

The Love Story of Rosa Berger and Boruch Meren

A MLYNOV STORY

mlynov

Version 3

From the desk of Howard I. Schwartz, PhD

Cell: 408.838.5410 / Email: hsaccount@yahoo.com

June 2020 (written during the COVID-19 pandemic)

(Copyright 2020)

A note about the researcher/author: Howard I. Schwartz, PhD, is the grandson of Paul Schwartz and Pauline (Shulman) Schwartz, first cousins from Mlynov. Paul and Pauline's mothers were sisters and part of the large Demb family of nine children in Mlynov. Paul's mother Yetta Demb married Chaim Schwartz and Pauline's mother Pearl Malka Demb married Tsodik Shulman. The Demb patriarchs were Israel Jacob Demb and Rivkah (Gruber) Demb, Howard's great-grandparents on his father's side of the family.

After Howard's parents, Leon Schwartz and Joan (Schinker) Schwartz, passed away, Howard began researching his family roots, an effort which almost naturally expanded into an interest in the story of Mlynov in general, since almost every family married every other family in the small town of Mlynov.

Howard has been publishing the results of his research and interviews on a website about Mlynov and the adjoining town of Mervits, hosted by JewishGen (<https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/>)

Contents

Rosa (Shoshana) Berger and Aaron Harari and Aliyah to Palestine	4
Love Story of Rosa Berger and Boruch Meren	7
Boruch Meren and Amelia Shargel Get Together	12
Amelia and Boruch Travel to the States.....	14

What follows is a Mlynov love story that I learned about after tracking down Hagar Lipkin, the daughter of Rosa Berger, who was born in Mlynov. I had only learned of Hagar recently when I set out to learn what became of the Bergers from Mlynov who settled in Israel. This is an excerpt from a longer essay I am writing about the Berger family from Mlynov.

Learning about this touching love story between a young man in Mlynov and his girlfriend who left for Palestine in 1933 opens a window into the yearnings and aspirations of the youth of that period and the ways in which their life choices shaped their destinies.

Figure 1 Caption reads [martyrs:] “Wolf Berger and his wife Golda and their daughter Hannah, may their memory be for a blessing, to be distinguished for a long life their daughter Reisel and son Aaron,” Mlynov Memorial Book, p. 467.



Figure 2 Caption reads: “Shoshana (Raisel) Berger on a bridge over the Ikva River.” Mlynov Memorial Book, p. 279.

[Rosa \(Shoshana\) Berger and Aaron Harari and Aliyah to Palestine](#)

Rosa / Raisel had been born on October 3, 1910 in Mlynov. She was the youngest child of Wolf and Golda Berger. Rosa and her younger brother Aaron basically grew up as the only two children in the household. She was 3 years old when her brother Sol left for America, and she was not yet a teenager when her brother Karl left for Argentina. Her oldest brother, Shaul /Saul, was also not living at home when she was a child; first he went to another city to study and then he was recruited to the Red Army, got married and lived in Russia. Rosa’s only sister, Hannah, was seven years older than Rosa. As a

teenager Rosa used to earn money by embroidery, something that her daughters enjoyed later, when she used to add ornaments to their dresses.

I was not surprised when I learned that Rosa had gotten involved in the Zionist Youth movement called “Hashomer Hazair” which was popular in Mlynov during the 1920s. I had already learned from earlier research on Mlynov in that period that, Aaron Harari, had played a key role in reviving that group in the mid-1920s. I had only recently learned that Aaron Harari was Rosa’s brother.¹



Figure 3 The Berger family: standing: Hannah and Saul (in Red Army uniforms), sitting from left: Wolf, Aaron, Rosa, Golda. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin. Circa 1919. The absence of Sol and Kalman may suggest it was the 1920s after Kalman left for Buenos Aires. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

¹ https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Zionist_Youth_in_Mlynov.html



*Figure 4 Rosa (Reisel) Berger (right) bathing in Mlynov in the Ikva River pre-1933.
Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.*



Figure 5 1927 Group HaTikva of Hashomer Hatzair. Rosa sitting on the floor. On the right – “Shapovnik” who went to kibbutz Ruhama. Her son was killed in the service. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

Love Story of Rosa Berger and Boruch Meren

When Rosa Berger left Mlynov and made aliyah to Palestine in 1933, she left behind a young man who was her boyfriend. His name was Boruch Meren. Boruch was born in Mlynov in 1908. His father was Ben Zion Meren and his mother Miriam was the daughter of Hirsch and Ida Goldseker; his sister's name was Seril.

Boruch used to send photos to Rosa in Palestine from Mlynov with notes on the back. The photos Boruch sent to Rosa and the notes on the back are wistful open up window into the young, quaint love relationship of two Mlynov youths during the 1930s. Rosa kept these photos indicating that the relationship with Boruch was still important to her many years later.



Figure 6 Dated May 4, 1933 Boruch wrote in Hebrew “Three who miss you” (שלושה שהשתגעו).
Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.



Figure 7 Dated 1/16/1934 Boruch wrote "To memory for Shoshana. Boruch (לזיכרון עבור (שושנה ברוך). The young man is unidentified. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.



Figure 8 Dated 10/10/33 Boruch wrote, "This place is beyond the big bridge by the side of the road. In the distance you can see a field of trees... We are sitting on a seesaw, spending as much time as possible in this activity. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

המקום הוא אחרי הגשר הגדול מצד הכביש מרחוק את רואה שדות העצים... אנחנו יושבים נדנדה, בילוי כמה שיותר בספורט זה.



Figure 9 Dated Feb. 14, 1935. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

Boruch wrote on the back of this photo:

And still the chain [i.e. connection] is not broken...Mlynov still stands in its place, and the mountain "Grinig," as our ancestor called it, stand upright entirely covered in greens. During Shabbat, those members [of the youth group] still left gather and sit upon it, reading, chatting, laughing, enjoying the beauty of nature that surrounds it.
Boruch

ועוד לא נותקה השלשלת...מלינוב במקומו עומד, וההר "גריניג" שכינו אבותינו עומד זקוף כולו מכוסה ירק. ובימי השבתות מתאספים שארית החברה, יושבים עליו קוראים, משוחחים, צועקים, נהנים מיופי הטבע שמסביבו. ברוך

I had seen this photo of the Mlynov young men and women on the hill of "Grinig" before. It appears in the Mlynov Memorial Book on page 158 with only the caption "a group of youth on a fieldtrip on 'Grinig'". It is a faded photo in the Memorial book and has no context. I wonder now whether the photo got into the memorial book because Rosa saved it and gave it to her brother Aaron, who was one of its editors. Whatever its path into the Memorial book, its preservation as a keepsake by Rosa from her boyfriend Boruch brings into relief the longings of Mlynov youth.

Figure 10 A photo in the kibbutz soon after Boruch (with the tie) arrived. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.



Figure 11 1935-1936 Boruch and Rosa near Kibbutz Ramat Yohanan. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

The story of what happened is told in a eulogy written by one of Rosa's closest friends after her passing, who, like Rosa, was also hoping to bring a boyfriend to Palestine. Looking back she wrote:

One of the Kibbutz founders, Smulik, hinted to us that he can secure two certificates "under the table," and to bring our boyfriends, mine and Rosa's, to Israel. One day the telephone rang telling us of arrivals. Rosa hurried to the Haifa port with the details, but returned depressed. Fischell had arrived but Boruch, Rosa's boyfriend, hadn't arrived. Shmulik continued his efforts because he could not see Rosa in her sorrow. After several months Boruch came. A young dashing man arrived, brilliant, a speaker of excellent Hebrew, a learned man, but not a working man. His hands were white and tender, working with heavy tools was not for him! Rosa, simply and decisively concluded, "he is not the same person, he is not for me", and she sent him to her brother Aaron to kibbutz Merhavia, to take care of him. Thus the affair was over.

Boruch arrived in Palestine in 1938.² Had Rosa not helped him get his certificate, he would have died in the Shoah along with his sister and his parents. His love relationship had saved his life.

It is not surprising that Boruch no longer seemed to be the man for Rosa. Rosa had been in Palestine for five years by that point. She was not the same young woman who left Mlynov and thus Boruch did not seem like the same young man. That Palestine had changed Rosa's tastes is not so surprising.

Rosa had arrived in Palestine in 1933 and joined her friends from the preparatory group of Hashomer Hatzair back in Ukraine, The group was staying in Rehovot at the time, where she became a wall painter and earned the highest salary in the group, painting the first buildings in the Weizman Institute. After a year she moved with the group to Ramat-Yohanan, a kibbutz 16 km east of Haifa. There she reunited with Boruch for a while, and later married Moshe Tzizik, whom she knew from childhood in Mlynov. Rosa and Moshe subsequently moved to kibbutz Beit-Alpha where she worked in the vineyards, grapefruit and olive groves and lived the rest of her life. Rosa and Moshe had three children. Hanan, born in 1940, who lives in Merhavia, Hagar, who has shared with me her family story, was born in 1944 and lives in Tel-Aviv, and Hannah, born in 1948 and now lives in Delray Beach, Florida.

² Boruch mentions this date in a essay he wrote in the *Mlynov Memorial Book*, 220-225, Sokolsky, *Translation*, p. 49)

Boruch Meren and Amelia Shargel Get Together

After his relationship with Rosa ended, Boruch started a new relationship. Rosa preserved photos of Boruch with his new girlfriend whom she called “Milka.” Milka turned out to be Amelia Shargel, Boruch’s future wife.

It is not entirely clear how Boruch and Amelia renewed their connection. They had also known each other originally from Mlynov where Amelia was born in 1910. After WWI was over and immigration rules tightened in the US, Amelia’s parents had immigrated to Baltimore to join their oldest children who were already there with hopes of having their younger children join them. With her parents in Baltimore, Amelia had lodged at the home of Shimon Goldseker at the time and was close friends with his daughter Charna. She likely took the room of Charna’s sister, Eta Goldseker, who left in 1924 for Palestine to join her future husband David “Dudek” Fishman on Moshav Balfouria. Amelia, for her part, joined her younger two brothers and headed to the US via Mexico. She entered the US from Mexico in 1929.

How Amelia knew that Boruch was in Palestine in 1938 or that his relationship with Rosa had ended we do not know. We can guess that the news traveled to her via Eta



Figure 12 A photo of Moshe and Rosa Berger-Tchijik with Amelia Shargel in the center, dated 4/25/1939 on the eve of her departure to the US. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

Figure 13 Dated 6/29/1939 Milka and Boruch in Hadera (Palestine). Boruch wrote on the back "For Rosa, thus was destiny's intention." Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

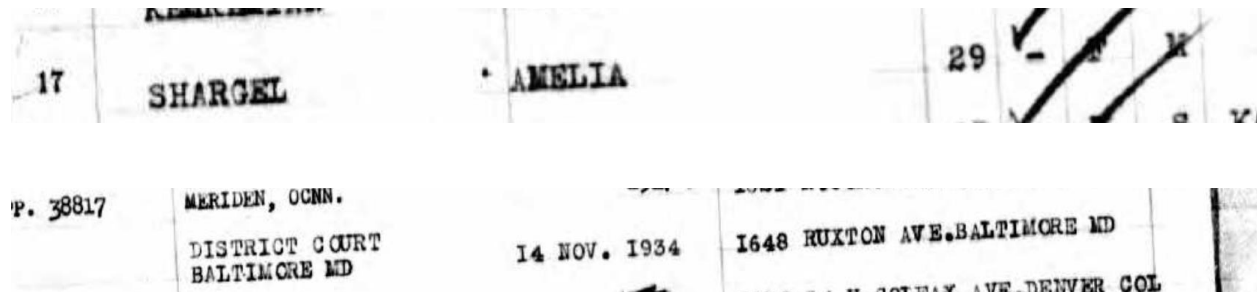


and David Fishman, who had by 1927 left Palestine for Baltimore. Eta or David may have been keeping in touch with the news of those in Palestine. In any case, Amelia apparently showed up in Palestine during this period and got together with Boruch. It has the sense of an arranged marriage. It was probably also the only way that Boruch could have made it into the US during these years.

Photos in Rosa's collection show Amelia with Rosa and Moshe, just before Amelia returned to the States. By then, she and Boruch had gotten married, according to the story told to me by Rosa's daughter. I'm guessing Rosa felt relieved that Boruch had found someone else in his life. A photo from a few months later, of Boruch and Amelia in Hadera, Palestine, also appears in Rosa's collection. It is dated after Amelia left for the US. Boruch's Hebrew words capture the turn of fate. He wrote: "For Rosa, thus was destiny's intention."

[Amelia and Boruch Travel to the States](#)

Amelia Shargel's passenger manifest shows one part of her journey back home. She left on May 3, 1939 from Cherbourg, France on the SS Queen Mary for New York and arrived on in New York on May 8. She was 29 years old. The date was just a year before the Nazis would invade France. She is now listed as married.



Boruch followed Amelia to the States nearly a year later. In the meantime, Amelia was probably arranging for his papers. A passenger manifest from one leg of his journey shows he traveled from Naples, Italy to New York, arriving on April 11, 1940. It was just a few months before Germany invaded France and at a point in time that Italy and Germany already had an alliance. He lists his last place of residence as Hadera, Palestine. It was same place where the photo of him and Amelia had been taken which he had sent to Rosa several months before.

9	Meren Jaekoh	Boruch Boruch	CC40K	33	m	m	mason	yes	Hebrew
---	--------------	---------------	-------	----	---	---	-------	-----	--------

Figure 14 Boruch's manifest from Naples, Italy to New York

Malta	Natur	QIV 3:06	Malta	Jan 30th	Malta	Natur
Poland	Mlynov	QIV 2710	Jerusal.	Feb. 29th	1940	1940
					1940	1940
						Palestine Hedera

Figure 15 Boruch's manifest shows his birthplace as Mlynov, Poland and his last residence as Hadera, Palestine

N.Y. New York	yes	self	yes	no	no	no	no	brother in law	23rd St	New York City
Md. Baltimore	no	self	yes	no	no	no	no	wife: Shargel Emilia =	no p	
N.Y. Bronx	yes	self	yes	no	no	no	no	1648 Ruxton Ave. Baltimore Md.		
								brother: Louis - 2042 E. 8th St	no p	

Figure 16 Boruch's destination was his wife Emilia Shargel in Baltimore

Rosa met Boruch and his family again in September 1960 in Baltimore, while she traveled to the US to visit her two brothers, Sol and Karl, following the death of her beloved husband Moshe Tchijick at the age of 49, from a snake bite.



Figure 17 Rosa in sunglasses visiting her brothers in Chicago circa 1960. Sol, her brother is standing behind her. Courtesy of Hagar Lipkin.

Rosa told her daughter Hagar about one other letter that that she received from Boruch. As Hagar recalls it, her mother “received another letter from Boruch in the 1980s telling her that his wife had died. Boruch suggested in this letter that Rosa join him in the US.”

When I heard about this last letter I froze. Boruch had in fact predeceased his wife in 1996. Amelia lived until 2005. When I asked Hagar about this, she said, “I only know what my mom told me because the letter was written in Yiddish, and she probably didn't keep it.” We may never know the contents of this last letter.

As I ponder whether to publish or bury this last story, I reach out to Baruch's grandson to tell him what I found. I remember him telling me he knew nothing about period in his grandfather's life. Would he be happy I had filled in those the gaps? After sending him what I wrote, he calls me to tell me how great it was to read about the missing years in his grandfather's journey. About the last letter Boruch wrote to Rosa, his grandson recalls that towards the end of his life, Boruch was getting dementia. Was he perhaps reverting to his long lost youth?
