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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This year was overshadowed by our members' concern regarding restitution and their reaction to it. I have repeatedly tried to explain the sources from which funds are likely to be available and what were the prospects for our members of being beneficiaries from these funds. At all times I was careful not to raise false expectations. What I expressed were not necessarily my views nor my policy nor my desired course of action. I explained what was the realistic understanding of what was feasible and the right channels through which to attain whatever is possible for our members. As your Chairman, I took my responsibilities very seriously as I have always done in the past. Indeed, even more so because of the emotions these issues arouse.

For the record, it is important for me to reiterate, very briefly, the nature of the various funds that are available, or will be available.

1. CLAIMS CONFERENCE

- (a) Hardship Fund
- (b) The Article 11 Fund.

These Funds apply to those survivors who have never received any compensation and it does not apply to us as most of our members have been receiving monthly payments since the 1960s.

- (c) Claims Conference Successor Organisation.

The Claims Conference has recovered hundreds of heirless and unclaimed Jewish properties in E.Germany which are then sold and the proceeds used to benefit institutions that assist survivors. This Fund applies not only to survivors who were in the Ghettos, in hiding and Concentration Camps, but also to those who lived under the Nazis since 1933.

You will be pleased to learn that the Society will be receiving a grant from this Fund for \$40,000, which will be used specifically for those who live on a low income. It will be assistance in kind for medical or health aid and not for any direct sums of money (see page 100).

2. WORLD JEWISH RESTITUTION ORGANISATION - WJRO.

WJRO was established in 1993 and is playing a central role in Eastern Europe by assisting and advising local communities and negotiating with the Eastern European Governments the restitution of heirless Jewish and especially communal properties. They are working closely with the State Department and Members of Congress in keeping them informed by focusing on their goals. Property restitution in Eastern Europe is a very difficult and complex issue and while it is of great interest to us it does not affect us directly.

The WJRO will, however, play an important part where it will affect us as it will be a major player in the deliberation and distribution of 1.25 billion dollars which they have negotiated with and will be receiving from the two Swiss Banks, the UBS and Credit Suisse, over a period of three years. The distribution issue will be very complex and intricate. I very much hope that cooler heads and reason will prevail. It will have to be sorted out by the Courts, to disentangle the many law suits which will last a few months. Then it will take some time to establish the identity and veracity of the claimants from the dormant accounts. During this time there will be heated discussions how best to distribute the remainder from the Fund. Many argue that it should be distributed amongst all the victims of Nazi persecution. If this were to be done, if distributed amongst 750,000 victims, each would receive about £1,000.

Whichever way this Fund will be distributed, it will leave many unhappy and disgruntled survivors. I must, however, emphasise that we are well represented at the highest level and we will endeavour to do everything that is humanly possible to ensure that our members are fairly treated.

3. SWISS ISSUE

As far as I know, the settlement of 1.25 billion dollars with the Swiss Banks and WJRO relieves the Swiss Banks from their obligation to any further claims. However, there remains still the Swiss Humanitarian Fund and the remainder of the gold that was until very recently under the aegis of the Tripartite Commission and was the subject of last year's Gold Conference in December 1997.

(a) Swiss Humanitarian Fund.

354 thousand dollars was allocated from the SHF to the needy victims of Nazi persecution in this country. Over 800 applications have been received and we are now waiting for this money from the Swiss. The machinery for distribution has been established under the auspices of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the recipients will receive about 400 dollars.

(b) Gold.

Britain and the U.S.A. have managed to persuade the ten European countries to whom 5.6 metric tons of gold - in today's value about £40 million - belong, to donate it to a Fund. They are also putting pressure on the neutral countries, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey and Argentina, to augment this Fund. It is very unlikely that any of this money will be given to survivors in the West. Stuart Eisenstat, the U.S. Under-Secretary of State, has been the main driving force behind this campaign, using moral persuasion to give this money to the "double" victims.

4. BRITAIN

Of the £1 million that Britain donated as a gesture of goodwill and for other countries to respond likewise, to the approximately 40 million Gold Fund, £330,000 was earmarked to the needy victims of Nazi persecution in this country. This, too, is administered by the Board of Deputies and is being distributed to needy applicants.

5. Claims from insurances, stolen objet d'art, which encompasses paintings, jewellery, rare books and manuscripts, and also claims against the Dresuer and Deutsche Banks will take a long time to unravel. In any case, most of it relates to individual and public owners and the chances of survivors benefiting from it are very slim.

6. SLAVE LABOUR (see also page)

This is a very emotive issue. We all, without any exception, feel that we were used as less than slaves and morally we are entitled to receive compensation. This is not a new issue. The Claims Conference put great pressure on the West German Government and German companies, such as I.G. Farben, Krupp, A.E.G., Siemens and Rheinmetall in the '50s, '60s and early '70s. They received nearly 52 million D.M. which was distributed among 14,878 claimants, of whom 104 were from Britain. They could not get much further with the German companies and the government and had to abandon the claims in the '70s with great reluctance. They did, however, turn their attention to other claims against the German Government which benefited many survivors.

At the last meeting of the Claims Conference in July 1998, it was decided to resume the pursuit for claims for former slave labourers. The moral pressure will be on the German Government and the German companies to accept their obligation to former slave labourers. Some companies are already recognising their moral responsibility and have offered payment. However, the most satisfactory outcome would be if the German Government and German companies were to set up a Fund so that every slave labourer would receive a fair compensation. It is important to understand that about 80% of the factories where slave labourers worked during the War ceased to exist with the demise of the Third Reich. It would be grossly unfair if most of them were not to receive any compensation. On the whole, survivors have been proud of each other's well-being but, in the case of compensation, the thought of being left out provokes in them, like in most people, strange reactions.

I would like to conclude with a reminder. Ever since the inception of our Society in 1963 and long before, we have been unlike most other groups. Our bonds have proved stronger than our stresses and have stood us in good stead. As we grow older we need these bonds more than ever. We have always helped and supported each other, both in times of joy and sadness. Each one of us understands the other one's needs. The culture of friendship which is the foundation of our Society cannot be measured quantitatively and its qualitative appeal is the envy of many. We should be constantly aware of the value of these bonds, guard them jealously and actively seek never to undermine them.

Ben Helfgott

* * *

PAST AND PRESENT

LODZ GHETTO LATE SUMMER 1942

ESTHER BRUNSTEIN

Esther is the sister of Perec Zylberberg. She was liberated in Belsen and then sent to Sweden. She joined Perec in England in 1947. She has written and talked eloquently about her experiences.

Late summer 1942. The darkest period to date in the Lodz Ghetto, renamed by the Germans Litzmanstadt. So many painful memories abound... faces and images of my dearest ones, so cruelly struck down in the prime of their lives, appear and demand not to be forgotten. As if I ever could or would... always and forever they are in the very depth of my whole being. To quote a line from a Yiddish poet: "I have not yet returned from the longest funeral procession" - and so I am forever attending silent memorial services.

Summer 1942. I see my mother's face, full of anguish and sorrow and yet I can still discern a loving smile in her sad eyes. And I, the once - not so long ago - happy and mischievous girl, now so timid and frightened and so old at fourteen with the pain and burden of my generation.

Thousands of people were dying of starvation. Mass deportations which had been taking place since the beginning of the year, had reached their zenith at the end of that summer. One day in September, the Germans arrived in trucks and deported all the patients from the two or three hospitals still functioning in the Ghetto. My mother, who had been confined in one of them, managed to escape with a few others by some miraculous means. Two or three days later, a strict curfew was enforced and no-one was allowed to leave home for ten days. The Germans, accompanied by Jewish policemen, were going from house to house rounding up all the inhabitants. Then selection would begin: all the old, sick, infirm and the very young were dragged or thrown on to the trucks and taken away, never to be heard of again. Although the vast majority of us were, as yet, unaware of the existence of Auschwitz, Belsen and Treblinka, we knew instinctively, after three years under Nazi rule, that all those taken away were doomed.

My brother, Peretz, who was eighteen, and myself might have stood a chance of not being taken but there was no hope whatever for mother because of her outward appearance. Although only forty-two, she looked old and was very ill at the time. Her hair had been shaven at the hospital and her face and body were swollen from malnutrition. To avoid selection, we embarked on a plan to cheat our tormentors. As one courtyard led on to another and we knew all the secret paths and passages, we would run from place to place, hiding in houses that had already undergone selection. Until it caught up with us very early one morning. The SS arrived in trucks in front of our block of flats and immediately posted guards in every part of the courtyard. We were quite convinced that the end had come.

We lived on the last floor of the building and there was a big loft above. Access to it was through a flap-door, reached by a ladder. All of us, that is, all the neighbours on that floor, decided in a flash to climb up the ladder and hide in the loft. We left the flap-door open in the hope that it would make it less obvious that anyone was up there. One young couple, whose gorgeous little girl of three was asleep in their flat in a wicker basket, thought it safer to leave her there, rather than risk her cries if awoken. They piled lots of bedding and clothes on the basket and, in fear and deranged state of mind, hoped that the flat would not be thoroughly searched.

In dead silence, we huddled together. We heard them go up from floor to floor and heard the screams of people as they were brutally beaten up and dragged out of their rooms. They were our neighbours and we knew them all; most of them were too ill to leave their beds. They reached the last floor and we heard the SS men ordering the Jewish policeman to search each room. We held our breaths, praying for little Danusia, asleep in the wicker basket. Alas, in vain, for we heard a big thump, something being kicked over and Danusia's cry: "Mummy! Mummy!" Can any normal person comprehend what it was like being up there in the loft with Danusia's parents? Can anyone understand what it is like to live with those memories - and go on living? I doubt it.

After they had searched all the rooms, we heard the SS order one Jewish policeman to climb up the ladder and search the loft. We were all convinced our time was up. I was pressing closely to my mother and I remember vividly (Oh, how I wish my cursed memory did not serve me so well) bidding silently goodbye to my mother, my brother, my young life and all, all that was dear to me. The policeman climbed up, looked around, saw us and we heard him say, on climbing down: "No-one up there." It was a chance in a million that his word would be taken - but he took that chance, risking his life.

It is probable that thanks to his display of great courage, which was not an isolated case, I am alive today and not fully shattered in my belief in mankind. It also afforded me the great fortune of being together with my mother for two more years and getting to know her better. She was a wonderful person who, until the last days of her life, which so cruelly ended in the Auschwitz crematoria, nurtured me with her love and urged me to go on, instilling in me hope for the future.

The policeman's name was Jakubowicz. He survived the war but his wife and young daughter did not.

. . .

HERR EMIL BERNHARDT AND THE PARTING FROM MY PARENTS

SALEK BENEDICT

Salek came with the Southampton group and subsequently lived in the Freshwater Hostel in Finchley Road.

I was born in the city of Lodz in central Poland. My parents owned a delicatessen and restaurant on the Ogrodowa 12. We lived in an apartment in the same building.

After the Germans occupied Lodz on the 8th September 1939, within days, they hanged several Jews on Baluty Market Square. Soon, they followed up with repressive measures against the Jewish population. One of these measures was a curfew from 5pm to 7am. Non-observance of the curfew was to be punished by imprisonment and a fine.

Since there was a side entrance to the restaurant from inside the building our neighbours would meet there in the evenings. They whiled away the time having heated arguments over the likely outcome of the war, relating events of the day etc. - or just play cards or dominoes.

One evening, amidst all the "din", there was a sharp knock on the door; everybody "froze". In the silence of the moment a man entered. He stepped into the centre of the room and raised his arm in the Nazi salute, but dropped it before exclaiming the dreaded "Heil Hitler". He then looked round the room.

Spotting my father he beckoned to him. Father approached him, they exchanged a few words, shook hands and disappeared behind the door leading to the delicatessen.

As if on a given command, all the neighbours left in a great hurry.

My mother remained sitting at a table, watching anxiously the door behind which the two men locked themselves in. I joined her and tried to console her.

Cela, the young waitress from Wloszczowa busied herself in the kitchen. My sister was older, visiting a friend in the building and my brother was on his way with a friend to Baranowicse, to try crossing the border into Russian-occupied Poland.

After about thirty minutes, my father and the "visitor" emerged, they shook hands and he left.

Father looked shaken. He sat down at our table and for a while he kept very quiet. My mother made some coffee, after which father composed himself. The man's name was Herr Emil Bernhardt, he said, and went on to relate how and when he first met him. One morning in August 1937, a customer wanted to order breakfast, the waitress found it difficult to understand him, so she called my father, who immediately recognised his accent and addressed him in German.

When father brought him his order, he enquired where he learned to speak German so well. Father mentioned that he served in the Austrian army during the First World War.

From then onwards, whenever he came into the restaurant, he would patiently wait for father to serve him. Soon, time permitting, they would chat for a while.

With the passage of time, these chats became longer and more frequent. They struck up a friendship which lasted until May 1939. From then onwards he didn't show up again. At first, my father was worried what might have happened to him and genuinely missed him.

Soon, war was looming on the horizon and there were more important matters to attend to.

Tonight, Herr Bernhardt apologised for having omitted to say goodbye before he left, excusing himself that he was recalled to Germany and had to leave in a great hurry. He returned to Lodz with the occupation forces. He now has an office in the headquarters of the NSDAP (Nazi Party) building next to the Family Palace of the Poznanskis, within sight of our business.

Recently, he passed by the shop on several occasions and could see my father in the window. He felt a compulsion to meet him again, to speak to him and warn him of the danger to the Jews of Lodz.

He suggested my father should leave the city, taking the family with him.

Herr Bernhardt pleaded, with the words: "Please leave town, for your own sake and mine!"

The following morning father called a meeting at my grandparents' house, which was also attended by my aunt and uncle, Sara and Meier Gold and my father's brother, Hirsh.

It transpired that my Uncle Meier has already made arrangements to leave Lodz for his birthplace in a small village near Radom. After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that my grandparents would join them, also Uncle Hirsh, to look after them.

My parents had a standing invitation from a friend in Wloszczowa. He was a cloth merchant and had a large house, with plenty of room and - how long is the war likely to last?

Within two weeks, my grandparents, Aunt Sara, her husband Meier and their two children, Sala (aged 7), Heniek (aged 5) and Uncle Hirsh, left Lodz.

My parents received a message from my older brother. He will be returning to Lodz, his friend fell ill. After several failed attempts to cross the border, they decided to return. My parents said they will wait for him but, in the meantime, they would dispatch most of their possessions to Wloszczowa. They asked me whether I would like to leave with the goods. Cela would join me too. They would follow as soon as my brother arrives back.

To me it sounded like a great adventure and I readily agreed. We left on a horse-drawn cart, fully loaded, Cela and I perched on top.

In Wloszczowa I was warmly welcomed by my parents' friends. They treated me as one of the family. But I was not happy. The weather was abysmal. I didn't have any friends there. Altogether, it was quite strange to me.

The son of the house, Berek, travelled to Lodz on business. Apparently there were bargains to be had in Lodz as people were leaving the city.

On his return I had a pleasant surprise. My father arrived with him.

For the next few days, my father took me on several visits to local customers of ours and a surprise visit to the local Rabbi.

One evening, after dinner, father asked me to join him. He wants to talk to me.

We sat down by the window. He took out a packet of cigarettes, lit one and put the packet down. He hesitated a little and then offered me a cigarette. This cigarette tasted better than any I have ever smoked. It made me feel grown up. (He must have known it wasn't my first one). He then explained that since my brother hasn't returned yet, they had no option but to wait in Lodz. Meanwhile, on his return home and after discussing the situation with mother, he will write me a letter.

Father left Wloszczowa several days later accompanied by Berek. Just before we said our final goodbye, father slipped off his wristwatch and handed it to me. I knew how fond he was of his Tissot watch, he bought it just before the war.

I rejected the offer. It seemed such a final gesture.

This was the last time I saw my father or the rest of my closest family.

On Berek's return from Lodz, he handed me a letter from father. The writing was smudged. Berek looked at me and said: "Your father must love you very much. He was crying while writing the letter. His tears smudged the ink."

In the letter, my parents instructed me to join my grandparents.

To this day I am still perplexed as to who Mr Bernhardt really was. He obviously knew the fate to befall the Jews in Lodz.

Was he a party to the implementation of the genocidal policies instituted in the Ghetto?

Many more questions will go unanswered, but one thing is certain:

He risked his career and probably his freedom by coming to warn my father!

P.S. I am the only survivor of all the people mentioned in this story. [My brother did return to Lodz shortly before the Ghetto was closed. He was shot in a concentration camp in Germany in 1943. My parents and sister were deported from the Lodz Ghetto when it was liquidated in August '44. They all died in Auschwitz. My grandparents died before being deported. Uncles Hirsh, Meier and Aunt Sara, with the children, were probably sent to Treblinka].

* * *

THE BRZESKO GHETTO

JANINA FISCHLER-MARTINHO

Janina lived in the Krakow Ghetto from where she escaped at the time of its final liquidation in March 1943. She survived the war in hiding. Her story is told in a book which is shortly to be published "Have You Seen My Little Sister". Like many others who did not come to England with the "Boys" she joined our Society in recent years.

In the early 1940s, when I first set foot in Brzesko - it was a small, grey town of no particular interest or consequence. The train journey from Crakow to Brzesko, direction East, took less than two hours. The town's pride was its solidly constructed, comfortable railway station. Its shame, in the summer of 1942, the small, tightly packed Ghetto.

I remember it was a bright, airless day when I stepped off the train at Brzesko railway station. I handed in my ticket and crossed the cool, empty waiting-room to emerge in the still, sun-lit town. I struck out to the right, as directed, and without any difficulty found and entered the Ghetto area. Nobody paid any attention to a small twelve-year old girl in a washed-out blue cotton frock.

The mission on which I was travelling to Brzesko was the hand-delivery of a missive from an elderly Jewish gentleman of the Cracow Ghetto to his close and dear friend - a high-ranking official in the Brzesko Jewish police. I was to deliver the letter to the official in person and bring back his reply. The old gentleman promised, on the conclusion of the mission, to reward me handsomely. In the meantime, I received a more than sufficient down-payment to cover "expenses".

I found the official's "residence" without any difficulty. He was very well known in the Ghetto; not only because of his exalted position, but also for reasons of ordinary, everyday human decency. He and his family occupied a large ground floor room in a house on the verge of the Ghetto's main boundary.

The room was full of light and luxuriously furnished with beautiful carpets and fine solid furniture. But what immediately drew my attention, stamped itself upon my mind to this very day, was the platter of fruit in the centre of the table. It had golden pears and scarlet apples in it. And right on top there lay, like an exquisite, priceless ornament - to feast one's gaze upon, to tempt one's taste-buds - a bunch of grapes; pale green, almost transparent they were... So fresh. So luscious. How? Where did one buy grapes in Brzesko, in 1942?

I was very kindly received by the official's wife and daughter. The wife - a faded, anxious woman - must have once led a very privileged existence. The daughter, in her early twenties, was strong and sturdy - her whole person radiating good health and energy. The official would not be home till late in the evening. They would be pleased if I stayed the night. A visitor from Cracow! They would make me very comfortable. Such kindness. Such warm hospitality!

The two ladies were truly glad to have me stay the night, they said. And again: "A visitor from Cracow!" The mother knew Cracow well. They wanted to know all about the Cracow Ghetto. I told them what I knew. I told them about the June "Aktion" and how I had lost my parents and younger brother and other close members of the family in it. They listened quietly - the mother nodding her head, the tears coursing down her cheeks.

There were very few children left in the Brzesko Ghetto, the mother explained - the tears again welling up in her eyes. They were after a big "Aktion..." "You do understand, don't you?" she asked. And I replied: "Oh yes, I do understand..." It was already some weeks, she said, but so far no sign of life had been received from the deportees...

There was a knock on the door. A young man came in. Dark, slender and very formal. He ceremoniously bowed before the mother and took her hand to lift it respectfully to his lips. The girl's face, rosy and animated, beamed with joy at the sight of him. He kissed her cheek delicately, lovingly, and she his.

The girl said that the Ghetto had store-rooms and store-rooms packed to the roof-tops with the deportees' clothing. It had all been properly sorted out and was awaiting removal by the Germans. There was a children's store-room. Just children's clothing! From babies' to teenagers'. With the winter not far away, she could fetch some warm clothing for me... She looked at her mother who inclined her head in concurrence. The young man too sought the mother's permission to accompany her daughter; she smiled assent.

The mother sighed. "Times are so uncertain, so terrible" she said. "They took my parents away in the big 'Aktion'. They were elderly. Frail. Not even my husband was able to protect them." And again the tears started flowing. "The children want to marry. But we don't know..."

The young couple were away for a good while. Maybe they lay down upon the soft, colourful patchwork quilt of dead children's clothing and made love.

The daughter brought back a wad of clothes for me. A boy's ski-ing outfit. A smart navy-blue jacket and two thick sweaters; one blue with a white, starry pattern; one plain - the colour of pale butter. And scarves. And gloves. And mittens. And strong, thick-soled, lace-up boots. I had never possessed, I had never seen such beautiful things. The boy to whom they had belonged? Sometimes pockets yield a clue... The lining of the pockets was pristine. The boy had left nothing in his. Not a grain of sand. Not a flake of snow. I wore the ski-ing jacket for the remainder of the war. It was the warmest, cosiest, loveliest garment.

I left for Cracow the following morning, after a solid breakfast, bearing the official's reply to his friend's missive.

In the early winter of 1942 - it may have been November, more likely December... It was cold. Winter was upon us again. I went around hugging my ski-ing jacket tightly about me. The June and October Cracow Ghetto "Aktions" had claimed all my family. There were just the two of us left; my brother Joseph and myself. But he had vanished, had gone into hiding. I was on my own in that harsh, war-stricken world where no quarter was given. A Jewish orphan clinging to life. I gripped with all my might. I would use any ruse, any stratagem that would enable me to hold on.

In that winter of 1942, I dropped in now and then on a pre-war neighbour - Pani (Mrs) Anna. Zofia, her eldest child, and my good Gentile school friend, made a monthly trip to the countryside to her mother's family. They were farmers in Uszwia. She always returned with a basketful of fresh country produce. She said: "Come, they won't mind if I bring a friend along... They will feed us well. We can stay overnight. Come, it's a bit lonesome on my own... and you can help me carry the stuff..." "But I..." "Look, nobody knows. You look more like a Gentile than I do! Come..."

We set off for Brzesko, for Uszwia lay in the immediate countryside around Brzesko.

Within minutes of emerging from the station, there, to the right, was the Brzesko Ghetto's boundary - a heavy traffic gate and, next to it, a much smaller pedestrian gate. A wooden sentry box had been placed on the pavement by the pedestrian gate. In it a solitary Jewish policeman. My heart leapt at the sight of that gate. I said to Zofia: "I would so like to call on a family I know in the Ghetto. They live right by the gate. Will you wait?" "Oh, alright" she replied, "but don't be long..."

I approached the policeman. "The Ghetto is out of bounds. Nobody is allowed in or out. Anyway, there is only a handful of us left..." I named the official. "Yes, he and his family are still here." And he let me through. I am sure he did not realise I was a Jewish child. A Jewish child strolling about freely, in Poland, in the winter of 1942, was a rare sight indeed!

The three of them were in the room. They knew me instantly. "Yasia. Yasia from Cracow!" They were astonished to see me. Astonished I had eluded deportation. And they knew as well as I did, better, that deportation meant death. All illusions and hopes had been shattered against the rock-hard surface of reality.

A cold winter's day. A cold room. How they had changed! The parents: old, sallow, skin and bone. The girl: thin, pale. The eyes very large in her wan face - two dark pools of unutterable grief. "Do you remember my loved one? My sweetheart...?" she asked. They have sent him away... To a Labour Camp... They have cleaned out the Ghetto. There is only a handful of us left - Jewish policemen and their nearest family... "Ah," interjected the mother who seemed to be suffering from ague: shivering, her bones rattling. "We are waiting for our papers to come through. They are shipping us off to America. As soon as the papers are to hand... We are off, on our way..."

* * *

FRYDMAN, GERSON
PVT US 51 209 635
317TH QM RCLM & MAINT CO (SMBL)
APO 46, US ARMY

This is a deposition which Jeff Frydman submitted to the American Army where he served in Germany in 1953. It is an interesting document without embellishments.

Jeff came to England with the Windermere Group and later lived in the Loughton Hostel. He subsequently fought in the Israeli War of Independence. After the war he returned to England - then emigrated to the U.S.A. He now lives in Miami.

19 October 1953

Baumholder, Germany

To Whom it May Concern,

I was born in Lodz, Poland on 15 September 1928. I lived and went to school there up until the time that World War II began.

In 1939 German Armed Forces occupied Poland. Two months later they confiscated all of my family's properties and evacuated us to Izbica, Poland, which is on the Russian Border. We were only allowed to take the clothes that were on our backs and twenty Deutsche Marks per person. Also there were many other families with us from around our area. All of these people including my family and myself were of the Jewish faith.

We settled at this place and my parents had to work for the German Army for wages that were so cheap that it was impossible to even buy enough food for the family. They made two DM a day apiece.

We were not punished, guarded or molested while here. The people that were here stayed because there just wasn't any place else to go.

We stayed there through the winter of 1939 and in the summer of 1940 we left and made our way to Cracov, Poland. We were supposed to stay at Izbica, but we decided that we could find a better place in which to live.

We stayed at Cracov until late summer of 1941. At this time the German SS Headquarters informed us that all Jewish people would have to go to a Ghetto that was already formed and had been there all of the time. It was in a section of the City Cracov. We were only given a 24 hour notice.

Again my family and I fled. This time we went to Szydlowiec, Poland. We settled here, but three months later the German SS Troops surrounded the town and took all of the people including my family away by train. After the War I heard that all of these people and my family had been taken to Treblinka, Poland and put into gas chambers. This could be true as I have not heard from or about my family since that time.

My sister Adela, then 15 years old, and I were taken to an ammunition factory in Poland called SKARZSKO-KAMIENNA. We had to work here for no pay. The factory was guarded by SA Troops. We got coffee of a morning, but it was not drinkable. In the evening we got two pieces of bread with about ½ pint of watery soup. Work was from 0700hrs until 1800hrs or from 1800hrs until 0700hrs. If you did not work they would beat you with a whip about 4½ feet long with a metal bolt attached to the end of it.

One night at about 2200hrs I cut the barbed wire fence and got out into the city. I bought a train ticket and went back to Cracov to the Ghetto. My sister had escaped a week before me and I met her there. Also we met my aunt and her five year old son. All of the people had to work for the German Troops, but my sister and I were not registered at the Ghetto and therefore had to stay hidden all of the time.

We stayed here until 13-March 1943. At this time the German SS Troops surrendered Cracov, but before doing so they took all of the people from the Ghetto, about 10,000, by truck, under guard, to Auschwitz, Poland. All of the small children, a few hundred, were taken to a city square and murdered by the German SS Troops with machine guns.

At Auschwitz I was one of a group of three hundred people that was selected aside from the rest. We were given a tattoo on our left arm. Mine was the number 108068. All of the other people were put in the gas chambers at Auschwitz, including my sister, my aunt and her son.

The rest of us were made to work for the German soldiers. I had to work eighteen hours a day building gas chambers. They continually beat us with whips while we worked. It was not because we didn't work hard enough, but more of a habit they seemed to enjoy.

After helping complete three gas chambers I was sent to Jaworzno, Poland.

I worked here in a coal mine until the end of 1943. The work was the same as at other places. We worked twelve hours a day. I worked three months for one period without seeing daylight.

When the Russians started moving across Poland the German Army had to retreat to Germany. I was with a group of 3,000 people who were taken on a death march, which lasted for three days and three nights. We marched without food, water and sleep. We finally arrived at Blechamer, Germany.

When we got here only fifty of the 3,000 were left. Those that could not stay up with the march were shot on the way.

At Blechamer we were put on cattle trains with other people and taken to Gross Rosen, Germany, but when we arrived here it had already been evacuated.

From here we went to Leitmeritz, Czechoslovakia, which is about sixty kilometres from Prague. Here we worked in a factory built in the side of a hill. We made engines for German Army tanks. I stayed here until 1 May 1945. I was then sent to Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia.

This place was a collection point for all Jewish people that the German troops were trying to kill before the end of the war which was close by.

On the day of 8 May 1945 I was liberated by the Russian Army. On 14 August 1945 I was sent to England with three hundred other children where I stayed until 1952.

On 30 March 1952 I arrived in the United States of America. On 21 November 1952 I was inducted into the United States Army.

As far as I know my whole family is dead because of the war.

| | |
|---------|-----------------|
| Father | Abraham Frydman |
| Mother | Frania Frydman |
| Sister | Adela Frydman |
| Sister | Hela Frydman |
| Brother | Smul Frydman |
| Sister | Manah Frydman |
| Brother | Mosses Frydman |

* * *

STEGMAN THE MUSICIAN

WITOLD GUTT

Witold Gutt D.Sc. Ph.D. M.Sc. C.Chem. FCS., came to England with the Southampton group in November 1945 and lived in the Finchley Road hostel. He was Senior Principal Scientific Officer and Head of Materials Division at the Building Research Establishment of the Department of the Environment. He is now a Consultant in Chemistry and Chairman of the British Standard Institution Technical Committee of Cement & Lime.

After the first action in 1942 in Przemysl Ghetto, I obtained employment in a workshop which was just being set up in the Ghetto. There was some sewing work - some tailors were of course among the people remaining in the Ghetto, it being a common trade among Jews - there were some gates and other wrought iron objects being made, and there was some small-scale engineering.

The Judenrat was attempting to assemble a number of useful trades all in one building which had previously been used for some kind of training establishment or school. At the beginning there was no electricians' workshop, but there was a demand for electrical repairs in the houses of the SS and the Gestapo, and there was a shortage of electrical appliances such as lamps and irons.

It was at this stage that Stegman appeared. He was a friendly personality and in reality he was a musician who played the piano and the piano-accordion, but he had a small amount of knowledge about electrical circuits.

Someone remembered that I had been an electrician's mate, and Stegman, with me to assist him, became the nucleus of an electrical workshop. Stegman was very good to me. Our capacity for electrical work was very small!

On one occasion we were repairing - or attempting to repair - a bedside table lamp in the flat of an SS man in town, near Gestapo HQ which was off Mickiewicz Street. Stegman did not really know how to repair this lamp, and we were frightened by the arrival of an SS officer. What would happen if we could not complete the repair? The SS man, however, was a visitor who asked where the owner was. We said we did not know, so he left a message for the owner and asked us to deliver it.

The incongruous part of all this was that it was treated like a 'normal' incident in the daily routine such as could occur anywhere in the world, just a trivial encounter. But our position was not 'normal'. We were not an ordinary electrician and his mate on their daily routine and we would not return to our homes after work. We would go back to the Ghetto, walking in the gutter because Jews were not allowed to walk on the pavement; back to the squalor of the Ghetto which was only intended as a half-way house to extermination in the death camps, or marginally less certain death in the concentration camps.

Soon thereafter, it was realised in the Ghetto workshops that Stegman and I were not a sufficient team for the electrical work, and others, real electricians, including Jakob Horowitz, were 'recruited'.

There were also people indirectly connected with electrical installations. For instance, Ringelheim, a young architect trained at Heidelberg and recently married; also an unpleasant ex-electrical-store owner who knew a lot about electrical lamps and components, and Kramer who was put in charge. Kramer was previously the owner of a major store in Przemyśl, which traded in a variety of goods from bicycles to electrical equipment. He was a knowledgeable man, skilled and resourceful, and everyone trusted him to be fair and to know what to do in different situations.

I was attracted to Kramer's daughter, Tusia, who had short dark hair and long legs. I watched her climbing into their ground floor apartment by the easiest access which was through the window. She and I were both thirteen.

In the workshop, Stegman became a junior member since he knew so little, and I was the most junior of all and naturally was given the simplest of jobs like dismantling equipment so that the parts could be used to construct lamps and fittings wanted by the SS who placed orders for them.

There were no sanitary facilities in the workshop, and a sink was used by the men to urinate into. In winter, when the pipes became frozen I was taught to use a blowlamp so that I could be given the task of unfreezing the pipes. Later I advanced to become chief junior when two younger boys were recruited.

I helped to hang some lamps in the house of Ghetto Commandant, Joseph Schwammberger. He had a conversation with me and corrected my German.

Stegman joined the Ghetto band, which played on Sundays in the ground floor room of a house with the windows open. The audience stood outside, and sometimes a few SS men came to listen.

Later, when I was in the concentration camp at Krakow-Plaszow, I heard that Schwammberger had developed a habit of shooting people at random. And that, one day, for no reason at all, Stegman was shot dead in the Ghetto. Of the people in the workshop, and their families, only Horowitz and I survived the war.

In 1992 Schwammberger was put on trial in Germany and sentenced to life imprisonment.

(This story appears in Ruth Piper's book 'Falling Shadows'. Book Guild 1995)

* * *

LILI POHLMANN
(nee STERN)

HER WARTIME STORY: A Brief Outline...

Lili Pohlmann came to England with the Rabbi Schonfeld Group. She attended the Hasmonian Grammar School. After finishing her studies, she worked as a translator and interpreter in London, Paris and New York.

This is a follow-up to her article in the last issue (21) of our Journal, "The Unsung Heroes" to whom my mother and I owe our lives.

Born in the city of LVOV (then South-Eastern Poland, now the Ukraine) and brought up in KRAKOW (Poland), where she lived with her parents and younger brother until the outbreak of Second World War.

From 31st August 1939 until July 1944, i.e., throughout the 1st Russian Occupation (September '39 - June '41), the German Occupation (June '41 - July '44), and the 2nd Russian Occupation (from July '44), Lili was in LVOV, where her maternal grandparents had lived before the war and to whom her father (FILIP STERN) had sent her, with her mother (CECYLIA STERN) and her little brother (URIEL STERN), just a few hours before the outbreak of war. He himself was drafted into the Polish Army, fought on the front for over two weeks, and after the Army was disbanded, made his way on foot to join the family in the, by now, Russian-occupied LVOV.

On 21st June 1941 the German-Russian pact was broken and on June 30th the German forces occupied LVOV. During the time of this tragic occupation, Lili lost her father, her six-year old brother, both grandparents and an extended family of over three hundred. Only her mother and she survived. WHY DID GOD WILL IT THAT WAY?.... HOW DID THEY SURVIVE?...

After Lili's miraculous escape from the Ghetto on 18th November 1942, a German Civil Servant - Frau IRMGARD WIETH* took her and her mother into hiding. But her grandparents were still in the Ghetto, and Lili's mother considered it her duty to return to the Ghetto and to look after them. Frau Wieth promised to look after Lili - even to "adopt her" should anything happen to her mother - and so, in the knowledge that she was leaving her child in such kind and relatively SAFE hands, Lili's mother made her way back to the Ghetto.

Fr. Wieth lived in the SS-and-Police District of LVOV, in an elegant two-room apartment formerly requisitioned by her friend, a high-ranking SS officer, who meanwhile had been transferred from LVOV to Holland "for other duties" (to a Jewish Concentration Camp). The apartment was the peak of luxury; bright, warm and, foremost, a "safe haven". But Lili was very unhappy, she missed her mother desperately and felt guilty about the relative luxury she was living in. To deter Lili running away, Fr. Wieth decided to take into hiding a Jewish couple to provide her with some company.

Very soon afterwards, tragically, Lili's grandfather was brutally murdered by the Germans and her dear, brave grandmother committed suicide by throwing herself from a third floor window, so that Lili's mother should be "free" to join her child... On 30th May 1943, Lili's distraught mother, in a state of utter despair, miraculously, made her way out of the burning Ghetto and joined Lili... Now Fr. Wieth was hiding four Jews...

The SS "boyfriend" came back unexpectedly; he had been "warned" that while he was away his "girlfriend" was having an affair with a Wehrmacht Officer. He let himself into the apartment (with

his own key) and in a mad frenzy began to shoot into the thin air and into and under every bed, wardrobe and cupboard, screaming and shouting threats and obscenities. In her despair and utter fear, Fr. Wieth went out on to the balcony (fourth floor) prepared to throw herself down the moment she hears four shots in the kitchen, where she knew we were sleeping. She was not going to fall into his hands, into the hands of the Gestapo. But there were no shots from the direction of the kitchen; when in his frenzy he ran into the kitchen, we were already in the scullery, locked from within, the key still in the door... He shouted and screamed, touched the door-knob, tried to open... turned around and left the kitchen... No shots were fired... Was he suddenly deaf, not to hear four panic-stricken heartbeats??? Was he momentarily blinded, not to see the key inside the locked door?? Was this some kind of a miracle???

Since no "Wehrmacht Officer" was found, he decided "it was all just a hoax"... and stayed at the apartment for two weeks! TWO LONG WEEKS under the same roof with an SS henchman... In the lion's den... Fr. Wieth at work during the day, Lili's mother pretending to be an Ukranian house-seamstress and the other Jewish lady a Ukranian cook and maid... Lili and the Jewish man hid in the 3ft x 3ft kitchen-scully throughout the day, not able to make a sound all day. At night they all risked sleeping on the kitchen floor, praying to God that the henchman does not feel like a glass of water in the middle of the night... It is nothing short of a miracle from God that Fr. Wieth and we four survived that visit...

With the Russian offensive nearing LVOV in 1944, Fr. Wieth was evacuated back to Germany. Lili, with her mother and the Jewish couple, sought and found refuge in the Ukranian United Church and then in their Orphanage. Here Lili pretended to be an orphan - Ukrainian, of course - and her mother was forced to pretend to be deaf and mute, as she did not speak the language.

After the Russian liberation in July 1944, there were very few Jewish people left in LVOV - the Germans saw to that - and a year later, Lili and her mother left for Krakow in a cattle train. It took them seven days to reach the city. There, Rabbi Dr KAHANE, then the Chief Rabbi of the Polish Forces, was attempting to trace displaced Jewish children throughout the country, to either reunite them with their families, had any of those survived, or find new lives for them. Rabbi Dr Kahane was working closely with the most courageous and highly charismatic Rabbi Dr SOLOMON SCHONFELD in London, and together they were attempting to give Polish-Jewish surviving children - 99% full orphans - a new life in England. In March 1946, the first group of over one hundred children were transported from Poland to London; Lili was among them. The Swedish boat SS RAGNE left the Polish port of GDYNIA and took seven days to reach London, arriving on March 29th, Lili's birthday! What a birthday present!!!... FREEDOM...

Before the outbreak of the 1939 war, and immediately after the end of the war, Rabbi Dr Schonfeld, singlehandedly, organised transports of Jewish children from West Europe to London, and he gave thousands of children new lives... Lili was fortunate because she was of school age and was sent to the Grammar school run by Rabbi Dr Schonfeld. Within one year the school had helped Lili to bring her dear mother to England. She arrived at Lili's school in May 1947. Lili is eternally grateful to Dr Schonfeld - she says:

"HE RESTORED OUR DIGNITY AS HUMAN BEINGS - AND THANKS TO HIM AND TO THIS WONDERFUL COUNTRY, WHICH ADOPTED US, OUR LIVES OPENED AND WE BEGAN TO BREATHE FREELY"...

• Please refer to p.2 - The "Missing Heroes"

* * *

A FRIEND OF OLD

BY ARTHUR POZNAŃSKI

Ben Giladi's devotion and contribution to the dissemination of the Knowledge of the Holocaust has been so enormous that Arthur felt compelled to pay tribute to him in our Journal. As the editor of "THE VOICE OF PIOTRKOW SURVIVORS" he ensures that the memory of our near and dear ones will never be forgotten. It is doubtful whether there is another survivor community that has an editor that produces a Journal of such great interest and high quality. Long may he continue in the task to which he dedicates his life.

From the little township of Praszka, where I was born, we moved to a larger town called Wieluń, situated in the region, which at the beginning of the occupation was called Wartegau and annexed to the German Reich. My mother, however, was born and bred in Piotrków, where her parents and other members of her family resided for many years. When my father's life was threatened in 1940 because of a round up of intellectuals, he escaped from Wieluń to Piotrków, where my two younger brothers, Jerzyk and Tadzio, were already staying with my grandparents. My mother and I did not arrive in Piotrków until the winter of 1941 after a harrowing escape from Wieluń. We ran away to avoid deportation in large black vans, which much later were identified as mobile gas chambers. Eventually we learned that corpses, together with people who were still alive, had been transported in these vans to the infamous extermination camp in Chelmo.

As spring approached, Piotrków ghetto still enjoyed comparative tranquillity. In spite of shortage of food and crippling restrictions, a Jewish hospital was operational and many children were getting some education in clandestine classes. My brother, Jerzyk, was a pupil attending secondary education classes.

In a short while I was accepted into a circle of intelligent teenagers and, owing to my sense of humour and virtuosity on the harmonica, I gained popularity. From among the many boys and girls, only few, who had the courage and ability to break the curfew, became my closest friends. One of them was Ben Gelade, who eventually changed the spelling of his surname to the original biblical Giladi. He was immensely popular because of his good looks, quick wit and musicality, and was at the centre of many activities. Ignoring the curfew, we would vault over many back garden fences and swiftly dart across dark, deserted streets to meet, exchange views and, ignoring empty stomachs, sing and play games or make music until late at night.

We were reminiscing nostalgically about those days in the ghetto when I met Ben during my brief visit to New York in 1995. We tried to recall some of the names of our friends, many of whom did not survive the war. Among those we remembered were Olek Goldberg, Abram Jakubowicz, Stefka Brandwajn, Irka Kwasner, Ziuta Sladowska and Ewa Glatte.

All too soon this relative calm was shattered by reports of deportations from small and large towns. Rapes and murders of large groups of Jews began to circulate and depress our community. Of course, we knew nothing of the Wannsee conference, nor could we check the accuracy of what we heard. However, it soon became obvious that Jews were being deported, not only from the territories of the German Reich, but from the whole of occupied Poland. Gloom and foreboding pervaded our little group when we discussed the issue of where all those many thousands of

deported Jews were being sent and wondered why none of them ever returned or sent back any messages. Alas, we were naive. In spite of so many signs confirming our worst fears, we found it impossible to believe that meticulously planned genocide on such a vast scale could have been conceived and carried out by a nation whom we regarded as civilised and cultured. In the tide of disastrous events in which Piotrków became engulfed our group was suddenly broken up. Deportations, internment and enslavement in diverse places separated and scattered the few of us who remained alive.

Great was my joy, when a long time after the war I learned that Ben Giladi, not only managed to survive the holocaust, but continued to distinguish himself with his literary work. Let us briefly follow his fortunes, as he outlined them during our brief meeting:

Born in Piotrków on the 15th August 1925, he had three good looking, older sisters. His father, delighted at having a son, asked the Rabbi Meir Szapira to be his godfather. After attending a kindergarten and a private elementary school, which was closed owing to financial difficulties. Ben was transferred to a state run public school. In the ghetto he continued his education in private, clandestine *gimnazium* classes. He was lucky to avoid deportation, when in the nick of time he, like myself, managed to get enrolled for approved work in industry. Thus we both became slave labourers in the Hortensja glassworks. It was our first taste of physical labour alongside and under the supervision of rough Polish workers. The first thing they strove to impart to us was their colourful, profane phraseology. Soon, to avoid being considered soft Jewish sissies, we learned to use their own vernacular and could equal and out-cuss the best of them. While we were encamped in the grounds of Hortensja, the ghetto was emptied of its inhabitants. Ben's father and my own parents were sent with thousands of other Jews to their doom in Treblinka. Only the slave labour force, a minuscule remnant of the great Jewish community of Piotrków was left. Our lives were precarious; we were now at the mercy of the German Nazis, Polish foremen and virtually anyone who took a dislike to any of us for whatever reason. Jewish life was cheap.

Soon after the encampment in Hortensja, Ben was transferred to a sister glass factory, Kara, made infamous for the use of the Jewish workgroup to erect a new glass furnace without using any mechanical implements. Because of the many serious casualties at work, the assignment was termed the Circus. Fortunately for Ben, he was selected for the prestigious post of tending the directors' pigs. However hard and dirty the work in the pigsty, it was child's play in comparison to the Circus. After a short spell at this activity, having failed to teach the pigs better manners, he was once again transferred to the backbreaking task of assisting the masons in building the new furnace. This work put hair on his chest, calluses on his palms and hardened him for the next task of working at the machine which produced plate-glass. This was a responsible job. It commanded more respect and slightly better treatment. Although we were both in The Block during the sparse minutes between the shift work and sleep, we rarely had time to meet. In any case, we were not in the mood for discussion, games or music. During November 1944 all Jews from the glass factories were deported to Częstochowa. Ben, with many others, was put to work in the munitions factory Częstochowianka, which specialised in production of steel bullet tips. From the veterans in situ he learned how to avoid painful lesions caused by putrid oil lubricants mixed with noxious chemicals.

In January 1945 he was transported with many others by rail, in cattle-trucks, to the world renowned beauty spot in central Germany called Buchenwald, where he was promoted to the rank of prisoner, number 113653. After a few days in quarantine, shorn, deloused, and re-dressed in approved prison garb, he was consigned with other slaves to Dora Mittelbau in the Hartz Mountains. Here the V1 and V2 rockets were being produced. This camp was run with the utmost cruelty by German criminals, who had the approval and blessing of the SS guards and officers. When, in the middle of the severe winter, he was picked for a working party engaged in constructing a new train route, Ben came to the end of his tether. In work conditions which defy description and on a starvation diet, his health rapidly deteriorated to the extent of utter collapse. He became one of the walking skeletons referred to as *musulmen*. No longer able to work because of total debility, he was sent to a nearby extermination camp, KC Nordhausen. Helplessly awaiting

the end, he survived for over two weeks only because the camp was being repeatedly raided in error by the allied airforce. Constant air alerts in the camp caused a lapse in security, during which Ben managed to run out into the surrounding fields, where he spent some days in hiding.

On 11th April 1945 the American infantry liberated him, together with other prisoners. In June, after a period of recuperation in an American army field hospital, he went back to Buchenwald, where he discovered the names of his three sisters on the list of survivors in Bergen-Belsen. Overjoyed at finding some family still alive, he decided to join them. Ben arrived in the former hell camp to discover a new phenomenon; women who were regaining their physical fitness and zest for life after a long period of existence in infernal conditions, outnumbered the men by ten to one. For a 19 year old lad starved of affection and female company, this seemed like paradise, a dream come true to make up for all those months of suffering and privation. Small wonder, that for about four months he was reluctant to leave. Finally, in September 1945 he abandoned this dreamland with two of his sisters and their husbands, in order to return to Piotrków. To his great sorrow he learned of his mother's death in Auschwitz.

If he expected a warm welcome in the place where he grew up, he was sorely disappointed. The effect of gloom and shabbiness were only secondary to a rampant anti-Semitism encountered at every step by the few survivors who dared to return to Piotrków. Marauders parading in the uniforms of Polish militia, armed with confiscated German rifles and bayonets and ably assisted by a horde of local yobs, staged many minor pogroms and amply demonstrated their readiness to murder any Jew they could find. The hapless Jews were still depressed after the hell they endured in the Nazi camps. Demoralised by the threat of death from uniformed and armed Poles and unable to seek protection of the law, which they thought the armed men represented, they sought salvation in flight. In December, after learning that three Jews had been killed and narrowly missing an ambush, Ben, together with one of his sisters, brother-in-law and their little daughter, escaped to Łódź. Unable to find accommodation or suitable employment in Łódź, Ben took a train to Piotrosław in Lower Silesia to join a kibbutz, run by Meir Zarnowiecki, his former Madrich from Shomer Hatzair.

In the summer of 1946, after continuous work with younger children, Ben led more than a 100 of them in an exodus from Poland through "the green border". With the help of two madrichot, he headed the argosy into Czechoslovakia via Bratislava to Prague, and further through Ash and Rehau in Germany into a DP camp in Hoff. From there the youngsters were sent to Bad Reichenhall and then to Jordanbad in the French zone. Ben, although inexperienced, cherished his role as Madrich and excelled in organising lessons, games and singsongs. With the aid of a little piano accordion, he initiated singing of popular Hebrew folk songs. The music thus produced helped to enliven the long dreary hours spent on trains. When they finally reached a camp, Ben started productions of short plays and revues, which developed into political satires, to the amusement of those who participated in them as well as the audiences. Freshly out of hell, he was able to identify and empathise with the feelings of the children and gain their trust. Shomer Hatzair, recognising his abilities and devotion to the group, put him in charge of what they called "a nest" of children in DP camp Bensheim. In May 1947 he returned to Łódź where his sister, Pola Glatter, lived with her husband, a dentist. Two of his former teachers verified Ben's secondary school education to matriculation standard, which enabled him to enrol at university on a course of dentistry. To earn his keep, Ben worked part-time in the dental laboratory run by his brother-in-law. He also found time, however sparse, to keep up an active link with the Zionist group and tried his hand at composing witty lyrics to popular melodies. Some of his songs were performed in a revue sponsored by the Zionist weekly, *Mosty* (Bridges). He called it "Prosto z Mostów".

In 1950, when legal Aliyah became a reality, Ben went to Israel and, not waiting for the mandatory year of grace, immediately joined the army. After very intensive training, he was picked for a group trained to perform martial arts at the opening of the first Maccabiah. He was then assigned to the main training base for artillery in Sarafand and was sent to an *ulpan* to learn Hebrew. After perfecting the language in record time, he was ready to write his first satirical revue, which he named "Life on the Base". This gained him promotion and put him in charge of organising

entertainment. Ben was in his element. His new position enabled him to utilise his artistic temperament and exercise his creative abilities to the utmost effect. However, his commanding officer felt that, in view of the prevailing circumstances, he should not forego any combat training. Taking into account his dentistry studies at Łódź University (however scanty and incomplete), he was sent on a paramedics' course. It was tough but Ben found it very interesting and useful.

While on leave in October 1950 he attended the first Piotrkover Hazkara in Tel Aviv and there met Guta, a kindred soul, whom he had known since childhood. By then, however, she had blossomed into an attractive 19-year-old girl, who was about to be drafted into the army. Mutual attraction grew. They met again while she was in the army uniform; he thinks it must have been destiny that threw them together. They were married on the 19th April 1951. Guta was demobilised, and in April 1952 their daughter Iris was born. After release from the army in June 1952, they lived in Gan Hashomron near Hedera, where Ben was working in the post office. They moved to Givataim in 1955 and Ben found employment in the Social Security Office. For a time they experienced relative tranquillity but, in 1956, during the Sinai campaign, Ben was recalled to the army and assigned to the "red berets" unit of parachutists. After a stint near Mitla, he decided that he had had enough of bloodshed and war. As a husband and father, he craved security for his family. Therefore, in 1959, he left for the USA.

The beginning in America was not easy; he found a job in a liqueur store, delivering bottles of alcohol to private customers all around the East Side of Manhattan, New York. In the exclusive neighbourhood where he worked, the clients were affluent and generous and their tips compensated for his meagre salary. Six months later Guta and Iris were able to join him. Although he worked very hard physically during the day, Ben found sufficient willpower and energy to attend evening classes at the City College to take courses in English, accountancy and business administration. Guta found a job as a cashier. In 1961 Ben was recruited to a position at the head office of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Making steady progress, he was promoted to be in charge of the Benefit Funds Department of the Union, and stayed there until he retired.

However, just making a living to support his family was not enough to satisfy him; Ben kept writing songs, poems and short articles. From 1967 he became involved with the Piotrkover Association and increasingly gave more time to their activities, writing many articles and essays for their Bulletin. After the demise of Moshe Mushinski he became associate editor, working alongside Roman Mogilanski. Unfortunately, Roman died in 1981 and it was up to Ben to produce the "New Bulletin" single-handed. It was a very demanding task but also very absorbing. Getting more deeply involved with the problems of his Landsmen, Ben decided to devote himself entirely to the project of remembrance. All his time was now spent recording the painful past and progress of the survivors from Piotrków. To this purpose he took early retirement in 1987. He concentrated on writing, editing and collating The Bulletin, as well as cajoling others to write their impressions and reminiscences. At that time The Bulletin was sponsored by the Piotrków Relief Association. His knowledge of Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish helped enormously and the publication rapidly gained popularity. It became accepted as portraying and reflecting the views and problems of the survivors scattered all over the world. This work left Ben with little time for relaxation at the piano, but somehow he managed to publish a thin album of songs. The acme of his achievement was of course the "Tale Of One City" published in 1991 - a graphic history of the Jews of Piotrków - a great part of which consists of survivors' testimonies.

At present, without the sponsorship of the Piotrków Relief Association, The Voice of Piotrków Survivors keeps on coming, each one bringing news of survivors' families from all over the world, as well as verses, songs and articles submitted by members of the second and even third generations. Ben facilitates contact between ex-Piotrkover currently scattered in far-flung corners of the globe. He also relentlessly exhorts all of us to write, and acquaint the whole world with what happened to our families and friends, and how our past experiences affect us even today. It is, in his opinion, our sacred duty to leave for posterity eyewitness accounts of events, which some groups deny authenticity, and by doing so, to keep alive the memory of all those we have

lost. His style of writing is colourful, using expressions most Jewish refugees identify with, and interlaced with idioms in Hebrew, Yiddish, German and Polish.

Keep up your good work, Ben! Like many others, I am proud to call you my friend in spite of the fact that sometimes you deem my style of writing too frivolous.

* * *

MUNKACS REMEMBERED

ETTA LERNER nee ZELOVIC

Etta arrived in England in 1946 with two of her brothers Villi and Hershi in a transport of child survivors and lived in the Jews Temporary Shelter in Aldgate. In 1947 she married Berish Lerner and settled in London.

Munkacs (Mukacevo in Czech) was a busy market town at the foot of the Carpathian mountains, between Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. It changed hands several times during the Twentieth century. Before the First World War it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Until 1919 Munkacs belonged to Hungary, then to Czechoslovakia. From 1938 to 1945 it became part of Hungary. From the end of World War Two it formed part of the Soviet Union. At present Munkacs is in the Ukraine.

There are records of Jews living in Munkacs in the second half of the 17th century. By 1711 local Jews were already engaged in commerce and acted as brokers in trade between Galicia (Poland) and Hungary.

In 1741 the Jewish Community consisted of eighty families, when a synagogue was established. The Jewish population grew fast. In the 1848-49 Hungarian revolt against the Austrians, some two hundred and forty Jews joined the local guard. From 1851, there was already a large yeshiva in Munkacs. The community maintained regular records of births, deaths, and marriages. A Hebrew press was founded in 1871 and many Hebrew books were published.

In my time Munkacs had a population of approximately thirty thousand; more than half were Jews, a quarter were Hungarians and the rest were made up of Ruthanian, Gypsies, Slovaks and Germans. This mixture of nationalities resulted in most people speaking several languages. Our mother tongue was Yiddish, but outside the home we spoke Hungarian, and to the peasants from the villages we spoke Ruthanian (a Russian dialect).

Market-days, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, were very picturesque, with the peasants flocking into the town in their country clothes. They dressed like the typical Russian peasants. The women had on many layers of full skirts and it was an amusing sight when they paid for purchases by lifting up skirt after skirt and took their money out of perhaps the fourth skirt pocket. They had head-scarves and shawls tied round their middle from front to back.

They came on horse-drawn carts, loaded with fresh produce which they sold and spent their money on clothes and household necessities. They had a peasant shrewdness, and their simple country style manner and behaviour contrasted strongly with the more sophisticated and progressive lifestyle of Munkacs.

There was a local Jewish newspaper, and four Yiddish periodicals were published. It had a theatre, cinema, ice-skating rink, football club, tennis-courts, a well-planned park with sandpit, swings, water-fountain bandstand and swimming pool.

The centre of the town had a broad boulevard with flower-beds and benches. Wide pavements flanked each side with cafés and elegant shops, where the population went strolling to take the air and meet their friends.

The Yeshiva of Munkacs was of great renown, because of its high standard of learning, and attracted students not only from the local Jewish population but also from further afield. There were about thirty synagogues in Munkacs. Many of these were Hasidic batei midrash. Boys attended chedarim, but girls were usually taught Hebrew by teachers coming to the house.

The schools in Munkacs were; Czech, Hungarian, Ruthanian, one Hebrew elementary and secondary school for girls, as well as a co-educational Hebrew Gymnasium (Grammar school).

We lived at 16 Csokoli Street. The market started at one end of our street and we had the park just across the street at the other end. The park adjoined one side of the river and on the opposite side of the river were the foothills of the Carpathian mountains. The vineyards could be seen clearly on the mountain slopes. I loved the view and to this day feel nostalgic whenever I see mountains.

In November 1938 Munkacs was transferred to Hungary from Czechoslovakia.

Our parents remembered that during the Austro-Hungarian Empire the Jews had been well treated so, on the day the Hungarian Army marched into Munkacs, we joined the majority of residents to welcome them.

I can recall the day very clearly. We went to see the military procession. The Hungarian Army marched in with bands playing and flags flying, and we cheered happily. At the age of nine it was a thrilling experience for me.

We returned home in a happy and optimistic mood, still humming the lively marches that the bands had played, but we came to a sudden stop when we heard screams from the windows of one of our neighbours. My father made us wait while he went to see what had happened.

He came back looking very sombre, saying that these Hungarians were not the same as he remembered, and the future did not look good.

While we had been cheering the procession in the town centre, other Hungarian soldiers forced their way into our neighbour's house and robbed them, injuring the father of the house when he tried to stop one of the soldiers as he ripped off the earrings from his daughter's ears. The family was trying to calm the girl and stop the blood flowing from her ears.

From that time on the social and economic climate of the Jewish inhabitants changed, anti-Semitism increased, even we children in school were targets of discrimination.

From 1939 all boys aged twelve and over had to go to "Levente" (a military youth organisation) one afternoon per week, for service training, but in 1940 the Jewish boys were separated and put to work cleaning municipal buildings, or to work on state-owned farms.

At first all young men did their National Service in the Hungarian Army but in 1940 Jewish men were put into work battalions of the Army; they had to wear their own clothes with arm bands and Army-style caps. The discipline was stricter than in the Army. They received very little food and the work was extremely hard. It seemed that the most anti-Semitic officers were put in charge and the men were badly abused.

When Hungary joined Germany in the invasion of Russia in 1941, most work-battalions were sent to the front lines to build fortifications. Large numbers did not survive the cold, hunger and hard work. As time went on they drafted older men; by 1943 they even called my father for a Physical Examination. He was then sixty-three years old, and we were afraid that he would be called up any day.

My oldest brother Matess was in service in the work-battalion from 1941. We rarely heard from him and he only came home on leave once or twice. We sent him clothing, but the men whose families could not afford to send any walked about in tattered rags and barefoot. Many married men who were the sole breadwinners of the family had no food or clothes.

Our schooldays were marred by anti-Semitism. For example, Fridays in the winter were a nightmare. Shabbat began well before nightfall, and with the days being shorter in the winter, we all left school about two hours before the commencement of the Shabbat. It had always been accepted that if we brought a note from our parents requesting that we be allowed home early for the commencement of Shabbat, we were able to do so.

Now the notes were ignored and we were refused permission to leave. Needless to say we left early anyway, during playtime. As a result, on Mondays all Jewish children were punished and verbally abused.

The punishments were quite cruel; the favourite one was to make us kneel on dried maize grains which the teacher spread on the floor and that was very painful. Another punishment was to make us put our finger-tips together pointing upwards and the teacher brought her cane down hard on them. In addition to this painful punishment, came the cruel jeering of the non-Jewish pupils.

There was hardly a lesson when one or another Jewish child was not ridiculed and I began dreading going to school, getting stomach cramps caused by fear of what each day's attendance would bring.

In 1941 I was given a scholarship for the Hebrew Secondary School for Girls and was very happy to leave the harsh treatment of the State school.

We always tried to go to and from school together with friends because this made us feel less vulnerable when the Christian boys harassed us on the way chanting "Dirty Jews! Dirty Jews!" all the time till we passed them by.

Our financial situation also became hard, when more than half the Jewish population lost their livelihood. About two thirds of business permits were taken away from the Jews and these restrictions were enforced; from the poorest shoe-repairer to the richest bankers, chemists and shopkeepers. My father also lost his business permit.

These were sad times for our parents. The children grumbled, but had the natural resilience and optimism of youth, but parents had to suffer the pain and frustration of not being able to clothe and feed their children. We were always hungry, and I am sure that my mother starved herself to give the younger ones a little extra. She was always tired, and my father aged visibly.

During times of hardship my father often voiced his thoughts; that we must accept the bad times without complaint, as we did not know the ways of the Almighty and He knew best what was good for us. This attitude was common among our neighbours. There was generally genuine soul-searching to find out in what way to improve oneself. This was not being "holy", just a modest and genuine reaction to being perplexed.

During 1941-42 whole families were picked up at night and deported across the border to Poland, about 100 kilometres from Munkacs. There they were abandoned in fields to fend for themselves. The German Army, which had occupied Poland, picked them up, shooting many and taking others

to Polish Ghettos or Concentration Camps. Some managed to escape back, reporting what had happened, but very few people believed them as the stories sounded unbelievable. However, we and our neighbours prepared rucksacks, "just in case".

During that time things got steadily worse. Our family's income plummeted and our food supply became even more meagre. Although we lived in a rich agricultural area, all the food was sent to the soldiers at the front. We lived only on potatoes and beans, except for hallot, on Shabbat. After a while we could not manage even that. Many people were arrested and beaten for trying to buy food illegally.

In 1943 the Hebrew school I attended was closed down by the Hungarian authorities and soldiers were housed in the building. We were all heartbroken. The teachers made us promise not to abandon our studies, but to revise all we had learned, so that we could continue once we had got our school back. We all did exactly as we were advised but we never returned to school.

We were not organised to resist. The Jewish people there were very passive. All the young men and most of the leadership had been taken away and only old men, women and children were left.

The deportations started in a small way. The raids came during the night, without warning. First the foreign-born Jews were taken away, then their families, then those whose grandparents were foreign-born. After that, families were taken at random, or if someone had enemies who had denounced them as "not patriotic", they too were picked up during the night. Soon the German soldiers marched into Munkacs and that was the end of any resemblance to normal life.

As time went on, the police made day-time raids or surrounded a whole street at night and searched door-to-door for suspicious people, contraband goods such as food not bought on rations, or goods brought home by the owners of shops whose permits had been taken away.

The authorities announced one decree after another in quick succession; "Jews have to wear a Yellow Star of David at all times," "Jews have to cut their beards!" That was a hard one to bear. It seemed to take away a man's personality. When my father, after a lot of persuasion, cut his beard, we were all in shock.

Suddenly we saw an old man before us. The wrinkles that had been hidden by the beard were revealed. We were all in tears. It was just as well that he did cut it, because later we heard of unfortunate men having their beards torn off in handfuls by the SS. For their safety, my brothers' sidelocks had also been cut some time earlier.

At the end of 1943, hardly any Jewish men between 18 and 60 were to be seen in the town and many others were taken away in the night, never to be heard of again. There were rumours of terrible things going on. There was no place to escape to, no leadership to guide us and we didn't have money for bribes or for fares to leave.

Some rich people who could have got out somehow didn't want to leave their possessions. Everyone hoped that things would get better, and that the rumours were not true. The Russian Army was doing well and as they were only a few hundred kilometres from our town, we hoped that we'd soon be saved.

We broke through the walls in the backyard in three places to gardens adjoining ours, planning to use these openings as an escape route in case we suddenly had to run. This proved futile, because very soon the Hungarian police and German SS, who worked together, were everywhere.

There were isolated cases of people running away at night, but most were caught. The only person we knew who survived was an 18-year old friend of my sister, who was active in Hechalutz. This organisation sent emissaries to try and save some of the young people and our friend was among those few who managed to escape to Palestine.

One early Shabbat morning we were surrounded by the SS and the local police. They announced that all the males aged ten and older must go outside and line up. We hurriedly hid father in the hay-loft, while my brothers Villi and Hershi went out to line up in the street.

They marched them off to the big synagogue. They told us on returning that they were beaten along the whole way. After taking their names and verbally abusing them constantly, the German officer got hold of an old man in traditional Chassidic clothing, told him to put on a Tallis and pray aloud; to ask G-d to help them. They beat the poor old man and forced him to sing prayers, and started to beat all others to help him. Many heads were smashed in.

At about 10 a.m. they marched them out ten at a time, to different street corners, where a lot of lumber was piled up. Giving them tools and ordering them to build walls and gates and board up all windows facing out to the town. It was then they realised that they were building the Ghetto of Munkacs.

They worked till late in the evening before being allowed home. It was the worst day in their lives, seeing such cruelty; people being beaten, being made to work on Shabbat, forced to work all day without food or drink and seeing people shot.

All the Jewish people outside the Ghetto had to move inside and share the accommodation of those living there. No furniture was allowed to be brought in, only bedding and clothing. Fifteen thousand Jews were packed into a few streets. We were considered lucky, because we did not have to move as our street was already inside the new Ghetto.

Life in the Ghetto of Munkacs was stifling, no-one went to work and we felt like caged animals. People gathered in groups and talked of their fears about what will happen next. Rumours of all kinds spread like wildfire, some people were so hysterical that it became contagious.

Realising that we lived in great danger, my parents buried my mother's jewellery under the floor boards, except for her wedding rings, which she hid by baking the rings in some biscuits.

Soon enough the Germans announced repeated curfews, when no-one was allowed out of the house at all. They marched into each house in turn and demanded valuables, such as jewellery, silver, watches and cameras. When we claimed that we had none of those things, they emptied the contents of all the drawers on the floor and threw out the clothes from the wardrobes, while shouting and waving their revolvers at us.

Early one morning we were woken and given half an hour to get ready and assemble outside in the street. We were allowed to take with us only what we could carry on our shoulders.

We didn't really have enough time to decide what would be most useful to take, so we each grabbed some change of clothes, my father and the boys took their Tallis and Tefillin, my mother the Shabbat candlesticks and I - foolish child - my school reports, thinking that they might be useful for finding a job. We had very little food to take. We were marched to the brick factory, where they gathered the Jews of the town. On our forced march we saw a strange Munkacs, empty of Jews, remembering the vibrant Jewish town it used to be. Subsequently, we discovered that this was the first stage of our deportation to Auschwitz, but that is another story.

* * *

Dig!

Etta Lerner.

Dig up potatoes for the Germans
Hope they will choke on them.
Dig, dig, don't show your tiredness
The guard looks bored with it.

Sarah works opposite me
Watching the enemy
She gives a nod when he turns
I hide a potato in my shoe.

Goldie stole a carrot last week
We three shared the treat
I forgot how delicious
A fresh vegetable can be.

My chilblains hurt
My hands are numb from the cold
I think of the food we might steal
And try not to feel the wind through my thin coat.

Sarah hums a tune and winks
We straighten our backs
We must think of positive things
And ignore the bitter facts.

* * *

Dreams of Youth

Etta Lerner

Where is the joy of youth
Where are love and peace
Where are right and truth
Where is humanity?

Where are the dreams
We ought to have
Where is joy
Where achievement?

The sunny fields of wheat
The fast running brook
The gardens of flowers
The trees bowed down with fruit.

They are all memories
Dredged out of the past
Into this barb-wired wilderness
Where nothing can last.

Surrounded with cruelty
Starvation and threats
The young are old with weariness
Slave labour bent their backs.

They dream of potatoes and bread
A stomach full of food
The luxury of a wash and bed
Of clean clothes and proper shoes.

Of freedom and hope
Calm and rest
Of finding their loved ones
Of being young at last.

* * *

IN MEMORY OF SHIYE

ZBIGNIEW PELCZYNSKI

Zbigniew Pelczynski is a former Don at Pembroke College, Oxford.

This is a true story, as far as I remember it, about sixty years after it began, and fifty-two years after it ended. It is a tribute to Shiye, a friend of the Pelczynski family, a memorial to one of the victims of the Holocaust, an episode in the saga of tangled Polish-Jewish relations. It lay dormant inside me for years, now and again floating into consciousness, doubtful whether it had a future on paper. The fiftieth anniversary of Auschwitz gave me the motive and courage to write it.

I spent my childhood in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, a small town near Warsaw, now in the Polish capital's commuter belt, but then living its own, separate, sleepy life although the one-million city - with its wealth of cinemas, theatres, smart cafés and excellent shops - was within easy reach by a suburban electric tram. My father owned a grocer's shop and also ran a wholesale business in flour, sugar and other foodstuffs. Originally both prospered, but the Great Depression, which hit the Polish agriculture-based economy very hard, caused trouble and eventually bankruptcy.

Perhaps half of the Grodzisk population were Jewish, but the two groups of inhabitants were segregated more by income and profession than by race. Well-to-do, assimilated Jewish dentists or businessmen lived in the centre, and sent their children to state schools. Poor Orthodox Jews (and they were the great majority) lived in small, crowded neighbourhoods, speaking Yiddish, wearing khalat and mytskes and eking out a living as stall-keepers, artisans or God knows what.

Shiye (in Polish spelt Szej) worked for my father as messenger, porter and odd-job man. His father I think was a cobbler or a tailor and a widower, and there was real poverty at home. Shiye must have been fourteen or fifteen when he became my father's employee, but since I was only seven and my brother Kazik only six he seemed quite grown up to us. He was very strong for his age,

had a face which gentiles would have called 'typically semitic' and spoke rather poor Polish - ungrammatical, badly accented, almost broken. He must have gone to a Yiddish school for he neither read nor wrote Polish. He was absolutely devoted to my mother and ran extracurricular errands for her for which she rewarded him with generous meals in the kitchen. In a somewhat condescending way she was fond of him too and came to regard him as a virtual member of our household, together with the cook and the maid.

The relationship was cemented a year or so later when Kazik and I began teaching Shiye to read and write. My brother had just started in the lowest form so his elementary school text-books came in handy. In early evenings, after work, Shiye would spend an hour or so sitting with us at a table, struggling with Latin alphabet and Polish spelling rules. The beginnings were hard but he was intelligent and keen, and made good progress. What started as a game, almost a joke, became to the Pelczynski boys a challenge and a source of pride - with the extra frisson that pupils ourselves at school, at home we were teachers to somebody who was twice our age. Mother looked on the trio with benevolent amusement and rewarded Shiye with extra food helpings for his effort. Father thought at first it was all a lot of nonsense but came to see that a literate Shiye would be more useful to him in business.

My childhood memories of 'Shiye's school' are as vivid as if it only happened yesterday. But memories of how and when it ended are very blurred. When father's business busted, Shiye must have found work elsewhere. About the same time my parent's marriage broke down. Mother took a job in Warsaw and set up home in Wawer, another small town near Warsaw, but in the opposite direction to Grodzisk. The sons were sent to a remote boarding school in Northern Poland, on the border with Germany. I stopped seeing Shiye, though I had news of him as he stayed in touch with father and mother. He re-emerged in our life in a dramatic and unexpected way in early October 1939.

Hitler's armies invaded Poland from three directions on September 1, leaving the Soviet army to occupy Eastern Poland just over a fortnight later, and the blitzkrieg was over at the end of the month when Warsaw capitulated after a brief siege. Shortly after the German invasion, with Polish Government's encouragement, the civilians of the capital and the surrounding country began to be evacuated eastwards on special refugee trains, unaware that a new danger was looming in the East. Mother, Kazik and I joined them, but we did not get very far. During the first night on the train most of our modest luggage was stolen and mother, enraged by the loss of her best silver, tablecloths and bedding, quit the evacuation game and installed herself in a rented room in a small wooded holiday resort ten or so miles further down the line. While the war raged elsewhere all was quiet in our woods until suddenly one day the German army steamroller descended on us, crushed the feeble Polish resistance in the neighbourhood, and we found ourselves under Nazi occupation.

Although the hostilities ended shortly afterwards, we were paralysed by the turn of events and did not know what to do. Was it safe to go back? What had happened to the flat in Wawer - was it still there? How much of Warsaw was still standing, and what about mother's job in the Ministry of Transport? Where was father? Was he alive and well? The questions were answered and our life took a new, somewhat more optimistic turn when one day... Shiye appeared on our doorstep, like *deus ex machina*. He was in Warsaw during the siege and met father there, but his mind was filled with one thought: what had happened to 'Pani Irena', Zbyszek and Kazik. He had to know and help us if possible. As soon as he could leave Warsaw he walked to Wawer (some 15 km) where he found our flat in one piece, though devastated by German soldiers who had billeted there. From neighbours he learned that we had joined the exodus to the East, so he followed the railway line on foot, making enquiries at all the station towns and intermediate villages. Had anybody seen a fine-looking brunette lady with two young teenage sons, one blond and one with chestnut hair? When the answer was no, he went on. He was prepared to press on till he found us, even if this meant crossing into the Soviet-occupied zone where the particular railway line terminated and where, but for the grace of God, we would probably have landed if our possessions had not been pinched. Fortunately, Shiye did not have to walk that far to find us in our woody refuge.

When we met we all burst into tears. Shiye hugged us and kissed mother's hands passionately and we hugged him in turn. He was a symbol of happier days, a link with father, provider of reasonably good news and reassurance. But above all, we were struck and moved by his extraordinary concern for us and loyalty, worthy of a true member of a family. We had never been closer together.

Shiye did more than bring good news; he took charge of our life. It was as if he wanted to repay all we had done for him in Gródzisk and also show that it was he who could now look after us. He bought or hired a handcart, similar to that he had often pushed for my father in the old days. He loaded our meagre possessions on it and headed towards Wawer, with the three of us marching slowly beside him. At home he helped mother to clear up the mess and after a couple of days left her with Kazik for company while he and I walked to Warsaw to find father. I remember the sight of the ruins, the damage done by German bombing and shelling, the downcast, disoriented people in the streets, and soldiers in strange field-grey uniforms strutting about. At some point Shiye stopped by a group of Germans and rather nonchalantly asked if he could light his cigarette from one of them. He got his light and thanked them, and to this day I have a clear image in my memory of the two cigarettes touching and behind them, almost touching, two very different faces; Shiye's 'semitic' face with black curls sticking from under a cloth cap and the flat, blond hair under the army cap and the 'aryan' face of the German. They symbolised two worlds which were soon to veer radically apart, one taking a tragically different course.

In occupied Warsaw, father managed to rebuild his business and for a time even prospered, although eventually German controls and restrictions over trade made his life a misery and nearly bankrupted him again. In the face of adversity, my parents' marriage was patched up and the family reunited for the duration of the war. Shiye once more disappeared from our sight, though at first we knew what had happened to him. He returned to Gródzisk and in 1940 was put in the local Ghetto, together with all the other Gródzisk Jews, poor and rich, secular and religious. Later on, under the policy of concentrating Jews and making their conditions worse, he was moved with others to a nearby Ghetto of Sochaczew, a larger town. Life was awful but still somewhat bearable; able-bodied Jews had work, generally outside; food could be smuggled from the countryside and bought (at a price); a degree of communication with relatives in other ghettos still existed. But all that was stories; we had no direct contact with Shiye and could only speculate about his fate. Warsaw of course had a huge and growing ghetto of its own and one knew much better what conditions there were like.

One evening, probably in the spring of 1943, just before the 10 o'clock curfew, there was a knock on the door. We trembled. Father was being harassed by the Germans and there had been one or two searches of our flat, followed (I remember) in one case by the confiscation of a precious store of coffee beans and tea, which were a part of father's business capital. Also, the apartment block where we lived had recently been annexed to the German residential quarter and we were threatened with eviction, without alternative accommodation in sight. We were sure it was the Germans again. 'Who is it?' asked father feebly. 'It's me, Shiye. Please let me in.' We were stunned. In the doorway stood our Shiye, with a deep hat on and a scarf up half his face, but to us instantly recognisable. When we looked at him properly inside he looked gaunt and sad, but not really worried or depressed. We gave him a meal and plied him with questions. What was he doing in Warsaw? How was he? What were things like in the ghetto?

The stories he told us were heart-breaking and we listened for most of the night. The days in the Gródzisk ghetto were almost idyllic compared with Sochaczew, though people had lost their business, often homes, and many possessions. A few people already got killed, but the brutality was within some bounds. In the move to Sochaczew more possessions and all the homes were forfeited, and overcrowding, starvation and disease sharply increased. As we had suspected, Shiye found some manual work to do for the Germans outside the ghetto, which enabled him to trade with the Poles and add to his minuscule food ration. His greatest worry was his old father, who lived in the Warsaw ghetto and whom he could not help. News was scarce but eventually Shiye learned that his father was sick, perhaps dying. We were amazed when he told us that through bribes he was allowed to leave Sochaczew and enter the Warsaw ghetto. It took him a few days

to make enquiries, visiting overcrowded flats, seeing starving children and dead bodies in the street - witnessing hell on earth in comparison with which the Sochaczew ghetto seemed still a relatively civilised place. When finally he tracked his father down he found him in a mortuary, among a mass of emaciated, naked bodies waiting to be buried. He helped to bury him, glad that at least he could say kaddish for his soul. Then he headed back for Sochaczew and on the way dropped in to see us, knowing he risked life if he were caught.

Although we were happy that he was alive and glad to see him, his visit plunged us into a mental and ethical turmoil. What could we do for him? How could we help him? It seemed cruel to let him return to the ghetto and sooner or later face the fate of his father. But the flat was not large, it was on the fifth floor, there were no secret hiding places inside or outside in case the Germans (or even our Polish acquaintances, whom one could not trust) called in unexpectedly. We were racking our brains, remembering stories of people, especially in the country, who hid Jews for money and nuns' convents where apparently some Jews were sheltered out of Christian charity. But Shiye would not listen to the suggestions. He simply said, 'I love you all. You were like a second family to me. I know what would happen to you if the Germans discovered me here - Auschwitz or worse. I would never dream of risking your life for the sake of mine.' And of course he meant it. He was so wonderfully unselfish while we felt like worms.

The following day, as soon as it got dark, he left us. We gave him all the money we could spare, and a lot of food. I think mother wanted to part with a diamond ring, but I don't think he agreed to accept it. She might need it when things got really bad 'on the Polish side', he said. (They did, in the Warsaw Uprising of August-September 1944, when we lost almost everything and were lucky not to lose our lives, like 200,000 inhabitants of Warsaw). One by one we embraced Shiye, saying goodbye and wishing him luck. Mother wept profusely; the men tried hard to suppress tears. One more goodbye and he was gone, gone from the flat and from our life for ever.

We don't know if he ever reached Sochaczew, some 30 km away. If he did, how did he fare in the ghetto? Eventually, all the small ghettos round Warsaw were liquidated, their surviving inmates sent to the gas chambers of Majdanek or Treblinka. I am sure he did not survive or he would have most certainly contacted my family after the war. I left Poland as a German prisoner-of-war after the collapse of the Warsaw Uprising, and eventually ended up in Britain. There was simply no way to find out how and where Shiye might have died, especially as I had forgotten his surname.

But recently something happened. Talking to my brother Kazik in Warsaw, I found out that he remembered Shiye's surname; Kastner. Now I can write to Yad Vashem and see if they have any record. 'Szyje Kastner; born probably in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, around the year 1916. Last known to be alive in spring 1943. Likely to have been deported to one of the death camps from the Sochaczew ghetto in 1944. Further details unknown; please supply if available.'

And if I discover where he perished I shall make a pilgrimage to Majdanek or Treblinka, put on a kippa and say a prayer for his soul.

* * *

SEPHARDI VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

PERCY S GOURGEY M.B.E.

Percy was born in Bombay. He is a former National Chairman of Poale Zion. He writes extensively on Jewish and Arab matters.

Amongst all right-thinking people, interest in the Holocaust increases rather than diminishes with the passage of time. This is because the mass murder of six million Jews by the Nazis is the greatest crime of genocide in history. Holocaust denial, an offence in some European countries, though not in Britain as yet, is effective amongst those who are credulous or naive.

The six million Jewish martyrs include over 60,000 Jews of Sephardi origin, mainly in the Balkans, though a considerable number were from Holland. Most of the former were transported to Auschwitz from Greece in 1943. Their ancestors had, during the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century, left Spain for Greece, Turkey and Morocco. Out of 77,000 Jews in Greece before the Second World War, only 10,000 survived. In many cities where prosperous Jewish communities had existed, only a few individuals remained. For instance, at Serres, out of 600, only 3 survived; in Kastoria, out of 900, only 50 survived; the list of horror is very long, culminating in Salonica where, out of 56,000 only 1950 survived. These numbers are small but still significant compared to those in Poland, Russia, Rumania and Germany.

The courageous Greek Orthodox Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens and all Greece, wrote a public letter to the Greek Prime Minister at the time, signed also by about 30 public figures, leaders of various organisations, constituting a unique document, stating, inter alia - "The Greek people were rightfully surprised and deeply grieved to be informed that the German Occupation Authorities have already started to put into effect a gradual programme of deportation of the Greek Jewish community of Salonica to places beyond our national borders and that the first groups of deportees are already on their way to Poland. The grief of the Greek people was even deeper since (1) according to the terms of armistice, all Greek citizens, without distinction of race or religion, were to be treated equally by the Occupation Authority, (2) the Greek Jews have proven themselves to be not only valuable contributors to the economic growth of the country, but also law-abiding citizens who fully understand their duties as Greeks. They had their share in the common sacrifices of Greece and were always in the front line of the struggles of the nation to defend its inalienable historical rights... to the national conscience all the children of common Mother Greece are an inseparable unity... our Holy Religion does not recognise superior or inferior qualities based on race or religion, stating that 'there is neither Jew nor Greek' (Galatians 3:28)... our common fate, in periods of glory or misfortune forged inseparable bonds among all Greek citizens. Today we are deeply concerned with the fate of 60,000 of our fellow-citizens who are Jews, with their irreproachable patriotism... We believe the Government should take a clear stance with regard to these events... we protest against the deportation of Greek Jews which insult our national honour and unity." (from "In memory of a lost world", daily newspaper, 'Kathemeroni' dated 21 April 1963).

Before setting out some individual stories, it is interesting to note the part played in the extermination of Sephardi Jews by the notorious ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, Waj Amin Al-Hussaini. In "The Grand Mufti" by Zvi Elpeleg, published by Frank Cass, London, 1993, the author writes: "... Maj Amin's hatred of the Jews provided a sufficient motive for his association with their greatest oppressors. His speeches on Berlin Radio were congruous with the Nazi murderers: 'Kill the Jews wherever you find them - this pleases God, history and religion'. His hatred of Jews - and not just of Zionism - was fathomless, and he gave full vent to it during his period of activity alongside the Nazis (October 1941 to May 1945). His claim that his co-operation with the Nazis was prompted

only by the struggle against the British was groundless. For Maj Amin Germany was first and foremost the embodiment of anti-Jewish sentiment. Germany's defeat caused him great sadness... (p.179)."

The irony of this situation is that Maj Amin owed his position as Mufti of Jerusalem to a Jew - i.e. he was one of three candidates for the post presented to Britain's first High Commissioner in Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, of a distinguished Anglo-Jewish family, who, after much consideration, appointed him Mufti at the age of 26, on 8 May 1921! (Maj Amin used this religious position to embark on his political career). In June 1941, Maj Amin encouraged the pro-Nazi General, Rashid Ali, to take control in Iraq and launch the notorious farhud (mob riots) in which many Jews were killed. It was terminated with British and Indian troops overthrowing Rashid Ali. In November 1941, Maj Amin was photographed with Hitler in Berlin, during which meeting he urged Hitler to carry out the extermination of the Jews - possibly this was the prelude to the infamous meeting in the Wannsee district in Berlin in January 1942 when plans were laid for the "Final Solution". There is another photograph (in Elpolog's book) of Maj Amin reviewing Muslim "Nazi" troops recruited mainly from the Muslims in Bosnia, to help Rommel rid the Holy Land of the Jews. "At the beginning of 1944, Maj Amin assembled a group of Palestinian Arab paratroopers who were trained in Holland by the Germans... in the summer of 1944, two groups of paratroopers were parachuted into Palestine" (p.69). Maj Amin's memoirs, which appeared in the quarterly, *Filastin*, include a detailed description of his efforts to prevent Jews escaping the Nazi inferno, which he notes with pride that by preventing Jews from leaving Europe he had kept the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine from increasing its strength... It should be stressed that a large number of Arabs shared his sympathy with Nazi Germany during the Second World War.

The following are brief extracts from the stories of some of those Sephardim who were taken to Auschwitz.

Violette Fintz, nee Malo, was born in Rhodes on 15 November 1911 and educated at the Alliance Israelite Universelle school there. She was a manager at the Singer Sewing Company until she was transported to Auschwitz by the Nazis. She was liberated in Bergen-Belsen on 15 April 1945 and subsequently lived in South Rhodesia. In October 1994, she was invited to tell her story in a film commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Rhodes Island Jews, made by a Belgian film company, Les Filmes de la Memoires. She recalled that "of the 84 Rhode Islanders who were in Dachau, only 9 survived". She concluded, after describing the horrors to which she and her family were subjected, "I cannot bear it when I hear people say that the Holocaust never existed". This recalls a statement made by Dr Elisabeth Maxwell recently - "We must act now before memory becomes history".

Lucia Amato was born in Rhodes Island in 1921 and attended the Scuola Israelite. She survived Auschwitz and Theresienstadt, from where she was liberated on 8 May 1945. She then moved to Rhodesia and South Africa. She recalled: "One day one of the prisoners was found missing during the call-up. The guard told us that unless we told him where she had gone, they would shoot 10 of us randomly. We were very scared that they would kill us all. The next day she was found and brought to our block".

R.A. was born in Rhodes Island. She was in Auschwitz, Theresienstadt and Dachau. After liberation she went to the Congo and South Africa. She said, in her testimony, "I did not want them to grow with hatred... In Auschwitz the decision of who would live and who would die was left up to Mengele. Ironically, he was called "the Angel of Death, and not the Devil... I think that survivors of the Holocaust who did not lose family members are more able to distance themselves from the memories of the Holocaust... I simply cannot do so, but my children grew up without hate".

Guiseppe Cone, also born in Rhodes, said, "When we arrived in Auschwitz, we still did not have any idea of what would happen to us...(then) the men, the women, the aged, the sick, the babies were lined up for selection. When it was my turn, I was asked how old I was, I said I was 35. I

had to turn round for them to see my buttocks if this was true and since these were still firm, I was told "Arbeit", which meant work.. the Germans treated us worse than slaves, worse than anything imaginable".

To conclude: if acts of genocide have occurred since the War, as by Pol Pot in Cambodia, by Idi Amin in Uganda, by Saddam Hussein in Northern Iraq, in Bosnia, it was because not enough was done to bring the criminals to book. The least that can be done in Britain is to make Holocaust denial a crime as it is elsewhere in Europe. A vigorous, unrelenting campaign must be mounted for this purpose

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- (2) "The Jews of Rhodes" by Marc D Angel, foreword by the Kahom Rabbi, Dr Solomon ---, Sepher-Mormon Press Inc. New York 1980
- (3) "In Sacred Memory" Edited by Gwynne Schrire, Cape Town Holocaust Memorial Council, 1995
- (4) "The Grand Mufti" by Zvi Elpeleg, Frank Cass, London, 1993
- (5) "Inside Hitler's Greece" by Mark Mazower
- (6) "A History of the Jews of the Balkans" by Aron Rodrigues and Esther Benbassa (Blackwells)
- (7) "An Atlas of the Holocaust" by Martin Gilbert, London 1982

* * *

BELZEC REPORT

ROBIN O'NEIL M.A.

Robin is a former CID officer. He took his MA at University College, London, under Sir Martin Gilbert. He is now working on his PhD. Jews in Galicia - transportations to Belzec. He is totally devoted to the study of the Shoa.

Belzec Report (Preliminary) with acknowledgement to the Institute of Polish-Jewish Relations and Hebrew Department (UCL) for financial support. The invitation from Professor Andrzej Kola, University of Torun to participate in the Belzec Survey.

Between the 12-25 October, 1997 and 28 April - 4 June, 1998, two archaeological investigations were carried out at the site of the former Nazi death camp at Belzec.

The principle investigators were a team from the Nicholas Copernicus University of Torun, Poland. The team was led by Professor Andrzej Kola¹ and Professor Mieczyslaw Gora², and assisted by Dr Ryszard Kazmierczak, Wojciech Azuła, Zbigniew Wleczorkowski (qualified surveyors), Michael Tregenza (author), Lublin³ and Robin O'Neil, MA (Holocaust Studies), Ph.D Research Student,

Hebrew and Jewish Department, University College, London. In addition, 12 local unemployed males from Belzec Village were employed for labour⁴.

The village of Belzec sits quietly on the main road between the town of Tomaszow Lubelski, 9km to the north on the way to Zamocs and the border crossing of Hrebenna, 13km to the south on the road to Rawa-Rusky and Lvov. The main attraction of Belzec to the Nazis was, of course, the rail communication complex. In 1939, Belzec had become central for rail traffic south to Lvov and points east, west to Krakow and points west, north to Lublin, Warsaw and the north.

Belzec, in many ways is the forgotten camp and unique within the operations of 'Einsatz Reinhard'. It was the first of the main three to be built on the eastern borders (Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka) and very much an experimental camp. In the scheme of things, Belzec was the catchment area for the Jewish populations of Galicia reaching out to the communities as far south to Horodenka, west to Skawina and Krakow and north to Lublin⁵.

By the time the first buildings were erected at Belzec in November, 1941, the framework of destruction was already in place and operating on a massive scale in all areas under German control. Lithuanian Jewry had been decimated by SS-Colonel Karl Jaeger of Einsatzgruppen 3, the Jews in Stanislawow and Dnjepropetrowsk were already facing the death pits, 10,000 at a time under the gaze of SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer Hans Kruger and detachments of Einsatzgruppen 6⁶. In their twisted sense of 'order', those responsible were issuing invoices to the Judenrat for the costs of bullets that were slaughtering their communities. The list of massacres is endless, escape was nearly impossible, the object was clear. This was the situation when the first barracks were erected at Belzec, and the building materials for Sobibor and Treblinka were cluttering the Eastern railway sidings in the General government.

The extermination camp was operational for the transportation of Jews, from March-December, 1942. In November, 1942, destruction and the digging up of the bodies for burning had commenced in a crude attempt to hide the evidence. By March, 1943, the site had been returned to some form of normality. It is estimated 600,000 were murdered in the gassing installations⁷.

Belzec Camp today has changed little since its dismantlement in the spring of 1943, and the site returned to natural woodland. Photographs of the site taken in 1945, show a barren hillside dotted with the odd group of fir trees. The walkway used by the Belzec villagers since the turn of the century, as a short cut to the villages over the hill, can be seen clearly on the photograph. This is as the site must have appeared to the Nazis in 1940.

The first investigation in October 1997 was exploratory, to determine the feasibility of the study to warrant further explorations. This investigation proved confirmative, which resulted in the further study of the second period, April-June, 1998. Both investigations were carried out with identical procedures.

Documentary source materials utilised.

- (1) Plans of the Belzec Extermination Camp obtained from a number of sources⁸.
- (2) Plan of the area, scale: 1,000 (Map No. 742, folio 27, prepared by the Lublin Regional Surveyor's office in Zamocs).
- (3) Luftwaffe aerial photographs of Belzec, dated 1944⁹.
- (4) Documentation taken by the Investigation Commission in October, 1945¹⁰.

Methodology.

- (1) Definitive measuring with surveying instruments at 5m intervals over the entire area of the present designated site¹¹.
- (2) Each point of measurement received (and subsequent bore-hole) an individual consecutive identification reference¹².
- (3) 18 inch wooden stakes (previously prepared and pointed) were used as markers for boring locations.
- (4) The investigators were divided up into 3 teams, each team working at a table recording data as each soil sample was withdrawn and examined.
- (5) Positive and negative samples at varying depths were recorded and then replaced, or sealed in sample containers for analysis¹³.

Drilling Procedures.

Detachable drill bits which were made of hard steel were sharpened each morning by the operating teams. Metal joining rods of 1m section were then attached and drilling commenced at the pre-indicated location point. A turning rod was attached which enabled two operators to drill to 1m. The drill was withdrawn and the soil sample extracted and the bit catchment was examined. Findings were immediately recorded by the supervisor sitting at a table who recorded the details on graph paper. An extension rod was then attached and the same procedure commenced to depth (when positive) of up to 6m. When the rods were withdrawn at this depth they extended sometimes to the tree tops¹⁴. This procedure was the same for both periods in the examination of over 1,700 bore-holes.

Observations First Period (12-25 October).

Work commenced on the undisturbed land at the South East part of the camp. The expert eye of Professor Gora selected this site by intuition¹⁵. He proved to be right, as five mass graves were located, the largest measured 36m x 18m x over 6m deep. Two graves contained unburned, naked human corpses below a layer of water at 3-4m below ground. At varying depths was found burnt human ash, burnt wood, crushed pieces of human bone and skull bone with hair attached. At the extremity of the drilling at grave marked 1, there were several centimetres of burnt human fat, easily identified when mixed with yellow sand. Three of the graves contained a mixture of ash, carbonised wood and crushed bone. One grave was so packed that the drill could not penetrate lower than 3m.

Adjacent to the East boundary fence, a grave measuring 5m x 5m x 2m deep was located spent and live rounds of German and Soviet manufacture were found. This site was believed to be the location of the bogus 'lazerat' (Military Field Hospital), where old and sick Jews were summarily executed immediately after entering the camp¹⁷.

Preliminary excavations were carried out where it is believed the shunting locomotives, bringing the wagons and human cargo to the ramp area, terminated to off-load and then return to bring more wagons into the camp¹⁸. Four 3m long excavations were made across this location. Soil samples taken from this location and analysed, show a high concentration of engineering oil which suggests that this was the end of the track and location of the ramp. Also found were traces of heavy beams and planks which may have been used to support the ramp area¹⁹.

With the use of metal detectors, a number of artifacts were found. The most interesting item was a silver cigarette case bearing the inscription, 'Max Munk' and an address in Vienna. This particular find is significant and points to the first real evidence that Jews from Vienna were transported to

Belzec. All these items of the first period have been catalogued and a selection is shown on the list attached²¹.

The Second survey period (28 April to 4 June 1998) was lead by the same team adopting the same methodology and procedures as the first period. 1,300 bore-holes were drilled at 5m intervals and covered the entire area of the present day camp designation. A further 27 mass graves were located and their dimensions and contents determined and recorded. The symbolic memorial tombs located and numbered 1 - 4 on the northern boundary fence, and believed to be sites of mass graves, proved to be correct, with the exception of memorial No. 2 where no evidence of a mass grave was found. On the northern location of the camp we found the majority of graves, the largest measuring 70m x 20m x 6m deep which extended beyond the fence into an adjacent timber yard²².

The grave area survey conducted in the first period proved to be the last mass graves dug. In two of these graves the bodies had not been exhumed and burnt as per the Himmler directive of 1943²³. The reasons for this are not clear. We know that the latter period (July - September) was the height of the Jewish transports sent to Belzec when the camp was at full capacity. How many bodies that remain in these two graves is difficult to establish - to be sure, there are many thousands.

Building Structures.

During the course of this survey, four camp structures were exposed. Three of the sites were excavated to a depth of 3m and revealed burnt structures, possibly at the location of the death brigade barracks in Camp 11. Outer walls and wooden support posts were exposed. All three barracks contained a concrete cellar area.

The two barracks in the upper camp were constructed of wood²⁴. The barrack exposed in the lower camp area was of brick construction. It was from this site that a number of human bones, skulls etc., were found. These remains appeared to be the remains of several people and probably shot on site, and their bodies dumped in the process of filling in the building plot when the barrack was destroyed²⁵. A fourth building was exposed near the West corner of the camp and suggested that this building was the generator housing building²⁶. Further traces of wooden barracks were located outside the Southern boundary and probably the site of the Ukrainian barracks and undressing buildings. We found no trace of the Gassing Barracks from the first or second phase of the camp's construction²⁷.

Summary.

- (1) Over 300 artifacts considered of importance were found and logged. A further 300 artifacts of interest were also recorded.
- (2) The research by scientific means, revealed and confirmed, with corroboration, the true nature and purpose of Belzec Extermination
- (3) The research kills the lie and destroys the integrity of the revisionists who maintain the Holocaust is a myth. To quote one report from this direction circulated on the Internet 4.1.97:

Air Photo Evidence.

4.2.2. Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek (10).

Illustration 3: Belzec, May 16, 1944.

Much like Treblinka, the Belzec camp could easily be looked into from the nearby rail line and road. The town of Belzec was located about 1 mile north of the camp, which had been built on a hillside, into the forest. Air photos from 1944, (11) in other words from after the camp was dismantled, show that the area of the camp where witnesses claim mass graves containing some 600,000 bodies as well as their later cremation

sites were located, had an area of approximately 7,000m² (75,300 sq.ft). No more than 70,000 bodies could thus have been buried there - provided that the rocky soil would ever have allowed for the excavation of 12ft-deep graves in the first place. There is no evidence of any foundations from former buildings nor or any large-scale movements of the soil or of mass cremations. There are no signs of any such activity anywhere in the surrounding area either²⁸.

Documentation of materials obtained.

- (1) Map itemising locations of bore-holes (402 in the first period and 1,300 in the second period).
- (2) Photographic and video recording of day-to-day activities²⁹.
- (3) Inventory (sample) of objects unearthed (attached).
- (4) Map detailing findings of 33 mass graves.
- (5) Daily Diary of events (20,000 words).

Conclusions.

- (1) Failure to locate the gassing barracks from the first and second phase was not surprising as considerable effort would have been made to dispose and destroy the main tool of genocide³⁰.
- (2) The Nazis gambled (and lost) by burning and burying everything in sight to destroy evidence.
- (3) The corpses not exhumed and burnt (graves of the 1st investigation) may have been the result of mass panic with no time to complete destroying the evidence.
- (4) Corroboration obtained of the escapees Reder and Hirszman, the evidence given by Kirt Gerstein, evidence given by defendants in War Crimes Trials.
- (5) As to numbers, we will never know. From preliminary research we may be looking to over 800,000³¹.

The work will continue.

Robin O'Neil, MA.
Hebrew and Jewish Department
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10th July, 1998

¹ Director of the Underwater Archaeological Department University of Torun.

² Senior Curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Lodz and site supervisor.

³ Michael Tregenza is probably the foremost expert on the German aspect of Operation Reinhard. I have worked with him for the past three years and acknowledge his expertise, help and advice with regard to my own project - *The Jews of Galicia* 41-43.

⁴ Essential to this project was the co-operation between the Polish Government and the United States Washington Holocaust Memorial Museum represented by Jacek Nowakowski, Associate Director of the Holocaust Museum. The basis of the investigation was the up-grading of the present memorial site which for many years had been neglected and is presently strewn with rubbish and used by the local inhabitants for drinking sessions.

⁶ See list attached of over four hundred Jewish Community Towns from which their communities were transported on a monthly basis to Belzec between February and December, 1942.

⁶ On 12.10.41, 20,000 Jewish inhabitants of Staislawow were herded into the town's Jewish Cemetery. Two large pits had already been dug and shooting commenced and would continue

all day into the late evening. Having shot between 10 - 12,000 that day, SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Kruger, protégé of Dr Schongarth, Commander of Einsatzgrupp zbV, called it a day and sent 10,000 Jews home. Over 10,000 lay dead in the pits. I would argue that this action was the beginning of the Final Solution in the Generalgouvernement which at that time was under Reich Law.

⁷ The official figure after the first Commission of Investigation shortly after the war mentions 540,000 and this appears to have been rounded up. I am at present working with other colleagues on this point to establish with more certainty the numbers involved. We will never know the exact number of Jews murdered, but indications from recent research show a much higher figure of 800,000 plus.

⁸ (1) Rudolf Reder (survivor of Belzec). 'Oboz Smierci - Belzec' (2 maps). Although Reder is the author of several publications about Belzec which were published after the war, one of the maps shown in these publications was drawn by Joseph Bau from details supplied by Reder (see signature). Joseph Bau was born in Szczecznyszyn, Poland. His family were all killed in Belzec. Bau survived as a young man, firstly in the Krakau Ghetto where he worked for the Judenrat as a statistician. ('the Jewish Councils are to undertake a temporary census of the Jews - if possible arranged according to sex (ages) (a) up to 16 yrs, (b) from 16-20 years and (c) according to the principle professions etc). See PRO Document EC-307-

1. When the ghetto was destroyed on 13.3.43 he was taken to Plaszow concentration camp where he worked as a draughtsman for the camp authorities under Amon Goeth. He survived the war with the help of Oskar Schindler on the transport from Plaszow KZ to Brunnitz, Czechoslovakia (via Gross-Rosen KZ), in October, 1943. Since 1988 I have met Bau on a number of occasions at his studio at 9 Berdychevski Street, Tel-Aviv. I last interviewed him in 1997 when he confirmed that he was the author of the maps as shown in the Reder material and that they were reasonably accurate. Hereafter shown as maps 1 and 2.

(2) Plan number 3 is the one shown on the display board as you enter the Belzec memorial site. The author is local to Belzec whose name escapes me. The map is simply drawn but nonetheless reasonably accurate. Hereafter map No. 3.

(3) Map by Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey, Travelling in Search of the Past* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1997) page 432, map No. 31. The only missing feature of this map are the locations of the mass graves found by the Torun expedition and perhaps the location of the Generator building.

(4) Map by Michael Tregenza is the most recent addition drawn after the preliminary findings of the first period but this too is now out of date. Michael is re-drawing the map as the result of our findings after the second period. As we were working on site, Michael was correcting his data by the hour. A more definitive map of the Belzec extermination camp will not be available until a proposed return to Belzec in October, 1998, when the area outside the present day wire boundaries will be explored. The former Communist authorities were responsible for landscaping and securing the camp site as a memorial in the 1960s. We are of the opinion that the present day boundaries are inaccurate and the camp is larger than we supposed. Preliminary research has shown mass grave and building evidence outside the wire. Also, we were unable to examine ground adjacent to the present day forester's domestic quarters due to growing vegetables.

⁹ Air Force Library, National Archive, Washington DC, USA.

¹⁰ Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation/Institute of National Memory, Warsaw.

¹¹ Working to map as described, the camp area was progressively covered during both periods.

¹² A total of over 1,700 bore-holes were made over both periods with each penetration catalogued, showing the results of soil analysis at the time or by further analysis in the laboratory.

¹³ On advice from Rabbinical authority, it was important to replace the soil samples in exact drilling locations.

¹⁴ The local labour, who did all the drilling work, became very efficient, and by the time of the conclusion of the first examination period they were able to predict and analyse with some certainty.

- ¹⁵ Professor Gora, *Przeczłosc 1 Pamiec*, No. 4(5) 1997, given to the author as a confirmatory record.
- ¹⁶ Professor Gora is very experienced in Forensic Archaeology. He has worked, written papers and books on many aspects of this kind of investigation. He was the principle investigator in many similar surveys, including Katyn, Kharkow and in the Ukraine.
- ¹⁷ We have no specific description of the Belzec 'lazaret', apart from execution procedures, but I suspect its set-up was similar to, and identical to named location in the Sobibor and Treblinka Extermination Camps. Belzec camp was the forerunner and very much experimental. In Sobibor and Treblinka, the 'lazaret' was surrounded by a tall barbed-wire fence, camouflaged with brushwood to screen from view. Within this area, which could be reached by way of an entrance on the side facing the train platform (and Belzec - the ramp), was a big ditch which served as a mass grave. The soil excavated from this ditch was piled up to form a mound approximately one metre high, directly on the right-hand longitudinal side of the ditch. A flame was burning in the ditch most of the time. The 'lazaret' area also contained a small booth that served as a shelter for the operators in bad weather. In Sobibor, and there is no reason Belzec differed, the old and sick Jews were brought to the site where they were killed by shooting in the back of the neck. In addition to the German or Ukrainian executioner, Jewish helpers wore Red Cross arm bands. The kapo sometimes wore a doctor's surgical gown. A Red Cross sign was displayed at the entrance. All bogus and deceptive of course, to deceive to the last moment.
- ¹⁸ The ramp area could only accommodate 20 wagons at a time. For security, the main camp gate (the location of which has not been determined) was closed after each transport entered the camp.
- ¹⁹ My colleague, Michael Tregenza, with the help of the graphics computer at Majdanek Camp Museum, has reconstructed the ramp area. He carried out a similar exercise in regard to the Gassing Barracks.
- ²⁰ I had circulated the basic information via email: H-Holocaust@H-Net.MSU.Edu. Peter Witte (email: p.witte@t-online.de) informs me that Max Munk may be identical to the same name, born Vienna 1882 who was taken from Prague to Theresienstadt 17.12.1941 with transport 'N', then deported from Theresienstadt to Piaski with transport Ag on 1.4.42. Peter Witte's information makes sense as the Piaski was cleared about the 11.11.42, when transports were sent to Sobibor and Belzec. Peter Witte has since informed me that there were Munks on a transport from Vienna to Izbica on 12.6.42. We will see.
- ²¹ Acknowledgement to M. Tregenza for translation and observations.
- ²² The graves were not in any sense conformatory, they were haphazard and varied in size from one location to the other. Some graves were 'L' shaped, others were 'T' shaped. The majority were rectangular. We were able to assess the nature of digging these graves by the varying depths of confirmatory evidence. Each bore-hole, as I have mentioned, was individually logged, and when placed together, show a distinct individuality. The majority sloped inwards due to the nature of the sandy soil. It is well documented that a mechanical digger was used in the excavations. We were also able to determine that the graves on the north side (the majority) were from the initial period of the camp's existence. This was determined by the presence of lime in the soil samples. In the unusually warm spring of 1942, the camp administrators had problems with over-flowing and decomposing bodies, the smell of which was reeking havoc with the local community and civil authorities. Lime was brought into Belzec in an effort to overcome these complaints.
- ²³ The Blobel 'Special Kommando 1005' Directive to exhume all sites of mass murder and burn the contents.
- ²⁴ During the investigation period of the first and second periods there were a number of instances of damage to the exposed sites: The heavy metal door at the side of the monument was forced open, the concrete flooring penetrated no doubt in the search for valuables. One of the exposed building sites which was suggested to be left open as an exhibit was also vandalised. Holes were dug into the sides of the excavation, again I would suggest looking for valuables. In both cases there is little doubt that these acts were committed by local people. This is not a good omen for any up-grading of the memorial site.

- ²⁶ These remains were preserved, filmed and photographed. On the last day of the survey we re-buried the remains in Mass grave number 1 of the first period. We did what we thought was right - tidied and cleaned the remains before reburial. As it turns out, we were wrong and should have re-buried the remains untouched. We were admonished by the attending Rabbi, Michael Shudrich from Warszawa, who recited Kaddish over the burial site.
- ²⁶ When the camp was built over the winter of 41/42, electricity was relayed from the Belzec railway station. The expansion of the camp and the completion of the second gassing barrack in early June 1942, the camp was self-sufficient with its own generator. This excavated site is believed to be that location.
- ²⁷ We were not surprised by this as every effort would have been made to completely remove any signs of the central feature of Belzec. (My underline).
- ²⁸ In the same publication there are similar references to Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Babi Yar. In respect of Belzec the same article 'As in the case of Treblinka, it would have been impossible in Majdanek and Belzec to keep any mass murder secret; the close proximity of settlements and roads, and cultivation of surrounding farm land right up to the camp fences'.
- ²⁹ I was responsible for videoing (with dialogue) the work and discoveries as the survey progressed. Explanations of finds and summaries by Professor Gora (in Polish). I have 9 90min film cassettes to be edited.
- ³⁰ The first gassing barrack of the first phase (February - June, 1942) was of a wooden rectangular structure and measured 12m x 8m x 2m in height, and was built on a raised concrete structure. The roof was pitched and covered with tar paper. The outer walls were constructed of wooden plank boards and lined inside with zinc sheeting. Sand filled the cavity between the inner and outer walls. There were no windows. Wooden sliding doors were located at the rear for unloading purposes. The entrance door was situated at the front of the building with access gained by three raised steps. The route from the undressing barracks to this entrance was hidden from view by camouflaged fences made up of barbed-wire interwoven with fine gauge wire and fir branches. On immediate entry to the three inner gas chambers was to the left and right. These chambers measured 8m x 6m x 2m high which were sealed with rubber seals. Bogus shower-heads were affixed to the ceiling of these windowless rooms. A Russian T.34 tank engine was positioned at the end of the barrack with gas pipes running underground to outlets in each of the three gas chambers. The improved gassing barrack built in June 1942 was a more substantive building and was erected in the top half of the camp. Measuring 15m x 10m x 2m high on a raised concrete base. A flat top concrete building covered with tar paper. The walls were red brick with concrete rendering. Entrance to the chamber was by three steps into a corridor. Three chambers measuring 5m x 5m to the left and three to the right with bogus shower-heads affixed. The gas pipe ran from 2 T.34 tank engines into each chamber. Outside, there were three unloading doors on each side of the building, opening-out onto raised platforms. Human capacity in the new chambers is estimated at 750 per chamber.
- ³¹ Consultation on site, taking into account many published and unpublished sources.

Over 300 items of property listed as 'very interesting'. Over 300 items of property listed as 'interesting'. All property items catalogued and listed before removal to Torun University for examination. 70 items selected for the purposes of this preliminary report:¹

1. Coins :gold Russian rouble dated 1889 (Tsar Nicholas II).
2. x 20gr RP 1923.
3. x 5gr RP 1931.
4. x 5gr RP 1938.
5. 2gr RP 1938.
6. x 10gr RP 1923
7. x 5gr RP 1923
8. Aluminium backing for thermometer, inscribed with temperatures. On the back inscribed in German
9. - manufacturers name, 'Kober'.
10. Aluminium cylinder for medicine pills, label in Polish.
11. Aluminium lid for army mess tin.
12. Aluminium military water bottles, one inscribed with the number '35257'.
13. Aluminium tube for ointment with the label in German with the Nazi eagle and swastika emblem.
14. Aluminium tubes for medical tablets.
15. Assorted leather footwear.
16. Assorted nails, screws, nuts, bolts and staples.
17. Assorted necks of glass bottles with ceramic stoppers.
18. Assorted tin and enamel cooking utensils.
19. Assortment of keys and locks for luggage and doors.
20. Assortment of plastic hair combs.
21. Assortment of pocket knives with plastic handles.
22. Broken pieces of pocket mirrors.
23. Bronze brooch.
24. Bronze metal inscribed 'Crem'.
25. Coral beads.
26. Decorative glass paper-weight.
27. Dental prosthesis containing one single gold tooth.
28. Filigree pattern silver ornament.
29. Fragments of glass bottles of various types and sizes, including medicine bottles.
30. Fragments of glass test tubes.
31. Fragments of shell shrapnel.
32. Fragments of white enamel.
33. Fragments of window glass.
34. Glass beer bottle inscribed 'Schultheiss'.
35. Glass bottle inscribed 'Grodzisk'.
36. Glass bottle inscribed 'Magister Klawa, Warszawa'.
37. Glass bottle inscribed 'Synerga Warszawa'.
38. Glass from spectacles.
39. Glass jar inscribed 'Ochronna'.
40. Glass medicine phials.
41. Hypodermic syringe needles.
42. Leather and plastic fragments.
43. Lid of silver cigarette case inscribed 'Max Munk, Wien 27'.
44. Lid of silver cigarette case.
45. Live ammunition of Russian manufacturer.
46. Live and spent rounds of ammunition from Russian and German origin.
47. Metal belt buckles.
48. Metal cap for a tube of pills inscribed with the name of a pharmacy in Paris.
49. Metal casing of thermos flask.
50. Metal cigar tube.
51. Metal cutlery - assorted.
52. Metal fob watch case.
53. Metal fountain-pen top.
54. Metal part of gas mask.
55. Nozzle for metal watering-can.
56. Pair of metal shoe trees, name of owner illegible, address inscribed: 'Warsawa, ul. Bielanska 5'.
57. Part of metal cigarette case.
58. parts of iron stove and radiator.

59. Piece of pocket mirror with a photograph of a female child on the reverse.
60. Plastic coat button inscribed 'For Gentlemen' in English.
61. Plastic tooth brushes.
62. Polish army metal buckle.
63. Sections of barbed-wire, interwoven with assorted gauge wire.
64. Sections of flattened iron pipe, 5 and 10cm diameter.
65. Several plastic dentures.
66. Silver buttons.
67. Silver spoons.²
68. Solidified bag of cement bearing the imprint of the rotted hessian sack and remains of label.
69. Surgical scalpel.
70. Two yellow plastic labels (part) bearing blue Star of David (stencilled).

Note:

In the first phase a silver cigarette case was found with metal detector. It was inscribed 'Max Munk' Vienna. According to Peter Witte (p.witte@spss.com) 'Here we have the first evidence that People from Vienna have been transported to Belzec'.

¹ Translation Polish-English M. Tregenza, Lublin.

² On the 9th July, 1998, Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek toured the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC. Buzek handed over two silver spoons as a symbolic gift to the Museum Chairman, Miles Lerman. These spoons were found at the Belzec Extermination Camp during the present survey. Lerman, after receiving the gift, stated 'My entire family perished in Belzec.'

DEPORTATIONS
TO BELZEC (in
alphabetical order)

F

FEBRUARY -
DECEMBER 1942.¹

Lublin
Lvov
Kracow
Radom

**FEBRUARY-
MARCH**

1. Biskupice
2. Drohobycz
3. Izbiца
4. Kazimierz
Dolny
5. Lublin
6. Lubycza
Krolewska
7. Lvov
8. Mosty Male
9. Opole
Lubelski
10. Piaski
11. Rawa Ruska
12. Rzeszow
13. Siennica
-Rozana
14. Stanislawow
15. Trawniki
16. Truskawiec
17. Zolkiew

APRIL

18. Bilgoraj

¹ Full acknowledgement to a number of sources including: Y. Arad, T. Berenstein, M. Tregenza, Dr. Wassalek, M. Gilbert, Galician SIG (USA). Internet Webb Sites Exact dates and numbers being reviwed.

19. Cieszanow
20. Dubienka
21. Horodenka
22. Izbiца
23. Kolomyia
24. Krasnyczyn
25. Krasnik
26. Krasnystaw
27. Kuty
28. Lubaczew
29. Lubartow
30. Lublin
31. Mielec
32. Peczeniczyn
33. Piaski
34. Radomysl -
Wielki
35. Relowiec
36. Rohatyn
37. Siennica
Rozana
38. Skalat
39. Siatyn
40. Stanislawow
41. Szczepieszyn
42. Thumacz
43. Uchanie
44. Wawolnica
45. Wlodawa
46. Zablottow
47. Zamosc

MAY

48. Bilgoraj
49. Cieszanow
50. Janow Lubelski
51. Jarczow
52. Komarow
53. Laszczow
54. Maidan
Gorny
55. Szczepieszyn
56. Tyszowce
57. Zamosc

JUNE

58. Dahrowa Tarnowska
59. Gwozdziec
60. Kolomyia
61. Konakowola
62. Kracow
63. Kuty
64. Lvov
65. Niemirów
66. Ohertyn
67. Olkusz

68. Tarnow
69. Zablottow

JULY

70. Baranow
71. Bircza
72. Blazowa
73. Chyrow
74. Czudec
75. Debica
76. Dobromil
77. Dabrowa
Tarnowska
78. Dukla
79. Glogow
80. Jawornik
Polski
81. Jaworzec
82. Jozefow
83. Kolbu-szowa
84. Niebylec
85. Niemirów
86. Nieniarow
87. Pilzno
88. Przemysl
89. Radomysl
Wielki
90. Rawa-Ruska
91. Ropczyce
92. Rozwadów
93. Ryglica
94. Rzeszow
95. Sasow
96. Sedziszow
97. Sokolow
98. Stryzow
99. Szczepieszyn
100. Tarnobrzeg
101. Tarnow
102. Tlaste
103. Tyczyn
104. Uhnów
105. Ulanow
106. Wielopole
Skrzynskie

AUGUST

107. Bezdzedza
108. Biecz
109. Bilgoraj
110. Blizne
111. Bobrka
112. Bobowa
113. Bochnia
114. Bolechów
115. Borystaw

116. Brzeszów,
 117. Brzechowice,
 118. Choroszków,
 119. Chyrow,
 120. Czarny
 Dunajec,
 121. Czortków,
 122. Czorsztyn,
 123. Dobczyce,
 124. Dolina,
 125. Domaradz,
 126. Drohobycz,
 127. Dukla Fryszlak,
 128. Garbatka,
 129. Gdów,
 130. Gdowca,
 131. Golcowa,
 132. Górał,
 133. Gorlice,
 134. Grodek
 Jagiełłowski,
 135. Grybów,
 136. Gwoźnica,
 137. Jarosław,
 138. Jasiennica,
 139. Jasiennica
 Rosielska,
 140. Jasło,
 141. Jedlica,
 142. Jezierna,
 143. Jezierzan,
 144. Jordanów,
 145. Kolaczyce,
 146. Komancz,
 147. Korczyn,
 148. Krościenko,
 149. Krosno,
 150. Krynica Zdroj,
 151. Labowa,
 152. Lacko,
 153. Leżajsk,
 154. Limanowa,
 155. Lwów,
 156. Lancut,
 157. Maków
 Podhalanski,
 158. Markowice,
 159. Medenica,
 160. Mikołajewo,
 161. Mikuliniec,
 162. Myslenice,
 163. Mysłówice,
 164. Niebieszczany,
 165. Nowotaniec,
 166. Nowy Sącz,
 167. Nowy Targ,
 168. Nowy Wisnicz,
 169. Olesko,

170. Olpin,
 171. Orzechowka,
 172. Pielnia,
 173. Pilzno,
 174. Piwniczna,
 175. Podbor,
 176. Przemysł,
 177. Rabka,
 178. Radymno,
 179. Rymanów,
 180. Sambor,
 181. Sasów,
 182. Schodnica,
 183. Skalat,
 184. Skawina,
 185. Stary Sącz,
 186. Stary Sambor,
 187. Strzyko,
 188. Stebnik,
 189. Strzeliska
 Nowe,
 190. Szczepietrzyn,
 191. Szczercz,
 192. Szczawnica,
 193. Tarnogród,
 194. Tarnopol,
 195. Tłuste,
 196. Tokarnia,
 197. Trembowla,
 198. Truskawiec,
 199. Turka,
 200. Wesola,
 201. Wieliczka,
 202. Wola
 Janienska,
 203. Zamość,
 204. Zasław,
 205. Zbaraz,
 206. Zborów,
 207. Złoczów,
 208. Zwierzyńiec,
 209. Zmigrod,
 210. Zolnia,
 211. Zolkiewka,

SEPTEMBER

210. Baligród,
 211. Biały Kamień,
 212. Bilgoraj,
 213. Bolechów,
 214. Bolszowie,
 216. Barszczów,
 217. Brodz,
 218. Brzódowce,
 219. Brzesko,
 220. Brzezany,
 221. Buczacz,

222. Bakaczowce,
 223. Barstyn,
 224. Buszcza,
 225. Chodorów,
 226. Chorosów,
 227. Czortków,
 228. Dąbrowa
 Tarnowska,
 229. Dalnica,
 230. Działoszyce,
 231. Górał,
 232. Gorlice,
 233. Horodenka,
 234. Husiatyn,
 235. Jablonów,
 236. Jezierzan,
 237. Józefów,
 238. Kalusz,
 239. Kamionka
 Strumlowa,
 240. Karolówka,
 241. Kłodno,
 242. Knihiczyn,
 243. Kolomyja,
 244. Kopczynce,
 245. Karolówka,
 246. Kasów,
 247. Karłow,
 248. Kozłowa,
 249. Krynopol,
 250. Kuty,
 251. Lesko,
 252. Lwów,
 253. Miechów,
 254. Mielnica,
 255. Mikołajów,
 256. Monasterzyska,
 257. Narajów,
 258. Orzyszowice,
 259. Pieczchwosty,
 260. Pistyn,
 261. Podhajce,
 262. Pomorzany,
 263. Probusz,
 264. Proszowice,
 265. Przenysław,
 266. Radziechów,
 267. Rokietyn,
 268. Rozdol,
 269. Roznow,
 270. Sambor,
 271. Sanok,
 272. Skala
 Podlaska,
 273. Skalat,
 274. Skalbierz,
 275. Skale
 Podlaska,

276. Siemnik,
 277. Sniatyn,
 278. Sokal,
 279. Stanisławów,
 280. Steniatyn,
 281. Striż,
 282. Sachystaw,
 283. Tarnograd,
 284. Tarnopol,
 285. Turnow,
 286. Tartakow,
 287. Tuchow,
 288. Ustrzyki
 Dolne,
 289. Wolbrom,
 290. Zablotow,
 291. Zagorz,
 292. Zakliczyn,
 293. Zaleszczyki,
 294. Zbaraz,
 295. Zborow,
 296. Zeldec,
 297. Zabia,
 298. Zarawno,
 299. Zydanow,
 300. Zydaczow.

OCTOBER

301. Annopol,
 302. Bilgoraj,
 303. Bolechów,
 304. Bolszowce,
 305. Boryslaw,
 306. Buczacz,
 307. Bukaczowce,
 308. Bursztyn,
 309. Bychawa,
 310. Chodorow,
 311. Chorostkow,
 312. Kracow,
 313. Czortkow,
 314. Drohobycz,
 315. Fliriel,
 316. Grodzki,
 317. Grzymaloe,
 318. Horyniec,
 319. Hrubieszów,
 320. Izbica,
 321. Jablonec,
 322. Kamianka
 Samolowa,
 323. Kolomoija,
 324. Konskowola,
 325. Koropce,
 326. Kosow,
 327. Krasno,
 328. Krasnik.

329. Krasnyaw,
 330. Krownica,
 331. Kuty,
 332. Lubaczow,
 333. Lubartow,
 334. Lubycza
 Krolowska,
 335. Leczna,
 336. Lopatyn,
 337. Modliborzycze,
 338. Monasterzyska,
 339. Masty Wielkie,
 340. Mosciska,
 341. Pistyn,
 342. Podhajce,
 343. Podwoloczyska,
 344. Radziechow,
 345. Sadowa
 -Wisznia,
 346. Sambor,
 347. Sandomierz,
 348. Skalat,
 349. Sniatyn,
 350. Sokal,
 351. Szczebrzeszy,
 352. Striż,
 353. Tarnopol,
 354. Tartakow,
 355. Tłuste,
 356. Ulanow,
 357. Urzedow,
 358. Witkow Nowy,
 359. Zablotow,
 360. Zakrzówek,
 361. Zamosc,
 362. Zawichost,
 363. Zbaraz.

NOVEMBER

364. Annopol,
 365. Badzanow,
 366. Bilgoraj,
 367. Bochnia,
 368. Bolechów,
 369. Borszczow,
 370. Boryslaw,
 371. Brody,
 372. Brzezany,
 373. Brzesko,
 374. Buczacz,
 375. Budzanow,
 376. Busk,
 377. Drohobycz,
 378. Frampol,
 379. Goraj,
 380. Hrubieszow,
 381. Janow.

Lubelski
 382. Jaworow,
 383. Jozefow,
 384. Komarow,
 385. Komarow,
 386. Komarow
 Oszada,
 387. Kolbuszowa,
 388. Kosow,
 389. Kozłowa,
 390. Krasnik,
 391. Krzeszow,
 392. Kulików,
 393. Lwow,
 394. Lubaczow,
 395. Michow,
 396. Mikuliniec,
 397. Modliborzycze,
 398. Mosciska,
 399. Narajow,
 400. Oleszynie,
 401. Przemysl,
 402. Rudki,
 403. Rzeszow,
 404. Skalat,
 405. Strasow,
 406. Striż,
 407. Szczebrzeszyn,
 408. Szczeczek,
 409. Tarnograd,
 410. Tarnopol,
 411. Tarnow,
 412. Turnacz,
 413. Tłuste,
 414. Trambowla,
 415. Tuchow,
 416. Zaklikow,
 417. Zakliczyn,
 418. Zakrzówek,
 419. Zamosc,
 420. Zbaraz,
 421. Zloczow,
 422. Zwierzyniec,
 423. Zabno,
 424. Zolkiew.

DECEMBER

425. Bolszowce,
 426. Bukaczowce,
 427. Brzezany,
 428. Bursztyn,
 429. Cieszanow,
 430. Krasno,
 431. Lubycza
 Krolowska,
 432. Magierow,
 433. Narajow,
 434. Narol,
 435. Niemirów,
 436. Patvlicz,
 437. Przemyslaw,
 438. Rawa-Ruska,
 439. Rohatyn,
 440. Tomaszow
 -Lubelski.

A VISIT DOWN MEMORY LANE!!



4TH DAY OF CHANUKAH IN WINTERSHILL HALL 1945



1954. DAVID & OLIVE HERMAN'S WEDDING PARTY.

A VISIT DOWN MEMORY LANE!!



PURIM PARTY IN 1966 WITH OUR CHILDREN.



CHANUKAH PARTY IN DOLLIS HILL IN 1965 FOR OUR CHILDREN.

HERE AND NOW

UPDATE TO "MY RETURN TO GERMANY AFTER 44 YEARS"

ANITA LASKER-WALFISCH

Anita was deported from her hometown 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. Her recent book, "Inherit The Truth 1939-1945", was widely acclaimed. Though she did not come to England with "The Boys", she is a member of our Society.

I have been asked to write an update. (Ben's ideal) So here it is:

I said in my last contribution to this magazine that I do not regret having broken my vow never ever to return to Germany, and that it led to many positive things.

Since my book has now been published in Germany, I am frequently invited to go there and speak in all sorts of venues, including schools. These invitations are sponsored by a foundation called: GEGEN VERGESSEN, FÜR DEMOKRATIE.

I read from my book and this is followed by questions and discussions. The people I talk to are all post-war, and certainly post Holocaust.

Here are some - translated - excerpts from letters I received. They speak for themselves:

"...since I have learnt during my schooltime - I was born in 1953 - of the happenings during the Holocaust, it has become an everlasting nagging and agonizing point of examination for me.

"Whilst the teachers at school gave the impression that all this happened quasi on another planet, I realised during a painful process of examination that in fact it originated in the immediate locality and at not so far distant time.

"The shock about this persists, especially in view of the inadequate dealings from the judicial point of view and the re-emergence of people who will not learn... My father, thank God, was a musician and became so severely ill that he could not be conscripted. It was very important for me, with my background, to reflect on what it means to be born in Germany after the war. The constant thought about the 'why' and the feeling of unredeemable loss and the futility of trying to compensate comes clearer and clearer into my consciousness... Whilst I deem it of great importance to confront the unspeakable which defies comprehension, I feel that I personally must not allow myself to be dragged into an abyss, because it would be a victory of the dark forces..."

A girl aged 16 wrote: "... I was born 35 years after the war and it is terrible that as a German I am being held responsible for the Holocaust. Just as anyone else, I had no choice where I was born. When I was in Poland on a school trip and Polish youths were pointing at us with fingers crossed in the shape of a swastika, I am very sad. I don't understand why I must feel guilty. Even my parents were born long after the war. It is important never to forget what happened and I have accepted that as a German I am being made responsible. But it is so depressing, because I don't

want to live in the past which I have not experienced, but in the present and the future as good and humane (German person) that I am..."

Boy aged 17: "... it was sad that the public seemed to consider themselves too young to ask adequate questions of a woman who has survived the persecution of Jews. The silence after the talk reflected the impact it had made on the listeners. No doubt there was fear that the question could be too banal. People who did not attend the talk have missed a lot... In spite of the calm she (ALW) seemed to show, by her choice of words she implied how abominable her experiences were... When we think of the Nazi time, we will remember this talk and this woman..."

Born 1955: "... 'to testify to the last'...[to speak with the words of Victor Klemperer], enables us not to lose sight of the '1000-jährige Reich'. Specially my generation has to make a concerted effort. Let me thank you for talking about your painful experiences and let me assure you that it is not in vain..."

21 years old: "...your testimonial about what happened to you, your sister and so many others has moved and stirred me deeply..."

22 years old: "... I don't find it easy to write to you after hearing your talk at the Moses Mendelssohn Centre and subsequently reading your book. I belong to the second post-war generation and may be we should be silent vis-a-vis the testimonials of survivors. But I have an urgent need to express myself to things which should concern us later generations particularly! Yours and your sister's fate and that of so many others has moved and shaken me deeply. I had heard of the fanatical factory-like genocide and atrocities committed by the Nazis before, but your personal description gives a much more immediate perspective of the crimes that have been committed... We, who were born after the war are responsible for remembering, and not forgetting and suppressing..."

This is just a small selection, a drop in the ocean.

No, I don't regret having broken my vow.

I know that there are as many different attitudes to "where do we stand now," vis-a-vis Germans as Jews. I would not dream of influencing anybody in whatever direction and I myself did not think in 1945 - and many years after - on the same lines as I do today.

For decades I was unable even to speak to a German and meticulously avoided anything to do with Germans or Germany. Today, half a century later, I not only feel, but I know that I am not wasting my time by listening and talking to them.

Professor Yehuda Bauer (Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Studies) addressed the Bundestag on 27th January 1998, fifty-three years after the liberation of Auschwitz and the date when Germans throughout the country commemorate Yom Ha'shoa.

He made a very long, superb and, to my mind, important speech.

I translated it into English, and would just like to quote some sentences from the end of his speech:

"... To remember the Holocaust is but a first step. To learn from it and teach it and everything that happened in the Second World War, in the way of racism, anti-semitism and xenophobia, is the next responsible step. With this step we are - Germans and Jews - dependent on each other. Without us you are unable to cope with the task of remembering, and we have to be sure that here, where the Holocaust originated, an old-new, better civilisation has emerged out of the ruins of the past. We together have a very special responsibility vis-a-vis the whole of mankind."

* * *

MY RETURN TO GERMANY AFTER FORTY-FOUR YEARS

VICTOR BREITBURG

Victor came to England with the Windermere Group and then lived in the Cardross hostel in Scotland. He emigrated to the States in the late forties and kept in touch with us throughout the whole time. We congratulate him for the Award that he recently received.

Last March I spent a couple of weeks in Florida. While being there a friend of mine suggested that I should see a movie about Jews in the DP camps 1945-48, called "The Long Way Home".

To my surprise, as the movie started to roll, so did my blood pressure. It was our time, seeing how we tried to go back to our own homes, and the welcomes we received. I myself went as far as Krakow, and at the station once again I came face to face with anti-semitism. At that point I felt I didn't need Poland any more, and returned to Therezienstadt.

As the movie progressed I saw a parallel of my trying to go to Lodz and then turning back to Therezienstadt and they, the Concentration camp survivors, were going back to the DP camps (some were formerly concentration camps).

But there was a world of difference. I went to Therezienstadt and then went to England, they went back to Germany to the DP camps.

Once again they were behind wires and being guarded, not by the Germans, but by our allies. The mere thought of living among the people who tried to destroy us and nearly succeeded brought back a lot of memories. Once again I saw Jews being contained behind wires, once again I saw a parallel of anti-semitism, but this time I saw it from our own liberators.

I heard what General Patton said, I heard what the Secretary of State Marshal said, and I heard what Ernest Bevin said; it was not a nice description of us.

Once again the movie rolled and I saw the struggle of the survivors trying to reach the shores of Palestine. Not through my own eyes, but through the eyes of our own survivors. Sneaking through the forests, mountains covered with snow, with their newly born children and finally reaching the coast and boarding a broken down ship, and nearly reaching the sight of Palestine, only to be once again apprehended by the British and deported back to the DP camps. At this point I was not ashamed to let the tears roll down my cheeks.

This was not the Exodus ship story which was portrayed in the past movie with Paul Newman. This was the real Exodus with a blue and white flag and the Star of David proudly flying from the mast. Those survivors were not any more the beaten people. They vowed that they will come back, because this land is their land.

In 1948 when Israel was attacked, a lot of our own boys went and fought, and some even died. Through their sacrifice for the Medina Israel, Israel is here today, and it is a home for any Jew to return to.

I showed this movie at our own temple and over two hundred people came to see it. Moreover, I intend to show this movie in many more places.

Fifty-one years ago I left England, but every time I lecture to young people I always mention the British people, Jews and Christians alike, who helped the seven hundred young boys and girls. We were the lucky ones.

I retired in 1992, but I am as busy or more with volunteer work. In a way I am trying to repay the kindness which I encountered in Britain and in America. Last year I spoke to over two thousand young people about the tragedy of the holocaust and where prejudice leads. I also work with the local colleges and on many other projects. Every once in a while I meet Martin Gilbert in the United States.

October 6th Naussau County (Long Island) is going to present me with the 1998 "Make a Difference Award", which I am very proud of.

Lucille and I want to wish you
L'shana Tovah
To You and Your Family
And to All the Boys may your home be warm with joy
And life of within be rich with happiness in the coming year

L'Chayim

* * *

HAPPY ENDING TO ALEC WARD'S QUEST

Holocaust survivors frequently spend years searching for family or friends from their town who might still be alive - only for the search to end in disappointment.

But for Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue member Alec Ward, the search has had a happy ending. He has found a family from the shtetl in Poland where he lived before being taken to the camps. His moving story of survival was told in the feature "I Was Twelve Years Old When The Nazis came" in the Pesach 1977 edition of LINK. Now he has told the equally moving story of how he discovered that, contrary to what he had thought for almost sixty years, he and his friend Alf Kirszberg, who lives in London, were not the only survivors from Magnuszew, just south of Warsaw.

Alec had tried, through advertisements in Jewish newspapers in Israel, France and America, to locate former Magnuszew residents, but had never had any response.

In January, Alec and his wife went to Israel for the barmitzvah of his step-grandson. As usual on his Israel visits, he went to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. But on this occasion, having more time to spend there, he searched the archives and discovered the name of a family from Magnuszew.

The person was living in America, so when he returned to Elstree, he wrote to the address given. A couple of months went by before he got a reply. It was from Freda Landau, the mother of the person to whom he wrote and she confirmed that she had indeed lived in Magnuszew, together with five sisters and two brothers. Not only that, she remembered Alec's father, who had been a glazier.

Freda put him in touch with her two sisters who live in Israel and, in May, Alec visited them. "It was quite an emotional reunion" he said. "One of the sisters remembered my family, even though

she was only twelve at the time. The other was only ten when she was taken to the camps and she could not remember us.

"We all kept on saying: "Where do we begin? Where do we begin? We had so much to talk about.

"I would now love to get together with Freda, who lives in Massachusetts. It would be wonderful."

Since that initial contact, Alec has had a second letter from Freda in which she wrote: "I still cannot believe that after so many years, someone, somewhere, I would find a survivor from the same town. Thank God we found each other."

And what does it mean to Alec to have made contact? "It feels like having found family. We were such a close-knit community in Magnuszew. It was wonderful to get those letters and to meet her sisters".

Alec has never been back to his village, or even to Poland, and says he has no wish to do so. "It would be too traumatic."

But he has not ruled out the possibility completely. "My wife would love to go to see my roots. Maybe one day I will feel strong enough to go back..."

* * *

LANDAU - ALEC WARD

Dear Friend Alec Ward and Family:

I wish to thank you very much for the letter you sent to my daughter Ann Kantor in New York. She transferred the letter to me where I live in New Bedford, Massachusetts, south of Boston, and my name is Frymet Goldberg (now is Freda Landau). I was born in Magnuszew. My mother's name was Chana Goldberg and my father's name was Mordchai Zalman Goldberg. I had five sisters and two brothers, Srulek and Abram - all born in Magnuszew. It was a very emotional moment for me to read your letter, and especially your fine eloquent description in every detail - your wonderful biography and whole life story. It made me cry and lose many tears the way you described every detail.

From our life, my two brothers are not alive any more. Abram Goldberg passed away two years ago in Bat-Yam, Israel. We four sisters now remain. Cirul, Pnina, Ester and myself. Two of my sisters are residing in Tel-Aviv and one in New York.

I remember very well our wonderful Shteitel Magnuszew. Also your father, Der Gleizer and the street. You must remember us - my father had a galantry and yard goods store. My older sister maybe remembers more in regard to the name Abram Warsaw. I cannot remember the town Laskazev. The short history of our family is from Magnuszew. We were all placed in the ghetto. From the ghetto we went to Kozènitz ghetto and then to Volanuv - near Radom and Starchovice. We worked in an ammunition factory. From there to Auschwitz, where I was with my sisters. My father went to Buna. He lost his life. We all survived liberation at Bergen Belsen camp. My dear Mom - may she rest in peace - died a week after the liberation from starvation, as did many others. My oldest sister was married in Magnuszew. We all have plenty to tell about our tragic stories. Thank God you are not the only survivor with Alf Kirsberg from Magnuszew.

* * *

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF SAMUEL HILTON

Moniek Goldberg describes in one of his articles in this issue how as a result of the publication of "The Boys", Samuel traced and made contact with him. There are still quite a number of those who came with us to England in 1945/6 with whom we have lost touch. We are always delighted when they surface and return to our fold.

My name is Samuel Hilton. It was Szmulek Holckianer. I was born in Warsaw, Poland, on September 23, 1929 on Francziskanska Ulica #13. My father, Josef was a well-to-do businessman in the tannery business. I went to a private school and enjoyed all the amenities of a Jewish boy in Warsaw. Summer vacations, fine gaberdine clothing etc...

All of this abruptly ended with the Nazi invasion on September 1st 1939. We lived in the ghetto when it was established or proclaimed on Yom Kippur in 1940. Life in the ghetto was getting really bad, starting in mid-1941 and getting worse daily. By the summer of 1942, the deportations commenced and my family, mother, two-year-old sister, were caught and deported to Treblinka Gas Chambers. My father and I were miraculously missed by the Nazis in the September 1942 roundup.

We lived in bunkers underground and participated in the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising. During the first week of May we were discovered or caught in the bunker by the S.S. We thought that they were going to shoot us immediately. They must have changed their mind and took us to the "Umschlagplatz". After two days of beatings and torture we were packed into cattle cars and departed for Majdanek. The trip took two days, over one hundred people per wagon. After arrival in Majdanek at least a third of the people were dead.

After two selections my father and I were assigned to Lage 3, Majdanek. For the next month we were beaten, humiliated and endured daily selections. In the middle of June about two hundred of the inmates, my father and I included, were transported to Skarsysko-Kamienna Werk C. This was a very bad camp. In October 1943, my father died of starvation in this camp. Now I was all alone at the age of thirteen.

In June 1944, when the Russians were closing in, the camp was evacuated after several selections. I was in the transport that went to Buchenwald. Compared to Majdanek and Skarsysko, this camp was "Paradise". I was assigned to the JudenBlock #22. In November of 1944, a small group, including myself, were transported to a "sub-camp" called Berga on the outskirts of the town of Berga.

In March 1945, when the allied armies were closing in, the whole camp went on a death march, going south. After about three weeks of marching, of which a goodly number were shot or died, we arrived in Theresienstadt. In the early days of May we were liberated by the Russian Army.

After liberation, all of the surviving boys and a few girls were assembled and housed in one house in the liberated ghetto. On or about August 12th, we went by train to Prague. We stayed in Prague for about two days and then went to the airport and boarded British Military Transport planes and flew to England, with a stopover in Amsterdam. We arrived in Carlisle (Cosby on the Eden) on V.J. Day, August 14th. We were transported by bus to Windermere. I was in the first group of boys that arrived in Windermere.

After about two weeks in Windermere, I was the first boy to receive two "affidavits" from my aunts in Chicago and Los Angeles. It was not until April 1947 that I received my visa to emigrate to the U.S.

In late fall of '45 a group of the boys, myself included, were reassigned from Windermere to Darleith House, Cardross, Scotland. Cardross was great. I had a lot of fun. I was the only boy who had his own bicycle. I am sure that Krulik will remember me. After Cardross I was sent to a hostel near the town of Burnley. I don't remember the name of the hostel. After Burnley, I was reassigned to London and placed with a family in the Tottenham Court Road area. I stayed there until I got my visa and emigrated to the U.S. on the S.S. Marine Falcon on May 15th, arriving in New York on May 23rd.

After arriving in New York, I was picked up by a distant cousin and stayed with her for a few days and went by train to Chicago. I stayed with my aunt and uncle for one week and they shipped me off to my other aunt in Los Angeles. After arriving in Los Angeles there was no-one to meet me at the train station. A kind taxi driver finally drove me to my aunt's house in West Los Angeles.

I attended High School in Los Angeles, but my life was not very pleasant. My aunt was constantly complaining about trivial items, such as I have eaten too many of her bananas... and mind you they were very wealthy people. After about six months, in February 1948, I decided to enlist in the U.S. Air Force. I was sworn in on March 8th 1948 and stayed in the Air Force for eight years. I was stationed all over the world, with two tours in the Far East in Tokyo for two years and in Korea during the Korean War. I was promoted to Staff Sergeant and was considering making the Air Force my career. I had nobody to go home to...

While in Japan at the beginning of 1956, I decided to utilise my G.I. Bill and go to college. When my enlistment expired, I decided not to re-enlist but go home to Los Angeles and enrol in college. I attended Los Angeles City College, California State University and U.C.L.A. I graduated with the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) and Master of Science (M.S.) degrees in Accounting, Taxation and Business Management.

In 1957, I attended a Bna'i Brith social in Los Angeles where I met my future wife, Marion (Miriam). We were married six months later in December 1957 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California.

By 1964, I passed the C.P.A. examination and became a C.P.A. From 1957 to 1985, I was employed in Public Accounting, U.S. Government and Director of Taxation of 3 Large Fortune 500 Companies. In 1985, I took early retirement and opened a solo Tax Practice in Scottsdale, Arizona. I am now practising on a semi-retirement basis.

We have two sons, Steven and David. Both are graduates of the University of Arizona. The older son, Steven, is President and Part-Owner of Monterey Homes Corp, a Regional Home Building and Developing Company. Steven is doing very well. He is married to a Jewish girl and we have two granddaughters, Shari and Eva, named after my mother and two-year-old sister who perished in Treblinka.

My younger son, David, is the owner of a men's clothing and accessories store in Phoenix. He, also, is doing very well. We have one granddaughter from David, named Natalie. Altogether, we have three beautiful grandchildren. Lots of "Naches".

We live in a brand new home (built by my son) in a very prestigious neighbourhood in Scottsdale, Arizona.

* * *

TRIBUTE TO JOHN FOX

John Fox (Fuchs) came to England with the Windermere group and subsequently emigrated to the U.S.A.

These biographical notes were written as a tribute to him when he was honoured on the occasion of the presentation of the State of Israel 50th Anniversary Labour Achievement Award on Thursday, September 17th 1998.

We congratulate him on his achievement.

John Fox was born in Lodz, Poland, a city known as the "Polish Manchester", which was famous for its large and influential trade union movement. At the outbreak of World War II, when he was eleven years old, he fell into the Nazi ring of fire and destruction. Somehow he survived the terrible experiences of the ghettos and concentration camps and in 1945 was rescued by the Czech partisans.

At the end of the War, John Fox became one of that small group who were granted the opportunity to go to England, where he was able to continue his education which the war had so brutally interrupted.

Arriving in the United States in 1956, he worked for ten years in the clothing industry and then joined the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union staff as a business agent.

From the very first days that John Fox has been connected with the Amalgamated, he has combined, in his manifold activities, a concern for improving the quality and working conditions of his union members with a deep understanding and awareness of the needs of the general community in which the standing and awareness of the needs of the general community in which the Union lives and works. Social justice, equal opportunity for all, the progress of education and of philanthropic activities - to all these objectives he devotes his time, energy and effort.

An activist in the best sense of the word, John Fox was elected Co-Manager of the Philadelphia Joint Board in 1981. He was then elected Manager of the Philadelphia Joint Board in 1987, and has held that office ever since. He is also an elected International Vice President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which merged with the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union in 1996 and is the Union now known as UNITE (The Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees) AFL-CIO, CLC). In addition to his duties at his Union, he is a member of the Executive Board of the National Trade Union Council for Human Rights. He is a former Vice-President of the Jewish Community Relations Council; Vice President of the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council; member of the Delaware Valley Labor Committee for Full Employment; Trustee and President of Sidney Hillman Medical Center and the Sidney Hillman Apartments for the Elderly; Member of the Interfaith Council of the Holocaust; Chairman of Ethnic Labour Committee and member of the Board of the National Jewish Labour Committee.

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**TRANSLATION OF ZVI DAGAN'S SPEECH AT THE DEUTSCH DAGAN
OPEN HOUSE ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1998**

While most of our members have retired or are in the process of retiring, Zvi Dagan (Hesiek Mlynarski) is going from strength to strength.

His new factory, fully computerised and a model of the latest technological developments in industry, was opened in Ashkelon on 6th September 1998 by the President of Israel, Ezer Weizman and his wife Reuma, in the presence of leading dignitaries. Many of our own 'Boys' who live in Israel were also invited.

This is a great achievement for Zvi, considering that the only education he received was when he attended the ORT School in Kensington in 1947/8. Many congratulations! Zvi came to England with the Windermere group, later lived in the Loughton and Belsize Park hostels and subsequently emigrated to Israel in 1949.

His honor, President of Israel, Mr Ezer Weizman and his wife, Reuma,
His honor, Mayor Ashkelon, Mr Benny Vaknin,
President of the Manufacturer's Association, Mr Dan Proper,
President of the Deutch Companies USA, Mr Dennis Ambrose,
Respected guests and esteemed workers:

I would like to welcome our guests who came from abroad to participate in the inauguration of the new plant in the presence of his Excellency, the President of Israel, Mr Ezer Weizman and his wife, Reuma Weizman and distinguished guests. (This paragraph was in English.)

I would like to thank you all for coming and participating in this festive occasion, the inauguration of Deutsch Dagan in the Southern Industrial zone in Ashkelon.

I stand before you with great emotion and look back with pride on the path my life has taken until reaching this very honored and exciting moment.

As a child who survived the extermination camps during the Holocaust, I was sent to England after the war and arrived in Israel in 1949 due to the persuasion of Mrs Reuma Weizman, who was my counselor in England.

Since then, I have been living in Israel, have raised a family here and have been blessed with two daughters and grandchildren.

But, not only was I busy building a home, I also built a factory which was my own personal dream.

Its existence gives work and livelihood, not only to the workers and their families, but to the city of Ashkelon and the State of Israel, as well. This factory is living proof that you should not lose hope and always look ahead and believe in a better future.

Now is the time to praise and thank the Deutsch family from Los Angeles. Alex, Lester and Carl Deutsch invested their money and insisted on building a plant in the city of Ashkelon, and in this way, greatly contributed to the city's population. The Deutsch family continues to believe in Israel's society and economy, and for this we thank them.

Deutsch Dagan has acquired a good reputation in international markets and also in Israel. Among our prestigious customers are General Motors, Newcor Decogrand, Detroit Diesel, the Israel Aircraft Industries, Rafael, Israel Military Industries, and many more.

Besides investing in a new and modern facility, we also invested in new machinery, absorbed new immigrants, thereby increasing the work force, developed advanced technological production systems, invested in worker instruction, and we are proud of our ability to enter the next millennium profitably and with great growth potential.

Today, our annual exports stand at about eight million dollars, which is 60% of our total sales. In the next five years we plan to increase our sales at a rate of 20% each year.

Because of this factory and many others like it, we are waiting for the day when there will be peace between our neighbors and ourselves that will open up new markets, which will only add to our success, and to the success and growth of the entire region.

I would like to thank the dedicated workers of Deutsch Dagan and their families for their help in the establishment of this factory.

Also, I want to thank my wife, Shoshana, for all her help in making this event a successful one, and for her continuous unfailing support in all our years together.

Finally, I would like to thank his Excellency, President Weizman and his wife Reuma and all honored guests who came from abroad, and from all parts of Israel to take a part in this memorable occasion.

Thank you all very much.

* * *



The President of the State of Israel, Ezer Weizman & his wife Reuma cutting the ribbon at the official opening of the new Deutch Dagan factory in Ashkelon. Zvi Shoshana Dagan with their granddaughter are on either side of the President & his wife.

These moving letters were sent to Menahem and are worthy of inclusion in our Journal. Menachem 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 successful travel agency.

September 20, 1998

Menahem and Sarah Waksztok
Haatzmaut 15
Afridar, Ashkelon

Dear Menahem and Sarah,

With Rosh Hashana beginning this evening I need to finish the year by closing a very important "matter of business." I wish to thank you for your friendship and for your ongoing commitment to the kehilla. Over the years I have learned much by listening to Sarah's divrei Torah, and am always fascinated by Menahem's stories of survival during the Shoah and afterwards as a member of the '45 Aid Society. And so I am writing in English to share with you a story connected to the society which you might wish to pass on to friends in England and elsewhere (some of whom I met at the Kotel a few years ago).

During my last fundraising mission to the U.S., I spent some time between meetings resting at a well known book store. In the Judaica section I found a new work by one of our finest historians, Martin Gilbert, on display. The book was entitled, The Boys: Triumph over Adversity - The Story of 732 Young Concentration Camp Survivors. I had a feeling in my gut that I already knew at least one story in this book, that of the '45 Aid Society. My hands were trembling and my heart pounding as I removed the book from the shelf, for I felt a special bond with this book. And as I opened the book I found, sure enough, the final chapter was about the society.

I looked for your name in the index and found it and then found your photograph. I cannot tell you what it meant to me to be sitting in a bookstore in Chicago, Illinois, reading about the experiences of my friend and congregant from Ashkelon and his experiences during and after the Holocaust in Europe.

You and your friends have fulfilled Fackenheim's 11th commandment by sharing with us your stories and allowing us to feel that they also belong to us.

I wish you and your family a healthy and sweet new year.

Matthew Futterman
Rabbi

* * *

25.5.98

To: Captain (Res.) Menahem Waksztok

Attached hereto please find a photograph of yourself marching on Jerusalem Day of the Jubilee Year of the State of Israel which I am very proud to send you.

You had the privilege to participate in the War of Independence of Israel and all the ensuing battles as a trustworthy and dedicated officer.

I hope to see you marching in many such parades in the future, a proud symbol of your contribution to the security of the State of Israel, its economic strength, and the glory of your wonderful family.

Sincerely yours,

Aluf (Colonel) (Res)
Nahshon Avizohar

* * *

NEW GENERATION OF PAIN

JANE LINKER

Reprinted from Jewish Week, Westchester, Bronx

Melvin Federbush is married to Elsa Stern, the sister of Meier Stern who lives in Israel. Both of them came to England with the Hungarian groups in 1946. Elsa was very popular and active in the Primrose Club. She emigrated to the United States where she met Melvin.

For Greg Federbush, the choice was simple. "You either let the past haunt you or you use it to propel you forward," said Federbush about helping found Holocaust Generations, a group of Westchester-based children and grandchildren of survivors that works to ensure that the experiences of their parents and grandparents will never be forgotten.

"We're not a support group," emphasized Federbush. "Our goal is to use education and outreach to ensure that the legacy is kept alive."

Federbush, 36, got involved at the urging of his father Melvin, who has been active in the Westchester Holocaust Commission and a number of other Holocaust-related organisations.

At 74, Melvin Federbush is an outgoing, energetic man who devotes a great deal of time to speaking to school groups as a representative of the Holocaust Commission. He was 18 when the war broke out. After it was over, he and his brother Sidney were the only surviving members of a Polish family that numbered well over 70 people.

"There are no photographs of my parents nor of my relatives," he tells school groups. "They were just ordinary people. My grandfather Mojshe Aron would convert his front room into a shul where the neighbourhood would pray on Shabbat. At Passover, the same room would become a bakery for matzahs."

Melvin Federbush managed to survive Buchenwald, and rebuild his life in the United States. In 1956, he met and married Elsa, now 68, who was from Czechoslovakia and a survivor of Auschwitz. Together they had two children, Greg and Tina, and ran a successful business supplying framing services to art galleries around the country.

"It's important to every survivor to leave a legacy so it's not forgotten. We wanted our children to carry forward our legacy, not just by telling our story, but by making sure it doesn't happen again, not just to Jews, but to anyone," said Melvin Federbush.

A year ago, the group met in the older Federbush's Scarsdale living room, and discussions began about their goals.

"First, we are committed to education, to helping schools implement the law that requires including the Holocaust in the elementary and high school curriculum," said Greg Federbush. "Second, we want to reach out to survivors and try to convince them to record their stories."

Federbush, who owns a videotape company and currently lives in Brooklyn with his wife Stephanie, continued.

"Many survivors are unwilling to tell their stories, but who better than a member of the second generation to try to convince them of how important their memories are? We can say things to them that others can't say - we can ask them why they're being so selfish."

Growing up in Yonkers, Greg Federbush recalled his parents telling him about their experiences, but much of what they said he simply blocked out.

Around the time he turned 30, his attitude began to change.

"I began to want to hear the details, to know more about the family that didn't survive," he recalled, adding that he's pained to have never seen a picture of anyone in his father's family. "I stopped wanting to avoid it, and realised the value of the heritage I had."

When his father asked him to take a leadership role in creating an organisation that would perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust, Federbush was ready.

Like many in the roughly 10-member core group that became the Founding Committee, Federbush recalled many positive experiences in meeting people who had grown up with similar memories.

"We found that we all worried a lot more about the people we loved, and we often expected the worst to happen," Federbush said. "We also found that many of us had a bizarre, almost macabre sense of humour. I mean, who else would think of raising money by selling T-shirts outside of Auschwitz that said 'I Survived Auschwitz, Summer of '97'?"

Gradually, the objectives of the group - which now has a mailing list of over 60 people - emerged; outreach, education, reparation, financial assistance and commemoration.

To pay tribute to the survivors "for giving us life," Holocaust Generations held an event last June at the Mid-Westchester Y in Scarsdale which attracted more than 125 people. Lawyer Barry Slotnick, a Scarsdale resident who is Special Counsel to Sen. Alfonse D'Amata 9R-N.Y.), gave an update of the status of the class action suit against the Swiss banks. A local Shoah Foundation

interviewer, Diane Weinreich, and Carl Jayburg, a survivor, told about the importance and personal significance of recording testimony.

The programme was videotaped and has subsequently been shown on local cable television, in the hope of prompting other survivors to record their memories and to provide information on retrieving funds from Swiss banks.

Like her husband, Elsa Federbush is very pleased at her son's commitment to Holocaust Generations. A survivor of Auschwitz - "for some reason, Mengele let us live" - she vividly recalled a reunion with her sisters at Ravensbrück. "We thought they were dead, yet somehow, among 100,000 women, my sisters found my mother and me," she recalls.

"I think it's wonderful that Greg is doing this. I think the way we always spoke to our children openly about what happened during the war made them more accepting of our background. I believe that's why he and Tina are so well-adjusted," she says. "I don't live in the past, but I don't want to forget, and I don't want the world to forget."

"There's a large segment of descendants of survivors who just don't want to become involved, and it really depends on an individual's personality how they deal with it. I feel that if you let it get in your way, Hitler will have won," summed up Greg Federbush.

* * *

JOYOUS MEETINGS IN FLORIDA

EVELYN ZYLBERSZAC

Evelyn came to England, as a refugee, with her parents from Hamburg just before the War. She was a very active and popular member of the Primrose Club. She has often contributed to the columns of our Journal.

Many of you will know that Aron and I spend some time each winter with Fay and Moniek Goldberg in Florida. This is one of the great highlights of our year and even as I write I am eagerly looking forward to crossing the Atlantic yet once again come February/March 1999. Although it is great to get away from the nasty European winter, Florida in itself is not the drawing force. You have guessed it - it is "The Boys". Need I say more.

Each time we visit we are treated like royalty and get the red carpet treatment. Over the years we have been wined and dined, invited to lunches, brunches, dinners, simchas of various sorts and spoilt dreadfully. Any excuse to get together to chew the fat, reminisce, exchange news and views, look at photographs of our families or, better still, at photographs (some of them exceedingly blurred) of "when we were young".

The resident Floridian "boys" are wonderful and then, of course, there is an additional bonus. We are there in the "Season" and anybody who is anybody makes it his (or her) business to be there and the snowbirds flock in from many points of the compass, e.g., Northern U.S.A., Canada, Israel and quite a number of our friends from England also put in an appearance.



Reunion of some of our members in Miami in February 1998.

A couple of years ago someone had the brilliant idea of having a Mini-Reunion. I believe it was organised by Paul Gast and David Goldschild and it was a monumental success. We met up with people we had not seen for very many years and it put the gilt on the gingerbread. There are no friends like old friends - or should I say friends of long standing. People who we thought had disappeared off the face of the earth appeared as if from nowhere. The enjoyment of the reunion in 1997 was such that another gathering was arranged in 1998, which attracted about 45 people. We all enjoy the official London Reunion each May, but there are so many strangers among us then, whereas in Florida it is just "The Boys".

If all goes well and nothing unforeseen happens, it is our intention to be in the Sunshine State in February/March 1999 and should you be considering having a winter holiday, do please come and join us.

We promise no speeches, no raffles, no strangers. Let us get together as much as we can and enjoy each other's company.

See you in Florida!!!

* * *

THE ADVENTURE OF LIVING WITH A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS

BY FAY GOLDBERG

Moniek and I have just returned from Israel. We went for Israel's 50th and, as our 50th wedding anniversary will be coming up in March 1999, I thought I would write a few words about our "adventure".

I first met Moniek in November, 1945 at Loughton. I belonged to Habonim and we were told by our Madrich that there was this group of boys who had just come over from Europe and that we should visit and socialise with them. So, a whole group of us went to Loughton on a Friday night for an Oneg Shabbat arranged by Sammy Chanahovitch, our Madrich of Hantzachon, our Chevrach. We met in this very large room with chairs arranged all around and everyone (not me, of course!) sang songs. It was very enjoyable! The boys spoke very little English, if any at all, and most of whatever conversations we had were in Yiddish. I held up my end of the conversation with Moniek in my broken Litvish Yiddish, and he in his broken English, which must have been somewhat effective because we discovered that Moniek had met one of my brothers on the David Eder Farm in Kent where they had stayed a couple of weeks while waiting for the house in Loughton to be readied. We missed the last bus home and had to go home by train, all the boys lined up and we filed out shaking their hands like in a receiving line. Some of the boys very kindly offered to escort us to the train station in Chingford. Moniek and Jerzy Herzberg walked with me. I think I was first attracted to Moniek because of his blue blue eyes. (All the other faces seemed the same that first time!!!). It was raining during that walk and everyone got soaked through.

It was quite a few weeks before I went back to Loughton with some other girls and it was fun; so many boys and so few girls!!! It got to the point where we girls did not go to Habonim anymore but only to Loughton each weekend. The boys in our Chevra complained and threatened to have us thrown out but, after a while, they came to visit Loughton and even gave some of the boys bicycles and became quite friendly with them. For his part, Moniek joined Habonim to be with me. By that time we had become a couple. Moniek's English improved very rapidly as even then he would read whenever he had a chance.

Moniek liked classical music so we went to a lot of concerts. Heini, and later Mr Harrison, would give him free tickets. We went to the Albert Hall for concerts that were sometimes fundraising events. Being conspicuously in the front, we often sank low in our seats when pledges were called for. One concert we attended featured Isaac Stern who was in the early stages of his career. The hospitality of Loughton was unsurpassed. If you happened to be there at mealtime, you were always invited to join them and eat.

I invited Moniek to meet my family during the Passover of 1946. My parents were very curious to know why I kept running to Loughton (which was some distance away). My father was very impressed with him and they conversed in Yiddish about what he had been taught at the Yeshiva. My mother fell in love with him right away and always took his part against me in any disagreements we had (and we had plenty).

We became engaged in 1948. Moniek had applied to go to the U.S.A. and Canada. At the time we were working for the same company. I was in the office of one branch and he worked in the East End in the factory. He had moved closer to where I lived, where he had his own room.

In time, the visa to go to Canada came through. It presented us with a dilemma: We had discussed going to Palestine. Moniek had even received his shots. But they did not want to take me as they needed girls with nursing experience or some other skills which I did not have. As our entry was to be illegal, they had to be very choosy which females they sent. What to do? Moniek went to Mr Friedman and discussed our situation with him. Mr Friedman advised him to go to Canada to meet his uncle who was his only known living relative at that time. If we did not like living there, we could always leave and go to Palestine later (easier said than done). So, we followed his advice. In September, 1948 Moniek left by the Ascania to go to Toronto to his uncle. I left in November by the same ship to go to Montreal to live with my aunt. Three months after my arrival Moniek came to live in Montreal and in March we were married in my aunt's house.

Our first son Philip was born. After all these years, I'm still amazed that when we brought him home from the hospital after having the Bris there (Moniek passed out during the procedure; he can't stand the sight of blood), Moniek gave him his first bottle, bathed him, and changed him. For my part, this was the first contact I had had with a baby. I had never even held one before mine was born. I was the youngest in my family and had no younger relatives so it never came about for me to have contact with babies.

Towards the end of 1950 the papers came through to come to the United States. Again, Moniek left in advance to find a place to live and started working for his cousin. On November 30th Philip and I left Montreal and arrived by train in Detroit, Michigan on December 1st.

We lived in Michigan for 25 years. During that time two more sons, David and Stephen, and one daughter, Karen, were born. In 1976 we relocated to Florida where we presently reside. One of the things we miss most by moving to Florida was our frequent trips to nearby Toronto to see the "boys" and their families. We do seem them when they come to Florida in the wintertime.

We opened a garment factory in Costa Rica and all of our sons came into the business. Moniek taught himself Spanish and spent a great deal of his time there. He still spends a lot of time there even though we have sold the business.

Now, to come to the part about what it is like to live with a "Holocaust survivor". When I first met Moniek he was always extremely proud to be a Jew though he was irreligious, ate *trafe*, had a very bad temper, suffered nightmares, (which I didn't discover until after we married!!!) would not go to visit anyone in the hospital as he had a mortal fear of hospitals, definitely would not attend funerals, or make *shiva* calls, or go to *shul*. He said, at the time, that he did not believe in any religion or in any G-d who could let such a thing happen to his family and to the Jewish people. He also had an especially intense hatred of Poles and Ukrainians. Have things changed? Yes, they have.

When we married, Moniek said the choice was mine as to whether or not we kept a kosher home. He simply didn't care. Of course I maintained a kosher home; I knew no other way. Over the years it seems that all that he repressed from his childhood learning has since been released. He now goes to Shul on Shabbat, (this is not to say that his belief in G-d has changed), occasionally chants Haftarah, so beautifully that he has been given the honour of chanting every Yom Kippur. He has also been asked to stand in for our *chazzan* when he goes on vacation. He still reads as much as he can; especially about the philosophy of the Jews and Jewish history and Israel. To this day he regrets following Mr Friedman's advice and feels that some way or another we should have found some way to go to Palestine.

His love of music has only grown over the years and his greatest relaxation is listening to classical music or cantorial choirs. He still does not like going to the hospital or shiva visits, but we do go.

His sense of family is extremely strong. We have 10 grandchildren who are our pride and joy. He is devoted to his friends and will always go the extra mile for one. He stills feels the terrible injustice displayed by the various governments during WWII and will argue with anyone about that period of time at the drop of a hat. As for his temper, I think a lot of that came from the feelings he had at that time because he rarely has outbursts now except when he is very frustrated. The nightmares still occur. The times around Yomtovim and Yom Kippur are still very delicate as they bring on vivid memories of the times with his family before the war. As for me, I feel like one of the "boys", especially with the Loughton crowd. I met them when I was young and grew up with them as though they were my brothers. I have the same feelings for the "boys" and their families who live in Toronto. I was very fortunate to have met Moniek and I know that I made the right choice and may we have another 50 years together. Amen.

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DEAR FRIENDS

BY MONIEK GOLDBERG

Moniek came to England with the Windermere Group and subsequently lived in the Loughton Hostel. He emigrated to Canada in 1948, swiftly followed by Fay. They moved to Detroit where they lived for many years. They now live in Florida.

It has been quite a while since I have contributed to our Journal so I have decided I had better write something before you all, (as we all say down here), forget about me.

1997 was a very eventful year for us. After being in business since 1959, we sold our business and I became a semi-retired person. Also, in 1997, thanks to Sir Martin Gilbert, I became a near-celebrity as my name appeared in the very prestigious New York Times Book Review, as well as in a number of other important American newspapers. Sir Martin was even kind enough to mention my name, along with some others, when he was interviewed on American television. We had calls from relatives and friends; some of whom we hadn't heard from in years. While I never sought publicity my family and my *landsleit* seemed to enjoy it.

Another pleasant occurrence, as a result of the publication of THE BOYS is that it was read by a fellow in Arizona named Shmulek Holckenner. He came with us to Windermere and left for the States in 1947 to live with relatives. Anyway, he read the book and saw that I was born in Glowaczow. He traced me through the telephone company and called me. It seems that when he

was six years old his father took him to Glowaczow to see his grandparents and he wanted to know if I remembered anything about his family. Of course, I remembered. I described to him his grandfather's house; where it was located, where most of his aunts lived, one girl cousin who was with me in the same class, and a lot of other details about the little hamlet where I was born and where the Holckenners were a respectable family. When Ben and Arza visited us Ben called him and spoke with him at length.

1997 was also an eventful year in a different way. After we came home from Ann Arbor where we enjoyed Ronit Rubenfield's wedding, we realised that I had a medical problem. Fay took me to the doctor Monday morning and they operated on me that very afternoon. I was extremely lucky and everything came out okay. I am fully recovered. Fay and I wish to thank all of you who showed such concern. We had calls from England, Israel, Canada, and, of course, the U.S.A. Thank you.

1998 started out as a very exciting year. We had, as visitors, in order of their arrivals: Sammy and Rae, Wendy and Lipa, Gloria and Krulik, Rivka and Jack (who gave us double the pleasure by coming twice), Arza and Ben, Sala and Yosef. There were quite a few others, but, for Fay and myself, the tourist season wouldn't be complete if we didn't have Aron and Evelyn as our guests. I will leave it to someone else to write about the various get-togethers that we had during these few but joyous weeks. Indeed, to me, it is always a joy when we meet up with "the boys". Noisy but joyful. And we are already looking forward to the next tourist season.

* * *

OUR TRIP TO ISRAEL

BY MONIEK GOLDBERG

| | |
|--|--------|
| Just to go to Israel. For me, as we say in the Hagadah..... | Dayenu |
| To go to Israel for the Jubilee..... | Dayenu |
| To go to Israel and see relatives, friends, landslaid, old campmates from those terrible days..... | Dayenu |
| To go to Israel to celebrate my 70th birthday and get a card full of good wishes from so many friends..... | Dayenu |
| To go to Israel for our own special reunion with our Israeli "boys" | Dayenu |
| To have, at that reunion, the First Lady of Israel, Reuma Weizman, who has kept a bond with us since our Loughton days, and Fay Nachman, who made a special effort in spite of her state of health..... | Dayenu |

So, my friends, as far as I'm concerned, if only one of the above events would have happened... it would have been enough. And I would have thanked G-d that I was granted life and was privileged to attend and enjoy. This time so much more happened. Over the years, we, as a group, have expressed our thanks to the C.B.F. and to the late Mr Montefiore, Oscar Joseph, and to many others. I have, on many occasions, as have many others, expressed thanks to the English community, the Jewish community, and especially to the people that worked with us in

Windermere and the hostels. But, at this reunion I was able to personally thank Trudi and Israel Cohen. On Monday morning Charlie Shane gave me the Cohen's telephone number in Jerusalem. I guess he figured that only I have the chutzpah to call and invite them at such short notice. I did have the chutzpah. So I called and insisted that they come. The last time I saw Trudi was in Windermere and when I expressed doubt that she would remember Moniek Goldberg, she said, "Of course I remember you. You gave me your picture", and, sure enough they came and she brought my picture and pictures of many other "boys". Judging by how many "boys" swarmed around their table, I am not the only one who remembers their kindness. I spent three days in the sick-bay in Windermere with what they thought, at first, was appendicitis but turned out not to be the case. I also would get extreme pains in my legs. The kindness and the compassion shown by nurse Trudi and Sister Maria - I will never forget. I remember seeing Trudi trying to brave it through but wiping her tears discreetly. Some of the boys were in worse shape than I was and I was fortunate to recover quickly.

I reserved mention of the most emotional event for the end of this letter. The Levensteins invited us for Friday night dinner and, while there, Mordechai tells me that Dr Groak is in Israel and he knows how to reach him. I told Mordechai that we have to reach him and invite him to the reunion. Since it was rather late at the time, we decided to call him the next day from Sala and Yosef Katz's place where we were meeting for lunch. When we called, Mordechai spoke to him in Hebrew. I took the phone and asked him if he spoke English. He said yes and I told him who I was and that we were having our reunion and that he must attend. Since I was in a hurry (my ride was waiting), I gave the telephone to Mordechai and told him to insist. Well, the next day Mordechai called and told me that he made all the arrangements: Dr Groak was coming. At the dinner, Dr Groak had a few words to say. He said that there were many people involved in getting us to England but he was proud of the fact that he was able to get us out from the "Hamburger Kazerne" and into some other housing. I do not know how many of our "boys" were in that terrible place. I only remember Henry Green, and Eliash Sheinberge - who has since died. Marerk Halter, in his book THE JESTER AND THE KING quotes from Andre Malraux's MAN'S FATE, where he writes "He had become used to the idea of Death but he could not bear the smell". This is exactly how I felt in the "Hamburger Kazerne". I sneaked out with two or three boys, perhaps two days after Liberation. I returned six weeks later but we should be eternally grateful to Dr Groak for getting any of us out of that Hellhole. Being a sentimental fellow, you can imagine how I felt at this reunion.

I reiterate: Any single aspect of this event would have been enough... DAYENU.

Fay and I wish to thank all those in England and Israel for arranging all this and may we do it again. Soon. We also wish to thank the Levensteins, Dundela, and Sonja, Sala and Yosef Newton-Katz, and last but not least, the Jacksons for their most gracious hospitality.

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A MEMORABLE TRIP TO ISRAEL BY THE '45 AID SOCIETY & MACHAL

BY KRULIK WILDER

Krulik came to England with the Windermere group and lived in Scotland in the Cardross hostel. In 1948 he went to fight for Israeli independence. After his return to England, he set up a successful business. He is the Treasurer of our Society.

Gloria and I and eighty members of our Society, including many from the USA., Canada, Switzerland, Zimbabwe, etc., joined Machal travelling to Israel to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. Twelve members of the '45 Aid Society, including me, wore two hats, a red one for Machal and a blue one for the '45 Aid Society. We became quite adept at juggling these hats for various events. The itinerary for our group included two coach trips, one to Tiberius and the second one to the South, Masada and the Dead Sea where we all had a swim, or at least tried! Our guide, Moishe Rosenberg, was one of our members who lives in Israel. He was a very good guide. When he described things, you felt the love he has for the country.

On Monday 27th April, there was a reception for Machal at the Duhl Auditorium and the Guest of Honour was the Mayor of Tel Aviv, Mr Roni Milo, and IDF Chief of Staff, Lt.Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shachak.

Machalniks came from all over the world, some very elderly and some in wheelchairs, all very excited to meet old comrades, many of whom had not seen each other for fifty years. The atmosphere was very emotional. From the very beginning we were informed that all medals and other mementoes had to be purchased by all Machalniks. I was surprised and disappointed that the Government of Israel could not produce a cheap "plastic" medal to give us as a souvenir. I felt that the organisers of the event were money orientated.

Tuesday 28th April.

Machal members paid a visit to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for a "Yizkor" ceremony. Later they went to the Western Wall for the opening ceremony for Memorial Day.

Wednesday 29th April. Yom Hazicharon (Memorial Day).

There was an early departure to Latrun Armoured Corps Museum. I did not join them but I later joined Machal Memorial at Sha'ar Hagai for the Memorial Day service for all Machalniks. There were many speeches from Machal members world wide. One particular speech by my friend Stanley Medicks, Chairman of British and European Machal, was particularly moving and tears were shed by speaker and audience.

One hundred and nineteen memorial candles were lit to commemorate the one hundred and nineteen Machalniks who were killed in the War of Independence in 1948. The heat from these candles was so intense that a gust of wind set them ablaze and the smoke blackened the memorial. After the speeches, lunch boxes were distributed and we all picnicked in the surrounding forest. In the afternoon we were supposed to go to Mount Herzl (Jerusalem) for the opening of the official celebration for Yom Ha'atzmaut but unfortunately the Israeli Government in their wisdom, withheld

the Machalniks tickets and gave them to people they thought were more important. A great disappointment to all.

Thursday 30th April. Yom Ha'atzmaut.

The morning was free. In the afternoon we all went on the beach in Tel Aviv to watch the spectacular show by the Israeli Air Force, Israeli Navy, paratroopers and flotilla of yachts. There were thousands of people on the beach to watch and cheer. It was a very moving event. In the evening we departed for Jerusalem to participate in the Independence Day Display "Bells of Jubilee" at the Hebrew University Stadium. I am sure many of you read of the objections of some people, which ended in the pulling out of the "Batsheva Dance Group". The show was very spectacular.

Friday 1st May.

Because we didn't get the tickets for Mt Herzl Memorial Service, they laid on an extra coach trip to Haifa. Could have done without it.

Sunday 3rd May.

A trip was arranged for Machalniks to visit Ramat David Airforce Base in Haifa, also the Navy Base, then a tour of Haifa City, followed by a reception. Our group did not go on this trip as we had a reunion for our members of the '45 Aid Society that evening. This was attended by one hundred and eighty members from all over the world. Our guest of honour was Mrs Reuma Weizman, the President's wife. The atmosphere was electric as many of the Boys had not seen each other for over fifty years. Many of the Boys know Mrs Weizman personally as she was a Madricha in Loughton hostel in 1945. Over the years we got to know her very well. When she comes to England on a visit she never fails to get in touch with some of us. That evening the "icing on the cake" was the unexpected arrival of her husband, the President of Israel, Ezer Weitzman who, during the remainder of the evening, made a wonderful speech, telling us how he met his beautiful and charming wife. He was very humorous. When he sat down, an indescribable and exciting scene took place. He was literally mobbed by one and all who wanted to say a few words and shake his hand. It was really something special.

Monday 4th May.

A Gala Evening Dinner in Jerusalem was attended by the President of Israel, Ezer Weitzman and the Minister of Defence, Itzhak Mordechai and the Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert. There were many speeches and a video was shown about the formation of Machal. The meal was served between all this activity. Overall, it was a very moving and rewarding experience, as far as Machal was concerned.

Tuesday 5th May.

We all had a relaxing day till the evening. A member of the '45 Aid Society and his wife, who live in Israel, invited the whole group from abroad for a barbecue. There was plenty of food and drinks and a great time was had by all. I must add that our Society is something special. We have great friends all over the world. The remaining few days were spent with our friends and families.

I know a wonderful time was had by all because I had no complaints.

"Machal" (Mitnadvei Chutz L'Aretz) Volunteers from Abroad.

* * *

SPEECH

BY BEN HELFGOTT

Extract from a speech made on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Israeli Independence at the Reunion in Tel-Aviv on Sunday 3rd May 1998.

It does not seem all that long ago when a large number of our members in the U.K. with a strong contingent from the U.S.A., Canada and other parts of the world, came to Israel to commemorate the 50th anniversary of our liberation, together with our members who live here. This was a most memorable event and many of us felt, at the time, that it would be most fitting if in 1998 we were to celebrate together the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. This spontaneous desire and reaction was motivated mainly by three powerful and emotive reasons. Firstly, we wanted to acknowledge and to manifest our pride in the part played by large numbers of the "Boys" when they fought with the "Machal" during the War of Independence in 1948, many of whom settled in Israel.

Secondly, we wanted to demonstrate our moral support and solidarity with the State and the Jewish people in Israel by our presence here during the celebrations.

Thirdly, in spite of the fact that most of us live in the Diaspora, we have always felt that our lives are inextricably bound with the State of Israel.

Israel's Golden Jubilee is a time of both celebration and reflection for all of us. In the last fifty years we have witnessed the transformation of Israel from a dream to a thriving modern State. Now is an appropriate time to reflect on some of Israel's most historic moments; times of war and peace, tragedy and triumph. Some of these moments you may recall personally. They represent the incredible achievements of a tiny country in what is really a very short time in our history. They represent the miracle that is Israel today.

In 1946, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, a famous American conservationist, published a book - "Palestine, Land of Promise". He examined the absorptive capacity of Palestine which included the West Bank. The argument prevalent at the time was that most of Palestine consisted of desert and that it would not support a large population. He argued to the contrary. The total population in Palestine, at the time, was 1 ½ million, of whom about six hundred thousand were Jews. He wrote - "After the centuries of darkness which crushed the hopes of Palestine's miserable inhabitants, a new force has come into the land and made it live again. The possibility of a new day for the entire Middle East is hidden in the fertile lands, flourishing villages and cities, the co-operatives and factories of Jewish Palestine." Today, without the West Bank Arabs, there are six million people living in Israel, of whom nearly five million are Jews. Not only is Israel today self-sufficient in food, but it has also become a major exporter of agricultural products in the world, not to mention the high tech and electronic industries which are making great inroads into the world markets. The GDP of Israel's six million people almost matches the combined GDP of its eighty-six million immediate Arab neighbours. At a time when the world population is growing by leaps and bounds and there are so many starving people in the world, if for no other reason, there are so many more overwhelming reasons for Israel to receive the praise and admiration of the whole world.

For those of us who still remember what it was like to be a Jew without the privilege of a Jewish State, Israel has a very special meaning. Notwithstanding the tragedy of the Holocaust, in pre-war years we were persecuted, humiliated, despised, denigrated and used as a political football by all and sundry. How different the scene looks today! Gone is the Ghetto mentality; the kowtowing; the turning of the other cheek. If anything, we have perhaps become over-confident and this over-confidence has its dangers. We must realise and constantly emphasise that this reversal of fortune



Some of our members at ZIPORI on a tour in Northern Israel in May 1998 during their visit to the State of Israel for its 50th anniversary. ZIPORI was one of the centres of Judaism in the Roman & Byzantine period after the destruction of Jerusalem.



Some of our members at MA'ALE NAHAMISHA on a tour in Southern Israel in May 1998 during their visit to the State of Israel for its 50th anniversary.

would never have happened without a strong and successful Jewish State. Israel's existence has enriched our lives, enhanced our pride and identity, and has served as a rallying point for culture and Jewish living. With the birth of the State of Israel, the destiny of our people has entered the autonomy of its choice. We have become the agents, not the victims of our history.

Israel has become central to Jewish thought, consciousness and inspiration! Since the establishment of the State, the major events of Jewish history have revolved around Israel. Those who were touched by these events, who felt themselves part of this saga, know the incomparable excitement such participation can impart. Nothing can match the reward of partnership in this momentous turn in the history of our people. No criticism, and there is plenty to criticise, can obscure the magnitude of the achievement realised by Israel. Nor should criticism be a reason for not supporting Israel. As Eric Silver, a well-known Jewish correspondent wrote, "Israel is still the best Jewish State we have!"

It must, however, be stated with some apprehension that at a time when Israel has never been more prosperous and more secure, it is also more divided and uncertain about its fate. The unending conflict between hardliners and doves, modernists and traditionalists, new immigrants and old-timers and, in particular, the secular and the religious, is having a corrosive effect on the morale of the people of Israel. Paradoxically, Israel is a much more vibrant democracy today than it ever was and perhaps its very success is a contributory factor to these dangerous manifestations. Dangerous because Israel is still surrounded by implacable enemies and therefore cannot afford the luxury of such disunity.

It is hope rather than despondency that has sustained us throughout the ages. It is our fervent wish that wiser counsels will prevail and Israel will become "a light unto the nations" as envisaged by the founding fathers of the State of Israel.

Footnote:

I would like to express our thanks to Krulik, whose dynamism, energy and effort, brought to fruition our project to travel as a group to Israel for the 50th anniversary of the State.

We were delighted that Dr Groag managed to join us at very short notice. Dr Groag is fondly remembered by those of us who came to England from Theresienstadt. He was in charge of the administration, but worked mostly behind the scene. For most of us it was the first reunion with him for almost fifty-three years.

It was also a great joy to meet Trudie and Israel Cohen, our Madrichim in Windermere and Liverpool, as well as Fay Nachman, one of our Madrichim from the Loughton hostel. It was also good to see Izek Weiss, who was one of the four supervisors who looked after us in Theresienstadt prior to our departure to England.

We were delighted that Reuma Weizman, Israel's First Lady, accepted to be guest of honour at our reunion. She was one of our Madrichim in Loughton and has always taken a great interest in our members, especially those in Israel. We know how difficult it was for her to be with us, due to an overwhelming number of other engagements. Her presence was therefore much more appreciated.

How honoured and excited we were when the President of Israel, Ezer Weizman, unexpectedly turned up at our reunion. He appeared very relaxed in our company, as indeed we all were. He made a warm and impromptu speech and greatly enhanced what was already an exciting and emotional evening.

* * *

'THE BOYS' HOLD SPECIAL REUNION

BY PAUL LUNGEN

This article was reprinted from The Canadian Jewish News. Howard Chandler is the brother of Harry Wajchandler, both of whom came to England with the Windermere group. Howard and his wife Elsa now live in Canada. Elsa has retired from politics and is devoting her time to writing about the politics and evolution of education in Toronto, as well as the development of teaching of the Holocaust unit. She has received many awards for her public work.

TORONTO - When The Boys assemble for one of their annual get-togethers, it often resembles something of a family reunion.

There's lots of hugging and kissing, sharing of stories and warm feelings. As children orphaned during the Holocaust, who were brought to England for rehabilitation after the war, the other Boys are often the only family they have.

This year, The Boys welcomed another member of the family to their annual get together - Israeli President Ezer Weizman.

Weizman attended a dinner held by The Boys at their reunion in Israel, which was held to mark the Jewish State's 50th birthday.

Although not a member of The Boys himself, Weizman's wife, Reuma, was a "madrichah" (counsellor) at one of the English hostels that housed The Boys.

Weizman noted that many of The Boys left England in 1948 for the new State of Israel and served in the Haganah during the fight for independence. Many remained and made outstanding contributions to the state, he pointed out.

For Howard Chandler, 69, the reunions afford the opportunity to meet people who became his family after the war. Along with his wife, Elsa, a long-standing school trustee and past chair of the North York Board of Education, he enjoyed the camaraderie of the most recent reunion.

"It was very emotional because we saw many of The Boys who went to Israel and stayed," he said. "Some held high positions, even in the security establishment. One fellow is retired but he won't say what he did. Some of The Boys called him 007."

Depicted in historian Martin Gilbert's book of the same name, The Boys were a group of about 1,000 young Jewish orphans brought to England after the war.

Chandler, a native of the Polish town of Wierzbnik, near Radom, was liberated in Theresienstadt, a Nazi camp in Czechoslovakia. After passing a physical exam, he and 300 others were ferried to England, in his case aboard a converted Lancaster bomber.

They were taken to an aircraft factory in Windermere in northern England for rehabilitation. There, "we made friendships that last until today," he said.

Of the 300, about 20 live in Toronto, with the majority remaining in England or in Israel. Smaller clusters of orphans made their way to the United States, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil - any place they had relatives, he said.

Chandler had two aunts in Toronto, Faigie Hochberg and Yentl (Jennie) Obsbaum. He joined them after two years. His brother, Harry, remained in England.

Most of The Boys lost all their families in the Holocaust. "This was our family. We didn't have anybody else," he said.

"I think the relationships that developed between The Boys is the kind of warm relationship that doesn't even develop in families," said Elsa. "When we see each other, the kissing among the boys and girls is something to behold."

* * *

CHILD SURVIVORS CONFERENCE - U.S.A.

EDYTA KLEIN-SMITH

Edyta was in the Warsaw Ghetto and after the Ghetto Uprising lived in Warsaw with her mother as Christians. She went to live in the U.S.A. in 1947 and has resided in London since 1967. Like many other survivors who came later to England, she joined our Society.

On October 16th-19th in Rockville, Maryland, in very comfortable surroundings, I attended the 11th annual conference for Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust. For me it was a first conference of this kind and a very powerful experience. I had the support of my husband. We were joined by my son, who knew very little about the Holocaust. For him the experience of meeting so many real survivors - the child survivors - (not just Schindler's List) and also bonding with well-represented second generation, who were so well-spoken and expressed themselves in a most moving manner, was, I think, unforgettable and beneficial. For me it was a very emotional weekend. I do dwell on the past and opening all the old wounds left me drained, but I would not want to miss it. All the workshops and seminars were well organised, divided into specific age groups, second generation, camp survivors, etc. For several meals the seating was at tables marked by countries of origin. Sitting at dinner, speaking Polish, discovering two "children" from Warsaw who had similar experiences, and meeting someone who knew my family, was a great feeling. The survivors and their families were mostly American and Canadian citizens. Two people came from Kiev. I was able to find out a little about their very difficult life in the Ukraine. The Ukrainian child survivor had a pleasant voice and knew all the old Russian songs that we, the Polish children, remembered. Every evening late after almost everyone returned to their rooms a group of about a dozen stayed and we sang our hearts out - songs and lyrics we could not believe we remembered.

It was the most therapeutic experience I have encountered in a long time.

I am glad I was there!

* * *

ALIN MOSSAD ABRAHAMS

JOSEPH RIBO

Jo came to England with the Southampton group, lived in the Woodberry Down hostel and subsequently emigrated to Israel where he joined the IDF, becoming a high-ranking officer. Later he was in the Israeli Diplomatic Corps.

The '45 Aid Society supports a number of institutions in Israel. One of those institutions is ALIN MOSSAD ABRAHAMS - the Israeli Society for disabled children.

ALIN operates and supports a number of institutions which tend to handicapped children and assists individual disabled children in the purchase of wheelchairs, orthopaedic equipment and other special needs.



The President of the State of Israel, Ezer Weizman & his wife Reuma with some of our members of our Reunion in Israel in May 1998.



A few of the "Bar Mitzvah Boys" at the celebrations at O.R.T. in December 1997.
From left to right: Harry Ziskind, Ben Helfgott, Harry Spiro, Ziggy Shipper, Ray Winogrodzki and Abe Dichter.

We want to acquaint our members with the institutions to which our society donates. BEIT NOAM is the first such institution to be followed by others.

One of ALIN's main undertakings is BEIT NOAM - a Day Centre for young adults with severe physical disabilities and mental retardation. The daughter of one of our members in Israel attends this Day Centre. Our Society has been donating money to BEIT NOAM each year for the last 10 years.

BEIT NOAM

BEIT NOAM was established over 10 years ago through the initiative of a group of parents who refused to place their disabled children in closed institutions. For the young adults of eighteen and over there was no alternative in existence.

It took the parents nearly 2 years of intensive pressuring to convince the authorities to open a Day Centre catering to the needs of these young adults. The condition to the establishment of such a Day Centre was that the Centre would be operated by a Public Institution and not by a Government Agency. That is where ALIN, with the cooperation of ILAN, came in, undertaking the task of operating BEIT NOAM.

From a modest beginning with a group of 6 children in a 2 room dilapidated hut, BEIT NOAM gradually grew to house 50 severely handicapped young adults of 18 years and above.

The CENTRE is located in Kiriat Ono, still in temporary buildings but bustling with activity, emanating love and hope!

BEIT NOAM employs a staff of over 60 special education teachers, para-medical experts and qualified assistants. Their task is to provide a habilitative and educational framework for the handicapped and help support the families in coping with a severely handicapped child at home.

In addition to group and individual based educational activities commensurate with the capabilities of each individual, as prescribed by the functional rehabilitation assessment, they receive para-medical treatment - physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, hydrotherapy, musicology and etc.

A few times a year, the youngsters can stay at BEIT NOAM over the weekend, enabling the parents to have a break and a free weekend for themselves.

The main objective of the BEIT NOAM staff is to enable these young adults brighter and more meaningful lives in as many ways as possible. It is, of course, a great support for the families who believe that the best opportunity for a fuller life for their young disabled is within the framework of the family.

BEIT NOAM became a success story and a model for other similar institutions. Staff members from other institutions come to study the "BEIT NOAM Approach" to the severely handicapped.

There are plans to build a permanent house for BEIT NOAM. Future plans call for the erection of a hostel, as many of the parents with advancing age and diminishing health find it difficult to cope with their handicapped child at home.

Anyone who wishes to visit BEIT NOAM while in Israel should contact Joseph Ribo, tel. 03-5346216.

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COLLECTIVE BARMITZVAH AT ORT

Last year some of our members participated in the launch, by World ORT, of a remarkable CD Rom programme called "Navigating the Bible". It enables those who prepare for their Bar Mitzvah to find their relevant portion in the Bible and to study and explore the Torah in the most modern and easy way, using the latest technology.

Many of our members, unfortunately, were unable to celebrate their Bar Mitzvah as it usually coincided with the deportations to the gas chambers or lived under conditions of extreme deprivation. They also never found out what Sidrah related to their Bar Mitzvah.

The CD Rom launch was both an opportunity for some of them to participate in a collective Bar Mitzvah and to find their own portion which was conducted by the same Chazan who sang the whole Torah and Haftoreh so beautifully for the programme and for ORT to demonstrate the value and importance of this project.

Those who participated in the collective Bar Mitzvah were: Abe Dichter, Ben Helfgott, Zigi Shipper, Harry Spiro, Krulik Wilder, Ray Wino (Winogrodzki), Harry Ziskind and Zvi Dagan (Mlynarski), who came specially from Israel.

It was a very moving occasion and as the Director of ORT said - "It went just a little way to making up for what the "Boys" missed in those terrible years of horror."

* * *

SURVIVING THE HOLOCAUST WITH RUSSIAN JEWISH PARTISANS

Jack's book was reviewed in last year's Issue No 21 in which the reviewer described it as "a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the Holocaust". Since then, Jack has indefatigably travelled far and wide, at home and abroad, introducing his book and speaking about his experiences. He, more than anyone else, is keeping alive the memory of his people from Novogrodek and is promoting good relations between the present generation of Jews and non-Jews from that area.

Last year my book "Surviving the Holocaust with Russian Jewish Partisans" was launched in the Imperial War Museum and I was very pleased that the BBC mentioned the book on television. Of course, that helped the sale but, more important, I started to get interesting letters, mainly from America and South Africa. Strange that third and fourth generation families that have left my town now wanted to know about relatives left behind. In fact, I referred some of the letters to the Novogrodker committee in Tel Aviv and they found that their relatives survived the war and are also residing in the USA.

With the success in London, I moved to launch the same book in Cape Town and the new Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, and it was very interesting to meet the past generations of Landsleit. After my talk I was surrounded by various people, young and old, who asked questions.

"Did I know this family, from a neighbouring village? Did I hear of a place like Lubtch before the First World War?". It was in "Minsker Gubernia".

Some of the questions related to the partisan movement and I promised and did find answers for them, thanks to my good friend the Director of the Museum in Novogrodek, Tamara Vershitskaya. She found me many documents of Jewish resistance in Belarus. In fact, some of the documents in Brussels will be exhibited at an exhibition organised by B'nai B'rith.

Again with the help of Tamara Vershitskaya, my book has been translated in Belarussian and published with the support of the Soros Foundation. The launch of the book will be in my shtetl in March 1999.

I will go back to my hometown with mixed feelings - sadness at the enormous loss and gratitude for having survived and being in a position to return and to demonstrate that "Am Israel Char".

The brave local farmers and their families who helped Jewish partisans, such as the Bielski brothers, will welcome it; as for the Anti-Semites, what can one say?

* * *

SIXTY YEARS AFTER THE KRISTALLNACHT

BY FREDDIE KNOLLER

Freddie was born in Vienna. He lived in Belgium and France till 1943, when he was arrested and sent to Auschwitz. After liberation he went to the States to join his elder brothers. He came to England in 1952.

The pogroms of November 1938 showed the real brutality and ferocity of the Nazis and the German people against the Jews.

In order to understand what has happened I must explain the background of these events.

Approximately fifteen thousand Polish Jews lived in Germany and Austria at that time. They were hoping that they were safe in Germany because they had a Polish passport. On 31st March 1938 the Polish Government issued a law whereby Polish passports were to be revoked if the bearer had lived abroad for more than five years. Thus, on 31st October 1938, the date when this law took effect, fifteen thousand Polish Jews would become stateless. The Germans, with their own experience in racial legislation, instantly realised that this Polish stratagem was aimed at the Jews, and Germany would risk being left with fifteen thousand stateless Jews whom no country would admit. Two days before the Polish law took effect, the Germans seized fifteen thousand men, women and children, herded them into railway carriages with one piece of luggage per person and allowed them to take with them ten marks only to travel the night of October 29th-30th to the German/Polish border. Most of these Jews had lived in Germany for over thirty-five years.

Amongst those deportees was a family by the name of Grynszpan. Sendel Siegmund Grynszpan was born at Radomsk at a time when Poland was part of Russia. In April 1911, a year after his marriage to Rifka Silberberg, the Grynszpans fled Polish Russia for fear that a tide of pogroms would sweep across the Ukrainian border into Poland. They settled in Hanover, retaining Russian nationality. When the Versailles Treaty restored territorial sovereignty to Poland, Sendel Grynszpan opted for Polish nationality.

In Hanover the Grynszpan family lived on a meagre income from a small tailor's shop. The earnings were so small that they received welfare assistance. The youngest of the family, Hershel Grynszpan, wanted to look for better opportunities and went to Paris where his uncle Abraham lived. He read in the Yiddish newspaper "Pariser Haint" about the deportation of the Polish Jews by the Nazis. The newspaper reported that the Jews were rounded up, taken to police stations where they were physically abused and then deported mostly to Zbonszyn, in a no-man's land between Germany and Poland, where their living conditions were most distressing. One thousand, two hundred had fallen ill and a number of insanity and suicides were recorded. At the same time, he received a letter from his elder sister Berta who told him what had happened to the family. They were only able to salvage one suitcase with the most important clothes for the winter and that they hadn't got any money. She asked him to send some money to Lodz.

Herschel was devastated by the news. He went to a gunsmith and bought a 6.35 calibre pistol. He went to the German Embassy with his gun in his jacket. He asked to see the Ambassador as he had a very important and secret document for him. He was shown into the offices of the Third Secretary, Ernst von Rath, who asked Herschel to show him the important document. Herschel pulled out his gun from inside his jacket, levelled it at von Rath and shouted: "You are a filthy Boch and here in the name of the fifteen thousand persecuted Jews is your document." Herschel Grynszpan fired five bullets into Ernst von Rath. He did not attempt to flee and he was arrested there and then without putting up any resistance.

This event was manna to the Nazis. Germany and Austria exploded with violence. The whole of Germany's Jewish community was subjected to a reign of terror without precedent in modern times in a civilised country. I remember this episode very well. Since the 7th November, when the news of the shooting reached Germany, we were sitting around the radio listening to the continued news reports about the anger of the German people that a Jew had gunned down a German diplomat at the Embassy in Paris. The attacks against the Jews began simultaneously throughout the country and we heard a speech by Joseph Goebbels who claimed that the orgy of violence and arson was a spontaneous reaction to the assassination of a German diplomat by a Polish Jew. On the 9th November at about 10 p.m., we received a 'phone call from our very close friends, the Ament family, who lived in the Leopoldsgasse right opposite our Synagogue, the Polnische Tempel. The Synagogue was one of the most beautifully designed architecture, with a large dome on the top. (PHOTO OF SYNAGOGUE). We were told that the Synagogue was burning and that the S.A. and the Hitler Youth had started this fire. We were further told that the fire engines arrived but were prevented by the S.A. to put the fire out. We were further warned that the S.A. was raiding every Jewish home and that they were arresting and beating up the Jews wherever they could find them.

My parents immediately turned all the lights off and bolted the front door. At about midnight we heard a noise coming from the courtyard. Our apartment was on the third floor of the building. Looking out of the window we saw a number of brown-shirted S.A. men talking to our Housbesorger (Housekeeper of the building) Mr Hagmann. They all went into our building. Suddenly, we heard a shrill scream of a woman, followed by the noise of a broken window, and then a dull thud in the courtyard. We looked down and saw a body lying there. We found out the next day that this was the body of Mr Epstein who lived on the first floor of our building. The Epsteins had a wholesale fashion business which they ran from their apartment where they lived. There was a big sign attached prominently at the entrance of the building. It showed: ROBBES ET MODES BEI EPSTEIN. Fortunately, the S.A. left our building while Mrs Epstein sat next to the body of her husband screaming and crying. The sky was vivid red from the fires of our Synagogue.

The next morning I met Mr Hagmann who told me that the S.A. wanted to visit other Jewish homes in our building, but he told them that no other Jews lived there. He also admitted that the S.A. pushed Mr Epstein out of the window.

During the night and the following days Vienna had one of the worst outbreaks of anti-semitic wrath.

21 Synagogues were burnt down
Dozens of Stiebels were destroyed
4,083 Jewish shops were plundered and closed down
1,950 Jewish homes were ransacked
7,800 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps
680 Jews committed suicides
91 Jews were murdered.

The broken glass from the Jewish shops looked like crystals reflecting the red flames from the burnt Synagogues. This was the Night of the Crystals - Die Kristall Nacht.

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MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

THE 22ND LEONARD MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

"OPENING ISRAEL'S BLACK BOX" TOWARDS AN UNCENSORED HISTORY

GIVEN BY PROF. BERNARD WASSERSTEIN

REVIEW BY J. FINKELSTONE OBE

Joe was only nineteen years old when, as a reporter for "The Carlisle Recorder" he wrote about the arrival of the first three hundred of the Boys at Crosby on Eden Airport. He has been closely associated with our Society and he and his wife, Hadossah, are honorary members of our Society.

Professor Bernard Wasserstein has been widely admired as one of the outstanding Jewish historians of our generation. Such books as "The British in Palestine", "Britain and the Jews of Europe", and his latest, "The Vanishing Diaspora", have been praised for their scholarship and range. As President of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, he occupies a deservedly influential post.

Thus, not surprisingly, a very large and expectant audience was present when he delivered the annual Leonard Montefiore Lecture at 33 Seymour Place, London. But what did surprise many of the listeners was Professor Wasserstein's exposition of the views of Israel's so-called new historians. The professor's views were challenged, sometimes passionately.

The "new historians", as exemplified by Benny Morris and Avi Shlaim, have seen it as their duty to destroy the "myths" associated with the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948. One of the main "myths" was that Jewish David was faced by the Arab Goliath. According to Morris and Shlaim, and others, the Yishuv in Israel although only 600,000 strong compared with three times as many Palestinian Arabs and faced by surrounding Arab countries with populations of over 40 million, was militarily stronger, except for a three-week period after the declaration of the State.

Israel, Morris argues in his books, won the war because it was stronger, better organised and better led. Israel was able to put more troops into the battles than all the Arab armies. Morris agrees, however, that Israeli morale and determination were vital in the victory.

Other "myths" which Morris and his fellow-historians have tried to eradicate were that the Palestinian Arabs fled their homes voluntarily or at the behest of their leaders, and that while Israel wanted peace after the war, the Arabs consistently refused.

In his lecture, Professor Wasserstein came out entirely in support of the "new historians". In the heated debate that followed, I expressed my personal respect for the professor and his scholarship, but I also voiced surprise that he had ignored the views of other outstanding scholars in Israel who had strongly challenged the views of the "new historians".

Thus Professor Itamar Rabinovich, of Tel Aviv University, had written a highly-regarded and well-documented book which showed how often Arab leaders had rebuffed Israeli desire for peace. He strongly dismissed the accusations as invalid.

Other leading scholars in Israel had challenged other points made by the "new historians". Benny Morris was even accused of omitting crucial words in a letter by David Ben-Gurion to make it appear as if the Israeli leader had deliberately sought the expulsion of the Palestine Arabs.

One member of the audience spoke emotionally about the survivors of the Holocaust being taken directly from the ships to the battlefronts where many of them died.

Another speaker recalled how desperate for arms the Israelis were at the start of the war.

Arieh Handler, the Mizrahi leader who was present at the Declaration of the State by David Ben-Gurion, asked why the "new historians" were so keen to bring up matters that discredited the Jewish State.

Professor Wasserstein answered all the questions patiently and calmly. He rightly stressed that as an historian, he saw it his duty to examine all facts. But his lecture, delivered in a masterly fashion, left me, and others, puzzled. Would it not have been more beneficial if he had presented both sides of the ongoing argument? By presenting only the views of the "new historians" and giving them his full backing, Professor Wasserstein was, perhaps, unwittingly creating a different myth; that the views of the "new historians" hold sway among scholars in Israel. This is not the case.

* * *

2ND GENERATION

CELEBRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

NAOMI GRYN

Adapted from speech given at a tribute to Rabbi Hugo Gryn - A Celebration of Human Rights - organised by The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (J-CORE) and The Refugee Council, on 12th March 1998, by his daughter, Naomi Gryn.

In my dad's now dusty office at 33 Seymour Place I found his notes for a Moral Maze programme on Radio 4 about the Asylum Bill, in which he talks about how he had himself once been a "stranger" and how this country had taken him in. Had there been more generous provisions, he writes, who knows how many more of his family and community might be alive. And he refers to these lines in Emma Lazarus' poem, "The New Colossus", about the Statue of Liberty, the "Moth of Exiles":

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

For Hugo, one of the yardsticks for the moral health of a society was how they receive and treat the vulnerable stranger. To describe one race superior to another, was - according to my dad - a "pigment of the imagination". For another programme - about Louis Farrakhan and black racism - he writes "that racism is a primitive and powerful doctrine - a monstrosity which should be checked and made obsolete - but without getting into the gutter with racists - or betraying such hard-won democratic values that our society has managed to achieve". He thought black racism as incomprehensible and appalling as Jewish racism precisely because - as the Bible has it - "we were all strangers in Egypt"... Show me a Jewish racist, he said, and I'll show you a betrayer of Jewish religion, history and experience. For Hugo, the mark of a civilised society was one which could celebrate differences and my father was an extraordinarily civilised man.

He was brought to Britain by the Central British Fund in February 1946. One of the Boys. Unlike any of the other kids on that flight, his mother - my grandmother - Bella, had also survived the war - but with a courage I can hardly imagine, she encouraged my dad to take up this opportunity to start his life again in a faraway land. A land where, as 15-year old Hugo insisted to his posse of fun-starved teenagers, the lights were bright and the pleasures many.

When the plane refuelled in Belgium, the boys were greeted by ladies from the local Jewish community who had prepared tea for them. Tea with milk. But where my dad came from you only had milk in your tea when you were ill. "Don't touch it!" he hissed at his pals. "They think we're sick...!" His first culture shock.

They reboarded without refreshment and landed finally at Prestwick Airport, far from the neon lights of Piccadilly Circus. The immigration officer asked my father for his name. In those days he spoke no English at all, but understood the sentiment. "Gryn", he said. G-R-E-E-N, wrote the official. "Nem", said my father, "*ipsilon*" and pointed vigorously at this unfamiliar spelling of his family name "*ipsilon*". Hungarian for "y". Bemused, the official led him by the hand and showed him to the toilet.

So now my father had an English surname. He sported it proudly until the mid-1950s when, perhaps feeling more confident about his exotic roots, reverted officially to its original spelling: G-R-

Y-N. But he pronounced it always like the colour of England's lush and pleasant lands. While I - a generation on - love the foreign sound of our family name and am deeply grateful for its brevity every time I have to spell it aloud.

The boys were taken to Polton House, a farm school in Midlothian. Determined to make his way in this, his new home, he found a marvellous English teacher in nearby Edinburgh to give him extra tuition. In exchange, the school required him to milk their herd of 56 cows. Twice a day. As well as all his other farming duties and his school lessons. Now you'll understand why my dad was so fond of the story about those immigrants thought to come to this country because they see it as a honey pot, because they believe our streets are paved with gold. But how they soon discover three sobering truths:

1. the streets are not paved with gold
2. many streets are not paved at all
3. they are supposed to do the paving!

On the advice of his guardians, he would have sought an apprenticeship in the fur trade. Instead he won a scholarship to Cambridge to study Maths and Biochemistry, which required - as he saw it - less proficiency in English than any other option.

He came one day to a lecture given by the late and great Rabbi Leo Baeck - at the very synagogue where he would later spend 32 years as rabbi. Baeck adopted my dad as his student and eventually encouraged him to apply to the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, to become a rabbi and to help rebuild the Jewish people. In 1955, he was naturalised as an American citizen and could finally dispense with the humiliating Travel Document of the Stateless with which he had travelled since the end of the war.

His first pulpit was in Bombay. The post was initially for a year - a condition of the scholarship that had enabled him to train for the rabbinate. But he and my mother, Jackie, then still a blushing bride, enjoyed themselves so much, they stayed for three. He found time to study Sanskrit and was enraptured by India's other cultures and traditions. How his heart must have ached, when, some years later, he joined a protest by those of his former community of Indian Jews who had migrated to Israel. They had been driven to go on hunger strike that they might be accepted as fully Jewish by their fellow citizens.

In 1992, Dad and I had planned to make a film about the Jews of India - intended as a tale of tolerance and peaceful co-existence. But, ironically, in Bombay's shameful race riots of December that year - my father's former synagogue - no longer in use as a place of worship, and by then the property of Muslims - was burnt down by neighbouring Hindus.

However, I'm thankful we did have the opportunity to make other films together. "Chasing Shadows", which we shot in 1989 in his hometown, Berehovo, now seems more like a eulogy by my father for himself. In it, he explains why he dedicated so much of his time to fighting racism and intolerance.

"People often say that time is a great healer - I'm not sure about that. What I think time does do for you is it gives you a perspective. And, walking around Berehovo on this visit I couldn't help but think that although Jews here were involved in the community over such a long time, and although, particularly in the Czech period, they really had full legal equality - Jews owned land here and worked it, businesses, professions - doctors, lawyers, teachers. Jews were also tailors, shoemakers, labourers - the fact is that while Jews and non-Jews depended on each other for many of the essentials in life, and we lived in the same society, we were not really part of the same community. There was hardly any visiting, sharing, or gossiping. I know that we are all equal in the sight of God, in the Czechoslovak times we all had equality in the sight of the law as well, but in each other's eyes - that was something else! I realise now that of Berehovo's three big and beautiful churches, I had never been inside any of them, and the chances are that none of the

Christians ever set foot in any of our synagogues. And when the chips were down I don't know of a single instance of a Jew being saved or hidden by a non-Jew. That I spend much of my time these days working for better understanding between religious groups and fighting racism as hard as I can, is partly because I know that you can only be safe and secure in a society that practises tolerance, cherishes harmony and can celebrate differences."

Cynically realistic about the inevitability of prejudice, my dad writes how he sometimes wonders if we were to wake up one day and find that - miraculously - everyone was of the same race - religion and language - whether by midday we wouldn't find some other reason for prejudice. He describes it as a great labour-saving device - you form an opinion without having to dig up any facts.

He understood - with the awful hindsight of his own childhood experience of racism and persecution - that the most effective weapon to combat bigotry is this: We have to get to know each other, to understand and share each others' pain as well as pleasure. We have to dispense with harmful stereotypes and hurtful distinctions. How he would have agonized over the recent news of ethnic conflict between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, the senseless murders of a Catholic and his Protestant friend in Northern Ireland, the seeming hopelessness for peace in the Middle East. And he would have chewed his bottom lip down to a pulp over the battle now erupting between Orthodox and non-Orthodox throughout the Jewish world, leaving such painful divisiveness in its wake.

He never forgot how vulnerable he had felt when he first came to Britain and relentlessly pursued the right to equality on behalf of all minority and immigrant communities, as well as the right to separate and vibrant cultural identities.

I think the reason my dad became a Rabbi was because it allowed him to bridge the vanished Jewish world of his childhood with the cosmopolitan universe of his post-war years. It let him live a thoroughly Jewish life in a fully pluralistic way. Though Humility was his middle name, he was very proud to be awarded a CBE in 1993, "for valuable services rendered in the field of community and race relations". And, just a few weeks later, the Home Office finally granted him British citizenship - 47 years after he'd first arrived in this country!

Above all, my father believed in the individual's right to self-determination. He understood the need for minority communities to develop strong, forward-thinking leadership - that we might flourish - intellectually, economically, spiritually and politically - that the rising generations should be protected from internalising the negative norms of society. Firmly rooted in our own rich tapestry of histories and traditions, but without fixating on the past.

He loved as brothers his colleagues of every creed in the diverse world of Interfaith Dialogue and religious education. Together, they struggled with concepts like assimilation and acculturation and they fought for a brave new world where lions can hang out with lambs and no one makes war any more.

Also in his office, I found his notes for a lecture on Migration, given ten years before to the Standing Conference for Interfaith Dialogue in Education. He concluded with a thought that is utterly and uniquely Hugo:

"Communities in transition - and are living/dynamic communities not always in transition? - need to have the right perspective on themselves. There's a Jewish story about a synagogue without a rabbi for 20 years, now tearing itself apart about the performance of a central prayer ritual. In desperation, a delegation is sent to the old rabbi - retired some 20 years before - to find out the correct tradition. Each presents its own side. The rabbi says: 'Are you sure your side is right?' 'Yes' both say. The rabbi continues: 'And both sides certain that the other side is mistaken and about to ruin everything if their view prevails?' 'Yes' again. 'So what is the tradition?' they ask. And the rabbi replies: 'The state of affairs you describe in our synagogue. That is the tradition!'"

"HER DAD"

NAOMI GRYN

Naomi is the daughter of Jackie and the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn.

As a child, I developed a chronic antipathy towards Bar Mitzvah parties. Attributed, said I, to an intense dislike of the ubiquitous snare drum. Quite a disability for a rabbi's daughter. So my father took me to a performance of Ravel's Bolero at the Albert Hall and I was cured. That's the kind of dad he was. Gentle, loving, funny, inspiring, generous to a fault and extraordinarily wise. Every moment we shared together was a joyful journey of discovery. He was in love with life. Through his eyes, the world seemed full of wonder, an ever-unfolding mystery, scripted and stage-managed by Hugo's Big Buddy, God.

He could make me laugh at even my greatest misfortunes - the pain of a broken leg would pale into insignificance under the spell of his charm. "You have two Jewish mothers!" he would declare to justify his over-zealous parental concern. Certainly he was very protective, but still he encouraged my unquenchable wanderlust and never-ceasing quest for excitement and adventure.

Whenever I could, I joined my father on Friday evenings at his synagogue. If he was leading the service, he would catch my eye as soon as I entered and we would bow towards each other, beaming with silent appreciation. I hung on to every word of his sermons, as I did his lectures and broadcasts, and it made me swell with pride to see how he could win the hearts and rapt attention of any audience. If he was sitting in the congregation, I would find a place next to him and we would pray and sometimes play together, singing with great confidence, but often shamelessly off-key. Afterwards, I would hover while he greeted his congregants and put away his robes. Then we would walk home, arm in arm, along Bryanston Square, discussing Spinoza, Freud, dramatic happenings in Anglo Jewry, or I would harangue him with interesting thoughts prompted by his sermon, and by the time we reached my parents' flat in Upper Montagu Street, the tensions of the working week would have faded into history. For me, anyway.

Shabbat and Jewish holidays were always magical occasions, as were all our family celebrations. Friends thought it strange that I never tired of my family's company, but the atmosphere around our dinner table, usually alive with visitors from far and wide, had a powerful lure. Sitting at the head of the table, my father, relaxed after a shot of whisky or a large slivovitz poured ice-cold straight from the freezer, would welcome everyone with a specially-tailored announcement about each of our latest triumphs or disasters. Then he would raise a glass of well-chosen wine and toast "*l'chaim*", to life. He was the ultimate host. His seemingly endless store of jokes and anecdotes, improved and embellished with every new telling, were matched only by my mother's bottomless pot of perfect chicken soup and a repertoire of hearty Hungarian dishes which would evoke for my father fond memories of his distant childhood home.

He was a creature of habit and modest taste. When we went out to eat, it was invariably for tandoori chicken or to Pizza Express where my father would always ask to see the menu, but never failed to order an American Hot and a glass of Peroni beer. He loved Mozart, Mel Brooks, M.A.S.H., Woody Allen, Dave Allen, natural redheads, the Marx Brothers, crummy thrillers and breakfast in bed.

My father taught me about justice and equality, respect for good wine and single malt whisky, and never to fear the unknown. I marvel at the breadth of his learning, the depth of his insight, his grasp of language. He could have conversed with a Martian. His heroes were Moses, Maimonides and Leo Baeck, but his style was uniquely his own. He instilled in me an insatiable curiosity about

our shared Jewish heritage, which spilled into much of my own work. As did my dad, who, as a victim of several of my film-making enterprises, dubbed me his "director with the iron whim".

Still blissfully ignorant of the tumours already growing inside his beautiful head, but with macabre foresight, over lunch one day I asked him what he'd like as his epitaph. Without hesitation, he quoted from the book of Micah: "Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God". This was my dad's creed. His genuine humility, his kindness and lack of pretentiousness endeared him to all. He reserved anger only for the petty and bigoted, the thoughtless and the inconsiderate, which included Westminster's army of traffic wardens and anyone with bad body odour.

The cancer was diagnosed the day after my father married - so to speak - my brother, David to Jane, his radiant bride. We had gathered in my parents' living room. My mother Jackie; the newlyweds about to set off for their honeymoon; Gaby, visiting from New York for the wedding with her husband David Massey and their children, Adam and Clio; Rachelle and me. We should have been excitedly extolling the virtues of the previous day, but Dad was already feeling deathly ill and we were all anxious, waiting for him to return from his appointment with a neurologist. When he finally arrived, I poured him a whisky. "Kids," he said, "I'm afraid I've got some bad news."

The next day was his 66th birthday, but no one felt much like celebrating. Within weeks, he had become emaciated and what was left of his hair had fallen out through the twin effects of steroids and radiotherapy. It was as if the *Shoah* had reclaimed him after all these years, as if his survival had been only a temporary loan. Pneumonia was filling his lungs, making every breath an effort of sheer will-power. I was trying to sell my dear, dying father my latest cosmic theory, that maybe bacteria and viruses feel that they have a right to this planet too. "Yes, Naomi," he whispered, "but the thing is, we have to learn how to get on with each other".

* * *

ADDRESS ON BEHALF OF THE "SUCCESSOR GENERATION" AT THE HOLOCAUST DAY MEETING, APRIL 23, 1998

ADA HOLTZMAN

This address was sent by Menachem Silberstein from Israel with a request to publish it.

I am standing here today, a representative of the "successor generation", a *sabra* born in Kibbutz Evron in Western Galilee, daughter of Rywcia and Meir Holcman from the town of Gombin in Poland, who lost 13 beloved cousins, 16 uncles and aunts, a grandfather and a grandmother and even a great-grandfather, Mosiek Gostinski, aged 80, whose life the Nazi butchers also didn't spare. I am standing and tears are choking my throat and I swear I'll never forget!

I remember, when I was a little girl, my mother of blessed memory, Rywcia, returned home all excited and agitated and for quite a while, nothing could calm her: "They caught Eichmann!" As far back as that, a mere kid, I realised that something terrible had happened to my family and to my people, and that it was fairly recently, not in some distant, mythical past, something that would leave its permanent imprint on my generation.

Part of the survivors are still alive, walk among us, plagued by nightmares and anxieties.

The German criminals as well are still around in their prosperous villages in the "Other Germany", enjoying their generous pensions, while their remnant victims walk around like shadows in our land, struggling for their rights and very survival.

Holocaust deniers crop up everywhere. The internet bristles with provocations and disgusting lies.

In my travels to Poland I still encountered everywhere anti-Semitic graffiti, and the Star of David is again hanging from the gallows - and no one utters a word of protest. Therefore, before the story of the Shoah and the bitter lessons to be learned from it are forgotten on some shelf of history books, before the last witness disappears from among us, we must not stop acting for the preservation of the memory. Because the future is concealed in the past and therefore we must do something about it.

We didn't know and certainly didn't understand the burden of sadness and pain weighing on my parents' shoulders. A bleeding wound which never healed. They were a generation of pioneers, inspired by Zionist strivings of building here their home, of creating a new, better society in our old-new homeland. A home for the Jewish nation and a more just society for man as a human being. It was a generation enthused with the idea of survival and upbuilding of the Jewish Land. Even the joy at the miracle of the State's birth was tempered by the mourning, the bereavement, the unbearable pain which cannot and never will be relieved. That is how we grew up, always touched by pain, notwithstanding the reticence of our parents, who tried to protect us by hardly ever mentioning the tortures they had gone through.

We, who grew up in a free Jewish State, could not understand how six million souls could have been taken to the slaughterhouse. How the German nation, a nation of culture and poetry, a nation of music and philosophy, could have bred from among it a monster, embraced and worshipped it, followed it and turned into a nation of heinous murderers, engulfing a whole continent in blood, tears and infinite pain. How an entire country, Poland, could have been turned into a giant slaughterhouse, the killing fields, while the whole world just stood by... except for a handful of just Gentiles, the Righteous among the nations, whom we shall never forget either.

How the inhabitants of an entire town, the town of Gombin, women and men, oldsters and children, were rounded up for three days and nights in the fire brigade square, without food and water, then with blows and pistol shots were pushed into satanic gas vans, cries "Shema Yisroel", darkness...

The brain does not grasp and the heart refuses to believe. Were the murderers, too, born of mothers? How will we ever be able to understand? How could we ever have visualised such total destruction? It is simply impossible. But maybe we can visualise lovely Channale and Perla, Eli, Andzja and Szajna, Channa, Eli, Hela and Channa, Elja-Chaim Rutka Bajla and Perla.. We see them clearly among the tears... They were all my cousins, little Bnai Gombin...

They were all my generation, innocent children without graves and their ashes are scattered in the fields of Chelmno, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, Stutthof, Bergen Belsen, Belzec... floating in the rivers of Poland restless, without a tomb, filling the endless mass graves hidden in the forests of that land.

And what was their guilt? That they were born Jews. That is the lesson we should never forget! There, on that other planet, only about fifty years ago, they did not distinguish between left and right, between secular and observant, between the Chassidim and the people of the intelligentsia, between folks from Saloniki or from Lodz, between the simple man and the great rabbi, between the Zionist Chalutz or the Bund activist, between the Betar members or Ha'Shomer Ha'tzair socialists...

There, everybody with Jewish blood in his veins shared a common fate. Therefore now, after 2000 years of exile, now that we have a country of our own; now, when in about a week's time we'll celebrate the State's 50th birthday, let's unite and work together and jointly in all fields of society and culture. Let's remember on what foundation the Jewish State was established and what a horrible price we paid for our independence. Let's guard this State like the apple of our eye. We haven't got another country and let's always remember how bitter was our fate when we didn't have a State.

Let's avoid internal quarrels and destructive struggles. Let's fight extremism and racism in all their forms and let's develop equality of rights for the minorities and the weak among us.

We are met here today in order to observe a ceremony of communion and remembrance, but as one survivor once said on the radio - "What we need is not one day to remember, but one day to forget..."

From this stage I appeal to spare no effort for commemoration of the Holocaust and its victims:

to learn and to teach,
to act and to activate,
to listen and make your voice heard,
to be careful and to warn,
to cry out and to alert,
to remember and to remind...

No one else will do it for us. This is our duty and also our right, we the successor generation, we who were born with a burden of sadness and pain on our shoulders. Our children are our consolation as they mark our triumph over Hitler's desire to destroy us.

We won't forgive and we won't forget!

* * *

**"MOJ SYN" - MY SON
(AS MY FATHER INTRODUCED ME DURING OUR TRAVELS IN POLAND)**

MAURICE HELFGOTT

Maurice is the son of Ben and Arza Helfgott.

I went to Poland with my parents in 1985 and, as my memory of the details of that trip have faded, my desire to return with my video camera has increased.

On 31st August, a memorial plaque was to be unveiled in the Rakow Forest outside Piotrkow. My father's mother and younger sister were among 560 Jews who were murdered there on 20th December 1942. When Dad told us he was going, my wife Danielle and I decided not to miss the opportunity.

This article is not going to try to describe what Poland is like today, nor to recount the stories we heard of the years before 1945. As readers of the '45 Aid Society Journal, this would be all too familiar ground. My purpose is to show how I felt about visiting my Father's home town, what I got out of it, and why I would encourage other second and third generations to go.

Understanding the stories.

I remember vividly, the first time I visited Piotrkow in 1985. As a child, I had put together a picture in my mind based on different things I had been told; Piotrkow was a small town; there were very few, if any cars; my grandfather owned a flour mill with two partners; he was very friendly with the Poles through his business relationships. As a child, I had conjured up a vision of a tiny rural hamlet with a white stone windmill on a small hillock and my grandfather sitting on the front of a horse cart with a Polish driver and a dozen big sacks of flour on the back. Of course, nobody said to me, "Describe your visual impression of pre-war Piotrkow and your grandfather's businesses" and since I had an image in my mind, I never stopped to ask - "is this right?" When we entered the busy town (pre-war population 70,000) and arrived at the flour mill, I could not believe it; 100m long and 4 stories high, it was a substantial factory. The reality of it radically changed my inaccurate mental picture. Much of pre-war Eastern Europe remains little changed - hearing the stories in their geographic context gives form to one's understanding and a focus for one's remembrance.

Connecting to a family I never knew.

As a child, I never "missed" my grandparents. Although I realised that many of my friends enjoyed special relationships with their grandparents, I had a very happy and rich family life. I enjoyed a close relationship with my mother's mother, Rebecca - the only grandparent I ever knew, and since that's the way it always was, I never felt any gap.

As a parent, I feel differently. Every second my son Sam spends with his grandparents is a joy to him, to them, and to me. I want that special relationship to go on and on for ever. I want him to know them, to learn from them, to be shaped by them; and just to be spoilt by them. Why not? From the grandparents' point of view, I want them to be able to go on enjoying the "naches" for ever.

When we visited Piotrkow, we went into one of the apartments where Ben and Mala lived with their family before the war. Dad excitedly pointed to the windows and to the fireplace, and he told stories he remembered about his parents in that place. As he did so, I felt a connectivity, a longing, a yearning and a spiritual attachment. Of course, it's a figment of my imagination rather than a meeting with ghosts, but although it made me feel sad, it also made me feel more rooted, more complete, more understanding of my origins, and more loyal to their memory.

Geography acts as a framework from which to connect to the family I never knew, and to realise that it was also my family that I never knew.

Making a record.

I don't think I'm the only one who fancies himself as a Spielberg! Watching the video record of our trip and sharing it with close family and friends has been extremely rewarding, all the more so because I know that it will be just as vital in 2098, as it is now.

Funnily enough, the itinerary or geography of the trip also provides the framework for the film. One doesn't have to go to film school to ask questions on camera and record the answers in the places that the events happened.

At home we never made the time to really establish and record the facts for ourselves - by visiting together, the time and effort was made naturally.

Sorting out my own attitude to the Poles and to New Generations.

This is probably the least clear-cut of my experiences and inevitably perhaps, not everyone will agree. Certainly, I can't help but be strongly influenced by my father's attitudes and by my own experiences.

On the streets of Lodz, football fans from rival teams use the Magen David and the word Jew, as a slanderous insult in their mutually hostile graffiti. On the railway station platform in Piotrkow, teenage kids mocked and giggled at the sight of a Chasid from Bnei Brak in traditional dress. Some of the Poles who offered to "help" us were obviously just trying to get money from foreign Jews. Sometimes Danielle and I didn't *feel* comfortable - we couldn't say why but we were a little on our guard.

On the other hand, we met genuine kindness and openness. In Lutotow, a poor old widow gathered friends and brought us into her humble home, made us tea and told us stories of Jews they had known and what had happened to them. Plaques commemorating the Jewish community in the Main Square in Piotrkow remained in pride of place - untouched by vandals. At the Rakow Forest Memorial, a big contingent of local Polish officials joined to pay their respects.

The bottom line is, of course, that anti-semites and bigots remain, but they are not ascendant. Engage them, see for yourself, understand, you will be rewarded.

My attitude is this, it's not my place to forgive, but neither is it my place to stereotype and condemn new generations.

29 Sep.98

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MY FIRST VISIT TO MY FATHER'S BOYHOOD TOWN

ANGELA RINDER

Angela is the daughter of Moshe Malenicki who came to England with the Windermere group. He was a very successful businessman and has donated generously to many causes, including our Society.

Growing up as the child of a survivor, my father's painful legacy was inescapable. I was made conscious almost from the cradle of a family of girls and boys '*just like me*' who had been taken away and gassed because *just like me*, they were Jews. More poignantly, however, these children would have been my aunts and uncles. Each had a name, a face, even an amusing personal nuance. The sense of grief for a family that I had not known, in a place that I could not imagine, was overwhelming and continues to plague me today. Hence, the prospect of visiting Poland, and re-opening that dreadful chapter in my family's history left me reeling, with a mixture of emotions. Poland had always conjured up terrifying images of families separated and subsequently murdered, of deeply entrenched anti-semitism and of monstrous Nazis stalking the street. During my short stay, my trepidation and fear was replaced by a deep sense of history and pervading grief that aided me in my quest to understand my father, the story of the Shoah and subsequently, myself a little better.

Arriving in Warsaw with my two sons, I was immediately aware and anxious of remaining close to them. I was similarly aware of seeking out older Polish faces amongst the crowds in the airport and wondering *what they were doing during the war!* We were met by a rather austere looking character called Ivan who announced himself as our driver. My father greeted him and directed him in perfect Polish to one of the last active surviving remnants of a once thriving and bustling Jewish community, the Warsaw Kosher restaurant. Sitting in a Kosher restaurant in Warsaw is a very powerful experience (as anyone who has been will give testimony to). It is certainly not the culinary experience that is memorable but rather its place as a monument. Even after the total desecration of the synagogues and any semblance of Jewish life, I could sit as a Jew and eat a bowl of gefilte fish and chicken soup - a stirring act of victory over the evil of the Third Reich.

The following morning having arrived in Piotrkow Trybunalski, my father's boyhood town, we walked to the synagogue to be met by a horde of Jews from all over the world, from America to Scandinavia, from second to third generation survivors, all here to share this emotional pilgrimage back to their home town, back to memories of murdered loved ones who had perished before their eyes. The synagogue, which now houses a public library, is only evident on the wall of one back room which is strewn with bullet holes. I could not help feeling a deep sense of anger that the only testimony to this building, once a site of worship, or barmitzvahs and simchas, is a rusting plaque with the words 'site of the great synagogue', no doubt ignored every day by those who use the now scholastic facilities.

From the synagogue we were taken to the forest where Jews, mostly women and children, had been marched and massacred. At the site of the massacre, local Polish dignitaries and Jews stood united as prayers were said at this mass grave. For many this was the focal point of their journey to Poland. As we stood with the mutilated bodies of our Jewish brothers and sisters under our feet, one felt a collective sense of loss, the Jewish prayers that echoed out into the forest united every Jew on that forest road.

The procession then sombrely moved to the Jewish cemetery. A *Jahrzeit* light was lit over another stone in remembrance of the murdered. I watched as a man recited in beautiful poetic Yiddish verse, an ode to his fallen family. Although I do not speak Yiddish, there is something about it that resonates through the soul like a shofar blowing unifying the Jewish spirit which makes it comprehensible...*where is my mother... where are her hands?...* he wailed... but there were no answers, just the tears of onlooking Jewish bystanders to a needless and truly iniquitous tragedy.

The afternoon was spent visiting the factories where those who were kept alive by the Nazis to perform back-breaking slave labour were housed. From glass factories to woodwork plant, these places of 'work', (still operating in some cases) were sustained using the blood of Jewish workers, yet there is not a single monument to their incarceration or existence; something which I later found was practised throughout the town... It was as if the Jews had never existed.

Breaking away from the organised tour, my father took me and my two sons to his childhood home. For me, this was the fundamental purpose of my trip. Walking through the dilapidated yet imposing archway into a similarly decrepit courtyard we were met with curious faces of locals wondering the purpose of our unannounced visit. Luckily, they were far from hostile and showed my father and I around his flat where he had grown up. Each place in the building had a story, each nook and cranny served as a reminder of a sister or parent. This decaying building, which had seemingly been locked in a time capsule for fifty years even had the same wallpaper hanging that my father had known. I touched the walls and looked intently at their discoloured patterns and experienced a whole myriad of emotions from anger to grief. As we were about to leave the building, I saw my father looking at a woman with great curiosity and saw her reciprocating. They walked towards each other, shook hands and embraced and spoke in loud and broken Polish. The woman had lived in this apartment for 57 years and was employed by my father's family as a 'shabbat goy'. The power of this scene is something that I will always remember.



Number 6 Starowarzanska, Pletrokov Trybunalski
Visited in 1998 by Morris & Lottie Malenicky, daughter Angela & her sons.

My experience in Poland as a second-hand witness to the fate of my relatives and millions of others helped me come to terms with a sense of loss and guilt that had remained with me throughout my life. Moreover, I not only have a greater understanding of my father and his life, but a newly enriched sense of what it means to be Jewish.

On behalf of my mother Lottie, and my sons, and, of course, my dad, many thanks to Ben Helfgott for arranging this very special trip.

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BOOK REVIEWS

LESS THAN SLAVES

JEWISH FORCED LABOUR AND THE QUEST FOR COMPENSATION

BY BENJAMIN B FERENCZ

This book was reviewed in the New York Times Book Review December 6th 1979 by Sir Martin Gilbert long before he became the President of our Society. As the question of Slave Labour Compensation has, once again, become very topical, (see page 100) we feel that this review would be of interest to our members.

This short book is of extreme importance. Benjamin B Ferencz arrived in the United States from Transylvania as a child. He was 13 when Hitler came to power. During World War II, as an American officer, he saw the horrors of the concentration camps as they were "liberated". After the war, as a war-crimes investigator, he was among the first to examine the Nazi records of the holocaust. Later, after he became a lawyer, his special area of concern was compensation for the victims of what is known as slave labour. He rightly calls his book, based on the experience of 35 years of dedicated legal work on behalf of the survivors, "Less Than Slaves".

In his first 30 pages, Mr Ferencz traces the wartime story of slave labour, showing how, as the war years progressed, concentration-camp labour increasingly became an essential ingredient of both the Nazi war effort and of private German industrial production. In April 1944, with the mounting effectiveness of Allied bombing, Hitler himself ordered Himmler to hand over 100,000 concentration-camp Jews to help build the new underground aircraft factories. In all these factories, the slave labourers were treated abominably and the death rate was grotesque. At one of the Krupp manufacturing plants next to Auschwitz, more than 30,000 slaves were worked to death.

Mr Ferencz comments at the end of his survey that whereas the concentration-camp commanders were mostly tried and executed, those German industrialists who took slave labourers from the camps and cruelly abused them were for the most part not even put on trial. Even those industrialists who had been tried and sentenced were released in 1951 under the general act of clemency by the United States High Commissioner, John J McCloy.

The bulk of this book is concerned with the trials of the industrialists and with the quest for reparations by the survivors. Mr Ferencz describes the first successful appeal, by Norbert Wolheim, a Buna survivor, in the Frankfurt District Court in 1953. There the court heard the slave-labour camp characterised as a "convalescent home" by a witness from the I.G. Farben corporation. But this particular court was courageous, and concluded that I.G. Farben "cannot evade its responsibility any more than can an individual". This meant the possibility of payment by Farben, not only to Wolheim, but to several thousand others who might be encouraged by the verdict to put in a now-legitimate claim.

When Farben challenged the Frankfurt verdict, the author himself was drawn in as a legal adviser. He describes at first hand the tussle provoked by Farben's announcement that any payment they might agree to make would have to be accepted by the survivors as a "gesture of goodwill" rather than "the discharge of an obligation".

The ensuing legal struggle is described graphically, and it makes for depressing reading. Mr Ferencz himself has given this section of his book the title "Bargaining about Auschwitz," which is an apt description of Farben's long, drawn-out defence. Two years after the original verdict, the appellate court called for "further evidence". Half a year later Farben and Wolheim were asked to work out a settlement between them. Early in 1956 Farben offered the equivalent of 5,000 marks for each client. The Jewish advisers asked for 7,000 marks - less than half of what they had originally proposed. For their part, Farben insisted that any settlement would have to make it explicitly clear that they "had no legal responsibility" for the fate of the slave labourers. Otherwise, they contended, it would harm the "reputation" of German industry.

By February 1957, as the arguments continued and the nature of Farben's various offers changed, the Jewish body principally concerned, the Claims Conference, became, as Mr Ferencz writes, "fed up with the indignity of the continuing hassle about how much should be paid to which Auschwitz survivors." They therefore closed the deal. On the German stock exchange, Farben shares jumped 10 percent. The agreement was later challenged by the Farben shareholders, and when it was finally ratified it contained the extraordinary condition, approved by the German Parliament and agreed to by the Allies, that all claims must be asserted by the end of that same year, 1957, "or be forever barred."

Mr Ferencz then describes the claiming process, set in motion by special committees, mostly of survivors, in New York, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, London, Oslo, Melbourne and São Paulo. But the work could not be done in the 10 months that remained. Many of the questionnaires sent out by the Committee were returned illegible or incomplete.

As the individual payments began to be made, it became clear that Farben was prepared to be more generous to former German guards - one of whom had actually been detained by the Poles for several years as a war criminal - than to the Jews. In 1961 Farben demanded a "refund" from the Claims Conference in order to pay non-Jews - mostly Poles - who had also initiated claims. They were determined to avoid finding a further lump sum for these new and equally valid claims. Mr Ferencz himself visited Poland to collect more evidence and found a document that had been smuggled out of Auschwitz in the autumn of 1944, in which it was explicitly stated that of the 10,000 Buna inhabitants, 200 (or 5 percent) were Poles. Farben had demanded a "rebate" of 10 percent.

The wrangles continued, and the claimants persevered. How sordid it all seems now; victims finding themselves in the position of plaintiffs and criminals as wheeler-dealers, haggling over sums of money that were, to them, quite insignificant. By 1968, 5,855 claimants had received compensation, mostly 5,000 marks (\$1,250) each. It made their lives, Mr Ferencz writes, "just a little bit easier."

There were other distressing signs that the destiny of the slave labourers had not really been recognised as the evil which it clearly was. The German Supreme Court confirmed that all claims

by forced labourers were in the nature of reparations and would therefore have to await a final peace treaty with Germany. Mr Ferencz comments wryly: "It was not likely that any slave labourer would live long enough to see that day."

Such was the Farben compensation story. Mr Ferencz then discusses Krupp, AEG, Telefunken, Siemens and Rheinmetall, all of whom had used, and abused, slave labour. All were reluctant to admit it, or to pay for it. All eventually gave in. Only one, Friedrich Flick, refused and got away with it. Each of these chapters contains the same detail as the I.G. Farben chapter, and each merits the same careful scrutiny.

The Flick story is certainly the most depressing in the book. Controlling 300 companies, from toilet paper to dynamite, and including Daimler-Benz, makers of the luxurious Mercedes, Flick was convicted of "major war crimes" in 1947. His use of slave labour - Jewish girls from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland - could not be denied. They had been sent from Auschwitz to work in his various munitions plants; but Flick refused to pay any compensation whatever. In 1964, on his 80th birthday, Flick donated more than a million dollars to German charities. But still there was nothing for his Jewish slaves.

In 1967 a sum for payment was agreed on, 5 million marks, but Flick excused himself from any actual payment by saying he was "short of cash." Yet only a few months before, he had given his son a cash payment in excess of the total Jewish claim. His 16-year-old granddaughter had likewise received, as a gift, a sum larger than the Jewish claim. In 1968 Flick's company, Dynamit Nobel, stated that it had "neither a legal nor a moral obligation to make the payment." In 1972, in his 90th year, Flick died. Mr Ferencz, who had been striving for this settlement for more than nine years, writes: "Although Friedrich Flick was reputedly the richest man in Germany and the fifth richest man in the world and left assets worth over one billion dollars to a playboy son, when he went to his grave he had paid the Jewish concentration camp inmates not a single cent."

This is a book to ponder.

* * *

JEWS FOR SALE?

NAZI-JEWISH NEGOTIATIONS 1933-45

YEHUDA BAUER

Reviewed by Ben Helfgott

Jews for Sale? is indeed an intriguing title for a book that deals with a question that is rarely asked. It is generally acknowledged that Nazi ideology as it evolved with regard to the Jews was uncompromising and final. The Jews were to be exterminated and pursued relentlessly to every corner of the World. Yet within this macabre theme of things negotiations between Nazis and Jews did take place between 1933-45 and ransom, bribes and bluff was used to release some, albeit not many, Jews.

In his excellent and stimulating book, Yehuda Bauer throws new light on the nature of these negotiations and examines, with great cogency, their limitations as well as the historical philosophical and moral implications. His method of approach is illuminating and useful. It deals with what could have happened if certain historical developments were not stopped in the process or did not materialise as a result of conflicting interests. From the very beginning of Hitler's rise to power, the Nazis exerted, with all the means at their disposal, their nefarious pressure on Jewish

emigration. At that stage, in spite of their pronouncements and rantings of the Jewish menace, the Final Solution was still in the distant future. Before the outbreak of the Second World War the Nazi policy was to rid themselves of the Jews. They believed that spreading the Jews all over the world will increase anti-semitism which will create more sympathy towards Nazi Germany. However, as it was shown at the Evian conference in July 1938, few countries were prepared to admit Jews in any substantial numbers. The option left to German and, later, Austrian Jewry was very bleak. Under these circumstances the Zionists entered into negotiations with the Nazis whereby Jewish capital, in the form of capital goods from Germany was transferred to Palestine for the use of German Jewish emigrants. Under this policy known as Ha'avarah, a hundred and forty million German Marks were transferred and fifty-two thousand German Jews emigrated legally to Palestine.

After the invasion of Poland in September 1939 and the subsequent conquests in Europe, the policy of forced emigration changed into ghettoisation and expulsion that blended into mass murder. Negotiations between the Nazis and Jews continued at a lower level and a trickle of Jews were saved, but one can hardly talk of negotiations, it was more a kind of co-operation between the cynical expediency of the persecutor and the desperation of the victim. As the War progressed and the "Final Solution" became official policy, the Jews found themselves in a trap - as indeed they were most of the time under Nazi domination - rendered helpless by the unwillingness of the allies to help and the determination of the Nazi to murder. The Nazis believed in Jewish power and influence which the Jews did not have. Yet they had to go along with this myth especially towards the end of the War when Himmler was anxious to make contact with the Allies through low-grade Jewish agents. The Allies on the other hand, especially after the Casablanca conference in February 1943 when unconditional surrender was announced, would not entertain any negotiations with the Nazis. Neither would they have received large numbers of Jews if Himmler had offered them. The White Paper of 1939, limiting Jewish emigration to Palestine, was resolutely adhered to by the British Government to avoid Arab provocation.

In any case, by the beginning of 1944, the majority of the Baltic, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Austrian, German and Dutch Jewry was already destroyed, but the Hungarian Jews, under the Fascist Government of Admiral Horthy, was relatively intact. Here a drama of unusual proportion was unfolding. In an attempt to save Hungarian Jewry, Joel Brand and a Jewish double agent, Bandi Grosz, were sent to Istanbul with an offer from the S.S. to exchange Jews for trucks and other material. However, while Brand was trying to make contact with the Allies, between May 14th and July 7th, 437,000 Jews were transported to Auschwitz, of whom only 72,000 survived. Frantic efforts were now being made to save the Jews of Budapest, of whom there were about 200,000 and the intervention of the neutral countries, Switzerland, Sweden and Portugal, played an important part in their rescue. So did the negotiations of Kasztner, Biss and a number of other Jews, but after the war most of them were accused of collaboration. The trial of Kasztner in Israel, in 1954, implicated the Jewish Agency and thus the Israeli Government of whom the majority were in the executive of that body during the war. They, too, were accused of betraying the Jews and collaborating with the Germans and the British in Palestine. The trial cast a shadow on the moral and political implications of such negotiations which persists to this day.

Yehuda Bauer deals with this question as well as many others such as: Was there a realistic chance of saving more Jews from the Holocaust? What were the Nazis really prepared to do? Did Himmler consider a separate peace? Did he try to use Jewish contacts for such a policy? Was he willing to release Jews if the conditions were right from the S.S. point of view? Would the Allies have accepted such refugees? Yet, adducing a great deal of evidence and with consummate skill he succeeds superbly in his brief.

* * *

CORRESPONDENCE

POST BAG FROM "THE BOYS" TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

We have continued to receive correspondence arising from the publication of "The Boys". This letter is especially very touching and worthy to be included in this issue.

9th September 1998

Dear Mr Helfgott,

I hope you will forgive my writing to you directly, but after having recently read Martin Gilbert's "The Boys", I feel compelled to make contact with the '45 Aid Society. I have written, via Martin Gilbert, as I cannot locate an address for the Society.

I am 31 years old and thankfully did not experience any of the traumas of the World Wars. My parents who are both in their mid-60's do have memories of that time, although they were children.

The First and Second World Wars have always been of immense interest to me since I was a young child. From watching old movies to reading historic books on both the battles and the effects on the individual, this dark time in our history has been very important to me. As I get older, I find the accounts of those individuals, such as yourself, the more compelling to read and although they are extremely traumatic and moving, these stories must be told and must be passed on through the generations. It is part of our European history and one which should not be forgotten.

The experiences which the Boys' shared filled me with immense sadness, admiration and gratitude that the Boys survived and were able to tell their stories. My generation will hopefully never experience the horrors of war, but we must be made aware of these atrocities and learn from earlier history. I feel as though I actually know some of 'the Boys', in particular, Perec Zylberberg, yourself and Harry Balsam because their stories are so real and so poignant.

Since reading 'The Boys' which was the most moving and honest account of a survivor's experiences I have encountered to date, I feel compelled to visit Poland and in particular, those towns and camps which 'the Boys' experienced. The reason for writing to you is to enquire as to whether the '45 Aid Society is able to provide information on such a visit and also to enquire whether the Society has produced journals or similar papers on these experiences. I want to learn as much as I possibly can about this period in our history and hope you are able to help me in my quest.

I thank you in advance for reading this letter and your kind co-operation.

With my very best wishes,

Lorna Rudkins

• • •

OBITUARIES

JUDA VAN DER VELDE 1925 - 1997

This Obituary is a loving tribute to our father Juda Van der Velde who passed away on the 23rd November 1997. It goes without saying how much we his children, Howard, David and Joanne miss him as, we are sure, everybody who came in contact with him does.

His kind nature, his sheer ability, his personality, endeared him to all. He had maintained these qualities even in the face of the bitter adversities he had experienced. He bore his illness with great courage and fortitude, and never, ever complained. However he felt, he always had a smile on his face.

He was a loving and devoted family man whose wife and children meant the world to him. In turn, his grandchildren too doted on him.

He was born in Amsterdam, one of four children, and lived there until he was 17 years old, when he was sent to 8 concentration camps. It was his sheer determination and tenacity which helped to make him the sole survivor of 63 other members of his family, at the hands of the Nazis.

After the war ended, he tried to find his family, but found that they had all perished. He then decided to come to England to make a new life for himself. It was here that he met our mother Sybil and they were very happily married for nearly 46 years. Again, his personal qualities helped him to set up a successful new life in his adopted country. This earned him affection and respect which was his hallmark.

He was a very special man who will never be forgotten and he will be sorely missed by all the Van der Velde family, and especially his grandchildren, who talk about him every day. He was delighted to have 5 grandsons and one granddaughter, so the family name of Van der Velde will continue.

We were privileged and honoured to have had this man as our father, as he was not only a wonderful parent, but our very best friend.

May he rest in peace.

• • •

LEO GEDDY

Leo was born in Ruthenia to a family of seven children, of whom only one sister, Eve, survived. His eldest brother, Armin, came to England before the war. Leo very rarely talked about his war experiences. As his daughter, Madeleine, wrote: "He kept most of it buried deep inside him. He found talking about the war very painful and his way to survive was to laugh and make others laugh. I am sure everybody remembered him as a funny man and his terrible jokes. He brought out the child in everyone that he met and was always joking. He was a very kind and generous man who always thought of other people." Those who knew him will echo these sentiments. Unlike most Czech-Hungarian boys who came to England after the war, Leo escaped from a labour

camp and went to Budapest where he lived under an assumed name as a Christian. He even went out with his housekeeper's daughter. When he was liberated, he lived for a while in Budapest where he worked as a Russian-Hungarian interpreter. When he heard that his sister, Eva, survived and lived in Czechoslovakia, he immediately went to meet her and the two of them went to live in Paris where they learnt English. They subsequently joined their brother Armin in England. It did not take Leo long to find out that other boys from his part of the world had recently arrived in England. He used to come regularly to the Primrose Club and blended easily with all the others.

He started work as a tailor but after burning a pair of trousers, he realised that this was not a job for him. I know that whenever he used to meet Jack Kagan he used to remind him about the time when Jack Kagan gave him a Red Cross jacket for alteration and when Jack put on the jacket, the right sleeve was not properly put in.

As it happened, Leo turned out to be a very shrewd businessman. He started importing glass from Czechoslovakia and soon afterwards started building a successful fashion jewellery business. At the same time, he was also engaged in the property business.

In the mid-seventies, he had a setback, but not for very long. He showed great resilience as, indeed, he showed throughout his whole life. It is interesting to note that Leo was one of the first amongst the boys to have a Jaguar and later a Rolls Royce. Leo was not ostentatious nor a show-off, but in the case of the cars it was a display as a sense of pride and a sense of achievement. He never boasted or gossiped and always acted with great responsibility.

One of the great moments of his life was when his cousin Paula managed to trace him and in 1960 walked into his jewellery shop. He also derived a lot of pleasure when he discovered three of his first cousins and some of his friends with whom he had been at the Yeshiva had survived.

Leo and Valerie were both involved with dog-training - in fact, Leo was a Judge at dog shows. Both of them have a great love for dogs. I understand that when Valerie discovered Leo's death, the dog was lying at his feet crying.

Leo had a great love for Israel and his wish was to be buried there and the funeral took place on Tuesday 27th October at Har Menuhot - the hill of rest.

Leo was a survivor in every way. He was always on the go. He even planned to go to work on the day he died.

* * *

MEMBERS NEWS 1998

COMPILED BY RUBY FRIEDMAN

We wish to apologise to Rene & Artek Poznanski and Pauline and Harry Balsam for the mis-print in our last Journal which should have read as follows:

Rene & Artek Poznanski a grand-daughter Olivia born to Angela and Clyde Mann.
Pauline & Harry Balsam a grand-daughter Emily Louise Adele born to Amanda and Colin.

* * *

BIRTHS

Mazeltoiv to all our members who have become grandparents since the last edition of our Journal.

Sara & Jan Goldberger a grandson Eden born to Cilla & Dotan.

Nechama & Menachem Sylberstein a grand-daughter.

Valaria & Leo Geddy a grandson Jordan Issac Solomon born to Geraldine and Richard.

Valerie & Chaim Kohn a grand-daughter Keren Yona Tziporah born to Frimette & Gabi.

Jaqui Gryn a grandson Isaac Hugo Leonard born to Jane & David.

Gena Turgil mazeltov on the birth of a great-grandson.

Barbara & Jack Kagan mazeltov on the birth of a grand daughter Avital born to Ruti & Michael.

Toby & Myer Cornell a grand daughter Tanya Shira Israela born to Maralyn & Martin.

Sara & Menachem Waksztok a grandson Yuval born to Mila & Yaron

Steve Pearl on the birth of a grand-daughter Laura Julie born to Claire & Lawrence.

* * *

ENGAGEMENTS

Mazeltoiv to Yisroel & Thea Rudzinski on the engagement of their grandson Benzion Dov to Yitty Schiff.

Jeff Frydman on the engagement of his son Kerry.

* * *

MARRIAGES

Mazeltoiv to Harry & Gloria Kay from Miami on the marriage of their daughter Toni to Lawrence Wolff.

Mazeltoiv to Tina & Victor Greenberg on the marriage of their son David to Deborah.

Mazeltoiv to Milly & Monty Graham on the marriage of their daughter Helen to Elliot.

Mazeltoiv to Ruby Dreihorn and Moric Friedman on their marriage on July 5th 1998.

Mazeltoiv to Vivienne & Kopel Kendall on the marriage of their daughter Lisa to Stuart Collingswood.

Mazeltoiv to Harry Fox on the marriage of his daughter Rachell to Mike Moore.

Mazeltoiv to Alf Kirsztberg on the marriage of his daughter Elaine to Steven Blatt.

Mazeltoiv to Yisroel & Thea Rudzinski on the marriage of their grandson Yitzchok Aizik to Rivki Schlesinger.

Mazeltoiv to Minia & Peter Jay on the marriage of their grand daughter Sharon Kienwald to Mark Weidenfeld.

Mazeltoiv to Sylvia & Mark Goldfinger on the marriage of their grand daughter.

Mazeltoiv to Jaqui Gryn on the marriage of her daughter Rachelle to Mathew Brettler.

Mazeltoiv to Ann & Raymond Jackson (Jakubowicz) on the marriage of their daughter Ruth Eve to Oren Tal.

* * *

BARMITZVAHS

Mazeltov to Hettie & Alec Ward on the barmitzvah of their step-grandson David, son of Barend and stepson of Lyla.

Mazeltov to Gloria & Krulik Wilder on the barmitzvah of their grandson Marc son of Mandy and Martin.

Golda & Motel Tabacznik mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Barry son of Esther & Harold.

Pauline & Harry Balsam mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Jason son of Rochelle & Steven.

Vivienne & Kopel Kendall mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Joshua son of Sue & Stephen.

*** * ***

BATMITZVAH

Mazeltov to Kippy & Koppel Dessau on the batmitzvah of their grand-daughter Chana, son of Carole & Steven.

*** * ***

RUBY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mazeltov to Jasmine & Michael Bandel on your 40th anniversary. May you have many more happy and healthy years together.

*** * ***

We are very sorry to announce the loss of seven of our friends:

Joe Van Der Velde in London, November 1997.

Jerry Wegler in Israel.

Sam Binke, Jack Moncarz and Sam Diamond in America.

Marie Beale and Carol Wurzel in Manchester.

Our condolences go to all their families.

Our sincere sympathy to Rochelle Nelkin on the loss of her son Stephen.

*** * ***

Dr Gerry Kaye MD. FRCP., Consultant Cardiologist son of Sala and Henry Kaye, was presented to the Queen at Buckingham Palace on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the N.H.S.

Congratulations to Marc Lewis on attaining his Bachelor of Engineering Degree with Honours at Sussex University. Marc is the grandson of Harry and Doreen Wajchandler, and son of Judith and Tony.

Congratulations to Paul Yogi Mayer MBE for receiving the award of Honorary Doctorate from the University of Potsdam. We include the following citation from The Council of the Faculty of Philosophy.

"The life's work of Paul Yogi Mayer cannot be judged on a traditional scale. Paul Yogi Mayer has lived through National Socialism and exile and has in spite of this been able to produce works which have enabled the Faculty of Philosophy II to award him the distinction of an Honorary Doctorate. This refers especially to his publications about Jewish sport in Germany and his efforts regarding exhibitions about the Olympic Games which have gained scientific recognition.

"Paul Yogi Mayer had to break off his studies of Social Economics (Volkswirtschaft) which he had commenced in Berlin in 1932, (official records of study have been examined). By 1934 he had made sport not only his hobby but the basis of his future professional involvement. He became an assistant teacher in physical education at the Landschulheim Herrlingen, a boarding school in the Black Forest and from 1934 to 1935 he was head coach, (Verbandssportlehrer) of the Sports association 'Schild' and Principal Youth Officer of the Jewish Front Soldiers League. He was also the editor of the sport paper 'Die Kraft', (Strength). He qualified as a physical education teacher in a special course which was recognised by the Department of Education of the Province of Brandenburg, where he wrote an examination paper, 'Physique and Character'. Until 1939 he acted as a teacher for Physical Education in Jewish schools in Berlin and remained active in the Jewish Youth Movement. As a sports journalist he also made numerous contributions about Jewish Sport in Germany.

"After his emigration and military service in England, he maintained links with various positions in the field of sport and the youth service. He acted as a time witness, (Zeiteuge) and scientist about the National Socialistic past."

Yogi was our club leader in the Primrose club. He is a Vice-Chairman of our Society and we are very happy and proud that he received this distinction, which he well deserves.

* * *

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS IN MANCHESTER

COMPILED BY LOUISE ELLIOT

108 Windsor Road, Prestwich
Manchester M25 0DF

20th Sept. 1998

MAZELTOVS FOR BIRTHS

| | | |
|------|-----|--|
| 1997 | Nov | Another grandson to Lily and Mayer Bomsztyk for their son Brian and his wife. |
| | Dec | A grand daughter to Arek and Jean Hersh for their daughter Michelle and her husband. |
| 1998 | Jan | Another grand daughter for Amelia Flasz to her son Mark and his wife Tracey. |

A first grandson to Jack and Rhona Aizenberg to their daughter Debby and her husband.
 May Another grandson for Pinky and Susan Jurnedz.
 July A grandson to Elaine and Sam Walshaw to their son Darren and his wife.

* * *

MAZELTOV BARMITZVAHS

1997 Dec Daniel Reuveb Nelson, son of Tania and Simon and grandson of Mendel and the late Marie Beale.
 1998 July Hayden, grandson of Charlie and Edna Igielman in Jerusalem.
 Aaron Ferster, grandson of Chaim and Nan Ferster

* * *

ENGAGEMENTS

1997 Jan Andrew Kleiman, son of Estelle and Karl Kleiman (with apologies for late inclusion).

* * *

BAT CHAYIL

1998 Feb Jodie Field, daughter of Jaqcky and Rodney Field and grand daughter of Mayer and Lily Bomsztyk.

* * *

GOLDEN WEDDING

1998 July Nan and Chaim Ferster

* * *

BIRTHDAYS

1998 July Jack Cygielman - 70 years young.
 Sept Arek Hersh - 70 years young.

* * *

WEDDING

1998 Sept Lse, son of Karl and Estelle Kleiman.

In May 1998 we had our Annual Service at Steincourt and as the Shool Hall was being rebuilt, Mayer and Lily Bomsztyk hosted a Kiddush for our members and we are very thankful and grateful for this wonderful gesture. On the next day, Hynda Sommer hosted a lovely afternoon tea which was enjoyed immensely by all our members.

Our member, Arek Hersh, has written a book "A Detail of History" which is written in a form which makes it acceptable for youngsters - the editor was Stephen Smith of Beth Shalom - and all the proceeds go to that organisation. Eric gives a lot of talks in the grammar schools and has been invited to speak in Oxford and Cambridge. He tells us that at one grammar school 90 students purchased his book.

In Manchester, Mayer Hersh continues his good work and talks and answers questions at schools all over the country and is extremely well thought of for the wonderful work he is doing.

* * *

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

YIDDISH COMEDY THEATRE COMES TO LONDON

The famous Sarah Feldman, the Israeli Molly Picon, will participate in a skit on Israel "OI IS DUS A LENDELE" on Sunday 6th December at 7.30pm at Raleigh Close Synagogue Hall.

For tickets 'phone Ruby Friedman on 0181-205 6878.

* * *

YOM HA'SHOAH

The communal Yom Ha'Shoah Commemoration will take place on Sunday 18th April 1999. The venue and other details will be announced in due course.

* * *

1999 REUNION AND OUR SOCIETY BROCHURE

The 54th anniversary of our liberation reunion will take place on Sunday 9th May 1999 at:-

Post House Hotel
Regents Park
Carburton Street
London W1

SLAVE LABOUR COMPENSATION

We have been informed recently that BRABAK/ZEISS has offered to make a payment of about 20,000 marks to slave labourers who worked for them in Rheimsdorf during the Second World War.

We are in touch with a lawyer in Germany who has offered to represent us without deducting any payment from the likely beneficiary.

So far, we have identified seventeen of our members who live in London, Manchester and Brighton, two in the U.S.A. and two in Israel, who worked there.

Anyone who worked in Rheimsdorf and has not yet applied for compensation should contact DAVID HERMAN, Tel. 0181-458 7959

* * *

FUND FROM THE CLAIMS CONFERENCE FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF NEEDY SURVIVORS

Our Society has received a grant of 40,000 dollars from the Claims Conference which will be used for those who need assistance with medical or health aids which are not available on the National Health Service and which they themselves cannot afford to purchase. Items that come within this category are such things as dentures, lenses, hearing aids, orthopaedic shoes and various other items.

Applications should be sent in the first instance to Ruby Friedman, 37 Salmon Street, London NW9.

* * *

THE MEMORIAL CAVE

Six million Jews perished in the Holocaust. They were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Many of them disappeared without a trace, having neither grave nor tombstone. Many have never been identified.

Yad Vashem has been invested by the Israeli Parliament with the responsibility for the important task of commemorating the victims by name. Pages of testimony tendered by relatives of those who perished are stored in the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem, where they will remain in everlasting memory of the deceased.

During the World Convention of Holocaust Survivors, which took place in Jerusalem in June 1981, participants brought with them hundreds of memorial stones engraved with the names of their dear ones who had perished in the Holocaust. The stones were placed as an eternal memorial in a cave constructed especially for the purpose.

The cave is now full, and it has been decided to create a new cave on the western side of Har Hazikaron, next to the Founders' Square of the Valley of the Communities.

Relatives, as well as friends of those who perished, are invited to perpetuate the names of their loved ones in the new Memorial Cave. Kindly send us a written copy of the names you wish to commemorate, and we shall arrange for the engraving of the stone and its placement. In order to cover our expenses, we should be grateful for a donation, according to the size of the stone which you wish to have made (see attached return slip).

If you are interested in this commemorative project, please fill in the attached questionnaire and return it to us, together with your cheque.

Yad Vashem will be responsible for preparing the memorial stones, engraving names and personal particulars on them, and placing them in the new cave.

For further details 'phone Simone Redbart on 0171-543 5400

* * *

THE ANNUAL OSCAR JOSEPH HOLOCAUST AWARDS

The '45 Aid Society offers up to two Awards of £600.00 each to assist successful candidates to participate in the Holocaust Seminar at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which is held from 28th June to 21st July 1999. 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 1999 to:

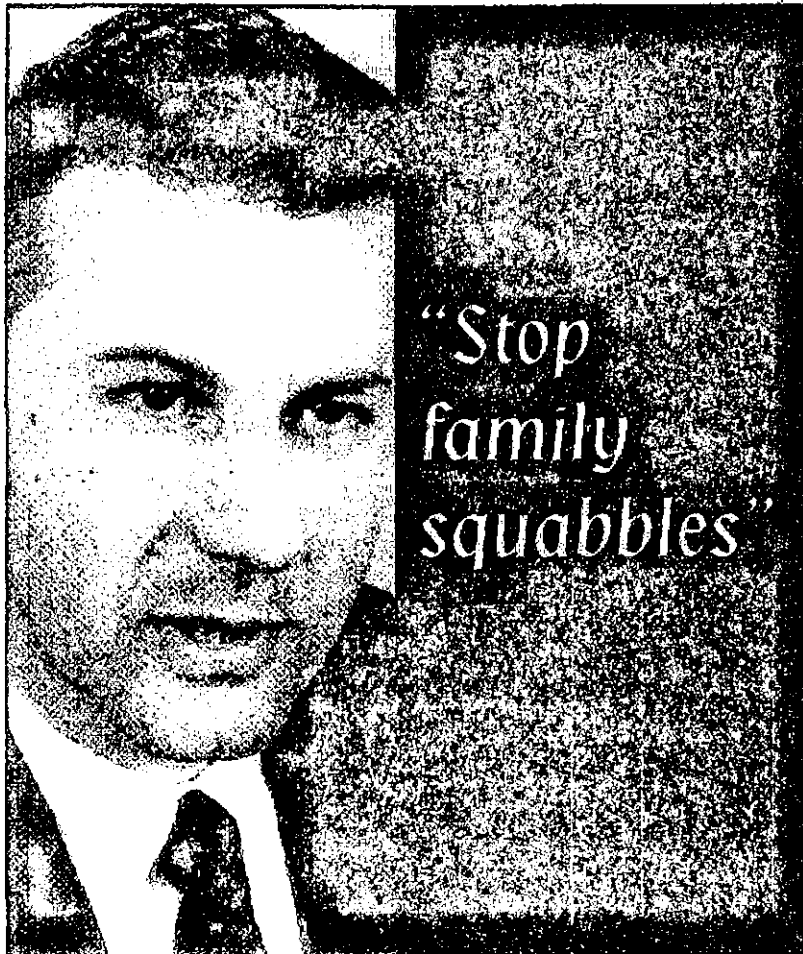
Ruby Friedman
37 Salmon Street
London NW9

* * *

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

We wish to express our thanks and appreciation to:

ANGELA RINDER (daughter of Lottie & Moshe Malenicki) for facilitating the printing of the Journal.
SALEK BENEDICT for the cover design.
PEGGY LUCAS for the typing of the Journal and the patience she displayed throughout.



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family
squabbles"**

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