

THE JACKET FROM DACHAU:

ONE SURVIVOR'S SEARCH FOR JUSTICE, IDENTITY, AND HOME

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ABIGAIL JALLE, ALEJANDRO LEAL-PULIDO, DANIEL NUSSDORF,
AND NITYA RAMANATHAN.

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THE HARRIET AND KENNETH KUPFERBERG HOLOCAUST CENTER
AT QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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CURATORS' STATEMENT

Survivors of the Holocaust frequently attribute their ability to avoid death to one main variable: luck. For Benzion Peresecki, the 15 year-old son of a delicatessen owner from Radviliškis, Lithuania, surviving the Holocaust was indeed fortunate, but came at an immense cost.

Within a span of 10 years, Benzion's father died from a stomach ulcer, his brother was murdered by the Nazis, he was forced into a ghetto, and was imprisoned, beaten, and subjected to forced labor at the Dachau concentration camp. After liberation, Benzion spent five years in a displaced persons camp with his mother, Chiena, who herself survived a death march at the Stutthof concentration camp.

After immigrating to the United States, Benzion fought to re-establish his identity, find justice for his family's suffering, and create a new home. Throughout his postwar years, no matter where he lived and how many times he moved, he always kept his jacket from Dachau.

Benzion never explained to his family or friends why he brought the jacket with him to New York; in fact, he never told his children that it even existed. However, keeping his jacket is consistent with other resilient actions on his part: his immigration to the United States; his search for a new, meaningful identity despite underemployment and several iterations of his name (he formally changed his name to "Ben Peres" soon after his immigration); his courage coping with the emotional and psychological stress from his traumas; his tenacious search for justice through a decades-long reparations campaign with the German government; and, his determination to support his wife, mother, and two children in New York.

On July 4, 2015, Ben's jacket, which had been in his closet for 65 years (and 37 years after his death), was discovered at the estate sale of his home in Bellmore, Long Island by a vintage clothing collector named Jillian Eisman. Ms. Eisman's grandfather served in the Soviet

army during World War II, and her brother was killed on 9/11; so, she immediately recognized the jacket as an object of pain, understanding, comfort, and reflection with which the public should engage. She subsequently donated the jacket to the Kupferberg Holocaust Center to ensure that students and the broader community could view the jacket and understand its significance.

New York, a city of immigration, determination, tragedy, and perseverance, also plays a role in this story. Ben and his mother lived and worked in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan after their immigration. They also both received medical treatment from several New York doctors for physical and psychological injuries sustained during the Holocaust. In 1968, with modest reparations payments awarded by the German government more than 20 years after their liberation, Ben and his mother, Chiena, along with his wife, Chaya, and two children, Lorrie and Michael, were finally able to buy a permanent home in Bellmore, NY. Ben lived there until his death in 1978.

This exhibit was compiled from over 1500 documents, films, and photographs left by Ben Peres and his family that contextualize his search for justice, identity, and home after he was torn away from his Lithuanian home. The curatorial team for the exhibit included Queensborough's own students and KHRCA interns: Peter Bandziukas, Kaitlyn Cicciariello, Gillian Farnan, Abigail Jalle, Alejandro Leal-Pulido, Daniel Nussdorf, and Nitya Ramanathan.

We encourage you to visit the reflection area in the gallery and in the online version of the exhibit, both of which are structured to document your own responses to this compelling story.

— Cary Lane, Ph.D., Curator-in-Residence, KHC,
Assistant Professor of English

— Dan Leshem, Ph.D., Director, KHC

MOSHE AND CHIENA PERESECKI



THE LITHUANIA YEARS (1900-1941)

VIEW OF RADVILIŠKIS, LITHUANIA



JEWISH CULTURE IN PRE-WAR LITHUANIA

The ancestors of the mostly Yiddish-speaking Lithuanian Jews (Litvaks) hailed from Poland and Germany. While there is evidence of earlier Jewish settlement, the first known charters granting residency privileges to Jews were issued by Grand Duke Vytautas to the Jews of Trakai, Grodno, Brest and Lutsk in 1388-1389. By the end of the 18th century an estimated 250,000 Jews lived in what is now Lithuania and Belarus. The 1897 Russian imperial census counted nearly 1,500,000 Jews in the lands of the former Grand Duchy, less than a fourth of whom lived in the ethnic Lithuanian gubernias.

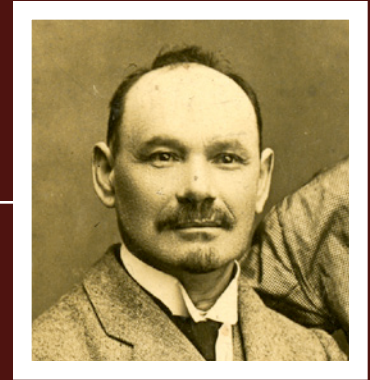
The government census of 1923 counted over 154,000 Jews in the Republic, constituting seven percent of the population, the largest national minority in Lithuania, but this did not include the Jews living in the parts of Lithuania which were part of Poland 1920-1939, including the all-important center of Jewish culture in Vilnius (Vilne). It was only in October 1939 that Vilnius and its environs were placed under Lithuanian control, greatly increasing the number of Jews in Lithuania, which now also included refugees from Poland which had been occupied by Nazi Germany and the USSR. This increased the number of Jews in Lithuania from an estimated 168,000 to nearly a quarter million.

On the eve of the Nazi invasion of Lithuania, its largest cities—Vilnius, Kaunas, and Siauliai—were centers of Jewish learning, culture, and commerce. Vilnius alone had 100 Jewish organizations, including dozens of Yiddish-speaking schools, 40 synagogues, four Hebrew high schools, a Jewish hospital, and hundreds of Jewish-owned businesses.

THE PERESECKI FAMILY OF RADVILIŠKIS, LITHUANIA



CHIENA LEVIN PERESECKI,
BORN 1900



MOSCHE AHARON PERESECKI,
BORN 1895



BENZION PERESECKI,
BORN 1926



LEVI-ICHAK PERESECKI,
BORN 1924

According to the 1931 Lithuanian government census, there were 42 shops and businesses in Radviliškis. 76% were owned by Jews, including three by Moshe Peresecki (Benzion Peresecki's father).

Type of Business in Radviliškis, 1931	Total	Owned by Jews
Groceries	9	7
Flax and Crops	5	5
Butcher shops and cattle trade	5	3
Restaurants and taverns	6	3
Food products	1	1
Drinks	2	2
Clothing, furs and textiles	4	3
Footwear, leather and shoemaking	2	2
Haberdashery and house utensils	1	1
Medicine and cosmetics	2	0
Radios, sewing machines and electrical equipment	1	1
Tools and iron products	1	1
Lumber and heating materials	1	1
Paper, books and stationery	1	1
Miscellaneous	1	1



THE RADVILIŠKIS RAILWAY STATION, C. 1930

Benzion Peresecki's father, Moshé, passed away in 1937, at age 42, from a bleeding ulcer. These documents, authored by Benzion to support his reparations claims against Germany after the Holocaust, described the three retail stores the Peresecki family owned in Radviliškis, Lithuania before the war: "Peresecki's Little Meat and Fruit Store," "Peresecki's Photo Store," and "Peresecki's Wine Shop."

Dr. J.A. LEVENSON
MUNICH, W. GERMANY

-1-

BEN PERES
428 W. 255 ST.
BRONX, N.Y.

SEPT 20, 61

DEAR DR. LEVENSON

ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND ALL DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO MY MOTHER'S CLAIM FOR HEALTH DAMAGES.

I BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND ALL PAPERS EXCEPT ONE EXTENSIVE AFFIDAVIT OF A WITNESS VERIFYING MY MOTHER'S ILLNESS DURING HER STAY IN K.Z. THIS AFFIDAVIT WILL FOLLOW VERY SHORTLY.

YOU WILL NOTE THAT WHATEVER POSSIBLE PAPERS ARE MADE OUT IN GERMAN, AS FOR PAPERS THAT NEED TRANSLATION I WILL BE HAPPY TO REIMBURSE TO YOU ALL SUCH NECESSARY COSTS.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE AKTEN ZETELNEN OF ESTER HANCOU (A WITNESS) IS 21256. AS FOR MOTHER'S AKTEN ZETELNEN YOU SORELY HAVE & WILL BE ABLE TO FILL IN WHEREVER IT IS NECESSARY ON THE ENCLOSED FORMS.

VERY IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE THAT I HAVE NOT ANSWERED QUESTION III ON PAGE 5 (FORM B) AS IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO ME AS TO WHETHER THE QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO MY FATHER OR BROTHER. AS YOU WILL RECALL MY MOTHER CLAIMED FOR THE DEATH OF MY BROTHER & NOT FOR MY FATHER. MY FATHER DIED IN 1937.

IN ORDER TO NOT TO DELAY ACTION I AM GIVING YOU INFORMATION PERTAINING BOTH TO MY FATHER & MY BROTHER SO THAT YOU COULD PERHAPS YOURSELF FILL IN THE MISSING INFORMATION

PERTAINING TO FATHER	PERTAINING TO MY BROTHER
MOSHE AHARON PERESECKI	LEVI-ICHAK PERESECKI
MARRIED - 1922	BORN 28 NOV 1892
DIED - 1937	OCCUPATION - BOOK MAKER
OCCUPATION - BUSINESSMAN (Kaufmann)	APPROX. 100,000 2400 LITAI
SCHOOL - SCHOOL OF COMMERCE (POLAND)	LITHUANIAN MONEY
GRADUATED - BEFORE WORLD WAR I	I BELIEVE IT IS BEST
FIRM - PERESECKI'S LIQUOR & MEAT STORES	IF YOU TAKE THE INFORMATION
REAL ESTATE	REGARDING MY BROTHER FROM
INCOME - APPROXIMATE \$ 20,000 YEARLY	PREVIOUS RECORDS SUBMITTED
	TO YOU FOR THE RE
	CASE. I HOPE YOU HAVE

116

bbl A. LEVENSON
MUNICH, GERMANY

-1-

COPY

BEN PERES
428 W. 255 ST.
BRONX, N.Y. 10471
FEB 19, 66

DEAR DR. LEVENSON

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER DATED

I APPRECIATE VERY MUCH YOUR EFFORTS & AM SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE & THE EXTRA WORK THAT I HAVE CAUSED YOU

I LEAVE ALL DECISIONS AS TO HOW TO PRESENT MY CASE UP TO YOU. I KNOW YOU WILL DO YOUR BEST & THAT IS MORE THAN GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

I WOULD LIKE, HOWEVER TO POINT OUT THAT THE MAIN REASON FOR MY NOT FILLING OUT FORM "B" WAS THE FACT THAT I WAS CONFUSED & SPILL AM AS TO WHO I SHOULD CLAIM SUPPORTED ME BEFORE THE WAR, IN VIEW THAT MY FATHER DIED IN 1937 & MAINLY IN VIEW OF MY MOTHER'S ~~PREVIOUS~~ PREVIOUS CLAIM FOR THE DEATH OF MY BROTHER (I AM SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE DATA OF THIS OLD CASE)

TO HELP YOU PRESENT THE CASE, IN WHICHEVER WAY YOU MAY DECIDE, I AM GIVING YOU THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

MY FATHER OWNED THREE STORES
ALL THREE STORES IN RADVILISKI, LITHUEN

- 1) ONE - A DELICATESSEN STORE
(CANDY, FRUIT & CIGARETTES) NAMED } PERESECKI
"SMUKIY PROKLY, ~~MAKING~~
~~IR VASIA~~ "KRAUTUVIS"
- 2) ONE - PHOTO EQUIPMENT STORE - NAMED } PERESECKI
FOTO APARATU KRAUTUVIS
- 3) ONE - WINE & LIQUOR STORE - NAMED } PERESECKI
VINO PARDUOTUVIS

HIS TOTAL EARNING WERE ABOUT
100,000 "LITAI" A YEAR

IN ADDITION HE OWNED REAL ESTATE

THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLOCAUST IN LITHUANIA



LEVI-ICHAK PERESECKI,
KILLED BY NAZI AND LITHUANIAN
FORCES IN A MASS SHOOTING IN
JULY, 1941.



MEMBERS OF AN EINSATZGRUPPE (GERMAN MOBILE KILLING SQUAD)
MURDERING JEWS IN A PIT NEAR SIAULIAI, LITHUANIA.

PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIOLENCE SPREADS ACROSS NAZI EUROPE

Nazi propaganda and prejudiced attitudes towards Jews, the disabled, Roma, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses began spreading across Europe after Hitler's rise to power in 1933. By 1935, the Nuremberg Laws established formal discriminatory policies in Germany; Jews were prohibited from using Christian businesses, marrying non-Jews, and lost their right to vote.

Lithuania fell under a Soviet sphere of influence as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In June 1940 Soviet troops occupied Lithuania and in August 1940 Lithuania was incorporated into the USSR. After the Nazi invasion and occupation in late June of 1941, the increased political de-stabilization resulted in the rapid spread of anti-Semitism. Despite their 700 years history in the country, Jews were scapegoated as untrustworthy, Soviet sympathizers. Distrust, deportation, and violence against Jews rapidly commenced in an organized and scaled way.



YAD VASHEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

NAZI PHOTOGRAPH OF JEWS DIGGING PITS IN THE KUŽIAI FOREST NEAR SIAULIAI, LITHUANIA. THE EINSATZGRUPPEN (NAZI KILLING SQUADS) WOULD USE THESE PITS TO BURY MURDERED JEWS OF SIAULIAI.

THE CONCENTRATION AND MASS MURDER OF JEWS BEGINS IN LITHUANIA

By 1941, violence against Jews across eastern Europe had sharply increased as the Nazis moved east. In their wake, dozens of mobile Nazi mass-killing units called *Einsatzgruppen* conducted mass shootings across Nazi-occupied countries, including Lithuania. The killing squads in Lithuania were assisted by anti-Soviet partisans and auxiliary police units created at the outset of the German occupation, including some supporters of the so-called Lithuanian Activist Front. People often referred to the local collaborators as “white arm-bands. The killings in Radviliškis were among the earliest organized massacres of Jews in the country.

On July 11th and 12th, 1941, four days after all the Jews of Radviliškis, Lithuania (including the Peresecki family) were forced from their homes and concentrated in the old Radviliškis army barracks, Nazis and members of the Lithuanian Activist Front led all Jewish men aged 16 or older to the grove next to the Jewish cemetery. There, about 300 Jews were shot and buried by Nazis and local collaborators.

One of the victims of the Radviliškis massacre was Levi-Ichak Peresecki, Benzion Peresecki's 17 year-old brother.



A MONUMENT COMMEMORATES THE MASSACRE SITE IN RADVILIŠKIS, LITHUANIA.



Affidavits relating to the death of Levi-Ischak Peresecki

JULY 12, 56
CH. PERESECKI
133 4 ST. JOHN'S PL.
BROOKLYN 13, N.Y.

DR. J. A. LEVENSON
ATTORNEY AT LAW
MÜNCHEN 22, REITNORSTR. 12/0

DEAR DR. LEVENSON

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER DATED JUNE 30TH, 56.
I AM VERY SORRY TO INFORM YOU THAT, AT THE PRESENT,
I CAN NOT FIND ANYONE WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE
KILLING OF MY SON.

IT SEEMS TO ME IT IS RIDICULOUS TO
ASK FOR SUCH A STATEMENT
SINCE ANYONE PRESENT AT THE
SHOOTING WAS SHOT TO
DEATH

“DEAR DR. LEVENSON, THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER DATED JUNE 30TH, 1956. I AM VERY SORRY TO INFORM YOU THAT, AT THE PRESENT, I CAN NOT FIND ANYONE WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE KILLING OF MY SON.

IT SEEMS TO ME IT IS RIDICULOUS TO ASK FOR SUCH A STATEMENT SINCE ANYONE PRESENT AT THE SHOOTING WAS SHOT TO DEATH.”

Dr. J. A. Levenson
Attorney at Law
München 22, Reitnorstr. 12/0

München, June 30th, 1956
Liebigstrasse 28 1/f

Mrs. Ch. Peresecki
1354 St. Johns Pl.
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

Sehr geehrte Mrs. Peresecki:

Ihre Entschädigungsangelegenheit habe ich nunmehr soweit vorwärts bringen können, dass von der zuständigen Behörde die Entscheidung in Aussicht genommen ist.

Es handelt sich lediglich noch um eine Beweis-Aufgabe, die ich Ihnen nachstehend bekannt gebe:

Als Todesnachweis fuer Ihren Sohn Lewi-Ischek Peresecki liegen nur die Erklärungen der Zeugen Meikel und Bekin-Ancoli vor. Aus ihnen geht jedoch nicht hervor, ob sie Augenzeugen des Todes ihres Sohnes waren. Es ist daher notwendig, dass Sie von Augenzeugen bestaetigen lassen, dass ihr Sohn am 11.7.1941 in Rdwilischki/Litauen erschossen wurde.

falls möglich!

Um Ihren Anspruch zu einem erfolgreichen Abschluss zu bringen, liegt es in Ihrem eigenen Interesse, wenn moeglich fuer die Bestaetigungen - in der ueblichen Form - von Augenzeugen besorgt zu sein und mir diese ehestens zugehen zu lassen.

Inzwischen verbleibe ich mit den besten Gruessen auch an Mr. Peresecki,

Ihr
[Signature]
rechtsanwalt

THE GHETTOS OF LITHUANIA

Before deportation to concentration camps, European Jews who were not murdered by mobile killing squads were forced to move to ghettos, which were cordoned-off sections of cities with cramped living spaces, little food, few civil rights, and limited employment. Ghettos were guarded by armed Nazi troops, local troops, or Jewish police.

In Lithuania, ghettos were established after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June, 1941. Ghettos were located in or near most major cities in Lithuania, including Vilna, Siauliai, Kovno, and Svencionys. Siauliai was the largest ghetto in northwest Lithuania.



JEWISH WOMEN WASHING CLOTHES WITH SOLDIERS IN THE BACKGROUND, SIAULIAI GHETTO, 1941. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY NAZI AIRMAN SCHRODER, WHO WAS STATIONED IN LITHUANIA IN 1941. AN INSCRIPTION NEXT TO THE PHOTOGRAPH READS, "OUR JEWISH WOMEN...."

BENZION AND CHIENA PERESECKI'S MOVE TO THE SIAULIAI GHETTO

On August 26, 1941, the Jews living in Radviliškis, Lithuania were told that the barracks were needed for the German army and that the Jews would be moved to Žagarė, a small ghetto north of Radviliškis near the Latvian border. Jews with children (including Chiena and Ben Peresecki) were able to move to the Siauliai ghetto, with special permission from the town's authorities.

The majority of remaining Jews in the barracks of Radviliškis were moved to Žagarė where, on October 2, 1941—the day after Yom Kippur—all Jews in the ghetto were murdered.



A MAN BEARING A YELLOW STAR IN THE SIAULIAI GHETTO.

YAD YASHEM PHOTO ARCHIVE



JEWIS AND GERMAN SOLDIERS IN THE SIAULIAI GHETTO, 1941.

YAD YASHEM PHOTO ARCHIVE



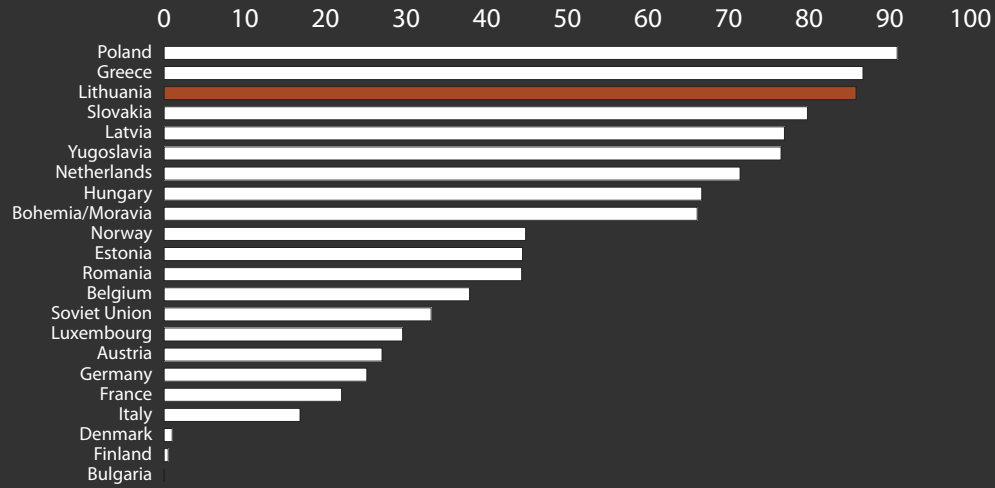
JEWISH CHILDREN AND NAZI SOLDIERS IN SIAULIAI, 1941.

YAD YASHEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

PRESENT-DAY MAP OF EUROPE INDICATING SIGNIFICANT SITES OF THE HOLOCAUST AND THE PERESECKI FAMILY'S MOVEMENT



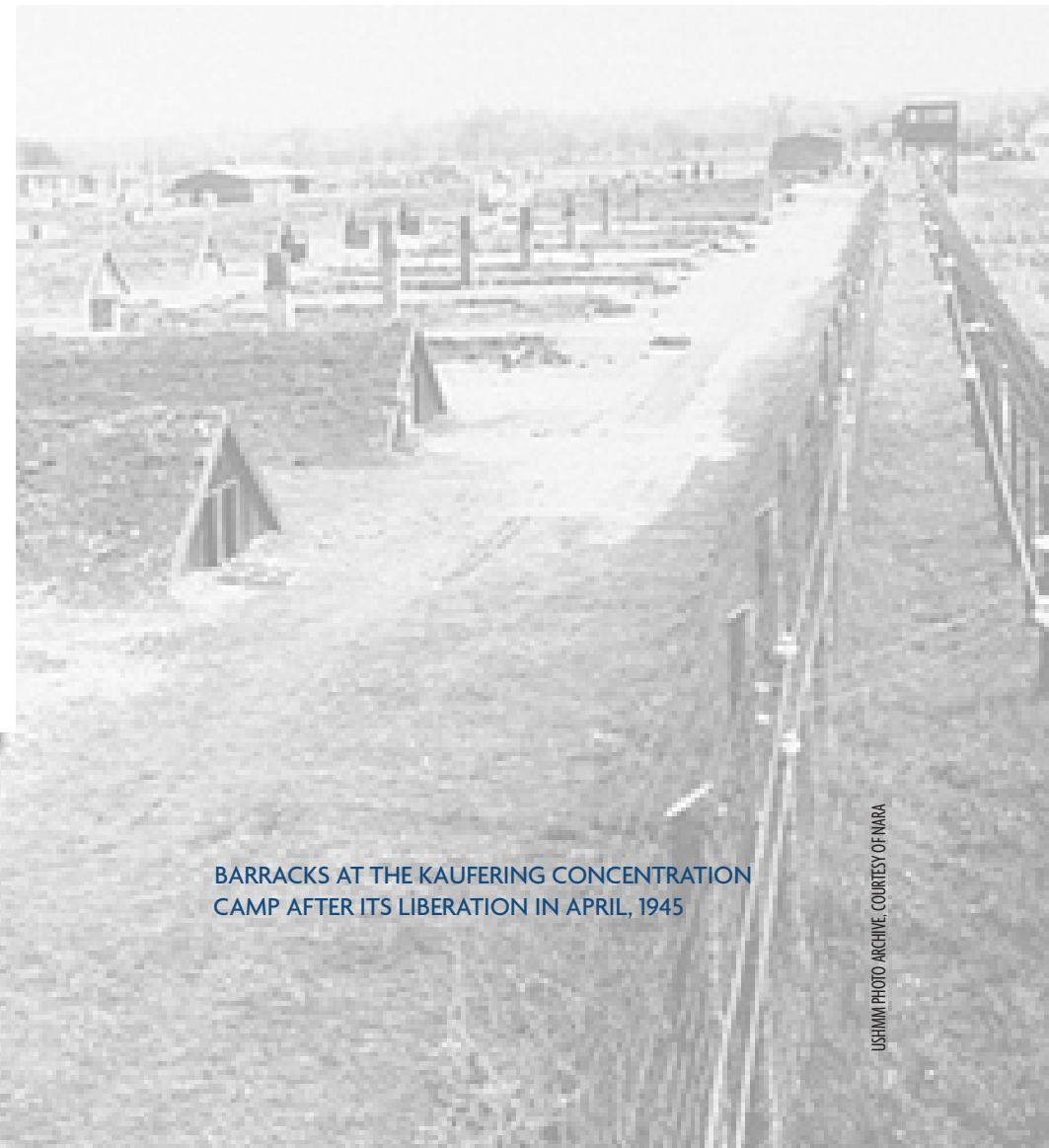
Approximate Percentage of Jews Killed during the Holocaust (by country)



NAZI AND LITHUANIAN FORCES MURDERED APPROXIMATELY 85% OF LITHUANIAN JEWS, ONE OF THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES IN EUROPE. IN ALL, ABOUT 66% OF EUROPEAN JEWS WERE KILLED.



BENZION'S MOVE TO DACHAU [KAUFERING] (1944-1945)



BARRACKS AT THE KAUFERING CONCENTRATION
CAMP AFTER ITS LIBERATION IN APRIL, 1945

USHMM PHOTO ARCHIVE, COURTESY OF NARA

DACHAU AND KAUFERING

In August of 1941, the Nazis deported the remaining 10,000 Lithuanian Jews still in captivity, including Benzion and Chiena Peresecki, to concentration camps in Germany – primarily Dachau and Stutthof.

In August 1944, Benzion Peresecki arrived at Kaufering where he remained until liberation on April 27, 1945.

Dachau, a major Nazi concentration camp near Munich, Germany, had over 30 subcamps; at least 11 of these sub-camps were named Kaufering for a railroad outpost 30 miles west of Dachau. There, Jewish and political prisoners built and worked in subterranean munitions and cement factories, insulated with 10-foot thick concrete walls in order to protect against allied bombing and fire.

The prisoners at Dachau and Kaufering worked long and grueling hours producing bullets, bombs, flak, cement, and other armaments including the V-2 rocket. Prisoners were given meager rations, were often beaten, and were frequently forced on death marches by Nazi troops. Thousands of prisoners died of starvation, disease, execution, and exhaustion.



BUNKERS AND BARRACKS AT KAUFERING IV WERE BUILT UNDERGROUND TO PROTECT AGAINST ALLIED BOMBING RAIDS AND SECURE MUNITIONS PRODUCTION.

PRISONERS INSIDE THEIR BARRACKS AT KAUFERING IV.

CONCENTRATION CAMP UNIFORMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Prisoners of the more than 40,000 identified Nazi concentration camps and incarceration sites across Nazi-occupied Europe were often issued uniforms, especially in larger camps. Prisoners in death camps or smaller incarceration sites were often not issued uniforms.

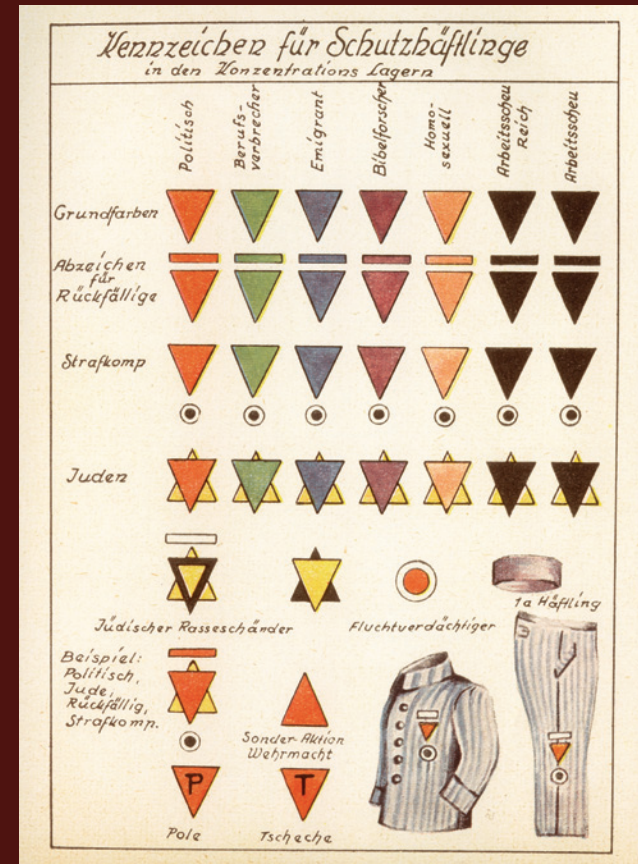
Uniforms were usually manufactured in sewing workshops within larger concentration camps, such as Dachau, Ravensbrück, and Sachsenhausen. Prisoners with backgrounds in textile trades or tailoring were often forced to work in uniform production, which may account for the surprising quality of sewing, stitching, pockets, and buttons of Benzion Peresecki's Dachau uniform.

Made of various blends of cotton and wool, most uniforms had a vertical striped pattern with shades ranging of purple to navy blue with various tones of grey and beige. Male prisoners were provided articles including jacket, pants, and a cap, while women were often issued a dress or skirt and jacket as their uniform. All prisoners were given the same uniform, no matter their political, social, or religious designation.

There were multiple numbers, symbols, colors, and badges sewn on uniforms to identify the types of prisoners. Identification badges were displayed on the left pocket of prisoners' jackets,

and occasionally on sleeves and pants. Triangles of various colors communicated different classifications:

- Red for political prisoners
- Yellow for Jewish prisoners
- Green for criminals
- Blue for immigrants
- Purple for Jehovah's Witnesses
- Pink for homosexuals
- Black for "asocial" prisoners (mental disease, addiction, or "work-shy")
- Brown for Roma
- Colored bars for prisoners with multiple classifications
- Yellow triangle with a Black outlined triangle for Jews who had sexual relations with someone of Aryan race
- Yellow triangle with a black triangle underneath for a 'race defiler'
- Red non-inverted triangle for POWs or deserters
- Red dot for a prisoner suspected of escaping





Kaufering

Many uniforms had identification numbers printed onto their uniforms; some were handwritten. Benzion Peresecki's jacket from Kaufering (pictured left) also had an inside pocket that was hand stitched later, clear from different thread and uneven stitches.



Kaiserwald

Some prisoners, especially women, were given overcoats as part of their issued uniform. This long-sleeved coat was issued to Esther Kessler Begeil at Kaiserwald, a labor camp in Latvia. The identification number was handwritten with a 6-pointed star. The yellow triangle, identifying Begeil as a Jew, was an alternative to the traditional yellow star displayed on many garments and uniforms.



Birkenau

Birkenau, a subcamp of Auschwitz, was known as Auschwitz II, opened in 1941. Auschwitz and its three subcamps was one of the largest camps to work and kill prisoners. This jacket, worn by female prisoner Malka Polak-Adler, displays no identification number or badge. The jacket has thin vertical stripes and pockets. Many uniforms were not in the best conditions and would need alterations, usually done by prisoners themselves. This jacket has tears underneath the arms, some holes in the collar and is missing some buttons.



Sachsenhausen

This uniform was worn by Dr. Julius de Clercq Zubli, a non-Jewish doctor from the Netherlands imprisoned at Sachsenhausen for "resistance activity." Sachsenhausen was a large system of concentration camps located north of Berlin, and primarily housed political and criminal prisoners before interning other types of prisoners in 1943. The identification badge and number of Dr. Zubli is hand-drawn in ink with an "H," for "Hollander" next to the number. Note the armband, identifying Zubli as an "härt arzt," or "prisoner doctor."



Gross-Rosen

Gross-Rosen, a subcamp of Sachsenhausen, was a forced labor camp located in western Poland. This jacket, worn by an unknown inmate, has light blue and cream vertical stripes and a hand-written identification number in black ink. Below the identification number is a red triangle with a "P," identifying the prisoner as Polish.



Unidentified Camp

This jacket, worn in an unknown location, has three pockets and large, black buttons.



Buchenwald

This concentration camp jacket was worn in Buchenwald, one of the largest concentration camps located near Weimar, Germany. The vertical stripes are much thinner and lighter than other uniforms. This particular uniform has a post-liberation badge that denoted the survivors experience in the Holocaust. Many times, these patches were created by the survivors themselves or by a survivor organization.



Dachau

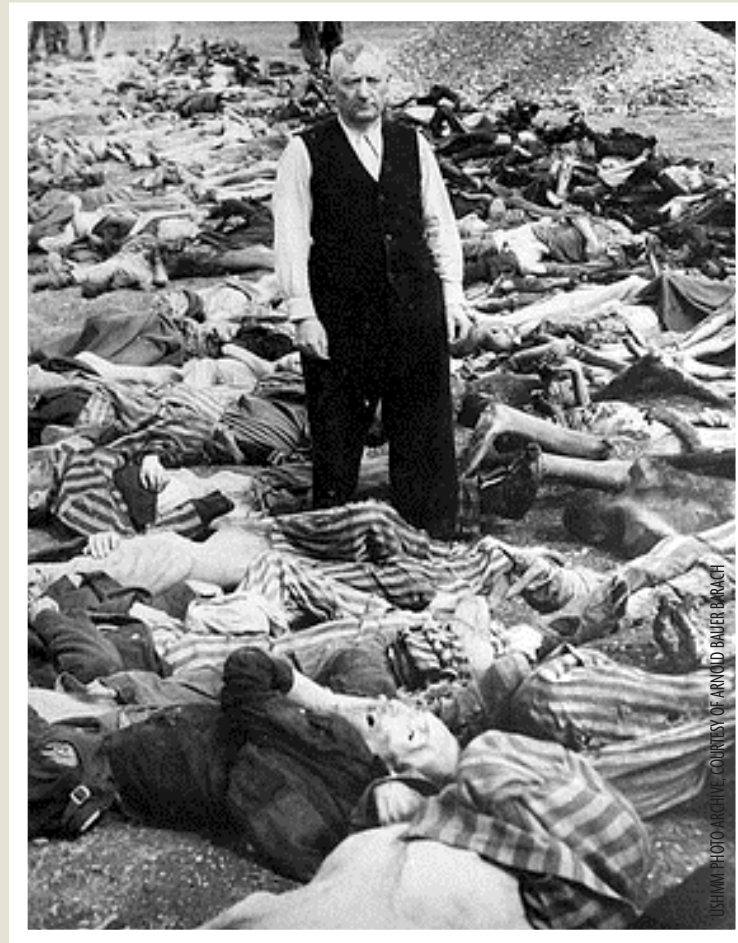
This jacket was worn by Matthaues Pibal, an inmate at Dachau. Likely manufactured in the same facility as Benzion Peresecki's jacket, this uniform differs in its style of stamped numbers, absence of pockets, and a purple triangle, identifying Matthaues as a Jehovah's Witness.

LIBERATION

The Kaufering IV sub-camp of Dachau was liberated on April 27, 1945 by the 12th Armored Division of the United States 7th Army.

On that day, Johann Eichelsdorfer, the last Nazi commandant at Kaufering (pictured here), was forced to stand among the corpses that were laid out prior to burial.

Eichelsdorfer was convicted of war crimes and was hanged at Landsberg prison, a few miles from the Kaufering camp, on May 29, 1946.





AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WALKING THROUGH THE GATES OF KAUFERING (LANDSBERG) CONCENTRATION CAMP ON THE DAY OF LIBERATION.



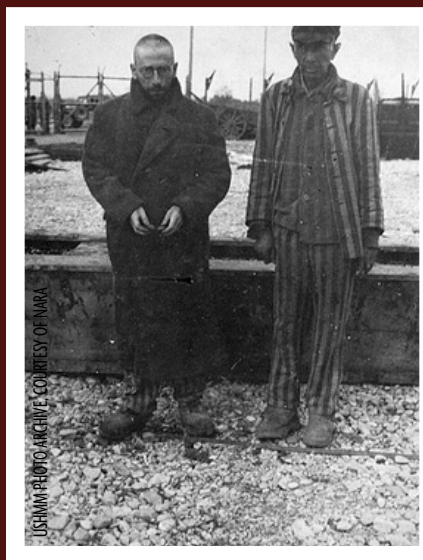
A SURVIVOR OF KAUFERING IV WITH AMERICAN SOLDIERS AFTER LIBERATION.



AMERICAN SOLDIERS VIEW BODIES OF VICTIMS OF KAUFERING APRIL 30, 1945.



US TROOPS FORCE GERMAN CIVILIANS TO VIEW VICTIMS AT KAUFERING IV, APRIL 29-30, 1945.



TWO SURVIVORS OF KAUFERING. APRIL 27, 1945.



MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT OF COMBAT COMMAND A, 12TH ARMORED DIVISION, XXI CORPS, US 7TH ARMY, VIEW THE BURNED CORPSES OF VICTIMS AT KAUFERING IV. LANDSBERG-KAUFERING, GERMANY, APRIL 28, 1945.

CHIENA PERESECKI'S CONCENTRATION CAMP AND LIBERATION

Chiena Peresecki, Benzion's mother, was separated from her son in August of 1943 and was transported to a temporary labor camp in Lithuania named Linkaičiai.

In July 1944, Chiena was moved from Linkaičiai to the women's section of the Stutthof concentration camp, near Gdańsk, Poland.

Approximately 85,000 of the 110,000 prisoners brought to Stutthof were murdered and it was the last concentration camp to be liberated by the allies, on May 9, 1945. With the Allies approaching quickly, Chiena as well as the other inmates in the camp were marched towards Germany. The cold and harsh conditions of the march killed many.

After her liberation, Chiena Peresecki reunited with her son, Benzion, in the Landsberg, Germany displaced persons camp.

Stutthof, den 20. Juli 1944

Internationaler Jurypol
Kassendirektor
Politische Abteilung

An das
Schutzhaftlager
Weichselufer bei Mirklingen

Rechtsabteilung
Anweisung von Mirklingen und Kinder wurden am 10. Juli 1944
in das Konzentrationslager Stutthof abgefordert:

1. Lobo	Wera	17.5.20	1904	47 904
2. Fuchskindl	Schil	1902	"	47 905
3. Hannelson	Wera	1899	"	47 906
4. Ros	Wera	25.12.07	"	47 907
5. Kerner	Schil	1922	"	47 908
6. Kerner	Wera	1902	"	47 909
7. Boder	Wera	1924	"	47 910
8. Ziskowitz	Wera	5.2.25	"	47 911
9. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 912
10. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 913
11. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 914
12. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 915
13. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 916
14. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 917
15. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 918
16. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 919
17. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 920
18. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 921
19. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 922
20. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 923
21. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 924
22. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 925
23. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 926
24. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 927
25. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 928
26. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 929
27. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 930
28. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 931
29. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 932
30. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 933
31. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 934
32. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 935
33. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 936
34. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 937
35. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 938
36. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 939
37. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 940
38. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 941
39. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 942
40. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 943
41. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 944
42. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 945
43. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 946
44. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 947
45. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 948
46. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 949
47. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 950
48. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 951
49. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 952
50. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 953
51. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 954
52. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 955
53. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 956
54. Boder	Schil	1902	"	47 957

USHMM PHOTO ARCHIVE, COURTESY OF WILLIAM O. MCWORKMAN

NAZI ROLL BOOK LISTING CHIENA PERESECKI IN THE STUTTHOF CONCENTRATION CAMP, JULY 1944

STATEMENT FROM CHIENA DESCRIBING HER SUFFERING

Page 2 of 2

As the Soviet army approached, the nazis marched us toward Dorever. On our way we suffered from extreme cold. Mrs Amolski's legs froze. As the Soviets came we took her to a hospital where both her legs had to be amputated.

All the above statements made by me herein are true in each and every respect.

Chiena Peres
Chiena Peres

Sworn to before me
This 31st day of Jan. 1977.

Anthony J. Conte

ANTHONY J. CONTE
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 204725028
Qualified in Rensselaer County
Commission Expires March 20, 1977

AFTER THE HOLOCAUST:
THE PERESECKI'S AT THE LANDSBERG
DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP
(1945-1949)



THE LANDSBERG DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP

As part of the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after the war, displaced persons camps became vital in the effort to house, heal, train, and repatriate Holocaust survivors after liberation.

Landsberg, about 30 miles from Dachau, was the second-largest DP camp in postwar Europe and was where Ben Zion Peresecki reunited with his mother, Chiena. Situated in former military barracks, the Landsberg population ballooned to over 5000 Jewish DPs by 1946. The populace of Landsberg was mainly comprised of Russian, Latvian, and Lithuanian survivors with a Russian-Jewish commander.

Landsberg had a strong Jewish life and culture, boasting a newspaper, radio station, synagogue (including a mikvah, Talmud, and Torah), as well as a small Yeshiva. The DP camp also had a sizable educational system, led by ORT (Society for Trades and Agricultural Labor) schools. Its programs were centered around engineering, technology, nursing, and basic job training. Ben Zion Peresecki received his high school graduate equivalency diploma through ORT.




JEWISH MEN IN A CARPENTRY WORKSHOP AT ORT SCHOOL (SOCIETY FOR TRADES AND AGRICULTURAL LABOR) IN LANDSBERG, GERMANY, C. 1947.

USHMM, COURTESY OF GEORGE KADISH/ZVI KADUSHIN

DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE LANDSBERG DP CAMP

JEWISH FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS COMMITTEE LANDSBERG/L. — BAVARIA

Certificate No. *489*



WE CERTIFY, THAT
Wir bescheinigen hiermit, daß

FAMILY NAME *Peresetski*
Familiennamen

OTHER GIVEN NAME *Chana*
Vorname

BIRTHDATE *23. 2. 1900* BIRTHPLACE *Rozelija*
Geburtsdatum Geburtsplatz

DURING GERMAN APPRESSION WAS KEPT IN NAZI-CONCENTRATION-CAMPS AND WAS BY ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY TRUPPEN GEFANGEN GEHALTEN UND VON ALLIIERTEN TRUPPEN VOM KONZENTRATIONSLAGER DAACHAU BEFREIT WURDE.

Starthof LIBERATED, befreit wurde.

PRISONERS NO. *82692*
Häftlings-Nr.

LANDSBERG/L. *93. Mai 1945*

Goldberg
JEWISH FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS COMMITTEE

MILITARY GOVERNMENT
Residence Army Artilleriekaserne
Landsberg a. Lech

Certificate.

The Camp-Commandant by means of letters scriptural at disposition and examination occurred


that *Peresetski* admits hereby *Benzion*
born *10.7.26* in *Radziliskis*
last civil lodging *Schauwen*
during german oppression was political prisoner (Häftling) before the occupation of this territory. He came from the Concentration Camp of *Dachau* prisoner Nr. *84679* into this camp.

This card serves as personal identification of above named individual.

Landsberg a. L., *12 July* 1945.

Military Government
Corps DPTA 12
Army

Commanding
A. H. Fredlund
1st Lt. Cav. CMD'G



Bescheinigung.

Der Lager-Kommandant bescheinigt hiermit auf Grund der vorgelegten Urkunden und der vorgenommenen Feststellungen, daß

Peresetski *Benzion*
geboren am *10.7.26* in *Radziliskis*
letzter Wohnsitz *Schauwen*
während der deutschen Verwaltung vor der Besetzung dieses Gebietes politischer Häftling gewesen ist.

Er kam hierher vom Konzentrationslager *Dachau*

Häftlings-Nr. *84679*

Dieser Schein gilt als Personal



MOTHER AND SON RECLINE AT LANDSBERG DP CAMP CIRCA 1948.

REST AND RECOVERY AT THE LANDSBERG DP CAMP

IMAGES SHOWING
BEN AND CHIENA'S
LIFE IN LANDSBERG.




STANDING 5' 4" TALL (163 CM),
BENZION PERESECKI PLAYED
GUARD FOR THE LANDSBERG
DP CAMP BASKETBALL TEAM.



For many Jews in displaced persons camps, education and job training were essential for re-entry into society. After Benzion passed his high school equivalency test, he began engineering training in nearby Munich, where he commuted from his barracks in Landsberg each day. The image below is his membership document for the Jewish Students' Union in Munich; at right is his high school equivalency diploma.

NAME Name	Pereseki				
Christian name Vorname	Benzion				
Date of birth Geburtsdag	10.7.1926				
Born at Geburtsort	Radwilschke				
faculty Fakultät	Maschinenbau				
Term	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher	6	7	8	9	10
address domicile Wohnort street Nr. Straße Nr.					

is member of the Union Jewish Students in Munich ist Mitglied der Vereinigung Jüdischer Studenten in München	
	
secretary Sekretär	president Vorsitzender
Date issued Ausgestellt am	21 December 1947
1. Expires Gültig bis	31 März 1948
2. Expires Gültig bis	31 August 1948
3. Expires Gültig bis	30 März 1948
4. Expires Gültig bis	

No I/55

VERIFIKATIONS-KOMMISSION
für Jüdische Hochschulkandidaten
München.



Herr/Frau/Frl. Pereseki Benzion
geb. am 10. VII. 1926 zu Radwilschke
der sein im Jahre 1942
an de m. Gymnasium in Schaulen

erworbenes Reifezeugnis nicht mehr besitzt, hat durch Ablegung der Verifikations-Prüfung gemäß M. E. des Bayerischen Staatsministeriums für Unterricht und Kultus vom 9. 9. 1947 Nr. VI 39428 und vom 12. 4. 1948 Nr. VI 20978 im Februar 1946

mit Gesamturteil
„Bestanden“

die wissenschaftlichen Voraussetzungen für das Hochschulstudium erfüllt.
Die Einzelergebnisse der Verifikations-Prüfung sind in dem nachfolgenden Auszug der Prüfungsniederschrift zusammengestellt.

München, den 28. VII. 1948

Der Vorsitzende der
Verifikations-Kommission
Sp. Dep. - Aus.

No: 36-46/f

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In 1946, Benzion Peresecki re-visited the Kaufering barracks and munitions factories from the nearby Landsberg displaced persons camp.



Documents chronicling Ben and Chiena's preparation for their move to the United States from the Landsberg DP Camp.

One document is from Ben and Chiena's resettlement interview; the other is an affidavit from Ben's uncle in the United States, Izzy Doubler, offering to help Ben and Chiena resettle.

THE INTERVIEW RECORD RECOMMENDING THAT BEN AND HIS MOTHER BE ALLOWED TO IMMIGRATE TO EITHER THE UNITED STATES OR PALESTINE.

“SUFFERED VERY MUCH FROM GERMAN NAZIS. WAS IN CONC. CAMP. KAUFERING BEI DAUCHAU, DEUT.”

“A YOUNG BOY WITH HIS MOTHER, A STUDENT, WILL GO TO U.S.A, WHERE THEY HAS THEIR ONLY RELATIVES, WHERE HE WILL BE ABLE TO STUDY. IF IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBILITIES TO GO TO U.S.A THEY WILL TRY EMIGRATION TO PALESTINE.”

Annex C to Administrative Order 29.

CMO 1539

CM No. 87932

ACTION SHEET English

PERSONS Case No.

Name of Displaced Person or Refugee Peresecki Ben - Gjon

Area Team No. 22 Assembly Center Landsberg

(a) Repatriation: yes — no lost all relatives in Lithuania

(b) Mass Resettlement U.S.A. or Palestine.

(c) Individual Resettlement Skills: Student Age 22
U.S.A
Req. for U.S.A since Dec 1946

(d) Assimilation: yes — no suffered very much from German nazis
was in Conc Camp Kaufering bei Dauchau, Deut.

(e) Interviewer's Recommendation A young boy with his mother,
a student, will go to U.S.A, where
they has their only relatives, where he
will be able to study
if it will not be possibilities to go to U.S.A
they will try emigration to Palestine.

M. J. A. K. S.
22.2.48.

Individual Assurance by Relative HIAS

STATE OF NEW YORK } Principal Applicant: Benjamin Peresecki
CITY OF NEW YORK } ss:
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Izzy Doubler, Citizen residing at 482 Montgomery St.,
Brooklyn, N.Y. being duly sworn, deposes and says:

I am the Uncle of Benjamin Peresecki
(state relationship)

~~accompanied by the following members of his family:~~

residing at Rossmarkt 192, Landsberg/Lech, Bavaria, Germany U.S. Zone

who is making application for immigration, under the provisions of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948.

I hereby assure that the applicant will be suitably employed as a Framer (Ladies Handbags) by Mert's Leather Goods Co.
(nature of employment) (name of employer)
at 14 E. 33rd Street, N.Y.C., N.Y.

without displacing some other persons from employment, and that the applicant will receive the prevailing rate of wages for such employment in the community in which it will be undertaken.

I further assure that the applicant and the members of his family upon arrival in the United States, will be provided with safe and sanitary housing, will share a two room apartment with his mother Chiena consisting of Peresecki at 482 Montgomery St.,
(number of rooms) Brooklyn, N.Y., without requiring any other persons to vacate the premises to be occupied.

I further assure that the applicant and the members of his family will not become public charges.

I further assure that the applicant and the members of his family will be met at the port of entry; that the inland transportation to the ultimate destination will be paid for by me; and that he will be met and received at the ultimate destination.

I make this affidavit in order that the above named applicant for visas may be admitted to the United States under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948.

Sworn to before me this Izzy Doubler
7...day of...October...1948.
Meyer Abrams

MAYER ABRAMS
Notary Public in the State of New York
Residing in Kings County
N.Y. Certificate No. 237, Exp. No. 208.9
Certificate filed in
Kings Co. Clerk's No. 234, Exp. No. 201A-9
Commission Expires March 20, 1949

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THE PERESEKI'S IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 ORIGINAL TO BE GIVEN TO THE PERSON NATURALIZED
 No. 7386409

Petition No. 521534

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Male of full legal age 1926 complexion Fair color of eyes Brown height 5 feet 3 inches weight 180 pounds nose bridge straight mouth Small mole on face marital status Single former nationality Lithuania

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

Ben Peres
 I, *Ben Peres*, Judge and true signature of holder:
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
 ss: I do hereby certify that at a term of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of New York held for session at New York on November 11th 1954 the Court having found that

then residing at 1334 St. Johns Place, Brooklyn, New York
 and under the name *Ben Peres* on the Petition filed in and approved by the District Court of the Eastern District of New York at New York on the 11th day of November 1954, in compliance with the provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to admission to citizenship, the person and that such person is and always was and always will be a citizen of the United States of America.
 In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 11th day of November 1954 in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-ninth.

By *Ben Peres*
 Clerk of the U.S. District Court
 Deputy Clerk

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 ORIGINAL TO BE GIVEN TO THE PERSON NATURALIZED
 Petition No. 521533

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Male of full legal age 1926 complexion Medium color of eyes Brown height 4 feet 7 inches weight 140 pounds nose bridge straight mouth Small mole on left cheek marital status Widow former nationality Lithuania

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

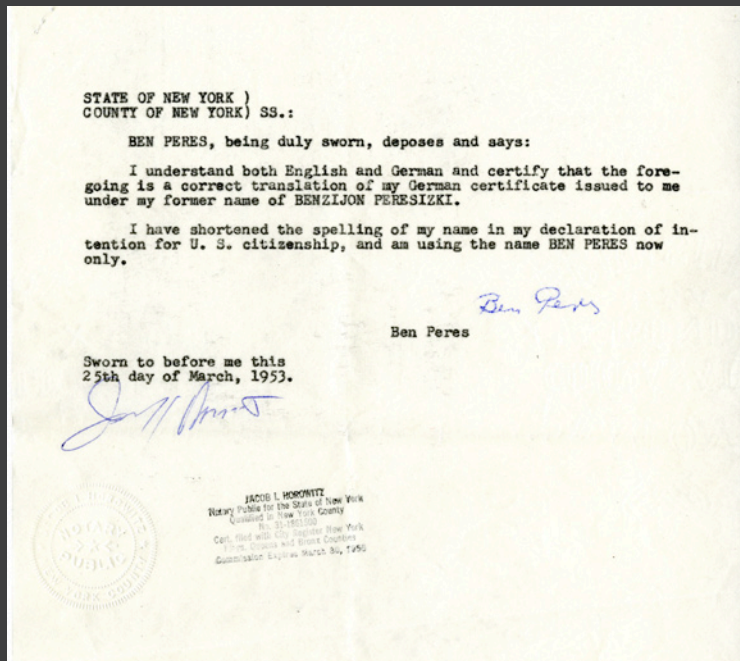
Christina Peres
 I, *Christina Peres*, Judge and true signature of holder:
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
 ss: I do hereby certify that at a term of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of New York held for session at New York on November 11th 1954 the Court having found that

then residing at 1334 St. Johns Place, Brooklyn, New York
 and under the name *Christina Peres* on the Petition filed in and approved by the District Court of the Eastern District of New York at New York on the 11th day of November 1954, in compliance with the provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to admission to citizenship, the person and that such person is and always was and always will be a citizen of the United States of America.
 In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 11th day of November 1954 in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-ninth.

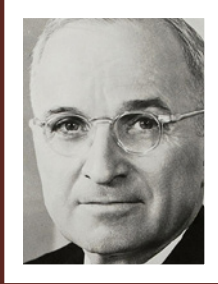
By *Christina Peres*
 Clerk of the U.S. District Court
 Deputy Clerk

ESTABLISHING A NEW IDENTITY IN NEW YORK

By his 23rd birthday, Benzion Peresecki's name and identity had been established, modified, misspelled, or changed at least seven times. The original Lithuanian spelling of his name, "Benzion Peresecki," was later usurped by his Dachau prisoner number, "84679," as well as various spellings by liberating forces, including, "Bencion Peresetzki," "Benzijon Peresizki," "Benzion Peresetzki," "Ben-Cijon Peresecki," and "Benjamin Peresecki." In 1949, during his immigration to the United States, his name was changed one final time, to "Ben Peres."



TRUMAN'S RESPONSE TO THE UNITED STATES DISPLACED PERSONS ACT (JUNE 25, 1948)



HARRY S. TRUMAN,
33RD PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES
(1945-53)

IN 1948, TRUMAN
GAVE THIS
RESPONSE TO A U.S.
CONGRESSIONAL
BILL: THE DISPLACED
PERSONS ACT. TRUMAN
ARGUED AGAINST
THE DISCRIMINATORY
NATURE OF THE BILL.

“Again, on January 7, 1948, I urged the Congress to pass suitable legislation at once so that this Nation may do its share in caring for homeless and suffering refugees of all faiths. I believe that the admission of these persons will add to the strength and energy of the Nation. The Congress did not act at once.”

“The bad points of the bill are numerous. Together they form a pattern of discrimination and intolerance wholly inconsistent with the American sense of justice. The bill discriminates in callous fashion against displaced persons of the Jewish faith. This brutal fact cannot be obscured by the maze of technicalities in the bill or by the protestations of some of its sponsors.”

“For all practical purposes, it must be frankly recognized, therefore, that this bill excludes Jewish displaced persons, rather than accepting a fair proportion of them along with other faiths. The bill also excludes many displaced persons of the Catholic faith who deserve admission. Many anticommunist refugees of Catholic faith fled into the American zones after December 22, 1945, in order to escape persecution in countries dominated by a Communist form of government. These too are barred by the December 22, 1945, dateline.”

“The bill reflects a singular lack of confidence by the Congress in the capacity and willingness of the people of the United States to extend a welcoming hand to the prospective immigrants.” “I know what a bitter disappointment this bill is to the many displaced victims of persecution who looked to the United States for hope; to the millions of our citizens who wanted to help them in the finest American spirit; to the many Members of the Congress who fought hard but unsuccessfully for a decent displaced persons bill. I hope that this bitter disappointment will not turn to despair.”

- Harry Truman, 1948

NEW YORK CITY YEARS
(1950-1968)



THE PERES'S SEARCH FOR A HOME

On May 1st, 1949, Benzion Peresecki, now Ben Peres, moved to his Uncle's apartment at 482 Montgomery Street in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn.

He lived in at least three different locations in New York City between 1948 and 1968, including in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx.

He carried his jacket from Dachau with him during each move.



HOW BEN PERES MET HIS WIFE, CHAYA

In this diary entry, Chaya Peres, Ben Peres's wife, wrote about a family friend, Esther, who introduced her to Ben. Chaya said this introduction to Ben would "alter the course of my life."

I first came to the United States in the Spring of 1960 as an Israeli exchange student. At that time, I had every intention to return to Israel after completion of the one year program. Though I did not know anyone in this country, I did have the telephone number of a woman named Esther Ancoli. Esther was the sister-in-law of my Israeli classmate Yocheved. Yocheved and her husband Lusik, (Esther's brother) had requested that I contact Esther to send their regards. I gladly made the telephone call, not knowing that this call would alter the course of my life.

From the very first time I spoke with Esther, I was struck by her warmth and generosity. She opened her heart and home to me; willingly offered her friendship; and made me feel that I had a home away from home.

The turning point in my life came when Esther asked if I was interested in meeting a wonderful man named Benzele (or Ben for short), who she knew from childhood. She described Ben as intelligent, generous, gentle and kind. I agreed to meet Ben, and quickly discovered that Esther was right about him. Ben had all of the qualities that Esther described and more. Ben and I were soon wed, and we decided to establish our home and family in America. From many years I experienced the joy of being married to a loving and devoted husband and father. For this gift, I am eternally grateful to Esther.

Over the years, Esther's deep friendship with my family has never faltered. It has been a blessing to know her. Esther treated my mother-in-law as her own mother, and my husband, like a brother. My children grew up knowing that Esther was incapable of forgetting a birthday. I came to realize that my close friendship with her was destined to last a lifetime.

Esther and I have shared so much over the years. There has been laughter and joy, as well as heartache and pain. We have attended more dinner parties than I can count, many of which were hosted by Esther. It is no secret that Esther is a consummate hostess, and that her table settings would put even Martha Stewart to shame.

Esther was a pillar of strength to me when I lost my husband. Even long after Ben's death, Esther continually reached out to me, ensuring that I remained connected and involved with our mutual friends.

It is difficult to imagine a more caring, loyal and trustworthy friend than Esther. My bond with her is exceptionally strong and has withstood the tests of time and distance. I know that she will remain an integral part of my life.

Happy birthday Esther! May you live to be 120 (and after that we'll negotiate for more).

Love always,

Chaya

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL OF NAZI OPPRESSION

For millions of survivors of the Holocaust, the emotional and psychological toll of Nazi torture was devastating.

As part of his reparations effort, Ben Peres itemized the medical care and associated costs treating the psychological and physical damage inflicted during the Holocaust.

In 1967, Ben was not pleased with one of his psychiatrists, describing how Dr. Boem and his secretary "acted exactly like Nazis." Ben was required to see this particular psychiatrist commissioned by the German government to verify his injuries.

Ranson Drugs, Inc.
237 UTICA AVENUE
BROOKLYN 9, N. Y.
SLOCUM 8-2128

October 20, 1967

To Whom It May Concern:

With reference to Mrs. Chloa Peres presently residing at 428 West 259th Street, Bronx, New York, formerly at 1334 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, New York.

Various prescriptions, from 1949 to 1955, prescribed by a number of doctors, totaling \$400.00.

From 1956 to 1962, as prescribed by Dr. Norton D. Ritz, for Miltown, Meprospan, Demasal and Theominal, totaling \$720.00.

Prescriptions for Reserpine, Miluretic, Gelustil \$264.00.

Total amount for period 1949 to 1962 **\$1384.00**

Very truly yours,
Ranson Drugs, Inc.
J. H. Handler, M.D.

J. H. HANDLER, M.D.
235 WEST 103RD STREET
NEW YORK 26, N. Y.
ACADEMY 2-2098

October 20, 1965

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to state that Mr. Ben Peres, at present of 428 West 259th Street, Bronx, New York has been a patient of mine since his arrival in New York in May 1949.

My patient lived under brutal circumstances for three years in the Ghetto, and one year in the concentration camp. His older brother was killed in the camp. Beatings—exposure and malnutrition were the accepted conditions under Mr. Peres at that time a boy in his adolescent years, has withstood.

I treated Mr. Peres for extreme nervousness—insomnia and headaches. G.I. spasms were his frequent complaint. My patient has, to this day, a loss of 40% to pursue any gainful occupation.

J. H. HANDLER, M.D.
J. H. Handler

DR. BOEM
428 W. 259th St.
BRONX NY, 10471
MARCH 27, 67

DEAR DR. BOEM

I HAVE JUST FINISHED WITH DR. BOEM (AND NEEDS IMMEDIATE)

I MUST SAY THE WAY VERY UNPLEASANT, HIS AND HIS SECRETARY ACTED EXACTLY LIKE NAZIS. THEY CAN BE NO CHANGE TO CHANGE TO CHANGE SOMETHING, THE WHOLE EXAMINATION LASTED 5 MINUTES. I CAN'T SEE HOW HE CAN TURN AN EYE ON IN SUCH A SHORT TIME.

I HOPE I AM NOT WORRIED ABOUT THIS OF HIS EXAMINATION.

IN THE MEANTIME I GUESS THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO, BUT WAIT.

I HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH YOU & YOUR FAMILY.

MY MOTHER & MY WIFE WITH YOU. I AM GOING TO VISITING ALL IN JERUSALEM OUR BEST WISHES TO YOUR WHOLE FAMILY

HAPPY PURIM

YOURS TRULY
Ben Peres

Mr. Ben Peres
428 W. 259th St.
New York City

J. H. HANDLER, M.D.
235 WEST 103RD STREET
NEW YORK 26, N. Y.

Neurotic features: emotional instability, depression, insomnia, anxiety, hyperactivity, etc.

The above was noted by Dr. Handler on 1/15/49. He was very tired and had a cold. He was very nervous and had a headache. He was very nervous and had a headache. He was very nervous and had a headache.

1949	65"
1950	60"
1952	58"
1953	57"
1954	56"
1955	55"
1956	54"
1957	53"
1958	52"
1959	51"
1960	50"
1961	49"
1962	48"

Medication:
Thioridazine
Deprol
Clonal
Pantolol-Aden.
B. complex-P.N.

9/21/67

1949 Jan 10 - April 15 - June 20 - Sept 24 - Nov 11 - Dec 19 412
1950 Feb 14 - May 22 - Aug 29 - Nov 7 - Sept 22 - Dec 6 442
1951 Feb 15 - April 15 - June 15 - Aug 15 - Oct 15 - Dec 15 452
1952 Jan 22 - Feb 15 - April 20 - May 20 - July 20 - Oct 20 462
1953 Jan 21 - Feb 15 - April 20 - May 20 - July 20 - Oct 20 472
1954 Jan 21 - Feb 15 - April 20 - May 20 - July 20 - Oct 20 482

ASDA
235 WEST 103RD STREET
NEW YORK 26, N. Y.

Ben Peres 3/19/67
J. H. Handler

TERMINAL STRENGTH APPEARANCE

STARVED AT THE
LUGGAGE STATION
Severely
Tired
Sleepless
Frightful
Wet

Catastrophic nightmares
of Nazis
Oxytocin
Amnesia
Uremia, diarrhoea
HEADACHES

LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS
OF PRESENT REALITY
DEPRESSION
PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL
DESTRUCTION & COLLAPSE

J. H. HANDLER, M.D.
J. H. Handler

NEUROSES, SPASMS, GASTRO-INT. DISTURBANCES, STIMMING-CLASSEN, NACH-VERGIFTUNG IN ERGEBNIS...

Part of the reparations effort involved documenting how injuries or illness suffered due to the Holocaust had adversely affected employment.

DR. J. A. LEVENKOW
Rockawayville
3. April 1967
L/nd

Mr. Ben Peres
428 W. 259th St.
BRONX, N.Y. 10471

Dear Mr. Peres,

I am in receipt of both your letters dated February 22 and March 25, 1967, contents of which I have carefully noted.

Concerning your examination by the Consular doctor Dr. Boem I can hardly imagine that this doctor should be unfavorably to your case as I know him personally as being very competent and favorable expert.

In connection with your letter of March 25, 1967 I have written to Dr. Boem directly asking his own explanation about the examination which he has carried out in your case. I am not quite sure whether Dr. Boem will inform me about the results of your examination, however, I shall give you a further report as soon as I receive Dr. Boem's report. It may you feel assured that I shall do everything possible in your case to safeguard your interests. It will take quite some time until the findings of the medical examination will be received by the Amt and the same evaluated by the Medical Board.

As your mother's case is concerned the same is still with the Medical Board. I hope, however, that the evaluation will soon be completed. As soon as I shall hear some more news on the subject matter I shall not fail to return to the matter with a further report.

In the meantime I am with kindest personal regards to you and your family and your dear mother also from my wife I am.

Sincerely yours,
J. A. Levenkow
Attorney at Law

THE PERESECKI'S REPARATIONS EFFORT

In an effort to seek justice for their pain, suffering, and associated health costs, many survivors of the Holocaust sought restitution from the post-war German government.

Holocaust reparations cases, most often international legal efforts, took years to compile, file, and adjudicate.

The Peres family actively sought reparations in a multi-decade effort using a lawyer in Munich, Germany, Dr. J.A. Levenson.

DEAR DR.

MY NAME IS BENJAMIN PERESECKI AND I AM A SURVIVOR OF BERNINA, NY, U.S.A.

I HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED IN THE Ghetto OF SCHAARLEN DUE TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMP OF POLSKA FOR AN TOTAL OF APPROX. 4 YEARS.

I HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED A COMPENSATION OF IMPRISONMENT THROUGH U.S.A. HOWEVER I AM TOLD THAT PERSONS WHO ENTERED HERE WERE ARRESTED AS MINORS (BY NUREMBERG) AND WERE NOT PERMITTED FROM OBTAINING THEIR EDUCATION AND ARE NOT ENTITLED FOR A COMPENSATION.

I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY IF YOU WOULD ACCEPT MY CASE.

MY AFTEN ZEICHEN IS

HOPEING TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON

REMAIN

I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY IF YOU WOULD ACCEPT MY CASE.

UPON RECEIVING AN ANSWER FROM YOU I WILL BE VERY GLAD TO COLLECT ALL MY PAPERS FROM U.S.A. AND OTHER SOURCES AND RETURN IT TO YOU.

ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND 2 AFFIDAVITS CONCERNING MY CLAIMS.

PLEASE INFORM ME EXACTLY WHAT PAPERS YOU WISH ME TO FURNISH TO YOU.

MY AFTEN ZEICHEN IS

HOPEING TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON

I REMAIN

Your very truly

Benjamin Peres

P.S. PLEASE FORWARD MY HEARTFEST REGARDS TO YOUR WIFE TERRA. ^{MY WIFE TERRA} SHE KNOWS NO MORE OF MY BROTHERS ^{MY BROTHERS} WHO REMAINS IN FRANCE. SHE SENDS HER REGARDS TO YOUR WIFE.

821

Dr. J.A. Levenson
Attorney at Law
München 22, Bayernstr. 21a

Munich, September 14, 1955

Mrs. Chlana Peresecki
1334 St. John's Pl.
Brooklyn 13, N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Peresecki:

I thank you very much for your letter of September 14, 1955 and I shall be pleased to take care of your interests without any delay. I am forwarding to you by separate mail the following forms:

- 1/ 1 application which has to be signed and filled out (this will be necessary for filing a claim for your health damages you suffered as a result of the persecution);
- 2/ 1 Power of Attorney which has to be signed and the signature verified by a Public or German Consulate;
- 3/ 1 Questionnaire which has to be filled out as exact as you can;
- 4/ 1 declaration which has to be signed only.

A retainer which has to be filled out only. As you are a good friend of my wife, the fee which is to be paid, only 75% from the amount of damages.

There is no need for you applying to U.S.C. because we shall manage everything without her.

You can rest assured that I shall start working on your case immediately upon receipt of the above mentioned papers.

My wife's health reminds you and your son's health and she is sending you her love.

I am very glad to hear from you very soon and with best regards to both of you, I am

Yours very sincerely

Dr. J.A. Levenson
Attorney at Law

621

October 12, 1955 1/m

Mr. Benjamin Peresecki
1334 St. John's Pl.
Brooklyn 13, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Peresecki:

I thank you very much for your kind letters, dated September 14 and 19, 1955 the contents whereof was carefully noted.

I shall certainly be pleased to take care of your personal interests and I am therefore forwarding to you the following forms:

- 1) 1 Power of Attorney which has to be signed and your signature verified by Notary Public.
- 2) 1 Questionnaire which has to be filled out. Although the problem of getting compensation for someone is quite difficult and the law is not favourable I shall see what I can do for you in this respect. After receiving the forms I shall try to check your file and then I shall return to this problem in question.

As regards the case of your mother, I shall try to obtain proof about the death of your father who perished as a result of the Nazi persecution. Will you give me also all details about this problem and I shall start working on the case without any delay.

I hope to hear from you very soon and with best regards to both of you, I am

Yours very sincerely

Dr. J.A. Levenson
Attorney at Law

Dr. jur. J. A. LEVENSON
Rechtsanwalt

MÜNCHEN, den Dec. 19, 1967
Münchenstr. 14
Telefon 888888

Mr. Ben Peres
428 West 259th Street
BRONX, N.Y. 10471
U S A

My dear Mr. Peres!

Pursuant to my letter of Nov. 24, 1967 I am very happy to inform you that despite the difficulties I could accomplish the best possible results in your favor.

According to the enclosed decision passed you have been granted a total amount of DM 28,350.-- (capital compensation, accumulated pension payments and dental damages). From said amount are due DM 17,130 which I have already collected. For the expenses I have deducted DM 435.-- so that I have forwarded to you through my bank the equivalent of DM 16,695.-- I am sure that the balance will be paid at the beginning of 1968!

I am enclosing herein the original decision from which you can learn all particulars pertaining to the subject matter.

Concerning the Heilverfahren I am forwarding to you the office instructions and as soon as you will have obtained the necessary bills in compliance with the instructions will you submit the same with the German Consulate General and notify me about it accordingly.

I shall be pleased to hear from you soon again, and with all good wishes also from Thibet and our son to all of you, I am,

Sincerely yours,
Jeannot A. Levenson
Attorney at Law

Thank you very much for your very kind letter of Dec. 7 with the enclosure!

8bl

Law Offices
Jeannot A. Levenson
München, Liebigstraße 28

München, 24. März 1960
1/K

Mr. Ben Peres
652 W. 163rd St.
Apt. 2
New York 32, N.Y.
USA

Dear Mr. Peres:

I am today returning to the claims of your mother and I should like to inform you that I have today represented her interests again before court. A decision has now been made on the following basis:

For the time from 1. Januar 1954 until 31. März 1957 she will be granted a monthly pension in the amount of DM 100.-- and for the time from 1. April 1957 until such time as she may not be found needy anymore she will be granted a monthly pension in the amount of DM 110.--. Besides that she will be adjudged a capital compensation in the amount of DM 5,860.-- for the time from 1. August 1941 until 31. Dezember 1951. For the time from 1. January 1952 until 31. Dezember 1953 no pension will be granted to her since at that time your mother's income was above the living standard based on the so-called Existenz-Minimum. Altogether she will receive for the time including April 1960 an amount of DM 33,210.--.

Please let me know by return mail whether your mother is in agreement with the above decision so that I may inform the court until 24. April 1960 accordingly. I personally do not think that better results could be obtained considering the requirements by the law.

At any rate I am pleased to inform you of such good results and looking forward to hearing from you by return mail I am with kindest regards to you and Mrs. Peres

yours very truly,
Jeannot A. Levenson

REPARATIONS RECEIVED:

“According to the enclosed decision passed you have been granted a total amount of DM 28.350.- (capital compensation, accumulated pension payments and dental damages). From said amount are due DM 17.130 which I have already collected. For the expenses I have deducted DM 435.- so that I have forwarded to you through my bank the equivalent of DM 16.695.- I am sure that the balance will be paid at the beginning of 1968.”

DRESDNER BANK
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT

München, den 20.12.67

Abteilung Auslandszahlungen

Im Auftrage von/By order of/Par l'ordre de

A.A.Kto. 214 499

RA Dr. jur J.A. Levenson
München

Mr. Ben Peres
428 West 259th Street
Bronx N.Y. 10471

Übersenden wir Ihnen anbei Scheck Nr. we hand you enclosed cheque No. nous vous remettons ci-joint chèque No.	5054663	Betrag/Amount/Montant	Unsere Ref./Our Ref./Notre Ref.
wegen/concerning/concernant		\$ 4.173,70	Z470/8380/Dr

Restitution payment DM 16.695.-- less charges à 3.9931

Anlage: 1 Scheck
Enclosure: 1 cheque
Annexe: 1 chèque

DRESDNER BANK
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT
in München

Im Auftrag von / D'ordre de / D'ordine di / By order of

DRESDNER BANK
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT
IN MÜNCHEN

München, den 20.12.1967

Gutschriftsanzeige / Avis de crédit
No. 2-470/1841/31

Wir haben Ihnen gutgeschrieben
Nous vous avons crédité de
Vi abbiamo accreditato di
We have credited your account as follows

US\$ 3.213.61

US-Dollars three thousand 213.--

Hochachtungsvoll / Vos dévoués / Distinti saluti / Yours truly

für Rechnung von / pour compte de / per conto di / for account of
Attorney-at-Law
Jeannot A. Levenson
München 22
Liebigstr. 28

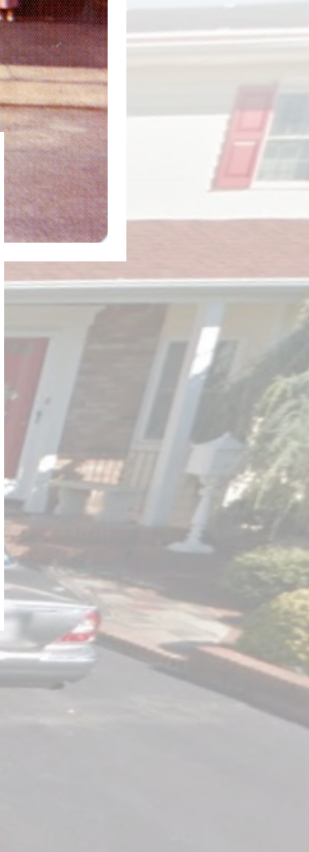
14 499

Transfer of restitution-payments
DM 13.480.-- à 4.175 less charges

COPIE FÜR DEN BEGÜNSTIGTEN
COPIA PER IL BENEFICIARIO
COPY FOR BENEFICIARY

Chiens Peresecki (Peres)
652 W. 163rd Street
New York 32, N.Y.

LONG ISLAND YEARS (1968-1978):
THE PERES'S BUY A HOME



A HOUSE, IF NOT A HOME

In the summer of 1968, with enough money from their German reparations effort, Ben and his mother put a down payment on a newly built, four-bedroom ranch house with a single-car garage at: 920 Siems Court, North Bellmore, Long Island.

Ben, his mother Chiena, his wife Cheya, his son Michael, and his daughter Lorrie all lived in this house.





BEN PERES'S DEATH

After surviving the Holocaust and finally settling down in his new home, Peres died on June 23, 1978 after suffering a stroke during his daughter's bat mitzvah ceremony. He was 52 years old.

THE JACKET'S LEGACY

Seventy years after Ben's liberation from Dachau, his prisoner's jacket still hung in the back of a closet in his North Bellmore home. With Chaya's (Ben's wife) health deteriorating, she moved in with her son, Michael and put her house up for sale. An estate sale was held at the house in July of 2015. It was at this sale that Ben's jacket once again saw the light of day.

Jillian Eisman, a vintage clothing dealer, was shopping at the estate sale when she spotted distinctive blue stripes on a clothing rack. Once she saw the prisoner number on the left breast she knew what she had found. Jillian purchased the jacket along with a few other articles of clothing for \$10. A few days later, Jillian contacted the Kupferberg Holocaust Center's Assistant Director, Marisa Hollywood, whom she had known since high school, to share her discovery. Jillian graciously donated the jacket to the KHC and the Center began extensive research.

A little research revealed that prisoner number 84679 had belonged to Benzion Peresecki, a prisoner at Dachau/Kaufering: clearly, the same person as the Ben Peres who owned the house in Bellmore. Dr. Dan Leshem, the KHC Director, was able to get the contact information for Ben's daughter Lorrie who was completely unaware of the jacket's existence. Eager to help, she and her brother donated over 1,500 documents, artifacts, photographs, and home movies to the Center in order that we would be able to tell the story of her father's journey through the Holocaust.

The jacket, assigned to a young prisoner from Radviliškis, Lithuania, stayed with Ben throughout his life, and even outlived him. This artifact, from a concentration camp liberated over 70 years ago, tells the story of Ben's search for justice, identity, and home.



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The mission of the Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center & Archives is to use the lessons of the Holocaust to educate current and future generations about the ramifications of unbridled prejudice, racism and stereotyping.

For information, contact: Dan Leshem, Ph.D., Director.

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