

DIE LETZTEN ZEUGEN



**Avraham
SHOMRONI** geb. 1927
(früher Alfred (Fredi) HELFGOTT)

ISRAEL

Family members, who were murdered:

- Rosa (Ruchel) HELFGOTT, my mother
- Fritz (Feibisch) HELFGOTT, my father
- Joseph & Klara HELFGOTT, uncle and aunt
- Amalia (Mali) und Elfriede (Elfie) BREUER-HOCHMANN, aunt and cousin

- 8.3.1927: Born in Vienna. Enrolled in the Chajes-Realgymnasium in 1937.
 10.12.1938: Left Vienna on the first Kindertransport for England, a month after my father was sent to Dachau concentration camp.
 1939-1942: Cared for by the Bentham Refugee Committee (Quakers, Church of England members, Methodists et al.) at Bentham Grammar School.
 1942-1947: War-work as a laboratory assistant.
 1947-1950: Dunlop Research Centre, Birmingham.
 1948: B.Sc. (Special chemistry with physics and mathematics, University of London). Many years later, M.Sc. studies (chemistry, education etc.) at Bar Ilan University.
 1950-1953: General Secretary of Zionist-Socialist Youth Movement.
 1953: Moved to Israel and joined Kibbutz Barkai, married and raised two sons 15 years in field-crops (cotton, maize, potatoes etc.) 12 years in regional high-school (partly as principal). 6 years in Kibbutz plastics factory (partly as general manager) Several times Kibbutz Secretary.
 1982-1986: Representative of the Zionist-Socialist Party Mapam and of my Kibbutz Federation, in England.
 1994: Resident in Tel Aviv. Active in the Israeli-Palestinian Forum of Bereaved Families for Reconciliation and Peace, especially in meetings with high-school students.

Seventy years after the Anschluss, I would like to offer young Austrians some words I have learned and tried to live by.

a) **Evil raises its head wherever good people remain quiet and passive in the face of injustice and cruelty.**

b) To the question "Am I my brother's keeper?" I must answer "Yes". Everyone's death diminishes us and therefor we must not ask for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for uns (after John Donne)

c) From the Talmud, Hillel the Elder's answer to the request "Teach me the Torah while I stand on one leg": "What is hateful to you, do not to others; all the rest is commentary; now go study". Also from Hillel:

"If I am not for me - who will be? And if not now - when? But if for myself only - what am I?"

d) The words of Pastor Niemoeller who was a decorated U-boat captain in World War I, afterwards became a pastor and when the Nazis came to power, became an Anti-Nazi. As was their way, they threw him into a concentration-camp like my father but unlike my father he was liberated at the end of the war and then said words to this effect: **"When they came for the communists, I did not speak up because I was not a communist. When they came for leaders of the trade-union, I did not speak up because I was not one of theirs ... When they came for the Jews, I did not speak up because I was not a Jew. When they came for me, there was none left to speak up."**

A LETTER TO THE STARS