Some of our members in 2007

David and Ellen Goldshild's home.
Kurt Klappholz interviewed at UNRRA Children's Centre Kloster Indersdorf Bavaria 1945.
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Gary Simmons and Jeffrey Stein
wish the 45 Aid every success
THE ANNUAL
OSCAR JOSEPH HOLOCAUST
AWARDS

The '45 Aid Society offers up to two Awards of £600 each to assist successful candidates to participate in the Holocaust Seminar at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which is held from 1st – 22nd July 2008.

Applications are invited from men and women under the age of 35 who have a strong interest in Holocaust studies and a record of communal involvement. After their return, successful candidates will be expected to take a positive role in educational and youth work activities so as to convey to others what they learned and gained from their participation in the summer seminar at Yad Vashem. However, before applying for these Awards, candidates should obtain permission from Yad Vashem to participate in the seminar.

Those interested should write, enclosing their CV and other details, not later than 28th March 2008 to:
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4 Broadlands
Hillside Road
Radlett
Herts WD7 7BH
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(HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS)

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JOURNAL OF THE
'45 AID SOCIETY
EDITOR
BEN HELFGOTT

All submissions for publication in the next issue (including letters to the Editor and Members' News Items) should be sent to
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SALEK BENEDICT for the cover design.
RUBY FRIEDMAN and ARZA HELFGOTT for their kind assistance.
PEGGY LUCAS for the typing of the Journal.
ANGELA COHEN (daughter of Lottie and Moshe Malenicky) for facilitating the printing of the Journal.

Design by SG
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HOLOCaUST AWARDS
By Brian Fox
Sept 2007 - Sam Lasker attained the age of 80 and hosted a Kiddush at the Whitefield Synagogue which was attended by many members of our Society and other friends and afterwards 50 guests returned to his home for a L'Chaim and a wonderful buffet lunch.

November 2007 - A memorial stone to the late Elaine Walshaw will be unveiled at Phillips Park.

Mazelto to Herbert and Louise on their granddaughter receiving an M.S. Distinction in French Literature - October 2007

October 2007 - Mazal to Bekinka Fradman on two new great-grandchildren - to her grandson Benji and his wife Shara a baby boy (grandson for Steven and Jacqueline Fradman) and then to her granddaughter Talia and her husband James, a daughter (another granddaughter to Stephen and Jacqueline Fradman).

SECTION X

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The annual Leonard G Monteforte lecture will take place on Tuesday 11th March 2008 at 8 pm at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, 94 - 96 North End Road, London NW11 7EX. The title of the lecture is "Hitler's Gift" - Contributions of Jewish Refugees to Britain and the United States. Speaker - Patrick Bass.

YOM HA'SHOAH

The communal Yom Ha'Shoah Commemoration will take place on Sunday 4th May 2008 at 11am at the Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London EC1.

***

2008 ANNUAL REUNION

The 63rd anniversary of our reunion will take place on Monday 5th May at The Holiday Inn Hotel, Regents Park, Carlton Street, London W1.

As always we appeal to our members to support us by placing an advert in our souvenir brochure to be published by the Society.

Please contact: Zigi Shapir
57 Oundle Avenue
Bushey
Herts WD23 4QG
020-8429 4035

***

We look forward to many of the 2nd and perhaps 3rd generation joining us for all or any of these events.
April 2007 – Yom Hashoah remembrance was again at King David High School Hall where, as usual, six candles were lit by survivors and their grandchildren.

April 2007 – Mayer Hersch was honoured by Ormskirk University for his work over a decade describing the horrors of the Nazis and they presented him with a framed print of Lake Windermere where he spent the first few months of peace after being liberated from Theresienstadt by the Russians in 1945. Mayer declared that he owed it to his late parents, brothers and sisters and other members of his family and community who were brutally murdered, to tell their story and give them a voice and identity once again. Mayer has spent his life sharing his testimony and is a wonderful man. I understand that Whitefield School also honoured him. There are so few of our members now who have the courage to relive their traumatic teenage years spent in concentration camps and he gives so much of his time and energy to do this.

May 2007 – We had the usual service at Steenecourt Shool to celebrate the boys’ liberation and this was well attended by our members and wives. This was followed by a lovely Kiddush.

The following day, Jacky and Rodney Field (Mayer and Lily Bomsztuk’s daughter and son-in-law) gave their home for a get-together of our members and there were only one or two who were unable to attend (they don’t know what a lovely evening they missed!). At this meeting, Jacky told the members that it was intended at some time in the future, if it was possible, for the 2nd Generation to take over the running of the Manchester Branch of the Society but, first of all, they were contacting all the second generation to a meeting in her house to see if a positive group could be formed to take over and once this has been ascertained, a meeting of all our members would be called to see if agreement could be reached as to the take-over and, of course, the terms, but this would definitely depend on the response by the 2nd Generation and, in the meantime, we would carry on as normal.

July 2007 – Sam and Sheila Gantanz became grandparents when Robbie and his wife gave birth to a baby boy.

July 2007 – Martin Wertheim died suddenly and we send sincere condolences to his family.

July 2007 – Unfortunately, Mayer Bomsztuk could not carry on as Chairman owing to ill-health and it was decided to see if the Second Generation could form a working party and at this stage help to continue with the branch in Manchester. After several meetings, Tania Nelson (the daughter of the late Mendel and Marie Bensh) was appointed Chairperson with Michael Rubinstein as Vice-Chairman. Jacqueline Field (daughter of Mayer and Lily Bomsztuk) became Secretary and Warren Bomsztuk the Treasurer. They are forming sub-committees to continue to promote education and fund-raising efforts and have taken over the responsibility of arranging the service each year to celebrate the boys’ liberation at Steenecourt Shool followed by a Kiddush, the annual memorial service at Agecroft Cemetery, the sale of raffle tickets, etc. and Louise agreed to continue to keep records of events for publishing in the Journal, collection of subscriptions and notifying members of events, etc. and we think that this will work well. They will represent the 45th Society and the 2nd Generation at the Communal Council and attend the various meetings.

August 2007 – Elisa, the daughter of Helen and Edward Harrison and granddaughter of Doora Samson and the late Nat Samson, was married.

The Nicky Alliance had an exhibition of work done by its members and Doora Samson, who does excellent tapestry work, was mentioned in the Jewish Chronicle with a picture of recent tapestry, many of which depict scenes from Israel.
SECTION 1  CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

It is not often that one can obtain, in English, an interview of one of our members that was taken soon after the war by 73-year-old Mary Heston Vorse—one of the most compelling and representative figures in the history of American radicalism, and a foremost pioneer of labor journalism in the U.S.A. It so happened that Anna Grundler, a teacher in Indianapolis, who is a volunteer worker at the Dachau Memorial, found a list of the names of the boys who were sent at the end of October 1945 from Dachau to Wintershall Hall in Hampshire. When she discovered that none in the area had ever heard of these young survivors, she felt that their experiences have to be made known to the German public. She contacted me and asked whether I could give her Kurt Rapoholz's address. Unfortunately, I had to inform her that Kurt passed away a few years ago. During our conversation, she informed me that she had found Kurt's interviews in the archives and immediately asked her to send me a copy. When I read Mary's comments and Kurt's interview, I felt the need to include it in our Journal, not only to share with you my admiration for Kurt's ability to describe his moving and poignant experiences, but also that he was able to convey it so well in the English language. His testimony is very important, not only for its searing emotional impact, but for his extraordinary memory and his ability to recapture the immediacy of his experiences in the concentration camps.

At a recent meeting at Yad Vashem, the Directorate Chairman, Avner Shalev, announced to hundreds of Holocaust survivors that their story will take the center stage next year. He also thanked the participants for their willingness to sum up their inner strength to recount their painful personal experiences many times. You decided to believe both in man and God—each one of you in your own way—and to continue to claim life. That is a tremendously powerful message and yet it is not entirely obvious. That is who you are.

Our members have always been conscious of the significance of the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel. Most of us can be proud that soon after our liberation and our arrival in England we harnessed all our energies and concentrated all our efforts on rebuilding revitalising our lifeline and spiritual revival. We did not allow Hitler to enjoy posthumous triumph over us. In our early upbringing, our parents instilled in us a deep sense of purpose, compassion, and responsibility towards our fellow citizen and this stood us in good stead. No matter how much we were dehumanised and deprived of all vestiges of human dignity, we did not succumb to corruption. The idea of revenge hardly ever entered our minds. Nor were we consumed with hatred, venom, or bred a mentality of increasing dependency. We have demonstrated by our swift adjustment and integration into the community that the positive approach and integrity taught by our parents have stood up against all evil influences. This has further been demonstrated by the way our attitudes and values have permeated to our children. Their success story has yet to be told. Also, a small exhibition about them will be shown at City Hall, the new home of the Mayor of London near London Bridge, between 14th January – 7th February 2002. They are a great source of pride to us. Our parents, too, would have been proud to know of our achievements and those of our sons and daughters. It is also gratifying that many of our members, since their retirement, have taken an active part in relating their experiences to schools, universities and institutions of all kinds. This is not an easy task as many of them are relying their painful past several times during a week. However, they understand that against a background of growing anti-Semitism, the danger of revisionism, and the persistence of Holocaust denial, their contribution in resisting these tendencies is of the utmost importance.

A century ago, Theodore Herzl's statement that anti-Semitism would exist as long as Jews exist, remains disturbingly valid. The irony is that he believed that the creation of a Jewish State will solve the problem of anti-Semitism. Also, now that there is a State of Israel, not only is anti-Semitism as strong as it has ever been, but it has also extended itself from being part of the prejudice of the Right to that of the Left. The Liberal and Socialist elements find it convenient to criticise Israel under the guise of anti-Semitism. The Holocaust offers mankind for their reflection and the acme, the culmination of the unprecedented spectre of man's inhumanity to man and the intolerable pervasiveness of human nature. It points to the extent of the depth of degradation, humiliation and cruelty to which mankind is subjected within the orbit of Law is manipulated and abused. This is the message that survivors have to submit when they give their talks to the public at large.

However, there are also two important issues that the Holocaust has taught us is that anti-Semitism makes no distinction between one Jew and another, that Jews can ill-afford to meet the challenges of anti-Semitism in disunity. Unfortunately, many Jews ignore these lessons to the detriment of the future of World Jewry.

As the youngest and last dwindling band of Holocaust survivors, we must not falter in our responsibility in transmitting to our co-religionists this most vital message.
An interview with Kurt Klappholtz in Indersdorf at the end of October 1945 before leaving for England with the Southampton Boys

By Mary Heaton Vorse
A member of the UNRRA Team 182

Mary Heaton Vorse was a foremost pioneer of labour journalism in the U.S.A. and a prominent participant in the women’s universal suffrage movement.

This is the story of Kurt Klappholtz. I have written it as he told it to me in what he calls his “own easy words.” I have kept it with all the repetitions of hunger, and homesickness and whippings. His story is the story of the lost children of Europe. The children who have lost all trace of their families. The little slave labourers who were taken from their homes to work in Germany.

I know his story is true for I have heard it over and over. I have heard other versions of the terrible march from Grossroesn to Ellsenburg in the middle of winter. I have locked through hundreds of the dreadful atonic records.

I have heard Kurt’s story with variations over and over. In Écudy, near Paris, where 500 children from Buchenwald found asylum through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, they sat on the grass in the sun and sang the prison camp songs. They sang Treblinka, the extermination camp. This is the awful song of the asphyxiated, the song of the gas chamber. These are the children who sang it unconcernedly as our children sang the latest song hit.

Kurt’s story is not the worst. I have talked with boys who have seen their fathers starved to death, who have seen their parents killed before their eyes. There are many who have seen their mothers and sisters taken off to the gas chamber.

They tell you these things intelligently. They have lived with death and brutality so long that they chat about starvation, torture and gas chambers as our children talk about the latest movie. The doctors say they can do this because they are emotionally anaesthetized.

Although no one knows the exact number of the lost children, two things are known. Between the ages of the two-year-olds and those older than twelve, there are almost no children at all. Among all the lost children found in concentration camps or picked up throughout the country, there are almost no little children.

The Germans gassed and cremated little children when they did not die quickly enough.

As nothing was done by chance, here is something we should never forget. In the heart of this regime of terror lay the plan of exterminating whole peoples and forever weakening others.

It dawned on you gradually that it was part of a plan of the high command that boys and girls were to be taken to the munition factories to be worked to death. When they got sick, they were to be killed.

When you wish to destroy a people you begin with the children. They are the ones upon whom the attack must be made. Every one of these boys and girls you see is a miracle of survival – only the strongest lived.

These unaccompanied children are but a few of the children in the master plan of extermination and weakening whole populations of countries. There were, exclusive of the Russian territory, roughly ten percent children. The army was faced with the return of these millions to their homes and performed a miracle of logistics. By September only a few hundred remained and they and their children are now in the care of UNRRA. They are, by army reports, in need of everything. This is not the whole toll of the slaughter of children.

In Russia, in Poland, in
GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

May you share many more happy and healthy years.
Pauline and Harry Spiro.

DEATHS:

It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of the following members during the past year:

- Peter Brandstein
- Sdc. Erlich
- Sam Rosenblatt
- Joseph Fischer
- Isaac Baum
- Paul Oppenheimer
- Doris Frydman
- Ray Winogradżski
- Nada Huberman
- Rene Zaibialek
- Perez Zilberberg
- Pavek Dzialowski
- Charlie Orzech
- Leon Rosenberg
- Eli Cohen

Sincere condolences to:
- Ann and David Peterson on the loss of their daughter.
- Toby Biber on the loss of her husband.
- Barbara Stimler on the loss of her husband.
- Lea Goodman on the loss of her husband.
- Joe Kresse on the loss of his wife Shirley.

3RD GENERATION NEWS:

Mazeltov to Lauren Harris on attaining 3 A*s in her A-levels. Lauren is now at Braemore College, Oxford, studying Chemistry. She is the granddaughter of Jasmine and Michael Bandel and the daughter of Carney and Daniela Harris.

Monty and the Chief Rabbi

14th September 2007

WATFORD SYNAGOGUE UNVEILS MEMORIAL WALL

The Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, unveiled a memorial wall at Watford and District Synagogue in Hertfordshire in June to commemorate those members of congregants' families who have passed away. It was a particularly poignant moment for Montague Graham as the memorial includes the names of four members of his family who perished in the Holocaust. At an emotional ceremony, Montague (known as Monty) was joined by his wife Milbey, his four children and their families, including his four grandchildren: Jonathan Kingsley, James and Danielle Gordon and Naomi Graham.

He says, "I am the only survivor of my family. It is the first time I have seen my parents Zlata and Kaima Granot and brothers Zelek and Benek remembered as the records of all their lives were destroyed. It was also a pleasure and honour to meet Sir Jonathan Sacks and to share this moment with my family."
Leon Rosenberg
Max and Alan Rosenberg

Here is the eulogy for their father, Leon Rosenberg, from his sons Max and Alan, which was read by Reverend Englemeyer before the levayah:

Warmth, honesty, wisdom, compassion with humour – our dear father’s core qualities are legendary. Indeed, in our mind he has always been ‘a man for all seasons’ with so many wonderful friends across the broadest spectrums of religious and social divide. Despite the unimaginable torment of his early years in Nazi-occupied Poland, he refused to become embittered and remained positive throughout his life. What a special lonely man – our dear father, Leon Rosenberg.

---

SECTION VIII  MEMBERS NEWS 2007

Compiled by Ruby Friedman

BIRTHS:
- Sala Newton-Katz and the late Benny Newton, Mazel Tov on the birth of a great-granddaughter.
- Doreen Weaver and the late Harry Wechsler, Mazel Tov on the birth of a great-granddaughter.
- Anita Weisner and the late Danny Wiener, Mazel Tov on the birth of a great-grandchild.
- Alisa and Ben Heilig, Mazel Tov on the birth of their grandson, born to Laura & Nathan.
- Beatrice and Leon Manders, Mazel Tov on the birth of a great-granddaughter.
- Yael and Naftali Rosenzweig, Mazel Tov on the birth of their 13th grandchild.

ENGAGEMENTS:
- Rachel Levy, Mazel Tov on the engagement of your daughter Shelley to David, daughter of the late Phin Levy.
- Evelyn and Aron Zylbersztajn, Mazel Tov on the engagement of their grandson Eli to Steffi, son of Fiana and Armand.
- Beatrice and Leon Manders, Mazel Tov on the engagement of their grandson.

BARMITZVAH:
- Pauline and Harry Spiro, Mazel Tov on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Jonathan, son of Tracy and Michael.
- Marie and Bob Obuchowski, Mazel Tov on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Joe, son of Ilan and Laurie.
- Pauline and Harry Spiro, Mazel Tov on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Ben, son of Midas and Leslie.
- Tina and Victor Greenberg, Mazel Tov on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Sam, son of Jamie and Alan.
- Carol Farkas, Mazel Tov on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Jack, son of Emma and Alan and grandson of the late Frank Farkas.
- Shirley and Alfred Huberman, Mazel Tov on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Joel, son of Susan and Maurice.

MARRIAGES:
- Olive and David Herman, Mazel Tov on the marriage of your son Paul to Sarah.
- Rachel Levy, Mazel Tov on the marriage of your daughter Shelley to David Irwin, daughter of the late Phin Levy.
Yugoslavia, children were killed wholesale. Entire schools of children in Yugoslavia were taken out and shot. 400,000 children perished under the Germans in that country. In Holland, Belgium, France, Norway and Greece, populations were systematically starved and their children with them. Germany planned a doctored, civilian population weakened by insufficient food. The careful Germans were conducting experiments in starvation on how little food a human being can live and still work. You can weaken a race of people by poor feeding so that few children live. So a vast slaughter of the innocents; unparalleled in history; was carried out.

Here is a survivor, Kurt.

I met Kurt in the old monastery of Indersdorf, which is one of the many homes for unaccompanied children now being set up by UNRRA, the largest number of whom are in Bavaria. The homes are being set up under the direction of Miss Dorothy Lally, Head of UNRRA Welfare for Bavaria. The Indersdorf home is directed by Miss Lilian Robins.

Before the war this was an orphan asylum run by the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul. Hitler put them out and now they are back at their unmemorable mission of caring for unfortunate children.

It is a wonderful sight to see these children eating good food in the ancient refectory, the older children helping; or to see a band of boys and girls rush in from one of the excursions they make daily. Seeing them so gay, it is hard to believe that this is the first kindness they have known since they were seized by the Germans and torn from their homes. Out in the courtyards, the babies lie in their cribs. The two-year-olds, in crimson rompers made on the premises, went on their adventurous voyages of discovery. The very nationality of some of these children is unknown. It was a fine sight to see a big boy feed a baby its bottle, or comb with the little ones.

for the big children cannot keep away from the babies. The blue-eyed Sisters with their white-winged caps looked on and one of the UNRRA girls kept attentive watch.

Miss Robins has seen to it that the children shall be as little as possible of an institutional atmosphere and as much of a home as possible, and you feel that if instead of its immense task, UNRRA were to have done only this work, its name should be blessed.

Kurt’s father was an accountant. They were not rich but lived comfortably and Kurt had private lessons in English which he kept in his mind throughout the three years of his captivity since he was taken from Bielsko in Upper Silesia. He is a fine looking boy, well grown, with hazel eyes set wide apart, thick brown hair, irregular features and eager friendly ways, and a great desire to tell his story, which he knows is the story of all children like him.

His father and mother surrounded him with such affection that their influence and the constant thought of them carried him through the unbelievable years between the time the Germans took him away and liberation. He even kept his ambition for the future. His father had intended to send him to college and he still wants to be a doctor. “A surgeon I would wish most of all to be,” he says, “but maybe now no possible.”

It was in June 1942 that I saw my mother and father. They took us away in trucks. My father stood there at the top of the hill and waved. He kept smiling to me but my mother cried. I shall not forget that moment. The girls, they were taken away too, how they cried! How they cried! Our parents stood on one side, we on the other getting in the trucks and they cried and we cried. They took us in trucks, all the boys and girls. The old people they took too. These were away in the railway trains to the gas chamber. We and the girls were taken away to work. We went to a camp, the girls to another and we never saw any of them ever again.

Four weeks I was in a transfer camp. I was in many, many camps. I will tell you about all of them so you can write how it happens to children who are in camps.

In the first camp, they taught us how to work. If you didn’t do the best right they gave you discipline exercises. You had to do the frog. You sit like a frog and hop and hop until you fall over. If the boy did wrong, we all were punished. Like the German proverb: “All for one and one for all.” It was hard after a long day on the building place to do the punishment frog exercise. I had to load 812 cubic yards of sand and I was thirteen. In that first camp I only was afraid I couldn’t do the work and then I would be cremated.

“My first impression is that of hunger. I had never thought about food before I
didn’t think about anything else for three years. I didn’t understand at first when they would say to me in the evening, “Save your bread, save your bread!” I would think all the time of the beautiful bread in our bakery. We had had a Polish servant and I wrote to her and said, “Send me a greeting from Mr. Pasternik.” That was our baker’s name. That Polish girl was a nice girl. She had been with my grandmother. She was like one of your family but I never heard from her with a greeting from Pasternik.

“So it is a long time since April when the Americans came. I can never get over my grief, my grief for my country. I still think of the bread. I cannot bear to live in this country without bread. I have lived for so many months, for so many years, I cannot bear the thought of something, anything I could eat.”

“You didn’t have any bread? Was no-one kind to you?” He asked.

“Not the Jewish tailor. That was all. No-one is kind in a camp. In a camp, everyone is bad. When you get to know one person, he went away soon. Everybody gets to be like an animal in a cage. It is everybody for yourself. Everybody thinks about only one thing – how can you get more bread? If you go to sleep, you know where you must put your bread. Inside your shirt; even then they might steal it. They are kind only when you get something. Now I give anything if someone asks me. You give me this chewing gum. You can get more. I cannot believe now how it was in the concentration camp. I cannot believe now how it was there, here where there is always food and always kindness. But I know it was true.

“They took me next to a camp in Upper Silesia where there were 8As instead of SS. I cleaned shoes for the SS. I did errands. Here I was not so hungry. They gave me sometimes potatoes. They had a kind of typhus so we were taken to a quarantine camp.

“Young camp, what stories I can tell you!”

“It was an old Russian Prisoner-of-War camp. Here there were like this – as long as my tail. In that camp there was really great hunger. After each meal I was more hungry than before. Around the camp were civil workers in the field. We weren’t allowed to move, we couldn’t leave the camp, but one or two of our boys swapped things with the civilians for rutabagas out of which they always made soup. Rutabagas, big turnips the whole time. They fed us. One of our boys gave a shirt, a new good shirt for some.

“One of the guards saw him and caught him. They called us all to see them beat him a hundred strokes. They gave him the chair. They made him lie on a chair. You know how they do it. One holds the arms, the other legs. Then they beat with a rubber hose a hundred strokes while we watch him swell up all colours like pulp.

“Seven weeks we are in this camp. Many died. Now I came to a transfer camp called Branica near Oppeln in Upper Silesia. When I first came to this camp I was shaking from fear. The Commander of the Guards was OT Organisation Todt – Organisation Todt. He had a big whip hanging from his belt. This man was a sadist. In this camp you would hear nothing but people being whipped and screaming. First they searched us for money, jewels, and arms. If anyone didn’t give his money and they found it, he was beaten 50 or 100 lashes. There was a garden. If you stepped off the path you were whipped. Then there was another thing. We were lined up in our winter clothes. We had to see if anyone was coming from your clothes. If there is, you got 25 or 50 strokes.

“This man, will they get him for a war criminal?”

“They told me in the 345 Battery they would punish war criminals. I can tell you all about him. He is the worst sadist there is. His name is Kurt Pompay. He is middle height with a little mustache. He has a wooden leg which he got in the last war. He made up things so everyone is whipped.

“In this camp not everyone went to work every day. One week I went to work Monday; then Tuesday, but not on Wednesday. In a camp you do as small as you can. Here all of us work willingly and hard. We unfold wood all the morning. There in camp everyone thinks. The less I do the more I save myself. You know if you wear out, you are killed. So I don’t go to work. I didn’t go and I got 50 lashes. 25 at noon, 25 at night. I had to cut wood and take steps to the latrine.

“Now they change us after four weeks in this camp to another forced work camp where we take up the track of a small spur railway. Here was an SS called Pietraszak who is a Folkdeutsch. He
prisoners that he made without hesitation. There was one occasion where he swapped places with another prisoner so that this man could remain with his brother. Many years later my father was contacted by this same man, William Samelson, from the United States of America, who had spent years trying to track my father down to thank him for what he had done.

Even during those most horrific, unbelievably inhumane times he thought of his fellow man more than himself.

After the liberation he was sent to England with his next “family” - The Boys. At Winterton he was able to convalesce from his experience. He told me that when he was learning to speak English he and the other Boys would spend many an evening at the cinema to help with this task.

He met my mother Sheila in 1951 at the Astoria dance hall and they got married in June 1954. It was with great joy that he learnt via an advertisement in the Jewish Chronicle that his father’s brother had also survived and was now living in Israel.

Over the years he worked in the clothing trade for, amongst others, Ben Helfgott and George Karson and in his later years, until he retired for Harry Spiro.

In 1985 I met my husband-to-be Robert and we married in 1988. My father never looked upon Robert as a son-in-law, treating him with as much generosity and kindness as if he was his own son. It was an emotional and joyous occasion for him when I gave birth to firstly Elena and three years later Ben. The grandchildren were a constant joy to him and he always took an interest in whatever they were doing. Once he retired both he and my mother looked after the children while Robert and myself were at work. He enjoyed this time with them immensely.

In the last couple of years he faced his illness with dignity and determination in order to try and live as normal a life as possible. I never once heard him complain. It was with great pride that he met the Queen and visited 10 Downing Street to have tea with Cherie Blair along with a group of other Boys. He would tell me afterwards that if someone had said to him all those years ago in Poland that he would one day meet the Queen of Great Britain he would have laughed.

I cannot begin to imagine what it would be like to have family and friends and a whole way of life and to suddenly have all that you held dear ripped away and then to start “life” all over again, gaining new family, making new friends and living in a totally different country.

As his daughter I get comfort from the fact that even after all the horrors and pain of his early years he enjoyed the rest of his life and was loved by everyone who came to know him. He will be sorely missed forever.
no harm to anyone. He was the epitome of gentleness and goodness."

"If he's alive, we'll find him," Roman administrated.

In my life-long endeavour to educate generations about the meaning and consequences of the Holocaust, I took recourse to copious references. In my search for material, I had made inquiries with various archival institutions, notably with the Histadrut in Israel and many other Holocaust museums, never allowing the memory of my dear friend Shlamek to fade. Where I succeeded in my factual historical research, I had failed in my search for Shlamek Winogradzki. Gradually, I was forced to accept the inevitable conjecture: "He didn't make it."

During the early 80s, I had volunteered my linguistic services to a dear friend, Harry Papan, who had the passion to assemble one of the most voluminous privately owned Holocaust libraries in the world. His mission was to combat Historical Revisionism: convenient euphemism for Holocaust Denial. I helped catalogue and identify foreign language books on the subject as well as those in the English language. It was there I came upon a book by the great British historian, Martin Gilbert, entitled The Boys of Poniatowitz: Tychonowski. The story dealt with one of the survivors boys shipped to foster homes in England.

Needless to say, it was a well-documented work, replete with survivors' testimonies as well as photographs of places and individuals. And there, to my great joy, after half a century of searching, I came upon the youthful photo of the subject I longed to find: the face of my dearest boyhood companion, Shlamek. The caption beneath the photo revealed the reason for the years of my unsuccessful search. It identified the boy in the photograph as Shlamek Winogradzki, born in Warsaw, Poland, on 17th March 1929, to Hanna and Chaim Winogradzki. He had two sisters, Esther and Ruth. He had a happy childhood which I am sure moulded his own personality into that of a real gentleman who really was a gentle man.

When my father and his family were in the ghettos he was assigned to work in the glass factory. Once he was sent to the camps he did not see his parents or his sisters again. The last camp he was sent to was Theresienstadt from where he would eventually be liberated. He did tell me of his selfless acts of kindness to other

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Solomon Rafael Winogradzki
(17/3/1929 - 23/5/07)

My father was a most loving, generous, warm man. As a child growing up I was at first unaware of the horror he had witnessed and the loss he had sustained during his own childhood. Here was a man who to me was a strong and emotionally balanced person who I could look to for comfort and advice at all times.

As I grew up I began to learn the background of my father's youth. Although he did not speak too much of his experiences during the war I did over a period of time hear about his family who were so cruelly taken away and of his selfless fight for survival.

My father was born in Poland on 17th March 1929 to Hanna and Chaim. He had two sisters, Esther and Ruth. He had a happy childhood which I am sure moulded his own personality into that of a real gentleman who really was a gentle man.

When my father and his family were in the ghettos he was assigned to work in the glass factory. Once he was sent to the camps he did not see his parents or his sisters again. The last camp he was sent to was Theresienstadt from where he would eventually be liberated. He did tell me of his selfless acts of kindness to other...
killed 17 Jews while I was there. He would take them out to the woods and he would shoot them. He said they were shot trying to escape.

"Now, again they moved the whole camp to a suburb of Brezina by rail and car, not box cars.

"Now I am going to tell you something. It is about psychology. In this camp I lost my morale. The first is you eat up your whole bread. You can't save it. You have no more self-control. I ate it all up, a whole pound, it was so good, with the tea water. Oh, the place of bread it's more than gold or anything else. How good it tastes! It makes me long for it and it's good, how good it tastes! Next is how I go downhill. First you don't save your bread. Next you don't wash any more. I don't try any more to be clean. You don't clean your clothes any more. If you're shoe string is shoes - you don't care - you are gone. So then you begin to die. My legs all swell up. If I press my fingers in my legs, the hole stays there. I get to be a 'musselmann,' a camp slang for a no-good. And why? I have too much work to do, too little food, but it is when I don't care I lose all strength. I was a kid and I don't even care to tell me like my father. I was too lazy, too tired, too beat. I didn't care for nothing. I lose my morale so I don't even go to the toilet. I was just like an animal. I was only want to eat, to eat, to eat!"

"I am not the only one like this, there are many, many. If you could see the people in the concentration camp. What a misery! What a misery! Most intelligent people, doctors, lawyers, teachers, they lose their morale. It is when you can't bear no more dirt, bearing hunger, then you give up - then your morale is gone. So intelligent people. People especially those, they lost their morale; people who weren't working, they died. His legs swell first, then he dies. The Czechs, the Dutch - they died. The Poles, the Russians, they don't have much ever. They live. There are some intelligents who live. The politics with the red triangle - they are wonderful. They keep up everybody's courage. They make up the songs. To kill them, they must shoot them. They never die because they lose their morale.

"Once I got beat with a ox whip so I could not move for a long time and I got sick. This is why. On the building place where I work, there is a small house. The door was broken and I was always looking for food. You know how a hungry dog sniffs everywhere. So, I think maybe an old piece of bread. I went in through the window I found an old bottle. I took it home. I want to save it for coffee. It is not coffee but sometimes it is hot.

"A guard saw me. He made a report to the Commanding Officer. He said this was a house of a German soldier who is away fighting for his country so they gave me 16 and I am cut up and can't move a long time. The doctor says, he is no good for work. So they sent me to Luckau, Lower Silesia. In this camp I worked in a hand-grenade factory. In this camp the powder turns your face yellow and your hair. I am four weeks there. I went to Cracow and I am only three days on the building place when I am sick with diarrhea. They sent me to the infirmary, a funny infirmary. You lie on straw. But I don't get well, and they send me to Brande, which is a place for sick people.

"While I am lying there, sick, I think. And in this place Brande I get my morale back. Maybe, too I rest. I don't have to work; there is a little more food. I am there for months. When I get well, they put me to work peeling potatoes. I could sometimes steal a potato. We managed to cook the things we stole. I get well quick now. I get my morale back. For when I am sick, I keep on thinking - I have to wash. I have to keep myself clean. If I don't, I would have died. In a camp it means so much. At home you don't wash yourself. You are dirty - you are not really so. If you are dirty in camp, you lose your morale and then you die. It is the same with food. You don't know hunger. You don't know to think nothing else, always, always, how can I get to eat? When a man has enough bread, he was like a king. We would say, 'Look at him! He has enough bread!'"

"Now, I am well. They took us to Bleicherhoefer Camp in Upper Silesia. Here there were 4,000 people. I came there on the 14th of September 1943. I lived here the longest time of any until January 1945. At first it was a forced labor camp, until April 1944 they then made it a concentration camp. They put us in striped clothes and tattooed on us the numbers. This is my number." He rolled his sleeve up to show me tattooed in blue 1777777.

"When they change it I had good luck. This is because I
have got my morale back. If I am dirty, they will not have had me. They made me strike for the infirmary. I am not hungry at Buchenwald the first right months.

But other things, there I do not like I should think about. I have to help burn people in the crematorium. About this time the Americans came and a great many people were killed, they were all in pieces and were burnt.

Then many were hanged. This is why: On the building place there was a room. When it blew the guards and everyone went to the burners. There were many small houses and while the guards hid from bombs, our people were hungry and searched the houses for food. So they took them down and hanged them. They called it poudrering. They made me help them down.

So there I was until the 21st January 1945 when the Russians came close. They gave us two pounds of bread, a little margarine and some synthetic honey. That was all we had for several days until we got some potatoes boiled in their skins. We went on foot for two weeks. The first night we slept in a field. The next night in a barn. This was the coldest winter. And in the barn they stanked us. You couldn’t see anything. It was black, black. When I lay down a man was lying on one leg, a man over me on my arms. I was fighting myself free. I got angry, mad. If they had given us a ray of light! We killed each other in the barn. If anyone had a knife they cut each other’s pockets in the dark. They took out 40 dead in the morning. It was so crowded.

"We walked for two weeks till we came to Grossroes. When we started we were 3,500 people. We were 3,000 when we got there. 40 or 50 children were dead. Whether you die or not, it all depends on the food. There were 150 women, but no women died.

"We arrived at 10 at night and went to a barracks with a stone floor. There were 2,000 people and the door was open. I lay down on the floor.

"At Grossroes they disinfected us and gave us a shower and paint. Every evening we had to stand two hours. People got crazy from the cold.

"Next more Capos and SS. They came with clubs. Everyone that didn’t stand straight, they hit them on the head. Each person killed some people. Some Capos have the green triangle and they are the worst of all. I was only three days there and more Russians came. We got two pounds of bread and a little margarine and again in the boxcar. 80 men in the car. I ate my bread up right away. And I didn’t get a sip of water for four days. It was hard to sleep on my feet. Then in four days we got to Buchenwald.

"Next we were taken to an old salt mine in Bad Salzungen, 120 kilometres from Buchenwald where we built a munitions factory 300 meters underground. It was the end of February and I didn’t see the light of day for four weeks. Until the 3rd March the Americans came closer. We walked for six days to Buchenwald. We were there only three days when they took us in boxcars. 90 men in a boxcar. We started to go Flossenbarg. Now, after a while, the Americans started to bomb the train. A gasoline train caught fire.

"Now I want to tell you how in concentration camps you lose all feeling, all sentimentality. As the Americans came, the SS were distributing bread. The first eight boxcars got bread but then they had to stop. Dead people were all around. Dead from airplanes, so everywhere were dead pieces. I wasn’t thinking. ‘Oh, God, I thank you I am alive’. I wasn’t thinking of the dead all around. I was only thinking. ‘Oh, God, I have lost my bread’. So you will see what I mean by no feelings. I saw the danger. I knew I might get killed. I didn’t think of bread. I was not the only one with no feelings. It was not only me. When we got back to the boxcar everyone asked, ‘Will we get our bread’. So you see how it is with people, how they get.

I remember that day the boxcar was so crowded everyone couldn’t lie down. Everyone who couldn’t walk was shot. That was the first time I cried. We were so near our destination when it happened. A Hungarian boy of 14 or 15 was crying. I said, ‘What is the matter?’. He said, ‘My father was so near where we are going. He fell. They shot him. It is not so bad to hear as it is to see it – your father getting killed. An SS man came while I was crying, I could have killed him. It is so bad people in
of the dreaded gas. Even the subsequent formaldehyde-dipping was bearable, though the acid substance was burning into the mutilated skin after the body hair was removed with the use of dull steel tools. The Nazis drew the first blood, but the pain of irritation only indicated that there was still life. "They will never defeat us after this, if we only manage to stay together," Shlamek was his confident self on our way toward the barrack.

He was first to climb onto the uppermost tier. There were four of them, counting the first being the floor. "That way, nobody will pass down on us." In addition to being practical, Shlamek maintained his sense of humour. We slept in tight quarters, next to ten other men, squeezed onto an area not much larger than three square yards. Sleep was a rare commodity, as we lay head to toe, the only way to fit into the sparse space. Shlamek lay between Roman and me. He was the carrier of the daily crumbs of bread we'd saved up. He put them under his jacket that was tucked into the trousers tied with a rope round his hips. It was imperative to safeguard our savings from possible theft, and we "feasted" on the few additional grams of bread when weekend arrived.

A loving bond had developed over time between the three of us. At first, we helped each other at the quarry later on, when we were assigned to the incendiary bomb manufac-
ture at the I.G. Farben in Weimar. As the welcoming inscription had told us in our arrival, we knew that as long as we were able to work, our lives were spared.

The Allied bombing raids put an end to our "job security." It was bitter said on the morning of January 12, 1945. The Capo's brutal voice sounded the familiar order: "Out for reveille!" (In German it was "Aus zum Appell."). The northern freezing winds howled, as we stood in formation, stepping from foot to foot to keep whatever traces of blood we still possessed in circulation. The SS hierarchy was assembled up front, and we knew something important was to happen. They called numbers, and inmates responded with "here" when their number was called. The inmate numbers were sewed onto our jackets. It was our only identity. Those called assembled to the right of the main formation.

"Labour transport!" The dreaded word circled through the ranks. The numbers sounded endlessly. First it was Roman's number. I waited and prayed for mine to be called. It wasn't to be. After a long interval, Shlamek's number resounded. The SS men calling numbers needed to depart. That was it. No more numbers.

"Merciful God," I thought. "We'll be separated. What will I do alone? I was desperate, teacious. No!" They can't do that to us after all this time together, Roman looked back. His eyes said goodbye. Now Shlamek was leaving as well. I was disconsolate. Suddenly, Shlamek handed me his jacket and took mine in exchange. He would stay behind so that I could join Roman. "Go, quickly, Wielc," Shlamek whispered. We hugged. "What will happen here?" I managed to ask. He smiled showing his characteristic tooth: "I'll manage. Well, meet when we're free." I heard him faintly, as I walked toward the departing formation.

Our destination was Colditz, a small satellite labour camp in the East of Germany. They put us to work on the assembly of the anti-tank weapon called Panzerfaust, the equivalent of the bazooka. There was not a day passed when we would not pray for Shlamek's safety. His last words resounded clearly in my memory. We would be reunited soon. I had hoped.

Indeed, my brother and I saw freedom on May 1, 1945. Too weak to begin our search for our adopted brother immediately, we had spent several months in recovery. It was early on the following year when we had undertaken our search for Shlamek. As the saying went: "If there is life, you will meet." We made inquiries everywhere. "Have you seen Shlamek Winogradow?" I asked wherever I recognized a familiar face. "No, I haven't," was the usual response. I immersed myself in playing catch-up with my formal education while waiting for our visas for the United States.

Years past and hope faded with each day gone by. "Why?" I asked the tormenting question. "Why would God give up on our dear Shlamek? He had done
Shlamek,
we shall miss you...

By
William (Wilek) Samelson

The shocking news of your untimely passing has once again caught us asking that silent question over again: “Why you, so soon?” It had seemed so quite obvious from the very moment of our liberation from Nazi hell, that God, in His infinite wisdom, would grant each of us special extension of life as compensation for the time we have wasted in slavery.

I remember you, Shlamek, my dear friend and loyal companion, even from the moment of the Piłsudski ghetto liquidation. We huddled together on the Breslauer Platz, you and I, and my brother Roman. It was the last transport to depart from the Bortensia Glassworks, as we were unaware that there may have been others left behind. The Nazi master had us under the names Shlamek Winogradzki, Roman Samelson, and Wilhelm Samelson. The bureaucratic Nazi benchmen recorded religion, age, and the alleged competence for slave labour. One thing was clear to the three of us: we would have a better chance of survival if we stayed together. The “if” was conditioned by the knowledge that the perpetrators delighted in separating families.

I remember you, my dear Shlamek, as a young and handsome boy. Even under stressful circumstances, there was a smile on your face and encouraging words that challenged the disaster. And when your lips parted in that inimitable laughter, there was one front tooth that protruded forward from the row of even, healthy teeth. And even in that small flaw there lay the indomitable humanity you so well represented, an added touch of humour. For who could fail to return that cheerful smile when faced by the friendliest of friendly faces yours?

After a brief stopover in Czestochowa, where we were “engaged” in one of several steel mills, we were again on the move. The problem we had faced each time of our “resettlement” journeys was that our destination was unknown.

“Wonder where they are taking us now?” We would question one another, knowing full well that only our jailers were privy to that sinister information.

Loaded like cattle into overcrowded freight cars, the three of us managed somehow to lay claim to one of the corners directly beneath the small barred window. “We can breathe better and, occasionally, spot a name of a township from our lockout,” Roman chuckled. From our vantage point, we could ascertain the direction of the transport: westward into the Third Reich.

After many hungry, almost sleepless days, with occasional stopovers in wooded areas for food ration and relief, we arrived at our destination: Wolmar. The knock on the wagon’s sliding doors clicked open, the doors slid to one side, and we heard the now familiar order: “Arbeit macht frei!” (“Work makes you free!”) We stood in ranks together, fidgeting in place, soon to march the five tedious kilometers up the picturesque rolling hills toward our new home, Buchenwald KZ camp.

We were greeted by the inimitable irony of the welcoming wrought iron “greeting” that arched above the camp’s entrance gate: ARBEIT MACHT FREI (Work Makes You Free). They marched us swiftly toward the “Disinfection Chamber” of which we had heard some sinister rumors in the past. Could they be true? Is this to be another Nazi ruse to entice us into the gas chamber?

Once in the cavernous chamber naked, having unbonded ourselves of all clothing, previously we looked up toward the ceiling where we located numerous shower heads. This is where Shlamek’s optimism quieted our fears. “Why would they go through all the trouble of making us sort our old clothing and hand us the new camp uniforms only to gas us?” he asked a rhetorical question.

What a relief it was when cold water sprouted from the ceiling shower heads instead
concentration camps. If a man said, 'Help me!' - who would help? In the concentration camp, you say, 'I'm feeling bad. I'm mad.' They say, 'So am I.' When people are shot, they don't look. They could kill each other for a cigarette butt. They watch an SS man Smoking. When he throws the butt, five people perhaps fall on it and he laughs and has fun he shoots. That is their fun.

"We get there Friday. The next afternoon they gave us a quart of raw wheat. Those whole grains are nourishing. Some SS men cooked them. They are worse than raw.

"Now I will tell you how they shot the people. We were walking on the main street. From a side street there came another transport. Two SS men walking behind shot at us and kept shooting as we passed. In a little while they shot 20 people. Our people looked at each other, their eyes said more than if they should speak. It was on the 23rd April in Oberpada, Bavaria the SS came and began to yell, 'Alles auf! Alles auf! Get going.' We got on the street. They are crying out. 'Form battens! Halt there in front!' I didn't have an idea the Americans were there.

"I see the first American tank charging around the corner and shooting the SS. I start to cry. An American soldier is stopping his jeep. A band of our people fall over him and start to kiss him. We were so happy. I never, never can see such a thing. You can never see such happy people as we were when the Americans freed us."

(Rudi brushes aside the fact he had typhus after liberation. What is important to him is that he worked in the kitchen of the 90th Division Battery C 345 Field Artillery.

"The first day I came down and said, 'I am here to work and do you know what they said? 'Get your plate and go eat!' In the concentration camp I had to work the whole first day and now they say, 'Go eat.' He still can't get over the wonder of being told 'Go eat.' nor can he get over the food thrown away.

"I would say, 'How can you throw away food when there are such a lot of hungry people everywhere? There were a lot of prisoners of war around and I would give them those good leftovers. Though they are my worst enemies, I would rather give them the food than see it thrown away. I worked for the field artillery until I came here. I know all their names. I have them all. They are the first ones who are kind to me since I am put in a truck and see my parents standing on the little hill. I have a certificate.'"

He pulled out his certificate proudly. It read:

Battery C 345 Field Artillery
APQ 90, Co P.M., N.Y.
22th August, 1945

I certify that Kurt Klapohott worked for Battery C 345 Field Artillery Battalion.

He can speak good English.
Signed J.C. Serras
Commanding

"This is my proudest thing because for the first time all were kindly to me."

"Now word came that boys can go to England so I came here to Intersdorf. There are 86 boys who are to go. I never slept so well as here since home. I never ate so nice at the table as here. a plate for soup, a clean plate for meat. I have never seen people always so kind.

"I have a question to ask - I hear my Professor is in Katowitz. His name is Richard Wagner. Professor of French and English. How can I get word to him? Maybe he knows about my mother and father. Always always I think about him. In the concentration camp when I was walking. He had so many patience with me. I understand it today. Then I didn't know. I wish I had my father here. When I had a great misery I think about my mother. When I didn't know what I should do. I think about my father. I loved him so much. He was like a law to me. I cannot believe my father is dead. Maybe if they read this written in my small easy words and see my name printed, maybe they will find me."

This cry of homesickness goes up from all lost children. Wherever you see them, they crowd around you. They write addresses of relatives on bits of paper. The lost children search perpetually for someone, anyone who belongs to them.

I wish that hundreds of people, educators, legislators, plain people, could see the things I have seen, watch the children in a place like Intersdorf, hear their stories, and then let their minds stray over the destruction of Europe and grasp the master plan of the slaughter and starvation of the innocents, and I wish they could hear these lost children sing the Buchenwald song: the song made up in the midst of torture and death, a triumphant song of Freedom.
Who was Kurt?

Kurt was greatly influenced by his father who was a well-educated man with a degree from Bethnurt University. His experiences in the concentration camps made a profound impact on his actions and thinking. It was characteristic of him that he was always a champion of the weak and oppressed. Soon after his liberation, Kurt came across an American lieutenant with two soldiers who had picked up two SS men. They recognized Kurt as a concentration camp prisoner and encouraged him to take revenge on the SS men by beating them up. Kurt, however, declined and told the American lieutenant that he was far too weak to try to beat them, moreover even if they were lying defenseless on the ground he would not wish to do so. He added that he got the impression that the lieutenant seemed to feel ashamed of himself. Reflecting on his action, he said that he was grateful that his father brought him up in this way. As a child, he heard his father saying that revenge only leads to a vicious circle which never stops.

Kurt was one of the 732 teenagers who were brought to England in three stages between 1945-6. He came with the second group to Wintershill near Southampton in November 1945. A few weeks later in a current affairs discussion, chaired by Dr. Friedmann, one of the 'Boys', Arthur Lasker, argued most vehemently that all Nazis should be killed without a trial and that the English and Americans are too soft on them. He was strongly supported by most of those participating in the discussion. Kurt's response was just as passionate. "If the English call them without trial and the Germans have felt that the English are no better than the Nazis themselves, then they have given up hope and maybe another Hitler finds it a good time to come into power." Kurt evinced this sense of justice, fairness and belief in a strong democratic government throughout his whole life.

Kurt was sent from Wintershill to 283 Finchley Road Hostel, which he found most ungenial. He did not like to be coerced to go to the Synagogue and to pray. As he said, "It led him to become more anti-religious, quite explicitly so much more than he had ever been in his life." His father was an atheist and did not expect him to be religious. Kurt was wooed by Mr. Freshwater with all kinds of promises, to become religious as he had a great influence on him in his life. His father was an atheist and did not expect him to be religious. Kurt was wooed by Mr. Freshwater with all kinds of promises, to become religious as he had a great influence on many of the 'Boys' in the Hostel. However, Kurt, who spoke and acted always in accordance with his conscience and ideals, would not budge.

Kurt maintained close association with the 'Boys', but the bond became stronger with the passing of time. In 1973, on the 30th anniversary of our liberation, Kurt expressed his feelings in the Society Newsletter. "For us the anniversary of our liberation is literally a second birthday anniversary. The liberation not only snatched us from certain death but also ended a period during which, though physiologically alive, it could hardly be said that we lived. Thus, our celebration commemorates a communal resurrection which is one of our bonds that has united us hitherto and will continue to unite us until no-one of us is left to celebrate another anniversary. We have no alternative but to live with the memory of lives gratuitously and wickedly destroyed. Each one of us has to decide for himself how to cope with these memories for which time does not seem to be the proverbial healer."

Kurt was a member of the Committee of the 48 Aid Society Association Survivors and the editor of the Society's Journal. Until, unfortunately, he was struck down by a severe stroke. He was highly respected by all the members and he himself held them in great esteem. In fact, he had a great admiration for them as many of them, unlike him, had very little education and were very successful in business. Although he was an economist, he certainly was not businessminded as he so often used to stress.

Kurt's time as a Reader in Economics at the London School of Economics was perhaps his most exciting period in his life. He associated with people who were interested in intellectual pursuits. His intellectual gifts and charm of his conversation was recognized by all those with whom he came in contact. He had an engaging personality, and his affability was all-embracing. He was very proud of his sons, Adam and David, and was aware of and appreciated their care and devotion to him during his tragic illness. He died on the 17th December 2000.
Joan watched us mature into adults, create our families and integrate with our local communities and this gave her tremendous pleasure. We are grateful for the interest she continued to display in our rehabilitation and welfare and we were delighted to have her join us at our annual reunion each year until she was prevented from doing so due to ill health.

It needs to be stressed that throughout Joan's working life with the C.B.F. spanning 15 years, she cared about people and the cause that was close to her heart - the rescue of Jews and those in distress. Joan was always correct and straightforward in her dealings. These qualities stood her in great stead and earned her the respect of all those with whom she dealt. Joan was held in high esteem at the Home Office with whom she worked closely. They always sought and relied heavily on her advice.

In the autumn of 1956, the Hungarian uprising and the expulsion of Jews from Egypt by Nasser meant that many Jews sought refuge in Britain and it was Joan's intervention with the Home Office that secured their admission to Britain.

In the 1960s, when the Iraqi government promulgated certain laws under which Jews could be deprived of their Iraqi nationality, a group of Jewish students from Iraq needed help to regularise their position with the Home Office and the intervention by Joan made it possible for them to continue their studies in this country. In some cases they also received financial help from the C.B.F. as the funds from their parents were disallowed by the Iraqi government.

Over the years, there were many occasions when individuals or groups of Jews were prevented from staying here by immigration officers but Joan's diplomacy and integrity was such that her intervention secured their admission into this country.

I have given only a few examples of where Joan made a difference to people's lives but her work was multi-faceted and there were many other ways in which she gave help to those in need.

It goes without saying that Joan was greatly assisted by a dedicated band of volunteers but it was she who was the conductor...

She set the tune....

Her reputation, her standing in the Jewish and non-Jewish community enhanced the prestige of the C.B.F. which enabled it to raise funds - never enough - to help the poor and distressed in many parts of the world.

When Joan retired from the C.B.F. in 1976, she was approached by Alan Montefiore, whom she had known as a teenager, to help him at the Wiener Library. His father Leonard had been a great supporter of the library.

How could Joan refuse such a request?

Needless to say, she threw herself energetically into her new task, making a significant contribution at a time when her help was most needed. She brought with her a huge network of contacts within the community to whom she wrote to secure funds for the library at a time when their resources were few.

Joan was a creative writer and wrote articles for various publications. She was a member of the Romantic Novelle Association and had articles published.

In her personal life, Joan enjoyed entertaining her many friends in her home in the West End. She enjoyed cooking, loved flowers and had a talent for flower arranging, for which she won many prizes.

Joan was a dedicated communal worker - accessible, sympathetic, patient and always helpful, and able to work well with others. She displayed determination when in spite of failing health, she overcame practical difficulties in order to attend a reception in 2006 as the guest of honour at the House of Lords celebrating the achievements of the C.B.F. - World Jewish Relief - and the Jewish Refugee Committee.

This remarkable lady rarely displayed anything but calm and bore her disabilities in recent years with dignity and continued to be interested in communal affairs and the welfare of all those she knew and loved.

Joan has our abiding affection. We shall forever remain grateful to her for her compassion and her devotion to us.
history of Jewish art. He put out a book detailing the history and art work of the father-in-law whom he had never met, but whose life he strove to perpetuate and celebrate.

The term "proud" in the title of his book on Kaspest was significant. Steve was a proud Jew. He remained, to the end, a product of the Betar movement of his youth. Any manifestation of weakness or appeasement that he discerned in Israeli policies aroused his ire. He relentlessly pursued a frustrating, ultimately unsuccessful, campaign to induce the Hungarian government to eliminate or amend the obscene memorials throughout Hungary that equated the Jewish victims of the Nazis and of their Hungarian collaborators with the so-called "Hungarian victims of fascism".

Steve's humour had a bitter, sometimes cynical edge to it. But he could also mock himself. Not far beneath the surface was a warm and caring heart. As one of the eulogisers at his funeral put it, "he was a diamond in the rough." For all those who knew him and loved him, he will remain unforgettable. And his blessed memory will shine forever.

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Cremation Joan Stiebel
Feb 1st 2007
A tribute to Joan Stiebel – died 26th January 2007

Address by Ben Helfgott

When Joan started her employment as secretary to Otto Stiebel in his office in the City of London, she could not have envisaged the path her career would take.

Otto Stiebel was chairman of the Jewish Refugee Committee and she soon became deeply involved in refugee work and less and less in the work for which she was interviewed. Six weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War, she was asked to work full-time for the Jewish Refugee Committee.

Soon after the end of the war, Britain was not prepared to allow any large scale Jewish immigration and the Jewish Refugee Committee, together with the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, applied to the Home Office for permission to admit some of the orphaned children who had survived the horrors of Nazi persecution and had been liberated in the Concentration Camps in Europe.

The Home Office gave their consent for a maximum of 1,000 orphaned children – of whom I am one – under the age of 16 to come to this country.

The Committee for the Care of Children from the Concentration Camps was set up with Leonard Montefiore as its chairman. Included on the committee were Mrs Neville Blond and Lola Hahn Warburg. All three were extremely active throughout and it was Joan who made all the arrangements for getting us over to England.

It was decided that Joan and Mr. Montefiore should meet the first group of 300 of the children who came to Crosby-in-Eden, an airfield near Carlisle.

They stayed to meet all the arrivals. I was among those that arrived on the last of the planes and it was our privilege that they were the first two people I met on my arrival in England.

Later on, in October 1945 Joan accompanied Leonard Montefiore to Southampton to meet the second contingent of our group.

Over the years, I met Joan on many occasions, but it was not until the early 60s when Oscar Joseph invited me to join the committee of the Central British Fund – now known as World Jewish Relief – that I got to know her well.

Joan continued to take a keen interest in our group, affectionately known as "The Boys", and visited us in our hostels and later at the Primrose Club.
"The Dress"

Steffen Hänsechen

On a study tour to Lviv, Ukraine 21st to 28th April 2007

Lili and Sister Chrysantia

in the Ukraine, our aim was to come across any interest in the Ukraine, as there is little tradition of processing and acknowledging the Holocaust there. Would it be possible to come into contact with the Jewish community in Lviv? How would the people there react to our interest in the topic? Our idea would have stayed an idea if it hadn't been for Robert Kowalczk's assistance the director of the memorial in Belzec, who we had worked together with in Poland for years. Robert, however, not only made enquiries for us, speaks Ukrainian, and put us in touch with people in Lviv who would give us support, but also told us of a Holocaust survivor from Lemberg who had met at a conference in Lviv Lili Pohlmann. The subject of the conference was the somewhat controversial behaviour of the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. On the one hand, he initially welcomed the Nazi occupation but, on the other, he also saved more than 150 Jewish lives, including Lili and her mother, by organising them a hiding place in one of his convents.

Lili Pohlmann was 12 years old at the time of the liberation of Lviv and East Galicia. In 1953, after 30 years, she returned to the city, because she felt compelled to put in a plea for the Metropolitan who ultimately had saved her, her mother and many more Jewish lives, a fact for which he had never received recognition.

Lili managed to escape during the mass deportations of the Lviv Ghetto in November 1943. Her mother, who was then working for the German civil administration, asked one of the German staff if she would take Lili in. This would have been an utterly inconceivable request at that time. Who would take in such a child condemned to extermination? However, miraculously, a certain Frau Wielch agreed, and Lili was able to hide in her apartment in the SS-and-Police District of Lviv until the retreat of the German administration. Meeting Lili obviously made a great impression on Frau Wielch, as she then gave refuge to a further three Jewish people over the following months. This is how four people came to live in a house in a quarter, where otherwise only high-ranking SS-and-Police and German functionaries, including the Ukrainian Head of Police, lived.

The first conversation sounded extremely promising. We were welcome to...
visit her in London to discuss our Lviv trip. She had emigrated to the UK through a children’s resettlement programme (Rabbi Dr Schonfeld) shortly after the war. In London, she told us not only the incredible story of how she and her mother had survived, and how the Germans and Ukrainians in Lviv lived, but also of how she had lost her brother and father in the massive purge of August 1942. The question at the end of the conversation was if we could invite her to join us in Lviv when we would travel there with a group in April 2007. Reluctantly, she agreed. Although she never wanted to return to those sites where the extermination was carried out, she felt obliged to pass on her experiences.

Shortly before the trip, it seemed that things would not work out. However, in the end, Lili decided to come back to Lviv for the second time since her experiences in the 1940s. The 25 Germans and Dutch who came with us in the group tour to Lviv were deeply impressed, as Lili finally told her story in the Brit Brith Jewish charity center. "But you won’t believe me", Lili suddenly interrupted herself. It almost sounded too incredible how she had cheated death again and again. On the next day we visited the places where she had stayed in Lviv, the apartment in the city in which she had originally lived with her family, where her father and brother had been taken from her. There, she continued. "I lived with the Ukrainian house-master. He always wanted my father’s watch and our radio. After my mother and I came out of hiding after the purge, we found our apartment had been sealed off. The Ukrainian house-master, who now was a policeman, was wearing my father’s suit and watch, and we could hear our radio playing local music..."

Lili and her mother never heard anything of her father or brother again. They will never find out whether they died in the Belzec death camp, or had already been killed beforehand. The two of them moved to her grandmother’s in the Lviv Ghetto, which had been set up by the Nazis for the people who had been condemned to death. Lili’s mother worked as a dressmaker for the German civil administration, until it came to another Atrocity by the Germans in November 1942. Her mother had stayed in the town on this day, but Lili knew that when she would come back the next day, even her work permit wouldn’t save her from deportation, so she slipped out of the heavily-guarded Ghetto under the cover of darkness to warn her. Dressed only in her pyjamas, she climbed over the railway embankment, dogs were alarmed, shots were fired and she let herself fall into the metre-high snow. And then another of these amazing coincidences, the German guards didn’t look for her any further. Maybe they thought they had already killed her? After a while, Lili rolled down the embankment and made her way into the town. In her pyjamas, the 10-year-old girl must have seemed to have been from another world. All the other people she met on the way would have understood without a doubt who she was and where she had come from. Anybody would have given her away as she huddled in a corner of the train. Nobody said a word, and she reached her mother’s workplace. All these people are her unsung heroes.

She met Frau Wielch at her mother’s workplace — the “Wohnungsamt”. This event did not, however, mark the end of Lili’s odyssey. She was not allowed to make a sound in the apartment in which nobody was allowed to live. Every time she was on the street she ran the risk of being discovered or betrayed. Would someone recognize her? Would she be asked for papers she didn’t have? One false step, one wrong encounter could mean certain death.

With the Russian offensive towards Lviv in 1944, the German civil administration withdrew. Where should she go now? Where could she find a place to hide? Who could she turn to? This is when the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky played his part. The couple who had stayed with her at Frau Wielch had heard that he was hiding Jewish people and, as it turned out, Sheptytsky made sure that Lili and her mother found refuge in a Greek Orthodox convent and orphanage until the end of the war. Lili as an orphan, her mother as a deaf-mute dressmaker.

On the day of her departure, we wanted to go with Lili to visit the Greek Orthodox Order of Sisters who had given her refuge. The Mother Superior who was responsible at that time, was no longer alive. After we had found her grave, Lili wanted to be sure that it would continue to be well-tended. But what should we have expected? Would
SECTION VII OBITUARIES

In Memoriam:
Steven (Istvan) Kanitz (1927-2007)
Yitzak Ben-David, Z”L

Steve Kanitz passed away in Israel on the evening of February 4, 2007, at the age of 80, not long after celebrating his 79th birthday. He was interred in the Ramat Hasharon cemetery, beside his beloved wife, Hassia, and his devoted cousin Vera from Prague who had faithfully tended to him during his final illness. During his hospital stay, the steady stream of concerned visitors had amazed the staff; it was not often that patients were visited by so many people who were not their relatives. The eulogies recited at the funeral reflected the admiration and love that Steve had inspired among those who knew him well, who appreciated his warmth, sensitivity, and sterling character, and who were never deceived by his rough exterior.

Steve was the sole survivor of his family. His parents perished at Auschwitz; his only brother was murdered by Hungarians. Steve’s own miraculous survival through the horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau and beyond was chronicled by him in a chapter of the book on the town of his birth, Kispest, that he published in 1983. The chapter was written in third person — the only way that he could bring himself to write it at all. Compared to Birkenau, Auschwitz was a luxurious five-star hotel.

Against all odds, Steve managed to resurrect his life from the ashes. In England he was associated with fellow young survivors who formed a cohesive group and whose members, though later dispersed, continued to cherish and nurture the bonds that they had forged. Steve’s path as a civil engineer led him from England to Israel and other countries and finally back to Israel again.

Steve always celebrated life. The name that he gave his book reflected this: A Proud Tribute to the Jews of Kispest 1870-1941. A Tomb in Hungary. So too did the fact that his own tale ends with his marriage to, and life with, Hassia and with a photo of the happy couple standing in 1979 under the Chupa wedding canopy on the lawn of Hassia’s cousin, Bezalel Perlman, in Ramat Gan. Steve avoided any mention, in his chapter of Hassia’s untimely death two years prior to the publication date.

Undoubtedly, the best years of Steve’s life were those he spent with Hassia. They travelled widely — to Europe, South Africa, South America, the United States and Canada. Mostly they visited cherished relatives. In Paris they met with people in Paris who had sheltered Hassia and her parents from the clutches of the Nazis. Prague was particularly enchanting to both Steve and Hassia.

After Hassia’s passing, Steve set about completing projects that she had not managed to bring to fruition. Spurning neither time nor money, he worked assiduously to recast in bronze the sculptures of Hassia’s father, Mordechai Perlman, and to ensure that the ones left in France would be properly exhibited in the Parisian museum on the...
Diary of Petr Ginz 1941-1942

Sixty years after schoolboy Petr Ginz wrote a diary recording life in Nazi-occupied Prague, his sister recounts his improbable rescue from oblivion. He did not survive, and his words too might have been lost had it not been for the 2003 Columbia space shuttle disaster. One of the doomed astronauts, the Israeli son of an Auschwitz survivor, wanted to take a symbol of the Holocaust with him into space. The Yad Vashem Memorial Museum gave him a copy of a picture Petr Ginz had drawn as a prisoner in Theresienstadt - his imagined view of our planet as seen from the mountains of the moon.

When Czech television, reporting the Columbia tragedy, showed the boy's drawing, a Prague viewer recalled a box he found in the attic when moving home years before. He had thought of throwing it out. Inside were revealed Petr's diary, an unfinished novel, short stories, drawings and linocuts, which his sister continued to be his. The collection eventually went to Yad Vashem.

The Czech Republic issued a commemorative stamp picturing Columbia, Moon Landscape and its young artist. The diary sparked further national interest:

more and more from this invaluable book, with its insights into what moves governments and leaders. Sir Martin Gilbert has performed yet another service to history, and to a renewal of vision.

Ecclesiastes said "of the making of books there is no end," but he never referred to reviews, so regretfully I must conclude my remarks. Read this book. There is so much to learn from it.

Edited by Chava Pressburger
Translated from the Czech by Elena Lappin
Atlantic Books £16.99 pp161
Reviewed by Theo Richmond

Theo is a journalist and author of "Zorin - A Quest"

when it was published in Prague two years ago. Now Elena Lappin provides a sensitive translation.

The entries begin in 1941 when Petr was 14, living in a middle-class home in Prague with his parents and sister Eva, who has edited this book. It was a mixed marriage - father Jewish, mother gentile - but it did not spare them persecution.

Some of the entries could be those of any schoolboy: "Did homework all morning. In the afternoon went for a walk."

He records classroom pranks, birthday treats. But there is also a creative intelligence at work, absorbed in writing, drawing, painting... an artist and writer in the making. Escaping emotional display, the teenager observes life with cool objectivity even while it is disintegrating around him. Wry humour defies Nazi humiliations: "The weather is foggy. Jews were told to wear a badge... When I went to school I counted sixty-nine"..."

As the transports get under way, leaving for Poland and the transit camp of Theresienstadt, the desks in Petr's classroom lose their occupants one by one. A teacher vanishes. At the railway assembly point, he says goodbye to departing friends, an aunt and uncle, a grandmother...

On 22 October 1942 the order comes for him to report that night for the next transport to Theresienstadt. In a note written there some time later, he recalls the events of that day: how the news reached him while he was intently cleaning a typewriter; how he "lovingly" packed his suitcase with papers, watercolour paints, an unfinished novel, pieces of leather, paper, paper, paper.

Only after that came the warm clothing supplied by anguished parents he was never to see again.

In Theresienstadt he read Dostoevsky, worked on a Czech-English dictionary, studied the geography of the moon. He wrote articles for a secret magazine, and poetry expressing his yearning for Prague with
anybody remember the saintly Mother Superior Yosifa? Would they welcome us to send us away? 

Lili was hesitant - it took some convincing to put aside her doubts. The little medieval abbey at the centre of Lvov exudes peace and tranquillity. Sometimes tourists come to marvel at the architecture of the courtyard. The main living there opened a small 'store-inside' to sell handmade devotional artefacts and memorials. The young woman who ushered us inside listened to Lili, whereupon she asked us to wait a moment - there still was one elderly sister among them who may possibly remember the Mother Superior Yosifa, after whom Lili was enquiring. Within a few minutes, she was back in the company of a frail, elderly Sister who not only remembered the Mother Superior, but had been to the same orphanage as Lili, run by her.

Yes - she remembered very well: the saintly Mother Superior Yosifa. Worker - a young Jewish girl who was brought into the orphanage one winter evening and told: 'It has been Lili?? - and foremost, she remembers a beautiful Jewish lad by the name of "Pani Cesia". 

And she kept a beautiful photo of "Pani Cesia", who pretended to be deaf and mute. "Pani Cesia" made for me a beautiful dress and a coat - I never earned anything like it, having been an orphan since I was 3 years old," said Sister Chryzantie. "THAT WAS MY MOTHER!" exclaimed Lili, sobbing... They fell into each other's arms, unable to stop crying. A few minutes later, still hardly holding back the tears, Sister Chryzantie took Lili to the Chapel, where they lit candles in memory of Mother Superior Yosifa ... and in blessed memory of "Pani Cesia". Lili's beloved mother. At that moment, Lili knew why she was meant to come to Lvov-Lemberg her home...

(Article written by Steffen Hunsche, Berlin)

A glimpse of my Family

My mother

My mother was born in a village called Rozny near Wilno in 1889. Later the family moved to Lodz, where she attended a Russian Gymnasium. High School and received a silver medal on graduation. All my older relatives in the United States and Israel told me that she should have received the Gold Medal, but the authorities were reluctant to do so to a Jewish person. She became a teacher, and for a while the headmistress of a Jewish girls' public high school, and continued teaching in the ghetto until the end of 1940.

She spoke fluent Russian, Polish, Yiddish, German, French and Esperanto.

At home she spoke Polish with us and occasionally

Michael Etkind

Michael Etkind came to England with the Windermere group and lived in Cardross Hostel in Scotland. He is dubbed by our President, Sir Martin Gilbert, as the Society's poet. He has been a frequent contributor to our journal.

Jewish girls' public school, and continued teaching in the ghetto until the end of 1940.

She spoke fluent Russian, Polish, Yiddish, German, French and Esperanto.

At home she spoke Polish with us and occasionally...
Yiddish with my father but with her former school friends and relatives from Odessa she spoke Russian. Our bookshelves were full of German, French, Russian and of course Polish books.

Her father, my grandfather, Moses Rudnieski, became a vegetarian when he was twenty years old and it was well known by all our relatives that he was corresponding with Tolstoy, who also became a vegetarian at more or less the same time. And this is the reason why we were all brought up as vegetarians, which was very unusual in Poland at that time.

As there were few charitable organizations helping the poor and the refugees from Germany, she was constantly helping those who were either illiterate or did not speak Polish needing to fill various documents at that time.

She listened to Hitler's speeches and always at ten o'clock in the evening listened to Moscow radio, although the programmes were interfered with. I believe that she was hoping that communism would somehow save us from the Nazis.

She never discussed anything political with me, as it was dangerous in pre-war Poland to have sympathetic views towards communism.

My father and my older brother Jacob left Lodz in March 1940 in order to find accommodation in Warsaw for all of us, but instead of arriving in Warsaw, they were taken to the Kielce ghetto. Therefore my mother was left with me, my younger sister Renka and my brother Lolek, and a month later in April we had to move into the Lodz ghetto.

Michael Etkind, Father.

Lolek, who was ten years old, died of typhoid fever in September and from that moment my mother lost her will to live although we still had enough food to eat.

She died in the ghetto on Sunday, the 8th of March 1941 at ten to four just as her younger sister Fania and her husband Szlomo Elgort arrived in our room. Szlomo, who was a very religious Jew, immediately covered the mirror stopped the clock, and arranged for two old women to arrive in the evening, to prepare the body for burial on Monday. The two women ignored me as they busied themselves all night while speaking Yiddish to each other. I understood two words which they repeated a few times - "Gute Neshome" - Good Soul.

My Father

My father, who was the oldest of four brothers, was born in Russia in Mogilev in the 1880s. He trained as an accountant, but a year before the outbreak of the First World War he and one of his brothers were called up to the Tsarist army and served there until 1918, when he was captured and his brother was killed. My father's captivity in Germany was not too bad because he became the interpreter for the other prisoners of war.

In the meantime, his younger brothers and his widowed mother were living in Tel Aviv as they had managed to leave Russia in 1918. Abram, the eldest of the two brothers, became the manager of the Anglo-Palestine Discount Bank and came to see us once or twice while we were on holidays before the war. I found out after the war that my father was giving his money to purchase land in Tel Aviv, which he sold during the Second World War.

On his release, he stopped in Lodz where he met and married my mother. He soon started working as an accountant for a number of large textile establishments which were now in predominately Jewish hands. In addition to doing the accounts he also held stock in some of the firms.

He usually worked on Saturdays, but he observed the High Holidays and fasted on Yom Kippur, while my mother would urge him to have something to eat and drink in the afternoon.

He was very secretive about his work and inventions. It was only one month after the outbreak of the war that he took a "deeesk" - a hasidic cab and took me to one of the firms of "Kanei Zbar" in Piotrowska street which was by then changed to Adolf Hitler Strauss and Jews were not allowed to walk on it.

The Germans were going to take away all the stock from Jewish businesses and since
the Great Blasphemy of the Concentration Camps, a crime against humanity of unimaginable magnitude, and the story of the descent of a once admired people into the depths of barbarism.

Churchill, with his intuition and his vision, was a lonely voice warning of dangers ahead. As early as 1933 he told the House of Commons that, in Germany “you have a dictatorship, most grim dictatorship.” He was shocked by the racist Nuremberg Laws, details of which were passed to him through the efforts of Leonard Montefiore of the Central British Fund. In his evidence to the 1937 Peel Commission he foresaw “there might well be a great Jewish State there numbered by millions.” His vision became reality, but in the meantime terrible events were taking place.

Whilst this book revives around Churchill and the Jews, there is much else of general historical interest. Martin Gilbert, portraits, paintings, the background scene so expertly as to highlight the foreground characters and events even more graphically. An example is the debate here and abroad, especially in the U.S.A. that ensued on the 1937 Peel Commission recommendation of partition of Palestine. Under that policy, according to Churchill “reconciliation would be impossible.”

Appeasement was in the air, as well as fear for the security of the Suez Canal, control of Persian oil, appeasement of Germans and Arabs, two groups who supported each other. The British government in 1939 issued a White Paper (the book describes it as a ‘Black Paper’) which dealt a severe blow to all Jewish hopes, with its restriction on immigration and land purchase. Within months there erupted the Second World War.

Wartime events are described so clearly that there is a great temptation to quote page after page. It is a drama known to most, if not all, of us, the bowing to Arabs, the creation of the Jewish Brigade, the revolt in Iraq, the 1946-47 war, the impact on Jews everywhere. All is set out with the detail and balance of an expert historian.

It was Churchill’s speeches as Prime Minister in 1940 that gave inspiration to David Ben-Gurion, then in London, for his decision to form the Jewish Brigade, the revolt in Iraq, the 1946-47 war, the impact on Jews everywhere. All is set out with the detail and balance of an expert historian.

On the other hand, being realistic, he commented that, “Wherever there are three Jews it will be found that there are two Prime Ministers and one leader of the Opposition.”

On 14th May 1948, in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion proclaimed the independence of the State of Israel. The only person now alive who was then present is Ariel Handler, a devoted and tireless worker for Jews and Israel, now in his 80s and living in Jerusalem, just as Churchill, immediately on hearing of the Declaration of Independence, rushed publicly to the support of the new State, and castigated the Labour Government for its tardy recognition of Israel’s sovereignty.

Churchill regarded the coming into being of a Jewish State in Palestine as “an event in world history to be viewed in the perspective of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand or even three thousand years.” Perhaps influenced by Chaim Weizmann, he declared that “there are none of the arts or sciences which have not been enriched by Jewish
Paine's words. The great heart and body of this work is admirable and, to me, a revelation. The Jewish people and the Zionist cause never had a truer and more courageous friend than Winston Churchill. He never wavered in his unstinting support for the Zionist experiment in Palestine, despite a barrage of lies, misrepresentations and base insinuations levelled against him at home and Arab violence and vilification in the Holy Land.

There is no doubt that Sir Martin Gilbert has done Jews, Israel, and history itself, a notable service in producing this detailed account of but one aspect of the life of a great man, an aspect so close to our hearts.

The story can be divided into three parts. First, Churchill's efforts for the Zionist cause. For the National Home from the beginning of the 20th Century until the outbreak of the Second World War, there follows a war period, followed by the unspeakable horrors of the Nazis, when, at one time, Churchill bore the whole world on his shoulders, followed by the post-war battle for the establishment of the Jewish State.

Many of us thought we knew the story. Well, I did. Having written a documentary on the subject, but, with this book, I confess I remain but a pupil and Martin the teacher.

A word about the author: He must be considered one of the finest historians of our era. He was Churchill's official biographer, with studies that included 16 volumes and documents and a separate Life of Churchill. Not content with that he has given the world 79 works.

some in several volumes, on many historical subjects, including an Atlas of the Holocaust, ranging from American to Russian history, and including, of course, his account of "The Boys. Triumph over Adversity."

He was eminently suited to write the story of the great war leader, both of them sharing a vision of history across the millennia. I would love to fill this review with Churchillian quotes, but a few perhaps.

"A man cannot be a good Englishman, unless he is a good Jew."

I am in full sympathy with the historical traditional aspirations of the Jews.

He saw the restoration of a national centre for Jews as "a tremendous event in the history of the world." He praised Jews for their sense of "corporate responsibility", as well as their bravery in the First World War:

"60,000 had fought in Europe. Africa and Asia. 2324 gave their lives. 6830 were wounded, and 3 won the Victoria Cross."

Churchill went further than any politician, or preacher, that matter.

"No thoughtful man can doubt the fact that there are beyond all question the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world."

having produced - a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious of mankind."

What can one say after that?

It was this perception, so carefully set out in this book, that impelled the whole of Churchill's actions and speeches as to our Jewish people. We see his efforts as a local M.P. for the Jews of Manchester, his strict action to prevent anti-Jewish riots in South Wales; his strong reaction to the 1944 Aliens Bill, his championing of Chaim Weizman's efforts in producing much-needed war material at a tense time in 1917.

Churchill hated, with all his heart, totalitarianism of every kind. He despised "tyrannical Bolshevism" even though many of its leaders were Jews, with as much force as he opposed the Nazis, describing Hitler as "the embodiment of many forms of soul-destroying evil."

Having served in the Sudan and seen the effects of the "Mohammedan", particularly in relation to the status of women, he referred to Islam as a "retrograde force". No wonder, despite our protests to him when, as Colonial Secretary in 1921 and later, he remained loyal to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, opening the way for Jewish immigration and development. Later justified by the League of Nations Mandate. As far as Churchill was concerned, Jews were in the Land as "of right" not on sufferance.

As one reads this clear, comprehensive account of events before, during, and after the 1914-18 war, one realises the crucial, indeed vital role Churchill played in the history of the Jewish State. What an ally he was! One wonders what might have happened had he not been at the centre of events.

The second part of the book deals in detail with the rise of the Nazis to power, leading to
the two main owners were in Warsaw, my father was asked by two former Polish employees to sign a document stating that the firm had been sold to them six months earlier and therefore it was no longer a Jewish establishment. My father refused to sign, but before leaving pointed out a room to me whose shelves were full of textiles, which belonged to him, and answering my question said that its value was one million "loty"—about two hundred thousand U.S. dollars before the war.

My older brother Jacob, who was four and a half years older than I, was very artistic. From the age of seven he was attending a private gymnasium—a school taking boys from the age of seven to eighteen—which nearly half of them were Jewish. Very soon he was the best in art in the whole school, but he was neglecting other subjects. When he was fourteen he joined a textile design college and also became apprenticed to a well-known Jewish painter, Maurice Treborz, who looked after six or eight apprentices.

Michael Etkind Sister

From time to time we went to see their exhibitions and I was very impressed by the high standard. But there were no modern paintings and Jacob started corresponding with some Parisian school of art and learning calligraphy and other designs. A year before the war when he was nearly eighteen he started talking about father giving him one hundred thousand "loty" to enable him to go to Paris and become a real painter. He was convinced that by the time the money ran out he would be able to support himself as an artist.

My sister Henka, who was two years younger than I, was attending the same school where our mother was teaching. Unlike me she had a good singing voice, and our mother took her to the cinema to see "The Merry Widow", "Dubok" and other films, after which she would not stop singing and acting. The only picture that my mother took me to see was "All Quiet on the Western Front" by Eric Marla Remarque.

In the ghetto Henka joined a small group of young people who were taught by a famous impressionist, a woman who was blind, but whose name I do not remember. She developed the ability to imitate people's voices and this made her popular in the ghetto orphanage and later in the tailoring workshop. She could imitate Runkowski's speeches and this never failed to amuse those who heard her.

My youngest brother Lolek was quite fragile. When I went skating with him, he broke his leg and our mother was always treating him as the baby of the family. Unlike me he was never street-wise, but he was very clever and quick to learn.

14th Waffen SS Ukrainian Division — The 'Galizien'

Before it is finally too late, there remains an urgent need for belated justice after the murder of the three million Polish Jews and the complete annihilation of the Jews in Galicia, then the southeast of Poland, during World War II. From the researches in David Cesarani's book, Justice Delayed: How Britain By Dr. Leonard Kurzer

The late Dr. Kurzer came to England with the Polish Army. He was for many years the Chairman of the Polish Jewish Ex-Servicemen.

Became a Refuge for Nazi War Criminals' and the campaigning by Dr. Arkier we learned about the murderous activities of the Nachtinatal Battalion and others that were later incorporated in the SS Ukrainian Division. Last year Mr Andrew Dismore, Member of Parliament for Hendon, brought this matter to the attention of the House of Commons in London.

We know about the fate of the Jews in Lviv, where my extended family lived, the Jews in Brody, Kolomyja,
Kostrzna and the surrounding villages who, before the Second World War, lived there in comparative friendship with their Ukrainian neighbours. Those places were seats of learning and culture, inherited from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire before 1919.

At the end of the Second World War, the Ukrainian SS Division surrendered in Austria to the British and were sent as prisoners to camps in Italy, between Rimini and Riccione. The Soviet Union demanded their repatriation which meant certain execution or being sent to "Guags" in Siberia. This led to tension between the Foreign Office, who did not want to comply with the Soviet's demands, and the Home Office, who had suspicions about the war-time record of the "Galizien". In the end, thousands of the "Galizien" Division were admitted into the United Kingdom and dispersed across the country, of course, without vigorous scrutiny of each man's war-time record.

The new arrivals then got jobs in agriculture, married English girls, became members of society without any later suspicion that some of them may have had a murderous past. With the operational limitation of pursuing enquiries in the absence of any specific allegation against individuals, the police have not brought even one case before a British Court. It is also claimed that the alleged culprits are too old for legal proceedings to be initiated. I relate this from my personal experience. I was a medical officer of my Unit which guarded the prisoners of war camp and had unrestricted access to them. I remember they were boys in their late teens and early twenties. At the time, I did not know of their past atrocity activities and, although they spoke Polish, I did not interrogate them.

It is worth mentioning that there was an exception to the atrocious behaviour of this section of the Ukrainian population. It was the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Lwow, Metropolitan Andrew Slepyskyi, who saved about a hundred and fifty Jews. Amongst them were two sons of Rabbi Yecheskel Lewin, of the famous progressive temple in Lwow, who were dispersed in convents, orphanages and monasteries.

Many survivors still alive bear witness to the noble and humanitarian gesture of this man. They will never forget him. His name deserves a hallowed place at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem as a "RIGHTEOUS GENTILE" and this omission should be corrected.

There is no limit of time to prosecute war criminals and I feel that even now we should get belated justice for our families and the victims. We can never forgive or forget what some members of the Ukrainian SS Division have done. Therefore, if any witness or anyone has any relevant information that will help bring belated justice for the murdered innocents, please address this in confidence to Holocaust researcher, Dr. Ankier, by contacting me on telephone number 0044 0020 7722 1767.

The Jewish Cemetery in Monte Cassino

A nother Allied Force invaded Southern Italy at the end of 1942. This army included the Second Polish Corps which had a great many Jewish soldiers and officers. By January 1944, the advancing Allied Forces had come to a standstill. Their progress was halted by the so-called "Siegfried Line" which was running between Naples and Rome and included a range of mountains dominated by Monte Cassino and its Benedictine Monastery. The area was defended by elite German Parzer Divisions who were "dig in" in Monte Cassino, thereby forming an impregnable barrier or Highway No. 6 and preventing access to Rome. Continuous bombing by the Allies had failed to dislodge them.

After an unsuccessful
SECTION VI: BOOK REVIEW

Churchill and the Jews

by Sir Martin Gilbert, C.B.E., D.Litt.
published by Simon & Schuster (£20)

Aubrey Rose, C.B.E., D.Univ.

Aubrey is a lawyer of great distinction and has played an active role in many fields. He was a Senior Vice-President of the Board of Deputies; he was an original member of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; he set up and chaired a working party on the environment which led to his book "Judaisms & Ecology". He spent five years as a Commissioner of the Commission for Racial Equality. He is a Co-Chairman of the Indian Jewish Association, a Trustee of various charitable trusts and he is Deputy Chairman of the British Caribbean Association. He recently published his fascinating autobiography, "The Rainbow Never Ends".

This book is typical of Sir Martin Gilbert. It is written with consistent clarity, based on immense research as to facts, evidenced by the detailed extent of acknowledgments, maps, references, private papers cited, bibliography, newspaper articles, etc., particularly graphic, fascinating, and heart-warming photographs.

Yet all these are the trimmings, as a tailor might say, or the plumes, in Toni...
gramophone record version see The Times, 15 December 1938.

For further analysis of the role and mindset of the refugee organisations, see Claudia Cuzio, "Invisible Children: The Selection and Integration Strategies of Relief Organizations," Shofar vol. 23 no. 1 (Fall 2004), pp. 41-56.


Boas in Hansard (HC) vol. 341 col. 1474 (21 November 1938).

Beate Neumeier, Kindertransport: Childhood Trauma and Diaspora Experience, in Ulrike Behlau and Bernhard Beitz eds, Jewish Women's Writing of the 1990s and Beyond in Great Britain and the United States (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004), pp. 54-59 comments on the different readings of the Kindertransport, the film Into the Arms of Strangers (2000) and the play Kindertransport (1995).

Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, First Annual Report: November 1938-December 1939 (London: MCCG, 1940), p. 3.


Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Lozinsky, Steiselberg's Holocaust, passim.

Bendit. A Great Adventure, p. 16.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Andrea Hammel, 'Representations of Family in Autobiographical Texts of Child Refugees', Shofar vol. 29 no. 1 (Fall 2004), pp. 19-29 indicates how this tendency has continued in recent Kinder testimony.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 151.

Egon Larsen, 'What Every Child Should Know', AJR Information.


Gerschon, We Came as Children, pp. 150, 153.

Gerschon, We Came as Children, p. 111; Ambrasey, The Story of Peter Cronheim, p. 55.

Testimonies of Vera Schanfield in National Sound Archives, C110-906, British Library.


Leverton and Lowensohn, I Came Alone, front cover illustration.

For a review of this documentary directed by Sue Read, see Ronald Channing, 'Kindertastic: a lifetime's odyssey', AJR Information, July 2000.


The plaque features in the film Into the Arms of Strangers (2000) and on the cover of Kindertransport 60th Anniversary.

1. The statue and installation were outside the Liverpool Street station where many of the Kinder arrived and were organised by the BCCM. This work is now being replaced with another devoted to the Kindertransport.

2. Produced by Deborah Oppenheimer and directed by Mark Jonathan Harris, See idem, Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport (London:
Danish Holocaust history is mainly known for the unique and exceptional rescue of around 7,000 Jews in October 1943. These events have logically and rightly been the focus of much attention, whereas the interest in the history of the victims has been markedly low. Despite the relatively low number of people who perished, a complete list of victims remains missing.

The purpose of this short article is to give an overview of the deportations of Jews from Denmark and the special conditions they lived under in Theresienstadt.

By Silvia Goldbaum Tarabini Fracapane

Silvia studied at the University of Copenhagen where she obtained an M.A. degree in Comparative Literature. From 2001 – 2003, she worked at the Department of Holocaust & Genocide Studies. Since 2005, she has been researching the history of Danish victims of the Holocaust.

Deportations

Due to the ‘policy of cooperation’ implemented by the Danish government after the German occupation April 9, 1940, the ‘Jewish Question’ was not raised in Denmark until after the government stepped down in August 1943.

The Jewish Community was warned about the impending raid, and so an Friday evening October 1, 1943 when it began, most Jews had already gone into hiding. During the night between October 1 and 2, the only night when an actual house search took place, approximately 200 people were arrested in the area of Copenhagen and a bit less than 100 people on Funen and Jutland. In the following
weeks, the number of arrested persons increased to about 500 people.

All in all four transports of Jews left Denmark. The first one departed from the peninsula on October 2 and brought 33 persons to Theresienstadt, where they arrived on October 5. Transport 2 left Copenhagen by ship for Swinemünde (Swinemund) on October 2, and arrived with 196 persons in Theresienstadt on October 6. Transport 3 left on October 13, from the internment camp in Horserod, Northern Zealand, where people who got caught after the raid were imprisoned. This transport carried 175 persons, who arrived in Theresienstadt on October 14. The last transport also departed from Horserod, where 19 prisoners left on November 23. Three young men managed to escape and therefore just 16 continued to Sachsenhausen (men) and Ravensbrück (women and children). 11 of them arrived later in Theresienstadt. One remained in Sachsenhausen and one was deported on to Majdanek, where he perished in January 1944.

All in all, 472 persons were deported with the four transports. Of them 470 arrived in Theresienstadt. Often it is stated that mainly old and sick people were deported from Denmark, going through data, it appears, however, that only 111 people were more than 60 years old while the group also consisted of 48 children 0-15 years old.

Of the 472 deportees from Denmark, 81 adults perished in Theresienstadt and two babies born in the camp died there as well. Furthermore, one man perished in Majdanek and one man presumably in Auschwitz. The two last cases are rarely mentioned in a Danish context and only one of them is mentioned on lists of people who perished.

The agreement

In early November 1943 Adolf Eichmann visited Copenhagen and concluded a special agreement with Werner Best, the permanent Danish Consul General in Copenhagen. The agreement consisted of three points: (1) that Jews above the age of 60 should no longer be arrested and deported. (2) Considered on a case-by-case basis, Mischlinge and Jews in mixed marriages, who had already been deported, should be released and transported back to Denmark. (3) All Jews deported from Denmark should remain in Theresienstadt and there receive a visit from representatives of the Danish administration and Danish Red Cross. It was added that a visit from Denmark was not considered desirable until the spring of 1944 and, whereas the Danish prisoners were allowed to correspond with their homeland, they would not be allowed to receive food parcels.

Subsequently, the Danish administration continually reminded German authorities of the promise of the return of Mischlinge and Jews in mixed marriages; on January 1944 five persons were actually returned from Theresienstadt, most probably as a gesture aiming at pacifying the Danish officials.

Although the prisoners began noticing that no groups of Danes were deported, the inmates from Denmark were not aware of the "agreement". During spring 1944, food parcels started to arrive from Denmark, even if this was not part of the agreement. The parcels were sent partly from private people, partly organized by different help organisations - and later on through the Red Cross.

Communists were interned here in the summer of 1941 by the Danish authorities; they were deported to Stutthof on October 2, 1943. In August 1943 the Germans took over the camp and used it also for the 300 "hostages" taken among prominent Danish men. In October and November 1943 Horserod was used for Jews arrested on their way to Sweden.
Telegram 1533 sent by Dr. Best on 3 Nov. 1943 and the answer from 5 Nov. Danish Record Office Auswartige Amt, “Inland III gemeben Juden Massenmord” box 228.
TONY KUSHNER IS DIRECTOR OF THE PARKES INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF JEWISH/NON-JEWISH RELATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON. HIS MOST RECENT BOOK IS REMEMBERING REFUGEES: THEN AND NOW (MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006) FROM WHICH SOME OF THIS LECTURE IS REPRODUCED IN AN AMENDED VERSION.

Notes

i. See Donald Bloch and Tony Kushner, The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), introduction and chapter 1: Memory and survivors.


iv. Ibid. p.253.

v. Ibid. p.256.

vi. Ibid. p.254.

vii. Ibid. p.256.


x. See, for example, the essays in Dale Ofer and Lenore Weitzmann (eds), Women in the Holocaust (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) which deal with gender but only with regard to women’s experiences.

xi. See, for example, Jan Blair’s Oscar-winning Anne Frank Remembered (1998) and comment on it in G. Jan Colijn, Anne Frank Remembered. Holocaust and Genocide Studies vol.10 no.1 (spring, 1996), pp.78-92.

xii. Benjamin Wilkomirski, Fragments (Heidelberg: Picador, 1996) and the sensitive analysis of the ‘affair’.


xvii. W.D. Rubenstein, The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis (London: Routledge, 1997).


xx. Baldwin’s broadcast of 8 December 1938 was printed as ‘The Plight of the Refugees’ (Ontario: Canadian National Committee on Refugees, 1939), p.9 for this quote. For the
designed to offer children from liberatedolland the chance to recuperate in Britain. Later extended to include children from France and Belgium, it brought up to 10,000 children to Britain before it came to an official end in June 1946. Schiff argued that a similar scheme, voluntarily funded, could be used for the children from the camps with an absolute assurance that their stay in Britain would be temporary. Second, according to Maxwell, Montefiore suggested that they should be brought to England not because there is no other means of providing for them, but because he thinks it right that England should do something to show sympathy, and also because he thinks there is no better way of impressing on the British people the horrors of the concentration camps than by bringing some of the actual victims to this country.

Initially, Maxwell suggested it would be better to help the children in Germany itself only to be convinced by Schiff and Anthony de Rothschild that this would be impracticable. It was Schiff’s and de Rothschild’s argument that France and the USA were helping and that it might not help the good reputation of Great Britain if we took no share that proved decisive. Yielding reluctantly to their moral pressure, Maxwell wrote to the Home Secretary that he would like to have avoided any scheme for bringing more refugees into Britain, but obviously this proposal with reference to children will receive a lot of public sympathy. Nevertheless, Maxwell laid down strict criteria: it ought not to be limited to Jewish children: it would depend on careful arrangements with regard to transport and screening the health of the children and, lastly, finding suitable accommodation in Britain. Maxwell stated that if money to fund the operation was found and all these conditions were met, then it does not think it would be justifiable for the Home Office to refuse on the understanding that it is the responsibility of the refugee organisations to make arrangements for their repatriation as soon as emigration becomes practicable. It was, be added.

An exceptional arrangement made for dealing with the specially pitiful conditions of children found in concentration camps, and must not be taken as a precedent for requests to bring to this country other children or young persons of older persons, who are in a distressed condition on the Continent.

The children were flown to Britain in autumn 1945 and the first half of 1946. Initially cared for in reception camps, they set up in Winchamere in the Lake District, and Wintershield, Hall in Durnley, Hampshire. The Lake District and Hampshire countryside locations were not accidents. Those involved in the newly created CCFCC were determined to restore the health of their charges: country air and food were seen as crucial. But other factors included: the availability of suitable accommodation, the closeness to RAF bases (the children were flown on planes returning or taking troops to Prague and then Munich), and their isolation from the wider community (keeping the desire for invisibility which the Jewish refugee organisations had followed since 1938). Avoiding urban locations was not for medical reasons alone: it was a response, also, to government concern, especially articulated by Ernest Bevin, that Jewish refugees were congregating on towns, thereby in his belief creating a Jewish problem.

In conclusion, it is crucial to separate out the experiences of the Kinder from those Jewish children who came to Britain after 1945 in order to be faithful to the experiences and nature of the Holocaust and its chronology. There are points in common — not in relation to the life stories of those involved, which were essentially different — but with regard to British governmental responses even if they were more open in 1956—9 than in 1945. There is also the commonality of those involved from a Jewish organisational perspective, including Otto Schiff and Leonard Montefiore. What also ties them together is the subsequent positive memory work, the dominant theme of which is to view Britain as essentially fair and decent and the experience as a whole as redemptive. What we now need, I would suggest, is a more open and critical approach, one which will enable us to differentiate one Jewish experience under persecution from another — that of the Kinder on the one hand and the child survivors of the Holocaust on the other.
this did heighten the prisoners’ living standards considerably. Before that period, according to several testimonies, and contrary to a common opinion amongst Danish historians, a number of Danish prisoners died of hunger and hunger-related health damages.

The Red Cross visit
During spring 1944 the big Verschrottungaktion of Theresienstadt took place: houses were painted, grass saved, playgrounds installed, etc. By mid-May approximately 7,500 people were sent to Auschwitz to make the camp seem less crowded." On 22 June 1944 several Danish families were allowed to move into newly furnished private rooms. The long prepared visit of the Red Cross took place the following day. Two Danish representatives participated, Dr. Eigil Juel Henriksen of the National Board of Health, also delegate of the Danish Red Cross, and Frants Hassel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Swiss doctor Maurice Rossel of the International Red Cross headed the delegation, which also contained a few German participants. The Danish efforts to "look after" the Danish prisoners have, of course, in a Danish perspective always been emphasised, whereas the role of the Danish visitors as a tool for the Nazi propaganda has never really been dealt with.

Examining the existing reports of the visit, nothing indicates that the delegates actually realised that it had all been staged, which is also confirmed by the 1978 interview Claus Lammann conducted with Maurice Rossel. In fact, the three reports are exceedingly similar in nature, which suggests that they were all based on the pre-approved introduction given by Paul Eppstein, "Chairman of the Elders", forced to play the role of Theresienstadt’s mayor for the day.

The visit carried significant importance for many Danish prisoners, who subsequently were allowed to remain in the private rooms. Furthermore, the shipment of food parcels became more regular after the visit.

On 15 April 1945, 423 prisoners, both Danish citizens and stateless were released from

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**SUMMARY TABLE OF THE FOUR TRANSPORTS OF JEWS FROM DENMARK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The four transports</th>
<th>Those who returned</th>
<th>Those who perished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st transport on Oct 2</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd transport on Oct 2</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd transport on Oct 6</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th transport on Nov 23</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arr. in Terezin, Jan &amp; Apr 1944 (V 4-1942)</td>
<td>107*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arr. in Terezin, Jan &amp; Apr 1944 (V 4-1942)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped in Sachsenhausen</td>
<td>1**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died from Sachsenhausen to Majdanek</td>
<td>1**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all deported to the transports</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of them arrived in Theresienstadt</td>
<td>410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of them died in Theresienstadt</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of them born and died in the camp</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of them died in other camps</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These people were taken to respectively Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen
** The man from the transport, who died remained in Sachsenhausen and a prisoner from Theresienstadt, who had been imprisoned in the Kleine Festung, and who was therefore missing when the buses left.

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* Of www.jerusaleminstitute.org/database in June and Dr. Czech Kalendarium der Ewigenste im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945, Rowohlt, 1989. For some reasons the number reported in Danish accounts is 13,000-17,000 people, e.g. H. Soe-Madsen, "The Perfect Deception", p.281. T Svede, October 1946, p.17.
Theresienstadt, picked up by the White Buses and taken via Germany and Denmark to Sweden. On 1 May 1945, the radio announced the surrender of Germany, and soon after the travel back to Denmark began.

The numbers

Since the 1990s the number of deportees from Denmark is quoted as 480, and the number of people who perished 58, including the two babies. This figure is, however, not fully correct. Even though no original deportation list exists in Danish archives, several different lists do exist on the basis of which the actual numbers can be established. First, there are lists detailing the Danish prisoners who perished in Theresienstadt as well as lists of the Danish transport numbers. Secondly, there are lists of people who arrived in Sweden from Theresienstadt in April 1945. Finally, the names of the five people who were sent back to Denmark in January 1944 are also known. Furthermore, a lot of useful information can be found in survivors’ testimonies and interviews. Pamphlet Terezin lists 665 Danish inmates, to whom should be added four Danish men who arrived from Terezin from Sachsenhausen via Berlin, and as such were not listed as Danes.

Conclusion

When going through Danish historiography, one can be surprised to note that not much interest has been paid to the fate of the Jews who were not rescued. And, in fact, in addition to the prisoners in Theresienstadt, other stories could be told: people drowned on their way to Sweden, others committed suicide in fear of deportations. Also, a few Jews were deported to different camps with other transports from Denmark than the four “Jew transports”. Furthermore, a group of children travelled out of Denmark hidden in or under trains to find a new way to Palestine; six were caught in Germany and sent to Auschwitz. There is also the case of formerly Danish women, who had lost their citizenship by marrying foreigners, and who were deported — often as stateless — from other countries. Some were helped by the Danish authorities to get to Denmark; some were let down. And, finally, a few Danish Jews were deported from abroad despite the fact that the racial laws should not be applicable to Danish citizens.

Due to the amazing rescue, the number of Danish victims to the Holocaust is much lower than the death tolls of other countries. On that background, it is even more remarkable that the precise number of people has yet to be established.

Most of them had originally been deported from Denmark, but some Czech women had married Danish men, and a few children had been born in the camp.


The same faces with stencilled age
We are survivors of circles
decades.

As has been highlighted throughout this lecture, creating a 'safe' Kindertransport narrative necessitates a downplaying of the vulnerable adults left behind in the Third Reich who lacked, in the eyes of the receiving countries, the appeal of childhood innocence. Even then, the children were regarded with some suspicion. In November 1938, the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, justified the Kindertransport scheme as being 'without any harm to our own population' IXII. The Home Office's official history of British refugee policy, written in 1954, hurried through this movement in one paragraph and simply outlined how this damage limitation was to be achieved. The children were allowed in on condition that they would be emigrated when they reached 18... and no encouragement was given to them to qualify for the professions or for 'black-coated occupations'. Until there is a film, book or memorial recalling such official proclamations, rather than redemptively desiring that they first witnessed Britain as a place where The Policeman Smiled before falling comfortably into the Arms of Strangers, we will not have done justice either to the experience or to the legacy of the Kinder.

The remainder of this lecture will focus on the children: on the children who came to Britain after the war through the committee created by Leonard Montefiore and Otto Schiff — for the Care of Children from the Concentration Camps (the CCCC). Until recently, through the efforts of Berl Hellgott and the '45 Aid Society, and its historian, Sir Martin Gilbert, the survivors that came after the war have been relatively neglected, especially in relation to those that came on the Kindertransports. The confusion brought about by labelling the Kinder 'survivors' has perhaps added to the marginalisation of those known, a little misleadingly, as the Boys' indeed, shortly after this lecture was delivered, Berl Hellgott himself was described by the Jewish Chronicle as 'this child of the Kindertransport', revealing the problems that can emerge if precision in understanding is lacking. What follows is perhaps a more critical reading of the scheme for children from the concentration camps than that offered by Martin Gilbert. It is offered not as deliberately controversial, but to highlight further the tenacity and achievements of those that recreated their lives in Britain after the war.

In 1945, in an effort to public pressure, a small scheme which had been proposed by the Jewish Refugee Committee (JRC), to allow up to 1,000 children survivors of the concentration camps to enter Britain temporarily to recuperate, was accepted by the Home Office. As with the proposals put to the Cabinet in 1933, Jewish refugee organisations promised to cover all costs. Eventually some 753 children, almost all Jewish, were found qualifying for the scheme: an indication of the narrowness of its restrictions. Otto Schiff of the JRC visited Sir Alexander Maxwell, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office, on 1 May 1945, putting forward a request from Leonard Montefiore for the temporary admission to the country of about 1,500 Jewish orphan children from the camps in Buchenwald and Belsen. By August 1945, the JRC's secretary wrote to Maxwell outlining the scheme to 850 'for no other reason but that of finance'. The initial restrictions to concentration camps in Germany is indicative of their nationality in Britain but also the more general ignorance in 1945 of the Holocaust's geographical scale. Eventually the scheme was extended beyond Germany to incorporate other camps, particularly Theresienstadt.

Another problem in finding those eligible for the scheme was the refusal of Zionist leaders in the displaced persons camps to allow the children to go to anywhere but Palestine. Having been liberated from Dachau, Karl Kleinman was determined to go to Palestine: 'I don't want to go to England'. Fed up with waiting, however, I said to myself and a few other boys: 'Why not? Let's get away from here at least'. The Peretz Zylberberg, as a Bundist, was less difficult to convince about the 'whispered rumour of a British option'.

Schiff and Montefiore advanced arguments designed to convince the Home Office which they knew would be hesitant to accept more Jewish refugees. First, they stressed that a scheme was already in existence, the Young People from Occupied Countries, which had been initially...
sought recognition has been transformed into "Britain's Schindler," as has Foreign Office bureaucrat, Frank Foley, Vera Gisen, one of the Czech girls brought to Britain by Winton states that "He has become the much cherished father-figure of the largest family in the world, because our own parents had perished in the Holocaust as surely we would have done without his swift and timely intervention. To him we owe our freedom and life."
The complexity of the actions of Foley, Winton and of course Schindler himself are lost sight of in the desire to create what are in essence "sacred saints," or for the orthodox, a Jewish equivalent in the form of Solomon Schorofeld, perhaps one of the most difficult people to have operated at an organisational level in British Jewry during the twentieth century. In one testimony he appears almost as a timeless Golem, rescuing the Jews from their violent oppressors:
"Where is this Rabbi Dr Schorofeld?... A man has entered. But no, he is not really a man, he is more like a giant. Like the giants in the Bible stories our father used to tell us on Friday nights. He is big and tall and broad-shouldered with a firm, strong stride and a ruddy beard and an undulating voice that is raggy like mountain ridges. He is quite old, like our father, forty at least. But no, on the other hand he seems quite young, in fact ageless."

The narrative structure is thus completed - the innocent children are rescued by the righteous nation and specific righteous individuals. They become a sacred remnant of a lost people whose parents sacrificed their own happiness for the well being of their children who subsequently made good. It is a great storyline and one that is understandable given the need to respond positively to the unfathomable scale of the Holocaust. Its appeal, however, explains the lack of critical historical subject and in such narratives we forget the essence of being a refugee, that of loss, and in the specific case of the Kinder the irreparable fracture of their parents' absence. As Louise London puts it: "We remember the touching photographs and newsreel footage of unaccompanied Jewish children arriving on the Kindertransports. There are no such photographs of the Jewish parents left behind in Nazi Europe, and their fate has made a minimal impact."

Self-contained and self-congratulatory, the story becomes cut off from the messiness of modern refugee movements, including the existence of enormous numbers of unaccompanied refugee children today who can be counted not in the thousands but in the millions. Indeed it has been estimated that approximately one-half of the global refugee population comprises children under the age of 18."

It is worth at this point returning to Karen Gerson's "We Came as Children" which remains the most powerful exploration of the identities and experiences of the Kinder in any genre. When the anthology was reviewed in 1986 there were those who desired to place it within the context of the general refugee experience and others who linked it more specifically to the Holocaust. The critic, John Carey, writing in the New Statesman, whilst putting the emphasis on the latter, was not oblivious to the former:

"Over here they froze in converted seaside chalets, then went to foster-homes. Often they were treated as servants by the wife, still, they Eved. Brothers and sisters who stayed behind were made into fertiliser at Auschwitz. Some who got as far as Holland were returned to Germany and used for medical experiments."

The anonymous reviewer in The Times similarly raised the problems they faced in Britain but ultimately dismissed them with the crude moral sleight-of-hand of the alternative raised by Carey: "the overriding emotion must come from Auschwitz and Buchenwald. They did survive!"

A generation later the Kinder experience has increasingly been placed in the Holocaust context, the former children describing themselves as "survivors" and unwittingly or not, a barrier drawn up with other refugee experiences. Bethia Leventer introducing I Came Alone in October 1989 wrote to her Readers: "Most of the children lost their parents in the Holocaust and thus became part of history. She continues that if some of the stories seem repetitious, please realize that our experiences were often identical: for instance the journey... was a trauma, as was the realization of having become orphans when the rest of the world celebrated victory." Lotte Kramer's poem "Kindertransport Reunion" continues with similar themes of uniformity under the impact of the Holocaust.
Wales meets Poland – July 2007

Although I visit Krakow twice a year, I avoid the summer. I have not experienced the Polish summer since August 1945, when I left the country. I remember it as scorching and airless – the sky blazing, the soil parched, the vegetation scrawny. Deep down I know, of course, that my dread is tied up to the Krakow – June 1942 “Resettlement Aktion” which lasted eight days and was conducted in a sweltering, stifling heatwave. This year 2007, I relented.

On 5th July 2005, I travelled from Paddington railway station to Wales. I had undertaken to address a group of students at a secondary school in Newport. I must have been in the vicinity of Edgware Road underground station on that fateful morning, minutes before the explosion. I missed it by a whisker.

The journey took much longer than two hours, but the students waited for me and welcomed me with great enthusiasm. One could have heard the proverbial pin drop, they listened so attentively to my sad talk. A deluge of questions followed. We then made for the school refectory where a splendid spread, a feast, was laid on.

A few days later I received a telephone call from Miss Annie Grooms, the teacher in charge, “The boys and girls want to visit Krakow, and so do I,” said Miss Grooms.

It took the youngsters two years to save the necessary funds; no job was too modest, too boring; they savoured away in the evenings, at weekends, during the holidays.

Two years later, Miss Grooms was on tour again. “We are booking the trip with a local travel agent – for July, it will be nice and warm. Sunny,” “Yes,” I replied, in what I hoped was an eager voice, “Yes, the Polish summer is sunny.” I asked my 16-year-old grandson Daniel if he would like to accompany me, “Not half, gran, any time.”

On Sunday, 15th July, we met the Welsh party outside St Mary’s Church in Krakow’s main square. Seventeen youngsters and four teachers, Danny and I, shaking hands, hugging, talking, laughing – all at the same time.

Dinner!

On Monday, the party went to Auschwitz and when I telephoned in the late afternoon, Miss Grooms said, “We are very downcast, deeply sad... An early night...”

We arranged to meet the following morning at 11 o’clock on the other side of the Vistula in what was once the “Umschlagplatz” (The Assembly Point) and is now “The Ghetto Heroes’ Square.”

The temperature that morning was 35°C. I felt very apprehensive about conducting the party round the Ghetto area in that heat. Am I going to be able to cope?” Danny said: “I’ll help you all I can. I’ll carry your bag for you in my backpack. We’ll take it gentle. We couldn’t let them down.”

Indeed, we couldn’t.

We started “the tour” at the remnants of the crematorium Ghetto wall where we placed a posy of fresh flowers and I translated the inscription on the plaque mounted into it. We bowed our heads and remained silent for a little while. It so happened that the heavy, oaken twin doors of No. 43 Limanowskiego Street, where I had once lived with my parents and brothers were wide open. We piled into the long hallway, cool and shadowy, and stood there just as I had done 65 years earlier – Batus, my eight-year-old brother, and I wedged between our parents. The SS were inspecting documents and our parents were holding their Kontrakten (identity cards) in their outstretched hands. The twin doors were wide open and we were looking out.

1st June 1942 – it has been a torrid day, the sky in flames... Now, at six o’clock in the afternoon, the heat is shifting, the Krakow sky is again blue, the promise of a mellow evening – the first day of an eight-day long “Resettlement Aktion.” The SS continue to demonstrate undiminished energy and
ruthless zeal. The lorries packed along the bright, sunny thoroughfare are filling up...

I ask the youngsters to look at the entrance right opposite No. 42 – its façade gaudy, peeling... Three stone steps lead from the doorway to the pavement...

"Ah, they are coming out... the old Orthodox Jew in his fine Shabbath garments, his long silver beard gleaming... his tiny, shrivelled, black-clad wife by his side. What with their frailty and the large suitcase, they have difficulty in negotiating the three steps...

From the nearby Ghetto pedestrian gate, a young SS officer, tall, slender, graceful, waltzes along the pavement – a black object in his elegantly-gloved hand... The old man has caught his keen eye. We witness a point-blank range execution. The old man, like a gigantic blackbird, swoops to the ground...

The youngsters ask: "You see that, Janina?" "Yes, I did. I still do." They remain silent. Then: "What happened to his wife?" "I am not sure – one minute she was there, the next she had been snatched up..."

We walk on... We shelter in a patch of shade. I extend my hand towards Dabrowka, a turning to the left... "There was a children's library in Dabrowka... In the spring of 1942, in the Ghetto streets. I ran into Erna Zelinger – she and my mama were childhood friends. Yasia, how are things?" She smiled. She had very crooked, dazzlingly white teeth. They made her.

There is a children's library right next door to us. Children from every corner of the Ghetto are joining... My Stal has joined... (Stal, her 12-year-old son). I was there in Dabrowka, like a shot. The librarians were so helpful and friendly. It was not an official library, but very properly run. A middle-aged couple and their two teenage daughters put their enormous collection of books at the disposal of the Ghetto children. Shared their riches."

The Welsh youngsters, fast learners: "Janina, did they... did they survive?" "I don't know. I doubt it. They were too old. The girls were too young..."

"And Erna Zel... and her son?" Ah, Erna, her husband, 12-year-old son? No! I remember Erna and Stal's so well. The husband is a dark blue. Before the war, they had been the owners of a fashionable children's wear shop in Krakow's elegant Florianska Street. When the family moved into the Ghetto, in the spring of 1941, Erna still had a few hundred pairs of smart children's socks which she had managed to salvage from the shop's stock. Little by little, I disposed of the socks for her outside the Ghetto – always receiving a generous commission. She used to say: "We are eating socks..."

The Zelinger family was dispatched to 'The East' on Tuesday, 4th June 1942. A rare shown in Krakow Ghetto annals as 'Bloody Thursday'. It was the hottest day of that very hot week. The sky was gray-yellow and the heat was searing and the Germans went berserk. They were screaming and who to tear off their grief on the Jews? For that morning, at dawn, one of the brightest stars of the SS constellation – Heinrich Reinhardt – the icy-cold, monotonously cruel governor of Czechoslovakia, his rheumatic body in one long jet of brown vomit, was claimed by Satan who had been hovering over the hospital bed jealously guarding his property.

The Zelinger parents and son were driven in a multitude of 3,000 men, women and children, towards the cattle trucks... Yes, from here, from this square, past the Ghetto wall where we had left the flowers..."

Tired, subdued, quiet – we cross the Taurid Bridge. We stop by the peacefully flowing Vistula and take photographs. After lunch, the youngsters and Danny go off to explore the city. I have a rest at my hotel. We meet again for dinner – their last evening in Krakow. The friendliness, the warmth, the goodwill – I am still to meet more courteous, more appreciative youngsters and teachers than these representatives of Wales. They made the trip a truly memorable experience. Heart-gladdening!"

My stories nearly always end on a sad note. This one is different. It ends on an amusing note.

On our last evening in Krakow, I invited Danny to a "posh" restaurant for a slap-up dinner. As we approached the entrance door, we saw a large blackboard and upon it in large capital, chalk-white letters: "Air-conditioned!" Danny smiled. I shook my head. A very pleasant manageress led us to a window-seat table. Danny tucked into roast duck with all the trimmings. I had a modest, but tasty salad. Danny had profiteroles. I had a coffee. Eventually, the bill
the countries in which they settled. Indeed, the success of the scheme and of the individuals in rebuilding their lives, creating their own families and successful careers is an increasing feature of Kinder representation, including the television documentary Rescued: A Sixty Year Journey (2009). Similarly, the organisation of the sixtieth anniversary, by the author, led to entry into the accompanying brochure ‘Survival and Achievement’.

By the time of the first Kinder reunion in 1989, the condescension of the 1930s and 1940s, and then the indifference and invisibility of the post-war years, had given way to respect and increasing interest. In June 1999, Bea Green organised an unveiling of a plaque at the House of Commons: ‘In deep gratitude to the people and Parliament of the United Kingdom for saving the lives of 10,000 Jewish and other children who fled to this country from Nazi persecution on the Kindertransport 1938-1939’. At a time when rampant anti-refugee sentiment was beginning to develop exponentially in the media, as well as in public discourse and in government behaviour, the prominence given to this plaque provided an intriguing example of memory work where the past and present were brought together in potential conflict. In September 2003 Flor Kant’s memorial at the Kindertransport outside Liverpool Street station, for ‘the Kind’, was unveiled with an almost identical message, with only the words ‘and parliament’ removed.

By this stage, the campaign against asylum seekers had reached fever pitch. That connections were not generally made between British refugee policy then and now was an indication of the respectability and acceptability of the Kinder. Some sixty years on there had been time enough for them to become viewed as decent citizens of Britain and no longer somewhat undesirable or pitiable aliens.

The Kinder, by the turn of the twenty first century, had become a safe story, put together neatly and with a redemptive ending. In the case of the Oscar-winning film of the Arms of Strangers (2000), even the losses were minimised with some of the children featured reunited with their parents after the war. Sadly, this was not a very typical experience, and when it did happen, it was not always an easy one for all concerned, a theme deeply explored in Diane Samuels’ Kindertransport, first performed in London in 1992. Samuels’ play explores the tension between mother and daughter when the former returns from the camps. Neither can overcome their trauma based on the guilt of survival on the one hand and anger at being abandoned on the other. It leads to the daughter suppressing all recognition of her origins. In 2000 it still remains the case, however, that Samuels’ play, which owes much to the testimonies in Gershon’s We Came Morello and more critical individual autobiographies, is counter to the increasingly dominant representation of the Kindertransport in which there are few questions asked about the generosity and wisdom of the scheme as a whole.

The Kinder have been incorporated into a Holocaust narrative, one with no powerful American influence. Into the Arms of Strangers is to be firmly located within this context, the cover of its book version proclaiming it tells the story of The British scheme that saved 10,000 children from the Nazi regime. And just as with the earlier Hollywood blockbuster Schindler’s List, it has its happy ending in the form of the former child refugees successfully re-creating their lives across the world. Unusually for Hollywood, Britain emerges as the hero, with America as the villain. Contrary to laws of God, it is dismissed as a peculiar excuse. Nowhere is it asked why Britain excluded their mothers and fathers by not introducing the Arms of Strangers is thus ‘heartbreaking, but also inspiring and not without humour’. It consists of the stories of those who survived with the help of others; they are stories of courage and hope, stories about the strength and resilience of children and most astonishingly: they are stories not yet heard about the impact of the Holocaust.

More generally, in the British context, the Christian rescuer has been personified in the form of Nicholas Winton, a British businessman who helped set up the Kinder scheme in Czechoslovakia. In documentaries, media features and now in biography, Winton, who has always downplayed his role and not
question. But why did you leave?"-quite convincingly-and those teenage readers could then have passed on that explanation to their parents, who still did not know what this Hitler business was all about.

But what is striking is the richness of Gershon's deeply moving and desperately unsentimental collection created by the desire of the former Kinder to explain to themselves who they were. The anonymous contributions are terse and therefore do not reveal fully the complexities of each of the 234 individuals that would have emerged from a full life story. Nevertheless, they are artistically crafted together by Gershon, a neglected talent in the post-war British literature scene, to produce not one smooth narrative, but an astonishing collection of voices that show the complexities of belonging and not belonging and the contradictory pressures past and present, operating on the former Kinder. Floating between history, biography, literature and psychology, it offers one of the most profound insights into being a refugee in twentieth century Britain. In the final section, "Summing Up," the former Kinder reflect on their status: "A refugee is someone who is not wanted in one place and given shelter in another out of pity. He is therefore forced to choose between death and charity." If we had not remembered that we were refugees there were always others to remind us. As Gershon herself wrote in a later edition of the collective biography, from her home in Cornwall, "I feel more at home in England than I do in Israel, but I don't feel at home there either, and that is worse, because I still expect to be able to feel at home. Here I am reconciled with.

One of the most important chapters in the collective autobiography is entitled 'Death and Survival'. It opened with a quotation from Ambrose's The Story of Peter Cronheim, a didactic novel aimed at British children: "I won't go," he shouted at his parents, "Why should I have to be pushed out on my own? I've done nothing wrong! I hate the Germans and I hate you." We Came as Children provided the first public forum for the grief of separation from parents before September 1939 and anxiety and depression caused by the lack of contact with parents after the outbreak of war. The pattern of knowledge in Kinder accounts is relatively similar, letters became increasingly infrequent and were replaced at best by messages from the Red Cross, eventually with the information for most, either in the war or after it, confirming the death of parents. But each individual reacted differently: from total disbelief at one end to publically expressed grief at the other and including elements of anger, shame, guilt and heartbreak. Vera Schaufeld, who came to Britain from Czechoslovakia, was 15 when the war ended. Vera relates how she then started having fantasies that really they were alive, and that they started a new life in Shanghai or one of the places that they tried to get to, and had another family but just didn't want me... I couldn't accept the reality... I never saw anything confirming their death. When the letters stopped from my parents, that was dreadful... I think that I always thought somehow I hadn't written... back enough [for] that they hadn't wanted to write... I thought that they couldn't come to me if only they wanted to enough.

Just as Karen Gershon had been alone in attempting a commemoration of the Kinder for its twenty-fifth anniversary, Bertha Leventon in 1988 realized that there were no plans to celebrate the Jubilee of the scheme. A huge reunion took place in 1989 achieving national prominence—indeed, the success of the meeting reflected the initial media attention given to the idea of a reunion. For the first time, the Kinder transport was becoming part of the national history and heritage of Britain, and was more generally connected to what were by then the beginnings of the growth in interest in the Holocaust. A collection of autobiographies was published, I Came Alone (1990) which was similar to Gershon's We Came as Children only in the large number of contributions that it made up - 243. In this later anthology, however, the autobiographical fragments were self-contained and presented alphabetically. The individuality, as indicated in the title, reflected the growing interest in the life stories of ordinary people. Unlike the earlier collection, however, the truncated stories reveal little of the emotion and complexity of the Kinder experience. Perhaps the best summary of this somewhat unwieldy collection is that provided in its original cover: It is a fitting tribute to the Kindertransportees and the generosity of their hosts, that so many survived to become upright and useful citizens of
Historic gathering to Commemorate the Rebuilding of Three Ohanim in Piotrkow

Although no one really wants to go back or even remember our loved ones, somewhere something always pulls us back. We were so young and we can't remember all the details so we come back to prove that we were correct, although it hurts very much. Sometimes we can't find things anymore, either the buildings were demolished or we simply can't remember so we go back again to try and find it or we go to show our children and grandchildren that we did not come straight from heaven, we had parents, a town and homes.

Our last trip to Eishel was extra special for us. Instead of seeing ruins, we came to commemorate the rebuilding, by the Dessau Family, of the three magnificent Ohanim of the Great Tzaddik buried in our Beis Ohanim in Piotrkow. I have been to dozens of towns in Poland and I can watch that nowhere have they rebuilt an Ohel as beautiful and beekovdek as these three in Piotrkow.

We arrived in Katowice airport at 11.00. We hired a car and drove directly to Piotrkow (about 2½ hours). Our first stop was at our impressive Shul, where the Tzaddik was buried in the Beis Ohanim of Piotrkow. We then went to the Dessau Family, who had previously mentioned that his Beis was in Piolek. Rabbi Dessau had previously mentioned that his Beis was in this Shul and our father told us that he remembered it. He might be upset that the Shul has now become a library but at least it is being looked after. In many towns, unfortunately, they turned the Shuls into factories or warehouses or demolished them completely. We all then went next door to the Beis Hamedrash, which is now a children's library. On the upper floor, on the back wall there is the original mural above the Ohr Hakoidek, which is riddled with gun shots from the Nazi Y'S.

Our next stop was at a restaurant in the square at the top of the Yidden Grass. We were all met by the Dessau Family, who offered to have us the famous Dessau Matzot, and we were served on paper and plastic disposables. It was a
Kiddush Hashanah to see a Kosher meal complete with freshly baked chalos being served in 2003 in the middle of Piotrskow.

We then made our way to the Beit Olame for the main event of the day. There were dignitaries from the town joined us and we all took our seats on the chairs laid out near the entrance. It was a pleasure to see the many younger second and third generation mixing with the fifteen or so survivors who were present. Although it was a solemn occasion, for me it was a pleasure to see my nephew Yisrael Zilberstein, an sister Esther's son (one of the only survivors of nine children), conducting the service with confidence and organisation. Actually it was Yisrael who organised all the arrangements for the week long trip for the Israeli contingent and he, together with Mr Desau, arranged the day in Piotrskow. Anyone who has organised group trips knows all the hard work and commitment that goes into making sure that everything 'kapt' and that every participant is kept happy.

Yisrael opened the ceremony with a speech in April. All the speeches were translated into Polish at last. Then the President (Mayor) of Piotrskow spoke in Polish. Yisrael responded wonderfully to each speaker. Next we heard from the Israeli Ambassador to Poland, followed by the Chief Rabbi of Poland. Rabbi Lau did not speak as he had to return back to Israel. I was then asked to say one Kapitel of Tehillim. We then heard from our chairman of the 35 Aid Society, Mr Ben Helfgott. He spoke in his native Polish and conveyed a message from Mr Ben Gitlitz. Finally the Chazan from Lodz sang Kell Molei Rachmanim. All the speakers' main points were to address the Mayor, firstly to thank him for the past but mainly to tell him that the Jewish community will be back for further visits and that they should always cooperate and also to use his powers to preserve all that remains holy to us in Piotrskow. Mr Gitlitz, I know that you must have been upset not being able to join us but I must say that you were well represented by Mr Ben Helfgott who gave your message beautifully. Mr Helfgott and myself were the only survivors representing England, although there were many more "Boys" who came to England after the war. I say "boys" as the Nazis Y'S only allowed young workers in the factories from where they were saved from the deportations. Unfortunately, a few have died, some are unwell or their wives need looking after.

We wish all a speedy Refiah Sheleimag and may we join only in Simchah.

We then went to pray at the newly rebuilt Ohel of the three holy Tzaddikim. Rabbi Menachem Finkler of Radostitz ZTL, Rabbi Yossi of Betzahem of Wolfsburg ZTL and Rabbi Menachem Miske Hofrect of Breskov ZTL. We also prayed at the Ohel of the great rabbi and doctor Rabbi Chaim David Bernard ZTL.

My father then said a Keil Molei Rachmanim for his father and grandfather who are buried there but as they died during the war they do not have Matzevahs.

We left Piotrskow at about six o'clock. We then drove to Pechacek (Pravcice) to daven at the koeve of the holy Reb Biten of Pechacek whose Yarzeit was on that day. The next day we travelled to Starczeshisk (Sherited Komornik) to visit the concentration camp where I had worked. We had made an appointment with the deputy Mayor who was very keen in building up a relationship with all Jewish visitors to the town. He took us to the ammunition factory where we worked, which is still currently active. I did not really recognise anything but we visited the mass grave in the middle of the woods, which I helped to dig. A local worker also showed us the memorial at the site of a crematorium used by the Nazis Y'S. They then took us to the memorial stone they erected in the town centre to commemorate the Jewish people who lived there and to the Jewish cemetery.

We then drove to Radostitz to the Koeve of the holy Rabbi Yischoel Don ZTL and from there to Radomsk to the Koeve of the holy Tiferes Shlomo and his son, one of whom had Israel on that day. We landed back at about 7.00 pm.

All the best and a giti geimenshik yur in men soln hoden gepoif alle gits.
argue, through Spielberg's depiction of Oskar Schindler. The charge of Christian influence on the RCM was also levelled by its contemporary critics.

Bentit ended by acknowledging that 'nothing had' been said of the personal histories of all these children, of the miseries from which they escaped, the fear and bewilderment with which they found themselves refugees in a strange land, having different habits, ways of thoughts and speech.

Instead, the emphasis was that through the unifying efforts of the Movement's workers, the natural kindness of the public and the humanity and patience of the authorities, a large number of the children had received refuge, and that many of the children's transports had been destroyed. Bentit stated categorically, 'They must not have suffered death, or if they did, it was in the struggle for their life, and not in their death.'

The need to express gratitude was clear, but it was clear that not everyone was prepared to do so. The book, however, was a reminder that the story of the children's experiences could never be told in full. bentit

Throughout A Great Adventure, reference to the children's parents is notable by its absolute absence. This silence is not accidental but crucial to the dynamics of the RCM's and government's justification of the project: in essence a younger generation had found what Bentit called 'not only an abiding place among us, but a spiritual home.' What had happened to the parents, or the children's grief and anxiety over their fate, were not allowed to interfere with the overarching narrative of the RCM's achievements.

It was to be another two decades before attention would again focus on the Kindertransport. The Kinder's stories were lost in the different post-war narratives of the Nazi era. In 1966, Karen Gershon, a poet and former Kinder, published her collective autobiography of the Kindertransport, 'We Came As Children.' She explained her motives in a letter to her publisher: 'At the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kindertransport, I discovered that most of the documents of those days had been destroyed, and that many of the people who were concerned with our rescue no longer remember the events clearly or, like Anna Eisinger, are dead. I decided then to collect what material I could before it was too late.'

There was no organisational structure of former Kinder and Gershon advertised in the national press for people to contact her. Some three hundred responded and her anthology uses the words of 234 of them. Emphasising further the fluidity of the movement, Gershon stressed how 'We all came in transit and there is no record of how many of us eventually stayed.' Recent Kinder commemoration, organisationally and in terms of representation, has been international. It is telling that Gershon's account was confined within the nation state; Most of us had a choice at the end of the war; I have continued my enquiry to those who chose England. With their help I have compiled this record, in gratitude and as an explanation.'

Gershon's last phrase, 'in gratitude and as an explanation,' neatly summarises the internal tension in Kinder testimony that has existed since she compiled the volume in the 1960s. The need to express gratitude was there from the Kinder's arrival in England, and has never gone away, producing an ambivalence among the refugees. As one contributor put it:

I shall always be grateful now for what was done for us then, although I wish it had not been so cruel and I wish my parents never had to have suffered the way I had. I was able to live here and never return to my homeland. I have never looked back since I left.

The need to explain was equally complex. Within the collection, it emerges as the need to explain to friends, acquaintances and especially family at who they were and where they came from. It was reflected in a review in the Association of Jewish Refugees' journal in 1962 of the first holocaust account of the Kinder, Kenneth Aubeoue's 'The Story of Peter Cremnich:

Twenty odd years ago [this book] would have fulfilled the most important task of explaining to English children why so many young Central Europeans were turning up in their classrooms and at their playgrounds. It would have answered the recurring
way of children coming here. The former Prime Minister, Lord Baldwin, in his famous radio broadcast on behalf of the child refugees in December 1938, which itself became the stuff of instant and iconic memory work with, amidst other promotions, a record of it sold to raise money, echoed Hauser's comments: Thousands of parents are appealing to the refugee committee to take their children out of Germany, even though they may never see them again. But Baldwin and Hauser were not probing very far; whilst it was, of course, the Nazis who were responsible for persecuting the Jews, and the process of emigration as tedious and humiliating as possible, it was the receiving or potential receiving countries that were ultimately determining who could and could not leave. From 1938 through to autumn 1941, emigration, alongside maximum financial extortion, remained the official Nazi policy towards the Jews of Greater Germany. The dilemma outlined by Hauser was one that his government and state apparatus had created. The scheme to rescue children alone had been suggested by the Jewish refugee workers not out of callousness but from a calculated assumption, that it was as far as the government could be pushed. As both shared an obsessive, and mutually reinforcing, fear of domestic antisemitism, it also suited their mutual nervousness. As Louise London states bluntly, 'Admission saved the children's lives. Exclusion sealed the fate of many of their parents.'

Right from the start, rather than acknowledging the inherent problem with the scheme, policy was couched in the most positive and humane terms. Hauser told the Commons that there was the chance of taking the young generation of a great people. Rather than ignore reference to their mothers and fathers, Hauser emphasised that we might retell[sic] in some extent the terrible sufferings of their parents and friends. The parents were presented as fundamentally damaged by National Socialist totalitarianism beyond rescue, a theme that was to reoccur in later memory work on the Kindertransport. Similarly, the organisation set up to administer the scheme - the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, later to become the Refugee Children's Movement, or RCM - was anxious both in terms of its contemporary reputation and, it must be argued, for the sake of posterity, to justify its actions. Its first annual report, covering the period from November 1938 to December 1939, started in defensive mode, arguing that it was 'thought worth while for the benefit of all to restate some of the facts that made it necessary to bring into this Country nearly 10,000 children, between the ages of 2 months and 18 years and to explain to the more critical why mistakes were made and why delays occurred.'

The same approach to the RCM's first annual report was adopted by Gladys Bendit, writing under the pseudonym of John Provland, who published an account of the organisation in 1944. Significantly, its title was more stated to a boy's own tale than the harrowing one it described: A Great Adventure: The Story of the Refugee Children's Movement. In this first history of the RCM, the Kindertransport was domesticated and made palatable to a British Home Front audience. Again, the persecution of Jewish and non-Aryan children in Nazi Germany, as opposed to adults, was highlighted:

'They were set apart from other children in the classrooms. They were forbidden to join in sports or games and the pupils were encouraged, sometimes even instructed by the teachers, to torment them in a hundred ways. Reliable witnesses state that the number of child suicides greatly increased in these years and was a sad indication of their suffering.'

Emphasis was also placed on 'Generous British hospitality', especially from ordinary people, Jewish and Christian, and how this helped over 9,000 be saved, a term used frequently in recent years in relation to the Kinder, especially in the Hollywood documentary Into the Arms of Strangers (2000). 'Saved' had clear Christian connotations but it is also implied that the rest, the adults, were, in the depths of the Nazi beast, beyond reach. A Great Adventure was thus an early example of what has become a powerful trope of Holocaust representation - the portrayal of rescuers as Jews as redemptive figures or, more unusually, as redemptive communities - in this case the British nation. The potential for such saviours to be presented through a Christian discourse was realised.
Address given by Ben Helfgott at a Memorial Service Honouring 560 Jews brutally murdered in the Rakow Forest on December 20th 1942

On an occasion like this our thoughts inevitably focus on the shattering event that occurred on this spot nearly 65 years ago. Indeed, they are closely associated with the deportation of 22,000 Jews from the Ghetto of Piotrkow between 14th - 21st December 1942 and the days leading to this horrendous tragedy almost two months later. Those days are indelibly engraved in the forefront of our minds.

It was difficult enough to endure the nightmare conditions that prevailed in the Ghetto, but what followed after the deportations is unimaginable to a civilized mind. The scenes that were unfolding in front of our eyes are impossible to comprehend. Ukrainians driving out innocent, frightened people from their homes to where the selection took place and shooting at them at random. Those infirm and weak who could not leave their beds and those who were found hiding were shot on the spot. At the selection place, families were torn apart, their crying and grief reached out to heaven. Within a week 90% of the Jews were deported to Treblinka and the remaining 2,400 were headed into the small Ghetto. There life turned into a living hell. Most of those who survived the deportations were like a body with its limbs cut off. Many lost their parents, many lost their wives and children, many lost their houses and children. Others lost their brothers and sisters. Those who were discovered in hiding were either shot on the spot or sent to Tomaszow and from there to Treblinka. No day went by without killing taking place. Our morale was at its lowest ebb.

Then came the round-ups of those who had no legal status in the Ghetto. There were those who returned from their hiding places, both inside and outside the Ghetto. They were taken to the Synagogue where for about ten days their fate was being decided by the Gestapo. Among those in the Synagogue were my mother, Sara, and my sister Lusia, as indeed were families of some of you here. We all have vivid recollections of those days. I remember the exchange of letters between my father and mother and my mother's description of the inhuman conditions that prevailed in the Synagogue. I also remember that fateful Sunday morning of 20th December 1942 when I heard the shocking news that all the 560 mainly women and children who were in the Synagogue were killed in the Rakow Forest just outside our town. We were all stunned and overwhelmed by a helplessness and despondency. I often wonder how we survived our ordeal because our hell continued until our liberation over two and a half years later. I would like to thank Robert Dessau and his late brother Saul and Ben Giladi for their generosity, initiative and endeavour in erecting this monument nine years ago in memory of those who were so innocently and prematurely killed here. I would also like to express our appreciation to the municipal authorities for their help and co-operation. Indeed, also for the five commemorative plaques which were unveiled in the town ten years ago.

One wonders why it has taken so many years to show some sign that Jews once lived here. The Jewish presence has disappeared from this town and it was as if their memory too was being
Every day in Auschwitz was like a year

There is no way I can convey or describe what I and my fellow survivors of the Shoah went through. Whatever impression I give you, it was a thousand times worse. It was very traumatic and for 50 years I wouldn't speak a word of what I had been through. It was a stigma I carried - that somehow we were different from other people.

I remember after liberation, when a group of us all around 15 and 16 years old, were airlifted to Manchester and housed in a hostel. How people who came to visit looked at us as though we were from another planet, as if we were a museum exhibit.

I was born in Lodz, the second largest city in Poland before the Second World War. It was a major textile manufacturing centre, with a population of 500,000, 200,000 of whom were Jewish. I was a normal 13-year-old when the Nazis rolled into the city in September 1939, days after their invasion of Poland began. The members of the SS looked like giants to me and they inspired the kind of fear that is hard for anyone, let alone a child, to imagine.

As they marched in people ran for their lives. Almost instantly, they started taking terrorising measures, especially against the Jews. Deportations began at once. I saw people being punished for no reason. Religious Jews had their beards shaved and
New York in 1991. Its preface was written by Abraham Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League and himself a former hidden child. Her book was, according to Foxman, an extraordinary contribution to an understanding of the Holocaust. The first person accounts by those who survived the war against Jewish children preserves for posterity the courage and resources of the hidden as well as those who rescued them. For Foxman, these inspiring accounts symbolize the triumph of good over evil, it is also a story of hope. Those who survived depended on the goodness and kindness of others.

The desire for a happy ending is also revealed in Robert Benigni’s Life is Beautiful (1997). For all of its powerful attributes, the success, popular if not critical, of this Oscar-winning film is based on the survival ultimately of the hero’s son, Giosue. The film is self-consciously and explicitly a fable or fairy tale; it is, as the director has stated, ‘a story about a father who is trying to protect a child’ and not, as he has made clear, a story about the Holocaust.[xv] The story of the Holocaust is about the utter impossibility of parents to protect their children, a fact that the influential child psychologist, and Jewish refugee, Bruno Bettelheim totally failed to understand in relation to his criticisms of Otto Frank.[xvi]

The post-1945 memory of the murdered and hidden children in the Holocaust thus fits within a complex and dynamic matrix made up of longstanding ignorance and marginalization, celebration, sentimentality and hope for the future. It will be argued here that the parallel memory of the Kindertransport can be understood within a similar framework. It is one that has allowed intense contemporary engagement, followed by a period of amnesia and then the present abundance of memory leading, on the one hand, to the beginnings of heritage construction and, on the other, to the absence of history and critical reflection. If the refugees from Nazism have received privileged status in recent memory construction, the children amongst them have become doubly set apart, both special and celebrated. It has led to a distortion and representation of the Kinder as survivors and confusion with, and marginalisation of, these children from the Holocaust who came to this country after the end of the Second World War.

It must be emphasised at this stage that I am not arguing against the significance and importance of the Kindertransports. For example the British government could have followed the example of its American counterpart and rejected a child refugee scheme. The Wagner-Rogers Bill was introduced in February 1939 and called for the entry of 30,000 German children over a two year period above normal immigration quotas. The scheme was rejected. President Roosevelt refused to challenge the restrictionists in Congress and the American public as a whole - in spite of much evidence of humanitarian sentiment in support of the Bill.[xvii] One of the great failings, for example, of W.D.Rubinstein’s best-selling The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democrats Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis (1997), is its failure to give contemporaries any choice. It was not inevitable that the Wagner-Rogers Bill would have been defeated nor that the proposal put forward by Jewish campaigner in November 1938 would have met the approval of the new Home Secretary, who, in the parliamentary debate, stated that there was ‘an underlying current of suspicion and anxiety... about alien immigration on any big scale’.[xviii] Nevertheless, the generosity of the Kindertransport scheme cannot simply be seen as a response to the increasing desperation of its recipients - those had largely been ignored before the pogrom. Nor can the specific focus of the scheme be explained by particular need: it was essentially Jewish male adults who were especially vulnerable after the pogrom with up to 30,000 interned in concentration camps such as Dachau and Buchenwald.[xix] It is thus important to focus on the question that few have been willing to ask: why just the children?

The question was in fact raised from the start: Sir Samuel Hoare himself stated in the House of Commons 'I could not help thinking what a terrible dilemma it was to put up the Jewish parents in Germany to have to choose between sending their children to a foreign country, into the unknown, and continuing to live in the terrible conditions to which they are now reduced in Germany.‘ Having been told by a Quaker representative that the parents would be willing to part with their children, the Home Secretary announced that he would put no obstacle in the
of adults.

It is asked of adult victims, either implicitly or explicitly, why they did not do more to resist. Such questions, however inappropriate, cannot be asked of the defenseless child. It is obvious, remarks Dwork, that the only meaningful question is not “why did you allow this to happen to you?” but “why was this allowed to happen?” Dwork thus explains the absence of attention to children through our attachment to the core of civilized values — studying the persecution of children enables an understanding of the Shoah stripped bare of all rationalizations, explanations, or justifications, in other words, with an appreciation of the quintessence of this evil. The Shoah, argues Dwork, represents the most radical challenge our society has experienced. It is the failure to face this challenge, the murder of the children, that reflects our failure to confront that challenge.

Dwork embraces the emotional difference relating to the one and a half million who, she suggests, her fellow historians have failed to confront and to do, like everyone else, they have been loath to pursue the subject. In Dwork’s view, the Shoah is not just a moment in history, but a process that has left marks on the consciousness of the world. The film Shoah, she notes, is a film about the Shoah, not about the Holocaust. It is about the murder of children, and the murder of adults.

Not surprisingly, however, more commercially oriented representations of the Holocaust do use the murder of children to tell the story of the Holocaust. In Steven Spielberg’s Schindler’s List (1993), filmed in black and white, only one Jewish figure is present throughout the film, the little girl dressed in red who is differentiated. Such individualization culminates with her being shot dead in the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto. The girl becomes the only personally identifiable victim in the mass murder, enabling a gesture towards the humanization of the Jewish masses but also part of the film’s descent into an irredeemable sentimentalism. But it remains the case that the progress made in the area of women’s and children’s experiences of the Shoah has left other areas under-researched — for example there is also a need for the study of older victims in the Nazi era. Moreover, whilst most of the studies of the Shoah have in their general focus been biased towards males, there are few if any studies on women as victims and the impact of persecution on their sense of masculinity. In short, we require an inclusive gender analysis of the Shoah and similarly a life-cycle approach rather than regarding children as the only group with age-specific experiences.

Whether sentimental or not, there has been some attempt since Dwork’s book was published to confront the murder of the children. Taking the case of Anne Frank, the most famous victim of the Shoah and of the Shoah and of the Second World War more generally, there has been a move away from the Broadway and Hollywood portrayals in the 1950s, which ended on notes of optimism and within the secret annex, to Oscar-winning documentaries and television series in the 1990s and in the twenty-first century which, at least accept her and her sister’s death in the gas chamber at Bergen-Belsen. Similarly, the desire amongst critics and public alike that Benjamin Wilkomirski’s Fragments be an authentic autobiographical account of a Holocaust childhood rather than fiction, reflected at least in part the hope that the child victims had found a true voice to communicate their collective experiences. Nevertheles, it is extremely doubtful whether we are yet ready to confront the seismic questions posed by Dwork in relation to the million and a half Jewish children.

One indication of that failure is the attention given to those who were successfully hidden during the war. In 1993, The Hidden Children: The Secret Survivors of the Shoah, by Jane Marks, was published, prompted by a reunion of survivors held in
their peyot cut. I saw our beautiful synagogue, the Alterehe-Shul, go up in flames, dying a slow death, as though the life was being drained out of my body.

In February 1944, they delineated the Lodz ghetto and enacted laws to resettle all the Jews of the city. By May 1st, 150,000 were sealed within its confines. Barbed wire surrounded us and we lived in wretched conditions. My mother used to make cakes from potato peel and on occasion we would have the luxury of a meal of horse meat.

We lived in constant fear of being taken away. The Nazis would close off a street to block any means of escape and they systematically go through the flats, rounding up the occupants. They never left anyone behind. They even took away the body of a dead baby — everybody had to be accounted for.

The ghetto was run by the leaders of the town, Chaim Rukowski, who was in charge, was completely subservient to the Nazis but felt that survival depended on the ghetto population becoming as useful as possible to the Germans. To this end he introduced a law that everyone over the age of eight had to be employed in workshops, manufacturing initially all the needs of the ghetto but subsequently everything from uniforms to munitions for the occupying forces. I worked as a rugger in one of the tailoring factories until my deportation to Auschwitz.

The productivity of the ghetto resulted in tensions between those determined to wipe out the Jewish population and those responsible for the supply of the German war machine. Almost 40,000 ghetto inhabitants died in the terrible conditions in which we lived until its liquidation in 1944.

I was in one of the last groups to be deported together with my mother and brother. We went in August 1944, days before my 15th birthday, bundled onto trucks and taken to a train station. From there we were crammed into cattle trucks which stank of stale air and urine.

I cannot remember how long the journey took but we arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The platform was filled with men and women in uniforms. There were bright lights, music was playing, and people were running all over the place.

The Germans were separating the men from the women and children from their parents. There was lots of crying and screaming. We lined up in groups. My mother and I were pushed to the same side and taken to a place where we had to strip. Then they shaved our hair and we went into the showers. I clung to my mother. The Germans looked over the naked bodies and performed another selection. This time I went one way, my mother the other. I never saw her again — a wound that has never healed and will never heal. I came out of the shower and was given a "shfortatter" to clothe myself and dogs to wear.

We were assigned to barracks and slept on concrete floors. I was fortunate to be kept at Auschwitz for only eight weeks before being sent to work at the munitions factory at the Aideran camp. They were eight weeks of continuous selections, standing in all weathers naked in front of Josef Mengele and his assistant as they chose. Once, Mengele asked me my age. I lied and told him I was 15. Every day in Auschwitz was like a year.

We were supervised by Kapos who were mostly from Slovakia and very cruel. One night they dragged me out to pick up a large pot of coffee. I was so weak that I couldn't carry it so they beat me with straps. The Kapos were the worst; they hit us all the time. It was a relief to be moved because then you were not thinking every second that you might be selected for the gas chambers.

Eventually I was selected for a work detail and sent to Aideran, a camp near Chequins, inside Germany. I worked there for nearly a year until April 1945. Without warning, we were loaded into open trucks without any provisions. It was a gruesome journey — the worst ever. Many people died.

We travelled for about a week and finally arrived at Theresienstadt, the camp to which the Germans brought most of the transports towards the end of the war because they had built a large crematorium there to destroy the remaining Jewish prisoners. They were due to cremate us on May 10 1945 but the Russians liberated us two days earlier.

We stayed in Theresienstadt until August, when a British Red Cross doctor arranged for a group of us to be flown to England. We were debussed and examined by a team of
doctors and psychologists but it was a long time before I really felt it was all over.

For many years I tried to forget all this so that my children should have a normal life and the education and opportunities that I missed.

Recently my grandson, who is studying at Yavne Yeshiva, went to Poland. He and his group put on tefillin and davened Shabbat in one of the barracks at Auschwitz-Birkenau - our response to the Nazis and their aims.

Hitler never achieved his goal of a Final Solution to the Jewish problem but the world should not be allowed to forget, lest we allow such atrocities to happen again.

Alec Ward’s Story
Edited transcript of talk and interviews April/May 2007

Introduction

At the beginning of the war Alec was 12 years old. He has been married over fifty years. The name of their home in Serendipity is ‘happiness’. It is a peaceful home immediate and there is nothing out of place - items are perfectly aligned on shelves. There is no clutter anywhere and the obvious contrast to the disorder, trauma and turbulence of his life during the war is immense. When Alec recalls his suffering it is touching to see how he talks. It is a look of deep love, admiration, but also concern. When Alec speaks to you it is impossible not to notice his eyes - a piercing bright blue, undimmed by the passage of time and perhaps an indication of the inner strength of this man. I have no doubt that many demons rage within Alec and indeed he still suffers from nightmares. This is Alec’s story.

By David Omie

Alec came to England with the Southampton ‘Rescue’ in November 1938 and lived in the Finchley Road Hostel. He has been a staunch supporter of our Society, from its inception.

Part 1 - Concentration camps, Slave Labour camps and Ghettos

As you already know, my name is Alec Ward. Formerly Abram Warszawski and I am a Holocaust Survivor. I survived two ghettos, two concentration camps and three slave labour camps.

I was born in Poland and lived before the war in a street called Magnuszew. I had one elder sister called Lena and three little brothers. Let me first tell you about life before the war. I had a very happy childhood and when I was young I sang in the synagogue, which was very beautiful, with a dome and a stone floor. The cantor’s voice reverberated around the synagogue which is still very vivid in my memory. My parents were very proud of my singing. One day while collecting potatoes which were stored in the cellar I sang a rendition of a synagogue service and when I came up the neighbours had gathered to listen and rapped to my embarrassment.

As a young boy I never experienced any anti-Semitism and the Jewish community lived in complete harmony with the Christian community. We had many Jewish ships, artisans and merchants and Jewish children played in the street in complete freedom. We had a Mikveh and a well kept cemetery.

On Friday afternoon the Jewish townsfolk proclaimed the coming of the Sabbath and announced it was time to go to the synagogue. On Saturday afternoon the whole Jewish community seemed to walk in the streets in Yiddish Shaperlin. On Purim people would cross the streets with presents consisting of freshly baked cakes and biscuits. On Yom Kippur one could hear a great amount of singing in the ladies part of the synagogue. On Simchat Torah there was great rejoicing by the whole community in the street and on Pesach we were proud of our new clothes.
Alice Zylberzazc

I've never really understood the concept of Auschwitz.

I mean, from a young age I've always known why 'The Boys' were and the reason why my grandfather and many of his friends were so special. I've always known that they survived the Holocaust in which six million Jews were brutally murdered, but I had never really been made face on with the notion of Auschwitz, the Nazi death camp.

The only adjective that I could use to describe this living hell would be grey. The floor was grey, the buildings were grey, the skies were grey and my thoughts were grey. The wind was so bitter that it pierced through me like a knife but all I could think of was my grandad. Aton Zylberzazc, who must have walked up and down the path I was walking along hundreds of times in a thin blue and white striped uniform.

It is the most surreal thing I have ever done and probably will do in my life. I expected to feel distraught with the inhuman living conditions of Auschwitz. Birkenau. I was standing in the starvation room when I realised that after the war my grandad was left alone. In the whole world he had, at my age, lost every single member of his family. The truth is as I was walking through the camp I was filled with an uplifting sensation and a feeling of pride that someone so close to me had lived through what I can't even begin to imagine and come out the other side, married with two children and four grandchildren. On this occasion and several other occasions, when we trodged from one part to another, I tried to put myself in my grandfather's shoes, but the concept was just too hard to grasp.

I've never really understood the concept of Auschwitz and I don't think I ever truly will.

SECTION V
ANNUAL LEONARD G. MONTEFIORE LECTURE

Tony Kushner

Remembering the Children: Britain, Refugees and Survivors from Nazism
(2007 31st Leonard G. Montefiore Memorial Lecture)

It is estimated that of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, one and a half million were children. Given that little was written of the victims, other than by the survivors themselves in their memoir books, or in privately published memoirs and by obscure publishers in small print runs, as was the case with Primo Levi, and given also the general failure until recently to accept the importance of the history of childhood; it is not surprising that these Jewish children would fail to achieve recognition for so long. The first major history: Children With A Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe, by Deborah Dwork, was published as late as 1981.

Reflecting on why some fifty years on, in spite of what had developed as a massive literature on the Second World War, Nazism and the Holocaust, Children are conspicuously, glaringly, and screamingly silent in absent. Dwork concluded that it was not surprising that this should be so. When we think of 'society' we understand this to mean the world of adults. Our dominant paradigm is that society consists of productive, or voting, or participatory members. The only place children have in that scheme is as future participants, the citizens of tomorrow. Indeed, the usual theme of children's history has been child-rearing practices and education. In other words, how adults develop the next generation.
The contribution of "The Boys" and their families to UK Society

The Jewish Museum, London, the Spire Ark, 45 Aid Society and the Second Generation of 45 Aid Society are working together to bring a fascinating and inspiring story to City Hall for Holocaust Memorial Day 2008.

On display will be the Jewish Museum's compelling exhibition "The Boys - Triumph Over Adversity".

In 1945 the British Home Office gave permission for up to 1,000 young survivors of the concentration camps to come to this country. 732 were found and were brought to Britain, where they gradually rebuilt their lives.

This exhibition, produced in association with the book "The Boys" by the eminent historian Sir Martin Gilbert, tells the inspirational story of this group who have become known simply as 'The Boys'. But what has happened since these young men and women who survived against the odds?

For the display at City Hall, it is proposed to produce three new panels to highlight the integration of The Boys and their descendants into London life. These exhibition panels will draw on new research to explore the many ways in which The Boys have rebuilt their futures. Focusing on the significant community of survivors who made their lives in London, it will examine the numerous ways in which these resilient individuals have gone on to contribute to society as part of London's wider diversity.

The research for this project is currently underway and it is anticipated that it will look at the many different ways in which The Boys and their children, the Second Generation, have enriched London life through family, work, leisure and religion.

The exhibition aims to show how survivors and subsequent generations have made enormous contributions to the fabric of society and therefore how an adopted country can benefit from immigration. It will take place at City Hall near London Bridge, from 14 January to 7 February 2008. Final details have still to be confirmed between City Hall and Spire Ark. Details will be published on www.2ndgeneration.org.uk.

"And I still see their faces..." - Exhibition at City Hall, London

"And I still see their faces..." is a magnificent exhibition of huge scale and high impact, using photos of Jewish families who were murdered in the Shoah. Their neighbours collected the photos, which in turn were selected for the exhibition.

This powerful exhibition will be brought to the UK by the Polish Cultural Institute. It will be on display at City Hall, the magnificent new home of the Mayor of London, near London Bridge. The exhibition will take place from 14 January to 7 February 2008 and is being organised jointly by the Polish Cultural Institute and the Spire Ark.

Final details are yet to be confirmed. When available, additional information will be published on www.2ndgeneration.org.uk.
I remember many Jewish weddings which lasted for two days with beautiful klezmer music and Brit Milahs which we as children were very happy to attend as we received sweets and cakes. Although there was a certain amount of poverty in Magnuszew, there was also a great amount of laughter and happiness.

My father, who was a glazier, was one of fourteen brothers and sisters and my mother had five brothers and one sister. All my grandparents and great-grandparents were alive at the beginning of the war but did not survive the duration.

When war broke out we were still living in Magnuszew and when the German army occupied our town they imposed impossible restrictions on the Jewish community. From the age of twelve we had to wear the Star of David on our arms. Jewish children were not allowed to attend school or play any games. We were forbidden to walk on the pavements and were not allowed to travel on the railways or slaughter any animals for consumption.

One night my Uncle Mendel and his business partner had a row slaug thered and distributed the meat to the Jewish inhabitants. The following morning the Germans shot my uncle’s partner and my uncle went into hiding. We never saw him again.

Later, the Jewish community of Magnuszew were put into a ghetto which comprised a very small part of the street near a lake. My family lived in an outbuilding in very cramped and inhuman conditions without any facilities whatsoever. When we were put into the ghetto I became the breadwinner for my family. I smuggled myself out of the ghetto on the Aryan side and smuggled in cigarettes which I sold on the streets of the ghetto. In order to attract customers for my cigarettes, I sang little Yiddish songs on the streets of the ghetto. One such song is still very vivid in my memory.

One day, a group of Hitler Youth arrived in the ghetto and gave us a few hours notice to be evacuated to Kozienice ghetto in the district of Radom. They marched us the 13 kilometres and we were only allowed to take items which we could carry. My parents could not take anything as they had to carry two small children – one of 3 years and the other a baby. It was impossible to survive there for long. Many thousands of Jewish people were taken from the surrounding shtetls and villages into a part of the town of Kozienice. Many died of starvation and disease every day. My father realised that we were not going to survive much longer and ordered me to take my little brother Leib aged 9 it was 13 years but without a Bar mitzvah and try to escape. I had no fear then and did as my father ordered me. When one of the guards was busy searching another I picked up the barbed wire at the fence and my little brother crawled under it and landed on the Aryan side. Then my brother did the same and I was free too.

Our parents’ hearts must have been torn to pieces when they decided to send away their two young sons, knowing only too well that our chance of survival was so slim. We walked the 13 kilometres back to our town where we used to live and knocked on the door of a former Christian neighbour’s house and asked for help. When the lady of the house appeared, we begged her for some food. The former neighbour gave us two thick slices of black bread and some cheese and told us not to come back for more as she said that she was frightened that someone would betray her to the Germans for helping Jewish boys.

For three months we lived in the forests and fields. We slept in haystacks in the fields in our clothes and shoes. We did not brush our hair or our teeth and we did not wash. We lived like two wild, frightened animals. During the night in the haystack my little brother would wake me to tell me that he was frightened, cold and hungry. I used to pacify him by telling him that in the morning I would make a camp fire to warm us up and bake some potatoes to eat. But it tore my heart and was absolutely unbearable for me during those nights when he would tell me that he wanted his mummy and daddy. I also craved for them and I cried bitterly on those nights.

Whilst walking in a field one day we came across a group of Jewish prisoners who were irrigating the land for German ethnic farmers. My little brother and I decided to join the prisoners as it was autumn by then and it was too cold to sleep in haystacks. The prisoners told us that they lived in a wooden five storey station in a
village called Chmielnik. They were very kind to my little brother and me. They even shared their meager ration with us as were they themselves. Early one morning German SS men surrounded the fire station and ordered us onto lorries which took us to a special slave labour camp. On the way to the camp we stopped in a town called Radom where I experienced the first Selection, one of many during my incarceration in the death camps. During that Selection, the German SS men picked out some elderly prisoners and my little brother Laj and shot them in front of us. That brutal and inhuman act left an indelible impact on me. I still often think about my little brother. I cared for him so much that I would have preferred him to survive the Holocaust instead of me. During our three months in hiding I became little Laj's mother, father, teacher, guardian and protector. Our young grandson, Liron, is named after his great uncle Laj.

All the Jewish people from the second ghetto, including my entire family, were taken by the Nazis to the extermination camp at Treblinka and gassed there. This barbaric tragedy is well-documented. I am the only survivor from the entire Jewish community of my street, Magnusiew.

I once gave a talk to the children of Bais Pinah Primary School on Holocaust Memorial Day. At first I addressed the whole school during the Assembly, which included many very young children. I had to be very careful what I told these young children. Afterwards I was led into the library where there were 60 boys and girls aged 10 and 11 and told them the story of my little brother. After my talk I allowed them 15 minutes of questions and everyone of them put their hand up. One girl asked, "Did your brother have any hobbies and what were they?" Another boy asked, "Did your little brother like playing football?" A very poignant and clever question was asked by a bright 10 year old boy and I doubt that I will ever forget it. He asked, "Alec, how did your father know which one of your three little brothers you should take with you when he ordered you to escape from the ghetto?" At that point I broke down and cried like a child.

The first of the slave camps to which I was sent was called Work A in Skarzysko Kamienna, Poland. On arrival all prisoners had to strip and were forced to give up all possessions. I spent about two months at Work A as a sweeper and general cleaner. The atmosphere in Work A was comparatively more relaxed than in the following camps and everyone dreaded the thought of being transferred to Work C. It was therefore my utter misfortune after about two months in Work A to be sent to Work C with a group of other prisoners. Male and female prisoners lived in separate huts and slept on bare boards in four-tier bunks without any blankets. Our meager ration consisted of a slice of black bread and some black coffee in the morning and some watery cabbage soup in the evening - nowhere near enough to stop our hunger pains.

For the first three months at Work C I worked with a group of other Jewish prisoners building a road through the forest. It was winter and the temperature was minus thirty degrees. When one touched anything made of metal one's hand stuck to it. The German SS guard was extremely brutal and derived great pleasure from his brutality. When he noticed a prisoner was not working fast enough he would beat him savagely with a shovel or spade. I was often beaten by him and he was the most brutal Nazi I encountered during my entire incarceration in the ghettos, slave labour and concentration camps. That sadistic guard was dressed in a black coat, black breeches and a warm green jacket. The jacket reminded us of the greenery we had in our homes in the steets for the festival of Shavuot. Consequently, we nicknamed him "Shavuot".

When Shavuot was over I was out of sight and we could stop working and rested. However, this was not always to our advantage as when starting prisoners stop moving about in sub zero temperatures hypothermia sets in - many prisoners just fell down and went into what looked like a deep and serene sleep but in fact they were dead. Four prisoners would occasionally come by pulling a wooden cart and collect the stiff corpses which were then buried in ditches. When Shavuot reappeared the word "Shavuot" was whispered along the line of prisoners and we all very quickly resumed our toil. To this day I cannot comprehend how I, a mere teenager, survived such conditions for three months. Tragically.
SECOND GENERATION REPORT

The Second Generation of the 45 Aid Society has developed a significant contact network and a programme of successful London events. The Second Generation – London Committee – would welcome the support and involvement of all Second and Third Generation to take part in shaping the future.

Activities

Over the last 18 months we have held many successful activities. We have launched a web site for Second Generation www.2ndgeneration.org.uk.

We have shown the documentary film “The Boys” to a full house in London in April 2008. In June 2008, moving stories of survival were delivered in person to members of the 2nd Generation by Members of the 45 Aid Society.

A poignant performance was given by 2nd Generation story-teller Lisa Epstein in London in November 2006. And in October 2007, the Second and Third Generations and their friends and families met in North London to learn about the Bielski Partisans and how Jack Ragan had survived in the forests of Belarus during the war.

The Second Generation have also worked with film producer-director Herb Krosney to publish a DVD version of his film “The Boys – Triumph Over adversity”. Copies of the film can be purchased from info@2ndgeneration.org.uk.

A number of Second Generation went on a day trip to Auschwitz on 1 November 2007. The trip was organised by Yad Vashem UK and included talks by survivors. A full report will appear on the Second Generation web-site in due course.

Coming up

We welcome you to join upcoming activities. Details of all events can be found by visiting www.2ndgeneration.org.uk.

On 14 January to 7 February 2008 – a major exhibition & events will be arranged at City Hall, London including the exhibition “And I Still See Their Faces”. Details will be published shortly on www.2ndgeneration.org.uk.

Help support us

We would ask you please to offer any practical support and help you can to the development of the Second Generation. Our small committee is happy to work hard but we could and need to achieve much more and your practical support would be much appreciated.

Please let us know if you can support us in this.

Can you provide:

- administrative support with the website, mailings, organising events, or
- send funds to our Treasurer, or
- join the committee to take an active part in shaping the future.

Please let us know if you can help - contact us any time at info@2ndgeneration.org.uk.

Thanks for your support to date. The future is yours to shape – come and help ensure it meets your expectations.

Yours – The 45 Aid Society Second Generation – London Committee
info@2ndgeneration.org.uk

P.S. – We need your contact details!
We only have 150 email addresses for 2nd Generation Members – we are missing many, many more.

Please help us to get email addresses for all your family members and for other 2nd Generation you know. Send us their email addresses to info@2ndgeneration.org.uk. Alternatively, please encourage them to send us their contact details or to sign up at http://www.2ndgeneration.org.uk/register.php. We will not continue to send out paper


Lessons Learned
Jack Kagan Talks to Second Generation

Survivor and former partisan Jack Kagan captivated an audience of more than 120 people with the story of his surviving the Holocaust.

Jack Kagan addressed a full house in London on 9 Oct 2007. Jack Kagan’s talk was attended by members of the 2nd and 3rd Generation and many of their friends and families, including a significant number of school children aged 10 and upwards.

The talk, at the Land Theatre at LCS School in Hampstead, North London, was preceded by the BBC documentary “Extreme Survival” made by Ray Mears and featuring Jack Kagan. The film told the story of the Bielski partisans and how they built a community of 1,200 people hiding from the Nazis in the Natalihi forest of Belarus and how Jack escaped twice from the Nazis’ Navradyok concentration camp and went on to survive the rest of the war in the Natalihi forest of Belarus.

After the film, Jack Kagan was interviewed by 2nd Generation member, Rob Gellatly. Questions were also raised by members of the audience. The many children in the audience also asked questions of Jack about his survival. Below is an article written by one of the attendees.

Lessons Learned – The Jack Kagan Night - 9 October 2007

The lights are dimming, the crowd is growing silent. The last whisper dies with curiosity of what might happen next. I squeeze my friend’s hand excitedly.

The film was called “Extreme Survival - Belarus”. It was extraordinary, but it touched me all the same. One of my favourite parts was when the presenter, Ray Mears, made a spoon out of wood from a tree. I personally think he is extremely talented and clever to be able to make such a thing with his bare hands in the forest.

I was and always will be devastated about the effect of the Holocaust on Jews during World War II. So, that night, I was amazed to meet one of the actual survivors, Jack Kagan, from the forest in Belarus. Lots of my friends asked Jack questions after they saw the film but I didn’t ask any questions because, in a way, I was a little scared of what the answers might be.

Jack Kagan’s experience is something beyond imagination. He tried to escape a couple of times from the Navradyok camp. On his second attempt, he succeeded. Everyone had help dig a tunnel that was 250m long and went under the fence of the camp. As some of Jack’s toes had fallen off with frostbite when he first tried to escape, he could not walk well and so he was told to go last, but he still managed to run to the nearby forest along with many others. Although Jack and his friend were split up from the group because of Jack’s feet, they managed to stay together and hid miles away from everyone else. Jack was freezing to death and about to give up when a wagon passed by with a man who agreed to take them to the place where the partisans were hiding. Jack survived the rest of the war in an unbelievable way, hiding in the forest with the Bielski partisans.

That night had many lessons to be learnt and many stories to be told. I think that World War II is a very important time in our history and we are very lucky to still have people around who were there at the time and can tell us once again about history and the astonishing tales of their survival.

My grandpa, David Bezman, is a Holocaust survivor too, and I know about his terrible experiences in concentration camps. Every survivor has a story to go with them, and every story is special.

By Emily Barton, age 10
there were only two survivors from my group of prisoners; the other prisoner was Sam Brener. It was simply hell on earth in that forest.

When the road was finished, I was transferred to the mines factory. I worked exhausting twelve-hour shifts. We were producing mines from dangerous chemicals, which wrecked our health and turned our skin yellow.

I remember the chemical causing this was picric acid. Fellow prisoners lived only three months whilst doing that work. I was often beaten by brutal SS guards when I did not manage to complete the required number of mines per shift as I was so desperately weak. We had three main German guards - Schneider, Walter, and their senior who was a tall elderly man and walked with a stooped back but whose name I cannot remember. They set us impossible tasks to fulfill during every shift and threatened us with punishment if we did not achieve their targets. Schneider never carried out his threats. Walter, who was very kind, would take her out and show her on the spot. The camp was constantly being replenished with Jewish prisoners, men and women, from ghettos and concentration camps.

As there were no washing or ablution facilities in my camp, we were marched under heavy guard every few months to a nearby camp to use these facilities. Kope, a tall young boy who was one of the prisoners in that camp and who was sent to us for the first time, was convinced we were from another world. We were bright yellow skeletons, shuffling along instead of walking. Most of us had distended stomachs. Kope never saw the same yellow prisoners twice except one young boy who kept returning. He called this boy the "Miracle Boy" and that boy was me.

Kope became a landscape gardener's helper in England after the war.

Various incidents in the camp are still very vivid in my memory: the hangings of prisoners; the selections; the dead bodies of Jewish prisoners who had been shot trying to escape during the night; the sad sound of the barbed wire fences early in the morning; the fearful hunger and malnutrition; the beatings; the torture; the time when I was very weak and could not walk up the two steps leading to our hut; and the miracle which saved my life. I was queuing up for my ration of soup when a girl asked me where I was going. When I told her, she informed me that she was the girl friend of my Uncle Yisrael and that they were planning to marry when he was back from the invading German troops. That angel of a girl did some knitting for the Polish Christian women who came into the factories to work as paid workers and gave Hemia some food occasionally, some of which she passed on to me. It was not long after

meeting Hemia that I began to negotiate the two steps into the hut manually. As far as I know she did not survive the war but I hope she met her again and was prepared to give my all to her for saving my life.

I have a memory of sitting with my friend Chaim Lebowicz on the end of a bunk, feet dangling below us. Two SS guards came in saying "Komm" and took us both to the place where prisoners were shot. They ordered us to dig a communal grave. Sixteen prisoners were led from "slab bay" to the grave and then shot in the back of the head. We were then ordered to cover the grave with earth. Normally the grave was dug from the bottom, but our memory came back to us both and we broke down in tears.

After that unspeakable place we were taken to slave labour camp Rakow in Ostroh, Poland. The accommodation was the same as in Wex C, the only difference being that we were eaten alive by wood bugs and other vermin during the day and although we were very tired after such hard work we could not sleep. The work was physically harsher than in the previous camp but less dangerous to our health. I worked in the wire factory. When the molten steel emerged from the furnace I guided it into sand made forms. Afterwards I cooled the steel with a water hose and when it was semi-cool, I threw the steel into wagons which were
transported to the ammunition factory. The Christian Polish factory manager liked the way I was working and occasionally he would give me a corner of his sandwich and some white coffee.

After Rakov they took us to Buchenwald in Germany. There we lived in gigantic huts each with one thousand prisoners. In my hut there were mainly Jewish Hungarian prisoners who did not understand any two languages; Polish and Yiddish, and I did not understand Hungarian. Many died from the hardship, disease or malnutrition and every morning many bodies were taken away from our hut on wooden carts. Early each morning we were driven out from our huts to be counted on the appellplatz (Editor: place for roll call in the camp). We were standing for hours in bitterly cold weather. Thinly clad in our striped uniforms, without socks or underwear, and with rain and snow falling on to our emaciated bodies. It was simply utter hell on earth.

From Buchenwald a group of us were marched to the nearby town of Weimar where we worked cleaning up the town after the constant bombing by the Allies. Occasionally we would find pieces of dirty and stale bread which we took back at the risk of being shot at the gate to our fellow prisoners in the hut.

After some time in Buchenwald I was taken to the concentration camp Flossen in near Leipzig. At Flossen I worked in an ammunition factory producing panzerafaus (Editor: anti-tank rockets). The camp was built in a forest, was very swampy and we had to walk in deep mud to and from work. The German Commandant was an absolute sadist who used great delight in beating us over the head with a stick as we passed through the gates of the camp on the way to work. None of us believed that we would come out alive from that place. By some miracle I made friends with a boy of a similar age to me who helped me keep up my morale. He had a most wonderful voice and we would often sing together to while away our painful and hungry time.

As the Russian army was approaching that part of Germany the Nazis put us on a cattle train to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. The journey took fifteen days due to the railway lines being bombarded by the Allies. There were one hundred prisoners in our wagon including thirty boys, and we had hardly any food or water. Many died of starvation, thirst and suffocation. We sat on dead bodies. After realising that we were unlikely to survive the journey, we organised an escape party. A number of prisoners had jumped from the train and I was supposed to be the eighteenth person. However, in order to deter further escapes, the SS guards put a few bodies of boys who had been shot trying to escape back into the wagon and there was a guard for the rest of the journey. My friend, the boy with the wonderful voice was shot by the guard and this was an unbearable blow to me just as he had been the earlier loss of my little brother. "Editor: the boy with the wonderful voice, Arthur Paznorski, had actually only been wounded in the leg and somehow survived the rest of the war before going to live in England. By coincidence a few months after the war Arthur recognised me in a London street whenupon the friendship was rekindled. Arthur's wonderful singing voice has been heard in synagogues around London.

Many more prisoners died marching up to the camp which was built in the Alpine mountains with the purpose of exposing prisoners to extremes of temperatures. Undernourished people could not survive such conditions for long. How I envied my little brother and my classmate, the singer. They were dead and did not have to suffer any more. Those of us who reached Mauthausen concentration camp alive endured further degradation and torture. They took our clothes away from us on arrival and we were left naked for some time until we were liberated by the American forces on 5th May 1945.

The first item of food which I received after the liberation was a tin of peas from an American soldier. I drank the liquid first and was going to leave the peas for later. Unfortunately, the liquid turned out to be too rich for my starved stomach and I became ill from it. I gave the peas to a friend. I have a delicate stomach to this day although food is very important to me as I have known true starvation.

Due to torture, hardship and degradation which I suffered in the ghettos, slave labour camps and concentration camps I forgot my birth date. It was
emotion. Friends and family would drop beside me, unable to hold on any longer. I would become 
The small bread slices and cups of cold soup would be my life. The crumbs others 
sacrificed would keep my feet planted unsteadily on the 
ground. Unsteadily, but 
planted. The tears, the 
numbers, the pain etched 
into my heart and skin. My 
round face would become 
sallow, flesh sinking into my 
body - the final source of 
food. I would try myself to 
sleep until there were 
no tears left. Difference 
between days and nights 
would disappear. All would 
feel dark.

It's call... child labour, 
bullets, famine, mismatched 
shoes that would not 
fit. Someone else's clothes, 
hair shaved from my 
head. Beds with no 
mattresses. No lessons 
to complain about, 
No bedtime to whisper for. 
No parents to fight with... all 
would be gone.

Hope would be stolen as 
the murdering men in 
green told us we were less 
than human. They took our 
identities, our rights, our 
dignity, our lives. They took 
everything we had. They 
would do it. I knew. 
They were inhuman.

Scaregoats they made us. 
They seemed to take 
the term literally. For we 
would be treated like animals 
- cut, kicked, sliced, abused. 
We became toys, animals, 
things... We would soon 
become an it and every 
last strand of faith would 
be lost.

Every night when I am 
drifting off to sleep, I conceive 
of the inconceivable.

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Article reprinted from 
“Jewish News”

Relatives of Holocaust 
survivors in the 
UK have distanced 
themselves from calls for 
Germany to fund therapy for 
children of Shoah survivors. 

It comes in the wake of a 
multi-million pound lawsuit 
filed in Tel Aviv on Monday 
which sees thousands of 
litigants demand that the 
German government pay 
for their treatment, claiming 
the scars of the Nazi 
genocide have been passed 
on to them.

Around 4,000 Israelis have 
joined the claim initiated by 
the Fisher Holocaust Fund, 
which states that the 
second generation was raised 
in the shadow of depression, 
grief and guilt of their 
parents, which created a 
powerful inclination among 
the children for pain and 
suffering.

The claimants say they 
have a "twisted relationship 
with their parents" that has 
impeded their development 
and led to psychological 
problems.

Children have complained 
that they fear riding 
on buses because of 
the way their parents were 
transported to concentration 
camps and are scared of 
dogs as it reminds them of 
animals used to control 
crowds of Jews.

But a group of children 
of British-based Holocaust 
survivors, including Ben 
Leon, the son of Judi and 
the late Leo Leon, and 
Maurice, the son of Ben 
Religioso, said it should not be 
up to Germany to provide 
support.

Their statement read: "As 
Second Generation group in 
the UK and children of the 
133Aid Society Survivors, we 
aim to guard the testimonies 
of our parents so that we can 
help teach the lessons of 
the past to a wider society; 
celebrate the values of those 
that were able to overcome 
adversity and rebuild their 
lives, and remember all those 
who were lost.

"We empathise deeply 
with those who face serious 
psychological and psychiatric 
conditions as a result of 
growing up with parents 
who are survivors. We 
recognise that a small but 
significant number have 
suffered challenges due to 
their upbringing, and we 
believe that there is a role for 
support for those in need.

"However, we do not 
believe there should be any 
compulsion on the German 
Government to provide 
this support. It is 
unfortunate that the 
informal discussions broke down 
between the Fisher Fund and the 
German officials. However, 
we want to make clear that 
we have nothing to do with 
the proposed class action to 
be taken against Germany, 
and recommend that 
alternative approaches are 
made for raising the much 
needed funds."

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stand here for hours while they accounted for everyone in the camp. Suddenly, I picture myself in this spot sixty years ago. Recalling my grandmother's description, I hear the barking of orders from the guards, smell the terror emanating from each prisoner, and see the blood on stark white snow. My grandma told me that the prisoners received battered, mismatched clothing and shoes that never fit correctly. I look at my own outfit: solid boots, a nice jacket, comfortable clothing. How did these people survive during one of the coldest winters on record without coats, without hats, and without heat? Many times, they did not even have shoes. How did they keep on this sharp, painful surface? Another survivor wanders with us and feels cold. I offer him my discarded jacket, thankful that we have that option.

We continue to walk toward my grandmother's barracks. In the camp, an index in the ground of the exact shape and size of the barracks remains. We look at the rows and rows of holes and imagine the people that were once forced to live in them. We trek to the most unpleasant areas of the camp: the punishment block, the crematoria, and the shooting block. I look into the narrow area between two cement walls. Officials forced prisoners to line up here, trapping them and summarily executing them. A deafening silence fills my ears. Everyone speaks in hushed whispers. Many people pray for those who perished.

Next to the camp lies a lake. The water glimmers in the dazzling sun. Everyone throws a rose in the water for each family member and friend who had been killed or who died here. Through this tribute, the ghosts appear to finally gain freedom and leave the camp forever. As the roses float away, the juxtaposition of so much gentle beauty in contrast to so much destructive brutality shocks me. Seeing all those roses brought to light the magnitude of people affected by the Holocaust. People mourn the loss of loved ones and say prayers for those still alive. I think of all the lives that could have been. I think of what the world lost forever when thirteen million souls vanished.

We leave the camp at the end of the day. Night wraps around us like a cloak, bringing with it a sense of calm and serenity. I contemplate the fact that we do not live consumed by fear. Generally untroubled and content, we face only small and insignificant problems in contrast. The next day we travel around the city. I see the vibrant youth of my generation playing outside, carefree and undisturbed. I hope that I will never suffer the horrors endured by my grandparents. On the plane ride home I reminisce over our experiences. I look at the booklet we received at the ceremony. It contains the quote expressed by Jews everywhere, "Never Forget." From that day forth, I vowed never to forget the six million Jews and seven million non-Jews whose lives were cut short. And I vowed always to be thankful for the wonderfully ordinary circumstances in my life.

Inconceivable

By Ilana Leah Geib
(Age 13)

(The following article is submitted by Ilana Geib, age 13, who lives in Bedford, New York. She is the granddaughter of our member Judith Sherman of New Jersey, U.S.A. This article is a third generation current reaction to the Holocaust.)

Every night I greet sleep in my warm bed in a four bedroom house filled with family. Not unlike my grandmother's childhood home. A series of bangs and booms shake me from my dreams. A door slammed down, wood cracking, booming voices. I grabbed my belongings and obeyed the sharp orders in foreign languages.

Starvation, hunger, fear become my life. All comforts of home are gone.

Such things I could not conceive. The pain I could not endure. The willpower I could not muster. The strength I would not find. Life around me would crash, falling into sharp pieces of cruelty. The fragments would stifle, slicing my bare body, stripping it of both fat and
indescribable how I felt when I realised I did not know how old I was. Even a dog has a birthday. The Red Cross traced my records from Buchenwald which stated my birthday to be 1 March 1927. However, this may not be completely accurate as it is possible that I gave the Germans the wrong date in order to survive - the younger one was the least use you were. I cannot remember what I did under those terrible circumstances.

If someone would ask me what were the major factors of my survival I would say friendship in the camps, meeting that angel of a girl called Henia and an innate will to survive to be able to tell the story. I had a feeling in the camps that my mother was watching over me "up there" in the form of a guardian angel.

Zvi Dagan’s story

Hersh Mlynarski

My father became a labourer in a glass factory, Fenix, and my brother Yacov and I began to sell cigarettes on the street (black market). After a while the Germans put the Jews to work and I was sent to work in a glass factory, Buta Hortensia, which worked three shifts.

During this time, my uncle, Jacob Witosz, had a Turkish passport because during World War I he went to Palestine and stayed there when the Turks occupied Palestine, and received the passport from them. As a Turkish citizen he was able to stay outside of the Piotrkow ghetto.

My uncle had three children: boys and a wife. They were very wealthy before the war and became even wealthier during the war because my uncle did business with the Germans and wealthy Jews gave him their valuables for safekeeping.

Instead of leaving Poland and going to Turkey, he decided that nothing would happen to him or his family and stayed until 1942 when the ghetto was closed and he was deported to the gas chambers at Treblinka.

Later, his house was taken apart brick by brick and all valuables were confiscated by the Nazis.

The ghetto was closed on October 14 - 22, 1942, and I was separated from my mother and grandparents. I was only left with my brother who worked with me at the glass factory while my father worked at a different glass factory.

We were then concentrated in a small ghetto with much barren living conditions and I had to walk a great distance every day to get to work.

One afternoon, during this time, part of a shift was arrested by the Germans and put into a synagogue together with all the families discovered outside of the small ghetto. About

Zvi and Shoshana at the opening of his factory with Ezer Weitzman, his wife Roma.
550 people, men, women and children were put into this synagogue. The Ukrainians guarded the synagogue and we heard sporadic gunfire of them killing Jews trying to escape or found hiding.

I was certain that I would be killed with all the people in this synagogue, especially since we were not given any food or drink.

Suddenly, a miracle occurred, and about eleven children my age were called out and sent back to work. I believe that my workplace intervened on our behalf. After about 3-4 days all the Jews packed into the synagogue were forced to dig a common grave outside of town and were shot to death.

At the end of July 1943, the Germans closed the small ghetto and deported my brother to another labor camp - Skarzysko, and my father to a different labor camp whose name I do not know.

I was left by myself and had a choice. I could go back to the glass factory or jump the fence and join my uncle, Wola Witorz, at work in the Bugaj wood factory. I chose to go to work in the Bugaj wood factory.

The small ghetto was closed at the end of July 1943, and in Piotrkow there were two camps for forced labor: one was in the Bugaj wood factory and the second was the Hortenia and Rasa glass factories. In the Bugaj factory, we were put into wooden tents and slept on\textsuperscript{1} on top of the other in the harshest conditions, Jews only occupied these camps.

In the Bugaj wood factory we worked as laborers making wood shelters and tents for military use. I continued in this camp until November 27, 1944. We were then put into cattle cars and sent by train to Buchenwald concentration camp during a very cold winter. Here we were stripped naked and received wooden shoes, a number and a common uniform for concentration camp prisoners. We lived in barracks on wooden beds with only one thin blanket to cover ourselves. Every day we had to go out into the bitter cold for roll call.

On December 12, 1944, in the afternoon, names were called out and those people were told that they would be sent out to a work camp. My uncle was among those called out and even though I held the next number, I was not called. I decided to step forward too in place of someone else not willing to go so that I could be together with my uncle.

We marched for about 10 kilometres until we reached a railway station very late at night. The Germans checked off each number according to their list and found that I didn't match the list. First, I was severely beaten, then showed them my hands that I could work as good as anyone else. I looked older than I was and told them that I] was 16 or 18 years old and not 14. Since the train had to leave, I was thrown inside and we arrived at a munitions factory in Schilden in Germany near Leipzig.

There we replaced a group of Jewish inmates killed in an explosion a week earlier. We worked seven days a week, in twelve-hour shifts. The food was inedible, potatoes without any salt and after a short time people became swollen due to the lack of nourishing food.

It took about an hour to walk to work in the freezing cold in wooden shoes with just a uniform on our backs. We tried to warm ourselves by putting paper from cement bags around our cheeks but the Germans checked us with a stick and anyone with paper had to undress in the snow and receive a serious beating. I was one of those caught with the paper under his shirt and beaten without mercy.

This camp was terrible and its attitude to the Jews was appalling. We suffered great hardship in this camp and prayed that whenever there was an air raid the factory would be bombed, but this never happened.

In April 1945, it seemed that the war was coming to an end. We were put into wagons and taken to the railroad, packed into cattle cars and sent to Theresienstadt, a journey that should have taken a few hours but took two weeks. During these two weeks, we were only given water and people only existed by eating other people's bodies. Whenever the train stood still on the tracks we were let out due to the fear of bombings, and at these opportunities we ate the weeds at the sides of the train tracks, just like animals.

We arrived in Theresienstadt like animals and were packed like cattle into wooden barracks, and stayed in these sub-human conditions until the end of the war. The Russians liberated us on May 9, 1945.

When the Russians freed us, for the first forty-eight hours we ran to get food in the surrounding German villages and gorged ourselves. This only made us more sick and together with
their mules, would arrive. They did not treat us too harshly but schools were immediately barred to us. That was the end of my formal education. The Germans followed. They rounded us up, traveling to Visco as a designated ghetto. It was there that my father was forced to shave off his beard. I was heartbroken, he looked strange and dirty.

They wasted little time before transport would take us to concentration camps, starting with Auschwitz. What followed has been well documented - deprivation, hunger, treated worse than animals. My two brothers, Schmuel and Israel, survived until toward the end of the war when they were shot on a death march.

In October 1945 Martin and I were brought to England by CBE (Central British Funds). My sister Bassa went back to our home, married and began to rebuild the farm. She was unsuccessful, and settled in Israel where she brought up her family until her death. Moshe and Riba led happy family lives with children and grandchildren but they leave only Shoshanna as my remaining sister.

Matteen and I went to Roscowa for a visit some years ago. Czaubeta was still in power and we felt sorry for the people under his rule. When he was toppled, however, our attitude changed because they started robbing and pillaging, resulting virtually in the destruction of our skull.

Our walk was now ending and we pondered on whether it mattered where or where you are born and if you are rich or poor. What matters is how you conduct your life, in spite of adversities. To be a decent human being. The 'Boys' cover this description, but some people experience them as a calm and invigorating stretch of water hiding dangerous currents which can erupt at any time, especially when Israel is affected.

SECTION IV  SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION

My visit to Ravensbruck with grandmother
Judith (Prisoner #83,621)

In life, certain events imprint themselves in our minds forever. These events influence our everyday actions and bring a new perspective into our lives. I received this package of awakening in Germany when I accompanied my grandparents, my father, and my uncle to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of the Ravensbruck concentration camp. My grandmother was fourteen years old when the Nazis rose to power, casting a veil of darkness over Europe. They invaded her town, her home, and her life. Her family fled, but most were caught and forced into brutal death camps, such as Ravensbruck.

By Ariel Sherman,
age 15

This article was written by the granddaughter of our member Judith Sherman and represents the reactions of a third generation family member.

Ariel lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Sixty years later, my grandmother returned to the camp with three generations of family beside her. While we drove to the camp, I looked at the surrounding town. The sun shone through the hazy sky, illuminating the trees and flowers. An overwhelming feeling of life permeated the scene, seeing through the open window. Unbelievably, barely a mile away death had reigned. When we arrived, survivors were showing their families the camp. On this day, the camp is full of survivors with healthy, robust bodies in stark contrast to the starving, broken ones from years previous.

My grandmother takes us to her bunk. As we walk, slight perspiration appears on all of our faces. Wearing a nice jacket and elegant boots for the occasion, I walk on the rocky and uncomfortable ground. I stumble and almost fall. We stop at an open area before reaching the bunk. My grandmother tells us this is the location of the roll call. Guards forced prisoners to
A letter to my Chairman

Dear Ben, I have just been listening to your broadcast on the BBC's Desert Island Discs. It was so moving, especially when remembering your dear parents. Imagine how proud they would be to hear it and to experience all your many other achievements. But, as with all our family events, the parents were robbed by those wicked perpetrators. I recently took a walk with some of the 'boys' from school. One of the grandchildren had read his Barmitzvah Portion. Naturally, everyone felt happy and proud. If only every day was like that day.

The conversation eventually turned round to whether we all had our barmitzvah. Some had and some not. However, I remember mine - how nervous I was, and the kiddush we all had afterwards.

My friends had not realised that my family had been farmers, as most of the other 'boys' were children of tradesmen mainly in Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The village we lived in was Rozewa up in the Carpathian mountains. It was a small village but we boasted three shuls and two pools.

My father owned a lot of land and employed several people from the village. It was hard work tending the crops and caring for the sheep and cattle, but we were rewarded by leading a comfortable life. My elder brother Moshe, loved the farming life but my father sent him to yeshiva in Sienna. Moshe did not like this at all and threatened to run away. About this time emissaries were visiting the districts around trying to encourage young boys to go to Palestine. Now the second part of my story begins and explains briefly my connection with Israel.

Moshe begged my father to emigrate and finally be released. It took a long time to arrange because of the farm and other businesses. My father decided to take only part of the family, being Moshe, Shoshanna, who would be able to work, Rifka and young Schmuel Abram. My mother stayed at home with the other children. It was now 1938.

The day came to collect everyone. The transport was horse and carriage (none of your mini-cabs then). I was sobbing uncontrollably as it left and clinging to the side as long as possible. Several people from surrounding villages would join them - including Moshe's future father-in-law.

They would then travel by sea to the Promised Land. I forgot to mention my grandfather who was in his nineties who did not travel with them as he was terrified of being buried at sea. He was suffering from some senility and did, in fact, die a while later.

Rifka was sent to school, maybe with Schmuel Abram, while Shoshanna and Moshe were found work. I remember that Moshe was with an American farmer called Arbiter. In fact, that is how I contacted him after the war. That period in Palestine itself were terrible times. Shootings, uprisings, no-one was safe. How my father must have longed to be home in Romania. As for the rest of us, life carried on as normal, with little knowledge of what was to befall us.

My father and Schmuel returned to Rozewa and had the sad task of sifting down the assets. However, it was already too late because war with Germany was imminent. Early 1944 the Hungarian army astride
the unsanitary conditions we endured, many contracted typhus and died after liberation. I was one of the lucky ones and endured all these hardships.

The first thing people did was to gather information about surviving family from relatives, the Red Cross, inmates from other camps, etc. I discovered that my father was killed about two weeks before liberation in Austria, marching and when he couldn't take it anymore and stopped marching, he was killed.

I later discovered that my brother was killed in a concentration camp in Poland. Skarzysko, in 1943, because he contracted dysentery and was shot in the stomach by the commandant.

We began to recuperate from the deprivation and sickness while the Red Cross collected information from us. I was part of a group of three hundred orphans, boys of the same age, and, on August 14, 1945, we were picked up by the Central British Fund (now World Jewish Relief) and sent to England in military bombers. One of the pilots gave me some chocolate and this was the first time in years that I tasted chocolate after completely forgetting what it tasted like.

We arrived in England in Windermer, in the Lake District, and were put into a military camp. My main concern after all the hunger I suffered was with food, and was always worried if there would be something to eat. There was always enough food on the table, and what we didn't finish we took to put under our beds just in case we weren't fed the next day.

During this time I discovered that I had family in the U.S. and in Israel, and of course, my uncle Wolf Wironz, who I worked with in the wood factory, who was temporarily now in Germany.

We were taught English and after six months of receiving some education and learning to be civilized again, about thirty-five of us were sent to Doughton, Harrogate, England, outside of London. There, every boy either worked or continued studying. I chose to study and attended a technical school, in London, with some of the other boys, and stayed there until 1948.

In 1948 the hostel was closed and we moved into rented apartments and continued studying until the beginning of 1949. In the meantime, my uncle in the U.S. sent papers for me to come to the U.S. I was very indecisive and after hearing that Israel received its independence, I decided to go there. The Jewish Agency advised me to finish my studies and then emigrate.

On September 12, 1949 I came to Israel and was prepared to come to a country without roads, only with deserts and people riding around on camels. I was very pleasantly surprised to find a country with roads, cars, and civilization, just like in England.

Here I started to learn Hebrew and immediately applied for work. Since I had engineering skills learned in England, I received a job as a tool designer in the Israel Military Industry. There I also did my compulsory military service and continued working until 1956.

During this period I met and married my wife, Shoshanna. We had one daughter, Zehava, in 1956, and another daughter, Tali, in 1960. In 1956 I went to work for a private company at a much better position and higher salary and was able to purchase my first automobile. This factory moved to Ashkelon in 1962 and, in the meantime, I became the Technical Manager. This factory employed 450 people. In 1967 this factory was sold to the Israel Military Industry and, again, I found myself working for them.

In 1973 I received an offer I couldn't refuse—to be a partner in a screw machine factory in Ashkelon. Since then I have been managing my own factory, which, in the meantime, has changed to Deutsch Dagan Ltd. Deutsch is my American partner, and Dagan is myself. Deutsch Dagan is very profitable and presently employs 110 people, of which 45 are immigrants from Russia.

When I came to Israel I decided to put the Holocaust behind me and only kept my thoughts and feelings occupied with providing for my family and being successful at business. The Holocaust only came back to me when my grandchildren were born and started to ask me questions and then I began to tell my story. Even today, my closest friends and business associates in Israel and abroad do not know my true story and all that I lived through.

To conclude, I am thankful and lucky that I was able to start my life over and achieve my successes in business with the help and support of my loving wife, Shoshanna, and daughters Zehava and Tali and their families.
January 2007 in the Erzgebirge

Anita Lasker Wallisch

Anita was deported from her home town of Breslau – now Wrocław – to Auschwitz where, as an inmate, she played the violin in the camp orchestra. Later she was sent to Bergen-Belsen where she was liberated. She came to England in 1946 and three years later she became a founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra. She published her biography INHERIT THE TRUTH 1939 – 1945. She is a supporting member of our Society and she has been a regular contributor to our Journal.

I promised to write an account of my last trip to Germany and here it is.

The story starts in 1942 when I was in prison in Breslau prior to my departure to Auschwitz. We were given work to do. We had to paint toy soldiers according to their nationality. These were brought into the cell by a young girl in her early twenties. She told us what paint to use. It was there that I saw for the first time soldiers in shirts, jackets, kilts! She was a slight small person and we nicknamed her ‘Pueppchen’, little doll. She used to breeze in and out of the cell. The only conversation was relating to the work.

One day I looked at the bottom of the cardboard box containing the unsainted soldiers some bread! Another time a piece of cake.

The joy and surprise was unbelievable since we were very hungry. Even more unbelievable was that such a thing could happen at all. Eventually we started talking more openly. She wanted to know what had happened to us, etc., and said that her mother had sent the food. In short, Pueppchen became a friend and the centre of my bleak life. She used to open the door of the cell and, for the benefit of other guards who may be within earshot, ask loudly if we needed anything. Then she would shut the door a little and we would chat in a whisper about this and that. Nothing profound but for me it was the highlight of the day. There was somebody who was actually ‘nice’ and did not treat me like dirt. Eventually I was transferred to another cell prior to being sent to Auschwitz. I was given back my civilian clothes and waited to be called, when it comes Pueppchen who had no business whatsoever in that cell, and brought me some bread and some very nice but touching sayings and proverbs to give me courage for whatever was in store for me. She said that her mother sent them. I was very touched.

There were still some human beings left after all. I am sure that whoever reads this will understand what I am saying.

Half a century later when I started going to Germany again I had many TV interviews and always hoped that ‘Pueppchen’ might come out of the woodwork and that I could say ‘thank you’ and tell her what her friendship had meant to me.

Nothing happened and I assumed that she was probably no longer alive.

Some four years ago my sister Renate and I had an hour TV interview with Bielek. This is a very popular TV program something like ‘Parkinson’ and I am told that it is watched by millions of people. Some days after this I got a letter from a certain Hella Bartsch. It said that she was the daughter of ‘Pueppchen’ and that she and her mother had watched the programme and that she felt as though she knew us because her mother had always told her about these two Jewish girls in the Breslau prison but she was sure that we would not remember her, etc., etc. (How wrong can one be?)

The letter goes on saying that she immediately bought my book INHERIT THE TRUTH and read that far from having forgotten me her mother. I had, in fact, devoted two pages to her. Very sadly, her mother had died two days before she got the book, so she never knew that she had been unforgettable to me.

I was really sad. I would so much have liked to have thanked her for her simple humanity. I wrote back telling her how very sorry I was that her mother had died before she knew that we had not forgotten her, that I had
Dear Friends,

It has been a while since I last contributed to our Journal. I hope you will find the following of some interest:

In January 1977, we opened a factory in Costa Rica. We sold the business in January 1997. I stayed on as a part-time consultant for the new owners and continued to travel to the factories on a regular basis. After a year or so, during a visit, one of the factory managers picked me up at the airport. While we were en route, he asked me, "Mr Goldberg, what are Sephardim?" I offered an explanation and asked him what prompted the question. He told me that he had been watching a television show on Costa Rica's educational station about the country's early settlers. The religious affairs at that time fell under the authority of the Bishop of Guatemala, who would take inspection tours of the territories. There were two small farming communities: one near the village of San Ramon and the other near Palmares. When the Bishop stopped at the first community he saw a church with a cross on a steeple, as was normal for each of the hamlets across the countryside. He went inside to meet the priest. Everything appeared normal except that there were no paintings adorning the walls or statues on the altar. When he moved on to Palmares, he found what appeared, from the outside, to be a typical church but upon entering, he found the "church" to be virtually bare. He called his entire escort, which included some heavily-armed men, inside the building. As a result of all the weight, the floor collapsed, exposing a basement. They were shocked to discover a hidden Synagogue full of Hebrew books. The Bishop summoned the people from both the settlements to gather in his presence. He told them that his authority could sanction burning them all burned. Instead, he confiscated their titles to the land, their belongings, and resettled all of them in Palmares. At this point, the narrative on the television show ended.

My companion asked me if I ever noticed anything different about Palmares. I told him that I always liked the central park and all the beautiful flowers. He went on to tell me how every Spring all the municipalities in Costa Rica have their Ferias (Fairs). They charge a Parente licence fee to the companies that run and profit from the fair. In Palmares, however, they make the Feria a community affair and all the profit goes for education. People come from far and wide to attend this fair and Palmares is known to have the best schools in the country.

I'd like to share another encounter during my years in Costa Rica. When we first came to the country, I knew of two families from Novi Jice, my second hometown in Poland, who came after the War. One day I went to visit the younger of the two in San Jose. She introduced me to a lady friend. This lady was a Costa Rican of Spanish roots whose family had long ago settled there. The family was Catholic and very prominent, well established in quite a few enterprises. She told me that her family has a number of curious practices for which there is no explanation except to say that the family always did things this way. Every year, late in September, all their business enterprises shut down for two days and then, after ten days, they would shut down again for one day. This practice, dating back hundreds of years, continues to the present day, offering evidence that our traditions, in all shapes and forms, persist and survive in all corners of the world.
has yet to be measured by future historians.

Societal collective memory transforms into collective amnesia when it comes to accounting for its errors in judgment. Good times are more pleasant to remember than bad times. We have come to the crossroads of decision making: do we heed the warnings based on past experiences or do we allow our addiction to entertainment to prevail and anesthetise our psyche?

One only has to glance at the persistent daily media newscasts to realise that there is something fundamentally wrong with the direction contemporary society has chosen. A cult of hatred has spilled into the 21st century. Some of the surviving Nazi symbols of hatred are demonstrated in the recurrent shooting episodes plaguing our schools and resulting in the death of countless innocents. Violence occurs when non-Nazi euphemisms invade not only present day language but also music, art, literature, and other means of cultural expression. Hatred is expressed when someone attaches a rope fashioned into a noose onto a university classroom door where an African-American professor conducts a lecture.

Late 20th century has ushered in the age of global terrorism which has spilled into the 21st. Some of its causes stem from religious intolerance; others are rooted in rising national fascism. What ought to be our response to these phenomena as survivors of that most infamous episode in the history of civilization we call the Nazi Holocaust? Can we say that “if it happened then, it can happen again?” Or should we say: “Beware, the hour-glass of history has returned to its former mischief based on blatant disregard of inherent civil rights of the individual?”

Whatever we choose to utter as a warning to the globalisation of hatred, will our words be heeded? After all, we are the conscience of society, but society has turned a deaf ear. There are too many choices that are much more promising than the appeals for the return to rational thought. One of them is the worship of technology at any cost.

Technology has always been a two-edged sword. On the one hand, society can benefit from its rapid exponential progress. Yet, at the flip of the coin, we can perceive serious drawbacks. The problem lies in the fact that the vast majority of people are unable to keep up with the new technologies, thus giving an unfair advantage to those who have mastered its manipulative potential.

Radical problems demand radical solutions. Counterterrorism tactics challenge people’s privacy rights. They go against the principles of free democracies. Deplorably, having to safeguard our way of life in combating terrorist activities we become, of necessity, like them by being forced to abandon the basic principles of human rights. Have we not experienced it in our past? To mind come words uttered by Nazi leaders: “Democracy is our ally: her weakness will aid us in destroying her.” (Paraphrase Goebbels.)

Lately, governments have used technology to collect foreign intelligence through electronic eavesdropping. Though it serves the purpose, electronic surveillance, under any name, is still infringing on democratic principles. What might come next? Will it be confiscation of registered weapons? Does that sound familiar?

During the last few decades, we have seen a rapid proliferation of nuclear capacity. We have also experienced a renewed version of the Goebbels technique of the Big Lie, notably from the mouth of the Iranian number one spokesperson of state Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. His blatan declaraton, which advocates the extermination of Jews everywhere, underlines the legitimacy of the sovereign State of Israel as well as our sacred right to exist. Does this not sound familiar? Astonishingly, all of that only sixty years after the Holocaust, coupled with the intense global denial campaign and the propensity for human forgetfulness of devastating historical events, is rapidly gaining momentum. It encourages doubt even among the most stalwart optimists.

In spite of it all, we must not allow the spirit of negativity and the culture of hate defeat the ideals etched in the memory of all Holocaust survivors. They echo persistently in my mindset as they were sounded loud and clear on the day of our liberation.form Nazi bell: “NEVER FORGET! NEVER AGAIN!”
always been hoping to be able to thank her and that she could tell her children that their grandmother and great-grandmother, most certainly were not Nazis but thoroughly decent people. Ever since then, Puepper's daughter — her name is Hella — tried to arrange lectures for me at her home town Tschenau. She had never done anything like that before and it was not easy to get enough local support to realise this. However, with a great deal of effort, she managed to get the support of the Landeszentrale fuer politische Bildung.

On January 27th I flew to Dresden via Munich, was collected by her son and we drove to Tschenau. Tschenau is a tiny village not far from the Czech border. Very picturesque — mountains, hills... but... I learnt a lot about the former east Germany. This was the first time that I was confronted with a bunch of truly brainwashed people. Forty years of Communism, where everything was laid on automatically. Everybody had work, there were nurseries, etc., etc. Nobody had to think or plan, it was all done for them. Now there is 80% unemployment, and this is precisely where the Neo-Nazi come from. Spoke in three schools and looking at this bunch of youngsters I was quite prepared for trouble, especially in one of the schools for kids who were already considered hopeless cases. There were some questions. Not as many as I would have liked, but I learnt that people — even this postwar generation — are still afraid of each other. Altogether a rather depressing picture.

I gave one talk to adults in the local very ancient and beautiful castle. My friend Hella was demented with fear that no-one would come after all her efforts. She was wrong. There was room for 100 people and nearly twice as many turned up and there was standing room only which, of course, is not allowed. Some had travelled a considerable distance and I found that very encouraging. I doubt that any of these people have ever seen a Jewish person before.

Well, now they have.

Of Nightmares and Miracles

Most of my friends have suffered, like myself, a fair share of nightmares. Visions of our tortured and martyred parents and siblings and closest and dearest friends suffocating in poison gas chambers should be sufficient to compete in visions of horrors with the contents of Dante’s Inferno. Also months and even years of avoiding the same fate by surrendering to an existence as slaves in concentration and forced labour camps have been sufficient to affect even the toughest of minds. But, as one of my friends keeps reminding me, we or rather the few of us still left alive and fairly sane, though scarred and bruised physically and psychologically, are the survivors.

By Arthur Poznanski

Arthur came to England with the Windermere group. He is an accomplished singer. He has written a number of musical compositions and has conducted a number of choirs.

Mainly in order to avoid imparting the trauma of our hurt to our partners and children, I managed to sweep my conscious mind of the most intrusive visions of past horrors and to keep them locked in the darkest recesses of my memory.

As for miracles well these, if you choose to believe in their authenticity, happened at the dawn of civilization. There are no survivors to attest to or confirm the written accounts of these events. So, even with scepticism, we tend to give some credence to the writings of sages, prophets, and chroniclers. Unable to ascertain which events were due to Divine intervention motivated by angels or other spiritual sources or were the results of warps in the laws of nature, we seek after the "truths" most of our lives, unless we are given a special cause to believe.

With my wife (the love of my life) I endeavoured to overcome many difficulties, while I valiantly tried to ignore the nightmares which kept returning on some nights. Singing gave me and the listeners rose and I gained the prestigious position of choirmaster in the synagogue of one of the largest Jewish
communities in this country. We hoped for a future of well-
earned tranquillity. Fate decided otherwise.

Both, Renee and I had many serious health problems. In order to cope
with these we decided to budget ourselves and live in a
Spartan fashion but invest in a limited private health
insurance. During 1996 Renee had to undergo
open heart surgery and had a ceramic aortic valve
implanted in her heart. These were early days of
successful open heart surgery. Her life was in
serious peril. My brother Jerry had recommended
special prayers at the grave of Rachel in Israel. In
spite of complications Renee soon recovered. Since the
operation she has had to have frequent blood tests to
establish how much warfarin she would need to maintain
that valve free of blood clots. We treated it as a relatively
minor inconvenience.

Reality turned into a nightmare on the 9th September 2004. Late in the
evening, for no apparent reason, Renee fell over in the
kitchen, knocked her head hard and fainted. In panic I
called a doctor. A voice on the phone informed me that it
would take three or four hours for a doctor to come.
But Renee felt nauseous and a protrusion appeared at the
back of her head. I put on her head a compress of a cold wet
towel as I used to believe helps in the case of a
headache. Greatly troubled, I decided to drive her to the
emergency ward of the nearest hospital which
happened to be King George Hospital in Barnet Lane
about four miles away).

On arrival Renee still felt
tumescent and ill. A doctor
recommended a scan. As a
result of what it revealed, she
was admitted to the hospital
and placed in a ward for
observation. I returned home
about one am to get her a
nightdress, toothbrush and
slippers. Still hoping that it
was but a minor injury, but in
a rush, I forgot the slippers
and promised to bring them
with a few more items in
the morning.

Early next morning, the
10th September, poor Renee
was unconscious and was
taken to a special unit and
put on a respirator. They
told me that a scan revealed
a haematoma in her head
which needed immediate
surgery. There is no
neurological department in
this hospital; she was
therefore to be transferred to
Oldchurch Hospital in
Romford as soon as they
found her a bed in the
intensive care unit. She was
already anaesthetised and
was connected to a ventilator.

Stunned by the news that
my little darling was in grave
danger, I felt helpless, unable
to think of anything that
might help. With my mind in
turmoil, I just held on to the
bug with her slippers. In the
meantime, a registrar neuro-
surgeon from Oldchurch
Hospital telephoned to
inform me that regretfully
they had no bed available
for her in the intensive care
ward.

This reality was worse
than any nightmare. A
search began for a hospital
with an intensive care bed
and a neurosurgeon. I phoned
my Health Insurers for help
but they said, if I could find a
surgeon and a hospital with a
bed in intensive care unit
they would be willing to
approve my choice and
pay for the procedure and
hospital fees but they could
not find or recommend one. I
felt desperate; vital time was
passing and I was unable to
help my little darling.

The administrators of
the King George Hospital
eventually found a
neurosurgeon and a bed in an
intensive care unit in a
hospital in Camberwell.

But it took sixteen
hours to transfer Renee
by ambulance to Kings
College Hospital in
Denmark Hill, Camberwell, while I paced
the waiting room frantic with worry. They refused to
allow me to go with her in the ambulance owing to
the space needed for the attending nurses and
equipment.

On the advice of the
London Transport office I
took the tube to Bank,
changed for another line to
Elephant and Castle and
from there walked over to the
main line station to take one
of the suburban trains which
stops at Denmark Hill. The
journey took over two hours.
In a desperate mood, I
phoned my son Victor in
Oxford for help. His wife
Phillipa told me that he
actually was in London and
she was able to contact him
on the mobile phone.

More than two hours later I
arrived at the Kings College
Hospital. Renee was still in
the operating theatre.
Quite soon Victor appeared
and joined me in anxious
waiting for news. When the
surgeon, Mr. Chitnavis, came
out of the theatre with his
tears: he had no good news for
us. "We did all that we could,"
he said. "She is alive but on a
ventilator. She had a very big
assault on her brain, part of
which was pushed against
aging survivors' confidence to recall the salient
details of distant events.
For those reasons, many
survivors have, in general,
been reluctant to giving

There is danger of
leaving out or inadvertently
embellishing historical facts
when appearing under the
unforgiving scrutiny of
the camera lens. This has
given rise to an inherent
presumption of feeding the
ongoing propaganda
effects of the so-called
historical revisionists.
This undercurrent of the
derelaxation corrupts the
suspecting minds of

A significant number of
survivors have thus
failed to grasp that their
aversion to discuss
their private experiences,
while facing inquisitive
interviewers who display a

Be it as it may, the horrific
tragedy of our losses in
lives and property,
compounded by the grievous
effect they will exert on
future generations, can be
measured in juxtaposition to
the irreversible eradication
of the once vibrant European
Jewish cultural energy.
The consequences of this
criminal act perpetrated
by a pagan Nazi cult on
all things pertaining to
the benign evolution in
human development shall
bear unmercifully upon
millennia.

My own introspective
viewing of the destructive
Nazi influence generating
recurrent catastrophes in the
aftermath of its debacle is
evident in all of my writings.
The belief of inevitability in
the minds of some tyrannical
national leaders was evident
in the second half of
the twentieth century.
World-class assassins can be

The latter have one
common character

dominant prevalent in their

galaxia: the belief that
if their prototypes succeeded
in their acts of terror and
mayhem, they, too, will be
able to accomplish their
goals to turn rational
human behaviour into

It is a well-known fact that
age is a terminal malady. But
the reservoir of experience
that can be accessed during
one's lifetime does not have to be
interred with the individual. The

Knowledge coupled with
experience yields what
we have come to know and

evaluate as wisdom. It was
the philosopher Santayana
who stated that "those who
forget the past will repeat its
errors" or something to that
effect. May I presume to add

My view is that we must take the human

element as symptomatic of

not being able to recognise

earnmarks that foretell
impending disaster.

The year 1922 saw the
publication of a monumental
work by Oswald Spengler
entitled "The Decline of
the West". In it he had
foreseen what is happening
today by his keen analysis
of the causes for the demise
of previous "civilisations", and
having collated them into common
denominators.

One does not have to be a
clairvoyant or a so-called
"prophet" in order to
determine the impending
catastrophe. The behaviour of a
given society. Spengler was a pessimist, and his
prognostications did not
bode well for the future.

Hitler's radio broadcasts
and sabre-rattling could not


man's ability to transcend evil. And we continue to devote ourselves toward that end.

Still, we are left personally to face the challenges of aging. The title of a book my brother once gave me proclaims: "Old Age Is Not For Sissies." The same qualities that helped us to build our lives—courage, sensitivity, optimism, recognition of reality, flexibility and creativity in the face of reality—help us to meet the changes wrought by aging. We become more creative in dealing with the tasks of life even as they become more difficult to handle. We substitute new interests and activities for those we can no longer perform. We make use of our remaining strengths to compensate for growing weaknesses. If we can't run, we walk. If we can't see, we listen more carefully and listen to recorded cassette tapes or CDs of books, lectures, music. If we don't hold a job, we volunteer our services for worthy causes. If we no longer have young children of our own, we spend time with grandchildren. We know from experience that every day that we are here we will make count somehow.

We know that death awaits us sooner or later. This is the way of all flesh. We know that we came naked into the world and will leave all worldly possessions behind. We also know that death is a natural part of life. We may have different visions of what comes next. Some, they believe reaching comes next. Others believe that there is a heaven and all walk with God and their ancestors. Some believe in reincarnation. Some believe that when the Messiah comes, we will all be brought back to life everlasting in a beautiful world. Several things are certain. Nothing in the universe is lost. It continuously transforms. Our lives have had meaning and are indeed worthwhile. Through our lives we teach the lives of multitudes in ways we cannot even imagine. And we cannot imagine how the lives of those we touch are transformed and enriched and how they in turn impact on others through the generations. And then there are the children and grandchildren and great grandchildren with our genes...

We may notice that the "we" more and more includes the second, third and fourth generations. We know for certain that we do not live in vain.

One of the great gifts of Judaism is life and we are constantly enjoined to choose life. Our lives are for a blessing and a celebration.

We also continue to carry on the traditions and mission of the 45 Aid Society. We are still here.

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Bridging the Past with the Present: An Historical Introspective

Finally, six decades past, there are signs that the present global society exhibits some evidence that it is gradually becoming sensitive in regard to a striking phenomenon: it is seemingly mindful of the rapidly waning presence of World War II Holocaust eyewitnesses. Among those in the forefront are the military veterans: so claims a recent magazine editorial. The media have eagerly joined the clamour and general accolades for the veterans, intensified by the ongoing Iraq conflict.

William Samelson

William obtained a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Philosophy. He has written many books, both fact and fiction. He worked during the war in the glasswork BORITNSH with many of the Boys from Pribram who came to England. After liberation, he emigrated with his brother to the U.S.A. He keeps in touch with some of the Boys by contributing articles in our Journal.

Alas, missing from public attention are the rapidly diminishing ranks of Jewish Holocaust survivors. The past few years have generated a small measure of attention-getters: the now prominent archives of Yale University recordings of Holocaust eyewitness accounts and the subsequent—similar in nature—data gatherings of oral video reports. The sum total of both efforts has yielded only a small portion of this valuable resource of historical facts. This happened for many reasons: one of them being the fear of recurrent traumatization; another is the lack of many
another. Fortunately it was a subdural haematoma; this means we were able to clear all of the blood clot. However, it is impossible to tell how much damage was done. I cannot even guarantee that she will wake up but she has got a good chance. We have to wait and see how her brain will react to external stimuli."

As he spoke I froze and lost the control of my bladder. "Is there anything I can do?" I asked. "All you can do is pray and try to stimulate her brain to regain consciousness when the anaesthesia wears off," he answered.

Victor, seeing the state I was in, decided not to return to Oxford but to stay with me. During the next few days we were both allowed to remain for many hours at Renee’s bedside in the intensive care ward. The anaesthesia wore off but she remained unconscious in a coma. On occasions when a nurse lifted her eyelids and shone a light, her pupils contracting. It was the only sign I was told that she was still alive.

I did not eat. I could not sleep. I prayed in Hebrew, in English and in my own intangible brain waves. Victor valiantly stayed at my side and, on our return home at night, poured for me some sign of brandy to dull the pain. As days passed, the nurses consoled me saying that there was some progress and that she was now partially breathing on her own, though assisted with a lot of oxygen.

Renee presented a pathetic sight with several wires sticking out of her head and tubes, broad and narrow, connecting various parts of her body to humming machinery. One of these taping to her face led through her nose directly to her stomach from a drip of specially prepared food and water sufficient to keep her alive. For five days she was connected to a recording device which monitored her brain responses twenty-four hours a day and required an operator watching her ceaselessly all the time.

Fearing any adverse effect it might have on her recovery, I objected to further research, which was then discontinued. In the meantime I left messages over the internet for all my friends and relatives all over the world asking them to pray...

Angela informed of the crisis, jetted in on Sunday from San Francisco. On Thursday, the 16th September I was told that Renee was able to breathe on her own, when assisted with only sixty percent of oxygen but, unless a tracheotomy was performed, she would choke on the mucus from her damaged throat and most likely die. On such dicta I signed my consent for the operation and she was now breathing through a tube in her trachea. At least she was alive, but in what a state.

Still in a deep coma, she developed pneumonia. By now she started to respond to pain by twitching eyelids. With Angela and Victor all of us kept up a vigil at her bedside, talking to her but unable to tell if she could hear us.

Tous Rosh Hashana, our New Year passed without much of any visible change. Exhorted by Angela and Victor, I left the hospital during the lunch hour for a breath of fresh air. In reality, I walked the streets tearfully looking at the cloudy skies and formulating prayers in my mind. At one point I noticed a figure of a gaunt old woman with her face covered by a black veil. Oh no, I thought, not the angel of death on a mission... Then a voice of reason interjected, "No one has seen the angel of death and lived."

With my mind on a turmoil and full of despair, I turned back towards the hospital building when a hand on my shoulder stopped my stride and a clear voice said, "Do not worry, she will be all right." Astonished, I stopped and thought, "Who was it and how did he know my thoughts?" I turned my head but whoever it was, vanished round the corner. Was it a real person, or was I hallucinating? Was my mind strained beyond endurance playing tricks on me or could it have been a spirit?

In whom could I confide what occurred, when I could not even recall in what language the person spoke to me. Was it a sign of an approaching nervous breakdown?

Somehow this incident did make me feel better and with renewed confidence I returned to the hospital to resume my daily vigil at Renee’s bedside. Angela, Victor or I were talking to her unceasingly, trying to gain her attention, asking her to open her eyes. I played tapes of various types of music and tried to sing to her, but drew no response. A faint smile greeted the tape of granddaughter Ilana’s voice which I played when Angela stopped reading aloud a book borrowed from the library.

In the meantime, Renee had a "whiteout" lung infection on both sides which made her very weak and
drowsy. Then more heartache: diarrhoea set in due to a severe stomach bug. Angela and I persevered, begging her to open her eyes. She nodded affirmatively when asked to listen to a tape of me singing Neapolitan love songs. A team of doctors came to examine her and adjusted her medication. Angela, Victor and I persevered by playing tapes of Ilana chatting and singing and myself singing arias in Italian and popular songs in Polish which in the past she had heard me singing on the radio. Both doctors and nurses, kept giving us useful hints and encouraged us to keep up our efforts. They allowed us to stay at her bedside for many hours outside the official visiting periods.

At times Renee seemed to wish to communicate, and tried to mouth soundlessly but as she was breathing through the tracheotomy tube, she was unable to speak, which was very frustrating for her and for us. Even with her eyes closed she was trying to give us signs. Normally the nurses looked on her at infrequent intervals but, when summoned, they came in pairs to be able to clean her or just to move her position in bed.

Sometime during the day, when our attention was momentarily distracted, she dislodged and pulled out from her nose the tube through which her food and water were dripped directly into her stomach. The tube had to be re-inserted by a senior, experienced nurse. It was a tricky and unpleasant procedure. The nurses bandaged both her hands to prevent her dislodging the "trashy" or the nose drip tube during night-time with fewer of them in attendance.

I abandoned all my other activities, commitments and hobbies and concentrated on attempts to help my little darling back into consciousness. And yes, I prayed in my own way for Divine help and some sign of grace from above.

Our house and garden were neglected, so were friends, societies, synagogue, piano practice, writing, the piano and guitar. I spent most of every daytime at the hospital and ate what was available in the canteen or cafeteria as fast as I could. On some days Victor virtually forced me to accompany him to the nearest restaurant; he said we both needed a break.

At dawn on Saturday, the 25th September, I woke early. It was Yom Kippur. Glad to have rehearsed the choristers quite well during the previous months I was confident they were able to sing the extensive programme of the Service in our Synagogue with a deputy conductor. My place and duty was in the hospital at Renee's bedside even if she was asleep, or comatose most of the time.

Suddenly, late in the afternoon, close to five o'clock, she spontaneously opened both her eyes and tracked from Angela to myself. In spite of some doctors' and nurses' prognostications that she would never regain full consciousness, she remained conscious for over twenty minutes.

Not only did she recognize us, but replied by nods and reject signs to our questions and indicated that her favourite choice was to listen to tape of Ilana speaking and singing. Second on her list was a tape of my Italian and Neapolitan arias. She was lucid and communicating. This was the longest "awake and recognition time" to date. What a pity she was not yet able to talk. These spontaneous signs of returning consciousness made me and Angela so very happy. Victor, who also witnessed this miracle, professed his amusement, but had to return to Oxford to be with his wife and children.

While Renee drifted back to sleep I journeyed with Angela back home and rushed to the Synagogue. To me what occurred today was a SIMAN, a sign from the Almighty that our prayers had been granted.

I was convinced that in response to my prayers I was granted a miracle, and although Renee was still very ill, her life had been spared, or rather that I was given a sign that my efforts to get her well would be effective. The miracle was dependent on my concentrated care and it was now my sacred duty to safeguard it.

I felt the need to pray and was glad to have arrived at the shul in time for Neilah service. My eyes filled with tears at the sound of the shofar, the signal of the end of the fast. It did not occur to me then that with a transfer to another hospital a long struggle still awaited me against nightmarish realities lurking in the background. My troubles were far from over. A long struggle against evil, vast forces of inadequate hospital nursing
Getting older, but still here

Robert Sherman - October 2007

Robert is the husband of Judith and both are regular contributors to our Journal.

and in the world. We remain active and engaged like Ben Heifigort who, through God's devotion, devotes enormous time and energy to the Society, this publication, and the International Claims Conference. Some members write memoirs, give speeches, teach, and engage in all kinds of activities to perform "Tikun Olam" repair the world.

Fourth, we look back in pride and satisfaction at all that we have accomplished in life and all that we have become in spite of all the horrors and obstacles. We know that inside the taller body is the same "Gebor" (hero) who moved mountains to get where he/she is. We serve as living examples of the ability to rise from the ashes of horror and severe trauma to live good and productive lives. This is a miracle of the human spirit and personal courage and tenacity.

Fifth, we have the advantage of decades of life experience and the historical perspective and, hopefully, the wisdom that such long experience provides. We know about the ups and the downs, adversity and triumph, and we know about the fact that the world and we ourselves are constantly changing and that somehow, in spite of change, the human condition seems to transcend time and change. It remains our great advantage and a great challenge. When will human-kind learn, not to pursue hatred and war no more? Because of our experiences we remain optimistic about life and mankind and
My Shtetl Revisited

I returned again to Poland with some reluctance, but I wanted to find my birth certificate and anything I could about my family. The local registrar does not have any Jewish births registered. I discovered they are kept separately, but first I decided to try my old school. The director and staff were very helpful. They searched our old records and photocopied my reports and even my little sister's report. They are still looking for my brother's report.

On leaving we saw displayed in the hallways some old war posters of the Nazi occupation and newspaper cuttings of local heroes who helped liberate them. I took some videos of it. Driving back to Warsaw with Moshe, who was with me, I remarked to Sorej, who can't read Polish, that there was not one word about the 300 Jewish families who were driven out and murdered. We didn't say anything about it at the time to the staff - perhaps we should have done. So we are trying to put that right in a small way. Below is the letter I sent to the school, which was published in a newspaper.

I can never forget those awful days of my youth in German-occupied Poland. One of my most vivid memories, apart from having to leave my family, was the day my two uncles were hanged in front of me.

My family were shoemakers by trade. Two of my uncles were hanged as an example to everyone else when they dared to take a few scraps of leather while making shoes for the Germans. It was terrible. I saw them hanged just a few steps away from me and could do nothing. It still haunts me.

The rest of my family died in the concentration camps, but I have never been able to find out where. I had not wanted to leave them, but I had no choice. My father wanted me to survive. When we were liberated, I was in Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. I was offered a choice of making a life in Britain or Palestine and, being a Jew, Palestine was my first option. But that is where everyone wanted to go, so I was sent to my second choice, Britain.

From the moment I arrived in Windermere I was glad I had come to Britain. I stayed in the hostels for many months as I adjusted and was shown nothing but kindness by the people from the hostel. Eventually a friend of a friend recommended me for a job with a furrier, as a fur cutter. Afterwards, I worked in many different jobs over the years.

I met my wife at the Primrose Club and we married in 1949. She was 16 and I was 22. We bought a lovely house in Kent, London. When I was told it had been a guest house, we turned it into one again and that is how I became an hotelier. We have had a happy life, but had to endure the tragedy of losing our younger son James.

My life here has been good and I have my close extended family with the Beys, but I always felt a need to rediscover my roots. I went back to Poland last week. It was emotional. My wife and a friend came as well and I am glad they were there. I went back to my old school and traced my old registration records and school reports. It gave me a sense of where I had come from and it has helped me to give me an inner peace. The awful memories will never go away but this has helped me - I have been able to come to terms with my past.
A Synopsis of my Post-Holocaust life

Alex Gross

Alex came to England in February 1946 with the third group who originated from Ruthenia. He emigrated to the USA where he became a successful businessman. In 1995, he received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Emory University. He published his memoir entitled “Ruthenia” in 1995. He keeps in close contact with our Society.

When my brother, Sam, arrived in America after being severely injured in the fight for Israel’s independence, we took him in as a partner. Then Jack Rubenstein, one of our boys, joined us as a salesman; later he became a partner and officer. He lives in Michigan.

As our business had its ups and downs, we also had a few other of our boys working with us. Abe Grabin was with us for many years. He retired a few years ago at the same time as I retired and moved to Miami, FL where I got remarried and blessed with a wonderful woman whom my children and grandchildren adore.

Living in Miami is great, not only because of the wonderful weather, but we have a lot of survivors moving to Miami when they retire from all over the USA, Canada, etc. I am in close touch in Cape Europa and with Paul Gear, David Mermelstein Magda Bader and Joe Sacks, where we provide three luncheons a year in Miami-Dade Co. to Holocaust survivors. We have over three hundred of the time. We provide food, music and entertainment.

We also are in touch with Alex Moose, Victor Bightnburg, Martin Buki who unfortunately is not well and many of the people that were with us in England. Unfortunately, we are not getting younger but fortunately many of us are still alive and able to function properly.

It’s always great to hear from friends that were in England with us and it is very special when we can get together.

About ten years after I came to the U.S.A., and our business flourished. I was blessed and got married to a wonderful woman, Linda, who came with me for a few gatherings of the 16 Aid Society to England and Israel. She blessed me with four wonderful children, three daughters and one son.

As we were in the process of moving to Atlanta, G.A., our only son, Benji, was accidentally killed with our farm equipment on the Gross Lake property while he
was beautifying it for some elderly people to enjoy a picnic at our lake. It, of course, devastated us, and just as we had begun to get our lives back on track, my beloved wife, Linda, became a victim of a rape murderer, and I have lost four brothers, including Sam, in the last five years.

We had to go on with our lives, suffering those tragedies, just as all of us had to get our lives together after the Holocaust. Losing our beloved parents and so many uncles, aunts, cousins and friends.

I was fortunate to have five brothers and sister, Rosalyn, survive the Holocaust. She was a roommate with Mala Tribich (Ben Belziger's sister). Our oldest brother died just before liberation in Bergen-Belsen.

Unfortunately, all of us have experienced and lived through the most unbelievable horrors.

In Atlanta, I got very involved heading up the Hemshech survivors' group, and especially with teaching and lecturing to many schools, civic, and other organizations about the Holocaust. The Governor appointed me to the GA State Holocaust Commission, and I received an honorary doctorate at prestigious Emory University in Atlanta.

I have written and published a book called, "Yankee Holocaust Survivor's Bittersweet Memoirs". It was published by University Press.

I hope all of us will stay healthy for many years, and derive pleasure from seeing, getting together, or hearing from each other as often as possible.

With best wishes to each and every one of us and our families.

Alex Gross
10155 Collins Ave., #504
Bal Harbour, FL 33154

Alex Gross
Born September 18, 1925 in Czechoslovakia, annexed by Hungary, taken over by Nazi Germany. Incarcerated at age 14 in a ghetto, shipped to the extermination camps of Auschwitz, Birkenau, then Buna and Gleiwitz. Finally liberated in Buchenwald by the U.S. Army where he found brothers, Bill and Sam. Went back to Czechoslovakia, found three brothers and one sister had survived. His parents were victims of Auschwitz extermination.

Sent to orphanages in England, then came to America on December 16, 1949, to join his surviving family, uncles, aunts, and family in the United States.

Started the building business with brother, Bill in 1956. During the Korean war voluntarily spent two years in the U.S. Army Intelligence & Medical Corps, attended Washington University. Rejoined his brother, Bill, who passed away in business.

They were joined by brothers Sam, then Ben, who passed away who relocated to Atlanta in 1960. They continued to build every kind of housing: single and multi-family, office complexes, and shopping centers. Since 1962, they have developed a planned community in Atlanta, Georgia. The Gross Brothers have built housing in eighteen states, as well as office and shopping centers.

Married to his wife, Linda, for over 25 years, she became a victim of a rape-murderer. Their only son lost his life at age fourteen in a farming accident around their Gross Lake property, may he rest in peace. He is blessed with three daughters, three sons-in-law, four grandchildren, and one grandson.

Recipient of many awards from Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, and many schools. Was active in many civic and charitable organizations, was acting Chairman of the State of Georgia Holocaust Commission appointed by the Governor, was on the Board of Atlanta Jewish Federation, past Chair of Israel Bonds Metro Atlanta, past President of HEMSHECH, an organization of Survivors of the Holocaust, was honored by schools, Hadassah, Veterans Organizations, O.R.T., and the Governor of Georgia.

He has lectured in Emory University, University of Mercer, Vanderbilt, Georgia State University of Miami, Alabama, and many other colleges, universities, schools and civic organizations.

He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa at Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

He has been written up in USA Today, Good Fortune Magazine, New York Times, Angels on Earth, T.N. Ohio, Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. He appeared on
who Eves nearly asked if we would be interested to join a small group of people who were coming in a couple of weeks at the spa of Bardejovská Kupel from different countries. They were all acquainted with each other and were all originally from Poland. They all now live in Warsaw, Copenhagen, Malmo, Stuttgart, and Dietikon near Zurich or Basel. After long deliberations we decided to join the group.

The lady and her husband who live near Zurich, she was originally from Warsaw, her husband from Koszice in Slovakia, arranged accommodation for the whole group in Bardejovská Kupel. The transport was booked by each participant individually. The arrangements included full board and a variety of medical treatments for each person, which were suggested by a doctor at the spa after medical examination. The treatment included classical massage, mineral baths, magnetic and oxygen therapy and the drinking of individually recommended natural healing waters from the mineral springs. A treatment plan was set up for each individual which specified the type of therapy, place and time of each treatment, which could be taken before mid-day, allowing free time after lunch for rest, long walks along well kept trails, excursions or other activities; all in all a perfect plan for rejuvenation and wellbeing. The group was assigned a separate dining room and usually met at meal times. In the evenings there was a get-together for those who wanted to join. Israeli and Jewish music was played.

The conversations turned to the parents and relatives who suffered and who were lost in the Shoah. The subject of why they left Poland in the years 1935-1940 was never raised.

Although the conversations in the group were mostly in Polish, Elke and I must have fitted into the much younger group quite well. For prior to our departure we were asked if we would come again next year, i.e. in 2007.

We decided to join the group once more, and made travelling arrangements for July 23rd. A few weeks before our departure, I got an unexpected call from the curator of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, a lady by the name of Teresa Pollin (Tel. 202-488-6128) formerly from Warsaw, who is working at the museum to arrange an exhibition in Washington about the pre-war Jewish community of Kozienice in Poland.

Through Teresa's contact with a person from Warsaw, by the name of Adam Jasny, who was also at the spa with our group in 2006, and who remembered that also Czesława Fersztand was from Kozienice. Teresa Pollin got in touch with me through our contact we exchanged information about events and people in Kozienice. I could give her some information that she required, especially about Selig Berman, a photographer whose studio was in the ground floor of the building we lived in.

Teresa was also interested to receive pre-war family photos and possible correspondence with family members and friends. I sent her some photographs from before the war of my family which were saved by my uncle in Paris who emigrated from Lublin to France long before the war, also my cousins who live in Israel, preserved some photographs which their parents, who came from Poland, brought with them when they came before the war.

I also sent Teresa photographs which I found by accident on my first trip to Poland in 1980 when I visited Kozienice, where I lived with my parents and sister before the Shoah. On that visit the son of the person who lived in the apartment to my parents at Zlota Lubska 19 was 13 in Kozienice, now lived in the same apartment. When I introduced myself to him, he remembered the family name Fersztand and asked us to come in to what was now his home.

In the course of the conversation, Pat Miaske put a carton box full of pre-war photographs onto the table which must have been taken from the photographer Selig Berman who had his studio on the ground floor after the Jews were deported from the ghetto in Kozienice. Among these photos, I found pictures of my parents, which I took with me, and now donated to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Anyone reading this story, who happens to be from Kozienice or surroundings and interested in the project of Teresa Pollin, and who is able to give any information about the Jewish community or individuals who lived in Kozienice before the war, is kindly requested to contact Teresa Pollin, Curator of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Teresa can be contacted under the telephone number 202-488-6128.
A journey to the Spa of Bardejovske Kupele in Slovakia

The town of Bardejov is situated in the north-eastern part of Slovakia. To the north lies Kremnica in Poland, a spa in its own right, to the south Budapest in Hungary and to the east Lutsk in the Ukraine. The town of Bardejov now has a population of about 30,000 inhabitants.

Between the war years 1918-1939 the population numbered about 6,000 people, about half were Jews. There were two synagogues, a Jewish cemetery and other institutions.

After World War Two in 1945, the Jewish survivors who came back to Bardejov numbered about 500, the majority of whom later emigrated to Israel, the USA, Canada and other countries. We are told that there are now only two Jewish families living in Bardejov. The cemetery we visited there was totally neglected, nearly all of the tombstones damaged and unreadable and the whole place was overgrown with weeds and shrubs.

One of the synagogues we saw had been turned into a storehouse for steel parts, but some signs of the original use of the place were still visible. The second synagogue which was still there was left in its original condition, but it is totally neglected and all the contents, including the old prayer books, are falling apart. There is almost nothing left of it and everything is in a lamentable condition. Both the cemetery and the synagogues are taken care of by a non-Jewish person from Bardejov who is paid by a Jewish man, a former citizen of Bardejov who now lives in the USA.

In the year 2000 Bardejov was taken on to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The spa of Bardejovske Kupele (Polish: kumpel) is located about 6 km further away from the town of Bardejov; it lies in the midst of natural beauty surrounded by dense forest. The entire spa was built up in a forest clearing about 200 years ago and contains a variety of old trees, shrubs and flowers which makes it very conducive to a relaxed and pleasant holiday. From Basic in Switzerland, where we live, it is easily accessible by plane with Slovakair, a low cost Slovak airline. The flight from Basic to Bratislava takes about 40 minutes where we had to change planes and wait for a connection to Kosice, another flight of 45 minutes. Having arrived in Kosice, a car awaited us in order to bring us to the last leg of the trip to the spa of Bardejovske Kupele.

Kosice, the final destination of our flight is the second largest city in Slovakia. In November 1938 the Hungarian Army occupied the city. At that time the Jewish population there numbered 11,500 people, it was the largest Jewish population in occupied Slovakia. When the Germans took over Hungary in March 1944, the fate of the Jews of Kosice had already been decided by them.

According to restrictions ordered against the Jews, it was decreed that they were obliged to wear the Yellow Star of David on their clothing, they were no longer allowed to use public transport, visit theatres, cinemas, coffee houses or spas. There was a curfew for Jews from 5 pm to 8 am. In April 1944 the Jews were herded into the brisk factor concentration camp in Kosice. Other groups of the Jewish community were located in the city ghetto, the prison and various other places. By now there were about 13,000 Jews in the city of Kosice. The deportation of the thus concentrated Jewish population began in May 1944, in four train transports, all those assembled were sent to Auschwitz, where about 12,000 Jews from Kosice perished in the gas chambers. Once a sizeable portion of the entire city population, only fragments of the Jewish community returned to Kosice after the war in 1945.

According to the demographic census from Kosice of the year 2001, the population of the city numbered 236,000; the number of Jews was given as 35 souls.

In the spring of 2006 a lady acquaintance from Warsaw
television programs. Good Morning America, Cable News Network, and local TV stations. A strong supporter of youth sports, was active in soccer, racquet ball, business.

served on many boards and devotes much of his resources to various charities.

Now retired, his life story, "Yankee" has been published by University Press of America and can be ordered at www.upa.org or 1-800-482-6120. All proceeds go to charity.

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John Fox presented with the Dennis Clark Solas Award

Dennis Clark told the story of immigrants in Philadelphia. He never tired of highlighting the contributions made by immigrants - building infrastructure, contributing their scholarly and literary genius, their intentions to fuel progress and their making it a patchwork quilt of vibrant diversity. Dennis was also an eager and tireless advocate who tried to end inequality and unfairness wherever he found it. His life challenges us to see ourselves in others, to reach beyond narrow sense of self, and to be enlarged and enriched by encounters with common humanity. This award honors those who do so. It celebrates the achievements of immigrants to our city and nation and it acknowledges Dennis for showing us the way.

The award itself takes the form of a bronze sculpture, designed and crafted by Robert K. McConville, to represent the idea crafted in Neuengamme - that the darkest day of the year is the day that penetrates the interior most deeply. It is given to those whose vision, voice and achievements inspire all of us.

Lesley Fox Testan

From the first day that John Fox was connected with the industry and trade unionism, he fiercely advocated for the quality of life issues and working conditions of working men and women. Even in semi-retirement, he continues to be a firm believer and advocate of equal opportunity for all.

John Fox was born in Poland and as a young Jewish boy of 11 years of age, he learned firsthand about human suffering. In 1942, when the deportations of the Jews began, Fox, his younger brother and father, were separated from the rest of their family, who were all taken to the gas chambers of Treblinka. John Fox lost 75 members of his family. The men were used to perform hard labor, until 1944, when they were put in a train cattle car and taken to a series of concentration camps: Czestochowianka, Buchenwald, Dora and Nordhausen. On his way to the Lamsen extermination camp in May 1945, John Fox was liberated by Czech partisans. He spent the next 10 years in England and apprenticed for 7 years as a tailor before moving to the United States with his wife Betty. Throughout the years, Fox has educated people about the Holocaust, and has been featured in the book The Boy by Sir Martin Gilbert. He has also worked with Steven Spielberg on

Dennis Clark 1927 - 1993

John's Award
Additionally, he has served as co-chair of the American Trade Union Council for Histadrut and the Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee, and been the National Chairman of its Administrative Committee. He has also been a member of the National Trade Union Council for Human Rights and former Vice-President of the Jewish Community Relations Council, as well as the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council. He was also co-chair of the Labor Division of Federation Allied Jewish Appeal, and was a member of the Delaware Valley Labor Committee for Full Employment, a trustee and Vice-President of the Sidney Hillman Medical Center and the Sidney Hillman Apartments.

Fox and his wife Betty have three daughters, Lesley, Lynne and Jacqueline. They also have five grandchildren. John Fox has never faltered in his firm belief in the rights of individuals. As a newly arrived immigrant in Philadelphia in 1934, he very quickly became involved with the union in the clothing industry, where he worked for 10 years. He ultimately became a union Business Agent, then Manager of the Philadelphia Joint Board. "UNITE HERE" from 1950 to 1999.

John Fox and his Family

My family and I toured Poland in August 2007. My goal was to retrace my own travels through Poland and the Czech Republic after the war’s end in 1945 and to share my memories of that time with my children and grandchildren.

I flew from Philadelphia to Warsaw with two daughters, son-in-law, three grandchildren and a family friend. A cousin flew from Virginia and met us in Warsaw. Another daughter and her son flew from California and she brought along two friends who were also the videographers. We rented a large bus as there were in excess of 20 people joining us.

The first morning, after a one and a half hour journey, we arrived at the memorial to Treblinka. We found the stone for Pietrow and said kaddish and toured the small museum. I knew in advance that this would be the saddest part of our journey. The family already knew that my mother and sister had perished here but, for the first time, I told them all of the other names of family that I could recall who had also perished here. Uncle, aunts and cousins. Most of the Firs and Goterman family from Tuszyn died at Treblinka. I felt a sense of closure in that I was able to bring this generation of our family to pay their respects to those they had never met.

We returned to Warsaw. The highlight of the afternoon was our visit to the Warsaw ghetto memorial, where we happened to meet a tour group of Jewish teens from New York and Israel. What a small world! Accompanying them was a 78 year old survivor who had been liberated at Theresienstadt. We spent a long time sharing our life stories and then joined their group for a memorial service in honor of the Warsaw ghetto.

That evening, we were joined by even more family. Five cousins from Paris, accompanied by several friends. They had arranged to meet us in Poland in order to visit Tuszyn with us. Tuszyn, where their father had lived. (He died two years ago.) After dinner, we all walked through old Warsaw and spent hours catching up with each other’s memories.
The Claims Conference allocates approximately $100 million of successor organization funds every year. Demographic studies (available on the Claims Conference Web site) show that there will be extensive needs on the part of survivors over the next 10 to 15 years. As survivors who are currently around age 75 get older, their needs will become greater. Yet the sources of restitution funding that are supporting current Claims Conference allocations for social services will not last nearly that long.

Those who know the Claims Conference know what we have accomplished, and, more importantly, our devotion to what still needs to be done. The time is short and work monumental. Read our Web site to see what we do and why. Together, let’s help those who suffered so much while we can.

In breakthrough, claims conference secures $250 million from Germany for additional 6,000 Holocaust survivors worldwide

In a breakthrough for Holocaust survivors, the Claims Conference has successfully obtained a major revision in its Article 2 Fund pension programme. The change will result in an estimated $250 million in payments over the next 10 years to an additional 6,000 survivors worldwide. The shift came following months of negotiations with the German Ministry of Finance, which will provide the funding for payments to those who are eligible.

Under the Article 2 Fund programme, as specified by German government criteria, the annual net income of an applicant may not exceed the local currency equivalent of US $25,000 after taxes. The relevant income limit for residents of Germany and other European countries can be obtained from the Claims Conference office in Germany. Due to Claims Conference negotiations, many benefits paid to elderly survivors will no longer count toward that income limit. With 81,000 survivors currently receiving Article 2 payments, this will lead to a more than 10 percent increase in the number of people who will now qualify for payments.

These negotiations established that as of October 1, 2007, all old age pensions—including governmental pensions, social security payments, occupational pensions and retirement plans—will be counted towards calculation of the income limit, effectively granting payments to thousands more survivors. In addition, only the net income of the applicant will be considered, and not the income of his or her spouse, changing the previous rule.

Specific details including which payments constitute comparable payments and limitations regarding assets of the applicant are available on the Claims Conference website.

These changes reflect the long-standing Claims Conference position that compensation payments, which recognize Nazi persecution and suffering, should not be based on income criteria and should be paid irrespective of financial need. In previous negotiations, the Claims Conference had obtained the exclusion of social security payments from the computation of income for persons age 50 and older who met other fund criteria.

The Claims Conference has implemented an international outreach campaign to inform survivors of these major changes in the program.

Persons currently receiving a monthly pension under the German Federal Indemnification Law (BEG) or a pension from the Israeli Ministry of Finance under the Israeli Nazi Persecution Disabled Persons Law 5717-1957 cannot also receive a pension from the Article 2 Fund.

Eligibility for the Article 2 Fund is determined by the German government and is also based on a survivor’s persecution history, including incarceration in certain camps or ghettos, forced labor, and time in hiding or living under false identity. Full eligibility criteria are available on the Claims Conference website at: http://www.claimscon.org/url=article2eligibility
The Claims Conference goes to extraordinary lengths to be open and transparent, more so than virtually any other major Jewish organisation. We take our fiduciary and moral responsibility seriously. Accountability and oversight are central to what we are and what we do.

The Claims Conference website every year, the full financial statements resulting from its yearly audit by Ernst & Young. [www.claimsonline.org/audit]

Accompanying the financial statements are summary charts, [www.claimsonline.org/financial]

Information on the Independent Review Authority for individual survivors regarding compensation programs: [www.claimsonline.org/appeals]

This is just a sampling of the information available on the website. There is plenty more to be found on the website.

All kinds of numbers have appeared in the media regarding the assets of the Claims Conference. The following is the reality. As detailed in the 2005 financial statements, the Claims Conference had US$900 million in total assets at the end of the year. This amount falls into two categories, funds that are committed for specific payments and those that are not, all of which is detailed in the audit:

A. Funds with commitment:

- $557 million
- $253 million for payments to identified heirs of property in the former East Germany

B. Funds not yet committed:

- $313 million

- Of this $313 million, $265 million was designated for allocations to be made in 2006
- The remaining $273 million is set aside for the long-term needs of Nazi victims as they age.

Additionally, East German properties that the Claims Conference has recovered but not yet sold are described in the financial statements. While we have estimated a value of $60 million for these properties, we recognise that they are the property remaining of the properties we have put up for sale, and as such, will be the most difficult to sell. The number of pending claims is available on our website.
The next morning we arrived in Tuszyn. At the city hall, we met with another four cousins from Paris. They were successful in finding some of our family history certificates (birth, death and marriage). We came away with an earnest promise on the clerk's behalf to email us any further information that he could find. He remained true to his word. He has since sent a copy of my parent's marriage certificate and an entry for my sister's birth. He is now working on school records and has emailed me many pictures of students.

The Mayor of Tuszyn presented me with a book about the history of this town that he says now has a population of about 12,000. He even suggested that I consider buying some property to build a home. I can't really put into words just how absurd I found this suggestion to be.

Tuszyn has changed significantly in twenty years. I found it to be almost unrecognisable. The water pump that I used as a child was now covered by a decorative flowerbed. The school house has been renovated and enlarged. Our family's home is gone and nothing has been built on the lot where it stood. The cobblestones have been replaced with asphalt. The kosher butcher is now an apartment house. The bakery where the children watched the matzoh being made is now a travel agency.

There is nothing left to indicate that this had once been the Jewish centre of Tuszyn. It was as if the neighbourhood that I remembered had never existed. I found myself wishing that I hadn't come back at all. I had to remind myself why I had returned ... to show my grandchildren their history.

It was time to start the journey to Piotrkow. The same journey that I had taken so long ago in the winter of 1939. Today, the train station in Piotrkow is a busy place. The street is lined with busy restaurants and shops. As the train arrived, I couldn't help but remember the bowers that took so many to their fate at Treblinka. Our family gathered around and I told them my memories of the deportation of the ghetto dwellers.

I pointed out the Hotensia-Kara glass factory where I had worked during the war. We found it to be closed and in bad condition. The windows are broken and the property is overgrown with weeds. I showed the children where the furnaces once stood.

In the Piotrkow ghetto, we walked to the synagogue. It has been a public library for many years. Upon entering, I wondered how anyone would ever know that this building had ever been a temple. The librarian told us that the smaller building next door housed the "torah room" and that was what I wanted our family to see. Up two flights of stairs and through stacks of books, there, hidden from view, is the mural of the torah that I remembered from my childhood. The paint is very faded and the bullet holes have not been patched. The only visible evidence of the crimes committed in this building during World War II.

The next morning, we set off to Krakow and to Auschwitz. About a mile outside of Auschwitz, we find our bus travelling parallel with a train on its way there. One cannot help but look at the train and think what a different purpose it once had.

Once inside Auschwitz, we did not take a guided tour but opted to walk around at our own pace. A French cousin takes the floor and shares some of her father's experiences in this camp. We were grateful for her courage in telling the stories because it was so emotional for her to do so. Some of her father's stories jogged memories of my own and I would add whatever details I could remember from my time in the camps.
We stopped by the crematoriums which housed the ovens, some of which are still intact, as are the chimney stacks. It is an emotional visit but the vista are well worth the lesson they deliver.

We return to Krakow. Our driver takes us to the street where the movie "Schindler's List" was filmed. The FARRUKA OSKARA SCHINDLERKA EMMIL was a factory off the beaten track in a rundown neighborhood. Outside is a plaque in the honour of Oskar Schindler which reads "Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world".

We decided to have dinner in the Jewish quarter. This is where the original Jewish ghetto existed but there is little evidence of a Jewish population now. We chose a restaurant called Alté Restaurace because they offer Jewish music in the evening and kosher-style food. There were twenty-one in our group.

Next stop Prague. We cross the Czech border easily. It is definitely a lot simpler to travel now than it was in 1945. I wanted to give the children a feel for how far I had travelled back and forth after the liberation.

We travel to Theresienstadt. Inside the fortress it has the feel of a village complete with a bookshop and a café. There are sculptures dedicated to those who died here during World War II. The building where the "300" were housed is now the site of the museum. The several hundred graves have been made into memorials and there are red roses placed everywhere. I recognized the Olympic-sized swimming pool which is now empty from my own visit in 1945. Roman Halerz and I swam in this same pool in July 1945. The orchard is flourishing and we all ate an apple picked fresh from a tree.

The whole family posed for a photo on the steps in front of the museum - the same building where my brother Harry and I had sat as boys over 60 years ago.

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My life in England and the States

It has been a long time since I wrote to the Journal. For those of you who cannot remember who I am, I shall again identify myself. After spending the years from 1942 – 1945 in six concentration camps in Poland, I arrived in Barhenwald. After two weeks, I was "on the road again" to Schleien where I worked on the Peenemunde shoulder guns. After a while, I was transferred with some of you to Zinger Nickel, where we packed the dusters in boxes with German ladies sitting between us. In April of 1945, I was on a three-week journey to Theresienstadt. I was liberated with many of you by the Russian Army on May 8, 1945. On August 10th, about 300 of us flew to England. We stayed a short time in Windermer, then we were divided into groups of 25 – 30 to live throughout the British Commonwealth. In order to avoid the London fog, because I suffered from pleurisy in Biezenow in the winter of 1942, I was sent to Bedford. When the O.R.T. opened up the vocational school in London, I asked the Refugees Committee to transfer me to London. I stayed at 93 Stamford Hill from 1946 to 1947, where attending courses at the O.R.T. school. I asked to be in the electrical department because I used to follow my uncle on his electrical work. I was told that I have to try other courses first. I joined the "radio" department, where I learned theory and practice and we repaired radios that private people brought in for repair. They were only charged for material. Last year, I received a letter from Canada from my former O.R.T. teacher.

From there, I transferred to "welding". I liked it and I successfully completed "acetylene gas welding" and started on "electric welding". I was doing well and my instructor wanted me to stay in welding but due to the fact that I had suffered from pleurisy in the camp of Biezenow near Cracow in 1942 - for which I was not treated - by the end of the day of electrical welding, I did not feel well. The dust from the electrical welding apparently was settling on my lungs and I had trouble breathing. I was sent to the hospital for a check-up and X-ray. The doctor returned with a proposition, that I go for nine months on
A press-conference was held which was chaired by Jerry Halbersztadt, with among others Jan Chodakowski in the Museum panel facing the press.

The groundbreaking ceremony was followed by lunch in Warsaw Town Hall at which diplomas were offered to various supporters of the project. Many in attendance thought that the groundbreaking ceremony was very successful as an event, but more significantly served to remove any residual anxieties about whether the project would be finalized. "I now know it is going to happen" was a phrase that echoed throughout the day.

Images

Written on the occasion of the 61st anniversary of the Holocaust
Colette Littman
Colette is a Director of the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

Tell me friend how to imagine the unimaginable
how to visualise what has no visual images,
the mental agony, the terror, the helplessness and the pain
of a people sentenced without appeal.

Tell me how to relate to their experience,
how to grasp the chaos which destroyed faith,
how to realise the stark finality of the final solution
because I could have been one of them.

Tell me how to forgive the unfounded accusation
the age-old curse, the loss of future generations
and let me question man’s humanity
with six million unanswered questions.

Tell me how to deal with evil
how to believe that man is in G-d’s image
man who destroys G-d’s creation
man who kills G-d’s image.

The claims conference: Perception and Reality
Julius Berman

Julius Berman is Chairman of the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany.

The Claims Conference is approaching its annual meeting in July, during which the board of directors explores the search for additional restitution assets to alleviate the physical and emotional problems of ageing Holocaust survivors. The board also determines policies concerning the allocation and distribution of available funds, among other items.

Recently the Claims Conference has been subject to some criticism in the media, most of it based upon myths that persist about this organisation despite all evidence to the contrary. The topic of Holocaust restitution and the distribution of compensation funds is an understandably emotional issue, but that does not excuse statements about the Claims Conference that are simply wrong and that can be easily disproved by a look at
Apocalypse or Armageddon in the Middle East

Michael Etkind

This is the place where it all began
Is man now watching his impending
doom...

Will Israel destroy the planet
As in Iraq
Will Europe blame them
If they do
And will America assist
Or turn her back

Iran will make the bomb
The terrorists will get it
Soon
And then -
All hell breaks loose
And spreads
Around the globe

What should man do
Before it is too late
And radioactive dust blows out the sun

Is man now watching his impending
doom

Groundbreaking Ceremony

Shammie Ross
Chairperson of the Friends of The Museum of Polish Jews in Warsaw

The groundbreaking occurred on 26th June 2007 and was given wide and enthusiastic coverage by the Polish media.

The ceremony was held on the site of the future Museum of the History of Polish Jews (site of the Warsaw Ghetto during the war), and in close proximity to the Memorial to the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The central event of the day was the interment of a Founding Charter signed by both Polish and international personalities in attendance. Prime among the latter were the current President of Poland (Lech Kaczynski), the current Mayor of Warsaw ( Hanna Gronkiewicz-Walt), the ex-President of Poland (Alexander Kwasniewski), an ex-German President (Richard von Weizsäcker), the former Chief Rabbi of Israel (Meir Lau), the archbishop of Warsaw (Kazimierz Nycz), and the former Chief Rabbi of Warsaw (Symcha Rabinovitch).

The Charter was signed by behalf of our own fundraising committee by Shammie Ross.

The interment of the Charter was preceded by a series of speeches. The President of Poland referred to the project as a “sealed success story which should have been brought to fruition much earlier.” The very charismatic former Chief Rabbi of Israel began by saying that “for all to see, the heavens are weeping with joy” the groundbreaking ceremony had begun with a heavy downpour, and then, after a pause, added “and better late than never”, a reference again to the late fruition of the project. He also spoke about his own Polish origins, and warmly thanked upon his friendship with Pope John Paul II. Further speeches were made by - among others - the very popular Shevah Weiss, an ex-ambassador of Israel in Poland, and former Speaker of the Knesset and a short but enthusiastic one was given by the personal envoy of President Bush, Tzvi Tova, who the previous day had been to visit the birthplace of his grandmother and of whose community nothing remained. Shimon Peres was unable to attend, but a letter from him was read out by the current Israeli ambassador in Poland.

The speeches were punctuated with music brought to the ceremony by a section of the Vienna Philharmonic, a leading Polish jazzman, a Jewish lament was sung in Yiddish by a well-known Polish-Jewish singer.
T.B. Saratovitch. I protested: "I lost my education during the six years of war and now I am trying to make a persona of myself, how can I take off five months and stop my education. The doctor came up with this answer: "You are now 18 years old, you have at least another 30 years to live – that is 600 months. What is to 9 months out of 600 months if you know that you are going to get well?" It was an answer that I could not refuse. I was sent to Ugly, outside Asford, Kent. After nine months, I returned to London and moved into the Finchley Road Hostel. I returned to the O.R.T. school and joined the electrical department. I graduated in 1948. I could not get a job in the trade, so I joined Cram Coles in a new ice cream factory in the East End of London. While in the Finchley Hostel, I was elected treasurer for the year and asked not to be elected for the year of 1949, but I was drafted and, together with Meche (Religious adviser) we ran the place. It was not an easy task. I even had to tell the cook to varry the meals from day to day and not to burn the soup.

In December of 1949 – after three years of waiting – with two affidavits, I obtained my visa and travelled with two other of our boys to New York City. I could not get a job in my trade. I worked in a radio factory for a few months and then I was out of a job. I went to the employment office, willing to take any job. I was offered a job as a shipping clerk. When I was willing to accept it, I was asked if I had a High School Diploma. My reply: "To take packages to the Post Office. I need an H.S. Diploma?" He replied that I did not. But the next guy had an H.S. Diploma. He got the job. Eventually, I got a job from a distant cousin – to repair electrical instruments and taking packages to the Post Office.

In the spring of 1951, my O.R.T. friend, Marian Rozenblum, arrived in Buffalo, N.Y., where he stayed with his uncle and aunt. He had no friends because all our boys came to New York City. He called me, asking if I would like to come to Buffalo 100 miles from New York City. I replied: "I would, if you can get me a job as an electrician." He answered: "My boss is hiring." A few days later, I put my basket suitcase in the bus in the evening and the next morning, I was in Buffalo. I immediately had a job and also registered in evening High School. Monday, Wednesday and Friday I had classes, while Tuesday and Thursday evenings I had off. Over the weekend, a neighbour died and the family was sitting Shiva, with evening prayers. On Tuesday evening I attended the prayers when a man in his 50s was observing me. After the service, we both went outside and it was still daylight. He asked me where I was during the war (one greenhorn recognizes another). I mentioned the four camps in the Cracow area and then Skarzysko. He said: "I was there." There were about 3,000 people there. As we stood there, his wife approached us on the way to do some shopping. She said to me: "Have I got a girl for you?" I asked: "How old is the girl?" She replied: "She is 16 years old." I said: "I have nothing to do with girls under 18." Two days later, on Thursday, again I attended the prayers. After the service, the man asked me if I would like to see his house. I agreed – it was only half a block away. My future father-in-law and his sixteen-year-old daughter rented two rooms in his apartment on the second floor of a two-family building. When I arrived, the man’s wife did not waste any time but went downstairs to the tenant where my future bride was watching "Milton Berle" on T.V. and called her upstairs. She was 16 and I was 23. After we talked for a while across the table, I found out that she went through the war with her mother and her mother was killed after the war by her neighbours. She was 9 years old when her mother was killed. She was sent by the Jewish returnees on a long journey, with wounded Russian soldiers, to join her aunt in Uzbekistan-Russia. She returned to Poland in 1945, not knowing if her father survived. She was reunited with her father, left for Germany, waited for a U.S. visa until 1950, and then arrived in Buffalo.

She was shopping, cooking and doing laundry for her father and herself. She was not what we call in America a J.A.P. (Jewish American Princess). Within a couple of months we became engaged. On June 8th 1952, we got married. In 1953, I graduated High School. I attended the University of Buffalo for two years until I lost my job. I studied for my business licence and went into business for myself.

On June 8th, 2007, my wife Rose and I will have been married 55 years.
Memories of the Holocaust

Born in Chodzecz, Poland, the seventh and youngest in his family, Roman Halter was twelve when the Second World War broke out. As Nazi measures against the Jews of Poland intensified, he was moved with a part of his family to the ghetto in Lodz where he became a metalworker. Conditions in the ghetto were appalling, and by 1942 his entire family had died either through starvation, ill-treatment or murder. Work in the Lodz Ghetto nonetheless gave Halter some protection until 1944 when he was deported to Auschwitz. There he was fortunate to be selected to work and weeks later was sent on to another camp — Stutthof, where the cold winds of the Baltic made the camp inmates' lives barely endurable. From there he went to Dresden, where he survived the Allied air raids in February 1945 and eventually found freedom through escaping from a death march.

At the end of the war Roman Halter returned to Chodzecz to find he was one of only four survivors from the town's 500 Jews. Halter was one of the 732 young survivors of the camps to be flown by the RAF to Britain in 1945. There he rebuilt his life and became an architect. Only twenty-five years later was he able to use his memories of those terrible times to make these paintings.

Quite soon after his arrival in Britain Halter started visiting the National Gallery and found windows into his own experiences within the paintings, most notably in the images of the Crucifixion. In the painting 'Shalom' for example, the anguished body of the crucified Christ known from Renaissance painting comes to represent the body of Halter's brother, hanged by the Nazis for an act of compassion. These familiar sources are overlaid with script and imagery that reflects Halter's own Jewish upbringing, and by barbed wire that binds the faces and bodies in pain. Together they merge Jewish identity with atrocity and judgement with race. Interwoven into these broken patterns are the faces of the masses, caught innocently in this tragedy.

Roman's Paintings

A few of Romans' friends at the inauguration of Romans' exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.

Woman Wearing Mantilla

Production Date: 1674-77

Medium: oil on canvas

On the Sabbath, sitting in the ladies' gallery in the synagogue, it was fashionable for Polish Jewish women to wear a Mantilla. My mother looked wonderful in it. The mantilla was itself covered by a fine veil. This fashion may have arrived in Poland with the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492.
Holocaust Memorial: A Timely Reminder

Ramaa Sharma (Interviewed by BBC radio)

A Holocaust survivor urges people to unite and learn from the mistakes of the past at the borough's annual memorial service.

Arthur Poznanski described himself as one of the last Mohicans at this year's memorial service held in Valentines Park, Gants Hill.

Saddened by the current state of the world's affairs, he talked about his responsibility to share his brutal experiences.

He says: "We have a lot of trouble all over the world. Hatred, discrimination and violence is still erupting...and even genocides on larger and smaller scales. I think maybe by quoting what happened to us we can influence people to abandon this type of pursuit and live in peace."

Arthur calls himself one of the lucky ones. His parents, like many others, tried to find labour work for their children so they would escape deportation.

He recalls: "Deportations were actually to a death camp, nobody believed it was so. Our parents sold their jewellery and by all means, bribed the authorities to give their youngsters a chance of life...giving them up as slaves to German war industries."

Arthur urged people to learn from the terror of his past.

The service was a public event, inviting local dignitaries as well as students from local comprehensives. Teenagers from the King Solomon's school were applauded for their touching contributions.

However, Arthur believes that young people today don't give the event enough importance and he thinks that must change. It's why Arthur is in the process of touring schools and writing a memoir. One that he hopes to publish in the near future.

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We have Survived

Michael Etkind

We have survived by hiding
In the chaos of confusion
To scatter and to plough
Through yet another day
We shared illusions
Of a purpose and a mission
Of being special in a very special way

We saw that hatreds
Not the answer for the living
That hate breeds hate
And urges men to slay
That man must learn
And practice real forgiving
To build a better future day by day

We thought that with survival
Came a duty
We were to urge the world
To change its former ways
Abandon hatred murder retribution
And live in peace
With all that life entails

This earth is not as yet a space
Of calm and peace
But for us, long as we're still here
We must convey
The horrors we have seen
And pray
The world becomes a better place

Before we disappear
I looked at the religious paintings in the National Gallery for the gentle young that reminded me of the face of that young girl from the wagon that I have carried all this time in my mind.

Mother with Babies
Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

In October 1943, Himmler addressed a group of high-ranking SS officers, heads of the GAA (Administrative regions) and many members of the Nazi party. His speech, delivered at the SS remaining centre in Poznań, concerned the Jewish people. He gave the order that the rest of European Jewry must be done away with and that the task should begin with the youngest. He argued that if they were allowed to grow up, then they would revenge themselves by murdering the German children. Following that speech, the SS began to murder mothers with their babies. Other murders continued with great intensity.

I was in the Lodz ghetto in October 1943. Where Rumkowski, the head of the Jewish Ghetto committee was told by the SS to announce in the market square that mothers should give up their children. Instead, the mothers chose to go on the transports together with their children.

Within the faces of Moses are the images, painted small, which form the subject of the other six paintings in the series.

Moses the Prophet
Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

After the destruction of the First Temple, the Jewish People were dispersed and gradually settled around the world. In some of these countries they formed welcome minorities. In others, they suffered pogroms, persecutions, and all sorts of tribulations. But throughout their dispersion, they held on to their trust, and worshipped their God. They did not blame God for the calamities that befell them; rather, they blamed themselves for having sinned. Even today, I have heard Orthodox Jewish people explaining that the Holocaust occurred as God's punishment for the transgressions of the Jews in Europe in the last century. In this painting, we see the strong, angry face of the Prophet, Moses. He is wearing a tallit - a striped Jewish prayer shawl and tefillin - phylacteries, little black boxes containing sacred texts of prayers which are bound by leather straps to the forehead and the upper arm of a man while he is praying. This is taken from the Shema - Hear, O Israel prayer: And you shall bind them. Here, Moses is looking down onto the mothers and children, all naked, as they are led towards their death in the concentration camp.

Shlomo I
Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

My eldest half-brother, Shlomo, was hanged in 1943. This was a few months before we were sent to the Lodz ghetto. He was taken with other Jewish men from our town of Chodziesz to work on the Berlin-Poznań highway. He was in charge of a group of men, and tried to get extra bread for them from outside the compound enclosure. He was caught.

We received a letter telling us that Shlomo had been hanged and that his best friend was made to do the hanging. My father, holding the letter with trembling hands, his tears running down his face, read the letter out loud to us. When he was hanged his feet touched the ground and he couldn't die. So the noose was removed and he stood and swayed. Then he fell. At the time of his death Shlomo was thirteen.

In some of the paintings I saw later in life, when Christ is being taken down from the cross, I saw Shlomo. Although he must have had his hands tied behind his back before he was hanged.
Before producing this painting, I visited the National Gallery in London and came across Goya's portrait of Doña Isabel de Porcel. His painting reminded me of my mother's dignified look. My mother had a longer face.

Each time I see the portrait of Doña Isabel de Porcel, I imagine my mother sitting in the balcony and looking down on the men praying below.

**Man on the Electrified Barbed Wire**
Production Date: 1944-45
Medium: oil on canvas

Auschwitz-Birkenau was the extermination section of Auschwitz. I arrived there in 1944, aged 17. On arrival, our group of 500 were selected for slave labour, but while we were in Birkenau, nothing was certain and all the time we were kicked and beaten for no reason at all.

Yet nothing could take away my desire to go on to live, to survive. Hope or no hope, I wanted to live. It was not something I pondered or thought about. Life drove me on. I never saw myself dead, no matter what. When I was hit I nursed my bruises. The day's portion of bread was eaten up moments after it was handed out; when it was gone and nothing was left for the afternoon and evening, I starved like the others, but I still wanted to live.

It was different for those over thirty. A man over thirty knew what life was like before the war and what the world was like then. He could understand that, whether the Germans were winning or losing, they were continuing to murder Jews. He could see no hope in the present or the future.

This man on the wire has lost his children. They were taken from him. This broke the spring of his life. His daily tortures, starvation, and the lack of hope made it easier for him to die with himself than live. So he ended his life on the electrified barbed-wire fence that surrounded us, where it took only seconds.

**Starved Faces**
Production Date: 1944-45
Medium: oil on canvas

Starvation was one of the methods used to murder the Jewish people. Those of us who held onto life and existed on starvation ration found that our facial appearance changed greatly. The Nazis wished to show that the Jews looked physically different and therefore were different from the German master race.

Under normal circumstances we all read faces. In this painting I wanted to show that we, the starved, could no longer read each other's faces. They had all become haggard, ugly and distorted. We could only read the eyes, search there for a response. The eyes communicated friendship, courage, defiance, compassion and life.

On the forehead of the main central face the words from the Yiddish song - Do not ever say that you are walking along the last road.