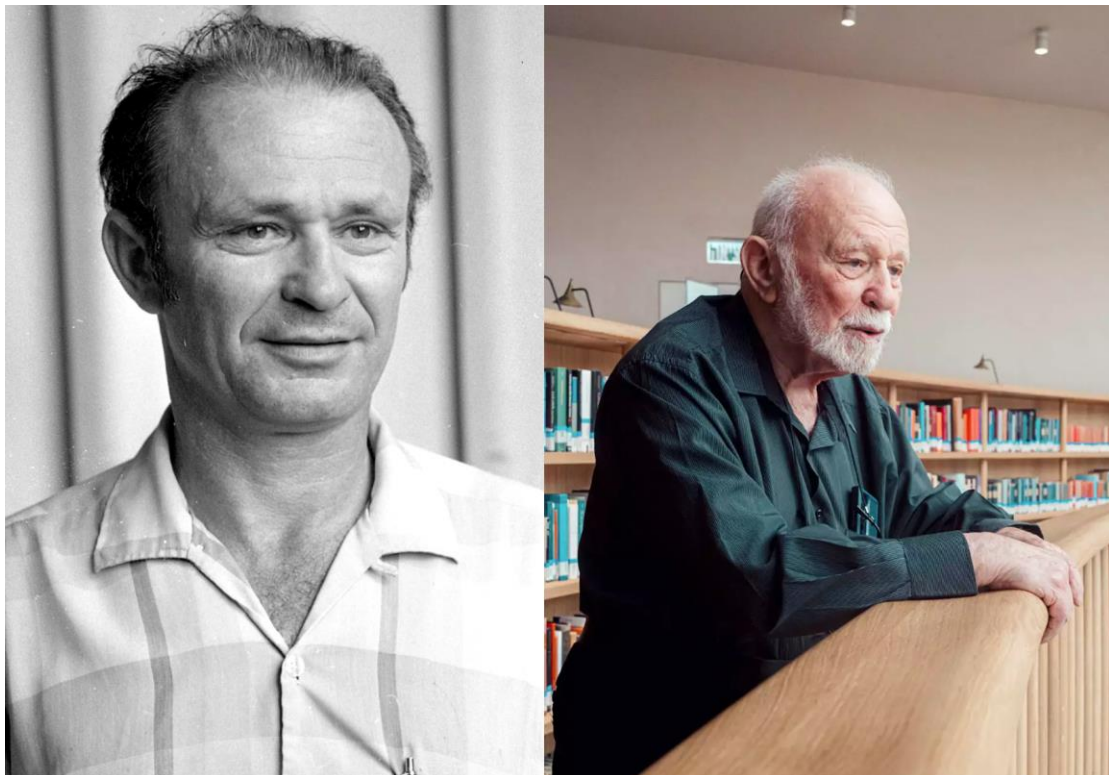


## The Lens of History: The Inspiring Journey of Dan Hadani by Ilana Konstantinovski

Meeting Dan Hadani is like stepping into a living archive of Israeli history. At 100 years old, his presence exudes a quiet strength, a testament to a life of remarkable resilience and creativity. As I sit down with him, I am immediately struck by his sharp mind and gentle demeanor.

Dan Hadani was born in Poland in 1924, to a father who was a Zionist activist and a mother who was a housewife. His early years were abruptly shattered by the outbreak of World War II. With Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939, his family was moved to the Lodz ghetto. His father died in the ghetto in 1942, and the rest of the family was deported to Auschwitz in 1944. There, according to Hadani's testimony, he encountered the infamous Josef Mengele. Tragically, his entire family perished in the extermination camp. Hadani himself was transferred to a tank factory where he worked under duress, enduring unimaginable hardships.



*Credit: from the right David Peretz*

Despite the immense trauma he experienced, it took Hadani many years to share his Holocaust story. The memories were too painful,

and it was only later in life that he began to openly discuss his experiences, understanding the importance of bearing witness to ensure that such atrocities are never forgotten.

After the end of World War II, Hadani worked in Poland and Germany and joined Zionist activists. In 1948, he immigrated to Israel under a false identity and was immediately recruited into the IDF to serve in the Navy. He was slightly wounded during the War of Independence. After the war, he went through a seaman's course and an operations officer's course. Later, he was assigned to the IDF Spokesman's Unit as a press officer, where he was involved in photography and media relations.

His entry into the world of photography marked the beginning of an illustrious career. In 1965, Hadani founded the Israel Press and Photo Agency (IPPA), an institution that would become a cornerstone of Israeli photojournalism. The IPPA, under Hadani's leadership, documented the nation's unfolding history, from the tense prelude to the Six-Day War to the daily lives of its citizens. His and his agency's photographs are not merely images; they are powerful narratives that encapsulate the spirit, struggles, and triumphs of the Israeli people.

Dan Hadani's archive of photos includes a photograph of David Ben-Gurion visiting Moshe Dayan in the hospital in 1968 or the IDF parade in 1968. These images, along with many others, provide a vivid portrayal of Israel's leaders and pivotal moments in the nation's history. His collection, now preserved in the Pritzker Family National Photography Collection at the National Library of Israel, serves as an invaluable resource for understanding the country's past.



*Credit: Dan Hadani collection, National Library*



*Credit: Dan Hadani collection, National Library*

Hadani's life and work are a testament to the resilience and perseverance that define the Israeli spirit. His photographs continue to inspire and educate, offering a window into the rich tapestry of Israeli history. As I listen to Hadani recount his

experiences, I am reminded of the profound power of photography to capture the essence of human experience and the importance of preserving our history for future generations.

Reflecting on his journey from a Holocaust survivor to a celebrated photographer, Dan Hadani's story is one of triumph over adversity and a deep commitment to bearing witness. His legacy is not only in the photographs he took but also in the spirit of resilience and hope that they represent. Through his lens, Hadani has immortalized the story of a nation and its people, ensuring that their history will be remembered and cherished for years to come.

As our conversation draws to a close, I ask Dan what his next goals and dreams are. He smiles warmly and says that he continues to share his story and his website with people. Spreading the story of his experiences in the Holocaust and his life in Israel gives him a feeling of purpose. This mission to educate and inspire others through his personal narrative and photographic legacy remains at the heart of Dan Hadani's remarkable journey.

For more stories and inspiration from Dan Hadani, go to his website: <https://www.dan-hadani.com/>