

Tova Pagi, CV

Tova Pagi, Lustman in the past, was born in 13.8.1933 in a small town called Wierzbnik Starachowice at the center of Poland. Her father was a jeweler and her mother a house keeper. She also had a sister who was eight years older.

As she was six years old, the second world war broke and Tova never got the chance to study. It was forbidden for Jewish children to go to school.

When she was nine, she was given to a Polish family to hide. She stayed with this family for a year. Then she was smuggled into a working camp where her mother and sister used to work for ammunition and steel factories. Her father died from typhoid in the camp.

In summer 1944, the camp was liquidated. Tova and all the other prisoners were sent in cattle wagons for three days, without food or water, to Auschwitz. Tova stayed in Auschwitz until January 1944. Then the concentration camp was abandoned and all the prisoners had to walk towards Germany in the death march. She arrived to Ravensbrück concentration camp where she and her mother were separated from her sister and then was transported to Rechlin concentration camp.

When the war was over, Tova and her mother, looking to find the sister, got back to their hometown in Poland. There they did find the sister but a pogrom by anti-Semitic locals forced them to flee back to Germany, to Bergen-Belsen, where a refugee camp was established. There, at the age of 12, she wrote a diary of her memories of the war. In summer 1947 she immigrated to Israel and settled in Haifa.

At the age of 15 she started to work as a secretary in Israel's biggest health organization [Krankenkasse] and at the age of 18, was enlisted to the army. She

served for two years in the army, where she met her future husband Joseph. They got married and lived on top of mount Carmel. They were married for 60 years and raised three children.

Tova worked for twenty-five years as a medical secretary in one of Haifa's hospitals and got elected as a union representative of all the secretaries in the hospital. She participated in the establishment of the feminist movement in Israel in the seventies.

Tova never gave up on her dream to study and broaden her horizons. Parallel to her work, at the age of 51, she started to study Philosophy in Haifa University. She finished her M.A. cum Laude.

In 2016 she published a book titled "Not giving up, not there not here" containing her memories and diaries from the war and afterwards.

Tova became a widow ten years ago but her family got larger. She has now seven grandchildren and four Great-Grandchildren.

She never lost faith in humanity.



Tova in Bergen-Belsen, aged 12.



Tova with her mother on their way from Bergen-Belsen to Israel, 1947.



Aged 15, working as secretary in the Israel's Health organization, 1949





Tova as a soldier, 1951





Tova always liked dancing and was dancing in an Israeli dancing group





Getting married, Haifa 1953



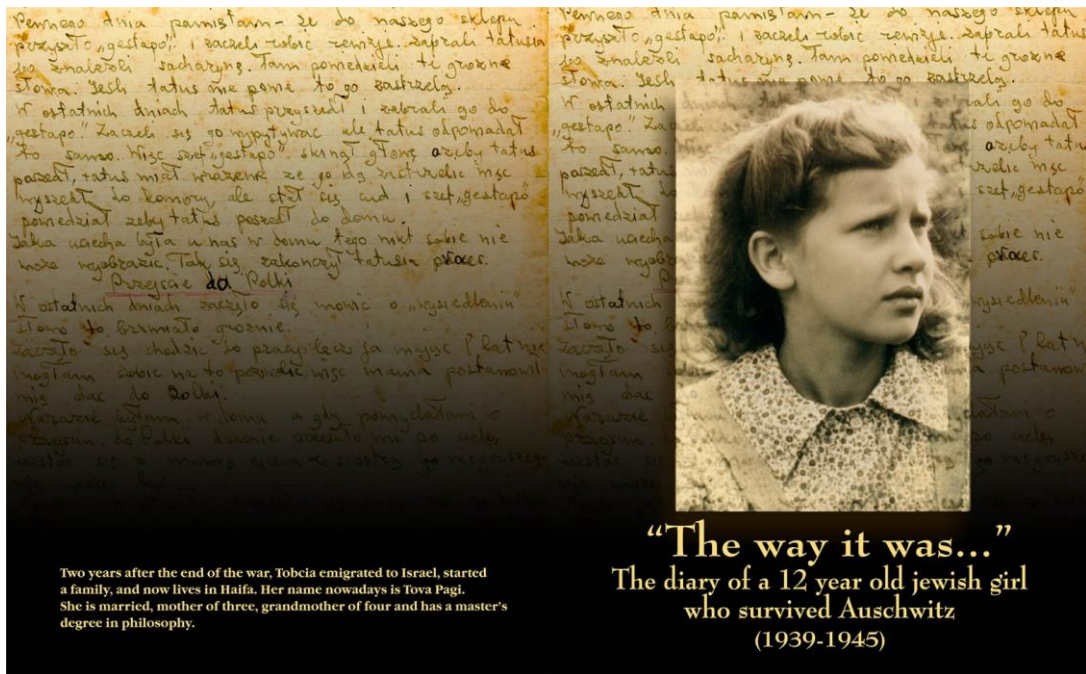
Getting an MA in Philosophy from Haifa University, 1994



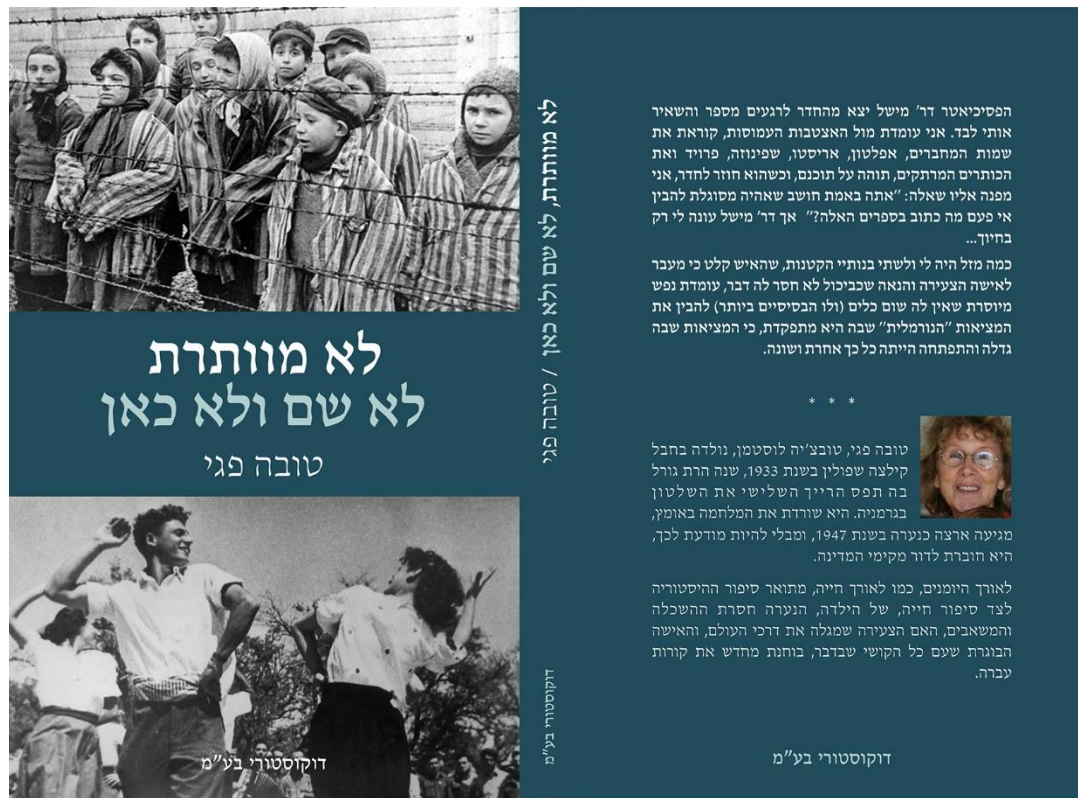
Tova with her family on her 90th birthday, September 2023



Tova holding her two newborn great-grandchildren



The cover of Tova's diary from the war



The cover of Tova's memories book