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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Last year I reported on the opening of Beth Shalom, the first permanent Holocaust Memorial and Educational Centre in England, by the Smith family. Since then the Centre has become widely known both in the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Those who have visited the Centre found the experience uplifting and inspiring. This year, in addition, a Memorial Garden was opened at Beth Shalom where Dr Elizabeth Maxwell spoke in the presence of a large audience. Her speech is included in this issue as well as an article by Paul Openheimer OBE, where he describes the activities of Beth Shalom and his association with Stephen Smith. It was a great privilege to honour the Smith family, Thomas and Marina and their sons, Stephen and Jim, at our Annual Reunion in May this year. The project was entirely due to their efforts. They did it without creating any fanfare or fuss and with limited resources. Humility is the hallmark of the Smith family; they represent what is best in humanity. Not only do they give of themselves physically, intellectually and spiritually but they also contribute their limited funds. Thomas and Marina have donated to the Centre from their savings. Stephen, a successful businessman as well as a great educator, donates the profits from his business to the Centre and Jim, a General Practitioner, took a six months sabbatical to devote himself fully in promoting the activities of Beth Shalom. How many people are capable of such dedication? They have gained a special place not only in our hearts but also in the hearts of the Jewish community. As a token of our appreciation our Society has donated £5,000 to Beth Shalom.

It is said that God works in mysterious ways and it is interesting to note that, having tried for so many years to establish a Holocaust Museum in the United Kingdom and failed, within a matter of a few months one Holocaust Memorial Centre was set up in Sherwood Forest and the start of another permanent Holocaust Exhibition was launched at the Imperial War Museum. What is even more significant, some might say providential, is that neither of these initiatives came about through Jewish efforts. I have already referred to the Smith family but in the case of the Imperial War Museum the Trustees of the Museum felt that the Holocaust constituted an integral part of the war and was therefore an essential element in the portrayal to what depth of depravity men can descend in time of war and the lessons one can learn from it. What is also very heartening is that the permanent Holocaust Exhibition is supported by the Prime Minister, the Rt.Hon. John Major and the Rt.Hon. Tony Blair, as well as the Rt.Hon. Paddy Ashdown. The National Heritage Memorial Fund has recently offered a lottery grant of £12,624 million and many donations, some very large ones, have been promised. Building work should begin in early summer of 1997, the construction is scheduled to be completed in 1999 and the opening of the Exhibition early in the year 2000.

I would like to draw your attention to the introduction of a new section in the Journal, "Boys in Retirement". Many of our members have now retired and have taken up interesting or exciting hobbies, whilst others are groping and looking for something to do. I have invited Michael Bandel, our Welfare Officer, who finds his work extremely rewarding, to write about his new vocation and how it evolved in the course of time. His article is, indeed, inspiring and admirable and I hope to receive from you similar contributions to be published in the future issue.

The dedication of the Sefer Torah written to the memory of our parents, which took place last year and the unveiling of the plaque in honour of our parents who perished in the Holocaust, which took place this year, was also a moving and memorable event for our members. The occasion is described in this issue.

The publication of the "Boys" by our President, Sir Martin Gilbert, and the launch of the book, was a momentous event in the history of our Society. I was delighted that many of our members responded to my Appeal and sent their testimonies to Sir Martin. However, I am saddened by the fact that many more failed to write their story and consequently are not mentioned in the book.

We are immensely grateful to Sir Martin for having written this book with such great understanding and sensitivity. The idea of writing this book stemmed from the hope that it will serve as a source of inspiration to those who find themselves in great difficulties, for there can be no greater injustice than what was inflicted upon us. Few people have endured as much hardship as we did and yet we have not allowed Hitler a posthumous victory. Let us hope that our return from hell and our triumph over adversity will stand as a shining example for those in despair. This is the lesson and the importance of this book and it is gratifying to see from the extracts printed in this issue that the reviewers see it in the same light.

Wishing you a Happy New Year.

Ben Helfgott

PAST AND PRESENT

A REPORTER AT LARGE

A QUIET LIFE IN HAMPSHIRE

This article was written by Mollie Panter-Downes and appeared in the New Yorker on March 2nd 1946 soon after the second group of the 'Boys' arrived in England

The British government has up to now brought between four and five hundred Jewish children from the Nazi concentration camps over to England. The children are, as far as is known, mostly orphans between nine and sixteen; checking on ages has been difficult, since the youngsters have no papers and nothing more definite than a few hazy scraps of family history to help trace any relatives who may still be living. Bloomsbury House, in London, the headquarters of the Jewish Refugee Committee, made all arrangements for the children's journey - the R.A.F. brought them to England by air - to reception hostels at Windermere, in the Lake District, and at Durley, in Hampshire, and from there to smaller hostels in Manchester, Oxford, and elsewhere. One morning recently I went down to visit the hostel at Durley, a tiny hamlet in a part of Hampshire where you see nothing much but quiet, brown fields, an occasional thatched cottage, and a lot of windy sky. Wintershill Hall, where this particular hostel has been set up, is a large, rather gloomy-looking Georgian mansion whose conventional pattern of park, formal gardens, and greenhouses has been somewhat altered by a block of Army huts. A Star of David was chalked on a pillar of the portico, where an electric bell, its push button missing, invited one to *klinge*. Before I could do so, the door was opened by a young man in spectacles, who wore a beret and a dark blue lumberjacket, on one sleeve of which the Star was indistinctly chalked. I entered a hall decorated only with multicolored paper chains - I just had time to notice a lot of children milling about in the background - and he led me into the office of Dr Friedman, the head of the hostel, and his organizing secretary, Mrs Katz.

Dr Friedman is an eager, thickset, red-headed man with humorous eyes and the vitality of the successful youth leader. He got out of Germany himself four months before the war started, and has since been a professor of languages and history at a university in the Midlands. He speaks excellent, lively English, and his pronunciation is perfect except for an occasional confusion of the letters "v" and "w". The first group of children arrived at Wintershill Hall five weeks before, he said; there were a hundred and fifty-two, the majority of them Polish. Now there were just half that number. Most of the others had been sent to other hostels or to hospitals for medical treatment, and a few were living with recently discovered relatives. Ever since it had been announced that the children were coming, Bloomsbury House had been besieged by anxious callers, come to scan the lists of each fresh party of arrivals for the name of the Polish niece, the German grandson, the Czech cousin who had disappeared behind the iron curtain in 1939. Sixteen children had been reunited with relatives in the London area, and a few fathers who had gone to America before the Nazis took over in their home towns had turned up, wearing American uniforms, to collect what was left of their families. Usually it wasn't much. Dr Friedman said that the children were mostly eleven or older, and there were far fewer girls than boys - only twenty-eight girls out of the hundred and fifty-two children at Wintershill Hall. "The young ones and the girls died more easily," said Dr Friedman simply.

I asked what would happen to the children who did not find relatives or were not adopted, and Dr Friedman said that at the moment this was hard to answer. The British authorities had let them all in on a two-year-visa permit, provided they would agree not to take any jobs. The older ones would, however, be permitted to receive some sort of vocational training. The Australian Jewish community was willing to take a large number of children, but transportation for them was not yet obtainable. It was hoped that eventually most of the homeless children would be allowed to go in a group to Palestine, a hope which the present difficulties of that troubled land have not exactly simplified. "It is what the children themselves wish, naturally," Dr Friedman said. "While they were in Germany, Palestine appeared indeed a promised land. Some of them feel very bitter toward the British about it, though they will possibly change their minds when they have been here a while and have heard all sides of the question. But what appeals to them most is the idea that in Palestine they would all be together. They dread being parted from each other. Children who have been together in Belsen and Buchenwald, who have lost parents and relatives, cling pathetically to that shared experience because it is all the background they possess in the world." Dr Friedman's face brightened. "But in spite of all they have gone through," he went on, "these children have managed to retain their will to survive. They are anxious to succeed, they are hungry to learn. And they have no sense of being under obligation to anyone. No, the very reverse! They feel that is up to society to make the best deal it can for them. People say to me, 'But in this house, in this lovely country - for these children to come here from Belsen and Terezin and so on must be *heaven!*'" Dr Friedman flung up his hands and laughed delightedly. "Not in the least! They are highly critical! When we give them a coat, they will touch the cloth and say, 'Terribly poor quality.' or they may criticize the cut. It is not lack of gratitude, it is that they worry about their futures, you understand. How they look is extremely important to them. They are anxious, passionately anxious, to look well. The boys carry little combs in their pockets and comb their hair all the time. They do not want to be set apart from the rest of the world by what they have gone through. No, already they feel that they are individuals. You can understand why it is our aim to encourage that feeling."

The health of the children, Dr Friedman said, has been on the whole surprisingly good. The months of proper food since their liberation have worked a considerable change. "There was much tuberculosis, as you can imagine," he said, "but it was checked by all the affected children being immediately removed for treatment. For the rest, there were skin complaints, such as scabies, and a general low resistance to any small infection. The most noticeable defect was their teeth. Terrible! We have a dentist coming here twice a week, working as hard as he can, but he does not know how to get through all the jobs."

"None of the big boys - there are a few older ones - have started to shave, either," said Mrs Katz, a calm and pretty woman. "I suppose that's a sign of weakness. And when they get excited over anything, or exert themselves at all, the sweat literally pours down their faces." The telephone rang, and she got up and began an earnest conversation with what was obviously the village plumber about a jammed lavatory in one of the boys' dormitories.

"Emotionally, yes - that is where I would say they show their history," said Dr Friedman to me. "There is no delinquency among them. Their terrible sufferings have not made them vicious, as might have happened. For instance, one child here was thrown by the Nazis on a heap of bodies waiting to be burned. When the British arrived, they found him still alive, though unconscious. Another boy saw Kramer take a baby by the foot, throw it in the air, and bang! with his revolver. Pleasant things to remember in your childhood! But when they arrived here, we were surprised at their control, their willingness. For remember, they couldn't be sure that any new grownup wasn't someone to be feared, who could torture and make life hideous if he chose. At first they couldn't get used to the idea that there would always be enough food for all at regular hours. It was one of the Nazis' ideas of humour to break up bits of stale bread occasionally and throw it among these starving little wolves just to see them fight for it. So when our meal bell rang there was a rush, a mad stampede. I have seen boys jump clean over tables in their anxiety to get there first and grab the food before the others. When they understood, after a few days, that each had his *own* chair, his *own* share of food, which was to be respected by the others, they were perfectly

reasonable. But their emotions are still strong. They are up in the air one moment, down the next. Suddenly it will come over a child: I have no father or mother, I am alone, I do not know what will happen to me. And of course they are terribly restless. They would like a cinema each night, each day something new to happen. Imagine the life of violent, terrible happenings to which they were accustomed! Some, you know, were in hiding in the ghettos, down in the sewers, and were accustomed to jumping trains, to dodging S.S. guards on the frontier. And then the dreadful things all the time in the camps - shootings, beatings, cremations. Here in Hampshire it seems quiet after that. So they are mad for movement - bicycles. If I could get them some, I would, but it is difficult. What they suffer from is the old refugee malady of moving on, moving somewhere. It's easy to understand."

Dr Friedman paused and offered me a cigarette. I asked if the children were allowed to go outside the grounds. He said that they certainly were. They go down to the village when they want to do a bit of shopping or see a movie. Each child is given three shillings a week pocket money, which he can spend as he wants; many, said the Doctor proudly, had started little savings-bank accounts. (The whole scheme, I learned, is being financed by the Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation, which appealed for help to the Jews of England.) Twice a week the village boys come up and there are what Dr Friedman called "the sport" - football games on the muddy playing field, between the Durley lads and the lads of Belsen, Buchenwald, and places east. Both sides apparently enjoy themselves. "In the afternoons there are handicrafts, too," Dr Friedman said. "Such work is valuable for calming the mind. Or we may have an informal discussion group on current affairs. You might hear one later. But our real work is in the morning. We have three periods: one English, one Hebrew, and the third on Palestinography - history and government, civic affairs, and so on. No boy or girl is forced to attend classes, but they are encouraged and persuaded by us to do so. And most of them have a thirst for learning; they wish to soak it up as fast as we can give it to them. Some find that they cannot keep up with the brighter ones, and then they have a tendency to stop trying, to give up all hope immediately. The habit of hope is still so new to them. In those cases, we have to coax them until their confidence in themselves slowly, slowly emerges."

Mrs Katz, who had settled things with the plumber, now rejoined the conversation. She said that she thought lack of confidence in anything or anybody was the chief mark left by the concentration camps. "Even though they like us now - perhaps they even love us - they still don't trust us completely," she said. "If you tell one to do something, you see him wondering what your motive is in telling him to do that. They don't trust humanity yet, and they have no idea of sharing or of the communal spirit, either. When it came to handing out clothing outfits, a boy would immediately be bitterly jealous and resentful if another boy got a pull-over or boots of a better quality. Even if it was his best friend, it made no difference. Because we guessed this would happen, we were very anxious to get all the children outfits exactly alike. But this turned out to be impossible; with clothing terribly short, we had to take what we could get. Even our determination not to give them any second-hand things failed. All their lives they had worn old, castoff rags, and it would have been so wonderful psychologically to start them out with a brand-new outfit that was theirs alone. Sad to say, we just couldn't manage it."

Dr Friedman said that the children had been astonished and horrified to hear that the English had a tight rationing of clothing and food. "When they talked in the camps, England always appeared as the golden land, the land of plenty," he said. "Now the boys say, 'Why, the *Germans* were better off than that!' I took them to see the bomb damage in Southampton one day and they could not get over that, either. They had not known that England had been so badly knocked about." He jumped up, tapped on the window, and called in German to two boys who were passing outside. "They are from Belsen, and I have told them to come in and meet you," he said, sitting down again. "You know, it's funny, the English press has called all these children who have come over here Belsen children, but many have never been to that camp. Belsen and Buchenwald have taken all the limelight, but there were others far worse, far more horrible, which no one seems to know about. Many of our boys have been in four or five camps, and if you ask them, they say Treblinka, in Poland, was the worst. They had a song about Treblinka which they used to sing in

all the camps. It went from camp to camp, and even down into the ghettos where the Jewish people lay hiding in the sewers, and it grew all the time as it went from mouth to mouth - like one of the old European folk songs, you know. I have a translation of it."

He was getting up to look for it when the two boys came in. One was small and swarthy, with lively black eyes and curly hair; the other was a taller, pin-faced boy with a shy, pleasant smile. They shook hands and said, "Hello, cheerio, thank you very much," all in one breath. Dr Friedman, coming back with the song, explained that the boys had picked up a bit of English since they had been liberated. He added that they were both about fifteen and had been in several camps before they fetched up in Belsen.

The translation of the song ran:

Not far from here, at the shunting yard,
The people are crowding round the cattle trucks.
The piteous cry of a child is heard calling to his mother,
"Don't leave me here alone. You will never come back again!"

For Treblinka is a grave for every Jew.
Whoever goes there remains there;
From there, there is no return....

My heart breaks
When I think of the good friends who there met a violent death.
My heart breaks
When I remember that there my brother and sisters perished.
My heart breaks
When I remember that there my mother and father were murdered,
And I join the others at the shunting site,
Sobbing bitterly with them and crying,
"Don't leave me here alone!"

"You know that Treblinka song, don't you?" Dr Friedman asked the smaller boy. "Oh, sure, sure," the boy said matter-of-factly, as though he had been asked if he knew the latest swing number. "You often saw Kramer and the others at Belsen, Arthur?" Dr Friedman asked the older one. "Sure, sure," he said. "I was doing a painter's job, see, and I hear Kramer say to one of the S.S., 'The British here very soon, so you got to get the place better, or else bad for me, see?' So we must quick paint the barracks, and Kramer tries to kill many more by the glass, so that when the British come, not so many Jews in camp, see?"

"Powdered glass," explained Dr Friedman, and the bigger boy, smiling gently, said, "In the soup - a small piece each day. In two, t'ree week, you dead for sure. Many, many have died by the glass."

"But then the British come," said Arthur. "They come on April fifteen." The boys looked at each other, laughed, and chanted together, "T'ree p.m.!"

"And they made the Nazis bury all the bodies they had not had time to burn," said Arthur. "Look! I show you!" He pulled out of his pocket a little diary and flicked the pages, in which, he showed me, he had methodically noted, "April 22nd, 1,000 [bodies buried]," "April 23rd, 5,000," "April 24th, 5,000," and so on. In the middle of these entries was a normal, childish memo, in large, straggling capital letters: "MY BIRTHDAY." "There goes the dinner bell," said Dr Friedman. "Off you go." Arthur, who had plainly been warming to his subject, looked disappointed, but he and his companion obeyed promptly. As we followed them, Dr Friedman said, "They don't speak of such things to each other. It's only when there is someone new who they think is interested. Among themselves, they discuss the work, the sport, the future - they worry much about the future -but not the past."

As we went through the hall, I noticed that the handrail of the big, curving staircase was twisted around and around with cord. "To stop them sliding down and breaking their necks," Mrs Katz explained. In the dining room were five long tables, already lined with chattering children. Some grown-ups (teachers, I was told) were ladling out plates of soup at a side table. Nearly all the boys wore large cloth caps pulled down to their ears, which gave them a curiously Dead End Kid effect. A few wore black skullcaps or berets. "Orthodox Jews must be covered at table," explained Dr Friedman, as he fished a skullcap out of his pocket and placed it on his head.

At first glance, the children looked healthy enough, though some of them were small for their age, and skinny. But when I inspected them carefully, I got a disconcerting impression of something not quite right, like a drawing which is out of scale. A number of the older boys were big, strapping lads, but their weight seemed badly distributed. When I spoke of this, Mrs Katz said that a lot of the children had a queer, bloated look because of overeating after the years of starvation. "Some of the girls, in particular, are extremely odd shapes," she said. Their eyes weren't quite right, either, having an odd, remote, sardonic expression, as if they were always remembering, even though the rest of the children's bodies had accepted all the changes for the better since April, 1945. Everybody's table manners were excellent. I said as much to Mrs Katz, and she replied, "Not bad when you remember that they weren't used to knives or forks, or to sitting on chairs, or eating off anything but a filthy floor."

"They all smoke," said Dr Friedman deprecatingly. "Girls and boys, even the little ones. How can one stop them? After they were liberated, the soldiers paid them in cigarettes for doing odd jobs."

"If you suggest they cut down," Mrs Katz said, "they look at you and say, 'You'd smoke all day too if you'd seen your mother and father burned,' and that is difficult to answer."

After the soup came a hearty helping of boiled beef and carrots and then some highly spiced pudding. When the children had finished, a young woman passed along the tables carrying a bowl of vitamin pills (the children are required to take them), and then the young man who had opened the door for me began to chant grace in a loud, high voice. This took some time, but the children loudly and with great gusto sang the responses. When grace was over, they got up and cheerfully clattered out of the room. "They have kept their religion," said Dr Friedman. "In the camps, the Nazis would make them do all sorts of forbidden jobs on the Sabbath day, but when the work was over, they would immediately say their prayers." He pointed out two posters, bearing Hebrew inscriptions in red, on the walls. He translated one as "From slavery to liberty," and the other as "A new light will shine upon Zion."

Dr Friedman said that he was now going to hold one of the current-affairs discussions. While a group of children was being assembled, one of the boys came up to the Doctor and asked for a chit to the village barber, so that he could get a haircut. He was a big, blond, slow-moving, good-natured-looking fellow. Dr Friedman said that he was one of several hundred people who had been hastily evacuated by the Nazis from Dachau to a place in the Alps when the Americans got uncomfortably close, so that the camp would not have quite such a ghastly collection of emaciated humanity to give a bad impression to the liberators. Adults and children were loaded into cattle trucks, which were then nailed shut. They travelled four days without food or water. "Of the seventy in my truck, fifty were dead when we arrived," the boy said in German. With an innocent, happy smile, he recalled how the starving prisoners had raided the Alpine farms, killed cattle, and wolfed eggs and milk after the Nazis hastily decamped. "Many died immediately," he said, shrugging. "It's bad to eat so much when you are not used to eating." He laughed softly, as though remembering some childish indulgence at a Christmas party, and went off to get his hair cut.

Dr Friedman and I went into a big, bare classroom where about twenty boys and three or four girls were sitting on chairs they had dragged up in a semicircle around a sofa, on which he and I sat. The children looked bright and expectant. "I say everything in German and then repeat it in

English. They are supposed to reply in English," Dr Friedman said to me. He began by holding up a newspaper and calling out, "What is this in my hand?"

"A newspaper!" the children shouted.

"What is contained in the newspaper?" Dr Friedman asked in German, and then repeated it in English.

"*Politik!*" roared the children, and one boy, who was wearing American battle dress, got up and began a rambling political speech which made everybody laugh. "They're all ardent politicians," Dr Friedman said to me, and then added encouragingly to the speaker, "Good! But what else is in a paper?"

"News of the world," some of the children said. "Economic news," said a dark, handsome, intelligent-looking boy named Witold, who Dr Friedman said was the son of a Polish municipal engineer shot by the Nazis in 1939.

"Can you remember one piece of recent news that especially concerned us here in the hostel?" asked Dr Friedman.

"Belsen children arrive in England!" cried someone, and there was laughter.

"Less food for everybody in England!" cried another boy.

"Less food for everybody in England," said Dr Friedman. "Now, is that political news or economic news?"

"Both," said Witold.

"Not bad, eh?" said Dr Friedman proudly, in an undertone. The news item to which he was referring, however, turned out to be about Palestine. He then touched on the United States loan to Great Britain. "Is Britain a rich country?" he asked.

"Not now," said Arthur. "Was," he added politely.

"What do you think of England?" asked Dr Friedman. "Speak freely! Say what you think, no matter what it is."

The boys hesitated, grinning and uncertain. At last Arthur said, "The English are very kind - " He was flattened by Dr Friedman with a good-natured "That is no opinion. It means nothing - like saying someone is nice."

"They speak short," said another boy.

"He means the English are laconic," Dr Friedman said to me.

A curly-haired, pleasant-faced boy of about sixteen, who had evidently thought out what he wanted to say, began carefully to say it. Dr Friedman said that his name was Kurt and that an American newspaperman had taken a great fancy to him and was making arrangements to adopt him. "What I like best about England," Kurt said, "is that each man is free to speak what he thinks. Also, he can read what he likes. That is the democratic life, and it is good."

"A fine answer," said Dr Friedman. After a few more remarks on English traditions and characteristics, Dr Friedman mentioned the Nuremberg trials, and the group began to thaw out. They all started talking at once, and Dr Friedman had to hold up a hand to slow them down.

"The English are too soft!" shouted Arthur.

Kurt jumped to his feet, energetically protesting, but was stopped by Dr Friedman, who calmly said, "Didn't we just say that free speech was the best part of a democracy? Each can say what he will."

"All know the Nazis are murdering, bad men," said Arthur passionately. "Why have the English give them trial and try to save them? All the Germans laugh at the English and the Americans because they so soft. Is true," he added, glancing defiantly at Kurt.

Nearly all his companions nodded. "Kill every Nazi twice!" someone shouted. Kurt look distressed. Keeping his eyes cast down on the pencil he held in one hand, he said earnestly, "If the English kill them without trial, all the other Germans have felt, 'It is no good; they are no better than Nazis themselves.' Then they have given up hope, and maybe another Hitler finds it a good time to come into power."

"These children find it impossible to believe that people in England want to feed the starving Germans," Dr Friedman said to me. "I have told them that there is a movement in this country, headed by Victor Gollancz, an English publisher who is a Jew, like themselves, to send food to Germany, but it is incomprehensible to them."

At the end of the discussion, the Doctor asked the children what they wanted to be when they grow up. Lots of the boys, including Witold, said, "Technician." "Cook and pastry cook!" cried Arthur, smacking his lips pleasurably, as though he saw a lifetime of *Apfelstrudel* before him. Several others said that they wanted to be cooks; possibly they felt they didn't want to take any chances in the future. One boy said that he wanted to be a gravedigger, and a boy with dimples got up and said shyly that he wanted to be a leather worker. "*Mein Vater*," he explained, "was a tanner." "I go to America!" shouted a merry-looking boy, and Dr Friedman murmured, "He has a father there, last heard of fighting in the Pacific. Who knows?" "Atlantic City!" the boy cried, looking knowledgeable and laughing.

Some of the children had not spoken at all throughout the session. The big, blond fellow who had been in Dachau was one. Most of the time he had listened, and he had laughed at some of the answers, but I noticed that he and some of the other children had occasionally sunk into a brown study and stopped paying any attention to what was going on. Maybe this was the self-protective knack of withdrawal which you must learn in order to survive in a concentration camp. Now one of the boys proudly showed me the ring on his left hand. It was a crude metal thing, made in Belsen, and he pointed out the dates 1941 and 1945 engraved on it. "When I come in and when I come out," he explained. Several of the children had similar little ornaments - two or three more rings, and a medallion engraved with the sad name "Treblinka." One boy rolled up a sleeve and exhibited his camp number tattooed in blue on his forearm. He did it quite calmly, but it was a relief when a jolly, freckled girl, showing me a bracelet made of threepenny bits, said happily, "From mine auntie in London." The other children looked at her respectfully.

Dr Friedman said that before I left I must take a look at the sick bay. Invalids are put in what was formerly the chauffeur's flat - several sunny, warm rooms, now in the charge of a bright-faced nurse. One patient, a boy, was sitting up in bed playing with a chemistry set. "He's one of the few children who have found relatives among other parties of refugees in this country," the nurse said. "One of the workers from the Windermere Reception Centre, where the first lot of Belsen children went, was here helping me get ready for a group. We had all the children's tooth mugs lined up, with each child's name on his own, and when this girl saw this boy's mug, she said, 'Why, that's the same name as two boys in our camp!' They turned out to be his brothers, who had been parted from him for years - the parents disappeared somewhere in the usual concentration-camp way - and now they're down here with him. He's just escaped pneumonia, but he's getting on fine. Thank goodness, we haven't had a ghost of an epidemic since the children arrived. We keep a careful lookout, naturally." There were two other children in the sick bay - a

girl who reared a startled head from a nest of blankets as we entered her room, and a dark-complexioned boy, dressed in American Army shirt, pants, and overseas cap, by the fire in the nurse's sitting room, laboriously tackling the critical first row of a newly cast-on bit of knitting. "There's nothing the matter with him any more, but he likes to drop back and see me," said the nurse. "All the children like it over here. It's cosy and more homelike, I suppose. I've been showing one of the girls how to knit, and he had to try, too." The boy had run into a snarl, and he confidently handed his knitting over to her to straighten out, as though he were a much younger child. His occupation and his soldierly kit made an odd contrast. When she had straightened out the snarl, the nurse passed the knitting back to him and said to me, "That little girl Margaret you saw lying down upstairs - she'll be down to tea in a moment. She was very ill with typhoid, but she's quite all right now. But she slips back to me whenever she can." She smiled warmly. "What Margaret needs is what they all need and have never had in their lives. A little mothering, that's all."

Next Dr Friedman took me to see the block of Army huts, which were warm and light. Some of them were dormitories, furnished with wooden bunks; others served as classrooms. The boys sleep in these dormitories; the girls and the staff sleep in the house. In one hut, a woman teacher was giving an English lesson to Kurt. As we came in, he looked up triumphantly from a dictionary and cried, "*Töpferware* is 'pottery'!" He acted as though he had just dug up a nugget. "The more advanced ones have private lessons," said Dr Friedman as we walked on. "They're quick linguists, most of them. Many of the children can speak Polish and Russian, and maybe Hungarian or Rumanian, as well as German of a kind, and now some English. As I have told you, they are eager to learn, not only from books but from the world. They know that they have missed so much and they are starving for experience of all kinds. The other evening a children's ballet from Southampton came to dance for them. They were entranced; they sat spellbound. No rude noises from the bigger boys! Nothing! We arrange similar little treats for them - trips to London to see a few sights, and so on. There is tremendous competition for these trips, but I take the children strictly in turn, and when I say to a boy, 'It will be your turn next time,' he goes away with a dark face, and I know that he does not believe me. They have no faith, no belief at all in a next time." Dr Friedman sighed and ran his hands over his hair. "That is perhaps the worst thing Belsen and Buchenwald have done to these children," he said. "But they will learn. I do not believe that it will ever leave their minds completely, but they will learn to be men and women who take pride in themselves, who can hope, who can look forward to tomorrow and know that it will come."

OUR CHILDREN

BY L.G. MONTEFIORE, O.B.E.

This article appeared in the Jewish Monthly, an AJA publication, in April 1947. Mr L G Montefiore's observations about us are very revealing. Had he been alive today he would have been pleasantly surprised at how well we integrated into the fabric of society despite our palpable disadvantages.

About 18 months ago, the first group of orphans from the Concentration Camps were brought to this country under the auspices of the Central British Fund. After the first three hundred from Theresienstadt, successive groups from other camps brought the total number up to about 700. To those who have been in close contact with these boys and girls, it has been a most interesting

experience. It began with a hurried readjustment of preconceived notions. We expected children, we had talked about children, and written about children. We had pictured under sixteens who could be sent to school or nursed back to health in the peace of an English countryside.

That was one picture in our minds. Another was the result of stories that had reached us of bandit children similar to those left to roam Russian cities after the Revolutions. Both expectations proved false. The boys and girls who arrived at the aerodromes were remarkably similar in appearance to those who stepped off some immigrant ship from Libau or Riga way back in 1907 or thereabouts. And the real children, the under sixteens, were not there. The very old and the very young had been exterminated. There were no young children left alive at Dachau or Mauthausen. The fires and the gas chambers at the killing camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka had destroyed them. Only those old enough to do forced labour and young enough to endure the harsh conditions had survived.

Looking back on the past 18 months it is easy to see some mistakes that were made. We should have from the very start tried to dispel the idea that England was a country where everything was to be had for the asking. Perhaps the orphans were treated a little too much like the prodigal son in the New Testament. Eighteen months later we must tell the prodigal son that the time for banqueting on the fatted calf is over and gone and that it is high time he should consider how to earn his living. But the future was veiled as the future always is.

We thought that in another two years at most, these trans-migrants would have left for Palestine or the U.S.A., or some other country of ultimate destination. And we felt like the father of the prodigal son who would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. Probably in Nazi Germany the pigs had been fed very much better than these Jewish orphans. They had been starved and beaten and humiliated. They had escaped death by accident and by their own ready wit and courage. For whom should the fatted calf be killed, if not for them? They deserved and deserve anything and everything we can do for them. But perhaps the very best thing is to make them independent, and to try and teach them that pity is a transitory emotion and cannot be reckoned on as a permanent source of income.

For five years or thereabouts these boys and girls have lived in a very harsh and cruel world, uncared for, unbefriended, utterly alone except for companions in misfortune. The weakest went to the wall. The strongest, the toughest, the most ingenious in trick and subterfuge survived. It was not the well-mannered child who never told a lie that lived; on the contrary it was the most adroit liar. He who could steal and retain possession of some desirable article might live a few months longer than the rest.

Sometimes it seems a miracle that this group of charmingly mannered lads could have endured and witnessed the horrors and the bestialities of the camps.

But a prolonged stay at Dachau or a similar place leaves its mark. There are certain characteristics acquired, not by all ex-camp inmates but by many.

There is a tendency to extract the last ounce of advantage from any particular situation, and an extreme nervousness of any risk of coming off second best. After being for so many years pariahs, and worse than pariahs, there is a tendency to insist unduly on equal treatment, ignoring the fact that some concession made to a few, becomes impossible if it has to be extended to seven hundred.

Most of these orphans show an intense desire to learn. They prize both theoretic and practical knowledge. On the other hand, they have been deprived for years of any chance to compete on equal terms with other boys and girls of their own age.

Thus they are apt to consider any small talent they possess as the proof of a genius. They are disinclined to accept the fact that much seeming drudgery accompanies the first steps in any trade

or occupation. They lack the bluntly expressed advice of father or elder brother that he too had to learn, and the beginning is usually irksome and difficult. In the earlier stages, they were apt to be suspicious of advice and to harbour the wildest suspicions. One small group asked me, and I do not think the question was wholly rhetorical, how large a bribe I had received when I insisted on making an unpopular change in the administrative staff. Also we had to contend with the language difficulty. German was the *lingua franca*, the language of the camps, which all had been forced to learn. But 95% of them come from Poland or Czecho Slovakia or Carpatho Russia. Among themselves they still speak Polish, Yiddish, Czech or Magyar. Only the handful of young children have by this time forgotten any other language but English.

Perhaps in some ways the long enforced delay before emigration overseas has been beneficial. It has given a rather greater sense of stability. Hectic months had succeeded the days of liberation. Many of them had trekked eastwards to look for any survivors in their old homes, and then westwards again out of the Russian zone, with the idea that better living conditions could be found in territory controlled by the Western Allies.

Now for the past eighteen months they have been living in a settled community, kept fairly regular hours, and life has moved more tranquilly. As a result, boys, who, on their arrival, would have flown out in a passion at any rebuke, now accept a telling off with an engaging grin. They have become less fanatical, more balanced, more reasonable as it would seem to me.

But one cannot say how long this mood of patience will persist. Many of them have relatives, near or more distant, in many parts of the world. They would like, in theory at least, to be reunited.

Others without kith or kin would be well content to remain in this country if they were permitted, and thus provide a small additional quantity of manpower in British Industry. Only in rather exceptional cases do they seem inclined for agriculture, although a number have fitted in well at the Farm Schools organized by Zionist youth groups. An altogether disproportionate number wanted to go in to the diamond polishing industry. A relatively small minority belong to the extreme orthodox wing and like to find themselves back in a Yeshiva not so very different from the one with which they were familiar in Poland. Some of this group are showing themselves promising Talmudic scholars.

The Nazis made no distinction between Jews. All were alike vermin. So it is natural that among the survivors of the camps all classes, all shades of opinion and all varieties of upbringing are represented. During their stay in Great Britain, efforts have been made to keep together those who were similar in outlook and had similar plans for the future. It has meant frantic and not invariably successful efforts to find the square peg its appropriate place.

But at least it has been possible to treat each boy and each girl as an individual with his own or her own needs, hopes and fears. And they have been taken out of Germany, removed from camp life, and placed under something approaching normal conditions.

That has made rehabilitation possible and a long stride to betaken on the road towards razing out those rooted troubles of body and of mind left by five years of Concentration Camps.

A 'LIGHT-HEARTED' EPISODE FROM A DARK PERIOD

by Ruben Katz

Ruben arrived with the first Schonfeld transport of children from Warsaw in March 1946. He stayed for a while in the main Woodberry Down hostel under the assumed name of Adolf Bader, but that is another story....

I survived the latter part of the war on the 'Aryan' side with my older sister Fela in and around Warsaw, passing off as Polish Catholics with false papers. My sister was Walerja 'Wala' Matera and I went by the name of Stefan Teodor Wojs.

My sister did not look Jewish, she had blonde hair and blue eyes, but even so, on the 'Aryan' side, one had to be more on guard against certain Poles than Germans. Poles could easier detect any Jewish traits or mannerism which the Germans could not. In fact, it paid to appear to be friendly with Germans to help allay any suspicion by Poles.

On the 'Aryan' side one went in constant fear of Polish Schmaltzers, blackmailers and informers, who preyed on people with Jewish features on the streets of Warsaw. One only thought of living through the day and each day brought with it new dangers.

The following is a 'light-hearted' excerpt from a grim period based on my wartime testimony:-

One day my sister decided to visit a Jewish girlfriend from our home town of Ostrowiec, also living with forged papers in a Warsaw suburb, in an area unfamiliar to her. As Fela emerged from the station, a Polish "Blue" policeman noticed she was perhaps disorientated and a stranger to the neighbourhood. He came up to her and asked if he could help, but she declined any assistance, maintaining she knew exactly where she was going. He, nevertheless, walked alongside her and as she changed direction, he insisted he was going the same way. He kept pestering her and asking awkward questions and then, out of the blue, he accused her of being a *Zydowka* and asked her outright for 'schmaltz' (money). She strenuously denied she was Jewish and that he would get no money from her. In that case, he said, she would have to accompany him to the Police station, which was nearby, to verify her true identity. Fela readily agreed, but threatened to tell his superiors that he had asked her for a bribe. As they carried on walking in the direction of the Police station, he enquired what she had in the little parcel she was carrying. Fela instinctively realised that he may have given her an opportunity to shake him off. The more inquisitive he became, the more Fela held on tightly to the package. She later relented and offered to give him some money she had in her purse, but "definitely not the package", which she clutched closely to her chest. She bluntly refused to give up the parcel, which whetted his appetite even more. Eventually, after a lot of prodding and pestering, she agreed to hand it over to him but only if he let her go. They were, by then, in clear view of the Police station, outside which policemen were standing and milling around. He suggested, so as not to arouse suspicion of his fellow policemen, that they part in a friendly manner, in front of the Police station. As they said goodbye, Fela handed him the parcel and he bowed and kissed her hand whilst clicking his heels in the Polish courtly manner. She immediately left the area as quickly as possible without visiting her friend. Inside the parcel were a nightgown, hairbrush and a few other cosmetic items a young lady needs for spending a weekend with a friend!

THE 'THUNDERER' AND THE COMING OF THE SHOAH: 1933 - 1942 [Shortened presentation at Conference]

By Colin Shindler

Colin Shindler is a writer. Former editor of The Jewish Quarterly and currently editor of Judaism Today. His books include, Ploughshares into Swords and Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream. He was very active in the campaign for Soviet Jewry.

In its two hundred years of existence, the Times has been perceived as the quintessence of 'Englishness' and well-connected to the ruling class in Britain by the world outside. The official history of the Times succinctly defined its role;

*'The Times, [diplomats in London] acknowledged, did not speak directly for the government; it spoke for itself, but its independent views, they noticed, generally corresponded with the thinking of influential groups in Westminster, Whitehall, the City and the older Universities. It therefore could be taken as the voice of the dominant minority in the country; sometimes in line with the government, sometimes in divergence; and where it was divergent, it was - these diplomats told themselves - especially worth noting, for then it showed what kind of pressures were likely very soon to be brought against the government from within the ruling circle in the attempt to bring about a change of policy.'*¹

The editors of the Times during the period 1933 - 1945 were Geoffrey Dawson (1912 - 1919 and 1922 - 1941) and his close colleague, Robin Barrington-Ward (1941 - 1948). Dawson had been at Eton and Magdalen College, Oxford. He was a Fellow of All Souls, had served as Lord Milner's private secretary in South Africa and was 'an Empire-oriented, conventional English scholar-squire'.² Indeed, it was in South Africa at the turn of the century that Dawson first met Edward Wood, later Lord Halifax and Chamberlain's Foreign Secretary. It was a close friendship that continued into and through the era of appeasement. Dawson was also a friend of Chamberlain and came to see himself in a quasi-Ministerial capacity. R M Barrington-Ward similarly came from a privileged background. He was the son of a clergyman and was educated at Westminster and Balliol. Unlike the more conservative Dawson, Barrington-Ward was much more a Tory radical in the Disraeli mode. In one sense, both Dawson and Barrington-Ward were both products of their time and their class. Their approach to the election of Hitler in 1933 and their understanding of Nazi antisemitism reflected the approach of wide sectors of the British establishment.

During the 1930s, the Times distanced itself from the openly anti-Nazi approach of other sections of the British press, in particular, that of the liberal Manchester Guardian. Yet this did not mean that its senior figures were uninformed about developments inside Germany. Barrington-Ward believed that the printed word in the pages of the Times was avidly dissected by the Nazi hierarchy. He therefore felt that the influence of the Times in the ruling circles in Hitler's Germany would be severely diminished if he spoke out passionately and loudly.³ In addition, the carnage during World War I had conditioned Barrington-Ward to exhibit a total hatred of war and he was thus loath to use his position to advocate too strong a policy against Germany for fear of antagonizing the Nazi leadership and thereby facilitating the movement towards war.⁴ The infamous editorial which advocated the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia⁵ had been written by the leader writer, Leo Kennedy and revised by Dawson. Yet for several weeks previously, Dawson had been primed by his old friend, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax and even allowed to read

sensitive Foreign Office memoranda. Over lunch on the same day as the piece appeared, Halifax indicated that despite the formal protestations of the Foreign Office, he was not displeased with the Times' editorial.

Even in private correspondence, Barrington-Ward was at pains to rationalise this policy as late as April 1939;

*'It was an endeavour to discover even at the eleventh hour whether the Nazis were, according to their professions, out for reasonable change or whether they were out for mere domination. Chamberlain was ready to wait for the proofs and Churchill was not. The Churchill case completely ignored the admitted blunder of the settlement of 1919 and above all the failure to give Germany a say in the Versailles settlement. A policy (Churchill's) which could have been represented as one of mere frightened encirclement would have ranked every German behind the Fuhrer and left this country with an uneasy conscience and deeply divided.'*⁹

Up until 1938, reports of Nazi atrocities were, by and large, underplayed by the Times. Like other sections of the British press, the experience of the Times was not attuned to such bestialities. It was - even at the very beginning of Nazi rule - beyond their comprehension why Jews should be persecuted. Many newspaper correspondents in Germany toned down their articles because they knew that the full details would not be believed by their editors. When Norman Ebbutt, the senior Berlin correspondent of the Times discovered that his most detailed and critical material did not appear, he passed on 'his more damning information' to the American CBS correspondent, William Shirer.¹¹

From the very beginning, disbelief pervaded the Times' approach to Nazi intentions - the extent that it underplayed the importance of antisemitism in Hitler's election manifesto in 1933.¹²

Although the Times had published an article on Oranienburg in September 1933,¹³ the newspaper was averse to publicising conditions in the camps. This was indicated clearly when the Times spiked a detailed story on Dachau in December 1933 from its Bavarian correspondent, Stanley Simpson.

The belief in the Jew's ability to exaggerate and distort reality, to promote their own cause was widespread in the British establishment. As Philip Graves, a foreign correspondent with the Times since 1906 and exposé of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, exclaimed in a private letter to Barrington-Ward; 'why must Jews be so prolix?'²³

In the monocultural world of the 1930s, Jews who did not assimilate and dissolve into the wider society were suspect. They manifested a distinct form of 'un-Englishness' by their insistence on maintaining their difference. Yet the very notion of Nazi antisemitism was similarly un-English. It was an affront against the liberal conscience and struck at the roots of a civilized behaviour which characterised the English way of life. It was a competition between these two dislikes which confused and characterised British understanding and response in the 1930s. As Neville Chamberlain, himself, pointed out after Kristallnacht 'No doubt, Jews aren't lovable people: I don't care about them myself, but that is not sufficient to explain the pogrom'.²⁴

In addition, there was a profound inability to understand the ideological roots of Nazi antisemitism which was also prevalent amongst many British journalists. There must be, it was argued, more pragmatic, more rational, reasons for such a dire situation. It was easier psychologically to believe that the Jews had brought the persecution upon themselves because they were prominent in German society and that although they carried German passports, they had remained a people apart. Similarly, it was more convenient to believe that Hitler did not know what his minions were doing in his name - especially after the Nuremberg decrees.²⁵

All this had profound consequences when news of the Shoah broke in the summer of 1942. The central point of contact for many journalists was the Foreign Office News Department. Sir William

Ridsdale was head of this unit between 1941 and 1954. His department was an essential source of information for the press from occupied Europe. Its job - at least on the surface - was to assist journalists by transmitting all available information. A more subterranean task was to ensure that only the news which the British government deemed to be fit to appear in the press should be published. Moreover, in wartime, the transmission of selective information could be rationalised in terms of national security. The Diplomatic correspondent of the Times believed that the Foreign Office passed on information factually without minimising it - and especially 'the terrible German atrocities in Russia'.³¹

The Foreign Office, moreover, had a vested interest in ensuring that reports in the Times in particular were aligned with government policy. The Foreign Office believed that regardless of the reality, reports in the Times were perceived differently from other sections of the British press by foreign powers. The possibility of erroneous signals - from the British Government's viewpoint - transmitted to the enemy through the vehicle of independent reporting in the Times was too risky.

After the outbreak of war in 1939, a certain subtlety of approach operated within the confines of the Foreign Office. There was a clear need to filter the news without the operation seeming too blatant, duplicitous and unjustifiable. As Andrew Cockett has pointed out,

'Just as the service ministries operated their own private censorship by rigidly controlling the flow of news, so the Foreign Office did likewise - but it also exercised those effective methods of personal contact both at the level of the News Department with the specialist correspondents and at ambassadorial or national level with newspaper proprietors and editors. Those ambassadors and officials operating this form of 'silent censorship' could point to its success in order to appease the more repressive instincts of most of their colleagues'.³²

Indeed, Sir William Ridsdale himself argued against any censorship because it was unnecessary since 'there was a large measure of cooperation between the press and the Foreign Office News Department'.³⁴

Information reached London from occupied Europe from a variety of sources. Much of it - and especially that derived from domestic intelligence operations in Europe - passed through the filter of the British Intelligence Services, SIS, SOE, MI5, MI9, MI19. Moreover, US Embassies remained open in Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest and Vichy until the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942. In neutral countries, allied diplomats operated information gathering centres. The press in these countries further provided reports. There were also anti-Nazi Germans who tried to pass on vital information through neutral countries. Furthermore, fragments of information could be gleaned even from the highly controlled Soviet and German papers and broadcasts. Emigre groups domiciled in London also possessed their own networks in their home countries. Jewish and Zionist organisations operating out of neutral capitals as Geneva, Istanbul and Lisbon similarly transmitted information received.

After such information was clarified and vetted, it was cleared for transmission through a variety of channels. The Ministry of Information fed the BBC home services while British Intelligence and the Foreign Office catered for the European services. The Political Warfare Executive directed by Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart utilised material for propaganda purposes.

The Times had access to most of these sources. Indeed, the Diplomatic correspondent of the Times first learned about extermination techniques using the exhaust fumes of trucks and vans through Polish intelligence and the 'London' Poles. In 1943-4, he met 'several Polish agents who were flown out of Poland to report and were then flown back again'. This included Josef Retinger, a political aide to Sikorski. They told him that Jews from Poland and Germany - as well as ethnic Poles - were being killed in Auschwitz. No differentiation seems to have been made between the incarceration of Poles in Auschwitz and the extermination of Jews there.³⁵

From the outbreak of war until May 1942, the Times picked up periodic stories about the Nazi persecution and massacres of the Jews. For example, the British White Paper on 'The Treatment of German Nationals in Germany',³⁶ the establishment of the Warsaw Ghetto,³⁷ the mass deportations of Jews,³⁸ the massacres perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen³⁹ and the gassing of Dutch Jews at Mauthausen.⁴⁰

Although there were indeed reports in the Times that Jews were being singled out for special treatment, official British policy was to subsume Jewish suffering within the general maelstrom of Nazi killings in Europe. When the Bund report which first revealed the totality of the extermination of Polish Jewry arrived in London at the end of May 1942, the Times did not pick it up directly. Instead, it reported Sikorski's interpretation of it, in a broadcast on the BBC which emphasised instead Polish suffering.⁴² The Nazis, it was considered, had embarked on a series of periodic pogroms rather than the systematic extermination of the Jews. Both the Times and the BBC had missed the essential point that this was an organised programme of extermination, Szmul Zygielbojm therefore looked for other outlets for the Bund report. He gave it to the Daily Telegraph which published the essential details on its main news page on 25 May under the heading 'German murder 700,000 Jews in Poland' and 'Travelling Gas Chambers', almost a month after its arrival in London. The two column story describing 'the greatest massacre in the world's history' was bordered by other stories - '100 Airfields in Three Months: Australia's Feat' and 'Ice Cream's last Summer: Manufacture to end on September 3rd'.

At the end of June, the World Jewish Congress held a press conference at which the Bund report was promoted centrally and intensely.

Although the Times headlined the fact that 'Over One Million [Jews] Dead Since the War Began',⁴⁶ the newspaper covered the press conference hesitantly and was economical with the information provided. This contrasted with the Daily Telegraph which quoted Goebbels in Das Reich that 'the Jews of Europe... will pay with the extermination of their race in the whole of Europe and elsewhere too'.⁴⁷ The Guardian recorded that seven million were in concentration camps and it was now sufficiently clear that Eastern Europe had been turned into 'a vast slaughter house of Jews'.⁴⁸

As further information seeped out - much of it appearing in the emigre Polish press in London - Jewish groups, the Polish and Czechoslovak National Councils and many others strongly promoted the need to publicise the fate of the Jews. This was not a course favoured by the Foreign Office who - amongst its other concerns - was also weary about upsetting the Arab nationalist cause in Mandatory Palestine.⁴⁹

The problem for the Times was that influential circles in the British establishment were now speaking out on behalf of European Jews. Zygielbojm and Schwarzbart ensured that the Bund report reached all members of Parliament. Cardinal Hinsley, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster denounced the atrocities against Jews on the BBC European service - adding that it was 'not British propaganda'.⁵⁰ The Times again devoted relatively little space to it compared to the Telegraph. On 9 July, the Government responded by organising a press conference with the London Poles under the chairmanship of Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information. The report of the Times the following day once more merged Jews into the generality of Polish suffering despite the speeches of Zygielbojm and Schwarzbart.⁵¹ The Daily Telegraph⁵² and the Guardian⁵³ carried more details about the persecution of the Jews in their reports yet their editorials, which spoke so movingly about the victims of Nazi violence from Warsaw to Lidice, made no mention of the Jewish tragedy.

Between July and December 1942, there was a steady flow of reports - the round-ups in Paris, the mass deportations to Poland from all parts of Europe, eye witnesses in Chelmno, the Riegner telegram, the Karski testimony - all of which constructed the general picture that European Jewry was gradually being exterminated in fulfilment of the ideological demands of Nazism. Whilst Foreign Office officials cast doubt on the truth of such reports and refused to recognise the Jews

as a distinct nationality, the British press began to move to a position where - even in the absence of official confirmation - they at least began to entertain the possibility that terrible, unimaginable things were being carried out against the Jews of Europe.

In August and September 1942, the Times began to publish detailed reports from its correspondents in Switzerland and Portugal about the roundups of Jews in Britain's closest neighbour and ally, France. Although this growing willingness to publicise the facts differentiated the Times from the Foreign Office, it was not willing to accept Jewish criticism of British government policy and the broad attitude of the press. At a rally on 29 October at the Royal Albert Hall, the Chief Rabbi forcefully attacked the reticence of the British press and suggested that it encouraged the Nazis 'to go on perfecting their technique of extermination' and hid the truth from the British public. The Times, however, did not report the content of Chief Rabbi Hertz's speech but gave more emphasis to the statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁵⁶

As the news of the mass extermination of Polish Jewry trickled out, the Foreign Office was still unable to confirm the facts to both BBC journalists and the Foreign Office News Department. Despite the deportations from the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos and the revelations of the Karski report, the Foreign Office did not alter its position. At the end of November 1942, the Foreign Office was still hesitant in giving any credence to the news from Poland to Sidney Silverman and Alex Easterman, representatives of the World Jewish Congress. A Foreign Office official briefed its News Department to softpedal the issue, but not abolish it altogether from the public domain.⁵⁶ On 1 December, Silverman and Easterman held a press conference to publicise the policy of genocide. Silverman further proposed to raise the issue in the House of Commons. On 4 December, the Times printed a lead story entitled 'Nazi War on the Jews: Deliberate Plan for Extermination'.

It commented that

'for some weeks London has recognised on the basis of independent evidence that the worst of Hitler's threats was being literally applied and that, quite apart from the widespread murders, the Polish Jews had been condemned to subsist in conditions which most steadily lead to their extermination'.⁵⁷

Although this went further than any previous Times article, it still stopped short of mentioning the actuality of mass extermination by design. Through the Berlin correspondents of Swedish newspapers, the Times commented that the entire Polish General-Government would be declared *judenrein* by 1 December. The Jews would be 'liquidated which means either transported eastwards in cattle trucks to an unknown destination or killed where they stood'.

Why did the Times suddenly change course? One reason was that the accumulating news from Poland could neither be ignored nor denied.

'There was not a special policy to promote any single aspect [of the horrors of the German occupation of Europe]. News was news - that was the guiding principle... [Running the series of reports in December 1942] was a news decision essentially, based on the sure belief that news about the German atrocities was an asset, a weapon in the allied war effort.'⁵⁸

This reflected the widespread belief in government and in the media that the Jews could only be saved by a swift and total Allied victory.

'A dominant British response to the question: How can we help the Jews and other occupied peoples?... the surest way to help and to save Jews and others from death and suffering is to do all we can to win the war and end the tyranny as soon as possible... that thought was in almost everyone's mind.'⁵⁸

Saving the Jews was then seen as a consequence of winning the war. The question: what happens if there are no more Jews left to save? was addressed only marginally. The news from Poland became not the basis for action to save the remnant of those left alive, but an item of well-intentioned agit-prop in the war effort.

The Foreign Office, however, was not pleased⁶⁰ at the Diplomatic Correspondent's report on 4 December and a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury the following day in the Times.

There may have been another, more political reason, for the Times to seemingly embrace a relatively open-minded approach. The Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, himself, had changed course. The flood of reports from Poland plus pressure from the London Poles and Jewish organisations may have suggested to Eden that some response from government was called for. Moreover, the advantages of publicity about the Jewish tragedy might now outweigh its well-known disadvantages. Eden had been persuaded to take seriously Silverman's proposal for a Great Power declaration on the fate of the Jews and had secured agreement from Washington and Moscow.

The first Times article on 4 December appeared two days after Eden had met the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, to discuss the possibility of a declaration. It was not until 7 December that the Times reported a meeting between the American and Soviet ambassadors and Eden to discuss 'the fearful plight of the Jews'.⁶¹ Clearly the series of Times articles in December 1942 coincided with the sudden interest of the Foreign Secretary to emphasise the Jewish tragedy in Poland. On 12 December, the Times published an editorial 'The New Barbarism' by J H Freeman which recognised the uniqueness of the mass extermination of the Jews unequivocally for the first time. Yet it applied a subtle corrective to any moral outcry, by effectively reiterating British government policy:

*'Moral reprobation realistically considered is less likely to achieve in war what it failed so signally to achieve in peace. The pre-requisite of real help is victory - and victory to be effective must be swift as well as complete.'*⁶⁵

Similarly, the Times report of the Chief Rabbi's speech at a Day of Intercession watered down his implicit criticism of the government and press.^{66,67} It allowed the Chief Rabbi's remarks to remain within the realm of the spiritual and the moral. On 18 December, the Times reported Eden's statement in the House of Commons, 'the restrained expression of anger', 'the stern protest' and 'the [famous] minute of dignified silence', but the Allied declaration said nothing about the prospect of rescue. The Times also reported Sidney Silverman's question about what could be done by the British government to relieve the situation, Eden replied

*'My honourable friend knows the immense difficulties in the way of what he suggests, but he may be sure that we shall do all we can to alleviate these horrors - though what we can do at this stage, I am afraid must be slight.'*⁶⁸

This euphemism for inaction was followed by a letter in the Times from Major-General Neill Malcolm, the former High Commissioner for German Refugees who wrote 'so unlike Hitler, we cannot convert words into deeds and must be content with promises which will not save one single life'.⁷⁰ Malcolm's attack and plea to help Jewish children and refugees in Spain and Portugal severely embarrassed the Foreign Office who made stringent efforts to ensure that no other public figures followed Malcolm's lead. Indeed, the Foreign Office were assured that the Times 'would not open their correspondence columns for further discussion'.⁷¹ The Times' restrained often erratic approach continued for the rest of the war. Even after Eden's declaration in the House of Commons, journalists preferred to listen to the Foreign Office who were presumed to be in a better position to know than often well-informed Jewish organisations. The reports of the Jewish tragedy in the Times did not match the moral fervour of the Guardian or the detailed dispatches of the Telegraph. The root of the problem was that the role of the Times in the 1940s was undefined. It was unsure whether it should be an unofficial organ of government, a faithful servant of a wider establishment or simply a quality newspaper of independent views and essential information. In

reality, it was all of these with considerable blurring at the joins. In wartime, the added psychological constraint of patriotism mitigated against independent opinion and speaking out too vociferously.

It must also be asked to what extent leading figures at the Times still espoused a policy of appeasement during the phoney war of 1939 and especially after the series of German victories and British defeats in 1940. Did they still sympathise with the peace lobby within the British establishment who wished to save the empire and permit the Nazis to destroy Soviet Communism for them? Would Dawson and Barrington-Ward have supported a peace treaty with Hitler in 1940 and a German-dominated Europe? Given the unfailing support which Dawson had always shown Halifax, the answer is likely to be in the affirmative. It would therefore always have been in Halifax's interests that the obstacle of the Jewish question should not be given prominence in the Times. Given the shortage of news space, the Times concentrated its coverage on the war effort. The Shoah was a minor, marginalised amorphous item underpinned by a modicum of genuine disbelief and selective indifference. Journalists often and easily dismissed the incredibility of Jewish claims because the enormity of tragedy was quite unimaginable. Moreover, any semblance of exaggeration on the part of the British would hand the Germans an easy propaganda weapon. What could therefore not be touched was not perceived to be a priority in terms of news coverage. Articles were thus positioned in less than prominent places. The fate of the doomed Jews in Poland and elsewhere was seen at best to be an insoluble problem and therefore no criticism should reside at the door of government and press. Thus the full messages of the combatants of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising were not published in the Times. Those sections of the messages which did not appear criticised the community of nations for its inactivity, its irresponsibility, its apathy and its lack of threats of retribution against the Nazi leadership. The revelations of Martin Gilbert, Bernard Wasserstein, Tony Kushner and others about the lack of motivation, deficiency in perception and vested interest of the British government to make a concerted effort to save the Jews of Europe was unfortunately also reflected in the Times. The British agenda was not the Jewish agenda. The Jews were left to their fate amidst much studied political hand-wringing and the professional deafness of many sections of the British press. As Czeslaw Milosz pointed out: 'There is no such thing as an innocent bystander. If you are a bystander, you are not innocent'.

1940: PEACE AT ANY PRICE?

This is a synopsis of a public lecture that was given by Professor Richard Overy on February 24th 1996 in response to the revisionist historians who claim that Churchill should have sued for peace with Nazi Germany in the summer of 1940.

Should Britain have made peace with Germany in the summer of 1940? This is the question at the heart of so-called revisionist history. The argument goes something like this: once France was beaten Britain had no way on her own of defeating Germany; continued belligerence only damaged Britain's position as a world power and weakened Britain's economy unnecessarily; in the end Britain had to rely on America, who took over Britain's leading world role, and on the Soviet Union, which imposed on half Europe a dictatorship every bit as bad as Hitler's. The assumption behind this line of reasoning is that peace with Hitler would have produced none of these unpleasant consequences. Communism would have been fenced in, perhaps even defeated by Hitler's armies; the Empire would have survived; and Britain would still be a great power.

The villain of the piece is Churchill. There were plenty in 1940 who doubted the wisdom of his apparently blind defiance of Hitler and refusal to parley. There is now a veritable chorus of historians who blame Churchill above all for Britain's 'decline', for relying on America unthinkingly, for preferring a communist alliance to a sensible compromise with fascism. Churchill's finest hour in 1940 has become tarnished by more than a decade of mud slung at his reputation. Mud sticks. Bit by bit the insinuation that Churchill was a warmongering liability rather than the man of destiny has become more than half-respectable.

It is high time to put the prospect of a peace in 1940 under the microscope. What did Hitler offer? On July 19th in a speech in the German Reichstag he told his audience of Nazi deputies that he could see no reason why the war should continue if Britain would only see sense. That was the limit. There was no hint of terms. Britain was in effect being asked to surrender. In the same speech Hitler warned that British intransigence would mean the utter destruction of the British Empire. This was perhaps as moderate as the Führer could manage. It hardly suggests a reasonable ground for negotiation.

The offer was curtly rejected, not by Churchill himself, but by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, three days later. There were pacifists and fascist fellow-travellers who disagreed. There were certainly some in Parliament who thought Britain's situation so bad that some way had to be found to get out of the war with honour intact. R A Butler was the most prominent. Peace was rejected in 1940 because the British recognised, surely rightly, that it would mean the collapse of all their ambitions in 1939 - to prevent German domination of Europe, and to destroy the threat to the democratic way of life.

Were they right? Who could doubt it. Hitler honoured none of his agreements. The one the British had made, at Munich, was torn up six months later when Czechoslovakia was occupied. However magnanimous Hitler might have felt, flushed with victory in the summer of 1940, there was not a shred of evidence open to the British to suggest that he was a man capable of keeping a bargain, or acting with predictability or restraint. At the very time he made the 'offer' to Britain he was already exploring with his generals the early plans for conquering his ally of the year before, Stalin's Soviet Union. The group of leading Nazis - Goering, Ribbentrop, Himmler, Goebbels - were no better bet. They wanted to flaunt Germany's new power. An independent, heavily armed Britain they could never have tolerated. If Churchill had arrived, cap-in-hand, at the Tempelhof airfield in Berlin, German terms would almost certainly have been as much of a shock as Allied terms were to the Germans in 1919.

If the British needed reminding in 1940 of the kind of enemy they faced in Hitler it was there in the 'peace offer' speech itself. Hitler blamed the war on the 'international Jewish poison'. While he courted Britain, he was planning his grotesque scheme to send all the Jews of Europe to rot on the island of Madagascar, which French defeat had brought in his grasp. Peace with Britain would have made it possible to send the Jews to a vast tropical ghetto where it was hoped they would die of disease and malnutrition. Peace with Hitler was possible in 1940, but it was not remotely desirable. Hitler was not the 'George Washington' of Germany, as Lloyd George called him, but a racist visionary with critically unstable delusions of grandeur.

Even had Realpolitik prevailed in 1940, peace with Hitler could scarcely have averted the relative decline of Britain as a great power. The survival of the Empire was hardly in Hitler's gift, for it rested on the strength of nationalism in the Empire itself and on the reaction of Italy and Japan, over which Hitler had no real control. Nor would peace have averted the Soviet triumph - this was a consequence of the Nazi-Soviet contest, not of British belligerency. And to imagine that a German-dominated Europe and Asia would not have brought America into the world order, sooner or later, is deluded. As Churchill saw more clearly than anyone, America was the free world's best bet. Churchill, after all, was the realist in 1940.

**COMMEMORATION OF THE LIFE OF ELEANOR RATHBONE, M.P.
ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HER DEATH.**

BEN HELFGOTT

This commemoration took place at the House of Lords on the 8th February 1996 -organised by the Yad Vashem Committee of the Board of Deputies and the Holocaust Education Trust. On the 19th May 1943 Miss Eleanor Rathbone said at the House of Commons: "We are responsible if a single man, woman or child perishes whom we could - should have saved. Too many lives, too much time has been lost already. Do not lose any more."

Most of us had at one time or another experienced intimations of immortality which come to us when we are able to derive from fellow human beings that glow of emulation which should be inspired by the excellence of their sincerity and strength. I have always been attracted to and inspired by people who have devoted their lives to serving humanity selflessly. Few people are capable of renouncing their material well being and dedicate themselves to helping the less fortunate amongst us and in saving human lives.

When I received a letter from Mrs Joan Gibson, who was during the war a secretary to the late Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., suggesting that a meeting should take place to commemorate the life of Eleanor Rathbone on the 50th anniversary of her death many thoughts came flooding to my mind.

I came to London in January 1946 with a group of youngsters who were brought to England from the Concentration Camps. At that time her name was completely unknown to me but over the years I read a great deal about her. What struck me most forcefully was her utter devotion to the cause of justice and humanity, her deep faith in the ultimate triumph of right. Moreover, the causes she espoused were both at home and abroad. For just one cause alone she would have gained immortality. As Tom Driberg wrote about her solid accomplishment "She did what only a handful of male M.Ps in a century do. She invented a new idea - a social reform of far-reaching consequences. She fought for it. She studied and planned and lobbied and argued. And nearly thirty years later she had the satisfaction of knowing she had won". Her idea was Family Allowance which was passed in June 1945 a few months before her death.

Frank Field has so ably and eloquently described her claim to Greatness which her humility would not have accepted. She always felt she did so little. Indeed, she refused an Honour. It was strange that so formidable a person could be so ingenuously modest. Yet her multifarious activities need to be stated again and again lest they are forgotten. I have conducted a poll amongst young and old and I was saddened by the fact that so few people remember her and worse still the majority have never heard of her. There is something profoundly wrong in our educational system that Pop singers should be the idols of our youth and the saintly figures like Eleanor Rathbone should be consigned to oblivion.

She held a high place among the women of her time, her moral fervour has helped to shape progressive thought and to raise standards which influence all human action. Compassion for the tribulation of individuals whom she championed added warmth to her inspiration but its real roots lay in the depth of her convictions that dignity was the right of every human being and the fight to ensure it was the reason for their existence. Her work at first was for the poor and for women's suffrage but during the First World War it widened to embrace the chaos of soldier's dependent's

allowances. She entered Parliament in 1929 mainly because she was horrified at the wrongs of Indian child wives. She crusaded with abounding energy for African women and for the girl slaves of Malaya and Hong Kong. She opposed the official policy when Mussolini invaded Abyssinia and was indefatigable in her support of the Abyssinian people. She also opposed the non-intervention policy in Spain and was untiring in her care for the young Spanish refugees who came to this country.

She became a passionate supporter of Jewish emigration to Palestine and as Nazi persecution grew, she became a strenuous advocate for refugees. In May 1938 she launched a campaign in Parliament to appoint a committee to formulate a National, Imperial and International Refugee Policy which would involve the provision of government financial assistance for large scale settlement. She had a hostile exchange with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and her proposal was turned down. She wrote in the Manchester Guardian "If the British Government feels itself too weak to be courageous at least it might show itself merciful."

It was a prelude to the disastrous Evian conference that was to take place later in July when few countries were prepared to admit refugees. It gave Hitler the signal that Jews were not wanted anywhere and probably the idea of the "Final Solution".

In December 1938 an all Party committee of M.Ps was established, with Eleanor Rathbone as Secretary, to press the government for pro-refugee action including financial assistance. She consistently warned of the impending fate of Czechoslovakia. In a series of letters and telephone calls she implored the Foreign Office to instruct the Passport Control Office in Prague to issue British visas without waiting for German permits. She castigated the government in the strongest terms for its unchanged policy of 'selfish isolationism' vis-a-vis refugees. Rejecting the argument that greater generosity toward refugees might harm British workers or increase anti-semitism, Miss Rathbone demanded a clear break with the fatal Evian decision on no governmental financial aid to refugees.

At the beginning of the Second World War Miss Rathbone formed a non-party Parliamentary committee to watch over the treatment of refugees, thus gaining the name of "Member of Refugees". Their appointed task was to direct English opinion aright, to combat irrational prejudice against aliens and to uphold a simple humanity. She was relentless in pursuing and prodding Ministers and Under-Secretaries if there were any confusion of the refugees with 'enemy aliens' in the real sense.

As the war progressed her preoccupation in saving Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe intensified. She was very unhappy with the Government response and in June 1943 she concluded that the Foreign Secretary "had no time for us. The implication of it all seems that the Government has very little sense of urgency over the whole matter, very little hope of doing anything for rescue except on a small scale and a strong desire to avoid pressure". She was also aware, however, that "if we refrain from publicity and from organised pressure, there is a real danger that the Government will assume that public interest has weakened and their present tendency to dismiss a painful subject from their own minds will be encouraged".

When the war finished and the terrible tragedy of the Nazi horror was revealed she immediately turned her attention to the relief of those who found themselves in Displaced Persons Camps in Europe. Unfortunately, the distress and the strain was too much for her and she died suddenly on the 2nd January 1946.

Tony Kushner in his recent book "The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination" wrote "within the populace of the Allied nations, there were few who gave as much of their time and energy to the persecuted Jews of Europe as Eleanor Rathbone".

In 1949 a new school was opened at Magdiel Village in Israel and given the name of Eleanor Rathbone - in memory of a great champion of Jewish children's rescue from Nazi dominated Europe.

In December 1969, Eleanor Rathbone House, in Avenue Road, Highgate, for Elderly Jewish Victims of Nazi Persecution was officially opened.

In a book just published entitled "No Longer Strangers", Helga Wolff, who came to England with the Kindertransport, pays tribute to Eleanor Rathbone who made it possible for her to realise her ambition in becoming a teacher. There were countless others who benefitted from her generosity as were as many for whom she gave personal guarantees to enable them to come to England.

There are others who need to be mentioned like Josiah Wedgewood M.P., Graham White, a Liberal M.P., the Rev. Henry Carter, Dr James Mallon, Warden of Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel, and Mrs Dorothy Buxton, widow of a great fighter for the oppressed, Charles Roden Buxton.

But what distinguishes her from other great activists was her complete dedication to causes which were dictated by no partial affections or animosities and by three absolutes that were identified by Harold Nicolson.

- 1) That cruelty is evil absolutely.
- 2) That untruthfulness is evil absolutely.
- 3) That cowardice is evil absolutely.

The intensity with which she fought these enemies in the end sapped even her vitality. Her name in Europe and America stood for Humanitarian England, for freedom and the underdog. No party ties could bind her spirit; by her personal example she raised her country's fame and was an inspiration to those who struggled on behalf of the wronged and oppressed, against adverse opinion, deep-rooted prejudice and the indifference of ignorance and selfishness.

I conclude with a few short excerpts from the address that was given by the late Sir Arthur Salter M.P. on the occasion of the Memorial Service to Miss Eleanor Rathbone on the 23rd January 1946.

"Eleanor Rathbone has long been one of the noblest figures in the House and found in it the principal medium through which to work for the causes she had at heart.

"She was a tenacious, gallant fighter all her days in the cause of the under-privileged and the unfortunate of every class and country; fierce in attack, but always with righteous indignation in a cause not personal to herself and without any alloy of personal bitterness. She was the most selfless humanitarian I have ever known."

These three things, we shall chiefly remember, above all, of her; the selfless and saint-like devotion of her work; her capacity to feel intensely for those personally unknown to her; her superhuman industry.

I salute a grand lady with an indomitable spirit.

OSCAR FRIEDMANN 1903 - 1958

Oscar Friedmann was well known to those of us who were brought to England in 1945/6. What was not so well known was his background. We reprint below an article that was written about him in the Journal of the Psychoanalytical Society soon after his death in December 1958.

OSCAR FRIEDMANN was born in March 1903 in Germany. He appears to have had a happy family life in his first years. He was the eldest son in a family of nine children and for some time the only boy. He matured early and it was therefore a heavy blow to him that at his father's death, when he was ten, the father's brothers decided that he and his sisters and brother should go into an orphanage. He was in this way unable to help his bereaved mother or her children. This might have embittered him but instead it set in him a pattern for his lifework. He made the helping of children his special job. He was dominated by the aim to keep a child home when a home exists, and to meet the child's need to be able to contribute.

It happened that after his father's death he was sent to a bad institution and he therefore knew at first hand the full extent of childhood frustration and misery. Soon he was transferred to a better institution and here he formed a strong relationship with the Director; this relationship lasted right on till the death of this Director in recent times. Here again experience became the basis for a pattern of action.

Friedmann trained as a teacher and later became a social worker. He did social work mainly with delinquent boys, and became Director of a Borstal in 1932 in Wolzig, near Berlin. He established himself as one who had the power to help boys and girls in need, especially adolescents. He was thus fulfilling himself at a time when, because of the Nazi régime, he and the children of the Borstal were all put into a concentration camp. This camp was a particularly awful one. It was notorious for the active cruelty practised in it. Our colleague suffered much physical hurt and as a result of direct assault he had a permanent partial paralysis of one side of the face and some unsteadiness of one hand. Fortunately he was transferred from this camp to a prison. He was released in 1933 and he then went of his own free-will to take charge of 60 of the boys of the Borstal. This was felt by the boys as an heroic act, and it is said that they never forgot it. In this work he had but little personal freedom, and the boys were in two rooms and always under guard. He made out of this a life full of constructive activities for these boys.

In 1934 he was made Director of an Orphanage in Berlin, the well-known Reichenhaimsche Waisenhaus.

In 1938 the German Jewish authorities asked Friedmann to take a large batch of Jewish children to England, which he agreed to do, intending to return. When here he was strongly advised to stay, and he was able in 1939 to get his wife and also his son and daughter over, together with his sister who was looking after them. (His first marriage was not at that time a happy one, but the children were closely in touch with each parent. This marriage broke up at about the time of the end of the war.) Until 1945 he was a social worker and a leading figure at Bloomsbury House, and he was at the same time in charge of one of the Jewish Refugees Boys' Hostels.

Friedmann and Mr Montefiore were in charge of the first 300 Jewish children placed at Windermere, and there are several accounts of this work. Friedmann soon saw that the children were liable to be given help of the wrong kind. Gifts were showered onto them but he tried to enable these unhappy children to contribute instead of to receive. Here we see a direct application of the lesson he himself learned at ten.

After the war Friedmann was in charge of the reception and rehabilitation of 700 Jewish children and he continued his policy of trying to give the children independence from a fixed attitude of "the world owes us something".

Friedmann was at first poor after coming to this country, otherwise he would have restarted psychoanalytic training which he had taken up in Berlin in the period following his release from concentration camp and prison. He had had analysis with Mrs Ade Muller-Braunschweig and through this he had gained much release from the experiences which might so easily have distorted his personality.

It was not until 1948 that Friedmann could afford to take up the training at this Institute. He qualified in 1950 and was elected to full Membership in 1956. From the time of his qualification he was fully occupied in psycho-analytic practice, being in special demand for the treatment of adolescent boys. Recently he began to concern himself with the Hampstead Psychotherapy Clinic, where he treated a case as part of the special investigation of twins in treatment. He also lectured to the students there.

Mann, to whom Friedmann has been married for two years, is in charge of the Nursery School of the Hampstead Psychotherapy Clinic, and she herself has been very much involved in the care of refugee Jewish children both here and in Israel.

Now for a personal note. I wonder how many of us knew that so dynamic a person was working in our midst. I myself had contact with Friedmann because he came regularly to a small discussion group that I held at one time in my house. We all liked him and valued the definite comments with which he sometimes broke through his very modest general attitude. I also knew him through cases referred about which he always kept me fully informed. Recently he had under treatment an excessively difficult anorexia nervosa case, a 15-year-old boy with an exceedingly high intelligence. I had to see this boy immediately after he had been given news of his analyst's death. He finds communication very difficult. He managed to say to me, however, that he was sad. Then after a pause he added the comment: "Mr Friedmann was always objective". This seems to me to be a high tribute, and it comes from an adolescent in need. Oscar Friedmann would have been glad.

In the 1952 Club he will be sorely missed. In my opinion Friedmann, if he had lived, would have made a very important further contribution to the development of our scientific work, especially in our effort to understand what we do when we meet the needs of sick and healthy adolescents.

HERE AND NOW

TALK GIVEN BY ELISABETH MAXWELL AT THE WIENER LIBRARY RECEPTION FOR THE EDITORS OF THE JOURNAL OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION ON 12TH FEBRUARY 1996

Dr Elisabeth Maxwell has been a staunch supporter of our society for many years. She organised an International Scholars' Conference in Oxford as well as a Public Conference in London, in which our members participated in July 1988, on the theme of Remembering for the Future. She has continued to be an indefatigable proponent on the importance of teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and has lectured extensively on the subject.

I feel honoured to have been asked by Frank Cass to say a few words on the occasion of this meeting with the editors of the Journal of Holocaust Education.

It gives me particular pleasure to know that the Journal is thriving because I remember vividly the early days of meetings in Hugo Gryn's office in 1990 when many of us were debating and discussing what the aims and scope of the Journal should be, and whether it would succeed.

I have followed the Journal closely from its first issue. As someone who reads and writes in this field, I feel I am able to appreciate its content by comparison with other serious work, so I am delighted to be able to praise the rising quality and scope of the articles in the Journal and congratulate the three editors who are in charge.

All those of us who work in the field of Holocaust studies know how much we climb on each other's shoulders to start our own research, write our lectures and educational work. For every useful piece of original research that is written, much of its content and inspiration derives from pondering on the research and findings of others. This can only take place if the research is published in up to date, well respected and edited journals and books, supported by long-sighted publishers and within the framework of facilitating organisations such as libraries, institutes and universities with ongoing courses for students and the public.

I, like every other contributor, know how much we depend on this whole network of education and dissemination. Obviously, the Journal of Holocaust Education is a crucial hub within this network and its future growth is vitally important to all of us. I want to illustrate this network and at the same time, acknowledge my own debt to various people and organisations in this country, who have long been leading the way in Holocaust education. I think of Martin Gilbert's indefatigable research on the Holocaust and in particular his remarkable atlases which in the starkness of their maps and statistics convey graphically the extent of the catastrophe. I think of the great contribution of David Cesarani to the activities and teaching of the Wiener Library and his continuing research and teaching at Manchester University, and also that of Tony Kushner in Southampton and his dedication in setting up the Parkes Library. There are several organisations who ought to be mentioned: the highly respected Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish studies

mention a much longer list of people and institutions, my point here is only to emphasise how much research on Holocaust education depends on them all.

Some people claim that too much research and too much time is being devoted to Holocaust studies. I completely disagree. There will never be enough research or time to encompass the enormity of the deed. This point has been subtly discussed by Gillian Banner in her article: Personal Reflections: Literature, Memory and the Holocaust in the latest issue of the Journal in a very personal and illuminating account of her own response to the memory of the Holocaust.

I am concerned with our responsibility as educators about what we will pass on to future generations who will only know of the Holocaust through what they have read in journals, books and newspapers or seen in films or on television. It is our duty to pass on a history as close to reality as possible and strong enough to resist the undermining attempts of Revisionists. It must be capable of combating the lies, myths and fabrications that Revisionists produce including those of the academic deniers of the Holocaust. This is part of the context in which I want to signal the importance of Frank Cass's publishing projects, both in the Journal of Holocaust Education itself and in the Library of Holocaust Testimonies. Nothing in my view is more important and more urgent than to gather the testimonies of survivors of the Shoah before it is too late. I want wholeheartedly to congratulate you, Frank, on this initiative, which we all know is a labour of love and not a money-making venture.

Why is it so specially important to gather in these testimonies before it is too late? We should definitely not be content only with the hard facts presented by official documents whether they be Nazi records or transcripts of Nuremberg and other trials, important though these are. The straightforward answer is that it is the cumulative effect and cross verifiable consistency of all these personal testimonies and contemporaneous documents that will win the day. For they constitute the crucial ammunition needed to defeat the present and future falsifiers of memory and therefore of history. The same reasoning is at the heart of Steven Spielberg's initiative to collect survivors testimonies through his Shoah Visual History Foundation.

It was the French writer Peguy who said that for every man and every event there is a precise moment in time when the bell tolls to signify that reality has frozen into history. Once history has taken over from memory, there may be no way of correcting any detail in accepted history that has been falsified. Therefore the longer we delay the moment when the Holocaust definitely falls into the category of historical events, the longer we can still work to ensure that its memory is preserved as closely as possible to actual events. By the laws of biology, there are now only at most fifteen years left when we can continue to work for this goal. Hence the urgency.

I congratulate again the three editors of the Journal and Frank Cass on their invaluable work in keeping the reality of the Holocaust in the forefront of our thoughts.

MY RETURN TO POLAND

BY NAT PIVNIK

Nat and his brother Sam were brought to England by their relatives but soon joined the Primrose Club, later the '45 Aid Society

On Friday 15th March Ben Helfgott 'phoned my brother Sam, asking "How do you fancy going in 10 days' time to Poland with a group of students for a week on the 24th?" Sam said he would think about it and said I may be interested as I had never been back. I 'phoned Ben and volunteered, thinking he would find someone else. Ben said he would let me know after the weekend. On Sunday afternoon I received a call - "This is Stephen. As you and your wife are coming to Poland with us, can I come and see you? I am in Hendon". Within half an hour Stephen arrived. Until then I hadn't realised it was Stephen whom we had met at Beth Shalom.

We discussed the itinerary, which Stephen said he would re-arrange so we would also visit my home town Bedzin. He also told us there were 22 in the group, consisting of university and college students and lecturers. Also including Gina Schwarzman (Hendon) hidden by Poles in Warsaw, whom we met. On Wednesday we received our confirmation. Only then did I grasp I was going to Poland and Bedzin, and what lay ahead of me. I contacted my friend Nissenbaum, who has a family foundation, and arranged to meet him in Warsaw. The day before we left, I was so nervous I felt ill.

On Sunday, with my heart in my mouth, we arrived at Heathrow at the same time as the others. We checked in and were told our flight was delayed. While we waited, we chatted to the group and got to know each other.

On arrival at Warsaw, we were met by our driver and bus, who stayed with us throughout the trip. We went on to the Gromada Hotel. In the evening we drove into town and had our evening Kosher meal at the Menorah Restaurant. While we were there, I made contact with my friend Nissenbaum, and arranged for him to meet us for breakfast in the hotel the following morning to introduce him to everyone.

In the morning after breakfast with my friend, our bus took us into town. We went to the Jewish Cemetery, where we lit candles. Then we visited the site of the Ghetto Memorial and walked along The Lane of Memory, which was opened on the 19th April 1988 - the 45th anniversary of the Ghetto Uprising. This links together with the monument of Ghetto Heroes. In the afternoon, the whole group went to Nissenbaum's office where, with the help of Gina and myself, he told his story of how he had survived. After refreshments, we left and went back to the Ghetto Memorial. We watched the Queen lay her wreath. This also gave us the opportunity and pleasure to see many Jewish people living in Warsaw today.

Day 2 in the morning we left Warsaw for Treblinka. At the first view of this place many of the group were numb as they read the inscriptions on the stones. That people were brought here to be murdered, from the whole of Europe. We saw part of the railway track and stones and lit candles at the memorial site. The area was covered in snow, hiding its grisly secrets. It was the same sky and forest that had seen everything, but they are silent witnesses to the killings of eight hundred and fifty thousand people. In the evening we arrived in Lublin. Later we discussed what was seen so far of our horrors and what effect it had on us.

The next day after an Israeli style breakfast we left the hotel and journeyed on to Majdanek. The mood of the group was even more subdued than the previous day. They asked me many questions

as we went through each barrack, trying to understand what they were seeing. In the afternoon we went to Belzec. Here the group faced the reality that only two people survived from this place. They expected to see something as they trudged knee deep in the snow, and saw nothing. Just an open space and a memorial. No trace of what had happened in this horrible place. In the evening we arrived in Tarnow.

On Thursday we visited the Jewish Museum, where we met our guide. He explained the fate of our people in Tarnow and surrounding areas. I was allowed to hold up the Torah for the group to see. From there we went to the Ghetto area, the site of the Shul, and we went to the Gypsy Museum. Some of the group hadn't realised the fate of the gypsies had been the same as ours. In the cemetery, we saw recent burials. It was explained that these Jewish people had lived in Warsaw after the war and now had returned home. The up-keep of everything is done entirely by Christians. There are no Jewish people in the town. In the afternoon we made our way to Krakow. En route we went to the site of Plaszow. Except for the memorial stones, there is no trace of what had happened there. At the Wanda Hotel in Krakow, we had our discussions. The group were appalled that so much evidence could vanish into thin air, from the majority of the places we had been to so far. I told them not to be so surprised.

Friday morning I was very excited, looking forward to seeing for the very first time after fifty years my home town, Bedzin. Expecting to see many things (miracles). Where we had lived and walked with families and friends. We came into Bedzin and found nothing there as I remembered. My street has altered, many buildings no longer there. My house number in a different place, because of the changes. No trace of the factory where I had worked. We walked to where the shul once stood, near the castle. Now stands a monument. The group were very sad for me. As I explained the whole area were Jewish homes and "steeples". The entire group visited my school. We were warmly received by the principals and were shown around the classrooms. We spoke to the children and I sang with them the morning prayer for the beginning of class. We were all very moved by the reception we received, especially the lecturers in the group. From Bedzin we went on to Auschwitz and Birkenau. Everyone was physically moved. I saw tears in their eyes, especially when four of us lit candles and the Jewish members of the group and Stephen recited Kaddish. Later we returned to Krakow. In the evening we had further discussions. We also went to the Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, for dinner and watched a group playing and singing Jewish songs.

Saturday was a free day. Some of us went to Shul. Following the service we were invited to the Kiddush and spoke about Jewish life in Krakow today. In the afternoon a few of us went to the Wieliczka Salt Mine just outside the town.

Sunday we left Krakow and travelled to Kielce Cemetery, which has been restored. The massacre that had taken place in 1946 was explained. We went on to Gina's town, Radom. She told us about the town and showed us where she had lived and the Ghetto area. We travelled on to Gora Kalwaria where the Gere Rebes are buried. Everything is intact. Unfortunately we were not all able to go inside. Some climbed over the locked gates. In the evening we arrived back in Warsaw. After a rest, we all got together and I was presented with a book "The Jewish Quarter of Cracow 1870-1988". Gina also received a book and my wife Jill was given two cassettes of Jewish songs.

Monday, our last day. We visited Lodz. We went to the gmina. There we saw people receiving matzos for Pesach. An administrator from the gmina showed us around. He also told us that two weeks earlier there had been a wedding for the first time for many years. We went to see the Shul which was destroyed inside by fire. It has been restored by the Lauder and Nissenbaum families. It is beautiful. From there we went to the cemetery. Slowly restoration is being done. Outside the cemetery, Gina's "brother" and family were waiting to meet us. They came on the bus and told us how his parents hid Gina in their home in Warsaw throughout the war. The next day we returned to London.

One day I would like to visit Bedzin again. I was in excellent company, which gave me great encouragement to face my first visit since the war. This is what the group wrote to me.

To Our Dear Friend Nat.

**For your joy and for your sorrow
For your laughter and your pain
Your smiles, your tears, your hopes
And your fears,
Thank you for sharing them all.**

**You have shown us the meaning of courage
And taught us that strength is a virtue.**

**Words cannot express the debt of gratitude
Which we owe to you for being our teacher,
Our companion and most of all - our friend.**

We will never forget you.

**And although 'thank you' can never be enough to express our thanks for all you have done for us,
this comes from all of us with truly heartfelt gratitude.**

To summarise the trip, the feelings of everyone from our group is:-

**We hope that we have learnt much, from what we have seen and heard. We would like to think
that we can now tell others about our experience. We now have the tip of the iceberg. We hope
dearly to learn and understand more. So that we can teach the next generation.**

**Finally I would like to say we bow our heads with 'thanks' to the few who tried, and did succeed
to save some of our people.**

**AFTER DINNER TALK FOR THE 51ST ANNUAL REUNION DINNER
OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE AID SOCIETY' ON SUNDAY 5TH MAY 1996**

DR ELISABETH MAXWELL

**1945. It is a date which no one of my generation will ever forget, for it marked the end of a
gruelling war, the end of a nightmare and liberation from the oppressor.**

**I feel honoured and intensely moved that you have invited me to be with you and address you
today.**

**At the time, I did not share your horrifying experience and it will remain to my eternal regret that
I was unable to alleviate your suffering in any way, that I was de facto a bystander. Even had I
known then what I know now, I cannot be certain what I might have done., It is easy to be
courageous in words now, with no risks attached, but I believe that I would have been moved to
action.**

**Late in the day, as you probably know, I came to learn what had really happened and studied what
was at the origin of such hatred against totally innocent people. I soon discovered that the 'record
of Christian complicity in the death of six million Jews is scarcely debatable'¹, and that 'the Church
was silent when she should have cried out because the blood of the innocent was crying aloud to**

heaven'² and that 'the burden of Christian responsibility for Jewish suffering over the centuries is very great, indeed scandalous'³. From the day of that discovery, there was no turning back for me. I wanted first to make amends, then to educate my fellow Christians, then to fight for the revision of Christian theology, and then to help in my small way to 'Tikum Olam'.

Through this work, it has been my reward to become the friend of a great many survivors and to have heard from their own mouths the truth about their horrific experiences. In addition to these personal encounters, I have also read or listened to several hundred printed or taped memoirs. They never fail to move me and although the basic common denominator is repeated, every single time there is a twist in the story that makes it unique and highly personal. Yet it is this common thread that is most important because the compounding of evidence is the best possible rampart against the falsification of history.

I have always encouraged survivors to tell or write their story or accept to be interviewed, because very soon no one of my generation will be able to say: I know, I was there. And it is only the accumulation of their recorded stories which will stem the flow of obscene denial and revisionism.

Thank you for the effort most of you have made to recall those most cruel years for us and for agreeing to talk to students and teenage schoolchildren. Your impact is invaluable, of that I am totally certain. You never fail to touch a chord that none of us can ever hope to do with such poignancy, although we can share in your suffering and thus gain strength from you to continue the work we do. Today is a day of rejoicing, but deep down in our hearts none of us can help crying for those million and a half children who were so cruelly deprived of the chance to live their lives and prove their worth.

Book upon book is being written on the history of the Shoah, and the very same question remains, 'Why?'. Even Elie Wiesel, in a recent review of Goldhagen's book: Hitler's Willing Executioners, writes: 'I am one of a small minority for whom this tragedy, unlike any other in its breadth and in its depth, will remain for ever unexplained, and inexplicable'⁴. For me, it was Primo Levi who gave the definitive answer to this question in the words of a Kapo: "Hier ist keine Warum", (Here, there is no Why?)

This must not, however, deflect us from trying to understand how such a catastrophe could have taken place in a country acclaimed for its culture and high degree of civilisation. By analysing the events which occurred between 1933 and 1945, we must study the behaviour of the German people who were perpetrators or bystanders in the extermination and torture of six million men, women and children, murdered not for what they had done or not done, but simply because they were Jews. We must discover at what moment in time the ethics of this mass of hitherto civilised people went dreadfully wrong. We must draw some conclusions which will hopefully contribute an early warning system to prevent the re-enactment of such a crime. We may not succeed in preventing similar behaviour all over the world, but at least we must do our best within the circle of possible action and try to contain senseless cruelty from becoming widespread.

Together we must work to fight the resurgence of frightening antisemitism. We will never do enough. But it must be our goal and this can only be achieved through education, which your society is so concerned with as a matter of priority.

As long as I have the strength and health to work for that goal, you will always find me at your side.

¹ Robert McAfee Brown

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer

³ Frederick M. Schweitzer

⁴ 'The Times', London 3rd March 1996

REFLECTION

VICTOR GREENBERG (KUSHY)

Victor was brought to England with the Czech-Hungarian 'boys' from Prague in February 1946 and lived in the Millisle Hostel in Northern Ireland. He is a very active committee member.

Much has been said and written about the FORTY-FIVERS, but very little about our sons and daughter (THE SECOND GENERATION). This occurred to me recently when I was at a 25th anniversary celebration and got into conversation with the two boys of the family. I don't usually generalise but because I know many of the youngsters, I therefore feel that it is justified.

It made me realise how lucky we are that our children grew up and matured with respectability, consideration, responsibility and, in most cases, successfully. I really can not think of one exception among them. In these days of drugs and hooliganism, this is remarkable. Which brings me to the main point: not only are they well behaved, caring and responsible citizens, they also possess a sense of love and, above all, a great respect and admiration for their parents which is extraordinary and it begs the question why?

It does not require a brilliant psychologist to work it out. It undoubtedly relates to our past, in that we picked up the pieces and managed to settle down to a successful life, and for this they respect us. It is, I think, deeper than that. My assumption is that as a result of losing our families, our children are extra precious to us. They therefore appreciate our love and care that we have shown to them through the years of upbringing, the affinity is therefore greater. Some may argue that every child loves and respects their parents, most do, but I have met many who fail in this respect and I maintain that the love, respect and affection between the forty-fivers and second generation is extraordinary. I would accept - although without confirmation - that this relationship may prevail with all holocaust survivors and their children. It is therefore appropriate to conclude that we are very proud of our youngsters and that both parents and the youngsters deserve credit.

OUR WEEKEND IN PRAGUE 23.08.1996

GLORIA AND KRULIK WILDER

Krulik Wilder is the Treasurer of our Society and amongst other things often acts as Master of Ceremonies of our reunions. He was also named by the President of our Society, Sir Martin Gilbert, as the official video photographer of our Society.

After much excitement our small group of twenty friends arrived at Prague Airport, where we were met by our Guide for the weekend. She introduced herself and escorted us to the coach to take us to the Hilton Hotel.

After checking in etc, we all decided that as we had such a short time to make the most of every minute. After consulting with everyone, we decided to walk to Wenceslav Square to the Monument where the now famous Group Photos were taken in August 1945.

Off we all went. The sun was blazing down and it was a glorious day. At the Square we stopped for refreshments and then carried on to the Monument where we had a photo session.

The Boys all seemed to remember this. They then tried to remember where the hostels were, but no luck. We then decided to walk back to the hotel. For some, it was too far and they took a cab. The rest of us walked. One of our group said she had studied the map and knew the way back. We walked and we walked and we walked; cars were hooting and we carried on walking (alongside a motorway). We finally arrived back at the hotel completely exhausted.

After a lovely meal in the hotel (for some of us) we made arrangements for the following morning. A four hour guided city tour by coach sounded great. The coach and guide arrived and said we were going to the famous Prague Castle.

We drove up as far as coaches are allowed and then we walked and walked for a four hours tour of the castle. It was very tiring, to say the least. From the castle some of us managed to get to the Charles Bridge (the longest bridge in Prague) and then to the old town. We collapsed on chairs in an outdoor cafe and had a snack in the sun in the sunshine, too tired to move.

After a short rest we continued onto the river to go for a cruise and rest our legs a bit. It was very pretty. We could see Prague from a different view.

Sunday was the highlight point and the main reason for the weekend. Our return to Theresienstadt.

The Boys were (well I suppose excited) about this trip. One said that he would recognise things when he saw the railway, another would recognise the Square, and so on. It was very distressing in the Old Fort, and Kaddish was recited at a Monument with all the camps names and an eternal flame that wasn't lit.

We then went to the Crematorium where we said Kaddish. It was very sad. We also signed a visitors book there and wrote the reason we were there. We believe that this Crematorium was for us who arrived in Theresienstadt. Thank God the Russians arrived in time and we are here to tell the truth.

On the way back from Theresienstadt some of us went to Jewish Prague and visited the Synagogues. The beauty of them was apparent even with all the tourists milling around.

The Pinkus Synagogue with 80,000 names on the walls was impressive. It was too short a stay, but we crammed as much as we could in the time available to us. A most memorable weekend.

I would like to take the opportunity of thanking our twenty friends who came with us. It was an unforgettable trip, the atmosphere was wonderful, very harmonious and friendly. Just being together like a family without any bickering. It was great.

The people who came:

Gloria & Krulik
Pauline & Harry
Gillian & Irving
Vivian & Michael
Carol & Berek
Blanche & Sam

Sam Pivnik
Gary & Leslie
Helen & Ronnie
Ruby & Moric
Ida & Nick
Leon Rosenberg

**TALK GIVEN AT THE OPENING OF THE MEMORIAL GARDEN
AT BETH SHALOM BY DR ELISABETH MAXWELL,
8TH SEPTEMBER 1996**

I would first like to tell you how very moved I am to have been asked to open this memorial garden.

Memorials can take many forms: we can remember events by building meeting halls for public discussions or official remembrance services. We can remember by creating permanent exhibitions of documents, objects and memorabilia of the period. We can remember by creating educational centres to teach children about an event and its consequences. We can found libraries and collect books on the subject. Or we can remember by creating a quiet place for meditation, be it a monastery or open space where one can sit and contemplate, praying for guidance.

The Smith family's admirable foundation for remembering the Holocaust, here at Beth Shalom, has already provided the first four forms of memorial outlined and these are now completed by the addition of a peaceful garden where we can meditate, remember and decide how to go forward in the future. This garden has also been enhanced by the magnificent sculpture of Naomi Blake, with whom I myself have a special connection: not only do I admire her work and have the privilege of owning some of her sculptures but Naomi comes from Munkach, a town in former Czechoslovakia, now in the Carpathian part of the Ukraine, one of the once famous Jewish communities wiped out by the Nazi hordes. Munkach was well known for its many yeshivas, for its Torah learning and its sanctity. It was also well known for the endless disputes within its community, between those who defended extreme orthodoxy and those more inclined to understand and support modernism in the shape of Zionism. It is also remembered by all of us who for one reason or another are haunted by this part of the lost Jewish world. There are no Jews in Munkach today, or at least none have returned there yet. That thriving community perished almost entirely in Auschwitz.

It is an extraordinary privilege to have with us today someone who not only survived that hell, but whose soul came through it hardened by its fire. Naomi has been given the marvellous gift of moulding her compassion, her unique insight and understanding of the catastrophe which shattered her youth, into images in clay and bronze. In this way, she allows us to approach closer than we otherwise could to perceiving and comprehending such trauma. She has sanctified life and the giving of life by sculpting the universal womb, cradling human figures and these sculptures are often framed with flames reaching for the sky, the very flames which destroyed life and are also the symbol of eternal remembrance. In this sculpture, we can perceive Naomi's mother mourning for all Jewish mothers, but the frame is closed and we are powerfully reminded of the enforced confinement of the victims and of their abandonment, all six million of them.

These powerful symbols encourage us to reflect on what happened in Auschwitz. If we take Auschwitz as the expression of Nazi criminality during the Holocaust, we can say that centuries of European culture flowed into Auschwitz and there the veneer of civilisation was stripped away. We can no longer regard ourselves as civilised and cultured because in our time these things were done at Auschwitz. If we did not believe in redemption, this would be an unbearable thought. It was the Baal Shem Tov who said "Remembrance is the secret of redemption". Here at Beth Shalom, Stephen Smith and his family are working towards saving our souls. You may consider this an exaggeration - believe me it is not - because they are really allowing every one of us to be redeemed by remembering.

In our post Holocaust world, good and evil are very much intertwined and it can often be difficult to do good without giving evil a helping hand. The view of the Jewish theologian Emil Fackenheim comes to mind in that the absolute protest against evil is the moment when one is touched by the force of God - 'the commanding voice of Auschwitz'. Evil is (theoretically) inexplicable; people can only fight it on a practical level. Evil does not demand a theoretical explanation, but a concrete answer. Every human response to the 'Commanding Voice of Auschwitz' will inevitably remain

inadequate or may even fail completely. But with faith, believers can be liberated by taking risks and being prepared to make choices when faced by the complexities of life. This was clearly demonstrated in Auschwitz itself for all the survivors' evidence suggests that amidst absolute evil and unspeakable atrocities, 'many of them remained impressively human'¹. This is also expressed in beautiful literary form in the work of Etty Hillesum, a Jewish girl who wrote during her stay in the Dutch camp of Westerbork²:

And if God can not help me further, I will help God. Mine is not a confidence that I will have no problems in external life, but a trust that even when life is difficult, I can accept this life and find it good. And this is the only thing we can save in our time, and also the only thing that is really important: a piece of You-in-ourselves, God, and may be we can help to dig You up in the scourged hearts of others. Yes, my God, You seem to be unable to change the circumstances much. They simply belong to life. I don't call You aside for it. You can later call me aside for it. And with every beat of my heart it becomes more clear that You can not help us, but that we should help You."

When I contemplate what is being done here, in Beth Shalom, by the Smith family, it seems to me that I am in the presence of people who are clearly committed to good. Through their prayers and deeds, they bear witness to God's goodness, people who force God to soften the hardness of our hearts by helping us to face reality after Auschwitz and make up our own minds how to alter the course of our life, making space in it to care for our neighbour.

My hope is that more and more young and not so young people will come to this lovely place seeking knowledge, help and comfort and will then spread that knowledge, understanding and tolerance. Above all may God bless this venture and grant all those of us who believe in it, guidance in our teaching, courage to stand firm and the wisdom to persevere and ensure that it will weather the passing of time and remain a beacon of enlightenment and faith.

¹ *Spiritual Resilience in Holocaust Literature*, by Joyce Jensen, *Yad Vashem Studies XV*, Jerusalem 1983, p.187

² Cited by Dr Didier Pollefeyt in *Jewish and Christian Theology Confronting the Holocaust: Theological perspectives on the Evil of Auschwitz*, paper given at the Fifth Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas, Utrecht, 19-24 September 1996

"MY ASSOCIATION WITH STEPHEN SMITH"

BY PAUL OPPENHEIMER

Who is Stephen Smith?

Stephen D Smith is the Director of Beth Shalom, the first Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre in Britain, located by the village of Laxton, north of Nottingham. Stephen is a 29-year old theology graduate, who visited Israel as a student and spent much time at Yad Vashem, the memorial to the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust; when he found no equivalent in Britain, he and his younger

brother James, and their parents, decided to build a Holocaust Education Centre at their home in Laxton. The Centre ("Beth Shalom") was opened in September 1995; I described the event in a previous edition of this Journal.

One year later, the Centre has proved a major success; not only in terms of visitors, but also in terms of activities and achievements. It has become a focus for study and education, as well as a place for commemoration and reflection. More than 20,000 children have visited the Centre or seen one of its travelling exhibitions "Another Time, Another Place".

Stephen Smith and his remarkable family are not Jewish.

And who is Paul Oppenheimer?

Paul Oppenheimer came to England in 1945 when he was just 17 years old. He had survived two years in Westerbork and Bergen-Belsen, together with his younger brother Rudi and sister Eve. Both their parents died in Bergen-Belsen and their four grandparents were killed in Sobibor.

Paul was invited to join the '45 Aid Society, although his wartime experiences are very different from those of the majority of other members. His memoirs have recently been published by Beth Shalom in a book called "From Belsen to Buckingham Palace".

And what is my association with Stephen Smith?

I first met Stephen Smith in November 1994, when I presented my annual "Holocaust Survivor" talk to a group of students at Wolverhampton University, and Stephen was the visiting lecturer. Afterwards, he gave me his namecard: "Stephen D Smith, Director of Beth Shalom". "What's this?" I said. "Never heard of it". "Wait till next year" answered Stephen, and I thought no more about it.

In July 1995, the Spiro Institute invited me to talk to students at the Elliot Durham School in Nottingham; this was only 20 miles from Laxton, so I went to visit Beth Shalom for the first time. It was not finished. In fact it was nowhere near finished; there was only a shell, walls were being plastered, concrete mixers were in action, electric cables were being laid; none of the exhibition panels were mounted, but I could see what was coming. It was a big surprise; quite amazing and most impressive.

"It will all be finished in two months' time for the official opening in September" said Stephen -- and it was.

I soon discovered that Stephen always accomplishes all his tasks, usually at the very last minute, working long hours with a dedicated team of supporters, with excellent communications and numerous contacts everywhere, preparing lectures, composing poems and thinking-up new ideas as he goes along.

As an example, just one week before the opening ceremony, Stephen came round to video my story; one week later, the video had been integrated within the stories of several other survivors and divided into sections illustrating "before the war", "ghettos", "transports", "camp life", etc., as illustrated in the permanent exhibition at Beth Shalom.

My association with Stephen Smith has blossomed since the opening of Beth Shalom; our visits to schools have been the core of my activities, but we have collaborated on other projects: notably, the publication of my memoirs, where Stephen provided the opportunity for me to write the second book in his series of "Witness Collection" paperbacks; last month Stephen addressed an international conference on Holocaust education at Yad Vashem, using video interviews of various survivors, including myself. My school visits with Stephen started slowly; Derby in December, Southampton in February, the Isle of Wight in March, Coventry in April, Walsall in May, Hampshire

in June; on several occasions we stayed overnight and I gave my talk two or three times, to different student groups or in different schools.

In between, I also talked in other schools for the Spiro Institute and for the Anne Frank Exhibition, in Warwick and Wolverhampton University, and to Rotary clubs and other congregations.

At that time, Stephen worked primarily with Victoria Ancona-Vincent, a wonderful lady who had survived Auschwitz and many other terrible experiences, but who had never talked about the Holocaust until Stephen met her last year in Nottingham, only twenty miles from Beth Shalom. Her story "Beyond Imagination" is told in the first of Stephen's books, published on the occasion of the opening of Beth Shalom; Victoria became a regular speaker and travelled with Stephen in her wheelchair to an amazing hundred assignments in one year. Unfortunately, Victoria died in August; but her last year was undoubtedly the most pleasant and rewarding of her sad life.

I live more than eighty miles from Beth Shalom, but I am now one of the nearest camp survivors, who is sufficiently mobile to drive around the country. Just this month, I have been to Gainsborough, to Beth Shalom twice, and to Melton Mowbray.

At the Queen Elizabeth School in Gainsborough, Stephen talked for twenty minutes on the rise of the Nazis in Germany and the origins of the Holocaust; then the eighty students divided into two groups; one group studied the Beth Shalom travelling exhibition, the other group watched videos of survivor testimonies; after 30 minutes, the groups changed places; after another thirty minutes, coffee break; then I presented my story to the combined groups for forty-five minutes, followed by fifteen minutes of questions. After lunch, we repeated the entire performance in the afternoon.

At Beth Shalom, there is usually an introductory talk by Stephen (or James or Mrs Smith) followed by a one hour tour of the permanent exhibition downstairs; a visit to the gardens and the library, lunch, and then the survivor talk, followed by questions and a final summing-up by Stephen.

At the King Edward VII School in Melton Mowbray, I should have addressed 500 children at assembly, but I could not get there early enough; instead, I gave my talk at 10.30, 12.00 and 2.15, to 50 boys and girls aged 14-15 each time.

I do not mind giving the talk several times in one day, although it tends to detract from the enthusiasm; I find it difficult to stimulate the emotion and excitement during such repeat performances. I have no problem addressing large numbers, even two hundred and fifty children or more. And I can vary the length of my talk from 10/15 minutes to one hour and more, supplemented by my video from Belsen, if appropriate.

The questions are really the best part of the day; they show whether the students have been listening and understood any of it. Most of the questions are along similar lines; Do you hate the Germans? Has your religion been affected by the Holocaust? Did you ever try to escape? What was your worse/best moment/experience during the war? Have you been back to Belsen; what was it like? Do you think the camps should be preserved/destroyed?

But occasionally there is a totally new question; How did you remember all this? Would you rather not have been born a Jew? I find that the younger children ask most questions; they seem to be less inhibited, perhaps more inquisitive, than the 14-15-16 year olds, who ask far fewer questions.

After a brief summary of my experiences to the entire Foxford School in Coventry at morning assembly, a little 10-year old met me at lunchtime: "Sir, did your brother and sister survive?" "Yes" I said, "they are both alive today". "Oh, I am glad" said the little boy, visibly relieved. For me, incidents like that make it all worthwhile.

Some of the schools are extremely well prepared; the Year 9 students from the Nottingham High School who visited Beth Shalom recently, were given prepared workbooks with questions to

answer while walking through the exhibition. For example, on the "Final Solution": Who else, apart from the Jews, were sent to the camps? What types of "solutions" did the Nazis use to deal with their "enemies"? Why do you think that all the death camps were set up in Poland? There were 29 such questions, followed by: Write a summary of the talk you listened to given by the survivor. What is your reaction to the talk?

Beth Shalom has concentrated on the neighbouring schools within 50/100 miles radius, although Stephen has found great interest within other areas, for example, Hampshire. It depends very much on people within the County Education Department or in individual schools; if there is someone really interested, then they will make the effort to contact Beth Shalom.

But there are hundreds of other schools all over Britain which have done nothing about the study of the Holocaust. Stephen believes that 60% of schoolchildren in this country have never heard of the Holocaust. Unfortunately, most of the teachers and educators are probably not aware of Beth Shalom (and other Holocaust educational facilities) and they have not made the effort to find out.

THE ONGOING DISPUTES OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE IN THE CAMPS

BY LIPA TEPPER

Lipa came to England with the Windermere group and later lived in the Alton hostel. He is an active member of the committee and a successful businessman.

There seems to have been for some time now an ongoing argument, and it would seem that it divides strictly on orthodox lines, i.e., the people who believe that there was some kind of religious observance in the camps are religious people whereas the people who dispute that would seem to be the irreligious people. I am particularly fortunate in that respect in that I have been on both sides of the fence, and I feel it is my duty to make a statement regarding this situation.

First all, I wish to point out that I am the product of an intensely religious background. Equally, I have been on the other side of the fence in that I have been at one stage of my life, soon after I came to England soon after the war, irreligious, although at this particular moment I am an observant Jew. It would seem that the religious people will attribute some religious observance to Jewish people in the concentration camps, i.e., the exchanging of bread for wheat, grinding the wheat and making Matzhas. I've heard all these things and I have heard them for a number of years. I wish to point out as follows:

I was interned with 120 people from my community. The people I was interned with were intensely religious, they were strictly orthodox, such people as you would not find in this country today. In point of fact, they lived before the war for their religion, their lives were bound up in such a way that they could never ever transgress on anything which would offend their religious belief.

I lived throughout the war and I was liberated with a person called Solomon Turner. He came from my town and we were together throughout our entire incarceration. Before the war, he being a lot older than me, he was a married man and intensely religious. He had a beard and all the trappings of an intensely religious person. It would appear that although we were in some minor camps, i.e., even in camps which were not as renowned as Auschwitz and Birkenau, religious observance, with all the best will in the world, was completely out of the question. Here I must state categorically that none of the camps that I was in ever had anybody practising religious observance of any sort. This can be corroborated by most of my friends with whom I came to this country. We were far too preoccupied with survival, and survival only.

There was not a case of people exchanging their bread for wheat and baking Matzhas, there was just a case of getting up in the morning, going to work and surviving the day to be able to get up for work the next day.

I have a particular recollection of Yom Kippur. Somebody told me jokingly it was Yom Kippur on that day in 1942. I was in the notorious Jerozolimska camp in Plaszow. We marched out to work as we did the day before and the day after. We did not, (REPEAT: NOT), on that day either pray, fast or do anything that was religious and I would like to assure anybody who reads this that the people I was with, to them their religion as was apparent to me before the war was uppermost in their minds AT ALL TIMES. They would have dearly loved to pray or to observe the festivals, but under the circumstances, this was impossible.

I wish to further assure anybody reading this that I did not at any time see anybody either exchanging his bread for wheat or grinding that wheat to make Matzhas. Those who managed to exchange their meagre ration of bread did so to make soup which contained more calories than the soup that we obtained from the authorities. I wish to point out that even today when I am on a flight to or from Israel, if I see a group of men stand and join together in a Minyan for either morning or evening prayers, I am the first to join in. I also wish to acknowledge the following fact if I had been told at any time that anybody was baking Matzhas or exchanging bread for wheat I would have participated out of respect and habit. I did, during the war, still wish to follow my religion and would have followed. I would have done the things that people were doing had I known that anybody was doing it. I did not lose my faith in the Concentration camps.

I can understand why religious people will persist in saying things like that, because obviously they want to point out that even at the worst times the Jewish people still believed. I too believed, but like them we were unable to follow our religion. I feel that by persisting to claim that they followed their religion in the camps, they do injustice to the memory to the countless numbers of strict members of the orthodox Jewish fraternity.

It is important to understand that in spite of the inhumane conditions which we were subjected to, most of us did not lose our faith in G-D. That by itself is testimony to our upbringing and our heritage. However, in order to survive, we could not, nor were we in a state to observe any religious observances.

A GLIMPSE OF MY PAST SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF A BBC DOCUMENTARY

ANITA LASKER WALLFISCH

Anita was deported from her home town Breslau - now Wroclaw - to Auschwitz where, as an inmate, she played in the Camp Orchestra. Later she was sent to 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, in which she still plays the cello. She has recently written a book, which was widely acclaimed, *Inherit The Truth 1939-1945*.

The BBC are making a documentary and asked me to participate. It meant filming extracts of my present life as well as a trip back to my former life. Had I known how incredibly tedious this filming business is, I might have thought twice before accepting this assignment. However, I did accept for the simple reason that since there seems to be considerable revival of interest in the events that took place half a century ago and in the people who survived the genocide of Jews and other 'undesirables' it is not for me to stand in the way of this generation who seem to be able to ask the questions which should have been addressed long ago. I will tell you a little about it.

I took my daughter Maya with me. She expressed long ago a wish to go and see where her parents came from as well as the various places of horror where her mother had been. Anyway I thought that it would be silly to go back to these places and hold a soliloquy. The BBC readily agreed and she was included in the venture.

We flew to Berlin on Sunday morning. I did not see the reason for going there, because Berlin does not really figure very prominently in my life. However, the fact that I was there on the 9th November 1938 (Kristallnacht) seemed important. I still have friends in Berlin, and they told me that in Germany they are trying to replace the word 'Kristallnacht' with 'First Pogrom'. The expression 'Kristallnacht' was after all coined in Germany. It sounds too much like 'clinking glass', more relating to some festivity rather than the first serious attempt to test the reactions of their citizens to what was in reality the first overt and public pogrom. I am glad that the idea of changing this expression comes from Germans.

The filming in Berlin consisted of standing for hours in front of a window of the KDW (Kaufhaus des Westens). The 'Harrods' of Berlin. I hope it makes interesting viewing!

On Monday we boarded a train to Breslau/Wroclaw. The journey, unbelievably, still takes some 3½ hours. Of course there was the Polish frontier in Frankfurt an der Oder. We were being filmed having a meal in the dining car. It was quite amusing because the dining car attendant had to become an actor and serve us our meal some 5 times in a row until the cameraman was satisfied. Needless to add that had the meal been edible at the first serving, it was certainly no longer so by the end of the 'performance'. We arrived at the Hauptbahnhof in Breslau. The very place where I had been arrested 54 years earlier by the Gestapo. My daughter suddenly started to cry. How little one knows about the emotions of people as close to one as one's own daughter. Breslau is the place where her mother and father had lived and it obviously filled a missing link for her. It is my third visit and it has ceased to have any meaning to me. Breslau is now Wroclaw and the language is Polish. 85% of the town has been destroyed, not by the 'enemy' but by a crazed Gauleiter by the name of Hanke, who followed Hitler's edict to the letter and defended the town

to the last man, notwithstanding that the Russians stood practically at the doorstep. It was turned into a 'fortress' and by the time the Russians went in there was not much of it left.

However, some of it is recognisable. The station is practically exactly as it was then and so is 'Wertheim', now called 'Centrum'. It used to be an elegant department store. When I was there for the first time in 1976 only the outside was recognisable. Inside were trestle tables and long queues at one of them where toilet paper was for sale! Now it has acquired a degree of western affluence again.

We stayed at the Monopol Hotel. That too is still as it was before the war. Grey and dirty on the outside, refurbished but very old-fashioned on the inside. Jews were of course 'unerwünscht' when I lived there. It is in the centre of the town and one has a good view of the prison. I walked about with Maya and showed her the empty plot where the Synagogue stood before it was destroyed on the 9th November. It is just an empty plot now and not even a plaque to say that it ever existed. We lived quite near there at the end of our time in that town. That house no longer stands.

The next filming assignment was at the Botanical Gardens.

The beauty of this place is timeless. It is so quiet and peaceful, it could be anywhere in the world. We are near the Dom which is on an island and much of this part of Breslau must have been rebuilt. The reason for filming there was that the producer has some amazing footage taken by an amateur photographer before the war, and they were trying to get matching shots.

I was driven back to the Monopol where I had an appointment with Professor Jonca. He is an absolutely amazing man. Not Jewish, speaks fluent German and is passionately involved with the study of the deportation of Jews from Breslau and what was Silesia. His knowledge on this subject is simply staggering. It is not just a matter of statistics to him. He has his soul involved. He drives a tiny car at breakneck speed. We rejoined the film crew at the Dom Insel, took shots of what was the Kaiser Brücke and that was the end of that day.

Maya and I had a meal in the 'Ratskeller'. This is in the cellar of the old Town Hall which has been restored to its old beauty. Juden are no longer 'unerwünscht' there!

The next morning we filmed at the railway station. The idea was to take shots at a platform with Maya and me standing there and a train moving out. This took several hours!

The smell at this station is absolutely dreadful. There are endless little food stalls there now and everybody seems to serve cabbage. We looked at the list of departing trains. Every name there has a sinister meaning. Kielce...Lublin... I can not rid myself of the feeling that I am dreaming and that I shall wake up any minute.

We tried to have a sandwich at a restaurant on the former Tauentzien Platz. Huge problem. They don't seem to understand the word: quick. How long does it take to make a sandwich? After half an hour we got up to leave just as the waitress brought the most elaborately decorated plate with cheese and tomatoes. Very beautiful but not what we had ordered and we had run out of time. All rather embarrassing, but we had our next port of call to get to: the prison. I must say that I take my hat off to Teresa (the director of this documentary).

It could not have been easy to arrange for a TV crew to get inside a Polish prison. It stands there in its former glory in the middle of the town. When it was built it must have been just outside it. I was getting somewhat irritated by the constant questions: '... was it like that when you were here last time? was it the main gate or the side gate when you entered the prison?' The simple answer is that when I was here last time, namely, 54 years ago, I did not look around me in order to take in small details just in case I should come here with a TV team. My mind was on other things! I had to repeat ringing the bell (at the side gate) and the door being opened some 5 times, until the cameraman was satisfied.

I remember the number of my cell: 116. The cells have been renumbered but we were escorted to approximately the correct one, the one with a view of the clock when craning one's neck. (That clock has stopped working by the way). I must be pretty unique with my return to the prison in which I had been an inmate once upon a time. Everybody was worried about me. They need not have been. The whole adventure had a feeling of unreality. It was more like a dream and I was the onlooker.

I was struck by the size of the place. I remembered it much bigger. The echo and the general noises were the same though. We climbed the stairs which I had walked on so many times and entered a cell.

The three present inmates had been taken to the adjacent cell while we were filing. (They must have stood there like sardines). Maya just sighed and sighed when she saw the cell. I reminded her that this was luxury compared to what was to follow. They have a television set now and a real lavatory in the corner, even a little curtain in front of it. We just had the famous 'Kübel'. A shit bucket with lid, to put it bluntly. But again I was struck by the minuteness of this cell. How could we have fitted 4 people into it? Now there are three, but they have one double bunk and one single bed, and that leaves hardly any floorspace. We had just one bed and mattresses on the floor which were stacked away during the day.

I did not feel like waiting around till they finished filming whatever they were filming, which did not involve me, and asked politely to please be escorted out of this place.

I noticed ashtrays attached to the bannisters and enjoyed lighting a cigarette - strictly unthinkable in my day! - I also appreciated walking out into the street this time - not into a black Maria, like last time!

After this little episode we tried to find the place where we had lived happily for many years. I knew from previous visits that instead of a big house, there is just a plot of wasteland there now, although it is in walking distance from the centre of town. I had great difficulties in locating it. The once very elegant Kaiser-Wilhelm Strasse (later Strasse der SA) is hardly recognisable. By now we had two hire cars with walkie talkie. Very useful on this search for my former home. I thought that I would recognise it by the street that ran at an oblique angle from the 'Strasse der SA'. I had not taken into account that this side street no longer exists. A second hand car repair shop - or rather hut - replaces a once wide street. A quick call to Professor Jonca at the University put us right. He knows all the former names of these streets. We had to walk up and down past the empty spot and be filmed. I was 'off duty' in the evening and Professor Jonca drove me to the paper factory where I had stuck so many labels around toilet rolls. It was pouring with rain now. I only vaguely recognised the place.

We were planning to leave Wroclaw at 2pm and drive to Krakow. Maya and I took a taxi and spent the morning driving around and visiting such places as the school I went to and the house in Kastanien Allee where we lived when I was very small. It was not destroyed. We tried to find the street where Peter (my late husband) had lived at one time. Stein Strasse. There are only two houses left in that street.

After lunch we drove out of Breslau. It is some 200 km to Krakow, but one has to take into account that the roads in Poland are not exactly motorways or even dual carriageways. The standard of driving is unspeakable and it is miraculous that anybody survives at all. I will skip a description of the 'amenities' we found on the way. We arrived in Krakow very late.

The hotel seemed first class. Gold taps in the bathroom!!!

I called Helena and asked her to come to the hotel next morning when we would go to Auschwitz/Birkenau together. Helena was with me in the Orchestra in Birkenau. She is about 10 years older than I, not Jewish, played the violin. We had got in touch with each other some years ago and now correspond regularly. In the camp we never spoke to each other. This was of course

partly due to the absence of a common language. But it is a fact there was hardly any communication between the Jewish and Polish members of the orchestra. But that is another story. I took a lot of presents for Helena and she arrived with flowers and peaches at the hotel. Very touching, because she is anything but well off. We still have some difficulties in speaking to each other. She speaks a little English and has a dictionary with her. The film crew had left for Auschwitz early in the morning and we took a taxi and met up with them at lunch time. To arrive in Auschwitz nowadays is totally unreal. There is a big car park, full of coaches for the sightseeing public. It made me think of Madam Tussauds. But what can you do. It is good that people are coming, only I felt that I should not be here any more. Helena pointed out the place where the supermarket had been planned. Thank God that plan was abandoned. We had a quick lunch at the restaurant, which is the first thing you see when you arrive there. (Yes, things have changed somewhat), and drove the 3 km to Birkenau. We were rigged up with microphones and walked into this vast space which must be the biggest cemetery in the world without graves. The ramp is there as it always has been, with the railway track ending at the gas chambers and the crematoriums. They have, of course, been blown up by the Germans prior to the arrival of the Russians, but they were built so well that they are really still there, but in the shape of heaps of debris. One of them has the steps leading down to the so-called bath - still intact. I did not notice the camera following me at every step. There is not much you can say when you walk there. All the barracks that were made of wood have fallen down and one can only see the outlines. Some of the stone buildings are still there. One can get a vague idea of what it was like to battle one's way in to the latrines and see the 'kojen' which were the sleeping 'facilities'. On second thoughts, one cannot really get any idea. The place is empty and still. There are not too many sightseers here, because there is little to see. You have to use your imagination and unless you have lived here, it is not imaginable what it was like. We needed Helena, (whose mother died here a few weeks after arrival) to point out a number of places, like Block 25. That was where the people who had been selected for the Gas Chamber spent their last hours. She also knew exactly which of the ruins was our music block. It took hours to film. I shall never understand why all this takes so long. I walked round the music block and showed to Maya where we slept and where we played and where Alma's corner was. It was very tiring standing around for hours on end.

Finally we drove back to Krakow and resumed the next day.

Back in Birkenau they had hired a crane - can you believe it - to get a shot from high up so that one can appreciate the vast size of the place.

Maya and I were filmed walking through the by now well-known entrance gate to the Camp along the rails that led to the ramp and the gas chambers. At a given moment we had to turn and walk back along the Lagerstrasse. This was repeated several times until we got it right.

I am glad I am not a film actress.

It started to pour with rain. A really torrential downpour, thunder and lightening. I was freezing without a coat, but thought that this was fitting in this place. We returned to Auschwitz 1 while filming had to be suspended. With the help of the 'grip' who was Polish, I managed to get a photocopy of my name and number as it was registered on my arrival there in 1943. Maya and I were not needed for filming at the Museum in Auschwitz, so we went from block to block and looked at the outrageous exhibits there. The mountains of shoes, combs, toothbrushes, hair, artificial limbs and little suitcases.

The most touching to me was one which gave the name of its owner and in brackets 'orphan'. There is a special glass case with children's clothes.... What does David Irving and his ilk have to say when they see this. There is a very dignified Jewish Block there. We went in and lit Jahrzeit candles that were standing around an illuminated glass case. I know that its presence gave rise to a lot of arguments. I don't feel that it is out of place. Thousands of non-Jews were murdered there as well. Auschwitz is the last place where there should be arguments about 'ownership'. Not only human beings found their end there. Civilisation itself was murdered.

We returned to Krakow by taxi and are lucky to be able to tell the tale. The potholes in the road made the water splash right over the top of the car and the driver went more often than not on the wrong side of the road trying to avoid them. Back in the hotel we had a memorable example of Polish 'room service'. Maya had ordered a cheese sandwich and a pot of tea. She was told that they did not have sandwiches, only bread and cheese and butter! She said that that would do. They did not have 'pots of tea', so she ordered three 'cups' of tea. An hour or so later a huge jug of hot water was brought to the room. No tea bags. Eventually, we achieved our aim to have a cup of tea and a 'sandwich'.

The crew invited us out for supper in the evening. We went to a very nice and posh restaurant and had a really good evening. We were slowly returning from another world. I doubt that anybody of these very pleasant and normal people will ever forget this trip.

The next morning, the day of our departure, Maya and I took a taxi to the Kazimierz district, the erstwhile Jewish quarter. (Schindler's List was filmed there). True to form the taxi driver charged us 3X more than he should have done. I thought that 20 zloty was rather excessive, but how does one defend oneself in Polish! We went to the old Synagogue. It no longer functions as such, but is a museum now. It is extremely beautiful and contains a surprising number of 'artifacts'. I wonder where they had been hidden. We went back to the hotel and parted company. Maya went to have a look round the beautiful big square of Krakow and bought some wooden toys for Abraham. I spent the rest of the morning with Helena and another of my ex-colleagues from those days at Helena's very modest tiny flat. She had baked the most marvellous plum cake and although I was not a bit hungry, I could not possibly refuse it. We made up for a lot of time when we did not communicate with each other. It was important for all three of us.

I hope the film will be worth the effort that was put into it.

P.S. The documentary has now been shown. I know I am not alone in feeling that whatever well-meaning people are attempting to do on this subject, only the very surface can be skimmed. A lot of time and effort is wasted on footage that may be important from the point of view of 'film making', but in my opinion detract from the subject matter.

A RECOLLECTION OF A VISIT TO AUSCHWITZ

TWO WORKING DAYS AT IG FARBEN IN AUSCHWITZ

RUDI KENNEDY

Rudi was born in Breslau, now Wroclaw, and was brought to England by his relatives soon after the war, having missed coming with the Southampton group. He used to frequent the Primrose Club but it was only in recent years that he joined our Society.

In January 1995 I, together with two of my children, Steve and Nicky, went back to Auschwitz. Fifty years earlier to the day, I had left on the long march to Gleiwitz and then was transported in an open railway truck in the middle of the winter. The destination was Dora, the secret underground factory run by Werner von Braun and his gang of engineers building the V1's and V2's.

When we left Gleiwitz some had to stand because of lack of room. At every major stop we threw out the dead ones. Gradually we had more and more room. The journey was to last more than a week and a large number died of the freezing cold, hunger and disease. The remainder like myself were in a bad way on our arrival. By my estimate, more than half had perished.

Two nice days at Buna

As I stood in the assembly square (Appellplatz) in the main Auschwitz camp, the temperature was about -10°C. We were wearing warm clothes and boots, but we were feeling the biting cold Polish winter. It all came back to me. I vividly and fearfully remembered having to stand in the assembly square of the work camp we called Buna, a few times for many hours in the evening after a long day of hard labour and a march back from the work place. We stood in the bitter cold in our thin striped, dirty, ill-fitting jackets and trousers; some of us had a loose hanging garment of thicker material, the so-called overcoat. But no shirts or underwear, rags instead of socks, wooden clogs and some bits of cloth round our hands, no gloves. Exhausted, ready to drop, a pain of hunger, no one can begin to imagine who has not been there, gnawing at your inside, blocking out all rational thought. If you fell down, and many did, you were kicked until you quickly got up again. If you did not or could not, your injuries from repeated kicks, were so great that you were left for dead in the square or you were pronounced unfit to work for IG Farben, and your time amongst the living was up. Both ways you ended up in the crematorium. As time went on standing in strict formation for punishment or repeated counting, you never knew why, you eventually urinated and defecated in your trousers, which tried to freeze on your rags which were your socks, as the mess descended down your legs.

Eventually, we were allowed to disperse and we dragged ourselves to our block to receive some thin soup, which had turned cold, and a small piece of bread. Our German Capos and Blockältesten, all criminals, had warmer clothes and showed little sympathy for our miserable condition. I and others were first told to clean up. The wash rooms and latrines were some distance away and we returned, even more weary, now wearing wet clothes. Of course most of the soup had gone and there was no longer any bread. The ordeal was far from over, now you had to sleep in the wet clothes which was not too popular, when occasionally you had to share the narrow bunk bed and blanket with someone else.

Your clothes were still wet in the morning, when we marched to work in the icy weather, after a hearty breakfast of one piece of bread, a tiny piece of margarine and half a bowl of brown liquid. Leaving our clothes to dry near the heating coils was not allowed and not an option as you would never see them again. More beatings and no food for the day was the minimum punishment if you lost them. There was the option of the electric fence, if you had enough and many took this way out every night. What made me hang on? Only another 790 other but equally horrific days to survive Rudi, think of the boy and girl in the boat in the "Stadtgraben" (moat), just think of that!

On another fine day, about five days after arrival from Breslau, I was 15 years old and completely confused and terrified. We were building a road outside the IG Farben plant, beyond my weak physique, watched by Auschwitz SS guards. One quite young guard, suddenly took my cap with the end of his rifle and threw it outside the guarded perimeter. I then was told to get my cap. Someone whispered "Don't go, the bastards will shoot you". At this moment an old looking Jew, probably not more than 25 years old, ill and tired of living in this hell, slowly dragged himself across and past the guarded perimeter and then was shot "trying to escape". I retrieved my cap quickly whilst the guards argued whose turn it was to shoot. Hang in there Rudi (would I if I had known only 789 more adventurous days to go!)

I only recently learned that these guards then received 3 days extra leave. Guards used that trick so they could visit their girlfriend! Can one fathom such depravity. Could they *qualify* to be of the human race? I think not. *One weekend of sex for the price of somebody's life!*

During our visit to Auschwitz we found the papers about my father's day of murder in the documentation centre. This was quite a shock for me and my children. It made their grandfather

real for them and at the same time unbearably sad. He had lasted six weeks, then he had dysentery and was no longer of any use to IG Farben and the death sentence was carried out. Just before, he had managed to get me into the 'Electrical Working Party' (Elektrische Kommando Nr. 9). This was indoors and the break I needed to have a chance to survive a little longer. I was also lucky, as it was run by the only Jewish Kapo at that time. An Austrian criminal found in a jail, as tough as old boots but you were nearly safe, as long as he liked you.

That evening in the hotel, I thought about our day in Auschwitz. None of us could talk very much. I could not understand how I had survived and why me? There were so many better and more educated and articulate comrades, who should have survived and who would have done so many things for a better world. My life in the paradise we call England passed in front of me. Yes, I had put my life together and had a family of my own now and many friends, but I had not done anything about the injustices of the past. I now realised that I owed it to the memory of my vanished family and all the many who did not make it, so that these unbelievable atrocities are not forgotten.

LIVING WITH YOU

FROM THE SPOUSE OF A '45ER

SARA WAKSZTOK

Sara is the wife of Menachem who came to England with the Windermere group. He lived in Stamford Hill and Finchley Road hostels and went to fight for the Israel War of Independence. He lives in Ashkelon where he runs a very successful Travel Agency.

From countryside and town, from families whole
From the Holy Land, all flowering and fresh,
We met you - so young and confident
Yet burdened with a terrible pain -
nevertheless spreading cheer as you went.

It was hard to comprehend what lay hidden in your
innermost thoughts,
The loneliness and the inexplicable horror,
But in fact of it all, you have survived and even turned grey,
And still speak of the "old girls and boys" of that bygone day.

You crisscrossed the world -
here, there and across the seas,
Taking part in industry, crafts and trade,
But always with chasms of the past entwined
with the hopes of the day.

In the places you call home, every effort was made,
To live a life, serene, honourable and staid,
And those who chose to settle in the holy soil,
Took part in the rebuilding, exerting effort, sweat and toil.

The pain in your heart hasn't twisted your souls,
Rather served as a trigger to broach a new life,
From the ashes and despair you vanquished the past,
Set up a memorial and brought forth a full cast.

Living by your side, we ask and attend,
To plumb the depths and try to answer -
How was it possible? How can we comprehend?
And how shall we relate all these tales of the past?

The meaning of death, destruction and loss,
To us they command even further effort,
The new generation - a witness of your persistence,
The amity and goodwill - an answer to the dread.

In spite of the problems, happiness abounds
As we look around, how the family has grown!
Our gratitude to those who brought all of this forth,
In the ties of togetherness joy can be found.

May G-d grant us many more gatherings
In health and in peace to all the '45!

THEY SAID

MICHAEL ETKIND

Michael came to England with the
Windermere group and lived in the Cardros
hostel in Scotland. He is called the poet of
our society.

They said
We died like cattle
And like sheep
Like flies like vermin
And like dogs

They lied

We died like women
Children men
We suffered pain we prayed
We died with question marks
On our lips

Those questions which
Make people different
From all other beasts

Those questions which
Survived the flesh
The passing time

Those questions which
Refuse to die.

MY SCHTEL REVISITED

SAM FREIMAN (DUNDELA)

Sam came to England with the Windermere group and later lived in the Ascot hostel. He went to fight for the Israeli War of Independence.

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 Registration Office does not have any Jewish births registered, I discovered. I decided to try my old school. The Director and staff were very helpful and they searched out 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 hallway 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 Sonja, who cannot 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 at the time. However, we are trying to put that right in a small way now. I am enclosing a copy of the letter which I sent to the school enclosed in a Christmas card.

The Director of Staff
Szkola Podstawowa Jeziorno

Thank you all very much for the great kindness shown to me when I recently visited your school this September when you found my old school reports and even that of my little sister. I would be grateful if you could still find the reports of my brother, Chaim Aron Frajman, born 13 September 1928.

As I left the school I saw that there was a display teaching the children about the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of our little town. It was very good and informative, but it omitted to mention the 300 Jewish families who were driven out of their homes by the invaders and murdered, or that the ten per cent of children from this school who were Jewish, one morning were all missing! Perhaps this could be included in future history lessons?

Thank you again and Happy Christmas and New Year.

The following two songs have been written and composed by Sam Freiman.

SONG OF HOLOCAUST

Ain moul is giveisen a milchumale
vee mengait is a noit
ainmoul is giveisen a milchumale
is cost shoin finf fund a fund broit.

Men est nisht men trinkt nisht
mishluft nisht ba nacht tzuraleh
is du un ashir reboine shelolom
vus hosto gemacht. Shik shoin
tzu uns der yeshie.

Zei hoben uns getriben fin unzer
haim ge sheimt tzu brochen
unzer gloibung. Reboine Shelolom
vus zukste tzu deim shick shoin
tzu uns der yeshie.

Zei hoben unz geshlugen
gesamt und gebrent dus is
ungegangen un an end
Reboine Shelolom du kukst zich
tzi tzu dem und shikst nisht
tzu uns de yeshie.

SONG OF A HERO

Shlomo Ben Josef is a vek gefuren
noch Eretz Israel vee a held
Osgevaikt sine muters treren
er is grait tzu boen a Yiddish Land.

Shlomo Ben Josef is noch
Eretz Israel ongekomen in dort
ferliebt in zeine heilig Land
Sonim zenen ungefallen und gevolt
a rostreiben fon unzeer Land
noch Jerushalaim er is gegangen dort
tzu kemfen for zein heiling Land
nor a kohl ot eim getroffen
und er is gefallen vee a held.

Of zeine matzelve is un geshriben mit
goldine oisies ois gekritz as do
liegt Shlomo Ben Josef vus is
gevesen a voiler mensch.

LAUNCH OF THE BOOK "THE BOYS" TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

The publication of The Boys - Triumph over Adversity was a momentous event for our members. The launch of the book on Wednesday 9th October at the Great Hall in King's College was extremely well attended and supported by the second generation as well as many of our friends. Rachel and Chaim Liss, Nechema and Menachem Silberstein, Sarah and Menachem Waksztok came specially from Israel for this event, as did Phyllis and Maurice Vegh from New York. It was a very moving and unforgettable occasion.

The book was widely and favourably reviewed and many articles were written about the Boys in various newspapers. Below are a few extracts from some of the reviews.

"This is a book about coming out of hell, about great evil, about the triumph of the human spirit and about great goodness on the part of those who helped. One is left with hope and admiration."

Julia Neuberger - The Times

"In collating their stories, Martin Gilbert has created an entirely new archive of previously unrecorded Holocaust recollections. The results combine to create one of the most remarkable testaments of human hope and endurance, recovery, companionship and generosity of spirit you could ever read. It is their eloquent collective voice that gives this book its remarkable force.... Most moving of all though is their sense of modesty, they are - like Primo Levi - witnesses, just witnesses, and never presume to judge."

Ruth Cowen - Ham & High

"Martin Gilbert's book is both moving and reassuring and his subtitle, Triumph over Adversity, sums it up nicely.... Gilbert, perhaps wisely, avoids any long excursions into sociology or psychopathology and lets his story speak for itself, but if one needs proof that one can suffer every handicap and adversity without declining into parasitism or depravity, it is to be found in the pages of this remarkable."

Chaim Bermant - The Scotsman

"It is customary these days to think that those who have been on the receiving end of violence as young people can be forgiven for being violent in later life. Here of all places - that is not the case.... Their dignified bearing, their lack of anger, their normality, place them among the towering moral figures of our century."

James Blitz - Financial Times

"This is the story of human beings sucked into a vortex of destruction in which family, identity, religion and culture were all ripped away. A sense of near miraculous calm descends when the Boys finally arrive in Britain, when human fortitude finally prevails over absolute evil."

Professor David Cesarain - Times Literary Supplement

"This is an important book. There was a Holocaust.... Sometimes one encounters people who ask about the Holocaust: Did it really happen? Was it really that bad? Anyone confused by lingering doubts should read this book."

Patrick Skene Catling - The Spectator

"Martin Gilbert is to be congratulated on producing a masterly and deeply moving tribute to those who had the courage and luck to survive. This should be required reading. Through the horror of these pages... there shines the determination of the human spirit to soldier on and ultimately to triumph in the face of the most extreme adversity imaginable."

Winston Churchill M.P. - Literary Review

"It is, as a further, indisputable, record of Nazi cruelty, as a series of testimonials to endurance and resourcefulness, full of arresting and memorable details that The Boys has to be read."

Caroline Moorehead - Daily Telegraph

"This is not just another book about the Holocaust, in Martin Gilbert's words it is about 'the human capacity for hope and renewal'."

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch - The Sunday Telegraph

"In a year of gloomy books and gloomier events Martin Gilbert has given us, in The Boys; Triumph over Adversity, a masterpiece of decency and courage and joy which describes what happened to the 732 young concentration camp survivors taken in by Britain. 'We were amongst the beasts' one wrote 'and I am proud to declare that we upheld the dignity of man'. Superb."

John Simpson's choice of his book of the year in the Daily Telegraph, Saturday 30th November 1996.

Elisabeth Maxwell, in her letter to Sir Martin, wrote -

"You have succeeded in depicting most movingly and with astonishing historical detail the cataclysm which hit Poland and its neighbours following the unleashing of the German armies upon their territories, through the horrors of the Nazi occupation and the ghastly apparatus of ghettos, labour and death camps and through to the final liberation. You have done this by the painstaking accumulation of the vivid memories of hundreds of children, most of whom you have personally encountered. Your account has infinite pathos, it rings

terribly pristine and true. Not a single detail is left to chance, each one taking its place at the proper time in the chronology of events, as history unfolded.

"One might have thought that such stories would be repetitive; well, there is an overwhelming element of bewilderment at the horrors perpetrated in front of these children who saw their fathers, mothers and siblings murdered before their eyes, but every patiently heard story represents a very specially shaped brick in the overall edifice, and the result is the most astonishing cathedral of a book.

"No one will forget this book in a hurry and if at times one feels depressed, low in spirits and lonely, one should think of these magnificent 732 boys and girls who, having lost everything and finding themselves at the Liberation in 1945 in an unknown land, where they knew not a soul nor spoke the language, managed to turn themselves into a family of brothers and sisters, endeared themselves to the most wonderful English foster parents and became successful members of the community.

"I am proud to be associated with the '45 Aid Society and their wonderful President. Thanks to one of the finest historians of the Second World War, the stories of "the Boys", written in beautiful and moving English, will be passed on to posterity as part of the history of our time."

She also wrote -

"I read the book for three nights running, I just could not put it down, it is really a remarkable book."

OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION "THE BOYS" TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

THE JEWISH MUSEUM, 80 EAST END ROAD, LONDON N3

An exhibition about our members, entitled "Children who Survived the Holocaust" was opened at the Jewish Museum - London's Museum of Jewish Life on Sunday 17th November 1996. The exhibition includes photographs, documents and objects relating to the lives of our members. These date from before and during the War and from the period of "The Boys" liberation and early days in Britain, with an accompanying text telling our story. The idea to hold this exhibition came from the Director of the Museum, Rickie Burman, and was sponsored by our Society. The exhibition will be available as a travelling display at schools and organisations and it will form part of the Museum's active programme of Holocaust education.

The exhibition was reviewed by Helen Jacobus in the Jewish Chronicle in which she stated "that it is a painstakingly compiled and clearly explained exhibition which cannot fail to absorb anyone who attends." We are grateful to Rickie Burman, Carol Siegel and the staff of the Jewish Museum for putting on this exhibition.

TO SIR MARTIN GILBERT

MICHAEL ELKIND

You've followed leads and plotted maps
that led to places planned to be erased.

You gave a voice to those condemned
to vanish in the Night and Fog.

You have restored the Name of those
whose names by numbers were replaced.

You've built a niche in the Library of Truth

**ADDRESS GIVEN BY BEN HELFGOTT ON THE OCCASION OF THE
UNVEILING OF A MEMORIAL PLAQUE, BY LORD JAKOBOVITS,
THE EMERITUS CHIEF RABBI, IN HONOUR OF THE PARENTS,
OF OUR MEMBERS, WHO PERISHED DURING THE HOLOCAUST**

15th December 1996

About a year before the 50th anniversary of our liberation when we were discussing plans how to commemorate this event, one of our committee members, Isroel Rudzinski, suggested that we dedicate a Sefer Torah to the memory of our parents who were killed in the Shoa. In addition, a plaque inscribed with the names of our parents was to be placed in a synagogue where the Sefer Torah would find a home. Most of the committee members accepted with alacrity the second suggestion, but there were some doubters about the dedication of the Sefer Torah. However, Isroel Rudzinski had set his mind on this project, to him this was a sacred task, and supported by Solly Irving managed to persuade the waverers on the committee to go ahead with this scheme. Those who were present in May last year at the Hachnasat Torah and watched our members completing the last letters in the Torah, supervised by the young Sofer who was the son of one of the 'Boys', Moshe Kuszmierski, found the occasion very moving and poignant. The exuberance and joy that prevailed during the Hakofos was a scene that none of us will ever forget. The timelessness of the Torah with all its splendour and tradition was there for all of us to witness. Thea and Isroel Rudzinski, as well as Solly Irving, were beaming with satisfaction and fulfilment, as were all those who were present. The atmosphere was electric and contagious; we all felt that we were participating in an event that our parents and our ancestors gloried in for centuries. It was a confirmation of our unshakeable faith that in spite of the attempts by evil people to destroy us through the course of history "Am Israel Hai".

In a way our Society is a microcosm of our community and the Jewish people at large, representing a wide spectrum of religious, political and social diversity. We often have our differences but we are aware that we have in common the covenant of shared history 'Brit Goral'. We are conscious of the fact that the Nazis did not differentiate between secular and religious Jews. It is a lesson we learned, remember and try to apply in our daily life. Tolerance and understanding towards one another and to our fellow man is foremost in our minds.

I return to today's event which is of a different nature from last year when we were rejoicing. Today's occasion is one of solemnity. Our parents were killed in the gas chambers, in the woods, in the ravines and marshes, on the death marches and in all sorts of unimaginable places. They have disappeared like the wind and we have no Matzevah for them. This plaque, that was unveiled by Lord Jakobovits and to whom we are very grateful for accepting our invitation to officiate and making this event very meaningful to us, will be our collective Matzevah. It is here, in this synagogue that we will be able to come once a year and say collective Kaddish to the memory of our parents who were killed so prematurely and who did not see us grow up and, unlike most other parents, could not share with us our joy and sorrow and derive 'nachas' from us. Our children, too, will know that there is a place where the names of their grandparents are honoured.

On behalf of our members I would like to thank the Hon. Officers of the Elstree and Borehamwood Synagogue and especially Rabbi Plancey who spoke so eloquently today and at last year's Hachmasaf Torah and who was so supportive and encouraged us with this project.



ASSOCIATION FOR THE CLAIMS FOR JEWISH SLAVE LABOUR COMPENSATION

SLAVES IN REVOLT

ROMAN HALTER, RUDY KENNEDY RESEARCH AND HELP BY LUKE HOLLAND

The large majority of the 150 applicants of our Association for the Claims for Jewish Slave Labour Compensation (our ASSOCIATION) are members of the '45 Aid Society. When we the "Boys" and girls look back to the time of the Holocaust, we were then in our teens, our survival was mainly due to a few chance factors. Our survival was certainly not planned by our oppressors. One factor was that the war ended in May 1945. Another factor was that we had not been selected for the gas chambers or the mass killings by shooting, which was the fate of millions of our people, who often had to dig their own graves first. We had been chosen for the slower death of slave-labour. This meant starvation, beatings or the final collapse of the disease ridden and worn out bodies. We saw this every day. Most of us were in the final state of collapse, more dead than alive, when the Allies found us. "Wiedergutmachung" a word coined by Germany (make it good again) is impossible for these crimes. It is the "Slave-Labour" part which our bodies had to endure, for which we now want recognition and compensation.

There was a "hell" of a difference between us JEWISH SLAVE LABOURERS and those who were FORCED LABOURERS, which needs explaining. This difference was not only important, it was crucial. It was the difference between life and the death sentence.

During the 2nd WW Germany imported millions of non-Jewish workers including FORCED LABOURERS from Poland, Russia, France and the other countries under Nazi occupation. They worked on the land and in the factories. Compared to us, they were reasonably fed and housed. Some of them were paid a wage, invariably less than that of a German worker, but paid nevertheless. They could send parcels home and it was not uncommon for some of their relations to visit them in Germany. Non-Jewish concentration camp prisoners, Germans, Poles and others, for instance in the Auschwitz/Monowitz (Buna) camp working for IG Farben, were allowed to receive parcels from home. In the Auschwitz complex of factories there were Labour Camps housing Polish workers. Not only were they infinitely better looked after, but they also had HOPE (no death sentence) and a family to return to, one day.

There was just no comparison between their fate and ours. They were brought to work where they were needed but 'chosen' to live. For the Jewish Slave Labourers the SS had coined a slogan "Vernichtung durch Arbeit", death through work.

We were given the worst, the most dangerous, the hardest and often the impossible work tasks and schedules to do. The working shifts were inhumanely long on food rations which were inadequate to live for any length of time. We had to sleep on bare boards, or in real luxury on thin straw mattresses, but pressed together like sardines in a tin.

The German SS guards beat, tortured and murdered indiscriminately and with impunity. Even they were outdone by the Ukrainians or Lithuanians SS guards "Volksdeutsche" (ethnic Germans).

The average life span of a Jewish Slave Labourer was 3 months. It has been suggested that up to 90% of those selected to work were killed-off in the work camps.

If the foregoing were not enough, we are now outraged when we learn that the very same SS who beat, tortured, murdered and guarded us, are receiving pensions from the German government, whilst we the victims who only survived by the skin of our teeth are denied compensation [1]. Many of the companies or their successor companies for whom we worked, exist today. Our traumatising experiences continue to haunt us even more so as we approach old age.

We are not impressed by the "democratic" Germany hiding behind their new laws and their refusal to deal with the Jewish Slave Labour issue by the simple expediency of not signing a peace treaty. German interpretation of International law allowing "Forced Labour" in war time might perhaps apply to non-Jewish Forced Labour and other workers, but not to us. Finally, Germany has pointedly ignored a resolution by the European Parliament on this issue [2].

Our ASSOCIATION has been set up to cut through this contemptible disregard for real justice. The committee members are Michael Etkind, Roman Halter, Kopel Kendall and Rudy Kennedy. The four of us are amateurs at this sort of work and we have asked others to help and advise us. We felt we needed a lawyer, a historian, an accountant, a political scientist and an outside, sensitive and detached observer and chronicler. We are still looking for a suitably qualified ally to assist with media and public relation matters. Our advisory board provides the strategic thinking and helps to guide our actions. All support is pro bono (i.e., free)
They are Anthony Julius, Sir Martin Gilbert, Helmut Rothenberg, Michael Pinto-Duschinsky and Luke Holland.

We had previously approached a well known firm of lawyers in London also qualified to act in Germany. Their fee was £200 per hour. The likely costs would run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. The members of our association have not got this sort of money to spend, nor have we backers to provide it.

Two major legal challenges involving former Jewish Slave labourers, mainly women, are currently embroiled in the German courts. Their backer has spent huge sums of money over the years. Apparent breakthroughs have been followed by inevitable setbacks and the feeling amongst serious observers is that the challenges may drag on for more years. In the meantime the "final solution" will have been overtaken by the biological solution.

Our catastrophe was sanctioned by Nazi laws enacted by an elected German government. It is high time that the present German government righted these wrongs with new legislation.

None of us has even received a letter from any German government saying "Sorry we are ashamed what we did to you and to your family, please forgive us."

Time is not on our side. We believe that this whole issue must now be prosecuted in the court of public opinion. This is the task we have set ourselves.

Our committee is very concerned how we spend the money entrusted to us by each member. The £40 seed money provided by each applicant is untouched (some could not afford this sum). So far the committee has met the expenses incurred. A kind donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, has recently provided £5,000 to help us with the day-to-day expenses in the future.

We have received many powerful and moving letters of support from a number of people, including MP's and members of the House of Lords who sympathised and expressed support for our just cause.

Michael Pinto-Duschinsky's article in the Times [3] presents eloquently our case against the backdrop of Germany's cynical moves. The editor of the Jewish Chronicle, in his leader 'Moral Imperative' [4] makes a poignant statement and Jenni Frazer in the same issue provides a clear and supporting front page article continued on page 3.

These articles have brought our campaign into the public arena and demonstrate that we mean business and are not afraid to speak out. It was also the background to our meeting with the German Ambassador. In parallel, MP's, particularly John Marshall, addressed the House of Commons and also contacted the Ambassador on our behalf [5].

At our meeting on the 10th December 1996, four of us met the German Ambassador, Dr Jurgen Oesterheld, with his legal team and the Press Attaché. We (RH and RK) were supported by Michael Pinto-Duschinsky and Luke Holland. We were received courteously and we were able to discuss the issues for some 90 minutes. He said he will pass on to the authorities in Bonn what we have told him. As soon as he has some comments he will communicate with us, which will be at the end of January or the beginning of February on his return from Germany. Jenni Frazer of the JC has reported on our meeting with the German Ambassador [6]. We are hoping that it will result in a satisfactory solution. If not, we will have to go on with our task.

One of the reasons that the Germans have been so successful in side-stepping their moral and financial responsibilities is because challenges to date have always been uncoordinated and acquiescent to the German legal agenda. Our initiative whilst originating from a UK organisation, the '45 Aid Society, will rapidly acquire an international character and profile if a solution is not found through the German Ambassador. We will then join with other countries to ensure that we succeed.

The German government repeatedly claims that almost 80 billion DM has already gone to survivors of the Holocaust. However, it has not been possible to obtain detailed breakdowns of these figures and no indication of how much of this money has gone to Jewish Slave Labourers.

We should not get confused by initiatives to use Jewish Gold in the banks in Switzerland or Jewish property in the 'East' to compensate claims by survivors. These should go to Jewish causes of course; they were after all stolen Jewish property. We are seeking compensation from German sources only.

References:

- [1] "SS Veterans paid secretly in Britain" Report in the Sunday Times 15 December 1996.
- [2] "Compensation for slave labour" Notice of the European Community 17/2/1986 No. C36/129 Doc. B2-1475/85/rev.
- [3] Justice for Germany's former slaves" Article by Michael Pinto-Duschinsky. Times 15 November 1996.
- [4] "Moral Imperative" Leader in the JC & Front Page "Surviving slave labourers to demand cash from Germany".
- [5] "Compensation for Holocaust victims" Extracts from John Marshall's address to the House of Commons adjournment debate on 12 Nov. 1996. AJR Information January 1997.
- [6] "Delegation presses German envoy on slave labour claims" Jenni Frazer JC 13 December 1996.

'BOYS' IN RETIREMENT

A VOW MADE IN HELL

MICHAEL BANDEL - AUGUST 1996

I was born in the late 1920s in Carpathia Ruthenia which was then part of Czechoslovakia. Like the majority of Jews there we were very orthodox, my family were Vishnitzer Chasidim. The other common factor was the great poverty in the whole area. The late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who was from the same region, once said "When G-d gave out poverty to the world He gave nine-tenths to Carpathia". My parents ran a small grocery store and it was from them and from my grandparents too, that I learned my first concepts of 'caring'. Many a late Thursday evening when my late father realised who had not 'bought for Shabbos' he would send one of us (4) children with some provisions; many a time a neighbour would come in and goods would be given 'on the book'. If only we had had 'in hand' all that was 'on the book'..... There were so many unemployed, poor and homeless who walked from village to village to collect a few coppers to try to feed their families; they often found themselves in Jasina, a border town, my town, by the end of the week. On Friday evenings after the Evening Service they would stand pitifully by the door of the Synagogue hoping to be invited for Shabbos. I cannot remember a Friday night that my late father did not bring home one or two men to join us. Always these mitzvot were done quietly and without fuss. My maternal grandparents were, on the other hand, quite comfortable; my grandfather was a raw hide/skin merchant who travelled a good deal to buy hides. At the same time he would buy wholesale groceries and my late grandmother had a special room set aside to keep it all and they would regularly distribute it to the poor and needy in their town, Vilchovic (Vulchovce) near Teich (Tacovo). They were very well-known and highly respected both for their 'frumkite' and their generosity. This latter too was always given with kindness, respect for others and discretion.

In March 1939 we were occupied by Hungary and war came to us as to others. With it came all the restrictions and hardships. My parents were interned for months, leaving us children, aged from 10-15 years old, to fend for ourselves. Family who lived nearby helped as much as they could, showing what caring meant, until our parents were allowed to return home some months later. In March 1944, however, Carpathian Jewry - now historically known as 'Hungarian', were deported and our fate followed the now-familiar path of cattle-truck journeys, partings, selections and death.

It was on our arrival in Auschwitz that help was first given to me. As we were being harried and hustled out of the trucks a man in striped clothing working on the ramps whispered to me in Yiddish "Try to go to work - to the right" and seeing I was young, 14¹/₄ years old, said also "make yourself older". My mother and sisters were separated from us there, my two younger sisters to perish almost immediately. My father and I lined up and he was eventually facing the infamous Dr Mengele; he signalled him to go to the right. I was sent to the left. Because I had understood what the man on the ramp had said to me, taking my life in my hands, because we had already seen the dogs tearing at people and the guards beating people, and wanting in any case to be with my father, I managed to cross over to the right hand line. The following day we were lined up for another selection, for work. They asked my father his trade and he said "carpenter". He had to show his hands, if they were rough, workman's hands which they were, and he was sent for work. I followed him: "What do you do?" "I help my father". "How old are you?" Again, remembering the whispered advice, I made myself 3 years older; I was also sent for work. The unknown man had already saved my life twice!

Soon came another journey and another camp - we were told in Auschwitz that we 'were lucky to be leaving there'! A fortress with massive gates greeted us, it was terrifying, it was Mauthausen! It was one of the most notoriously brutal work camps. There were stone quarries

and the 180 stone steps leading down to them, which are still there, took thousands of lives. The work was horrendous, backbreaking, literally and in fact killing. The (SS) guards were brutally evil, devising all sorts of 'fun'; making prisoners jump to their deaths from a high cliff they called the Parachute Jump; standing two men back-to-back, their mouths open, and shooting them through the mouth to see if they could 'kill two for the price of one'. Again, after a short time we were 'lucky' again and were moved to a sub-camp - Ebensee. I wondered how long 'Luck' would hold for my father and me. The work was very hazardous, apart from the usual brutality and lack of everything - even barracks. We were the first 'inmates' to arrive and had to build the wooden huts from scratch. We were assigned to work in the stone 'tunnels' which had to be blasted with dynamite from the mountains themselves; the injuries were frequent and many. The Germans hoped to build factories inside these tunnels in the mountainside which would be unseen and safe from Allied bombing. My father and I had different shifts but somehow managed to see each other sometimes in the evenings. I remember well being with him clandestinely to help make up a 'minyan' (quorum) to recite Kol Nidrei that year. Had we been found we would have been beaten to death. I was injured at work and sent to the so-called 'hospital'. There, again, I was really lucky and found another prisoner, a Czech doctor, who had compassion for me, treated me and managed to get me assigned to work in the hospital for a few weeks; this was a life-saver, keeping me out of the bitter winter weather there in the mountains of Austria.

I was in the hospital when I got a message from friends that my father needed 'mercy'. I knew what that meant. He had been found praying and had been beaten terribly; he now lay in Block 27 where they sent the dying. Frantically I found my Czech doctor, whose name I never knew, and begged him to help me. He managed to have my father brought into the hospital on a stretcher, black and blue and unconscious. I tried desperately to revive him and for a moment he came round; he recognised me and spoke his last words to me, saying 'You are my son and I'm proud of you'. He died in my arms erev Pesach 1945.

I think it was then that I made a vow that if I should survive I would try to care for and help others.

On May 6th 1945 Ebensee was liberated by the American Forces. After much trauma, I found my mother and older sister alive in Prague, but 95% of my extended family had perished.

In June 1946 I eventually arrived in England, one of the 732 Child Survivors from the Concentration Camps, brought here through that committee and the Central British Fund (now World Jewish Relief). They were all wonderful people who cared, who worked hard for us and helped us in every possible way. I firstly had to learn English, then a trade - I became a furrier - then how to live my life. In 1958 I married Jasmine and I started our family. Our son Martin was born (coincidentally on May 6th, the date of my liberation) in 1959 and our daughter Gaynor in 1962. We had joined the local JNF committee in Kingsbury soon after our marriage but found it was not what we wanted. In 1960 we had moved to Edgware and like all our friends were busy with work, family and home. As the children grew up Jasmine found herself with more time to spare and joined the League of Jewish Women in 1970 and has been closely involved with that marvellous voluntary service organisation ever since, both at Head Office and at local level. It has been a great influence on our lives and afforded her many opportunities to not only help and give to others of her time, but to discover and develop abilities and skills of which one is not always aware. It also gives a sense of achievement and fulfilment. During the past few years Jasmine has also become a volunteer for Jewish Care in Edgware. All the volunteers we know say how much their 'work' gives to them and how grateful they are for the experiences they have had. Helping others has always been fitted into our busy lifestyle.

My working days didn't leave much time to spare but I was always mindful and determined to follow in the footsteps of my late family. Almost from its inception I was a member of the Committee of the '45 Aid Society, the group formed by the boys and girls who came over in those original groups, of 732 survivors. I was co-Treasurer for many years, a committee member and, for the last approximately ten years, have been Welfare Officer. Mine was always a 'hands-on' approach. In the 1970s I applied to become a Samaritan. After completing their own training

programme I was accepted and found myself doing fortnightly duties, one evening duty straight from work until 11 pm and one night duty from 11 pm to 6 am and then going straight to work. It was very much needed and I found I had an aptitude for this kind of caring. I was the voice in the night which I hoped would help someone get through the next hour, or day, or night; sometimes just the voice to assuage the loneliness, to be there for someone - as someone had once 'been there' for me in my hour of need. I found the work very satisfying but very tiring both physically and psychologically.... and after 16½ years I felt in need of a break.

On semi-retiring a few years ago I once again took up voluntary work. It isn't always easy to find just the right thing for you, but I would urge anyone who wants to, to at least explore all the possibilities. With my previous experience I still had to be interviewed by various organisations. On arriving at the Jewish Care offices in Golders Green, the first person I saw was my previous senior at the Samaritan branch. She grabbed my arm, saying 'Just the person we need - come with me!'. Jewish Care had just opened its first Stroke Club and desperately needed volunteers. I went with her to the Rela Goldhill Home, almost next door to the Sobell Centre, and there became involved with people who had suffered strokes. Their disabilities and needs are all different. They have speech and physiotherapy on alternate weeks. They come in the morning for coffee, then lunch and afternoon tea is provided too, with the various activities spread throughout the day. Most important of all they have each other, professional help and caring volunteers who urge them on to achieve the most they can. I spend every Tuesday with them and feel sure and hope that my input is worthwhile. The Club has just celebrated its third birthday and I hope to be a part of it for as long as I'm needed.

Jewish Care later opened a Wednesday afternoon Stroke Club in Edgware which provides similar help but just for a couple of hours. It has increased its membership as the need is, unfortunately, great. There is now a Stroke Club in Stamford Hill and a second one in Golders Green and all of them would welcome more volunteers. They are hoping to open one in the Ilford area too. Can you help? You would be surprised what you can do if you try!

At the time of my interviews I also went to Ravenswood, the organisation which works with the learning disabled. I was also accepted and was asked to help at their Kennedy Leigh Resource Centre in Hendon. There I work on a one-to-one basis and my 'client' is a young man in his early thirties. We are trying to develop the skills he may have. We play scrabble, which helps to improve his concentration, work skill and spelling. We talk sport, which he loves and we now have a good rapport. He knows me and looks forward to seeing me and responds well. My experience with the Samaritans was invaluable. As a group we have visited the Cezanne Exhibition at the Tate Gallery and it was a wonderful, if tiring, day for us all. We have special celebrations at the Yomtovim and it is very gratifying to see how they react and feel nurtured and loved within the Jewish atmosphere of these special occasions. The work done is all to help improve their quality of life and I am happy to be involved.

Many of us are now semi or fully retired. It is very nice to be able to sit back and take things easy, to have our hobbies and time to stand and stare - SOME OF THE TIME! But there is so much help needed in so many different ways. If you have any time to spare, please do look around, find a niche for yourself somewhere with something. You are so valuable! Yes, I am lucky to be where I am, and how I am today, to have my health and my - healthy - family and I do feel concern for those to whom life has dealt a bad hand.

If those unknown people could help me in the Hell in which we found ourselves in the War.... If my parents, who were themselves poor, could help others and if my grandparents, more comfortable though they were, felt they must help others less well-off, then I too will follow their example. I hope I contribute something of value to others and pray the Almighty will give me the strength and the will to continue for as long as possible.

A SYNOPSIS OF DAVID BORGENICHT'S LIFE SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN WINDERMERE IN AUGUST 1945

Dear Friends,

I read with great interest the December issue of the Journal. Since I was one of the first three hundred to arrive in England from Theresienstadt, the first four articles brought back many memories, although the names of some of the authors don't ring a bell.

After a short stay in Windermere, I, along with about twenty-five other boys, took up residence in Bedford. I stayed there until the ORT School opened in London. I asked for and was granted transfer to 93 Stamford Hill. While there, a philanthropic gentleman bought us twenty-five coats for the winter. He also assisted us in finding relatives in America by steering us to The Jewish Morning Journal, located in the West End of London. With their assistance I made contact with two relatives in New York City and obtained two Affidavits within three months.

I attended the ORT School for the next few months, intending to become a Master Electrician, but I was side-tracked and told that I had to take up other trades first. One of those was welding. The dust from the "electrical-welding" affected my breathing by the end of the day. The doctor diagnosed that the scars of "Pleurisy", suffered in 1943 in the Camp of Biezanow, never healed, due to the dreadful circumstances. I spent nine months in a TB Sanatorium near Ashford, Kent, and fully recovered. When I returned to London, I settled at 833 Finchley Road, where I stayed and took an active part, until December 1949 when I left for the USA. I spent a year in New York City trying to pursue my career as an electrician, but to no avail. When my friend Marian Rosenblum arrived in the USA he came to his aunt in Buffalo. He was also one of the three hundred group and an ORT electrical graduate. Since all our friends arrived and lived in New York City, he talked me into moving to Buffalo, where he had an electrical job waiting for me.

In June of 1951 - three months after my arrival in Buffalo - I met my beloved Rose; we married on June 8 1952. I continued with my education - evenings after work - received my High School Diploma in 1955 and attended college for the next two years. In 1958 I took a test and passed for my Electrical Contractors License. After seventeen years in a successful business, in February of 1975 Rose and I flew to Los Angeles to attend a wedding. While swimming in our friend's pool, Rose pleaded that we should forsake the cold Buffalo weather for the warmth of Los Angeles. I applied for a California Contractors License, took and passed the test and bought a house. We drove and moved there with our four children before another winter set in.

While in Buffalo we spent seven summer vacations in the Catskill Mountains. We paid two visits to Israel. While in LA, we vacationed in Mexico and Hawaii and spent many weekends in Las Vegas. After sixteen years in business in California, I retired in 1991 on my 63rd birthday and moved to the Miami area in Florida.

In 1992, after meeting some of our "boys" at Joe Goldberg's home in Florida, I made arrangements to fly to England and attend the reunion on May 1992 at the Hilton. Since my wife Rose has a problem with flying and cruising, I came alone and stayed only one week. After a forty-two year disappearance I decided that I am long overdue.

Since I retired, I have never been bored for lack of things to do. This is my fourth year as a volunteer at South Broward High School, four hours per week, helping graduating students understand problems in algebra and geometry. On Fridays, I am in my second year, a volunteer in a senior day-care center, composed of physically or mentally handicapped patients. We also belong to three Holocaust organisations. Rose and I travel often to visit with our four children and seven grandchildren. I'm looking forward to my next reunion.

FROM THE SECOND GENERATION

JOURNEY HOME WITH OUR FATHER

YOSSY RUDZINSKI

No doubt many readers know my father, Reb Yisroel Rudzinski Shlita. We were brought up with Piotrkow in our blood. Whenever the opportunity arose, be it Pesach or at Simchas, we were told about life in Piotrkow and the suffering later in the war years. It was therefore with great anticipation that we arranged a trip for my parents, brother, sister and myself to visit Poland.

We arrived in Warsaw at 11.00am on Monday 17 Iyar (6 May). Our first stop was at the Umschlagplatz in Warsaw town center. From there we travelled south to Ger (Gora Kalwaria). The key to the Beis Oilam is kept by a Yid (Velvel Karpman) who speaks a perfect Yiddish. We prayed at the graves of the first two Gerrer Rebbes Z"TL and then went to visit the "Hoif" where the Rebbes lived and had their Beis Hamedrash (both still standing).

We then started the two hour drive to the main part of our visit, Piotrkow. Our driver parked opposite 20 Pilsudskiego, the Rudzinski home before the war and during the ghetto. We tried to gain access but either the occupants were not in or more likely did not want to let us in. We then walked down the road towards the main Shul. On route my father pointed out who lived in each building, the Rov, the Jewish Council offices. We found it fascinating that the town seemed to be hardly modernised since pre-war times. The Piotrkow Shul is a most impressive building but unfortunately there are no visual signs (except for the beautiful plaque put up last year) that it was once used as a Makoim Tefillah (prayer house) by so many Yidden for so many generations. It was hard to imagine that so many holy Tefillos were recited there, so many holy Rabbonim including the great Rabbi Meir Shapiro Z"TL and the current Israeli Chief Rabbi's father Rabbi Lau Z"TL had walked through these same doors, that so many holy Yiddishe Mamas had poured their hearts out in the still existing ladies' gallery. Today the building is used as a public library.

The building next to the main Shul was the Beis Hamedrash. This was where my Bubba and Elter Bubba davened. My father remembered coming there on Shabos, as a child under Bar-Mitzvah, whenever the Eruv broke to carry home the Bubba's Siddue.

Behind the Shul is a small empty green that is an old Beis Oilam. In the first year of the war my grandfather, together with others, was taken by the Nazis Y"Sh to the Shul and ordered to destroy the Sefer Toirahs in a degrading manner. They tried, however, to dig a grave in the old Beis Oilam to bury the Sefer Toirahs. The Nazis Y"Sh caught them and beat them so hard that they just about made it home alive. This was about Chanukah time. My grandfather never recovered and was niftar on the first night Pesach. We said Tehillim at this old Beis Oilam. My grandfather was buried on the second day of Yom Tov in the main Beis Oilam.

We then walked down the road to the beginning of the Yidden Gasse. My father pointed out who lived where and who owned which shop. My father stopped to speak to a few elderly men in Polish. I then said a few words in Yiddish. The goyim then said something and left in a hush. My father translated that they said "if they still speak their Yiddish we better move on". Near the top of the Yidden Gasse we turned right. We happened to notice a cavity in a door post where there had once been a Mezuzah.

I realised that my father was walking a bit hesitantly as if he was not sure whether he would find what he was looking for. However, he then pointed to a building and said "doo hot der Zeide

gevoint" (here his Zeide lived). Although from the outside the building seemed to have only a ground floor, he told us that der Zeide lived upstairs. We entered the hallway that led to the downstairs apartments and to the back courtyard. We then saw the wooden staircase leading upstairs. It looked so unsafe that my parents said that it was probably unused. I went up and immediately noticed another staircase leading further up. I asked if I should go up but my father shouted "no it's dangerous up there, that leads to the attic where we used to play as kids". After asking which of the three apartments was der Zeide's, everyone came up and my father knocked on the door. A woman holding a child answered and after my father explained why we were here, she let us in.

The apartment had hardly been altered in the fifty years and looked exactly as we were always told. The first room was a tiny kitchen, this led directly into the living room which in turn led directly into the bedroom. The only changes my father pointed out were that a small closet in the kitchen was now a WC (before they had to go out into the courtyard) and that the coal fire that was between the living room and bedroom had been blocked and tiled over. We were all very moved and emotional as we looked around and tried to imagine all that had gone on in within these walls. All the Simchos, Sedorim, Shabbos, Yom Tov that our family had shared with our Zeide Moishe Yehida and Bubba Chavah.

After chatting to some of the other tenants on the floor we made our way across the back courtyard. There we saw where one of the Radeshtitzer Shtieblech had been situated. On the way back we tried again, unsuccessfully, to gain entrance to my father's home.

Our next stop was at the Hortensia glass factory. When my grandfather died, my father was the oldest male at home and although he was not yet Bar-Mitzvah he had to go out to work to support the family. He went to work at the Hortensia. Everyone who survived the Holocaust can recall many stories of their own Seyato Dishmayo (Help from Above). working at this factory certainly saved my father from being deported to Treblinka, because the Nazis Y"Sh only left in town those who worked at the two main factories of Piotrkow, one of which was the Hortensia.

At the gate to the factory we were stopped by security guards. After explaining the reason of our visit we were let in. The vast majority of buildings lie derelict and are not used. At the end of a long corridor we were led to the only part still in use. I had never before been to a glass factory, but to us it looked like what we envisaged slave labour to be like. My father said that the system of working had not changed since he had worked there.

We then drove back into town and to the only other major proof that Yidden had inhabited this town, the Beis Oilam. Here in these grounds lies my father's father, my father's maternal grandfather and probably many more members of our family. The Beis Oilam has large impressive gates at the front entrance. These were only used for Rabbonim or special members of the community. We went in through the side entrance where the woman who supposedly is caretaker lives. As we walked into the Beis Oilam our first impression was that the place was overgrown. To the right of the main pathway the Matzeivohs had been cleared somewhat, but the whole section to the left was very overgrown. We walked up the pathway and across many of the rows, stopping to read many of the interesting inscriptions on the Matzeivohs. My father knew he would not find the burial place of his father or grandfather as they were buried at the beginning of the war and no Matzeivohs were erected. However, we still spent about an hour just looking around engrossed in thought and saying Tehillim. Deep amongst the thicket we found a newly erected Oihel around the burial place of the Great Tzadik known as Dr Bernard. Near the entrance we saw the remains of two Oihels, one of which was where the Radishitzer Rebbe was buried. After tipping the caretaker we left back into town.

Before leaving Piotrkow we drove past the Halle. This was the market place where my grandfather had his stall selling men's clothes. On the way out of town we saw the railway track of the little train, the Kolejka. About three miles out of Piotrkow we passed through Uszczin. During the years of the ghetto the Shochet used to smuggle out to this village under a pile of hay. My father

remembers having to walk regularly these three miles to fetch meat for the family, knowing, of course, the consequences should he be caught.

An hour later we arrived in Radoshitz. Here we went to the burial site of the "Holy Grandfather" of the Radoshitz. We davened Mincha and said Tehillim. We then headed for Skarzysko Kamienna. It was already quite late and at the third attempt we found a hotel with space. It was very decent and clean. We davened Mariv, unpacked our food, ate supper out of tins together in one room and settled down for the night after a most fulfilling day.

After Shacharis and breakfast (we brought with an electric kettle for coffee) we drove the ten miles or so into Skarzysko Kamienna. My father had spent some two years here in the concentration camp working in the ammunition factory. As soon as we got into the town my father recognised where the factory was. It is still standing and is still making ammunition. We realised this because as soon as we started taking some photos, we were surrounded by security guards. We drove down one of the side streets towards where the actual concentration camp was. Apparently none of the wooden huts are still in existence. We walked through a field where my father remembered the camp to be. There we happened to meet two Polish workers. They told my father that in one part of the factory, known as "Werk C", there was a Jewish cemetery. We went to the central office of the factory complex and after waiting some twenty minutes, we were given permission to enter the site to visit the cemetery. A security guard accompanied us all the time and at the entrance we had to show our passports.

My father had always told us what "Werk C" was. This was where the gunpowder was put into the ammunition. Working without the proper protective clothing etc. meant that one did not usually survive there more than three months. The chemicals caused their hair and skin to turn yellow. My father also told us that the only time he was taken to the dreaded Werk C was to help dig a mass grave.

We drove through the controlled entrance down a narrow road, past many buildings, for some ten minutes. At the end of all the factories in the middle of the woods we came to an open space surrounded by a metal fence. This was the site of the mass grave. As we started saying Tehillim, my father broke down crying, probably bringing out all the memories of his grief and suffering and the memories of all those Kedoishim who had perished in this hell and that more than once, due to Divine Providence, he had been saved from being transferred to this hell. We lit memorial candles and spent some more time just trying to imagine what this place must have been like some fifty years ago. I don't think any of us will forget the emotions we felt standing there in the middle of the woods at a grave site that probably hardly anyone knows about, never mind visits.

Our next stop was Auschwitz - Birkenau. My mother's mother and grandmother, together with many other members of our family, perished here. Auschwitz has been made into a tourist attraction. We all somehow felt that maybe it would have been better not to have gone there. It somehow has lost the Holiness that this place deserves. We then drove the few miles to Birkenau. Here we did capture the feelings of suffering that occurred at this site. It was gripping as we looked down the railway track and the sidings that had brought so many millions of our brethren to their Holy end, H"yd.

Time was getting late and we wanted to be in Krakow before nightfall, as it was Lag-Baomer, the Yartzit of the Remah who is buried behind his famous Shul in the Jewish Quarter of Krakow. We davened Mincha there and spent some time saying Tehillim at the graveside of the Remah and the other Tzadikim buried there. The Beis Oilam is beautifully kept and we saw a team of workers renovating many of the old Matzeivohs. Next to the Shul is a Kosher restaurant. The Shoimer was from Bnei Brak. He asked us to take with a piece of a Sefer Toirah that a tourist had left with him that morning. On the way out of town we stopped at the site of the Plaszow concentration camp.

We arrived at Nowy Sacz (Sanz) at about 9.00pm. Here we stayed the night at the Orbis Hotel. On the way we looked at the piece of the Sefer Toirah. It was from Parshas Beshalach, Parshas

Hamon. That evening was the Yartzit of Reb Mendelle Rimanower ZT"L who used to say Toirah every week on this Parsha. So my brother and myself decided to go to Rimanow that evening. As at all the well visited towns, our driver knew who kept the key to the Beis Oilam. The Beis Oilam is just out of the town and when we got there there were two men waiting with a bucket of water to wash our hands. We tipped them all and after davenning Maariv and praying at the graves of the Tzadikim we drove back to Sanz, arriving after 1.00am.

In the morning, after davenning, we had breakfast and cleared away our food for the last time. We then headed for the Beis Oilam in Sanz. Here lies the famous Sanzer Rov ZT"L and many of his descendants. Again, the Beis Oilam was very well kept. Our next stop was Bobov. Our driver just had to sound his horn on the main road at the beginning of the town and the key holder came running. The Beis Oilam is at the top of a hill from where there is a beautiful view. We prayed in the Ohel of the first Bobover Rebbe ZT"L, who was the grandfather of the Bobover Rebbe Shlita (YL"T) of New York. We also visited the site where twenty-four Kedoishim were buried at the beginning of the war after being killed by the Nazis Y"Sh. Again, the Beis Oilam is beautifully kept.

We then drove into town to visit the Shul which is currently being renovated. The original Oron Hakoidesh is still in existence. On the way out of the Shul we experienced one of the most fascinating twenty minutes of the whole trip.

We had been intrigued as we had not seen a ladies gallery in the Shul. My father started talking to an elderly gentleman and asked him if he remembered life before the war. He seemed to relish the idea of telling us all about the Yidden in Bobov. He told all the first and surnames of all the Jewish owners of the shops, Yankle, Moishe, Froiyim, Chiel, we were almost laughing. Then he told us that the ladies davened in a wooden building that used to be next to the Shul. The ladies never mixed with the men. I then remembered from a trip I made to Bobov some twenty years ago that there were some non-Jewish inhabitants who remembered the big wedding in Bobov. In 1931 the then Bobover Rebbe's daughter married Reb Moishe Stemple in Bobov. My father asked him if he remembered the big wedding. He told us that the town was full of visitors from all over the world. We then asked him if he remembered the song that they sang at the wedding. He buried his head in his hands but could not remember. I prompted him - "Kol rinah viyshiyu". You should have seen his face, he lit up and started singing in the middle of the street. He also told us of all the atrocities the Nazis Y"Sh inflicted on the Yidden in Bobov.

Our next stop was in Wishnitze. My mother-in-law's family and my brother's father-in-law's family came from here. We could not get into the Beis Oilam. We then drove to Bochnia where my brother's father-in-law's mother is buried. It is a small Beis Oilam but, again, beautifully kept.

From there we drove to Krakow to the airport to catch our flight back to London. We all felt very uplifted having experienced and seen for ourselves the places where so much Yidishkeit had taken place only some fifty years ago. 'Mir zolen hobn ales git aus gepoilt'.

I feel I must end with one point that left us a bit disappointed. I am directing this point mainly to the survivors of Piotrkow. The only Holy place in Piotrkow that is still as it was then is the Beis Oilam. After visiting so many other towns and seeing how well they look after their Beis Oilam, we all felt that something must be done in Piotrkow. Please, I ask all Piotrkow survivors and the Piotrkow Society in America to try and organise the clean up of the last resting place of so many of our forebears. The Rudzinski family is willing to help.

NUREMBERG

THE 20TH LEONARD G MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE 11 MARCH 1996

JOHN TUSA

John Tusa pursued a distinguished and varied career as a broadcaster with the BBC. He was Managing Director of the BBC External Services which he renamed BBC World Service in 1988. He has written two volumes of essays on broadcasting and journalism. "Conversations with the World" and "A World in your Ear". He also co-authored two books of contemporary history with his wife, the historian, Ann Tusa. "The Nuremberg Trials" and "The Berlin Blockade". He is currently writing and presenting BBC Radio Four's survey of the twentieth century to mark the millennium "Twenty/Twenty - A View of the Century".

Ladies and Gentlemen --

I am delighted to be here on this occasion and am very honoured by your invitation to deliver this Leonard Montefiore Memorial Lecture. It is a challenge to reflect on the experience of the Nuremberg Trials fifty years after they took place, not least when the lessons of the International Military Tribunal are being applied - however hesitantly and half a century late - to the appalling war crimes committed in Bosnia. Before I do so, I want to make one personal acknowledgement. You have asked me to deliver this lecture, but I could not have done so without the work, far greater than my contribution, that my wife, Ann Tusa, put in to our book on the "Nuremberg Trial". Her name comes first on the book jacket; that reflects the proportion of the work done by, and the credit due, to her. The same goes for the material that I have drawn on for this lecture.

I have one further preliminary but essential observation to make. This is a daunting occasion and a daunting audience. I am not a Jew. I have no experience of what you experienced. I may try to understand it, even to imagine what you and millions of Jews went through. I have no doubt that mere imagination falls dismally short of the reality of what you endured, and your relations, your families, your fellows suffered. What I say now is offered in a tone of respect and in the hope that it will not fall too far short of what any discussion of the Holocaust demands. Please forgive me if through lack of imagination or inadvertence, anything I say appears less worthy of the subject, the event, the occasion, or the audience.

The Nuremberg Trial was conducted by an International Military Tribunal. International - because the Judges and Prosecution were drawn from four of the powers who defeated Nazi Germany - the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France. Military - because the German government had surrendered unconditionally, and Germany was then governed by the military occupation authorities.

Fifty years ago, on 4 March 1946, the Prosecution Case against the Twenty Two Accused Nazi War Criminals had just come to a close. It had lasted 73 arduous days. As Norman Birkett

reflected gloomily on the time that the trial was taking - in fact it was to last until mid-October - the British Alternate Judge consoled himself with this thought. By being endlessly painstaking in the amassing, analysis and presentation of documents, the Tribunal would become a landmark in international law. "To make the trial secure against all criticism it must be shown to be fair, convincing, and built on evidence that cannot be shaken as the years go past. That is why the trial is taking so long and why documents are being piled on documents." From the very beginning, it was destined to be more than a Trial; it was to be a landmark of historical experience.

Birkett was wrong in one respect. Despite the Judges' best efforts, the Trial has come in for its share of criticism over the last fifty years. But he was right in another. The mass of documents produced as evidence in the Tribunal represented an astonishing compilation of a lasting and authoritative archive of atrocity and criminality; of genocide and of holocaust. Nuremberg presented that evidence in systematic and ordered form for the first time. None of the evidence was, or has subsequently been, substantively challenged. Indeed, those few material documents that emerged after the Trial have all confirmed the prosecution charges. The evidence remains conclusive proof that the Nazi War Crimes did take place, and of all the crimes that they committed across the European continent, the destruction of the Jews, the Holocaust, was the worst.

To say that is not to diminish the appalling sufferings of, or the hecatombs of the dead among, Slavs, Poles, Russians or Gypsies; it is not to ignore or minimise the policies of murder, deportation, pillage and exploitation inflicted on the Dutch, the French, the Italians, on all the nations of conquered Europe. But it is to recognise that there was a special fate planned for the Jewish people by Hitler and the Nazi leadership, and a special thoroughness, system and cruelty devoted to realising it in practice. The Nuremberg Tribunal played a key part in presenting for the first time to an often incredulous world just how inconceivable should have been the fate of extinction dreamed up for the Jews, but just how close it came to being carried out to the very last individual. The Tribunal aimed to deliver justice on behalf of all crimes, on behalf of all victims. But the picture it produced of the Holocaust, of those who executed it, of the mentality of those who conceived it, represented an unforgettable achievement. It is about the progressive revelation of the truth of the Holocaust during the Nuremberg Tribunal, and the way that it altered people's knowledge and understanding of what happened to the Jews under Nazism, that I want to talk to you tonight.

I will say something later about the question of what was known of the Final Solution and the Holocaust at the time, and particularly how it impacted upon the participants in the tribunal. What is striking is that it was not the Holocaust that provided the original impulse for some quasi-legal action against the Nazis. It was the evidence of German execution of French hostages in October 1941 that made Churchill and Roosevelt issue a joint declaration warning that the punishment of atrocities "committed in Poland, Yugoslavia, Norway, Holland, Belgium and particularly behind the German front in Russia" would one day "exact a frightful retribution". Note that at this stage in the dawning realisation of the horrors of Nazism, all that was really grasped was the existence of conventional, historic war crimes - such as the shooting of hostages. It was only later, as they drew up the indictment against the Nazi leaders, that the allied powers realised that the old category of mere slaughter could not begin to encompass the scale and brutality of Nazi murder. An altogether new class of crime had to be defined - crimes against humanity. Within that, a new word had to be coined to describe a new obscenity - genocide. Only as the indictment was read to the Defendants in October 1945 was that word heard for the first time by the world.

From October 1941, and the Churchill-Roosevelt Declaration, Governments in exile joined in with their own threats of the consequences that would flow from Nazi actions. Yet, despite this early expression of awareness that horror beyond previous imagining was unfolding in occupied Europe, comparatively little was done during the next four years to turn threats of retribution into actual plans for justice. This was not for lack of trying by some officials. As the war years dragged by, Churchill in particular was increasingly nagged by the UN War Crimes Commission to stir himself over what they called "governmental sluggishness" in devising policies for dealing with war crimes and war criminals.

There were at least three reasons for this sluggishness. First, the obvious one. "Don't you know there's a war on?" Without victory, there could be no retribution, no justice, legal or otherwise. Second, the world was a younger, more innocent place fifty years ago. You can hear the voice of Judge Brack, aghast at the news of Hedda Gabler's suicide: "But people just don't do things like that". Third, the United States, which rapidly became the driving force behind the Trial and its conduct, was then less engaged in, less aware of the beastly potential of European nationalism. Fifty years ago it had a more idealistic view of its own capabilities in assimilating groups and races of differing backgrounds and a more guileless view of the world beyond its sheltered shores. It was also characteristic of many American policy planners to think, as George Ball did, that while he was as well informed as anybody else who had served in government, he found "dark stories of the treatment of the Slavs, Jews, Gypsies and others who did not meet the Wagnerian standards of the Master Race" as likely to be exaggerated. He conceded that "preoccupation with the squalid menace of the war... (meant) ... we did not focus on this unspeakable ghastliness." And then he added this revealing comment: "It may also be that the idea of mass extermination was so far outside the traditional comprehension of most Americans that we instinctively refused to believe in its existence". That persistence in a tragic innocence, naiveté or gullibility was, of course, indulged in at the expense of others and could not and did not survive the evidence of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

Looking back at the Tribunal over fifty years, the order in which the founders approached their work is revealing. First, there was an over-riding belief that justice must be done - as a matter of principle. A just war had, after all, to be ended with justice. Second, a connected belief that the rule of law must be re-introduced into a continent ravaged by the exercise of lawlessness. The benefits of the rule of law, and of the right to a fair trial, had first to be given to those very people whose actions had made a mockery of law for the previous fifteen years. Third, there had to be an organisation, the Tribunal, which would be so constructed that it could deliver the rule of law and be seen to be exercising justice. Fourth, the right people had to be seen to be in the dock. The four Allied Powers had not come to try janitors, subordinates, functionaries. As Justice Robert Jackson insisted in his opening speech for the prosecution, they had put in the dock "men of a station and rank which does not soil its hands with blood ... men who use lesser folk as tools". These planners, designers, instigators and leaders created the evil architecture which scourged the world with violence and lawlessness and the agonies of the terrible war.

Now, what is curious about that procedure is that the hard evidence of evil-doing came, in a sense, last. Of course, everyone knew that atrocities had been committed, and if they did not, then the opening of the gates of Auschwitz and Belsen by the Red Army and the Western Allies in the Spring of 1945 would have purged them of ignorance. While many believe that the Twentieth Century had lost its idealism, lost a belief in progress, lost a sense of God, in the slaughter of the trenches of the First World War, what little of those feelings remained could not survive the revelations of the extermination camps. As their gates opened, so the last vestiges of the century's tattered innocence died, perhaps too any belief that humanity should be given the benefit of the doubt when it came to its ability to make decent choices between good and evil.

The Tribunal lost little time in bringing the treatment of the Jews - the apogee of evil - into the sharpest focus. At an early stage in his opening speech for the prosecution, the American Chief Prosecutor, Robert Jackson, set out the inexorable sequence of events by which the Nazi Party set about the destruction of the Jews. First there was disenfranchisement, open discrimination, and obstacles to economic activity. In 1935, the issuing of the Nuremberg Decrees which excluded Jews from professions, restricted their cultural life and education, and then led to outright confiscation of property. In November 1938, Heydrich's organised "spontaneous uprising" of Germans against Jewish people, property and synagogues followed, only to be capped within a matter of days by the effrontery of a Billion Reichsmarks fine on the Jews for causing the destruction. At this stage in his speech, Jackson pointed only in broad terms to the final outcome of such crimes and contented himself with a quote from Hans Frank, subsequently Gauleiter of Poland, that "The Jews are a race which has to be eliminated".

Jackson himself conceded that he had frequently withheld belief in some of the atrocity stories emanating from occupied Nazi Europe. But though some of his earlier evidence was by now comparatively familiar, by the time he had presented accounts of the so-called "cold" experiments at Dachau, or displayed the lavishly illustrated commemorative volume on the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto prepared on behalf of SS General Stroop, not only the defendants in the dock but hardened journalists in the well of the courtroom began to have some inkling of the very special horror that would be unfolded by the prosecution.

It was revealed slowly. Not so much by design, but by the nature of the documentary evidence itself. Maybe the progressive revelation of evil is no bad thing; it should not be a sudden flash of horror that induces shock, and ebbs into a dulled acquiescence almost as quickly as it appears. Evidence of five million forced deportations from occupied Europe to Germany were bad enough. Yet the revelation of the charnel houses of the concentration camps, the deployment of gas vans and gas chambers, of Adolf Eichmann's terse note announcing the death of four million Jews in concentration camps, with a further two million killed by police in the East, all this moved the understanding of the evil done onto a still more ghastly plane.

But perhaps the onlookers at the Tribunal began to learn something new about the minds of those who supervised such slaughter as well. The Court heard of an official report from the authorities at Mauthausen in March 1945 recording the death from heart attack of 203 people, at regular intervals and in alphabetical order. If such an attitude is beyond explanation, then so was the claim from SS Colonel Otto Ohlendorff, number 3 in the Gestapo, that the Einsatzgruppen working in the Ukraine and Russia found the use of the mobile gas vans an emotional strain. Unloading the dead bodies was a disagreeable experience, he said; shooting the victims would have been less stressful to his men. The distance between the moral universe inhabited by such men and the regime whose orders they automatically obeyed, and anything that we might call European values was becoming clearer by the day. There was an explanation of sorts on offer: it came from Ohlendorff himself. "To me it was inconceivable that a subordinate leader should not carry out orders given by the leader of a state".

There were perhaps moments of grim satisfaction for the onlookers even on a day when the hideous parade of evidence led the American Judge, Francis Biddle, to write in his diary: "Absolutely horrible, I omit the details". At the end Geoffrey Lawrence, the Tribunal President, could not manage to speak to adjourn the Court for the day. What they had heard was a Czech doctor, one Franz Blaha, who had been drafted to Dachau as a prisoner and subjected to typhoid experiments. When he refused to perform experimental operations on healthy prisoners, his punishment was to be sent to the autopsy room where he performed 12,000 post-mortems on camp victims. Inconceivable as this experience was, Blaha was therefore able to testify with personal authority that he saw no fewer than six of the accused - Bromann, Frick, Sauckel, Rosenberg, Funk, and Kaltenbrunner - when they visited the camp, and maintained his eye-witness evidence of their presence at Dachau despite cross-examination. They had been identified, red-handed.

Perhaps there was a grim satisfaction, too, to be found in the evidence of Dieter Wisliceny, a self-styled friend of Eichmann. Denial - physical and psychological - was the nature of much of the defence. Wisliceny shattered all that. Yes, he knew about the so-called "Jewish Question" and the "Final Solution". Yes, he had seen Hitler's orders to Eichmann on the subject, and what is more quoted from subsidiary orders by which the policy was carried out. And yes, he recalled Eichmann saying to him that if Germany lost the war, he would leap laughing into his grave because the five million Jewish dead were a source of extraordinary satisfaction to him. Here was first hand personal evidence of the most damning kind, calculated to puncture those most routine of evasions proffered by criminals from the most small-time to the gigantic. "I didn't do it", "I wasn't there", "I didn't know about it", "I couldn't help it", or "It wasn't my decision".

Yet there was worse to come and it is worth describing only because it proved a watershed in the court's understanding of the events, actions and people it was trying, and as a result transmitted

itself to the wider world beyond, which knew that atrocities had been committed but had no emotional vocabulary to begin to comprehend it. It came in the middle of the presentation of the Russian evidence. (I leave to one side the broader doubts held by many as to whether the Soviet Union should have been among the judges or should have been sitting in the dock with the accused. Yet no-one can gainsay the relevance or the validity of the hideous evidence that the Russians produced against the Nazis). It was so distressing that the American alternate judge, John Parker, a decent lawyer from North Carolina, protested to one of his junior legal aides one evening: "They're going too far in this trial. They claimed today that the guards threw babies up and shot them in the camps. You know no-one would do that". Still, the real horror had not sunk in. It was about to do so.

One atrocity film of the concentration camps had already been shown early on in the prosecution case. But a second one proved psychologically decisive. It lasted for 45 minutes and showed the warehouses at Maidanek, stuffed to the brim with the remnants of human beings. I imagine they were like the similar remains now maintained as memorials at Auschwitz. I do not need to labour the point to you. Maybe it was the guards smiling for the cameras that did something to the onlookers. More likely, it was that any residual doubts about the possibility of exaggeration of the horrors that had been committed, such as Parker or Birkett candidly admitted, simply vanished in the face of the evidence of such industrial killing.

Certainly, the Judges behaved as if they themselves were traumatised. Theoretically, they believed the trial should be speedy, that justice should be expeditious. They had ruled at the outset that they would admit no repetitive evidence. But what they were seeing and hearing now swept aside any resolution for mere efficiency and speed. They were confronted with testimony of a different nature, the testimony that places events on record well beyond the needs of legal proof or evidential thoroughness. The witnesses the Russians produced were not there to give evidence of wrongdoing. They were engaging in a cathartic outpouring of horror that they had endured, not because the court needed it or the prosecution required it but because they as individual victims had to tell the world what they had endured and what they had survived to tell. They spoke too for those who had not survived and could not tell their tale. As a result, the eight Judges sat in silence for six whole days as the evidence from the witnesses assembled by the Soviet authorities poured out unstoppably. It was impossible, presumptuous, indecent, to cut such witnesses short.

These individuals in particular could not be checked and were not. If you have to choose three who spoke for all, three who represented the voice of the evidence, it must surely be these. For in speaking for themselves, they spoke for all. There was Severina Shmaglinskaya, who spent three years at Auschwitz. She told of women being driven to work within minutes of giving birth, of babies forcibly removed from their mothers, of children being herded into gas chambers. No defence counsel wanted to cross-examine her.

There was Samuel Rajzman, who was taken from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka and forced to become an interpreter because he spoke Hebrew, French, Russian, Polish and German. What he described is now part of the universal account of the Treblinka experience. When Rajzman described the calculated normality of Treblinka railway station, the restaurant, the ticket office, the departure board for destinations whose trains always left empty, the strip searching on the platform, the shaving of women's heads, and then the final one way walk up Himmelfahrt Strasse, it was the first time the world heard that story. It can never lose its ability to appal, to strike cold with disbelief. The Nuremberg Tribunal heard it for the first time. No wonder nobody tried to tell Rajzman to please be brief. He was describing a scene that resonates for the Century as a whole.

And then there was the carpenter from the Warsaw Ghetto, Jacob Vernik. He had given the Polish government a statement about what he saw in his year in Treblinka. The Tribunal needed no more evidence about Treblinka. They had all had enough. But they could not turn Vernik away. This is what he wrote. "Awake or asleep, I see terrible visions of thousands of people calling for help, begging for life and mercy. I have lost all my family. I have myself led them to death. I have myself built the death chambers in which they were murdered. I am afraid of everything. I fear

that everything I have seen is written on my face. An old and broken life is a very heavy burden. But I must carry on and live to tell the world what German crimes and barbarism I saw".

When I was at Auschwitz a year ago, I met a Pole whose life mission was the same as Samuel Rajzman's. Because he had been a political prisoner, not a Jew, he was ultimately released. When he received his release papers from the Camp Commandant himself, Rudolf Hoess, he was warned: "If you ever do anything against the Germans again, you will end up going up the chimney". Well, my acquaintance lived to see Hoess hanged in the shadow of that chimney, and his life work is to act as a living reminder to visitors to Auschwitz of the cruelties committed there.

For it was at Nuremberg that the true nature of modern industrial, bureaucratic evil was revealed in the evidence of men such as Rudolf Hoess. For him, running an extermination camp was a business. It was a matter of his pride, and his men's organisation and efficiency. He was proud that his organisational ability meant that 2½ million people were exterminated at Auschwitz. Hoess did have his regrets. Half a million victims had died from starvation and disease while in his hands. For a moment, his listeners might have thought that a shred of compassion was breaking in, even to the mind of a mass-production murderer. No; Hoess's regret lay in the fact that these half million did not die as they should have done and as he had had his orders to kill them. Somewhere, in remarks such as that, the new consciousness of the second half of the Twentieth Century began to reveal itself. How had we produced a world where our actions and our moral awareness were so divided? How had we reached a state where efficiency was apparently its own justification, without reference to humanity, to compassion, to morality, to outcome. That, too, was part of the revelation of the Nuremberg process. The trial had become more than a trial; it was a seminar on organised evil, a cathartic release of suffering and grief.

No wonder that the judges did not stop Vernik, Rajzman or the others. No wonder that the judges were in some senses different people after that evidence. No wonder that any residual disbelief about the scale of the atrocities vanished. There was even a slight possibility - for those who believe in the possibility and importance of repentance - that something had got through to the defendants. Some of them occasionally were seen to shed tears. Otto Kranmzbuehler, Counsel for the Admirals Doenitz and Raeder, and a lawyer of the highest standards and ability, much admired by the prosecutors, demanded of Doenitz: "Didn't anybody know anything of these things?" All he got was a silent shrug and shake of the head. Goering gave an answer: "Of course not... The higher you stand the less you see of what is going on below". A lie of course, but did it contain the seeds of an understanding of what they had done?

Certainly, the evidence presented at Nuremberg was disseminated by hundreds of journalists around the world. It was systematically printed in the allied controlled press in occupied Germany. German journalists were virtually press-ganged into attending and filing daily accounts. The fact is that the educative process was less successful initially than was hoped. Germans felt too cold, hungry, defeated and humiliated to face up to shame and guilt as well. They did not want to confront their past; newspapers were useful only for stuffing gaps in the walls to keep out the draughts in the bombed ruins and to light fires in that winter's bitter weather.

The twenty-two volumes of the verbatim trial transcript, and as many again of additional evidence, makes the possibility of casting doubt on Nazi atrocities, even on the Holocaust itself impossible, except to a comparatively small handful of evil obsessives. It proves beyond question that "we didn't know" was a blatant lie. It established that "I wasn't there" was a fantasy. If, fifty years on, the sense of the evil actuality of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust today remains as vivid as ever, then surely the achievement of the Nuremberg Tribunal in placing the events on the public record, overwhelmingly on the basis of documents drawn up, prepared, maintained and preserved by the Nazi authorities themselves must be acknowledged as having played an important part in that process.

Why didn't people know more about the Nazi pillage, human and physical? Some will always believe that there was good knowledge of the Holocaust but that the Allies chose - some for

disreputable reasons - not to act upon it. In his recent book, "Changing Enemies", Noel Annan, who served in British Intelligence during the war said: "It took some time for the enormity of Germany's crimes against the Jews to sink in. In Intelligence, we knew of the gas ovens, but not of the scale, the thoroughness, the bureaucratic efficiency with which Jews had been hunted down and slaughtered. No-one at the end of the war, as I recollect, realised that the figure of Jewish dead ran into millions." He then records how the opening up of Belsen began to transform those impressions.

A very close friend of mine, for whose reliability as a witness I can vouch, was an Intelligence Officer in the British Army. He confirmed to me that although as a much younger man before the war, he and others were aware of the existence of internment camps such as Dachau. Despite being in Intelligence, he and his unit knew nothing of the existence of the extermination camps. There was no Army propaganda about it, no briefings from Army Current Affairs Unit. One day, as he and British Army units were advancing across Luneburg Heath in northern Germany, German Wehrmacht Units approached with white flags. The German officers said that there was a camp nearby with many prisoners in a very poor state, starving, suffering from typhus and other highly infectious diseases. The Wehrmacht officers suggested that the British units should make all speed in that direction, not in order to relieve suffering, but in order to seal it off to prevent disease spreading as the inmates scattered over the countryside - a revealing glimpse into the Wehrmacht mind. My friend's units advanced as fast as they could and found Belsen. They were the first units to arrive. They were utterly shattered by the sights they saw, sights for which they were utterly unprepared. "Some of the ordinary soldiers", said my friend, "went fairly berserk at what they saw and found".

Others, higher up in the chain of political command were perhaps less ignorant of the hidden realities of Nazi Germany. That is a separate issue. What I would argue is that the systematic and ordered revelations of Nuremberg played a major part in informing the whole world of the reality of the Nazi occupation of Europe, and that it was a process - to judge by the reactions of the participants in the trial themselves - that genuinely took them by surprise as well. It was as late as February 1946, five months into the Trial, that Sir Patrick Dean, Legal Adviser at the Foreign Office, who was closely involved in preparing the prosecution evidence, attempted to draw up a tally of the total killed by the Nazis. He recorded his appalled guesstimate that over ten million civilians must have died in Europe. Such remained the gap between the understanding of Nazi slaughter and its true reality. The evidence was a revelation for all concerned, and a revelation for all time. After Nuremberg, there could be no concealment.

But the whole process served another function too. Nobody after the Trial could deny that the Nazi regime did what they did. Nothing could be brushed under the carpet. Nobody could begin reconstructing German politics and society on the basis that a few changes might be needed but that on the whole, the former foundations of the German state were perfectly adequate and decent ones. After Nuremberg, there could only be a year zero approach to the creation of a new Germany, though in 1946 that itself seemed a very distant prospect.

But there was a further consequence for Europe as a whole. Peace had been won on the back of outright military victory and unconditional political surrender. No-one could argue with those facts. It was the addition of justice - through the often imperfect medium of Nuremberg and the subsequent trials - that laid a secure foundation for the orderly evolution of Europe, although the Cold War delayed the appearance of its final form for another generation. Had justice not been attempted, had justice not been seen to be done, then peace would have been less complete because the universal longing after a decade and a half of institutionalised illegality was for a full and complete reckoning that at least attempted to be commensurate with the crimes committed, the evils done, the wrongdoing perpetrated. Nuremberg, for all its faults, recognised the scale of what was demanded of it, and the nature of the opportunity before it. It was no less than to put a regime, an era, a way of thinking and acting on trial before the world.

As the Chief American Prosecutor, Robert Jackson, put it in his opening speech: "That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgement of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason". The result of that process was the presentation of evidence, the establishment of fact, the accumulation of a historical archive. Such was Nuremberg's contribution to law, to politics, to society, to memory and to justice. That is why Nuremberg itself deserves to be remembered and honoured fifty years on.

BOOK REVIEW

ASSASSINS OF MEMORY

ESSAYS ON THE DENIAL OF THE HOLOCAUST BY PIERRE VIDAL-NAQUET

BEN HELFGOTT

Denying the Holocaust has pre-occupied the minds of the anti-semites almost since the end of the War. However, in the early years it was confined mainly to irregular ill-produced pamphlets and leaflets. It was not till the 60s that a Frenchman Paul Rassinier with seemingly excellent credentials, a socialist Deputy in the French Assembly, a pacifist, a resistance fighter and an inmate of the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dora, became the cultural hero of the revisionists. He argued that international zionists fabricated the Holocaust myth to arouse feelings of guilt and sympathy from the world community in order to establish the State of Israel. He also denied the existence of the gas chambers. He was supported by the *Vielle Taupe* (old mole) which was founded by Pierre Guillaumie, a former militant of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (sob) with Trotskyist tendencies, as indeed was Robert Faurisson, a lecturer in twentieth century French Literature at the University of Lyons whose book *Memoire en Defense* they published in 1980. This book was as mendacious and dishonest as all the others written before, including those by the American historian and sociologist Harry Elmer Barnes and Arthur Butz, a lecturer in electrical engineering, who wrote the "Hoax of the Twentieth Century" and the German Wilhelm Staglich, author of "The Auschwitz Myth".

However, Faurisson's book "Memoire en Defense" astounded the intellectual world and deeply disturbed Holocaust Survivors by the fact that the book was prefaced by Noam Chomsky, a world renowned linguist, a son of a Professor of Hebrew, a libertarian and anti-imperialist. Chomsky admitted that he did not read the book and that he wrote the preface not in defence of Faurisson but in defence of freedom of speech and expression. Although Chomsky later disavowed not his text but the use that had been made of it by his naivety or perhaps hubris, he handed the revisionist an 'extraordinary windfall'.

'The Assassins of Memory' is a collection of five essays written between 1980 and 1987. Although Professor Naquet refers to some of the international revisionists, especially Arthur Butz, his main attention is concentrated on the French scene. It is written with the incisive logic of the French School combined with that of a classical scholar. There is also a stimulating foreword by Jeffrey Mehlman, a Professor of French literature at Boston University.

In his first essay entitled "A Paper Eichman" one is conscious of his dilemma on how to respond to these denials. As he states "to argue with Faurisson is difficult as his use of the non-ontological proof makes discussion futile". Faurisson states that it was not possible technically for so many people to be killed in the gas chambers. Yet it was possible because it occurred. There is not nor can there be a debate over the existence of the gas chambers. However, not answering his allegations would by itself be tantamount to concurring with him. It is the speciousness of his arguments, rather than the arguments themselves that have to be answered. In this essay Professor Naquet dissects the pseudo-historical arguments propounded by Faurisson, Rassinier and Butz and exposes their cynical half-truths and blatant falsehood with consummate skill.

In his second essay, entitled Faurisson and Chomsky, Naquet takes both of them equally to task and demolishes their arguments with a rapier-like precision. Here is one of his many ripostes, "The simple truth, Noam Chomsky, is that you were unable to abide by the ethical maxim you had imposed. You had the right to say; my worst enemy has the right to be free on condition that he does not ask for my death or that of my brothers. You did not have the right to say; my worst enemy is a comrade, or a 'relatively apolitical sort of a liberal'. You did not have the right to take a falsifier of history and to recast him in the colours of truth".

The essay of the "Theses on Revisionism" is illuminating, but why refer to David Irving as a semi-revisionist when in fact he is an arch revisionist and semi-denier. I also do not agree with Professor Naquet that the Shoah is 'a common place tool of political legitimation in Israel' as well as an instrument in demanding unswerving loyalty to Israel from Diaspora Jewry. It is understandable that the Shoah should exert a great influence on the consciousness of the Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora but his assertions go too far.

To state that the revisionist crisis occurred in the West only after the widespread broadcast of the 'Holocaust' film in 1979 is also debatable. The film may have been exaggerated and even fictitious but the essential elements of the Jewish tragedy were very well portrayed.

The last essay "Assassins of Memory" written in 1987 is tremendously stimulating and raises many aspects on the Holocaust and revisionism but his criticism on Israel is unjustified. Professor Naquet believes that we have to come to terms with the world of Faurisson's but we must never capitulate nor must we stoop to the level of our enemies. We must persist in establishing facts not for those who are already informed but for those who are genuinely seeking the truth.

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OBITUARIES

NORMAN TURGILL

GENA TURGILL

I have been given this opportunity to write a few words about my late husband, Norman.

Many of you will know that I am a survivor and that Norman was an ex-serviceman, but he was considerably more than this, because it was he who rescued me from Belsen concentration camp.

As a sergeant with the Intelligence Unit, Norman was the first to enter Belsen on 15 April 1945, taking surrender of the camp and arresting Commandant Kramer. He was my saviour and liberator and, soon after, my husband too, and from then on he was there for me for all times. When we were married in Germany in October 1945, the British Army rabbi, Reverend Hardman, proclaimed that our love would serve as a symbol of hope after so much death.

After the war, Norman brought me back to London where I lived with his family. It was a difficult time for everyone, but especially for me. I had lost five brothers and sisters at the hands of the Nazis, and settling in London was extremely arduous, as I had only my mother as family. We had very little in material terms, but we had each other, and with Norman's support I began to follow a British lifestyle and we soon started a family of our own. With a loving and adoring husband dedicated to my well-being and the distraction of our new young family, I could look forward to the future with enthusiasm and hope. I too, at long last, could now begin to appreciate what the rabbi had meant.

In the years that followed, Norman and I took it upon ourselves to educate and inform people who had never known the horrors of the Holocaust. After the publication of my book "I Light a Candle" we received an enormous number of requests from schools, colleges and universities to speak about my life in Belsen. We have been interviewed and written about in newspapers and magazines, and we have appeared many times on national television and radio.

During the past ten years we have also made two visits to Belsen, on the fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries of its liberation. They were difficult and distressing experiences to say the least, for me as a survivor and for Norman as a liberator, but we gained great strength from each other.

Since then, interest in our lives grew more and more and we travelled extensively, here and overseas, to talk to different institutions and associations.

It has not always been easy and sometimes the emotional strain has been considerable, but Norman was always there eager to remind me that if the recounting of one more experience can broaden the scope of human understanding, it is a small price to pay.

More than anyone else, Norman realised that if the future is to be built on the memory of the past, then it had become our duty to remind and inform the children of today of a time, not very long ago, which might otherwise be consigned to the pages of history books.

When my dear Norman passed away in July his great strength and support was taken away from me, and although this can never be replaced, my work has continued and my motivation to inform has remained undiminished. In fact, I have an even greater resolve to continue, knowing that it is what Norman would have wanted.

LOLA TARKO - nee GOLDBERSZ

SALA KAYE

It is with great sorrow that I write of my dear friend's death.

Fate has a strange yet wonderful way of bringing together people who would never otherwise have met. This was the case with Lola and I. Although we were both from Poland, both from camps, our lives were miles apart. Lola had lost her family in the camps - mine survived, only for us to be

parted. We were given the chance whilst in Terezinstad in 1945 to come to England to start a new life and my mother was insistent that I take this opportunity and I therefore ended up in the Knoll in Windermere, where I was lucky enough to meet Lola, who befriended me and helped me cope with the trauma of leaving my mother and my sister and standing on my own two feet for the first time in my life. Lola and I were to share not only a room, but our lives for many years - until we married.

When I met Henry Kaye in Bedford and decided to live near him in Luton, Lola decided to move to Luton with me so that we could share a room together and through Henry she met Johnny Tarko whom she married not long after I married Henry. We all stayed in Luton for many years and when their daughter Rosalind was five years old they decided to go to New York, as Johnny had found his father.

Our friendship continued even though we were far apart. We met twice in New York and the last occasion was in October 1995 when she re-visited England.

Lola - dearest friend - SHALOM.

EPHRAIM FARKAS

DAVID HERMAN

After a long illness, on the 21st May 1996, Frank passed away aged 66. He was born in the small town of Horinc, Czechoslovakia. There were eight children in the family, five brothers and three sisters.

In April 1944, the Jews of Horinc were taken to Auschwitz. Frank was separated from the rest of his family. From Auschwitz he was sent to the notorious Mauthausen concentration camp. In April 1945 he was taken to Buchenwald and then to Theresienstadt where he was finally liberated on the 8th May 1945.

At the end of the war only three brothers and one sister survived, the rest of his family, including his parents, perished in Auschwitz.

I first met Frank in Prague at the beginning of March 1946, when our group of forty children were boarding a plane (army Dakota) bound for England. Frank and I sat together, we soon got to know each other. When we arrived at Northolt airport in Middlesex, a coach was waiting to take us to the Jewish Temporary Shelter in Mansell Street, E.1. A few days later we left by train for Manchester and then to Montford Hall which was a hostel in Nelson Colne, Lancashire. In June 1946 I left Montford Hall and moved to London. I later learned that Frank was suffering from tuberculosis, (which he contracted in the camps) and was in the Grosvenor Sanatorium in Ashford, Kent. When the Grosvenor Clinic closed, he was transferred to Quaremead Sanatorium in Ugley, Essex.

In 1948 we caught up with each other at the Primrose Club, we renewed our friendship once again living in rooms close to each other and often going out together. In 1954 Frank married Carol Miller whom he met in the club. They had a daughter Helen, and a son Alan. In the '60's and early '70's Frank and Carol were busy raising a family. Frank was very determined to make a success

of his life. After a number of different jobs he went into partnership with Benny Newton, and together they built a very successful business.

He was a keen and active member of the '45 Aid Society. For many years he was a member of the committee and also was treasurer of the Society. He loved the company of the "boys" and enjoyed playing cards with them. He had a large collection of records and tapes of world famous cantors, he was passionately fond of playing them to his friends when relaxing at home.

Frank was a very strong supporter of the state of Israel, he frequently travelled to Israel to visit his family and friends. He supported those of his friends who were less fortunate than he and was always ready to give of his time and help when needed.

In 1988, Frank and Carol emigrated to Israel to join their daughter and family. However, he found the climate did not suit him and later returned to England, sharing his time between London and Tel-Aviv.

In January 1995 it was discovered that Frank was suffering from a very serious illness which he fought courageously until the end. His final wish was to be taken to Israel and buried there.

Our sincere condolences to Carol, Helen, Alan and the entire Farkas family. Frank was a true and loyal friend. I find it hard to believe that he is no longer with us. He will be missed by all who knew him and remembered with love and affection.

RABBI HUGO GRYN 1930 - 1996

BEN HELFGOTT

Hugo Gryn was one of 732 teenagers who were brought from the concentration camps to England in 1945/6. A few months later the late Leonard G Montefiore, who played an important part in their rehabilitation, gave an address to the Cambridge University Jewish Society in which he stated "by no stretch of imagination is it conceivable that any one of these children will become a member of the Reform Synagogue".

One wonders what Leonard Montefiore would have thought had he lived to see the outpouring of grief and expressions of admiration by the thousands of Jews and non-Jews following Hugo's death. Hugo surpassed all expectations, making a tremendous impact not only on the members of his congregation in the West London Synagogue but also on the whole of the Reform movement and on the outside world. He added lustre to the West London Synagogue which became a centre of progressive Judaism in the Anglo-Jewish world. His office became a Mecca for visiting Rabbis and educators who came to London seeking his wise counsel which he gave so unstintingly. Very often, especially if it coincided with Friday evening or the Chagim, he would invite them to his home where they were received with open arms by his family. This was a central feature in the life of the Gryn's home and many a family has happy memories of their hospitality enhanced by his wife Jackie's charm and good cooking.

However, Hugo's influence stretched far beyond the Reform Movement. He was very active in the CCJ and the architect of the Interfaith Network, for which he received an award. His frequent appearances on radio and television made him a household name. His services were in ever

growing demand as he gave inspiring talks to schoolchildren of all grades, University students, Clergy and a host of other groups. John Forest, the producer of BBC School Television, in his tribute to Hugo, stated that "he had been particularly encouraging in the quest to understand and innovate in the field of religious education which promotes tolerance and understanding of people who adhere to different and various faith practices".

In another tribute, Stephen Whittle from the BBC referred to him as the 'great communicator' and "one of the finest religious broadcasters with the skill of telling stories, stories which illuminate our lives". Hugo always found the right word and a relevant story to tell for every occasion. He had the unique ability of making one feel the very centre of his attention and concern. When I used to visit him in his office there was hardly ever an occasion when the telephone did not ring, usually from people seeking his advice on a multitude of problems which he dealt with with great sensitivity and encouragement. He gave comfort to many people in many walks of life and denominations. However busy he was he always found time for individuals who needed his guidance. His Saturday evenings were as a rule taken up in visiting the sick, not only his congregants but also many of his friends from different denominations, for Hugo was a devoted friend to all who knew him.

His experiences in the Concentration camps had a profound impact on his actions and thinking and it was characteristic of him that he championed the cause of the weak and the oppressed. Hugo's passion for a society which respects the rights of all minority groups and pursues justice for all was at the core of his life's philosophy. He was a man of great moral courage and was never afraid to speak his mind whenever and wherever the occasion would arise. He was a great supporter and admirer of Israel; he went to fight for its independence in 1948, but he never desisted from criticising Israel when that criticism was necessary.

The Moral Maze on BBC Radio 4, as well as other radio and TV programmes, became a perfect vehicle for his ethical and humanitarian expressions. However, he was not a moraliser nor did he pronounce moral judgements, especially on individuals, as he was only well aware of human frailties and shortcomings. He articulated the humane aspect of Judaism and appealed to the middle ground expressing its feelings and aspirations. He was, as he said, "a healer and harmoniser rather than a divider". He avoided conflict as far as possible. Ordinary people could identify with what he was saying. He touched people's hearts. As the Reverend Lord Runcie, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, put it, "it is hard to think of anyone so universally trusted across the frontiers by reason of his sense, sincerity and above all his own profound but never paraded personal experience".

His Judaism was understandable and acceptable to the wider section of the Jewish community, many of whom did not belong to the Reform Synagogue. Contrary to the belief of the Orthodox, who are afraid that his type of Judaism is but a stepping stone to assimilation, if anything, his approach helped to save many Jews from leaving their flock. Jews who live in the Diaspora in a pluralist world must inevitably expect a continuous fall out. The brand of Judaism that Hugo practised and preached did not prevent the haemorrhage but may have stemmed the flow of assimilation. Hugo, like so many survivors, was very conscious of the fact that the Nazis did not distinguish between Liberal or Reform Jews and that of the Orthodox strands. To him every Jew, irrespective of what brand of Judaism he or she belong, indeed every human being, was very precious. Paradoxically, Hugo was in many ways following a tradition that the Rabbis in Eastern Europe practised for centuries. Their priority was to find a solution, within the Halakhic Law, to the multifarious problems with which they were presented by their followers. Their concern was for the well-being of the individual. Hugo understood this and strove at all times to achieve this goal. It is mainly because of this that he earned the love and respect of so many.

Hugo was a Vice-President of our Society and, due to his many and varied activities and pressure of work, his time did not permit him to have a high profile within our group. However, his advice and influence in the affairs of our Society was wide-ranging and much appreciated.

He served God, he served his people and humanity at large, enriching the lives of many and, at the same time, enhancing the image of the Jewish people in the eyes of those amongst whom they live.

TO RABBI HUGO GRYN 1930 - 1936

MICHAEL ETKIND

For fifty years you grew
In stature poise and fame
While building bridges between creeds
Of different shades

And those who knew you grew as well
Grew taller - in themselves

You ventured into areas
That not many dared to tread
That were taboo to those
Of lesser faith in man
The no-man's-land became the common ground
Upon which men of different outlook could converge
Agree to disagree to argue
To express their different points of view
To think

Yours was the middle way
Between the two extremes
Which the fanatics on all sides abhor

You've searched for ways
Out of the moral maze
The thinking man confronts each day
At every step he takes

To the survivor of the holocaust
You gave a voice
And silenced those who lied
Who tried to stir up hate

You knew that progress means
Traditions being kept alive
That in a changing world
Religion also must adapt, evolve
And grow

You knew that all which links mankind
Brings Hope

That Hope survives

TO RABBI HUGO GRYN 1930 - 1996

MICHAEL ETKIND

We did not meet a lot
Just now and then
A warm handshake and
Some words of praise

I always heard you on
The 'Moral Maze'
And all those meetings
You addressed with Ben

And the reunions with
All the 'Boys'

None will forget you
Your hope and your zest
Your rich sense of humour
Your voice

And your Faith

We were very sorry to learn about the death of Gerald Faull and send our sincere condolences and deep sympathy to his brother Stanley and his wife June and family.

Some of our members will remember Gerald who came, as a very young RAF serviceman to meet Stanley in Windermere. He often came with Stanley to our reunions and was very fond of our 'boys'. We shall all miss him.

MEMBERS' NEWS

BIRTHS

Congratulations to our members who since the last edition of our Journal have been blessed with grandchildren.

Rifka and Jack Rubinfeld a grandson, Eitan Leor, born to Dolcy and Ilan.
Pauline and Harry Spiro a granddaughter, Hannah Gita, born to Ros and Leslie.

Margaret and Harry Olmer a granddaughter, Gemma Zoe, born to Julia and Andrew.
 Pauline Harry Balsam a grandson, Jack, born to Amanda and Colin.
 Jasmine and Michael Bandel a granddaughter, Sabrina Hannah, born to Amanda and Martin.
 Irka Reichman a grandson, Moishe, born to Metta and David.
 Roma Barnes twin granddaughters, Elena Rae and Rachel Fae.
 Betty and Charlie Lewkowicz a granddaughter, Sharon Anita, born to Karen and Jack.
 Anna and David Turek a granddaughter, Rachel Esther, born to Susan and Jeremy and a grandson, Jonathan Solomon, born to Vicky and Michael.
 Marian and Myer Stern a grandson, Dotan, born to Lelia and David.
 Rachel and Phin Levy a grandson, Michael, born to Julie and Martin.
 Vivienne and Kopel Kendall a grandson, Jordan, born to Tania and Jeffrey.
 Dian and Stanley Faull a grandson, Mathew, born to Laura and Maurice.
 Tina and Victor Greenberg a grandson, Joseph Hershel, born to Janie and Alan.
 Doreen and Harry Wajchandler a granddaughter, Haley Grace, born to Gillian and Douglas.
 Elsa and Howard Chandler a granddaughter, Yael, born to Bonnie and Oded.
 Thea and Isroel Rudzinski a great-granddaughter born to their granddaughter Yitty and Levy Jitzchock Miller.

BARMITZVAHS

MAZELTOV to our members who have had the pleasure of celebrating the Barmitzvah of their grandsons

Lottie and Moishe Mallinek, grandson.
 Betty and Charlie Lewkowitz, grandson Jonathan, son of Eve and Howard.
 Carol Farkas, grandson Shai, son of Helen and Jacob.
 Beatrice and Leon Manders, grandson Ben, son of Sharon.
 Betty and John Fox, grandson in America.

ENGAGEMENTS

Valerie and Chaim Kohn, mazeltov on the engagement of your daughter Frimette to Gaby in Israel.
 Rita and Ruben Orzech, mazeltov on the engagement of your daughter.
 Thea and Isroel Rudzinski, mazeltov on the engagement of your grandson Mylech.
 Alf Kirshberg, mazeltov on the engagement of your daughter Elaine to Steven.
 Harry Fox, mazeltov on the engagement of your daughter Rochelle to Michael Moore.
 Minia and Peter Jay, mazeltov on the engagement of your granddaughter Sharon to Mark.

MARRIAGES

Mazeltov to:

Olive and David Herman on the marriage of their daughter Julia to Phillip.
Valerie and Chaim Kohn on the marriage in Israel of their daughter Frimette to Gaby.
Shirley and Joe Kiersz on the marriage of their daughter Allison to Steven.
Arza and Ben Helfgott on the marriage of their son Michael to Thea.
Thea and Isroel Rudzinski on the marriage of their grandson.
Sala Newton-Katz on the marriage of her granddaughter Debbie to Olivr, son of Janet and Dennis

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

A very hearty mazeltov to Wendy and Lipa Tepper on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary.

I am in my early thirties and work as an English teacher in Spain. I would like to correspond with someone in the same profession with a view to friendship.

Suzanne Kutner

Telephone Southend-on-Sea 01702-341903

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS IN MANCHESTER

COMPILED BY LOUISE

DEATHS

In 1996, our friend Henry (Henech) Glazer died in Manchester and was buried in Israel.
25th December 1996, Alan Weiler died.

BIRTHS

February 1996. Stephanie and Leslie Portnoy became proud grandparents of a grandson.

April 1996. Sam and Elaine Walshaw celebrated a new grandson born to their son Brenden and his wife.

July 1996. Sam and Blanche Laskier celebrated another grandson born to their daughter Gillian and husband Peter.

BIRTHDAYS

April 1996. Mayer Hersh attained the age of 70 years and made a celebratory Kiddush.

December 1996. Mendel Beale attained the age of 75.

BARMITZVAH

June 1996. Daniel Rubenstein, son of Harold and Joan and grandson of Alice, had his big day.

November 1996. Gavain, son of Simon Beale and grandson of Mendel and Marie Beale, had his big day.

BAT CHAYIL

April 1996 saw the happy event for Nicola Field, daughter of Jacky and Rodney Field and granddaughter of Mayer and Lily Bomsztyk.

ENGAGEMENTS

March 1996. Darren, son of Elaine and Sam Walshaw.

October 1996. Sarah, daughter of Maurice and Marita Golding.

November 1996. Lee, son of Karl and Estelle Kleiman.

RUBY WEDDING

September 1996. Lily and Mayer Bomsztyk celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

December 1996. Sam and Blanche Laskier celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

51ST ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION

We had our annual service at Steincourt Synagogue followed by a very fine Kiddush and instead of an evening celebration Pinky and Susan Kumedz invited all our members for afternoon tea the following day. This was an enormous success and it was decided that we would take this format in the future relying, of course, on our members making their homes available.

During 1996, both Carol Wurzel and Mark Fruhman have had very serious operations and the good wishes for a speedy recovery to both of them is in all our minds and we hope that they and their families will be able to rejoice with good health in the very near future.

Every good wish to you all.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOM HA'SHOAH

In 1997, Yom Ha'Shoah falls on Sunday, 5th May. On that day, commemorations will take place at the Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London EC1 on Sunday, 5th May at 11 am.

1997 REUNION AND OUR SOCIETY'S BROCHURE

The 52nd Anniversary of our Liberation Reunion will take place on:

MONDAY 5TH MAY 1997

**WATFORD TOWN HALL
THE COLOSSEUM
RICKMANSWORTH ROAD
WATFORD
HERTS WD1 7JN**

As always, we appeal to our members to support us by placing advertisements in our Souvenir Brochure to be published by the Society. Please contact:

Brochure Chairman - Harry Balsam 40 Marsh Lane, Mill Hill, London NW7
Telephone: 0181-959 6517 (Home) 0171-372 3662 (Office)

Diamond Page	£500.00
Gold Page	£250.00
Silver Page	£150.00
Full Page	£100.00
Half Page	£ 75.00
Quarter Page	£ 40.00
Children's Name	£ 10.00

THE ANNUAL OSCAR JOSEPH HOLOCAUST AWARDS

The '45 Aid Society offers up to three Awards of £600.00 each to assist successful candidates to participate in the Holocaust Seminar at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which is held for three weeks in July 1997. The overall cost of participation is about £1,000.00.

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 3rd March 1997 to:

Ruby Dreihorn
37 Salmon Street
London NW9

Please send items of family news for inclusion in the next issue to our Secretary, Ruby Dreihorn, 37 Salmon Street, London NW9.