

INGA BELICK GRAND DAUGHTER OF ANNA WASSERMAN

Inga Salomon



Albert Salomon



Salomon family before World War



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Alfred, Georg, Ervin and Utz Inge Elfride

My name was Inge Salomon

I was the younger child of Georg and Elfride Salomon of Bochum, In Westphalia Germany, some 65 k from the border with Holland. As my mother had been previously married to a photographer called Bonn who had died, I had 3 brothers: Ervin Bonn, Yehuda Lutz Bonn, and my full brother Alfred.

I well remember going to a local Jewish school until I was 8 years of age though from then until the age of 15 I have no recollection of my schooling.

Georg, my father, was a butcher and, with the help of my mother, ran a restaurant. We must have been fairly affluent in those days as I do remember that we had a nursemaid looking after us.

I remember the rise of Hitler and the Nazis and can still hear the jeer "Dirty Jews" and in 1933 my parents had to close the restaurant and my father went to work in a spice factory until 1938 when he was forced to leave and started packing spices at home.

On Crystalnacht, in 1938, my father and brothers were arrested. My father was taken by the police and returned after a number of days, but my brothers were sent to Dachau and Buchenwald. Ervin and Lutz returned in 1939. Alfred spent 6 years in various concentration camps – but survived. Up to then my father believed that the Nazis were primarily concentrating on Poles and Polish Jews, and that he could rely on his service in the German army in the First World War to save him and his family. He began to see the light and he realized that no Jew was safe.

Every summer we had gone for a holiday to Rotterdam, staying with the de Groot family; my father wanted to send me there for safety using the “good offices” of a Christian organization which was helping to save Jews. My mother wouldn’t hear of it as it was strictly illegal by this time. However a teacher, Frau Hirsch took me over and put me on one of the “kinder transport” trains which were legal.

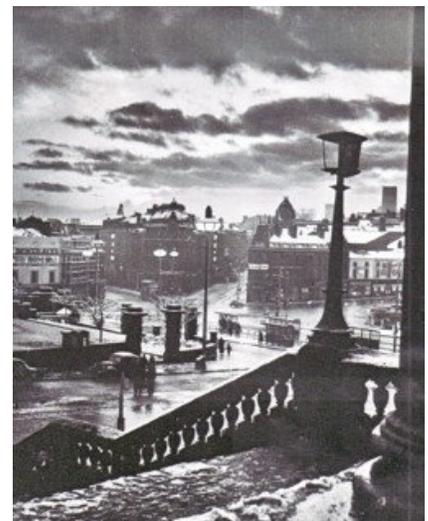


**Kindertransport (also Refugee Children Movement)** is the name given to the rescue mission that took place nine months prior to the outbreak of [World War II](#). The [United Kingdom](#) took in nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children from [Nazi Germany](#), and the occupied territories of [Austria](#), [Czechoslovakia](#), and the [Free City of Danzig](#). The children were placed in British foster homes, hostels, and farms. **KTAmemoryquilt**

My parents were eventually sent to Poland and then to Riga where they were killed. I had contact with them via our friends in Holland until 1942. Fr. Hirsch traveled back and forth as long as she could but was eventually caught and sent to Auschwitz and perished. Eventually I arrived in Liverpool and emerged from the railway station alone and unwelcomed. I had been photographed and had a name tag around my neck with my photo and the name and address of the family to whom I was to go. A kindly Red Cross Nurse took me under her wing and phoned to the family.

Eventually Dave Freedman drove up to take me – not home, but to the wedding to which they were invited. He showed me off to all his friends as “our refugee girl. We paid fifty pounds for her.” This was the nature of the man –the epitome of tight-fisted ness and always after a bargain. His wife, Esther, on the other hand, was kind and considerate. They lived in Wallasee. It was not a happy home. They had one son, Murray, who was 18 when I arrived and he hated his father, and there was no relationship between them at all.

I was very home-sick and lonely and being described as “our charity girl” of “our refugee girl” did nothing to help. They employed a maid, and I helped out as well. I remember that I would help Esther with the cooking and Dave would



congratulate me on the result but never a word of praise or

## LIVERPOOL MUSEUM

### STEPS

thanks to his wife. Esther wanted to send me to learn dress-making but this did not materialize – I guess Dave wouldn't pay for the extravagance. Dave was a "big noise" in the Shool (Synagogue). I had a friend, Ruth, who was also not being treated well. On one occasion, I remember the ladies of the community considered this to be bad form – a 'refugee girl' shouldn't try to be above her station. Ruth gave up Judaism on the spot.



I spent an unhappy year there until I was 16. At this stage I had to leave Liverpool, it being a port and I being an enemy alien – the two were not allowed together during the war. (Boys were then interned, though some joined the army. Girls were allowed greater freedom but not near the sea.) Intra-family negotiations resulted in my transfer to the Copeland family in Salford (Manchester).

Esther Freedman had been a Copeland before she married. This was a new world for me. Lily and Ben Copeland took me in immediately as one of the family. It was an "open" house. Friends and relations seemed constantly to be dropping in and this was the first "love" I had experienced since leaving home. I became at



**The Copelands**

home immediately and was an older sister to the three children: Carla aged 12; Anne aged 7; and Michael aged 3. In spite of the warmth and love I received in the family, it was many years before I was allowed to address my new "parents" as anything but Mr. and Mrs. Copeland.- but this didn't seem untoward in those days. – It was correct procedure both in Germany and in England. Eventually I was permitted to call the Uncle Ben and Aunt Lily.

Eventually Ruth also came to Manchester where she fared no better so she decided to go to London, and I decided to go with her.



I found work in Foyle's bookshop in Charing Cross Road where I earned so little that I was hungry. I was under the wing of Bloomsbury House and the authorities there wanted to write to Dave Freedman about my condition, but I wouldn't hear of it. Eventually one of the bosses lent me some money.

### **RUTH a friend AND INGE**

Soon after this I started working in a Jewish "finishing" workshop where I was to learn the trade – but they put me onto ironing and I walked out.

My third "effort" was more successful. I started working for Decimy button makers. To cover me from the authorities, I was described as a button worker-essential work – but in fact I was doing something quite remote from that. I was keeping the books. I even got food and buns at work !! and I went to evening school to learn typewriting and short-

hand. By this time I was 17 ½ and wanted to go into the W.A.A.F.'S (Women's auxiliary Air Force.) but finally decided against this. This was quite a good decision. I was at this stage (1943) living in a dump of a hotel. Ruth, who was originally Czech, lived in the Czech Hotel and invited me to a social at the Czech British Friendship Club.

Inge recalled writing to her guarantor, wishing to borrow money to buy a coat. Her guarantor was not forthcoming but her boss lent her the money to buy a coat and hat.



What happened to my family? Alfred was sent to Auschwitz where he had to work as an electrician and survived the war. His wife was also in Auschwitz, but died. I heard from Lutz from Sweden. He had gone on Hachshara (training) to Denmark and been sent to Sweden and thus survived.

Ervin's brother Arnost, wished to visit us after the war, but of course there was no relations between Israel and the Communists then and his request for a visa from Czechoslovakia was turned down. He therefore went to the secret police head-quarters where he was interrogated.

#### ALFRFED

As it happened the father of the chief of police had been in the Czech army and died in Tobruk, so Arnost and Ervin knew him. Arnost took a photo from Evins album with him. He got his visa. It turned out that Ervin did remember the father. Many years later Ervin and I were on a visit, staying with Arnost, and went to see the official. We asked for him, Doctor Sudov, and at the desk they "phoned up to him" but he was not interested to see us—he was too scared.

Inge met Ervin Bleiweiss Belik when she was 19 years old. They decided to marry. She went to her guarantor and he would not give permission for the marriage. The woman from the Bloomsbury house managed to secure permission on the second attempt. Aunt Lily came to the wedding with a money gift from the Copelands.



Ervin was in the Czech army under the British high command. He fought in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

In July 1949, at age 25 Inge and Ervin moved to Israel.

Ziva her daughter (born in 1944) was 4 ½ years old. Pertez her son was 1 ½ years old. They lived in a Shikun and slept in a kitchen in Efratz. They moved to Kyriat Motzkin in 1954.





My name was Ervin Bleiweiss. I was born in Mistek some 18 km from Ostravia in Czecho-Slovakia on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1918.



The Jewish community in Mistek was large in those days and our part of it consisted of my mother (my father had already died at the age of 54) and 5 children of which I was the youngest. As my story deals with the Second World War, I shall start by recounting that my mother died in an extermination camp,



My eldest sister, Elsa, married with a 2 year old child was taken to Therezienstadt-and later to Auschwitz where she and her child were killed.





Arnost, the older of my two brothers married a Christian, had two children, and during the war worked in a coal mine. Eventually the Germans caught up with him too, and sent him to a work camp, then Theresienstadt. His wife escaped into the mountains where she spent most of the war, returning when she thought the...

#### ARNOST AND FAMILY

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Having decided not to wait around for the Germans who were already invading the country on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1939, I crossed in Poland, where we had family- 2 aunts and cousins. While there I heard that one could enlist into the Czech "army in exile" at the Czech consulate. I hurried there and was taken for an interview. Two

questions only decided my fate. Why did you run away? And Are you a Jew? I was rejected and dejected. Outside the office I bumped into an old friend, a youth, who asked me what I was doing there, so I told him I had been rejected. He told me to wait whilst he went into the room and within a few minutes he proved the old adage that it's not what you know but who you know. I was on the list and told to wait for a call.

From what I was hearing I decided that a little back up wouldn't go out of place so hearing that the British Consulate was signing people up for "agriculture" in Sweden, I enrolled for that, too. Here there were 200 applicants and they accepted 6. I was one of the lucky ones but we didn't get out in time. Meantime I received orders from the Czech army to report. We were going to Krakow where we were taken to a military camp (Midlanki) just outside the city. The commanding officer, Colonel Svoboda interviewed me. He asked if I had left family behind in Czecho-Slovakia. As I said "yes" he advised me to change my name and promptly issued me a new identity card with a photograph as Ervin Belik. Around this time there was an enlistment going on for the French Foreign Legion and I decided to join this too, but Colonel Svoboda wouldn't hear of releasing me. Three days before the war broke out at the end of August 1939 we took a train to a camp in Leshna in Byelo Russia on the Russian border. After 2 days there we again got onto a



train, this time heading South towards the Ukraine. We heard that the war had started, the Germans having invaded Poland. We were almost in the Ukraine when the Russians too, started to invade Poland from the East. We, a unit of some 1000, hoped to reach Romania. But 6 k before the border the Russian army stopped us one night. We made a white flag and lit it with a torch. They didn't know we were Czech and started to investigate us. They took 60 of us, mostly non-Jewish and marched us towards Vladamirov railway station. This was only 40km and the temperature was minus 40. I remember that I was the last of the line with a Russian NCO. We were given hot drinks, a glass of hot water and a lump of sugar. There was also some vodka for the ill. I claimed I needed some for medical reasons, the NCO approved

this, and they gave me far too much. My stomach was empty and I was blind drunk before we got to the train. I must have been bundled on the train; I was sober by the time we reached Moscow.

Once in Moscow we were barracked in the Intourist Hotel, given new civilian clothes. They took us in groups of 6 to 7 to tour the city.

A week later we were put on a train and sent to Odessa, the Black sea port where we boarded the Swedish luxury liner, Svanetia. (Sweden was neutral) The Czech authorities wanted their boys in the Eastern Mediterranean. When we arrived in Istanbul we were not welcome. The Germans had already got there. The Czech consul in exile met us, gave us food, and put us on a train to Mercina via the Taurus Mountains, to a port in Southern Turkey. There we had to wait for a Polish boat, the Varshava. We were not the only passengers. The ship was full of the wives of Polish officers. There were no cooks so we boys took over the kitchen, cooking and distributing food to the ladies. We soon came to a modus vivendi with them, as we hadn't enjoyed the company of the opposite sex for a long time, and, as the saying goes, a slice off a cut loaf is never missed.



We were sorry when we got to Haifa. However we were not allowed off the ship. The sailors were given shore leave, so I gave some of them the address of my sister Olga, who lived in Haifa, and whom I had not seen for five years. They brought her to the port.

Eventually we were checked out by the British, who were mainly concerned that they were not admitting communists, and after a considerable time disembarked and were taken to the St. Luke transit camp where we were given British uniforms, rifles, and



equipment. A week later we were sent to Alexandria by train. We had to leave the train at the Suez Canal. We were ferried across; then we boarded an Egyptian train. In Egypt we joined an existing Czech group under the British High Command and spent two weeks guarding German and Italian

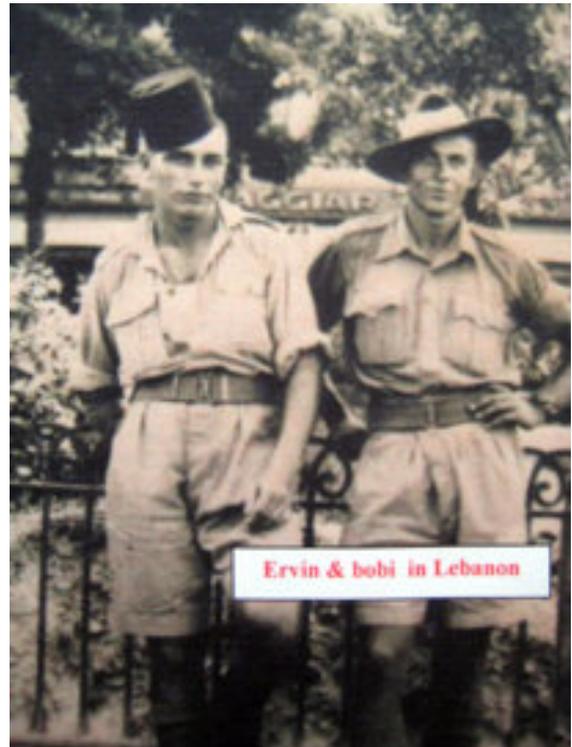
prisoners of war.

From Egypt we moved to the Egypt Libya border, if there was such a thing at that time. The dividing line went back and forth like a yo yo with the advance, then defeat of each side in turn. Many of our patrols were in the desert night.

On June 20 1941 we were sent to Palestine, traveling in RASC trucks. We crossed the Suez Canal on boats and traveled via Kantara to Beth Lid where we were issued Bren guns and Sten guns. We then moved further north and billeted near Kibbutz Dan. The members of the Kibbutz invited the Jewish boys over for Friday night and I enjoyed my first experience in a Kibbutz.

June 21, 1941 was a turning point of the war. Germany attacked Russia. A few days later a number of us marched to Merdjaoun in Lebanon to fight the Vichy French. On one occasion when we were out on night patrol we heard men talking Czech, fellow countrymen of ours on the other side. We warned them that we would be attacking them in two days with Australian armor and our instructions were to take no prisoners. We took the town easily, the troops there surrendering. We stripped the houses and pressed out. Soon after this we were moved to the Syrian Turkish Border. The Germans were in Turkey and wanted to make a new airport on the border in addition to the one at Aleppo. That was an area infested with malaria, which I promptly got. I was evacuated via Homs, Hama, Barbeck, Damascus, and Nazareth to an Australian hospital.

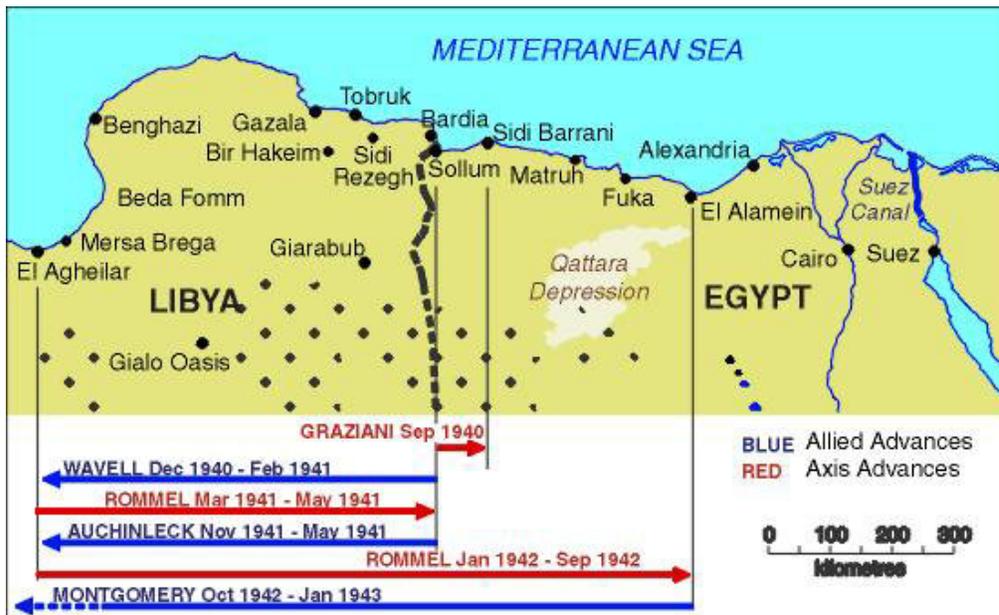
By the time I got there I was already healthy so I wrote to Olga and she came to see me, traveling by bus. The arrival of a visitor was such a rare event that the hospital



Commandant, a general, actually brought her to my ward. However he did not know me personally and started to introduce her to someone else. I was boozing in the cafeteria. A few days later I was sent to a recreation camp in Netanya before returning to my unit. The train journeyed back to Damascus via Haifa. The train followed a sine curve up the mountains, and anyone who needed to relieve himself could get out and catch it again as it came around the next curve. Once in Damascus I had to wait for a convey to take me to the unit in Aleppo. I got there to find them lined up waiting for the transport to take them back to Palestine.



We covered Palestine, arriving in Jericho via Jerusalem. We were to acclimatize ourselves for North African Desert conditions. Then we traveled to Egypt, to Alexandria, where we embarked on a destroyer and were taken to Tobruk, which at this stage was surrounded on land by German and Italian troops. My job was mine-spotting. We were stationed in the hills around the bay and had to watch and note the direction of German aircraft when they dropped mines. Then by triangulation, mapping the coordinates and directions from different outposts, the mine sweepers could go into action and find and deal with the mines. 10:00 AM was the worst time, because the German bombers, Stukkers, came streaking in from their airport some 30 k away with the sun behind them, bombing the port area. We were there for some 8 months until a South African unit of over 10,000 men relieved us and we were taken by convoy to Haifa.



As we got to Palestine we heard that Tobruk had fallen and 10,000 men had been taken prisoner. An interesting diversion is that many years later Inge and I were on a trip to

South Africa and being hosted by a charming family. I saw a photograph on the wall of a soldier in the South African uniform which I so well remembered and asked our host about it.

Yes, he was one of the boys take prisoner and had spent the rest of the war behind barbed wire.



We spent the next 3-4 months of 1941 learning to use Beaufort 4 mm guns, anti aircraft guns, the ones with telescopes. We would test fire them into sacks trailing after real planes.

Our big white chiefs were Auchinbeck, Wavell, and eventually Monty, (General Montgomery). When we arrived in the

Middle East, and we were sent into Egypt with British, Australian and other troops to initiate a counter attack, the Germans being but 30-40km from Cairo at this stage. We pushed them back out of Egypt, over Lybia via Benghazi, to the Moroccan border. By this time the American 5<sup>th</sup> army was coming up through Morocco. A Polish unit took over from us and went into the invasion into Italy while we were ordered back to Cairo. There we heard that we were being shipped to England and were taken to Suez to await a boat. I applied for leave, was granted 4 days, and again went to see Olga, who was now married to Erich Susser, and for the first time I saw her son Yossi.

Later we were on a boat traveling by a circuitous route. We went north and around the northern coast of Ireland to escape the U-boats which were rather thick on the Irish Sea route. Our route was so very circuitous that for part of the time we entered the Arctic circle and enjoyed a period of circuitous night.

After 6 weeks at sea we landed at Liverpool.

We were sent to Vivienne Howe Park in the Midlands and were given 2 weeks disembarkation leave which I did not fully enjoy because my malaria recurred. I was given the job of driving a Bren-gun carrier.

We also came across some fellow Czechs more au fait with the local conditions, and of course asked where we could get a decent meal. The British idea of good food did not really come up to Czech home cooking, and they suggested the Czech British Friendship Club in London.

This proved quite a turning point in my life as I got myself a good meal and a wife.

We met a couple of girls, Inge Salomon and Ruth Lamberger who now lives in Australia. Inge and I kept in contact though I was stationed far away. From Vivienne Howe Park a number of days later we were sent to Brickstock for exercises. I was given the job of driving a Bren gun carrier. Just next to our camp was a camp of the ATS, the women's army. We were 100 men. They numbered 1000. I became friendly with their sergeant Major an Amazon of a woman who took me to the officer's mess where much good whiskey was enjoyed.

Some time before Xmas we were sent to Keswick in Cumberland to do cross-country exercises with the bren gun carriers and motor bikes. One of the tasks was to repair the carrier in the dark and then return to camp. Very few of the boys passed this but I had equipped myself with a small torch and managed it with ease. This was for 6

weeks so I wrote to Inge but got no reply. It emerged later that Inge and her friend Annie tried to find me but got to a neighboring unit where some of the boys knew me. When Inge asked about me they called me a bluffer and generally gave me a bad name. "This, I guess, was just in jest, but Inge decided not to take a chance and she and her friend headed for home. When I eventually managed to get to London and tried to get in touch with Inge she was busy. I discovered what had happened and persisted, even to the extent of agreeing that all they had heard was correct. Eventually my friend, Sonny Sonnenschein, with whom I had been since we left Poland in 1939, went to See Inge and smoothed things out for me to such a degree that when I proposed marriage she accepted. Sonny eventually returned to Ostravia"

After D day Irving's unit was sent to France and Belgium. As they moved through Europe the Germans set up mine fields and lost 50% of their unit.

**Inge and Ervin with first born:  
Ziva & Peretz their children in Israel.  
Marion with Inge March 08 ;**

