

Doctor may be boy in Holocaust photo

By NANCY KRIZ
Staff Writer

NEW CITY — In Jerusalem, there is a place called the Yad Vashem Holocaust Monument, where there is a picture of a little boy within a group of people with his hands raised in the air.

In Poland, and perhaps somewhere in the United States, there is a copy of a report that contains the same picture — a picture that is used on the stationery of a California research organization, and is symbolic to the Jewish people.

Dr. Tsvi Nussbaum, 47, a New City doctor, first saw that picture while visiting Yad Vashem. I reminded him, said Nussbaum, of an incident in his past.

That incident caused Nussbaum to think that he might be that 8-year-old boy

in the picture. And if he is fortunate enough to be able to get a copy of the report compiled by Jurgen Stroop, a general who was in charge of taking care of the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, he will finally have an answer to this controversy — could he possibly be the boy in the historic picture?

In 1942, Nussbaum, who was then 7-years-old, hid with relatives on the outskirts of the Warsaw ghetto. They eventually traveled to the Hotel Polaski in the ghetto and were told they were going to Palestine, Nussbaum's birthplace. But instead, they were sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

When the group was told to board the truck, Nussbaum said "his name was not on the list and I was told to raise my hands." He was,

however, eventually allowed to rejoin the group. But the image stuck in his mind, causing him to see a resemblance in the picture years later.

Nussbaum, who came to New York in 1953 after living in Israel for eight years, said there was evidence that Stroop sent daily communications of the progress of the ghetto's operations through a man named Krueger to Heinrich Himmler, the general in charge of liquidating the Warsaw community.

"When the ghetto was liquidated," he said, "Krueger came to Stroop and said, 'You know, it would have been a nice idea

if Himmler had some memorabilia.' " This development of a book to commemorate the ghetto's liquidation, according to Nussbaum, was a way for Stroop to make "some brownie points" with Himmler.

Three identical copies were made and Stroop, Krueger and Himmler each received one. In those albums, Nussbaum said, there was an introduction, copies of daily communications and 56 pictures. One of those pictures is the picture in question.

The albums contain communications from April 1943 to May 24, 1943, said Nussbaum, but he was in the

ghetto July 14, 1943. Critics have said that all the pictures had to have been taken before that time so he couldn't be the boy. "My way of thinking," he explained, "is here is a guy who wants to get some nice marks. There was no reason for him to mail it May 27 (or as soon as possible). The album itself could have been completed months later. I'm trying to find out when Himmler received a copy."

Critics have also said that the clothing worn by the people in the picture is for the winter weather, which would be another reason for eliminating Nussbaum's suggestion. July is considered a hot weather month and the clothing would not fit the time frame.

But Nussbaum doesn't agree. "You wore whatever you had," he said. "Otherwise, if you're going to put it

someplace, you'll never get it back." He added that he thought it was "stupid" for those to press that point.

Nussbaum, in a way to strengthen his suggestion, has a passport picture of himself when he was 10-years-old. When he puts it next to the 8-year-old boy in the picture, the resemblance is striking. But he admitted that he doesn't recognize anyone in the picture.

That's why the date Himmler received the album is important, he explained. If there was a stamp which dated the day Himmler received it, and if it was dated before that time, then Nussbaum couldn't be the boy as he wasn't there yet. "But if there's no stamp there, it could be me," he said. "I couldn't swear to it, but it could be me."

Nussbaum has been in con-
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Holocaust photo

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tact with Dr. Sylvia Milton, translator of the original Strop Report from German, for help in his search to find a copy of Himmler's album. He plans to speak with her again in about a month to check on her progress. "There might be a copy someplace in the United States," he said. "If there is a date, I'll try my best to get it. I've waited almost 40 years, so another week or months won't make a difference to me."

The notoriety he has gained from this publicity is becoming world-wide. It first began, he said, with an article in the Jewish Weekly, and subsequent interviews with the New York Times, WNBC-TV, the Italian 'La Stampa' magazine, and most recently, the French 'Paris Marche' magazine. But, Nussbaum added the Jewish Weekly article "labeled" him as being the boy and "it might have been a mistake."

Nussbaum said he doesn't mind talking about the picture as "that part doesn't bother me. After awhile, you develop a thick skin." But, he doesn't talk about his involvement in the Holocaust. "As terrible as my experience was, there are people whose story is worse," he said.


He will, however, continue speaking to groups on behalf of the Israeli Bond Organization. "I was doing it (speaking on Israeli bonds) before any article appeared," he said. "I've always been active for Israel."

The fact that he could possibly be the boy will gain more validity if he is able to locate Himmler's album. Even the possibility still exists, he said, it won't take away from any symbolic value the picture holds. "I hope the boy is alive," he added. "I'd rather see some other Jewish boy alive than dead."

But Nussbaum emphasized he still wasn't sure if he actually is the boy. If not, it's just "another good looking kid," he said.

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