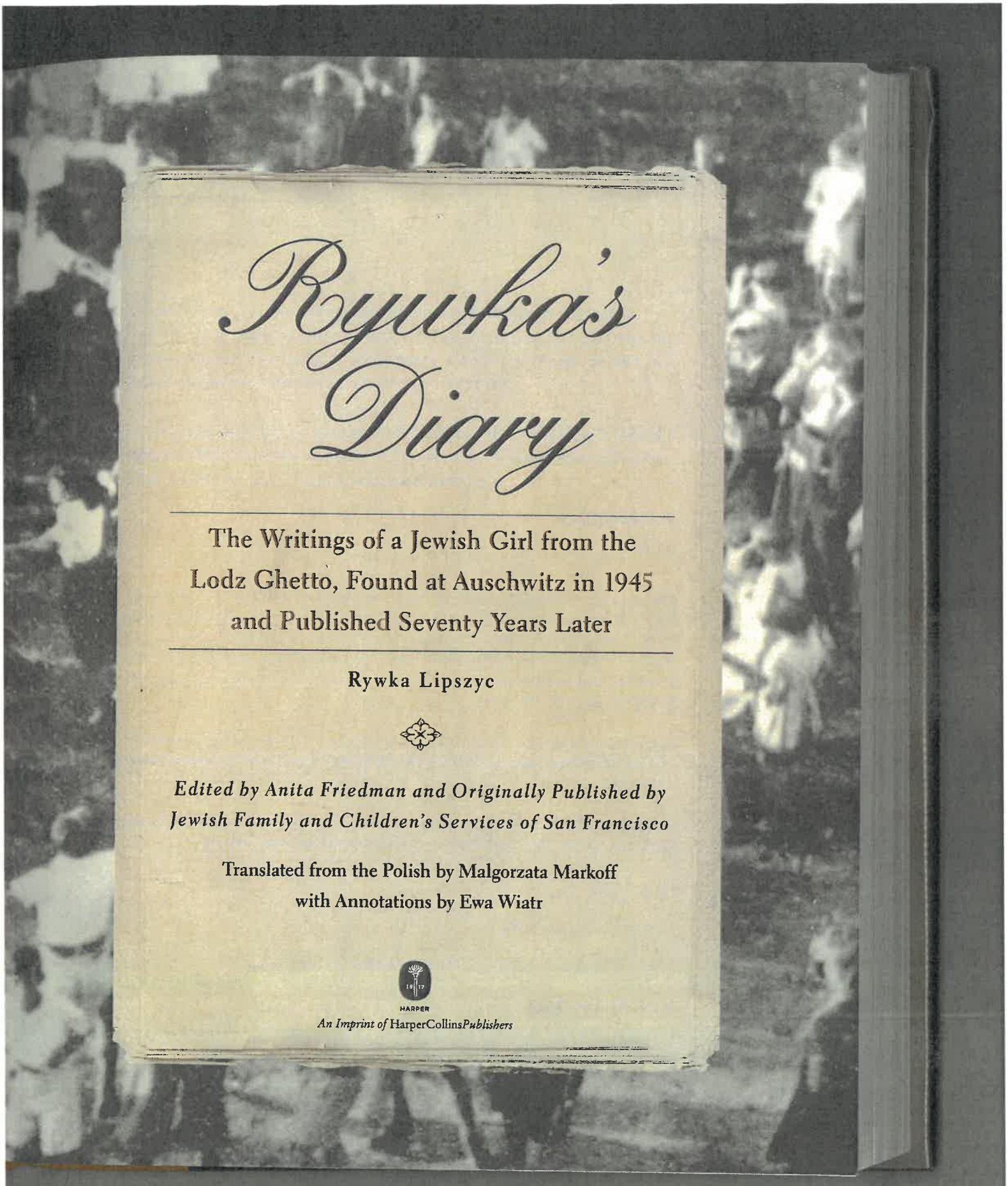

Rywka's Diary

The Writings of a Jewish Girl from the Lodz Ghetto, Found at Auschwitz in 1945 and Published Seventy Years Later

Rywka Lipszyc

Edited by Anita Friedman and Originally Published by Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco

Translated from the Polish by Malgorzata Markoff
with Annotations by Ewa Wiatr

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Poland after the Nazi conquest, September 1939

Preface

THE DIARY'S JOURNEY FROM AUSCHWITZ TO AMERICA

JUDY JANEC

In the spring of 1945, a doctor with the liberating Red Army plucked a diary from the ruins of the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The physician, Zinaida Berezovskaya, a fierce Soviet patriot and committed Communist, had left her home to fight the great battle against the invading Nazi army and had accompanied the Soviet troops to Auschwitz.

Zinaida took the diary with her when she returned to her home in Omsk, in southwestern Siberia, where she and the diary remained until her death in 1983. Her effects were sent to her son, Ghen Shangin-Berezovsky, who lived in Moscow. Upon his death in 1992, Ghen's belongings went to his wife, Lilavati Ramayya. It was at her mother's house in Moscow that Ghen's daughter, Anastasia Shangina-Berezovskaya (granddaughter of Zinaida), first encountered the diary on a visit in 1995. Immediately sensing its value, she brought it back to San Francisco, where she had emigrated in 1991.

Over the ensuing years, Anastasia made several attempts to find an appropriate institution to collaborate with—one that could identify the diary's

value and perhaps translate and publish it. In June 2008, she contacted Leslie Kane, executive director of what was then the Holocaust Center of Northern California. Leslie passed on her e-mail to me as the center's archivist and librarian, and within days, Anastasia brought the diary to our library.

It was a breathtaking artifact—an unknown diary written in the Lodz ghetto—and a rare opportunity to add to the historical record. Handwritten in Polish, in a school notebook, the diary was in relatively good condition. The first two pages were detached from the rest; part of the writing was obscured; and there were some water stains and rust. But considering its age and its provenance—the ruins of the crematoria at Auschwitz—it was remarkably well preserved.

One hundred twelve pages long, the diary was accompanied by a note (see page 217) and two newspapers from the time. The diary's first entry was dated October 3, 1943, Litzmannstadt [Lodz] ghetto. It concluded in the ghetto on April 12, 1944. Clearly, this was a remarkable document. How remarkable neither Anastasia nor others could determine without assistance. We decided to digitally reproduce a few pages so that we could share them with experts in the field. Carefully, we scanned several pages, and in this way began the process of bringing this diary, which had slumbered in darkness for over sixty years, to light.

On the recommendation of Zachary Baker, the curator of Judaica at Stanford University and a member of the board of directors of the Holocaust Center, with whom we first shared the scans, we approached Professor Robert Moses Shapiro of Brooklyn College, an eminent scholar and expert on the Lodz ghetto and its diaries, as well as a fluent reader and speaker of Polish, Hebrew, and Yiddish. Dr. Shapiro quickly recognized the special value of the diary. After viewing the sampling of pages that we had scanned, he felt sure of its authenticity. Over the course of the next months, several steps were made to ensure that this extraordinary diary would be shared with the world.

The first step was to make a high-resolution digital reproduction of the diary. In this way its intellectual content would be preserved forever. Even if something were to happen to the actual artifact, the words of the diarist would be saved. The scans of the diary were viewed by Marek Web, former archivist at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City, who also confirmed its authenticity.

The next step was to have it transcribed. At the recommendation of Dr. Shapiro, we turned to Ewa Wiatr of the Center for Jewish Research at the University of Lodz. She agreed to transcribe and provide annotations to the diary. It was Ewa who discovered the identity of the writer and confirmed it through a check of the Lodz ghetto records. The diarist helped with this identification by naming herself in the diary. Thus we began our acquaintanceship with Rywka Lipszyc.

In December 2010, the Holocaust Center of Northern California was dissolved, and it donated its collection of books and artifacts to Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS) of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties, headed by Dr. Anita Friedman. JFCS developed a new Holocaust education program and worked in partnership with Lehrhaus Judaica, a nondenominational Bay Area center for adult Jewish education, founded by Fred Rosenbaum, to publish the diary. In a fortunate coincidence, Rosenbaum had just coauthored a book about a young woman's experiences in the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz—*Out on a Ledge* (River Forest, IL: Wicker Park Press Ltd., 2010)—with its subject, Eva Libitzky.

We now had to translate the diary into English, including the annotations that Ewa Wiatr had prepared. Working with two translators, Malgorzata Szajbel-Kleck and Malgorzata Markoff, we soon had an English translation available. Alexandra Zapruder, the editor of *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* and the winner of the 2002 National Jewish Book Award for Holocaust literature, agreed to join our project as editor of the diary and to offer an introduction to and perspective on an adolescent's

emerging identity in the face of extraordinary circumstances. Historian Fred Rosenbaum provided an essay on the Lodz ghetto, and Hadassa Halamish, the daughter of one of Rywka's cousins, contributed her mother Mina's and aunt Esther's recollections of their time with Rywka in the ghetto and in the camps. Esther also provided a postscript.

So, with the assistance of archivists, historians, Holocaust survivors, translators, and editors—as well as the support of philanthropists, agency directors, and so many others around the world committed to Holocaust education—our goal has been achieved. Rywka Lipszyc will not remain a nameless victim of the Holocaust. Her words will survive her.

The Family Remembers

More Than a Name

HADASSA HALAMISH

I only knew Rywka by name: Rywka Lipszyc.

As the Israeli poet Zelda said, "Every person has a name that was given by his parents, and one that was given by God."

All I knew about Rywka was that she lived during the war. Beyond that, I knew absolutely nothing; I could only imagine. What kind of girl was Rywka? Was she pretty? Was she outgoing? Did she have braids? Did she have dreams? Was she skinny or fat? In my mind, I could picture her any way I liked.

No matter how much I asked my mother about Rywka, she couldn't tell me anything. My mother knew her very well; they belonged to the same generation. They spent the hardest years of the terrible war together, all the way until the end. They even slept in the same bunk, on the same bed of misery. Still, my mother couldn't tell me about Rywka, just as she couldn't tell me about the other members of her family who no longer existed, who rose to the heavens through the ovens of Auschwitz.

My mother, Mina, was born to Hadassah and Yochanan Lipszyc in the Polish city of Lodz in 1926. She was the third daughter in the family,

after Esther and Channah. The house she grew up in belonged to her grandfather, Moshe Menachem Segal of blessed memory, who was the city's rabbi. Grandfather had five children, but it was his oldest, Hadassah, who stayed with him, even after she married Rabbi Yochanan Lipszyc of blessed memory. Rabbi Yochanan was a judge in the Lodz rabbinical court. Mina's grandfather, Rabbi Moshe Menachem, and her father, Yochanan Lipszyc, served the community with great dedication.

Mother used to tell us about a house full of life, full of Torah. She spoke of the cabinets filled with holy books, and of the dining room tables that, on Sabbath and holidays, were adorned with silver platters laden with all kinds of delicacies. She also talked about the needy people who relied on their support. She told us about her grandmother, Tseluva Leya of blessed memory, and how she ran the household with a firm hand. People used to come to the house, she said, to ask the rabbi questions, not only about Halacha (Jewish law) but about worldly matters as well. She spoke of a home that was focused on giving to others, and, above all, to steadfast faith in God.

When Mother spoke of home, she mostly talked about her *yichus*—her prestigious ancestry. Her maternal great-grandfather was Eliyahu Chaim Mezul [Maizel] of blessed memory, who was the rabbi of Lodz. Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim was known for his skill, his wisdom, and his keen mind. He led the Jews of Lodz with modesty and kindness, and he was recognized by the Polish government for his many accomplishments. In fact, the city of Lodz recently dedicated a garden in his memory, on the hundredth anniversary of his death.

Mother didn't say much about the family of her father, Rabbi Yochanan Lipszyc, perhaps because nobody from his family survived, at least not to my knowledge. The pain of loss is unbearable, and therefore rarely discussed. My questions were generally answered in a matter-of-fact way. Mother remembered the names of the uncles, but not those of their spouses or children.

Rywka's cousins, Esther and Mina (right), at Mina's wedding in 1949. *(Courtesy of Hadassa Halamish)*

In 1990, my daughter Tamar went to Poland on a youth mission. When she came back, full of experiences to share, she asked to write a family history. This was the first time Mother was willing to help us with our family tree, to bring all her relatives who had died in the Holocaust back to life, at least on paper. From this large and remarkable family, only two girls survived, Esther and Mina, and, thank God, they created new families to carry on the names of those who died.

Avraham Dov and Esther Lipszyc had eight children. Yochanan, the third son, married Hadassah. Yankel, the fifth son, married Miriam Zelwer (Rywka's mother). All of them lived near each other in Lodz and saw each other frequently. When the war broke out, and the sense of uncertainty was enormous,

everyone tried to save their families and themselves. There was an atmosphere of panic and chaos; some people tried to run away, without knowing where. Their lives were filled with fear, anxiety, and a desperate search for solutions.

Yankel Lipszyc tried to run away with his brother-in-law, Noach Vladmirsky. A bomb fell on a house near Lodz and buried Noach. Yankel waited for his proper burial, then went home. One day, he went outside and was caught by Germans, who beat him mercilessly. The volley of blows that rained down upon his head and body left him severely injured. He was taken to the hospital, where they did their best to restore him to health, and he was able to return home (as Rywka describes in her diary). But he continued to have pulmonary problems, and a year later he died of his injuries. He was buried in Lodz on June 2, 1941.

Miriam was left with four children: Rywka, her sisters Cypora (Cipka) and Tamarcia, and her brother, Abramek (Abram)—four small kids, living in the squalor of the ghetto. Despite the help of her many relatives still living in the ghetto, starvation exacted its cost, and Miriam succumbed on July 8, 1942—a month before the *szpera* (mass deportation).

Now there were four orphaned children between the ages of two and thirteen. Three weeks after the death of their mother, the deportation took place. Abram and Tamarcia were taken to their destruction, and Rywka (thirteen) and Cypora (ten) were left all alone. They were supposed to go into the ghetto's orphanage, but family members took it upon themselves to rescue the girls. Rywka and Cypora were adopted by my grandmother, Hadassah.

Hadassah, too, had lost her husband, Rabbi Yochanan of blessed memory, who had been taken to Chelmno and murdered there. In addition to Rywka and Cypora, Hadassah had also taken another niece under her wing, a three-year-old girl named Esther. Hadassah was now living in her house with six girls; her three daughters: Esther, Channah, and Mina; Yankel's daughters Rywka and Cypora; and little Esther, the daughter of Tova Vladmirsky, the sister of Yochanan and Yankel Lipszyc.

My mother told me that her mother was so devastated by the loss of her husband that it fell to Esther to look after the home and the children. Hadassah became severely ill due to hunger, and the girls took turns tending to her. My mother told us how they took on extra work to get food for their mother, and how they dedicated themselves to saving her life, until on July 11, 1943, her heart stopped.

Now there were five girls living in the house by themselves: Esther, Channah, Mina, Rywka, and Cypora. (Little Esther had gone to live with another aunt on her father's side at the age of three; she died along with the rest of her family.)

What was it like for them? I had no idea. What was life in the ghetto like? "Hard." That's the only answer I would get. Esther, who was not yet twenty-one, was the oldest and served as a surrogate mother to the rest of them, but I never really understood what losing their parents, or fighting for survival, had meant for her and for my mother. My impression is that Esther felt responsible for the rest of them, and Mother felt that she had someone she could depend upon.

About a year ago, someone from Yad Vashem contacted me and asked if I had ever heard of Rywka Lipszyc. I knew that she existed, but I didn't know anything else about her. That's when I found out that a family from Moscow had held on to a diary their grandmother had found in the ashes of Auschwitz. It was a diary kept by Rywka in the Lodz ghetto. In it, she described her experiences during this difficult period.

> **Write! . . . Only write! . . . Then I forget about food and everything else, about all the trouble (it's an exaggeration). May God grant Surcia health and happiness, at least for suggesting to me this wonderful idea that I write a diary.**
>
> **(FEBRUARY 11, 1944)**

In this stunning, personal testimonial, Rywka writes about the suffering and excruciating hunger she experienced. She describes the life of a growing girl who is learning things about the world and about people, who watches the world around her and tries to understand the impossible reality that exists in these crazy circumstances. Most of all, she writes about how much she misses her mother, her father, and her little brother and sister. She saw her parents die, but she has no idea what happened to her brother or younger sister. She realizes she will probably never see them again. Who can she share her thoughts with? Who can she talk to about her pain? She finds comfort in her diary; the diary is her secret self. She writes that she has to hide it from her cousins. This is the only way she can preserve her soul: to hide her authentic self from everyone else.

Is it possible to be authentic in an impossible reality?

In the reality of war—a reality too unstable to rely upon—Rywka looked for something to anchor her, and she found it in God. It was to God that she addressed her prayers and her faith. Had she not grown up in a home that was built on faith, a home in which religious life was the greatest liberty of all, she would have been devoid of any comfort during these incomprehensible times. Reading her diary, we see that her pain and hunger were getting increasingly difficult. The food supply was dwindling, she had no tools to work (all the sewing machines were broken, and there was nobody to fix them), and time was becoming a precious resource. She had no time for herself or for her writing; she lived on prayer and faith. She found comfort in Torah study and in preparing for the Seder. She regretted that her need for work compelled her to break Shabbat, and she asked that never again would she have to go through a terrible experience like this.

Oh, it's Friday again! Time goes by so fast! . . . Do we know? What's waiting for us in the future? I'm asking this question with both fear and youthful curiosity. We have an answer to this,

a great answer: God and the Torah! Father God and Mother Torah! They are our parents! Omnipotent, Omniscient, Eternal!!! . . . I have a support, a great support: my Faith, because I believe! Thanks to it I'm stronger, richer, and more worthy than others . . . God, I'm so grateful to You!!!

(FEBRUARY 11, 1944)

Through the diary, Rywka reveals herself as a Jewish girl full of faith in God. She sees God in everything she does.

I am amazed that such a young girl—she was only fourteen—could be so incredibly aware of her emotions. Rywka was fighting for her life. She didn't want to simply survive; she was choosing life! She knew that this choice would bring sorrow and pain, but to her it was better than choosing to live without feeling.

Last night I thought: happy is a person who is unaware, totally unaware, like a child. Unhappy is a person who is aware of his unawareness . . . I belong to the latter category. I'm miserable. What's worse, I can't find any solution. I don't know what to do . . . it's the same over and over again . . . I have only one answer to everything: Surcia. Oh, Surcia . . .

(DECEMBER 23, 1943)

The way Rywka analyzes her life through the prism of her emotions is astounding. She is always studying people: how they behave, and how they embody the divine image. She watches them and scrutinizes their actions. She even advises her younger sister, Cypora, to keep a diary of her own and teaches her how to observe people. And in the cruel reality in which she lives, she discovers, to her dismay, how people can turn into beasts, into cheaters and liars, how they will steal your food, how they will

sacrifice their friends in order to survive. These observations weigh heavily upon her, and sometimes—when life becomes meaningless or intolerably cruel—she wants to die.

Living with her cousins is hard for her. She knows she is there as an act of kindness. She doesn't feel like it's her home, and she bemoans the fact that she has no home. She doesn't feel like she belongs where she is, and as a result, she doesn't help out as much as others may expect of her. This makes her cousins angry—none more so than Esther, who runs the household. The others get angry, and she doesn't respond. They complain to her teachers. She tries to do her best and hopes that all will be well. Rywka thinks they don't understand her. Her diary becomes her sanctuary. The paper endures everything.

Esther remembers one day when Rywka disappeared from the home just when her help was most needed. She remembers how Rywka would close herself off from everyone else and write. Mina, on the other hand, didn't always believe that Rywka kept a diary, because she had never seen her writing. Rywka felt like a stranger in the house. Poor girl.

Rywka decided to go to school; she was such a curious child. She loved to read and write, to ponder the meaning of life. School was a refuge for her. There she studied literature, exchanged books with others, wrote plays, and composed songs. School became her workplace, and it was there that she received her food rations. It was also in school that she found love—love of Surcia (Surcha). Surcia was her counselor, and like all growing girls who admire the people they want to emulate, Rywka admired Surcia.

We now know that Surcia is Sara Selver-Urbach. She was a member of the Lodz Jewish Women's Association, and she was Rywka's spiritual mentor. She, too, kept a diary, and she published a memorial book for her relatives: *Through My Window: Memories from the Lodz Ghetto*. Sara's diary, it seems, was destroyed in the flames of Auschwitz. In her book and her autobiography, she writes that after the agony of Auschwitz, she was sent to a work camp. There, she wrote the story of her life on random pieces of paper that she

found lying around. These fragments of paper survived and remained in Sara's possession. They can be found in her book. Reading these assorted pages, you can see a strong similarity to Rywka's writing style.

We (my aunt, my mother, and I) met with Sara after Rywka's diary found its way into our hands. I hoped she could tell us about Rywka. Sadly, Sara's condition prevented her from speaking clearly about Rywka, and I was left with the question: Was Sara related to Rywka on her mother's side? Did Sara know how much Rywka loved her, or was her love concealed?

When I finished reading Sara's diary, I felt very sad about this missed opportunity. I still didn't know Rywka. I had tried to get more information from Mother in the past, but whenever I asked about Rywka's fate, her only answer was a terse "she died." Mother left the dead to themselves so that she could build a new life.

Still, I persisted. I asked Mother to tell me about what happened to them after they left the ghetto. Mother told me her story, and Esther told me hers. Their versions were similar, but different, too. Memory is subjective, and each of them remembers things differently.

In August 1944, after the ghetto was destroyed, five girls stood together in the train station for a journey to the unknown. One of them was given a loaf of bread, which they took with them to Auschwitz. I asked them what else they brought with them. Mother said she didn't remember; Esther said she brought photographs of her family members. Rywka, it seems, took her diary. When they got to Auschwitz, they went through Mengele's (may his name be wiped out) infamous selection process. Cypora was sent to the left. Esther, in her role as protective "mother," tried to go with her but wasn't allowed to do so. Now there were the three cousins and Rywka. After seven days of indescribable hell, they were all sent to a work camp in Christianstadt for six months. They worked laying down sewage pipelines. Mere skeletons, they toiled in hard labor, with nothing to shield their bodies from the freezing winter of 1945. Miraculously, they survived

this brutality. With the defeat of the Germans, they were taken on a death march. Over the course of six weeks, they walked forty to fifty kilometers (twenty-five to thirty miles) a day until they reached Bergen-Belsen, where they were left to die. They were very ill.

Esther, Mina, and Rywka were put in a bunk together; Channah, who was in critical condition, was taken to the hospital. Every day Mother would go to the hospital to see how Channah was doing and to tend to her. She tried to lift her spirits, urging her to hold on until liberation. But on the day of liberation by the British army, April 15, 1945, Channah died. When Mother saw that Channah had passed away, she went back to her room and lay down on the bare floor next to Rywka and Esther; they tried their best to warm each other with their bodies. When Esther asked her if she had seen Channah, Mother told her to go visit her herself. Esther went and learned that Channah had died; she, too, returned to the bunk and lay down on the floor next to the others. They didn't speak. There were no words to describe their grief. The loss was immeasurable, the pain unbearable. Even today, nobody talks about the pain. It is buried deep inside us; it gets passed down from one generation to the next.

The liberation and rehabilitation plan for the survivors at the camp was to transport them to Sweden, where they would receive further care. Everyone was very sick. Mother said that the moment she found herself in the hospital, lying next to Esther, she lost consciousness for two weeks. Esther was very sick also, and was unlikely to survive the trip to Sweden. Mother was required to sign a form stating that she would take responsibility for the trip. Before the departure, when she was feeling a bit stronger, Mother went to look for Rywka. She remembers that when she got to the hospital, the doctor told her that Rywka was dying and had only a few days to live. Mother left her, knowing that her cousin would not survive this cursed war. And so Rywka, too, descended into the depths of oblivion and forgetfulness.

Until the discovery of her diary.

"Now that I've finally managed to forget her, she has suddenly come back to me." This was Mother's reaction when I told her that Rywka's diary had been found by a Soviet doctor during the liberation of Auschwitz and finally made it to America sixty years later. Because of the documents that Mother had filled out after the war, in which she listed the names of her relatives who had died in the Holocaust, we had been tracked down as the next of kin.

"How do you remember her?" I asked my mother. She replied that Rywka looked older than her, even though she was actually two years younger. She remembered that during the selection at Auschwitz, there was no question about Rywka, since she looked old for her age and able to work. With Mother, the choice wasn't so clear. Esther remembers that Rywka's belly was distended, and Mengele, may his name be wiped out, asked if she was pregnant. Esther explained that her belly was swollen from hunger. Mother said that they all shared the same straw-covered bunker, both in Auschwitz and at the labor camp, but she didn't remember their relationship.

We received the diary from Dr. Anita Friedman, executive director of Jewish Family and Children's Services in San Francisco. The granddaughter of the doctor who had found it delivered it to JFCS's Tauber Holocaust Library for safekeeping. The library's director, Judy Janec, has been leading an investigation to find out what happened to Rywka. Her explorations of the paper trail led to the discovery that Rywka survived the war. As for Rywka's fate after the war, nobody is certain.

In the course of the investigation, a document with Rywka's handwriting was found. It had been filled out five months after Mother said good-bye to her, sure that she was going to die. When we saw the document, we were filled with doubt. Mother talked about the impossible choice she had to make: whether to stay at Rywka's bedside when the doctors were certain that she wouldn't make it, or to go to Sweden with her sister and start the rehabilitation process. She made her choice! Now, with this new information, she was plagued by doubt.

Rywka's cousins' families at their maternal grandfather's gravesite in 2012; Eliyahu Chaim Mezul [Maizel] was the chief rabbi of Lodz for forty years. *(Courtesy of Hadassa Halamish)*

Was Rywka still alive? Had she moved to Israel? Why hadn't she looked for Mina and Esther? Did she think they hadn't survived, just as they thought about her? Did she have a family? Did she die? Where?

These questions remain unanswered.

And me? I feel very sad that I didn't have the opportunity to know her. I'm sure she and I would have found a common language. I feel that she taught me how one can, and must, *live*, regardless of the situation. Even under impossible circumstances, under Nazi rule, Rywka never lost the divine image within her. The strength that she drew from God, from her faith, from the Torah, from the physical life that went along with her spiritual life, was the knowledge that eternal life is rooted in the spirit.

Rywka had the good fortune to come back to us. To this day, I feel her inside me. I feel a pressing need to tell her story, to bequeath it to future generations. Esther and Mother were lucky enough to build large families. In Israel, they have grandchildren and great-grandchildren, which allows them to keep the memory of their loved ones alive. Rywka was blessed with a name—a name given to her by God. All those who read Rywka's diary will keep her name alive.

Hadassa Halamish is the daughter of Mina Boyer, one of the two older cousins who lived with Rywka Lipszyc in the Lodz ghetto and survived Auschwitz, Christianstadt, and Bergen-Belsen with her.

A Meeting with the Past

ESTHER BURSTEIN

It's hard to believe! After so many years, we saw the journal of Rywka, which had been buried at Auschwitz!!

When I learned of the journal's existence, I was in shock. I couldn't believe that such a miracle as this could have happened. While reading it, I was transported to the times in the ghetto—to the fear, hunger, and difficult work without end. I don't think that a person who wasn't there could grasp the hell that we experienced during those war years.

I was a child in the ghetto, only nineteen years old—however, I grew up fast. I was responsible for all of the girls in my family—two sisters and two cousins—and this was not easy. It was especially hard since Rywka, who had been the oldest girl in her house, also thought that among us she was "a big girl," and she found it very difficult to accept my authority. She wrote in her journal about the arguments that we had. It's clear to me now that these circumstances—my being the eldest and the one in charge—were not comfortable for her.

Rywka joined us in September 1942, after both her parents died. She

was a very talented girl and loved to read and write. It seems that her journal would have dated from the beginning of 1943, while she was influenced by her mentor, Sara Selver-Urbach. However, the notebook that was found at Auschwitz dates from October 1943 to April 1944. We left the ghetto for Auschwitz in August 1944. Perhaps there was another notebook?

The writing gave Rywka a lot of satisfaction. She was able to forget about the hunger and pain. In the journal, one sees tremendous faith, and this is what sustained her and gave her the hope that tomorrow would be a better day. Without such faith, one was liable to go mad.

Today, it is difficult to believe that all of this suffering befell us. We have *our great revenge* in that we've survived against those who wished to destroy us. We have a big family . . . *a tribe among the glory of Israel.* To my great sorrow, we still don't know what happened to Rywka. In 1945, my sister Mina and I went to Sweden to recover, while Rywka remained, very ill, in a hospital. With the finding of the journal, and through subsequent investigations that were made as a result of it, it was revealed to us that she remained alive for a number of months after we left. In a document from September 1945 that was found, she wrote that she wanted to come to *Eretz Yisrael.* However, we still don't know where she went.

Perhaps this book, once published and publicized, will help reveal her fate.

Esther Burstein is the elder of the two cousins who lived with Rywka Lipszyc in the Lodz ghetto. She and her sister, Mina Boyer, are the only two members of their families to have survived the Holocaust.

Rywka's Family

Rywka Lipszyc (pronounced Rif-ka Lip-shitz):
Born September 15, 1929; date of death unknown

RYWKA'S FAMILY

Yankel Lipszyc (Father):
Born October 14, 1898; died in the Lodz ghetto, June 2, 1941

Miriam Sarah Lipszyc (Mother):
Born December 15, 1902; died in the Lodz ghetto, July 8, 1942

Abramek (Abram) Lipszyc (Brother):
Born January 13, 1932; deported to Chelmno, September 1942, and died there

Cipka Lipszyc (Cypora) (Sister):
Born October 9, 1933; died in Auschwitz, August 1944

Rywka's cousins Mina and Esther were the only members of their immediate and extended families to survive the Holocaust. These photos were taken in 1948. *(Courtesy of Hadassa Halamish)*

Tamarcia (Estera) (Sister):
Born September 10, 1937; deported to Chelmno, September 1942, and died there

RYWKA'S COUSINS AND THEIR FAMILY

Yochanan Lipszyc (Father):
Born October 31, 1894; deported to Chelmno, September 1942, and died there

Hadassah Lipszyc (Mother):
Born March 8, 1903; died in the Lodz ghetto, July 11, 1943

Estusia Lipszyc (Esther Burstein):
Born October 31, 1923; lives in Israel

Chanusia Lipszyc:
Born January 3, 1925; died in Bergen-Belsen, April 15, 1945

Minia Lipszyc (Mina Boyer):
Born June 18, 1926; lives in Israel

RYWKA'S MENTORS IN THE LODZ GHETTO

Surcia:
Sara Selver-Urbach; lives in Israel

Chajusia (probably Haya Guterman):
Friend of Surcia; fate unknown

Miss (Fajga) Zelicka:
Teacher; fate unknown

What Happened to Rywka Lipszyc?

JUDY JANEC

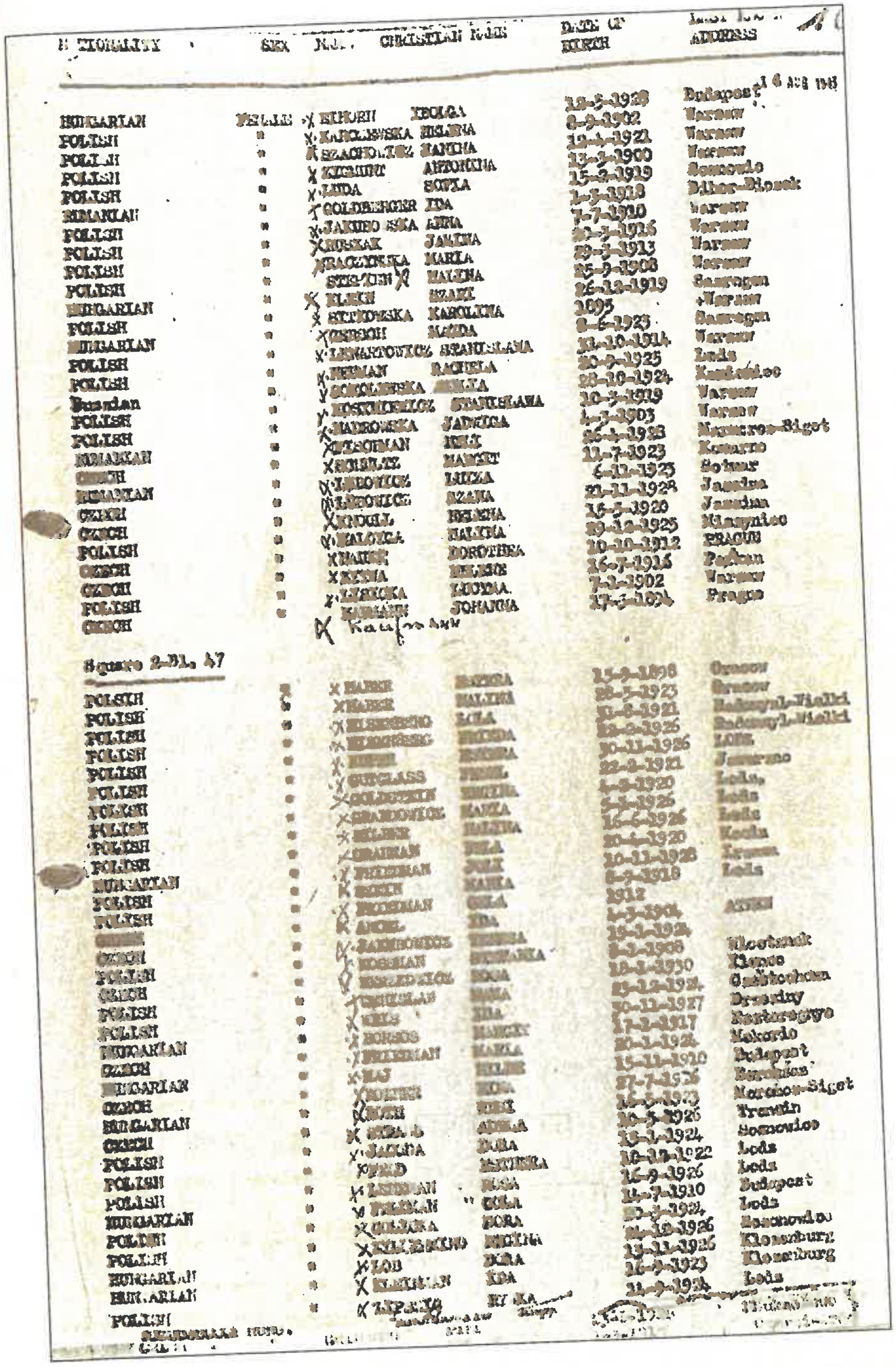
The last passage of Rywka Lipszyc's diary was written in April 1944. We know that she was deported to Auschwitz during the liquidation of the Lodz ghetto in late summer 1944. After all, the diary was found there. But how did the diary survive from Rywka's arrival in Auschwitz-Birkenau in August 1944 through the harsh Polish winter until the spring of 1945, when it was found by Soviet doctor Zinaida Berezovskaya?

Numerous Holocaust survivor accounts tell us that when deportees arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau, they faced two possible fates. Rywka could have been selected for the gas chamber and perished immediately, or she could have been spared to become part of the Nazis' vast slave labor force. In either case, all of her possessions would have been taken from her. Once her belongings, including the diary, were gathered together, they were most likely taken to Kanada, Auschwitz-Birkenau's sorting warehouse. There, other concentration camp inmates went through the clothes, packages, and suitcases; their job was to set aside anything that might be useful in the Nazi war effort.

Could someone in Kanada have found Rywka's diary and decided to keep it or hide it? Could it have been deliberately hidden near the crematoria in the hope that someday it would be found? Finding answers to the mystery of Rywka and her diary would eventually involve the efforts of historians and archivists throughout the world from 2008 to 2013.

After Rywka was initially identified by the diary's transcriber, Ewa Wiatr, in 2009, I searched Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names for any records relating to Rywka. Names in this database have been compiled from historical records and other documentation and from "Pages of Testimony" submitted by family, friends, and researchers to memorialize individuals who perished in the Holocaust. I found documentation of Rywka Lipszyc in the database from a postwar registry of Lodz ghetto inhabitants, as well as similar documentation about her immediate family members. After the diary had been translated into English in June 2011, I decided to revisit the Yad Vashem database, to see if another search, two years later, might yield more information. A record that I had never seen was revealed, which stated that Rywka had died in Bergen-Belsen at age sixteen! The record was based on two Pages of Testimony submitted by Mina Boier (Boyer), one in 1955 and another in 2000; Mina was identified as Rywka's cousin. She was surely the Minia mentioned frequently in Rywka's diary.

The 2000 Page of Testimony indicated that Mina lived near Tel Aviv, in the religious community of Bnei Brak. I contacted Dr. Anita Friedman, the executive director of Jewish Family and Children's Services, to alert her to the possibility that one of the cousins mentioned in Rywka's diary might still be living. Dr. Friedman was in Israel at the time and immediately contacted the family. Both Mina and Esther, the oldest cousin (Estusia in the diary), were alive. How much could be learned by actually speaking with someone who knew Rywka, let alone the cousins with whom she lived and endured so much! And what an astounding discovery for the cousins to hear, after so many years, about the existence of this diary.



NATIONALITY	SEX	NAME	CHRISTIAN NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS
HUNGARIAN	FEMALE	[illegible]	[illegible]	12-5-1928	Budapest
POLISH	"	KAROLEWSKA	HELENA	8-9-1902	Warsaw
POLISH	"	[illegible]	JANINA	12-4-1921	Warsaw
POLISH	"	[illegible]	ANTONINA	13-3-1900	Warsaw
POLISH	"	LINDA	SOFIA	15-2-1919	Sosnowiec
RUMANIAN	"	GOLDBERGER	IDA	1-3-1918	[illegible]
POLISH	"	JAKUBOWSKA	ANNA	7-7-1920	Warsaw
POLISH	"	[illegible]	JANINA	[illegible]-1926	Warsaw
POLISH	"	[illegible]	MARIA	29-3-1913	Warsaw
POLISH	"	[illegible]	HALINA	25-9-1908	Warsaw
HUNGARIAN	"	KLEIN	[illegible]	26-12-1919	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	KAROLINA	1895	Warsaw
HUNGARIAN	"	[illegible]	MAGDA	8-6-1923	[illegible]
POLISH	"	LENARTOWICZ	STANISLAWA	31-10-1914	Warsaw
POLISH	"	HERMAN	RACHELA	20-9-1925	Lodz
Russian	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	28-10-1924	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	STANISLAWA	10-3-1919	Warsaw
POLISH	"	[illegible]	JADWIGA	1-3-1903	Warsaw
RUMANIAN	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	26-4-1928	Maramaros-Siget
CZECH	"	[illegible]	MARGIT	11-7-1923	Komarno
RUMANIAN	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	6-12-1925	[illegible]
CZECH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	21-11-1928	[illegible]
CZECH	"	[illegible]	HELENA	16-5-1920	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	HALINA	29-12-1925	[illegible]
CZECH	"	[illegible]	DOROTHEA	10-10-1912	PRAGUE
CZECH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	16-7-1915	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	7-1-1902	Warsaw
CZECH	"	[illegible]	JOHANNA	17-5-1924	Prague
		Kaufmann			

Square 2-Bl. 47

NATIONALITY	SEX	NAME	CHRISTIAN NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS
POLISH	"	HABER	[illegible]	15-9-1898	Cracow
POLISH	"	HABER	HALINA	28-5-1923	Cracow
POLISH	"	[illegible]	LOLA	11-6-1921	Radomysl-Wielki
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]-1926	Radomysl-Wielki
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	30-11-1926	LODZ
POLISH	"	GUTGLASS	[illegible]	22-2-1921	[illegible]
POLISH	"	GOLDSTEIN	[illegible]	1-8-1920	Lodz
POLISH	"	[illegible]	MARIA	[illegible]-1926	Lodz
POLISH	"	[illegible]	HALINA	16-6-1926	Lodz
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	20-4-1920	Lodz
HUNGARIAN	"	FRIEDMAN	[illegible]	10-11-1928	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	MARIA	6-9-1918	Lodz
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	1912	
[illegible]	"	ANGEL	IDA	1-3-1924	ATHEN
CZECH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	19-1-1924	
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]-1908	[illegible]
CZECH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	18-1-1930	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	23-12-1924	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	IDA	30-11-1927	[illegible]
HUNGARIAN	"	BORSOS	MARGIT	17-2-1917	[illegible]
CZECH	"	FRIEDMAN	MARIA	20-1-1924	[illegible]
HUNGARIAN	"	MAJ	[illegible]	15-11-1910	Budapest
CZECH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	27-7-1926	[illegible]
HUNGARIAN	"	ROTH	[illegible]	16-5-1923	Maramaros-Siget
CZECH	"	[illegible]	ADELA	30-5-1926	[illegible]
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	13-1-1924	Sosnowiec
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	10-12-1922	Lodz
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	16-9-1926	Lodz
HUNGARIAN	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	14-7-1910	Budapest
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]-1924	Lodz
POLISH	"	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]-1926	Sosnowiec
HUNGARIAN	"	[illegible]	REGINA	13-11-1926	Klausenburg
HUNGARIAN	"	LOB	[illegible]	16-9-1923	Klausenburg
POLISH	"	[illegible]	IDA	11-9-1924	Lodz
	"	LIPSZYC	RYWKA	[illegible]	[illegible]

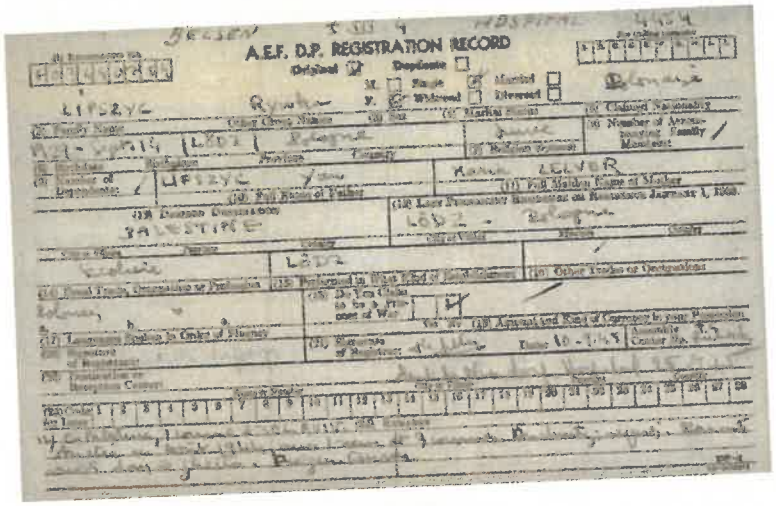
Bergen-Belsen liberation list with Rywka's name (last name on page) *("Nominal Rolls of various nationals liberated in Bergen-Belsen," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, compilation of Ceges/Soma microfilm RG 65.001M, roll 64, file 4823)*

It was through conversations with Mina's daughter Hadassa that we discovered what happened to Rywka, her sister Cipka, and her three cousins once they arrived at Auschwitz in August 1944. Cipka was immediately selected for the gas chamber, and Rywka was separated from her. Tragically, Rywka Lipszyc was now bereft of every member of her immediate family.

Along with her three cousins, Rywka was sent from Auschwitz to Christianstadt, a women's camp near Gross-Rosen. After months of hard labor, they were marched to Bergen-Belsen. These young women, aged fifteen to twenty-two, had survived the Lodz ghetto, Auschwitz, Christianstadt, and a death march to Bergen-Belsen, and three of them survived to see their liberation by British troops in April 1945. (Chanusia, the middle sister of the cousins, died of typhus in the camp.) According to Mina's testimony, it was at Bergen-Belsen that Rywka died.

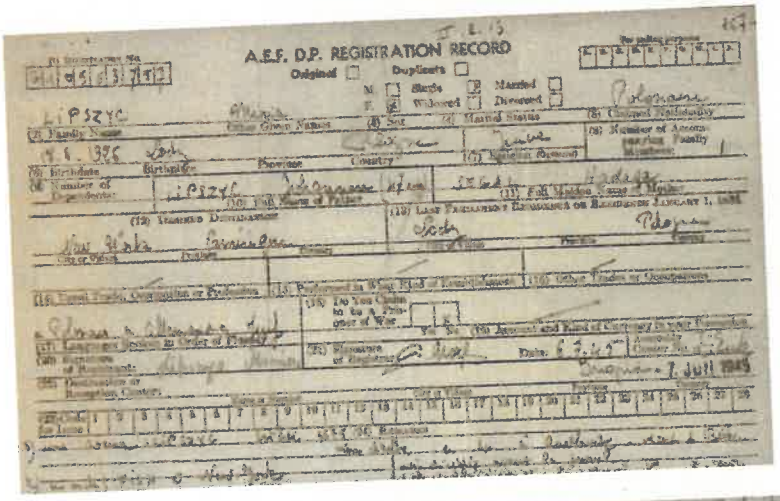
In the meantime, requests for documentation on Rywka's fate had been sent to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the International Tracing Service (ITS), as well as numerous other archives, including the Bergen-Belsen Memorial Site. Rywka's name was identified on a list of those liberated at Bergen-Belsen. However, no mention of Rywka Lipszyc was included in the Bergen-Belsen death lists, a fact that Bernd Horstmann, the keeper of the registry, found strange. It was known, more or less, he said, who had died after liberation.

With the assistance of Steven Vitto at the USHMM, a DP (Displaced Person) Registration Record for Rywka was found among the ITS records. The ITS records were compiled after the war by the International Red Cross and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. This vast repository of information contains 50 million records documenting 17.5 million victims of Nazism, including those from displaced persons camps. The DP Registration Record posed many questions and mysteries. First of all, it was dated September 10, 1945, and was filled out at Transit Camp Lübeck. It appeared that Rywka had not died in Bergen-Belsen after all but


A.E.F. D.P. REGISTRATION RECORD

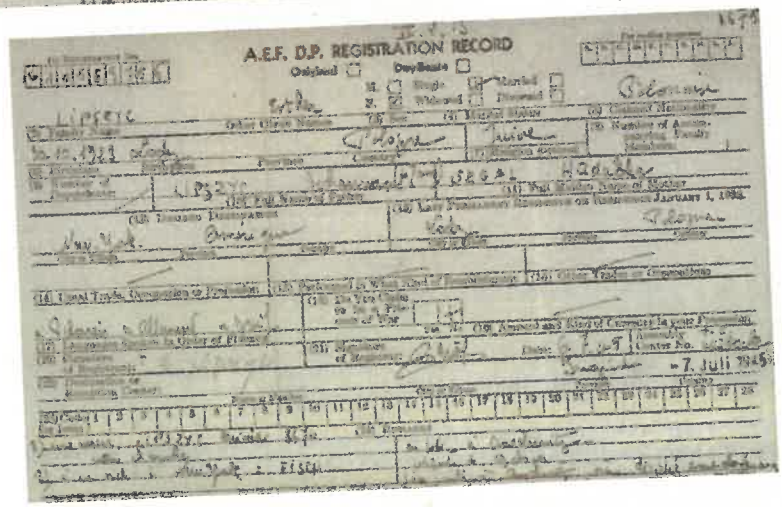
Rywka Lipszyc's Displaced Persons Registration Record

("Rywka Lipszyc—Allied Expeditionary Force Displaced Persons Registration Record," September 10, 1945, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, International Tracing Service collection, Archival Unit Number—3.1.1.1, document no. 68068248)


A.E.F. D.P. REGISTRATION RECORD

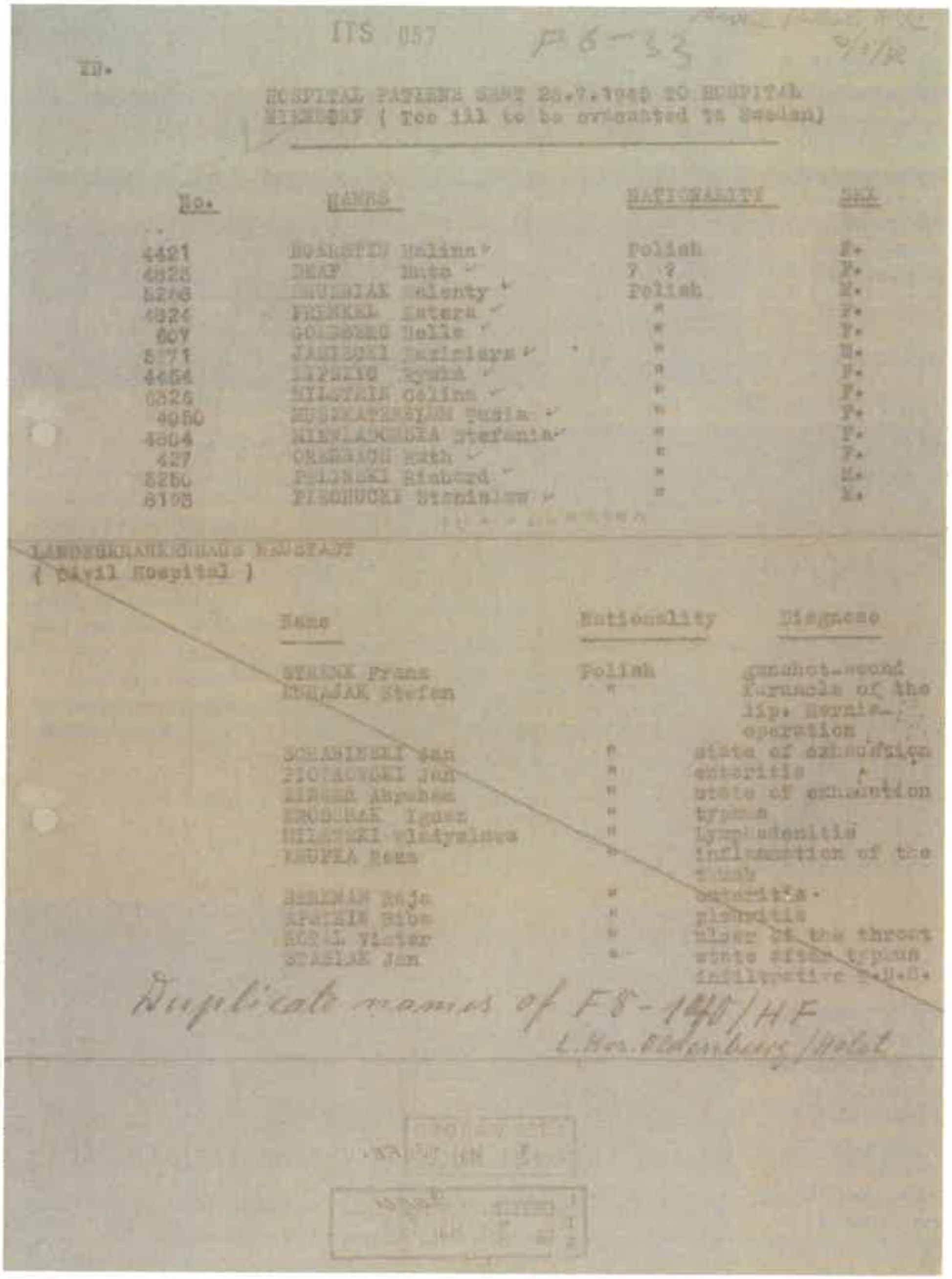
Minia Lipszyc's Displaced Persons Registration Record

("Minia Lipszyc—Allied Expeditionary Force Displaced Persons Registration Record," July 7, 1945, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, International Tracing Service collection, Archival Unit Number - 3.1.1.1, document no. 68068098)


A.E.F. D.P. REGISTRATION RECORD

Esther Lipszyc's Displaced Persons Registration Record

("Esther Lipszyc—Allied Expeditionary Force Displaced Persons Registration Record," July 7, 1945, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, International Tracing Service collection, Archival Unit Number—3.1.1.1, document no. 68067236)



ITS 057 F6-33

[illegible]

HOSPITAL PATIENTS SENT 23.7.1945 TO HOSPITAL NIENDORF (Too ill to be evacuated to Sweden)

No.	NAMES	NATIONALITY	SEX
4421	[illegible] Halina	Polish	F.
4825	[illegible]	? ?	F.
5246	[illegible] Walenty	Polish	M.
4824	FRENKEL Estera	"	F.
607	GOLDBERG [illegible]	"	F.
5271	[illegible]	"	M.
4454	LIPSZYC Rywka	"	F.
6826	MILSTEIN Celina	"	F.
4950	[illegible]	"	F.
4504	[illegible] Stefania	"	F.
427	[illegible] Ruth	"	F.
5250	[illegible] Richard	"	M.
8198	[illegible] Stanislaw	"	M.

LANDESKRANKENHAUS NEUSTADT
(Civil Hospital)

Name	Nationality	Diagnose
[illegible] Franz	Polish	gunshot-wound
[illegible] Stefan	"	furuncle of the lip. Hernia-operation
[illegible] Jan	"	state of exhaustion
[illegible] Jan	"	enteritis
[illegible] Abraham	"	state of exhaustion
[illegible]	"	typhus
[illegible]	"	Lymphadenitis
[illegible]	"	inflammation of the thumb
[illegible]	"	enteritis.
[illegible]	"	pleuritis
[illegible] Victor	"	ulcer of the throat
[illegible] Jan	"	state after typhus infiltrative [illegible]

Duplicate names of F8-140/HF
L. Hos. Oldenburg/Holst

Rywka Lipszyc's name appears on a list of patients transferred to a hospital in Niendorf on July 23, 1945. The title reads "Hospital Patients Sent 23.7.1945 to Hospital Niendorf (Too ill to be evacuated to Sweden)."
(Digital Archives, ITS Bad Arolsen, document no. 70623435#1)

had survived for months after liberation. A handwritten note on the DP Registration Record indicated that she had been transferred to a hospital in Niendorf, about eighteen miles north of Lübeck on the Baltic Sea, on July 25, 1945.

Copies of the cousins' DP Registration Records show that they, too, had been sent to Lübeck, but their records were dated July 7, 1945, almost three weeks earlier that Rywka's. The cousins went from Bergen-Belsen first to Transit Camp Lübeck and then to Sweden, where thousands of Holocaust survivors were sent for treatment and recuperation after the war. Rywka, apparently, was transferred later, most likely through Lübeck to Niendorf.

Further communication from ITS produced a document with a list of hospital patients transferred to Niendorf's hospital on July 23, 1945, because they were "too ill to be evacuated to Sweden." Rywka Lipszyc's name was on that list.

Why did the cousins think that Rywka had died in Bergen-Belsen? Mina told her daughter that, before she and her sister were sent to Sweden for recuperation, she had visited Rywka in the hospital at Bergen-Belsen, and the doctor told her that Rywka would be dead within days. That was the last Mina and Esther ever heard of her.

Did Rywka die in Hospital Niendorf? If so, we needed to find documentation of her death. (Until her death was definitely proven, there was still hope that she might have survived and lived a full life.) Bernd Horstmann suggested that we contact Timmendorfer Strand, the municipality that includes Niendorf. He was told by archivists there that the Niendorf hospital no longer existed and that there was no mention of Rywka in any of their municipal or cemetery records.

I contacted Lübeck's municipal archives; no mention of Rywka Lipszyc was uncovered, despite intensive searches. Further messages and requests to ITS and USHMM were sent, but no new material was uncovered in either archive. I wrote to the National Archives of Sweden, in case Rywka had

returned to Transit Camp Lübeck and then was sent to Sweden. No mention of her name was found there.

Bernd Horstmann suggested that since Hospital Niendorf no longer existed, it must have been a British military hospital, but, upon contacting the National Archives of the United Kingdom, I learned that the British Army did not keep permanent records of individuals in the displaced persons camps that were set up in the British occupation zone after the end of the war. Those records were transferred to the ITS.

A mention of Hospital Niendorf was found in a letter written by British Jewish Relief Unit (JRU) welfare worker Bertha Weingreen and published in the academic database "Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement, 1945–1950." She wrote that the hospital was run by the "Save the Children fund" and that many Jewish patients who had died there were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Lübeck. Yet archivists at the University of Birmingham, where the institutional records of Save the Children are housed, could find no additional information about the hospital. A member of Lübeck's Jewish community provided us with a list of names of the displaced persons buried there, but Rywka's name was not on the list. Along with staff members at several archives in Germany, we searched for but did not discover any mention of Rywka in displaced persons or compensation claims records.

What could we do next to find out what happened to Rywka? We decided to contact the editor of *Lübecker Nachrichten*, the local newspaper, and ask that it publish an article about Rywka, the diary, and our search. The story was published on February 19, 2012. No new information was immediately forthcoming, but Daniela Teudt, a student of Jewish studies at the University of Potsdam, read the article and stepped forward to offer her help. Daniela was born in Lübeck and had written her bachelor's thesis on the Jews of Lübeck. Full of enthusiasm, familiar with the Lübeck and Niendorf areas, and a student of local German Jewish history, she volunteered to consult archives in the area and to search more deeply to learn about Rywka's fate. It was she

who compared the list of those sent to Niendorf hospital with the list of those buried in Lübeck and discovered that of the nine girls on the hospital list, five were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Lübeck, but not Rywka.

In October 2012, I embarked on a fact-finding journey, tracing Rywka's steps from Lodz to Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen to Lübeck to Niendorf. By doing research in local archives in these locations, viewing records, and visiting cemeteries and memorial sites, I hoped to uncover some answers to the mystery of Rywka's fate.

LODZ

I began where Rywka did, in Lodz. Meeting Ewa Wiatr, my first partner in the search and the diary's transcriber from Polish to English, and her colleague Adam Sitarek, we visited former ghetto sites. Rywka's home in the ghetto, 38 Wolborska Street, was demolished long ago, and in its place stand apartment buildings. I learned that Wolborska Street was very close to the southern boundary of the ghetto, and all of the buildings across the street from where Rywka lived, including one of Lodz's beautiful synagogues, were destroyed by the Nazis in order to protect the rest of the city from the diseases that were rampant in the ghetto.

We visited the location of the concern where Rywka worked—the Wäsche und Kleider Abteilung—on 13/15 Franciszkańska Street. We viewed the building she lived in before the ghetto and the building that the cousins lived in. The ghetto area itself bore very few traces of the terrible years that had been endured by the Jewish community there from 1940 to 1944. We visited Radegast train station, the terminal from which Rywka, Cipka, and her cousins were sent, among thousands of others, in cattle cars to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

We drove to Lodz's Jewish cemetery—the second-largest Jewish cemetery in the world—where 160,000 people are buried. It is a magnificent cemetery, full of history and mystery. The older sections are overgrown with trees and

vegetation, and it was hard to imagine the cemetery completely bare of all trees, as Ewa told me it had been. (During the ghetto years, the community had cut down all of the trees to use as fuel.) The Ghetto Field, which held the nearly 43,000 graves of those who died in the ghetto, was in a separate section. Although those who were buried there died under difficult circumstances—of injuries, disease, and malnutrition—each person was honored by a separate grave. In a chilling coda to the visit, near the wall of the cemetery, we viewed four grass pits. These pits were dug by the remaining inhabitants of the Lodz ghetto and were meant to be the site of their mass grave. The arrival of liberating Soviet troops rescued those men from that fate.

The Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi (State Archives in Lodz) holds one million documents from the years 1940–1944, making Lodz one of the best documented of all Nazi-era ghettos. Microfilm of registries, notices, certificates, identification cards, housing and work documents, sick leave notices, and hundreds of photographs offers insight into the day-to-day lives of those who lived and worked in Lodz's ghetto in all of its variety. Here, I found one new document relating to Rywka—regarding her benefits as an orphaned child.

AUSCHWITZ AND BERGEN-BELSEN

At the beginning of our work on this mystery, Robert Moses Shapiro had mentioned that Rywka's diary could be one of the manuscripts buried by the *Sonderkommando*. Victims of what Primo Levi called "National Socialism's most demonic crime,"* the *Sonderkommando* were those prisoners who were made to escort arriving Jews into the gas chambers, remove their bodies to the crematoria, and dispose of their ashes. Isolated from the rest of the camp, the *Sonderkommando* labored under unspeakable psychological, emotional, and spiritual burdens.

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* Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Summit Books, 1988), 53.

Knowing that they, too, were doomed to death, some members of the *Sonderkommando* wrote about their experiences, and in an attempt to leave evidence of Nazi crimes behind after their deaths, placed manuscripts in tin containers and buried them in the soil near Crematorium III. Several of the manuscripts were uncovered after the war. The first, written by Zalmen Gradowski, who perished during the *Sonderkommando* uprising in October 1944, was uncovered by Shlomo Dragon, a former *Sonderkommando*, who pointed the Soviet investigators to it. In total, eight manuscripts were recovered between 1945 and 1981.

Almost all of the manuscripts were those written by the *Sonderkommando*, but one of the members, Zalmen Lewental, also buried a different manuscript—a diary written in the Lodz ghetto by an adult man. Before he buried it, Mr. Lewental wrote a note, dated August 14, 1944, and wrapped it around the diary. Discovered in 1961, the manuscript and note were badly water damaged, but the note refers to other manuscripts buried and ends with the words ". . . search further! You will find still more."*

Could Rywka's diary have been one of the manuscripts he referred to? I visited Dr. Wojciech Płosa, the head of archive at the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim, Poland. After viewing scans of Rywka's diary and the newspaper article that Zinaida Berezovskaya saved with it, he agreed that it was likely that Rywka's diary is the ninth of the *Sonderkommando* manuscripts to be recovered.

Although Rywka's diary remained in Auschwitz-Birkenau, she did not. After months of hard labor at the Christianstadt concentration camp, she and her cousins were sent on a forced march to Bergen-Belsen. It was here that, after years of starvation, suffering, and loss, Rywka was liberated in April 1945. She lived to see her liberation; she lived to be put in a hospital,

* "Diaries and Memoirs from the Lodz Ghetto in Yiddish and Hebrew," in *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust Through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts*, ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1999), 106.

where she was cared for; and she lived long enough to leave Bergen-Belsen. I met Bernd Horstmann at the memorial; we walked through the site, past the raised platforms of mass graves filled with the bodies of those who perished. They're still here, in the silence of the countryside. Chanusia, Rywka's cousin, is among them.

LÜBECK

It was in Lübeck that I hoped to learn more about Rywka's fate. Visits to the Lübeck archives, however, did not reveal any new information. All records regarding displaced persons were not related to Jewish DPs. I also visited Lübeck's Jewish cemetery in Moisling, on the outskirts of the city. Here it was that those who died in the Niendorf hospital were buried. In the far corner of this hidden cemetery stood the gravestones of eighty-seven Jews who died in the years between 1945 and 1950. We walked through these rows, looking at each name. Most were Polish and young, between sixteen and twenty-four; there were some children. It was in this lonely corner that I located the graves of the five girls who had accompanied Rywka to the hospital in Niendorf but who died there: Tusela Muschkatenblum, Bella Goldberg, Halina Burgztyn, Celina Milstein, and, sadly, the grave of a young woman who was labeled Mute, Deaf on the list, but whose gravestone read Seaf, Mute. Rywka's grave was not among them.

We continued to search in Lübeck's municipal cemetery and the cemeteries in nearby Travemunde, Timmendorfer Strand, Niendorf, and Neustadt. Although we found a single Jewish marker in one cemetery, and the graves of victims of the *Cap Arcona* tragedy,* as well as gravestones for Polish and Dutch prisoners of war, unknown victims of concentration camps, and German soldiers, we did not find one for Rywka Lipszyc.

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* On May 3, 1945, the German ship *Cap Arcona*, which was transporting concentration camp survivors, was bombed by the British air force and sunk in the Baltic Sea. Nearly 4,000 prisoners died in the attack.

Left: Zinaida Berezovskaya, the Red Army doctor who discovered Rywka's diary in the ruins of the crematorium at Auschwitz-Birkenau in June 1945; photo from 1943 *(Courtesy of her granddaughter, Anastasia Berezovskaya)*

Below: From the February 9, 1945, edition of *Lenin's Flag*, a Soviet Army newspaper; Zinaida Berezovskaya wrote a note next to the photograph of the ruins of the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau: "This is where I found the diary in June 1945." *(Courtesy of Anastasia Berezovskaya)*

Юго-восточнее города Шваргард наши войска с боями продвигались вперед. Советские пехотинцы, при поддержке артиллерии, прорвали оборону

За день боев на различных участках наши войска подбили и уничтожили 84 танка и самоходных орудия противника.

Юго-западнее города Кранц наши войска вели наступательные бои.

Под покровом ночи

РАЙОН БОЕВ. 9 февраля. (По телеграфу от нашего корр.). Штурмовая группа, которой командует старший лейтенант Кушнарев, под покровом ночной темноты внезапно атаковала немцев, засевших в доме селения Н. Так как наблюдение велось целый день, смельчакам удалось забросать гранатами именно те здания, где сидели гитлеровцы.

Девять немцев были убиты, 15 захвачены в плен.

Отличные водители

В нашей части все бойцы и офицеры хорошо знают имена шоферов Шемякина и Бэйло. Это — лучшие водители части. Каждый из них любовно ухаживает за своей машиной, своевременно производит профилактический ремонт, экономит горючее.

Еще не было случая, чтобы Шемякин и Бэйло останавливались из-за поломки в пути. Их машины всегда исправны. Каждый из них проделал по 20 тысяч километров.

Старший сержант Г. ВЕРБИН.

ОСВОБОЖДЕНИЕ ТАННЕРА ОТ ОБЯЗАННОСТЕЙ ДЕПУТАТА СЕЙМА

ОСВЕНЦИМ. Чтобы скрыть следы страшных преступлений, немецкие палачи взорвали крематории, в которых сжигали заключенных людей.

На снимке: Взорванное здание одного из крематориев в лагере Биркенау.

Фото Б. МУЛЯРЧУКА, Ф. СЕМЯННИКОВА.

Ответственный редактор Ю. М. КОКОРЕ[...]

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We stopped briefly at the harbor in Travemunde, the place where Holocaust survivors like Rywka's cousins were sent to Sweden, across the Baltic Sea. Finally, we visited the site of a hospital that might have been the one we were seeking. It was built in 1911 and served as a hospital from 1938 to 1948; today it is a facility for mothers and children. Part of the German national health system, it is operated by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George. No one there knew anything about how the hospital was used in July and August 1945, when Rywka might have been there.

LONDON

My search finally took me to London, where I explored records in the Wiener Library and at the National Archives. I was looking for any sliver of information regarding activities in the hospital in Bergen-Belsen in June and July 1945, transfers to Sweden via Lübeck, or of British military hospitals in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, and in particular in Niendorf. Although I learned much about the heroic efforts of the British military to save the lives of desperately ill survivors, I found nothing to shed light on Rywka's fate.

After years of searching and the collaborative efforts of archivists and historians throughout the world, the answer to this mystery remains elusive. Yet there are always new avenues to explore. We will continue our search for this young survivor and hope that someday we will find the answer to what happened to Rywka Lipszyc.

If any readers have information that could be helpful in the search for Rywka Lipszyc, please contact Jewish Family and Children's Services' Holocaust Center, 2245 Post Street, PO Box 159004, San Francisco, California, 94115 (www.jfcs.org).