

MALKA BARAN

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



Malka Baran was born on January 30, 1927, in Warsaw, Poland, the older of Izak and Bella Klin's two children. A year later, Malka's family moved to Czestochowa, Poland, where her father had a

small printer's shop and her younger brother, Heniek, was born.

In 1939, when Malka was twelve, Germany invaded Poland and quickly occupied Czestochowa. In a series of anti-Jewish decrees, Malka's school was closed, armbands were mandatory, and her father's printing machinery was confiscated. Malka and her family were then exploited as forced laborers.

Malka and her family were required to move to the ghetto when it was established in 1941. In 1943, SS troops began to evacuate the ghetto; Malka's mother was deported to the Treblinka extermination camp where she was murdered. The rest of the family went into a smaller ghetto where Malka, her brother, and father were again forced laborers. One day Malka's father and brother did not return from a labor detail on the railroad. Later eyewitnesses told Malka they had been executed.

When the smaller ghetto was liquidated in the spring of 1943, Malka was deported to the Tschenstochau labor camp and forced to work in a munitions factory. After the Soviet Army liberated Tschenstochau in January 1945, Malka and some of her friends decided to stay and live in an abandoned apartment. A Russian Jewish soldier who befriended the girls provided food, and

eventually Malka and a friend traveled with the soldier's unit. Malka worked a series of jobs for the Russian army until the war ended in May 1945.

Immediately following the war, Malka and her friend arrived at Wegscheid displaced persons' camp in Austria, where she worked with young children who had survived the war. Since the children spoke different languages, she taught them some Hebrew words using sign language. While at the DP camp, she met Morris, who would later become her husband. The couple separated when Malka left for Israel in May of 1948, and Morris and his family immigrated to America. In Israel, Malka was accepted into a seminary for teachers and became a teacher.

Malka and Morris corresponded for six years before they were married in Israel in the early 1950s. Malka remained in Israel for ten more months before her immigration papers were finalized and she could travel to New York to be with Morris. Later Malka earned a bachelor's degree in early childhood studies and a master's degree in special education. At the time of her interview in 1997, she and Morris had two daughters, Avi and Bella, and six grandchildren.



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