



## My Uncle Juda (Lajb) Halperin and His Family

Juda-Lajb was born, in December 1906, in Lututów. He was my father's age. His wife Alte, *née* Tabacznyk, was born in 1912. Alte had married Fiszl Cirulnik. Their son, Zvi (Hersz), was also born in Lututów, in July 1933. When Hersz was one year old, his parents were divorced. Alte [then] married my uncle Juda (Lajb) Halperin, who took her son Zvi (Hersz) under his wing, but did not adopt him as his son. Zvi-Hersz continued bearing the Cirulnik surname.

My brother Natan and I had never been aware of the fact that Zvi (Hersz) was not Juda-Lajb Halperin's biological son and we, therefore, did not understand why they had different surnames.

When the War broke out, in 1939, Zvi (Hersz) was six. In 1940, the three - Juda, Alte and her son - were sent to an open labour camp in Częstochowa. Afterwards, they were transferred to a concentration camp next to Częstochowa, where they were put to forced labour. Juda was employed in building roads. The son, Zvi-Hersz, was saved thanks to the resourcefulness his mother Alte showed.

In October 1942, she put him into the hands of a Polish family, who lived in the village of Razin [Rędziny?], next to Częstochowa. Juda and Alte remained in the concentration camp until they were liberated by the Russian Army. This was on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1945.

On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1945, two days following the Liberation, the Halperin couple returned to the Polish family, which had shown humanity and courage, accompanied by two men - Alja Korn and Heinrich Kinas - and took Zvi (Hersz).

During the six years of the War, my mother knew nothing of her brother Juda's fate. Only after the War did my mother, her brother and his wife meet. In my possession, I have a photo which was taken in Munich in 1947, which shows my mother and her brother, in the company of several other survivors from the town of Lututów.



*My father, my mother and me in Munich*

[Below is a photograph in which] I found my uncle Juda-Lajb and his wife. This is the only testimony to the meeting between them. (I found this photo by accident during my visit in Lututów, and I shall speak of this in more detail subsequently.)

Like the other survivors, Juda and Alte also returned to Lututów in order to, once more, settle in their hometown. In March 1945, their firstborn daughter Cypora was born. But the survivors, as is well known, sensed acutely that they were no longer welcome. The rising antisemitism forced them to leave their town. In 1946, they were transferred, together with other survivors, to the DP camp [sic community] of Nandlstadt in Germany, where contact was made

with my mother Miriam and where they met my father Majer for the first time. In 1947, while they were in the DP camp, their younger daughter Toby<sup>1</sup> was born. From the DP camp, they moved to Munich.

Alte, who had survived the horrors of the War, did not live much longer. She died on German soil, on 4th January 1949. My uncle Juda was left to take care of Zvi (Hersz) and his two young daughters, Cypora and Toby.

My uncle Juda-Lajb, like the other survivors, was faced with the choice of immigrating either to Israel or to another country which was willing to accept the displaced. He opted for the United States and settled there, with his daughters, in Minnesota.

Cypora, his daughter, later immigrated to Israel and lives on Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet. The youngest daughter, Toby, remained in Minnesota. My attempts to get closer to my cousins and meet them were unsuccessful. They both had children and grandchildren, whom I do not know at all.

Toby and I corresponded for several months, during which time she sent me documents, from which I learnt a great deal. Unfortunately, the connection with her was cut off - without any explanation. Nevertheless, from the documents she passed on to me, and after reviewing additional information I received (hoping the information was as close as possible to the facts), I was able to become better acquainted with my uncle and his children and to immortalise their experiences as they appear in this book.



*The survivors from Lututów. I am sitting up front; my father is in the first row, the fifth from the right, and my mother is to his right. Uncle Juda and his wife Alte are standing in the uppermost row, in the left corner*

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: This name is spelt in Latin characters in this exact manner in the original – with two B's.]