

*Rena, the wife of the last Torczyn survivor.*



Rena was born on April 4, 1932. in Baranawicze in Belarus.



Grandfather Sagalevich father of Clara  
And his son.  
Died in Achinsk Siberia



Father of Moshe Zablocki  
Had a furniture store.

Clara      her father      Moshe      Clara's sister



Rena was the daughter of Moshe Zablocki and Clara Sagalevich.

Moshe and Clara exported Cheese, Honey and Mushrooms and were well off.



Clara and Moshe with Baby Rena

As a girl she was a member of the Betar, a Zionist youth organization.



Clara, Rena's mother, seated. Front with her siblings many of whom died during the holocaust.



Years later Rena's parents and sister in Israel

In September 1939 Germany occupied Poland West of the Bug River ethnic Poland. Russia occupied Eastern Poland: ethnic Belarus and the Ukraine  
When the war came, my father was sent to prison in Tashkent. They sent my mother, my sister, and me to Siberia. I was 10. When we were sent to Russia, the train was for animals. There were Russians on it, too, not just Jews. We lived in one room with another family with two kids. We all shared a bed. There was a wooden divider. There was a kerosene stove on the floor. My sister fell on it and was burned. We went to school, and we worked in the fields making hay. Our pastime was looking for lice. My mother never complained. My father wrote us letters and found us before the end of the war. When he lived with us, we moved to a town. My parents were a good crutch.  
After Siberia, we crossed borders at night and ended up in an Austrian DP camp. We'd walked the whole way. My father was elected secretary of the camp. They chose him because he was very intelligent and because he was an accountant. He planned for us to move to the U.S., where we had an aunt, or Israel, whichever came first. My sister and I went to school in the camp. We went skiing. People drank a lot of beer.

Moshe was well dressed, wore a tie, an aristocrat living off the blood of his poorer comrades. Around 1941 he was sent to Tashkent in Uzbekistan and Rena and her mother were sent to a collective in Siberia. Somehow Moshe found his wife and daughter and they survived the war.



### Uzbekistan

After the war Jews were often in DP camps. Many wanted to go to Israel.

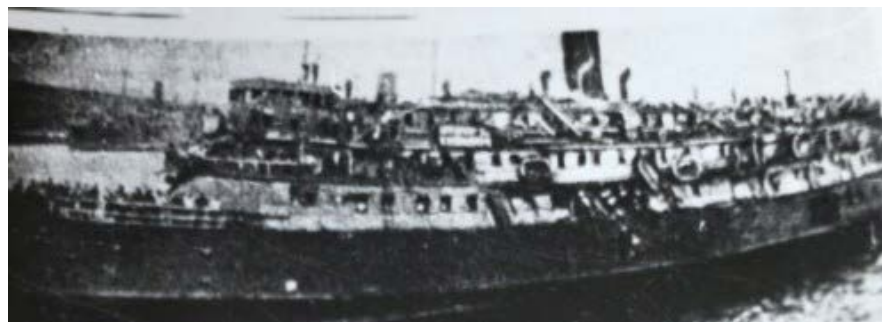
In 1946 the Haganah, a Zionist organization, bought a U.S. Naval ship that was war surplus and named it the Exodus. It sailed under the Honduran flag. (The embassy gave them permission to use the flag.)

Rena was one of the 4500 Jews who were moved by truck convoy through post war Europe.

### Siberia



She and her parents boarded the ship in Sete France. The ship was trying to transport





Eastern European Jews to Palestine, a British Protectorate. The British didn't want to let them in.



The ship *Exodus 1947* became a symbol of [Aliya Bet](#) - illegal [immigration](#). After [World War II](#), illegal immigration increased and the British authorities decided to stop it by sending the ships back to the ports of embarkation in Europe. The first ship to which this policy was applied was the *Exodus 1947*.

The ship sailed from the port of Site, near Marseilles, on July 11, 1947, with 4,515 immigrants, including 655 children, on board.

As soon as it left the territorial waters of France, British destroyers accompanied it. On July 18, near the coast of Palestine but outside territorial waters, the British rammed the ship and boarded it. We sailed on the *Exodus* from Marseilles. Before it was *Exodus*, it flew under the flag of Honduras. It was terrible on the *Exodus*. It was very hot and very crowded. We

slept on the deck. There were cabins, but the doors were gone. I had three dresses, and I wore them all at once. I had one pair of shoes, but I didn't wear them; I wanted to wear my shoes in Israel

The immigrants put up a desperate defense. Two immigrants and a crewman were killed in the battle, and 30 were wounded. The ship was towed to Haifa, where the immigrants were forced onto deportation ships bound for France.

Port-de-Bouc, in southern France, the would-be immigrants remained in the ships' holds for 24 days during a heat wave, refusing to disembark despite the shortage of food, the crowding and the abominable sanitary conditions. The French government refused to force them off the boat.

Eventually, the British decided to return the would-be immigrants to Germany, and on August 22 the ship left for the port of Hamburg, then in the British occupation zone. The immigrants were forcibly taken off.



They were then transported to two camps, Am Stau near Lübeck and Pöppendorf. Although most of the women and children disembarked voluntarily, the men had to be carried off by force. We stayed at Bergen-Belsen for a year



# Panina  
# Guinzburg  
# Rena



A year later Rena entered Palestine "legally". She assumed the identity and papers of Rosa Markevich, a Jew who died of Pneumonia in Bergen Belsen.

She was a nurse. A nurse in the Israeli air force.

Itzhak and Rena with their first born years later



On Dec 23 2009 the captain of the Exodus died. From the NY times:

(An antiquated former Chesapeake Bay steamship originally known as [the President Warfield](#), the Exodus 1947, as it was formally renamed, was acquired by the Haganah, the Jewish paramilitary organization, in 1946. The group planned to use it to transport refugees, most of them Holocaust survivors, to Palestine, then under British control.

The refugees had no legal authority to enter Palestine, and [the British were determined to block the ship](#). In the battle that ensued, three Jews aboard the Exodus were killed. The ship's passengers — more than 4,500 men, women and children — were ultimately deported to Germany.



Captain Ahronovitch was 23 when he took the helm of the Exodus. On July 11, 1947, he picked up the refugees at Sète, in southern France. On July 18, as the ship neared the coast of Palestine, the British Navy intercepted it. Captain Ahronovitch tried to break through, but two British destroyers rammed the ship.

Several hours of fighting followed, with the ship's passengers spraying fuel oil and throwing smoke bombs, life rafts and whatever else came to hand, down on the British sailors trying to board, The Times reported at the time. Soon the British opened fire. Two immigrants and a crewman on the Exodus were killed; scores more were wounded, many seriously. The ship was towed to Haifa, and from there its passengers were deported, first to France and eventually to Germany, where they were placed in camps near Lübeck