

B'NAI GOMBIN

Newsletter of the Gombin Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society

ISSUE 12, APRIL 2000

EDITOR: NOAM LUPU

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The Gombin Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society (GJHGS) is a non-profit organization (EIN 33-0762680) that seeks to educate the public about the history and genealogy of the Jews of Gombin. To achieve this goal, the GJHGS collects and publishes relevant materials, encourages historical and genealogical research, and undertakes activities aimed at preserving documents and relics of the culture and history of Jewish Gombin. *B'nai Gombin* is the newsletter of the GJHGS. Everything published in *B'nai Gombin* is meant to provide information for Gombiners and their descendants. Articles, stories, poems, or other genres about Jewish genealogy, Poland, Gombin, or other subjects of interest to Gombiners submitted, may be published in *B'nai Gombin*. The views and opinions expressed in *B'nai Gombin* are not necessarily those of the Gombin Society. For further information or to receive back issues, contact the Gombin Society (GJHGS) by mail at P.O. Box 503052, San Diego, CA 92150, by fax at (925) 274-0927, by e-mail at NoLupu98@aol.com, or by phone: Mindy Prosperi, President, at (914) 928-8211 or Noam Lupu, Secretary, at (925) 930-6588. Visit our website at <<http://www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/gombin/gombin.html>>.

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ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Gombin Jewish Historical and Genealogical Society is a nonprofit organization, open to all people, from all over the world, who have an interest in Gombin Jewish history and genealogy. The goals of the Gombin Society are to:

- Educate the public about the history of the Gombin Jewish community and the genealogy of the Jews of Gombin.
- Collect, teach, disseminate, and publish knowledge and information on the history of the Gombin Jewish community and the genealogy of the Jews of Gombin.
- Encourage all interested persons to pursue historical and genealogical research focused on the Gombin Jewish community.
- Undertake activities aimed at protecting, preserving, and restoring vital records, documents, and physical relics and landmarks of the culture and history of the Gombin Jews.
- Undertake activities to preserve the memory of the Gombin Jews who perished in the Holocaust.
- Assist the activities of all other organizations whose objectives are related to the preservation of the heritage of the Jews of Gombin.

B'nai Gombin is the newsletter of the Gombin Society (GJHGS). Its main purposes are to inform Gombiners of projects and activities of interest to them, as well as to share experiences and writings. Any articles, stories, poems, or other genres may be submitted for publishing. The views and opinions expressed in *B'nai Gombin* are not necessarily those of the Gombin Society. For back issues, contact Noam Lupu at the Gombin Society's address.

Gombin also has a website at <http://www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/gombin/gombin.html> including information about Gombin's history, the Holocaust in Gombin, the Gombin Society, the Mailing List, *B'nai Gombin* and more.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I have long been aware that the generation of those who witnessed the atrocities of the Holocaust is dwindling with each coming year. The realization has been a driving force in my personal involvement not only in the Gombin Society, but in the perpetuation of Holocaust memory as a whole. Because I know that with them survivors of the Holocaust will take so many unshared memories, their passing is painful.

For me, it is even more difficult to cope with the passing of a Gombiner Holocaust survivor—not only a witness to the Holocaust and a link to Gombin's past, but a member of our worldwide Gombiner family.

I refer to the recent passing of Bela Boll, z"l a survivor of the Holocaust and outspoken supporter of our organization and our projects.

I will never forget that first time I met Bela, nearly four years ago at our first summer meeting. With my hand in hers as I sat beside her, she told me about Gombin.

"Laks! Of course I remember Laks! They had a bakery, delicious pastries." She could have continued for hours. Her enthusiasm and glowing vivacity were more than beautiful, they were inspiring.

Though I saw Bela several times after our first encounter, each time so happy to receive a kiss from that radiant smile, I will always remember her as I first saw her that August afternoon. Her memory will forever inspire me to love life and celebrate it as she did.

Goodbye, Bela.

I will miss you.

Noam Lupu

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Gombiner Family & Friends,

To every season there is change. And this season is no different. We have seen our friend Leon Zamosc leave the Board of Directors and we have seen our friends Bernie Guyer, Marty Guyer and Gail Solomon join our Board of Directors. To Leon, thank you for all your efforts. With your guidance and extremely hard work we have accomplished an unbelievable amount. We know you had to put aside many other projects that now demand your attention. However, we let you leave our Board reluctantly. Please promise us you'll stay close at hand. To Bernie, Marty, and Gail we wish you a hearty "welcome aboard." We are so pleased to add your ideas and your passions to our future.

During this time of change, we have sadly also seen another change within our group. Recently, we have mourned the death of Bela Boll, the wife of Raymond Boll, President of the Gombiner Young Men of New Jersey. Bela was not only the "First Lady" of the Gombiner Society, she was a beautiful person. I have known Bela my entire life. . . for that I am the lucky one. She was always so sweet, kind and caring. All the horror that she had to see in her past never penetrated into her being. To myself, and many others, she was an angel long before now. It is easy to understand why Raymond always treated her like one. To the entire Boll family, we extend our condolences on the loss of your wife, mother and grandmother, Bela Boll, z"l. In her memory, the Gombin Society is having a plaque made and will present it to the Boll family upon completion.

I recently had an opportunity to see a "tease" of the Back to Gombin film. In it I saw Bela proclaiming our victory over Hitler. A great piece of film. It reminds me again of how glad I am that we are a part of the "Back to Gombin" film being produced by Minna Packer. Without that footage, that piece of Bela and of our history would be lost to us forever. I urge you, if you have not yet participated in this project—either by being filmed and sharing your story or by donating to keep the project moving forward—do so now.

The Chelmno monument, the cemetery restoration, the "Back to Gombin" film. . . These are just the beginning. There is more for us to do. . . and we must do it. But we need your assistance. Each and every one of you reading this newsletter. Until this time, we did not require anything for membership to the Gombin Society except to acknowledge yourself as part of our Society. And we wish it could remain that way but it cannot. We cannot continue to send out quarterly newsletters to over 300 families around the world as well as initiate and fund the projects that you will read about in this newsletter without a stream of income. I urge each and every one of you to read the membership form enclosed and act now (see page 10)! Please send your dues and keep us going. Enough said.

In this issue you will have the honor of reading from the memoirs of another great Gombiner, Meir Holtzman, z"l. His daughter Ada has painstakingly completed the work of her late father and published his memoirs. What a thrill for all of us. Now Ada, I can only hope for an English translation of the complete works. In the meantime, included in this issue is a start.

Please stay with us and help us do it all. In the meantime, here's wishing each of you a happy and peaceful Passover. May it ensure each of us another year of freedom and happiness.

Best Wishes,

Mindy S. Prosperi, President

MEIR HOLTZMAN MEMOIR EXCERPTS

My Childhood

My memory reaches the very early age of 4-5 years old. The event which was engraved in my memory was the Hebrew kindergarten where we fell in love with Hebrew, pronounced with the Ashkenazi accent.

One late afternoon I remember myself sitting on the stone stairway in front of my mother's grocery shop when I saw the children return from the Hebrew kindergarten, teasing me for not being in their class. When I heard this, I entered the shop, fell on the ground and kicked all over, screaming "I too want to join the Hebrew kindergarten!" From this outburst, the glass door smashed and until this very day I hear the sound of thousands of pieces of glass breaking down. . . Needless to mention that on the following day I was walking proudly also, stepping into the Jewish kindergarten. . .

A second picture which stands clearly in my memory is a pogrom parade done by the "Hellerziks" (followers of the extremist anti-Semite Polish General Heller). A horrible noise echoed from the street: "death to the Jews!" The gang was notorious for abusing the Jews, cutting beards and wigs, catching and torturing helpless Jews without ever being brought to justice. This was how it was also in Gombin. I remember hiding in a small yard near the house until the storm blew over. The incident happened before Passover. In a stable at the yard, we fattened goose for the Holiday. There was also a lamb, which I embraced strongly from fear. The incident passed without injuries but all Jewish property which stood on their way was destroyed.

The Hebrew School

From the Hebrew kindergarten we moved to the Hebrew school, founded by "Tarbut" in Gombin. I remember the following unforgettable teachers: Gurzalka, Varhaftic, Londinski, Chaja, Kalmus,

Perelgritz and Rembaum.

During the breaks we used to go and visit the ropes spun yarn at the Freedmans'. We were enthusiastic about the colorful ropes, a real piece of art. The son of Freedman was my late friend, Yerucham Freedman from Kibbutz Beit Alpha who died in Israel and Shalom Freedman who is still alive and whom I met recently in the remembrance gathering at Beit Gombin.

We often spent a lot of time near the shop of the Pole Ledzon. There were two black menacing dogs the size of a calf. The mother's name was Duga and her youngest son was Temerik. They were our friends and we shared our daily meals from home with them. Ledzon had a son who was a pilot in the Polish army and when he flew over the town of Gombin, the people knew that Ledzon salutes the people of Gombin.

The Hebrew school crystallized our love for Eretz Israel and Zionism. I remember the food given to us by the Joint right after World War I and our Zionist education. I remember, as if it happened yesterday, the sad notice we got of the death of Max Nordau, a famous Zionist leader. The study stopped and a very impressive memorial gathering took place. The ceremony is well remembered and it enhanced our spiritual identification with the Zionist cause.

When the Hebrew school "Tarbut" was closed due to lack of resources, we moved to an elementary school (3rd grade) and parallel to this we studied in the cheder of Agudat Israel in Gombin. Our teacher was Rabbi Noach Gedalia Shlang, a brilliant, clever Jew. For the "Pshetel" (study for the Bar Mitzvah), I was taught by another teacher, Reb Moshe.

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Bakeries (from the chapter Shtetl Folklore)

There were few bakeries of the Jews, among them Godel Rogorzinski who was named "Godel Beker" and of the Ettingers.

From each bakery spreads to the distances the smell of a baked paste in all sorts of tastes. The *balabuste* (housewives) were linked to one bakery, got used to the taste, and persisted as customers for many years of the same bakery.

On Saturday, after the prayer you saw the children bringing home chulent (a traditional Sabbath dish) which on Friday was brought to the baker. Chulent was a masterpiece, special to every woman. The basic ingredient was potatoes, beets, "kishke", etc. to which were added all parts of meat and in the end had a taste of paradise...

I remember a story, and even now, after 70 years, I shall not mention the names of the people involved: Even the "Epikores" (Epicurean, skeptic) of the Bund loved the chulent dish and participated in the general celebration. The story goes that in taking out the chulent from a certain bakery, the pots were mixed by error, and the Rabbi received the dish of one of the Bund's leader in town. When they opened the pot, here was a young foot of a pig inside it. . . It is hard for me to remember how this public scandal ended. . .

Velvek Friedland, z"l

The Friedland family had a leather shop and was considered a well-off family. I visited them often. Velvek was my best friend. His mother was a very pleasant and cultured woman. There were only two children, a rare thing at those days when every family was very large.

Velvek studied and was a refined, educated, clever young man with a lot of charm. He had a romantic soul and was a truthful friend to those who knew him. We shared endless heart-to-heart intellectual conversations and we were partners in searching the new ways and answers to our personal and Jewish distresses.

Velvek joined the Shomer Hatzair at a relatively

old age and we considered his joining a great achievement. He immediately became one of the leaders and contributed a lot to its educational and organizational activities.

His family was Zionist, but like so many others, did not consider seriously aliyah (emigration to Eretz Israel), being a well-established and rooted family in Gombin without the slightest inclination of what would soon happen.

The decision of Velvek for *hagshama* (fulfillment of the Zionist ideal by immigration to Eretz Israel) gradually materialized. He left for *hachshara* (preparatory kibbutz) in Kalisz and worked very hard in the flour mill there. He contributed a lot to the cultural activities and life of the kibbutz members there.

When I left for Palestine in July 1939, Velvek was also in the last preparatory phase of his own immigration. But the war caught him in Gombin. From stories of survivors I learned that he run away to the Russian part of Poland in Bialystok. There he was united with his beloved wife Blumka. They both perished and circumstances of their disappearance were never found out.

I mourn you, my good friend Velvek Friedland. . . You were killed before your time. For no reason, before emigrating to Eretz Israel. You were shining like a beautiful star over the community of Gombin and your light was extinguished, as millions of others, by the hands of the German murderers. I have always kept the memory of this fine boy, whose dream did not materialize and who did not arrive to the beloved land of our renewed State of Israel.

■
excerpts from "Meir Holtzman"
translated from Hebrew by Ada Holtzman

BELA BOLL, Z"l

1916-2000

My Mother's Most Miraculous Life

My mother led a most miraculous life — a life full of miracles. Necessary miracles without which I would not be here today speaking to you or be the person I am. But the source of these miracles did not solely come from a power from on high. Rather they were enabled by the strength and determination that burned within her.

Rushing back from Florida, my brother Benny brought back a picture of my mother when she was 16 years old in 1932 Gombin, Poland. It's a beautiful picture showing a young woman in the full bloom of her youth. And what an interesting pose she struck before the camera. Her body was slightly angled, but looking over her right shoulder, she squarely faced the camera. Both her hands were pressed together up against one side of her face. She appeared calm, serene and confident - in short, ready to meet and transcend all the obstacles that life would place before her — obstacles before which many others would perish. But the most striking aspect of the picture were her eyes. They demanded your attention, they were riveting in their intensity. They provided a glimpse into the reservoir of strength that resided within her.

The specialness about her was readily apparent to anybody who knew her. It was a special something that would engage even perfect strangers in warm conversation or spontaneous acts of generosity. These past few years, my father hired a succession of house aids to assist him in her care. Without exception each of them developed a strong, almost daughter-like affection toward her. Her smile was more than skin-deep — it came from the deep within and was genuine, sincere and authentic.

This coming February 14th, Valentine's day, would have been my parents' 63rd anniversary, a

number which in this day and age is astronomical in its magnitude. They were as totally in love and devoted to one another on their last day together as they were on their first. Each night when he put her to bed, my father gave her 4 kisses — left side, right side, front and back. Of all the people here today, my father will miss her the most.

What of the miracles I alluded to earlier?

The most dramatic and preternatural miracle was a dream my mother had before the outbreak of World War II. In it her deceased Uncle Simcha Beenim appeared before her and told her to take her loved ones and flee, for a great danger loomed before them. Shortly thereafter they fled into Russia where they survived the war. Another miracle was surviving the war in Russia amidst unspeakably horrid conditions. My older brother's survival as an infant during this period was a testament to my mother's strength — she breast fed him for 5 long years and he survived in a time and place where many adults, let alone infants, did not. Three years ago my mother made a kind of recovery from death's doorstep which defines the word "miracle." Deep in the throes of a biologically induced profound depression, she withered to a scant 70 pounds; was listless, lifeless and disoriented. But with help of family — especially the tireless efforts of my brother Ronny — decisive medical intervention, and her own indomitable will to survive, she staged a complete recovery over time.

But to my mind the most remarkable miracle was that she lived through humanity's darkest hour — the Holocaust — and emerged as an intact, caring and loving person. During that period she saw unspeakable tragedies, endured horrid conditions and suffered immeasurable family loss. Yet she came through on the other side as a wife and mother, a complete human being capable of re-

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ceiving and giving boundless love from her family. There was a Yiddish saying she would often recite which captured the essence of her philosophy — *Überkimmen mit Shrek* — that essentially means “to live through it and suffer only fear.” That dark period in history left many survivors scarred, unable to shake the demons, which impaired their lives. But my mother experienced, absorbed, grieved, honored and remembered it all. And then went on with the rest of her life as wife, mother, grandmother and shining light to the rest of us.

Her life was an exemplary lesson for all of us here today.

Harold Boll

from eulogy delivered January 20, 2000

Grandmother

My grandmother's eyes are young. They are clear and blue, and when you feel the warmth of their welcome you would never guess what they have seen. The soft wrinkles of her face show her age, but do not betray her beauty. I look at photos of her in her twenties, forties, and she is radiant and youthful. Her hair is wavy-curly like mine, and I seem to have inherited the curve of her chin. If you were to glance at her now, in her wheelchair, you would be deceived by her smallness. Her fighting spirit is much larger than she is. My grandfather sits by her side, where he has been for over sixty years. Their relationship is the only hope I have that a marriage can possibly last a lifetime.

Bela and Raymond were married on February 14th, 1937 in Gombin, Poland. It was a proper Jewish wedding underneath a canopy in the bride's hometown. In observance of the *shevabrucha* (seven days of celebration) there was a party every night for a week. When they came to America, a war and three pregnancies later, Bela was surprised at how everyone celebrated their anniversary. Cards and big red hearts, it was Valentine's Day. A won-

derful coincidence.

Dana Boll

from eulogy delivered January 20, 2000

I am deeply saddened by the loss of your beloved mother and send you all my condolences. As I experienced myself not too long ago, the pain for losing one parent is never really healed. Be strong and may you never grieve again.

Ada Holtzman

My aunt Bela was a very special lady. At the funeral, Harold and his brother Ronny and two of her five grandchildren spoke about my aunt who always had kind words about everyone. The Rabbi compared my Tanta Bela to Miriam, and how Miriam digs wells wherever she went. So too did Bela dig wells so that all would be nourished. I will miss my Tanta Bela.

Gail Salomon

I only knew Bela briefly, but she touched me with her infinite wisdom, humor and towering strength.

Minna Packer

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

BENEFIT DINNER REPORT

The benefit dinner held on March 7 at the Cornelia Street Café in New York City was a splendid event.

For many of us it was a reunion with friends and Gombiners who traveled to Poland together in August 1999. In addition many of us brought some or all of our children, bringing the third generation into the fray in larger numbers. The food was delicious and the company exquisite. I only wish more of us could have been there.

After dinner, presented beautifully by the hosts of the café (including a menu entitled "Back to Gombin," we made our way downstairs to the theater. Presentations were enjoyed, including a reading from *Last Dance at the Hotel Kempinsky*, by Robin Hirsch; *Isaac*, a monologue from Anna Deaveare-Smith's "Fires in the Mirror" about a designated survivor whose duty it was to survive to tell the horrid tales performed by Stacie Lents; and an original humorous monologue from *The Jet Lag Show* performed by Israeli actress Ayelet Ron that teaches us how to cry. Great speeches were given by our very own Noam Lupu and Menachem Rosensaft (whose father Yosele Rosensaft was a brave leader of the postwar Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp and who my father, Michael, held on his lap in Germany).

Of course, I presented excerpts from the documentary in progress, including a few of the British interviews, with admittedly funny out takes from Jeremy Freedman (for example when Yedidya, the son of Rabbi Yehoshua, borrows Jeremy's glass of scotch and swallows it all for the camera), a lovely excerpt from Lawrence Guyer taped in Plock and an interview with Jeffrey Greenwood. I showed a piece of the work that was edited by Harry Kafka including, among others, Bela and Raymond Boll on tape. Especially pleasurable was the music of the young Shlomo Carlabach musicians who

played beautifully with a *Yiddishe neshuma*. A very special addition to the event were the enlarged photographs of Poland in black and white by Marianne Galway, still photographer on this project. We have now secured other prominent New York City venues in which to show them, potentially including a university in the city.

The next steps for the documentary are to: 1) finish the remaining shoots of Gombiner survivors and their children; create digital copies of all originals and submit to an officer in the society as an archive, 2) finish transferring remaining footage, 3) compile the photographs to be animated in the documentary and process, work with editor Harry Kafka and develop a rough cut, and 4) submit a rough cut to Dick Hyman (musical arranger) for orchestration and instrumentation. This will include the rental of a professional sound studio and assembly of a small orchestra to perform the works in unison to the film.

Future goals include transferring the completed video to 16mm film for exposure at international festivals. This will entail travel and could be costly so for this purpose I am now writing grant proposals to nonprofit foundations.

We hope that this work will become a major educational tool. I hope it will be successful on an aesthetic level as well as.

There is still lots of work to be done. I am proud to be the one to do it. It is my focus and desire to make this a far reaching and powerful testimony of our people.

Thank you to all who attended the benefit, all who donated now and before to this worthy project, and everyone who helped to make it such a very special occasion.

■
Minna Packer

producer/director, "Back to Gombin"

THE LAST SHTETL IN EUROPE

My older brother Victor and I were born in a Displaced Persons Camp in Torino, Italy after the Holocaust was over. DP camps were organized by the Allies to house approximately 250,000 Jewish survivors until they could decide what to do with them. They were located in Germany, Austria, France, Italy and Sweden. My parents met in a DP camp in Austria where they got married. Neither of them had any desire to live in Poland again, so they decided to emigrate to what was then Palestine. The Bricha, a secret Jewish organization from Palestine, helped smuggle them and many more "surviving remnants" across mountain borders into Italy to DP camps while they awaited transport to Palestine.

DP camps were in many ways the last shtetl in Europe. They were waystations for Jews who had endured incredible suffering and loss, to recover from the horrors of concentration camps, hiding in cellars, secret identities, and flights into Russia. In 1947 when the war of Independence for a Jewish State broke out, my parents decided they could not face another war. Eventually we emigrated to New York City.

As children of survivors, our small black and white photos depicting life in the DP camps were our only link to Europe. We had no other family photos of relatives because they were all destroyed during the war. Mom later labeled these photos in our family album with arrows stating, "Dad holding Rochelle in nursery school," "Dad and Victor," "Mom and Rochelle," "Dad pushing carriage" (along with hundred of other parents) to march for a Jewish state. This labeling ensured that we would always know "what was what."

To this day, whenever I enter a Jewish home, if there are framed photos of relatives hanging on walls or displayed on side tables—old photos of Orthodox Rabbis, women wearing wigs, girls with long-sleeved dresses and boys wearing skullcaps

and side curls—I stare into their faces to see if perhaps my relatives might have looked like that. I try to recapture a part of my family in them.

When my daughter Nicole was born, I marveled at how my parents danced around her, their first grandchild. They treated her like gold. I watched with childlike eyes something very new to me. I never knew that kind of love. Never experienced it firsthand. Never felt what it was like to have grandparents hold me in their arms. My brothers and sisters doted on her (aunts and uncles, what was that?) and Nicole became the family's center. A whole new world of relatives opened up to me. So this is what it would have been like to have them.

As a child, I was always particularly interested in the way Mom described her mother, after whom I am named. "Each morning she would get up, do her toilet, put on her blond wig and dress for the day. She was a perfect lady." Mom idolized her mother. I wanted Mom to say "your grandmother did this or that," but she never referred to her in that way, only as her mother. There was a void in my heart. I felt so connected to her.

In Washington, D.C. this January, at the "Life Reborn" conference on DP camps, I found myself wondering what my grandmother would wear to the conference or dinner of how she would have related with people. I opened the closet door and selected a grey sweater and a long, navy wool skirt. After dressing, I looked into the mirror. I could see my grandmother's face smiling back at me. She was happy. We had finally found each other. She was inside me all this time.

■
Rochelle Weithorn
second-generation Gombiner

NEW MEMBERSHIP POLICIES

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On February 13, the Board of Directors held its annual meeting in Cranford, New Jersey and discussed, among other topics, the issue of sponsorship income and the future of the Society's funds. Treasurer Steve Tadelis reported that at the current rate of the flow of sponsorship donations, we will not be able to continue publishing and distributing our quarterly newsletter to the over 300 families worldwide who currently receive it.

Therefore, the Board of Directors has reluctantly voted to change its policy regarding sponsorships and the distribution of *B'nai Gombin*. After this issue (April 2000), future issues of *B'nai Gombin* will only be sent to donating members of the Gombin Society. The annual membership dues will be \$36 for members within the US (\$10 for students) and \$18 for International membership. Annual membership to the Gombin Society, which will still be tax-deductible, will ensure receipt of all four issues of the newsletter of that year. Those Gombiners on our mailing list who do not become members will receive one issue per year so that we can keep them informed at the very least of the activities and projects of the Gombin Society.

Included within this newsletter is a membership slip for annual membership dues to the Gombin Society. We believe that our membership amounts are not beyond the means of our readers and hope that you will all consider it a part of every Gombiner's responsibility to the memory of Jewish Gombin.

Without your membership support, we cannot continue our important projects for the memory and for the historical documentation of Jewish Gombin for future generations. Without your support, we will not be able to hold future meetings, plan future trips and take on new memorial initiatives. Most importantly, without your support, we will not be able to perpetuate our community of Gombiners worldwide, linked by our common Gombiner heritage and by this Gombin Society.

Please send in the enclosed membership slip with your tax-deductible check to the Gombin Society as soon as possible. Ensure that you will continue to receive all four issues of *B'nai Gombin* and ensure that Jewish Gombin is never forgotten. We cannot do it without you!

GOMBINAMES PROJECT

"And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." – Isaiah 56:5

The GombiNames Project, headed by Ada Holtzman, is the Gombin Society's newest project with the aim of compiling the names of all the Jewish Gombiner Holocaust victims. The aim is commemoration and remembrance. We shall have the list of the Shoah martyrs of Gombin, so that the extent of Nazi crimes in Gombin will be forever evidenced. We shall have the list so that our family members who "perished without traces" will

be remembered – every baby and every old man... We shall remember them all!

Please send in the enclosed form (Yad Vashem's "Daf Ed") for every known Holocaust victim in your family, to Ada Holtzman at the address shown. We will send our completed list to Yad Vashem's archives after completion of the GombiNames project. Help us remember them so that future generations will never forget.

MAY 2: HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOMBIN SOCIETY

*Break down again, songs, break down
into pure melody, wind's way,
history sung in leaves almost lost,
atoms of singing darkness, the meanings,
the wailing songs of the Holocaust,
themselves dying, returning with spring, the bleeding
notes, break down, break down again, my songs.*

—from *My Holocaust Songs*
by William Heyen (1940-)

Dear Gombiners and Gombiner descendants,

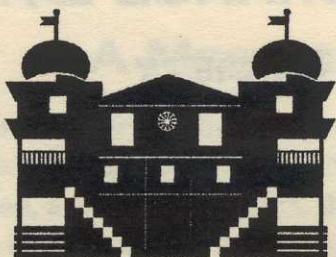
In about a month, the world will commemorate the terrors and the tragedies of the Holocaust on *Yom Hashoah*, Holocaust Remembrance Day, which this year falls on May 2nd. On that day, Jews around the world will remember the six million murdered at the hands of the Nazis, reciting memorial prayers and vowing to never forget.

It is also around this time that we Gombiners commemorate the anniversary of the destruction of the Gombin Jewish community in the Spring of 1942, its liquidation to Chelmno and its extermination in the gas vans. On this day of remembrance, this 58th anniversary for Gombin, we urge you to pause and remember the over two thousand Gombiners—men, women and children—gassed and burned at Chelmno. Remembering them must not only be one of the main objectives of this society, but must be an objective for each and every Gombiner household.

Please light a memorial candle and say a prayer for the Gombiner Jews whose lives were cut short. Talk to your children about the victims of the Holocaust, about Gombin and its destruction. Show them the Gombin Yizkor book, tell them about their grandparents and great-grandparents, dig out your family photographs. If you have access to a computer, we urge you to visit our website, which constantly grows to include more information and photographs about the Gombin Jewish community that was. Our site also has links to other websites with even more information about the Holocaust, Gombin, Poland, genealogy and the importance of memory. The Jewish Gombin website can be accessed at <<http://www.jewishgen.org/gombin/gombin.html>>.

As we recognize the importance of the mission to remember, please keep in mind the incredible efforts and achievements of this society. Please continue to show your support for this newsletter and the society in this membership campaign. Without your continued support, we cannot continue our mission to remember Gombin through education and important memorial projects.

Board of Directors,
The Gombin Society, GJHGS



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