Memoirs of Holocaust Survivors Residing in South Florida

A Time When it Was
Easier to Die Than to Live
Holocaust Survivor Anita Karl's Memoir

As told to Bobbi Kaufman

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The information in this book is presented in good faith. The words in this book are the words of Anita Karl as she recalls her personal experience in the Holocaust. This is her story and her truth.

On the cover: Anita Karl with her mother and sisters in Poland. 1942.

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FOREWARD

"For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive future generations of a past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.…

"... I have tried to keep memory alive…I have tried to fight those who would forget. Because if we forget we are guilty, we are accomplices."

- Elie Wiesel

As time goes on, the number of Holocaust survivors alive today is rapidly dwindling. With their passing, the incomprehensible cataclysm known as The Holocaust, or Shoah, is fast morphing from a 'lived memory' into a 'historical memory'; from a personal experience of 'those who were there' into impersonal commemorative monuments and museums.

All too soon, there will be no one left to offer first hand testimony of what it was like to actually be there when all hell broke loose; all too soon, even those who knew and heard directly from the victims of the Nazis and their collaborators, will be gone.

It is, therefore, a matter of great urgency that we gather and preserve for future generations as much primary documentation and testimony as possible about the lives and experiences of those heroes who survived the Holocaust, managed to build new lives, and were willing to tell their stories.

Memoirs serve as a very important means of preserving these testimonies. Several years ago, Holocaust survivors began approaching Bobbi Kaufman, asking for help writing their memoirs, describing their lives before, during, and since the Holocaust. She began working with the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach (HMMB), writing the memoirs of Holocaust survivors who were docents and contributors to the memorial. This collaboration was instrumental in her developing a series of in-depth, book-length memoirs. Six books were completed and uploaded onto the HMMB website and the HMMB created lesson plans for each book to be used in teaching about the Holocaust.

Now, in collaboration with the HMMB, the Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies, and the George Feldenkreis Program in Judaic Studies of the University of Miami, the series has been named Memoirs of Holocaust Survivors Residing in Florida. The existing books were graphically redesigned and several new books have been added to the collection, with the objective of continuing to expand the series. The complete series will be freely available to the public in digital form on the HMMB and Miller Center and Feldenkreis Program websites.

Our hope is that this series will make a significant contribution to the growing literature of Holocaust survivors' memoirs and serve as a tribute to their ability to make new lives for themselves while never forgetting.

Dr. Haim Shaked
Director
The Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies,
and the George Feldenkreis Program in Judaic Studies, University of Miami

DEDICATION

To my mother, Mali Karl, for her indomitable courage
To my father, Samuel, for sacrificing his life so we might live

To my beautiful children, Michelle and Samy, who are proof that we triumphed over the evil that rained upon us.

- Anita Karl

LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

I was born in Lwów, Poland in 1938. When I was born they gave me the Polish name Dzunia. I would have many names during different periods of my life. My sister, Fela, was born October 10,1936. My baby sister, Tusia, was born September 16, 1941. We always called her Esther. I come from a very big, very well-to-do, orthodox Jewish family. My mother was the youngest of eleven siblings; my father was one of six brothers. Only three of the seventeen siblings survived the Holocaust.

My father, Samuel Karl, was born in 1908. The Karl family was in the textile business. The family was well situated economically. During World War I the Karl family moved to Vienna for safety reasons. When the war ended, the family returned to Lwów, but my father's brother, my uncle Julius, had already started studying to be a doctor, so he stayed behind in Vienna.

My mother's family, the Brandts, also went to Vienna for safety, but returned to Lwów where they had a factory that produced baby carriages, rattan baby carriages. Those carriages were exported throughout Europe. They also imported toys and beautiful dolls from Austria and other countries. I had the most beautiful dolls with beautiful porcelain faces! All the Brandt sons worked in the family business and they lived quite nicely. When the war started, my grandmother said she was not afraid because she exported to Germany, they were her friends, they did business together. She was one of the first to go.

My mother, Mali Brandt Karl, was born in 1908. She was tall with short dark hair and green eyes. My mother was the only one in the Brandt family who was not orthodox. She wanted to see the world; she wanted to study. She traveled to Vienna and other cities and countries. She was the only one to go to on to secondary school after finishing high school. She studied music, she was a pianist; she could play with an orchestra. Her parents allowed her freedom to do whatever she wanted. She held her head high and confronted the world. She was a force of nature; her courage was limitless. Few women in those years were able to accomplish what she was able to do.

Our home was a large apartment. It had a big living room and dining room. There was electricity and the bathrooms were inside. There were several bedrooms. I remember *Shabbas* dinners with aunts and uncles and cousins gathered around the table. I remember my mother lighting the *Shabbas* candles in her candelabra.

I was a rather unruly child. I remember being in my crib one day standing and screaming like a maniac while my mother was entertaining people in the living room. To get me to be quiet she gave me her beautiful long pearl necklace. When I was suddenly too quiet she came to check on me and discovered I had broken the necklace and put the pearls up my nose. They had to call the doctor. Another time I remember being in my crib and screaming so much that my father took me out and gave me a *potch* on my *tuchas* and said to me, "Leave your mother alone. She is tired."

My parents loved each other very much. My father simply

adored my mother even though she was more modern, less orthodox, less religious than he was. He was very religious. Every time my mother had to go to the *mikvah* he would touch her hair to see if it was wet. One day when she came back he said, "Did you go to the *mikvah*?" She said yes. He said, "That is strange because I just passed the *mikveh* and it is closed for repairs." She had made her hair wet from the faucet—but he loved her!

My parents' first child was a son named Nolus. He died at age three from meningitis. It was a terrible tragedy. My mother went with her niece to a resort in the mountains for a month or two to recover from the loss. Later, while in a work camp during the war, my father was forced to break up grave stones to repave the streets of Lwów to accommodate the Nazi tanks. One of the grave stones was Nolus's.

THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

After the collapse of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in 1918, Lwów was occupied by the Russians. When the Germans came in the Russians retreated. Then, in 1939 the Russians came in again. In 1941, the Germans seized Lwów and renamed it Lemberg.

The Russians made our lives just as miserable as the Germans did. They brought with them the idealism that Stalin was the god. They called him Bapka. They forced all the children to go to school to learn about Communism. I must have been two years old and my sister, Fela four years old when we had to go

to school. Our mother was allowed to be with us because we were so small. The first question we were asked was, "Who believes in God?" The Catholic children said they believed in God. Those who said they believed in God had to go to the right side. For those children who said they believe in Stalin, the ceiling opened up and candy came down for them. So, the next time they were asked, the children would not say they believe in God, they would say they believe in Stalin because they wanted the candy. This was part of the indoctrination.

The Russians wanted Communism to set in. They wanted to conquer the land; they wanted all of Poland to belong to Russia. Whoever they figured was bourgeois, from the wealthy class, they would send to Siberia. Day and night the Russians were deporting people to Siberia. Although the deportations were cruel—families were broken up, the people were hungry, they lost everything—but they all survived. Nobody was killing them. They were spared. The Russians were not murderers like the Nazis would be. Though completely ignorant in manners, culture, and education, the Russians would not take a pistol and kill just for fun. The refined, educated, well mannered Nazis were murderers. My family was not sent to Siberia because a Russian family had been assigned to live with us. The rule was if you had room in your house you had to take in a Russian family that was immigrating to Poland. A couple with a little boy occupied one of the bedrooms in our house. They had access to food that they shared with us which my parents were grateful for. The Russians were very primitive. They had no manners and they had no education. In one instance the woman was going to the opera for the first time

in her life and went out and bought a nightgown thinking it was an evening gown. My mother looked at her and didn't dare say anything except, "You look nice." They lived with us for about a year then they had to leave because the Nazis were coming.

WAR THREATENS

When my father's brother, Julius, who stayed in Vienna, was told by the government that he could no longer work because he was a Jew, he decided to leave. He applied for visas to many countries in South America. The only county that gave him a visa was Peru. To leave Vienna was a terrible thing for him. but he left, and over the years he established himself in Peru as a very famous cardiologist.

One of my mother's sisters went to Palestine before the war. When the war began and we had to go to the ghetto, she wrote to my mother, " Come, come. Here at least we will be together. Where are you going to go? You cannot go back home. There is no going home." One of my mother's brothers went to Palestine before the war but he came back saying he couldn't live there because the Jews there were *treif*, not kosher enough for him. He did not survive the Holocaust.

WE HAVE TO LEAVE OUR HOME

In June 1941 the Nazis entered Lwów. The Germans came

into our house and they looted it. They took everything that was value: carpets, paintings, crystal. They told my father to prepare a box and box up all the crystal and porcelain and that they would come the next day to pick it up. My father took a bag, a burlap bag, and he threw in all the porcelain, crystal, and everything—even the Shabbas candelabra—and with a hammer he destroyed it all.

My youngest sister was born September 15, 1941. My mother was in bed with a newborn when the Nazis gave us 24 hours to evacuate the apartment and go to the ghetto. The baby was one day old. I was three years old, and my older sister was five. My father, my mother, and the three of us left our house and moved into the ghetto. We were not allowed to take more than we could carry. The walk to the ghetto took a couple of hours. Sometimes my father would carry me and my older sister, and my mother would carry the baby and our one suitcase, somehow. Other times my father held our suitcase, my mother held the baby, and my sister's and my hands were busy holding onto our mother's skirts. I believe the most important items in the suitcase were winter clothing and shoes.

The Nazis immediately occupied the houses the Jews were forced to leave and the Poles did, too. They couldn't wait to get in. That is why there was no possibility of us ever going home. There was no going home.

My father, Samuel Karl.

My mother, Mali Brandt Karl.

My mother's oldest sister.

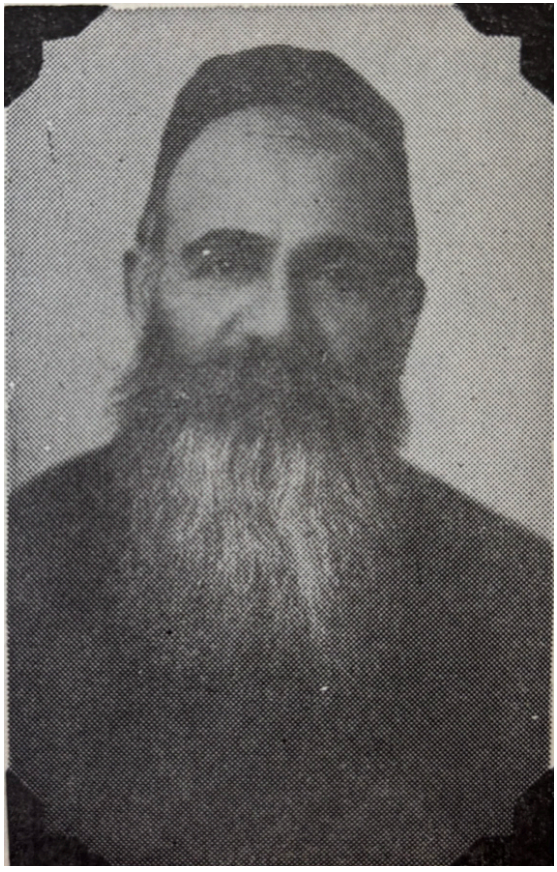
My mother and her sister.

My mother and her niece at Zakopany Resort in Poland.

My father with his father at a resort in the mountains of Poland.

Sara Lazar Karl, my father's mother.

Sara Lazar Karl, my father's mother.



My father's father, Marcus Karl.

Fela and I in Lwow, Poland, before the war.

THE GHETTO

In the ghetto my life that I knew came to an end. The ghetto was in a very dilapidated, old part of the city. I imagine it was about ten blocks square, surrounded by barbed wire. There was a little bridge we had to cross to enter the ghetto. It stuck with me because they called it the Bridge of Death because you entered this ghetto but you never came out alive. We crossed over the bridge and went to my mother's sister's one bedroom apartment. She was already living in the part of the city that became the ghetto. Several of the brothers' and sisters' families came there, too. There were eighteen or twenty people living there already when we got there.

My family slept in a corner with one mattress on the floor. On this mattress my father, mother, and the three children slept. All the time I was waking up to make sure my mother was there and holding on to her. All the time I was scared. I was afraid all the time. I did not want to be far away from my mother. I knew where she was at all times. If she left us with anyone it was her sisters. Her sisters and brothers were in other buildings in the ghetto. Some of them lived there originally before it became the ghetto. They would get together in the evenings. Some of them died of malnutrition, of hunger, of cold, of illnesses that visited us. There were no funerals; they would just lie there. The bodies would be collected—sometimes it took a day, sometimes it took two days.

In 1942 the men, including my father, were sent to work in Janowska, a forced-labor, extermination, and transit camp in a

suburb of Lwów. They worked manufacturing materials for the Germans. They would go to work during the day and come home to sleep. We were terrorized every day worried that somebody would not return.

I remember standing in line for food. I remember being hungry. In the morning we would get up very early to go stand in line for our daily ration. My mother and father could not get food for us because they only gave to those who were there in the line. They were not compassionate, they were cruel. The ration consisted of one piece of dark, black, stale bread and a cup of water. We brought our cup and they gave us the water. I remember standing with this metal cup. I remember taking the bread and eating it crumb by crumb so it would last me 24 hours until the next day. People were scrounging for food. There was no food other than the bread.

What I remember most in the ghetto is the dirt. I remember the dirt on the floor, the dirt on the streets. I remember Nazis shooting people on the street. I remember people lying on the streets dead. I witnessed many atrocities in the ghetto. I saw the Nazis hose down people on the street with water, just for fun, because they knew they would freeze to death. I knew of a woman who was stopped on the street because she was wearing house slippers with a little bit of rabbit fur trim. She was told Jews were not allowed to wear fur—and she was shot. Sometimes the cruelty was so, so bad that it was easier to die than to live.

My mother took very good care of us. She sewed clothes for

us from whatever scraps she could find. We were kept very clean—a way of defeating illnesses. I was the only child in the ghetto with long hair because everybody else's was cut short to avoid lice. My mother liked my long blond braids; she would comb and inspect my hair every day. During the war my mother used my blond, Aryan appearance to help us pass as Polish and not Jewish.

My sister, Fela, the oldest, was a delicate child, she always got colds, she was always sneezing. I don't know why, but in my memories she suffered more than I did. We were all hungry and very, very cold, but maybe it was harder for her because she understood better what was going on and she knew what we were missing.

My baby sister, Esther, never smiled. She never knew how to smile until she was six years old and the war was over. The only life she knew was life in the war. She had no way to compare life in the war with anything different, like I did. She saw this is how life is—people got killed and if you are a Jew it is not good.

ESCAPE FROM GHETTO

They began bringing in people from the surrounding *shtetls,* small towns and villages. When the ghetto became too overcrowded, the Nazis were planning to transport 150,000 people to the camps, but they would not take the children, only the grownups. When my mother and father heard they

were going to murder the children they were horrified and decided, "We are not going to stand by and watch our children be murdered." They came up with a plan that might work or not. The commandants' families came a couple of times a week to visit their husbands, stay a couple of hours, then leave. So it occurred to my mother that it would be a good idea if we mingled with the visiting women and children and just walked out. It would not be possible for my father to go with us because he had to report for work at Janowska and his disappearance would be noticed. My mother promised him that if we were successful she would try to get him out.

At that time, desperate to keep their children safe, people were leaving their children in convents or paying Poles to hide them in their homes or farms. My mother did think about giving the new baby, Tusia, away to keep her safe. She had a very good friend, a Polish Catholic woman who wanted to take her. She said, "I don't want to take the big ones, but I will take the baby." So my mother brought Tusia to her and the woman said, "Now, if you survive by some miracle, don't ever come back for her because I am going to raise her as my own daughter." My mother heard this and she took the baby and said goodbye. She said, "Whatever will happen to me will happen to my children." She decided she would never separate us.

When my mother's sister heard her plan to escape from the ghetto she said to her, "What are you doing? You are taking your children into an open grave. Don't go. We have a better chance staying." When the situation became so terrible that there was no way out, the family gathered all the little pieces

of jewelry they were able to hide and gave it all to my mother so she could have a better chance of surviving. She sewed the jewels into her girdle to hide them. My father's pocket watch and my mother's ring were among the jewels. Today my sister has the ring and my son has the watch.

First, my mother went to see my father's cousin who was a druggist to get a vial of poison so she would be able to poison us and herself in case she was not successful escaping. Then she took the Star of David off all of us. She washed us, and braided my long blond, almost white hair. She tugged on my sister's curly hair to try to make it look straighter, less Jewish. With my mother holding the baby in her arms and us dressed in clean clothes, the best we had, holding on to her skirt, we just walked out of the ghetto with the Nazi women. Nobody stopped us. It was the spring of 1943. We had been in the ghetto for approximately eighteen months.

ARRIVAL IN BUCZACZ

We went to the train station and boarded the first train leaving Lwów. We got on the train and my mother sat next to a woman who had some packages. My mother also had one or two bundles with her which she put next to the other bundles and they started a conversation in Polish. The three of us children were sitting on the floor in the corner. When the train stopped at the first station my mother got off to get us milk or something. She was away for 5 or 10 minutes. She came back and started to rummage among the bundles and asked the woman, "Where is my purse?" And the woman said, "Your purse was here with your bundles. I saw it." They both

started looking and the woman said to my mother, "Look, there were so many people coming and going somebody stole your purse, obviously." So my mother started to cry terribly and scream. The woman was trying to calm her down. "But what am I going to do? The police are coming. The Nazis are coming to control tickets and everything was in my purse. The woman said, "Don't worry, I will tell them that your purse was stolen." So my mother had the foresight to get a witness. She was very, very smart. My mother didn't have a purse! She didn't have anything! So when the conductor came asking for documents, my mother had no documents. We had nothing to identify ourselves. But it was established that the purse was stolen.

When we got off the train in Buczacz we went to the police because we could not exit the station without documents. My mother took me with her because of my appearance. My older sister was more Jewish looking, so I was always in the front. My mother told me, "Do not speak under any circumstances. My mother trained us so that with one look we knew what we were supposed to do. So I am standing there with my mother and the officer starts interrogating her, "Who are you? What do you want?" My mother said, "I am the wife of a Polish officer who is fighting at the front. Our house has been bombed and all our documents burned so we have no identification. After she finished answering everything they brought a Bible and she had to swear on the Bible, put her hand on the Bible and swear that to the third generation there was not one drop of Jewish blood coursing through our veins. She swore and they gave her the papers. We got the papers and we were the Karols from that day on.

My mother changed her name to Maria Karol. I became Anna, Fela stayed Fela because it is a Polish name, and Esther (Tusia) became Martha. We began our lives as Polish Catholics.

Next we went to the priest's house. He was a young fellow. I remember it very well because he brought up from the cellar three apples for us. (In those years we used the cellar as a refrigerator because there was no refrigerator.) I remember the smell and the taste of this apple. Today whenever I take an apple and I see myself eating that apple.

We rented a room in a little house on a hill at 4 Dowbuska Street in Buczacz, Poland. It belonged to a very anti-Semitic Polish woman named Gadziszewsky. The house had two rooms with a kitchen between the two rooms. The toilet was outside in an outhouse. Our room had one bed for the four of us and a wood wardrobe for a closet. Through friends, my mother was able to send our address to my father in the ghetto. So he knew where we were. A cousin, Lusia Barach, would bring news of my father. She soon moved in with us and was a great help to my mother.

My mother needed to earn money to pay the rent and buy food. The only thing she knew how to do was play the piano, (which nobody wanted to learn), and to bake. When she was young she would stand and watch the women in her family cook and bake for the family. She learned to make napoleons and other complicated pastries. She became an extremely well trained baker. So she decided to sell napoleons. She would get up at four o'clock in the morning and start to make napoleons. She would leave the house at seven o'clock and go from door

to door and village to village selling the napoleons. She had a big business.

We were to live as a typical Polish family, so my life as a Catholic girl began. The first Sunday we went to church we sat in the last row because we didn't know anything about being Catholic. My mother said to us, "Imitate what the people in front of us do. If they kneel, you kneel. If they make the sign of the cross, you make the sign the cross." Slowly, after many weeks, months, I graduated to the first row and decided I wanted to help the priest with Mass every Sunday. I became very religious, very accepting of the Catholic religion. The change was very quick for me. I was the one who celebrated the holidays, who helped the priest, who was convinced I would be a nun when I grew up. I was very, very proud of being a Catholic; not only proud, but I felt safe. I saw the difference: The Catholics were sitting in church praying and they were happy. They were not crying, they were not afraid. And I wanted to be like that also. I had this terrible desire to be like that.

I had one white dress and one pair of white shoes which I wore only on Sunday. They were too small for me and they hurt my feet. I hated shoes; during the week I would not put on a pair of shoes, I was barefoot. We were very well brought up: we would courtesy when we met someone, we never spoke unless we were spoken to, we knew how to behave at the table, and so on, but I was a nonconformist. I was very curious; I always wanted to know. Everything had to be explained to me. I was a real tomboy; I was scaling walls, climbing trees. My mother would sew our clothes and I would destroy them

every day. We did go to school with the other children. We had school as long as the school was there, but when the school was bombed by the Russians there was no more school.

Our landlady was very good to us: She rented us the room, she helped to feed us, she watched out for us so we would not get in trouble, she picked us up when we fell. She always told me, "You continue to be a bad girl and the Jew is going to get you!" Yet, if she ever found out we were Jewish she would immediately run to tell the Germans.

One day I was sitting with my little cousin playing in a piece of dirt when a German came with a bar of chocolate. He showed it to us and said, "Who wants this piece of chocolate?" We had not seen a piece of chocolate in over a year. We both got up and ran to him. My cousin ran faster than me and got there before me. The German picked her up and sat her on his lap. With one hand her gave her the chocolate and with the other he took out his revolver and shot her in the head. He got up and she fell to the ground. He cleaned off his pants and walked away without so much as a glance. This little girl was maybe four, four and a half years old. What had she done to him? Where was his humanity? Where was his compassion? I realized she was dead. I ran away with so much fear. I was completely out of control. I ran to my mother and cried. I didn't know what was going on. Why? What did she do wrong?

In Buczacz I felt a bit more freedom and less hunger than in the ghetto, but I was still scared because I kept seeing people getting killed. One day a boy was killed in front of my house

and the blood splattered on the windows. I said to our landlady, "What happened? Why did they kill this boy?" And she said, "Oh, don't pay any attention, he was just a Jew." So I knew that if you were a Jew you were going to be killed.

Everything about being Jewish I erased from my mind. For my older sister it was much more difficult. Every Sunday she would have a migraine and stay home in bed rather than go to church. She could not erase being Jewish from her mind. She remembered living in a kosher home and saying the Jewish blessings. My mother worried that Fela would say something that would give us away. My mother said to us, "Do not speak. Do not ask me anything. Reply only when I tell you to. You are not allowed to open your mouth." We would respond to our mother's words and the rest of the time we did not say a word.

Behind the little house there was a garden, a piece of land, where my sisters and I would play. We would sometimes play with the neighborhood children: tag, hide and seek, normal games children play. They thought we were regular Polish people. One day we were playing and the children pointed at my sister who wore glasses and had curly hair, and started yelling, "Jew! Jew!" They were calling her a Jew. A German officer was nearby and he heard. My sister ran away into the house to my mother. The German officer knocked on the door and said to my mother, "I hear that you have a Jewish child here in your house. The officer was standing in the doorway, not inside the house. The room was filled with holy pictures. So my mother looked at him and said, "Jesus! Mary! How dare you! In this house there are only my daughters." And she

slammed the door in his face. My mother was so brave—another woman would have gone on her knees, begged for mercy, and signed her own death certificate.

There was another incident when we were playing outside. In our yard there were stones and rocky places. One day a German came with a German Shepherd dog. When the dog got loose and ran toward my sister she fell and hit her head on a rock. This incident scarred her for the rest of her life.

Our house was on top of a hill. Down the hill there was a bombed out building. As we walked down the hill to go someplace we walked past this destroyed building. That day the Polish people had told the Germans that there were people hiding in the rubble in the basement. The Germans came and started to pull people out by their hair. They pulled out maybe eighty people—men, women, children. One woman was holding a little package that she put on the ground. When she saw my mother and me standing there—there were many people standing there looking at what was going on—with her foot she pushed this little package toward my mother and looked at her, desperate. My mother understood that she wanted her to pick up the package. It was wrapped in newspaper or something. So my mother went to pick up the package. A Nazi saw her and came with a pistol pointed at her and at me and said, "If you touch this package I will kill you both. Take your child and leave." So my mother stepped a little back. The German picked up the package, opened it, and there was a newborn baby, alive. He took the baby by the legs, by two legs, and ripped it in half, and threw it. Can you imagine a man, sophisticated, educated, doing something

so horrific? Where was his soul? Where was his compassion? Where was his humanity? They put those eighty people against the wall and shot them one by one. They took little children and beat them to death against the walls of the buildings, the unfinished cement. My mother took me and we just walked away. That building will never leave my mind; that cruelty, that hatred. I have no words to describe that scene.

All these murders had a traumatic effect on me. There were many moments in my childhood that made me develop terrible fears of all kinds of circumstances. I only felt safe and reassured in church. That is why every Sunday was like a holiday for me because in church there was peace, there was singing. I felt that nothing could touch the church because it was God's place. God would not allow this church to be destroyed, so it was safe. I wanted to go to church every day to feel safe, but we only went on Sundays. The rest of the week I was exposed to being murdered.

Even though I was Catholic and I was not a Jew and was not going to be killed by the persecutors of the Jews, I was still scared of the Germans. If I saw somebody in a uniform it produced a terrible fear in me because I did not know who they were going to kill—was it me? I did not have the concept that Jews were other people. To me they were something like a monster, something evil because I heard this all day long. I felt it had nothing to do with me. Yet I saw the incident with my sister and the dog so I knew anything could happen even if you are a Catholic. It was the danger of war.

In 1943, when the Lwów ghetto was going to be liquidated,

my mother paid people to go to Lwów to get my father and bring him to us in Buczacz. She paid them with the jewels her sisters had given her that she had sewn into her girdle. She trusted these people because either someone knew them, or they were related to someone, but they were honorable and brought my father to Buczacz. My sisters and I missed our father terribly but my mother decided that under the present circumstances it would be too dangerous to tell us he was in Buczacz. We were passing as Polish Catholics and he was a Jew with no identification papers. She was afraid someone would overhear one of us call him 'Poppa' and that would mean the end of us.

In exchange for a good payment my mother's friend, Zoysia, agreed to hide him in a hut on the property by her house. After a while when it was no longer safe for Zoysia to hide my father any longer, my mother decided to hide him behind the wooden wardrobe in the room we were renting. He had to stand all day long between the wardrobe and the wall. At night he would come out and kiss us and hug us while we were sleeping and then go back behind the wardrobe. Sometimes he would stretch out on the bed for a while with my mother standing guard. We would never know he was there.

Once, I was very sick with a very high fever. My mother thought I would not live through the night so my father came out and hugged me and held me in his arms. He took off his scarf and put it on me. The scarf was around my neck the next day when I woke up. I asked my mother, "Who was this man who came here who was hugging me and holding me and kissing me?" My mother looked at me and said, "A man? No,

you were dreaming, you were hallucinating because you had such a high fever. But no, no one was here with you. Only I was here. I was holding you." But then I had the scarf. I remembered it was my father's favorite scarf. Where was the scarf from? I had the scarf but I could not argue because my mother said no one was there. Maybe my mother put the scarf around my neck. I still have the scarf.

One night I was sleeping next to the wardrobe when a bullet came in and grazed me on my nose. My father was almost going to come out to grab me, but he couldn't because I woke up. The bullet inserted itself in the wall; I looked at the bullet and I called for my mother. It was just a miracle that I was not killed.

In the winter of 1944 a year had passed since my father had started hiding behind the wardrobe.

EVACUATION OF BUCZACZ

In 1944 the Red Army entered Lwów. The Germans did not want to be caught by the Russians. As the Germans were retreating they decided to take all the civilian population with them as they marched toward Germany. They didn't want to leave any people in Buczacz to aid the Russians who were coming—to cook for them, to give them a room, to help them find anything.

When the Germans ordered the population to evacuate, my mother tried to tell the officials that she did not want to leave,

that she had nowhere to go, that we were too young to travel. The answer was, "You can stay, but everyone staying will be eliminated." We had proper papers to leave with the army, but my father did not. My father was to stay hidden in our room and in a small shelter my mother prepared for him. Our dear friend, Lusia, offered to stay behind and care for him. She was murdered while she was out getting food for him.

We were picked up at dawn the next morning to begin a death march. My mother had to leave the house where we lived and abandon everything—our shoes, our clothes, our food—because she had three little girls to carry. We walked to the train station and were crammed into freight cars carrying coal. Then the bombs began to fall. I can still remember the hissing sound of the bombs falling. The bombs were falling so close to us—if we moved to the right or to the left we would be killed.

I was terrified of the noise of the planes and the bombs. When the train was bombed and started to burn we had to jump from the train. We hid in the forest until we met a woman who agreed to take us to Jadowniki for a fee. A friend's aunt, her name was Helena, let us stay in a room in her house in Jadowniki. There my mother found a job working with tobacco.

After a few weeks my mother decided to return to Buczacz where she had abandoned everything and where my father was hiding. My mother couldn't help herself wondering what happened to him? Was he safe? The Russians were coming but the Germans were still there. She had to go back to see if she could help him. At the border to Buczacz she was stopped

at a barricade and a Nazi came out. “Why are you back here? What do you want? There are no people, all the people left. What are you doing?” My mother said, "I have three little children and I couldn’t carry the shoes and the clothing I had to abandon. Winter is coming and I need those clothes.” The Nazi said, “That is not allowed.” But an officer came and said, “Come with me; I will take you to your house.” So my mother went with the officer. When she came to the house another German came out of the house and said, “What do you want?” The officer explained that this woman has three children and needs the clothes and shoes she left that she couldn’t carry. The German said to the officer, “Did she come here to get the Jew we found yesterday?” My mother completely collapsed. She couldn’t answer, she couldn’t talk. She couldn’t do anything. So the officer miraculously said to the German, “No, she came for her shoes. Let her go in and get the shoes. Whatever happened, whoever hid there when she was away was not her fault. She is not responsible.” So my mother walked into the house, grabbed some shoes and walked out. As she was walking she saw a Polish man and asked him what happened with the Jews who were there yesterday. He said, “Oh, this morning they were all taken to the woods where they dug their own graves. Then they were shot. No one is anymore alive.” A week later the Russians arrived so it was only at the last moment that my father was found and murdered. It was June 24, 1944.

Fela, Esther, and I in Buczacz.

My father's favorite scarf that he wrapped around my neck when I was very sick in Buczacz.

LIBERATION IN KRAKOW

My mother made her way back to Jadowniki where she went back to her job working with tobacco. A day after the Russian army entered Jadowniki we hastily left the room we were renting and boarded a train for Krakow. When we were on the train the bombs started to fall. The Allies and the Germans were bombarding the trains, so we had to get off the train and walk again. It took us several days to reach Krakow. Once we got to Krakow the Germans disappeared. We were liberated in Krakow by the Russians.

We were alone in Krakow. My mother knew there had been a large Jewish community in Krakow, but she did not see any Jews. There was no one. For a moment she thought we were the only Jews left alive. But slowly some appeared. While walking down the street my mother met Erna Stein, a friend of her older sister from Lwów. Erna helped my mother with us children, loaned us money, and found us a place to live. She bought us shoes, but I refused to wear them—I took them off in the middle of the street! We were in Krakow for almost a year when Erna brought news to us that the allies were helping Jews that survived—but in Berlin, not in Poland. There was no more Poland. The Allies had divided it and this area was now Russia. So my mother decided to take us to Berlin to look for help.

LEAVING POLAND FOR BERLIN

It took us months to get to Berlin. We stopped in Katowice which was a gathering place for Jewish survivors. There, Erna

found us a little apartment, she found us food, and she went to all the organizations to get information about the emigration process. From Katowice we traveled to Poznań on trains crowded with Russian and German soldiers.

In December 1945 we finally reached the border between the Russian's zone and the Allies's zone. We wanted to cross over. The Russians stopped us and said we could not cross, "You are Russians and you stay in Russia." They took us to a hut that was the police station. That night they gave the children chocolate and candy. The Russians are good to the children; the only privileged citizens in Russia are the children. At midnight my mother took me and said to the Russians, "She has to go to the bathroom." There was no bathroom. We would have to go outside in the snow. It was winter. My mother took everybody and everything with her. I opened my mouth, "I don't need to go." My mother looked at me and said, "You have to go to the bathroom." I knew I could not protest any more. So we went outside and my mother took us by the hand to cross the border. I ran back and said, "I am not running anywhere because they are going to kill me. I won't run." Fear was ruling my life for many, many years. An hour later I had to go to the bathroom. My mother held me and schlepped all of us across the border, and we escaped from Russian occupied Poland into Germany. Berlin was very close.

We found ourselves in the Russian controlled zone of Berlin. There Max Bank and Erna found us a place to live in a boarding house. My mother did not want to stay in the Russian controlled zone of Berlin, so after a while we made our way to the American zone in Berlin.

DP CAMP IN THE AMERICAN ZONE OF BERLIN

When we arrived in the American zone we went to a displaced persons' camp. There the JOINT (The American Joint Distribution Committee) and UNRA (United Nations Relief Association) received us very nicely. They couldn't believe what my mother was telling them—that she saved three children. That was unheard of! They called her The Mother of All Survivors because she saved three lives, three children. That was a miracle.

I do not know the name of the camp, but I have a document from 1945 that says Berlin and the street number of the camp. On the document my name is listed as Anna.

We were quickly settled in the displaced persons (DP) camp where we were assigned to an apartment and given everything we needed and things we did not need—too much of everything! Money had no value, we were given things. You were given according to how many were in your family. They didn't care it you were adults, children, or infants. We were four in our family so we got four times everything: four kilos of sugar, four kilos of coffee, four kilos of flour—everything four—whether we consumed it or not. Since the camp had an overflow of food and the Germans were starving, they were bartering with us. My mother bartered a kilo of coffee for a coat for herself and heavy jackets for us for the winter. For one kilo of sugar you could get anything you wanted in the world.

Max Bank was in Berlin. He was bartering food for jewelry. He took us to his apartment where he had no furniture, just

three big trunks. One was full of diamonds and rings, any size you could imagine. One had watches. The third had other jewelry. He said to my mother, "Take whatever you want." My mother looked and said, "This is stained with blood. I don't want any."He took out a watch with a leather band and gave it to my mother because she did not have a watch.

The camp was preoccupied with giving us everything we needed, but unfortunately we were not interested. We were not grateful—we were dead. We were the walking dead. We had no desire to do anything. We did not want to go to a synagogue or to a tea. We were interested in nothing. My mother was a walking cadaver and so were we, in a way.

The DP camp was not inclined to do anything religious. The interest of the camp was to instruct the adult survivors, not the children, so they would be able to support themselves when they got to a new country. Five years had passed since the war began and we were uprooted from everything we knew. Many of the survivors were teenagers who did not have the opportunity to complete their studies. In the camp they would not learn to be professionals, they would just learn a trade: One was learning how to do shoes, another one how to sew clothes, how to make hats, coats. My mother was learning how to be a milliner.

After a while my mother saw that we needed some kind of instruction because we were just running around in the streets doing nothing. So, when I was six years old she enrolled me in the Berlin Opera ballet classes. She did not want me to become a ballerina, she just wanted to occupy my hours.

In the Berlin DP camp my mother decided it was time to tell us we were Jewish. She slowly explained that we were not Catholic, but we were Jewish. She explained about the house we came from and the traditions and what it meant to be Jewish. I immediately rebelled. I said, "Stop it! It is not for me. I am not going to be Jewish. I am Catholic." I did not want to be Jewish because I knew that if you were Jewish you got killed. And I did not want to be killed. "I don't want to be Jewish, I am safer being Catholic." My mother, very gently and with a lot of patience, explained to me what had happened, why we pretended to be Catholic, but now we were in a place that was safe, where nobody was going to touch us. She sat with me every night and said, "You don't have to go on your knees and do the sign of the cross, and say the *Pater Noster*—you just have to say this little prayer in Hebrew before you go to sleep.

So, sitting on the bed I learned to say the prayer. I repeated it after my mother every night. But when my mother left the room I immediately was on my knees making the sign of the cross and praying to the Holy Mother. For months this went on. When Christmas was coming I said to my mother, "When are we doing our Christmas tree?" She explained that we don't celebrate Christmas, we celebrate Hanukkah. I said, "That is very nice, but I want my Christmas tree." My mother said everybody there was Jewish and would be lighting candles. The way I carried on was unbelievable! I was becoming hysterical. In the end she bought me a little Christmas tree and I promised it would be my last Christmas. (Today if a non-Jewish family is putting up a Christmas tree I am always there to help!)

In the DP camp there were 80 orphan children from every age—from newborn to sixteen years old. They were lost. Nobody knew where they belonged; nobody came to look for them. The leaders of the DP camp asked my mother if she would mind being director of the camp orphanage. My mother agreed. They said it would be for just a few months because people were coming from Palestine to take the children there. One of those orphans was my close friend, Frieda. Finally the delegation, two men and one woman, from Palestine arrived. They were wearing British army uniforms. They started to make arrangements and Frieda was to be going with them. So I ran to the woman and said, "Why don't you take me and my sisters and my mother also? Why are Frieda and I going to be separated?" She told me, "I can not take you, your mom, and your sisters, because you are not orphans. Thank God you have your mother." So I said goodbye to Frieda, never to see her again.

DP CAMPS IN ESCHWING AND STUTTGART

In 1946 when Erna heard that it was easier to immigrate to America from Stuttgart, she and my mother decided to leave Berlin and go to Stuttgart. We had been in Berlin for a year. On the way to Stuttgart we had to stop at a DP camp in Eschwege, Germany. This DP camp was not as nice as the one in Berlin. Eschwege was like a barrack with a fence around it. Because we were not progressing in getting visas, we began trying to get to Stuttgart. After several weeks we finally got permission to leave Eschwege and travel to Stuttgart.

Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin

An die

U n r r a

Berlin N.4, den 30.November 1945.
Chamissoplatz 2f.

Berlin - Zehlendorf,
Teltower Damm 87.

Kommt nach seiner/ihrer Angabe aus dem Konzentrationslager Lodz,
nach M ü n c h e n weiterreisen.

Wir bitten alle Zivil- und Militärbehörden, Obengenannte bei der Beschaffung der Reisepapiere und auf der Weiterreise selbst Unterstützung zu gewähren.

Diese Bescheinigung gilt nur in abgestempeltem Lichtbild.

Gültig bis 3.12.45.....

Im Auftrage:
Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin

Our entry to a DP camp in Berlin.

POLSKI CZERWONY KRZYŻ

Zaświadcza się, że

ob. Amalia Marx

urodz. 24 IV 1908 w

narodowości żydowska

przybywający z Niemiec - obozu koncentracyjnego

udający się do Niemiec

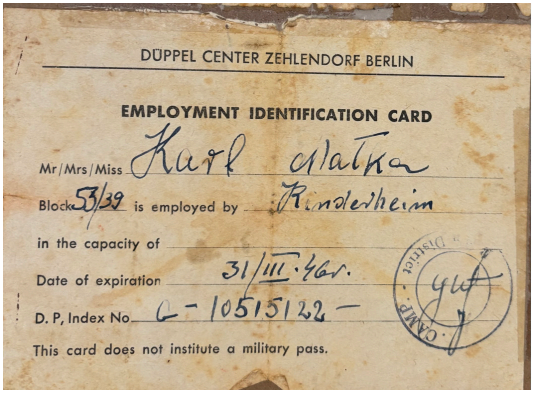
został zarejestrowany w Polskim Czerwonym Krzyżu na Okręg Śląski w Katowicach.

dnia 13 XI 1945

Kierownik Biura.

1) Felix 1936
2) Anna 1938
3) Charly 1941
4) Erna Braun 1886 matka

The Red Cross papers show my name as Anna.



DÜPPEL CENTER ZEHLENDORF BERLIN

EMPLOYMENT IDENTIFICATION CARD

Mr/Mrs/Miss Karl Glatka

Block 53/39 is employed by Kinderheim

in the capacity of

Date of expiration 31/III.46r.

D. P, Index No C-1051122

This card does not institute a military pass.

My mother's employment identification at the DP camp in Berlin.

In the DP camp in Berlin, Germany.

I am with my mother and her friend in a DP camp in either Berlin or Stuttgart, Germany.

This picture was taken of me in Paris as we were waiting to leave Europe on the way to Lima, Peru.

My mother in Paris while waiting to leave for Lima, Peru.

LEAVING EUROPE

The Red Cross published a list of the names of the survivors that would circulate in newspapers throughout the world. In New York a patient of my father's brother read the list and saw the name Karl which was not very common. (She became his patient when she got sick during a vacation in Lima, Peru. Julius Karl was a well known doctor. He was associated with the biggest, best hotels in Lima so if a visitor got sick the hotel would call him. That is how he had many, many patients who were foreigners.) The Red Cross list said, "Mali Karl and her children survived and are living in Berlin." She immediately sent a telegram to Dr. Karl asking if they were his relatives. This is how he found us. He sent my mother letters asking her to come to Lima. They were written in German.

Peru was not accepting Holocaust survivors and not accepting Jewish people. So my uncle went to the president of the republic, who was his patient, and asked for visas for his sister-in-law and three nieces. He got the visas—no questions asked. We left Stuttgart in June of 1947.

My uncle sent first class tickets for us to sail from Le Havre to Rio de Janeiro. We left Germany and went to Paris to wait for all the papers for traveling. We spent six months in Paris where I learned to speak French. Our ship was the *Formosa*. It was a freighter bringing cattle to Europe and refugees from Europe to South America. There was no first class—we were in steerage in the hold of the ship. My mother hung up some sheets so we would have some privacy. It was a terrible experience.

When we arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, we spent a few days in a small hotel where the Jewish families came to welcome us. They brought us beautiful meals and when a woman noticed I was not eating she asked me what I wanted. I said all I wanted was dark bread—what I was used to. The trip from Rio to Lima was by a small plane that had to cross the Andes. It was a very rough ride. We arrived in Lima on October 8, 1947.

Once we arrived in Lima our house became a Jewish home. There was Shabbas dinner every Friday night. We went to synagogue every holiday. We became traditional. We had to get used to the Peruvian food which is quite different from the Polish food. My mother always continued making Polish food: pirogies, borsht, goulash. People would come to watch her bake and write down her recipes for napoleons, babka, Passover nuts…

For many years after the war and having everything I wanted to eat, I used to eat with my arm around my dish. I surrounded it with my arm because I was afraid someone would come and take it away. It was an instinct. I did this for many years when I was young. Even today if I am eating with my sister or a friend and I want to taste what they are eating, I will ask first of course, then take a piece of their food. But if someone wants to take from my plate I feel a twinge—like *Don't touch my food!* This is all a sequel from when I had no food. There are some things that always stay with you. Today my refrigerator and freezer are always packed with food. When my children were young I never wanted them to feel there was not enough. There were always leftovers and I never wanted to throw food away.

Two years after we arrived in Lima my mother and my uncle, Julius Karl, fell in love and got married. He adopted us and gave us the warmth and love of a father. He was my uncle and also my father. They had a very, very happy marriage for 25 years.

After the war there was no music for my mother. She never played the piano as a musician ever again. There were two things she promised herself which she would not ever do again because of what she lived through: She would never play the piano and she would never dance. My uncle loved to dance, but I cannot remember any instance where she would dance with him. All three of us children had to study piano. I hated it from the beginning. I studied piano for three years—a waste of time. To get out of piano I said I wanted to study violin. The teacher came and said my little finger was too short and that was the end of that.

My uncle hired a tutor, a professor, to teach us Spanish. My mother did not want to speak the language if she made mistakes. My uncle spoke perfect Spanish. My first language was Polish. I spoke to my mother in Polish and to my uncle in German because his Polish was not good. German was the language we spoke when we were all together. After two years in Germany my German was perfect and after months in Paris I spoke fluent French.

In Europe my mother was always trying to teach us. It was more of an education of survival: Don't go there, don't speak. I think she taught me how to read a little bit in Buczacz. I would go to school whenever there was a school and a teacher,

but I never really went to the first three grades. That was lost to history. I was eight years old when I started a real school program in Peru. I went to a private school because my parents did not want me to be exposed to antisemitism. In school in Lima classes in Hebrew, English, and Spanish were compulsory every day. I learned Italian by talking to a neighbor who thought she was speaking Spanish. Along the way I picked up some Portuguese. I picked up Yiddish easily because it is close to German. I already knew some Russian. Today I can read in English, Spanish, German, and Polish, but when I count it is always in Polish.

We continued our European ways in Peru. My parents educated us. We were always studying to know how to do everything. My mother did not believe in a three month vacation from school. We got one month vacation and for two months we had to study something—another language, how to sew, secretarial skills, etiquette, and behavior. One year I went to the Alliance Francaise to study French. One year I studied how to make and decorate cakes. Another year I studied how to be a secretary—typing and shorthand. Another year I studied how to sew and embroider. When my sister graduated from high school I made her graduation dress.

I could not remember the faces of my aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Not even the cousins. I was always very curious so I was always at my mother's feet asking how they looked. The only pictures we had of our family before the war are the ones Julius Karl brought from Vienna. Much later the relatives who were in Israel sent us some pictures and I got to see pictures of my mother's sisters.

All the papers, all the documents from where we were born in Lwów were taken by the Russians after the war. Some of the papers they sent to Warsaw, the rest they destroyed—thousands of documents. Through an archivist at the Polyn Museum I found a copy of my birth certificate. Much, much later I found my mother's marriage certificate. She did not get to live to see it. That was very emotional.

GOING TO SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES

I finished high school in Lima and immediately got a scholarship from the American embassy to study in the United States. When I applied for that scholarship I was hoping they would give me Brandeis or Columbia—Cottey College never dawned on me! Cottey College was in Nevada, Missouri, three hours south of Kansas City. It was a junior college for women from many countries. I flew to Miami and then took a 48 hour long Greyhound bus ride through the South. This was where I saw signs that said 'Whites Only' and 'Blacks Only.' There were people who could not sit next to me. It broke my heart.

The campus was beautiful and my dorm was very beautiful, and there were 'big sisters' to take care of us. There were about 1,000 students. I had my first meeting with the dean and told her I wanted to study languages, history, and theology. She gave me the rule: Every Wednesday afternoon there was mandatory chapel. I told her I was Jewish and did not go to chapel. She told me I was the only Jewish student and there were no Jewish families in town for me to go for Shabbas so I would have to stay at school and go to chapel. The dean said

chapel was nonsectarian, so on Wednesday I walked into the chapel and on the wall was a big cross. I walked out and went to the dean. I said, "I cannot pray with a cross in front of me." She replied, "It is a requirement."

I went to her with a proposition: I would go to chapel for Christmas because it was the same time as Hanukkah if she would let me do a little presentation about Hanukkah and Judaism and another girl do a presentation about Christmas. She was thrilled. I taught the glee club the Hanukkah songs and the other girl taught them Christmas songs. I still have the program! I told the students what it meant to be Jewish and I introduced them to the Holocaust. It was my first talk about the Holocaust. When I finished all the girls came up to me and said I was the first Jew they had ever seen. They wanted to know if I had horns. They asked where my bow and arrow were because they thought people from Peru were savages. Over the next months many organizations—the Masons, Kiwanis—asked if they could interview me on the radio. They had never heard about the Holocaust. They were fighting for me to come speak every Sunday.

I did well in my classes and wanted to continue with school, but circumstances played against me. First of all, the dean would not let up on going to chapel. Then there were girls who said their parents would not let them come back next year if I were still in the school. I felt trapped in a little hole. So when my sister decided to visit Israel I thought I would take a break from studying and go with her.

MEETING MY HUSBAND

My parents arranged our trip. They arranged a schedule of where we would be every hour of every day. We would be met in every city by my parents' friends or my father's colleagues. They would take us sightseeing and to the opera and ballet but at eight o'clock every night we had to be in our hotel room. I was around eighteen, my sister was around 20.

We embarked on the British ship *Reyna de Mars*. We went to all the islands in the Caribbean and Bermuda before reaching Le Havre. From Le Havre we sent all our luggage, the big luggage, the trunks, on to Marseilles. We took our smaller luggage with us to Paris where we spent ten days. From Paris we took a train to Marseilles. As we were standing in line to get our boarding passes for our luxury Israeli ship, I saw this young man, very Italian looking. I was wearing a suit, blue and white. The skirt was up to the knee–the latest fashion. I think my shoes were crocodile; my pocketbook, also. He looked at me and thought I was British.

I got to the window and got our boarding passes then asked, "Are our trunks already on board?" The answer, "What trunks? We didn't receive any trunks." I refused to leave without knowing where our trunks were. My sister got bored and tired and went to our cabin. After a while the trunks appeared, but it was too late to put them on board. I was beside myself—I started screaming at them in French and Hebrew! A stewardess told me to stop fighting because the ship's hold was closed and if I didn't hurry I would not be able to get on the ship. So I ran with the stewardess to where the steps are to board. When we

got there there was no ship. The ship was far away. And I am standing there, alone in Marseilles with my little pocketbook and my umbrella, nothing more. It was scary. The stewardess said, "Come with me, we will take a little dingy and we will catch up with the ship. The ship has to stop for the pilot to get off, so you will make it." I got on this dingy, and she did not. I am thinking to myself, "I am alone with the driver of this canoe! He can take me anywhere!" We caught up with the ship. The pilot came down on a rope ladder. The driver said to me, "Now you go up." I looked at him, "What! You want me to go on this rope ladder up to the top of the ship? I am not going. I am a passenger—bring down the ladder, the big one attached to the ship so I can go up." People were coming to the railing to see what was going on; they all had an opinion if I should go on the rope ladder or not. I was so embarrassed. Finally I said, "Call the captain. I am a passenger and I will go up like every passenger went up." The captain came, looked at all the screaming going on and said, "She is right. Lower the ladder." Only then did I go up.

I got to my cabin and my sister said, "Where have you been? How is it possible you always get lost or something?" That night we went to dinner and as we entered the dining room everybody stood up and started applauding. Only then did my sister find out what happened! The music started and the man I thought was Italian came over and invited me to dance. This is how we met. His name was George Feld. He was actually a Jew from Argentina! He was going to Israel to have the kibbutz experience and to learn Hebrew. He was not entirely finished with his studies but he was already working as an architect.

In Israel I stayed with a woman named Mrs. Lieberman, who was originally from Czechoslovakia. My uncle had been her father's doctor before the war. She had a beautiful, large apartment in Haifa. During the week I was going out with a doctor named Richard and on the weekends I was with George. They were both very, very nice to me—I was having a good time—but in the end I fell in love with George. I wrote to my parents that I liked this young man and I wanted to get married. Instead of answering the letter, my mother took the first flight from Lima to Tel Aviv. She came to see what I was talking about. "This is not for you! Who is he? What does he have? Where is his family? What are his intentions?" Then she met him. She thought he was very nice and well educated, but said, "You have to marry a prince! He hardly has his career and he is going to a place he doesn't know. He has no money, how is he going to support you? You are not going with him under these circumstances." I said I had my skills and I was going to go to work. So my mother said to George, "You go to New York, find a job, find a home, establish yourself, and once you do that and you have the means to support my daughter, then you can get married."

George left immediately for New York where he stayed with an uncle in New Jersey. He went to an architecture firm that was looking for an architect. George could not communicate with them because he did not speak any English. They told him to draw something, and when he spoke to them with his pencil and paper he got the job. Within two months he was set up. He bought a car and rented an apartment. In the meantime my mother took me on a leisure trip through Europe—to Vienna,

Italy, Paris. It was so wonderful to travel with my mother without having my sisters along. After a month and a half my mother and I went to Lima via New York. George picked us up and showed us where he was working and where he lived. My mother said, "If you still want to get married, let's buy your dress here in New York and we will make the wedding in Lima. George came to Lima in October for the wedding and my mother kept putting it off until February 14, 1961.

Just as we were about to get married, the United States government drafted George into the army. He had already served for a year in Argentina, but there was some kind of agreement between the United States and Argentina and George had to go into the US army. They gave him 24 hours to appear. So my uncle sent a letter saying he was having heart problems and he could not travel until he was released from medical care. That gave us two or three days to get married and to get back to New York. George had to go to the army for six months and then for a week every year.

Because the army drafted him and he was an officer, he became a United States citizen. I was already a resident of the United States and had a green card from 1961 but I didn't become a citizen for four more years. When I became an American citizen in 1964 and had the liberty of taking any name, I chose Anita—for no reason at all!

My family in Lima. My mother, sisters, and I with Dr. Julius Karl. Julius Karl was my uncle who became my adoptive father.

My mother and father with my sister Esther. I made the graduation dress she is wearing.

With my mother and sisters in Lima.

When my mother was in her eighties she wrote this book about her experience in the Holocaust. It became a great success in both English and Spanish.

George Feld and I at our wedding in Lima.

George and I had a good life together in Lima, Buenos Aires, and New York.

A picture of me in Lima.

A picture of me in New York.

In Buenos Aires I began my work supporting Israel and Jewish Federations.

NEW YORK

We lived on Long Island, New York. For a while I worked doing translations from several languages for foreigners coming to the United States. I got a job at Memorial Hospital in Forest Hills doing paperwork for each patient. In 1961 while I was there I made a new friend—she was Black. She could not understand why a White woman would be her friend, and I couldn't understand what was the problem!

I was not happy working at the hospital, so when an opportunity came to work for El Al Airlines, I took it. The job was at the airport which was close to our home. I was very happy working there. After a while they transferred me to their office in New York City. I was in charge of all flights that left New York. All of them. I was like a controller of flights. With my language skills I handled enormous amounts of flights from all over the world. I got a lot of free plane tickets. I did not have time to travel then, but later I took advantage of them and traveled extensively all over the world. When I started having children I left that job.

We lived in the United States, but my children were all born in Peru. I went to give birth there because my uncle had a clinic there with deluxe accommodations. There I had a garden, I had a waiting room, I had a room for guests. I spent seven days getting massages, just lying in the clinic doing nothing. It was there or Queens General Hospital! The children were registered with the American Embassy as soon as they were born. When my children were about seven or eight years old we bought a house in Dix Hills, Long Island.

RETURN TO LIMA

In 1970 my husband won a solicitation to build a hotel in Lima. I was beside myself with happiness. My parents were there, my sister, Esther, was there with her family. The job relocated us, they paid for everything. I took the piano, I took the dog! They gave us a beautiful apartment, a car and a chauffeur, and a cleaning woman. I got to be with my parents for the next two years.

When my mother was in her eighties she began to write a book as testimony for her three daughters. She wanted to leave us a testimony of what happened because she knew that after she was gone there would be no one to ask. The book was published and was a complete success. *Escape to Life*, has been reprinted several times in Spanish and English.

ARGENTINA

Because of American tax rules we decided to go to Buenos Aires and stay with George's family for a while. He finalized whatever he needed at the university there to get his final degree. I am curious by nature—whatever I don't know I want to understand and study. I did not understand what my husband was doing. I wanted to understand the blueprints, the design, the furniture, colors, decoration…. I could not go and study architecture so I opted for interior design. I applied myself and I got my bachelor's degree in interior design. We stayed in Buenos Aires for eight years with him building beautiful houses and me doing the interior design.

When I was living in Argentina I helped found the Women's Division of Federation. Israel sent a woman to help us organize the Women's Division. So, the day came and we were sitting in rows to hear what this lady was going to say. She said she was asked to go, after the war, to Berlin to pick up 80 orphans. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Did I hear her right? Memories came. She asked to hear the story of each of us to see how we could contribute to making Israel better. When it was my turn I got up and said, "I am the girl you left behind, who you would not take with you because I was not an orphan." Hugs! Kisses! Everyone was crying and everyone wrote a check. I asked, but there was no way to find the orphans. A couple of years later she came again and brought a medal for me, the Magen David Lev, which is given to people who contribute to the wellbeing of Israel from the heart, not just with money. I have worked all my life for Israel in different organizations including WIZO, Pioneer Women of Miami, and Hadassah. Through my work and my lectures a lot of money has been sent to Israel.

MIAMI

When the children were in their teens we decided to go back to the United States, but not to New York, to Miami. We bought a beautiful home in Highland Lakes. When we lived in South America I spoke to my children only in English; when we lived in the United States I spoke to them only in Spanish because I wanted them to be bilingual.

After thirty years of a very good marriage George and I divorced. Later on I had a gentleman friend, a widower, Phil

Morse, who was close to twenty years older than I. At the beginning I didn't want to have a relationship with him because of the age difference, but he was so good to me that in the end I said all right. Phil was a Holocaust survivor who escaped from Poland to Moscow and Japan. He became a successful businessman and a well known philanthropist in the United States and a big donor to Israel. Together we hosted Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Perez on one of his trips to Miami. Another time we were invited to Amman, Jordan to have lunch with the prince. I enjoyed every minute of this time in my life. It was very nice—those almost ten years—until he passed away.

Esther, Fela, and I with our mother in Miami in the 1980's.

Fela, Esther, and I in Miami.

I am with Philip Morse and Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Perez.

I am with Philip Morse, President Bill Clinton, and Congressman Alcee Hastings.

I am with Philip Morse and Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

I met with royalty in Amman, Jordan.

MY LIFE TODAY

My sister, Esther, is my only remaining family in Lima. She married George Oxenstein and raised three children: Lea, Marc, and Joel.

My sister, Fela, married Maurice Grubair in Israel and had two sons: David and Guy. The family then lived in New York and Miami. Fela passed away In 1998 in Coconut Grove, Florida. She had a brain tumor which I believe is a result from the dog chasing her in the Holocaust.

My son, Samy, and his wife, Sharon, have three children: Steven Feld, Alan Fled, and Sandra Feld. Steven and his wife, Remi, are the parents of my first great-grandchild, Noa.

My daughter, Michelle, Is married to Mario Sapoznik. Michelle has three children: Andrew Brodsky, Joel Brodsky, and Stephanie Brodsky. Andrew and his wife Maria are the parents of my second great-grandchild: Emilio.

Today my children and grandchildren all live within ten or fifteen minutes of me. We have a big Shabbas dinner together every Friday night. I used to make the gefilte fish and matzo balls, but I taught my daughter how to do it and I passed it on to her. All the children make a big fuss over me! I tell them about my week and my lectures. Every week I bring questions and have them try to guess the answers. This is a game we have going to activate their knowledge.

My son and my daughter know how important family is. They are always ready to lend a hand to make my life a little bit easier. I am really blessed with the family I have and I am so grateful to God that He gave me those two children that are the joy of my life.

At my age it is a little harder to do all the things I used to do, but I am still independent. I drive, I go to cultural events, and I play bridge twice a week. I sometimes have as many as two or three speaking engagements a week. I enjoy the library where I borrow books in English and Spanish. I use the computer to be in touch with my friends who live all over the world. We have family chats where all the latest news and events are posted so we all know what is going on with each other. On days when I don't have anything to do, I am very happy to relax at home and read or watch TV.

My daughter, Michelle, with her husband, Mario.

My son, Samy, with his wife, Sharon, carrying Michelle's grandson, my great-grandson, Emilio, to his brit milah.

I am with my six grandchildren. Sandra, Stephanie, Steven, Andrew, Alan, Joel.

I am with my great-granddaughter, Noa.

There have been movies, videos, and pictures of me speaking about the Holocaust.

I have lost count of the organizations, churches, schools, and universities where I have spoken.

SPEAKING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

I began speaking about the Holocaust when I helped found the Women's Division of Federation in Buenos Aires. When we moved to Miami, I spoke at the Greater Miami Jewish Federation for the first time. Then I began speaking at the Jewish Community Center, the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center in Dania, and the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach. I have been in the newspapers and on Youtube. There have been movies, videos, and pictures of me speaking. I have lost count of the organizations, the churches, and the schools where I have spoken. I have hundreds of letters from students who are so grateful that I spoke to them. So, while I can still do it, whenever they need me to speak, I always go. I believe that through education and from listening to survivors speak out, nobody can deny that the Holocaust happened.

I always begin my talks by saying that among the millions of Jews who died in the Holocaust were my father, my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, and all my cousins. I try to help them comprehend the magnitude of the monstrous crimes committed agains us and about how the world stood by and did nothing to save us. I tell them that what we endured was unimaginable and to survive with our sanity was nothing short of a miracle. I end my talks by sharing my hope that one day the world will be free of bigotry, persecution, racism, and that the new generations will never allow the horrors of the Holocaust to ever happen again. When I look and at the sweet faces of my children and great-grandchildren I know that we not only survived, but we triumphed over the evil that rained upon us.

ABOUT THE WRITER

I began writing for Holocaust survivors in the 1990's when survivors I met on The March of the Living asked me for help writing about their feelings on returning to Poland for the first time. Later, survivors I interviewed for Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation asked me for help writing down all the things they did not speak about in their interview. Soon, other survivors began approaching me seeking help writing a book about their experiences in the Holocaust. I met with the survivors, recorded our numerous conversations, organized and wrote the stories in the survivors' own words, printed the books, and then handed the books to the survivors as my gift to them. The books were written solely for the survivors and their families; they were never intended for publication. They are being published now because my friends, Carol and Jaime Suchlicki, recognizing their historical value as first-person testimony, introduced me to Dr. Haim Shaked to discuss finding a wider audience for the books.

Thank you to Dr. Haim Shaked director of the Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at the University of Miami for agreeing to publish the books and for your guidance and patience as we worked together on this project.

I am grateful to the March of the Living for introducing me to the world of Holocaust education and finding a role for me in it.

Thank you to the Shoah Foundation for choosing me to be an interviewer and for mentoring me through more than thirty interviews of Holocaust survivors. Your training led me to do the work I do today.

Thank you to the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach for encouraging the docents at the memorial to work with me to write their memoirs. I appreciate your confidence in me and your respect for my work.

Thank you to the my dear Holocaust survivors for sharing your most painful as well as your most joyful memories with me. Thank you for answering questions that no one should ever have to ask or answer. Thank you for trusting me to write your memoirs accurately and respectfully. It has been my honor and pleasure to work with you.

—Bobbi Kaufman

When my mother noticed that the commandants' wives came a couple of times a week to visit their husbands, stay for a couple of hours, then leave, it occurred to her that it would be a good idea to mingle with them and just walk out of the ghetto.

—Anita Karl

Anita Karl was four years old when the Nazis entered her home town of Lwow, Poland. On September 16, 1941, the day after her mother gave birth, the family was ordered into the ghetto. Eighteen months later, her mother, with her three young daughters, courageously walked out of the ghetto and fled to Buczacz where they would live as Polish Catholics.

Anita's father escaped from the ghetto and hid for a year, standing between a wardrobe and a wall—close to his children, but never with them.

Following the evacuation of Buczacz, Anita's mother and the three children made their way to Krakow where they were liberated by the Russians. They spent the next years in DP camps until emigrating to Peru.

Anita was educated in Peru and the United States. She had a career as an executive for El Al airlines and as an interior designer. She raised her daughter and son in Miami.

There is a concept in Judaism of a positive commandment, something that is time dependent, something that must be done *now*. One must, accordingly, applaud this important effort by the Miller Center and Feldenkreis Program of the University of Miami to collect and publish Holocaust survivors' memoirs as there will soon—too soon—come a time when the last survivors will be no longer. Sadly, tragically, this testimony is not only urgent but timely because the world in which we live echoes their world and the quality of their witness. The very nature of their survival has much to teach today's generations. One must express gratitude for this project and in the sagacious words of Hillel say: "If not now, when?"

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