the Holocaust. Unfortunately, as the years went by the vast majority of these organizations ceased to exist. To preserve the existence of our Society approximately ten years ago, our Bylaws were changed to enable us to accept members from the Landsmanshaften which no longer existed. At that time, the Bylaws were expanded to allow members from "Polish Galicia." Now, ten years later, the Board thinks it is in the Society's best interest to once again modify the Bylaws so that we can accept members from a

much larger geographical area covering Poland before its partition in the late 1700s. During the pandemic, we were approached by several Landsmanshaften with memberships concentrated in the areas outside "Polish Galicia" that have unfortunately reached the point where they can no longer sustain their existence. They expressed interest in either merging into our Society or giving their members the opportunity to independently join the NCFS.

Increasing our membership in such manner is beneficial to the Society as a whole. Not only does it promote the continued existence of the Society, but it also exposes us to other people with shared experiences and common goals. The sharing of ideas, the development of interesting and relevant programs, and the strength advanced by a larger community, will reinforce the purpose of the Society and its commitment to its mission. In order to take advantage of these benefits, however, the language of the Bylaws needs to be revised again and the approval of the Membership is required.

To that end, over the course of a year, the Bylaws Committee has done extensive research and prepared several drafts of proposed language to find the correct wording for this change. In accordance with the procedure set forth in the Bylaws, the Board has voted to accept the final draft of the proposed revision, which draft is printed in this Newsletter in its entirety. On behalf of the Board, I strongly encourage each of you to review the proposed change and vote to accept the same. Your vote can be cast at the upcoming General Membership Meeting, the first to be held in almost three years, which will be held virtually on May 1, 2022, at 12pm. To receive a link to this meeting, please visit our website **WWW.NEWCRACOW.ORG** and press the REGISTER icon on the homepage. By clicking this icon, you will also be able to access a link to articles and maps that support the wording of the revised provision of the Bylaws. I urge all members to review these materials as they provide a history of events following the end of World War I when Poland again gained its sovereignty as a unified country. This information, coupled with the keys set forth on the maps, will illustrate how the borders of Poland have changed between World War I and World War II. The Board will be making a presentation at the General Membership Meeting and members are encouraged to ask any questions they may have at that time.

It is my hope that you, our members, share the Board's vision for continued growth of our Society, will vote to approve the proposed revision of the Bylaws, and will welcome new members who are excited to join us. I look forward to seeing each of you at the General Membership Meeting.

Steven Radwan
President@newcracow.org

LISTING OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Cemetery

Bernice Slutzman
brei513@aol.com
Leon Hilfstein
Leonh74d@gmail.com

Commemoration	Bernice Slutzman brei513@aol.com
Membership	Ida Lewis Membership@newcracow.org
Newsletter	Bernice Slutzman Newsletter@newcracow.org
Outreach	Elizabeth Szancer Outreach@newcracow.org
Social Action	Anna Gallegos socialaction@newcracow.org
Social Committee	Susan Krul Caren susankc@optonline.net
Sunshine	Ida Lewis Idale747@gmail.com Eva Pfau Pfaueva@gmail.com
Telephone Tree	Leon Hilfstein leonh74d@gmail.com
Website	Simone Scheumann info@newcracow.org
Welfare	Renata Farahnik Teacherspet130@hotmail.com

HELP WANTED

As we move forward we are in need of help from individuals who can do any of the following: are proficient in Zoom, can help create content for our social media or create and format email flyers. Any time you are able to donate would be appreciated. Email us at info@newcracow.org if you are interested.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED

We need your help in building our digital archive!

We are hoping to collect a library of photographs and documents to preserve the memory of our society and the lives and Jewish communities of Krakow and vicinity. It could be photos of Jewish artifacts belonging to victims or survivors, photos of past society events, any photos showing the lives of our members from before/ during/after the war or copies of any documents related to the Shoah and your family. View the archive at www.newcracow.org/archive
To contribute, email us at info@newcracow.org

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Greetings dear members,

I'm hoping this Newsletter arrives and finds you healthy, emerging into spring and out from under the cloud of the most austere and challenging 2 years that our 2nd and 3rd generations have known. (I haven't included our survivor members in this description because that statement surely wouldn't apply for them!) However, I'm certain there were some lessons learned by all about solitude, isolation, and loneliness as well as advances made in family cohesion, friendships, and communities pulling together.

As for our Society, we learned that we are only as strong as the combination of our efforts... and we do try. With Covid-19 limiting our in-person Board Meetings,

social functions, and Commemorations, we met on Zoom. Like the rest of the world, we could then provide our membership with a variety of programs accessible online: "Women in the Resistance", "Intergenerational Trauma", "Racism & Antisemitism", "Commemoration of the Liquidation of the Cracow Ghetto" 2021 & 2022. We're hoping to continue these efforts and offer our members relevant presentations in the future. Our mission is to unite families and offspring of Jewish survivors from Cracow, Galicia and other areas in Poland. I have never before watched as many Holocaust related programs online and on educational television as have appeared in the past two years. It seems that having a circumstantially driven alternative model for our communication has up-started a whole new way of connecting, presenting and learning.

Our goal is to keep our Society functions as relative and pertinent to our membership community as possible. However, we need your assistance and support to do so. We have requested your feedback and invited members to step up and contribute their time, talents and services to the working of our collective membership, all in order to help support our original mission... to connect and unite. We have heard from several people recently who wish to share their gifts and expertise and are hoping to hear from more of you. You'll be hearing from us in the future. Recently our main focus had been on creating the "Commemoration of the Liquidation of the Cracow Ghetto" which you were able to view on March 13th, 2022. Please provide your email address to us so you can be informed of all future programs. At work, we are now a small core of survivor, 2nd and 3rd Gens and are sincerely hoping to keep building this nucleus into an active robust participatory membership. Our survivor predecessors had a vision to build extended families... out of necessity.

The needs of the subsequent generations for gathering together now are different but we all know that there are common concerns and characteristics that many offspring of survivors share. Take for example the recent onslaught of Russian forces into Ukraine. Which 2nd or 3rd Gens did not have a knee jerk reaction to this incursion? There's so much to share about the nature of our births. So please be more than just a dues paying member of the Society. Allow your time for working from home, your spare time or your retirement to inspire you to support this organization that has withstood the test of 57 years. The New Cracow Friendship Society needs your willing spirit and fresh new energy to grow... and keep on thriving! Please let us hear from you.

Re: membership dues... please remit your 2022 dues (and any dues in arrears) as soon as possible. You can pay online through PayPal by referring to the membership tab on our website at www.newcracow.org.
***Please keep in mind that we are charged a small fee for PayPal when you pay online.

***For any additional donations, please press the donate tab. All contributions of any amount are deeply appreciated.

Or, if you so choose, you can mail your check to me at the address below. The fees are still \$25 for single, \$40 for family. Both sides of the renewal card need to be filled

out. Adult children who no longer live at a parent's home pay separately. Members who have purchased plots at Beth Moses must remain "members in good standing".

PHONE TREE- Any member who doesn't "opt out" of our Phone Tree will be on the list and notified of all announcements. If you wish to "opt out", please mark it on your membership renewal card or on the online form.

To our families who have suffered the loss of a loved one, we send our deepest condolences. May your beloved rest in peace and may you find comfort among the mourners.

We welcome our new members Debbie and Marty Vine in Israel, and new member Jill Liebman.

Wishing all of our members good health, happiness and peace.

Sincerely,

Ida Lewis- Membership Chair.

Maria Helfman- Membership Co-Chair
membership@newcracow.org

Please mail your checks to:
NCFS c/o Ida Lewis
147-17 78th Road, Flushing NY 11367
Hm Ph: (718) 380-3574.

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

We look forward to rolling out our new project soon. A wall of memorial plaques, each dedicated in honor of a loved one, will be incorporated into our website. Every member of our society will have the opportunity to inscribe individual plaques with the names of survivors or others they wish to honor. The cost will be \$18 per plaque. Other details to follow.

REMARKS AT THE COMMEMORATION Bernice Slutzman

I am Bernice Slutzman and I would like to welcome you all to the New Cracow Friendship Society's Commemoration of the 79th Anniversary of the Liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto.

The timing of today's observance is perfect as it was in this month and on this day that the liquidation took place 79 years ago. It was a week before the festival of Purim as it is today. Yesterday the Torah portion was Zachor, Remember. Our ancestors were commanded to remember the deeds of Amalek. *Remember what Amalek did to you, on the way, when you were leaving Egypt, that he happened upon you on the way, and he struck those of you who were hindmost, all the weaklings at your rear when you were faint and exhausted, and he did not fear God. It shall be that when Hashem, your God, gives you as an inheritance to possess it, you shall wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven—you shall not forget!* Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Why do we read that passage on Shabbat Zachor?

Haman is said to be a descendant of Amalek hence the connection and the reason for remembering the incident just described. I bring this very brief lesson of Jewish tradition to you today because although it is not Amalek we remember today, we follow the commandment to remember the evil that was done to our people not in ancient times, but, in the vast scope of our people's history, only yesterday.

We here today are not old enough to remember first hand any of the events which took place on Plac Zgody but we are the repositories of the memories of our parents and grandparents. We remember their memories as imparted to us.

Today you will hear from several speakers, hear renditions of poignant melodies and prayers and pause for a moment of silence as we witness the lighting of 6 candles representing the 6 Million murdered in the Shoah. one of the candle lighters is 102½ year-old Regina Lewis. *Ani Maamin*, which you will hear, was voiced by those who knew they were about to die. It speaks of how they still believed in the coming of the Messiah, even though his arrival may be delayed, they still believed.

The Partisan Hymn, the anthem of those young heroes who valiantly fought against the Nazis in the ghetto will be sung near the close of our program. Kaddish will be recited. We will end the program with the singing of Hatikvah.

Bonnie Kantor

When NCFS asked me to talk about my parents Arthur and Irene Gross, both from Krakow and Holocaust survivors, I hesitated - what words to use, memories to share that would honor my parents and contribute to combatting hate and antisemitism. I'm not a historian, poet, or philosopher but I do know that speaking from the heart, from a place of truth and speaking simply can be powerful. I learned this from my mother, and it is what inspired me to work with Anna Gallegos to create the NCFS Power of our Stories series- a program we started 2 years ago as part of mission to work in communities teaching tolerance. The Holocaust helps us examine very current issues affecting us around the world, such as the power of extremist ideologies, propaganda, and group-targeted hate and violence. Data from the Holocaust can be daunting, yet when we hear an authentic personal story -it helps us to make the human connection, makes it meaningful, and sometimes, inspires us to take action. I decided that because I have only a few minutes today, I will talk about my mother, Irka. Maybe as a thank you to her for the magnificent gifts she gave me and my sister: compassion, kindness, and resilience - a guidebook of how to live life fully. I may not follow it always but it's wonderful to be in possession of the North Star for living. She would have been 100 last week. I also selected a few photographs for this talk - a precious few from before the war, after in NYC and more recent that includes the newest member of our family - Fox Offutt, my grandnephew.

My mother's maiden name was Ziemer. She was born in 1922 and raised in Krakow. She had an older

sister who died before she was born. Her father, my grandfather, was an officer in the Polish Army. As my mother described him, “he was tall, very handsome and charismatic”. She told me that “he looked exactly like Gregory Peck”. He died before the war. My mother and Grandmother stayed together in the ghetto as long as they could, until my grandmother was murdered by a SS officer.

My parents met at a summer resort outside of Krakow – My mother was 11 my dad 14. My mother had a big crush on my father. He was older and didn’t much notice her at first - eventually he came around. They were married in the Ghetto, “under the stars” as my mother tells it. My mother was 18 and my father was 21.

Early on they were in the same camps but over time, they were separated and did not know if either was alive until after the war. They found each other in Germany, stayed in Munich in a DP camp until my father finished school, he studied architecture. They came to America, NYC in the late 1940’s, lived on the upper west side of NYC, moved to Brooklyn, had 2 daughters, me, and my older sister Rita. My mother eventually too went back to school, got her BA, and became a recreation therapist, spent many years at Sloan Kettering working with cancer patients and their families, helping them through difficult times focusing on kindness, resilience and compassion.

An important note – my parents had a unique bond – they knew each other’s families – parents, grandparents, and Benno, my father’s younger brother who was murdered in the camps. They shared family stories and memories of time before the war. This connection was a blessing and I believe helped them move on and thrive.

I learned about the Holocaust and knew that my parents were survivors when I was 5 years old. I learned later that there was a lot of debate in the house and with cousins and survivor friends about whether or not to talk about the Holocaust with the children but my mother was adamant that she tell her girls - “they must know...it’s their story too...I don’t want them first learning about it in school, outside the home or maybe the world will try to bury what happened”.

She started the sharing process by telling gentle stories about life in the ghetto and then the camps – usually on our walks to the bank, grocery store, bakery and at bedtime. Her stories were sweet yet powerful:

- how she traded a potato for lipstick so she could look pretty when daddy came to visit her
- how she and others hid a young boy in the barracks until they could get him out safely
- how people from different barracks would meet in secret spots at night to share their feelings, provide updates on friends and family
- she told me that the wedding band on her finger was her original band and that she hid that ring inside her thru the entire war
- she told me how she admired the beauty of the Hungarian women – even though their heads were shaved they looked like angels

As I got older, the stories became more vivid and she exposed me to more of her horrors – what it felt like to be in a packed cattle car, getting hit in the head by a policeman (an injury that may have contributed to her Parkinson’s illness later in life), and how my grandmother was murdered in front of my mother. She told me that she pleaded with a SS officer – to let the two of them stay together and showed the SS officer her father’s army medal. The SS officer instead shot my grandmother on the spot. As my mother tells it – the officer had “some kindness in him” because her mother (my grandmother) was spared the gas chamber and the officer’s choice to shoot my grandmother kept my mother alive.

Mom told me later in her life that she did a great deal of preparation before each story session. She would make sure to leave out parts that I may have not been ready for. Her commitment was for me to feel safe and proud, and to focus on the humanity that showed itself in the most horrific situations.

I started to formally learn about the Holocaust in school, 12 or 13 years old. The books included frightening images and overwhelming numbers. Most of my classmates could not make the connection. For them – it was “ancient history”, so I started to share the stories my mother told me and some of my schoolmates had the opportunity to hear it directly from my mother. Mommy shared her experiences in a way that made it ok to ask questions and learn more. She also would magically translate her horrific experiences into relatable situations to provide important life lessons. She would say, “please do all you can not to be quick to judge others. You never know what choices you would make when you are under huge stress – for example: you may easily give your seat to a stranger on the subway – when you’re feeling happy and strong, but would you make the same choice if you were feeling hungry, tired or in physical or emotional pain?” She made you think. She also told us a lot about the power of kindness – she acknowledged that it takes strength to be kind and she would say it also gives you strength!” It is spinach for your soul and how and why I survived. By the kind acts of others and the strength I received from being kind”. What incredible way to be – thank you again Mommy!!

One more memory that I feel compelled to share, my mother loved popcorn –she told me that when she was in the camps, she would dream that one day there would be a movie about her experience. She imagined she would eat popcorn as she watched the movie. Many years later, my husband and I took my parents to see Schindler’s List. She insisted on popcorn. I sat next to her. As we watched the film, she held me close and ate the popcorn. She encouraged me to partake. In that moment I experienced the power of her three gifts - kindness, compassion, and resilience. I miss you mommy and pray that you and daddy are together and at peace.

Maria Stoecker Helfman

My name is Maria Helfman. I am on the Board of Directors for New Cracow Friendship Society. I was

born in Krakow and both my parents, Emil (Samuel) and Janet Stoeger were Holocaust survivors.

In Krakow, in 1947, my father testified at the trial of Amon Goeth. This testimony included details about the March 13, 1943, liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto. On that date, Amon Goeth ordered the removal and murder of women and children. After that event, my father never saw his family, including his wife and young son, again.

However, it is just recently that I have discovered that my father also gave testimony on February 21, 1947, in Krakow, to the Main Commission for the Investigation of German War Crimes in Poland. I am going to read excerpts from my father's testimony.

Here is part of the testimony:

During the occupation, I lost my whole family of 13 people, including my wife and child. Within that time, I was sent to the Kraków ghetto, camp in Płaszów, camp in Pionki, then camps in Auschwitz, Gliwice and Blechhammer

I arrived at the concentration camp in Auschwitz in a group transport from Pionki. We were unloaded in Birkenau on 29 July 1944. There were 2500 people in the transport. Women with children were separated from men who were fit for work. Old men were grouped with women and children.

When we arrived there to Birkenau, Otto Moll was head of the camp. The food was insufficient, especially since some of our portions were stolen by the prisoners so the majority of us suffered from diarrhea. On the average, 300 prisoners out of 1,500 would be sick, the corpses were transported to the crematoria in Auschwitz. The dead were replaced with new prisoners sent to the camp, so that the total number of prisoners was always about 1,500.

With regular monthly intervals, the SS men from Auschwitz, including an SS doctor, would come to the camp and conduct selections, that is when they selected those who were unfit for work. The selected prisoners were then transported to Auschwitz and gassed. They were replaced by newly transported prisoners.

Germans who supervised our work in the repair shops, would report us to the camp authorities for the most trivial offences, committed during work, such as trying to get warm or eating scraps. Based on these reports, SS man Moll would subject us to "flogging".

Officer Moll would personally shoot prisoners for the most trivial offences. He once caught me boiling potatoes, which I had been given at the repair shop. He assumed that I stole them from the camp warehouse and didn't believe my explanations. He beat me up and knocked me around, set the dog on me, and then told me to run "for freedom" ("Lauf auf die Freiheit!"), pointing to the wired electrified fence around the camp. When I refused, he threatened me with a revolver. Having no choice, I ran up to the wires and started climbing. Four shots were immediately fired from the guard tower. None of them hit me. At almost exact same moment, Moll's deputy drove by. who supervised our work in the repair shops and knew that I was a hardworking man. He pleaded

with Moll on my behalf and saved me from death. Such incidents were very frequent.

During my stay in the camp, less than half a year, the camp claimed about 1,500 lives due to selections and "natural" deaths, within that time almost the entire camp population was replaced. At the end of my stay in the camp, very few people from the original transport in which I had arrived, were alive.

The camp was closed down on 18 January 1945. On that day all prisoners marched, even the sick who had to be supported by colleagues, were herded through the city of Koźle to the camp in Blechhammer. If unable to march, they were shot by the SS men. The majority of the victims died when the transport was going through the forest. The SS men threw the corpses of the people who had been shot into the ditches on the side of the road. We got to Blechhammer after three days of marching. No food was given to us.

Upon arrival to camp Blechhammer, the SS men ran away, dumped their weapons, and changed into civilian clothes or even striped prisoner uniforms, so we realized that we were close to being liberated.

This was the testimony given by my father to the Commission. As I conclude, this was my father's unimaginable daily nightmare until the end of the war in 1945.

My dear father and my mother, Janet, also Holocaust survivor, were able to enjoy their family and grandchildren, where he passed away in Fla in 1995.

In memory of our Parents -- loving family and grandchildren, Maria and Kenneth Helfman, Marc Helfman and family: Nicole, Brayden and Skylar. Ally Stoeger and husband David Domnitch and family, Aaron Domnitch, wife Carrie, and family: Cameron, and Parker. Karlyn Owens and husband Dave and family: Bradley and Maya.

Thank you.

Steven Radwan

Hello, my name is Steven Radwan, and I am President of the New Cracow Friendship Society. On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank all of you for sharing with us this moving and memorable occasion.

To Bernice, Cantor Kanarek, Arthur, our speakers Bonnie, Maria, Simone and the families which lit candles, I say yasher koach.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank all those who worked so diligently behind the scenes who, without whose help this event could not have come to fruition:

To Anna Scheumann Gallegos. A 3G Board member of the New Cracow Friendship Society, who is both the Zoom coordinator and director of this event.

To Aidan Gallegos whose movie magic in creating the solemn candle lighting ceremony and merging *Es Brent* with the beautiful scroll of names of our Society's family members who perished in the Holocaust.

To Steven Morris, who is the Social Justice Program Associate for the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue,

who granted us permission to use Cantor Daniel Singer's soulful rendition of *Es Brent*.

I hope that all who shared this event with us today will also share future events with us.

As Bernice mentioned earlier, we will close our program with the singing of the *Partisanen Lid* which became the anthem of all resistance fighters throughout Eastern Europe, followed by the singing of Hatikvah.

Hopefully for next year's commemoration we will gather together in person.

OF SANCTIONS AND PROMISES

When the Editor reminded me last week that I needed to prepare an article for the upcoming newsletter, who knew that the world as we knew it would change, perhaps irrevocably, by the time I sat down to write this article. But here we are, Friday, February 25th, with Russian troops already in Kiev. In 2022, one country has brutally attacked another, its leader brazenly falsifying claims to provide a pretext, lying through his teeth every step of the way. Surprising no one and surprising everyone at the same time. One former US President called it "genius". I'd argue that to be a remark better not to have been said. And maybe the Russian president isn't a genius. Maybe he is just a realist, knowing that pretty much whatever he did, he would get away with it. And that my friends, is the core of the problem. And not just for Ukraine.

Today, I write this article with a swirl of emotions. As a human being, I am disgusted at what I am seeing and, in my hopelessness, to help. I am particularly disgusted that Ukraine has been left to die, to fight a war machine 20X its size, with no real chance to win. If they stick to their guns (literally) and fight back, they may inflict serious damage on the Russian troops. They may even delay them. But you don't need to be a military genius to know how this battle will end (will probably already have ended by time you read this). If Putin stops the attack, it is because that is what he plans to do, perhaps to leverage his presence in Ukraine to lead to a "peaceful" transition of power from the pro-western Jewish president of Ukraine Zelensky, to a pro-Russian Ukrainian government. Perhaps he can use his presence in the country to leverage negotiations with the west. But if I were a gambling man, I'd say he's gone all in, and this will end with the occupation of Kyiv, and the removal (perhaps execution?) of Zelensky and the rest of the government. The Russian flag will fly above the government building in Kyiv, and Ukraine as we know it, will cease to exist. And if I'm wrong, and the Ukrainian army and its bravado to fight back hold out, there will be a massacre. Maybe it wasn't wise for the US and NATO to even consider spreading east to include Ukraine, but as luck would have it (bad in this case) it never happened. Only the threat of it was in the air, so Ukraine finds itself a sacrificial lamb. Their desire to turn a page and become a western country with western values, tossed to the flames of history, as they are not NATO, and no one will come to save them. It is so tragic; I literally have tears in my eyes.

But this story goes way beyond Ukraine. As an American, I am filled with fear. The American star has been in descent for some time now, both internally given the serious schism in the country, and externally in terms of its pull back and not get involved policy, started by Obama, followed up by Trump and carried out now too by Biden. The message has been crystal clear over the past 15 years. The US no longer wants to fight wars of others and send its boys to die for causes not directly related to US national security. So it was that Obama pulled out of most of Syria and literally handed the country over to the Russians after failing to live up to the famous pledge to make the Syrians pay if they ever used chemical weapons again. They did. The US not only didn't respond, they made the Russians the kings of the territory, and we are paying for that to this day. More on that in a bit.

There was Trump that abandoned parts of Syria desired by Turkey leaving the former ally Kurds to be massacred by an avenging Erdogan. There were the force reductions in Iraq and Afghanistan and finally the pull out in the middle of the night from Afghanistan (reminiscent of the Israeli pullout from Lebanon in 2000). True, there was a pledge to be out by a certain date. But the way that retreat was carried out send a miserable message to US allies and potential adversaries (read that Russia) that the US doesn't want to hear about foreign wars anymore. And in the current Ukrainian crisis, it was made clear from the very start that no matter what Russia would do, and US intelligence had it down to the fine print of exactly what would happen, there would be no US or European military response. Sanctions yes. A real threat - no. Putin heard the message clearly and acted accordingly.

In fairness, it's not just the US, it's the entire West. The West is living (maybe was living until yesterday) in an illusion that in a post-World War II world, diplomacy is king. What they forgot is the basic tenant of Machiavelli that War is just another form of diplomacy. It is why they view Israeli actions with disdain, no matter what the provocation was for an Israeli response. It is and always was, a naïve approach when facing the likes of Russia, Iran, North Korea and others. If one side is willing to use force, pretending you don't have to doesn't stop the bully. Israel learned that lesson a long time ago. Now the US and the West have learned the lesson the hard way. They drew the line at NATO and abandoned Ukraine to the wolves, thinking that by imposing sanctions it will impress someone beyond themselves. The real question is, will the US and the West wake up in time before it is too late? History shows that if you hand over the Sudetenland, the bully will want more and more until there is no choice but to fight back. By then, the price will be significantly higher than if the battle started earlier. So as an American, I fear that the US hegemony in the world is in tremendous danger and if that should fall apart, G-d help us all. Note - the Chinese are watching closely what is going on here. If I were Taiwanese, I would not be sleeping well right now. Will the US respond to a Chinese attack on Taiwan? And of course, there is Iran...

As a Jew I write this with terrible pain as well. There are so many Jewish angles here. Jewish history in

the Ukraine not all of it good, particularly in World War II. The excellent relations with the State of Israel today. The large Ukrainian Jewish community now in Israel, and the large (200,000) Jewish community still in Ukraine today. Uman – the burial site of Rabbi Nachman where thousands flock to close to Rosh Hashana, the countless shlichim from Chabad and other organizations active in Ukraine. There is also the Jewish community in Russia and the relations Israel has with Russia to consider. Then there is Zelensky, the Jewish Ukrainian president. The list goes on. But what upsets me the most is the parallel. While not a perfect one, at least I hope not for the sake of the Ukrainian people, what is the same is that in the face of barbaric, unprovoked violence, the world is standing by. In the past the Jews were left to their own devices. Now it's the Ukrainians. Its not a comforting thought.

Which brings me to the final swirl of emotions, as an Israeli. With all that was said above, there is also an Israeli angle which is getting considerable world attention. It is a dilemma that we would prefer not to have had, but one that can have tremendous consequences. And as you will see, everything is intertwined.

You see, because Obama handed Syria over to the Russians, the Russians are now our neighbor on our northern border. All of the IDF's activities to stop Iran from building its presence in Syria from which they supply weapons to Hezbollah and Syria and have opened another front against us, is coordinated with the Russians. Their army is all over the place. We have to be careful not to hit any Russian troops by accident. Up to now, the coordination has worked well. And its in Israel's supreme interest that it continues to do so. The alternative is that the Iranian buildup in Syria will go unchecked. And now there is an even a bigger threat. Israel could find a hostile Russia on its borders and even a threat of a direct military conflict with Russia may loom. To prevent this, Israel has toed the line, condemning the invasion but not as much as others and not joining the sanctions imposed by the US and the Europeans. As we speak a huge dilemma exists if Israel will support the UN resolution condemning Russia (and we have a lot of experience with those resolutions). The short of it is, Israel can't afford to antagonize Russia and as long as it can get away without doing so, it will, the moral shortfall of the position, notwithstanding.

So far, the US and the Europeans seem to understand this position. But that can change. And if push comes to shove, its pretty clear which side Israel will choose. Still, this is problematic in its own right. After all, even as the war escalates in the Ukraine, the US and other powers – which includes Russia – are on the verge of signing a new deal with Iran. And they aren't really caring much what Israel (or Saudi, or UAE, or Bahrain and others) have to say about it. The main thing, get it off the table and buy a few years to worry about it later. But for Israel this means – Iran will be flushed with billions of dollars which will find its way to Hezbollah, to Hamas and to Syria. It will redouble its efforts to open up a new front on the Syrian border. It will continue to expand its ballistic missile program. As part of an agreement, they may freeze the program where it is and lower enrichment from 60% back down to 3%, they may even send out their enriched

uranium to Russia (yea, get that, to Russia, we can trust them on this now of course) – but they keep their centrifuges intact so that in 3 years, when parts of the deal run out they can go back to enrichment, equipment in place, with the blessing of the international community. They will never get nuclear weapons the US promises. The Germans and Brits promise too. The problem is, it's hard to believe them. It's hard to trust them at this point. Not when it's your life that's on the line.

From the Ukraine, to the folks left behind in Afghanistan, to the moderate Arab countries in the middle east and of course to Israel, the promises of the US and the West are a lot harder to take to the bank then they were in the past. The policy to push for sanctions as a legitimate alternative to military action has been proven to be a failure. See Iran. See Russia.

This war in the Ukraine is terribly tragic, especially for those people who live in the country. But when the Russian troops crossed the border and invaded Ukraine, the world as we know it changed forever. Again. We can only hope that the lessons of what brought us all to this woeful day are being learned and actions taken to prevent things from going from bad to worse. If not, Ukraine won't be the last to suffer in Europe and Israel will be facing a very dangerous future.

On a personal note, I had hoped to dedicate this article to the experience I had a few weeks ago, when after 32 years, I finally had to hang up my IDF uniform for good. I'll just share that this was a very difficult thing for me to do. Having served in the IDF is one of the things I am most proud of in my life. That a kid from Staten Island became a Lt. Colonel in the IDF, is pretty amazing. I had a great run and wouldn't have changed a day of that experience. In the last 15 years, while a reservist, I had the honor of heading the public affairs section of the joint exercises with the US Army. I served side by side with US military in preparing and executing exercises such as Juniper Cobra and Juniper Falcon, aimed at protecting Israel in the case of a major missile attack from a combined set of enemies (I send you back to the scenarios above). As someone who loves the US and Israel, this was an amazing experience and one I will never forget. I am lucky to have made numerous friends in the US Army with whom I stay in touch and I am deeply thankful for that.

Serving in the IDF was an honor. I know that to the readers of this article, for those who survived the Shoah, to see a strong Jewish army is a source of pride. I hope I made my parents and family and friends proud of me for my service. I know I am very proud of my children, one of which is still serving as a Naval Officer, all of who served.

It all comes together in the end. Service in the military is an incredibly important thing in Israeli society. But today, more than ever, when realism overcomes wishful thinking, as sad as it may be, we also understand that it is the only way to protect ourselves. As Ukraine goes up in smoke, I doubt there are many Israelis around who honestly believe that if Israel was in a similar situation, anyone (maybe including the US – we aren't NATO either after all) will come to our aid. Maybe I'm

wrong. I hope I am. But wishful thinking was never a good course of policy.

Barry Spielman
Oranit, Israel
February 25, 2022

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE REPORT

HAPPY EVENTS

Anniversaries

March

Dr. Gary & Dr. Lillian Chubak
Mr. & Mrs. David Geller 52

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Radwan 48
Dr. Gitta & David Silberstein 52

April

Melvin Bukiet & Jill Goodman
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Forster 49
Mr. & Mrs. Roman Hartman

Mr. & Mrs. Oskar Matzner
Mr. & Mrs. Frederic Rothenberg
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Sass

MAZAL TOV! Blessings for many more happy and healthy years together. Simchas and anniversary dates can be submitted to us at membership@newcracow.org

Contributions We wish to thank our members wholeheartedly for your tzedakah. Your contributions enable our Society to continue planning, working, and growing. Please feel free to donate to NCFS at any time in memory of a family yearzeit, to celebrate a birth, bar/at mitzvah, engagement, wedding, anniversary, to honor a friend, or just to fulfill our mitzvah of giving tzedakah. This can be done by sending a check to NCFS at the address below, the address on the front page, or by PayPal payment on line at newcracow.org via the donations tab.

Any recently received donations will appear in the next Newsletter.

Marvin Blumenfrucht \$25
David & Cindy Patrych Brotman \$100
Helene & Abe Dorthheimer \$18
Saul Dreier \$15
Paula Fishman, in memory of husband David \$200
Faye & Jack Gingold \$72
Yona & Jerry Gonan \$100
Miriam & Roman Hartman, in memory of Jaron \$54
Miriam & Roman Hartman \$40
Maria Helfman \$20
Sam Hersley \$25
Annette Insdorf
Ed Kleinman \$21
Renee & Abe Kreiger \$32
Jeff Krul \$36
Albert Laufer \$125
Susan & Charles Mandelbaum \$18
Marlene Mindel \$160
Edward Mosberg \$500

Ruth Offen \$42
Michele Ores \$320
Toby & Steve Radwan \$100
Barbara Rosenstock \$18
Sig Rosenstock \$25
Stephanie Rothenberg \$100
Sara Schanzer \$18
Ettie Shapiro \$15
Sydelle & Arthur Spielman \$188
Ruth Steif \$75
Ally Stoeger, in memory of Janet & Emil Stoeger, parents
& grandparents \$500
Sonia Traulsen \$15
Helene Wolloch in honor of
Jack Gingold \$75
Richard Wolloch \$75
Andzia Zellner \$155
Darien Finder Zimmerman \$55

Please send us your good news. We love to share good news with our members.

Looking forward to seeing you again in person or on Zoom.
Stay healthy. Be safe.

Ida Lewis
718 380-3574

Eva Pfau
718 464-0932

NCFS
c/o Ida Lewis
147-17 78th Road
Flushing, NY 11367

Star of David Memorial Chapels



Everything you need in your hour of need.

Elegant and spacious sanctuaries
located adjacent to New Montefiore,
Beth Moses, Wellwood, Mt. Ararat and
Pinelawn Memorial Park.



"Because in the end, everything matters"

631-454-9600 866-95-SHALOM

ANDREW NOVAK KEVIN GRAY
LICENSED FUNERAL DIRECTORS

1236 Wellwood Avenue, West Babylon, NY 11704
www.starofdavidmemorialchapels.com



NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, INC.
c/o Bernice Slutzman
3905 Arthur Avenue N
Seaford, NY 11783