

JOURNAL '45 OF THE AID SOCIETY

No. 8

MARCH 1981

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JOURNAL OF THE '45 AID SOCIETY

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All submissions for publication in the next issue (including letters to the Editor and Member's news items) should be sent to:

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They should be typed in double-spacing and reach the Editor not later than the end of August 1981.

EDITORIAL

Once again almost a whole year has passed since the appearance of our last issue. Once again the major reason for this was the lack of contributions. However, we are delighted to be able to report that during the last few weeks the flow of contributions suddenly increased and thus the current issue is a rather bumper one compared with previous ones. Furthermore, for the first time since our issue of November 1978 we have a reaction to a preceding article, this time in the shape of Moniek Goldberg's comments. Moniek Goldberg's view of the "lambs to the slaughter" thesis was also expressed in these pages in the November 1978 issue, in the course of a review of "Holocaust". It is a view of which "our sons and daughters" should not remain ignorant. We, in turn, should be aware of such views as those expressed by Ardyn Halter, who adds a welcome touch of controversy to our pages. Will he, one wonders, draw the fire of any Member, as Shlomo Raz drew Moniek Goldberg's?

As in other recent issues, the "Here and Now" Section seems to be the most attractive to our contributors. Never before have we had as moving and as hopeful a contribution as Peter Brandstein's. Some of his feelings will be shared by many of us, particularly his feeling that we need to make up for the tears we did not shed in the camps. Part of what he says also endorses the view of the Society expressed in our last Editorial. We are very glad to have the piece by Moriz Sobov who, although he does not identify himself as such, is the Chairman of the U.S.A. Section of our Society. Our "Headquarters" being in London, and this being the Journal of our Society, it is natural that Chairmen or Presidents of (overseas) Sections of our Society should use it as a means of informing the entire Society of what their particular Section may be doing. We look forward to having similar contributions from our Section in, for example, Israel.

Many of our Members are likely to be present at the forthcoming world gathering of Holocaust Survivors in Israel next June (to which we referred in our last Editorial and which figures prominently in Moriz Sobov's piece). We look forward to publishing reports on, and impressions of, that event.

As the anniversary of our last issue began to draw ominously nearer and nearer rumours began to reach us that some Members were actually impatient for the next issue! This seemed praise indeed and helps to explain why the appearance of this issue was not delayed even longer. If the prospect of praise acts as an incentive, economists refer to it as a 'moral incentive' - but as an incentive nevertheless.

Those who read these Editorials may have noticed that their author does not forget what was said in earlier ones. Last time we urged Members to respond to our questionnaire survey and we boldly and, as it turns out, brashly, announced that the results of the survey ". . . will be published". Well, we are informed that our appeal has had no effect whatsoever,

and that the response rate stands where it stood a year ago, i.e. at under 50%, which is not good enough to warrant publication of the results. (A response rate of at least 80% is required.) In our Editorial of May 1979 we pointed out that these results would be of interest to our Members and would also be of scientific interest. Moreover, some Members have invested a good deal of work in the design and organisation of this survey. It would be a pity if the survey were to be a failure. You can still help to make it a success by filling in and returning your questionnaire, if you have not done so already. As far as response goes, we are more than half-way to being successful. Could we ask the 50% of our Members who have so far ignored our appeals not to ignore this last one.

We wish to extend an additional invitation; Roman Halter has suggested that we should print in this Journal photographs which illustrate various aspects of pre-war Jewish life in the areas in which we were born. Members who have such photographs should send them to me - I guarantee their safe return. We cannot do too much to try to preserve the historical record of Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe, all the more so as this record is certainly not being preserved in those areas. Aron Zylberszac's report that in most parts of Poland no traces whatever remain of pre-war Jewish life there will be confirmed with regret and indeed anger by other Members who visited the country during the last 10 - 15 years. We can do nothing to preserve visible records there - but, in the spirit of the project reported by Artek Poznanski, we should do our utmost to contribute to its preservation in whatever way we can. The re-printing of photographs in this Journal is one such way.

"YOUTH" REMEMBERED

THE END OF SUMMER HOLIDAYS . . .

by Michael Etkind

The atmosphere in Wiśniowa Góra, where we were spending our three months summer vacation, was tense. People were gathering in groups to listen to the radio. They read all the papers and were talking incessantly about the impending war. Colonel Beck, the Polish foreign minister, was flying backwards and forwards to London, Paris, and Berlin, proclaiming that Poland would never surrender to Hitler's demands, "Not even a button", was his famous slogan. Later it became a joke: "Not a button but the whole coat". There was a full-page cartoon in a Sunday paper, showing Hitler and Stalin embracing each other and smiling surreptitiously; each holding a knife behind the other's back.

Wiśniowa Góra was a holiday village bustling with life and consisting of cottages, villas, and flats, owned, or hired for the summer season, by Jewish families from Łódź. It was a pleasant place on the edge of an enormous pine forest that stretched for miles towards the town of Tomaszów Mazowiecki. We used to spend our holidays in more remote places before 1936, but, because of growing antisemitism, it seemed safer to be amongst other Jews. Usually we returned to our flat in Łódź at the end of August, but this year my parents decided that we should stay in the country a little longer. School was to have started on the 1st September, but instead we awoke on that day to find that the Germans were attacking Poland.

It was a beautiful late summer's day, but the peace was interrupted by the hum of aeroplanes in the cloudless sky, and the stillness was broken by distant explosions that caused the ground to tremor beneath our feet. Somebody suggested that we should build an anti-bomb shelter, and so we started to dig a long trench; if nothing else, it helped to relieve tension. The radio announced heavy fighting, and claimed that dozens of enemy planes and tanks had been destroyed. Our maid, who spent the summer months with us, decided to leave.

Three days later there was jubilation - England and France had declared war on Germany. Now there was nothing to worry about - Hitler would be destroyed in no time.

That night we were awakened by a constant stream of traffic; convoys of refugees were moving East. Peasants on horse-drawn vans and carts with their livestock trailing behind and families with bundles on their backs were moving slowly in the direction of Warsaw. They looked tired and bewildered and did not answer our questions, but only asked for water. The night sky was lit up in the West, from where a steady rumble could be heard. The stream of civilian refugees was joined by soldiers and officers retreating in disarray, and even some tanks passed slowly along the road. This went on uninterruptedly for almost two days.

Rumours began to circulate that the Germans were killing all the men, irrespective of whether they wore uniforms or not, and that all men had to go to the capital to defend it. Caught up in the panic, my father together with the other men departed in the direction of Warsaw. My older brother, Jacob, was spending the summer in Zakopane, in the mountains, and we did not know whether he managed to return to Łódź.

When the stream of refugees had passed, an eerie silence fell over the village, and my mother, left with the three of us, my younger sister Henka, my youngest brother Lolek, and myself, decided that we should make our way back to Łódź. For safety's sake we would walk at night; we joined a group of about two hundred women and children making their way back to their homes in Łódź. A lonely Polish officer appeared, confiscated my bicycle, and pedalled off in the direction of Warsaw. The sun was setting as we passed the empty railway station, from which we would have normally departed for Łódź.

Suddenly, a German aeroplane came screaming over the treetops at the edge of the road, and with its undercarriage tore all the telegraph wires above the railway track, and then disappeared into the distance. The telegraph wires vibrated and hummed a long low mournful sound . . .

We scrambled out of the ditch at the edge of the road, gathered our belongings, and silently walked on. Slowly the sky darkened, but no lights appeared in the wayside cottages, and their dark shapes were silhouetted against the starlit sky. The silence was only broken by the cries of the younger children.

As we neared Widzew, on the outskirts of Łódź, we passed a group of men in prison garb who greeted us with catcalls and shouted: "You're going in the wrong direction, the Germans will kill you".

We entered Łódź before dawn. The town seemed deserted; we thought that all the inhabitants had fled.

We rang the bell of our gate. Five minutes later the caretaker's wife let us in; her husband and son had gone. There was a note from Jacob, my older brother, saying "I am going to Warsaw".

(to be continued)

HERE AND NOW

Notes on Contributors

P I Brandstein	came to the U.K. with the 'Hungarian' group
Moriz Sobov	came to the U.K. with the 'Hungarian' group
Moniek Goldberg	lives in Florida having come to the U.K. with the Windermere group
Aron Zylberszac	came to the U.K. with the Windermere group and now lives in London
Jacqueline Gryn	lives in London and is married to Rabbi Hugo Gryn
Arthur Poznanski	came to the U.K. with the Windermere group and now lives in London

RETURNED FROM THE DEAD

by Peter Isaac Brandstein

Many of you, no doubt justifiably, claim that on the date of liberation or escape from the Nazi camps, you in fact were returning from the dead or from a fate that was even worse than death.

Some of us can in fact claim to have had lucky escapes from death many times over during the notorious Nazi era, but I wonder how often many of us realise that even in these 'peaceful' days we are so close to death. That it is indeed thanks to a very close shave with the hazards of life on this earth that we manage to thread our paths through life safely. So I think that if we stopped to ponder for a minute we would give thanks to the Almighty that in spite of all the hazards that we happen to encounter, we are still alive and relatively well.

In recent years, I have undergone particularly harsh, yet in a way, very heart-rending experiences of living through a trauma which in many respects had a number of similarities to the struggle of trying to remain alive in the Concentration Camps and Ghettos. I have been, for very many years now, very ill indeed, and from day to day my illness was getting worse and worse. Many times I wished I could die or just peacefully fade away, but this was not to be. I was in spirit fighting my way through the K.Z.'s once more. In the Camps I had comrades who were sharing my fate, and this comradeship, in a way, served as a form of fuel to fill my veins with the lifeblood required for living. This time my struggle was a much more lonely one. I was caught up in the net between the living and the dead. The twilight of a mental patient was entering my existence. From day to day I was seeing myself going more and more insane. My friends were falling by the wayside and gave up the struggle to stay and remain my friends. It was very painful for me to find myself more and more deserted as time passed by. I soon began to realise in my insane warped mind, even the saying "If you laugh, the world laughs with you, but if you cry, you cry alone" in fact applied to me in my plight. Oh and did I cry. Buckets and buckets full. I cried, sobbed like a baby. The tears were just rolling down my cheeks, there was just no way of stopping them. Had I collected those tears in a bowl I could have easily washed myself in them, so numerous were they. It was as if my crying was trying to make up for the tears that I should have shed in the Camps, but never did. Not even during the killing of my nearest and dearest. In the camps there was no time available for crying, but now time was on my hands and so I could spend it reflecting on my miserable state and existence.

Not working, not being able to do anything at all, gradually not being able even to speak, or to eat or drink without a struggle, whilst someone would have to hold the glass to my

lips, I was left with plenty of time in which to think. But although I had plenty of time, the time was spent fighting my hallucinations of battling against the Nazis and once more living all over again in my imagination the happier times of my childhood. I can remember trying, at the same time, to find an answer to my miserable existence and searching in my mind for a miracle cure to my illness, as well as wondering how I could relieve the agony that I could see on the faces of my handful of remaining steadfast friends. For these friends too, were undergoing a very anxious and difficult period. All the time I ended up in desperation just saying in my thoughts (as I couldn't even speak any longer) SHEMA ISRAEL over and over again, like a gramophone record when the needle gets stuck. Just like in the camps, during the bombing raids or during selections, when it was decided who should remain alive or be exterminated. I was just praying to God to do something to relieve me and my dear friends of the pain we were all undergoing. Slowly my friends diminished as they gradually gave up all hope for me, until there were only 3 or 4 steadfast good friends left. But I could well imagine what they must have been thinking and saying behind my back, as I really was beyond any help or hope. I will refrain from naming the friends that still stood by me, even though they eventually believed that I was beyond redemption! Suffice it to say that all but one are members of the 45 Aid Society, either in a passive or active capacity.

I would mention, however, one friend by name, who is no longer in our midst, as I should very much like to have his name remembered in the annals of our Society. This was my dear friend, the late Ken (Chaskel) Slomovic, who has managed to beat me to the gatepost of death. May he rest in peace. Ken was not really an active member of the Society, but he was indeed a member as far as the spirit of the Society is concerned. He emanated the same spirit of fellowship towards his fellow man as the Society is meant to foster. As I was lying in bed, not even able to stick my hands out from beneath the sheets to reach for the 'phone, Ken, in spite of the fact that he himself was seriously ill with heart trouble, would 'phone my home and pass messages to me saying "Come on, get up, there is a world out there waiting for you." Ken would also say "What did you survive for, do you want the Nazis to win, get up, get up! Don't give up, you owe it to your fellow Jews, to your ancestors, to your brothers and sisters, to yourself, to your friends, to conquer the evil that has crippled you". But it was to no avail. No amount of cajoling was having any effect on me. Ken wasn't to know that he would die such an untimely death in open heart surgery and leave me behind to my own devices. I wish I could have changed places with him because Ken had a will to live and get on with things, no matter what the odds. He also had a wife, children, a sister and other relatives and friends.

Some of you, and most psychologists and psychiatrists, may be of the opinion that in my subconscious I did not in fact want to die in place of Ken. This may be so. It seems that

it was similar to my stepping out of line in Buchenwald and begging the camp commander to send me to Auschwitz with the transport that was leaving for the gas chambers with two thousand souls, including my father. Although I knew that I was asking for what was certain death, I felt that it was my duty to my father to make a gesture of supreme sacrifice. After all, the duty of a son was to stand by his father to the end. I may as well admit that I was greatly relieved when the camp commander pushed me back into line, saying "you are too young to die".

I didn't shed a tear then, there was just no time for crying. I just stepped back into line. Twentyfive of us left out of a transport of 2,000 odd. Well, I have since made up for the tears that I failed to shed during captivity.

Soon after Ken's death my life became practically motionless and silent. My friends diminished further and further, and gave me up as a lost cause. If ever someone ventured to come and see me it would just take the form of a fleeting visit, never to be repeated again. It was also the time that for me seeing people was accompanied by great agony, as I had to prepare myself days ahead for the visit and I was very frightened. When my friends would leave I would feel lonely and sad and as the light was flickering by my bed I thought of the room I was in as a cemetery and my bed as a coffin. In a way I didn't have to let my imagination run away too far as the truth was that my life style was just like it, even my body started to rot away. What is amazing is that when now and again, for a day or two, I would regain sanity of a sort and try to contact my ex-friends I was cold-shouldered, even though the very same people prided themselves on the fact that they and their wives etc. were participating in various charitable organisations such as the 'Samaritans', League of Jewish Women, 45 Aid Society. There no longer seemed a place left in their hearts for me.

I have acquired new friends, some imaginary and some real. The imaginary ones were my obsessions and phobias. There I would be lying in bed, day and night for many years - motionless, friendless, wishing I were dead or that I could find a pathway to easy death.

My real friends by then were doctors, psychiatrists, therapists and above all fellow patients. I was a lame duck, a has-been, a write-off without a chance. To spend the rest of my life in such a place was not something to look forward to but I had no choice. The Rat Race was something that had taken its toll on me. There was a little light still shining in from the 45 Aid Society. Its light reminded me of the oil burning in the Temple during the fight of the Maccabees. Also my therapist, an American Jewish professor of Sociology, kept on at me and wouldn't give up. Well it took a long time, but here I am learning to live again, back amongst the living once more. I am very proud to say that all but one of my friends are members of the 45 Aid Society, and it is under the umbrella of this Society that they all sheltered me. May God give more power to their elbow!

"45 - 81"

by Moriz Sobov

In June 1981, many old friends and survivors will have a reunion. Joyfully, Jews from all over the world will be meeting, to fulfil a promise made to themselves and each other in concentration camps, to be free one day in the Promised Land.

From the United States the trip to Israel takes only 12½ hours. For many of the members of our special organization this relatively short trip took over thirty years and spanned many countries and thousands of miles.

Although the group leaving from America has only been in existence for five years, the seeds for this affiliation were planted in 1946 when most of our members arrived in the United Kingdom. One of the more pleasant aspects during our odyssey was the time spent in the Promrose Club. There stories were exchanged, relationships were formed and cemented. Who can forget Mama's dinners served in the basement, or Mr Mayer, the athletic director? The dance lessons not only served as a release from our worries and tensions but also brought together many boys and girls who later fell in love and got married

In time many of the group departed for different destinations. Some went to Israel, others to Canada and the United States. The group that stayed in England immediately formed the 45 Aid Society, a meritorious organization that became the model for our own 45 Reunion.

For the group that came to America it wasn't easy. It was during Harry Truman's post-war Presidency and we encountered many problems finding employment and adapting ourselves to our new environment.

But we were young, and we were tough, and we were survivors. Many of the new arrivals joined the U.S. Armed Forces and served with distinction during the Korean war. Even though our group was scattered, when any two or more friends met, inevitably the talk got around to the need for affiliation. However, at that time there were still obstacles to overcome as we attempted to climb the socio-economic ladder. That we are a viable organization today is testimony to the fact that we met the challenge and we were victorious. In 1975, firmly established in our adopted land, with our children growing up, a small group took the active leadership in forming and forging the U.S. branch of the 45 Reunion.

In the early days it was exciting and rewarding as we contacted our many friends scattered throughout North America, urging them to attend and join with their fellow survivors. Our first informal meeting was held in a Brooklyn Synagogue and about forty people showed up. The enthusiasm was overwhelming and a new chapter of the 45 Reunion was born.

Prior to our convocation in Israel, a fourth annual Gala Dinner Dance will be held on May 17th 1981. Our annual reunions bring members from as far as Canada in the North, Florida in the South and California in the West. This proves that, in addition to caring for canapes and conversation, Jews care about and for each other.

Looking to the future, as long as there are Jews imprisoned in Russia and the middle East, as long as there is anti-semitism throughout the world, our course is clear. We must become even stronger as an organization and aid and support our brethren. As we were all helped in the past it is now our turn to help those less fortunate than we are.

With the same determination and indomitable spirit that got us out of bondage, we will continue our efforts on behalf of the "45" and what it stands for. Looking forward to seeing all of our old friends and friends we are yet to meet, the '45 Reunion will truly "reune" in the state of Israel in June of 1981.

A MEMBER REPLIES TO SHLOMO RAZ

by Moniek Goldberg

One hesitates to disagree with a contributor to this Journal. One's disagreements will be published a year after the original article and the issues raised will have been read and forgotten. I am even more reluctant to comment on an article by the younger generation as I feel we should do all we can to encourage them to contribute. It is therefore my fervent hope that Shlomo Raz will take it in the right spirit and consider it part of a dialogue between generations.

I am at a disadvantage since I did not read the essay of Naomi Reis. Furthermore, I really don't know what Shlomo Raz means by "Jewish Faith", but let us not get involved in semantics.

What intrigues me is that Naomi hoped to "understand the story of her nation" by interviewing the members of the '45 Aid Society and make this group her window from which to see life under Nazism.

Let us examine the conclusions to which Shlomo attached such great importance.

- (a) "The Jewish Identity does not express itself in religion but through a sense of belonging to the Jewish people, Zionism and the State of Israel."

Fair enough.

- (b) "The interviewed members understand Judaism as 'a Jew is someone who is pointed at as a Jew'."

I have tried very hard to think of any of our group and indeed any of my acquaintances who are Jewish who would give this response, and I cannot think of one.

- (c) "Only a few of the members live in Israel today. Materialism caused the others to live elsewhere."

Fair enough.

- (d) "The sense of the Holocaust and sorrow is deeper among people who live in Israel. In Israel it exists permanently, through memorial days, and during times of war and in the State's everyday struggle to survive. The members in England are not exposed to the permanent sense of the Holocaust or death."

There are three sentences in the last paragraph. Only the last sentence can be said to be true. To say that people who have suffered and lost their dearest and nearest will grieve less and feel less sorrow merely because they don't live in Israel borders on arrogance.

I have a friend in Detroit who has put up in his business a miniature Yad Vashem consisting of pictures and articles relating to the camps and ghettos, etc, and he becomes very angry when one does not go over to see it. I often tell him "Lou, I don't need reminders; I haven't forgotten; show it to American born Jews and Gentiles." But I can understand him - this is the way he holds on to his memories.

I agree with you Shlomo. There is a paradox about the relationship and obligations that a Jew has to Israel and it is something that has occupied the minds of Jews both in and outside Israel. I can sympathise with you when you tell of the American Jew you met and who told you that "you and I share the burden of the State of Israel; I give my money and you give your life." But he is no more representative of how American Jews feel about Israel than my uncle in Israel was representative of Israelis when he asked me to buy him a television because "I owe it to him". He said: "You live in America whilst I live in Israel". But let us be completely fair to this American Jew. Many is the time that visitors from Israel at fundraising campaigns use the exact same words. Nevertheless, his remark to you was unforgivable. I do not share your view that many Jews in America feel that way. You say that as an Israeli you can defend yourself whereas you state that "any Jew in the diaspora would not be able to defend himself if he were attacked just because he is a Jew". I think your conclusions are in error. I believe that the American Jewish community would defend itself, as it has already proven it can on various occasions.

Now let me point out a "paradox" since after the war the phrase "lambs to the slaughter" has often been heard. Translated literally it means that our parents and grandparents were led to the slaughter and were too cowardly to do anything but submit like lambs, whereas you would not submit. You would fight as you have valiantly fought in all too many wars that the State of Israel was forced to fight since its proclamation in 1948.

But tell me, Shlomo, what is your point of reference? Do you see our situation during the Churban 1939/45 - indeed during the last 2000 years - vis-a-vis Israel 1948/80? Israel is a country with a powerful and well-trained defence force - and may it grow ever more powerful until its enemies give up war - with superbly trained officers (you among them) with help from outside. What were we? Where were we? Who was there to help us? What weapons did we have? And where were our battle lines? Permit me to hypothesise and believe me when I say I would rather give my life than allow this to happen again.

The world now knows and acknowledges the heroism of the Israeli soldier. However, if a number of Israelis found themselves in a Prisoner of War Camp and were put in a closed airtight truck and without their knowledge an exhaust pipe was connected to the box and they then died, would you say

they went like lambs to the slaughter? How about the Israeli athletes; were they lambs too because they did not "do something"? Had the American hostages been killed would they have been lambs?

There is my point. Everybody is quick to use words, make statements, pass judgements without reflecting whether they have all the facts. Let me relate one incident. One day before Christmas in 1943 - when I was 15 years old - I was working in a camp called Poinki where there was a foreman who was a Volksdeutscher. It was time for lunch and I had a little pail in my hand for soup. I went up to ask a friend if I should bring him his soup and this foreman - without any reason - started hitting me. This was nothing new; I was hit without reason before, but that day the thought went through my mind: "why is he hitting me?" I turned around and swung my pail at him and opened up his head. Anybody hearing this story would say I was very brave. I hit back. I was not meek like a "lamb". In truth I wasn't brave at all, as anybody who was in the camp would tell you. By hitting him I signed my death warrant and - what did I accomplish? How did I improve the lot of my people? Did the foreman become less abusive to my fellow Jews? Of course not. The fact that I was not hanged was a chance in a million and I was saved by - of all people - an old German woman, but that's a different story.

In your case, Shlomo, I am more perplexed because you are the son of a survivor and so you should have some idea of what it was like. You should also know that Jews all over the world have learned to be proud and act together in their defence both in a political and physical sense, if need be.

In the last few issues of this Journal there has been some discussion about who should talk about the Holocaust and what should be said. Personally I have always felt that anybody should talk about it. However, such talk should be based on the complete and full story; one should try and avoid catchphrases and sweeping generalisations.

I am very much encouraged that the generation of Naomi and Shlomo are interested in what happened, even though I don't agree with all their conclusions. I would like to leave them with this question. Why is it that the Jewish survivors in general - and our group in particular - who at a very tender age had been subjected to and witnessed unimaginable horrors did not turn into a hate-filled pack of killers seeking revenge?

POLAND RE-VISITED

by Aron Zylberszac

Having always yearned to go back to Poland, I finally plucked up enough courage to return to the country of my birth, happy childhood and where I was finally parted from my family under circumstances I do not need to describe to you. Thirty-five years have gone by and in all that time there has always been the urge within me to retrace my steps and convince myself once and for all that there is nothing there for me.

I was born in Łódź, lived there before the war in the area that was to become the Ghetto. I knew the town like the back of my hand (or thought I did), but on returning there after such a long interval found that there had been numerous changes and many of them were for the better. I expected to find water pumps in the courtyards, open sewers, rats running about and accommodation overcrowded as it was all those long years ago. I was pleasantly surprised to find that water was coming out of taps, there is modern sewerage and drainage, there are no rats in sight and, compared to the pre-war situation, about one-third of the number of people per dwelling.

The biggest disappointment and most difficult to assimilate was the fact that there was not a Jewish face in sight in an area which had been solely populated by Jews before the Holocaust. Łódź had a pre-war population of 750,000 people, one third of whom were Jews.

I had a great desire to re-visit my old home and those of my sisters, brothers, uncle and various other members of my family. I wandered around the streets, looked at doors and windows and tried to remember the names and faces that used to look out at me from those doors and windows. It was not only family that I tried to recall but also the friends of my young years and I found it quite difficult to remember some of those names and faces. I knocked at the door of my old home and wanted to have a look around inside, but unfortunately this flat was now occupied by a very old lady who had no intention of letting us in. I took quite a number of photographs of the place where I spent those days of yore, including my old cheder and school, the latter now being reduced to a slum dwelling.

Although I had plucked up courage to go back to Poland, I was not courageous enough to go on my own. Evelyn and I went together with Bob and Mary Obuchowski and had it not been for their moral and physical support I don't think I would have made this journey. Bob and Mary had already been in Poland once before and gave us the benefit and advice of their previous experience. In spite of this, I must say, I was rather tense and jittery all the time I was there.

Apart from Łódź, we also spent a few days in Warsaw, visited Bob's home town of Orzoków, a Jewish convalescent home near Otwock, and travelled to Auschwitz, Chełmno and Ciechocinek.

I have a friend living in Warsaw who is a member of the Polish Yiddish State Theatre Company. He was in London about twenty years ago and we became great friends. We were delighted to see each other again and he made our stay most memorable. He clucked over us like a mother-hen and paved our way in whatever we wanted to do. Unfortunately, the theatre was closed for summer holidays and that was rather a disappointment.

We took a morning tour of Warsaw, which was very interesting. Looking at Warsaw today it is very hard to visualise that this town was razed to the ground and built anew. We visited Stare Miasto and whilst I was standing in a queue waiting to be served with cherries I got involved in a conversation with an old Polish woman. After having noticed by the number on my arm that I had been in the camps, she thrust a bag of cherries at me and said: "Please accept these for what Poland has done to you" and ran off. I was most startled and somewhat embarrassed, as each person standing in that long queue had heard every word. During this tour we had a guide who pointed out the various monuments and in each instance spoke about the Polish people who had died. It wasn't until I drew his attention to the fact that most of them had been Jews that he mentioned this fact to the group travelling with us. I found in Auschwitz and many other places that one spoke of "people" and not "Jews". You can imagine what effect this omission had on me.

We visited the cemetery in Warsaw and to say it is in a terrible state of neglect is an understatement. Grass, weeds, bushes and trees grow in great abundance and the place looks more like a wilderness than a cemetery. We also took the opportunity of going to the Łódź cemetery, which is in an equally bad state. Whilst there we saw the monument commemorating the children of the Ghetto. The inscription reads: "Odebrano Wam Życie-Dziś Dajemy Wam Tylko Pamięć" which literally translated means: "They have taken your lives - today we only remember you."

We saw the Jewish Historical Institute and the Synagogue which is at the present moment being renovated and about to be turned into a museum. The house adjoining the Synagogue is used for a minyan on Shabbath morning.

Much to our surprise, the best hotels in Warsaw are overrun by Arabs, who come to spend their money with the Polish ladies of easy virtue and on vast quantities of alcohol.

We all went to Orzoków where Bob was born - although he also lived in the Ghetto of Łódź. Bob was delighted to find people who still remembered him and his family. He met his immediate next-door neighbour who had been his sister's friend and this woman was overcome with joy at seeing him.

She had not been aware of the fact that he had survived the war. She burst into tears when she heard of the fate of the rest of Bob's family. Whilst we were standing there talking, more and more people who had known the Obuchowskis before the war gathered around us and it was a very emotional reunion.

We travelled from Warsaw to Otwock one afternoon to attend a Jewish concert, which was being given by some members of the Yiddish Theatre for the benefit of convalescing people. These people were very old and it was sad to realise that these were the remnants of Polish Jewry. There I met a man who had been my brother's friend in Łódź before the war and remembered my whole family. It was a very moving experience for me to discuss my family with a man who had been on such intimate terms with my nearest.

I would say that the most moving and sorrowful time we spent in Poland was the day we went to Auschwitz/Birkenau. It was traumatic for us all, as this was the final place of parting from our families and standing there once again - even after such a long period of time - brought it all back very vividly. We had a very interesting and exceedingly well-informed guide. She was a young woman doing a thesis on Auschwitz and certainly knew her subject. On seeing my number she knew - without referring to any documents whatsoever - the date I arrived in Auschwitz, the number of people arriving in that particular transport, the number of people who were selected to work and the number chosen to die. This young woman apparently had had a grandfather who had harboured a couple of Jews and for this humane act both he and his wife paid the ultimate penalty. She promised to look at the documentation and forward to us all relevant available information regarding our families. I could write a lot more, but feel it best not to dwell too much on this particular subject. To visit Auschwitz was something I felt I had to do, but would not recommend this experience to anyone else.

We also visited Chełmno where 360,000 Jews had lost their lives and this is one of the very few places where it is specifically stated that the victims were Jews. Most of these came from in and around Łódź. Here the Germans used the experimental mobile gas chambers, i.e. exhaust fumes being pumped back into the lorries containing the victims. The memorial stands forlorn in some woodland and it is hard to realise that so many lost their lives there.

It was our desire to visit Zakopane to rest after this strenuous pilgrimage. However, I was dissuaded by well-meaning advisers, who thought that as the weather this summer had been disastrous in Poland Zakopane would be very wet and rainy. We were persuaded to visit Ciechocinek instead, where it poured most of the two days we were there. On arriving there we found it difficult - impossible really - to find any decent accommodation. There is not one single hotel in this spa town and people stay in sanatoria or nursing homes by arrangement with trades unions. We ended up in a none too

clean private dwelling and spent two nights there. We were eaten alive by mosquitoes and soaked to the skin several times and left for Warsaw as soon as we could, where we spent three more days than we had originally intended.

I would like to sum up this article by saying that I felt my return to Poland was like a visit to the dentist. I had to get rid of the ache and having dreaded going, put it off as long as I could, but having gone felt a certain relief.

A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER

by Jacqueline Gryn

Following a course of lectures on the history of Polish Jewry held during the past year under the auspices of JIA Young Leadership, guided by Rabbi Dow Marmur, twenty members of this study group set out in the last weekend of April to visit Poland.

We made Shabbat in our hotel in Warsaw (with Selfridge's Chollas) and our special guests were the Director of the Jewish Historical Institute, Professor M Horn, his Associate, Dr Ruth Sakorska, and Dr Szymon Datner (historian, and especially of the Białystok Ghetto) the former Director. They described the work of their Institute, which comprises a Museum, Library, and Archives. They also publish a three-monthly magazine in English and Yiddish, and an annual publication in Yiddish.

Before sightseeing we attended the Shabbat Service at the Bet Hamidrash, where a congregation of some 20 elderly men and a couple of women eyed us with curiosity but soon made us welcome. We had the sad feeling that we were among the last survivors of what was once a great and thriving community of 350,000 Jews. The only synagogue that miraculously was not destroyed is undergoing lengthy renovations and is not available for services, and in all likelihood will end up as a museum.

After the service we walked to what was once the site of the Ghetto, now completely rebuilt. In the centre is a large monument dedicated to the memory of the Ghetto, but one's attention is caught by an elaborate replica of a manhole through which the final Ghetto fighters sought escape in its final hours in 1943.

Then we proceeded to the Jewish Historical Institute where Archives were left buried for posterity by Emanuel Ringelblum, who with great foresight during the War collected material with his pupils about the conditions and life of the Ghetto. The Institute was the intellectual nerve-centre of the Ghetto.

The day ended with the first of our two visits to the modern Yiddish Theatre, founded by Ida Kaminska over 30 years ago. It is obviously a popular place of entertainment. The majority of the audience comprises non-Jewish Poles who follow the action on stage through earphones on which there is simultaneous translation into Polish. Not all the large company are Jews, though the majority are. Szymon Szumlej, the lead actor-director-compère, welcomed us afterwards, and we were delighted to learn from him that plans are being readied for a tour of Europe in the coming year, which is to include London

Some of our group met Mr Tennenblat, Editor of the Yiddish newspaper, the Folks Sztyme. It is published weekly and is sent to subscribers all over the world, and read by the few thousand local Jews.

Our tour called for a visit to Auschwitz and to the adjoining extermination camp of Birkenau. Its dreadful statistics were given special relevance by the comments and recollections of two members of our group, Ben Helfgott and Roman Halter. Part of the exhibit consists of suitcases with the owners' names painted on, mountains of personal possessions, shoes and artificial limbs and crutches belonging to the victims. These create a powerful impression and feeling of sorrow, and its memory will never leave us.

En route to Auschwitz we visited Ben's native town of Piotrkow. There he gave us a quick but profound insight into the life and death of the community - typical of numerous Jewish communities all over Poland - how Jewish families were rounded up from their homes and herded into overcrowded ghettos.

We continued on to Krakow, a beautiful old university city which escaped damage during the war. This city contained 70,000 Jews before the war, (now only 600 approximately) who lived around the hundred or so synagogues. The Jews were all transported to concentration camps immediately after Occupation. Some synagogues still stand and are well maintained by the Polish government for tourist purposes. Two are used by the handful of the remaining old Jews. We visited the Remu Synagogue, founded in 1557, and its adjoining cemetery, and another was the large so-called "Progressive" Synagogue founded in 1862. The Historical Museum was formerly the 15th Century Old Synagogue.

Our last hours in Poland were spent in the 200 years old Warsaw Jewish Cemetery. It is the largest in Europe and now in sad disrepair. There we spontaneously recited Kaddish. Dr Datner and a friend escorted us and pointed out the elaborate headstones of well known names in Yiddish literature and the arts such as Perez and Anski.

The trip was a most worthwhile conclusion to a study programme which went a long way towards enriching our understanding of the history of our time and of our people. But the above report can only be the bare bones of a heartrending and emotional experience.

THIRTYFIVE YEARS

by Peter I Brandstein

Good morning Great Britain, Hullo to you all,
I hope that you will hear this, my Clarion Call,
For this includes a thank you, as well as a greeting,
On this the Anniversary of the day our hearts once
more started beating.

We can still remember those very early days,
When we started to learn the mystery of 'British Ways',
Since then, we taught our children too,
How to say "hullo", and "how do you do".

We came here to learn and loved it so much,
That we became British and are behaving as such,
Though our hearts are yearning for Israel and its people,
We nevertheless reach out to Britain, like the
Westminster Abbey steeple.

Thank you English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish alike,
For having given us the opportunity to have a life,
We bow our heads in gratitude to you all,
For letting us live to the days of this Clarion Call.

As the 35th Anniversary of our reaching freedom goes by,
We also remember our comrades that had to die,
Whether it be by fire, gas, gun or gallows,
Our deep gratitude to them still flows.

If the whole world's trees were made into pens,
And the world's rivers and seas were ink,
Not even then could we adequately describe hereunder,
The debt that we owe to those that died during the
Holocaust thunder.

We remembered them during the past thirtyfive years,
As we remember them every day of our lives,
And those of us who have husbands or wives, and
children too,
We teach them all to 'Remember the Holocaust' as
well as saying "How do you do".

TALE OF THE CENTURY

by Arthur Poznanski

Dear Friends, Roman, Landsmen, Nochshleppers and Editors
(of course),

For multifarious reasons I never seem to be able to address you orally. Whenever I meet you in sufficient numbers and stand up to advertise my unequalled English enunciation, someone throws the spanner into my works by shouting simply: "Give us a song".

In a way, your trust in my ability to entertain you is touching and flattering, but sometimes we have to be more serious.

Undaunted therefore by such failures, I shall aspire to reach your individual and collective consciences by the use of the world's mightiest weapon - the pen - with which I hope to resuscitate your sense of duty and purpose, which may have been languishing dormant for years under an avalanche of everyday trivia.

In the U.S.A. a group of survivors of the Holocaust, similar to our Society, namely the "Nazi Victims of Piotrków - Trybunalski", is making a fantastic effort to collect, edit and publish a full "Ghetto Anthology".

In bringing the above to your attention, I am giving you the chance you may have been waiting for; a chance to actually be a part of a "living monument" to contemporary history, by telling your true story of wartime events in the locality where you were born and lived. Your help is needed in obtaining copies of photographs, documents or letters saved from the Holocaust, diaries, verses and songs of the times (as remembered) be it in Yiddish, Polish or any other language. Descriptions of exact locations of ghettos, names and dates are all important. We must record for posterity who were the heroes, martyrs, traitors, informers and which Poles or Germans ever rendered any assistance to anyone you knew.

Put your story on tape, cassette, or write it down. If you are unable to do either, please arrange to see me; I shall be honoured to help.

It is important to bear in mind that not only Piotrków is to be portrayed in the book, but every ghetto and camp in Poland, which can be adequately described by survivors.

The Editors must do a lot of research and gather evidence essential in each case to be able to prove when a particular ghetto was formed and how, who ran the administration and to what effect, how many captives it held and when it was dissolved. Therefore, every bit of information will help.

Kindly address all entries and other material direct to the Chief Editor of the project, Mr Roman Mogilanski of 84-10 Main Street, Kew Gardens, N.Y. 11435, U.S.A., or to me.

TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY

Should you wish to acquire a tome of this most important contemporary history, in itself a written memorial to our Jewish culture, lore and tragedy (the price of which has not yet been assessed), you may send a deposit of at least \$10 and such advance payment will ensure that you will receive a copy at 20% discount upon publication.

The "Anthology" is being written partly in English and partly in Polish and Yiddish. It is meant to provide the evidence of our roots and should be regarded as a reminder of all we have lost, a vivid link with the past for the next generation; in short a MUST for most of us.

A printed form "How to Subscribe" is printed overleaf for your information and convenience.

Cut along dotted line & mail

שליח איש את שיק

חבר ושליח

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Address _____

FROM OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

ISRAEL - THE CONS AND THE PROS

by Ardyn Halter

The cons outweigh the pros. Some even ask where are the pros? Make a list: the pros and the cons. The cons are easy: 200 percent inflation; three years of army service and, in addition, 'miluim' - reserve duty until the age of 55; claustrophobia; a new language; a country whose population is merely one third that of London; bureaucracy far worse than that in England today or even than that of Dickens' England, 'The Circumlocution Office' - the England of the past; dangerous driving; wars and army service for every child born to every subsequent generation. The cons are easy to find. There are many more of them. The list runs off the page and everyone can find their own particular distractions. Perhaps it's the problem of assimilation of Jews within such a disparate Jewish society. Perhaps it's the taxes.

At first glance the pros seem easy too: a Jewish State; a sense of belonging; Jews who can, after 2000 years of wandering and persecution, finally defend themselves; Israeli men and Israeli women; hope, youth, the future, the future for myself, for my family and children to come. But it is so easy for those pros to remain easy, to remain round as the figure 2000, glib as the terms 'hope' and 'youth' or 'the future'. It is easy for the pros to remain, like some picture decorating the lounge, familiar, yet distant. And then there's the Israeli men and women. They can be visited, in Kibbutzim, Moshavim, Ulpans, in the towns, they can be met, dated, judged or enjoyed, married and brought back to England or America or wherever. Hope in the household. And the pros of the original list dissolve. If the Israeli male or female can't take it and wants to leave then how can I be expected to live there? If he can't stand the society he created, then how could I?

The argument against is easiest. Why is this so? Because most people want it to be so. We are resistant to change and our intelligence tells us to resist change at all costs when by it we would enter into a state of greater material discomfort.

And so Israel becomes a two-faced image in one's mind. One face is green and golden. Pastoral and pioneering. Halutz, the Chevra, Ben Gurion, the triumphs of Israel against her enemies; making the desert bloom; living in shirt-sleeves, the sun, sweat and the land; frontier life; orange groves; owning one's own land in one's own country. The dream side, the dream face, it's convenient, it's history. And we keep it as history. We even voice criticism against those who in Israel go so far as to bring that dream history into the present and create settlements in the Golan or the Negev or Judea or Samaria. White linen of the dream comes to the surface and reality as dirty washing.

In England we live with the dream. We go to lectures about it. We donate to it. In some peculiar way it becomes our escape exit, just as it will serve for us one day as the escape exit. We nurture the dream in our children. We send them to youth movements, a form of diaspora 'gadna', we educate them Israel, Israel, Israel. It's part of our Jewish lives and their Jewish education. Then we take them on holiday to Israel, to hotels or to our apartment, our pied-a-terre in Eretz Israel. (We must belong to it if part of it belongs to us.) We send the children to Kibbutzim for the summer (though usually we are gratified to see that they go of their own volition), and our hearts are warmed to see them come back enamoured of rural idyllic life. It's the Israel Dream, there it is again. Just as we told them. Just as we saw it. Perhaps they return once or twice. But it becomes a pattern. The holiday pattern, just like ourselves. They go into business, the family business, or to university, then into a profession and soon, father and son, mother and daughter foster the same dream. Quite often though, the second generation care less for Israel and that hurts. But shouldn't it really be a compliment? It's a sign of successful aculturalisation. They are influenced by what is written in the Times or the Telegraph and are affected by a David Dimbleby libel about the 'West Bank' on 'PANORAMA'. Or if they aren't then they reserve for themselves a comfortable uninformed scepticism, though they can't offer any arguments to the contrary and fall flat in any ensuing anti-Israel debate or arguments. That is, if they were ever interested in the programme in the first place. And when, in any ensuing argument or discussion, the subject of ALIYA raises its head, either because of some forced discussion, or because there is an Israeli or Oleh in the company, then the other face, the other side of the Israel-image springs to mind. Janus turns around and there ready and waiting, in mind or in word, are all the cons, like a charged blunderbuss.

So when it is convenient to us, when we need the dream, the Messianic cuckooland, then we have a flood of images and names, rural, pastoral experiences, convenient, at hand. The Israel of the past and the Israel that once was, we have a floating picture of history. But when we are confronted with any direct question or have the embarrassing subject of ALIYA put to us by an arrogant Israeli or Oleh, then we have the facts, the 200 percent inflation, the data, the faulty leadership of Israel, the quibbling opposition, the chaos in the Knesset, the barrage of the cons. Our position to Israel is two-faced, and how could it be otherwise? I have probably, for the sake of this discussion, made it seem much more schizophrenic than it really is, but I have done so in order to try and bring to light what I see. Especially in this subject where emotion is too involved it is necessary to exaggerate, to magnify slightly in order to clarify the picture.

So on one side we foster the dream-image and yet at the same time are protected from it by the second, the 'rational' image, the blunderbuss of cons. And yet we do not see the depth of this irony. For the dream, the impetus of the dream in Israel itself is fuelled precisely by the galut, by the diaspora, by the Zionist education and most of all by ALIYA.

Are we going wrong, and if so then why are we going wrong? Why is it that emigration to Israel is decreasing? Why is it that the second generation of the 45 Aid Society remain rooted in England? Why is it that we are only committed to Israel up to a point, and why is it that the second generation are also only willing to commit themselves up to a point, but not to commit themselves? There are many more questions. These are only a few. It is certain that these are questions which do seriously concern members of the Society and also other British Jews outside the Society. But in order to answer these questions I feel that it is necessary to make a complete distinction between the first generation and the second.

I am from the second generation. I am from a different period of history. I am not here to judge my parents, nor am I writing this in order to sting all first generation consciences into making Aliya. Not only would it be foolish and arrogant to attempt such a thing, but it would be to overlook the enormous contribution to Israel in thought and deed made by the Society, and, moreover, the value of the Society here in England too. The second generation: our task is not to blame our parents but to examine ourselves. If our parents do have a duty to our generation as we shall have to all future generations, then it is this: the second generation must be given the chance to decide. I know of many parents who have spoken Zionism all their lives, but when it comes to the crunch, when their children wish to make Aliya, then they have quietly opposed it. They have lost their families in the past and do not wish to lose any more in wars, even for Israel. Their sons can be Zionists without joining the army, without living in Israel. It's a genetic Zionism. Then there's the argument that if the children live in Israel they are so far away, the family is broken up. But the same people will openly expatiate on how small the world is, how cheap flights are these days. How it costs less to visit Israel now than it did two years ago. How small the world is. But what is the point, what is the purpose of preaching Zionism if one is to thwart its final manifestation by withdrawing financial support from the children when they decide, when they opt to make Aliya. In many cases parents have even offered financial incentives to the children to stay in this country. I believe that such emotional, financial blackmail is altogether wrong. Assistance; this alone after education is the greatest help that a parent can give the child. I am deeply grateful to my parents for always leaving my decisions up to me and for giving me that wonderful feeling that whatever path I choose in life they will support me and back me. What support could be greater than those words, and what freedom greater? As far as the parent goes, as far as his role in the education of the child goes, in his upbringing, this is the best and final present.

So I turn to my generation, the second generation. How we regard our parents is not material to this discussion, whether they see themselves as Israeli envoys abroad, as flying buttresses of the state, as good Jews, as Zionists in spirit (and I do respect this), their choices, their ways, their decisions are theirs, and their past is different from ours. We have not lived through the Shoah. But the Shoah is part and parcel of our history. And not only the Shoah but the State of Israel. I cannot conceive of what life as a Jew without Israel must have been. And yet despite the knowledge of the fact that since the destruction of the second temple the Jews have been dispersed and oppressed time and time again throughout our history, despite the statistics and the facts, this is not altogether understood. If it were then there would be more ALIYA. People would be aware of the most remarkable fact: Israel, of Israel as the only chance, the only hope, the all and everything of the Jews of the world.

That there is only a trickle of ALIYA is not to say that British Jewry does not support Israel from the bottom of its heart. I am certain that this is the case. It is well known that British Jews give more financial support per capita to Israel than any other Jews in the Galut, they have even gone over and fought in time of war. A spontaneous tributary. And when there is any project of pressing need, then the 45 Aid Society are there, willing, active and proud of their link with Israel. An annexe of the House of Israel. Emergency. Crisis. War.

Let us look at the state today. 32 years old. The challenge of the early years has been realised. The impossible has been achieved. We have a state, a defence system, developed agriculture, industry, welfare services, the list is gratifying and familiar. But today is not like those early years. Then settlers faced a challenge with each new day, the challenge of defending themselves; of building their own houses; agriculture; roads; of raising the first generations of Israelis; of starting trade; export; of reclaiming land; clearing swamps; the challenge of a new state. And with that challenge, as the Israelis who faced it tell us, was the sharp, vivid sense of life, of living for something. There is a song by the Israeli singer Arik Einstein: 'There was something to get up for in the morning then . . .' The tone of the song is sentimental and rather melancholy. There are others who speak of Israel as starting on the right tracks, of the vigour of the beginnings of the state and then of Israel as going off the rails somewhere, where exactly they cannot say, or when they can, then they don't stop saying it. It is my belief that starting is always easy. The first line of a poem is the easiest. It might be one of the most important since it sets the rhythm and metre of what is to follow. Those who founded the state of Israel had most of the conditions of life, most of the challenge was dictated for them. The Arabs were attacking: they had to defend; there was no accommodation: they had to build it. The natural challenges created the vivid, often selfless, comradely life.

But once these were overcome, once these challenges were realized, then there was a different challenge. The more serious challenge, that of continuing.

The growth of Israel as a modern state may be seen as a graph with a steep incline and then a levelling-off. During the period of the incline it was easy for a person to look round at the end of the day and see what he had done. To witness and chart his own growth, his own contribution, to pioneer. But who follows the pioneer? If he stays, then it is his family. The pioneer opens the territory, but it is the following generations who settle it. The settler, the true settler, is not the first founder, but his son. When his son stays, then the land has been settled. And to settle is essentially to know that the place is one's home. That is the point one returns to each day or after each journey.

Settlement brings advantages. It is a commonplace that every Jew is a critic. But how frustrating to have the advantage of distance, of what one supposes to be greater clarity and objectivity, to judge and to criticise from afar and yet not to be able to do something about one's criticism, to implement change and to see change through. Unless one is a cynic, and delights in observing that the object of criticism does not improve, then what is the critic's lot but irritation? For to criticise honestly is earnestly to seek for change and improvement. The settler has this power, the power to vote and do something about what he sees and criticises, favourably or unfavourably.

We create our own standards and our own challenges. It is up to the Oleh, the settler, the second generation to do likewise. It is up to us to recognise the challenge of Israel, the toughest challenge of all: of actually living, of making our homes there. Not our country homes, our cottages, but our real homes. It sounds easy. I am certain it is not. It even sounds to some like a sacrifice. But is it a sacrifice or a challenge? Here and now history has laid before us the dream of one thousand, nine hundred and ten years! Since our dispersion in 70 CE this fact we see was our dream. To me this is incredible. And we know the difference between what immediately preceded the State of Israel and what we have now. And if we do not truly understand this, then our parents can explain. Is this not enough? Do we have to wait for the cake to be iced? Does everything have to be immaculate before we deign to touch it? One thousand nine hundred and ten years of dreaming and there it is. It is a fact, there to develop, to mould and to live. What more do we need or want?

In the Galut we feel that we have an option, eternally open to us. We cling to this option and believe that with it comes greater freedom. But this is not true freedom. The man who is truly free follows the one true choice. As Jews we all know deep inside what that choice is.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND WELLWISHERS

"HITLER'S LOSS WAS BRITAIN'S GAIN"

by P Yogi Mayer

At a time when you and your friends languished in those overcrowded blocks of the Nazi Concentration Camps, thousands of other Jews lived in huts as well. They did not wear the striped outfit of the KZ-Prisoners but the khaki uniform of soldiers opposing the Nazi terror regime.

In World War I thousands of Jews had been killed or wounded as Germans (12,000 fallen), Russians, Poles, Austrians, Italians, Americans or as soldiers of the Commonwealth. Jews had killed Jews. Many of those were people like Dr Weiss' father-in-law in "Holocaust", who, in his despair about Germany, commits suicide with his Iron Cross on his chest.

Many of you may not know what happened on "the other side" during World War II. Many of those who had been inmates in Nazi Concentration Camps such as Dachau and Buchenwald had been freed because they had a visa to emigrate to another country, be it America or Britain, South America, Australia or Shanghai, as well as Palestine. Of 550,000 German Jews, only approximately 160,000 remained in Germany at the outbreak of war.

As the USA was unwilling to increase its quota for Germany beyond 25,000 immigrants per annum, it was left to England to admit approximately 70,000 German Jews, many of whom had to wait in the Kitchener Camp near Sandwich in Kent for their American "affidavit" to materialize. Others had come to England as domestics, as trainees or as children under 16 (does this ring a bell?) to complete their education.

The background to my story is provided by the Tribunals which were set up in the UK at the outbreak of war to decide who was to be interned, to be shipped to the Isle of Man or even, with some Nazis, to Australia. This very sad story was the result of the fact that the UK was unprepared for war and therefore frightened. But at the same time, thousands, many from the Kitchener Camp, from Colleges and Universities and various Training Centres, joined the British Army, often forsaking a chance to wander on to the safe shores of the distant USA.

Already in September 1939 a friend of mine, who was a lecturer at Cambridge, and I decided to approach the War Office with a proposal to form an anti-Nazi "German Free Corps". But we received no reply and I volunteered to join the British Army. A letter from the notorious Heydrich, banning me from speaking at public meetings, had proved my anti-Nazi attitude to the investigating Tribunal. And when I finally arrived at the Recruiting Office in Norwich I found a large poster displayed: "British Army - no vacancies"! There was an acute shortage of arms and training facilities for those who had been called up as Army, Navy

and Air Force Reserves. It was possible, so I was told, that the War Office would give permission for my enrolment as a PE Specialist for the Norfolk Royal Artillery, but to start with I would have to join the AMPC, the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, later called by us ironically "The King's Own Enemy Aliens" since our legal status was that of "Enemy Aliens". I was sworn in with my hands on Jeremiah and received the King's shilling and a railway warrant to take my wife and child to London and then to proceed to Sandwich where I joined No. 88 AMPC Company.

I still regard the story of our training before and after Dunkerque as one of laughter and pain, of tragi-comic events to be told at another time and place.

In the AMPC Brigadier the Marquess of Reading, CBE, KC, became our first Commanding Officer. He was assisted by Lt Col Julian Layton, who, together with Oscar Joseph, Joan Stiebel and others, had received many of us at Bloomsbury House when we arrived in England.

When we returned from France in 1940, proud of our British uniform, we found that close relations and friends of many of our comrades had been interned. The "Daily Mail" produced a shameful headline: "Intern the Lot". But slowly the mistrust in us melted and thousands joined the war effort. They built airplanes, produced ammunition, cleared bomb sites, joined the fire services, whilst others were admitted on a temporary register as doctors, dentists, and nurses. Scientific and manufacturing skills were also provided and finally it was left to Churchill to proclaim that "Hitler's loss was Britain's gain" (if I can recall his words correctly). Until 1943 Enemy Aliens, such as we were, could serve only in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, and only as volunteers. But in the course of 1943 we were permitted to volunteer for other units. The proportion of volunteers was extremely high and soon various transports left with men to join various fighting units. Amongst those were a few of us who volunteered to join the No. 12 Commandos under Col Robert Henriques. But I was sent to the SOE, the Special Operations Executive, and its Special Training School (STS) hidden somewhere in one of the many stately homes in Britain with their extensive grounds. After the war, I met Robert Henriques, by now a famous author; we shared a tent at Brady Camp and talked about the war into the early hours of the morning.

On our way to the SOE we had to undergo a special interview at a certain "hotel" in Cumberland Avenue. There we were sworn in under the Official Secrets Act and asked to sign a document, which gave the title to Professor Bentwich's book: "I Accept The Risk". Part of the text of the document we had to sign read: "I hereby certify that I understand the risk . . . to which I and my relatives may be exposed by my employment in the British Army outside the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding this, I certify that I am willing to be employed in any theatre of war." When at a later date we asked for British Citizenship to protect our families' future in case we should be captured and found

out, we received so many promises that we called out Superior Officer "Father Christmas".

I remember meeting Professor Bentwich after the war, a little, rather strange looking man with much vitality, to discuss with him material at his disposal for his intended publication. Bentwich listed 9,230 men and women who joined HM Forces in the UK alone, including the ATS for women, and gives a detailed list of their deployment, service, promotions and decorations gained. To those one must add many thousands of "Jewish Refugees" who joined the armies of the United States, the Commonwealth, enlisted in India after being freed from internment, or escaped, as did my brother from France to North Africa to join the ranks of the French Foreign Legion. Thousands took to arms in Palestine, joining the ranks of the Palestine Rifle Corps and other units. Of my own youth group years ago in Germany, three out of twelve were killed, 2 with the French Resistance, and 1 after having been parachuted into Yugoslavia.

Bentwich mentions many names and exploits, even a security exercise of which I was in charge, prior to the despatch of many of our group to various overseas involvements. We, "Force 12" as we were called, "captured" the nerve-centre of the British Navy at Portland Bill in the course of a security exercise, prior to more parachuting and endless training which prepared us for our final involvement. Bentwich reports on our Fred Berliner (alias O'Hara) who was deployed in Austria, caught and executed in Graz. Today a memorial tablet is displayed in honour of Captain O'Hara. "Butch" Baker-Byrne was dropped twice into Nazi Germany, contacted the "Fremd Arbeiter" involved in sabotage, and escaped into Switzerland. The second time he was caught and condemned to death in a German Concentration Camp but liberated before the sentence could be carried out. Two others were liberated from the Death Cells in Trieste when war ended. Still, since Bentwich published his books, many more details about Force 12 and other units have become available, including those about some of my unit who parachuted into Austria to achieve the surrender of airfields prior to the end of the war.

Finally, when radio-messages from British Prisoners of War confirmed what we had heard of the terrible fate of the Jews in Concentration Camps, we suggested that we be dropped near those camps during the final days of the war. But we were told that British planes could not land in Russia and that it was too far for a return journey. Thus you and I might have met earlier than when we formed the Primrose Club.

May I conclude with a quotation from Professor Bentwich's book:

"If they were captured, they would be shot without further question. That was the risk they understood . . . For those were nationals of the country they were going to fight and traitors by international law - even if it was treason for liberty against Nazi

tyranny - they were in fact refugees from Nazi oppression who had enlisted in the British Forces in the World War . . . Five companies went to France after the invasion of Belgium and two of them were hastily armed and fought gallantly on the retreat in the defence of le Havre . . . By the time Sicily was invaded the men were ready. At the Anzio and Normandy, on the Rhine and in the South of France, they were the Army's pathfinders, familiar with the terrain since childhood, fluent linguists. They won promotion and hundreds became officers, many leading British troops into action. In the intelligence corps Sergeant Majors from Berlin and Hamburg planned moves which enabled their colleagues from Vienna and Cologne to catch the criminals . . . It is a gallant record worthy of the best ideals of the larger fight of which it was a part . . . the fight for liberty-loving people of all nations against Tyranny . . ."

One can only hope that, since the Official Secrets Act is no longer in the way, some other historians will now add to Professor Bentwich's story. Maybe other countries will add the tales of many of their own citizens who fought in their armies as Jewish Refugees from Nazi Oppression.

And you should add the stories of the Jewish Partisans in the East, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and the deeds of thousands of Jews who were already the citizens of their countries for many generations. Finally, our story and theirs must be added to the annals of the Israeli Wars which followed soon after the end of World War II. And so the tale that Jews lacked courage and bravery has been replaced by one of pride and honour.

JEWS IN INTERWAR POLAND

by Dr A Polonsky

Lecturer in History at the London School of Economics

Delivered at the Stern Hall on 13th March 1980

The subject I chose for the fourth annual Leonard Montefiore Memorial Lecture was an obvious one, since the overwhelming majority of the "Forty-Fivers" have personal experience of the recent Jewish past in Poland. But it also has a wider significance. In the first place the problems of the Jews in Poland illustrate in a most striking form the general nature of the difficulties of the six million Jews in Eastern Europe between the wars. This "Jewish problem" seems to me to have had two aspects. On the one hand, the Jews, as an intermediary group in largely rural societies, attracted the hostility which such groups have everywhere given rise to - what has been called "the hatred of the primitive peasant for the primitive capitalist". In this sense the position of the Jews in Poland, in Hungary, in Romania or in Slovakia was not strikingly different from the position of the Indians in East Africa and Burma or the Chinese in South-East Asia. On the other hand, there was a more specific aspect to the Jewish question. Both in the late nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, Jews were seen as the embodiment of some almost demonic force threatening the whole structure of traditional society. In the late nineteenth century, the development of political anti-semitism owed much to the belief by hard-pressed artisans and craft workers that capitalism was a Jewish phenomenon. In the early twentieth century, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and the relative prominence of Jews in the Bolshevik leadership led to the view that Bolshevism was a Jewish conspiracy. A declaration issued by the Polish episcopate during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920 affirmed:

"Bolshevism is truly aiming at the conquest of the world. The race which leads it previously subordinated the world to it through gold and the banks. Today, driven by the age-old imperialist drive which flows in its veins, it is undertaking the final conquest of all peoples under its yoke. All the slogans which are used: People, Workers, Freedom and so on are only masks whose aim is to hide the true goal."

The Jewish problem in the sense in which it existed in the interwar period is no longer with us as a result of the tragic fate of European Jewry. There is of course the question of Israel and of peace in the Middle East, but that has an entirely different character. There are echoes of prewar problems in Eastern Europe, but these lack the social base which made the Jewish problem so intractable in the interwar years. In the Soviet Union, the desire of a large section of the Jews to emigrate is a result of new developments - the emergence of Israel and the pro-Arab

stance of the Soviet government - rather than a consequence of the persistence of old problems. Nevertheless, the character of the "Jewish question" in interwar Poland does enable us to understand more clearly the nature of these issues. In addition we have an obligation to keep alive the memory of the three million strong Jewish community in Poland which has now effectively ceased to exist and to make widely known its difficult struggles and remarkable achievements.

The early years of the Polish republic were uneasy ones for the Jews. They were widely suspect among Polish opinion for their generally pro-German attitude during the German occupation, for their attempts to guarantee their status as a national minority at the Versailles conference and for their alleged, and, in some cases, real sympathy for Bolshevism. It is true that according to the constitution and the special clauses of the Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Poland of 28th June 1919 the national minorities were conceded far-reaching rights. In fact, however, the situation of the Jews remained highly insecure and their fears were intensified during the Polish-Soviet war, when a fair number of anti-Jewish excesses occurred. The creation of a bloc of the different national minorities (Germans, Jews, Byelorussians and Ukrainians) which won nearly 80 seats in the elections of November 1922 increased hostility to the Jews, who were accused of making common cause with Poland's enemies. It was only during the two-year non-parliamentary government of Władysław Grabski (1923-1925) that a serious, if not entirely successful, effort was made to deal with Jewish grievances.

The coup which brought Józef Piłsudski back to power in May 1926 improved the position of the Jews. The Piłsudski-ites, while not markedly sympathetic towards the Jews, had always been hostile to anti-semitic agitation, a principal political weapon of their bitter enemies, the National Democrats. One of the declared aims of the post-coup regime was a new deal for the national minorities and some attempts were made to furnish credits to Jewish commercial institutions and to exercise pressure on the universities to do away with the numerus clausus. Above all, the government sought through a decree extending and reorganizing Jewish communal organizations to win support from the religiously orthodox sections of the community.

From about 1929, however, the position of the Jews again began to deteriorate. The deterioration was not caused primarily by government policy but by the depression, which ended the possibility of significant emigration and also hit Jewish artisans and traders very badly. The ease with which Hitler had been able to introduce discriminatory measures in Germany greatly stimulated the demand for similar legislation in Poland, though the government still repressed anti-semitic agitation and refused to introduce a numerus clausus in the universities. After Piłsudski's death in May 1935, matters became still worse, as the now weakened administration saw in anti-semitism a means to widen its

support and divert attention from social problems. The campaign to persuade peasants to boycott Jewish traders became ever more violent and led to a large number of brutal incidents. Moreover, though the government condemned violence, it now claimed that there was nothing amiss in an "economic struggle".

The new government party founded in 1937 for the first time adopted a clearly anti-Jewish stance while at the same time the Jewish students at the universities were subjected to increasing harassment. In October 1937 special "ghetto benches", where Jews were compelled to sit, were established in all universities and other institutions of higher learning. Efforts were also made to exclude Jews from the professions, above all law and medicine. Increasingly, the government came to argue that the only solution to the Jewish problem was mass emigration. As a result, it sought, by means of a "cold pogrom" to make it more difficult for Jews to make a living, taxing heavily primarily Jewish occupations and excluding Jews from some, like the timber trade, in the belief that it could thereby compel them to emigrate. Yet this was at a time when country after country was closing its doors to the Jews and in Palestine the annual quota of Jewish immigrants was only 12,000. The consequence was the massive pauperization of the Jewish community, with no benefit to the Polish state. By the outbreak of the war perhaps one million Jews were almost entirely dependent on relief, largely from private Jewish organizations financed from the U.S. A prominent Jewish leader in Lwów reported with awful foresight: "A year or two ago, 40% of our people applied for aid to the community, this year it is 50%, the next year or the year after it will be 60%. We are waiting for death."

This gloomy picture should not obscure the real achievements of Polish Jewry between the wars. Assimilation and acculturation proceeded rapidly in these years and Jews played an active part in Polish cultural life. Many leading literary figures, including Julian Tuwim and Bolesław Lesmian, two of the greatest Polish poets of the twentieth century, were of Jewish origin. Jewish creativity also flourished in the Yiddish and Hebrew languages and the Jewish press, scholarly organizations and school networks expanded enormously. All these developments could under more promising conditions have laid the foundations for a Polish-Jewish symbiosis which would have enriched both peoples and the world as a whole. But this was not to be and today, the 1,000 year history of the Jews in Poland is at an end, an end seemingly as final as that of the Jews in Spain. This makes all the greater our obligations to keep alive the memory of that past, so near to us and at the same time so far.

LETTERS

Dear Editor

We would like to thank all those concerned for making the Reunion last May such an enjoyable and memorable occasion.

We are sure that we speak for all the visitors from abroad when we say a special thank-you to all those who went out of their way to entertain us.

It is good to meet up with old friends and we hope to see a large number of you in Israel next June.

Regards to all,

Marion and Meir Stern

Rch. Bat Yiftach 11,
Zahala, T.A.
Israel

MEMBERS' NEWS

LONDON

compiled by Kitty Dessau

March 1980

Birth of a granddaughter to Mary and Bob Obuchowski.
Barmitzvah of David, son of Tina and Kushy Greenberg.

April 1980

Barmitzvah of Mark, son of Mr and Mrs Abe Dichter.

May 1980

Wedding of Sergio, son of Anna and Motek Zamel (Brazil).
Wedding of the son of Esther and Morris Frenkel.

July 1980

Birth of a grandchild to Priscilla and Martin Bennett.
Wedding of Trevor, son of Muriel and Norman Friedman.
Engagement of Steven, son of Pauline and Harry Balsam.
Birth of a first grandchild to Beatrice and Leon Manders.
Birth of a first grandchild to Evelyn and Aron Zylberszac.
Barmitzvah (in Israel, by the Western Wall) of Joseph, son of Nicki and Harry Fox.

August 1980

A third grandchild for Sala and Benny Newton, this time a boy - it seems Ben finally made it!
Barmitzvah of Morris, eldest son of Arza and Ben Helfgott.
Barmitzvah of Saul, son of Jesse and Moshe Nurtman.
Wedding of Mark, son of Anne and David Peterson.

September 1980

Engagement of Ellis, son of Muriel and Norman Friedman.
Wedding of Denise, daughter of Mr and Mrs Pomerance.
Engagement of Bonnie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Howard Chandler (Canada).

November 1980

Wedding of Ellis, son of Muriel and Norman Friedman.
Barmitzvah celebrations held for Joseph, son of Nicki and Harry Fox.
Two additional grandchildren for Thea and Israel Rudzinski (Kenana-Hora!).

December 1980

Condolences to Betty Lefcowitz on the death of her brother-in-law, Isaac, and also on the death of her brother, Bernard Orenstein.

January 1981

Birth of a granddaughter to Anita and Charles Shane.

Birth of a second grandchild to Sala and Henry Kaye.

February 1981

Wedding of Annette, daughter of Sylvia and Johnny Gutman.

March 1981

Mary and Bob Obuchowski's pearl wedding.

CONGRATULATIONS

Valerie Cooper made Captain of Potters Bar (Ladies') Golf Club.

Nicholas, son of Chichek and Salek Benedict, qualified as a doctor.

Denise Pomerance gained her Law Degree.

Gaynor Bandel gained entrance to Bedford College (London University).

Bruce Dessau gained entrance to King's College (London University) to read Philosophy.

Angela Poznanski is at Hull University reading Politics.

MAZELTOV TO ALL

APOLOGIES

After being informed, I missed out announcing the silver wedding of Sheila and Ray Winogradski in June 1979.

MANCHESTER

Louise Elliot reports:

It is a mostly thankless task being a Secretary of any organisation but nevertheless I am very happy to have been associated with our "Manchester Boys" for over 30 years. However, I do wish that in future before members complain that their Simcha or event has not been included in the Journal they would bear in mind the following:

- (a) that the event may occur between the time details are given for press and the actual printing; and
- (b) human, but unintentional errors.

If our Manchester members would, as the Journal suggests, contact me before the printing date, and give me personally their news then we would not be relying entirely on my memory.

I would like to compliment those concerned for all the effort which I am sure must be put in to ensure the appearance of each Journal and to wish the Society continued success.

Up to the time of writing our events in Manchester are as follows:

<u>BARMITZVAH</u>	Paul, son of Marie and Martin Wertheim Johnathan, son of Mayer and Lilian Zwicker Ivor, son of Jack and Rhona Aizenberg Farrell, son of Charlie and Edna Igielman
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<u>SILVER WEDDING</u>	Michael and Amelia Flasz
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<u>PEARL WEDDING</u>	Adash and Zena Bulwa Hannah and Sam Gardner
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<u>BIRTHS</u>	A second grandchild to Edna and Charle Igielman A first granddaughter to Joe and Alice Rubenstein A first granddaughter to Nat and Dorca Samson
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WEDDING

Tania, daughter of Marie and Mendle Beale
Helen, daughter of Abraham and Rosalind
Pawlowski
Simon, son of Marie and Mendel Beale

ENGAGEMENTS

Simon, son of Marie and Mendel Beale
Jacqueline, daughter of Lily and Mayer
Bomsztyk
Sharon, daughter of Myer and William Zwicker

ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENTS

Farrel, son of Charlie and Edna Igielman,
won a place at Manchester Grammar School
Warren, son of Maurice and Marita Golding
is reading Medicine at Leeds University
Lawrence, son of Mark and Reginka Fruhman,
qualified as a Solicitor
Michael, son of Alice and Joe Rubinstein
obtained a BSc in Economics

FORTHCOMING
MARRIAGE

Frances, daughter of Adash and Zena Bulwa

In April 1980 many of our members attended the Annual
Martyrs' Memorial Service at the South Manchester Synagogue
which as usual was a very well organised and memorable
occasion. Black candles were lit by Sam Laskier and his son
Darren, Charlie Igielman and his son Farrel and Mayer Zwicker
and his son Jonathan

At the Yom Hatzmut Celebrations at the New Century Hall,
Manchester, Jeremy Kurnedz and Danniella Kurnedz, the
children of Susan and Pinkus Kurnedz, each lit a symbolic
candle.

On 4th May 1980 a Thanksgiving Service to commemorate the
35th Anniversary of our liberation was included in the
Shabbat Service at the Manchester Great and North Synagogue.
Nearly all our members were present when Pinkus Kurnedz
took part in the Service. The service was followed by a
Kiddush attended by over 250 people.

The following Day, Sunday 5th May 1980, David and Hynda
Sommer were hosts in their home to a magnificent party at
which only three members were unable to attend. The spirit
and comradeship was apparent and the party went on till the
early hours of the morning.

ISRAEL

Marion Stern reports:

WEDDINGS

Son of the late Bernard Katz and Mirian Katz

Shlomi, son of Menachem and Nechama Silberstein

BIRTHS

A granddaughter to Menachem and Zviya Fraikorn, their third grandchild

A grandson to Chaim and Rachel Liss - their first grandchild

SILVER WEDDINGS

Yehudit and Yechuskel Ray

Marion and Meir Stern

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

5th LEONARD G MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

The 5th Leonard G Montefiore Memorial Lecture will take place on 25th March 1981 at the Stern Hall, 33 Seymour Place, London W.1 at 8 p.m. The Lecturer will be Martin Gilbert and the title of the lecture: "Why Was Auschwitz Never Bombed?"

1981 REUNION

The Reunion to mark the 36th Anniversary of our Liberation will take place on:

Sunday, 10th May 1981

4.30 for 5.45 p.m.

at The Regent Centre Hotel,
Carburton Street,
London W.1

For tickets please contact the Ticket Chairman, Mik Zwirek,
tel: 01 550 9426.

Brochure

The Joint Chairmen for the brochure are:

HARRY BALSAM	906 1702
FRANK FARKAS	203 2692
MARK GOLDFINGER	449 8222
JACK KAGAN	435 4677
DAVID SOMNER (MANCHESTER)	061773 5080

The Brochure prices are:

GOLD PAGE	£100.00
SILVER PAGE	£ 75.00
FULL PAGE	£ 50.00
HALF PAGE	£ 35.00
QUARTER PAGE	£ 25.00
CHILDREN'S NAME	£ 2.00

WORLD REUNION OF JEWISH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

15 - 18TH JUNE 1981 IN ISRAEL

Most of you will have heard or read in the media about the world gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, scheduled to take place in Israel from 15th-18th June 1981. (You should have received a leaflet outlining the purpose and provisional programme of this gathering.)

The Committee of the '45 Aid Society wholeheartedly supports this event and hopes that most Members will be able to attend it. We have been in touch with our Members overseas and they have also expressed their intention to participate.

We have for many years nurtured the desire and aspiration for all of us to have a grand gathering in Israel. With this in mind, we are planning, together with our Israeli Members, to hold a grand reunion of our Society in Tel-Aviv on Saturday, 20th June. We feel that most of you will want to avail yourselves of these unique opportunities which will prove to be most unforgettable, moving experiences.

ALBANY FOREMOST TRAVEL, tel: 01 629 2485, have been appointed official travel agents for this event and tickets for Scheduled Flights may be booked through them. The return fare from Heathrow is £142.00. Charter flights are obtainable for £107.00 through Miss Sue Rick of Venus Travel Ltd, tel: 01 431 1515.

The cost of hotel accommodation is approximately £9.00 per night (including breakfast) at a 4-star hotel and £7.50 at a 3-star hotel. Bookings may be made through ALBANY or VENUS. Our Members in Israel have offered to accommodate anyone who so desires. Should you wish to be so accommodated, please contact a Member of the Committee in London.

A REGISTRATION FEE of £45.00 for the World Gathering is payable by all participants. Those who make bookings through ALBANY FOREMOST TRAVELS should pay this REGISTRATION FEE to them. Those who make their travelling arrangements through other channels should send the REGISTRATION FEE to:

Frank Farkas
49 Sherwood Road
London NW4 1AE

making cheques payable to: The '45 Aid Society.

YOUR PAST IS NOT BEHIND

by Michael Etkind

. . . but closer than the shadow
your body casts upon the ground,
and nearer than the breath
that passes slowly through your lungs;
you are the Past you saw
and heard and felt

your Past is you



ISRAEL 1981 JUNE 15~18