

## Closing the circle of the Exodus baby



Cwi Chatkewicz was in his mother's womb while sailing to Israel in Exodus. Now, at 72, he returned to the DP camp where the illegal immigrants were deported and where he was born - and inaugurated memorials

**By Israel Moskowitz, Yedioth Ahronoth 11.9.2019**

His mother, who was with his father from the Exodus, carried him in her womb during the voyage. Now, after decades, Dr. Cwi Chatkewicz has closed a circle.

The story of the Exodus is burned in the history of Israel. The "illegal" immigration ship, aboard which thousands of Holocaust survivors crowded, was deported from the shores of the Eretz Israel by the British to Hamburg Harbor in Germany. Chatkewicz, a resident of the north who was during the voyage in his mother's womb, was born some time later in the Sengwarden DP camp in Germany, where the deportees were deported.

Particularly historic and symbolic of his birth date: "I went out into the air on November 29, 1947, the day the United Nations decided to end the British mandate and establish a Jewish state in Eretz Israel," Chatkewicz says. He, as well as many of the exodus immigrants, eventually immigrated to Israel and settled there.

About a year and a half ago, Chatkewicz traveled to visit Sengwarden village where he was born. The pastor of the village toured the area, and memories of the past floated.

During the visit, Chatkewicz came up with an idea for his German hosts: to erect a monument in memory of the displaced persons. They responded positively and set up the commemorating panels. Recently, after the panels were installed, Chatkewicz traveled to Germany, accompanied by dozens of Israelies born on the Exodus and their families who visited in the DP camps sites - where the delegation took part in the unveiling ceremony. One memorial plaque was installed in Sengwarden Village, the other at a military base erected there. Among the members of the delegation was Yitzhak Rosman, son of Mordechai Rosman, leader of the Exodus immigrants.

"It was the most personalized closure that could be," Chatkewicz says excitedly.  
"When I unveiled the commemorating panel, I felt that my parents were standing next to me and saying, "Cwi, you did it for us"