

20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1995 PAGE 1

My Name is SALAMON RAFAEL WINOGRADZKI  
I was born in Poland on the  
14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1929 in the town of PIOTRKOW  
TRYBUNALSKI, I believe the population  
of the town was approx: 60,000 people  
Approx: One Third of the population  
were Jewish.

Trying to remember as a child of  
10yrs old, the town seemed to be quite -  
Big.

We did not live in what was known  
as the Jewish Quarter.

We lived in an apartment (of which  
my family owned the whole block of  
these apartments.) On a street called  
PIKSUDSKIEGO. which was named after  
President PIKSUDSKI, It was the main  
street of the town.

The members of my family were  
my FATHER CHIAM My MOTHER HANNA my  
2 SISTERS ESTHER AND RUTH, AND MYSELF.  
I was the Eldest of the 3 children.

My Father was a French-Polisher and  
he had his own business, in which he  
employed other people. Also our immediate  
family was in business owning a  
saw-mill in PIOTRKOW, where by they  
gave employment to a lot of people  
of the town.

We were a Middle-CLASS Family, we had a very comfortable life-style, as children we never wanted for anything.

I remember going on holidays to the lakes many times with my Family.

I went to a school which was mixed with Jews and Christians.

I remember I did enjoy my school-days, and I must have done reasonably well as my Family never complained or showed any disappointment in my school work.

I did enjoy some sport which was football in the summer and Tobogganing in the winter.

As far as Anti-Semitism at school was concerned, I did not have too much trouble as I was friendly with Jewish and Christian boys. And the only reason why I think they did not Bully or Fight with me because My Father and the Immediate Family gave work to nearly all the boys Fathers.

All this came to an abrupt end at the beginning of September 1939.

I remember our Family sitting down to lunch, when suddenly we heard the sirens-sound, and we all ran out into the courtyard we saw German planes in the sky and we heard Rifle shots.

(( And that will tell you how Poland was prepared for war, to shoot at planes with Rifles.))

From then on from what I remember it was "KAOS" as the Jewish People of the Town did not know what was going to happen to them.

The families were trying to give each other advise and support but all this was in vane.

3 months after the war had started the first Ghetto was opened.

And the whole Jewish Population of our Town PIOTRKOW was herded into this Ghetto.

The conditions in the Ghetto really deteriorated and a Typhoid-Epidemic developed.

And my Father was one of the very unfortunate victims of this terrible epidemic and he died in the year 1940-1941 APPROX.

So it was up to me as I was the eldest of the 3 children, to look after the Family the best I could.

By taking off the arm-Band, which we had to wear with the STAR of David. I managed to get in and out of the Ghetto. and we were lucky that the Polish people who had been employed by my family used to help me with getting food. But I was not always lucky in getting the food back into the Ghetto.

The reason being I was caught by the KAPO'S and beaten (the KAPO'S who were Jewish Men Policing in the Ghetto) though I did not give up trying to get food for my family. It was getting harder all the time.

In the summer of 1942 my Mother heard that the Germans were looking for workers to work in the local factory's

My Mother dressed me up in a very long Coat and put a cap on my head to make me look older. And then took me to a glass factory named "HORTENSIA" where I managed to get a job without being paid. At least I was still living with my Family in the Ghetto.

Towards the end of 1942 the Germans started rounding up many thousands of the Jews, and sending them to extermination camps. They closed down the Big Ghetto, then they opened up what we called the Small Ghetto.

(( For the next few weeks Jew's were being murdered for no reason at all, except for being Jew's ))

We who were working in the factory's felt reasonably safe, but after each day's work we were always stopped and counted to make sure that no one had escaped.

One day we were stopped coming back from work, and they made a selection and about 20 Boys including myself were taken to the Synagogue, There were many people already in in Synagogue.

(( The things that I saw happening in the Synagogue of people trying to save themselves, Even if I would describe it, I believe that you would not be able to print it ))

I am not sure how long I was in the Synagogue, I believe it was a few days but it seemed like a life-time.

The only way out of the Synagogue was to be taken to an extermination camp or taken to the Forest and shot.

We were saved by a German whose name was "Michelfried" who was a director of the factory from what I know.

Our Parents pleaded for our lives and he being a kind man, he did all that he could to save us, by explaining to the people higher up, that what we were doing was ~~more~~ important,

And that is how we were released from the Synagogue, Amongst the 20 boys that were saved were 2 of my very good friends KRULIK WILDER and HARRY SPIRO.

From what I now know the rest of the people that were in the Synagogue were taken to the forest and murdered.

In the summer of 1943 the Germans were closing the small Ghetto, and that was the last time that I saw my mother and my 2 sisters.

I was safe for the time being because I was still working in the factory.

And so were other people safe who were working in other factories in the town.

The work was very hard we had very little food, but somehow we survived.

Towards the end of 1944 the Germans closed the factory's because the Russians were getting nearer.

I was sent to "Chasiochowa" and then on to "Bucklowahy"

The weather then was freezing-cold. We were pushed into a place which looked like a large room or a warehouse, and we were stripped-naked shaven and disinfected all over.

The conditions in the camp were very very bad. And what with the very bad weather very little food, and only a very thin striped uniform for protection against the weather.

And what with having to report every morning outside in the open air and stand in this big square and be counted and then be selected for work.

I was selected to work outside the camp to clear the roads and any other rubble that was there.

In the spring of 1945 we were taken from "Bucklowahy" and put into cattle-trucks which were packed so tight that we were standing up and couldn't move.

I do not know how many thousands of people were on the transport, our journey took between 3-4 weeks, what with the freezing cold weather and no food, only a few-hundred of us survived.

Eventually we arrived in a station named "THERESIENSTADT".

And while the train was standing in the station, we heard a lot of Gun-FIRE. and when we looked out of the small barred windows, we saw men in strange uniforms who were the local Partisans.

The next day which was the 8th May 1945 we were "liberated" by the Russian Army while we were still on the cattle-tracks at the station.

For the first few weeks after "liberation" I did not know what was happening.

After 5 years of being told what to do when and how to do it, it was quite bewildering.

and then we were taken to "PRAGUE" and I stayed in a Hostel with some of the boys who were "liberated" with me.

In the middle of August 1945 we were told that we would be going to England. I believe that between 300-350 Boys and Girls came over with me to England.

In actual fact we landed in Carlisle from there we were taken to Windermere Scotland. where we were convalescing and to bring us back to being normal human beings once again.

After about 3 months we were separated into groups and sent to different parts of England. I was sent to Loughton in Essex.

While I was in the Hostel at Loughton I continued with my recuperation.

After I was there for a while I went to live in the (PRIMROSE JEWISH YOUTH CLUB)

And while I was there the committee decided that I should be taught a profession

I was taken by one of the club members to a tailors factory, to find out if he would teach me the profession.

He agreed to take me on, but he expected me to pay him for the privilege of teaching me when the club leader explained that I was a Holocaust survivor and living in the "PRIMROSE CLUB".

He then agreed to take me on and pay me £2 a week.

I progressed quite well as a TAILOR-CUTTER, and in time he increased my wages. By the time my wages reached £3-50p I had to leave the PRIMROSE-CLUB and move into lodgings, and pay for everything myself.

At the same time I was trying to live a normal life as possible by going to Jewish youth clubs and social events.

And in 1951 I met a beautiful young girl of 17 yrs. who's name is Sheila whom I liked very much and we met socially.

After a little while she asked me to meet her family, they made me very welcome and treated me like one of their children, they had 3 children already and I made the fourth child.

After about a year I proposed marriage and she accepted me, and we were married in 1954.

We lived in the East End of London and we had 3 rooms which we were renting, and things were very very hard.

After a few years we managed to buy a house in which we are still living in.

And in 1963 our beautiful daughter Karen was born.

Karen got married in 1988 and in 1992 she presented us with a beautiful grand-daughter and she gives us plenty of (NACHA'S) great joy and pleasure.

P.S. I would like to thank Ben Helgott and Knulik Wilder for encouraging me to put pen to paper.

As I still find it very painful and disturbing after all these years to talk about it.

S. R. WINOGRODZKI.