

THE JEWISH ADLER FAMILY IN HIDING

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Introduction

The fate of the Jewish Adler family during the Second World War and shortly after has earlier been described in *De Silehammer* and a few other books. The subject is David Adler and his wife Bertha Heinemann, their son Jakob 'Jacques' Adler, his wife Betsy de Leeuw, plus their three daughters: Jacqueline (1944), Berthe Jemima (1946) and Jochebed (1947). Long after the war, their names would be written down according to both the English and Hebrew pronunciation.

Recently, new information has been discovered in newly published books. Hans de Lange and his wife Jacqueline de Wagt from Hoogland managed to get in touch with Yemima Lupu-Adler. Hans' father, Johan de Lange (1926-2015), was one of the seven men from the Wetering ('Weteringers') who were arrested in december 1944. While in the Leeuwarden prison, Johan met David Adler, who had also been arrested in the Wetering.

The purpose of this article is to expand the knowledge on the whereabouts of the Adler family by adding new data from the time before, during and after the war.

Jakob (Ya'akov) Adler, who was known as 'Jacques' when in hiding, wrote a book in 1991:

*From Grief to Glee, from Suffering to Holiday
Memories and Events 1933-1944*

Helen Bruls-Turin is currently working on a Dutch translation, which certainly will produce more details from the life of the family Adler-de Leeuw.

David Adler (1885-1945) and Bertha Heinemann (1882-1946)

David Adler was born on April 18, 1885, in Bonyhád, South-West Hungary. The former Donau Monarchy consisted of the Empire of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary. In 1852 2.351 Jews were living in the town of Bonyhád; in 1963 only four Jewish families were left.

His father's official name is Bernhard, on David's tombstone written in Hebrew: Issakar Dov. In Hebrew, *dov* means *bear*. Elsewhere these names are even combined: Ber Dov and Dovber.

David's mother is mentioned as Rachel Lea on his tombstone, her Hebrew name; on David's death certificate she is mentioned by her official name: Rosa Steiner.

David was from a poor but religious family. When he was eighteen he moved to Germany where he met his future wife Bertha.

Bertha Heinemann was born on May 20, 1882 in Giebelstadt, Bavaria. Her Yiddish name is also mentioned on her tombstone: Perel, daughter of Aaron Heinemann and Zippora Schüler. Where and when David and Bertha got married is not known. Possibly in Neurenberg, since they lived there on Bauerngasse number 21. Their first three children



David, Bertha and Jakob Adler.

all died shortly after birth. Their son Jakob was born on December 30, 1911. David was called to war in 1914. His wife spent four years alone at home with her son. After the war, the Adlers were able to start a well-running tailor shop in Neurenberg.

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became Reichskanselier. A big reason to worry.

In the autumn of 1933, David and Bertha moved to Holland. After some time in a rental, they moved to a house in the Van Bearlestraat 130, Amsterdam. They had a little bit of money put aside; To not remain idle, David started a business in leatherwear. Bertha, who suffered a bad eye-illness, stayed at home. David and Bertha were never recognized as state citizens. Their son Jakob was naturalized after the war. More on David and Bertha later on.

Jakob 'Jaques Adler' (1911-2007)

As previously mentioned Jakob was born on December 30, 1911 in Neurenberg, and started studying at the university of Erlangen in 1930. The events on January 30, 1933, put Jakob in a state of panic; That is where his book starts.

Jakob travelled to Zürich, then to Strasbourg, and finally to Paris. In November 1933 he received a letter from his parents in Amsterdam, which prompted him to also travel there, and despite the fact that he was not an official state citizen, he was able to continue his medical studies. His university years in Germany counted as well.

Jakob passed the exam early, in 1934. He took an internship at the Dutch Israelite Hospital, and also in Arnhem, where he specialized in children's diseases. Before the war, there were three Jewish hospitals in Amsterdam; the Israelite Centre for the Sick (Dutch: CIZ), the Portugese Israelite Hospital (Dutch: PIZ), and the Dutch Israelite Hospital (Dutch: NIZ) on the Nieuwe Keizersgracht. All of them vanished. Since 1978, the Amstelland Hospital has a Jewish ward, still the only Jewish hospital in Western Europe.

During his time in the NIZ, Jakob met Betsy 'Beckel' de Leeuw, a nurse. She was replacing the head of the maternity ward. She was born on May 30, 1913, in Steenwijk. In 1920 she had moved to Utrecht with her parents and two sisters.



Left: J. Adler is mentioned a few times in the New Israelite Weekly (Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad, NIW), dated September 6, 1939.

In 1937, Jakob passed the PhD Medicine. In 1938, he took the first part of the exam to become an official doctor. In June 1939 he completed the exam and received the Dutch doctor certificate. In this time, Jakob became more and more interested in Zionism. His parents did not like this very much: a pious Jew had to wait for the arrival of the Messiah before going to Eretz Yisrael.

On February 5, 1942, all doctors were ordered to report if they were of Jewish origin. On May 2, it became obligatory to wear the yellow badge (*German: Judenstern*). Exactly on Jakob and Betsy's wedding day (6th of August, 1942), the Germans executed a raid in south Amsterdam. Raids kept on happening in hospitals in May, June and August 1943; during the last one, on August 13, all three Jewish hospitals were cleared and locked down.

Jakob and Betsy had already found shelter in March 1943, in North-West Overijssel. During his time in hiding Jakob called himself: 'petit Jacques from Surinam'. Little Jacques, because he was short and slender, with a tanned complexion. On a Thank You card, sent to his helpers in december 1948 from his Soest address, he still used the name Jacques - that was the name he was known by after all.

Betsy 'Beckel' de Leeuw (1913-2012)

Betsy was born in Steenwijk on May 30, 1913. Initially, there was some doubt whether Betsy was indeed her given name, and not Betje, Beile or Bela in Yiddish, and Batya [as usual] in Israel. Beckel is her nickname. After some research in birth certificates and the civil register in Steenwijk, it is confirmed her given name is indeed, Betsy.

Betsy is the second daughter from the family of Salomon David de Leeuw (1883-1935) and Klara de Leeuw (1881-1940); both came from butcher's families in Steenwijk, where they were married on May 7, 1909. Salomon was a cattle-dealer, and according to a matrimony appendix, he was excused from military service in 1903. Their oldest child, a boy, was stillborn on February 15, 1910 in their house 'outside the Woldpoort'. The youngest child, gender unknown, was stillborn on February 7, 1918, in their house on the Cornputsingel. Betsy had two living sisters. The oldest, Gonny Betsy was born on October 19, 1911. She was named after both grandmothers: Gonda (Gelle) of Coevorden and Betje (Beile) Davidson. Then came Betsy, while the youngest daughter was Helena, born on June 28, 1916. Hardly any information was ever retrieved on Helena.

We know more about Gonny though. She married in 1940 to geologist Jaap (Akiva) Vroman, a passionate Zionist. Shortly after their marriage they settled in Palestine. They had three daughters, one of which was called Yemima. Jaap passed away in 1989 in Herzliya, Gonny in 1999.

Jaap's brother was the hematologist and poet Leo Vroman (1915-2014); Well known is the last verse of Leo's poem *Peace*:

*Come tonight with stories
how the war has disappeared
and repeat them hundreds of times
each time I shall weep*

Salomon David de Leeuw is mentioned a few times in newspaper articles. The family moved out of Steenwijk on June 7, 1920, and from that moment on they lived on the Weerdsingel Westzijde 23, Utrecht. Salomon David de Leeuw passed away in Utrecht on November 11, 1935, at 52 years of age. He was buried at the Jewish cemetery at the Zandpad in Utrecht. His widow Klara returned to Steenwijk, because she had some family there. On her headstone her name is written as Clara, in Hebrew with her Yiddish name Kijle/Keile.

All the tombstones on the Jewish cemetery in Steenwijk are mentioned with pictures, captions in Hebrew and translations on the website: www.stenenarchief.nl/

In Betsy's family tree the name De Leeuw ('The Lion') is a common one. When they took the name in 1811, they could be inspired by Jakob's Blessing, where Juda is called a lion cub (Gen. 49:9). However, Jews with the family name (De) Levie also chose (De) Leeuw as their last name. Grandmother Betje Davidson (1856-1930), is mentioned as daughter of David Ha-Levy.

Reconstruction of the period in hiding

A lot of the following is retrieved from what Albertus ('Bertus') Timmerman, living in the Wetering, has written in December 1976. Bertus (born in 1897) and his wife Gees Petter did not have any children. That is why he gave his title-less story of 18 pages long to Hendrik Willem Huisman; we, from the Historic Association IJsselham, got it in our possession through his son Bert Huisman. The story has also been used by Freerk Smit and Jaap Houwer. Also grateful use has been made on information provided by the book *In de onderduik (In Hiding)* by Jan van Rossum.

As previously mentioned, Jakob 'Jacques' Adler and Betsy the Leeuw went into hiding in March 1943, in North-West Overijssel. A brother from a non-Jewish colleague who lived in Steenwijk would secure a hiding place for them in that area. Betsy's family bonds with the region will surely

have played a part in that. Note: At that time they were not connected with the Deaconess' Hospital in Meppel, as Smit has written; Jacques was employed there only after the war.

First, Jacques and Betsy traveled to Steenwijk per train with his parents. David and Bertha spoke with a German accent and had to stay quiet during the entire journey. After a short stay in Giet-hoorn, all four of them arrived in the small village of Wetering. 'On the Wetering', as one usually says.

Bertus Timmerman, ferryman of a small ferry across the canal

Bertus lived on Wetering Quarter VI-33 during the war, nowadays Wetering West 7. He was asked – no date mentioned – if he happened to have room for two Jews, young folks who just got married: Jacques and Betsy. Bertus didn't have place for them, but baker Jan Nijholt and his wife Grietje did; they lived opposite of him across the canal. On a dark evening the two refugees would be brought from Steenwijk to the Wetering by truck. It turned out there would be four refugees, as Jacques' parents David Adler and Bertha Heinemann would join them. Helping Jews was punishable by death. Still, on dark nights Bertus would pick all four of them up for a cup of (surrogate)coffee.

Hiding with Jan Nijholt and Lammert Muis

The Adlers stayed with baker Nijholt for fifteen months, with the four of them staying in one small room. From the hiding story by Freerk Smit it was discovered that apparently the Nijholt's had an old potato basement underneath the kitchen floor. This basement served as a hiding spot. A carpet covered the hatch. It is not known whether the Adlers also stayed in this basement.

One day, Bertus received a note from the refugees, in which they asked to see him. The young wife, Betsy, was pregnant. There already had been some rumours going round the neighbourhood and baker Nijholt did not know whom he could trust. For a little while they considered to abort the pregnancy, but despite everything, optimism had the upper hand, since the Allies were clearly progressing. By the time the baby would be born, it would be peace...

Thanks to a reverend from Steenwijk and Truus van Stapele-Manoth, an address was found. Bertus' wife Gees took Betsy to Meppel on June 7 1944, by bicycle to bridge keeper Douwe de Gale (Kaapbruggen) and his wife Tjitske. There, on August 5th, 1944, Jacqueline Adler was born. Later she would be called Yael. Betsy, who had been assistant head of the maternity ward in the NIZ hospital in Amsterdam, instructed Tjitske extensively prior to the due date about what she needed to do to assist during childbirth.

Freerk Smit wrote that Betsy was brought to the Deaconess' Hospital in Meppel, where she was admitted under a false name by the hospital's vice president Dr. Roelfsema. This is incorrect. Surgeon and gynaecologist E.J. Roelfsema had been offering his medical aid secretly to members of the underground resistance, and had been murdered near Ruinen on September 29, 1943 - thus, it couldn't be him whom helped Betsy during her labour.

Betsy Adler-de Leeuw was safe for now. According to Freerk Smit she and her husband Jacques were together, although Jacques joined the hiding place in Meppel a little while later. First, he stayed with the Van Stapele family in Steenwijk.

Daughter Mienke Goldstein-Van Stapele (born in 1936) tells in (*In de onderduik = In Hiding*, 96) that the whole family ate together with the refugees in the evening and that 'uncle Jacques' led the prayers for the Sabbath on Friday nights. The whole family would join them; as a child this was special, but at the same time, perfectly normal for her! Jacques was hidden behind a double wall which was placed behind Mienke's wardrobe. The Van Stapele family always remained friends with the Adler family. Mienke even stayed with them in Israel for over a year.

Jacques wasn't able to ride a bike, but Truus van Stapele demanded that he learned to, because the situation in Steenwijk had become too dangerous. This way, she escorted him to Betsy in Meppel on September 5th.

Bertus Timmerman's story only continues about 'the old people', David Adler and his wife Bertha Heinemann. Together with 'pal' Lucas, a student in hiding, he brought the Adlers to Lammert Muis. Lammert and his wife Albertje Krikke lived on the Wetering in those days, not far from Bertus Timmerman, however, sailing straight to the Muis family by boat over the Wetering Canal was deemed being too risky.

Even close family did not know that there were people in hiding at the Muis family; the people who had attended a birthday party never noticed anything. Probably because it had been a child's birthday party, and there weren't usually any adults invited to those. Maybe it was the birthday of Lammert at August 25 or the birthday of Albertje September 15, 1944.

The razzia on Sunday 3d and Monday 4th of December, 1944

Shortly after the birthday of his wife Gees on October 15, Bertus Timmerman was arrested and brought to labour-camp Ahlem near Hannover. The camp hadn't been finished yet; Bertus became a kitchen help.

Because of betrayal, Lammert Muis' home was raided on December 3rd, 1944. Lammert and David Adler were arrested by the Germans and brought to De Blokhuispoort prison in Leeuwarden. While there, Lammert found out the Leeuwarden prison detained seven more Weteringers. They had been arrested a day later, in the early morning of December 4. Lammert found them to be the brothers Klaas, Johan and Jan de Lange, the brothers Marinus and Klaas Lok, and the brothers Joost and Willem Zandbergen.

On December 8, 1944, the Frysian Underground Resistance (*Dutch: Knokploeg, KP*) attacked the prison. Without a single shot, 51 resistance members were freed. All Frysians; for them, the danger was the greatest. In 1962 a movie was made about this event, 'De Overval' ('The Silent Raid'). De Weteringers were then placed in the empty cells.

Johan de Lange said that David Adler also stayed with them in their cell in Leeuwarden, and they ended up having many conversations. Adler had wanted to give him a golden cigarette-case, which Johan declined. "On the morning of the fifth day the door of the cell opened, and Adlers name was called. The remaining prisoners in the cell never saw Adler again." David Adler had been in prison until January 1945.

David Adler executed by firing squad near Dokkum, January 22, 1945

After weapons had been found on January 13 in Dokkum, there were a lot of arrests. Out of fear that their comrades would speak, a group of Dokkum people in resistance attacked a transport of prisoners to Leeuwarden on January 15. The attack failed.

There were several house searches in Dokkum on Friday the 19th of January. Most people had been warned beforehand, so only a few people were arrested. Also during another attack on a transport of prisoners, one of the *Sicherheitsdienst (SD)* had died and another one was badly injured.

The SD located in Leeuwarden made a plan to shoot the whole population of Dokkum, but this was rejected by the SD location in Groningen. Reprisals followed. Completely at



David Adler, 1885-1945.

random, ten 'political' prisoners from Groningen and ten from Leeuwarden were picked and transported to Dokkum. One of them was David Adler.

In the morning of January 22, 1945 a firing squad entered a meadow on the Woudweg in Dokkum. The first five prisoners were ordered to take their places in front of the firing squad. Two gunmen for each prisoner; one aimed for the chest, the other for the head. This way, twenty men were shot, five men each time. They were all being laid on their stomach, so that if there was still a sign of life, they could make a final shot in the neck.

Mayor Jonker was forced to come and watch.

Furthermore, no other person was allowed on the streets; the SD made sure of that. The bodies had to lay there for 24 hours, to scare the local population and the resistance. It was the biggest massacre in Friesland in the Second World War. The mayor himself wrote all the death certificates. On David Adler's, it says the time of death is 10:30. As his place of residence ~~Neurenberg (Duitschland)~~ is stricken through and replaced by Amsterdam.

Two memorials in Dokkum

Soon after the war, a cross was placed on the place of the massacre. In 1965 they placed the cross in the current stone memorial, designed by Peter Gelencsér. The memorial stands on a stone platform with two white plaques. The top of the left plaque reads IN MEMORIAM, and at the bottom of the second plaque states JANUARY 22 1945 PRO LIBERATE (For freedom)

The name D. Adler can also be found on the war memorial of Nel Bakema from 1949, for all 51 victims from Dokkum: Resistance people, citizens and prisoners. Location: Noorderbolwerk.



Yemima Lupu-Adler from Jerusalem, granddaughter of David Adler, near the Resistance Memorial, Dokkum, together with her granddaughter Raz and grandson Yahav. Date: August 11, 2009.



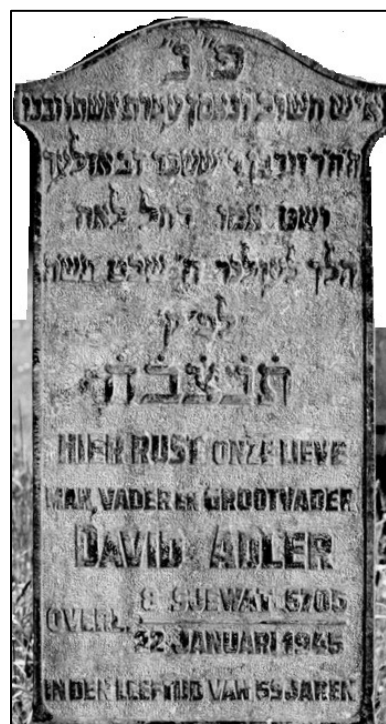
Above: Johan de Lange (1926-2015) with his son Hans near the Resistance Memorial at Dokkum, Woudweg.

On the right plaque: D. ADLER BANYHAD (HONG.) 18-4-'89
['89 incorrect for '85]

Both pictures: H. & J. de Lange-de Wagt, Hoogland.

Date: August 23, 2013.

Johan de Lange, one of the seven Weteringers arrested December 1944, met David Adler in the prison at Leeuwarden. They had been arrested at nearly the same time without knowing of each other's fate.



On the right: David Adler was reburied at the Jewish Cemetery, Jelsumerstraat, Leeuwarden; row 23/III.

Double mention of his date of death:

8 Sjewat (Shevat) 5705 = January 22, 1945.

On the HVIJ-website:

Hebrew text, transcription and Dutch translation.

Further process of the time in hiding

After her husband was arrested at the Wetering, Bertha Adler-Heinemann was allowed to stay there, for she was blind, and the Germans had no use for her...

In the autumn of 1944, Jacques Adler, his wife Betsy de Leeuw and their baby were brought to a location in the Friesche Veld near Blesdijke. The Resistance thought Oldemarkt would be a better hiding place. The local resistance contact, school principle Taeke Lubberts was willing to welcome the young Adler family into his home, even though he and his wife Ymie had six children already, and were currently expecting their seventh one! Their address was Quarter I-90, nowadays Hoofdstraat 108.

Many people saw the principle's wife walking around in Oldemarkt with little Jacqueline in the baby stroller. After a while, Oldemarkt proved to not be safe enough for Jacques Adler. It was decided to separate him and Betsy. On a proposal of Taeke Lubberts, Jacques went to the hamlet of IJsselham. When Taeke had to go into hiding himself as well, Ymie had the baby at home - with weapons under her mattress.

Neighbour baker Roelof Spijker took Jacques Adler on a transport bike. Roelof apparently had a hard time keeping the bike straight on the road, due to Jacques' severe trembling with fear.

Jacques was now going to hide on the farm of Thijs de Haan and his wife Fem Otten. Jacques slept in a pit which was delved underneath the bedroom floor. This was where he awaited the liberation on April 14.

Hasseltje (Hassie) Doeven-de Haan was thirteen years old at the time. When she saw a picture of David Adler in 2014, she immediately saw the resemblance with his son 'Jaap', the name they called Jacques.

The first years after the war

Jakob, alias Jacques Adler went to Steenwijk with his family. They stayed in the house of the family Van Stapeler, where they saw his mother, Bertha Adler-Heinemann again. The four of them moved to Noordersingel 23 (now 12) in Steenwijk, where previously the Jewish couple Abraham Reindorp and Emma Catharina Stokvis lived, whom both had died in Auschwitz on October 8, 1942.



Jakob became a doctor in the Deaconess' Hospital in Meppel. For a while Thijs De Haan was cared for by his former refugee in this hospital.

Bertha 'Perel' Adler-Heinemann, 1882-1946.

Bertha, who was blind, fell from the stairs one morning and died on February 16, 1946 = Adar 22, 5706. If we are sure that her birthday is May 20, 1882, she was 63, almost 64 when she died. Bertha was buried next to her husband David on the Jewish cemetery in Leeuwarden. The writing on her tombstone is readable. The Hebrew writing with Dutch translation can be found on the HVIJ-website.



*Obituary in NIW
February 2, 1946.*



On May 6, two months after the passing of Bertha, her second granddaughter was named after her: Berthe Jemima (in the birth announcement incorrectly spelled: Jemina). Her name is nowadays spelled as Yemima. It means: dove. Perhaps it was chosen as a sign of peace?

Birth announcement in NIW May 17, 1946.



The Jewish community in Steenwijk asked Jakob Adler to be a correspondent for the Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad (NIW), the *New Israelitish Weekly*. In the NIW published later that year there is a small announcement about the services at the Yamim Nora'im, ('Days of Awe'), the ten days from Rosh Hashanah (New Year) til Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). On the evening of Yom Kippur dr. Adler preached in the Kol Nidre service.



NIW October 5, 1945. For sure dr. Adler is referring to Jakob. Had he already taken his doctor's degree at that time or should Dr. be interpreted as Dutch 'dokter' = physician?

At the end of 1947 the third child of Jakob and Betsy Adler was born: Jochebed. In the announcement in the newspaper, the date was also written in Hebrew: Tevet 3, 5708. Perhaps a sign that Jakob and Betsy became more aware of their Jewish roots. N.B. their address should be: Bartolottilaan 1.

NIW December 12, 1947.



Another article in the NIW on November 21, 1947, where the Commission for the Jewish Book in Amsterdam requested that borrowed books would be returned. The request is, among others, addressed to David and Bertha Adler...

From the Netherlands to Israel

From the birth announcements of their daughters we can detect that Jakob and Betsy Adler moved in 1946 or 1947 from Steenwijk to Soest, Bartolottilaan1. Jakob worked as a lung specialist in sanatorium *Zonnegloren*. Tuberculosis was very common after the war.



From June 4, 1948 there are several calls in the NIW in favor of the *Haganah* (literally: defense). It is the Zionist paramilitary organization, founded during the British mandate over Palestine, with the purpose of defending the Jewish community in Palestine. The Haganah also organized illegal immigration of Jews, mostly Holocaust survivors, to Palestine. The state of Israel was founded on May 14, 1948. The last Haganah-call in the NIW was on July 16, 1948.

NIW June 4, 1948 (fragment).



In December 1948, the Adlers still live in Soest, according to a photograph with writing (in Dutch) on the back:

*With Thanks, for all the Good
that your helpfulness has given us.*

Betsy en Jacques

The Adlers moved to Israel in 1949. After their *aliyah* ('ascent', emigration to Israel), Jakob is known as Ya'akov, obviously.

Odd: Jakob's request of naturalization in Holland was not granted yet by then, though that request was submitted a long time before the emigration, because Steenwijk is mentioned as residence. The case of the 'naturalization of Jakob Adler and 21 others' was submitted to the government on October 18, 1950 and it was granted in November.

Article 1 states: 'The qualification of Dutchman is granted to: *Jakob Adler*, born in *Neurenberg (Germany)* December 30, 1911, doctor, living in *Steenwijk*, province of *Overijssel*.'

In the *Memoire of Explanation* it reads: 'The stateless requester Jakob Adler [...]. With his parents he settled in 1932 (it is supposed to be 1933) in our country, once and for all. He completed his university here, got the Dutch doctorate and can - thanks to his marriage with a Dutch women - be considered as completely naturalized. Requester has spent a long time in hiding with his family during the War.

In Israel, Jakob became deputy head of a hospital in Tel Aviv, specialized in the treatment of tuberculosis.

On March 26, 1956, Ya'akov Adler filled in a survey with data about his father David for Yad Vashem. That is the official state organization of Israel, located in Jerusalem, for the remembrance of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust and the rescuers of Jews.

Jakob signed with יעקב Ya'akov, the Hebrew form and pronunciation of his name. In Israel, Betsy became Batya. The y is meant to avoid the English pronunciation of Dutch *j* as *dzi*. Jacqueline became Yael, Jemima became Yemima, and Jochebed became Yochebed.



*Two of the three daughters, their names in the current spelling.
From left to right: Yamima (born May 6, 1946) and Yael (born August 5, 1944).*



Batya Adler-de Leeuw and Ya'akov Adler in later life.

Ya'akov Adler passed away in 2007, 95 years old.

Batya Adler-De Leeuw passed away in 2012, 99 years old.

May their souls be bound in the bundle of the living (1 Samuel 25:29).

תניצ'ב'ה
תניצ'ב'ה

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pictures: > Gravestone Archives – work in progress (tick disclaimer!).

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Hebrew text + free translation epitaph David Adler.

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notice (without a source) that David Adler was arrested November 18, 1944.