Francis Mandel FRYMCHA Bat chaim v’ Esther

funeral Thursday May 30 2019 12:30 PM Mount Sinai Cemetery Tanakh Chapel

Died Saturday night May 25 2019b March 3, 1915

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Francis was born 104 years ago in a small shtetl of PLOWACHIV, Poland, to Chaim and Esther Wainberg, themselves extremely pious Jews, members of the Gerer Chasidic movement .

She started normally, as was appropriate to a good Jewish young woman; she married, had a baby , but it was all upended with German invasion of Poland. They rounding up her and her family, hauled them off to Warsaw. The family was split apart and she was sent off to Auschwitz where she managed to survive as a laborer; however, her husband and daughter , Hannah, perished. As the Soviet army drew near to liberate Auschwitz, the SS commanders marched her and the surviving inmates over long distances and sub-zero weather in order to eliminate the witnesses to their crimes; those who could not keep up were shot, those who fell were left to die. Then, the Soviet tanks broke through . The commander of the lead tank was himself Jewish and then offered Frances a gun to take revenge against her captors. She refused: ”I've seen enough death and killing .I don't need to do this “

She made her way to the DP camp in Stuttgart and there she took care of surviving orphans. It was also there that she met another survivor Jack Mandel. Jack was also from a Gerer background, but as the young man, he had broken with tradition and became an ardent Zionist . They married and while he wanted Israel, but Francis prevailed and took America . He never forgot his desire to settle in Israel and he made his final resting place there many years later.

They settled in Los Angeles and Francis put to use the experience she had in the camps of sewing the enemies uniforms, and here found work as a seamstress while Jack found work in a warehouse. No labor was too difficult for them as they set up their new home here. They saved their pennies, then opened a cleaners, and then a grocery store.

It was in a poor neighborhood with criminals and druggies and robberies. Frances would stay long days, from 8:00 AM till as late as 2:00 AM. She would sell to her customers, on credit if they had no cash. The list of unpaid iou’s to them was very very long.

Frances would talk to all the clients who came to the grocery store, even if they were drunk, on drugs or going through a psychotic episode. Everybody was a human being. That's what Francis understood. And although it was a dangerous neighborhood and there were robberies even the thieves respected her .

They created a new family with son Charles “Chuck” and daughter Liz. They too worked as they could, Liz at the cash register and Charles running deliveries.

As time went on, they managed to set aside savings, and bought properties here and there. Eventually, they could quit the grocery store.

They lived very modestly because they realize that what mattered was not money, but family and friendship. They believed in that, and in God Bless America, and in Israel .

Frances was privileged to see the children married and start families of their own. Charles, married Laura, and together they had Benjamin, Rebecca , and Daniel. Liz married David Kirschner and had children Lexie and Jessie. Frances, who had lost the bulk of her family, was privileged to see great-grandchildren as well- Sophie, Mikah, and Gavin.

They also knew the happiness would be in friendship had in helping others as I had mentioned before. Many years later, Frances went to the gym religiously until she was about 96. The gym was visited by a lot of young gay men who found in Francis a sympathetic ear; it was back in a time when many of them weren't accepted by their own families. So Frances became their counselor, guided them in love life and in relationships. She was probably the mother or grandmother that they were missing. Eventually, the head of the gym let her attend for free and even gave her a private trainer for free.

Frances and Jack knew that the state of Israel was the answer for the Jewish people to prevent another Holocaust. They became active with the American Congress of Jewish survivors of Concentration Camps of Poland. Jack eventually acted as the president for 25 years and Frances as the secretary and Treasurer . They supported a great many projects in Israel.

I was Rabbi at Hollywood temple Beth El back in the early 90s and the Congress would hold many lively and happy social events and it was thrilling to watch Frances and Jack with so many others of the survivors with them.They celebrated life, they celebrated their triumph over all the evils that the Nazis could carry out .

Jack died in August of 2003 and as I mentioned his one wish was to settle in Israel, so what he could not do it in life, he did so at death, and was buried in Israel

Frances had great inner strength that kept her going, overcoming illnesses, and moving forward. She even outlived her doctors’ expectations in the last weeks. She hit 104, just 16 years short of 120!

**Jacob Mandel Obituary**

Mandel, Jacob
We mourn the loss but celebrate the life of Jacob Mandel, known affectionately as "Jackie" to his five beloved grandchildren, who died August 26th at the age of 84. He was a strong, wise, and courageous man who was passionately committed to his family, the United States, and the State of Israel. For 25 years, he was President of the American Congress of Jewish Survivors of Concentration Camps. In that capacity, he was deeply involved in a variety of charitable causes, Holocaust issues, and programs. He will be dearly missed by his wife, Frances, his son and daughter-in-law, Charles and Laura; his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and David; his grandchildren, Alexis, Jessica, Benjamin, Rebecca, and Danielle; and his dear friends and other family. Burial will be in Israel.

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