

Rede Sivan Sobol, Enkelin der Überlebenden Miryam Sobel am zoom meeting der Initiative „erinnern - ehren - versöhnen“ zum 29 April 2021

I start by saying Thank you to Eva and Rosemary and everyone who contributed and invested in organizing this important meeting.

It is difficult to describe briefly how the Holocaust affected my family and me as a third generation to the Holocaust. As I thought about the subject ahead of this conversation, two childhood memories came to my mind that may provide a partial answer to this big question. One memory is of my brother and I, eating dinner and our grandmother watching over us. We used to harass each other and kicked each other under the table. My grandmother immediately stopped us. "Brothers do not kick each other", she explained to us very seriously. "You know I lost my siblings in Auschwitz; they were as beautiful and young as you are. You must take care of each other because there is nothing more important than family". This is how we grew up, with the shadow of the dead accompanying us. The Holocaust was present all the time.

Another memory is of me going to visit my grandmother in a hotel she used to go to every year that was subsidized by the German government. The lunch portions in the dining room were reach and generous. At the end of the meal, we left the dining room and my grandmother took two more plates filled with food to her room, just in case we will be hungry. What is she doing? I thought to myself, I hoped no one saw, I was embarrassed. when I grew up, I realized that anyone who experiences such extreme hunger cannot be calm if he doesn't have food at his reach, just in case. Today I am sad to think of those moments I was ashamed of her. When I grow up, i could I realize how heroic she actually was.

These little daily day anecdotes show just how much the Holocaust was a part of our daily lives, Sometimes in direct speech and sometimes in indirect behaviors. The survivors were those who needed to cope with the trauma, but the second and third generation were influenced deeply as well. The second generation carried the burden of memory and resurrection. Many were named after murdered family members. My father for example is called Haim. This name carries a double meaning – first he was named after his grandfather who died in a work camp, and second the meaning of the name in Hebrew is life. This name, is an honor and a burden at the same time. It symbolizes the pain of loss and the hope of continuity, the pride and victory and the tragic orphanhood. As a psychologist I know how much children are influence by their parents' thoughts, believes and mental state. I can assume that without noticing, my father felt obligated to make his parents happy, even at the cost of sometimes giving up his own will.

The Holocaust influenced many aspects of my life – the importance of family relations and how much i cherish it, attitudes towards the State of Israel and the choice to live in it, the choice of profession and many more. in many decisions, I find myself thinking about the Holocaust and it has become a point of reference at all sorts of events in my life. For example, when our son was born, and we were debating whether to circumcise him, the thoughts I had about it were that maybe it was a good idea to erase Jewish symbols in case a Holocaust will happen again, and at the same time I felt I could not turn my back on this Jewish tradition after all the pain and loss.

The Holocaust played a major role in shaping my identity, it is part of my thoughts, associations, history and my emotional, cultural world. Even when I want to run away from it or forget it, it is with me. As a mother, I wonder how will I pass it on to my children, that I can proudly say, are the fourth generation. my grandmother did not have the chance to see them, but I'm sure she would have been very proud.