

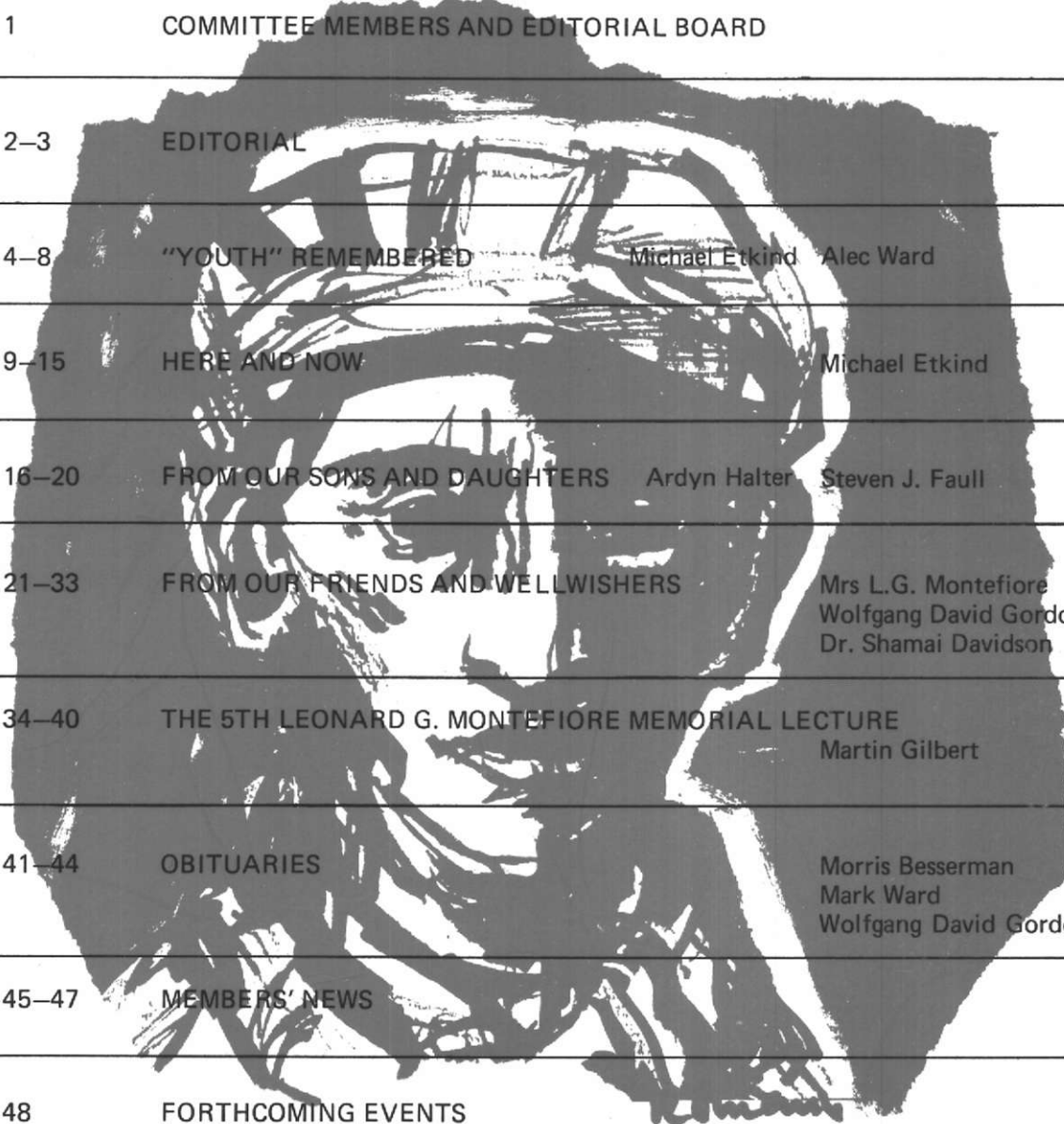
JOURNAL

'45

OF THE AID SOCIETY

No.9

DECEMBER 1981



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JOURNAL OF THE '45 AID SOCIETY

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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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They should be typed in double-spacing and reach the Editor not later than the end of February 1982.

EDITORIAL

Our last three Editorials - as well as earlier ones - contained several appeals to our Members. All these appeals have evoked uniformly stunning responses, which indeed can be quantified: they amounted precisely to zero. This phenomenon, no doubt, has various possible explanations, of which the most plausible is that the readership of the Editorials is as large as has been the response to our appeals - zero. Those who notice the continued presence of the Editorials might well ask why we publish them. The answer is that we apply democratic principles. A majority of the Editorial Board is in favour of having Editorials and the Editor, being a principled democrat, carries out majority decisions. In this particular instance abiding by majority decisions admittedly implies a degree of schizophrenia - like talking to a person one regards as deaf. To minimize the schizophrenia there will be no further appeals in this Editorial, which will be confined to some comments on the present issue.

We are honoured indeed to be able to publish Mrs Montefiore's reminiscences of her late husband's work. While our devotion to his memory stems mainly from our contact with him, we are delighted that no less a person than his wife should record in these pages references to his other manifold charitable activities. The late Wolfgang Gordon's article is an interesting reminder of how others saw us when we first arrived here. Then we were not told, but now we can be. In retrospect it is perhaps not surprising that we conveyed to others our strong feeling that, while in the camps, we had not been normal human beings, and that it might take us a little while to regain that status. At the same time the late Wolfgang Gordon inadvertently reveals that, as late as 1946, he, like so many others, still could not grasp what had happened to Jews during the war in Nazi-occupied Europe. Thus he wrote that among East European Jews "relations between parents and children are exceptionally close". Alas, in 1946 one could no longer use the present tense to describe East European Jewry, a point relevant to Steven Faull's article. We would like "our sons and daughters" to be aware of certain aspects of the history of the last war. Steven's article suggests that this desire may have unfortunate, if unintended, side effects. The question naturally arises: can our desire be satisfied in the absence of those side effects? Perhaps this is one of the topics which will be discussed at the 2nd Generation Meeting on 6th December (see Forthcoming Events, p.). The events of the war which remain most vivid in our memories were undoubtedly discussed at the Gathering in Israel, on which Michael Etkind reports. We must be grateful to him for being not only such an interesting but also such a reliable contributor to our Journal. When it comes to expressing thanks for efforts on behalf of our Journal we cannot but mention Romek Halter. Observant recipients of the Journal will have noticed its much improved appearance and

layout, all due to Romek's energetically felicitous intervention in the whole process of producing the Journal. On behalf of the Editorial Board, and especially the Editor, "thank you, Romek".

Believe it or not, we last published the Journal at this time of the year a full three years ago, in November 1978. At that time "... your Committee and Editorial Board (belatedly) ... [took] ... the opportunity to wish all our Members and friends a very happy New Year. L'Shana Tova Tikatevu". We repeat these wishes now.

"YOUTH" REMEMBERED

MY FRIEND THE SINGER

The author came to this country with the Southampton group and was one of the Finchley Road (Freshwater) Hostel boys.

by Alec Ward
(formerly Abram
Warszaw)

The Editor does not normally comment on the degree of his acquaintance with various contributors to the Journal. In this instance, however, he feels almost compelled to reveal that, although he has known Alec since our simultaneous arrival in this country, and lived in the same Hostel, he had never before heard the story which Alec now tells (Ed.).

After having lived through the appalling life in two ghettos and three slave labour camps in Poland, I found myself in Buchenwald in January 1945. Four weeks later I was taken to Concentration Camp Flossberg near Leipzig. In Flössberg I worked in an ammunition factory, producing bazookas. The camp was built in a forest, was very swampy and we had to walk in deep mud on the way to and from work. The German Commandant was an absolute sadist. He derived great pleasure when he could beat us over our heads as we passed the gate to work. None of us believed that we would come out alive from that hell. By some miracle I made friends with a boy of my age, who helped me enormously to keep up my morale. My friend had a most wonderful voice. Very often he would sing to while away the very painful and hungry free time. Friendship in the camps was very vital and was a major factor in surviving the Holocaust.

As the Russians were approaching that part of Germany, the Germans put us on a cattle train which took us to Mauthausen in Austria. The journey took 15 days, most of the time without food or water. The reason why it took so long to get there was that the railway lines were being bombed constantly by the Allies. The majority of that transport perished on the way.

Our wagon included 30 young boys. After realising that we were unlikely to survive the journey we organised an escape party. I had already tried to escape once before when my father ordered me to take my younger brother Leib aged 9½ and escape from Ghetto Kozenice. I dutifully obeyed my father and when the guard was busy searching someone we both crawled under the barbed wire and escaped. For a few months we managed to hide in barns and haystacks in the fields. Occasionally the Poles would give us some food. It was not long before we were caught by the Germans and while being

taken to Skarzysko slave labour camp Werk C, I experienced the first selection when we stopped in Radom. They took my brother, Leib, and some elderly people to be shot.

Coming back to the original story, 16 boys had jumped the train and I was supposed to be the 18th. However, in order to deter further escapes the SS put a few dead bodies (those of boys who had just been caught and shot) into our wagon, together with a guard, for the rest of the journey. My friend the singer was one of the 16 who had jumped and had been shot at by the guards who were perched between the wagons. I saw him being hit by a bullet and fall to the ground. This was an almost unbearable blow to me which I was unable to get out of my mind for a long time, just like the earlier loss of my brother.

Only a small proportion of the original number of prisoners arrived in Mauthausen. Many died during the journey and others while marching up to the camp from the railway station. The camp was built in Alpine mountains with the purpose of exposing people to extremes of temperature. Undernourished people could not survive such conditions for long. How I envied my friend the singer. He was dead and did not have to suffer any more. Those of us who reached Mauthausen alive went through further degradation and torture. They took our clothes from us and we were left naked until we were liberated by the American forces on May 5th 1945.

In October of that year I came to England, a mere teenager, together with a group of young survivors. We were intoxicated with the freedom of this country, where everyone was so kind and helpful. How my friend the singer and my brother would have loved that freedom.

A few months later in a London street I noticed a boy who resembled my friend. When we got nearer we instinctively embraced, had tears in our eyes and for a while found it very difficult to talk. He had not been killed after he jumped from the train, and a woman found him wounded in a Czech forest and got him medical treatment. He arrived in England a few months before me with another group of survivors. He is an active member of our Society and his name is Arthur Poznanski.

BEFORE THE GHETTO (THE FIRST SIX MONTHS)

by Michael Etkind

This is the second instalment of the author's recollections of events during the early part of the War. The first instalment was published in our last issue. (Ed.)

Warsaw had fallen. Hitler was speaking on the radio. Every now and then a deathly silence would be interrupted with perfect timing, his rasping voice rising to a crescendo until it was drowned in an outburst of cheering. Every sentence ended to rapturous applause and roars of "Sieg Heil". I was straining my ears in a vain endeavour to understand what he was saying. Eventually, during a prolonged bout of cheering, I asked my mother to translate his last sentence. "Die Juden müssen von Europa verschwinden", she said, it means: "The Jews must vanish from Europe". She got up and went into the kitchen. A shiver ran down my spine - we had been sentenced to death. The radio began to play "DEUTCHLAND, Deutschland über Alles" ...

Every day brought new misfortunes. An all-night curfew was imposed. All Jewish property was to be confiscated. Overnight, the money we had in the bank (P.K.O.) was blocked. German marks appeared and somehow my father managed to get hold of those strange looking banknotes with swastikas and pictures of Hitler. The buying of food became an ordeal, even if you had the money. Queues would suddenly form in front of bakeries, but often, after waiting for hours, you would walk away empty handed. How proud and happy you were when you managed to buy and bring home a loaf of bread. It was safer for me to go outside than it was for my father, or my older brother Jacob who was then eighteen (and had returned home after trying in vain to reach Warsaw). I was fourteen but, being small for my age, looked younger and was therefore less likely to be caught for work. In fact, while everybody older, and many of my friends even a year younger than I were caught at least once, somehow I managed to evade this experience for the time being.

One morning my father asked me to accompany him to one of the textile firms, "Kanel i Zbar", for which he worked as an accountant. The offices and warehouse were situated in Piotrkowska street, about a mile from where we lived. There were thousands of bales of material stacked up to the ceiling, which the Germans were going to take away the following day. The two major shareholders of the firm, Mr Kanel and Mr Zbar, had escaped to Warsaw and could not be contacted. A couple of Polish employees, who worked for the company in some minor capacity, were asking my father to sign certain documents stating that the business was sold to them before the war and therefore it was no longer a "Jewish business". My father refused. He told me that a part of the stock belonged to him, and thinking aloud decided to take a

few bales of material home. We managed to find a "doroszka", a kind of hansom cab on four wheels, and took with us half a dozen bales of silk.

Some days later there was a knock on the door. A soldier and a German civilian entered our flat. The civilian, a middle aged man with a small swastika in his lapel, did the talking. He spoke German to my mother while going from room to room and opening all the cupboards and drawers. I followed them gingerly. I had the feeling that the soldier felt uncomfortable. My mother took off her wedding ring and handed it over. After searching a little longer they found the six bales of silk my father and I brought from the warehouse. The soldier picked up a walking stick my brother Jacob brought from Zakopane, examined it carefully, but then seemed to have changed his mind and replaced it. We breathed a sigh of relief when eventually they left with two loaded suitcases. My mother explained later that the civilian was a "Volksdeutscher", an ethnic German.

Winter was approaching. Life was becoming harder and more precarious. We had to wear armbands with the star of David, (this was later changed to two yellow stars with the word "Jude" on them). We had to take our radio set to the police station. Piotrkowska street, the Oxford street of Lodz, was renamed "Adolf Hitler Strasse", and Jews were not allowed to walk on it. Every day another sinister looking placard in German and Polish would appear in the streets announcing some new restrictions and ending with a warning. We soon learnt that the slightest infringement of the rules meant the death sentence.

In addition to these official orders, Jews were being rounded up, ostensibly for work, but in more cases than not simply to be tormented. The Germans would catch people in the streets, or they would enter Jewish dwellings and take away one or more members of a family - usually the adult males. Some of those taken never came back and no one knew what happened to them, but more often those caught for work would come back, beaten, degraded, demoralised. The stories of sadism beggar description. Ten Jews would be ordered to push a car, while the German driver would put it into reverse gear. Public lavatories had to be cleaned with tooth-brushes. A friend of mine was caught, with a number of others, and taken into a school converted into barracks, where they were surrounded by a group of smiling soldiers. Two men in white coats, looking like medical orderlies, entered the room; one of them held a long knife. They ordered one Jewish man to follow them. Ten minutes later the two Germans returned splattered with blood, and selected another victim. The soldiers were roaring with laughter. Eventually my friend's turn came: he was led across the yard into a shed, in the corner of which was a cage with geese. My friend had to hold a goose, while the German with the knife cut its throat. After plucking off its feathers, my friend was allowed to go home.

On the night of the 10th of November 1939 we were awakened by a loud explosion. The following morning we learnt that the monument to Kościuszko (the Polish national hero) in Plac Wolności had been demolished by the Germans. The equivalent in London would be the demolition of Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square. On that very day, several people were hanged in public and left hanging for three days as a warning against any possible acts of resistance to mark the 11th November. There were none.

Łódź, with its surrounding area, was to be annexed to the Third Reich, and its name changed to Litzmannstadt. There was panic; surely the Jews would not be allowed to live inside Germany; if only one could escape to Warsaw, or somewhere else inside the General Government, as it was now called. Pinkus Gierszowski, a textile magnate and my father's friend, together with nine other prominent Jewish leaders were arrested. Most of my father's friends fled to Warsaw, and so he too decided that we should follow. My mother was not keen; it was dangerous enough to venture outside for a few hundred yards, let alone travel to Warsaw. After lengthy discussions, it was decided that my father together with my older brother would go first and try to find a place for all of us, before we would try to join them. A German officer was bribed by a third party to smuggle a group of Jews across the border. They left at dawn, at the beginning of February 1940. That was the last time I saw my father and Jacob.

A few weeks later posters appeared announcing that all Jews would have to move into the ghetto area, a notorious part of Łódź, known as "Bałuty". Three days before the final date for leaving for the ghetto, there were raids and many Jews living in the vicinity of Piotrkowska were shot inside their dwellings. This was designed to stampede the Jewish population into leaving for the "safety" of the ghetto. Needless to say, it succeeded. During the next three days, thousands upon thousands of makeshift sleighs could be seen converging on the ghetto area, loaded with bundles of bedding. The ground was frozen and there was a blizzard blowing as I was pulling my sledge loaded with our belongings. My mother, together with Henka my younger sister and my little brother Lolek, were pushing from behind. We made a number of journeys. We were lucky that my uncle, Szolym, already had a room and we moved in with his family for the time being. There were three adults and five children in a room of about 250 square feet. The ghetto was filling fast.

(to be continued)

HERE AND NOW

A DIARY OF THE WORLD GATHERING OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN ISRAEL, 14th-18th JUNE 1981

by Michael Etkind

As soon as the "Fasten Seat Belts" signs lit up above our heads the voice of the captain announced that the aircraft was approaching its destination. The morning sky was overcast, but, as the 'plane was preparing to land, we could see through the windows the tilting landscape around Ben Gurion airport. Five minutes later a group of tired travellers waited patiently in the reception hall. A plaque on the wall reminded us that this same area was the scene of a terrorist attack some years ago. The girl, who was stamping our passports, was not in a hurry. A long day lay ahead of her and she did not share in our excitement. By the time we had walked through customs the sun dispersed the clouds and there was no need to worry about the weather. After a warm welcome from Greville Janner, Gloria and Frank Green, Ray Jackson, Romek of El-Al, and some of the other boys who had arrived earlier, we found ourselves in a taxi speeding towards Tel-Aviv.

The Ramada hotel had not changed since our last visit, and we seemed to have been allocated the very same room we had eighteen months earlier. No sooner had we unpacked, than the telephone rang. My eighty-seven year old uncle, who came to Tel-Aviv in 1913, was on his way and any ideas about sleeping or resting had to be completely abandoned.

In the evening, having eventually obtained our registration badges at the Hilton, we found ourselves in a stampede for coaches which were supposed to take us to the Tel-Aviv sports stadium for the welcoming ceremony. After arriving at one of the entrance gates we were told to proceed to another, halfway round the stadium, only to be informed that we needed entrance tickets. By that time I had the feeling that it must be easier to get into Wembley stadium for the Cup Final without a ticket than to attend our Gathering. However, before long, Harry Balsam had managed to get behind the ticket collector and was ordering him to let us all in. Obviously his experience during the war as Hauptputzer to Oberscharführer Müller gave him the authority needed for this occasion. The main speaker of the evening was Simone Weil, the President of the European Parliament, whose mother had perished in Auschwitz. She spoke in French and apparently referred to herself as being first and foremost French. For me, born in Poland, such dual identity problems ceased to exist from about the age of two, when I first began to understand the most often repeated sentence in Poland before the war: "scabby Jew - to Palestine".

Between the speeches in English, French, Hebrew, Yiddish and even Ladino, we were entertained by young Israeli dancers and singers. The enclosed stadium was hot and airless and by eleven o'clock we decided to leave while the others remained till midnight.

After an early morning swim and an Israeli breakfast which can be best described as the opposite of "too little, too late", we began to wear out the pavement between the Ramada, the Diplomat, and the Marina. As soon as we arrived outside one hotel somebody said the coach would arrive outside another. Looking at Ben one would never have believed that he used to be a champion weight-lifter; he looked much more like a sprinter, or long distance runner. "Where is Ben?" was the phrase on everybody's lips, as Ben disappeared into one hotel lobby and reappeared from another. "Everything is under control", he would say each time he overtook us. Eventually we found ourselves inside a coach, but many of us had to stand. It must have been the wrong coach, because we arrived at the Tel-Aviv bus depot instead of in Jerusalem. The coach driver turned round and said in Yiddish: "By your cackling like a herd of geese, I know I am with my family"! Of course it sounded much better in Yiddish.

We had to change our coach and eventually arrived in Jerusalem at the "Survivors' Village", a large assembly building containing the computer hall where young Israeli students were feeding information to the computers, in an effort to find out the whereabouts of other possible survivors. The two names I submitted produced negative results.

After lunch we arrived at Yad Vashem via Roman's gates, described on postcards which were being sold to visitors as "designed by Herman Halter". Here we were shown a film on the Holocaust, after which Jenny Young, the BBC reporter who accompanied us throughout the week, suddenly asked me why I wanted to see such films. Jenny was collecting material for a prospective programme on the Gathering for Radio 4. I told her that when a crime is committed, the least, although possibly the only, thing that ordinary people can do is to try to express their outrage. It would be a sad world if crimes such as the Holocaust provoked only indifference, silence, and the shrugging of one's shoulders. Young people everywhere, and especially in Israel, should see the results, the fruit of hatred. I was there to add my share to the publicity. After all, one of Hitler's main aims was to silence us forever, as his operation named "Night and Fog", which so nearly succeeded, demonstrates by its very name.

Yitzhak Navon's speech was excellent. His main point was that nations should not be judged by their philosophers, composers or artists, but by the way in which they treat human beings. There are single sentences which often say more than whole volumes.

Ernest Michael, the American organiser, followed with a moving speech. No one who heard him will ever forget his phrase: "... and now they say that it never happened ... these hands carried more corpses than I dare to remember ..."

The film, the music, the lighting of the six columns, the songs, and finally Rabbi Lau's speech were all beyond description. It was one of those "once in a lifetime" experiences, which cannot be repeated or recaptured, and none of the five thousand people present will ever forget that evening.

On Tuesday morning we went to Ashkelon to see how Jewish refugees from North Africa are being helped and educated, and no amount of praise can do justice to the volunteers from Britain engaged on this project. Seeing us take an interest in them was a tremendous boost for the morale of the refugees, and seeing our boys' antics helped them to realise how normal and well balanced they are. Watching Ziggy and Harry Fox dance with the children in the Kindergarten was a sight for sore eyes. Since their teacher must have told them that we came from Britain, those children are bound to grow up nursing some funny ideas about this country. Fortunately, Hugo Gryn's speech at the dedication of a transit van and at the Holocaust Square redressed the balance, so that perhaps the young Mayor of Ashkelon might have formed a more favourable opinion of us.

That evening we were in Aloma's flat in Jerusalem discussing literature with Ariel Hirschfeld, a young professor from Jerusalem University. "The reason why Holocaust literature is rather limited in its scope is that literature deals with imagination, and cannot possibly do justice to this subject, because as far as the Holocaust is concerned the reality outstrips imagination". Ariel was quoting the thoughts of Israeli thinkers on this subject.

Roman and I returned to the Ramada, while Elaine remained in Jerusalem with Aloma in order to go on a conducted tour next day.

"Symposium on Antisemitism" was on the agenda for Wednesday morning and I joined Ben, Frank and Gloria Green, Hugo and Jacqueline Gryn and thousands of others for that event, which took place in the auditorium of the Holocaust Village. One always learns something new at such events. Professor Yehuda Bauer stressed the point that the structures of both ancient Greece and Rome were based on slavery and since Judaism preaches equality, the Jews were looked upon as trouble makers even in those early days. No matter how many reasons and explanations I come across, I feel that they are all inadequate to explain this hatred that leads to such terrible crimes. One can understand the superficial antisemitism, such as the annoyance with people who are loud and pushy (as most Mediterranean nations are), but the hard-core antisemitism is beyond comprehension. I liked the speech by H. Foxman, and especially his phrase: "Who would have believed that thirty-

six years after our liberation, we would be meeting here to discuss the rise of antisemitism - and the revival of the new-Nazis".

The proceedings were interrupted by Rabbi Kahane who demanded to be allowed to address the meeting. Tempers flared and suddenly Ben jumped up and ran towards Rabbi Kahane, who calmed down a few minutes later. Apparently Ben appealed to him in the name of a mutual cousin to simmer down and not to interrupt such an important meeting.

After a swim and a light lunch at the King David Hotel we went to the Knessef to hear Samual Pissar, whose book, "Of Blood and Hope", should be on everybody's bookshelf.

Thursday was the last official day of our gathering, and again we set out for Jerusalem after breakfast. After leaving the Jerusalem Great Synagogue, which was being dedicated to the Six Million, Elaine and I made our way towards the Old City. We entered through the Jaffa Gate intending to go across towards the Lion Gate and the Mount of Olives. An inedible cheese sandwich at "Moses" Caffe cost one pound Sterling, coca-cola nearly two pounds. Against my will I found myself buying presents in one of the shops of the bazaar. Pointing to my label I asked the middle-aged shopkeeper, "Have you heard about the Holocaust? Do you know who Hitler was? ... the Nazis?" The Arab looked at me as if trying to make out what lay behind my questions. "Yes, yes" he said eventually, "I know all about the Second World War". "Can there be real peace in this area?" I carried on. The shopkeeper shook his head and looked sternly at me. "I have nothing against the Jews, it is the Israelis, they took our land. Wait a minute", he added, and went out to call a neighbour, a younger man who joined our discussion.

"We are not Arabs", said the younger man, "we are Palestinians", and went on about the crime committed against them by the Israelis. I replied that the United States, and the North and South of America are composed of refugees. New Zealand, Australia, every part of the world consists of people who, at one time or another, moved from one side of the globe to the other for innumerable reasons. I mentioned that two years ago I went to Poland and saw my father's house. There were people living there with their children. I did not hate them and not for a moment did I dream of tossing a hand grenade at them. We are all refugees on this planet, wherever we live, and we should be able to discuss our problems without killing one another. The Nazis were not allowed to talk to us, because Hitler knew that if he would allow his troops to talk to Jews, they would begin to think and to have doubts about his extermination policy. I ended, "We are talking now, and I am sure that you could sit down and talk to the Israelis, who are no different from me. Is there no hope of real peace in this part of the world?" The younger man looked straight at me and said "Can you make peace between a rat and a cat?" I walked out depressed, and while we were trudging

through the Via Dolorosa, I thought I should have enlightened him on the point that we were not of the same species as a rat or a cat.

The Via Dolorosa was hot and dusty, and hard to negotiate because of roadworks. We finally reached the Lion Gate, and before us across the valley lay the Mount of Olives, its refreshing greenness and glinting domes in sharp contrast to the dust and bustle of the Old City. A taxi stopped by us and the driver offered his services. He took us into the Kidron Valley, where we visited Absalom's Tomb, and then to King Solomon's Pool, where a group of school children were dipping their feet in the clear cool water. As we wound our way up to the viewing-point on the Mount of Olives, the taxi driver told us he was a Christian. I asked him if he had any Jewish friends, and his reply was, "Oh yes, too many. We don't mind doing business with anybody". I then asked him how life had been here before 1967, under Hussain. "It was good," he answered, "there were many tourists and food was much cheaper than it is now, especially meat".

"Food is very expensive now, everywhere", I responded, "since your friends in Saudi Arabia increased the price of oil, everything went up by leaps and bounds all over the world". He looked at me suspiciously and shook his head. "No, it is because of the Israelis that the cost of living has gone up". "How many children have you?" I changed the subject. "Eleven", he answered with pride, "the youngest is one and a half and the oldest is twenty-three, and is at Cairo University studying to be a doctor". "Do you intend to have any more children?" I asked the man who hardly looked forty. "No more cement" he answered with a smile.

The view from the Mount of Olives is very exciting, although I find the projections into the skyline of the numerous tower blocks somewhat distracting. A little further down the Mount we stopped and looked across the desert towards the Dead Sea. We noticed that the groups of Israeli schoolchildren were accompanied by an armed man, so I asked the taxi-driver why the Jewish school children had to be protected in such a manner, while Arab children visiting Jewish areas did not require such protection. His answer was simple: "We are not allowed to carry guns, so our children carry hand grenades in their pockets." Now my efforts as a peacemaker came to an end.

That afternoon thousands began to converge upon the Western Wall. We each lit a candle and placed it before the especially erected platform. After the lighting of six memorial candles, and the passing on of the Survivors' Testament to the Second Generation, Menachem Begin climbed the rostrum and began to speak. "From the Baltic Sea in the North to the Mediterranean in the South and the Black Sea, there lived communities of Jewish people. All that they wanted was to live in peace with their neighbours, but ...". His passionate and emotional speech struck exactly the right note with the audience, and his phrases seemed to reverberate inside one's head long after he stopped speaking.

Whatever one might think of his policies, no one can deny that he is a great orator. A good speech, in my opinion, must contain what I would call poetic ingredients, and Begin manages to infuse his speeches with these qualities.

Eli Wiesel's excellent speech came after Begin's, when many people, who could no longer suffer the cold breeze, unfortunately began to fidget, and to leave.

We spent Friday morning at the Hilton swimming pool, and from there we went to visit Ardyn and Asnat Halter in their flat in Maoz-Aviv. Roman came with us together with Johnny and Betty Fox from Philadelphia.

Saturday evening's reunion was the best ever and Marion Stern and the other Israeli boys and girls who made the arrangements deserve our thanks and congratulations. There was a buffet and everybody could choose to eat as little as or as much as possible. Nobody was glued to one spot and it was a pleasure to circulate and meet everybody. I made the acquaintance of Eli Pfeferkorn of Haifa University, who devotes his life to the study of Holocaust literature.

"Holocaust literature", he began, as soon as we sat down away from the music, "can be divided into three sections. Firstly, the writing which took place during the war, and secondly, that which was written in the vernacular of the survivor immediately after our Liberation, and lastly, years after the event, the writing which is being done in the retrospective tranquility of one's adopted country".

"What is the purpose and the value of all this writing?" I asked, "can human beings, by learning and understanding the horrors inflicted, become better, or, is the study of Holocaust Literature purely an intellectual exercise? Or to put it another way - are we doomed to go on killing one another in smaller or larger waves, until with present day technology we end all life on this planet, or can we, with our deeper knowledge of mans' inhumanity to man, by communication through writing prevent this from happening?"

"Unlike Elie Wiesel", Pfeferkorn continued, "I am a pessimist. I don't think this writing is likely to have practical results, but the study of human behaviour under extreme conditions opens new fields for research ..."

My thoughts do not coincide with his. I believe that the study of the Holocaust has a practical value. Recent history since the collapse of the Third Reich suggests that dictators of Hitler's type have not re-emerged in countries with first hand experience of his regime, and are unlikely to appear there for as long as accurate knowledge of the Nazi era remains imprinted in people's minds. It is in countries like Uganda, Libya, Syria and Argentina that pale replicas of the Nazis have been allowed to emerge.

Later on I discussed this subject with Moniek Goldberg. "How can one address a Catholic audience" Moniek asked, "and say to them that their Pope, by speaking against the Nazi crimes, could have saved a million Jewish lives?"

Long after midnight we were still in Ray Jackson's house drinking coffee. Unlike eating and drinking, which have their limits, talking can go on for hours on end and yet so much be left unsaid.

The last hours of Sunday were spent with relatives who were already getting annoyed that so little time was devoted to them on this occasion. My cousin Dvorah, who is an unrepentant supporter of Menachem Begin and the Likud party, became embroiled in a heated discussion with Ben, and only the arrival of the taxis for the airport put an end to the argument. Twelve hours later our aeroplane landed at Luton Airport.

FROM OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

SECOND GENERATION DAY

by Steven J Faull
MA (Cantab) ARICS

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Wednesday June 17th 1981 was the day devoted entirely to the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. So important was this group considered by the organisers that a whole day of speeches, discussion groups and workshops was allocated for their benefit, with Holocaust survivors specifically excluded from the Conference on that day. Anyone actually attending the Conference could not help being emotionally moved by the meetings, and because the impressions received will obviously differ from one person to the next, the opinions which I formulated at the time and express in this article are purely personal and hence necessarily subjective.

The first question that was put to us at the Conference was why were we there and what did we hope to derive from such a meeting. For me, the first part of the question was easier to answer than the second. Having completed my studies and obtained my professional qualification, I was, at the time of the Conference, living and working on a Kibbutz between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Having qualified as a Second Generation participant by virtue of my father's wartime experiences in the Warsaw Ghetto, Majdanek, Buchenwald and Theresienstadt, I felt interested in attending the Conference to attempt to discover the feelings and experiences of other offspring of Holocaust survivors. I wanted to know whether there exist common factors between all children of survivors and whether our generation does in fact have any special responsibilities towards perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust.

The day itself was organised into several distinct sections. First, there were introductory speeches at the Plenary Assembly, followed by Discussion Groups, Workshops (where participants chose between subject headings such as Psychosocial Issues, Political Issues, Teaching the Holocaust, Philosophical Implications of the Holocaust, or Oral History), and concluded with poems and songs, and later at the Knesset, a commemoration service for more than one million children killed during the Holocaust.

For me personally the most moving and interesting part of the whole day, indeed the whole Conference, was the Discussion Group. This involved twenty to thirty people sitting in a circle and discussing firstly, their parents' experience during the war, how the Holocaust had affected their own lives, why they were attending the Conference, and, finally, how they believed its memory should be perpetuated, if at all.