

**A** BOOK written by Holocaust survivor Waldemar Ginsburg is currently being re-printed for its second edition.

Waldemar — known as Val — wrote *And Kovno Wept* in 1998. Published by Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre in Nottinghamshire, it deals with his experiences during Soviet occupation in Lithuania — where he was born — and then Nazi occupation, up to his liberation after the Second World War.

"It took me about 10 years, on and off, to write," Val said. "It all began when our children were about eight or nine years old and were asking me difficult questions like 'why don't we have grandparents as others do?' and 'why do you speak with a funny accent?'"

"I decided I had to break my silence and tell them about my experiences."

**BY GILDA LIBBISH**

That was just the beginning for him to "spread the word" — and now hundreds of children and adults, Jewish and non-Jewish, have heard his talks.

Val and his wife Ibi (known as Ibi) have given numerous talks at Beth Shalom to visiting groups. They still give talks, although less frequently, now that Val is 81 and Ibi is 79.

**Emotional**

Some of their talks involve long journeys — in 1992 they spoke to the historical society at Durham University.

And the following year they went to Sussex University to talk about their experiences as Holocaust survivors.

Now most of their travelling is around Elland, Yorkshire, where they live, and regularly to Leeds, where they attend meetings of the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship

# Val and Ibi still warn about war

Association.

Re-telling the past rather than putting it behind him has been an experience in itself for Val.

He says that he is able to tell it without getting personally involved, as it would be too emotional for him even now.

So, rather like an actor, he can relate his experiences to his audiences.

Val still has painful memories of losing his parents and community through the Holocaust.

"We were under Soviet occupation for a year in 1940-41," he recalled. "In 1941 the Nazis marched in."

He was imprisoned in Lithuania for three years when he was a teenager and then taken to Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

After liberation by the Americans in May, 1945, he finished up in hospital.

"I was half dead when I was liberated," Val revealed.

When he learned later that his family and community perished in the concentration camps, he suffered deep depression.

"It was a mental and physical recovery," he said. "Meeting my future wife, Ibi, in the hospital and falling in love with her helped me to overcome the trauma of the past."

**Permit**

Ibi was born in Hungary, and in 1944 was taken to Auschwitz.

"From there I landed up in Dachau," she said. "But we didn't know each other while we were incarcerated."

Ibi was then 19 and Val, 22

Ibi worked in the hospital where Val was taken for treatment. They were married in Munich 1946, and came to Yorkshire in 1948 on a permit to work in



**TELEGRAPH PEOPLE**  
VAL AND IBI GINSBURG

textiles.

Val became a textile manager in Elland and retired in 1980.

His wife also worked in textiles and was head of a department in the same firm. She retired at the same time as Val.

"Originally, we came over to England for five years and planned to go to Israel where my father and

sister, who survived, settled," said Ibi. "But then we decided to stay here!"

They have two daughters — Pauline Gardner, a probation officer, who lives near them, and Mandy Ginsburg, a barrister, in Leeds.

There are three grandchildren — including Amy, 11, a budding actress who

was featured in the *Jewish Telegraph* recently on her TV role in a drama series set during the Second World War.

"The more we talk to people, the more we realise how important it is for Jewish and non-Jewish children to know what happened during the Holocaust," Val emphasised.

"There's such a lot

of ignorance. It is so important for them to know the consequences of prejudice, discrimination and racial hatred — how they can escalate into persecution and even into genocide given the right circumstances."

Ibi said: "We try to impress this on all our listeners. We are doing an important job. People are also very anxious to invite the second generation of Holocaust survivors to speak."