

Accuser Remembers Years in Hell

Ziggy Gorson was caught stealing potatoes in the Nazi concentration camp at Hannover-Ahlen in Germany. For this, he was given the personal attention of the camp commandant.

"The killer's name," Zippy Gorson was saying yesterday, which was 30 years later, "is Johann Heinrich Wexler." Gorson said Wexler beat him with a steel pipe across the back and arms and shoulders and head.

"He hit me 75 times," said Gorson. "I know because he made me count them. I didn't cry out. I wanted to show him I was a man, not an animal."

Later, Wexler would kill Gorson's father-in-law and brother-in-law.

"I CAN TELL you how he walked," said Gorson, "how he held his hands, how he would hit people with his elbows as he walked by. You could put him in a lineup of 1,000 people and I would pick him out in a split second."

For 30 years, Ziggy Gorson has carried this photograph in his mind of Johann Heinrich Wexler. Now it is time to pull it out. Gorson read in the Jewish Exponent the other day that Wexler has been captured in Germany.

It is time once more for Ziggy Gorson to say, "I accuse." In 1972, Gorson was in Israel to testify at the trial of Yaacov Ben-Aliahu Reichman, who was charged with murdering Gorson's grandfather.

Gorson personally found Reichman living in Israel in a town near the Lebanese border after a search that had



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taken him through Germany and Poland and France.

"I must live to see justice done," said Gorson. "to accuse those who are guilty. There aren't too many of us left who can accuse."

YAACOV BEN-ALIAHU Reichman was a Nazi collaborator who was the coal yard foreman in Lodz, Poland, Gorson's hometown. Moshe Jakubowicz, Gorson's grandfather, was beaten to death with an iron pipe in the coal yard.

Reichman was found guilty of the murder at his trial in Israel. The court said he had been under great pressure from the Nazis and fined him \$119.50.

Gorson was not bitter.

"Hate is a waste of time," he said.

This comes from a man whose family was wiped out by the Nazis, whose parents and three sisters were shot down and killed.

Gorson talks like this because he always found humanity in the middle of the worst kind of madness.

HE SPOKE OF A German named Tul Harden, who was in charge of the S. S. guards at Hannover-Ahlen.

"As long as he was in camp," said Gorson, "we could breathe. He was a great soccer player and he used to organize games in the camp. He gave us bread. He was loved by everyone."

There are other good memories. A Catholic priest, Father Francis Kolbe, was a fellow prisoner who became Ziggy Gorson's great friend. Gorson was only 20 when he was released at the end of the war.

Father Kolbe was someone to hold on to.

One day, a Jewish prisoner was marked for execution. He screamed that he had never seen his newborn twins. Father Kolbe volunteered to take his place and was killed.

Ziggy Gorson carried away his body.

Now Ziggy Gorson is 50 years old. His wife, Jean, who

was a prisoner with him at Hannover-Ahlen, died last year of a heart that had been damaged by the Nazis. His sons, Carl and Allen, help him to run his meat business in Wilmington, Del. Ziggy and Jean Gorson came to America on Dec. 2, a day he holds sacred. He has everything America can offer. He could have forgotten the past, but there are books that need balancing.

FIVE YEARS AGO, he and Jean were in Munich. He had not seen Johann Heinrich Wexler in 25 years, but there he was, suddenly, on the sidewalk next to him.

"Wexler!" Gorson screamed.

The name and the face were a nightmare relieved. Jean passed out. Wexler took off running. Ziggy Gorson turned to help his wife.

Now Wexler is in custody in Germany and Ziggy Gorson will go back to testify against him.

On Ziggy Gorson's left arm is a number-S2871-that was tattooed on at Auschwitz. On his left leg is a brand that was burned into him outside the camp at Treblinka. They are terrible reminders of six years in hell, but Ziggy Gorson does not have to look at them to remember.

He has the photographs in his mind.

"THERE'S TWO MORE NOW," he said yesterday. "Two more vicious killers I must find. I saw them take away babies from their mothers' breasts and split their heads open against a wall. I swore I would get them."

Until he does, Ziggy Gorson cannot close the gates of hell behind him.



Gorson