

[From 3 pages handwritten by Dov Zelmanowicz]

Recently, an invitation was distributed on behalf of the organization "The World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors" to hold events at "Yad Vashem" and Beit Hatefuzot in Israel this coming July.

Since the content of the invitation and the titles of the people holding positions at the events contradict the facts and the appearance of members from Israel contradicts the agreement and has a public impact and a direct impact on our activity in the blessed deed since our immigrating to Israel, we are obligated to clearly clarify the issue and the subject to the public institutions concerned.

**The Bergen-Belsen Survivors Organization in Israel** was founded in 1949 after the immigration to Israel of activists from the Central Jewish Committee in Bergen-Belsen, and most of the camp survivors signed below, along with others, led by Rabbi Dr. Zvi Azaria, have held positions and are involved in the organization's activities ever since. The organization's activities for its own sake and its adherence to its public goals, especially that of remembrance [meaning commemoration], have earned it a name in Israel and around the world. The late Josef Rosensaft, who served as chairman of the Central Jewish Committee in Bergen-Belsen, despite remaining in exile, was awarded the honorary title of president due to his numerous and constant contacts with members in Israel and his activities in the organization. Every event he organized was in line with ours, bore our name and patronage, and was a single link in our activity. In 1964, the late Josef Rosensaft founded the "World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors" and its basis of operation relied on the centrality and activity of the organization in Israel, with the aim of establishing groups in the Diaspora in places where Bergen-Belsen survivors are found.

The cooperation was fruitful, and a long line of commemorative projects glorify our years of activity. It should be emphasized that throughout the entire time, all actions were coordinated between the organization and the "World Federation" and everything was done with the consent of both parties. Due to the centrality of the She'erit HaPleita organization in Israel, it received a distinguished and large representation for its members, which was expressed in 4 vice-presidents, including Rabbi Azaria, Rafael Olewski, and long live Chaim Poslushni and Zami Feder, as well as several board members in addition to the general secretary Dov Zelmanowicz. Our representatives in Israel took part in events or prepared them abroad until 1968 after the Six-Day War, when it was evident in the activities of the late comrade Rosensaft that he was suffering from his conscience, that he was living outside the borders of the country with a handful of members, and most of the Remnant is in Israel and some of its sons fell in the war and most of them experienced firsthand the events and anxiety of those days. Due to his personal internal mental pressure and to justify his presence abroad even at this time, he took

an opposing position and began to deny the centrality of our organization and compared it to Montreal or Toronto – where there was no real organization at all, but only a handful of members and friends.

The undersigned hurried and met with the late comrade Rosensaft, but due to these fundamental differences of opinion, a rift was created that has not been healed to this day. The activity of our organization continued and persisted in its goals, while that of the "World Federation" gradually declined. The events that were nevertheless organized by him in Israel did not take place on the regular dates known as the days of remembrance, and, in addition to a handful of individuals who personally withdrew from the organization, were invited to them private individuals or holders of public office who have no connection or affiliation with the remnant and the camp's veterans. It should be noted that throughout the rift, the late Rosensaft did not attempt to abolish or change positions, and apparently out of hope for peace, maintained the framework of the Federation as it was at the time of its founding.

Our organization was, throughout its existence, a recognized and respected body in the Organizations Committee and later in the World Organization, and despite the main pressure from the late Rosensaft to remain outside of the two aforementioned fraternal institutions, we found it appropriate, and naturally, to persist and belong, and the appearance of our members in them was necessary, useful, and respected as the spokesperson for the remnant of the Holocaust in the country. Today, we are in fact the most active organization representing the interests of the remnant in the camps.

Our relations and connections with "Yad Vashem" have also always been positive, active, serious, and respected, and this despite the pressures from outside, and especially those of the late Rosensaft, to remain independent, unattached, and in a cool relationship with this respected institution.

Following the rift between our organization and the late Josef Rosensaft, an official letter was sent to him, approved by the entire management, stating that he had no authority to represent our organization or appear in its name in Israel or abroad, and that all powers granted to him as president were being taken away from him. He was aware of the situation and tried to minimize activity to the necessary minimum.

In 1975, Comrade Rosensaft passed away, and with his death an empty space was left to the point of waning all activity. Comrade Shmaya Bloch tried in some way to act and uses the title of President of the Federation in vain. It should be noted that Comrade Shmaya **Bloch was never elected as president, no assembly was held, and certainly no elections were held** as a result of which he was supposedly elected president. Comrade Bloch is not among the camp prisoners or partisans, but rather as someone who found refuge and shelter during the war and was not chosen by anyone to represent the name of Bergen-Belsen (except as secretary of the "World Federation" in New York only). The same title appears next to Menachem Rosensaft's name as chairman and founder of the "World Organization of Children

of Holocaust Survivors". By whom was he elected and when and whom does he represent? Such a founding body exists in Israel, representing the next generation, is active and recently affiliated with our Organizations Committee.

The status of the "World Federation" on whose behalf Comrade Shmaya Bloch acts in Israel is in a completely ambiguous and unclear state. The positions of the vice presidents and members of the board and the general secretary have never been abolished in Israel, and on the other hand, they have not participated in the activity it intends to carry out, have not received any authorization or consent and have no right to bear the name of Bergen-Belsen or appear in its name. Certainly not on behalf of the large remnant of camp survivors who are in Israel. Comrade Shmaya Bloch sent the best of the youth, who remained to be evacuated from Bergen-Belsen, to be drafted into Israel, and as a member of the draft committee he remained settled in Germany and from there continued to the United States and has remained there to this day.

Despite all the above facts he tried with audacity and a determined face and also managed to enter the World Committee in Israel through a back door and take a place, due to personal connections and exploitation of Bergen-Belsen, in the "Yad Vashem" institutions, and the 3 members who retired remained apathetic to public activity to the point of contempt and prevented themselves even from memorial rallies and any event we organized.

[The beginning of the sentence is missing in the original] This time, Comrade Grajek accepted the "World Federation" within the framework of the World Organization, but it was expressly stipulated that this was a delegation from the United States and in no way from Israel. An explicit letter in the spirit of the agreement was sent by the organization to the World Organization, emphasizing the agreed-upon clause that Bergen-Belsen in Israel would be represented at all events only by authorized representatives of our organization. Comrade Grajek promised personally and on behalf of the World Organization that this agreement would indeed be implemented in practice.

Upon receiving the invitation from the "World Federation" in which 3 members from Israel appear as speakers as representatives of the "World Federation", the agreement was violated in a gross and blatant manner, and for this reason the name of our organization was damaged, as if 2 governing authorities were subordinate to one another.

In light of this situation, we cannot knowingly refrain from the act, especially after Comrade Grajek simply claims that in his opinion we must continue to participate in the fraud as if nothing had happened, and we hereby announce to every forum that as long as the agreement is not implemented and a public apology is made and the situation is rectified by fully implementing the agreement, we will no longer be able to participate in the framework of the world organization.

We must emphasize once again that the entire event that supposedly came to commemorate the memory of the late Josef Rosensaft is contrary to the spirit and will of Yossel, who distanced himself from Yad Vashem and the world organization, and the very idea of the Federation being accepted into the world organization serves to push the feet of our organization and present the fictional Federation as a fait accompli.

We rightly demand a serious discussion on the subject and a definitive decision.

[No signatures or names]

Conclusions:

The letter was written after 1975 [the death of Yossel Rosensaft], and after 1981 [the death of the late Rafael Olewski], both of whom are mentioned in the letter as not being alive.