

RG-50.156.0029

Summary

MANFRED (FRED) KLEIN

Born 4/6/18 Posen, Germany, now Poznan, Poland. Jewish name Mikol Naphtali ben Moshe Meir. Moved to Breslau 1922 Two sisters, Gertrude (Malka) and Malibut (Golda). Father Max (Moshe Meir ben Mickolil), born 7/11/80 in Posen, mother, Leah (Leah ben Shmuel), born 2/24/84 in Kotpost, Germany. Maternal grandparent, Sam and Armarja Shachman in china and glass business in Berlin. Fraternal grandparents, Michael and Setilia Klein in milling business in Kotpost and Posen. Father a wholesaler/salesman. Orthodox, but spoke only German at home, no Yiddish. Felt assimilated. Klein went to religious school and had private tutoring in Talmud, Torah and Gemorrah. Not Zionist. Belonged to Habonim and Agudas Yisroel. No antisemitism to speak of prior to 1933. Then Nuremberg laws put quotas on the number of Jews in schools. Klein and other Jews not allowed to go to university

Kristallnacht, family business in Berlin destroyed. And Klein lost his job in Breslau. Previously, "criminal" Jews, i.e., those married to gentiles, were rounded up in 7/38. Klein rounded up and sent to Buchenwald by train and truck 11/9/38. Beaten by SS upon arrival. 10,000 in the camp and 2000 died from disease and suicide. Put in barracks with 5 tier bunks. Little food and water. Father went with him but he was released as over age 60 after 4 weeks. Watched an escapee hanged and was punished with others by being forced to stand on tiptoes with hands behind head (Saxengrusse—Saxon Greeting). Klein released after 9 weeks 1/13/39 with hope of getting permit to Sweden via Habonim. Instead, got UK permit and left 7/17/39 to go via Shanghai with wife to be whom he met at JCC. Parents and sisters stayed and they died along with in law's parents at Buchenwald in 1943. Went to UK and worked on a farm for War Agricultural Committee. Married wife, who came on a nursing permit, 10/39 in London. Stayed in UK 12 years and then to US. Never hid being Jewish in the UK but became an atheist, although son had a bris. Does not keep Shabbos but is committed to the survival of Jews and Israel.