

Simon Reise

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Abstract

Simon Reise was born October 19, 1931 in Warsaw, Poland as Shimon Rajze (Polish) which he changed to Reise as it sounded more English. His father was Floyen (?) and his mother was Hinda Rosenberg. He was the youngest of six children. Avraham was the oldest born 1914, next was Shaul or Shyke (was in the Polish Army during WWII & POW and later died) born 1916, then his sister Paula who saved his life, then Mordecai (in Polish Army in WWII), then Shmuel and Simon was the youngest and only one born in Warsaw. The other siblings were born in Kortz (?) near Lublin, as was his mother. His father was given a cigarette kiosk to earn an income as a veteran of WWI. His family was religious and lived in a Jewish neighborhood. They read the newspapers. Simon feels he lived in the Stone Age there and now in the modern age. He had two years of formal schooling. On September 5, 1939 he was in summer camp and heard the bombing which began WWII in Poland. Avraham and Mordecai ran away and his mother left with his older brother, Shmuel. Neither Shyke nor his father survived. Simon's sister, Paula, took him by train to Malkene on their way to Bialystok. They stayed with a farmer in "No man's land" and then took the train to Bialystok. They went to Lovna in the Ukraine where they met up with their three brothers and their mother at a bungalow. The KGB came and Avraham and Mordecai jumped out the window and ran into the woods. Simon was put into a boxcar with his mother, Shmuel and his sister and traveled to Chet (?) where they were put into a Gulag for a year. The family worked in the woods and Simon attended school where he was taught that there is no G-d. His sister's foot got infected and the doctors treated her. June 22, 1941 Germany invaded Russia and in August they were released and walked and took a boxcar to Kazakhstan which they reached in October. Except for his mother, they were all in the hospital for two weeks recovering from typhoid fever. Then they all worked in the fields. Mordechai was drafted and later Avraham was drafted and became a Major in counter-intelligence. The war ended May 9, 1945 and they were permitted to return to Poland. They did not return to Warsaw as it was destroyed. Simon was placed in a youth group and was on a train going to Vienna when a lady gave him water which he felt saved his life. The youth group went to Mathausen in the Austrian Alps and attended an American occupied army school while his mother and sister were in Salzburg. He enjoyed playing with the other children and attended machinist vocational school. Avraham was a leader in the Belknap DP camp in Schvaden (?), Bavaria. His father and brother Shaul were presumed dead as did not return. His sister got married and had a son in Germany and another later. In 1946 Simon went through the Alps in the snow to Italy. Around 1948 he took a small boat to Israel where he was a machinist for 10 years. He and Shmuel were in the Israeli Army and were tired of being frequently activated so they went to Brazil. After four years, Simon came alone to the US as he did not like being in business and preferred working with his hands. He got married and lived in Brooklyn, moved to Bayside, Queens and twenty years ago moved to Florida. He raised two successful lawyers. He

still believes in G-d despite the training in Russia. After the interview, Simon showed a photo of himself at 19 in Germany, and a photo of his sister in '38.