

Random Thoughts

by Muriel Levitt

Recently I received a phone call from Amvets requesting that I make a donation of old clothing. Since I have been threatening for years to do a major overhauling of closets, this call gave me the necessary incentive. Going through our old clothes was almost like a stroll down memory lane. Let me tell you about it.

My husband is a dear and wonderful man who possesses one infuriating trait. He is very easy on clothes, nothing wears out, and he keeps stuff forever. On the other hand, I am not a saver and when something is out of style, I give it the old heave-ho. My things are pretty up to date, but his closet is a 35 year old panorama of fashion. It goes without saying that I tackled my husband's accumulation first.

The initial discard was the ruffled shirt he wore to our son's Bar Mitzvah. How handsome Hy and David looked, both in black silk mohair suits. My husband's fancy dress shirt was tucked and embroidered, just what the man of distinction was wearing at that time. Fourteen years later it is limp, sick, and sad, a far cry from its original splendor. I folded

it gently while recalling the exciting occasion of our wonderful simcha.

Sure enough, the next item I came upon was Hy's lox and bagel jacket. This was a heavy woolen three-quarter length coat with a fur collar. Up north, every self respecting man wore one on cold Sunday mornings when he braved the cold to buy fresh, salty delicacies for a late breakfast — hence the name bagel and lox jacket. But who needs a heavy woolen coat in the South? Into the box it went.

Next I spotted the first pair of golf shoes he ever owned. They were his lucky shoes and although he has owned several pairs since then, they have taken up space in the back of the closet for 25 years. Enough is enough!

I plowed through all his belongings, recklessly casting aside outdated styles, colors and materials. His loss would be Amvet's gain. Then I steeled myself for the job of doing my closet. Surely, I thought, it couldn't be too painful. I was wrong.

High up on the shelf was the black pillbox hat I had bought for my Grandmother's funeral. Worn only once, it was cushioned in tissue and just like new. How I miss my darling Grandmother — more and more as the years go by. I have kept this hat as a memento, dreading to part with it lest my memories fade. I realize now that I need no hat nor any material thing to remember and love one who meant so much.

What have we here? It's the snazzy cocktail dress

that went with my husband's ruffled shirt. This was a made to order creation also worn at our son's Bar Mitzvah. It was lovely then and it is lovely now, but sadly out of date. Yet I had such a great time doing the Alley Cat, the Mambo and the Hully-Gully wearing this side draped, sequined stunner. But now the time has come to give it away. Like everyone else, I have learned when to let go.

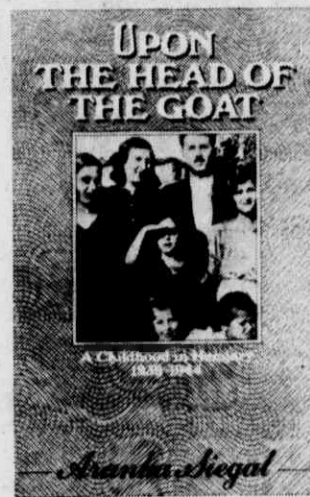
I was amazed to find my 1946 ankle strap, high platform, Carmen Miranda alligator shoes. I paid \$32 for them, a fortune in those days. How I waltzed along the Grand Concourse in those sexy, snappy shoes! Wearing them made me feel like a celebrity, the best dressed lady in the Bronx, and a real fashion plate. Why I kept them all these years is a mystery, but I suppose it was too hard to throw them away after they had given me such pleasure and cost so much money.

My carton of rejects filled up quicker than I imagined and before me lay a wealth of joy and sadness. I put the box out on the back porch to await collection. While I prepared dinner, I noticed Hy foraging through the things and sneaking back into the house with his worn out golf shoes. I said nothing.

The next morning I must confess that I also took back my Carmen Miranda shoes. I simply could not part with them. I figure that if the Alley-Cat and the Mambo ever return, I will be ready. And if ankle strap, high platform, alligator shoes ever become fashionable again, "I'll be number one on the hit parade!"

Books In Review

UPON THE HEAD OF THE GOAT. By Aranka Siegal. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 19 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003. 199 pages \$9.95 ages 12 and up.



Reviewed by Eileen Schmidman

To add to a fine and growing number of books on the Holocaust for children and young adults, some of which are: *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* by Judith Kerr; *The Devil in Vienna* by Doris Orgel; *Alan and Naomi* by Myron Levoy; *Elli* by Livia E. Bitton Jackson; and, of course, the best known of all *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Otto H. Frank, we can now include a new book with a most unusual title of *Upon the Head of the Goat* by Aranka Siegal.

Subtitled "A Childhood in Hungary—1939-1944" is a sensitive, clearly written, beautifully descriptive story of Piri and her family in a small town in Hungary. At the beginning of the book the feeling is idyllic, with Piri visiting her grandmother in a small Ukranian village and playing in the fields; but as the story unfolds, there is a strong, frightening premonition of pending disaster. Piri's father and brother-

in-law are in the army, and her mother, a strong and self-confident woman, is trying to hold the family together. But as the months go by, the relentless horror of war comes to Hungary and Piri and her family are sent to a ghetto and from there on the cattle cars to Auschwitz.

The author has dedicated the story to "those who did not survive. They are deathless and timeless. Auschwitz could not sever the bonds of love and friendship which contributed to my survival and which will live within me to the end of my days." This book should help all of us rethink and remember.

Eileen Schmidman is Librarian of New York's Ramaz Lower School

We have just found out that *The Black Book*, originally scheduled for November publication, has been postponed by its publisher, the Holocaust Library. The book is now scheduled for publication sometime in 1982. We regret any confusion that this delay has caused.

-Editors

Educational Tid-Bits

NEW YORK (JTA) — A growing number of the women who have been ordained as Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis since such ordinations began in 1972 are being placed as "solo" rabbis, spiritual leaders of congregations too small to need more than one rabbi.

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Some 2500 university students from development towns throughout Israel are involved this year in Jewish Agency-sponsored programs to aid youth in their home towns. The scheme provides for the Agency to finance the students' university studies for which, in return, the students must devote several hours a week to coaching and youth work among the youngsters in their home towns.

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