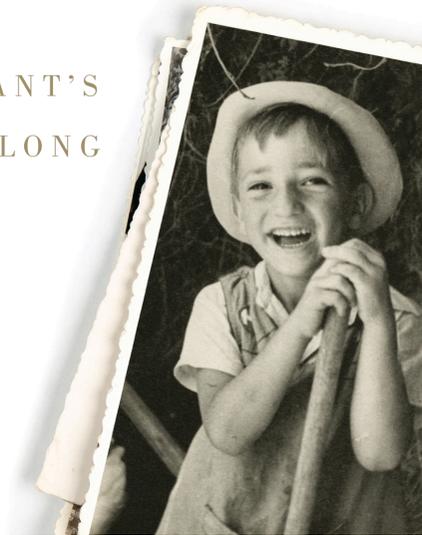


Life with an Accent

ONE IMMIGRANT'S
QUEST TO BELONG

Marilyn
Gottlieb



Life with an Accent is based upon the memories of my

husband,

Frank J. Levy

and dedicated to:

Frank's Grandma, Alice Hamburger Levy, who was born in
Aschaffenburg, Germany, and who later reunited her two
sons and their families in America after WWII

and

Lou Ann Walker, my mentor and friend, without whom this
book would never have been written

and

The next generation, especially our eight grandchildren:
Margalit, Eliana, Yoni, Julia, Charlotte, Theo, Benjamin
and Annabelle.

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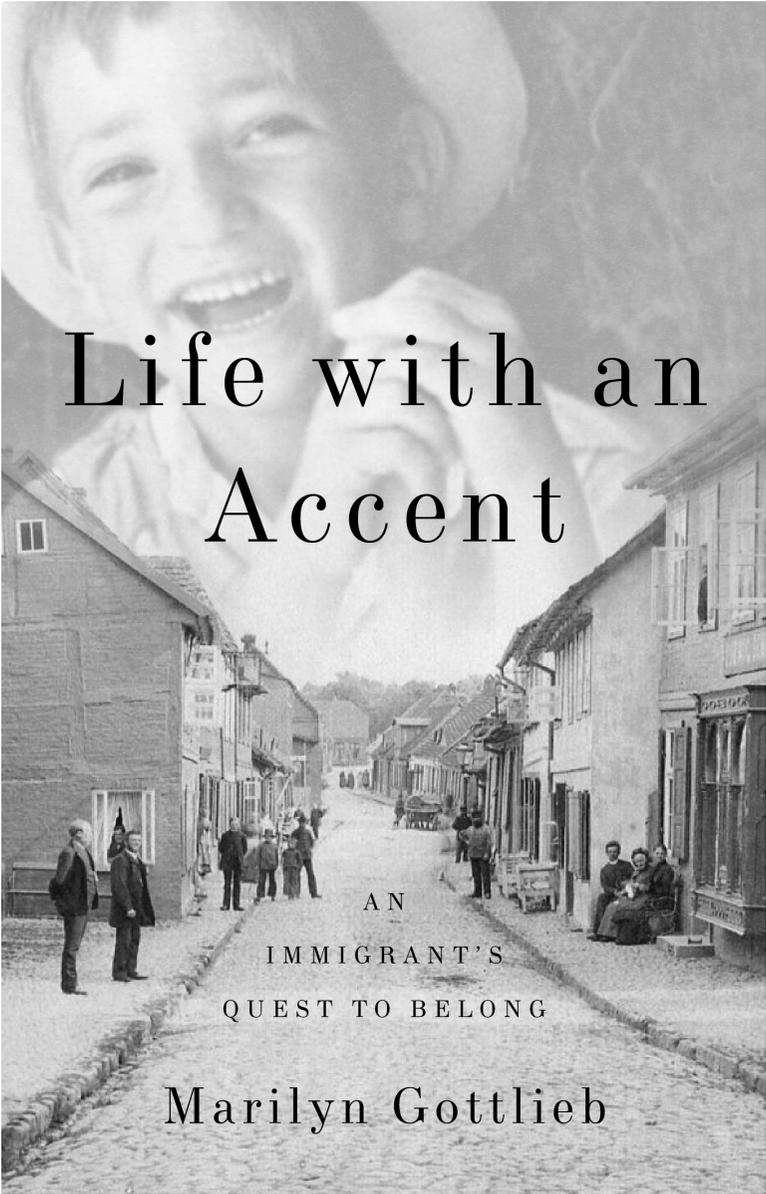
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Life with an Accent

AN
IMMIGRANT'S
QUEST TO BELONG

Marilyn Gottlieb

“Where are you from?” Gorbachev asked
Frank.

“Where are you really from?”

Prologue: The Hamptons, 2008

We live in the Hamptons now, in a small safe haven on the South Shore of Long Island. But if you ask my husband where he's from, he'll tell you, with his distinctive intonation: "I'm half from Germany, half from the British Mandate of Palestine and half from America." I know it doesn't compute, but Frank's life has always been bigger than the whole.

Frank Berthold Jacob Levy was born a Jew in Berlin on November 3, 1933, the year Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany, almost three years before Frank moved to Palestine, 12 years before he immigrated to America, 48 years before cancer claimed his first wife and 50 years before his textile machinery business moved to China.

1933 was 57 years before we married and 75 years before Frank traveled to the European Parliament in Brussels where Mrs. Maneka Gandhi presented him with the 2008 World ENERGY GLOBE Award on behalf of the United States.

That's a lot to absorb, a lot of markers in the life of a man used to starting over, searching for a way to survive, yearning to belong.

And me, the All-American woman Frank married? I was born in New York on December 2, 1942, three years before the end of WWII. I followed fashion, not history. In high school I was the drum majorette leading the band, high stepping across the football field with a tall blue hat on my head, a whistle in my mouth and a baton in my hand. Growing up I was more familiar with Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan and the Beatles than The League of Nations or the establishment of the State of Israel.

Being Jewish meant dinner with the family for the New Year and Passover. What I knew about the Middle East I learned from watching Paul Newman in the film, *Exodus*. I went to a “good” college, married the day after I graduated, divorced two sons later and built a communications career in the world of advertising. I lived in Westchester most of my life. I never thought about belonging.

When I married Frank, I fell into a history book. I wanted to know his story, to share his memories even if they differed from information available elsewhere. I became aware of the effects world events have upon our lives. I accompanied him to Germany, though I don’t like the sound of the German language, am pained by the country’s history and am wary of its older citizens.

My husband is different. He likes everyone, including the elderly residents of Crivitz, Germany, where his grandfather lived until the Nazis took over. While there I watched Frank put his arm around the town historian’s shoulder, as he is prone to do when making a point, engaging a stranger, pulling him into Frank’s special world. I did not realize Frank would become friends with Dr. Fritz Rohde. I could not entertain the idea that Nazi actions had affected both their lives and I thought: *This man might have helped the Germans kill Frank’s relatives. How can Frank be so nice?*

It was not the first time our opposing viewpoints collided. For years Frank has been assembling letters, photos, old plane tickets, coins, a Boy Scout badge, an old blanket, a swimming trophy and other keepsakes to make sense of his life. I thought of it as a sweet hobby to be shared with his grandchildren. Then my niece, Melissa, interviewed Frank for a college assignment. Her paper inspired me to learn more.

Frank reminisced. I listened. As he spoke, I took notes, asked questions, and verified facts online. Some checked out. Others seemed to have been created in his heart. I developed a renewed interest in his friends from around the world. When planning a trip, instead of flipping through travel books, I matched Frank's recollections to historical events in places we visited. Each excursion unleashed a flood of details long buried beneath the routine of everyday life. I collected so many they spilled into a book: This book.

Part I
Under The Radar of War
1933-1946

1: A Smooth Way Out

1934 August: Hitler becomes Führer (head of state) as well as Chancellor.

1935 The Nuremberg Laws strip German Jews of citizenship. Jews lose their right to use public transportation, restaurants, theaters and stores. Jewish children are banned from public schools.

1936 August: The Olympics are held in Berlin. Restrictions on Jews are lifted temporarily to give tourists the impression that all is well.

Frank's first memories are of Uncle Herbert giving him sunflower seeds to feed the pigeons in Venice. Hundreds, no, it could have been thousands of pigeons were flying everywhere. He could hear them coo above the sound of musicians playing their violins. I imagine his father, Fritz, and his mother, Hilda, waltzing in the piazza, perhaps a tear or two rolling down his mother's face, while Frank was fascinated by the birds.

“At the start the cooing was pleasant,” he said. “Then it became a monstrous, unfamiliar noise jumbled with a bombardment of other new experiences.”

The pigeons seemed to fill Piazza San Marco. They were bobbing their heads, pecking holes in the marble of the Basilica San Marco. They flocked toward him from every direction, nibbling at the seeds in his outstretched hands. He could hear them flapping their wings as they landed near his feet, on his shoulder, then on his head. He quickly figured out to drop the seeds, to stop feeding these scary birds even though his papa insisted, “Mucki, hold out your arms so the pigeons can reach the bird seed.”

It was the end of August 1936 and photos show a little boy dressed in short white pants, a white shirt and light jacket with white shoes up to his ankles, a typical German outfit for an almost 3-year-old boy, the same outfit he had worn the day before on the train from Berlin to Venice. The next day he would continue his journey to Palestine, his new home.

This day in August was a day of rest. It was special because Frank was visiting with his only uncle who worked in Zurich and was vacationing in Cortina, not far from Venice. Frank’s papa, in his jacket, starched white shirt and tie, wept as he hugged his younger brother goodbye. Frank was also crying, probably from fear of the birds, too young to understand a permanent separation.

“Don’t cry,” Uncle Herbert said. “Pigeons and doves are of the same family. They symbolize the peaceful land you are traveling to.” Then he swept up his nephew and carried him to the shops that sold trinkets. “Pick something to help you remember today,” he said as they walked through the ancient stone arches to look into store windows.

Frank told me he was thrilled to be safe in his uncle’s arms, happy to get away from the birds with their

iridescent feathers and bold intrusion. Most of all he was excited about selecting a new toy.

The uncle and nephew saw shop upon shop selling glass vases and figurines. They passed places that smelled of coffee and chocolate and stores that sold beautiful clothes. At first Frank was drawn to the red, yellow and blue glass items similar to the colorful Venetian glass vases that are now displayed under special lights in our built-in bookcase. Finally, Frank found something he really wanted. Maybe it reminded him of their neighbor's dachshund back in Berlin. Maybe it was just the right size for a small boy. Either way, it was to be his—a miniature black schnauzer that was an inch or two long. The toy dog had been carved from old wood and then painted black.

When Uncle Herbert and Frank returned, they joined Frank's parents for a walk along the Grand Canal, mingling with the tourists, enjoying the sounds of water lapping on the sides of gondolas and vaporettoes that were competing for space in the dark water.

After Fritz and Hilda said farewell to Uncle Herbert, the family boarded another train to Trieste to meet a huge white passenger ship. At least it was huge in Frank's mind. Even though he wasn't quite 3, he remembers the festive atmosphere, the holiday feeling amongst most of the travelers. He was happy to be part of the fun.

"I climbed on anything that was climbable, so my mother put me in a harness with a leash for the two-day journey," he said. "Some passengers told her it was cruel, but I'm sure Mother just smiled and walked the deck with me in tow until we landed in Jaffa, at that time the only deep-water port in the area."

According to the story circulated within the family, an Arab rowed them to the coast, joking with Frank's papa that Hilda was too skinny to be a good wife. He said, "She is not even worth one camel."

Before descending the narrow wooden ladder in her heels, Mother passed her son to a man who had already found a seat in the vessel. As they approached shore the man lifted him in the air asking, “Does anyone own this child?”

There are no records of what happened next. The details of the voyage are lost forever. Frank was too young to remember much more and his parents hardly spoke about their peaceful escape.

In later years the Jewish National Fund and other organizations helped relocate families, often providing housing and land in small farming villages. But the Levys’ arrival in Palestine preceded the big wave of immigrants. Hilda, Fritz and Frank were on their own.

We’ll never know how Frank’s parents, speaking only German, settled straight off the boat in this hot, dusty environment. I can picture his father walking down Ben Yehuda Street, the main avenue in Tel Aviv, carrying two suitcases, his elegant wife holding Frank and Frank clutching his little black dog. Eventually they rented a single room from a young Hungarian immigrant who cooked lunch for workers. Soon after they found an upstairs flat around the corner one block from the Mediterranean Sea.

Although they saw Herbert once in Palestine, the two brothers would not reunite for another ten years.

2: A Tough Decision

1933 January 30: Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany. Within weeks the Enabling Act allows Hitler to pass laws without parliamentary debate.

April 26: Hitler demands a boycott of Jewish businesses and establishes the Gestapo—the Secret State Police.

“What made your parents go to Venice?” I asked. “What gave them the foresight and courage to leave Germany so early?”

“My mother,” Frank said, taking a step back to the beginning of his story. “My Mother pushed to get away from the Nazis and my father agreed.”

Frank’s mother, Hilda Pauline Jacobson Levy, was a formidable woman. She earned her Ph.D. in economics at the age of 80. Hilda wasn’t a flirt, like my mother. She discussed politics, but she rarely discussed her life in 1933.

“Why?” I asked, craving details. “Didn’t your mother explain the reason they left a few years after you were born, especially given that so many others stayed?”

“A little,” Frank said, “but not as much as you’d expect. I learned more about my early life in Germany from history books. It’s all there. Cold facts, except my parents lived much of what I read. If you dig into this time frame, you will ask why so many stayed rather than why my parents left.”

So I turned to history books and checked online. It didn’t take long to discover how difficult life was in 1933. That was the year of the burning of the Reichstag building—where Berlin’s Parliament met. Hitler accused the Communist Party of setting the fire and used the incident as a means to curtail civil liberties. In 1933, the Gestapo—the Secret State Police—were formed and the Dachau concentration camp was opened to house political prisoners just ten miles northwest of Munich.

“I’m not sure my parents knew everything about their changing government until much later,” Frank said. “They knew more about the personal liberties they were losing each day.”

On May 10, when Hilda was pregnant, students in university towns throughout Germany torched and burned thousands of books to cleanse the country of un-German thoughts. They burned books by H. G. Wells, Karl Marx, Helen Keller, Bertolt Brecht and Heinrich Mann. Of course they included Jewish writings such as work by psychologist Sigmund Freud. They also burned academic papers written by Albert Einstein who had won the Nobel Prize in Physics. Nazi rallies proclaimed a new era in which Jews were blamed for all of Germany’s problems.

“Joseph Goebbels addressed thousands of people in Berlin,” Frank said, “inciting more book burning. Living in Berlin, of course, my parents knew about that.”

Frank was born six months later. At the time, after childbirth women routinely stayed in the hospital for over a week. That explains why Hilda was still in a clinic when

the brown shirts marched outside her window in preparation for the November 12th election.

“What was the vote for?” I asked Hilda one Thanksgiving when she was teaching me her mother’s recipe for apple pie.

“The brown shirts were demanding support for Hitler’s decision to withdraw from the Geneva Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations,” she said. “I didn’t want to back him. I had a private room and my nurse agreed to put a sign on my door: ‘Patient is recovering from a serious operation and should not be disturbed.’”

I thought it was a risky move. If she had been caught, it was unclear what the Nazis would have done to the young Jewish woman. Perhaps she was not important enough to bother. Perhaps they would have vented their growing animosity. They already had ruled that Jewish doctors and dentists could not work with state-run insurance companies. Aryans were required to boycott their Jewish neighbors’ shops, banks and other businesses. Hilda’s refusal to vote for Hitler would have been a perfect opportunity for the Nazis to teach her and her family a lesson.

“They left me alone,” she said. “I slipped under their radar, but I still had to deal with my parents. They were angry with me when I became pregnant.”

“How can you bring a child into *this* world?” Marta and Martin Jacobson had asked.

By the time Hilda and Fritz took Frank home from the hospital, people were starting to get nervous about their neighbors.

“I was afraid to talk to my Aryan friends about anything,” Hilda said. “We became wary of each other. Jews couldn’t attend public events, not even the movies, so we went our separate ways. Friendships withered.”

The Levys' two-family house was in a residential area called Hermsdorf on the outskirts of Berlin.

"I walked my baby along the sidewalks near our house," Hilda said. "The streets were lined with trees, stores and private homes like the suburbs here in America. Our porch was filled with pots of white flowers, adding to the peaceful façade that masked the poison springing up around us."

Mrs. Velzine owned the house. She lived below with her dachshund. She had no children of her own. Maybe that's why she liked to help care for Frank and fell in love with the little boy. Mrs. Velzine nicknamed him Muckelchen, meaning cute little one. The name stuck while they lived in Germany and I've been told she's the reason Frank is still called Mucki by some people.

In 1933 the Nazis began to attack Jewish stores. A year later Jewish children were banned from German public schools. Frank's mother was only allowed to buy meat during one two-hour period a week.

"I was forced to quit college," Hilda said, "even though I was the only female earning a business degree at my university, Handelshochschule."

The family printing, publishing and binding company was also in trouble. Frank's father, Fritz, was forbidden to work with German banks or the Berlin Stock Exchange.

"Without his two biggest clients, papa made no money," Frank said.

Amongst all the turmoil, Fritz and Hilda read Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, describing how Hitler would eliminate the Jews.

"If someone threatens to kill you," Hilda said, "you don't wait until they do."

Frank's parents decided to start over in a safer place. His father had visited Palestine on a hiking trip with his friends from the *Blau Weiss* Club, a Zionist sports club.

He felt familiar with that part of the world and Hilda...Hilda would go with her husband wherever he went.

The police station was adjacent to their backyard. In preparation for departure, Hilda had obtained the mandatory eagle and Nazi insignia stamped on their passports. But the police in Berlin-Hermsdorf were not happy about the supposed vacation. It took many attempts to get the proper documents, attempts Frank's mother hid from her Aryan friends.

"The man in charge knew us," Hilda said. "He grabbed Frank, saying, 'Palestine is no place to take a child. It's a country filled with tarantulas, scorpions and snakes. It is too hot for a little boy. Leave him behind and I'll watch him until you return.'"

Hilda kept calm. "No thank you. We will all stay here," she said as she took her son back into her arms.

They waited until there was a change of guard and then tried again.

"We felt there wasn't much choice," Hilda said. "It was almost a year after the Nuremberg Laws were implemented. Jews no longer were considered German citizens and we lost the rest of the rights that had been eroding all through Frank's short life. It was time to make a break."

Every Saturday the extended family gathered for a weekly afternoon *kaffeeklatsch*. An old photo shows them dressed in clothes that would be formal enough for a cocktail party. I could smell the coffee and imagine the apple strudel they enjoyed before Hilda revealed their plans to emigrate.

Hilda's uncle, Dr. Carl Joseph, yelled at her. "You are 27, an inexperienced, stupid young girl," he said. "Nobody needs to leave our country. Nobody needs to trade Beethoven concerts, theater, museums and Bauhaus architecture for life in the hot sand. Our family has lived in

Germany for hundreds of years. Your papa and I have been awarded the German Iron Cross for service in WWI. Certainly nothing bad will happen to us.”

Was it an instinct for survival that motivated Frank’s mother and father, not yet 30 years old, to resist the wisdom of their elders, to carry their toddler son along with a few valuables and leave? Just leave. Was it extreme intelligence that helped them find the strength to trade the familiar for a chance, only a chance, to breathe on?

It was early in the Nazi regime; before Jewish businesses were confiscated, so they sold a 40% interest in their printing company. Maybe that was the best they could do or perhaps they were pretending they would return. In later years Frank’s parents told him that while Jews were still free to buy tickets they had applied to the German government for permission to travel through Italy to Palestine.

The Olympics were held in Berlin that summer. To keep up appearances for the outside world, signs reading “Jews Are Not Welcome” were taken down, and the Nazis eased anti-Jewish activities. Perhaps it was no coincidence that their passport gave the family permission to take their trip August 18 through August 24, 1936, shortly after the Olympics ended.

Hilda and Fritz smiled good-bye to their neighbors as if they were going on a short vacation to Italy. They walked out of their house, most likely holding Frank’s hand.

“We closed the door to our home with everything in it,” Hilda said. “We left our Citroën convertible in the driveway and never turned back.”

3: A Yekke Starts Over, 1936-1939

1936 Arabs begin to revolt in Palestine. British military vehicles patrol the streets; British use guns to quell riots.

1938 Hitler is named Man of the Year by Time magazine.

Once in Palestine Fritz and Hilda assumed they would soon assimilate into their new homeland. It wasn't so simple. Some of the Jews, the Mizrahim, entered the British Mandate from neighboring countries: Iraq, Persia, Egypt and North African nations. Others, with Spanish roots, were the Sepharadim.

"I thought everyone was from Russia, Poland and the Ukraine," I said.

"They were the majority," Frank said. "They were called Ashkenazim and spoke Yiddish, a mixture of German, Hebrew and their local tongue as well as their native more formal language. They adapted. In the hot sun they wore shorts, sandals and hats."

In contrast, though the Germans were also Ashkenazim, they separated themselves. They clung to their more formal dress code.

“Despite the blazing Mediterranean heat, my mother wore heels,” Frank said. “My papa wore his tie and jacket. I guess they were considered snobs, proud of their formal education and higher standard of living in the old country.”

The German refugees reminisced about classical concerts, traditional and modern architecture and art they had left behind. Relationships with their Ashkenazi neighbors were strained.

“My parents wanted me to have an easier time,” Frank said. “Maybe that’s why they stopped calling me Mucki and began calling me Yaakov, the Hebrew version of Jacob that’s one of the names on my birth certificate and a shortened version of Jacobson, my mother’s maiden name. I’m sure they thought a Hebrew name would help me fit in.”

In summer camp I had changed my name from Marilyn to Buzzy. I wouldn’t choose that name today. It’s not feminine and I’m a girly girl. I wanted a nickname and that was the first that popped out of my mouth. I don’t know where it came from. The only Buzzy I had ever heard of and never met, was Buzzy Bavasi, the General Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers whose son was in my fourth grade class in Westchester. I printed Buzzy on my sailor hat then forgot about it. Sometimes I didn’t answer when my new friends called me. On visiting day my parents were stunned to learn there was no Marilyn Gottlieb at camp. Perhaps they meant Buzzy? My grown sons still laugh when an old buddy crosses my path and says, “Hi, Buzzy.”

For me, it was all in fun. For Frank, a name change meant serious business. I’m amazed he didn’t get confused

when his parents still called him Mucki at home and his friends called him Yaakov in school. He claims he was comfortable with a new label to match his new country.

“My assimilation was slow and subtle,” Frank said. “I remember when I started to call my parents *abba* and *ema*, the Hebrew words for father and mother. After that I never gave names much thought. I never had an identity crisis. Language, however, was a bigger issue.”

The Germans didn’t understand Hebrew, so they created their own German newspapers and spoke German amongst themselves. With the Nazis clamping down on Jews, it was understandable that other Jewish residents in Palestine despised the sound of German. Fritz and Hilda tried to remain quiet in public. They took night classes in Hebrew and Arabic, learning to read and write from right to left, but the teachers were barely ahead of their students.

“My parents encouraged me to learn Hebrew, too,” Frank said. “My mother told me, ‘When you buy an orange from a vendor, point to the fruit and ask how to say it in Hebrew.’”

The problem was a lot deeper than language. The German word for jacket is *jacke*, pronounced *yekke*. Since the men wore their suit jackets, *yekke* became the slang name to describe the German Jews in Palestine. It was not used in a positive way. Sometimes people yelled *yekke putz*. Germans were not just punctual. They were too punctual. They weren’t simply polite. They were overly polite. Though their honesty was appreciated, they also were considered arrogant and humorless.

I had never heard the word *yekke* before I met Frank. I didn’t *feel* what it meant until we ordered artichokes in a restaurant. My finished leaves were scattered on my plate; his were lined up in an order as precise as a blueprint. His knife and fork formed a perfect parallel. At home, I chopped onions and peppers in haphazard chunks, the faster the better. He took his time to

chop even pieces. I tore my bread. He cut his, removing my ragged edges, subtle proof I had married a German.

The *yekkes* resisted assimilation, formed the German Immigrants Association and sought out other German Jews to befriend. Frank was part of this subgroup. Until he started school he didn't understand that he didn't fit in with the majority. As difficult as that was, his father faced a greater challenge—finding work.

While Fritz was attending college in Berlin, his father, Frank's grandfather, died. At 19 Frank's father had to quit school to take over the Berthold Levy Publishing and Bookbinding Company on Neue Friedrichstrasse 48. The company printed books, stationery, envelopes and index cards, as well as brochures and promotional material. It earned Fritz the respect of friends and neighbors and provided a good living—enough to support his mother and to pay for his kid brother, Herbert, to study textiles at a college in Zurich.

In the new country this experience was useless. He did not have the money to duplicate his business in the Middle East. Besides, nobody carried business cards. Fritz knew a German doctor who opened a grocery store and a German lawyer who started a chicken farm. For sure he'd find something. But what?

“My Uncle Herbert came up with a solution,” Frank said. “Through Austrian friends he met investors in Vienna who wanted to build a bakery in Tel Aviv. Not just a simple storefront, but rather a nice-sized factory designed to sell fancy Viennese pastries as well as bread.”

The investors purchased the baking equipment overseas and shipped it to Tel Aviv, then followed up with sugar, which was almost impossible to find in Palestine. All Fritz had to do was manage the Sova Bakery and sell the sweets wholesale to other shops, as well as to retail customers.

His delivery wagons were pulled by horses. Did he rent them? Own them? Feed the horses in a local stable? Nobody knows.

“All I remember,” Frank said, “is visiting my father in the bakery and going for rides in the wagons while eating marzipan or chocolate pastry. Sneaking sweets was one of the first secrets my *abba* and I kept from *ema*.”

The investors created a commercial about the Sova Bakery that is documented in the Steven Spielberg Archives at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The bakery building still stands, now a warehouse stocked with used furniture, and Frank still gravitates to marzipan whenever we find some in a bakery.

In 1938 Hitler closed Hilda’s parents’ rubber-recycling factory in Berlin. It was getting more dangerous for them to stay in Germany. *Opi* (grandpa) Martin Jacobson sold his machinery for scrap and he and *omi* (grandma) Marta Jacobson joined Hilda and Fritz in Palestine.

Omi’s brother, Dr. Carl Joseph, the one who had yelled at Frank’s mother for wanting to leave Germany, opted to remain in Berlin. He was in love with his sophisticated lifestyle and proud to be a medical doctor from the University of Heidelberg. He still didn’t believe the events in Germany were permanent. He still didn’t believe the situation would get worse.

Before the Jacobsons left they were able to ship a container of furniture, an enclosure 20 feet by 20 feet holding a washing machine, refrigerator, radio and other treasured items such as skis, coats, heavy shoes, towels, bed sheets and fur coats. I guess they hadn’t considered the difference in weather.

They moved into Hilda’s two-bedroom flat and shifted Frank to the living room. About the same time, in 1938, Frank’s sister, Ada, was born. Their apartment was getting crowded.

“I couldn’t understand why my parents were so excited to have a second child,” Frank said. “I wanted a dog, not a sister.”

In honor of her birth, *abba* gave Frank a box of chocolates. At 5 years old Frank was strong and determined to vent his disappointment. “I threw the box at the baby,” he said. “*Abba* caught it before it hit Ada’s head.”

Instead of punishing his son, Fritz took Yaakov in his arms and assured him that one day he would have a dog—a guard dog, but today he had a new sister.

4: Kristallnacht in Germany

1938 November 9: Dr. Fritz Rohde, now a veterinarian and town historian in Crivitz, Germany, saw damage to a synagogue. His friend saw windows smashed in Berlin.

While Frank enjoyed a peaceful life in Tel Aviv, his future friend, Fritz Rohde, was a young Aryan boy living through sobering experiences under the Nazi regime in Crivitz, Germany. He was 15, too young for the military and too old to ignore what was going on.

If it hadn't been for the Nazis, as a child Frank probably would have accompanied his mother to Crivitz to see the family general store, as well as some distant cousins who lived north of Berlin. It is even possible that Frank would have become friends with Dr. Rohde, perhaps playing soccer with him. But the Nazis did exist, causing very different lives for the two German boys.

Aside from some travel to Jerusalem, including Yad Vashem, the World Center for Holocaust Research, Dr. Rohde rarely left his hometown.

“Maybe the trip to Yad Vashem inspired him to share his journal,” Frank said. “Or perhaps there are other reasons we will never know.”

Following is an excerpt from Dr. Rohde’s unpublished private document, which Frank translated, titled: *Stories Through Which I Have Lived*.

Dr. Rohde wrote: One day my grandparents took me to Spandau with the SS Bahn train. From the train window I saw a large broken-down structure that had black burn marks on it with caved in sections. It was the synagogue on Fasanenstrasse in the heart of the city. Thousands of people were walking by this disaster every day. I stared at it, but most people turned away. As I gaped at this huge burned-out building, I yelled in shock, “What’s happened there?” The faces of my grandparents turned into white stone. They looked straight and my grandfather pulled me away from the window saying, “This is not right what we are doing to the Jews. It will come back to us and will be a catastrophe. This fire will come back to us thousands of times.”

Then my friend, who was 15, gave me a detailed report of what he saw in Berlin on Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass) when he was with his uncle on a big boat full of apples. From a town called Aussig, they were moving along the Elbe River into Berlin to sell their fruit. It was night and he could hear people crying and yelling. He could hear breaking of windows and noise and thuds of people

being hit. In the morning my friend went into town to buy milk, coffee and cake. My friend said he was in complete shock seeing so many broken windows. The streets were full of glass. Beautiful stores were destroyed. The city was in total ruin. You could see well-dressed people hurrying past tall buildings carrying their purses across their chests. If they dropped their bags, you could see a big yellow star on their coats and see their faces. It was appalling.

So, we knew. Maybe not everything that was to come, but we knew. If we helped the Jews, we risked our own lives. But I always felt that we must put ourselves in their situation and try to understand how good citizens were required to be marked and put forward for destruction without any reason. Unfortunately this was not the end.