

A Living Memorial in their own words

Family of Marc Futter

Thomas Marc Futter was born in Berlin, Germany on August 10, 1921. After Adolph Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, Marc encountered anti-Semitism. While leaving his Hebrew school class, he was accosted by Nazi S.A. (Brown Shirts) troopers, thrown down onto the street, and warned never to return to the school. Later in the same year, his mother and stepfather, Elli and Walter Jacobi, sent Marc and his younger brother Herbert to England to attend a boarding school. They returned home for vacations but because of the Nazi attitudes towards Jews, the family relocated to London in 1935. At that early stage of the Nazi regime, the family was able to take most of their possessions out of Germany. Marc's immediate family left but many members of his extended family remained in Germany and were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In the summer of 1939, Marc and his family left England for a summer holiday in Norway. They extended their stay in order for Marc's stepfather to conduct business with Norwegian companies.

When the war broke out Norway joined the other Scandinavian countries in proclaiming neutrality. Vidkun Quisling, a Norwegian army officer and politician, organized a fascist political organization modeled after the Nazi Party. Although support for him in Norway was slight, Quisling arrogantly and publicly proclaimed his support for Germany, for Hitler, and for Germany's invasion of Poland. On the evening of April 9, 1940, Germany invaded Norway, catching the country by surprise. Within hours Quisling declared himself prime minister. Armed resistance in the neutral, totally unprepared country was inadequate against the well-trained Nazi troops and Luftwaffe and Norway surrendered on June 9, 1940. Despite the occupation, Nazi ideology failed to take root and the Norwegian people organized a strong resistance movement. The name "Quisling" became a synonym for traitor.

Marc did not feel an immediate personal threat because he was well received by and totally involved with his Norwegian friends. Marc's mother and stepfather left Norway in March of 1940 while Marc stayed in Oslo to continue his university courses.

On August 28, 1941 the Gestapo arrested Marc and put him in the section of the Oslo prison that was directly under their control. He

suffered daily beatings and torture. It was a physically devastating experience which included being hung by his feet, kicked, and having screwdrivers, knives, and corkscrews used to inflict pain. The Nazi guards also questioned Marc about sexual matters and about his experiences with "Aryan" Scandinavian women. Above all, the Nazis expected that the pain and fear would make Marc reveal the names of friends and acquaintances who might be active in the Norwegian underground or people who listened to BBC broadcasts or Charles de Gaulle to learn the "real news" of the war. Even more terrible were the screams that Marc heard coming from rooms adjacent to his cell. Several of these prisoners, unable to withstand the torture and fearful that they might break down and reveal names, committed suicide by jumping out of the window onto the street below.

Marc remained in the Oslo prison until September 13, when he learned that he would be sent to Bergen-Belsen. A sympathetic Norwegian guard helped him escape and gave Marc a copy of the New Testament while telling him that he thought Marc could become a "good Christian" some day.

Marc fled to the Oslo City hospital where kind staff cared for him. He had developed tuberculosis and after some months, the hospital personnel decided to move him to a sanatorium further north in the country. Marc spent many months there but eventually German soldiers came near and he had to run again. Marc and a friend skied to the east for several days and nights and after some close calls, they arrived in Sweden in late 1942.



Marc Futter, circa 1940

Marc came to New York in 1945. His mother, stepfather and his father, George, who had been in Italy, were all there. Marc started working in the investment field on Wall Street. Initially his father had no job but then found work helping the owner of the Kellogg Brush Company in Westfield, MA. Marc's father began running the company and brought Herbert in to oversee manufacturing and Marc in to be head of sales. Marc and Herbert bought the business. Several years later, they expanded and moved to Easthampton. Marc married and he, his wife and two daughters moved to Northampton.