

Abraham Gannani

Previous Name: Gartenberg

I was born on February 26th, 1923 in Boryslaw. My parents were Bella and Reuven and my siblings were Haim the eldest, Isaac and little Zisale. We lived in the Wolanka neighborhood of Boryslaw. I remember the Jewish street where we and our entire extended family lived on.

I belonged to the Gordonia youth movement. When the Second World War started I was 15 years old. One day, without any logical explanation I grabbed a box of matches, left home and boarded a train. I spent a few months in a kolkhoz and then joined Anders' Army. My entire family stayed behind. My mother and siblings fled to Russia and disappeared without a trace. My father joined the army. After the war we were able to track each other and he immigrated to Israel. Only my father and two cousins survived from our extended family. Until this day, I don't know what happened to my mother and my younger siblings. I keep thinking that they may live somewhere in the world and maybe miraculously we will reunite one day.

After joining Andres' Army, we crossed Russia in the bitter cold of winter with temperatures sometimes down to -40 degrees and then to the sweltering heat of the Iranian desert where temperatures reached +40 degrees.

In February 1943 we arrived in Eretz Israel. I left the Polish army and made my way to kibbutz Mishmar HaSharon. I lived in a secluded tent and learnt about the kibbutz life which I loved. There I also met my wife Shoshana.

In June 1946 I was arrested by the British during the Black Sabbath (or Black Saturday) operation. I was sent first to Latrun and then to Rafi'ah.

Shoshana and I married in 1948 in Jerusalem in the midst of the War of Independence. All the guests at our wedding were in uniforms and we could hear shots echoing.

We settled in kibbutz Ma'ale Ha'Hamisha where we live to this day. We are both very active in the kibbutz life. We worked in the agriculture and hospitality sectors and are proud of our wonderful family: three daughters, eight grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren.

Four generations in a kibbutz in Israel stemming from a young boy who left his home in Poland at the age of 15.

This year we celebrated in good health my 93rd birthday and my dear wife's Shoshana 88th birthday.

Today, I Abraham Gannani, am lighting a memorial candle

To the memory of a big and extended family, part of the magnificent Jewish community of the city Boryslaw which numbered 20,000. Most of them were murdered, starved and humiliated, unable to defend themselves by the Nazis and their helpers, for no other reason, but because they were Jews.

I swear that I will never step on Polish soil which is soaked with the blood of my mother and my brothers.

I dedicate this candle to the memory of my dear mother Bella and my three siblings Isaac, Haim and little Zisale.

Abraham Gannani

Holocaust Remembrance Day, 2016