

## Rabbi Isaak Samuel, יהי"ד<sup>1</sup>, Rabbi of Norwegian Jewry\*

By

Ester Samuel-Cahn and Amos Samuel

*We would like to tell about our father, Rabbi Isaak (Julius) Samuel HJ"D, who was the Rabbi of the Norwegian Jewry. Our father was arrested by the Nazis in Norway, was imprisoned in Grini, and sent to Auschwitz, where he perished. Intertwined is the story of our own rescue.*

Our father was born in the small town of Freudenburg<sup>2</sup>, on December 19<sup>th</sup> 1902, [the 19<sup>th</sup> of the month of Kislev, 5663], son of Samuel Samuel and of Yocheved (Ida), nee Weil<sup>3</sup>. During World War I and after, 1915-1922, he studied in Trier, at the Kaiser Wilhelm Gymnasium. A philanthropist, friend of the family, sponsored his studies. After successfully completing the Matriculation Exams, he chose to devote his time to the study of Torah. He studied in several Yeshivoth<sup>4</sup>, among them the Yeshiva 'Torath Moshe' in Frankfurt am Main, where he studied during 1925. In the summer of the same year he moved to Berlin, where he started his studies as a regular student at the Hildesheimer Rabbinerseminar, from which he was ordained as a Rabbi. His Certificate of Ordinance, from the summer of 1929, is signed by Rabbi Joseph Wolgemuth and Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, and is intact, with us.

In parallel to his studies in the seminary, our father attended courses in Philosophy and Psychology at the von Humboldt University in Berlin. He joined the 'Misrachi' movement, and its faction 'Ze'irei Mizrachi' and was elected a delegate to the Zionist Congresses in Basel, in 1927, and in Zurich, in 1929.

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\* This is a translation from the Hebrew article, included in the book 'Mihaofel el Hashachar' ('From Darkness to Dawn'), which appeared on the tenth of Teveth, 5767, (2006), The General Kaddish Day.

1. יהי"ד, Hashem Jikom Damo, translated as "G-d will take revenge of his blood", a phrase added about someone who was guiltlessly killed/murdered.
2. Freudenburg – a small town near Trier, in the west of Germany, close to the Luxemburg border.
3. Our grandmother was a descendant of Rabbi Nethanel Weil, author of 'Korban Nethanel'.
4. Yeshiva – an institute for higher Talmudic learning.

In the year of 1928 the 'Weltverband Schomre Schabbos' (World-organization for the observance of Sabbath) was established, due to the initiative of Rabbi Dr. Schmuel Grunberg. Its aim was to further the Sabbath-observance in the Jewish world, and to counter-act the discrimination of Sabbath-observing Jews. Through the influence of Rabbi Grunberg, who was one of our father's teachers in the Seminary, our father accepted the task of Secretary of this movement. Under this capacity he was involved with the organizing of the World Congress of the Sabbath Observers, which was held in Berlin in the summer of 1930. The success of this congress was, to a great extent, attributed to our father.

During his stay in Berlin our father published several articles in the journal 'Zion', published by the Misrachi in Berlin, and in Judischer Rundschau. Some of his articles were published using the pseudonym 'Ben Yocheved', (son of Yocheved, his mother's name). Recently we found, in the National Library in Jerusalem, a booklet which our father published in 1928, entitled 'Die Judische Seele und die Aesthetik' (The Jewish soul and the Aesthetic). In 1930 he published a detailed article about the Sabbath, in a collection 'Hygiene und Judentum' (Hygiene and Judaism), which was published in relation to an exhibition about hygiene which took place in Dresden.

In due course our father met our mother, may she rest in peace. Our mother, Henriette-Jetty, was born in Berlin on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1907, (the 17<sup>th</sup> of Marcheshvan, 5668), to Leah (nee Wechsler) and Nathan Pollak. Her grandfather was Rabbi Pinchas Elchanan Wechsler, also known as Rabbi Hile Wechsler, from Schwabach. During the second half of the nineteenth century anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic publications were in abundance. This, and several dreams he had regarding massive anti-Semitic acts in Europe, led Rabbi Hile Wechsler to publish, in December of 1879, a booklet entitled 'Ein Wort der Manung an Israel' (A word of warning to the Jews), wherein he called upon the Jews in Europe to leave their countries of residence and move to Eretz Israel (then Palestine), before the onset of a terrible storm which might destroy them<sup>5</sup>.

Our father and mother got married in Berlin on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1930.

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5. The booklet was published in 1881. A new edition with a Hebrew translation was published in Jerusalem, by Merkas Dinur, in 1991. This edition includes an introduction and notes by Professor Rivka Hurowitz.

Already at the end of his studies at the Rabbinical Seminary our father was offered a position as a Rabbi in Oslo, the capitol of Norway, and soon after their wedding our parents settled in Oslo, where our father started his rabbinical duties. In Oslo our older brother Elchanan, in blessed memory, was born. (He passed away August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1984), Also we, Ester and Amos, were born there.

Until the year 1851 Jews were prohibited from living in Norway. That year, as a result of the efforts of the Norwegian poet Henrik Wergeland, and six years after he passed away, the prohibition was abolished by the Norwegian parliament. Slowly Jews started to settle in Norway.

When our parents came to Norway there were mainly two places where Jews were concentrated: Oslo and Trondheim. In Oslo there were two communities, the oldest was officially established in 1892. The community in Trondheim was established in 1905. Other Jews were scattered in small towns with no organized Jewish life. In Oslo there were two synagogues, which were conducted as strictly orthodox synagogues, though only few of their respective congregants were strictly observant of the Jewish laws.

During his years in office, our father tried to bring the Jewish community closer to Judaism in daily life. Often Halachic questions (questions about conduct according to Jewish laws) about matters of community life arose. In more complicated problems our father consulted his former Rabbi and Teacher, Rabbi Jacob Yechiel Weinberg, may he rest in peace. Some of Rabbi Weinberg's answers are included in the book 'Serideh Esh' ('The Remnants of the Fire'). A few years ago some of the original letters of our father to Rabbi Weinberg were found, in an archive where letters sent to Rabbi Weinberg were kept. From the letters of our father, one can get an authentic picture of Jewish life in Norway in the period prior to the Holocaust.

Shortly after his arrival to Norway, our father gained full knowledge of the Norwegian language. His sermons and lectures on Judaism and other subjects were given in Norwegian, and he also lectured on various topics to the Norwegian public in general.

Our father continued his literary work in Oslo. He published booklets on Jewish topics for use in the 'Cheder' (a school for children, on Jewish subjects) which was active in the localities of the Synagogue in the afternoons. He also published articles in 'Hatikwoh', the monthly journal of the Jewish community, and in general Norwegian outlets. He translated from Norwegian into German Henrik Wergeland's poems 'The Jew' and 'The Jewess'. (Der Jude und die Judin, Oslo, 1935.) Our father saw in Wergeland an antithesis to the Nazi anti-Semitism which spread in Germany, especially after 1933, when the Nazis took over power. In his foreword to the book, he writes that he hopes this book will be of comfort

and consolation to all those who suffer because of their faith or national belonging.

Our father was very helpful and supportive of the Zionist organizations and the 'Keren Kajemet' which were active in Norway, and our mother, may she rest in peace, was the founder of the Norwegian chapter of the women organization 'Wizo'. From many handwritten letters, which can be found in the Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, one can get a picture of our parent's contribution to the Zionist activities in Norway.

During December 1934 – January 1935 our parents went on a few weeks trip to Eretz Israel (Palestine). Our father kept a diary of the trip, which he published in Norwegian, in 'Hatikwoh'. On their trip, our parents went to Jerusalem and also visited the Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Abraham Isaak Kook, a few months before he passed away. Their base in Eretz Israel was in Haifa, in the house of our grandparents Pollak, who immigrated to Eretz Israel already in 1933, immediately after the Nazis came to power in Germany. Our grandparents urged our parents to also settle in Israel, but our father said he had commitments towards his congregation, and therefore, though aware of the situation in Europe, must return to his duties in Oslo.

During the night between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 1940, half a year after the outset of WWII, the Germans invaded Norway. The Germans were met with considerable resistance, but nevertheless Norway finally capitulated on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Nazi ideology did not take roots among the Norwegians. The Nazis, had, however, a Norwegian cooperator, namely Vidkun Quisling, who was the head of a small fascist political party, founded in 1933. During part of the German occupation of Norway, Quisling became Prime Minister, under the auspice of the Germans. After the war Quisling was sentenced to death, and the name 'Quisling' became a synonym for 'traitor'.

Approximately a year before the war, our father managed, with the help of leading Norwegians, with whom he was in close contact, to rescue his brother Ferdinand from Germany, together with the brother's wife Martha and their two children, Hannelore and Gunther, and to bring them to Norway.

The fate of the Norwegian Jewry, and also what befell us, can be seen from the testimony of our mother, may she rest in peace, in the Eichman Trial. The trial of Eichman, who was the architect of 'the final solution' and one of its main executors, commenced in Jerusalem on the tenth of April 1961. The Chief Judge was Moshe Landau. Mother testified on May 11<sup>th</sup> 1961. She was questioned by attorney Gabriel Bach. Because of her excitement, she preferred to answer in the German language, and her testimony was simultaneously translated into Hebrew.

(Below are parts of the testimony, intertwined with complimenting remarks based on our brother Elchanan's stories<sup>6</sup>, and on other sources.)

**Q.** How many Jews were living in Oslo when the Germans entered Norway in April 1940?

**A.** At that time there were 1700 Jews in Norway.

**Q.** Do you know how many lived in Oslo at that time?

**A.** In Oslo there lived about 1200.

**Q.** What was the situation of the Jews in Norway just before the entry of the Germans?

**A.** The Jews had a free unhampered life in Norway and felt at home there. They lived in good economic circumstances. There was no anti-Semitism.

**Q.** What was the situation of the Jews from 1940 until the beginning of 1942 during the German occupation?

**A.** At the beginning of the German occupation, from 1940 to 1942 the Jews lived in the illusion that in Norway, the country of Henrik Wergeland and Fridtjof Nansen<sup>7</sup>, Hitler's Jewish laws could not be applied.

**Q.** What was the first anti-Jewish measure you experienced?

**A.** At the beginning of 1942 all Jews had to have their identity cards stamped with "Jude". Some time later, the Jews had to hand in their radio sets. However, a month later, the Norwegian non-Jews also had to hand over their radios, with the exception only of members of Quisling's Norwegian Nazi Party; they were allowed to keep their radio sets.

Elchanan tells that in the beginning of the German occupation he continued to attend elementary school until all schools were closed. The reason for closing the schools was the refusal of the teachers to cooperate with the Germans, who demanded to educate the children in a pro German spirit, and use Nazi textbooks. The Nazis closed the schools also

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6. Elchanan was interviewed on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979, by Ms. Buny Gurewitz., for the 'Center for Holocaust Studies' in Brooklyn, N.Y. The tape number is OH 79-15 SuC Rg 546. Mother's testimony is indented in the text.

7. A well-known Norwegian Statesman, known for his expeditions and research of the North Pole. In year 1923, Nansen prepared, for the Association of Nations, a treaty about help to refugees.

because they needed the buildings as dwellings for the German soldiers. After the closing of the schools the teaching continued in private homes. There was a claim that the Jews were listening to the B.B.C., something prohibited by occupying power. But just a month later, also the general public had to hand in their radios. Only members of Quisling's Nazi party were allowed to keep their radios.

**Q.** Mrs. Samuel, when did you first come in contact with the Gestapo directly?

**A.** In Trondheim, the northernmost Jewish community in the world, there were about 500 Jews. The first Jewish victims died there.

**Q.** Can you tell us briefly in what circumstances this happened?

**A.** There was a curfew. One Jew returned home a little late and was shot dead on the street.

**Q.** When was your late husband first arrested by the Germans?

**A.** Shortly after the Trondheim affair it started in Oslo; all Jews named Bernstein – they were looking for a spy by the name Bernstein – had to report to the police. The physician Dr. Paul Bernstein was arrested, while the others named Bernstein were sent home. During the summer, Dr. Bernstein stayed in Naersnes, a small village in the Oslo Fjord, and the result was that all Jewish families who spent that summer in Naersnes on the Oslo Fjord had to report to the Gestapo when they returned home, among them my late husband.

**Q.** How many times was your late husband arrested after the incident?

**A.** My husband, together with the twelve men who had been in Naersnes, had to report to the Gestapo five or six times. Once my husband came home and told me he had received hints that he should disappear.

**Q,** Who gave him the hint?

**A.** One of the Gestapo officials.

Elchanan says that a Gestapo Commander asked him: “Are you still here?” [Sind Sie noch immer hier?]

**Q.** And did he listen to this suggestion, to this recommendation?

**A.** My husband said to me, as he had already repeatedly said in 1940: “I, as a Rabbi, shall not leave my community in this dangerous hour”.

Our mother probably meant the suggestion of our uncle Joshua, in blessed memory, (who passed away on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003), that we should flee

Norway and come to him to Teheran, through the Soviet Union which borders on north-east Norway. It is possible that she hinted to other suggestions of escape.

**Q.** What happened then?

**A.** The men in Oslo, among them my late husband, were again called in to the Gestapo on 2 September 1942, and did not come home again.

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**Q.** Does this mean all Jewish men in Oslo?

**A.** No. On 2 September, it involved only the men who had been in Naersnes.

**Q.** Did you find out where your husband was when he did not return?

**A.** The underground movement saw to it that the twelve families concerned were informed the same day.

**Q.** And did they inform you where your husband was?

**A.** The men were taken to Grini, the Norwegian concentration camp near Oslo.

**Q.** Did you try to see him there?

**A.** All my efforts to get a visiting permit through the Gestapo were in vain. So were the requests of the Jewish Community to let the Rabbi officiate at least on *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.

Even the application of the Jewish community to the Gestapo with such a request, and their thought that such a request had a chance of being granted, shows that still in year 1942 there was a large amount of naivety about the true character of the German occupation force..

**Q.** Did he take anything with him when he went to the Gestapo on that day, 2 September, belongings, clothes?

**A.** My husband went with the clothes he was wearing, without saying goodbye to me or the children, because we believed he would return as he had on previous occasions.

**Q.** How many children do you have?

**A.** I have 3 children.

**Q.** When did you first learn that your husband was no longer in Norway?

**A.** On 21 November Inge came to visit me ...

Here the flow of mother's story was interrupted. In an answer to a question she explained that Ingebjoerg Sletten Fosstvedt was one of the leaders of the Norwegian underground, who lived close to where we lived. Members of the underground had to operate extremely secretly in helping Jews, because if caught, they could await the death sentence.

She told me: "Last night your husband was deported to Germany, I was struggling with myself whether to call you. Perhaps this was the last time you could have seen him".

The imprisonment of father in Grini thus lasted 80 days. A Norwegian prisoner who was imprisoned in there together with our father, testifies that his conduct was "quiet and relaxed".<sup>8</sup>

**Q.** Do you also know how your husband was taken to Germany?

**A.** My husband was deported on the *Monte Rosa* on 20 November 1942, together with the other eighteen Jewish inmates of Grini.

**Q.** Mrs. Samuel, you said your husband was arrested on 2 September, together with others, with twelve persons who had been in Naersnes. When were the other Jewish men arrested in Norway?

**A.** On 26 October all Jewish men were arrested in a lightning operation.

**Presiding Judge** All the Jewish men in the whole of Norway?

**A.** The operation was meant to apply to the whole of Norway, to all Jewish men. However, thanks to the Norwegian underground movement, some went into hiding.

**State attorney Bach** Who actually made the arrests, both times, of the Jewish men in Norway?

**A.** The operation was carried out by the Norwegian police accompanied by the Germans.

There was no coordination between the Gestapo who arrested our father, and the Norwegian police who acted under the Germans. When the Jewish men were arrested, the police came to us, wanting to arrest Rabbi Julius Samuel, not knowing that he already was arrested in Grini.

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8. Stated in an article 'In Memorial', in memory of our father, written by Johan Scharffenberg, April, 29<sup>th</sup>, 1946, in the daily paper Morgenbladet, on the occasion of our (mother with us, three children) departure to Israel.

Here we have to add a few details, not included in mother's testimony: In the middle of November all men older than 65 were released from the prison Berg, where the men were imprisoned. This release aroused hope among the Norwegian Jews thinking: "if now the old men are being released, soon the others will also be released". But this optimism was short lived. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, when our brother Elchanan came back from school, mother told him that all those released from Berg were to be arrested again. Elchanan tells about this episode: "I made a list of all the old men I remembered, and I, as a child – I was a little over ten – went from one old person to another, with intention to warn him and convince him to leave home and come with me – I would explain that we had connections with the Norwegian underground -- so that he could be hidden and later brought over to Sweden. Everywhere I went, I found out that I was too late, the Germans had been there before me. In Mr. Siv's house the Germans had also been, but Mr. Siv was absent, and so he was not arrested. I waited and waited until Mr. Siv came home. I tried to convince him to come with me, but he refused. I went home and told mother to go to him, maybe she would succeed in convincing him. Just as mother came to Mr. Siv's house, he came down the stairs escorted by the police – we were too late."

**Q.** Do you know when and on what ship the Norwegian Jewish men who were arrested in October were deported?

**A.** The men were carried off to Germany together with the women and children who were arrested on 26 November 1942, and were taken straight to the ship *Donau*, with the men from the Berg camp who were arrested on 26 October.

**Presiding Judge** Which women and children were arrested? We have not yet heard of this.

**A.** On 26 November a lightning operation, similar to that against men, was carried out in Oslo at 5 o'clock in the morning.

**Q.** And the women and children were also arrested?

**A.** In this operation arrests were made especially of women and children.

**Q.** How many Jews were deported from Norway altogether?

**A.** Half the Jews of Oslo, about 750, were taken to Auschwitz. Twelve survived.

**State attorney Bach** Mrs. Samuel, did you know a man named Kai Feinberg<sup>9</sup>?

**A.** Kai Feinberg is the son of Elias Feinberg, a son of one of the most respected Jewish families in Oslo.

**Q.** Did he come back from Auschwitz?

**A.** He is one of those twelve from Auschwitz who remained alive.

**Q.** Tell me, Mrs. Samuel, what happened to the other Jews, those who were not deported and who did not hide inside Norway?

**A.** During the night of 25 to 26 November, the underground tried to warn as many Jewish persons as possible that danger was imminent and that they had to go into hiding.

**Q.** And what happened to these Jews? How did they manage to escape?

**A.** Very slowly, with the opening up of trails and with the development of political conditions, these Jews were saved by the underground movement and taken to Sweden. This was a very dangerous operation because the trails and the borders were closely watched by German guards who patrolled there.

**Q.** And what happened to you and the children?

**A.** During the night of 25 to 26 November, I received a call from Inge: "Tonight it is very cold. I advise you to cover the children well." That was enough for me. Telephone conversations were monitored. I understood the language, I understood there was danger. I woke my children and dressed them warmly.

**Q.** And what happened?

**A.** Inge came to us an hour later and transferred us, as well as my sister-in-law and her children. My brother-in-law was hospitalized for a hernia operation. As I said, my sister-in-law with her two children and I with my three children were transferred by Inge to another neighbor in a house nearby. There, however, we could stay for only one day. There were children in the house, and this Christian family was endangered. The children might tell people: We have Jews living with us. Inge took upon herself to keep us hidden.

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9. On October 10<sup>th</sup> 1960, Kai Feinberg gave a declaration to Mr. Yochanan Bein, vice-consul of the Israeli Embassy in Norway, about what happened to him during the holocaust, (Yad Vashem archives, TR 3-34). This declaration was in the hands of the judges in the Eichman trial, and their questions stemmed from it. (A more detailed testimony about his arrest by the Nazis and his stay in the various camps was given by Feinberg to an investigating Norwegian court on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1946.. This testimony is included in a protocol of various testimonies, dated May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1947. A copy of this protocol can be found in Yad Vashem. In his testimony, Feinberg mentions our father, but did not give any specifics about his death.)

We learned what happened to us that night also from another source, namely the book of a woman by the name Sigrid Helliesen Lund, who was active in the underground, and played an active role in our rescue<sup>10</sup>. In her book “Alltid Underveis” (“Always Traveling”), pages 96-97, she writes<sup>11</sup>:

“I understood immediately what it meant: It was concerning women and children. Again we had to leave our homes and act. There were many homes where we were unsuccessful in entering, but Mrs. Samuel, the wife of the Rabbi, who was the first to whom we went, was home in Melzersgate #3. She and her two older children were brought to my brother who lived in #1 of that street. I took little Amos to the two sisters Erichsen, who lived on a street crossing Colbjoernsensgate. Just as I left the entrance, a siren went off. This was an excellent method for vacating the streets of people. I ran alongside the green fence of the Swedish Embassy, (which was located on Melzersgate). A German inspection vehicle with search-lights directed towards gardens and alleys came zooming by. I lied down, with Amos underneath me, and we waited ... The light hit us, but we were not detected, and Amos was brought to safety”.

**Q.** After that day, how long did you remain in Norway?

**A.** We were housed in an empty villa outside Oslo. My son, ten years old at the time, drew back terrified on entering the house: “We cannot stay here,” he said, “there is a radio in the house, Nazis live here.” I had to calm him down and explain: “If Inge sent us here, then I am safe.”

Elchanan later said that we were told that indeed the owner of the villa was an active Nazi, but he was away in North Norway as a supervisor of the Work-Camps where the Norwegian teachers, who had refused to cooperate with the German occupation, were held as prisoners. His wife was active in the underground. Thus it seems that we were hid in a safe place.

We were five children<sup>12</sup> and two grownups<sup>13</sup>, and a staff organized by Inge kept us supplied with food and clothing. They were all Homefront<sup>14</sup> fighters who worked during the day, followed their professions, and used the nights to fight for the Homefront.

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10. As a recognition of her activities in the Norwegian underground, it was recently decided (June 2006) to posthumously recognize Mrs. Helliesen Lund as one of the “Righteous among the Nations”. Mrs. Ingebjorg Sletten Fosstvedt got this recognition already in the sixties in Jerusalem, and planted a tree in the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations.

11. Translated from the Norwegian.

**Q.** How long were you in that villa, Mrs. Samuel?

**A.** We stayed only eight days in this villa, as we had priority, because of the children, to be taken across the border as quickly as possible.

**Q.** When did you cross the border into Sweden, Mrs. Samuel?

**A.** During the night of 3 to 4 December 1942<sup>15</sup>.

**Q.** Perhaps you will only say briefly who brought you to the border and how you crossed the border.

**A.** We were a transport of forty persons in two lorries. The lorries had permission to transport potatoes.

We were split between the two lorries. Mother and we were in one lorry and Elchanan in the other. He believed that the underground purposely did not transport all members of the family in the same lorry, like: (Genesis, 32, 8) “if Esau come to the one camp and smite it, then the camp which is left shall escape”.

We had to behave like potatoes under the tarpaulins: not a word must be spoken. The children were given sleeping pills. And we were warned of danger if the lorry should stop en route. “Those will be Germans searching: not a word from you, you are potatoes.”

The papers reporting on the trial, said that upon hearing this, Eichman smiled in his glass cage.

The last stretch could not be traversed by the vehicles. We had to cross on foot with the children, in minus twenty degrees temperature.

**Q.** How old were your children, Mrs. Samuel?

**A.** My children were 3, 9 and 10 years old.

**Q.** Did the whole group reach Sweden safely?

**A.** Thank God, we managed to cross into Sweden safe and sound.

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12. The two of us, our brother Elchanan and our two cousins, Hannelore and Gunther (= Lore Frank, presently in the US, and Gerry Samuel, presently in Israel).

13. Mother and her sister-in-law, our Aunt Martha.

14. Homefront, translation from the Norwegian ‘Hjemmefronten’, is also referred to as ‘underground’ in other places.

15. First night of Hanuka.

Swedish police whom we met asked us why we stole the border. We answered that we had to escape from Norway because of the persecution of the Jews. They permitted us to go to a refugee camp in Alingsaas, east of Goeteborg, where we stayed a few days.

**Q.** Do you know how many Jews altogether reached Sweden with the help of the Norwegian underground?

**A.** About 850 Norwegian Jews were saved by the underground and taken to Sweden.

**Q.** Mrs. Samuel, did you ever hear from your husband after he had been taken to Germany?

**A.** In 1943, in January or February, I received an exchange immigration certificate to Palestine, sent to Sweden through my brothers, thanks to the help of the late Chief Rabbi Herzog, of blessed memory. I applied to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, which tried to have my husband sent to an exchange camp.

At that time, father was no longer among the living. There was also a formal application by the Swedish Government to the German authorities to release father. The Germans ignored the application.<sup>16</sup>

I used to send packages through the Red Cross and once, I believe it was in 1943, confirmation came that Reb Shemuel<sup>17</sup> had received the packet.

**Q.** Did you ever receive a letter from your husband?

**A.** I never received a letter and never heard a word. From Grini too, correspondence had been forbidden. I have a document from the Arolsen Archives saying my husband perished in Auschwitz already on 16 December 1942.

Our father perished in Auschwitz on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942 (the 8<sup>th</sup> of Tevet, 5703). The fact that he was no longer among the living reached us in the summer of 1945, while we were still in Sweden, but we found out the exact date of his death only after we came to Israel. Details about his death are based on conflicting evidence. In the documents of the Arolsen Archives, to which our mother alluded, it says: “Transported to Germany

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16. In an internal German document there exists a reference to this application, worded: “We have no intention to give the Swedish embassy a receipt of their letter, or to answer it”. (This is mentioned in the article by Leni Yachil: “Acts of rescue in Scandinavia (in Hebrew), Yad Vashem, Collection of Research about the Holocaust and the Uprising, Vol. 6, page 161.)

17. Code name” for Rabbi Samuel.

with S.S. 'Monte Rosa' on 20 November 1942. Probably gassed by the Germans. Died on 16.12.1942.”

A different testimony reached us indirectly through someone who was imprisoned with our father in Auschwitz: On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1943 a Jewish Norwegian watchmaker who reached Sachsenhausen from Auschwitz, told Odd Nansen<sup>18</sup>, a Norwegian Statesman who was imprisoned there, and was interested in the lot of the Norwegian Jews which were sent to Auschwitz, that a day when our father returned from work, he collapsed on the stairs of the barrack, and died.<sup>19</sup>

Exactly nineteen years after the death of our father in Auschwitz, on the eight of Tevet 1961, Eichman was sentenced to death by the Regional Court in Jerusalem. The sentence was carried out during the night between May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1962.

Shortly after our arrival to Sweden, we got an apartment in Stockholm. Our uncle Ludwig, in blessed memory, (passed away in Stockholm, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002) a brother of our father, who lived there already before the war, was able to obtain a permit enabling us to live in Stockholm. (Generally, refugees were not permitted to live in Stockholm.)

Most of that time period we did not know anything certain about our father. In spite of this, our mother managed to keep her spirits up: with a lot of effort our mother managed to give us, as far as possible, a regular life, and to educate us in true Torah-spirit, even though this was often involved with difficulties and arguments. Our mother, may she rest in peace, managed also to be active in social work, especially among the refugees from the camps and those rescued, from all over Europe, who came to Stockholm towards the end of World War II. She opened her home to them, even though our apartment had only two rooms (one bedroom).

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18. Odd Nansen, an architect by profession, was the son of Fridtjof Nansen. During WWII he was active in rescuing refugees from European countries, and bringing them to Norway. He was a friend of our father, and helped him in rescuing our uncle Ferdinand and his family from Germany to Norway.

19. This is told in the diary of Odd Nansen (English abbreviated translation, from the Norwegian,) “Day after Day”, page 437. The advantage of this testimony is that it is directly concerned with our father, as opposed to the Arolsen document which states ‘probably’, assuming that the fate of our father was the same as that of the others, but not based on an explicit German list of the persons gassed to death. On the other hand, one must take into account that this is an indirect testimony – Nansen telling what he heard from the watchmaker in Sachsenhausen – and not a formal testimony, told in front of a court. (The watchmaker also told Nansen that father’s brother, our uncle Ferdinand was killed in Auschwitz, which certainly is false.)

After the war mother went for a few days from Stockholm to Oslo. In the cellar of our home in Melzersgate # 3, the house where we lived before the war, our mother found the big wooden bin, where the books which belonged to us, both Jewish and secular, had been stored, together with various papers and some artifacts. She was happy to see that none of these had been harmed by the other tenants of the house. Furthermore, she found out that whatever she and our father did not manage to put into the bin before we escaped, the neighbors put there immediately after we left.<sup>20</sup>

The furniture and other items which remained in the vacated apartments of the Jews, were taken by Norwegian citizens, cooperating with the Nazis, to their own homes. Everything was carefully noted down by the officials. After the war a law was made which enabled the survivors to get back their belongings, and thus also we got our furniture back.

Shortly before *Shavuot* (Pentecost), 1946, we were privileged in coming to Israel. Here our mother succeeded in rebuilding the 'House of Samuel', and to fill it with the spirit which previously had dwelled in the home of our father and mother in Oslo.

By the initiative of leaders of Keren Kajemmet in Norway, the Jewish community planted a grove in memory of our father in the Forest of Martyrs, on way to Beth Shemesh. The place is called 'Samuel Place', and in its midst is a stone commemorating our father. It also commemorates other Norwegian Jews who perished in the Holocaust. The grove is located near the crossing to Eshtaol, left to the road leading up to Zoba and Ramat Raziel.

Mother, thank God, reached an old age. She died in Jerusalem at the age of 96, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004. She was blessed with having 20 grandchildren and over 100 great-grandchildren during her lifetime.

In the new museum of Yad Vashem, which was inaugurated in 2005, there is a showcase in memory of our father, showing a few artifacts which remained from his service as Rabbi in Oslo, and a brief summary of his activities.

In Oslo a Center for the Holocaust is just being completed. It will exhibit the deeds of the underground, and will commemorate Jewish and non-Jewish Norwegian victims of the Holocaust. The inauguration will take place this summer (2006).

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20. This is written in the original article in Hebrew. After further investigation it seems, however, that this account is inaccurate. Evidently mother and Inge went back to the apartment after we had gone to the neighbors in hiding, and carried down books, additional documents, etc. until it was dangerous to stay there any longer, and stored them in the bin. After our escape to Sweden Inge packed everything in wooden boxes and had them stored with a member of the underground.

May the soul of our father be cherished in the treasure of the living, with the souls of scores and multitudes of Jews who perished during the Holocaust.