

Morris Zipkin, 83, in Cincinnati

APPRECIATION

• By ELIEZER JAFFE

Few Israelis have any idea of how many unsung, modest Jews abroad have labored lovingly and quietly, making a major positive impact on the welfare of our little country. Last month one of them, Morris (Moe) Zipkin, passed away in Cincinnati, Ohio, at age 83.

Born into a large family of struggling farmers in rural New Jersey, Moe worked hard to become an aeronautical engineer. After being turned down for jobs in the private sector because he was Jewish, he landed a job with NASA, the American government's renowned aeronautic research agency in Cleveland, Ohio. There he met and fell in love with the talented Alice, the oldest child of a large local religious-Zionist immigrant family. They married and raised 3 children.

Moe's professional specialization was in jet propulsion

and jet engines, and as he lectured, published, traveled and managed his team, he became known around the US and the world. The General Electric Company hired him to head their jet engine division in Cincinnati, and later on, he headed the jet engine division at Pratt and Whitney, the other giant in this field. Both companies supplied his jet engines to the Israeli Air Force.

This gave tremendous satisfaction to Moe, but a most important event occurred when Prof. Moshe Arens, then Israeli defense minister, began looking for a new, more powerful engine for the planned Lavi jet fighter, which would mark the entrance of Israel into this new industry and provide independence from foreign countries for fighter aircraft. They quickly became friends.

These were the best years for the Zipkins, and Moe frequently remarked that he had the best possible job, since he could help Israel and frequently visit his grandchildren in Israel, where his eldest son Allan

had meanwhile immigrated. Unfortunately, prime minister Yitzhak Rabin scrapped the Lavi project due to American pressure.

Years later, on one of his visits to Israel after he retired, I took Moe and Alice to the Air Force Museum near Beersheba, where the prototype of the Lavi jet fighter stands today for all to see, and he lingered alone in silence for a long time beside the plane.

All this time Moe worked very hard to build up the small and relatively fragile Jewish community in Cincinnati, starting with the synagogue, the day school, kashrut, the Jewish community federation and other institutions that would provide Jewish continuity. He was always fearful and protective of the future of Israel and American Jewry.

His interest and analysis of Israel's problems matched the best of our Israeli media

people. He was a warm, immediately lovable person, very knowledgeable and actively involved in Jewish life. He passed these traits on to his children, and he lived a fruitful, productive Jewish life.

He lived his life like the patriots and heroes of Israel and the Jewish people

On his deathbed, struggling with long-term cancer, he told everyone how blessed he had been. He was honored to receive a phone call at the hospice from Moshe Arens, who had heard about his illness. He passed away quietly in the early morning hours.

This is how good, proud Jewish brothers and sisters of ours lead their lives, patriots and heroes of Israel and the Jewish people. This particular Jew, Moe Zipkin, was also my beloved friend and brother-in-law.

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