



Canadian Institute for Jewish Research
Prof. Frederick Krantz, Director

ISRANET DAILY BRIEFING

Yom Shishi 24 Cheshvan 5773 Volume XI, No. 2,937 Friday November 9, 2012

P.O. Box 175 • Station H Montreal • Quebec • H3G 2K7
cijr@isranet.org 514-486-5544 www.isranet.org

SHABBAT SHALOM!!

ZACHOR, REMEMBER! KRISTALLNACHT, 1938, REMEMBRANCE DAY 2012 & JEWISH W.W. II MILITARY HEROISM



Canadian
Institute for
Jewish Research

International Conference

Jerusalem
Center for
Public Affairs



“Combating the Delegation of Israel”

Sunday November 18, 2012
9 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Congregation Beth Tzedec
1700 Bathurst Street, Toronto

TO REGISTER
1-855-303-5544

514-486-5544
cijr@isranet.org
www.isranet.org

PRE-REGISTRATION: **\$25**
Conference & Lunch

REGISTRATION AT DOOR: **\$36**
Conference & Lunch

STUDENTS FREE: **\$00**

REGISTER
click here
ONLINE

Conference Chairman:
Prof. Frederick Krantz (CIJR)

Participants:
Ambassador Alan Baker (JCPA)
Rabbi Abraham Cooper (Simon Wiesenthal Centre)
Dr. Mark Dubowitz (Foundation for Defense of Democracies)
Tarek Fatah (Canadian Muslim Congress)
Prof. Paul Merkley (U. of Ottawa)
Rabbi John Moscovitz (Holy Blossom Temple)
Prof. Clifford Orwin (U. of Toronto)
Lawrence Solomon (Financial Post)
Prof. Sally Zerker (York U.)



CIJR'S Latest ISRAZINE is now available on line (www.isranet.org):

Israel's Levy Report - Clarifying the Misconceptions

Contents:

Viennese Torah, Saved From *Kristallnacht*: Yvonne Margo, *Executive Assistant, CIJR*, Nov. 9, 2012 — On *Kristallnacht*, his two grandsons, Efraim and Zev Kritzler [Ben-Yehuda], risking their lives, were able to get into the *shul*, with all its windows smashed as a result of being firebombed by the Nazis. The boys took off the wooden spindles of the *Sifrei Torah*, folded the parchments, and took them home.

Recollections of *Kristallnacht*, November 9-10, 1938: Walter Bingham, *Israel National News*, Nov. 9, 2012 — Throughout the Jewish world, there will be meetings to commemorate “*Kristallnacht*”, - or the night of the broken glass – from November 9th to 10th 1938. That night, most Synagogues throughout Germany, Austria and the by then annexed Czechoslovakian Sudetenland were set alight, thousands of Jewish businesses were destroyed and almost 30,000 Jewish men sent off to concentration camps.

Veterans: Crystal Clear Memories of *Kristallnacht*: Gloria Deutsch, *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 8, 2012 — John Katten tells of the night the synagogue in Bamberg, of which his father was spiritual leader, was burned to the ground – and how they escaped. Born Hans in 1928 in Bamberg, Germany, [he] remembers *Kristallnacht* as though it happened yesterday.

Remembering the Escape Over Berlin: Bernie M. Farber, *National Post*, Nov 9, 2012 — Winnipeg is known for many things, from its cold blustery winds at Portage and Main to its legendary kamikaze mosquitoes. What few people realize, however, are the number of Canadian Jewish war heroes originating from the gateway to the West; amongst them, Flight-Lieutenant Louis Greenburgh.

On Topic Links

German Army Was A ‘Criminal Organization’: Sheldon Kirschner, *Canadian Jewish News*, Nov. 6, 2012

The Great War’s Jewish Soldiers: Naomi Sandweiss, *Tablet Magazine*, November 9, 2012

VIENNESE TORAH, SAVED FROM *KRISTALLNACHT*, IN USE TODAY AT KIBBUTZ LAVI, ISRAEL

Yvonne Margo

Executive Assistant, CIJR

My great-grandfather Bernard Hofbauer, a well-known Jewish Community leader, owned his own department store in Vienna, Austria. As he was an observant Jew, he maintained a synagogue next to his place of business.

On *Kristallnacht*, his two grandsons, Efraim and Zev Kritzler [Ben-Yehuda], risking their lives, were able to get into the *shul*, with all its windows smashed as a result of being firebombed by the Nazis. The boys took off the wooden spindles of the *Sifrei Torah*, folded the parchments, and took them home.

They were later mailed to London, and when the boys eventually went from London to Palestine, they took the scrolls with them. Eventually, the *Sifrei Torah* were reconstituted at Kibbutz Lavi, Lower Galilee, where Efraim Kritzler lives and works, and where they are in use to this day.

RECOLLECTIONS OF *KRISTALLNACHT*, NOVEMBER 9-10, 1938

Walter Bingham

[Israel National News](#), November 9, 2012

Throughout the Jewish world, there will be meetings to commemorate “Kristallnacht”, - or the night of the broken glass – from November 9th to 10th 1938. That night, most Synagogues throughout Germany, Austria and the by-then annexed Czechoslovakian Sudetenland were set alight, thousands of Jewish businesses were destroyed and almost 30,000 Jewish men sent off to concentration camps. I was in a city called Mannheim and saw it all when I tried to get into my school which was behind the Synagogue.

But why did it happen on that particular night? What caused this outrage, the worst pogrom in Germany before the policy of extermination was formulated at the Wannsee Conference held in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee on 20 January 1942 in the presence of Adolf Eichman and other high-ranking Nazis.

Well, the trigger for these atrocities can be found in the events of a few years earlier. During 1938 the Polish authorities were concerned about the German annexation of Austria in March of that year and also about the increased persecution of German and Austrian Jews. It was not the Polish Jews' welfare that concerned them, but they feared that the many Polish nationals among them would either want to or be forced to return to Poland. So in mid-October the Polish government issued a de-nationalisation law which annulled the citizenship of Poles living abroad for more than five years, unless before the end of the month they received a special stamp into their passports from the Polish Consulates.

Not surprisingly, Jews were refused this facility.

German policy at the time was not yet the mass extermination of Jews, but to get them out of Germany; so when the Nazi regime learned that Polish officials would not stamp the passports of Jews, thereby making all of them stateless, without any nationality and hence without passports, they were concerned about their having to remain in Germany.

So SS Reichsfuehrer (Field Marshal), Chief of Police and the Gestapo Heinrich Himmler ordered that all Polish Jews be immediately and forcefully repatriated to Poland.

It was during the small hours of October 28th 1938, when about 20,000 men, women and children had to respond to the dreaded knock on the door. They were arrested, permitted to hurriedly pack just one suitcase and with an allowance of just 10 marks per adult transported to the Polish border in sealed trains.

When the Poles became aware of this, they closed the border. “No more Jews” was the order. With Polish machine guns facing them and German bayonets behind them, these Jews were stranded in no-man’s land. Jewish welfare organisations were allowed to hastily erect some shelter. The circumstances were grim and food was short, while the Poles and Germans argued for two or three days. Eventually the Poles were forced to accept this by now dejected, hungry and tired mass of people.

The largest number were interned in Zbaszyn, a small Polish border town, before some months later being moved to the Warsaw Ghetto. My own father was among them.

At the time, I was at a Jewish school in another town; had I been at home, I too would have had the same fate, because the Gestapo asked my mother where I was and she told them that I had gone out and she does not know where to. She herself was not arrested on that occasion but at a different time and fortunately survived the concentration camps and so was able to relate, and related, the events to me.

I left Mannheim on that fateful day to travel back to my home, some 72 km and even remember that it was the 3.22 pm diesel train. Ask me what I had for lunch yesterday and I can’t remember.

Among those deported to Poland on October 28th were the Grynspans from Hanover. Their 17 year old German born son Hershel who lived illegally in Paris received a postcard from his family telling him of their deportation and desperate plight. He became so angry and enraged, that he called at the German Embassy in Paris, asked for the Ambassador, and when taken to Ernst Vom Rath a third secretary, he drew a pistol and shot him. Vom Rath died of his wounds on November 7th.

This was the trigger for the “spontaneous” pogroms three days later known as “Kristallnacht”. It is documented that plans for such an outrage had been planned in great detail and that the Gestapo Chief Heinrich Himmler only waited for a suitable moment to implement them. During the torching of the Synagogues the fire service was in attendance, not to douse the flames, but to cool and protect neighbouring German properties from being damaged.

Just one other fact is worth mentioning. After the event the remains of some walls of one synagogue constituted a danger to the public, and so to add insult to injury, the Jewish community was ordered to pay for the demolition.

When Hershel Grynspan was arrested by French police he protested - for all the history of Jewish persecution: “Being a Jew is not a crime; I am not a dog, I have a right to exist on this earth; wherever I have been I have been hounded like an animal.” There are conflicting reports about his fate, but it can be safely assumed that he did not survive the war.

Let us never forget the brave Hershel Grynspan z’l.

(Walter Bingham is a veteran journalist and broadcaster from London who now lives in Jerusalem.)

[Top of Page](#)

VETERANS: CRYSTAL CLEAR MEMORIES OF KRISTALLNACHT

Gloria Deutsch

[Jerusalem Post](#), November 8, 2012

John Katten tells of the night the synagogue in Bamberg, of which his father was spiritual leader, was burned to the ground – and how they escaped. Born Hans in 1928 in Bamberg, Germany, John Katten, remembers Kristallnacht as though it happened yesterday. “The older I get, the more I remember,” says the 84-year-old architect who grew up in England, who managed to escape with his family in 1939 and made aliya with his wife Brenda in 1988.

“My father was the spiritual leader of the Bamberg community and, even though the anti-Jewish decrees were getting worse, he did not want to leave,” recalls Katten. “Even when all the Jewish children, including me, were thrown out of school and shops had signs saying ‘Don’t sell to Jews’ and ‘Boycott Jewish shops,’ he still thought it could not get any worse. ‘We can live with it,’ he said. “My father was very German,” he continues.

“He had fought in the First World War and his family could trace their being in Germany back to 1646. My mother was Hungarian, the daughter of the head of a rabbinical seminary in Breslau, and they met when my father went to study there; He fell in love with her smile, he used to say. They used to argue constantly about leaving, but it wasn’t until Kristallnacht that my father agreed.”

On the night of November 9, 1938, the beautiful Bamberg synagogue was set on fire, as were hundreds of others throughout Germany. “We watched in disbelief,” he recalls. “At first we thought it had been an electrical fault. I was allowed to go and look and I cycled there, although my mother stopped my father from going, which probably saved his life, as the president of the community, Willy Lessing, was beaten and later died.”

The 10-year-old boy with artistic leanings assumed it was more of a lark than anything else. Only later did he come to understand the significance and the depth of hatred into which the German people had sunk. Many years later, when he took up painting as a hobby after he moved to Israel, one of his most searing works is of the synagogue of his childhood going up in flames.

With the intervention of Chief Rabbi of the UK Joseph Hertz, who knew his Hungarian grandfather, the family managed to get visas to England. “We flew from Frankfurt, and from the airport in London a bus took us and dropped us in the middle of London in Tottenham Court Road. My father had a pound and a few shillings and found us a hotel for the night. One of the waitresses spoke German, being Swiss, and she took us to her Italian landlady who had a spare room. My father spoke to her in Latin.”

The next day they found a soup kitchen where, for a penny, one could get a bowl of soup and for tuppence a piece of bread with it. Somehow, like all the other refugees, they managed to survive and made a good life for themselves in England. For John, everything was an adventure; for his sister the events were much more traumatic and affected her mental state for many years.

Katten became an architect and met his wife Brenda – a past president of WIZO as well as of the Israel, Britain and Commonwealth Association, and today chairwoman of the English-Speaking Residents’ Association – through a friend from his student days. “He said he’d met a lovely girl – eight years younger than us – and he really liked her but she was too tall for him,” he recalls. And indeed, even 50 years later, the Kattens make a very distinguished – and tall – couple.

With a son living here and a growing family of grandchildren, they visited often but could not leave elderly parents until 1998 when they settled in Herzliya Pituah. Brenda is busy with her various public offices and activities, and John decided to take up painting as a hobby.

In 1995 he received an invitation from the mayor of Bamberg to be his guest at the consecration of a monument that would mark the place where the synagogue had once stood. The event was to take place on November 9 and, together with 22 other ex- Bamberg Jews, the Kattens travelled to his old hometown.

“It was very strange to be back in Bamberg,” he recalls. “It was as I remembered it but it looked different, with modern cars on the roads and signs not in Gothic script as they had been when I was a child.”

The guests arrived at the place where the synagogue had once stood and the commemorative ceremony began, with speeches about the contribution of the Jewish community to the city. All Katten could see in his mind’s eye, as the officials droned on, was the picture of the flames engulfing their house of worship while the fire brigade stood by just to make sure that none of the adjacent buildings caught fire.

“This is where you stood and celebrated the destruction of our synagogue,” he thought, remembering the photo that documents the event in a 1995 book about Bamberg by Karl H. Mistele. He recalled also the photo dedicating the synagogue in 1910, with the speech from the mayor promising to protect the place, and looked around at the same German people now praising the Jews for their contribution.

“It just made me realize, listening to all this, how humanity can be manipulated and twisted by evil people,” he says. Today, a new community is growing in Bamberg and a small synagogue was dedicated a few years ago, established mostly by Jews from the former Soviet Union. “Jewish life is slowly returning to Bamberg,” he says.

[Top of Page](#)

REMEMBERING THE ESCAPE OVER BERLIN

Bernie M. Farber,

[National Post](#), November 9, 2012

Winnipeg is known for many things, from its cold blustery winds at Portage and Main to its legendary kamikaze mosquitoes. What few people realize, however, are the number of Canadian Jewish war heroes originating from the gateway to the West; amongst them, Flight-Lieutenant Louis Greenburgh.

Born in 1916, Louis attended St. John’s Technical High School. He was a very colourful character who didn’t always play by the rules. In fact, he was expelled from high school after it was discovered that he appropriated the answer key to an exam. Yet Louis was not to be deterred; a short time later he travelled to England where in 1937 he joined the RAF as a flight mechanic. Not content with maintenance, and having always longed to be a fighter pilot, Louis trained arduously and in 1942 received his wings and commission.

Louis quickly became known for his courage under fire. He flew numerous sorties in 1943 and 1944, mostly in the Lancaster, a four-engine aircraft used by the RAF for heavy bombing. Indeed the Lancaster became the night bomber of choice during the Second World War, delivering over 600,000 tons of bombs in more than 155,000 sorties. Near the end of the war, this versatile war plane was outfitted to carry bombs that weighed over 12,000 lbs, known as “blockbusters”; they were used successfully in destroying Germany’s Ruhr valley dams.

In his first sortie in a Lancaster in December 1943, after dropping his load over German war factories, Louis’s fuel tank was hit, leaving him empty over open sea. He safely brought his aircraft to a landing on the water, ensuring his entire crew got safely aboard the rescue dinghy. Buffeted by stormy seas, Greenburgh kept the spirits of his crew up until they were rescued a day later. All survived.

Louis flew many more missions. On a brisk dark night in March 1944, Flight-Lieutenant Greenburgh was part of a squadron tasked to bomb Berlin. As a result of a strong tail wind, Louis and his crew arrived well before the pathfinders, the smaller planes used by the RAF to mark targets using flares. Louis’s bomber was “coned” by Nazi searchlights. Nonetheless, Greenburgh managed to avoid the heavy anti-aircraft fire. Awaiting the pathfinders Louis and his crew began circling the target area. The night sky was thick with tracer rockets, ground flares and more anti-aircraft fire. Greenburgh’s steely nerves and expert flying skills kept them out of trouble. The pathfinders arrived, dropped their markers and Greenburgh’s crew hit each of their targets.

As they re-grouped for the perilous flight back to their airbase, the crew came under heavy fire by Nazi JU 88s, known as Junkers. To look at a Junker you would wonder how it even got off the ground, lumbering and odd-looking as it was. Nonetheless, the Junker was a lethal weapon in the sky, bringing down large numbers of British flyers.

While Greenburgh's gunners returned fire during a ferocious battle over the night sky of Berlin, two of his starboard engines were heavily damaged. The trusty Lancaster spiralled out of control. Plunging close to 11,000 ft, Greenburgh ordered his crew to bail out. Most of the crew parachuted from the falling plane, but the rear gunner was trapped in the turret and the navigator had lost his chute.

Showing amazing courage, Greenburgh managed to get back into the cockpit. As the plane continued its rapid descent, Greenburgh skillfully pulled the Lancaster out at 4,000 feet over Berlin. However, they were not yet out of danger. A fire was raging in the fuselage. Greenburgh's Wireless Operator, who also stayed with the plane, fearlessly fought the flames, extinguishing them before the fire did any more damage. With tremendous effort, Greenburgh managed to re-start one of his damaged engines. Even without the lost flight charts, Greenburgh was able to pull the bomber up to 6,000 feet so that they could fly back visually to air command in the U.K.

On March 14, 1944, Flight-Lieutenant Louis Greenburgh was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and on Oct. 31, 1944, he gained a second honour for bravery with a Bar to the DFC. The citation with the Bar read: "This officer has displayed the highest standard of skill, bravery and fortitude in air operations."

During World War Two, 16,883 Canadian Jews enlisted for service. Close to 700 were killed in action. Flight Lieutenant Louis Greenburgh was one of 196 Canadian Jewish Servicemen decorated for heroism.

[Top of Page](#)

ON TOPIC

[German Army Was A 'Criminal Organization'](#): Sheldon Kirschner, *Canadian Jewish News*, Nov. 6, 2012 —The [800 pages of transcripts of meticulously transcribed conversations of about 14,000 German soldiers who had been covertly bugged by the British and Americans] make it clear that practically all German soldiers knew or suspected that Jews were being murdered en masse," the authors write in *Soldaten*. ...[t]he Wehrmacht murdered about 20,000 Jews in the former Soviet Union and supported Einsatzgruppen units in the killing of more than one million Russian, Ukrainian and Baltic Jews.

[The Great War's Jewish Soldiers](#): Naomi Sandweiss, *Tablet Magazine*, November 9, 2012 —On Veterans Day, I remember my grandfather, who fought in World War I as a Jew and an American. In his book *The Long Way Home*, David Laskin recounts the experiences of immigrant soldiers who represented one-fifth of the U.S. Armed Forces in World War I. He writes, "In many cases just a few years or even months separated their arrival at Ellis Island from their induction in the American Expeditionary Forces.

VISIT *CIJR*'S BI-WEEKLY WEBZINE: ***ISRAZINE***.

CIJR's ***ISRANET Daily Briefing*** is available by e-mail.

Please urge colleagues, friends, and family to visit our website for more information on our *ISRANET* series.

To join our distribution list, or to unsubscribe, visit us at <http://www.isranet.org/>.

The *ISRANET Daily Briefing* is a service of *CIJR*. We hope that you find it useful and that you will support it and our pro-Israel educational work by forwarding a minimum \$90.00 tax-deductible contribution [please send a cheque or VISA/MasterCard information to *CIJR* (see cover page for address)]. All donations include a membership-subscription to our respected quarterly *ISRAFAX* print magazine, which will be mailed to your home.

CIJR's *ISRANET Daily Briefing* attempts to convey a wide variety of opinions on Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish world for its readers' educational and research purposes. Reprinted articles and documents express the opinions of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the *Canadian Institute for Jewish Research*.

Ber Lazarus, Publications Editor, *Canadian Institute for Jewish Research/L'institut Canadien de recherches sur le Judaïsme*, www.isranet.org Tel: (514) 486-5544 - Fax:(514) 486-8284