

# JOURNAL

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

**'45**  
SOCIETY

Inauguration of the  
**Teachers' Garden**

Endowed by the  
**'45 Society England**

**Yad Vashem Jerusalem May 15, 2005**

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

MARTIN  HELLER

5 North End Road • London NW11 7RJ  
Tel 020 8455 6789 • Fax 020 8455 2277  
email: Gen@Martin-Heller.com

REGISTERED AUDITORS

**simmons stein & co.**  
S O L I C I T O R S

58 Queen Anne Street London W1M 9LA  
Telephone 020 7224 6006  
Facsimile 020 7224 2764  
web site [www.simmons-stein.co.uk](http://www.simmons-stein.co.uk)  
e-mail [info@simmons-stein.co.uk](mailto:info@simmons-stein.co.uk)

**Gary Simmons and Jeffrey Stein**  
wish the '45 Aid every success

# THE '45 AID SOCIETY (HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS)

## PRESIDENT

SIR MARTIN GILBERT C.B.E., M.A., F.R.S.L

## VICE PRESIDENTS

M BEALE

HIS HONOUR ISRAEL FINESTEIN Q.C.

BEN HELFGOTT M.B.E.

LORD GREVILLE JANNER OF

BRAUNSTONE Q.C.

PAUL YOGI MAYER M.B.E.

ALAN MONTEFIORE, FELLOW OF BALLI-

OL COLLEGE, OXFORD

DAME SIMONE PRENDEGAST

D.B.E., J.P., D.L.

KRULIK WILDER

HARRY SPIRO

## CHAIRMAN

BEN HELFGOTT

## VICE CHAIRMAN

ZIGI SHIPPER

## TREASURER

K WILDER

FLAT 10 WATLING MANSIONS, WATLING  
STREET, RADLETT, HERTS WD7 7NA

## SECRETARY

M ZWIREK

55 HATLEY AVENUE, BARKINGSIDE,  
IFORD IG6 1EG

## MANCHESTER

### CHAIRMAN

MAYER BOMSZTYK

### VICE CHAIRMAN

H ELLIOT

### SECRETARY

LOUISE ELLIOT

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

M BANDEL (WELFARE OFFICER),

S FREIMAN, M FRIEDMAN,

M GOLDFINGER, V GREENBERG,

D HERMAN, S IRVING, J KAGAN,

B OBUCHOWSKI, I RUDZINSKI,

C SHANE, H SPIRO, H OLMER

### SECRETARY (LONDON)

MRS RUBY FRIEDMAN

### SECRETARIES (MANCHESTER)

MR AND MRS H ELLIOT

---

### *JOURNAL OF THE*

### *'45 AID SOCIETY*

### *EDITOR*

### *BEN HELFGOTT*

---

All submissions for publication in the next issue (including letters to the Editor  
and Members' News Items) should be sent to:  
RUBY FRIEDMAN, 4 BROADLANDS, HILLSIDE ROAD, RADLETT, HERTS WD7 7BX

---

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SALEK BENEDICT for the cover design.

RUBY FRIEDMAN and ARZA HELFGOTT for their kind assistance.

PEGGY LUCAS for the typing of the Journal.

ANGELA COHEN (daughter of Lottie and Moshe Malenicky)  
for facilitating the printing of the Journal.

Design by DOUGLAS GABUAT & LEE SABINI 020 8418 5555

# INDEX

Page 5	<b>SECTION I</b> <b>PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE</b>	Page 36	<b>AMBULANCE DEDICATION CEREMONY IN ISRAEL.</b> Anne Peterson	Page 65-72	<b>ISLAM AND EUROPE</b> David Pryce-Jones
Page 6	<b>CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS</b> Ben Helfgott M.B.E	Page 36-37	<b>INAUGURATION OF THE TEACHERS GARDEN AT YAD VASHEM</b> Anne Peterson	Page 73	<b>SECTION VI</b> <b>BOOK REVIEW</b>
Page 7	<b>SECTION II</b> <b>PAST AND PRESENT</b>	Page 37-38	<b>SPEECH BY FIELD MARSHAL LORD BRAMALL TO WELCOME THE '45 AID SOCIETY TO THE I.W.M. FOR THE SCREENING OF HERB KROSNY'S FILM "THE BOYS: TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY" ON THE OCCASION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND</b> Lord Field-Marshal Lord Bramall	Page 73-74	<b>OUTWITTING HISTORY</b> Aaron Lansky Reviewed by Aubrey Rose C.B.E.
Page 7-8	<b>THE SQUARE OF PEACE</b> Janina Fischler Martinho	Page 38-39	<b>"MIR SENNEN DU"</b> Aubrey Rose C.B.E.	Page 74-77	<b>SAY THE NAME</b> Judith H Sherman Introduction by Professor David Carrasco
Page 9	<b>SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY RETURN TO RAVENSBRUCK</b> Judith Sherman	Page 40-42	<b>HOW SWIMMING INFLUENCED MY LIFE</b> Susie Halter	Page 78	<b>SECTION VII</b> <b>CORRESPONDENCE</b>
Page 10	<b>SIXTY YEARS AGO I DO NOT DIE</b> Judith Sherman	Page 42-43	<b>A DREAM FULFILLED</b> Jerzy Lando	Page 78	<b>COMMENT ON THE SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY JOURNAL</b> Herman Taube
Page 10	<b>EVKA'S REQUEST</b> Judith Sherman	Page 44-48	<b>A PLEA</b> Lily Pohlmann	Page 78	<b>THE CARING SOCIETY</b> Shirley Huberman
Page 11	<b>MY DARFUR MOTHER</b> Judith Sherman	Page 49-50	<b>THE SPIRIT OF TOLEDO</b> By a commentator	Page 79	<b>A LETTER OF APPRECIATION</b> Alfred Huberman
Page 11-12	<b>RECOLLECTIONS OF PRIMROSE JEWISH YOUTH CLUB</b> Thelma Marcus	Page 51	<b>REFLECTED PRIDE</b>	Page 79-80	<b>THERE WAS STILL HOPE</b> Chris Archbold
Page 13-14	<b>MY ENCOUNTERS IN GERMANY</b> Anita Lasker-Wallfisch	Page 51	<b>ROMAN HALTER</b>	Page 80-81	<b>PROTEST AGAINST SCHOOLBOYS POEM</b> Witold Gutt
Page 14-15	<b>LIBERATION OF DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP</b> Witold Gutt	Page 52	<b>SECTION IV</b> <b>SECOND &amp; THIRD GENERATION</b>	Page 81	<b>SECTION VIII</b> <b>OBITUARIES</b>
Page 15-18	<b>THE PRICE OF IGNORANCE AND BETRAYAL</b> Michael Bandel	Page 52-53	<b>'45 AID SOCIETY SECOND GENERATION UPDATE</b>	Page 81	<b>A TIME TO REMEMBER - HARRY WAJCHENDLER</b> Ray Winogrodzki
Page 18	<b>ABOUT FAITH</b> The Late Rabbi Hugo Gryn	Page 54	<b>A DAY TO REMEMBER</b> Victor Poznanski PhD	Page 82	<b>CHAIM LEWKOWICZ</b> Eve Pearl
Page 19	<b>SECTION III</b> <b>HERE AND NOW</b>	Page 55	<b>THANK YOU FROM THE SECOND GENERATION</b> Lesley Fox Testan	Page 83	<b>NUSZI ROSENBERG</b> David Herman
Page 19	<b>THE BARMITZVAH THAT WAS 65 YEARS LATE</b> Louisa Barnett	Page 56-60	<b>A MEMORABLE 24 HOURS WITH MY DAD</b> Allen Frydenberg	Page 83-84	<b>RAY JACKSON (JAKUBOWICZ)</b> Shy Jackson
Page 19-20	<b>MY POST-WAR JOURNEY FROM 1945 TO THE PRESENT TIME</b> Gena Shwarzman	Page 61-62	<b>MY THOUGHTS ABOUT VISITING POLAND</b> Daniel Shane	Page 85	<b>HASKIEL ROSENBLUM</b> Michael Etkind
Page 21	<b>REVISITING WINTERSHALL</b> Jack Hecht	Page 62-63	<b>REMEMBER AND NEVER FORGET</b> Avi Brand	Page 86	<b>SECTION IX</b>
Page 21-23	<b>MAJER STERN'S ROOTS TRIP</b> Marion Stern	Page 63-64	<b>GOOD EVENING - HEROES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR</b> Tali Asher	Page 86-87	<b>MEMBERS NEWS 2005</b> Compiled by Ruby Friedman
Page 24	<b>THE HOPE OF SURVIVAL IN CAMPS</b> Kurt Klappholz	Page 64	<b>BECOMING AWARE OF THE HOPELESSNESS OF DEFENCE</b> Shlomo Raz Rosenberg	Page 88-89	<b>SECTION X</b>
Page 25-27	<b>PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS</b> The Late Shamaï Davidson PhD	Page 65	<b>THE PRESENCE OF MY GRANDMOTHER BLUMA</b> Hilary Dochovnay	Page 88-89	<b>MANCHESTER NEWS 2005</b> Compiled by Louise Elliot
Page 28-31	<b>A RETROSPECTIVE JOURNEY</b> William Samuelson	Page 65-72	<b>SECTION V</b> <b>THE ANNUAL LEONARD G. MONTEFIORE LECTURE</b>	Page 90	<b>SECTION XI</b>
Page 32	<b>RETURN TO BERGEN BELSEN</b> Eva Oppenheimer			Page 90	<b>FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>
Page 33-34	<b>HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 27TH JANUARY 2005</b> Witold Gutt			Page 90	<b>SECTION XII</b>
Page 35	<b>THE FOOTBALL MATCH</b> Paul Openheimer			Page 90	<b>ANNUAL OSCAR JOSEPH HOLOCAUST AWARDS</b>

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is always a pleasure to write a few words of introduction to the Journal. It is now almost thirty years since the first issue was published, edited by Kurt Klappholz, whom we all remember with affection.

In the past few years a number of you have published your memoirs. This is most welcome, as the educational aspect of teaching the Holocaust spreads through Britain and many other countries. Holocaust Memorial Day is now an established educational focus in Britain. The International Task Force for Holocaust Education, of which Ben Helfgott is an active member, is involved in educational work in twenty-four countries. That number is growing.

Among those of you whose memoirs have been published recently are Jack Klajman (*Out of the Ghetto*), Issy Hahn (*A Life Sentence of Memories*), Sidney Finkel (*Sevek and the Holocaust: The Boy who Refused to Die*) and Roman Halter (*Romek*). Jack Kagan, whose memoirs *Surviving the Holocaust with Russian Jewish Partisans* were published six years ago, has now edited a major work on the history of his hometown, Novogrudek, entitled *Novogrudek: The History of a Shtetl*.

The more memoirs, the better. As your President, who has written your collective story, I welcome the publication of as many of your individual stories as possible.

This issue of the Journal will give pleasure to all of you, and, as your President, to me as well. Once more, Ben Helfgott is to be congratulated that - among his many onerous and important commitments, including as a Vice-President of the Claims Conference, which has done so much for survivors - he has found the time to prepare such a readable work.

Martin Gilbert

2005 was a momentous year in the annuals of our Society. It began on the 27th January by meeting H.M. the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at St. James' Palace and on page 90. Witold Gutt describes the honour and the privilege of being recognised by Her Majesty and commemorating the National Holocaust Memorial Day with her on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Yom Ha'shoa and our annual reunion, which took place on the 8th May, marking the 60th anniversary of our liberation and the end of the Second World War, was another unforgettable event, especially that it was attended by over two hundred of our second generation and a large contingent of our members from many parts of the world. The reaction to this event is described by Lesley Fox-Testan and Allen Frydenberg in Section IV - Second Generation.

Another of the highlights of the year was the reunion in May in Israel where many of us travelled simply to celebrate with the Israeli fraternity. Here again, the large contingent of the second generation was conspicuous and their presence rewarding. The comments offered by Shlomo Raz-Rosenberg in Section IV were poignant when he described the pivotal change of attitude in Israel towards the Shoa from "Why did they go like lambs to the slaughter?" to one of understanding and admiration. The visit in Israel included the dedication of the ambulance donated by our Society to Magen David Adom and the dedication of a teachers' garden at Yad Vashem in memory of the educators who perished in the Shoa. A short account of these events is described by Anne Peterson.

Herb Krosney, an American film producer living in Israel was inspired by the story of "The Boys" and was motivated by Sir Martin Gilbert's book "The Boys - Triumph Over Adversity" to make a film about us, using the same title. We celebrated the 60th anniversary of the arrival of the first group of 300 of 'The Boys' by holding a reception at the Imperial War Museum, followed by a showing of the film. Field Marshal Lord Bramell introduced the film and his speech on that occasion and an article by Aubrey Rose are printed in this edition.

While recognising that we have been blessed with good fortune, we cannot ignore the fact that 60 years after we have survived what Sir Winston Churchill referred to as "horrors and miseries beyond comparison in human experience", the President of Iran should threaten to wipe Israel off the map. Furthermore, he has invited leading Holocaust deniers to a Holocaust Denial Conference which will take place in Teheran. By dismissing the Holocaust as a myth, he is aiming to de-legitimise Israel - to rehabilitate anti-Semitism. After all, the Holocaust has generally been recognised as one of the most terrible crimes that ever took place and surely the very emblem of evil in the modern age. If that crime is a direct result of anti-Semitism itself, then anti-Semitism is inevitably discredited by most people.

At the same time "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", which were exposed as a fake in 1921, are widely circulating in the Moslem world as propaganda against Jews as effectively as it was used in Nazi Germany. This danger can no longer be ignored and must be taken seriously.

In 1935, James G. McDonald, a Commissioner for refugees at The League of Nations, resigned, stating "convinced as I am that desperate suffering in the countries adjacent to Germany, and even more terrible calamity within German frontiers, are inevitable unless present tendencies in the Reich are checked or reversed. I cannot remain silent. I should be recreant if I did not call attention to the actual situation and plead that world opinion, acting through the League of Nations and its member states and other countries move to alert the existing and impending tragedies".

We know what happened to the League of Nations and we know unfortunately what the consequences were when collective security failed in the 1930s. The United Nations, too, has failed in its collective responsibility by not deterring or punishing the aggression or reverse its consequences. We as victims and witnesses of the most heinous crime in history are duty bound to continue relentlessly to warn mankind of what can happen to our civilisation when indifference and disunity prevails.

## The Square of Peace

By 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 her book "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. She is a regular contributor to our journal.*

### Memory is a gift... and a duty... Primo Levi.

tiny, shoddily constructed, individual cubicles. All are sturdily padlocked.

The window of "our" room faces the courtyard. Its interior is hidden behind a fully-drawn, chipped and cracked, Venetian blind. The window has a wide external stone-ledge. I spread upon it the fresh flowers I brought. I stand there for a while. It is a mild, peaceful afternoon. Autumnal fragrance is in the air. The sky is blue and clear - just as it was on the most tragic Ghetto days. And I remember them - the many inhabitants of that long, shadow-filled room. It is unlikely that there is anyone else, alive today, who could re-create, people that room as it was, then, at the height of our misery.

Both my grandmothers walked from that room, unknowing, to their death. Aunts, uncles, cousins, close and distant relations left and

never came back. Friends, acquaintances, who "popped in" for a while to give, to receive news, to share hopes and fears, promising to keep in touch, never came back. And total strangers like the Kalfus family, who became friends and who lived in that room to the very end of the Ghetto existence. They left holding their child by the hand and never came back....

My mother's younger sister, Aunt Regina, died in that room. Died of grief in the night of the 11th November 1942... the room slept. My 16-year old cousin, Zofia, left that room to be starved, to be worked to death by successful Leipzig industrialists at the Skarzysko Kamienna Chemical Plant...

By December 1942, when the Krakow Ghetto had barely three months of "life" left, yet another ingenious stratagem was thought up to part the young and the fit from the frail and the helpless. The Ghetto was split into two sectors - "A" and "B". The Labour Contingents and the Jewish Police lived in Sector "A", "Useless Mouths" lived in Sector "B". A screen, as primitive as it was temporary, was erected between the two sectors - lines of barbed-wire stretched from wooden stake to wooden stake. It had two narrow gates, guarded by the Jewish Police, for a limited and strictly supervised degree of movement was authorised between the two sectors. In the evening, in the bitter cold, one would

When I was a child, in Krakow, the autumn was my favourite season. It still is. I thus chose the month of October to make my annual pilgrimage to Krakow. I stayed, this time, in a small, comfortable hotel in Krakow's pre-war Jewish Quarter - Kazimierz. It was only a stroll from there to Podgorze - the wartime Ghetto area which has remained, virtually, intact. Although few material changes have taken place in the last sixty years, the Square of Peace - the Ghetto's only open space which served, then, as a marshalling yard and a homely, handy killing ground - was re-named soon after the war. It now bears the name of "The Ghetto Heroes' Square".

We, the Jews, lived during the years 1941-1943 within a stone's throw of the Vistula, so that once I have crossed the bridge over the river, the Square, grey and empty, spreads before me. Members of my closest family and I lived in The Square at No. 4 - our second abode in the Ghetto - right up to the Liquidation Action in March 1943. The dreary, one-storey corner building is still there, fully functional, fully inhabited. A touch of modernisation, of comfort, has, however, been implemented in the intervening years. When we lived there one communal outside toilet served the whole building. The misery of it! I now notice, in the bleak courtyard, a longish row of

see young people, living in "A", carrying a saucepan, a dish, a frying-pan of cooked food to their parents, family... living in "B". Children came up to the wire and stretched out their bare hands...

A 12-year old orphan, and they knew better than anybody that I was an orphan, had no right, no business to so much as set foot in Sector "A". Equally, Joseph, my 19-year old brother, a member of a worthy lime-quarry press-gang, belonged, perfectly legitimately, in Sector "A". He lived in that squalid, tightly-packed room at No. 4 The Square of Peace. I tagged onto Joseph. He was my life-support. And nobody grudged me a corner in that room. Nobody minded my presence in that room... which I see in such vivid detail through the drawn Venetian blind... That room where we gave vent to the rawest human grief, where scalding tears ran down our faces... That room where Fenia Kalfus, a descendant of generations of strictly observant, deeply pious Jews, listened to her small daughter recite unfamiliar prayers in preparation for survival... That room which is there to this day, and on whose external window-ledge I place flowers in memory of those for whom it was the final earthly shelter.

I now stand by the window, I look, I listen... I close my eyes to evoke them. They come, as if in a dream, a surreal dream... They are stubborn, determined... They crowd the cold, narrow passage. They push and shove. They want to make it to the doorway... To the air. A long, crooked line of phantoms is making for the

doorway. And I, an old woman, call out to them; tender diminutives, fond nicknames.... They do not hear. They do not respond. To reach the doorway, to open the door...

Now, in October 2004, I walk slowly along the dim passage and stop in the doorway. One last look... Maybe it is my last visit...

Did I catch sight of a lithe shape, a filigree outline? did I hear a child's voice whisper my name - "Jasia, Jasia..."

One day, in the winter of 1942, when the Krakow Ghetto had been cleaved into two halves and "the end" was nigh, I saw, as I approached No. 4, Irene Kalfus standing in the doorway. She was on her own. An astonishing sight. Her mother was nowhere to be seen. She was on her own! Irene Kalfus - the youngest and the most vulnerable inhabitant of our room. She was dressed for going out. She had her warm winter coat on and a matching bonnet - the strap neatly fastened at the side of her chin. Where could she be going? I looked around for her mother, but she was not there... Darkness would set in early on those short winter days, but it was still daylight - frost-laden, opaque. It had stopped snowing and the Square, on our very doorstep, glistened with the freshly fallen snow. Irene was snugly dressed; she did not seem to feel the sub-zero temperature. I said: "Irene..." and she nearly smiled. I loved that child. I looked at her. I wanted to put my arms around her, give her a hug, but I was not sure if she would like it. She was quite fastidious about physical contact. And I was

nowhere as clean, as neat, as cared for as she. I was shabby. Already a vagrant...

"Mamma says I must become independent... it means I must learn to look after myself..." I could not take my eyes off her; she was quite tall for her age, but skinny and pale. A plain child. Her nose already prominent, was pinkish. Only the eyes, large and soft, the colour of fine jade, held one. "Aren't you cold, Irene, standing here?" She was naturally quiet, timid... She now spoke unnaturally rapidly and boastfully. She had been told to be confident. And now independent as well. She did not understand why she needed to be either; or how these skills were to be manifested. "We are safe. We live in "A". I am going to leave the Ghetto. Soon... I am going to stay with friends. Papa's friends... I am going to live with them. Mamma and Papa will come to take me back when the war is over. They promised. Jasia, will the war be over soon?"

"Irenko, Kotus, ja nie wiem..." (Irene, kitten, I don't know...). It will be dark soon. You have been standing here for some time. Let's go in." She put her gloved hand in mine. Her mother was on tenterhooks with anxiety. She had a small saucepan of milk warming on the stove. I wanted to help Irene take her coat and bonnet off, but I remembered, in time, that she must become independent. Fenia Kalfus handed a beaker of warm milk to her child. She tipped the remainder into a glass for me. The child nodded her head.

Irene Kalfus, aged ten years, perished in Auschwitz in May 1944.

# Sixtieth Anniversary Return To Ravensbruck

Judith Sherman - April  
2005

Fifty years ago I go back to commemorate the 50th anniversary of my liberation. It is my first return. Immediately upon being seated on the Lufthansa plane going there, I ask the stewardess for water - for water from a German woman. This time I will have water on the way to Ravensbruck. From the Camp I send a postcard to myself - to my home address. This time I will be back to receive it. I say Kaddish in Camp Sachsenhausen - the men's camp near Ravensbruck - for my father Ele and his brother Moshe. My father was in Sachsenhausen when I was in Ravensbruck - but at the time neither knew where the other was. Now I know and hope he hears my Kaddish. God, see to it. I place a flower onto the lake in Ravensbruck, the lake where the ashes from the crematoria were thrown; a flower for those who have no-one to place a flower for them. In the Commemoration Parade I march under the banner of the Israeli flag. With reverence and gratitude - if only we had an Israel back then..

Now, sixty years later - in April 2005 - I return to Ravensbruck again. To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation.

*Judith (nee Stern) lived with her younger sister Miriam in Weir Courtney and in Lingfield House. She studied Social Science at the L.S.E. and later emigrated to the USA where she lives with her husband, Reuven, a regular contributor to this journal, in New Jersey. She recently published a book "SAY THE NAME", a survivor's tale in prose and poetry. An introduction to her book appears in this journal by Professor David Caraso in Section VI Book Review.*

## Sixty years ago I am liberated from Ravensbruck Concentration Camp.

This time my husband, Reuven, sons David and Allen, and granddaughter, Ariel, go with me, Ariel is thirteen and a half years old, close to the age I was when deported there. During the commemoration ceremony, the TV cameras are focusing on the dignitaries present. I say to the producer of the TV programme - "The dignitaries are not the significant element here, not for us prisoners. The food there on those tables is. That is what we notice first."

And I also show him the three slices of bread in my bag which I bring from the hotel every morning. This time I will not enter Ravensbruck without bread in my bag. And this time too I send a postcard to my home address. And this time all of us, family members of INTACT families, place roses onto the lake - to remember.

This time - this sixty years later time - I am aware of different changes. The sign above the gate "Arbeit Macht Frei" - Work Makes You Free - is no longer there. The barracks, where 6 to 8 of us shared a narrow bunk - if we were lucky, for others slept on the floor, or standing up - the barracks were no longer there. And soon we prisoners will no longer be there. And I keep wondering - who will remember this place that should not be, but must be remembered. For we must use this place of darkness and ugliness, this Holocaust place as a beacon to gird against. To protect against its repetition - towards ourselves, towards any people, any time, any place.

Ariel, my granddaughter, takes pictures, "to show my school," she says. Ariel the witness.

I write the book "Say the Name" to say the names - to remember - to gird against.

# Sixty Years Ago I Do Not Die

Judith Sherman - April 2005

Sixty years ago I do not die. Though my death sentence is there.  
Sixty years - filled with life and life events. Youth, adulthood, old age.  
Family. Friends. Garden.  
An evolving tale of life's flow.  
And the old tale of sixty years ago remains. Much shorter in duration - eternal in duration. It stays and sticks. Screaming hunger. Frozen pores. Dead by morning.  
I write the book "Say The Name: A Survivor's Tale"  
The story is imprinted before I write it. No elaborations. No additions. No forgetting.  
An old film finally developed.  
I write the book to reclaim their territory - their visibility.  
Hear the names. The laughs. The summer splash in the river.  
See their bicycles, candle sticks, poppy seed cake.  
Fair hair, dark hair, grey hair.  
Toothpaste, mended shoes, plum trees.  
I write the book to damn the dark that dismembered the Sun.  
For sixty years their names inhabit me.

Make room for them, world,  
I am not space enough.

## Evka's Request

Judith Sherman

There are only a handful of Jewish families left in the village. My friend Evka's family is for the next transport. Evka comes by with a request.

"As soon as we get there, I will send our new address to you so you can send us Papa's letters," she says.

"I will," I reply. "But why don't you send the address to him directly?"

She looks hurt. "Papa is used to writing to this address."

"Promise you will check for his letter every day at the post office. I told them to give it to you." I promise.

Evka badly wants Papa's letters and she is equally concerned that they not be

sent back to him, lest he stop writing.

Papa's letters come only about two to three times a year. Her father left for America seven years ago. The plan was that he would send for the family as soon as he saved up the fares. Evka was five and her brother Isaac three when he left. In every letter he states the tickets will arrive "soon." Every letter brings hope and disappointment. Evka knows him by the one coloured photograph he sent. It is in a silver-plated frame on a small lace coloured table. Out of hurt and frustration her mother turns

the photograph face down when Evka leaves for school - then, on her return from school, Evka rightens it. This regular ritual is never discussed. They are sweetly protective of each other whilst from far away America Papa keeps the hurt and hopes alive. Maternal grandparents keep the family fed.

I pick up one letter from the post office, but receive no forwarding address. Evka must not have an address.

At what point are the letters no longer delivered? No longer written? What does he make of this - that papa in America whose photograph in Kurima moves from upright to downright to upright.

# My Darfur Mother

*Judith (nee Stern) lived with her younger sister Miriam in Weir Courtney and in Lingfield House. She studied Social Science at the L.S.E. and later emigrated to the U.S.A., where she lives with her husband Reuben in New Jersey. In recent years she has been lecturing on the Holocaust.*

She sits  
upon bareness  
watching, unseeing  
watching,  
her wounded memory  
of shrieking cows  
slain husband  
drowned son.

I, her ripped daughter  
curse you, you prayer  
mouthing  
your freedom spouting  
you always "again"  
standbys.  
Be you cursed with  
my mother's memory.

## Recollections of the Primrose Jewish Youth Club

By Thelma Marcus

**H**ow many milestones do we reach in one lifetime? Not many of us have achieved as many as The Boys (and Girls) who arrived here 60 years ago from the war-torn ravages of Europe, their horrific experiences and final release from the various concentration camps.

It was, therefore, with much pleasure and humility that I was invited to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the group's arrival in England and to witness the most moving film narrated by Sir Martin Gilbert, and to listen to Lord Bramall, Judge Israel Feinstein and Ben Helfgott pay tribute to the struggle and survival of young men and women who had clawed their way back to begin their lives again.

What was particularly poignant was the attendance of some of the children, themselves now adults and parents, supporting the work of their parents.

Two days later I revisited the Imperial War Museum to see the Holocaust Exhibition.

*Thelma and her late husband Solly were leaders of the Primrose Jewish Youth Club in the early fifties.*

Although I have visited other exhibitions in Israel and Los Angeles, I was both impressed and angry again at what was portrayed and I am encouraging both friends and family to spend time there and reacquaint themselves with the bestiality. In my opinion it should be mandatory for every school child to visit.

During the 60 years a further phase was reached when, due to the efforts of the Central British Fund, the Primrose Jewish Youth Club at 523 Finchley Road was inaugurated and at last we were able to leave the church hall in Swiss Cottage.

A fine three-storey house was converted into a purpose built centre, and like the "Windmill Theatre" we never closed except for Shabbat.

The top floor was a self-contained flat for Solli,

myself and Deena and what was supposed to be a part-time job of four and a half hours each a week, a total of nine hours, very quickly engaged our full time commitment and became a way of life.

By this time most of the club members were studying or working and living in digs and what we set out to do was to establish a "home from home", together with cultural, sport and general recreational activities.

The building was spacious and contained a good library, snooker and games room, a general hall, a garden, other smaller rooms and most importantly a canteen where one could obtain a bite to eat, snacks, tea, coffee and cold drinks, all home prepared. The fact that one could leave work, come in, eat and drink, relax with friends was the most important factor in creating a wonderfully warm atmosphere of belonging.

We then had to structure the club in order to cater for all tastes. Committees were set up to decide on activities

and we enjoyed tremendous support from so many people eager to make Primrose an outstanding club. It would be invidious to mention names since there were so many willing helpers and I would hate to leave out some and mention others but I am certain who they were and they remain fresh in my memory.

We arranged general lectures on topical affairs, debates on issues of the day, a drama club was formed and we competed successfully within the A.J.Y. (Association for Jewish Youth), as did our football team who rehearsed during the week and played in the league on Sundays. Table tennis was most popular and the Snooker table always in demand.

One of our other successes was the magazine which was produced carrying articles contributed by guests and club members and which was very well received and eagerly read.

I well remember going to the Conway Hall to watch Ben competing in the weightlifting trials and subsequently being chosen to take part in the Olympics and we were all overjoyed and immensely proud when he won a Bronze medal at The Commonwealth Games in Cardiff.

We were well supported by Elsie & Charles Warren who strove to coach the drama group, which included enthusiastic participants making scenery, arranging make-up and costumes. We did well in the adjudications and our contributions were commended for their professionalism.

Mark Gaudy, another lecturer, was very popular, taking discussion groups.

Our Art classes flourished, as did our Israeli dancing group, mainly girls, spurred on by Shoshanna our Israeli dancing teacher who worked tirelessly with us to achieve a really high standard. We looked really good in our costumes and gave numerous performances. . .

Frequent visitors were Richard Harriet and Oscar Joseph, who were delighted to see such a busy and purposeful agenda. Rev. Harry Levy, from West Hampstead synagogue, came as often as he was able and his presence was much appreciated.

After Shabbat and throughout the weekend there were dances and social events.

One of my precious memories were the Sederim that we held in the club where so many attended and helped. Willing helpers set tables, helped prepare vegetables etc. It was a most wonderful family atmosphere and worth every minute of the hard work.

We celebrated other Chagim of course, Chanukah, Succoth, etc.

Of course I mustn't forget that we decided to open the club to young Jewish girls and boys from this country. The influx was tremendous and the mixing of the two groups was an instant success. The young people learned much from the original members and ensured that the club would continue to play a part in the community. The only stipulation was that if they came from school they had to go to the Library and do their homework before joining club activities. Their parents approved!

Soon after the inclusion of

the youngsters, we organised a camping holiday abroad to La Napoule in France, a great success even though we had to keep an eye on the girls!

By this time a further transition was taking place, romance was in the air and couples were becoming engaged and subsequently married. Two couples come to mind especially, Vivienne and Kopel, for whom Solli and I were "unterferers" and Olive and David married. We had to convince Olive's dad that David was a sound young man and she'd be alright. There were others, of course, who started a new life and families of their own.

We had sadness of course, Claire & Abe left for U.S.A., Marion and Meyer to Israel. Natek left for the U.S.A. Unfortunately he did not enjoy many years.

I often look back at our time at Primrose. Solli and I loved our time there, we loved the "open house" to our flat, we forged friendships that were precious to both of us, and we learned so much.

Eventually though we realised that due to the way we were running our lives, there was little quality time for Deena, and Solli, who was by this time working for the Jewish Blind Society as the Chief Welfare Officer, was under pressure, due to his growing responsibilities and evening commitments, to give up the club, which we reluctantly did eventually.

So our lives and Primrose were a portion of the sixty years we've been celebrating, a never to be forgotten experience for both of us.

I do hope your memories are as happy as mine and that we succeeded, together, to achieve our aims.

# My encounters in Germany

Two of my trips to Germany this year were somewhat different from my usual talks in schools and various German organisations who occupy themselves with their past.

I mentioned the 'Kreisauer Kreis' at the end of my last contribution to this paper, assuming that everyone knew what I am talking about.

In the meantime I discovered that very few people know what I am referring to here, and curiously enough... I suddenly find myself involved directly with the above mentioned establishment. Only now it is referred to as 'Freya von Moltke Stiftung for the New Kreisau.'

Just very briefly: Kreisau - now called Krzyzowa - lies some 50 km south west of Breslau and was bought in 1867 by the Fieldmarshal v. Moltke and became a family home which was handed on through the generations and finally became the home of Helmuth James v. Moltke whose mother was born in Capetown and was no doubt an important influence in introducing a liberal Anglo-Saxon attitude into this family. Many years ago I was given a book called Letters to Freya 1939-1945. These are beautiful letters written by Helmuth James to his wife Freya from Berlin where he was working in the Intelligence Service. He was a key figure in the resistance to Hitler. He was betrayed and arrested in 1944, and the letters continue from various prisons until his execution on January 23.1945.

Helmuth James had been

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch

*Anita was deported from her hometown, Breslau (now Wroclaw) to Auschwitz where, as an inmate, she played the cello in the camp orchestra. Later, she was sent to Bergen-Belsen, where she was liberated. She came to England in 1946 and three years later she became a founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra. She published her story, "Inherit The Truth 1939 - 1945". She is an indefatigable speaker, both in England and Germany and she is a regular contributor to our Journal.*

educated in Berlin and London, was violently opposed to Nazism, and turned his talents and training toward countering the deportation and murder of Jews and executions of captured soldiers. He brought the most brilliant resisters of his time to his country estate in Kreisau, where they covertly planned the assassination of Hitler and the creation of a democratic Germany.

Well, Hitler was defeated, most of the resisters had been executed, Kreisau became Krzyzowa in Poland and fell into complete disrepair. After the fall of the 'Mauer' it was repaired with money from the German Government.

It must be over a year ago now that I received a letter asking me if I would consider becoming a member of the Committee for the 'Freya von Moltke Stiftung for the New Kreisau', as it is called now.

Well, I accepted the invitation to be on the committee

and went to Berlin for their first meeting.

After the execution of her husband Helmuth James v.Moltke, and the end of the war, his widow Freya had emigrated to America with her two young sons. Shortly before my trip to Berlin I received the news that one of her sons had suddenly died and I was sure that she was not going to come all the way from the USA to Berlin. She is in her mid-nineties. I was wrong. She came and it was a pleasure to meet this dignified and down-to-earth lady.

The meeting took place in a room in the Dresdner Bank. It was a sweltering hot day. The committee consisted of some members of the Moltke family, various middle aged Germans, some young people who work in Kreisau, and one Jew, myself.

As ever, the problem is about raising enough money to keep the place ticking over. In the evening there was a concert in a disused electricity works, something like the Tate Modern. The event was attended by many hundreds of people. There were the usual never-ending speeches but some really talented young musicians played and I feel that anything that brings people together on a quest of mutual understanding, cannot be bad.

My next trip took me to a place called Wolfenbüttel, some 50 Km from Hanover. There was a sort of master-class for young writers who had published their first book and were working on their second one. I received an invitation to talk to them about 'Heroism in the West'. I admit I got a bit of a shock.

Luckily I had just been lent Martin Gilbert's book: THE RIGHTEOUS and he says in the preface that if one wrote the names of those people who have been officially recognised as 'righteous', it would fill a book with 20,000 pages. I also named several people who I consider to have behaved heroically: Raoul Wallenberg, Frank Foley, Harald Poelchau, a priest in the Berlin Tegel prison, who ran a veritable 'saving shop' for Jews, finding hiding places, food coupons and even employment for 'illegals' or 'U boats' as they called Jews.

In short, I talked about the people to whom the Nazi ideology was totally unacceptable and who had the integrity to behave like human beings. My question is whether this is heroism *per se* or simply basic morality.

The next day was the turn of a Catholic gentleman. His topic was 'Sainthood', and in his long and rather boring talk he mentioned Edith Stein. It appears she is

next in line for a sort of 'semi' sainthood.

Edith Stein was a Jewish girl from Breslau who converted to Catholicism long before 1933. She was hidden in a convent when Hitler came to power. The Nazis obviously knew her whereabouts, located her and sent her to Auschwitz, where she died in the gas chamber.

I had a good argument with my Catholic counterpart when I said that one has to be honest here. Edith Stein did not die as a Catholic martyr but simply as a Jew.

I gathered from the participants of this master-class that the Catholic gentleman felt very uneasy about my being there. Tough!

I questioned him about this at the end of the session and it transpired that he had never ever met a Jewish person before. I was the first one and he was simply scared and embarrassed! What can one say!

We still have a long way to go before we will be able to deal with each other just as

representatives of the human race.

The conversation became more natural when he asked if I happened to know Elizabeth Wallfisch. (My daughter-in-law.) He has her recordings and we launched into a heated argument about the interpretation of Baroque music. It was much more enjoyable than discussing collective guilt.

Just by the way, Wolfenbüttel is a fascinating place. It is famous for its most amazing old library created by a minor German nobleman who was bored in some remote place and collected as well as wrote books. One of the librarians there was Lessing. Lessing was not Jewish and was a great friend of Moses Mendelssohn. He wrote the play 'Nathan der Weise', an antidote to Shylock, no doubt inspired by the personality of Moses Mendelssohn.

There is a big statue of the 'Jew Nathan' in the middle of Wolfenbüttel. So, all told, I had an interesting time.

## Liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp

By Witold Gutt D.Sc., Ph.D., M.Sc., C.Chem., FRSC., FCS

*Witold Gutt D.Sc., Ph.D., M.Sc., C.Chem., FRSC., 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 Standards Institution Technical Committee of Cement and Lime.*

On the 60th anniversary of VE-Day (VICTORY IN EUROPE), 8th May 2005, The Times republished its edition issued on VE-Day. On page 6 of the 8th May 1945 edition I found

HIMMLER'S DACHAU ORDER which is reproduced below, as printed in The Times on VE-Day.

HIMMLER'S DACHAU ORDER

In the *communiqué* issued by allied Supreme Headquarters yesterday morning it was stated:-

"An order by S.S. Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler on April 14 that no prisoners in the notorious Dachau concentration camp shall be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy alive has come into allied possession. He had ordered the camp to be evacuated 'immediately.'"

This order, of which we in the camp were unaware, is a highly significant and historic document, dealing as it does with the intended fate of the prisoners held in the camp just before the time of its liberation by the American Army on 29th April 1945.

A few days before the liberation, we were unexpectedly provided by the SS with rations of food, including tinned items, and were told to keep them for a journey. Clearly, following Himmler's order given on 14th April 1945, preparations were made to evacuate the camp and march the prisoners somewhere. It needs little imagination to guess where

and how such a march would have ended.

For once the SS failed to carry out Himmler's order. We ate the food without waiting. As we were starving, that was both beneficial and not surprising, and the Americans got there in time to save us.

It is noteworthy that Dachau was the first Nazi concentration camp established in March 1933 as a base for the incarceration of critics of the regime.

My first intimation that the amazing liberation was taking place was the sight of American soldiers shooting at the SS guards in the perimeter fence towers.

Some of the Americans spoke Polish and I was able to make contact with them at once.

Allied journalists (who included Lee Miller), accompanying the troops, were shattered by the condition of the prisoners, of whom many were too weak to recover. There were heaps of bodies by the crematorium, and on a railway siding a train of fifty wagons, full of dead bodies.

Among the 33,000 survivors were many Catholic priests and 2,539 Jews (see M. Gilbert *The Holocaust* p. 799, Collins).

Witold Gutt  
Ex-prisoner Dachau  
No. 147597

## The Price of Ignorance and Betrayal

By Michael Bandel

*Michael came to England in early 1946 with the Czech/Hungarian "boys". He is an active member of our Committee and is the Welfare Officer of our Society.*

Romania and also part of Carpathia. This it did in two stages: the first in September 1938 when my area was occupied by the Ukrainians, as Hitler had promised them an independent state. Hungary, however, pressed Hitler to occupy my part as it was Austro-Hungarian until 1918, and they promised to support more the war effort, with a bigger army. So, in March 1939, Hungary then took over my part of Carpathia; soon afterwards anti-Jewish laws were proclaimed. Firstly, all Jewish businesses had to submit a trading licence to Budapest where it was decided who

could continue to trade and who should not. Under the anti-Semitic government, led by Admiral Horthy, the majority of Jewish businesses had to close. The second requirement was more extreme and very hard; we had to prove Hungarian citizenship. This was extremely difficult because the older generation had been born under the Austro-Hungarian empire and the younger generation under the Czechoslovakian government. It was a very poverty-stricken area - and to quote the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who came from the same region: "When G-d gave out poverty, he gave nine-tenths to Carpathia". Therefore, to travel to the capital was almost impossible and the proof needed practically non-existent.

In August 1938, Joachim von Ribentropp, for Germany, and Molotov, for Russia,

Not many people have heard or read about the following - part of the history of the Holocaust.

I, and the late Baruch Pollock, were born in the most eastern part of what was then Czechoslovakia, known as Carpathian Ruthenia, in the region of the Carpathian Mountains, in a border town called Jasina: this bordered Polish Galicia. Ours was a family of six, my parents, myself and three sisters, one older than me and two younger. We were ultra-orthodox, bordering on fanaticism, followers of the Vistnitzer Rebbe. My late father left Yeshiva at the age of twenty-six to marry my mother, which was, of course, a Shidduch.

When Hungary allied itself to Germany, to acquire the territory back that it had lost in the 1914-1918 war, it occupied part of Slovakia, part of Yugoslavia, part of

signed a non-aggression pact. Germany invaded Poland and Russia did the same to Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Polish Galicia - so now we were bordering Russia. Many people believed that they would be better off under Communism and came from far and wide to cross over the border. Some were shot as spies, some sent to Siberia and some were actually sent back, having been told 'If you are a good Communist, you fight the enemy from within'.

At the beginning of 1940, all Jewish males aged from 12 to 55 years had to register. The adults were conscripted into forced labour battalions and the youngsters had to attend army drill and gun handling sessions. It was forbidden to buy fuel; we had no coal or gas, only wood to use for heating. The winters were extremely cold, with temperatures falling to anything between minus 20-40 degrees. That was so cruel and we had to resort to bribery or, like my father and me, to get up at 2 or 3 am in all weathers to steal wood from the timber yards. On June 22nd 1941, Germany invaded Russia and Polish Galicia under the code name 'Barbarossa', so now we were bordering Germany/German occupied land. A Hungarian District Chief of Police rounded up 16,000-20,000 Jews on the pretext that they could not prove citizenship, and these were deported to 'the East'. As the trains were passing through Jasina, in one of them I saw my maternal grandparents, uncle, aunts and cousins. They were held in a sawmill at the border from where they were forced to walk across the border; some were taken by Hungarian Army

trucks. For some time we had no idea what was happening there, until some escapees came back and told us of the atrocities and murder being committed in Kolomei-Stanislawov, Lvov, and many other places. Any escapees caught were beaten and tortured at Police headquarters, not far from our house, and we could hear the screams. One episode stands out in my mind, of a man being beaten, tortured, then tied to the tail of a Hungarian officer's horse and being galloped to the border which was 10 kms away; he would not have reached it alive.

The Carpathian Jews were made to walk to Kamanec-Podolski where there were ready-dug ditches. They were told to undress and they were then shot on August 27-28th 1941. Some were tied together and thrown alive into the rivers Dniester and Dnieper.

Teenagers had to report on Saturdays, not for army drill but to work, unloading cement, as they were building fortifications in the mountains. We were taken to the border to clear the snow so that the criminal Germans, Hungarians, Romanians and Ukrainians could cross over, get drunk, and they would mimic the cries of the Jews before being killed - "Shema Yisroel" and also they would cry out Psalm 130 -

"I call unto thee O Lord,  
listen to my voice".

In the spring of 1942, they brought fifty-two rich Slovakian Jews to our town and held them in one of our synagogues. When food was taken to them, they were told they would not need it. They were taken across the border

and shot. One of them who was not actually killed, hid under the dead bodies and, when the murderers left, he managed to scramble back, was patched up and sent clandestinely to Budapest. The date of this event was 22 Ivar, corresponding to May, and my father wrote it in his diary, to keep a *yahrzeit*.

In 1943 we had to wear a yellow star, 4"x4"; there was a total restriction on travel. We were permitted only a few hours a day to be outside on the streets. To say how difficult this was is very hard. One instance was when a neighbour committed suicide, the few elderly men left were too scared to carry the body to the cemetery. We did not have such a vehicle as a hearse. Being past Barmitzvah age, I was asked to do it. That was the first time I have seen a body laid to rest, with no coffin, just like they do in Israel. They put a bag of Israeli soil under the head, obtained by the Chevra Kadisha. Two pieces of earthenware were placed on the eyes and a twig placed in the hand. There is a superstition that when a child is named after that deceased person, the earthenware falls off the eyes, and when the Messiah comes the twig helps the soul to go to Jerusalem.

In March 1944, Germany invaded Hungary. It was before Pesach and the Jewish community did not know how to get flour for matzah-baking. The Joint Distribution Society managed to send some, a quantity of which was kept in our house as we were reliable for Kashrut. On Erev Pesach, the German army was going to the front line and two soldiers were billeted in our house. This was the first

time I had seen one. Our house was spotless for Pesach. On the sixth day of Pesach, a young girl next door knocked at our window at 2 am, crying, screaming, that they were coming to take us away and this the Hungarian Gendarmerie did, to take a census. The day after Pesach, two gendarmes knocked at our door and gave us half an hour to pack and assemble on the street. There were about 150 - 200 people there but no-one, but no-one even protested! We were marched to the Jewish cemetery and believed we were to be shot. They assembled about 1,500 Jews there, each family were taken into an hotel to be beaten and searched for money and any other valuables. The next day my father asked permission to go home - he had forgotten something. Permission was granted. I asked to go with him and we walked through the deserted streets - and back - without a guard. We did not escape to the mountains because of our family. Three and a half days later we were marched to the railway station 1½ kms away. Railway wagons were stationed there, used by the Hungarian cavalry going to the front. They were filthy dirty. We were made to clear the straw and dung and 70 - 80 people were herded into each wagon; one door was left open. On the journey, the train stopped at the town of Chust to take on coal and water. Father had an aunt living nearby and he actually got off the train to go and see if she was still at home. She was, and she gave him some bread and some Hungarian money hidden inside it, and he returned to us in the train...

The following evening, the train stopped at a railway siding where the Hungarians handed us over to the German SS and we were marched to the Ghetto of Mate Szalka. From there we were taken to Auschwitz, where we stayed only a short few days and then my father and I were transported to Mauthausen and from there to one of its sub-camps, called Ebensee, these latter two in Austria. What happened during that time is another story.

My father died in my arms, in Ebensee, Erev Pesach 1945. I was liberated by the Americans on May 8th 1945. After liberation, I had three priorities; to search for my family, to recuperate and get my health and strength back, and to confront someone from the Hungarian Judenrat to get some answers to questions that had tormented me. That opportunity came in the early 1960s when Dr Stephen Roth gave a lecture on how they coped with the Holocaust. After the lecture I asked the following questions:

(1) He, being in Budapest, the capital city and in Central Europe, must have known what was happening to the Jews in Europe. Why did he not pass any information, or warnings to the heads of the towns and villages? His reply was that they did not want to cause panic.

(2) With the knowledge they had, why did they not send specialists to teach us self-defence? If Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia had survived five years in the mountains, surely more of us could have survived the six months left before Russia liberated our region? His reply was it was

most difficult to procure arms. I said this was rubbish as the front was only 200 kms away and they brought the injured day and night; for a bottle of vodka or slivovic not only could you get hand guns but you could have bought a small Hungarian tank!!!

(3) I quoted him the case of Erzso Kastner, who had negotiated with Adolf Eichmann and Becker to permit a train carrying 1,680 Jews(?) to leave Hungary for Switzerland, as a sign of "good faith on the part of the Germans". How were those people chosen?

He replied that as they did not know if any of European Jewry would survive, to safeguard its continuity, they chose rabbis, teachers, academics, musicians... I told him I thought this was rubbish. I had been told by a friend who survived, living on Aryan papers in Budapest, that people had been chosen who were family and friends of members of the Judenrat, and others who could pay the most money...

Like another family - the Weiss's. In the 1950s, Kastner was accused in Israel of collaborating with the Nazis; the judge told him that he had 'sold his soul to the Devil'. Kastner was shot down on the steps of the courthouse and the killer was never found. He was buried outside Haifa, in a forest, and not in consecrated ground.

A few years ago a documentary was shown on Channel 4 TV entitled 'The Last Train Out Of Budapest', dealing with Kastner's negotiations with Eichmann, in which Kastner was shown to promise Eichmann that he would not divulge the destination of the trains.

In the early eighties, Jim Allen published a book entitled 'Perdition'; this was later dramatised and produced at The Royal Court Theatre in London. However, many, if not all, Jewish organisations objected strongly to the contents of the play, stating that it was

anti-Semitic. Jim Allen wrote that the Hungarian Judenrat had 'sold Jews to Nazis' in order to obtain/help achieve the State of Israel.

*I do not believe that!*

*I do believe* the Hungarian Judenrat 'sold out' Carpathian Jewry to save 'Hungarian Jewry'.

*I believe* that they considered us illiterate, poverty-stricken, Yiddish-speaking Chasidic Jews - dispensable!!!

That was, and is despicable.

That was, and is - betrayal.

## About Faith

The Late

Rabbi Hugo Gryn

(Reprinted from Journal  
No.3, April 1977)

**Y**ou may think this is a strange thing to say - but when I was a teenager in Nazi concentration camps in Germany - I discovered God. Not the God of my childhood. I lost him - or lost sight of him - around the crematoria of Auschwitz. I prayed that he "do something" and when he did not, I turned my back on him as well.

But later - in the slave labour camps - and, I suppose, in retrospect too, when I saw more clearly the different ways the human spirit can respond to people and events.

In the camps there was "a regression to primitiveness" - that is to say, our interests became restricted to the most immediate and urgent needs. Food and water and sleep. Because there was hardly any food, and crowded conditions combined with vermin plus 14 hours of work a day, gave little chance for sleep - we were, in the main, apathetic and irritable. Not so much zombie-like, more tired animal-like. If you saw that magnificent programme on BBC2 recently - "In Memory of Justice" - you have your own set of images.

All thinking was concentrated on a simple and single point: to get through today; to

survive another day!

There was an important change in the meaning of some key values. Freedom is something you and I consider that we *have* - and if you are imprisoned - it is taken away. But in the camps freedom had become what you *were* - and this shaped the attitudes you formed to your situation and to your destiny. Apathy could only be overcome by force of spirit. Or you could give in to it and so disintegrate from within. Irritability and brutalisation could only be suppressed through intellectual and emotional effort. If you could not do this - you became less - considerably - than a civilised human being.

It became a choice: to fit into the surroundings and swim with the tide - this was towards primitiveness. Or to struggle against a dreadful environment and swim against a powerful tide. I began to see it then - and see it much more clearly now; it was a matter of spiritual effort.

The worst handicap had to do with time. No-one knew when the experience will end.

It made for a sense of helplessness. Victor Frankl is a psychiatrist, who was in the camps himself. He wrote about a fellow-prisoner he knew who dreamt that on 30 March, 1945 the war would end and he would be liberated. No real news was possible and when nothing happened - this man developed high fever on March 29 and the next day he died of typhoid. Disillusionment, according to Dr Frankl, brought quick decline of bodily defence.

My own experience bears this out: there was always a spate of rumours about; about food from the Red Cross, or the approach of the Russian Army, or the proximity of the Americans - and when events proved them false - morale dropped like a cement bag. Only an inner sensation - that in the end evil will be defeated - gave any kind of certainty.

And afterwards - when I look back on my experiences and suffering - and it is purely good luck that I am alive - I realise that there is nothing left to fear in this world - except God. Many people lost their faith in God in the concentration camps. Many others - I among them - learnt to believe or believe again in God.

## The Barmitzvah that was 65 years late

A Holocaust survivor, who was in a concentration camp on his 13th birthday, finally celebrated his barmitzvah at Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue last month - at the same time as his grandson.

Polish-born Harry Olmer, 78, was interned in Plaszow, a Polish concentration camp, as he turned 13, and was unable to celebrate his barmitzvah, the traditional coming of age ceremony for 13-year-old boys.

His mother and three sisters had been taken away and gassed as soon as the war started.

Throughout the war, he was moved to many camps before being liberated in 1945, and came to England suffering from typhus.

It was there he met his wife Margaret and settled in Potters Bar to start their family, before eventually moving to Mill Hill.

(Reprinted from The Borehamwood Times)

Louisa Barnett

Bursting with pride, Mr Olmer said: "It was such an honour to be barmitzvhed on the same day as my grandson, Danny. It's something I've always wanted and to do it in such a special way was incredible.

"I worked so hard for that day and having my family around me and Rabbi Plancey, who made it so special - it made it all worthwhile."

Mr Olmer's son, Philip, said: "It was such an emotional experience to watch both my father and my son get barmitzvhed at the same time. Something I and the rest of my family will never forget.

"We wanted to do something special for him and decided this would be the greatest honour in the world.

"When Rabbi Plancey made his sermon, he had half the congregation in tears. It was wonderful."

The Olmers' entire family from around the world were all there for the service - the first time they had ever all been in one room together.

Additionally, the day was marked by the 60th anniversary of Mr Olmer's wife being liberated from a concentration camp.

Although Harry was prepared to be barmitzvhed, he wasn't expecting to be called up with his grandson Danny for the customary blessing.

Rabbi Plancey, who has led the congregation for 30 years, said: "I have never seen anything like this before. It was an exceptional morning in that we were able to celebrate something which was never celebrated all those years ago.

"It was extremely emotional and something I will never forget."

## My Post-War Journey from 1945 to the Present Time

By Gena Schwarzmann

Passing years have a habit of changing us physically and mentally. When liberated from Nazi persecution in 1945 one believed that freedom will also liberate us from all the pain of long years of suffering. The reality,

however, was taking me on a long journey of inner grief for the lost loved ones and the personal struggle of finding some joy whilst trying to discard the feeling of loneliness and drift.

Miraculously, my father

and only one uncle survived the war and I considered myself very lucky to have at least a fragment of my family. But my father was then serving in the British Army in Egypt and was not demobilised until 1947 and my uncle was in a DP camp

in Germany and was later to make his way to New York.

I arrived in Israel (then Palestine) in October 1945 with a group of twelve orphans. We experienced a perilous journey over a period of seven months, avoiding Polish Nazi sympathisers still thirsting for Jewish blood. After all we went through, we did not expect to still be haunted, but reality proved us wrong.

On arrival in Israel, our group was dispatched to Kibbutz Gan Shmuel after an initiation of six weeks in an agricultural women's farm in Petach Tikvah.

I was then eleven years old but the oldest in the group was a thirteen year old boy.

The kibbutz committee decided that our group of children should work for four hours per day, six days a week and learn Hebrew and History also four hours daily. I do not think that the kibbutz committee really understood our predicament or what we had experienced and how much more fear, terror and uncertainty we concealed not knowing where to find security and true protection in yet a different culture.

I was assigned to work in the hen house to assist Dov and his team. Dov was a kind man and understood both my inner struggles and my limitations. In his team of workers Dov had no-one under the age of eighteen so I was, as he said: like his daughter who was of the same age but, unlike me, she had no work obligations.

Dov made allowances as to what I could cope with and how long it took me to complete a certain task.

To collect the newly laid eggs every morning took me more than two hours, whereas other workers did the same in just twenty minutes. Some time later Dov appointed me to take care of the chicks released from the incubators. One day I heard Dov say to one of his colleagues: "Let the child see new life around her and the beautiful colour of sunshine on the chicks."

I spoke very little Hebrew at that time and Dov spoke no Polish but his implicit kindness showed through. He taught me Hebrew when he could, took time to help me acclimatise to the work routine and guided me to what was expected of me.

Dov noticed that one of his team members addressed me with: "Soap, take the basket of eggs to the kitchen!" Before I could react to this cruel connotation, Dov demanded from the kibbutz member an apology to me and in a calm voice told this person to leave the hen house and never to return to work in it.

My kibbutz teacher, Tzvi Ciechanowski, once referred to this episode by simply saying that Dov would like me to have compassion on the person who hurt my feelings and that this would be a fine gesture on my part towards that person. This was a lesson for me to respect both Dov and Tzvi for their concern for both the offender and the victim.

Festivals or free days were times of reflection and painful memories, despite the fact that I was more fortunate than most, having a father and an uncle.

Memories habitually taunted me when other people were happy in the bosom of their enlarged family circle. At times like these one ponders on what could have been, if only our loved ones were with us now.

I consider myself to be fortunate to have achieved much against all odds. I served in the Israeli Army and was proud to take part in Israel's rebirth. Regrettably I had to leave Israel due to a skin condition which in hot climates was crippling.

England became my home, a wonderful country in many ways and a country that contributed to my personal happiness and intellectual advancement. I have managed to attain two degrees despite the fact that the Nazis deprived me of my formal education and despite the fact that I had no financial means of support. Neither my father nor my uncle were able to help me financially at that time.

In London I met my future husband, a lecturer in aeronautical and mechanical engineering. We have three sons and a daughter and now we also have ten grandchildren and hope that they will enjoy a happy and peaceful future and that their lost heritage will not scar their lives the way the Nazi legacy has scarred and damaged ours.

# Revisiting Wintershill Hall

By Jack Hecht

The weather was not very promising on the way down but next day we awoke to brilliant sunshine. It was late October and Maureen and I were in Bournemouth. My plan for that day was to look for a village called Durley and for a particular house called Wintershill Hall. I and several of the 'boys' who landed at Eastleigh airport on 31st October 1945, had been taken to the house. It was like a halfway house where we could adjust to our new country and be assessed for our futures.

Alec and Hetty Ward had visited the house once (Alec was in the same group) but unhappily found no-one there to show them round. We hoped to be more successful. We rang the police and they gave us the exact route, having a map showing Durley. And so we set off on our adventure.

The journey could not have been nicer - driving through New Forest country with the leaves and grasses bursting with colour.



*Jack Hecht at Wintershill.*

Eventually we arrived in the small village of Durley. We had to ask someone if they knew the house and they pointed us in the right direction. We turned into a narrow lane with pasture land either side inhabited by farm animals - and suddenly there was Wintershill Hall in all its glory. The memories came flooding back for me, especially the fine columns either side of the door.

Now was the hour of reckoning. Should I knock at the door? Well, we had come all this way so let's take a chance.

I rang the bell and an elegant lady came to the door. I briefly told her why I was there. She immediately

realised where I was coming from and said she had a copy of Sir Martin Gilbert's book "The Boys". She explained that her parents-in-law had owned the house since 1948 and the family name was Balfour. Without more ado, she invited us into the house.

The present Hall was built in 1852 and was granted the name of a manor house. It suffered a fire eight years ago and consequently it had changed since I lived there. I did recognise the staircase and the bedroom I shared with several others. The furnishings were exquisite throughout the building.

Apparently, the original estate dates from 1420. This is now a ruin in another part of Durley. In 1939, Mrs Sebag-Montefiore owned the house and we are assuming that because it was in her hands, it was donated for the survivors' use.

Thanking our hostess profusely, we made our leave after walking round the large grounds and feeling very pleased that we had made the effort.

## Majer Stern's 'Roots' Trip

By Marion Stern

For 60 years Majer showed no interest or inclination to go back to the places where he grew up. that is, until his friend told him that a group was being formed to go at the end of May. Within the group of twenty that went, we were a group of eight - five friends that were at school together and three spouses.

Our early morning El Al flight took us to Budapest

*Marian is the wife of Majer, who came to England in the winter of 1946 with the Czech/Hungarian "boys". He and Marian emigrated to Israel where they now live. They are frequent visitors to London and keep in close touch with the members of our Society.*

where we boarded a bus for the Carpathians. We stopped

overnight at a place called Nyiregyhaza before reaching the Ukranian border. We were warned that it can take hours to cross the border, depending on the mood of the man in charge! It took nearly two hours, which our guide assured us wasn't bad at all, but there was very little traffic at the time, which makes one wonder how many hours it can take when they are busy.

Majer was born in Svalava, Czechoslovakia and moved to Mukachevo (Munkacs) in 1939, after the family sold everything in order to emigrate to Chile. They had their visas and were due to sail from Danzig on 7th September. The Germans marched into Poland on 1st September and war was declared! The Hungarians took over the country again in 1939 and then the USSR took it over at the end of the war and when Ukraine became independent, it became part of Ukraine.

As we entered Mukachevo, the excitement grew and became intense as they looked for places they could recognise. As soon as we had checked in and deposited our luggage in our rooms, our group set off to explore on foot. Majer led the way straight to where he thought his house was - and it was there, still recognisable, although slightly altered. Opposite the house was the dilapidated building that had become the schoolhouse after the Hebrew Gymnasium was confiscated and until they were herded into the ghetto. We returned to the hotel, which was only five minutes away and others joined us on our trek through the town.

The Russians had changed all the street names and had removed all the old names; even the numbers were changed. We did find what had been known as the "Yiddish Gass" but most of the buildings have been changed and the only thing Jewish there now is a commemoration plaque on the wall at the beginning of the street. We also went to the market place to buy cherries but they had already packed up. We continued in

the direction of the football field and found it still intact and in use. We made our way back, walking along the river, and got cleaned up and changed for dinner; a rather poor affair in what is known as the Kosher Kitchen which stands in the grounds of the hotel. Thereafter, we chose our own places for dinner and ate very well, although we had to wait an interminable time until we got the food, since everything was freshly cooked.

We stayed at The Star Hotel (The Csillag) in the centre of town, opposite the Town Hall, which still looks the same except for the green colour it was now painted. The area has been nicely landscaped but many areas off the main street are in a bad state of disrepair and neglect. The hotel was built or renovated a few years ago by a Mr Roth, a rich American Jew who was born in Munkacs and wanted to make it possible for Jews to visit their place of origin and have somewhere to stay. He invested a lot of money in the project and is said to be losing heavily. There is also a courtyard restaurant, complete with live, old-fashioned music for dancing (under the stars) where we ate and the food was good and cheap. The Kosher Kitchen feeds the poor Jews living in the town free of charge or for a nominal amount. There are approximately five hundred Jews living there, mostly elderly, and there are also some Israelis working there.

The following morning, the eight of us walked to the Hebrew Gymnasium, but first we went to the house behind the school where one friend lived. The people in

the house would not let him in and were very suspicious and unpleasant. He was very upset by it. The reception at the school was rather better and they were received by the Director to whom they told their stories. Majer asked to see the gymnasium and we all trotted down there to find that everything looked the same as it did sixty years ago! The place is still a school and classes were in progress. We also went to a government office about obtaining birth certificates but it was too complicated to get into.

Half the group of twenty came from different places in the Carpathians and they spent the day visiting their villages with our bus while we did our own exploring. At 1 pm we piled into a mini-bus with a driver that Majer hired at the hotel and he took us to Svalava, where Majer was born, but everything had changed there except for the railway station. He knew beforehand that the house they had lived in was no longer standing, so he just wanted to get out of there. We continued up to Volovec where he used to visit his grandfather with the same result; only the station remained unchanged. The big timber-yard of his grandfather by the station and his big house were no longer standing and, in their place, stood ugly blocks of flats built by the Russians. On the way back we stopped at the Schoenborn Castle to have a drink. It is used today as a convalescent home and has acres of beautiful grounds to wander through and the weather was marvellous whilst we were in Munkacs.

The next day the whole group was taken on a trip to

Ungvar (Uzhorod) with a local guide who spoke English. She talked a lot about the history of the area and upset us by saying the Jews *emigrated* after the war. When she made an unscheduled stop at the castle that we had visited the previous day, I found an opportunity to talk to her and explain how upsetting her words were and how they distorted history.

We were taken to a 'museum' which was a collection of different houses, most of which had thatched roofs, showing how people used to live, and included furnishings and utensils, farm implements, the well and the schoolhouse. Then we went to what was once *the* synagogue with a beautiful high-domed ceiling and vitrage windows with Magen-Davids. Majer remembers going to this synagogue with his uncle when he stayed with his aunt and uncle from time to time. The Russians had added a staircase and upper floor and turned it into a concert hall. The outside of this building is now being renovated and no longer resembles a synagogue but rather reminded me of places I saw many years ago in India. The guide had made so many mistakes directing our driver out of Munkacs and then again around Ungvar (he was from Budapest) that we were left with very little free time there to wander on our own and only had time to get a bite to eat before heading back to Munkacs. Luckily, we had a superb driver who got through seemingly impossible places.

The next morning was our last one in Munkacs and so

the eight of us split up in order to 'tie up loose ends'. Majer and I and one friend who used to live near him, went, once more, in the direction of where they lived, Majer having decided that he wanted to see the inside of the house and yard. He rang the bell without hesitation and, after a few minutes, two women appeared at the window and Majer tried to explain in Russian what he wanted. Very few people there speak or understand Hungarian now and so language was a bit of a problem all the time. We were very lucky in that she was a nice woman and agreed to let us in. The moment Majer went through the gate and saw the yard and the entrance to the basement, he knew he was at the right house. He had been a little unsure before because the gate had been changed and a room built above it which they had not had. Now he was told that the house had actually been divided into two units. We were shown around the house which these people had moved into four years earlier and which had acquired a bathroom and toilet since Majer's family had lived there. At the back of the garden, which was far smaller than I had imagined it to be, still stood the cowshed and outhouse but without the original roof. As for the basement, that had also been divided between the two houses and so Majer was unable to show me the exact location where his father had hidden the family's valuables. In their day it had been an earth floor and the box of valuables had been buried in the furthest corner under the wall. Only

Majer knew where it was and when he and his brother went back there after the war, he found that the whole basement had been dug up but they never found that box. When he walked out with it, the people living in the house just gaped. Now, in fact, the basement has less headroom as the steps and floor have been cemented.

Our friend's house had also been divided into two units and nobody seemed to be there but he didn't want to go in anyway. We went to check out the field where Majer took the cow to graze every day and found that a house had been built right in the middle of it and the pathway that he used to go through near his house had now been closed off by small buildings, possibly workshops. The garden with the fruit trees was still there though and was full of memories for the two friends.

That afternoon we left Munkacs and headed back the way we came and everyone felt satisfied that they had closed the circle. We made our way back across the border, stopping over once more in Nyiregyhaza where it was pouring with rain (the weather had been hot and sunny all the days we were in Munkacs). The following morning we made our way back to Budapest where we spent less than two days under dark grey skies and showers. We visited the big synagogue and the new Jewish Museum which showed a very moving film about how life was for the Jews in the Carpathians before Hitler.

# The Hope of Survival in Camps

Kurt Klappholz

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

I seemed to be acutely aware of these changing chances of survival. As the evacuation period proceeded I regarded my chance as, objectively, getting smaller and smaller and indeed approaching zero. Yet, subjectively, I somehow did not believe that I would die.

*The late Kurt Klappholz came to England with the Southampton "boys". He was a Reader in Economics at The London School of Economics and the former editor of our Journal.*

This tension between the perceived objective reality of one's survival chance and the subjective refusal to accept it was illustrated by an incident I still vividly remember.

We had been marched out of Flossenburg when the camp was evacuated in the face of the approaching

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

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



*Kurt Klappholz photographed by UNWRA after his Liberation.*

# Psychosocial Issues in the lives of Survivors

In Israel the survivors form a large and integral part of the population. They are our neighbours, friends, and colleagues at work. They are our husbands and wives and their children become our daughters-in-law and sons-in-law.

A specific part of the identity of each Israeli who was not born in the country relates to the country of origin. Thus, people are often referred to as "Yotzei Hungary", "Yotzei Lita", "Yotzei Iraq".

Holocaust survivors, however, are often referred to as if their country of origin was the "Shoa" – as "Yotzei Shoa". Having been in the "Shoa" thus displaces and takes precedence over the country of origin and becomes the central feature identifying the individual survivor and his family in the eyes of his fellow-citizens. Designating survivors in this way demonstrates an important aspect of the Israeli attitude to the survivors. It means that identity is defined in relation to exposure to the trauma of the Holocaust and may even be used as a stereotype for certain characteristics and reactions. In general, however, in Israel the survivors have not been singled out for special recognition and they – like all the other olim – were expected to play down their origins and traumatic past and become active citizens contributing to the building and defence of the new State and embrace the new emerging Israeli identity.

The Late Shamai Davidson Ph.D  
(written in 1981)

*Shamai was the Director of Shalvata Mental Health Centre, Hod HaSharon, (Tel-Aviv University Medical School), Professor of Holocaust and Social Trauma Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan.*

*As part of his research work, the author interviewed, and thus got to know, many members of our Society. He clearly belonged among "Our Friends and Well-wishes". (Ed.)*

There was a powerful relevance and coincidence of psycho-historical and personal themes in the "rebirth" of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel with the need to fight for its survival and in the creation of new lives and families by the survivors.

The re-establishment of links and continuity with the values and goals of the pre-Holocaust past was a powerful influence in overcoming the trauma of loss of family and community. For many survivors who came to Israel in their late teens and early twenties activity, belonging, and identification became fused into a cohesive whole infusing meaning into their new lives. In these ways Israel became a huge rehabilitation project for the survivors of genocide.

At community and national levels in Israel, the Holocaust has always been

given central significance and expression in annual memorial meetings for the destroyed communities, in the Holocaust Remembrance Day, in teaching programmes in the schools, and through constant reporting in the media.

At the interpersonal level, however, the individual survivor's Shoa past was in general avoided. In our culture people are uncomfortable in the presence of the survivors of man-made disasters. In the personal encounter with them images arise of victimisation and helpless confrontation with death and horror, of humiliation and loss, and the misery of the struggle to survive in extremity. These images arouse feelings of anger, fear and guilt, emotions which we prefer to avoid, although we also want to know what really happened.

For many survivors themselves the recalling and relating of their experiences was extremely painful and humiliating – hence the natural tendency to try to forget. The reluctance that they often sensed in others to listen to what they had been through reinforced their tendency to avoid talking about their dreadful experiences. They justified their silence in the general society in terms of the inability of the others to understand what they had experienced. In this way both the survivors and the surrounding society interacted to maintain, by and large, a shameful silence.

Accepted as citizens with more or less full rights and opportunities in most of the societies of the democratic world in the post-war era where they settled, their survivor identities and experiences were avoided and remained shadowy and unexpressed except when meeting with fellow-survivors in the special intimacy and solidarity of mutual aid or social groups.

For many years we have been studying the impact of trauma on the life cycle of individual survivors, as well as the possible transgenerational influence of this impact within the families of the survivors and on future generations.

The degree of recovery and the quality of integration of survivors of massive trauma are related to an interaction of many factors and results in a wide range of differing outcomes. Despite the catastrophic dimensions of the trauma and the immense losses, the experiences and their significance were different and unique for each individual.

Many factors determined how the individual was affected, such as age during the Shoa, personality resources, the quality of family life in childhood, the capacity to form relationships, and confidence in one's ability to affect one's fate. Furthermore, belonging to a community, group or ideology, the professional success, have been important factors in the struggle to overcome the effects of the traumatic past and to find meaning and satisfaction in the years since the Holocaust.

For many survivors who had been married and had

children before the Holocaust, the multiple losses of spouse and children, of siblings and extended families, created tremendous burdens of mourning. The memory of the former unmourned spouse and children sometimes cast a shadow over the new marriage and family relationships. In this age group, the symptoms of the so-called "concentration camp survivor syndrome" such as depressions, fears, flashback associations, guilt feelings and nightmares, have been more evident.

Survivors in general tend to be vulnerable to disappointment, separation, illness and death in members of their families and close friends. Furthermore, for some who have lived lives of constant activity and overactivity and are often highly successful achievers, cessation of activity can create serious problems. At such times when facing stressful life events, the suppressed painful memories of past suffering and loss can flood back causing or reinforcing depression and anxiety.

However, the vast majority of survivors did not become psychiatric patients and have shown remarkable capacities in overcoming the effect of the extreme experiences and multiple losses, creating new lives and healthy and successful families. Unfortunately, generalisations were made from clinical symptoms which did not do justice to the strength and complexity of the lives of survivors and their families.

Our research studies today are mainly concerned with understanding the processes

and strengths within the individual and his environment in the recovery, adaptation and integration of survivors. We have been focussing these studies on those who were in their teens and early twenties at the end of the war. This age group in general seems to have been less adversely affected by the traumatisation and made the best recovery despite the fact that their adolescent years were spent in ghettos and concentration camps. "Survivor syndrome" symptoms were present to a much lesser extent and survivor guilt often entirely absent.

It was much more possible for this age group to resume development, education and occupational training. As a result, marriages which occurred years later were usually on a more solid basis than with many of the older survivors who made hasty liaisons and gave birth to children very soon after liberation.

An important finding in our studies of survivors has been the role of small groups, friendships, and protective relationships in enhancing the chances of survival in the camps.

Almost all the well functioning "teen-age survivors" interviewed had experienced helping relationships in the camps and for many these experiences have remained as valuable memories often cherished as a humanising and ethical influence throughout their lives. Furthermore, the bonds which were created in the concentration camps and during the rehabilitation period after liberation have continued as an important

social support system for many of them throughout their lives up to the present. In the different countries in which they now live, mainly Israel, England and North America, many have maintained close contact and affection for each other, often of a sibling bond nature, throughout the past thirty-six years with much mutual caring and helping behaviour. The intensely supportive quality of the network of relationships of small and large groups, such as the '45 Aid Society, enabled much exchange of reminiscences and mutual support and encouragement. These self-help survivor groups have been of considerable help for many individuals, allowing for a slow "working through" of losses and other traumata in solidarity with others who had similar experiences. Some of these groups, especially if spouse and children were involved, became substitutes for the lost extended families. Such support systems may well have replaced a need for "therapy" which might have arisen without it.

Today, thirty-six years later, many survivors who were adolescents or young adults during the war feel a need to talk about their past; to return to and even to attempt a belated "working-through" of their Holocaust experiences. Now middle-

aged and older, they are confronted with a return of suppressed Holocaust memories as part of the normal process of reflection on and review of past life at this stage in the life-cycle.

In the early years after the war the attempt to come to terms with concentration camp experiences and Holocaust losses would have been so painful that it was avoided and postponed until this later period in life when the passage of time may have rendered the traumatic events more distant and less intolerably painful.

Furthermore, until then all the psychic energy of many survivors was mobilised to meet the demands of work and growing families which provided purpose and meaning in their lives. Some of the survivors who now feel the need to talk even connect the return of Holocaust memories with an increasing disillusionment and disappointment with the state of society and the world.

The ways of "coming to terms" with, and "overcoming" Holocaust traumata utilised by individual survivors are multiple and complex. Each phase of the life-cycle presented new opportunities for "dealing with" the traumatic memories and losses with great variations in individuals (for example episodes of delayed mourning). Creative artistic expression (painting, sculp-

ture, writing prose or poetry etc), Holocaust studies as well as communal and social activity have been of considerable value for survivors in "working through" their experiences as well as constituting meaningful communication of real importance for the rest of society.

They wanted "to speak" but waited because they "did not know how and with whom". Nowhere has this been better expressed than by the gifted survivor - writer Aharon Appelfeld:

"Human suffering is the lot of everyone, but the way to the suffering of extremity, like to death itself, is the escape from it;

but what can we do when each attempt to escape always returns us in the end to ourselves, to our childhood, to the camps, and to the ghettos?

In this circuit of escape and return our self-awareness moves, and until we 'work through' it we shall not be free".

(From "Essays in the First Person" by Aharon Appelfeld. Zionist Library, Jerusalem, 1979, p. 144.)

# A Retrospective Journey

William Samelson,  
Ph.D.

Do I live in the past? People ask when I tell them about the life I lived in Hitler's hell. No, I respond, I don't live in the past, but the past has a way of intruding into my life daily. It lives in me when my heart aches for the great, irreparable, losses I have suffered. My heart is still filled with pain, for the suffering I endured and for the torments my loved ones underwent before Nazi assassins mercilessly slaughtered them.

I also remember the 17th century philosophers, Leibnitz and Voltaire. The former claimed that ours is "the best of all worlds". The latter responded with a question: "If this is the best of all worlds, I wonder how the others are?" The story of my life allows me to ponder both statements on equal terms.

Common-sense dictates that there are no guarantees for a "good life". We are not always dealt from the top of the deck. It is easy to conclude, therefore, that life is part heaven, part hell. Some people create their own heaven or hell. Others fall victim to the evil forces that are bent on destroying whoever comes in their way of reaching success.

The Piotrkower *Yidn*, as I remember them from my ancestral home, could be divided into the common categories of humanity; some counted into the very fortunate, others were less able to draw out of life the good fortune. It was a fact of daily life. As such, the community recognised its responsibility toward the

*William obtained a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature & Philosophy. He has written many books, both fact and fiction. His latest book "Warning and Hope - Nazi Murder of European Jewry" was published in 2002.*

"have-nots" and did all in its power to lighten their burden. Thus, a precarious balance was struck and the human condition prevailed almost bearable.

I remember my grandparents, my uncles and aunts, cousins and various other relatives and friends. Most of them were gentle people, immersed, each in their own way, in eking out a living, minding their own business and mindful of other's privacy. To be sure, there were some troublemakers amongst the Piotrkower *Yidn*, but they were dealt with justice and due attention to their civil rights by the Shtetl authorities; the rabbis and the council of elders. We had a cheder (Hebrew school) and employed a *melamed* (teacher) who educated the local children. There was a Chevra Kaddishah (a philanthropic burial society that assisted in the internment of unfortunates unable to bear the burdens of the final obligations). All of those treasured institutions acted in concert so as to secure satisfaction to as many as was possible. It was a civilised way of caring for people from the cradle to the grave.

Not so when the Nazi scourge overran the European continent. All vestiges of civilised society crumbled under their assault. Cruelty became a common occurrence; kindness was an exception. Hitler viewed the Jew as a scientist would view a dangerous disease or virus, thus he engaged in a struggle to eradicate (*aurrotten*) the "bacillus". The analogy of disease allowed the perpetrator to dehumanise his victims and, thereby, facilitate mass murder. Hence, Hitler's minions felt no more qualms about killing a Jew than one would feel about exterminating a deadly virus.

As a boy of eleven, I experienced a most extraordinary event in the history of human evolution; an event so horrific, so lacking in adjectives to describe it, that we now call it *Shoah* or Holocaust, September 1, 1939. Nazi Germany invaded Poland. On that day, *Stuka* dive-bombers wreaked havoc on Piotrkow. We ran for cover toward the trenches called "bomb-shelters". For the first time in my brief existence, I experienced the sight of death. Men, women, old and young, small children in mothers' arms, lay strewn and fragmented on the pavements along the trail to the shelters. Their bodies were shattered into fragments; beneath them the ground was crimson red and soaked in their blood. I was terrified and deeply pained by the sight, saddened by the cruelty of humans toward humans. It was then, as an

eleven-year-old boy, I lost my innocence; I knew things would never be as they had been in the days of old. My childhood was lost, as it gave way to a premature adolescence.

My belief in human inhumanity was significantly strengthened with the arrival of German troops in Piotrkow on September 5th. Soon, the Nazis rounded up the Jews into the ghetto, forced them into slave labour, concentration camps and, finally, to their terminal destination in death camps. My entire family, save my brother Roman and my father (who was a POW in Stalin's Gulag) fell victims of the Nazi "Final Solution to the Jewish Question", a German euphemism for their killing of European Jewry. After the liquidation of Hortensia and Kara Glass works, where Roman and I were "employed", the Nazis "resettled" the ghetto Jews. The old, the handicapped, mothers with infants and children unfit for work, filled countless freight cars that transported them to the nearest extermination camp: Treblinka. My mother, Bela, and my little sister, Felusia were among them.

During the five-and-a-half years that followed, I had been confined in various labour and concentration camps. While there, I was exposed to the utmost deprivation, infectious diseases, severe hunger and frequent beatings and humiliation at the hands of my jailers. I was being punished for the crime of having been born of a Jewish mother. An innocent anger invaded my soul, and it grew into unbounded hatred. It was then I had begun to hate my enemies. But as my

hate grew to a great rage inside me, my heart was filled with its venom. Daily, I prayed that my jailers would cut open my chest and bite into my heart, drink the venom and die. But the enemy grew stronger each day, as did my hatred toward them, and my health declined exponentially to the point of resembling a living skeleton that was about to expire. And the hatred I felt toward the Germans soon encompassed all mankind, for there seemed to be no one in the whole universe who cared about my bitter fate; neither God, to whom I addressed my prayers, nor the free world. Everyone had abandoned us in our hour of need. I hated and distrusted people. I was alone to fend for myself, as I grew into my teens.

Yet, in that dark hour of mankind, there were some faint glimmers of light brought about by random acts of kindness of those few righteous Gentiles who on occasions risked their own lives to lighten our burden. It was that occasional kind word, a smile, and a shared portion of bread that helped us through another day. Still, the bitter hatred and the weight of the injustice wrought upon us transcended feelings of trust and love of mankind.

When the American GIS liberated me on May 1, 1945, I was physically reborn. An old man at the tender age of seventeen and a half I weighed 76 lbs. Hardly the weight of a grown-up. Mentally, I was a functional illiterate, having completed 6 grades of formal schooling and in the absence of education during the six and a half years of incarceration. Emotionally, hatred and

bitterness occupied my entire psyche and love was only a faint glimmer reminiscent of the distant past. While I gradually recovered my strength (during seven months of hospitalisation), I hungered for knowledge to enable me to avenge my losses in lives and property. Though I really wanted to become an assassin of my enemies, I soon realised the futility of my intended undertaking without the knowledge it necessitated. Therefore, as soon as I had left the hospital, I applied for entry into a high school in Wiesbaden, Germany, the place where my brother and I lived then.

As I was placed in a class with my peers, it was soon realised that I did not fit into a high school graduating class with my limited knowledge of a sixth grader. The school principal relegated me to the care of a professional tutor, Fr. Paula Kaiser, who was to prepare me for my graduation. It was a daunting task, especially since my teacher was legally blind, a former Nazi Party member, one I hated and mistrusted with a continuing passion.

So many questions preoccupied my mind then; would I be able to trust any person again? Was I ever going to grow capable of loving man and nature again? They were both cruel enemies up till now. Would I be able to lead a "normal" life with a loving wife, children and friends? And, most importantly; would I be capable of procreation? Those were the things I vaguely understood that worried me constantly, obsessively, especially the *procreation* part.

Soon, Paula (as she went on with her business of re-educating me), made me understand that all persons employed in the Third Reich had to be card-carrying members of the Nazi Party, and that she was one of them. Endowed with a sense denied to the rest of us, in spite of, or perhaps because of, her handicap, she was able to "see" me for what I was and sense what it was that made me the way I was. While the major portion of our time was spent studying reading, writing, and arithmetic, Paula succeeded in drawing me back at first into the natural environment through innocently devised trickery and without arousing my suspicion.

"The tulips must be in full bloom already, William," she remarked one day, "would you care to take me for a walk?" And while we walked together, she enquired about the multitude of colours before us and about the first buds appearing on the branches of the huge elm trees lining the avenue. At first hesitant, I soon began to feel at home with flowers and trees and the clouds in the sky and the raindrops in the spring, as well as the snowflakes during the winter. All of that. I described in minute detail to my teacher Paula. And I gradually allowed her to "see" me by placing her chubby fingers on my face and hair. I shared her joy when she laughed and her sadness when she wept. We had become trusted friends. I rediscovered the joy of laughter and felt the moisture of tears. My "conversion" into a human had begun. Reason slowly replaced those gnawing old feelings. It came to

me that if I could trust one person I might begin to trust humanity as well.

When I told Paula that I was considered a child prodigy, playing the violin from the time I was three years old, she was silent at first. She was an accomplished pianist, and she knew how six-and-a-half years of musical inactivity would atrophy the dexterity needed for performing any art and inflict irreparable damage on an aspiring musician's dreams. I shunned listening to music and attending concerts, thinking how I might envy the virtuosi for the success that was denied me. Here, too, Paula's wisdom worked its magic.

One day, the great violinist Heifetz, my childhood idol, visited Wiesbaden for a concert at the famed Kurhaus. I was aware of that rare treat, but hesitated to attend. Needless to say, at Paula's invitation, we attended the performance. At first envious and tearful, I sat without acknowledging the great master's virtuosity. Cautiously, Paula took my trembling hand into hers and squeezed it tenderly. "William," she whispered in the darkness, "it is *you* up there, my dear, think of it this way, my dear, enjoy." I responded, likewise in a whisper, "I love you, Paula." My conversion was complete. From that day on, I would tell my friends and acquaintances that it was the US GIs who had saved my life, but it was my teacher Ms. Paula Kaiser who saved my soul.

In February 1948, my brother Roman and my father Henryk (who meanwhile deserted the Soviet Army and joined us in Germany) set out for the land

of our dreams, the United States of America. I was looking forward to this journey all my life and especially after having been liberated by the US Armed Forces. I wanted to become part of the American dream; a dream of a tolerant and united society "with liberty and justice for all." I was eager to learn the English language in order to find work and resume my interrupted education.

Soon, the colleges I had attended had given me an understanding of the academic environment; its advantages and shortcomings. My father's trade of tailoring had taught me the benefits and disadvantages of unionism. In his attempt at becoming rich through inventiveness, he exposed us to the pitfalls of the legal system and its tragic consequences. My brother's inability to cope with the fast-paced American life forced his return to a regimented military routine.

The disappointments with our American brethren and their insensitivity to our past experiences and present needs cut deeply into the preconceived and romanticised notions we had harboured about them. The wastefulness of the Americans became soon evident in the midst of an over-abundance of goods. And their neglect of their civil rights belied the myth of a true democracy. I had become a fence-straddler and objective observer of the American people and their worldviews based on Monroe's isolationist doctrine.

Nightmares of the past had plagued my nights and dream fantasies of my lost

family visited me at any unexpected hour. I would bewail my past and think of the things my loved ones and I could have achieved if only things would have been different. My little sister would have been allowed to experience life's trials and perhaps found true love and gotten married; I might have become a great violinist and a physician; as was my father's wish. My parents might have prospered and enjoyed their grandchildren.

I was drafted into the Korean Action in 1951, which disrupted my studies and the completion of the Masters' Degree in Comparative literature. Fearing for my life again, I imagined the worst, only to be sent back stateside and thus avoiding the hazards of protracted combat. In 1953 I left the Army and continued my studies in the Humanities. I married a Cuban (Sephardic) lady in 1954, and two children were born soon thereafter (James in 1956 and Regina, 1958). I was on my way in pleasing my father regarding the "replenishment" of our decimated family tree. Sadly, he did not live to see his grandchildren for he died in 1958, two months after Regina's birth. My father's untimely death caused me great sorrow and pain. Especially painful was his refusal to derive naches (pleasure) from my successes in the academic field, having insisted that the only worthwhile profession for his son was a doctorate in medicine. After completing the M.A. degree, I continued work on my doctorate (Ph.D.) in philosophy and comparative literature and completed it in 1960. In 1962 and 1964

we were blessed with two sons, Henry and Morris, in that order. My degrees and publications brought me honours and invitations from my erstwhile antagonists, the German government. My first visit to Germany was extremely traumatic but useful for my career. However, my father's refusal to accept my Ph.D. degree as a valid *Doctorate* as he lay dying burned a lasting scar of guilt and false modesty, which was hard to overcome.

As I look back at the choices I contemplated after my liberation from Nazi hell, I rest assured that I have ventured on the right journey. The dedication to my work as professor foreign languages and comparative literature throughout a forty-year career in Academia fulfilled my dream of becoming a productive member of society in spite of the adverse influences during my formative years. My many publications, academic as well as personal accounts, have absorbed my energies to the point of having been forced to abandon my first marriage after the children had been settled, each in their own private life.

Presently, approaching the 60th anniversary of my liberation, I live happily with my second family in Texas; my wife Jenny Mai, and three children, Brian (20), Sharon (19) and Karin (14) years old. If my dear parents are observing me from afar, they ought to be pleased, for I have lived up to my promise to replenish and to be fruitful in every way, and to live a useful and happy life of the righteous. My thoughts travel to my loved ones often; my beloved parents; Felusia; my paternal and maternal

grandparents; so many uncles and aunts and cousins, and dear friends, all of whom are part of me as I venture into the winter of my life.

In my travels on the speaker's circuit, as I bear witness to the darkest period in the history of civilisation, I never fail to mention those gentle people of Piotrkow Trybunalski whose lives have been snuffed out by Nazi executioners. In speaking of the perpetrators, I also recall those righteous individuals without whose random acts of kindness many of us would not have survived Hitler's plan. I am reminded of the ancient saying, as it rings loudly in my mind throughout my deliberations: "When you save one life, you save humanity."

My work and my ideology are, necessarily, a reflection of my past and my parental desires. Nevertheless, honed by years of disciplined study and introspection, I have cut a bargain with the past by aspiring to accommodate the future. My sense of my self is based on this uncompromising principle on which I have built my life after the Shoah debacle. But through it all, my maternal grandfather Srukko's admonition echoes in my mind: "Welwele, always keep your dignity, love your people, and never forget where your roots are. Beyond that, never forget what happened here." These words he spoke to me, in a last embrace, as he entered on his terminal journey. The Piotrkower Jewish community, he had loved with all his heart, ended with that embrace as well. It is all now part of me, and it will remain so until my last breath.

# Return trip to Belsen

By Eva Oppenheimer

It was on Friday lunchtime that a few survivors, and their families met up at Heathrow Airport, with Stephen Smith and some of the staff of Beth Shalom. We were going to Bergen Belsen for the liberation ceremonies of that camp 60 years ago. I was feeling very nervous, but having my brother Paul and his wife Corinne there helped (my other brother Rudi came later that day).

After arriving at our hotel in Hanover (incredibly clean and tidy) we went to Synagogue, and met up with many more survivors. Our party, however, did not go to the service, but went instead into the building next door, which was the old people's home, for our dinner, which was specially cooked for us, as we did not want to keep the staff waiting. I had no idea that so many elderly Jewish people were living in Hanover. The building seemed very large. It was after dinner - which was very good - we started reminiscing about Belsen 60 years ago, and also Rudi, who by this time joined us, telling us about his day at the Memorial Service at Hyde Park.

The next day we went to the airport to collect Paul's three children and one grandchild (Lara), and then went off to the camp. Many people were already there wandering around the grounds, which were now beautifully kept, with grass and heather, and a few tombstones

dotted around (including one to my parents). Trees surrounded this place with birds singing in them. It was eerie wandering around, a place that has haunted me for such a long time. Paul and Rudi remembered so much more of where each of the barracks was: and I tried so hard to find the barrack where my mother died, and where a family called Birnbaum looked after me.

One of the few remnants of the camp is the railway track, with its awful ramp, overgrown now by weeds. There is talk that some of the foundations which were burnt down by the British Army because of the many diseases are going to be excavated, which will give an idea of how the camp looked. It will, however, never give the impression of the filth, the awful stench and the loneliness people felt there.

Sunday 17th April, we arrived early for the commemoration service. It was quite cold and wet, but blankets and umbrellas were handed out. There are two memorial sites at Belsen - one for Polish prisoners of war, gypsies and homosexuals, and Jewish people. It was there that we gathered first. I'm sorry to say that the service there did nothing to comfort me. The second service at the Jewish Memorial, which was about two hundred yards from the other one, was very moving and left so many people in tears,

including my 40 year old nephew.

It was after the services that a small miracle happened to me. We were bussed over to the nearby British Army barracks for lunch - vegetable soup, various rolls and cheeses, followed by fresh fruit. I was sitting on one of the long trestle-type tables, talking to people around me. The army had by this time requested that perhaps the younger people would have their lunch outside as far more people had come than they anticipated. My niece, who was with her parents, rose and offered an elderly couple her seat and the empty one next to it. My brother Paul was talking to them, asked what their name was and where did they come from. Imagine his surprise when the lady said her maiden name was Birnbaum. Immediately, Paul asked her if she looked after orphan children in the camp and on one of the trains that left Belsen before the actual date of liberation. No, she said, it was my mother who looked after about 50 children, and I was one of them. It was an extremely emotional day for me, to find someone whose mother looked after me so many years ago. Hugs, kisses and many thank-yous for looking after me were said over the next hour before we went our separate ways. Belsen for me now is where some goodness can come out of suffering.

# Holocaust Memorial Day - January 2005

## A Survivor's View

by Witold Gutt

The day 27.1.05 marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The theme of the memorial day was, Survivors, Liberation, Rebuilding Lives. HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh were present at all the events that took place.

Those invited to this national commemoration were survivors of concentration and extermination camps liberated by the allies, liberators, representatives of affected communities and senior public and religious figures.

The day began with a reception at St. James's Palace at which the highlight was the presence of HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh who met the camp survivors, some of whom were presented and spoke to them. The historic surroundings provided a comfortable yet dignified setting for the guests to converse with one another and exchange memories,

In the afternoon a major commemoration took place at Westminster Hall, in the Palace of Westminster, in

the presence of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh. The Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Leader of the Opposition, as well as religious and other community leaders attended. Six hundred camp survivors, and some camp liberators had been invited to attend with their guests.

An important aspect of the commemoration has been the recognition of the resilience of the survivors in the Holocaust and in the rebuilding of their lives. This was evident in many of the key speeches and was explicitly stated in the written introduction to the programme by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary who state, "We recognise and deeply respect the courage and determination of survivors who rebuilt their lives in harsh and difficult circumstances, having lost families, livelihoods, communities and cultures." Tribute was also paid to the role of the liberators of the camps.

I shall never forget the feelings of hope and thankfulness that accompanied my first sight of the American soldiers who liberated Dachau on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1945.

It is noteworthy that the task of reading the names of 3,000 of the victims later in the programme was given to the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors - the children were not present, we heard their voices. This reading gave implicit recognition to the continuing influence of the Holocaust on the lives of the children and grandchildren of survivors.

Music of the highest quality featured strongly in the memorial programme. Music is a medium which may sometimes, better than words, evoke intense feelings.

During the proceedings, photographs of the camps were projected on to the stark walls of the hall, bringing the audience into close contact with the enormity of the suffering. Such visual evidence serves to condemn the Nazis for ever, and shows those who deny the Holocaust for what they are, traitors to humanity.



*Yom Hashoa - Survivors with their grandchildren lighting the memorial candles.*



*Survivors at the Yom Hashoa Memorial Service.*



*Lighting of the Memorial Candles at the 60th Anniversary Reunion.*

The ceremony opened with Elgar's 'O, Harken Thou,' and a reading from 'If this is a Man,' by Primo Levi, whose writing is unrivalled in Holocaust literature, followed by an introductory address given by Lord Winston.

Then came a heart-rending performance of Bloch's 'Scenes from Jewish Life' by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, with magnificent solo playing by the cellist Natalie Clein.

In the next item, Susan Pollack described in a video her rescue as a skeletal teenager by allied liberators at the gates of Belsen, and her recent visit to the site of the camp where she again met the British Major who rescued her. She had been very brave to make the return journey and her account was very poignant. There at Belsen, she lit a candle in a miner's lamp

which was brought back to London under Army escort. During the ceremony this lamp was carried into Westminster Hall, to light 60 candles, one for each year since liberation. The Queen and The Duke lit the first two candles, and a procession of survivors lit the rest. The showing of the scenes of the video was interspersed with extracts from the oratorio named 'Annaliese' using words from the diary of Anne Frank.

Under the heading 'the Forgotten Holocaust' the murder of the gypsies and other targeted groups, including gays, was recalled. The disabled black athlete Ade Adepiton told us from his wheelchair that as a black disabled man he would have been in line for extermination, and the Boros Gypsy Ensemble played a poignant gypsy lament on traditional instruments.

In a significant address the Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks urged people of all creeds to challenge prejudice and intolerance. He paid tribute to survivors and wondered how they had found courage to continue having witnessed such horrors. He said, 'Just as the eye can be blinded by too much light, so the soul can be broken by too much darkness. Yet theirs was not. They re-affirmed life, built families and cared for one another.' He continued, 'The survivors have borne the weight of memory. Now we must carry it and hand it on to our children.'

The Prime Minister used as his main theme the effect of the Holocaust on his own generation.

Anglican Christians were represented by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Roman Catholics by Cardinal Murphy O'Connor, who mentioned that the Pope had urged Catholics to renew their understanding of the Jewish roots of their faith.

The vast, cold Westminster Hall with its great hammer-beam ceiling was a fitting setting for this commemoration. The oldest of the parliament buildings, it housed the chief law courts of England for six centuries, and here deceased Monarchs and great statesmen such as Winston Churchill lie in state.

My Mother, Jadwiga Gutt nee Peiper, died in Auschwitz in 1943 and I spent the night preceding the Memorial Day thinking about her.

Written 28th Jan 2005

# The Football Match

By Paul Oppenheimer

To mark the annual national Holocaust Memorial Day 2005, the Holocaust Educational Trust and the All Party Parliamentary Football Club arranged a football match between children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors against MPs.

The match was played on Monday 24th January 2005 at Upton Park, home of West Ham United Football Club and a notorious multi-racial area.

Both my 'Second Generation' sons Nick (age 40) and Simon (age 38) volunteered to play for the HET team, whilst my brother Rudi and myself were Holocaust survivors in attendance.

Several hundred local school children had been invited to refreshments, watch the match and fill the stands.

Nancy Dell'Olio - girlfriend of Sven-Goran Eriksson, the England team manager - kicked off to start the match and by half-time, the HET scratch team were leading 3 - 1. Both Nick and Simon contributed well, being extremely fit from regular match play, but never having played on such a large professional pitch.

The MPs, including Ian Duncan Smith and managed by Lawrie McMenemy, played decidedly better in the second half; perhaps some of

the older MPs had been replaced by younger researches and staffers, to score 3 goals without reply. In a final frenzied burst of excitement, the HET team won 5 - 4.

The subsequent reception explained the intention of keeping the Holocaust in the public eye, raising awareness of the issues and tackling racism in sport, by reaching an audience interested in football, but not so knowledgeable of the Holocaust. The facts of the Holocaust should never be forgotten, even 60 years after the liberation of Auschwitz. Survivors of the camps were available to talk to young people and tell their

experiences in schools and colleges and universities.

Three days after The Football Match, on 27th January, the national Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated in Westminster Hall.

Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh were in attendance and there were speeches by Holocaust survivors and the Prime Minister and the Chief Rabbi and by Sven-Goran Eriksson, who recalled the England football team visit to Poland during the previous year, when he led the entire squad on a tour of Auschwitz - an experience never to be forgotten.



*Paul and Rudi at the match.*



*Ambulance dedication at Magen David Adom Head Quarters in Israel.*

## Ambulance Dedication Ceremony

By Anne Peterson

**O**n the morning of Friday 13th May 2005, members of the '45 Aid Society, accompanied by Chairman, Ben Helfgott and some American and Israeli supporters, made the journey to the Gertner Institute, Tel Hashomer, for the formal handing over of our ambulance to Magen David Adom at the Israeli Blood Centre. Elli Benson, the Director of the Friends Society, who thanked the '45 Aid Society for their financial support, warmly welcomed the members. Members were

*Anne is the wife of David Person (Pietrikowski) who came to England with the Southampton "boys".*

briefed on the work of the Centre and although our ambulance was handed over in London in 2003, it now stood proudly outside for its unveiling. This was an auspicious occasion to coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Camps.

Our ambulance, proudly bearing its '45 Aid inscription

and its radio code No. 32 in red, awaited the formal handing over of the keys. Members were told that the ambulance had already seen service, including the night-club bombing in Tel Aviv in 2004, as well as many patrols. Following speeches by Ben Helfgott and the Centre Manager, Avi Zohar, the unveiling took place to great applause. All the members signed the Israeli flag which has been brought back to London. Refreshments were then given to the members.

## Inauguration of the Teachers' Garden in Yad Vashem



**O**n Sunday 15th May 2005, a party of sixty-two members of the '45 Aid Society visited Yad Vashem. The first part of the visit took place in front of the garden endowed by the members of the '45 Aid to honour the memory of the educators who perished in the Shoah. The members were welcomed by Solly Kaplinsky, Chairman of the Teaching School, who discussed the purpose of the

school, which was to educate teachers, who would go forth and teach around the world the legacy of the Shoah. The inauguration was then carried out by Avner Shalev, with a moving tribute to the '45 Aid Support over the years and how their shared memories would keep the

belief in human values. He praised the work of the second and third generations, whose relevant research gave purpose and meaning to Yad Vashem. In his address, he emphasised that teachers are the key factors in promoting the remembrance and promised to keep the

standards and the mission going to continue the direction of the '45 Aid.

Ben Helfgott then presented a cheque for £50,000 to the Centre and spoke about how the idea arose in 1995, which has now been realised. A plaque was then unveiled.



*Dedication of the Teachers Garden at Yad Vashem Jerusalem.*

## Speech by Field Marshal Lord Bramall to welcome the '45 Aid Society to the Museum for the Screening of Herb Krosney's new Film "THE BOYS: TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY"

I am delighted and honoured to have been asked to address you this afternoon.

We are here for the premiere screening of a film which has been made about you, the '45 Aid Society, who came together as youngsters of the concentration camps back in 1945 and who rebuilt your lives in this country after the war.

Your story was of course told first in words by Sir Martin Gilbert in his very illuminating book "The Boys", which came out a few years ago, a moving account of the suffering inflicted on

you and your families under Nazi occupation and how you coped with the aftermath of that experience.

And now there is a film, developed with Sir Martin's guidance, and narrated by him - which will bring the story to a wider audience. Those who see it will hear you describe in your own words the terrible privations you endured in the Nazi camps, and your physical recovery from that time in the weeks immediately after the war. They will learn about your impressions of this country when you arrived, how you learned

English, adapted and supported each other, found education, training and jobs, and raised families.

I am particularly glad to be here this afternoon, because it allows me to say a few words about the Holocaust Exhibition, which essentially tells your story, and to give you some idea of the impact which it has had on our visitors.

As you know, I had the privilege to be the Chairman of the Museum's Board of Trustees during the time that the Holocaust Exhibition was conceived and developed.

It represented a significant

turning point in the history of the Museum. We had never tackled a genocide before, and we were novices in the field of Holocaust scholarship, an area which as you know is fairly complex.

I know from Suzanne Bardgett, who directed the exhibition, that one of the great satisfactions of her team was the fact that they were able to meet so many of you, and to hear your stories first-hand.

We are extremely grateful for the trust you placed in our institution to present this appalling event accurately and sensitively. As you know, we had an Advisory Group to help us in this task, and several of them are well known to you.

Sir Martin Gilbert helped us with the historical, interpretation, as did Professor David Cesarani, who I am delighted to see here today. Ben Helfgott, Chairman of the '45 Aid Society, guided us and opened many doors for us, as did the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn who sadly died before the Exhibition was completed. I am delighted to say that his widow, Jacqui Gryn, is here today.

So how has the Holocaust

Exhibition been received? Well, it has had a very profound impact. It steadily receives between 700 and 800 visitors each day, and roughly a million and a half visitors have now been through it.

And those visitors find themselves utterly absorbed and quite often overwhelmed by what the Exhibition tells them.

There are not many public places in London today where people stand in complete silence. But that is what they do in the Holocaust Exhibition.

And the comments left behind by visitors show that they take a great deal from it - not simply learning the history, but asking themselves very profound questions.

I don't know how I would have behaved - wrote one visitor - and I pray I never learn.

And visitors frequently comment on what it took to survive and their admiration for the survivors. One wrote:

It's the triumph of the spirit which comes through in this display.

And so to the film. I understand from Suzanne that it is a really remarkable social document and that Herb

Krosney, its director, has done an inspired and very professional job of tracking down original photographs and film, and interweaving these with the testimony so many of you gave him. Our own Paul Sargent in the Film Department made a special contribution through finding the remarkable film footage of many of you embarking on the RAF planes which brought you from Czechoslovakia, and he is with us today also.

And so to conclude, I understand that the film demonstrates that it was indeed a stroke of genius - as your mentor Yogi Mayer describes it - to keep you all together in 1945, something which fostered your togetherness and sustained you as you went forward into adulthood and life's challenges in your newly-adopted country.

And so today, on the sixtieth anniversary of your arrival in this country, the Director General, Robert Crawford, and I are delighted to welcome you here, and invite you now to watch

"The Boys: Triumph over Adversity".

## "Mir Sennen Du"

By Aubrey Rose C.B.E.

*Aubrey is an ardent supporter of our Society. He is a former Vice-President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, an original member of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, and spent five years as a Commissioner of the Commission for Racial Equality. His autobiography "The Rainbow Never Ends" will shortly be published.*

I had not been in a concentration camp. I had not perished. I had not survived. Had my parents not left Eastern Europe earlier in the century, I might

have perished. I might have survived.

The strip of water between Britain and the Continent had enabled me to live in freedom. So had the

courage of the British, of Churchill, and eventually of the combined Allied power. Alongside so many other children and youngsters, I had endured the nightly

bombing, the Blitz, had slept on Tube platforms, or in shelters in the garden, the home. But still, I was free.

Not so those, of my age, who languished in degradation in those camps, never knowing from day to day whether they would ever know freedom. Not even, in one way, were their captors free. They were imprisoned, mentally, even physically, as part of a wicked conspiracy of hate, violence and brutality, the embodiment, as Churchill perceived, "of many forms of soul-destroying evil".

Among those Jews who had survived were 732, whom fate subsequently threw together. They were a handful among millions. They were young. Almost all had lost their parents, their families.

As the terrible war ended in 1945, I, in London, was surrounded by my parents, my family. A few had died in the bombing, but I could hope to resume a normal life. I was the same age as many of 'The Boys', as the 732 became known. I knew then nothing about them, who they were, what they had endured. But for a lucky chance I could easily have been one of them.

I looked around, 16th August 2005, in the spacious rooms of the Imperial War Museum, south of the Thames, at the Boys and their families, wives, husbands, children, grand-

children, eager, happy voices and faces, a re-union. Ten years before I had joined them on the 50th anniversary of their liberation. I had sat then next to one of them, the incomparable Rabbi Hugo Gryn. Earlier this year I had the privilege of attending their 60th re-union celebration.

Now here we were, a warm sunny Tuesday, not far from the modern London Eye, the Gothic Houses of Parliament, the heart of London. We heard welcoming speeches, the former Chairman of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. Field Marshal Lord Bramall and its General Director, Robert Crawford. Later we heard also from His Honour Israel Finestein Q.C., and Ben Helfgott. We assembled in the Museum's cinema. The Museum and its staff had always been such friends, had worked so hard to set up the Holocaust Exhibition within its walls. Now The Boys own '45 Aid Society, had invited us all to see a film.

Our guide through the film was wonderfully lucid historian Sir Martin Gilbert whose book had brought to life in print, in written words, the story of The Boys. Now, the grim reality, the epic survival of a few, made a powerful visual impact. We saw the episodes of the War, the degradation of the camps, the inhumanity of the death trains.

We saw too how the Boys, there were girls too, had come to Britain, lived in hostels, went out into the world, resumed their fractured education, learned English, welded themselves into British society. It was inspiring for me to sit there, looking at those on the screen describe far-off-days, how they felt, what they sought. Despite all they had endured, there was no hate, no vengeance. They were real human beings and would never sink to the bestial depths of their captors.

I looked around at the audience and saw the same faces as those talking to me on the screen, Ben Helfgott, Roman Halter, Krulik Wilder, David Herman, Harry Spiro, Solly Irving, Michael Etkind, and many others.

The secret of their survival in Britain, their escape into normality? It was their continued unity. They had kept together, throughout the years, as one devoted family or band of brothers and sisters. They had remained in touch, supporting one another. They had blossomed forth and, in a special way, had triumphed.

No wonder the film was called 'Triumph Over Adversity'. Adversity there had been, a modest word for what they had suffered, but triumph it had been. The film was well-named. The Boys had triumphed indeed.

# How Swimming Influenced My Life

Susie Halter

When my mother took me swimming from an early age on Sundays to the Lukcs swimming pool in Budapest, she probably didn't realise what a great role swimming was going to play in my life. I discovered buoyancy at the age of 5½. I remember the moment up to this day. I believe this happens to many people that certain events become like a milestone in their memory.

I taught myself a kind of breast-stroke but later automatically started a double arm back-stroke.

I was in the first year of my secondary school in Raskai Lea gymnasium when our very ambitious gym teacher announced that those who could swim would take part in the Budapest Interschool KISOK race at the National Sport Swimming Pool on St Margaret Island in the indoor pool. I had never been to that famous pool and had never swum in a 33⅓ metre pool. I came third in the one length back-stroke. The first and second were already known club swimmers. Therefore, I considered myself first as a complete untaught outsider.

On that occasion, Sarosi, the other girls' coach, approached my mother and asked if she would agree to let me join his club, the FTC. My mother refused, thinking competitive swimming would be detrimental to my health. I was very upset, but had to accept the decision. Years later, another coach approached me, wanting to train me. Since I felt that I couldn't go back to Sarosi after my mother's refusal, I

joined the MUE and presented my family with a fait-a-complis.

I was under 14 when I swam my first race in the yearly Newcomers' race and was beaten to second place by Sarosi's latest protégée. From that time on, she never beat me again and I won all the under-14 back-stroke races that summer, bringing a lot of points to my club, the MUE.

Soon the anti-Jewish laws came into force and I wasn't invited to the yearly MUE Club dinner. They only invited one Jewish swimmer, who was the senior breast-stroke champion. She tried to talk to me and told me that all this will be over soon and I should be invited to future dinners. I told her that "I shall never again swim for the MUE, and immediately left off training with them and joined the Jewish coach, Sarosi, the one my mum refused in the first place. The two girls who beat me in the school gala became my best friends. One of them, Eva Szekely became an Olympic champion in '52 and Adel Vamos lives in Australia and became the 1,000 metres record-holder.

During the war, we Jewish swimmers were no longer allowed to race, but we swam in a smaller pool and trained hard under Sarosi. We had time trials and the guests of the Lukacs Pool were very supportive, awarding us trophies for good times recorded.

When our house had the yellow star on it, as did my friend Eva's, we could only leave the house during

limited hours and had to wear a yellow star. My friend and I decided that we really badly wanted to have a swim and, without the star, sneaked out and went for a swim to a pool we didn't frequent before. To crown it all, after our swim we went to the famous Gerbau and had cakes before going home. It was quite a foolish thing to do as the staff at the pool could have spotted and reported us.

Of the war years, I could write at length; how I escaped from the transport taking us to the Austrian border before being handed over to the Germans by the Hungarians soldiers; how I walked back to Budapest realising that my parents were already in the ghetto. Swimming didn't come into it at that time, but the fortitude acquired through training helped me to manage.

Eventually, the Russians came into Budapest and soon the war was over. After the war, the swimmers cleaned the National Pool and we could swim. We were under-nourished and despite our lack of training we beat our opponents and had a very successful season. We were once again back at school. I took the matriculation examination and trained twice a day.

In 1947, I swam in the University World Championships in Paris and got a bronze in the 100 metres back-stroke. This was the last and only time that the Hungarian flag went up for my third place.

For the 1948 Olympics in London, I was a probable choice for the team and when

my place was secured for the 100 metres free-style and possibly for the relay, I came to London at the invitation of my aunt and uncle who were prepared to have me stay with them for a year to study.

The 1948 Olympics was an outstanding event. In those days, there was no Olympic Village. The girls stayed at St Helen's School in Northwood and we had our meals at the Hendon Technical College, where the men stayed. We travelled everywhere by tube.

In the heat, general confusion and excitement, I swam badly and didn't make the semi-finals, but still I enjoyed being part of the wonderful event and watched Zatopek and Fanny Blankers Cohen run.

After the Olympics were over, I had permission to stay and study in England and I joined the famous Mermaid Swimming Club. We went for the Nationals in different parts of England. Besides studying, I trained and represented Middlesex, the club.

In 1950, I also joined Maccabi through Barkochba Swimming Club. They were preparing for the Maccabiah in the newly-founded country, Israel. We had a great send-off in the Grosvenor House. The opening of the Maccabiah was a most uplifting experience. Ben Gurion gave the opening address. Doves were let loose and Jewish athletes from all countries paraded in the festive stadium at Ramat Gan. We were feeling the heat in a smart but warm uniform donated to the English Team by Marks and Spencer. Mr Reise was our coach. During the Maccabiah, I made a lot of friends. It was during the

training sessions that I met my future husband, Roman. Within a year we were married.

At the 1950 Maccabiah I won five gold medals, including one for the team race. In 1957, both Roman and I took part in another Maccabiah. This time, I gained silver in the 200 metre free, bronzes for the 100 metre free and 100 metres back. Once again, a gold in the team race.

I carried on swimming, won the London Championship 100 metres and various other events.

In 1954 our first child, Aloma, was born. I gave up work with Air-India, a job which I got through a friend in the Mermaid Swimming Club. Her parents were in India and we were both attending college in London.

In 1956 our son Ardyn was born. We carried on swimming with limitations.

In 1957 Ardyn was only one year old and it was wonderful when Roman decided that he would look after the children and I could go (if selected) to swim in the 1957 Maccabiah. It was great to have some 'time off'. Any mother with two small children will testify to that. I had the honour of carrying the team flag. I still managed to get a bronze.

Swimming was still important in the family. We took the children swimming at an early age. Aloma, a baby Mermaid, became a full Mermaid at the age of six. Ardyn was, in due course, a member of the Hampstead Priory Swimming Club. Aviva was born in 1956 and she, too, was a baby Mermaid.

Soon I started teaching swimming, having acquired my teachers' certificate

through the Mermaid Swimming Club, where I was, by now, a Life Member.

Our son Ardyn, who won a scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge after attending Haberdashers, got three full and one half Blue swimming for Cambridge. Aloma, a scholar at Newnham College, Cambridge, was also swimming in the University swimming club. I coached Ardyn at an early age and he won his 100 metres back age group swims at the age of 10 and 11 in the Junior Nationals at Crystal Palace and Blackpool. Aviva got her B.A. at Camberwell Art Collegiate after attending North London College School and swimming for them.

After finishing at Cambridge, both Aloma and Ardyn went on Alya to Israel. When I was once visiting Ardyn in Israel, he took part in a race at Givat Haim and I took part just for fun. Garson Shaffer, the Olympian, and resident coach there, told me that "you could get a place in the coming World Championships for Masters in Brazil". Since my club in London was going, I too decided to try for it and, indeed, I got a bronze in the 50 metres back and 4th in the 100 metres.

Since then I have been training as well as teaching swimming. In addition, I took my teacher training course at All Souls as a mature student. Incidentally, I enrolled to All Saints on the recommendation of a local headmaster at Ashmount in whose school I set up a swimming programme for ILEA.

When I qualified as a teacher, I still continued swimming teaching at

Westminster under School and took a part-time teaching job in Islington for ILEA.

Many British and International competitions followed. This entailed visits to France, Germany, Austria and New Zealand and the USA. I was lucky enough to end up with reasonable placing. The best result was a second in Sindelfingen, Germany, in a European Championship in the 200 metre free and two years ago in Millau, France, silvers in the 50 metres free and 50 metres butterfly events.

My Waterloo was in March 2004 when I officiated at a Westminster Under

Inter-house competition. I slipped, although only judging. That afternoon I was due to swim in the Welsh Masters Championship in Swansea and instead I ended up at St Thomas' Emergency in London, having been taken by ambulance with a serious shoulder injury. It was operated on in May by Mr Levy in the Reading Shoulder Unit of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Whilst having physiotherapy, I started my own hydro-therapy at the local pool.

Eleven months later I still have a problem with my right arm movement but in January I ventured an entry for the Southern Counties

Long Course Championships at Crystal Palace for the 50 metre back and freestyle (there was no turn involved in the long racing pool) and I swam reasonable times, getting a gold and silver.

Our seven grandchildren are all good swimmers. Roman and I have our daily swim at the ripe age of 77.

When at St James' Palace, I was introduced to Her Majesty The Queen. The sportsman introducing me said "Mrs Halter was swimming in the Olympics". The Queen said "Are you still swimming?" and as I answered "Yes", she said "Really" and moved on.

## A Dream Fulfilled

Jerzy Lando

When we read that the number of university students in the UK represents currently 6% of population - and this is six times as many as in the 1960s (HERO. 2005) - it is hard to realise how small was the number of the privileged few who had access to higher education before the Second World War, where my narrative starts. At that time, even in France, Germany and Britain, university students formed only one-tenth of one per cent of their total population (Hobsbawn 1994, p.295).

In pre-war Poland prospective Jewish students had to contend with additional handicaps; gentile students were irritated by the number of Jewish colleagues, at times in excess of 20% of the total number. As open anti-Semitism erupted in the post-Pilsudski era, the conservative and rightist

*Jerzy was born in Lodz and during the war lived in the Lodz Ghetto, Warsaw Ghetto, and then on the Aryan side. He came to England in 1946 and was a very successful businessman both in the textile industry and in computers. His book "Saved By My Face" was published four years ago and has enjoyed considerable success.*

students demanded a quota to be placed on the admission of Jews. They also demanded that Jewish students should be forced to sit separately on the so-called ghetto benches, though many Jews preferred to stand during the lectures rather than sit there (Watt 1979, p.363). Consequently, the number of Jewish students declined.

None of these problems applied to my family. In fact, like many others, we were

blind to them. My parents were wealthy enough to send their sons to study abroad; my elder brother studied at the prestigious Manchester College of Technology - part of Manchester University - and this is where my father, a successful textile manufacturer intended me to study as well. In due course, the sons would join their father in running the business, with the added advantage of what was considered as the best specialised education of this kind. When the war broke out, I was starting my final school year, looking forward to studying in England very soon.

A two-year spell in the Warsaw Ghetto, followed by two years of existence under a false Christian identity and nine months in a German POW camp, put an end to such aspirations. When I arrived in England in 1946,

my first journey was to Manchester, where I was hoping to get a place - most were already allocated to the demobilised British ex-servicemen - relying on my brother having been known there as a former student. I was too late. However, the Principal promised me a place a year later and suggested that I should enrol in the meantime at the Textile Technology Department of Salford Royal Technical College. He kept his promise but, because of my restricted financial means, when faced with the alternative of three more years at the University and one year at Salford before I could earn a living with a qualification, I had to opt for the latter. To satisfy my boundless ambition, typical of a penniless outsider determined to make good in a foreign country, I worked for over fifty years under constant pressure, trying to create a successful textile manufacturing enterprise and later a specialised computer business, while always dreaming of what I was so cruelly deprived of by the German invaders - the opportunity study at a university for a degree.

At the age of 78 I retired from full-time work and, having come across a prospectus of the Open University, in order to complement what was my life's technical bias, I chose to study 'humanities' at the Arts Faculty; art history, literature, music, philosophy, classical studies, history, religious studies, and history of science. It was also an ideal environment to provide an answer to a question that

had been haunting me since I saw in front of me the first uniformed German: what kind of cultural world do we live in that allows "all this" to happen and why did "all this" happen? My next year course *Total War and Social Change: Europe 1914 - 1955* might bring me closer to an answer.

What makes Open University method of learning effective is pressure of meeting targets, monthly submission of essays - they are returned with tutors' comments and advice. Tutorials are usually held once a month with an opportunity of live discussion with your tutor and fellow students. Bulletin boards offer conferencing facilities with other students and course facilitators. Teaching materials include printed books, video and sound tapes. Some courses are supplemented by a residential one-week course with a demanding timetable at one of the UK universities. Optional revision courses are held at some universities before the final examination at the end of each course.

My starting course introducing humanities lived up to the promise of helping 'to express myself more clearly and develop the reading, analysis and interpretation skills needed before moving on to more specialised courses at the next level'. An introduction to philosophy showed (as it promised) 'how philosophical issues arise in familiar questions about our own nature and situation, and taught me the techniques of analysis and argument essential to other academic subjects and to

everyday discussion'.

After my first year of study, I was privileged to receive the bursary award from Dorothy Schuler's foundation that is presented once a year to two Open University Art Faculty students of retirement age. The *Ham & High* printed an article under the heading 'Ghetto survivor Jerzy finally able to fulfil a dream', the dream to study for a degree.

A few days ago, shortly before my 83rd birthday and four years after I embarked on the project, I received a letter confirming the award of a BA degree. Next year I hope to complete another course that will allow me to add the words 'Honours' to the BA. I shall look forward then to a graduation ceremony most likely to take place at Palais de Congres in Versailles.

I believe that many of your readers could derive considerable benefits from following my example.

Jerzy Lando BA (Open)  
Contact for Open University:  
e-mail: [london@open.ac.uk](mailto:london@open.ac.uk)  
Phone (020)7485 6506

### **Bibliography**

Hobsbawm E., *Age of Extremes* Penguin Book, London, 1994

Watt Richard M., *Bitter Glory* Touchstone, New York, 1979

*HERO*, the primary internet portal for academic research and higher education in the UK (online) available from [http://www.hero.ac.uk/inside\\_he/higher\\_education\\_statistics6763.cfm](http://www.hero.ac.uk/inside_he/higher_education_statistics6763.cfm) (accessed 26/12/05)

# A PLEA

*at the*

## International Scientific Conference Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytskyi: The Dilemma of Humanistic Choice in the conditions of Totalitarian Regimes

By Lili Pohlmann, Lviv, 7th November 2005

**YOUR EMINENCE - DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS AND GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

**M**y name is Lili Pohlmann. My maiden name was Stern. I was born here in Lwow, but have lived in London, England, since 1946.

I am no historian - nor am I an academician, but I am a witness to history, at least to some events in it, and I have come here, after an absence of 60 years and 3 months, for one and one reason only; to pay respect and homage to a GREAT MAN - His Holiness the Archbishop Metropolitan **ANDREI COUNT SZEPTYCKIJ.**

I have given depositions and testified on his behalf countless times - in spoken word, in writing, and on film - all are to be found in various museums round the world, in Holocaust exhibitions and in books - but never before have I addressed such a distinguished and influential audience as this. I shun speaking in public - but the moment I was invited to attend this conference I knew I had to be here in order to testify yet again - foremost to defend the good name of this Remarkable Man... this

Great Ukrainian...

To have survived the Nazi occupation in Lvov is in itself a miracle; if I stand here before you today it is thanks to the infinite humanity, infinite courage and infinite loving-kindness of the Metropolitan. For it is this saintly and noble man who, in the most inhuman times in history - at the risk to his own life, as well as the lives of many nuns, monks and priests - dared to give sanctuary to the persecuted Jewish people, not only within his own residence of St. Jur, but, at his recommendation, within Uniate monasteries, and convents and orphanages of the Studite Order. He dispatched letters to priests, ordering that they be read to the congregations in all churches. In these he warned his people - and I quote: that: "anyone helping the Nazis to persecute or kill Jews will be doomed to eternal damnation".

What more could an old, ailing, paralysed man do, than to protest thus?! And did he not, by this very act alone, defy the Nazi regime - and their willing collaborators from within the Ukrainian community?! Did he not, by



*With Cardinal Huzar, Head of Ukrainian GR. CATH. Church.*

example, show them up for murderers that they were? Did the head of any other church dare to protest, as he did, in his well-documented letters to the top echelons of the Nazi regime?! And when writing to Pope Pius XII, did he not begin by apologising for not writing since the occupation of Lvov by the Nazis, for fear that his letter: "... might fall into the hands of those who should not be reading it..." In the same letter he says, and I quote; "The German rule is wicked, almost diabolical - by far surmounting that of the Bolsheviks. ... **ARE THESE THE WORDS OF A 'COLLABORATOR'????!!**" Can any evidence for the so-called "co-operation" on his side outweigh his acts of goodness and Christian charity??

If one refers to the infamous letter of 1941, it is important to bear in mind the climate of the times - that it was written at the time when the German army was seen as 'the rescuer from the persecution of the Bolsheviks' who were offering false hope for a free and independent Ukraine. This letter was written at the time when no-one - I stress, no one, not even the Jews! - could envisage what the 'civilised' Germans were capable of... The moment he saw and understood their intentions, however, he did not remain silent - he acted, and his actions spoke louder than words... He fought with his pen - and his pen was mightier than the proverbial sword. Let us not forget his well-known encyclical letter of 1942, entitled: "Thou shalt not kill." **ARE THESE THE WORDS OF A 'COLLABORATOR'?** What a

cruel perversion of the truth! **SCRIPTA MANENT** - yet despite all existing documentation and written proofs, the good name of one of the **GREATEST HUMANITARIANS** of our times is constantly being maligned and besmeared by unjust allegations and accusations. Is not a man who was instrumental in rescuing from the Shoah between 150 - 200 lives, primarily children (*including boys*, which put the church and the priests in yet greater danger!) - is not such a man a **RIGHTEOUS MAN??!!** To shelter and protect 150 - 200 Jews - and not a single one, denounced, or handed over to the authorities! And that at the time when collaboration of the notorious Ukrainian militia in the round-ups and bestial killings of the Jews was rampant! This has made the Metropolitan's stand even more precarious, and his situation totally different than in any other occupied country of Europe....

I met Metropolitan Szeptyckij when, under the cover of a cold November night in 1943, we were brought with my mother and a couple named Podoshin, to St. Jur. We were ushered by a young monk to an elegant, warm room, probably the library, and were asked to make ourselves comfortable while waiting. After a short while, the main door opened and the Metropolitan was wheeled in... A giant of a man, even in the sitting position, his lionlike mane of white hair and long white beard gave him the appearance of a saintly patriarch. He looked at us from behind black rimmed spectacles, his beautiful steel blue eyes so very kind.

He must have had the impression that I stood in awe of him - which I most probably was - or was it simply because I was a child? - because he beckoned to me gently and asked me to come closer. When I did, admittedly with some trepidation - he held me close and, stroking my hair, he said in Ukrainian: "He Jiuceir, gumuho.....do not be afraid my child, no harm will come to you here, here you are safe." And immediately I felt safe. An unforgettable moment... He then exchanged a few words in Ukrainian with Mr. Podoshin - his pharmacist - and turned to my Mother who, unfortunately, spoke no Ukrainian - but this did not make any difference. With tears in his eyes, the Metropolitan listened when she told him that, by now, the only ones from the entire family to remain alive was she and I. My Father and my six-year-old little brother, my Grandparents and all the more distant family, were either brutally murdered or sent to extermination camps in the years of 1942-3. The Gestapo - aided and abetted by the Ukrainian Militiamen - were responsible for these atrocities.

The Metropolitan gave us immediate shelter, food, warmth, comfort - and within a few days we were moved to a convent, orphanage and monastery. At his instructions, my mother and I were NOT to be separated; we were sent to **UBOCZ - A CONVENT AND ORPHANAGE RUN BY Studite nuns**, whose Mother Superior; was Abbess Yosifa - **A WONDERFUL WOMAN!** She took my Mother into her private quarters and, as my Mother spoke no Ukrainian,





# Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of our Liberation



Sister Yosifa suggested that from now on my Mother will be deaf-and-dumb... Should anyone other than herself address my Mother at any time she must remain deaf and dumb. She provided my mother with a sewing machine and so she became the seamstress for both the convent and the orphanage. In the meantime, I was in the orphanage attached to the convent, a partly Polish - partly Ukrainian child, since my Ukrainian was not yet fluent. My name was LIDIA OSTROWSKA - my mother became JULIA POPOWYCZ. Mother Superior provided a genuine birth certificate for my Mother, which belonged to one of her relatives, a country peasant. What courage! I had no papers at-all. The nuns and Sisters were all wonderful and kind to us - we were fed and clad and looked after in the best way possible. Mother Superior was posthumously recognised by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Amongst the Nations and Yad Vashem sent me a copy of the certificate some years back. I don't know who - if anyone at all - received the medal on her behalf. After Sister Yosifa (whose real name was OLENA WITER) and the nuns were banned by the Soviet Authorities from UBOCZ to SKALAT nr. TARNOPOL - we were sending them parcels from London, which helped them to survive. According to the correspondence exchanged between my Mother and Sister Yosifa, these parcels kept them alive. I have one of her letters here with me. She died in 1988, and is buried in Brzuchowice. I wish I could put a flower on her grave to say: "THANK YOU"! At least

my mother and I were able to repay, in a modest way, those brave and wonderful NUNS for their humanity and loving-kindness.

As I said before, Yad Vashem - acknowledging our testimonies and depositions - bestowed their medal upon the RIGHTEOUS SISTER YOSIFA - OLENA WITER. Sadly, however, the same cannot be said in the case of the Metropolitan Szeptickyj, Despite their motto being; "WHOSOEVER SAVES ONE LIFE SAVES THE ENTIRE WORLD", after all these years Yad Vashem still refuse to recognise ONE OF THE MOST RIGHTEOUS OF MEN AMONG THE NATIONS; THIS GREAT HUMANITARIAN. It is time to rectify this injustice!

There is no substantial evidence that the Metropolitan supported the establishment of the Waffen-SS Galizien - but, fortunately, there is ADEQUATE live evidence that he saved the lives of Jews... To mention but a few of them, the family of the late Rabbi Dr David Kahane of Lvov; the two sons of the brutally murdered close friend of the Metropolitan, Rabbi Dr Ezekiel Lewin of Lvov; the two sons of the late Dr Chameides, Chief Rabbi of Katowice; Adam Daniel Rotfeld, until recently Poland's Foreign Minister; the Podoshin Family; my late mother, Cecylia Stern, myself...and many more...

In a few days' time it will be 61 years since the death of this splendid man.

I still remember very vividly the stately funeral procession at the end of November 1944, attended by many dignitaries and hundreds, if not thousands,

going through the streets of Lwow. SUCH FUNERALS ARE NOT ACCORDED TO COLLABORATORS !!...

For over 60 years, I could not pluck up the courage to come back to this beautiful city of mine, a city once so nobly called LEOPOLIS, but which, tragically for my Mother and for me, became NECROPOLIS...

But - I am here today - a very emotional journey in time... I am here, because I OWE a debt of gratitude to this man - I am here, because I hope to be able to bring some justice to this case, and foremost, I am here to plead from this platform with the committee of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, to acknowledge the Archbishop Metropolitan Andrei Count Szeptycki for the MAN THAT HE WAS: A GREAT HUMANITARIAN AND SAVER OF JEWISH LIVES.

I know I speak for all of us, those no longer with us and those of us still alive, scattered around the globe, who cannot be here today, but who owe their lives and the lives of the generations to follow, to the sanctity of THIS ONE MAN...

**Please remember:**

**WHOSOEVER SAVES ONE LIFE.....**

Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen

Text by:  
LILI POHLMANN  
54 NORTH END HOUSE  
FITZJAMES AVENUE  
LONDON, W14 0RT  
ENGLAND

Tel: 00-44-20-7602-1182  
Fax: 00-44-20-7603-7849

# The Spirit of Toledo

## A NOTE ON OUR MUSLIM MINORITY

“By a Commentator”

Peaceful integration of minorities is one of the hardest things to achieve. When it is successful, it benefits the whole of society. When it fails, everyone is the loser.

Some groups have integrated well, though the process often takes three generations. Jews have always done well, due to the prophetic teachings to pray and act for the peace of society. The same applies to the enormous Indian Diaspora spread around the world, though their economic progress has aroused envy and opposition. Fiji is an example.

Likewise, the industrious, able Chinese minority are also spread worldwide. When Indonesia was in an uproar in the last decade, the masses there physically attacked the Chinese minority. Why? Muslims in Malaysia go even further, so that the law of that country creates statutory and institutionalised discrimination against the substantial and capable Chinese minority.

There are similar tensions world-wide, witness Japanese – Korean relations and current Japanese – Chinese tensions. Even in Canada, those of French origin often have a greater loyalty to province and ethnic group than to the nation as a whole.

On the other hand, here in Britain, consider the successful post-Second World War integration of the large Polish minority. No problems, no trouble. That also applies to most of the 50

or so minorities who dwell here. The basis for successful integration is not merely the passage of time, the gradual acceptance of differences in appearance, faith, clothes, habits, but basically an acceptance by the minority of what I can only call the national psyche or historical consciousness and agreement to abide by the rules of that society.

This widespread acceptance was visibly present when London was nominated as the venue for the 2012 Olympics. Abroad it succeeds in places like Singapore, with its Council for Religious Harmony. Take the Jains or the Parsees in the UK. They never make the headlines. Occasionally the 300,000 or more Sikhs do, but in no sustained way. That ‘headline’ problem seems particularly to affect the 1½ million Muslims here. They are never out of the news. One must try to understand why this is the case.

There are sections in that community, e.g. Ismailis, who have no problem at all, just as there are Muslims up and down the country who integrate well, and hold prominent public and private positions. This is intriguing and, in a way consoling, since Muslims, teetotallers and some other faiths adjure alcohol, whilst Jews and Christians have prayers

and rituals based on alcohol, and the rest of the country happily floats on an ocean of beer, wine and whisky. The process of Muslim integration is far from complete, and there are probably historical reasons.

The event that is most profound in the minds and hearts of the British people is their survival in face of the onslaught of Nazi Germany, when their very existence as a free nation was at stake. Books, plays, films, pour out on the theme, even 60 years after that epic period. Yet Muslims played a minimal role, unlike Indians, Africans, West Indians, in that conflict, and thus have no immediate innate consciousness of the sheer horror of the Holocaust, or of those who, even today, still suffer as victims of that war.

Indeed a leading Muslim cleric sat in Berlin during the war advising the Nazis. That a prominent Muslim spokesman here could even query the existence of a Holocaust Memorial Day shows how far he, and possibly his organisation, are removed from feeling part of the national mood and history.

One has to be understanding of that minority. It is adrift from the general acceptance of values in various ways. Historically, it has always found it hard to live as a minority, witness the current uprisings in Philippines, China, repudiation of national laws in Nigeria.

Its own history does not regard others as equals.

That certainly applies to its religious laws, the unequal status of women (shared with some other faiths), even regarding historically Jews and Christians as second class citizens, and the rest as 'infidels', a contemptuous term for God's creatures. That is part of Muslim history.

It goes a stage further when people who kill themselves and others indiscriminately are described as 'martyrs'. There is no other faith system in the world that would regard such a person as a martyr.

Of course, Muslims and others might refer to problems created by Western Imperialism, but there was also Islamic Imperialism, whilst Islam, jointly with Europe, for centuries followed a policy of human slavery, only legally abolished in Saudi Arabia in 1922, and still alive in the Sudan.

Thus Islam, among other faiths, remains in conflict with aspects of fundamental human rights set out in a series of post-war Declarations. Hence a divergence from national views and values. This has been a problem for European nations, so that Germany, recognising this recently, has now set out a kind of loyalty test for Muslims.

It must be galling for peace-loving Muslims to see that terrorism on a world scale has emerged only from Islam, and from no other faith. How does this equate with Islamic teachers stating that Islam is a religion of peace, when ordinary citizens in London, New York, New

Delhi, Egypt and Russia are murdered?

Perhaps the greatest test and hope for integration lies in the nature of British democracy. There is little democracy in Muslim history, or in Muslim states, of the type we experience here. Most Muslims in Britain come from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The former country is still struggling to have a tolerant democracy, whilst retaining blasphemy laws that offend against every decent British instinct. The latter country had a gleam of hope under its founder and his daughter, but have now embarked on a demeaning, vicious campaign against Hindus, Christians, and others. There is no doubt that multi-party, tolerant, equalitarian, secular democracy is the main challenge to the Muslim world. Hence, the violence of its reaction to the West, and the mass preaching of hatred.

There are other cultural divides. The music of the West, classical and popular, in concert halls and theatres, is not part of Muslim musical tradition, nor is it part of the Indian or Chinese tradition, yet fine musicians playing the music of the West have emerged from those two countries. A cultural divide exists, but, in time, it can be bridged.

The English sense of humour is unique. There is nothing comparable in Islam where people take themselves so seriously. There will be successful integration when a Muslim comedian can stand up publicly and make fun of himself, his Muslim colleagues, and even aspects

of his religion. Lessons could be learned from Dave Allen, Spike Milligan, and the Indian TV soaps, let alone generations of Jewish humorists.

Yet Islam has a great, positive side. The prophet Mahomet built on the Judeo-Christian traditions to advance a form of moral monotheism on a people submerged in forms of idolatry. This led to a vast military and missionary expansion, comparable to the campaigns of Christian nations, with literary, artistic, medical and philosophical developments of similar proportions. In both cases, the good went along with the bad.

So I come to Toledo in Spain. There was a time there when members of the three faiths learned together, and from each other. Maimonides even wrote one of his greatest works in Arabic. Islam preserved classical works of Greece and Rome and even brought to the West the wonderful concepts in mathematics and astronomy of India.

I often wonder whether that Spirit of Toledo can really be revived, when differences were acknowledged but never imposed, were part of a wider understanding that enabled people to live peacefully side by side. Perhaps it is wishful thinking, in view of the media-indoctrinated extremism that pervades the minds of young and old everywhere. But wouldn't it be wonderful if terrorism was a thing of the past and peace descended on our stricken and tormented planet?

## Reflected Pride

**O**n the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the re-admission of the Jews to England by Oliver Cromwell, the Jewish Chronicle conducted a poll on who is the "greatest British Jew". It is with great pride and joy that we read that Rabbi Hugo Gryn was voted in third place. Hugo came to England in March 1946 with the Czech-Hungarian "boys" and was a very supportive and active member of our Society. Here are a few comments by some who voted for him, as quoted in the Jewish Chronicle.

"There was strong admiration for his personal qualities and pastoral work, including 'his humanity, warmth, charisma, inclusivity, intellect and his amazing voice'.

"His efforts towards bettering race relations and interfaith dialogue was also cited. One reader described him as a modern Job after the Holocaust. 'Like the entire Jewish people, he was on the deck, got up and remade himself; in every generation it needs somebody to encourage us, and he did'".



*Our late beloved Hugo Gryn.*

## Roman Halter

"In May 2005 Roman Halter was invited to exhibit his painting at Tate Britain. The four works, Man on the Electrified Barbed-Wire, Shlomo, Starved Faces and Woman wearing a Mantilla, with their accompanying texts were powerful and highly acclaimed. The picture shows Roman with some of "The Boys" at the Gallery".



# 45 Aid Society Second Generation Update



**M**embers of the Second Generation met again on 27th September 2005. Introductions were made of all attending, naming their parent(s). The previous meeting of November 2004 was summarised reviewing the achievements to date, which included the development of the Second Generation website and the Survivor's Testimonies project. Pleasure was also expressed that over 200 Second Generation attended the 60th Annual Reunion on 8th May 2005, with many expressing an interest and wish for further involvement in the Second Generation.

The Second Generation website ([www.2ndgeneration.co.uk](http://www.2ndgeneration.co.uk)) provides continual opportunities to contact other members, locate and view excerpts from Survivor Testimonies, view and download photographs, find out about current events and news of interest to the Second Generation and to provide a forum to discuss issues within the group. Next steps for the website include collation of information and photographs and the raising of additional funds in order to support further development.

The objective of the Survivors' Testimonies project is to protect, preserve and pass on. Due to the huge scale of this project, any additional help would be appreciated. Obviously, time marches on and we need to start achieving a memorable archive for future generations. Should you own or possess a copy of your parents/grandparents testimony, please inform us so that we are aware that it exists.

**If you wish to be involved with the Second Generation or with any of our projects, please contact Philip Burton (email: [secondgeneration@45aid.com](mailto:secondgeneration@45aid.com) or telephone: 0845 226 7545).**

'45

Role
Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership
Testimonies
Webmaster
News
International Relations
Press & Public Relations
Events Organisation
Education

The Second Generation London Committee has now elected the following members into the various roles as below:



## Second Generation - London Committee Elected Roles Sept 2005- Sept 2006

	Name(s)	Working Group Members
	Philip Burton	
	Rosalind Gelbart	
	Thea Helfgott	Volunteers welcome
	Philip Burton	Estelle Friedman
	Maurice Huberman	Lorraine Simons, Tracey Moses, Leonard Herman, Suzanne Robeson, Sue Bermange, Gaynor Harris
	Laura Friedman	Martin Stein, Rosalind Gelbart, Rachel Fox
	Laura Friedman	
	Ben Leon	
	Steven Faull, Maurice Helfgott	
	Julia Burton	Maurice Helfgott, Gary Zylberzac, Helen Gordon, Lorraine Kingsley Photography: Jeremy Rosenberg
	To be identified	Helen Gordon, Julia Burton

# A Day to Remember

This weekend, an asylum seeker died. He wasn't one of the recent immigrants to the UK, but had lived in this country for fifty or so years following his internment in a concentration camp. This meant he couldn't accept the invitation, recently issued on behalf of the Queen to all British Holocaust survivors and their liberators, to a reception at St. James' Palace, followed by a televised ceremony at Westminster Hall. As he lay in his hospital bed, suffering inconspicuously in a corner, how many of the carers understood the meaning of the serial number tattooed onto his left arm? If recent statistics are correct, only a small fraction of the carers would even understand the word *Auschwitz* if he chose to tell them about it. This ignorance is not limited to the very young or uneducated. I have heard the following from well-meaning University-educated colleagues: "I'm not a mathematician - exactly what is the Third Reich?" and "It sounds very exciting - I wish my dad had been in a concentration camp!"

Numerous people have asked me why we are marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz with the Holocaust Memorial Day. I see two good reasons. Since the Nazis slaughtered outright the young children whom they couldn't work to death, most survivors were at least in their teens. This means that the youngest of them are now in their seventies.

(This article appeared in "Hadashot" of the Maidenhead Synagogue)

By Victor Poznanski  
Ph.D

*Victor is the son of Rene and Arthur. He is a manager of a research team in information technology.*

When I was a child, memories of the War were still fresh for many people. The impact, horror and tragedy of the many atrocities perpetrated on the Jews, the handicapped, the gypsies, were omnipresent. But that was last millennium. Now, it is consigned to history. It happened in a different, warmongering society, before the world was truly civilised. Surely it couldn't happen today? The testament of the living survivors tells us otherwise.

Far from being unenlightened, the Germany of the 1940s was seen as the paragon of society. Many of its Jews took significant roles in the maintenance of its leadership in science, art and philosophy. Many of the Jews were well integrated; amongst them, military heroes, Reform Jews and atheists. This did not save them. Treated worse than cattle, the Orthodox and the atheists perished together in industrialised human abattoirs. How could it happen? No-one really knows. And it is still happening. The disregard for the sanctity of human life has endured into this century.

The Holocaust Memorial Day was held not just to commemorate, but to educate and change peoples' perceptions. The Queen, Prime Minister and the Chief Rabbi lent the endorsement of the British establishment. British celebrities, among them prominent Jews such as Lord Winston and Stephen Fry, helped convey the gruesome facts and the warning to future generations.

I was privileged to attend the Westminster ceremony, and found it profoundly moving. It was a fitting tribute both to those that perished and those that survived to become strong contributors in our present society. The event culminated in the lighting of sixty candles, one for each year after the liberation of Auschwitz, by as many representative survivors. The flame had been brought from Belsen by the Royal Guard. As my father joined the dignified procession to light his candle, the voice of survivors' grandchildren could be heard in the wings. They had volunteered to spend the day reciting the names of a fraction of a percent - 3,000 - of the six million that died.

Another Holocaust survivor has died, and life goes on. We have a duty as Jews to pass on his dire warning from the past, no matter how hard it is for some to digest. I look forward to my own children reaching an age where I can explain to them why Grandpa met the Queen.

# Thank you from the Second Generation

**T**hank you to the '45 AID SOCIETY, for the wonderful celebration in London, on May 8, 2005. My husband and I travelled from California to join my parents, John and Betty Fox, for the 60th anniversary of your liberation. There were eight of us, including my sister Lynne Fox Brenner and her three children, Robert, Sam and Jesse. We were honoured to attend such an important event.

As the evening progressed, my father's energy level seemed to increase by the minute, as he would continue to hug, kiss and then introduce all of us to his many friends. We listened to all of the stories that each "boy" would tell us as we met them. We clung to every word, trying to absorb a lifetime of memories in the space of a single evening. Every person that we met was so warm and friendly, eager to share their own piece of history that they shared with our father. They were all such wonderful storytellers. A recollection about something as simple as borrowing a "few quid" to buy a suit, or sleeping on one another's settee for a night or two, were a delight to hear, especially when the fellow telling the story had such a delightful twinkle in their eyes.

Those of you who know my father, know that he emigrated to the United States in 1956, along with my mother and an eighteen-month-old baby (me, of

Lesley Fox Testan

*Lesley is the daughter of Betty and John Fox, who live in Philadelphia, USA.*

course). Dad was fortunate to flourish, both personally and professionally, in Philadelphia and, as a result, our family has had a wonderful life.

As second generation children, however, we share the experience of growing up with very little (if any) extended family. Growing up in Philadelphia, many of our friends attended "cousins' club" events several times a year. This was a luxury that the American children took for granted. "Cousins' Club" events were times when dozens of family members

would get together and share stories of childhood with their own children and grandchildren.

The reunion in May was a sort of cousins' club event for our family. These "boys" are the surrogate extended family that Dad lost in Poland so many years ago. Only these men could share with us the memories of our father kicking a soccer ball, or of wearing his first suit as a young adult. Then there were the memories of the first apartment in London, the first job as a tailor and even the first time Dad met Mom at a dance. I could go on and on, but then I'd be writing a book, not a letter.

Thank you, '45 Aid Society, for giving our family the best cousins' club party that we could have ever imagined.



*The three generations of the Betty & John Fox family.*

# A Memorable Twenty-Four Hours with my Dad

**M**y dad Bernie and I met in London on May 8 for a Holocaust survivors' 60-year reunion.

At the Yom HaShoah service, we stood for the singing of "Hatikvah", Israel's national anthem. What an honour it was for me to stand between my dad and his friend Sam, two former Israeli army soldiers who fought in the 1948 War of Independence. I sensed those two had sung this many times, and it carried a special meaning for them that most of us will never fully appreciate.

Later, we all stood and toasted the Queen of England first and then Israel second. Then the survivors stood to receive a toast from all present, and the second generation, myself included, rose to toast the survivors. I stood as a second generation to a survivor and toasted him in front of his best friends.

At a cocktail party before dinner, a Mr Himmel from New Jersey and Dad shared a few memories. Himmel drove a tank in Israel during the 1948 war.

"Your dad was a real fighter", he told me. "Your dad; he was the real one".

Sam Pivnik and Dad met in Liverpool, England. Sam grew up 100 kilometres from Auschwitz. Sam's job at Auschwitz was to help unload people from cattle cars, where they had been crammed in, often for days.

He said he used to whisper to the young children to lie

By Allen Frydenberg  
(Special to the CJN)

*Bernie Frydenberg came to England with the Windermere group and emigrated to The States in 1948.*

about their age and tell the German soldiers they were two years older than they really were. This would give them a better chance to survive. He said someone whispered this to him when he got off the train.

Sam never married. He plans to leave his entire estate to .....

Dad met Joe Newmark at a concentration camp in Czestochowa, before being moved to Buchenwald and Terezienstadt. Joe sat at our table with his wife Charlotte at the reunion dinner. Near the end of the reunion, after hardly saying anything all night, he put his hand on my shoulder, saying, "I am very proud of you and your brother. You are both wonderful boys. I am happy to have you as my friend". Then he went back to his seat and sat down.

Before the war, Dad studied with a rabbi in his hometown of Demblin, Poland. The rabbi taught Dad how to put on telefillin (phylacteries), which he still wears today. Dad introduced me to this rabbi's son, who had studied together with Dad. Dad told him he leads the Shacharit portion of the service back home. Dad also

teaches my nieces and nephews their Torah portion for their B'ar mitzvah. The rabbi's son said, "If my father taught him, then he knows."

Dad told his story about carrying a backpack for a German soldier. Dad asked another prisoner to help him carry it. Later, the German soldier gave Dad a piece of bread for carrying the backpack. Dad shared his piece with that other prisoner.

After Dad was liberated from Teresienstadt, he lived in Liverpool and, later, at 833 Finchley Road, London. He took me to see where he lived sixty years ago. Dad used to go down the street to a rabbi's house for Shabbat services, which used to be conducted in the rabbi's living room.

My attendance at this event allowed my dad to fulfil a dream. He is part of a family, commonly referred to by all as "the boys", who love him dearly. This is not a biological family, but one built around love, respect and trust.

Just watching these men hug and kiss each other spoke volumes about the depth of their experiences together. So many people know Dad, remember him, love him and respect him. Before this reunion, I did not know any of them or how they felt about him. Now I know, which is important to me, but I think equally important to him.

Allen Frydenberg is a resident of Orange.

## Himmel

When my father first started talking about the Holocaust, one of the first questions he was asked was to describe his experiences in the various camps that he had been in. Originally deported via train to Birkenau, within hours my father would quickly find himself in a small group being marched down the road to Auschwitz where he stayed for only a few days before his transfer to Buchenwald. When asked what Buchenwald was like, he replied simply "bad". After several weeks, he was sent to another camp called Ehrlich. When asked to describe Ehrlich, he responded "very bad". And when asked to talk about Dora, the camp where he was sent to next and where he would spend the majority of his time during the Holocaust, he answered; "Now that was very very bad, the worst!"

It's taken me a long time to understand the significance of these words. Time has begun to thin the ranks of the survivors and as their children, a second generation of victims, assume the responsibility of recounting their stories, we struggle with finding the right words to bear witness to these terrible times. In my own search it's always these simple words, bad, very bad, and the worst, that I am constantly drawn back to. They encapsulate the Holocaust experience better than any other description that I have seen or even one that I could write myself.

We are all familiar with certain visions of the Shoah; the cattle cars,

the gas chambers, the crematoriums. But the Holocaust did not start, nor did it end with the death camps. Many would already be dead, a result of acts of violence, forced labour, movement into the ghettos and starvation before the deportations to places like Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor, Chelmno and Birkenau began in earnest. Those of us who lost family during this time constantly search for someone to blame for this calamity and until those conversations with my father I tended to focus entirely on those who built and ran all of the horrible things that I just mentioned. But I consistently ignored the others, those people who found themselves in positions to help, but silently stood by as the situation in Eastern Europe deteriorated from bad, to very bad, to very very bad, and finally to the worst.

And it is because of their silence I was excited that Rabbi Hammerman asked me to talk briefly once again about my father's experiences during the Holocaust. It is also why I was so pleased to see the performance this afternoon put on by a group that is not Jewish. By standing together as a community, not of different religions, but one of people, and jointly remembering what happened, we can continue to remind each other of the consequences of remaining silent; that doing so in the face of evil invariably makes a bad situation very bad, or a very bad situation the worst.

For my father, the Holocaust began in 1938

when the Czech government was forced out of the region in Carpathia where his village of Nizhny Veretsky was located. The situation for the Jews in this region became, in my father's own words "not so good". Organised beatings by Ukrainian nationalists who had filled the power vacuum became commonplace and my grandfather; perhaps the town's most prominent Jew and one of only two who sat on the town's council of elders, quickly became a target of great interest.

There were a few who immediately rose up and denounced the escalating violence. One who is remembered fondly is a Roman Catholic priest named Vasilyev. On several occasions my father clearly remembers Vasilyev speaking out, often at great risk to his own personal safety. For a short time Vasilyev was able to keep my father's family, and some of the other Jews of Veretsky safe.

But one day the mob got a hold of my grandfather and took him to the local police station. It was well known that the assaults conducted there, outside of the public eye, would escalate into torture and that this torture would continue over the course of several days often ending with the death of the victim. At this point in time there was another Catholic priest, one who was considered to be a close family friend. He was so often a dinner guest at my grandfather's table where discussions on history, politics, or nothing in particular

stretched long into the night that it was said that the priest spent more time in my father's house than he did in the church. My grandmother had even taken to calling him by the nickname of "your highness" as a sign of her affection for him.

When my grandfather was seized, my grandmother went to this priest along with her youngest son, my father, to beg him to intercede. One of the leaders of the mob that had seized my grandfather was the priest's brother and it was thought that a few quick words from the priest to him would secure my grandfather's release. Unlike Vasilyev, this priest's response to my grandmother's appeal was to call her a whore and to throw her out of the church. It was at this instance, when a friend refused to utter a couple of words to intervene that a not so good situation now became bad.

Over the next several years, the bad situation for the Jews of Carpathia began to deteriorate further. World War II began in earnest. Hungary annexed Carpathia and the theft of Jewish property, now sanctioned by the new government's anti-Jewish laws escalated. Jews were forbidden from almost all occupations and most of their assets seized. When the Hungarian army confiscated all of the Spring harvests at gunpoint, the Jews of Carpathia could only watch as starvation began to claim the weakest among them; the elderly, the infirm, the children. A fact that is not commonly known is that at this point many of the Jews wanted to emigrate. But when to leave, how to do it, and most importantly where

to go, were questions that each family group had to struggle with.

In my own family, some decided to make the journey to Palestine, a journey that was technically illegal and discouraged by most of the countries that these people had to transit through. Others decided to go through more established channels and secured entry documentation for Canada or, unfortunately for some, Visas for the United States. My aunt Chaya Adler was one of them. The reason that I say that she was unfortunate was that while she was waiting to emigrate, intentional delays built into the immigration process specifically to make it impossible for the Eastern European Jews who held legitimate visas to start their journey. While my Aunt Chaya was forced to wait, the world's governments stood by while twenty thousand other Hungarian Jews, many of them her neighbours, but who were not able to prove that their grandfather's father was born in Hungary and therefore not Hungarian enough for the local authorities, were deported to the pre-Russian frontier and machine-gunned to death. While she was waiting, every Jewish male between eighteen and forty two was conscripted into what the Hungarian government politely called the "labour battalions" but in reality was the start of the Hungarian slave labour system. While she was waiting, almost fifty thousand of these labourers, perhaps one out of every two Hungarian Jewish men in this age range and including my father's uncles Simcha Klien and Sruel Penner, were

killed while in service to these battalions.

For Aunt Chaya, her wait would be in vain. In May of 1944 she would take a bullet to the head on the train platform in Birkenau. Her eighteen month old son would be gassed the same day. In many ways it was a spoken and unspoken message in the denial of transit rights for those who held legal visas that sealed their fate. Besides preventing Chaya's emigration, these actions implied that there were limits to the United States, or any democracy's willingness to step in and help these refugees and further emboldened their tormentors. When they thought they could actually get away with what they were doing, a bad situation suddenly became very bad.

In the Spring of 1944, very bad became very very bad. Angered by the fact that Hungary wasn't killing her Jews fast enough to suit his tastes, Hitler ordered his troops to occupy that country and the wholesale deportations of the Jewish communities of Carpathia began. First the Jews of Veretsky were sent to the brickyards in the neighbouring town of Muncaks. Five days on a packed cattle car with no food and two brief stops to remove the bodies of those who had died on the journey ended only with a bewildering arrival at Birkenau. My father, very thin and only weeks past his fifteenth birthday, would fail the initial selection and be placed, along with my grandfather on a line for what they would be told were showers but we now know were in reality the gas chambers. Across the platform his

mother, sister Rosa, and Rosa's two children were on a similar line. A twist of fate, some pushing and shoving on the line and the next thing my father remembers is he is on the other line, a much smaller one, that is quickly marched off to the neighbouring camp at Auschwitz and into a year of experiences that I will try to describe, but fear will never be able to do justice to.

First there were the beatings. Beatings with fists, bad but not so bad. Usually you could walk away from these. Beatings with a whip. Very bad because they left you with open wounds and without access to medical care these could take weeks to heal. And beatings with an electrical cable wrapped in rubber that were yielded by the guards like truncheons. These were the worst. If you got hit with one of them it was unlikely that you would ever get up again.

Every day, seven days a week, you were awake at first light. If you weren't, you were beaten. Rain or shine, you had to quickly get to the appel, the line up, to be counted. If you got there late, another beating. If you couldn't make it because you were sick or too weak, you were sent to the infirmary. That was a death sentence. My father never saw one Haftlinger, what the inmates were called, ever return from there. For two hours you were forced to stand absolutely still while the guards first counted, then checked and rechecked their numbers. If you moved, another beating.

After the line up, some imitation coffee for breakfast. Food was a rare commodity and the prisoners were

slowly being starved to death. If it was a good day you would also get a piece of a loaf of bread, but you had to be smart. No matter how hungry you were you could only eat a portion of it. The remaining few pieces were tucked under your shirt before you headed off to work. You learned early on to save it for later in the day when hunger would be its most intense.

Your reward for a hike of several miles to your work station was a twelve to fourteen hour workday. In Ehrlich, my father dug ditches. In Dora, he was part of the transport commando, a work group that moved materials in and under the mountain where the V-2 rockets were built. At some point there is a quick break for lunch. Most likely it's a watery soup. When you first got to the camps at least there used to be one or two vegetables in this soup. Towards the end of your stay you were lucky to get a single root. No matter how bad it tastes, you know it is keeping you alive, and you force yourself to eat it. If you saved some of your bread, now would be the time to take a piece of it out of your shirt.

The bread you saved would be crawling with lice. Your body is besieged with them, and there is no way that anything stored under your shirt couldn't be. But that doesn't bother you much anymore. It was more important to eat and by now you've gotten used to the crunching sound that the lice made when you ate the piece of bread anyway.

No sooner do you finish then the work starts all over again. But as the afternoon wears on it seems harder.

Your strength is failing. You haven't eaten enough and you feel like you are dizzy. You're incredibly thirsty, but you know you can't stop. If you are in Dora, perhaps you pass one of the thousands of German civilians that also work there. They have to see what's going on. They know that you're starving. Why won't any of them give you some food?

Someone in the group faints and the guards seem like blurs as they surge past you and pounce on him. If he can't get up from the beating they will shoot him. If you try to help him up they will shoot you too! If he dies the situation will be bad enough for him but even worse for you. His suffering will have ended. But yours will continue. On the walk back to the barracks you will have to carry his body so that the numbers at the evening roll call will add up and be completed.

Hunger and thirst continue their incessant assault but you have to wait until you the final count is finished before you are released and can eat. Dinner is a meal that in another lifetime you wouldn't even serve to your dog. If the guards are in a particularly festive mood, maybe they will come down with a few extra pieces of bread. The only problem is that if they do, they will throw it onto the ground and if you want it then you have to wrestle another Haftlinger like an animal for this meagre morsel.

Through it all, your desire to live, to survive, to outlast these bastards, remains strong. But it's not the same for everyone in your barracks. You can tell that several of them are starting

to falter How many of them won't get up for tomorrow's Appel, you can only guess. Many will be physically unable, illness, lack of food, a beating, or perhaps all three finally wearing the victim down There are several Musselman among you. Musselman is the term your fellow concentration camp inmates have come up with for the walking dead. Prisoners whose condition has deteriorated to such an extent that most people don't think will live more than a few days. You look at them and again say to yourself. "That will not be me". But you also begin to wonder, at what point does a man just give up? When does he reach the realization that death must be better than the pain he is currently experiencing?

One day your older brother Eliezer, who has been with you since the first deportation can't get up for the Appel. He is suffering from Pneumonia but that doesn't matter. You beg him to get up. You might be able to help through the day but he has to get through the Appel first. But Eliezer is too weak and they won't let you carry him to the line-up. In the end you have to leave him behind in the barracks. They will kill your brother today and there is not a single thing you can do about it

And then one day you are transferred to yet another camp and sent on a march. No explanation but three thousand prisoners set out for what turns out to be almost a two week journey. No food is provided and the gunshots coming from the back of the line tell you what is happening to those who

can't keep up. You are marching through the German countryside. There are civilians everywhere and with one look at you, weighing no more than seventy pounds, it must be clear to them that you and the other Haftlingers are starving. But the situation is the worst. None of them will help you. Not one of them will even ask if they can give you a sip of water, a piece of fruit a slice of bread. Nothing is ever offered as the column of walking skeletons slowly shuffles by.

And then one morning it's over. The guards have run away and American soldiers are everywhere. Of the three thousand of you set out from your last concentration camp, no more than three hundred are left.

It takes a number of weeks but the Americans give you food and medical care and finally you are strong enough to travel on your own. Did anyone else from your family survive? The lists the Red Cross have created are incomplete at best so you begin to search for them all over Europe. You learn that your brother Morris is also dead. Shot in the back during an escape attempt from Auschwitz.

But then you hear a rumour and decide to follow it back to your hometown. Your brother Eliezer is in fact alive, his imminent execution halted by a timely allied bombing raid and the appearance of an American patrol. You reunite with him and walk up to your old house. But now there are six families living in it and they refuse to let you in. The local authorities will not help you

and eventually you go down to the river and cry your eyes out. You have survived but any possibility of a life here, where you were born, has not. You will leave Veretsky and never set foot in it again.

Sixty years have passed since the events that I just described took place. My father would eventually make his way to England as part of a group of almost 800 other orphans, serve as a commando for the Seventh Brigade in Israel's war of Independence, move to Canada, then to New York before starting a family and eventually settling in Lakehurst. But the events of the Shoah are never far from his mind. I know that my father would have wanted to be here, would have been happy to listen as the silence was broken again and again at this or other Holocaust remembrances. But this time he had a more pressing engagement. The silence is also being broken in England and Israel. After the end of the war, the orphans that he was sent to England with formed a group called the '45 Aid Society and over the past two weeks they have been having their sixtieth reunion in these two countries.

So, on behalf of Jack Himmel, my father, who is here in spirit, and for the eleven grandchildren of Jacob and Feiga Himmel, our family's living second generation, I just wanted to thank you one more time for giving me the opportunity to talk a little bit about our family, to break the silence once again and for continuing to have events such as this. It really means a lot.

# My thoughts about visiting Poland

You've heard from the rest of my family about our journey around Poland, visiting the towns and villages from my grandfather's past. Rather than repeating what others have said about the deep emotions that come from walking around Auschwitz or the awe that is invoked by the sheer scale of the distances my grandfather had to cover on his own, I want to talk about a much shorter and simpler experience from the trip.

On our last day in the country, we walked away from a main road and through the tough, heavy doors that marked the entrance to the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw. Slightly outside the borders of the ghetto, it was the resting place of generations of Jews from well before the war until the first few years of occupation. Inside the doors there is an original piece of the ghetto wall, still standing on its own to one side; to the right, a small memorial to the children that lost their lives in the war, surrounded by candles. The wall that marks the boundary of the cemetery is itself filled with plaques, memorials and fallen headstones whose graves have long since been lost. The cemetery itself is a little how you might imagine such a place might be – overgrown in some areas, plots arranged roughly in rows that have somewhat lost their definition and no real way to make any progress except by visiting the graves of others. It is at once an atmospherically beautiful and desperately sad place.

Daniel Shane.

*Daniel is the grandson of Anita and Charles Shane.*

Our aim for the morning was to find the headstones that mark the body of my great-grandfather and my great-aunt, both of whom died during the ghetto. What initially seems like a straightforward and methodical task became formidable as clearly inscribed headstones in Polish give way to weathered, overgrown and fallen markers in barely legible Hebrew. We started by attacking the graves randomly, trying to find some order in how the plots were laid out but it soon became clear that while you could easily spot areas of newer graves from older ones, there was no way to find a particular year, let alone a single person. The only way seemed to be to try to look at every last headstone, to read it and learn a little about the person buried there, hoping that we didn't accidentally miss who we were looking for.

Walking along the rows was somewhat of an eerie experience – we approached either alone or in twos, taking a row at a time, stepping around marked plots and over fallen headstones. Each name had the feeling of being an unknown person and yet, at the same time, oddly familiar – a sensation that came from seeing distant relatives of people and families from home. Dates leapt from a mere fifty years ago to over a

hundred and fifty at random; the dark, worn stone making the inscriptions sometimes impossible to decipher. Interspersed among the rows were trees, their roots providing obstacles to clamber over and somehow giving a very intimate and close setting to what was otherwise a field of stone markers. This was very much a time that you felt alone, even with half a dozen family members not more than 20 metres away, carrying out their own searches. There were whole sections where English gave way to Hebrew and as a result many of the loving words from relatives written on the headstones became a little lost on me. Still I worked hard to uncover names and in my head put a face to each individual and couple that I passed.

I think that walking around the site, we all felt closed-in, caught up in our thoughts and feelings as we wandered with purpose but without direction in our search. Trees formed a canopy overhead and waist-high granite headstones closed in upon us so that even in pairs, it was a lonely place. And yet, despite the solitude and isolation around me, there was a warm feeling that surrounded everything. Even with our searching, we were visiting the graves of people who had been lying there for decades and centuries; people who may have been left for years without anyone giving them more than a glance as they passed and that idea had its own special feeling that enthused me as I went round. Although

no cemetery can ever be called a happy place, this was gradually filling up with people that I knew – maybe not in person, but as someone who had remembered them.

We spent several hours searching around the headstones, looking for family that we might not have found in a month of searching. In the end, we found a memorial to some of the children lost in the Ghetto; a mass grave to the young that had lost their lives in a time where it seemed like more people were behind the walls of the cemetery than those of the Ghetto. A small circle of stones among the graves

in a clearing covered by an overhanging tree, it seemed a fitting place for a few thoughts for our great-aunt and other family members long lost. As we walked out of the cemetery, back towards the entrance, the feelings and the sights slowly started to fade. Looking back up the steps, along the wall made of headstones and memorials, the loneliness of wandering from grave to grave melted away and it felt as if the whole place had been hidden once again. Outside the gates, there was a barely a clue as to what lay behind the high brick wall and in some ways it felt as if that

was how it should be – a little sheltered site that we could still lay claim to.

In many ways, I think our trip to the cemetery was one of the most moving of the entire trip it was not a house that my family had lived in, a path that my grandfather had walked down, a furnace or a fence, yet it was still a very personal experience. It was simply a memorial to the Jews of Warsaw that had lived there for hundreds of years, and would always continue to be a part of the city and that somehow seemed to be a more fitting and permanent memorial than all the rest.

---

## The following three speeches were delivered by Second Generation Members at the Reunion in Israel Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of our Liberation

We the second generation owes you, our parents, who survived the holocaust horrors, a debt that we will never be able to pay back.

- We owe you an apology for not understanding what you have been through because you didn't tell us and even when you did tell us we could not understand the unbearable tragedy.
- We owe you an apology for not understanding your way of thinking and your interpretation of life which is totally different from ours.
- We owe you an apology for not understanding your behaviour regarding different issues such as, for example: when I, as a small boy came back home from school saying "I am starving" I, as a child just wanted to have

### REMEMBER AND NEVER FORGET

By Avi Brand, son of Zvi Brand (14.5.2005)

lunch, but for my father the meaning starving was totally different "you die from starvation".

- We owe you for being always behind us giving the feeling that we are not alone.
- We owe you a debt for volunteering, after all you have been through, to fight our independence war in 1948 and give us, the second generation, the security of living in an independent state of Israel and giving us the opportunity to raise our children without

the shadow of another catastrophe like you have been through.

- We owe you for doing your utmost in order to give us what you didn't have: warm accommodation, economical and existing security.

Today, 60 years after your liberation, you can be proud. During those 60 years you raised a new generation and today we have the similar number of children to the families you lost during the holocaust. You established a new state, institutions, and industry known all over the world.

You did your best to raise a contributing generation, an educated one that contributes to the community and the development of the state of Israel: military

officers, artists, doctors, industrialists, philosophers and journalists.

During the last two weeks we had the Holocaust Memorial Day and the Memorial Day for the soldiers who died in combat and in terror attacks. The Jewish nation, through the history, lost its best sons

and daughters, during the Holocaust because of genocide and now because our enemies want the destruction of the State you have founded.

We, the second generation, must keep the heritage, never forget and do our utmost in endowing the personal and collective

history to our children and to generations to come.

By keeping this heritage and understanding that we are the only ones who will protect ourselves, we will make sure that the tragedy that you have been through will never happen again.

## Good Evening - Heroes of the Second World War

Tali Asher

*Tali Asher-Shifron is the daughter of Israel and Dvora Shifron.*

Why should a young woman, at the peak of her joyful life, enter this swirl of thoughts in a happy and summery day? Why? Because there is no liberation. Because, although sixty years ago the insane routine of extermination and concentration camps was finally terminated, and the war was ended, liberation did not occur.

On the Holocaust Remembrance Day I act like a little child who is pulled to see what his eyes cannot bear to, hides his eyes with his hands and peeks between his fingers. So am I with the movies and programmes that confront me with the sights and the fear. Asking not to see but watching. Knowing that each image is bound to be engraved in my conscience, stab and burn and will not let me rest.

Therefore, not because of the ceremonies and perpetuation events, but in everyday routine, I am not liberated.

On the Holocaust Remembrance Day I do not think of the history of the Jewish people, forgive me my nation. I think only of my own parents. I remember that for years my mother told me she doesn't want to tell because anyway no-one will understand. Socrates said he knows he doesn't know. I understand I cannot understand. I know that we are beside comprehension, that we almost know, that we are around the horror of events. I want to promise I will never think I understand and that I will never delude myself liberation did occur. This promise does not free me from ever trying to understand, and does not stop me from continuously trying to be a liberated Jew.

There are things one can not liberate.

One can open the gate for the prisoner, he can dress the naked, feed the hungry or hug the orphan, but the past which is engraved in each one who had experienced World War II not only you cannot liberate - it is even an inner code with a long life-span that passes through generations.

And so, non-liberated with-

Six years ago my husband and I built a house. Entering our own home made us both happy, proud and belonging. But on that day, while my husband was wandering smiling around the house and my young daughter was running laughing all around, I was trying to push aside one troublesome thought that bothered me at that moment; can it be that one day my launderer, had I had one, will knock on my door and say to me: "I choose to live in this house because it's the nicest one in the neighbourhood. You and your family have to leave". I will, then, swallow my fear and my pride, I will try that my voice will not expose my trembling knees and say quietly: "I'm not leaving here without blankets for my daughters". I will tell myself that this way they will not be cold at night but, between me and myself, I will know that not because of the cold I want the blankets. A soldier, scowl-faced, will look at me and say: "Fine. You have twenty-four hours". I will remember forever the launderer's expression, although I will try hard to erase her from my mind.

in their experience and life story, my parents told me episode after episode and each time my life enters a cross-road that reminds me of a moment from their life - all the stories that were told to me over the years come to life with colours and sounds, and I see in front of me those events through my own life.

My parents are "Holocaust survivors", I am a "second

generation", my daughters are "third generation" - do these definitions indicate liberation? Does the fact that each time I hear the word "train", I also hear the sound of the train aboard which my mother and her sister were led to the extermination camp - indicate liberation? Does the fact that each time my father talks about how he survived the Holocaust in

front of an audience I document his words and try to remember - hint the beginning of liberation?

My young daughters already hear of their grandparents past, they see the memorial candle lit on the Holocaust Remembrance Day, and in my library there is a shelf with Holocaust literature. No liberation.

## Becoming aware of the hopelessness of defence

Shlomo Raz Rosenberg

*Shlomo Raz is the son of Stega and Moshe Rosenberg*

**G**ood evening to everybody.

For years we in Israel were taught that one of the fundamental questions regarding the Shoah is: "Why did they go as lambs to the slaughter?" Why didn't they organise themselves, take weapons and fight against the Nazis?

Our teachers, most of whom were Sabras, taught us, not without some arrogance, that if the exiled Jews were more like us, they would take their destiny in their hands.

Every year, during Yom Hazikaron Lashoah Velagvura - the day commemorating the Holocaust and the heroism, the focus was on the Warsaw ghetto uprising, on the partisans, on individual acts of bravery.

The concentrations camps, the death camps, the ghettos, were mentioned, but only after the uprising and the Partisans, and in an apologetic tone.

It took me, and my generation, (most of us are second generation to the Holocaust survivors) many years to realise that we were wrong. I say realise, rather than

understand, since no-one who has not been there can understand what you all went through.

Mentally and intellectually, we really can't understand what happened during those horrific long years.

About fifteen years ago I went there with my father. We went to visit his home town, Proszowice; we saw the home where he grew up, the streets he walked with his family, we travelled to my mother's home town, Lodz, we went to see the building where she lived, then we went to the ghetto - where she spent a few years during the war with her mother..

We then drove out to see the sites of the death camps:

Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Majdanek, there I was exposed to the industry of death.

But I must admit that I haven't gained any understanding. How did you survive the humiliation? The freezing winters? How did you survive the labour camps? How did you survive

the death marches? How did you overcome the ultimate losses? Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, whole families....

As many Israelis, during my military service, I had to go, more than once, to the battlefield. On a few occasions I took part in very hard battles. But nothing could compare with your plight.

Then, as survivors, many of you volunteered to come here and to fight for the independence of the State of Israel.

You literally helped build this country, with no complaints (even though complaining is second nature for many Israelis).

Over the last decade or two the whole attitude has changed; now we're all finally aware of your heroism, your bravery. Just surviving those long years, emerging from the ashes and building new lives are acts of courage and heroism. Each and every one of you marks the victory of the human spirit and the Jewish fate.

We are honoured to celebrate with you this 60th anniversary of your liberation and the victory over Nazi Germany.

# The presence of my Grandmother Bluma

By Hillary Duchovnay

*Hillary Duchovnay is 16 years old and lives outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. She lives with her parents, Pamela Urbas and Andrew Duchovnay, her sisters, Sara and Marley, and her grandmother, Bluma Urbas, who is the sister of Berek Wurzel and with whom she came to Windermere in 1945, and about whom she wrote this poem. Bluma Urbas, a Holocaust survivor, suffered a stroke in December 1999 and lost her ability to talk clearly, but this has not dulled Hillary's memory of the stories of the Holocaust and of lost family members her "Bubba" shared with her. Hillary, an avid reader of Holocaust literature, will never forget.*

Distant memories dance into my mind  
Blurry and vague yet distinct and specific  
Your kiss on my cheek and your warm embrace  
I can feel its presence  
But the words cannot be spoken  
The words cannot be spoken  
Traditions are repeated but never the same  
Everything is there in your loving gaze  
I can feel its presence  
But the words cannot be spoken  
The words cannot be spoken  
Time is fragile, this I did not know  
Just leave me footsteps when you go  
I can feel your presence  
But the words cannot be spoken  
The words cannot be spoken  
Others use words carelessly and free  
What you say in silence will always remain with me  
I can feel your presence

---

## SECTION V

### The Annual L. G. Montefiore Lecture

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

*David Pryce-Jones, the British political analyst, is a senior editor of National Review and the author of, among other books, The Closed Circle and The Strange Death of the Soviet Empire. An earlier version of this tale was delivered at a conference on culture and society at Boston University in October.*

Only a few years ago, mass-murder attacks on the West in the name of Islam, like those of September 11, would have seemed like a thriller writer's fantasy. Nor would anyone have imagined that a bombing by Islamists could swing a general election in a European country, or that one might find oneself watching, on television, the

beheading of Western hostages by men crying out *Allahu Akhbar!* over their savage deeds. Pakistan now has a nuclear bomb, thanks largely to the efforts of Abdul Qadir Khan, and this weapon is widely described as a Muslim bomb. To judge by their pronouncements, the Islamist leaders of Iran can hardly wait to perfect and use their derivative of it.

At present, it is not clear whether the religious/ideological rage that is the motive force behind these developments has any limits, whether it may yet succeed in mobilizing truly huge numbers of Muslim masses, or whether it can be deflected or crushed. What is clear is that a phenomenon that at first looked like a cloud no bigger than a man's hand has lashed up into a crisis with global implications.

Does this crisis amount to a "clash of civilizations"? Many people reject that notion as too sweeping or downright misleading. Yet whether or not it applies to, say, the situation in Iraq, or to the war on terror, the phrase has much to recommend it as a description of what is going on inside Europe today. As Yves Charles Zarka, a French philosopher and analyst, has written: "there is taking place in France a central phase of the more general and mutually conflicting encounter between the West and Islam, which only someone completely blind or of radical bad faith, or possibly of disconcerting naivete, could fail to recognize." In the opinion of Bassam Tibi, an academic of Syrian origins who lives in Germany, Europeans are facing a stark but straightforward alternative: "Either Islam gets Europeanized, or Europe gets Islamized." Going still farther is the eminent historian Bernard Lewis, who has speculated that the clash may well be over by the end of this century, at which time Europe itself will be Muslim.

Today's situation has been a very long time—centuries—in the making. For much of that time, of course, the encounter between

Muslims and the West remained stacked in favour of the latter, both militarily and culturally. Which is not to say that Europeans of an earlier age were blind to the danger posed to Western civilization by a resurgent Islam. One watchful observer was Winston Churchill, who wrote about Islam—or Mohammedanism as it was then called—in *The River War* (1899):

No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science . . . the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome.

Hilaire Belloc had similar premonitions 30 years later in *The Great Heresies* (1938):

Will not perhaps the temporal power of Islam return and with it the menace of an armed Mohammedan world which will shake the dominion of Europeans—still nominally Christian — and reappear again as the prime enemy of our civilization? . . . Since we have here a very great religion, physically paralyzed, but morally intensely alive, we are in the presence of an unstable equilibrium.

To these early observers, nevertheless, it did seem that

Western cultural and military superiority could be counted on to prevail, at least for the foreseeable future. (Belloc is better remembered for his boast, "We have got the Maxim gun, and they have not.") And prevail it did throughout a good part of the 20th century. In the last decades, however, another historical process has been at work drastically revising the calculus of power.

Contemporary Islamism might be summed up as the effort to redress and reverse the long-ago defeat of Muslim power by European (i.e., Christian) civilization. Toward that end, it has followed two separate courses of action: adopting the forms of nationalism that have appeared to many Muslims to contain the secret of Western supremacy, or promoting Islam itself as the one force capable of uniting Muslims everywhere and hence ensuring their renewed power and dominance. In the hands of today's Islamists, and with the complicity of Europe itself, these two approaches have proved mutually reinforcing.

In Europe, the world wars of the last century finally undid and discredited the idea of the sovereign nation-state, the engine of the continent's pre-eminence and self-confidence. In place of this tried and tested political arrangement, now suddenly seen as outmoded and dysfunctional, institutions like the European Union and the United Nations were thought to offer a firmer foundation for a new world order, one that would be based on universal legal norms and in which sovereign power would be rendered superfluous. It has

been the resulting decline of the European nation-state that has helped provide a unique opportunity for Islamism, itself based on a world-wide, transnational community that has been united by faith and custom since its inception and that traditionally has drawn no distinction between the realm of faith and the realm of temporal power.

A number of ideological movements have spread and fortified the modern projection of transnational Islam. Perhaps the most successful has been the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928, with branches today in some 40 to 50 countries. Yasir Arafat and Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, are among those formed by the Brotherhood. Its more recent inspiration derives from the Egyptian-born Sayyid Qutb, whose three-year stay in the United States in the late 1940's and early 1950's convinced him that the West and everything it stood for had to be rejected, while Islam already provided every Muslim with state, nation, religion, and identity all in one. Saudi Arabia has spent billions of its petrodollars financing groups, including terrorist groups, that promote this idea.

The 1979 revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran was an opening test of the new balance of forces between a rising transnational Islam and the declining Western nation-state. European countries, which in the post-war period seemed largely to have lost the will to respond to aggressive challenges from without, presented no opposition to the totalitarian Khomeini

regime and no barrier to its aggrandizement. That left the United States, still a nation-state very much committed to defending its sovereignty. Indeed, to the ayatollahs and their allies, the U.S. represented a final embodiment of the Great Satan, fit to be confronted in holy war.

This remains the case today. In the meantime, though, a battle of a different but no less decisive kind has been taking place within Europe, where some 20 million Muslims have settled. Thanks on the one hand to their high birthrate, and on the other hand to the sub-replacement birthrate that has become the norm among other Europeans, the demographic facts alone suggest a continent ripe for a determined effort to advance the Islamist agenda.

In its global reach and in its aggressive intentions, Islamist ideology bears some resemblance to another transnational belief system: namely, Communism. Like today's Islamists, Communists of an earlier age saw themselves as engaged in an apocalyptic struggle in which every member of a Communist party anywhere was expected to comport himself as a frontline soldier, and in which terror was seen as a wholly permissible means toward victory in a war to the finish. Compare Stalin's "If the enemy does not surrender he must be exterminated" with the refusal of the leader of Hizballah in Lebanon to negotiate with or ask concessions from the West because "We seek to exterminate you." To Sheik Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian with British citizenship who until recently led a group called al-

Muhajiroun, the terrorists of September 11 were "The Magnificent Nineteen"—or, as he explains, the advance guard of an army of "our Muslim brothers from abroad [who] will come one day and conquer here."

Throughout the cold-war era, the European democracies under threat from Soviet expansionism were themselves home to Communist parties, as well as to an array of front organizations ostensibly devoted to peace and friendship and culture but in reality manipulated by and for Soviet purposes. In addition, many people from all walks of life accommodated themselves to Communism with varying degrees of emotional intensity and out of various motives, including the wish to be on what they perceived as the winning side and the converse fear of winding up on the losing side.

Each of these elements, in suitably transmuted form, is present today. The pool of local recruits upon which Islamists draw is itself very large. Of Europe's 20 million Muslims, it is estimated that 5 or 6 million live in France alone, at least 3 million in Germany and 2 million in Britain, 1 million apiece in Holland and Italy, and a half-million apiece in Spain and Austria.

It is true that most Muslim immigrants to Europe come simply with hopes for a better life, and that these hopes are more important to them than any apprehensions they might entertain about living in a society ruled by non-Muslims—something historically prohibited in Islam. Indeed, large numbers have assimilated with greater or lesser strain, and, in the manner of other minorities,

have become "hyphenated" as British-Muslim, French-Muslim, Italian-Muslim, and the like. Religious life flourishes: if, a half-century ago, there were but a handful of mosques throughout Europe, today every leading country has over a thousand, and France and Germany each have somewhere between five and six thousand. Muslim pressure groups, lobbies, and charities operate effectively everywhere; in Britain alone there are 350 Muslim bodies of one kind or another.

Among these various organizations, however, a number function as Islamist fronts. Inspired by Saudi Arabia or Khomeinist Iran, by the Muslim Brotherhood or al Qaeda, they work to undermine democracy in whatever ways they can, just as Soviet front organizations once did. They push immigrants to repudiate both the process and the very idea of integration, challenging them as a matter of religious belief and identity to take up an oppositional stance to the societies in which they live. Issues of Islamic concern have been skillfully magnified into scandals in the attempt to foment animosity on all sides and thus further deter or prevent the integration of Muslims into mainstream European life.

The notorious 1989 *fatwa* condemning the novelist Salman Rushdie to death for exercising his right to free speech as a British citizen was an early example of this tactic of disruption and agitation. Another has been the attempt in Britain to set up a Muslim "parliament" that will recognize only Islamic law (*shari'a*) as binding, and not the law of the land.

Still another has been the insistence, in France, on the wearing of the *hijab* by girls in public schools, a practice that clearly contradicts the ideals of French republicanism and is in any case not an Islamic requirement. The tactical thinking behind such incitements was well articulated by an al-Qaeda leader who, calling upon British Muslims to "bring the West to its knees," added that they, "the locals, and not foreigners," have the advantage since they understand "the language, culture, area, and common practices of the enemy whom they coexist among."

Still another phenomenon familiar from the Soviet era has lately made a repeat appearance in the West, and that is voluntary accommodation, or fellow-travelling, among non-Muslims. Leftist fellow-travellers once helped to create a climate of opinion favourable to Communism. Many knew exactly what they were doing. Others merely meant well; they were what Lenin called "useful idiots." In like manner, Islamist fellow-travellers and useful idiots are weaving a climate of opinion today that advances the purposes of radical Islam and is deeply damaging to the prospects of reconciliation.

As in the 30's and throughout the cold war, intellectuals and journalists are in the lead. Books pour from the presses to justify everything and anything Muslims have done in the past and are doing in the present. Just as every Soviet aggression was once defined as an act of self-defence against the war-mongering West, today terrorists of al Qaeda, or the Chechen terrorists who killed children

in the town of Beslan, are described in the media as militants, activists, separatists, armed groups, guerrillas—in short, as anything *but* terrorists. Dozens of apologists pretend that there is no connection between the religion of Islam and those who practice terror in its name, or suggest that Western leaders are no better or are indeed worse than Islamist murderers. Thus Karen Armstrong, the well-known historian of religion: "It's very difficult sometimes to distinguish between Mr. Bush and Mr. bin Laden."

One form of Islamist fellow-travelling masquerades as a call for "tolerance," or "diversity," and has penetrated right through the world of European opinion and European institutions. The British Communist historian Christopher Hill once concluded a book on Lenin with a reverent recital of the epithets the party had devised to glorify him. Pious Muslims follow the mention of the Prophet Muhammad with the invocation, "Peace be upon him." This practice has now crept into a biography of the Prophet written by a British writer not ostensibly a Muslim. To encourage such acts of deference, there has been a complementary effort to stifle contrary or less than fully respectful opinions. When the outspoken French novelist Michel Houellebecq pronounced Islam to be hateful, stupid, and dangerous, Muslim organizations and the League for the Rights of Man took him to court, just as the Italian writer Oriana Fallaci was sued for her book tying the 9/11 attacks to the teachings of Islam. Although both writers won their cases,

the chilling effect was unmistakable.

The institutions that have been affected by Islam-ophile correctness run the gamut. In Britain, a judge has agreed to prohibit Hindus and Jews from sitting on a jury in the trial of a Muslim. The British Commission for Racial Equality has ordained that businesses must provide prayer rooms for Muslims and pay them for their absences on religious holidays. In a town in the Midlands, a proposal to renovate a hundred-year-old statue of a pig was rejected for fear of giving offence to Muslims. The British Council, an international organization for cultural relations, fired a staff member who published articles in the *Sunday Telegraph* arguing that the roots of terror and jihad were nourished in the soil of Islam, while the BBC cancelled the contract of a popular television journalist for allegedly using negative language to describe the Muslim Arab contribution to mankind.

Commercial society has likewise rushed to accommodate real or imagined Muslim sensibilities: a British bank boasts that it will comply with *shari'a* prohibitions on the uses of money, and the German state of Saxony-Anhalt has become the first European body to issue a *sukuk*, or Islamic bond. Religious society is not far behind: even as bin Laden speaks of wresting Spain ("al-Andalus") from the infidels by violence, the cathedral of Santiago has considered removing a statue of St. James Matamoros, hero of the 15th-century Christian reconquest, lest it give offence to Muslim. For

the same reason, the municipality of Seville has removed King Ferdinand III, hitherto the city's patron saint, from fiesta celebrations because he fought the Moors for 27 years. In Italy, where Islamists have threatened to destroy the cathedral of Bologna because of a fresco illustrating the Prophet Muhammad in the inferno (where Dante placed him), thought has been given to deleting the art-work from the walls. Even the Pope has apologized for the Crusades. In secular Denmark, the Qur'an (but not the Bible) is now required reading for all high-school students. And so forth.

The lengths to which apologists for Islamism are prepared to go is nicely illustrated by the case of Tariq Ramadan, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and a popular writer and speaker. As is well known, the American university Notre Dame recently offered Ramadan a professorship, but U.S. immigration authorities have so far rejected his application for a visa. This has elicited some classic examples of fellow-travelling obfuscation from both Americans and Europeans outraged on his behalf. A letter to the *Washington Post* protesting Ramadan's treatment undertook to explicate his supposed message to Western Muslims: they "must find common values and build with fellow citizens a society based on diversity and equality."

Not quite. What Tariq Ramadan has really proposed in his writings and teachings is that Muslims in the West should conduct themselves not as hyphenated citizens

seeking to live by "common values" but as though they were already in a Muslim-majority society and exempt on that account from having to make concessions to the faith of others. What Ramadan advocates is a kind of reverse imperialism. In his conception, Muslims in non-Muslim countries should feel themselves entitled to live on their own terms—while, under the terms of Western liberal tolerance, society as a whole should feel obliged to respect that choice.

Ramadan happens to be a grandson of Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, but he is also a guarded writer. In fact, his is a relatively "moderate" and qualified expression of Islamic reverse imperialism. More overtly, and with an implicit threat of violence, Dyab Abu Jahjah, a Lebanese who has settled in Antwerp, has denounced the Western ideal of assimilation as "cultural rape," and aims to bring all the Muslims of Europe into a single independent community. He, too, needless to say, has his defenders and apologists among European liberals.

Or consider the European reception of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, heir to Sayyid Qutb as the religious authority of the Muslim Brotherhood. Wanted on charges of terrorism in his native Egypt, al-Qaradawi now lives in Qatar. Like Tariq Ramadan in Switzerland, he emphasizes that Muslims must keep apart from liberal democracy as it is practiced in the West while also availing themselves of its benefits and advantages. But he goes much further. Unlike Ramadan, he approves of wife-beating in the forms

sanctioned by the Qur'an; as for homosexuals, he is agnostic on whether they should be thrown off a high cliff or flogged to death. Yet this year, in an official ceremony at London's City Hall, al-Qaradawi was welcomed as "an Islamic scholar held in great respect" by the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. "You are truly, truly welcome," gushed Livingstone, an otherwise enthusiastic supporter of gay pride. Also appearing last year in London was Sheik Abdul Rahman al-Sudayyis, a senior imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca; among his many distinctions, al-Sudayyis has vituperated Jews as "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world, the violators of pacts and agreements, the murderers of the prophets, and the offspring of apes and pigs." Standing beside *this* apostle of "diversity and equality" was a junior minister in the Blair government.

The Islamic Foundation, one of Britain's numerous Muslim bodies, has an offshoot called the Markfield Institute. In July, the *London Times* linked both the foundation and the institute to terrorism. An offended reader with an English name wrote to protest: "I hope that Markfield . . . will be allowed to help individual Muslims to practice their faith with peace and respect, in a multi-cultural Britain." Another reader, an Anglican canon in the Diocese of Leicester (a city with a Muslim majority today), asserted that the institute was simply trying to teach imams and Muslim youngsters alike to work within British institutions.

In just that spirit, and even in that vocabulary, the

fellow-travelling Beatrice Webb used to advance the transcendent virtues of the Soviet social model. Gullible, false, and dangerous statements of this kind are now as common as rain.

In the realm of classical Islam, Christians and Jews once lived as *dhimmis*—that is to say, minorities with second-class rights, tolerated but discriminated against by law and custom. Many contemporary Muslims appear to idealize this long-lost supremacy over others, and aspire to reconstruct it. One way to work for this end is through violence and terror. Another way, the way of Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, is through words. One way and another, the project is advancing. Summing up the collective achievement so far, Bat Ye'or, the historian of "dhimmitude," has written that "Europe has evolved from a Judeo-Christian civilization with important post-Enlightenment/secular elements to . . . a secular Muslim transitional society with its traditional Judeo-Christian mores rapidly disappearing." She calls this evolving entity "Eurabia."

If that is the case, or is becoming the case, is it any wonder that some Europeans are switching sides, so as to be on the winning one? The sheer elan and cultural confidence displayed by Islamist spokesmen may have something to do with the fact that every year, thousands of people all over Europe convert to Islam. Some of these converts, from Britain, France, and Germany, taking the direct route from words to action, have gone on to play a disproportionate role in terrorism and Islamist

militancy. Thus, at a rally organized in London last year by a radical offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, a high proportion of demonstrators were clearly not of Middle Eastern origin. At a recent trial in Cairo in which three British citizens were condemned to prison for subversion and intended terrorism, two were English-born, with English names. They were led away shouting defiance of the West.

There are certainly Muslims in Europe who look with horror upon what is being done in their name, and who wish to have nothing to do with the notion that they are entitled to live in the West as, in effect, conquerors. For wholly understandable reasons, few of them have the courage to speak out. One of the exceptional few recently wrote a letter to the *London Times*, giving his name and address, and saying that he defines his community as the people with whom he chooses to interact. He went on: "We do not all subscribe to the same way of being a Muslim, neither do we push our beliefs into the civic and political sphere." But, he continued, "Sadly the public does not always get our point of view, because the only Muslims who are consulted are those who choose to drag Islam into the political sphere."

One could not ask for a clearer repudiation not only of all Muslim Brotherhood-style proselytizers but, even more biting, of the patronizing and indulgent attitude adopted toward them by the European establishment. Those in Europe who have striven in ways great and small to extend special privileges to Muslims

while subtly deprecating their own national identity and culture have indeed helped open the way to Islamic separatism and Islamist agitation. They have thereby hastened the very clash of civilizations that they (or some of them) foolishly claim they are avoiding. If Bassam Tibi is correct that, by the end of this century, "either Islam gets Europeanized or Europe gets Islamized," powerful forces are at work to foreclose that question long before its final due date.

## TWO

Evidence piles up continuously of a Europe that has lost confidence in its culture, perhaps no longer even knows what its culture was. Listen to Robin Cook, at the time Foreign Secretary, speaking in 1998 to an Islamic audience: "Islam laid the intellectual foundations for large portions of Western civilisation." In simple fact, Muslim scholars were part of a chain transmitting knowledge from classical Greece and Rome, from Persia and the Judeo-Christian tradition. To claim otherwise, as Cook did, and innumerable others do, is to curry favour with Muslims for whatever reason. Every day brings examples of a national culture giving way to something Islamic. Here is Lloyds TSB proud to be offering mortgage services compatible with sharia law. At a memorial service for Sir David Gore-Booth - a former British ambassador to Saudi Arabia - in St Margaret's Westminster, a most select London church - the Saudi ambassador read from what

The Times Social Register called "the Holy Qur'an and from the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad." The news that Muhammad is now among the twenty most popular names in Britain is presented in the press as a social fact like any other. Hibz ut-Tahrir is an extremist party banned in the Muslim world but allowed to operate freely and openly in Britain. The party put a sixteen year old girl up to attending school in a jilbab, a garment enveloping the entire body except the face and hands. Her school in Luton was already four fifths Muslim, and the Muslim head mistress permitted other less extreme forms of Islamic dress, but not the jilbab. Under the Human Rights Act, the girl took the case to court, and won - her lawyer was Cherie Blair, incidentally on record excusing Palestinian suicide bombers on the grounds that deprivation left them no other choice. The writer-doctor Theodore Dalrymple thought the jilbab judgement read like the suicide note "not of a country alone, but of an entire civilisation."

True, electoral considerations are in play. The Muslim vote might be decisive in as many as a score of British parliamentary constituencies presently held by Labour. In Dewsbury, in West Yorkshire, for instance, where Muslims are about a quarter of the population, both main parties are fielding Muslim candidates. And here's the rub, not just in Britain but throughout Europe, that the presence of Muslims in significant numbers has imported and transplanted the issue of Islamism in general, and the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict in particular. Which is why in the run-up to a general election, the Labour Party could put out posters of Conservative leaders Michael Howard and Oliver Letwin (who happen to be Jewish) likening them to pigs, or to Fagin and Shylock. Which is also why a junior minister by the name of Mike O'Brien publishes an article in the periodical *Muslim Weekly* under the title: "Labour and British Muslims: Can We Dream the same Dream?" and goes on to ask whether Michael Howard can be trusted to be sympathetic to issues purported to be Islamic, for example Palestine. Another junior minister by the name of Kevin Macnamara responds to suggestions from Michael Howard about illegal developments of green belt sites by travellers with the smear that there is "a whiff of the gas chambers" about them. This is the Thirties or Mosleyite style of anti-Semitism.

Between 1945 and 1973, more or less, Europeans were sensitive to Jews, and their new nation - state of Israel. This may have been out of guilt and remorse for the Holocaust, as some maintain, but there was also admiration for the living energy with which Jews had built their state, and a Hebrew culture as well. As the Cold War became more and more extensive, the Soviet Union and the majority it commanded in the United Nations took the side of the Arabs. France had traditionally seen itself as a Muslim power - "une puissance musulmane" - a euphemism for the abiding intention to develop a grand imperial design in conjunc-

tion with the Arab world. Exploiting the Palestinian cause in the two main international forums of the UN and the EU, Yasser Arafat more than anyone refurbished hatred of Jews. That is his legacy. Not just the BBC and the Church of England, but the media and the Catholic church in all European countries, the Left throughout the continent, ceaselessly propagate the view popularised by Arafat and his Fatah, that Israel is a brutal oppressor with no right to nationalism of its own, not even self-defence against terror. One and all, they further fold their contempt into the wider post-Cold War anti-Americanism of the UN and the EU, with fantasies that Jews, otherwise known as neo-conservatives, control President Bush. These confluent developments in the history of our times have reversed public opinion and given new forms to ancient anti-Semitism. Two-thirds of Europeans in a recent poll expressed the opinion that Israel was the greatest danger to world peace, more than North Korea or Iran.

What has happened illustrates the way one culture borrows and adapts from another. Jews once lived among Arabs in conditions restricting their rights. Murderous anti-Semitism as practised in Europe began only in 1840 when the French consul in Damascus levelled

the ancient blood libel against Jews. The accusation was repeated elsewhere on at least a dozen occasions. The example of Hitler and Nazism found enthusiastic Muslim imitators and disciples. *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are current best-sellers reprinted in Muslim countries. Sponsors of terror like the Muslim Brotherhood keep up a barrage of repetitive statements such as "the Jews are enemies of the faithful God, and the Angels; the Jews are humanity's enemies...Every tragedy that inflicts the Muslims is caused by the Jews." Whether or not they know it, Arabs are repeating what they once heard from European teachers, and whether or not they know it, Europeans are now in turn repeating the variety of anti-Semitism they themselves instilled in the Arabs.

In Britain, the Human Rights Act has enforced the release from prison of men with a record of terrorism and Jew-hatred. Absence of will and the capacity for self-defence can only encourage others with this mind-set to operate in Britain. After the murder in Amsterdam of the film-maker Theo van Gogh, the Dutch in contrast decided that they had taken tolerance too far, and in future would deport Muslim extremists. Germany is beginning to supervise the preachings of imams. In France, Louis Caprioli, former head of the

DST in charge of security, recently said, "Behind every Muslim terrorist is a radical imam." One such is Imam Chelali Benchellali, who has been preaching jihad in a suburb of Lyons. Arresting him, the DST found that he had rigged up a laboratory in his apartment to manufacture bombs with the poison ricin, as *Le Parisien* reports. France has some 1,500 imams and in 2004 five were expelled.

But there is also derangement, appeasement and surrender. A book by a Frenchman claiming that Americans themselves carried out the September 11 attacks is a best-seller, and so is a book by a German with the title *Schwarzbuch USA*, evoking pre-war anti-Nazi tracts. It is now a commonplace to draw comparisons between Israel and Nazism, and to describe Israel's measures of self-defence as war crimes. Academic boycotts of Jews are again in order, and when an Oxford lecturer and BBC pundit calls for American Jews on the West Bank to be shot, neither the university nor the BBC sees fit to take action. The number of attacks on Jews in France doubled last year; the Grand Rabbi advised Jews not to be recognisable in public. Perhaps these are reflections only of today's fanaticised geo-politics, but on the face of it this all amounts to a crisis of confidence in the culture of Europe – again.

## Outwitting History

By Aaron Lansky

Reviewed by Aubrey  
Rose C.B.E.

Aaron Lansky's *Outwitting History* is a compelling read. I picked it up, and was more than half-way through its 300 or so pages in a day. I could not put it down. It is the work of a man with a mission.

Aged a mere 23, the author embarked, with unique enthusiasm, refreshing humour and rare organisational ability, on a self-imposed and dedicated campaign to preserve Yiddish culture and Yiddish writings and overcome the devastation caused by race-crazed Nazi maniacs who had wiped out the heart of the Yiddish-speaking world in Europe.

Through 25 years of constant effort, Aaron Lansky saved and preserved over one and a half million books, the same number as the Jewish children murdered in that Great Blasphemy called the Holocaust in which over 6,000,000 Jews were annihilated in under 4 years by sophisticated barbarians, sophisticated in method, totally barbaric in morality.

But for the good fortune of coming to this country from Eastern Europe early in the 20th century, my parents, hence myself, would have been part of that mass destruction.

Lansky's story will appeal to everyone of the 50 or more immigrant minorities in Britain where a second or third generation see their original language and culture overwhelmed by the dominance of the British and

especially the supremacy of the English language.

Aaron Lansky is a hero who achieved a miracle, made even more inspiring by his humility and total lack of self-importance or personal gain. He is a practical idealist who overcame every material obstacle. In a way, he moved mountains.

A word about Yiddish. It developed among Jews living in Germany about eight centuries ago, at the same time as the early dawn of English. Yiddish is 70 percent High German of that era with about 20 percent of Hebrew, the remaining words acquired from the peoples among whom European Jews dwelt, including Russians, Poles and Slavs. Many of their words and expressions, even of Latin and French expressions, were assimilated into Yiddish.

Yiddish is vastly different from severe, humourless German, Yiddish is imbued with humanity, joy, laughter and tears, warmth and eloquence, poetry and hope, reflecting so much of the travails of ordinary people. It had no time for pomposity or class arrogance.

It is a people's language, reflecting an endless daily battle against poverty and persecution, yet never glorifying violence. In fact, as the Yiddish author, Isaac

Bashevis Singer stated, when receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature, "the language possesses no words for weapons, ammunition, military exercises, and war tactics." It is a language whose soul derives from the 4,000 years-old Jewish tradition, especially the sublime Hebrew prophets who looked to the day "when nation shall not lift up sword against nation and man will learn war no more." It is the language of peace and social justice. Yiddish is written in Hebrew characters using the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. As a boy growing up in London's East End among scores of thousands of Jewish immigrants, I remember my father sending me out to buy a newspaper. It was a Yiddish paper I returned with and which I read. I had to understand the language; my grandmother and her generation spoke nothing else.

Aaron Lansky interviewed those of my father's and grandmother's generation still alive, some in their 90s and recorded their memories of Yiddish. He acquired from all over America, from all over the world, thousands upon thousands of Yiddish books that would otherwise have been consigned to the rubbish heap. This young man, still in his 40s today, proved that Jews remained "the people of the book". Old civilisations revolved around the written word, the Chinese of Lao-Tze and Confucius, the Sanskrit of

the Indian tradition, the Arabic of the Koran. But these people were numbered in hundreds of millions. Jews have always been a tiny people. Even today the inhabitants of one major city, Tokyo, Cairo, Sao Paulo, number more than Jews in the whole wide world, United States and Israel included. One day the media will acknowledge this fact. Yiddish is rich in expressions, similes, metaphors, wise sayings, shining a sympathetic light on the foibles and fables of our human species. It is the world from which so many of the great modern comedies and musicals emerged. I used to attend the vibrant pre-1939 Yiddish theatre every week. (Edward G. Robinson and Walter

Matthau began as Yiddish actors). It was a language that flourished. From 1864 to 1939, its golden period of creativity, over 20,000 books in Yiddish were published. Shakespeare was translated into Yiddish, as were the works of Tolstoy, Dickens, Zola, Balzac, and Tagore. Even the Bhagavad Gita had a Yiddish version!

Aaron Lansky describes the emergence of Yiddish after 70 years of Soviet efforts to destroy the language and the culture. Yiddish and Hebrew are both springing to life again in Eastern Europe after intense official state ideological intolerance and suppression. And the author has played a most notable role in that revival.

The high point of Lansky's

tireless efforts was the setting up of the National Yiddish Book Centre, the fastest growing Jewish cultural organisation in the USA gaining support from Jews like Stephen Spielberg as well as many non-Jews, national trusts and institutions. What an outstanding achievement for just one man imbued with a mission.

This book is a wonderfully evocative yet so-easy-to-read story. The writer has a narrative gift. It is impossible to do justice to it in a review. It could become required reading for all minorities who feel their culture, their language, is under threat. I learned from it. I enjoyed it. You could do the same. It will be time very well spent.

## Say The Name

“Apell. Roll call. The wake up siren sounds at four a.m. - the sound of dread and ugliness. To help me get up I have developed a system that works for me - ‘resistance’ I call it and get up. Family injunction in operation. The other option to getting up is being beaten to death, thrown into a punishment bunker, bullets - but ‘resistance’ works for me - a gift to the family, a gift from the family.”

Judith Sherman,  
*Say the Name*

Judith Sherman got up from her years of memories, nightmares, private resistance and public silence to write *Say the Name*, this book about her childhood, her imprisonment in

By Judith H Sherman

Introduction by David Carrasco  
Professor of Theology & Anthropology at Harvard University

Ravensbruck death camp and her “liberation”. She tells us she was armed by the ‘family injunction’, a promise the family members made to each other “to survive/to live” as they were being sucked into what she calls the ‘primal night’ of the Holocaust! She survived and now, thanks to her skilled poetry and prose, her story survives. The chronological backbone of this book tells of her childhood home

in Kurima, Czechoslovakia, several deportations, hiding in homes and in the forest, her struggles in several prisons including a converted castle, undergoing torture and witnessing murder in Ravensbruck, and her liberation. Along the way, we meet and grow to care about, and mourn for many individuals, especially women, whom she encounters, remembers and now gives us their names. The book ends in the present day with her reflections on the destruction of families in the 9/11 attacks and on her own legacy for her children. As readers will experience, this book is an expression of Judith's ongoing *resistance* to Hitler and the Holocaust, and it is a gift to her family and to all *our* families.

The narrative, in prose and poems, speaks with two voices - the 13-14 year old girl who experienced the dismemberment of family, European Jewry and perhaps even God and in the voice of the adult survivor remembering family and friends, raging against rape and murder, writing poems, and searching for a dialogue with a God who wasn't there. Here are a few examples of both of those voices, sometimes intermingling as she writes about the simple things that both children and God's followers might care about when facing disaster,

"I am not yet 14. I think of home. I would like to be with my mother. I never am any more. So much to tell her...All bundles are to be left on the side...The contents, flashlight, sweater, photographs, sewing kit, instant coffee, a mug, perhaps a prayer book, a book, brush, house keys, socks - will be integrated into the camp economy, or more Likely the German Reich. But not the connections. They are severed..."

and

"I shall never not value shoes, life is from the ground up, life with shoes, perhaps, without-death..."

and later,

"Come Messiah  
Is not the apocalypse  
Your cue  
To do  
The Messiah thing?"

Tragically, the Messiah was not on cue and Sherman writes her life story with lamentation from what she calls "survivorship territory" where she 'lives on two tracks always', -- the Holocaust track and the track of life today. Selecting fruit at the grocery store, taking a shower and seeing railroad tracks 'trigger' her memories of 'the selection', 'gas chambers' and 'transports' to death camps, and she realizes she will always be both old and young at the same time.

"I am old in this late  
year  
But my soul - my soul  
Is peopled with parents  
Who are younger than  
my children  
My brother will forever  
be nine."

While this Holocaust story might be read as a gripping example of women's testimonial literature, it is important to emphasize that Sherman has written this book to *testify*, and sometimes we have the impression she is both a witness for the victims and the inquisitor of God in the courtroom of Shoah. She *stands up and gives evidence* before us and her God of the relentless sufferings caused by the 'experts in humiliation', at camps where the "whip reclaims the essence of the place - power, superiority, violence." She testifies and shrewdly tries to draw God into her ongoing ordeal and trial as a partner in dialogue. When she doesn't elicit a response she skillfully rebukes God through a series of poems and pointed questions about his absence when he was most desperately

needed. She writes when remembering the women shot dead for trying to aid others,

"Are You not tempted,  
Lord,  
To intervene  
Lend a hand  
Prevent a scream?"

As no response was forthcoming, Sherman is driven to speak up for the others. As though in a courtroom she writes in "Reluctant Witness" that she is here to 'testify to their murder of Anna' who starved, Evka who was beaten to death, Daniel who was gassed, Johanna who was shot down... leading her to ask three simple yet profound questions,

Where is the judge?  
Where are you, judge?  
Is there a judge?

Judith Sherman is symbolically standing up for the many who cannot stand up for themselves, and her interrogation of God wakes us up and raises the absurd possibility that there was no judge. No justice or mercy Giver! It's not that the judge didn't show up on time, it's that the judge abdicated his role, failed to pay attention, intervene and produce awe with his justice, his love. She and we are left to wonder if Anyone is out there, listening, attending.

Sherman's work may be a most compelling narrative in that it treats both God and humans with 'life bestowing awareness.' At one point she gives us her definition of God or what he would have to be to live up to his Biblical reputation. It's a simple definition, "Accountability is Divinity," and she's insisting on this accountability - for

the humans we meet in this book and more.

I remember the morning lecture on the Terror of History when I first met Judith Sherman. I arrived at the Princeton University lecture hall with a feeling of paralysis in the face of lecturing on the religious meaning of the unspeakable cruelties of the Lager. I chastised myself, "What led me to give a single week in the semester's course on the religious dimensions in human experience to the overwhelming story of the Holocaust? Who was I to interpret Elie Wiesel's stunning account, Night? I don't have the imagination, words or knowledge to help students to be attentive to this 'human experience.'" I admitted my crisis of language to the students, that talking about such a monumental horror was too much to handle. Words fail, utterly, in the face of the Holocaust. I said that this failure of language to illuminate reminded me, in a reverse way, of my first white water trip through the Grand Canyon.

"In the midst of the mysterious time depth of the Grand Canyon, the stunning sunshine, the breathtaking beauty, the heights of rock walls, oases of the side canyons with flowing springs, we passengers would utter our exclamations like we were describing God or Paradise on Earth - 'Amazing', 'Awesome' 'Astonishing', 'Nothing like it in the World', 'Unbelievable' 'Incredible', 'Beautiful

beyond Belief, 'Overwhelming' - and the second each of these exclamations came out of our mouths they dropped like empty balloons and fell into the depth of the canyon. Well, the Holocaust is the Grand Canyon of Terror and if you've ever seen the Grand Canyon in person or confronted the Holocaust you'll know why words fail. Why silence is an option. Any furious exclamations, roaring condemnations, big words, or strained comparisons that I could utter would just droop like little bits of banal absurdity and sink into the darkness of the Shoah. Think about it! What do these names mean, what synonyms could you rightfully use - Auschwitz, Treblinka, Dachau? six million gassed and burned! We are driven into silence, into depression, into non-verbal attention. But to be silent in the face of this Grand Canyon of Horror makes even less sense to me."

And so, I went on. At the end of the lecture a line of students met me to quickly talk about their individual interests. At the end of the line was Judith Sherman who I had not yet met but who had been sitting in on my course with other senior citizens. She said something like "I've never heard a non-Jew speak the way you did today about the Holocaust

and I want to thank you. I am a survivor of the Ravensbruck death camp and I've written this poem which I would like you to read." We talked briefly and I learned that she had, for the most part, remained silent about her experiences. She quickly passed by and I sensed an opening between us. Later that day I read her poem,

God, that particular  
pain is too much for me  
You have it and Be  
branded

The terseness of the poem and its challenge to God seized my attention. I called and invited her to speak in the class the following week to tell of her experiences in Ravensbruck, read some of her poetry and speak of her survival. Reluctantly, but with signs of a deep interest, she agreed. She came and we sat together at a table in front of 200 students. She spoke haltingly at first, we held hands during some of her talk, she read some of her poems and used them as openings to describe and interpret her experiences. She told about the first time German soldiers entered her home,

"A gun with a bayonet  
is pointing at my sleeping  
head  
A nightmare this - but  
it is real  
Happening when  
I'm not quite ten", and  
the resulting feelings of  
"TERROR and FEAR."

and of hearing her mother say "shoot us or leave us alone." She wept when she read the poem about her younger brother Karpu being

gassed hoping that someone was there with him at the horrible end. She spoke of the 'miracles' that saved her and her pain about those not saved. She opened up and opened us up to her story and to her thoughts about God. Never in my many years of teaching have I heard a quietness of attention, respect, and awe fill an auditorium of students as it did that day and I've heard some of the best lecturers in the world. But it wasn't just the story. It was the woman and her way of telling the story - the story that is in this book.

A year later she spoke again in my class only this time there were many more pages of prose and poetry. This time we learned of the forced and brutal instability of her flight in the woods, her probing of Nazi rationalizations of humiliation and death, of her withstanding human experiments in the camp hospital, of the miracle that saved her there, and her horror and shame of the "selection" of others.

We heard more of her questions for God, the embarrassing questions she posed to him. We heard her invite God to come down Jacob's ladder because "I will not deal with angels, I'll wait till you arrive" so she could take God's hand and show his Godly eyes horrors that result in divine grief.

She spoke again the following year and now there were 30 pages and we heard of her shrinking teenage world made up of powerless

parents, unprotected children, where "fear is normal". We heard her ask, referring to the Nazi's hunting children down in the forests, "God, how are we so visible to them and so invisible to You? You owe us visibility."

When I moved to Harvard she came to speak in my class here and now there were chapters! We heard more about her "forms of resistance" in the face of the gruelling, freezing, dangerous hours standing in line where she survived by thinking "of every thought I ever had, every place I have ever been to, every person I ever knew." And then in true Judith Sherman style, she thought 'up new categories to move time along.' And then she invited us to her funeral "...to my un-Auschwitz funeral" telling us that the attire was optional but "no stripes please". Again God comes in for her critique,

You come too Lord  
(were you too  
embarrassed to attend  
in Auschwitz?)  
You come too. Lord And  
smile-Your will be done.  
No! Not smile. Just be"

As readers will discover, there are many such challenges to the Lord in this book. The birth of the Messiah, the red apples of Eden, the sacrifice of Isaac, and even the possible death of God are all scenes she re-imagines. But her purpose is not just an individual search for God in this abyss

but to say the names and account for as many of those who 'know the final of the Final Solution.'

Her directness and strength, the compactness and playfulness of the cry in her language and her creative and critical inquisitiveness constitute a very distinctive voice in literature about the Holocaust and its family legacies. In the face of the memories of the dead and all that death, Judith affirms life. It is she, not me, who 'lets the terror of history terrify'. She remembers the branding, requires us to be attentive and never wavers from the knowledge that Auschwitz and Ravensbruck *are part* of her life and legacy. Toward the end of her book she addresses death in the same gritty way she speaks about people and to God. She writes "Death stand aside/do not hover/by my side" as she leaps "to touch the sun, push children's swings..." and in the fortitude of that spirited 14 year old she outruns the Nazi reaper and tells him "Don't mess with me/you bloated creep/you cannot/run as fast/as me."

With this book she passes on to her children and the generations to come "a gift to the family, a gift from the family". She gives sound and words to and makes indelible the memories of her (and our) lost ones and she knows "Connections-Friendships," and "a touch of genesis" and works in her own garden nearby to where she wrote *Say the Name*.

Rockville, Md. May 29, 2005

Dear Ben,

We immensely enjoyed your 60th anniversary special issue of your well edited Journal. The editorials, photographs of Holocaust Survivors and 'historical journeys' by so many contributors, makes this issue a historical document of great value to future historians, writers and archivists who will study the record of our past; Martyrdom and survival, resistance, bravery and our achievements. As always, I was inspired by the

essay of my favoured author, historian and scholar, the Hon. Martin Gilbert. Reading the reminiscences of the contributors to this issue, comparing it to other publications in our own country, I consider your magazine a great achievement in the domain of Holocaust Anniversary Journals. All of your editorial committee deserve thanks for their dedication to keep memory alive, documenting sixty years of evolution with stories that touches our hearts and spirit. You

captured with this volume our survivors strong will to go on with our lives, even after terrible things that happened to us. And even after our liberation, still facing horrible conditions, we never gave up... The mix of thoughtful essays, interesting memoirs and articles by your son, Maurice, and others of the 'Second generation', hit a chord in my heart, almost a prayer: Blessed be the hour when all of you were saved.

Herman Taube

## The Caring Society

Shirley Huberman

I've been told it is everyone's worst nightmare, having a husband taken ill whilst staying in an hotel in a foreign country and yet

Alfred and I had spent a truly memorable week remembering and celebrating the 60th anniversary of his liberation in 1945. The suitcase was packed and taxis were arriving to take some of 'The Boys' to Ben Gurion airport for the journey home. It was obvious that my precious man would not make the lift, let alone an aircraft. So what does a frantic wife do - she calls Ben (the organiser). "Call the hotel doctor, we are leaving now but I will let Mick and Michael know and they will keep in touch". That's when you know you are not alone - "The Boys" are with you!

Alfred was admitted to a superb Cardiac Unit, commenting "now I feel safe, they

obviously know what they are doing". The speed and the efficiency of the treatment was probably as good as anywhere in the world. It felt good to hear Alfred and a nurse conversing in Yiddish. The Boys' prayed for him, visited and 'phoned. I was taken aside to be asked "I know this is very personal but are you alright for money".

The interest and tender, loving care from "The Boys" was immense. Whilst Alfred was being well treated and cared for, I was enveloped in what can only be described as love.

All this time, back in England, our three children were discussing their strategy and it was decided that the "most travelled" Bryan and his wife were the people for the job - the text read "we are leaving in half an hour, do we bring anything?"

Meanwhile, the other two were organising for medical notes to be faxed and alerting the Cardiologist as to what was going on.

On their arrival Juliette and Bryan were touched by the warmth and love of "The Boy". They described the relationship as a brotherhood (a bit like the Mafia!).

I have never had a brother or sister and I just want to say thank you to all my "brothers and sisters in law" for all their love and support to us, both. You were certainly there when we needed you and our nightmare will be remembered as really quite a wonderful experience.

Dear Ben

As you know, Shirley and I joined a group of "The Boys"

on a visit to Israel after an exceptional 60th reunion in London. Our week in Israel was enjoyable, emotional and rewarding, ranging from dedicating the ambulance, the reunion with the Israeli Boys in a beautiful venue and visiting the extended Yad Vashem.

Our stay was at an end, we had packed and said our goodbyes, when a potential disaster struck. That evening, instead of being home in Brighton I was in the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Centre, where the treatment was excellent. I felt at home and once I was feeling better was fascinated by the mix of

patients and staff. A Yemenite, a Russian, a Frenchman and an Israeli or two, in turn, filled the neighbouring beds. One of my carers was a Yiddish speaking nurse from the Argentine, a doctor who originated from Brighton, a nurse from St Petersburg, who missed the museums, many Russian and Israeli, all well qualified and efficient.

The main purpose of my writing is to show my appreciation to those boys who were so caring and understanding in our 'hour of need', offering us all sorts of help, visiting me in hospital and making sure that my wife

ate, asking if she could manage financially, since we had to extend our stay.

I am still receiving telephone calls from 'Boys' in London, Israel and America enquiring as to my progress. It gives one a warm feeling to belong to such a caring brotherhood.

I am delighted to say I am much improved and wish all "The Boys" good health and much happiness - they deserve it.

Warmest regards.

Alfred Huberman

## There was still Hope

By Chris Archbold

“Be careful what you say to him; it may end up in a story”. With these words a colleague introduced me to a new teacher. Let me introduce myself to you with a story.

*I was at a seminar to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. We were given name tags and I went into the lecture theatre wearing mine. No sooner had I sat down than a man sitting in front turned round, saw my name and spat out "What are you doing here? With a name like that, you're not even Jewish." The name was "Chris Archbold, in fact it still is. Hopefully, most of you will still read what follows.*

This is written as a response to a gift from Zigi Shipper, a copy of the 60th anniversary "Journal". For 35 years I was an RE/History teacher and as such taught the Holocaust long before it became fashionable post

Schindler's List. I left mainstream education two years ago and since then have been working as an outreach educator for the Holocaust Educational Trust and last July I became a Fellow of the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. As a teacher I often invited Survivors into my school to talk to pupils. Josef Perl and Barbara Stimler were regulars and added much over the years. Others such as Harry Fox, Trude Levi and Henry Wermuth gave valuable contributions on a one-off basis. Over the last two years I have met many others and can now often put faces to what were formerly names in books. In fact when I speak in schools the title of my work is "Some people I know" and it is this that I am making an appeal about.

Another story... One Survivor, who never came to my school but who I talked to

many times was Abi Brysh of Bournemouth. He was reluctant to talk of his experiences but would sometimes in the middle of a conversation drop in some tale that had come into his mind. For example, one day we were talking about I don't know what and he told me....

*We were working outside of the wire, on a road and the SS told us to stop so they could have their lunch. We of course had nothing so I lay back and tried to rest. I was lying with my eyes closed when I felt a foot nudge me so I opened them. An SS was handing me half of a cheese sandwich. He didn't say anything, he just gave it to me and walked away. He could have got into a lot of trouble for that. They weren't all completely bad, Chris. There was still hope for some."*

A couple of years, and a few more tales later Doreen and I were visiting Isa and him and on the way out he stopped me and said, "You will come back, won't you? I want to tell you my story." Although I assured him that I would it never happened as my Mother died and Doreen went into hospital. In April 2003 Sylvia Perl telephoned to tell us Abi had died and they would call and pick us up on the way to Bournemouth.

Earlier this year, while reading the story of Meyer Hersh, I noticed a similarity between the story of how Meyer's brother had escaped from a Death March and one Abi had told me. Telephoning Isa, I asked her to repeat this story and realised I had got it right although she has no idea who Abi had escaped with. Another call, this time

to Meyer, gave me the information that he didn't know who his brother had escaped with but .... had died in Israel; at about the same time as Abi died in Bournemouth.

Earlier this year I was at Yad Vashem with the other Fellows from Imperial War Museum. One lecturer was Yehuda Bauer. In his book "Rethinking the Holocaust" he states "There are still "documents" walking among us.... namely the testimonies that we have not taken down yet. But we should of course."

This is my emphasis at the Imperial War Museum. To write down some of those unheard stories in a way that teachers can use them. The title is "There was still hope". What I am not looking for is "the good SS", but rather stories that show how "goodness" helped Survivors

in their ordeal. Abi once told me how he survived the Death March... he made sure that he was in the middle of the column where the SS couldn't reach him. Another time I asked him if he had doubted G\*d while he was in the camps. His reply; "He was there with me."

I know that a lot of Survivors have written what they remember without thought of publication. If anyone is prepared to entrust me with a copy of these documents or to talk to me of their experiences I would be honoured to meet them. It is so important that these stories are taken down as soon as possible. Should you have any doubts about what I am doing please have a word with those friends that I have mentioned. You could also contact me at home.

---

## Protest against Schoolboy's Poem

Witold Gutt

Rt. Hon. Ruth Kelly, MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
House of Commons  
London SW1

9th November 2005

Dear Secretary of State,

Row over schoolboy's Hitler Poem - The Times 9.11.05, p.22

It was painful for me to read in the above-mentioned article of the poem by

Department for Education and Skills

21 November 2005

Dear Dr Gutt,

Thank you for your letter of 9 November

Gideon Carter published in "GREAT MINDS", a book distributed to schools in Britain by the Forward Press Group. I think that the poem, apart from being deeply offensive, could poison the minds of young people in the schools. The poem contains lines of virulent anti-Semitism indistinguishable from NAZI PROPAGANDA and could be taken to endorse Hitler's views. I would ask you to intervene and have the book withdrawn

Yours faithfully,

Witold Gutt

Ex-prisoner DACHAU Concentration Camp  
No. 147597

---

addressed to Ruth Kelly about the publication 'Great Minds'. I have been asked to reply.

Firstly, I must state quite clearly that this Department is appalled by any promotion of anti-Semitism or any downplaying of the Holocaust. As a Department we have over the last five years supported the Home Office in

its establishment and delivery of the Holocaust Memorial Day and have produced free educational materials to support that. In addition all pupils must learn about the Holocaust as part of the National History Curriculum at Key Stage 3 (11 to 14 year olds). Pupils are required to understand how events in the past came about. They are also required to be able to think critically and evaluate history.

Schools are subject to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000; and we would impress on all schools within England that they should provide a safe environment where all elements of racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia should never be promoted or tolerated.

The publication that contains the controversial poem is an independent publication. It has no connection to the Department for Education and Skills and is in no way endorsed or promoted by the Department.

The Department advises parents who are concerned about any materials being used in their child's school to contact the Headteacher and, if necessary, pursue the school's own complaints procedure.

Yours sincerely,  
Craig Jenkins  
On behalf of the Head of the Public  
Communications Unit

## SECTION VIII OBITUARIES

### A time to remember Harry Wajchendler

By Ray Winogrodzki

I came to England with my friend Harry Wajchendler in 1945. We landed in Carlisle. From there we were taken to Windermere where we spent many happy months recovering and trying to learn English.

Harry has a brother called Howard who also came to England with him and he has been living in Canada for many years (from 1947).

They had two aunts living in London - in Stamford Hill and Tottenham. Harry stayed in Stamford Hill and Howard stayed with the other aunt in Tottenham. That is when we lost contact with each other.

Doreen first met Harry in October 1945 at the Menorah Club in South Tottenham. Then Doreen and Harry met up again at the Primrose Club.

I was in contact once again with Harry. but then, once again, we lost contact with each other.

Harry became a diamond polisher.

Doreen and Harry were married on June 11th 1950. They have three wonderful children. The firstborn is Leslie, then Judith and Gillian.

Between the children, they are blessed with eight grandchildren and one great-grandson. He was proud of each and every one.

I lost contact with Harry for a good few years, except when we met up at our reunions.

Then Doreen and Harry moved to Gants Hill in July 1972, when we became very close friends.

I was very sad when Harry passed away, as we all are

when one of us passes away, especially after all we have been through during the war.

I also miss him because we were schul partners. On shabbas and yom-tovs we always sat together. We also supported different schul functions.

Harry was very, very proud of his son Leslie, who is the warden of Coventry Road Synagogue.

We all miss Harry greatly, and I am sure he is looking down on us with his little cheeky smile on his face, feeling very proud of all he had achieved over the years and the many years which were spent with his loving wonderful wife, Doreen.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE

# Chaim Lewkowicz

**H**olocaust Survivor, beloved husband of the late Betty Lewkowicz, adored father of Eve and Jack, honoured grandfather, Zaida, of Jonathan, Robert and Ilana, Sharon, Steven and Samantha.

Born in Piotrkow, Poland on the 21st February 1926, the youngest son of 11 children. His father was the town confectioner and like all those in the Jewish section, a religious and revered man. The Holocaust saw the destruction of this family, with Charlie's parents and most of his brothers and sisters perishing. His greatest delight was meeting up with a brother and sister in Israel in the 1950s.

How Charlie managed to survive the horrors of the Holocaust was something he frequently asked himself. From the slave industry of the glass factory in Piotrkow to the slave labour of Buchenwald concentration camp to the horrors of Czestochowa and Reimsdorf to the three week Death March and ending up in Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, he managed to live when so many others died. He escaped death time and time again. An escape, when he was shot in the leg and hid while he heard everyone else being murdered and thrown into a pit they had dug for themselves, was but one episode. An outbreak of typhoid in his barracks killed most inmates around him but miraculously he survived. Starvation, exhaustion and disease, let alone the murderous intentions of the Nazis could at any time have ended it all. A quiet hero, stories have been told by his

Known affectionately as 'Charlie'.

By Eve Pearl

*Eve is the daughter of Betty and 'Charlie'.*

friends of how when they were ill or too exhausted to make the two mile trek to an ammunitions factory at dawn, Charlie literally carried them to work, knowing that if they remained behind they would be shot. After a tortuous 13-14 hour day's work he carried them uphill and back to the barrack...

This was Charlie - a man who always put others before himself. A man who didn't like the limelight, liked to stay in the background, a man of few words but with an enormous heart. Charlie loved everyone - he would never be involved in a 'broigus' a man of peace and goodwill - 'life is too short' he would always say. He loved to be with friends, the members of the '45 Aid Society - his family he called them - all those who, like himself, were liberated in Theresienstadt in 1945 and came to England to make a new life - they were each other's family! He loved to dance and could be seen taking the centre stage doing the Russian 'cozutska' living life to the full. Other loves of his life were having a tippie - or three - of whiskey and of course playing cards. Right up to the weekend before he was taken into hospital for the final time, he played Kalooki, and won, to his great amusement.

Humour was another of his traits - he loved telling jokes and could see the funny side of any situation.

A quiet man. After going back to Poland for the first time some fifteen years ago - he found his roots. Instead of being a lost soul, he felt ready to talk and wanted to become involved in telling his story to others and ensuring that the world should not forget the Holocaust. He gave a testimony to the Steven Spielberg Trust and became involved in the creation of the Holocaust Survivors' Centre in Hendon. Both Charlie and Betty spent many hours there, regularly, each week organising things in the early days. Charlie was on the organising committee and was then elected to represent the Centre on the Advisory Committee to Jewish Care. Dedicated and committed; Charlie worked tirelessly to help put the Centre on the map.

His pride in his family was obvious. He was devoted to his wife Betty. Married happily to her for fifty-two years, he nursed her through the last two years of her illness and was bereft when she passed away two years ago. Both Eve and Jack, named after Charlie's parents, were a source of great pride to him and he glowingly talked to everyone about his children and, of course, his grandchildren. Even as his health failed, two heart attacks, a stroke, diabetes, thrombosis, deafness, poor eye sight - the list continues - his family kept him going. Despite repeated stays in hospital the 'survivor' in him made him have the strength to carry on and bounce back. Unfortunately, the survivor could not beat this last hurdle and we say goodbye to the quiet hero ñ never to be forgotten.

# My friend Nuszi Rosenberg

By David Herman

I am very sad that my friend Nuszi passed away in April.

Nuszi Rosenberg was born in Czechoslovakia. We were childhood friends in our hometown of Munkachevo and lived very near to each other when we were small boys, he came from a family of five children, and he was the youngest and the only boy.

His Father died when he was very young, He matured at a very early age and learned to look after his mother and sisters and keep the family together.

Nuszi was a naturally talented footballer. He was very good at all sports and frequently came to our garden to play with us.

In late 1942, Nuszi and two of his elder sisters moved from Munkachevo to Budapest where he worked in the Jewish Hospital. The three of them managed to hide in Budapest during the

war and this saved them from being sent to the concentration camps.

After the war, in the summer of 1946, Nuszi arrived in England with a group of 120 boys and girls. Not having met for four years, we quickly re-established our friendship while he was living in the Jewish Temporary Shelter in London's East End where we frequently met.

When the Primrose Club opened in Belsize Park, Nuszi joined and became an active member. We often met up at the club and he participated in many sports including football, basketball and swimming.

In 1948 Nuszi and his friend Meier Stern - also from Munkachevo - set up a business partnership working as dental mechanics in London.

In April 1950 Nuszi married Ibi in London and very soon afterwards emigrated to New York; there he continued

to work as a dental mechanic during the day and attended night school to catch up on his education. He went on to study dentistry in the evenings and eventually qualified as a dentist. He was very talented and good at his job and soon set up his own successful dental surgery. He established an excellent reputation in New York's Queens district, where he became very well known.

Nuszi and Ibi frequently attended our annual reunions in England and whenever any of the boys visited New York, we were always made very welcome. They could never do enough for us.

Nuszi was always kind, gentle, and considerate and a very, generous man, he was a loving husband and father.

He leaves behind his heartbroken wife Ibi, three children and grandchildren.

# Ray Jackson (Jakubowicz)

By Shy Jackson

**I**tzhak, Jack. Itzik. Ray, Jackson: my father, who passed away in July, was known by several names. You can learn much from names and the names represent different stages of his life and different circles of friends. But these stages and circles intersected each other and, regardless of the name, there are a few main themes which were present throughout my father's life and are what my father was to me.



*Ray Jackson.*

In that respect, some of the things said about my father at his funeral highlighted his determination and strength

of will, in surviving the war and fighting cancer for as long as he did. I can understand why these are what people have focussed on. However, for me, it was just as important to hear the number of people who told us what they thought of my father and their experience of encountering him in their lives.

For me, what I take of my father is how his friends saw him every day. While it is impossible not to be humbled

by the way he survived the horrors of his early years and the final years, my strongest impressions of him are of whom he was, what he made of his life and how he dealt with people. This is difficult for me to judge, seeing my father from the narrow perspective of a son. I, therefore, have to rely on other people's accounts when trying to form a picture of my father.

Like all of us, he was not perfect. But what emerges in people's mind is his positive approach to life as well as to individual people. Specifically, this characterised itself in a great sense of adventure, a mischievous sense of humour and the talent and ability to succeed in what he chose to do.

It was this positive, and practical, approach to life which not only helped him survive the camps, but made him decide in the 1950s that it would be a good idea to spend a few years in India. This was quite a transition for a Polish-born young man at the time, but he enjoyed this adventure immensely; he made the most of it and went on to spend a significant part of his life in the Far East, moving between Burma, Malaysia and Singapore.

Putting to one side the successful business he set up, what is striking about that period is the good and lifelong friendships he made, with

friends with whom he remained close until his final days without any heed to geographic distances. To this day, I hear tales of his epic fights with his good friend Harry Elias, all-night card-playing sessions driving through the jungles of Malaysia when terrorists were all around.

And finally, any description of my father's life could not be complete without his long relationship with the other Boys and Girls, who were always there and with whom he shared many happy times. Friends he would see in Israel and whenever he came to England, being the family they did not have and the cause of many lasting memories. Similarly, Israel was another place where he created yet another circle of good friends, all from different backgrounds but enjoying life together.

Given his upbringing in pre-war Poland, my father could not be expected to easily find a common ground with, for example, the English people based in India, the Malaysians or even the native Israelis. The secrets of his success, I believe, were his sense of humour and the decent way he dealt with people. Throughout his career and life, he was resolute in doing what was right, in treating people fairly and refusing to take unfair advantages. Not being able to describe this

directly from my experience, I appreciated this even more when David Nimni, one of his business colleagues, spoke at his funeral and told us how he learnt from my father that it is possible to succeed without what he described as "shouting, intrigue and dishonesty".

I have kept for last what I treasure the most; my father's sense of humour and mischief. I see this as one of the main keys to his personality, his way of dealing with life and the reason he became what he was. As many will know, he liked and enjoyed speaking his mind and saying what he thought, especially if it would get a strong reaction. He was not one to accept things simply because everyone else did; challenging things was part of life and this was how his friends recognised him. At the same time, loyalty was one of his strengths. Yosef Yarom spoke about my father at the funeral, describing how he would always be there to help, but without making too much of it.

There are other facets to my father, not least as a family man. But these things are some of what my father was and remains to me; a challenging and mischievous sense of humour, loyalty to friends and decency in dealing with people. Most of all, he had a very positive approach to life regardless of the circumstances.

# Haskiel Rosenblum

By Michael Etkind

**H**askiel Rosenblum came with us to Windermere in August 1945. He was then, as most of us were, a lively energetic teenager, full of optimism. He had a suitcase full of memorabilia from Terezin and Prague which contained, amongst other things, thousands of Kronen, which it soon became obvious was of no value outside Czechoslovakia.

He later went to Cardross in Scotland and four of us, namely, Felix Berger, Danek Szurek, Haskiel and myself shared one large room in that spacious hostel. We had teachers and students from Glasgow University coming to teach us English, Mathematics, Geography, etc., and Haskiel was in the top group with us.

Two or three times a week we would go on bicycles or by bus to Cardross or Helensborough to see a film and to meet other young people.

Meanwhile, Haskiel was corresponding with his uncle in Bolivia, and was waiting for his visa in order to leave Britain, and eventually left in the summer of 1946. He returned to Britain on a number of occasions and so we knew that he left Bolivia for Argentina, where he was in the property business. He married René and had two children.

Haskiel and René never recovered from the loss of their son Pepe who had 'disappeared' during the terrible period of the military 'Junta'. To Haskiel this was a second Holocaust. Haskiel



*Haskiel Rosenblum.*

was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He was a successful businessman, witty, with a good sense of humour and an abundance of jokes.

He lost all his family in Poland and considered the "Boys" as his family. He wrote a short memoir in 1995 in which he concluded as follows:-

"The unique and only reason which moved me to break my silence and write this testimony is my deep

love to 'the boys of the '45 Aid Society' who are the rest of my family. I have always felt that I owed them the story of my life after I left England. I have always felt that my silence and geographical distance were unfair towards them and to myself. I have always felt, and will always feel, one of "The Boys".

Yes, he was, indeed, very close to many of us and we will always cherish his memory.

# MEMBERS NEWS 2004/2005

Compiled by Ruby Friedman

## BIRTHS:

- Valerie Kohn and the late Chaim Kohn mazeltov on the birth of their grandson Chaim. Yonatan Naftali, born to Frimette and Gabi.
- Thea and Isroel Rudzinski mazeltov on the birth of their great-grandson.
- Arza & Ben Helfgott mazeltov on the birth of their grandson Reuben, born to Laura & Nathan.
- Estelle & Jack Schwimmer mazeltov on the birth of their grandson Mathew Lewis. born to Ginette & Keith.
- Harry Fox mazeltov on the birth of your granddaughter Molly Miriam, born to Rochelle & Michael.
- Moishe Nurtman mazeltov on the birth of your grandson.
- Barbara and Jack Kagan mazeltov on the birth of their great-grandson in Israel.
- Doreen Wajchandler and the late Harry Wajchandler mazeltov on the birth of their great-grandson, born to Melanie and Grant
- Anna Jackson and the late Izak Jackson mazeltov on the birth of their granddaughter Ella Naomi, born to Ginny & Shai.
- Gena & David Schwarzman mazeltov on the birth of their grandson Shraga Raphael Simon. Beatrice & Leon Manders mazeltov on the birth of their great-granddaughter Gillian.
- Wendy & Lipa Tepper mazoltov on the birth of their grandson Coby, born to Sara & Alan.
- Shirley & Joe Kiersz mazeltov on the birth of their granddaughter Sophie Fay, born to Allison & Steven.
- Ruby & Moric Friedman mazeltov on the birth of their grandson George, born to Estelle & Mark.
- Tina & Victor Greenberg mazeltov on

the birth of their grandson  
Harvey Daniel, born to Debs & David.

## ENGAGEMENTS:

- Beatrice & Leon Manders mazeltov on the engagement of their granddaughter Jenny to Josh, daughter of Howard and the late Gillian Hamilton, and their grandson Simon to Joanna son of Howard and the late Gillian Hamilton.
- Charlie Lewkowicz mazeltov on the engagement of your grandson Jonathan son of Eve & Howard Pearl, grandson of the late Betty Lewkowicz.
- Marie and Bob Obuchowski mazeltov on the engagement of their granddaughter Louise daughter of Sue and David Bermange.
- Miriam & Jack Melcer mazeltov on the engagement of their son Leonard to Denise.
- Pauline Balsam mazeltov on the engagement of your granddaughter Natalie to Marc daughter of Rochelle and Stephen and granddaughter of the late Harry Balsam.

## MARRIAGES:

- Barbara & Jack Kagan mazeltov on the marriage of their grandson.
- Beatrice & Leon Manders mazeltov on the marriage of their granddaughter Jenny to Josh and their grandson Simon to Joanna, daughter and son of Howard and the late Gillian Hamilton.
- Barbara & Leo Frischman mazeltov on the marriage of their daughter Elizabeth Rebecca to Daniel.
- Miriam & Jack Melser mazeltov on the marriage of their son Leonard to Denise in Australia.

## BARMITZVAHS:

- Pauline & Harry Spiro mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Stephen, son of Tracy & Michael Moses.

- Sylvia & Joe Perl mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Benjamin son of Frances and Albert Kahan.
- Barbara & Jack Kagan mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Daniel son of Lisa & Jeffrey.
- Margaret and Harry Olmer mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Danny son of Phillip & Ellie.

### **BATMITZVAHS:**

- Marion and Mayer Stern mazeltov on the batmitzvah of their granddaughter Lyora daughter of Lelia and David.
- Pauline & Harry Spiro mazeltov on the batmitzvah of their granddaughter Rachel daughter of Roz & Leslie.
- Carol Farkas and the late Frank Farkas mazeltov on the batmitzvah of their granddaughter Violet daughter of Emma & Alan.

### **GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**

- Sylvia & Joe Perl
- Shirley & Alfred Huberman
- Vivienne & Kopel Kendal

May you have many more Happy and Healthy years together.

### **DEATHS:**

We have unfortunately lost several members during the past year. We offer our condolences to their families. They will be sadly missed.

- Chaskel Rosenblum
- Harry Wajchandler
- David Jonisz
- Adolf Fixler
- Mark Fruhman
- Willie Rosenberg
- Sam Gross
- Sam Weinberger
- Shoshana Lebovic
- Motel Tabacznik
- Raymond Jackson (Izak Jakubowicz)

- Adek Beil
- Charlie Lewkowicz
- Mendel Beale
- Johny Goldman
- Hela Singer

Our sincere condolences to those of our members who have lost loved ones.

- Anita Wiernik on the loss of her son Steven.
- Felix Berger on the loss of his son Simon.
- To our Vice-President Israel Finestein on the loss of his wife Marion.
- Wendy Tepper on the loss of her mother.
- Harry Olmer on the loss of his brother.
- Henry Kohn on the loss of his wife Lily.
- Rachel Levy on the loss of her husband Phin.
- Freda Wineman on the loss of her brother.

### **3RD GENERATION NEWS:**

- Congratulations to Samantha Wolreich on her graduation from Nottingham University. Samantha attained a 1st in Languages. Her grandparents Gertie and Alf Wolreich are enormously proud of her achievements.
- Mazeltov to Paul Gilbert on gaining 3 A's in his A. Level exams, and will be taking up a place at Birmingham University following gap year in a Yeshiva in Israel. Paul is the grandson of Tauba & Mayer Cornell.
- Mazeltov also to Victoria Gilbert on achieving 6A\* and A grades in her GCSE exams. She scored among the top five marks in English Literature from a field of 365,000 students. Victoria is the granddaughter of Tauba & Mayer Cornell.
- Many congratulations to Lauren Harris on gaining 10 A\* in her GCSE examinations, Lauren is the granddaughter of Jasmine & Michael Bandel and the daughter of Gaynor & Daniel Harris.

# MANCHESTER NEWS 2004/2005

Compiled by Louise Elliot

## BIRTHS:

- Mazeltov to Marita Golding and the late Maurice Golding on the birth of a grandson born to Sara & Phillip.
- Karl & Estelle Kleiman mazeltov on the birth of their granddaughter born to Scarlet & Lee.
- Rezinka Fruhman and the late Mark Fruhman mazeltov on the birth of a great-granddaughter born to Talia the daughter of Stephen & Jacqueline Fruhman.

## BARMITZVAHS:

- Susan & Pincus Kurnedz mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson, son of Jeremy, in July 2004, in September the barmitzvah of another grandson, and in January 2005 the barmitzvah of another grandson.
- Rezinka Fruhman mazeltov on the barmitzvah of your grandson, son of Lawrence, grandson of the late Mark Fruhman.
- Lily & Mayer Bomszyk Mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandsons Sammy, son of Warren & Sharon, and Jamie, son of Brian & his wife.
- Sam Laskier and the late Blanche Laskier mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Jamie, son of Sue & Johnny.

## ENGAGEMENTS:

- Estelle & Karl Kleiman mazeltov on the engagement of their son Andrew to Lauren.
- Rezinka Fruhman mazeltov on the engagement of your grandson Benjamin, son of Steven & Jacqueline.
- Berek Wurzel mazeltov on the engagement of your granddaughter Emma daughter of Michelle & Warren, and granddaughter of the late Carol Wurzel.

## WEDDINGS:

- Alice & the late Joe Rubinstein mazeltov on the marriage of your granddaughter Suzanne to Rob, and also on the marriage of your granddaughter Emily, daughter of Joan Issacs and Harold Rubinstein.
- Rezinka & the late Mark Fruhman mazeltov on the marriage of your grandson Benji, the son of Stephen & Jaqueline.

## SILVER WEDDING:

- Tania & Simon Nelson mazeltov on your silver wedding anniversary, Tania is the daughter of Mendel and the late Marie Beale.

## DEATHS:

- We are very saddened to report that in November 2004 David Jonisz died, then in December 2004 Mark Fruhman died. We send again our very sincere condolences to their respective families and hope that their widows will continue to support our Society. In August 2005 our friend Edna, the wife of Charlie Igielman, died.

## 3RD GENERATION NEWS:

- In July 2004 Brandon the grandson of Charlie & Edna Igielman obtained his degree.
- Jack & Marion Cygleman's granddaughter won a place at Leeds University.
- Pinkus and Susan Kurnedz are going on Aliya early in 2005 and we hope they will be very happy surrounded by all their children and grandchildren and will continue to support the Society through the Israeli branch.
- April 2005. I am sure that most of our members read in the Jewish Chronicle that JNF is holding a tribute dinner in honour of Arek Hersh and on May 10th

Arek will be addressing a security group at the Pentagon in Washington. Congratulations from us all. Whilst mentioning this I would again like to say how much wonderful work Mayer Hersh is doing in Manchester, visiting schools and other institutions talking about the Holocaust and answering questions especially from children. He should be commended for all the good work he has done, and also from time to time Jack Aizenberg has assisted. Carry on with the good work friends.

Mayer Hersh has been further in the news and on the 14th January 2005 the Guardian published a letter from him concerning Prince Harry's fancy dress of a German. In case you did not read it - it went as follows:

"To us survivors, the swastika is a symbol of hate. Whenever I see the swastika, it feels like a knife being pushed into me. It reminds me of those dark days. It means danger and fear and cruelty, because I know what the swastika produced. But I try to look at it from his point of view too. I don't think Harry knew the seriousness with which wearing a swastika would be interpreted by survivors and others who experienced the war. I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. His timing, though, is disastrous. We are commemorating the Holocaust and the liberation of Auschwitz. This is a solemn moment, a moment for reflection" In a supplement of the Guardian his experiences are set out. Let's hope it is read, and understood by the people who have been disbelievers.

January 26th/27th 2005. A very momentous time for our members - meeting the Queen and then later the reception. All eyes will be glued to the T.V., as they have been all the week watching the wonderful but sad programmes. Again we hope the non-believers will now be convinced.

- In May 2005 Arek Hersh was invited to the Pentagon where he described the work he is involved with and was very well received by all and on his return to England the JNF hosted a tribute dinner in his honour - well done Arek

and a hearty mazeltov to you and Jean. The Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance service took place on 5th May 2005 and this year it took place at the King David High School in Manchester. It was well attended and a survivor's story was presented and interpreted by students of the school. Six candles were lit by Mark Ferster, Jessica Bomsztyk, Shopia Greenstein, Sammy Bomsztyk, Hannah Wertheim and Jamie Bomsztyk. The survivors' legacy was read by Jack Aizenberg and the response by his daughter Debbie. The programme was based on Mayer Hersh's story and was divided into five chapters. The first "The Joy of Shabbos", then "Occupation", "On becoming a Slave", "Deliverance and Rebirth and Renewal", which was carried out by students from the school and finally Chazan M. Isdale gave a wonderful rendering of Psalms 131 and 121.

- In July 2005 Pinkus and Susan Kurnedz invited all the Manchester members to their home for a L'Chaim on their departure to their new home in Israel. Everyone wishes them success for a happy and healthy future.

## OBITUARIES:

- Mark Fruhman: It was a very sad loss to our members when Mark died. He had been ill for quite some time and had difficulty in talking, but he managed to put on a brave face and was glad to see his friends who frequently visited him.
- David Jonisz: David was a committee member and his contribution will be sadly missed. His sudden death was a great shock to us all.
- Edna Igielman: Edna had suffered bad health for many years but always made light of her problems. She lived for her husband Charlie and her daughters and their families and put on a smile on every occasion.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The annual Leonard G Montefiore lecture will take place on Wednesday 15th March 2006 at 7.45 pm at the Hendon Synagogue, 18 Raleigh Close, Wykeham Road, NW4 2TZ

### **YOM HA'SHOAH**

The communal Yom Ha'shoah Commemoration will take place on Sunday 30th April 2006 at 11am at the Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London EC1.

\* \* \*

### **2006 ANNUAL REUNION**

The 61st anniversary of our reunion will take place on Sunday 7th May at The Holiday Inn Hotel, Regents Park, Carburton Street, London W1.

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

Please contact:- Zigi Shipper  
6 Salisbury House  
57 Gordon Avenue  
Stanmore  
Middlesex HA7 3QR  
Tel: 020-8416 3899

\* \* \*

## **THE ANNUAL OSCAR JOSEPH HOLOCAUST AWARDS**

The '45 Aid Society offers up to two Awards of £600 each to assist successful candidates to participate in the Holocaust Seminar at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which is held from 1st - 22nd July 2006.

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 5th March 2006 to:

Ruby Friedman  
4 Broadlands  
Hillside Road  
Radlett  
Herts WD7 7BH

# ALKHAM INVESTMENTS

WITH  
COMPLIMENTS

**design  
&  
print**  
*... and much more*

**ELMAR PRINTERS LTD**

Unit 3, 8 Becket Road, Montagu Industrial Estate, London N18 3PN

T 020 8803 5249 / 8807 2350 F 020 8803 0370

E [elmarhmg@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:elmarhmg@globalnet.co.uk)



[www.elmarprinters.com](http://www.elmarprinters.com)

**ELMAR GRAPHICS**



[www.elmargraphics.com](http://www.elmargraphics.com)



# St. James's Palace

