



The Forty-Five Aid Society



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

For a good many years now I have been a regular contributor to your Annual Brochure, so that it is becoming increasingly difficult to give expression to any new thought. However this year's dinner is a special occasion in that it marks another decade in the life of the '45 Aid Society.

Thirty years is a substantial slice of anyone's life and if in 1945 any of us had thought about it, I do not suppose that we would have imagined the possibility of a joint gathering in 1975.

This evening there will be a reunion for very many, I understand that some will be coming from overseas—Israel, the United States and Canada—especially to attend this function. May I welcome them and say how delighted we are by their presence. It is indeed this spirit that has kept alive the '45 Aid Society. The feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood has not worn thin with the years and I know that this is manifested in practical help whenever required.

I am looking forward to meeting you all again and I am confident that you will share my enjoyment of the evening.

H. O. JOSEPH.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

In this our thirtieth year of freedom, it is time to celebrate and at the same time to reflect. It is, therefore, appropriate to include in this brochure a kaleidoscopic picture as seen through the eyes of a few people who witnessed the vicissitudes of our experiences beginning with the ghetto days, concentration camps, liberation and passing through the spectrum of rehabilitation and then on to becoming fully-fledged members of a stable and deeply-rooted community. Most of the vignettes are written on a personal note but in the main, mirror our shared experiences. They open a little window to our past and I very much hope that it will stimulate and encourage our children to reflect and to nurture on their immediate past. To have an understanding of the trauma through which we lived—on a scale where we can be thought of individually and more important where we can be thought of as part of the Jewish People as a whole.

It is essential for the younger generation to have an appreciation of our good fortune and to understand that return to normality for us was achieved in large measure by the care, love and generosity extended to us by the British community.

We are especially happy to have with us as our guests a number of people who were so kind to us and who will always remain close to our hearts.

We are, however, sad that some, like Leonard G. Montefiore and Oscar Friedmann are no longer with us and cannot see the results of their devoted and tireless efforts. Not only have we become fully integrated in our community but also support many deserving and worthy causes both individually and through the '45 Aid Society.

In this connection I wish to thank all those who have given so generously to the brochure and to ask all those who have not yet responded to our Appeal to be forthcoming with their contributions.

I am deeply grateful to those whose sketches and personal reminiscences serve as a reminder of the deep bond of friendship which exists between us all and to those who have helped to compile the brochure.

My thanks to those who have donated gifts and to the team that gave willingly of their time to make the shop or raffle a financial success.

At a time of economic crisis it is encouraging to see our friends from all over England, U.S.A., Canada, Israel and Rhodesia. We extend a warm welcome to them.

Finally, I wish to record my gratitude to the London and Manchester Committees who have laboured unflinchingly and to whose efforts we owe the success of the evening.

Ben Helfgott

'45 AID SOCIETY

President :

H. OSCAR JOSEPH, O.B.E.

Vice-Presidents :

Mrs. M. MONTEFIORE

Mrs. E. NEVILLE BLOND

JULIAN D. LAYTON, O.B.E.

Mr. F. M. FRIEDMANN

Mr. P. Y. MAYER

Mr. I. FINKELSTEIN

Mr. B. HELFGOTT

Mr. M. BEALE

Committee

Chairman : BEN HELFGOTT

Vice-Chairman : MICK ZWIREK

Treasurer : FRANK FARKAS

Secretary : ISSY WILDER

HARRY BALSAM

SAM COOPER

MAX DESSAU

HARRY FOX

NORMAN FRIEDMAN

HENRY GREEN

KUSHIE GREENBERG

HARRY SPIRO

ZIGI SHIPPER

LIPPA TEPPER

HARRY WAJCHENDLER

London Secretaries: CAROL FARKAS JESSIE NURTMAN

Manchester Chairman : DAVID SOMMER

Secretaries : LOUISE & HERBERT ELLIOTT

Joint Brochure Chairmen :

HARRY BALSAM, SAM COOPER, FRANK FARKAS

Manchester : DAVID SOMMER

In Memory of
Our Dear Friends of
The '45 Society
who have passed away.

INSIGHTS OF A REMARKABLE TREASURER



The late Leonard G. Montefiore was to many of us friend and mentor. In our own circle he became something of a legend in his lifetime despite the fact that he was a most modest and self-effacing man you could meet. The impact of meetings with him was probably due to the fact that this quiet man accepted in, all of our boys, pretty well on our own terms when the majority of the various committee people and officials that we met tended to apply their particular yardsticks to us.

The impression is born out by some of the reports which Leonard Montefiore, in his capacity as Treasurer of C.B.F., provided for the "Committee for the Care of Children from Camps". Reporting that over a quarter of a million pounds was spent on the "700 orphan survivors of the concentration camps" in 1945 and 1946, he not only gave the breakdown of the figures and the statistics but adds to it his own comments. Here are a few extracts which in retrospect tell us something about our own condition at the time when we first came to Britain.

One report ends with a perspective analysis and a curious question—"As a whole, the group makes a deeply interesting study, all the more interesting as one comes to know these boys and girls individually. It is difficult to imagine a more evil training than they have received. They have been in close contact with every kind of vice and wickedness that the mind can conceive. Each of them represents a human tragedy, none the less a tragedy, because it was common and suffered by millions. Their lives have been twisted and abnormal. So the acceptance of what we in this country regard as normal standards of behaviour, the usual codes of honesty and fair dealing, represent a very considerable individual effort. For them during the whole of their childhood, honesty was the very worst policy. It led immediately to destruction. How can they be expected to learn in a short while, the reverse of the maxim taught them by bitter experience?"

His hope nevertheless was that a new course could be set which would lead to happiness.

As early as in October 1945, Leonard Montefiore noted that despite our tender age we had formed "what we may call adult tastes. They want cigarettes in any quantities and I should be greatly surprised if they had not formed other and far less innocent habits. As soon as they have mastered the language difficulty, a whole heap of surprises are likely to be sprung on us". Nevertheless he sees this as a minor difficulty and one that he is confident "can be got over".

There was also the problem about religious orientation of our groups. Much, it seems, was dependent on the sort of professional leadership that could be recruited to run the various homes and hostels. They ranged from members of the Agudas' to the Hashomer Hazair and a characteristically tolerant conclusion and recommendation of this particular report:

"No doubt inside the hostels, a good deal of discussion and, I fear, occasionally criticism, is going on from one side and from the other. My own feeling is that one must attempt to ensure that what one may call the decencies are observed in all hostels. A kosher kitchen must be kept, and opportunity be given for Sabbath services. Apart from these things, there must be variety. I do not feel inclined and indeed I am not able, to insist that a member of Hashomer Hazair should conduct religious service, any more than I wish the susceptibilities of Bachad or Agudas should be hurt by flagrant neglect."

In May 1946 it became clear to this most remarkable Treasurer that our environment and education had become a chief problem. He urged that the institutional be kept to the minimum possible and that the authoritative approach be kept as far from us as possible. He likened our group to the most mixed kind of school possible and shared this insight with his colleagues on the Committee:

"These strange pupils have experienced perilous adventures. Out of the hundreds who died on forced labour, or were frozen to death in railway trucks, they are the survivors. They have time to catch up, pleasures foregone to overtake and to enjoy, and for five or six years they have known no discipline, but that of the whip."

It is possible that some members of that Committee felt that as Treasurer, Leonard Montefiore, may have been over generous in expenditure on our behalf. His explanation—he was much too secure a man to have given a defence—is an eloquent tribute to his compassionate understanding: "So long as these orphans remain in this country, they are our children who have been deprived and robbed of their birthright of irresponsible happiness. In some ways at least, nothing we can do for them is too much. Nothing we can do for them can make up for what they have lost. And with that reflection in mind, some reasonable mean between parsimony and extravagance has to be sought." Here surely was one man who did as much as any man could to make up.

Rabbi Hugo Gryn

IN MEMORY
OF
THE
SIX MILLION



Song of the Jewish Partisans

You must not say that you now
walk the final way,
Because the darkened heavens
hide the blue of day.

The time that we've longed for
will at last draw near,
And our steps, as drums, will
sound that we are here.

From land all green with palms
to lands all white with snow
We now arrive with all our pain
and all our woe.

Where our blood sprayed out and
came to touch the land,
There our courage and our man-
hood rise and stand.

זאג נישט קיינמאל אז דו
געיסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
ווען הימלען בלאיענע
פארשטעלן בלאיע טעג.

קומען וועט נאך אונדזער
אויסגעבענקטע שא,
ס'וועט א פויק טאן
אונדזער טראט, מיר
זענען דא!

פון גרינען פלדמען לאנד
ביז ווייטן לאנד פון שניי,
מיר קומען אן מיט
אונדזער פאין, מיט
אונדזער וויי.

ווי געפאלען ס'איז א
שפריץ פון אונדזער
בלוט,
שפראצן וועט דארט
אונדזער גבורה, אונדזער
מוט.

The Almighty and I and The Divine Spirit in The Lodz Ghetto

The Almighty and I have had many disagreements in the past, but matters came to a head in the Lodz ghetto on my twelfth birthday.

My mother conferred upon me the full status of a Barmitzvah boy as my father was dead and my two elder brothers and two sisters were in other ghettos. In the twilight of every Shabbat, she would talk to me in a most serious fashion about all manner of things; especially about my ancestors (distinguished rabbis and talmudic scholars) and how they personally intervened with the Almighty. Once, when my eldest brother was critically ill, my great-grandfather Rabbi Henoch of Alexander appeared to her in the dead of night and pronounced that my brother would live, contrary to expert medical opinion. I knew of course that I was also a very near relative of the illustrious Gerer rebbe. So my chutzpa grew and grew and I started to demand of the Almighty straight answers. "Why," I asked "does he let the Nazis throw down sick children from a fourth floor window into lorries to be taken to Auschwitz?"

I worked in a children's hospital—office boy cum porter and big brother to the sick children. I was the only one in the hospital whom the parents of the sick children would trust with their precious food parcels (saved from their own meagre rations), to be safely delivered to the children's sick beds.

And so, the Almighty and I grew further apart, till one Sunday morning we parted company. I discovered in an obscure part of the ghetto a fascinating library full of communist literature, Emile Zola's "Germinal", "The Communist Manifesto", and others. The answers were there, loud and clear.

My conversion lasted until Friday.

On Friday night, my mother lit the Shabbat candles and we both intoned in Hebrew "Shalom Aleichem Malachei Hashalom"—"Welcome Angels of Peace"—by then, I felt the Shekhina (Divine Presence) in our house. The meal was of course marvellous, Jewish mothers in the ghetto had perfected the art of making gefilte fish and tsimes out of potato peelings. But I eagerly looked forward to the second part of Friday night, the Oneg Shabbat with Jacob.

Jacob was eighteen, thin, tubercular with fiery brown eyes, and a large forehead. He was the leader of a secret Zionist youth group, which met every Friday night, at a factory which made uniforms for the Germans. When Jacob spoke of the Hebrew poets the Divine Presence rested upon him.

"You will all survive and one day see Eretz Israel." "The Nazis will perish," he kept prophesying.

If arguing with the Almighty I found difficult—arguing with Jacob was impossible!

Friday night was a happy night.

The Almighty and I have a much better relationship now. I forgive Him his imperfections, and he is I think, quite reconciled to my fallen star, for my children can hardly claim to be the sons of a rabbi. However, on Friday night when my wife lights the Shabbat candles and we all kiss her Shabbat Shalom, I feel that the Divine Presence cannot be far away.

Felix Berger.

*Now, after all the journeys
There above for us to see
(For these trucks had no roof)
Was a warmish
Large, copper colour
Spring
SUN
And so we all looked
Seeing and not seeing
For there perched
The guards with guns
Were no more
They vanished
Just like that
All at once
Leaving us in mid-journey
Thin
Weak
With a spirit which burned
Hope
Life
And now
Freedom
As brightly as that 1945 spring SUN*

Roman Halter



THE HOPE OF SURVIVAL IN CAMPS

We know that the average chance of survival in the camps was low, and that it varied through time. For example, it must have fallen substantially during the evacuation period which preceded the end of the War.

I seemed to be acutely aware of these changing chances of survival. As the evacuation period proceeded I regarded my chance as, objectively, getting smaller and smaller and indeed approaching zero. Yet, subjectively, I somehow did not believe that I would die. This tension between the perceived objective reality of one's survival chance and the subjective refusal to accept it was illustrated by an incident I still vividly remember.

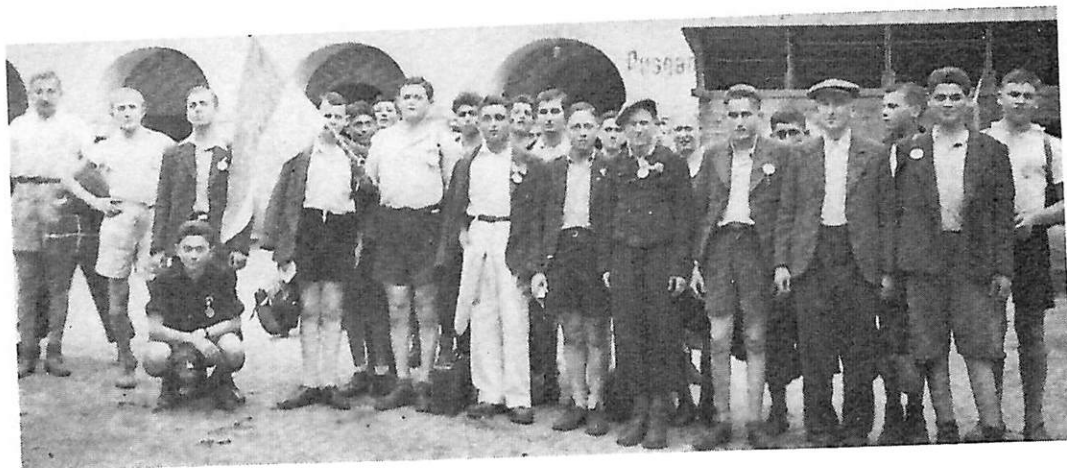
We had been marched out of Flossenburg when the camp was evacuated in the face of the approaching Americans. During the march in the direction of Dachau we once had to stop on the road to allow a different column the right of way. You will recall that during those marches the guards had two kinds of arrangement for dealing with stragglers, either a straggler would be shot by the guard nearest to him, or some guards at the rear of the column would be detailed for this work. The second arrangement had been adopted for that other column. Since we now stood still, and our energies were temporarily released from the effort of marching, the extent of the prevailing slaughter forced itself upon us as never before. We silently looked at each other in muted horror as if to say: "at this rate our turn will come any moment". Yet, subjectively, we probably refused to believe it.

In this particular case, however, the subjective beliefs of most of us were to be justified. Two or three days later the American Army overtook our column of marching skeletons. We were free—quite suddenly we were no longer prisoners whose lives had been at the mercy of any guard, but people who could even rely on the American Army for protection. Quite suddenly the moment had arrived of which we had been dreaming constantly for years but about whose likelihood of arrival we had always been ambivalent. And when the moment arrived we were too exhausted to greet it with the joy which it deserved.

Kurt Klappholz



THERESIENSTADT BARRACKS, 1945



The First Passport to Freedom

ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ REPATRIAČNÍ ÚŘAD ЧЕХОСЛОВАККИЙ РЕПАТРИАЦИОННЫЙ ОРГАН CZECHOSLOVAK REPATRIATION OFFICE

Jméno a příjmení:
Фамилия и имя:
Family name: *Kurnena Pinkus*

Den, místo narození: *15. III. 1931*
Год, месяц, день и место рождения:
Date, place and country of birth: *Portokón*

Povolání:
Занятие:
Occupation: *školák*

Místo určení:
Место направления:
Desired destination: *Palatina*

Vlastnoruční podpis:
Подпись владельца:
Signature of holder: *Kurnena Pinkus*

V
B
N

dne
дня
date *13. 7. 45*



Richard Stein

Samospráva býv. koncent. tábora Terezín.

P O T V R Z E N Í

Jméno: Den a rok nar. *13. 7. 45*

Bydliště v Terezíně:

Státní příslušnost: cíl cesty:

Jmenovaný jest t.č. bez jakýchkoliv příznaků infekčních chorob. Ježto odchází ze sídliště, v němž se vyskytl skvrnitý tyf, jest nakažen podezřelý a proto povinen, aby se hlásil u úředního lékaře svého bydliště za účelem zdravotního dohledu.

Jmenovaný i jeho zavazadla nejsou zavšívány.
Jmenovaný i jeho zavazadla byly odšívány.

Za zdravotnictví:
Docent Dr. Richard Stein.

vyšetřující lékař

V Terezíně, dne července 1945.

Clean Bill of Health to leave for England

NEMOCNICE ČSL. ČERVENÉHO KŘÍŽE při Klubu čsl. turistů PRAHA XII, SMETANKA 1

Poukaz č.ís. *163*

na jednu večeři

S

dne

13. VIII. 1945

Specimen of Meal Tickets issued at the time
to ex-concentration camps in-mates.

NEMOCNICE ČSL. ČERVENÉHO KŘÍŽE při Klubu čsl. turistů PRAHA XII, SMETANKA 1

Poukaz č.ís. *130*

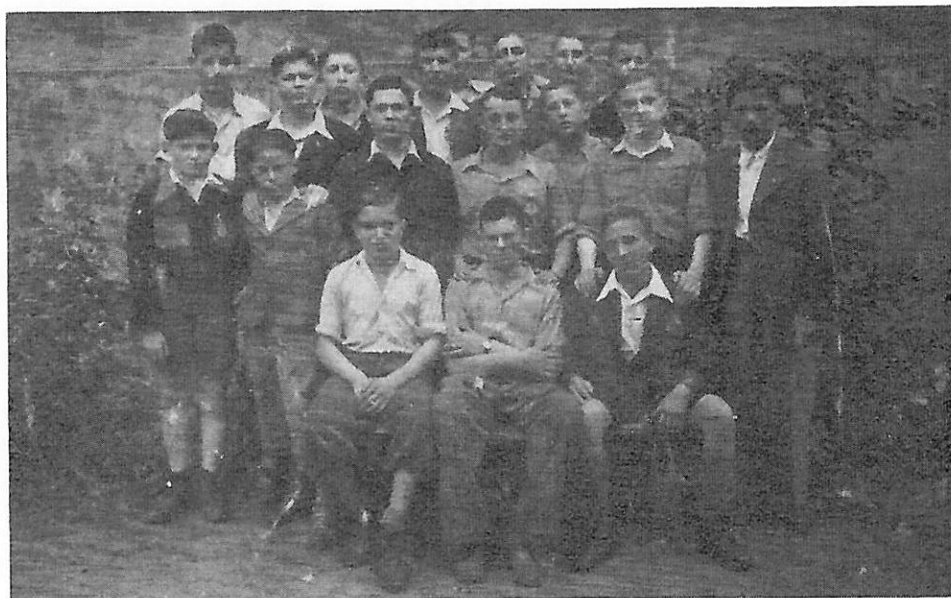
na jednu snídani

S

dne

9. VIII. 1945





Some of our boys pictured after using their meal tickets



Children from Theresienstadt Concentration Camp.
These were among the first group of 300 children brought over to England,
sixteen of whom were under 7 years of age.

PRAGUE - PRIOR TO DEPARTURE TO ENGLAND



August 1945



February 1946



WINDERMERE 1945

The big birds swooped down out of the sky — only they were not big birds but large Stirling bombers bringing not death and destruction but life and hope, the first group of 731 children who had lived through years of concentration camp and survived to start a new life.

To all of us who had been preparing for the arrival of this transport, put off on five successive days because of weather conditions, this was the fulfilment of our dreams. In the first moments of watching that first big bird descend, one's spirit soared to meet it in a paean of joy.

The reality, of course, was different. The suspected typhus case was nothing of the kind; the bicycle borrowed from one of the local kindly inhabitants and not returned was found safe and undamaged; the pieces of bread smuggled from the dining-room on the first evening





1945

Learning English in Windermere

for fear that there would be no breakfast tomorrow made a nice meal instead for the birds singing outside. The young people got to know us and we got to know them. The presiding genii were various but Mr. Montefiore was the chief of them all, even when he roused us, after a very long day, at 7 o'clock next morning.



An Outing in the Lake District

And soon there was no one left at Windermere, they had dispersed in various groups, the transit period over and life to be lived ahead.

So when we meet again each year there is much to say, much to remember and to me on May 11th, 1975, the first big bird will be very real in my imagination, and once again I shall say a big 'Thank you' for a dream far more than fulfilled.

Joan Stiebel.



Relaxing in Windermere



Quaremead, 1946



Loughton, 1946



Cardros, Scotland 1946

Hostels - The Path to Rehabilitation

Liberation came to us in many ways and varied circumstances. Some, I imagine, were strong enough to be about to see the Germans run for their lives or saw them surrender. It must have been a sight to see, an emotion of a lifetime to experience.

I was flat on my back, ill, pretty well on my way out and certainly past caring. Needless to say I saw none of it.

Instead, I woke up one day to find myself in a hospital bed. A bed with linen, clean linen, I might add and people caring for me. Caring for ME!

It was not long before I was able to get up and found myself convalescing in a children's home in Theresienstadt. My first HOSTEL.

I shared a room with four or five other boys. This of course was heaven when you consider the crowded conditions that I had been used to until then.

Erna, our matron, had two girls to help her and soon we became one small family. Some of us were more energetic than others, but we were all getting gradually used to becoming individuals again. I began to discover that I am a person in my own right—quite a revelation after years of propaganda about "vermin" and "parasites", etc.

One could not leave Theresienstadt without a permit, add to it that it was a garrison town, life was inevitably somewhat restricted, a good thing in a way as it introduced us into normal life in a city in a gradual way.



Manchester, 1946



Stamford Hill, 1946



Finchley Road, 1946

The arrival at Prague was quite an experience. The friendliness and hospitality of the Czech people is something I, for one, shall never forget. It was in Prague that I went to a circus and to a cinema for the first time as a free person.

Then England by courtesy of R.A.F. Bomber Command. There were no seats or "mod-cons". We sat where we could. On the floor, on boxes, anything at all. The R.A.F. men acting as kinds of stewards communicated with us in sign language. We spoke no English.

Carlisle aerodrome and then by coach to Windermere. Windermere, what a delightful place!

On arrival I was shown into a tiny room with a bed, chest of drawers and wardrobe. A room all to myself! Has anyone ever lived so luxuriously?

It was a particular time of, certainly, my life when there could have been no gift more precious. For the first time in years, in my short life, I would have the luxury of a room ALL TO MYSELF. I could have danced in the street for joy. I could and would have except for a small "technicality".

Well, the clothes in which we arrived were suspect—from a cleanliness viewpoint and so it had been planned to have new clothes waiting for us on arrival. There was a hitch. We arrived first. No clothes, except for underwear. Well, we were issued these and nought e'se. Since we could not wear our old clothes, underwear was all we had.

I just danced, metaphorically speaking, in my new room.

Windermere, my second hostel—home, where a group of friendly people one of whom, at least, Alice Goldberger is here tonight, helped me and the others in various ways: teaching English, etc., and where I began to make friends with England and the English.

It was a happy time for me. I had the proximity of so many friends, sharing a dining room with them and participating in a variety of activities and yet being able to retire to the luxury of my PRIVATE room. I cannot recapture the wonder of it in words sufficient to do the feeling justice. However, I have no doubt that those who shared this experience with me will know precisely what I mean.

Windermere—"Wondermore"—as I like to call it, stands out for me for it was, apart from its renowned natural beauty, my own reintroduction to a new life as an individual where living was no longer on the level of the animal's instinct for survival but things of the spirit, of sight, sound and touch began to matter. Wonderful things were happening in "Wondermore". A happy, happy time.



Goldington, Bury, Bedford, 1946

Three months or so went by very quickly and it was time to move on yet again.

Scotland. Darleith House was about three miles from the village of Cardross in Dumbartonshire. It was in the style of a mansion set in its own extensive grounds with a rhododendron flanked drive leading to it from the keepers lodge about a quarter of a mile away.

It would be quite easy, again to become ecstatic about the beauty of the setting and the general splendour of the place, which as my third hostel was about to become my new home, but to do so would be no more than to state a fact.

Here I must pause and say something for the people who planned all this for us. It was obvious that a lot of effort, accompanied by a generous breadth of imagination went into finding these places for our benefit. I feel that a deep humanity coupled with an understanding of our need to be in lovely surroundings as an antidote to the ugliness that we had encountered in our lives hitherto, was the visionary motive in all this.

To these people, whoever they are, MY SALUTE.

I settled down to study and my English began to improve and although Polish and Yiddish were still used a lot English gradually began to take over.

I recall an incident which amused us at the time.

Teachers would come up from Dumbarton for various subjects. One, a Mr. Smith, taught us English. He was very good with us and we often shared a joke. Our English was beginning to be passable. One day, during an English lesson Mr. Smith heard someone talking and it was not in English. "Boys", said said, "unless you speak English only you will never learn the language properly".

Up stood one of the boys and his reply, which although somewhat cheeky, was taken in good part as it demonstrated that we were making strides towards speaking the new tongue.

Here is what he said: "Mr. Smith, you see, I have to speak Polish sometime because I am in the habit of telling myself jokes. If I tell them in English I shall not understand what they are about".

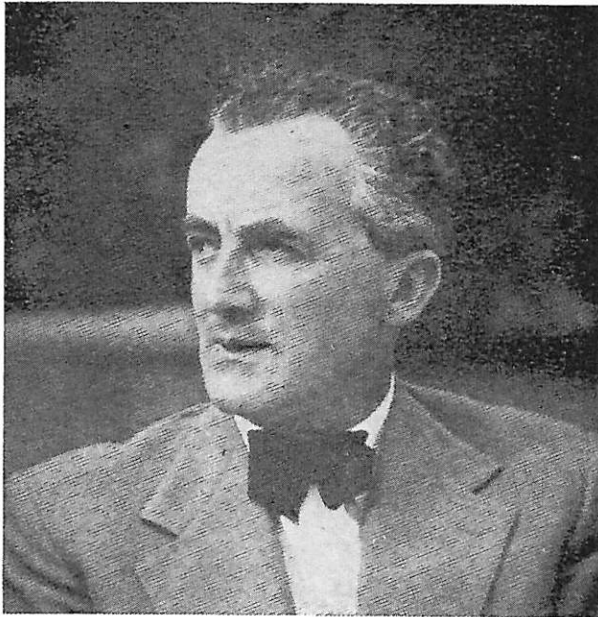
Mr. Smith seemed pleased with the effort.

Cardross was more or less akin to life in Windermere with the same aims, pursuits and above all its country setting.

Glasgow was different and here I began to work still living communally in a hostel. I was learning a trade and studying in my spare time. Gradually city life was something I was taking in my stride and soon feeling confident of being able to cope for myself I moved with a friend from the hostel and into "digs". Life has come full circle. I began a "normal" life.

HENRY GREEN.

PRIMROSE



Oscar Friedman asked me to join him at 24/25 Belsize Park, a place known to me as "Mrs. Glucksman's British Restaurant". He wanted my advice. Did I think those premises suitable for a club and how did I think one ought to approach the idea of forming a club for the "Children rescued from the concentration camps" — a typical approach for Oscar Friedman, just an attempt to get me so involved that I would give up whatever I was doing and try to put my thoughts into practice.

Oscar was right. I accepted, but under one condition only; that this would be an "open club"; that anyone could become a member as long as he or she was asked by one of those children to join their club. Some "children", as I was to learn soon enough.

The opening was chaotic — particularly as there were free refreshments at the coffee bar. My wife feared for her life when the first on-rush started.

Weeks later, when our four football teams returned to the club for Miss Mahrer's Vienna cakes and trifles, I saw again with utter amazement what an immense amount of food those boys could manage.

The backbone of the club was the hostel on the top floor. I was Club Leader as well as Warden, signing school reports for some, notes for absence for others and chasing a group having a "spiel" in the attic down to the boiler room.

Miss Mahrer's cakes not only enthralled the members; I found Mr. Montefiore down in the kitchen, at a time when he was urgently required at a board meeting, eating Vienna strudel, listening to a gesticulating, excited youngster and finally giving him some money. When I teased him for not having realised that he had listened to a pack of lies, he laughingly agreed "but the boy told lies so charmingly".

Sunday started with volleyball and preparations for football matches. I shall never forget Primrose's battle-cry "Moishe, schiess!" and the fights after when a match had been lost. These boys just could not accept a defeat anymore! Then came the "nosh-up" in the club and finally what must have been one of the noisiest and biggest discussion groups ever in any youth club, with over a hundred involved members trying to express their opinions.

At one of their first meetings, the name for the club was discussed. Many wanted to call it "Freedom Club", others wanted to make use of famous names. Finally they drifted to their first real English action, a compromise. The name chosen was "Primrose", the club being so close to Primrose Hill. Romek won the badge competition, Natek, the future developer in the U.S.A. and Moniek, who became an accountant, accepted the post of Treasurer. And so we discovered Romek's artistic talent, which led him to qualify as an architect. Beniek's mental and physical strength made him not only a natural leader but also



One of the Primrose Teams



Jersey Holidays

a member of the British Olympic Games Team. "Brains" Jerzy is now a university lecturer, as is Kurt, who is at the L.S.E. Others showed their inclinations to get on. They succeeded as is apparent to anyone who attends these re-unions.

There were club holidays in Jersey, when the boys revolted and formed a "men only" society. Boys were in the majority amongst these "survivors" but they brought what they called "English" girls into the club, Jewish girls born in England. And today, there are many dozens of marriages based on first meetings at the club.

After two years the club moved across into St. Peter's Hall, as the Jewish developer next door wanted both houses. However, most of the so-called children rescued from the concentration camps had become young adults, standing on their own feet. I searched, and when I found 523 Finchley Road, my job was done. I felt free to join Brady in the East End and handed over Primrose to Solly Marcus at new premises.

But the end of the club was near. Solly went to the Jewish Blind Society and the building bought for £9,000 by the Jewish Youth Fund and the Jewish Refugee Committee, was available to Habonim.

When I joined the British Army during the first months of the war, being a refugee myself, there was a large sign "no vacancies" outside the recruitment office in Norwich at a time when Eastern Europe was already suffering under Nazi terror! In the final stages of the war, I served with the S.O.E., many of whom parachuted into Yugoslavia, Austria and one even into Germany. My section, one of the last to go, insisted again and again, that we would like to drop near the camps. But there was no chance to permit a British plane to land in Russia. It was too far for a non-stop flight and so one failed to save more children during those last stages of the war.

When those children who were finally rescued from the camps by others needed a club, as a step into Britain, I felt compelled to help. Those two or three years were most exciting, demanding and immensely rewarding.

I wonder whether there is anywhere another group of immigrants who came without anything, no funds, no education or skills. Surely the achievements of the group of approximately 700 children rescued from the concentration camp would warrant a special study by a sociologist. Now their own achievements become over-shadowed by those of their own children, the second generation. No doubt, Churchill coined the right phrase "Hitler's loss was Britain's gain".

P. Yogi Mayer.



Training at O R T School

IN SEARCH OF SYMPATHY

The topic of Auschwitz is still fairly emotional and I like, occasionally, to trade on it to obtain some sympathy, but I am not always lucky. When I told two English ladies that I spent the summer of 1944 in Auschwitz, I was asked what the weather was like. I answered: "It was beautiful, but . . ." only to be interrupted at this stage and told that I was very fortunate—they had had rain all the time.

Last year a young Canadian asked me about the place. I told him that during my ten weeks' stay there, I had had no bath, and very little food, but had to undertake some light work and I was forced to spend most of the day in the open air. His face brightened up and he exclaimed that it sounded absolutely marvellous—even better than an American health farm. I decided not to be beaten and added that I had previously lived in the Ghetto where it was so cold inside my bedroom in winter, that the water froze to ice. His face brightened up even more. "For that we pay ten dollars extra" — he exclaimed — "let me have the brochure". I almost felt that I ought to write a letter of thanks and appreciation to the German authorities. However, on reflection, I can still assure my readers that in some ways Auschwitz did fall short of the amenities of either American health farms, or even of Canadian camping grounds.

Eventually, in spite of the German's efficiency in carrying out Hitler's Final Solution, some of us emerged alive and came to this country in 1945. Some settled here fairly happily; amongst us we have one permanent resident in a lunatic asylum, two academics and three architects, but the rest seem fairly normal. Each year we celebrate the anniversary of our liberation with a dinner at which we clearly demonstrate that deprivation of food during our adolescence left us good healthy appetites for the next 30 years at least. All are proud that we survived various concentration camps—it may not have been terribly clever, but for us all it is the cleverest thing we managed.

In the early 1960's the German Government decided to give us compensation for damage to health. In accordance with the requirements of our former masters, most of us discovered previously unacknowledged ailments and, after examination, were duly compensated with a pension. Now that the Deutsche Mark is a very strong currency, I find my Auschwitz past a fairly lucrative additional source of income.

In other ways too I have been affected. Recently when I was having coffee with two university colleagues the conversation turned to various parking offences and licence endorsements and I mentioned that I have so far been blameless. One colleague said with a smile: "It is because of his upbringing under Fascists—he is still afraid that breaking the law will result in two years in Siberia". The other looked towards me and murmured: "What excellent training!" I knew then that I shall probably never obtain any sympathy on the grounds of my war experiences and that perhaps, indeed, I ought to be grateful to the Germans.

Jerzy Herszberg.

THE NEXT GENERATION

BRIDGE TO THE PAST

How often we travel the shaky bridge that leads to one's memories of the past, escaping from the present while forgetting momentarily about the future. Somehow, everything seems so perfect on the other side of that bridge so, we would like to stay there awhile, although we know this to be impossible.

The children from the war, that is, children whose parents had endured and survived Hitler's tyranny, are witnesses to these attempts at crossing the bridge and brought up with their parents' tales of the past. They see only the living statements of those times in the form of their parents themselves. The patterns of their speech, their habits, their manners of thinking and living, are a product of the past—a residue that has remained in them to the present, attesting to what once was.

The kind of life which once existed for these people in another land can almost be recaptured and envisioned in the aura of camaraderie which exists in the organisations of uprooted "Landsleit". The children at home in a completely different and new country, are surrounded by the ways and attitudes of the past that are still retained by the older generation. They see all this and try to understand. Their parents take them across this bridge into the past in order that these children see a lost world that once was there. Yet the children live a totally different lifestyle from which it is hard to understand so different a life that once existed for this older generation.

And so it came to pass that one woman and her daughter decided to cross that bridge together and visit Poland. The woman was in search of past happiness, hopes and dreams, while the younger one was in search of a more fuller understanding of her parents, herself and all those like them. They went to Poland expecting to find it the same as pictured in memory. But a very different picture awaited them . . .

The woman and child came to the mother's home town Piotrkov. With anxious excitement, the elder woman entered the town of her birth, where she had lived so long ago. With curiosity, the younger traveller approached the town, impatient to finally see the place so often talked about and imagined. What awaited these two expectant travellers was the delay of time. The town had not changed, but rather had stayed in the same condition as when

the war had come. The same buildings old and dingy. Everything was in a state of disrepair. What had once been so nice, so full of life, was now slowly and painfully dying, ugly in its death throes. The mother's courtyard, once so full of children's voices, was quiet and empty. Her husband's house which had once been decorated with so many flowers, now stood naked. The "Hala" market once full of business, was now closed and boarded up. Outside on the square a few old people stood with their few fruits.

The mother felt lost seeing neither the past she remembered nor a present she could understand. The haze of time had spread its darkness upon the town and the mother began to suffocate in it. It was the place she knew, but it was not as she had known it. This town that she saw before her eyes was but a bad joke of what had once been, a product of the ravages of time and the apathy of its inhabitants.

The daughter saw only the altered vestiges of what had once been a thriving Jewish community. She could still only imagine what had once been, for it was certainly to be no longer seen. Out of 25,000 Jews only a few remained. From a way of life, a living town of people, a breathing nucleus of friends and families, there remained nothing.

It was at the cemetery that the final blow to the past was seen. What could be more permanent than the gravestones we erect in memory of those we love? Yet the cemetery—that symbol of Jewish thought and feeling was totally in disarray. Grass covered the graves where once heartfelt tears had fallen; gravestones were missing and overturned. The weeds were slowly encroaching threatening to engulf everything. It was indeed a very, very sad picture.

And so, they left this strange place. For it was not the Piotrkov that the mother had known or the daughter had heard about. What had once been was in the past, and the past could only be remembered not relived. The past was but the starting point for the present, but the past cannot be returned to since it no longer exists. A person is to live only with the "now" and "later". So, the daughter could now better imagine the type of life her parents had once led. The mother gave up her hopes of reliving the past; she understood now that what had been, while it had been good, was gone. Instead she could finally turn her mind and heart toward building a realistic life at home. The welcoming warmth which had not greeted her in Piotrkov would be found in the present.

Abby Henig.

WE EACH OF US

*The Anniversary of 30 years of Liberation.
We are all 30 years older than we ever
thought we'd live to be.*

*This is a joyous occasion —
riddled with the pain and sorrow
of memory*

*The memory . . . of a mass genocide,
. . . of a people herded together
to face, destruction
cremation
extinction
at the whim of a madman.*

*We each of us have learned to deal with the past
in our own way,
Some maybe better than others—
but we all still utter the saddest Kaddish,
as we remember . . .*

*— 30 years Anniversary
We join together to thank G-d for our
liberation from death,
and try to fulfil his wishes for a liberated
nation of Israel.*

Debbie Abrahamovic

CHILDRENS NAMES

Mark Bajer
David Allen Bajer
Edward Buckwald
Julia Buckwald
Stephen Balsam
Colin Balsam
Gaynor Bandel
Martin Bandel
Michael Burns
Daniel Burns
Tanya Burns

Hania Cooper
Joel Cooper
Marc Lee Conway

Mark Dichter
Rutch Dichter

Helen Farkas
Alan Farkas
Steven J. Faull
Maurice Faull
Ashley C. Faull
Ben Saul Freiman
Jonathan Freiman
Mark Etkind
Debra Etkind
Josef Fox
Rachelle Fox
Bettina Pretoria Freeman
Sarah Fleur Freeman
Jacqueline Emma Freeman

Daniel Goldberger
Cilla Goldberger
Ruth Goldberger
Alan Greenberg
David Greenberg
Naomi Greenberg
Lorraine Graham
David Graham
Helen Graham
Rose Graham

Nina Hecht
Sammy Hecht

Maurice Harold Helfgott
Michael Chaim Helfgott
Nathan Lawrence Helfgott
Charles Herman
Rosalind Herman
Julie Herman
Paul Herman

Jennie Issacharoff
John Issacharoff
Adele Issacharoff
Ruth Irving
Hazel Irving

Michael Kagan
Jeffrey Kagan
Debbie Kagan
Phillippe Katz
Nadine Katz
Lawrence Kayson
Janine Kayson
Mandy Klinger
Billy Klinger
Steven Kendall
Jeffrey Kendall
Lisa Kendall

Beverley Morris
Graham Morris
Fiona Morris

Janet Newton
Rosalind Newton
Lorraine Newton
Howard Nurtman
Saul Nurtman
Michael Nurtman

Philip Olmer
Pauline Olmer
Julia Olmer
Donna Bettina Orchant
Mitchell Orchant

Denise Pomeranc
Stephen Pomeranc
Theresa Peterson
Angela Peterson

Larry Peterson
Rosalind Perl
Judith Perl
Michelle Perl
David Perl

Lorraine Rentz
Michael Rentz
Benice Rentz
Lisa Rowland
Michelle Rowand
Susan Roberts
Ivor Roberts
David Rosenblat
David Ryb
Anthony Ryb
Daniel Ryb

Michelle Shipper
Lorraine Shipper
Michael Shane
Elton Shane
Leslie Spiro
Gary Spiro
Tracy Spiro

Marcia Teichman
Alan Tepper
Justin Tepper
Hershie Tabacznik
Jeffrey Tabacznik
Michael Turek
Jeremy Turek

Paul Wilder
Simon Wilder
Martin Wilder
Karen Winogrodzki
Hanna Winogrodzki
Suzanne Wegier
Michael Wegier
Ruth Wegier

David Leslie Zwirek
Helen Zwirek

SECOND GENERATION PRIZE

On the occasion of our 30th Reunion we are pleased to announce a competition and are inviting entries from the sons and daughters of members of the '45 Aid Society (or from the children of those who would qualify for such membership by virtue of their being survivors of the Nazi holocaust and who themselves were young during their time in the camps). Entries for this prize may be in the form of essays, poetry or even paintings or music, and should centre on the effect the holocaust and wartime experiences of the parents may have had on the attitudes of their children.

There will be two prizes in the first year of this competition in the form of book-tokens to the value of £30 and £20 respectively. A distinguished panel of adjudicators will be appointed and will include Mr. William Frankel—editor of the "Jewish Chronicle", as well as "specialists" should they be required.

Special forms of entry are available and will be sent out with the next magazine of the '45 Aid Society as well.

It is hoped that all our members will bring this project to the attention of their children. The closing date for the competition is March 1st, 1976, and it is also hoped that all the entries will be edited and published in a special booklet available in time for the 1976 reunion.

Both within and beyond our Society there is great interest in seeing how our children see us, their parents, and themselves.

'45 Aid Brochure
SECOND GENERATION PRIZE
ENTRY FORM

NAME:

ADDRESS:
.....

TELEPHONE:

PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH:

OCCUPATION:

NAME(S) OF PARENTS WHO WERE IN NAZI CAMPS:
.....
.....

TITLE OF ENTRY:

Please send your entry to: '45 Aid Society
46 Amery Road
Harrow
Middlesex

and make certain that it is received by **MARCH 1st 1976** and agree that all
or part of it may be reproduced and published by the Society.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

151

539