

In Memory of Dalhinev

In Memory of Dalhinev
An Excerpt From the Dalhinev Yizkor Book
Translated by Yohval Nahary
Introduction pages 8 -10

To remember and not to forget.

In this day and age when many nations are marking with pride in their heart the fortieth anniversary of the victory over the German Nazi regime, we the survivors of the small township of Dalhinev, together with our brothers and sisters who were saved from the holocaust and made Aliyah to Israel, have gotten some satisfaction with the publication of this book Sefer Yisk

Forty plus years were not enough to heal the wounds, to dampen the bitter memories and the pain and the blur the terrifying experiences. All of those cried out in expression in response to clear the conscience over the fact that we are alive and breathing are walking and enjoying the sun, freedom of movement, laughter of children, closeness to women and from the conversation with people.

All the ones whose fathers brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances, bodies from the mass graves in which they lay with broken limbs while wondering eyes in the voices of their blood is crying out into empty space asking the question, why? And there is no answer. And with this seal, were are senses sealed. Let the facts in this memory book be a parallel cry, a partnership in destiny, and the combining of body of soul with the silent souls which float above us can accompany our being every day and every hour. Many days have passed since the idea to create a book that could commemorate our holy loved ones its creation seemed very difficult, distant and foggy. We knew that there were no people amongst us in our small community who were writers who could put on paper all the memories and experiences or to revive the life cycles and the bloodshed there. But the superior mission did not let go of us and did not give our souls and moment of rest and so we started.

Friends told and wrote their stream of tears which was destroyed opened up and resumed to flow. A wonderful generation was revived. Simple characters, gentle warm and naive souls came back and reappeared. Their lips softly engaged in story telling and like a steadily increasing flow, lines and pages accumulated, most of them drenched with blood and tears over life that was abruptly stopped over depression and humiliation with sighs of mourning and indescribable suffering coupled with this endless pity, brave expressions, love and devotion.

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With all the storytelling, this book started to materialize. A living testimony, authentic, a first hand truth emerges and joins the most difficult accusations, the most horrifying and the longest since wisdom was given to mankind. It is only natural that gaps and details, dates and numbers will occur in people's reports that experienced the Holocaust firsthand. The witnesses experienced the events in unbearably tense moments and these events were written after many years.

Brothers, sisters and dear Dalhinevs , read and study these pages. Put this book in your children's and grandchildren's hands for many generations until the last to come. To remember and not to forget.

Pages 11- 14 A Historical View of the Dalhinev Community
from Its Beginning Until the First World War

Dalhinev, a town in Balika county located on the Northeastern section of the Polish Kingdom which in the past belonged to Lithuania after the First World War. Under a peace treaty reached in Riga in 1921, Dalhinev came under the jurisdiction of independent Poland until the second world War. This town was already included on the Lithuanian map during the years 1569 -1667. Its location is a bit east of the postal? railroad tracks which connects Velika with Disna and is 42.5 unknown units of measure Southeast of Velika, 125 unknown units of measure southwest of Disna and 127.5 unknown units of measure from Vilna.

Although it was a way from main roads, and having the status of a forgotten town since its existence in the middle of the 16th century, it was always a battlefield among colliding armies and a stage for violence and attacks by smugglers and gangs. Already in its early days, a post office and a police station were built as well as the establishment of the "Gemina" comparable to a committee or city hall. It also had a public school that served the locals and the surrounding villages, two churches, and offices of the provoslavlic and catholic villages. The Slavic church, a wooden building built approximately in 1704 and one Catholic Church built sometime earlier. Both were improved from their original wooden structure to a stronger stone construction during the 19th Century.

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The Catholic Church in 1853.

The majority of the land in town and its vicinity including the village belonged to the Polish Royalty, the Schlachta. The rest of the land was owned by bulyars who got accustomed quickly to the customs of the Polish Schlachta. The farmers of the neighboring villages were mostly employed by the landowners and only a few of them were self-employed and paid their taxes to the landlords of which some of them were the Drotsky, Skolinsy, Zuftofski, Nisaf-Vitowski families. There is not much known about synagogues before the second half of the 18th Century although Jews lived in town prior to that period, it is very difficult to determine exactly when Dalhinev became a township. In reality, Dalhinev was governed by two different authorities, a municipal and a village authority which governed the surrounding villages as well. Even today it is still doubtful whether Dalhinev is a town or a village. There is a Gorsoviet and Sossoviet municipal village authority.

In 1661 the Polish Lithuanian Army fought several battles against the Russian Army in Dalhinev's vicinity. During the same year, Stefan Vittori, King of the Polish Lithuanian Empire, conducted the famous Victory March known as Polzak March through Dalhinev and Kritiz where he led his army to cross the Valika River. Witness? to these battles which lasted a few days are archaeological findings of defensive trenches near the Servich River which flows through Krivitiz and not too far away from Dalhinev. Next to the riverside of the Sarczita River, which runs through town, you could also find signs by now are very faint. Throughout these battles, most of the Russian Army was used for a general attack around Minsk, and by sending an attack force towards the Vlyika. Vitori sent a selected force that was led by officer Chamilawsky toward Minsk to stop the Russian attack and to disguise the river crossing over the Vialaya. Chamilawsky proved himself as a very effective leader and won. The Polzak territory and the town in it was all conquered and in acknowledgment and respect, the King gave this talented officer mansions and many villages. Chamilawsky's grandson granted the Jews the right to establish the first synagogue in the 1790's.

In the year 1667, 485 Jews lived in Dalhinev out of a total population of 1,710. With the growth and development of the Jewish community the number of synagogues grew to five between the first and second World Wars.

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Jews in Dalhinev

Since we are distant and disconnected from the historical roots it is very difficult for us to answer the many questions of where when and how Jews actually arrived in Dalhinev and the surrounding villages. Whatever will be said and written is based upon assumptions and guesses which were collected from newspaper articles and books of which not more than one contradicts each other. Most of the documents which were kept in archives in both Vilna and Minsk municipalities were destroyed in fires and Smolonsk in the year 1812 when Napoleon invaded Russia.

It is only right to assume that already throughout the middle of the 16th Century and maybe even before that, Jews had arrived in Dalhinev and its surroundings on their way to new settlements like Vilna and Minsk, Mohilov and Vovosok? Vitvask etc. which were established in the years 1550 through 1650 and on their way to the oldest settlements like Brisk and Horodona in which Jews were settled already since the 14th Century. It should be remembered that the invasion of the Mongolian tribes into Eastern Europe and in the year 1214 through 1236 allowed the Lithuanians to defeat the Russians and to attach themselves to Byelorussia and to expand from the Ukraine including Kadolyah and the Helm. That's how Lithuania reigned over Novogradsk, Volkavisk and Solonin and in the South Polosik and Smolansk in the North at the 13 th Century. The migration to conquest was founded mainly after a treaty between the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania.

The following are the headings on pages 18 -26
The Jewish Social Economic Structure in Dalhinev
Rabbis, Scholars, and Yeshivas
The Physical Connection with Israel and Alyiah
Re-Awakening of the Aliyah with new Movements
Immigration to America, Canada and South Africa
Demonstrations against the Railroad
and They were all from Dalhinev

Page 208 Rabbi Shamyahu Shmolgonsky

[Editor's Note: A few family members told me that we were related to Rabbi Shmolgonsky so I had Yohval include this section in the translation]

Rabbi Shmolgonsky was 83 years old when he died one day after Pesach in 1937. I, Shlomo Shamal Shmolgonsky from Ramagan are starting my life's history with his death. With his departure from our world and era almost ended. The period of two world wars 1918-1937.

The man was a remarkable person in his knowledge of Torah and his wisdom. With his dignified and noble faces and eyes holding the holy fire wrapped with a long white beard and always dressed neatly with a silk coat and chevro boots. During the winter months, he wore a cloak and a fur hat. He was an organized and knowledgeable person.

The peak of his glory was seen throughout the high holidays during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur while he was standing next to the ark in the main synagogue. He had a clear and strong voice. His prayers and songs were said with deep emotions and repentance like a lyrical conversation between himself and the Almighty who he approached for the sake of his family and his congregation.

The ones who knew him, and are still with us today, will never forget the way he approached and prayed such as Kol Nidre etc. which touched many hearts and brought to tears even the men. I remember clearly today how the Christian leaders such as the Mayor, Chief of Police and others invited themselves to the synagogue for Kol Nidre and.. (end of translation)

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