

1) Friends,

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My name is Jack Aizenberg. I was born in Staszow in Poland, near Cracow.
At the outbreak of war in 1939 I was 11 years old.

I am a Holocaust survivor. For years we survivors kept quiet, we wanted to put the past behind us, to start building a new life, but in my conscience I always knew that I am not doing right. Why did I survive? Wasn't there a purpose in it? **YES.** To be able to be living proof that there was a Holocaust and also to tell and remind everybody of the horrors which took place. We also realized that time marches on and it's getting late and that we must hurry and come out and speak, which I'm doing to-night and feel privileged to do so.

On Wednesday April 7th on B.B.C.2 at 7.45 - Time Watch Special. I watched the most amazing programme, which had to do with the bombing of Dresden. In the programme Erica Daniels who was a teacher remembers February 1945 when in two nights 60,000 people were killed.

THE PROGRAMME WAS

TO ME.

She says that British and American Forces - and Bomber Arthur Harris himself - were outright criminals and the air forces committed the worst war crime in the history of Europe. She also said "I would not like to stand in front of my maker with Dresden on my conscience". If this is the case the British and American Air Forces and Bomber Arthur Harris ~~do~~ ^{NEED} not to stand in front of their maker with the murder of 6 million Jews and other nationalities on their conscience, who had been murdered in cold blood.

There was also a man who might have been the same age as Erica Daniels, who said "I remember the chaos, the dead and the stench" I would like to tell this man that 5 years ago I went with my wife to the infamous extermination camp at Maidanek in Lublin and that 45 years later the stench of the death of 1 million Jews is unbelievably still there.

Has Erica Daniels got no compassion and respect for any of these and their families? Obviously not.

The programme lasted 45 minutes. Not once has the Holocaust been mentioned by many of the eminent people on the programme. And may I mention the presenter Mr. Dimbelby for whom I have great respect, ^{He} also did not bring on the ^{THE HOLOCAUST} obvious question when the crimes against civilians were being discussed.

^{SPACE} He also did not mention the 55,000 British Airmen who lost their lives for the defence of freedom and also making it possible for us survivors to come to this country and rebuild our shattered lives. Also ^{the man} never said that Germany were the aggressors and nearly destroyed the free world as we knew it.

I feel sad how quickly the world forgets crimes against humanity. If 50 years on people do not want to bring into the open the painful period, and allow the crimes of the Nazis not to be mentioned, which is typical of Britain, not to offend the other side, then this is unfair to the victims. They did not want to be forgotten, and they wanted their memory to serve as a warning to the World of the Genocide.

Therefore the Yom Hashoa is imperative to take place once a year to keep the memory of the horrible era alive.

If I may mention Erica Daniels again. I think the decent people of the world would have liked not to hear her say, that the British Air Force which lost 55,000 men defending their country against the aggressor committed a crime of great magnitude.

^{But} If I suggest that Germany should vis-a-vie the Holocaust Day introduce on the same day a day called, 'The Day of Repentance' this would give the German Nation a opportunity to say to the victims, including the 55,000 airmen and their families, that what the Nazis have done, we ask our maker for forgiveness. It would give the German Nation ^{the} chance to feel better and show compassion to the victims and the survivors and the world at large.

Let Germany not miss this opportunity. It is never to late to apologise. And maybe set a pattern that if one Nation does wrong to another Nation that they are sorry and show it by word and action.

If I may give you a description of a survivor. It is a broken heart full of everlasting pain. Although my dearest wife has helped to heal a lot of the pain - all of it is impossible because the scars are to deep for them to be completely healed.

If these pains bring me close to those who perished, so be it. I don't wish to be changed.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you just a few of my inner thoughts and lift the veil for a few moments of the dreadful tragedy that befell the Jews of Europe, when six million of our finest people perished beneath the jackboots of the Third Reich.

I have so many memories. I recall so clearly and with such pain, those dark and tragic days. Days which were seared on my mind, with an indelible fire for I was yet a child barely understanding the despair, the trauma, the anguish and the destruction that struck my life, my family, my friends and all our Jewish Nation. Those were the dark and horrid days in Europe, when the light of our people flickered and was almost extinguished, and only the miracle of the great allied victory saved the remnants of European Jewry, and perhaps the Jews of all the world from Hitler's final solution, and their eventual extinction.

Should we not always read back those lessons of so many years ago and should we ever forget that only 21 miles of water separated Anglo Jewry from the same desparate fate of that of my own dear parents and loved ones. Perhaps I more than most can say 'remember and never forget' for I was really there.

My memories take me back to the days of the thirties when Jewish life in Europe was in jeopardy and all our futures were in peril.

I went to the Pardess Zionist School in Lodz at 29 Zawadzka Street. Our background our heritage and our idendity was punctuated by our teachings and I lived in a home of love and care and basked in a childhood of Jewish consideration.

Pardess School was named from the hebrew word for orchard. We were the saplings of our time. On September 1, 1939 and the invasion of Poland our orchard was destroyed, and we were cast into a world of emptiness and despair almost beyond belief.

These are my memories, and these are my tears and when Yizkor, the memorial prayer is recited, in my mind I see forever the look, the dread and fear and the hopelessness of those whso gave me life. This was the time when the spiritual resevoir of Jewish people was almost destroyed.

In January 1940 our family left Lodz as there was talk about the Ghetto being established. It was my grandfather, who lived in Staszow who send a horse and cart for us. He believed that in a small stetl - town - which consisted of 7,000 Jews and 7,000 Christians we would be safer, and he was right.

We managed to live a reasonable existence until November, 1942, although in the latter part of 1942 things began to happen, which we were fearing.

6th November 1942. Staszow was evacuated and it was one of the last places to be evacuated, but myself an uncle and a cousin went into hiding. I was seperated that day from my parents, when my father said to me, "Let's separate, in case something happens, the chances maybe better if we are not together", and how right he was. Myself and two girl cousins and their young brother were luckily taken to an ammunition factory in Kielce to work. The factory was called Hasag. I don't know for sure what happened to my parents and younger brother. I can only assume they were shot, or been sent to the Gas Chamber.

In Kielce, I worked until Autumn 1944. As the Russian army advance to the West, the Germans evacuated the factory, to Czestochova, where the Pope was born.

The factory was also an ammunition factory. It was called Chestochowiavka. There I met up with my present business partner Pinchus Kurnedz.

In January 1945 the Russians again advanced forward and after a short inactivity the Germand again did not let us go, but put us on Cattle Trains and on to Buchenwald. It took two days to reach Buchenwald - there was no water, food or any conveniences. The temperatures was below freezing.

We were so worn out that Buchenwald was something we were looking forward to. One thing stands out in my mind. Somehow I managed to keep some family photos. In Buchenwald they were taken away from me, for this I can never forgive them. I managed to get a picture of my father and mother in Israel, but sadly not of my younger brother. He was nine years old. The Nazi thugs sentenced him to death. His crime was that he was a Jew. He was innocent.

One day in Buchenwald I was taken to work in the quarry. It was a dangerous place to work. People carried big and heavy stone to the top to be loaded onto small trucks. Many, because they were undernourished, used to drop the stones and people at the bottom of the quarry as a result got hit and many injuries took place. This was disastrous.

I said to myself then I must not go to work in the quarry again. Being a young small boy with luck I managed to stay away. However, hunger was taking its toll. I was getting weaker.

1 March 1945 I was taken including Pinkie my partner to Colditz where the British Airmen were interred. I worked on the conversion of a glass factory to a munition factory. After a short time the American Army started advancing.

Again the Germans decided not to let us go but force marched us for two weeks to Terezin in Chechoslowakia. 600 of us left Colditz and only 60 arrived alive and just about. Hunger took a bit more of its toll.

In Theriesenstad we were just kept there, food rations were almost nil. One heard rumours the war is coming to an end. At this time I was so weak and getting weaker - that I am sure I was dying.

Miraculously on the 8th May as I was lying on the boards which were my bed I heard a lot of noise, and Russian music coming from accordions. Luckily I still had the faculties to realize that the Russians have arrived and that I may be free.

With my last bit of energy I managed to get downstairs, upstairs I could not walk anymore. I got outside the gates, and saw the Russian tanks, rolling on towards the Capital, Prague.

The story was that a unit went to Therisanstadt first to liberate the camp and then on to Prague. Therisanstadt became a hospital as typhoid broke out. Many of us died after the liberation, I am here to tell the story.

Jewish organisations started to make sure as all of us were orphans, instead of finishing up in Russia, that we came to England and that our identity would be preseved

The British Government gave permission for a group of 400 to come to England, not only were they generous, but they have sent 20 Lancaster Bombers, to bring us to England.

We the survivors, will never forget the British kindness, which is the hallmark of the British people. Britain can be proud of themselves and if only more nations would show the same consideration the world would be much richer.

If I may tell you a little story. Before entering the plane a Russian officer said to me "Look my boy, you are going to England. When you will join the army or the air force, and when you are asked to go and bomb Moscow, refuse I hope. Don't forget we have liberated you".

We landed in August 1945 at a Military Airfield near Newcastle. From there we were taken to Windermere in luxury Coaches. Quite a change from the cattle trucks going to Buchenwald.

We soon began to enjoy freedom, care, friendship and the British queues. These were the days of shortages in Britain, but to us it was paradise.

Next day in Windermere we were told that we shall get new suits. But first we got new underwear. We thought it was marvellous. But the suits did not arrive, so we were stuck in the chalets. After a few hours we got impatient and restless, so we decided to go outside and slowly go down to town. On top of it it started to drizzle, and I can remember people looking at us in amazement and really we did not realize that it is not suitable attire for an afternoon stroll in town.

Some boys even took bicycles which were parked in front of houses and started riding them and all this in the underwear.

Fifteen years later I read in the letter page of the Manchester Evening News a lady from Stockport wrote I would like to know what happened to the boys in the underwear and if some of them would get in touch with her she would like to see the difference and talk about the past.

I thought this was a typically sweet English lady which has always thought about us.

It is said the Holocaust has speeded up the creation of Israel, but look at what price. This is why Israel is so precious to us. Israel is our Insurance Policy, and like all good policies the premiums are high. It could well be that Israel may still prove to be so.

Yes my friends how marvellous it is to see here so many young people, who will carry the traditions, the inheritance and the dream of our people into a new and brave world, where never again will our people suffer and bleed to the point of almost extinction. Thank God we have a Jewish State.

Am Isroel Chai - The Jewish People Live!