

# JOURNAL

## '45

OF THE AID SOCIETY

No. 12

MARCH 1985

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JOURNAL OF THE '45 AID SOCIETY

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## EDITORIAL

The 30th Anniversary of our Liberation inspired the initiative to found the Journal of the '45 Aid Society, which replaced the Society's Newsletter. The Newsletter of Autumn 1974 carried articles about the 30th Anniversary, and what was said then could also be said now, ie. ten years later. Nevertheless, the approaching 40th Anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe can hardly pass without comment in our Journal.

People often look to anniversaries as sources of "historical lessons". Yet history does not teach any clear lessons, and if we insisted on commemorating historical events only if they taught us clear lessons, we would not have any commemorations. Indeed, different people may have quite divergent motives for commemorating the same event. However, Members of our Society have at least one motive for commemorating the end of the Holocaust, which we all share: that commemoration provides an inevitable opportunity for remembering our lost families and the manner in which we lost them. This shared loss is one of the characteristics of our Members which helps explain the evident comradeship and deep sense of loyalty among them.

This 12th issue of our Journal is special, not only because its appearance roughly coincides with the 40th Anniversary of our Liberation, but also because it is unique in a particular respect compared to earlier issues. Addressing our Members the Editorial of the first issue noted that:

"..it will be clear to you that our Journal can be published only if Members send us material for publication. Very occasionally we may be able to publish articles by "outsiders", but as a rule this must be a Journal by our Members not for our Members. The Editorial Board trusts that your response will be such as to ensure the success of the Journal. Lest you think that our hopes are misplaced, let me say that we interpret "success" in a modest way. To begin with we would like to publish the Journal once a year... Should contributions simply pour in we would be happy to publish more often."

Although successive Editorials did contain exhortations to Members to submit articles, the cautious optimism expressed in the first Editorial seemed to be justified. Between 1976 and 1984 we published two issues a year in only two years, 1976 and 1978, and for the rest we published one issue per year. Still, the bulk of each issue consisted of contributions by our Members. This is not the case with the present issue, even if it coincides with the 40th Anniversary. Yet, the view expressed in the first Editorial about who should be our main contributors seems to be as appropriate now as it was then. Therefore the time has come to re-consider the future of our Journal, ie. to consider whether it has a future. That can be decided only by our Members. Quite soon motions will be put before our Committee and our Editorial Board. The motions will propose that, unless by 1st November 1985 the Editorial Board received at least sixty letters from our Members which express not only support for the continuation of the Journal but also give commitments to submit contributions, the Journal should cease publication. Whether these motions will pass remains to be seen, but they will include a clause to the effect that anyone opposing them will be deemed to have written the kind of letter just described!

Although this is a special issue in at least the two respects mentioned above the Editorial would not be complete without a few comments on the contents of this 12th no.

Our first Section, "Youth" Remembered, would have had to be omitted unless we had received contributions from our Members. In the past we usually had several contributors. Now we must thank Michael Etkind once again for occupying a position perhaps best described as that of an inadvertent monopolist, a position he also occupied in our last issue.

The Section Here and Now of course was intended to feature articles from our Members. In their absence we are extremely fortunate to have been offered the piece by Dr A Polonsky, known to us from his 1980 Leonard G Montefiore Memorial Lecture, and from his participation in academic historical activities also related to our own experience. Some of our Members attended the Oxford Conference which Dr Polonsky describes. Those who did not attend, but have views on the subject of Polish-Jewish relations, will be grateful to Dr Polonsky for offering them a glimpse, as well as indicating the flavour of the learned discussions which took place at Oxford last September. No doubt Dr Polonsky would hope that our Society might consider the appropriateness of supporting the publication to which he refers in the last sentence of his article.

Not only does it seem that the pens of our Members have dried up, but those of the Second Generation seem to have suffered a similar fate. Therefore the Section entitled From the Second Generation has had to be omitted.

On this occasion the next Section, From our Friends and Well Wishers, requires special comment. Our Newsletter of 1974 contained a reprint of one of Leonard G Montefiore's articles about us. The Newsletter however, was not divided into Sections, and to put the late and lamented Mr Montefiore merely into the category of one of "our friends and well wishers" must be the most monumental understatement ever to appear in these pages. Mr Montefiore spared no effort on our behalf and worked tirelessly for our welfare. The innumerable articles he wrote about us shortly after our arrival in this country show that his concern for us turned almost into an obsession. In some people obsessions very easily turn into an utterly illiberal dogmatism. Leonard Montefiore did his best to protect us from dogmatic, intolerant and illiberal influences, which he so rightly regarded as evil. He was also right in thinking, that, if given the choice, many - indeed most - of us would prefer to live in the U.K. or the U.S.A. rather than Palestine, as it then was. In his 1946 talk reprinted below he was wrong on only one, relatively insignificant, point, when he observed that: "by no stretch of imagination is it conceivable that any of these children will become a member of the Reform Synagogue". In due course he discovered that some did become members; perhaps he merely made the remark because it fitted in well with his theme, which should have been applauded then as it is to be applauded now, that "... I am not seeking recruits for my own particular tabernacle". We missed Leonard Montefiore's presence at our commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of our Liberation in 1965, when an eulogy was delivered for him. We shall miss his presence no less twenty years later. Yet, in which other Section could his article have been placed?

This issue contains two Leonard G Montefiore Memorial Lectures, because we could not publish the 1983 Lecture in 1984.

The last time we had an issue without obituaries was in March 1981 and the present one, alas, also carries one. As we become progressively younger the chances of any issue being devoid of an obituary become ever smaller. At this point it is perhaps as well to say that, since this may well be the last issue of this Journal, this is the last Editorial you are likely to read.

## "YOUTH" REMEMBERED

By Michael Etkind

The author wishes to thank Aloma Halter for her helpful suggestions on the style and content of the items published here. (Ed).

## THE DEATH OF FAVEL

Favel. I never knew his surname.  
Two metres tall; the biggest in our cell.  
Broad shoulders, strong, a face  
that anyone would trust.  
We slept on bare boards, thirty to a cell.  
There were no bunks, no straw;  
the prixon Marysin, in Lodz  
The 3rd of March, 1944.  
This was to be our last night in the cells.  
Next day, at dawn, the cattle trucks  
would shunt us to the camps.

That night they fed us well;  
the thickest soup we'd had for months-  
with lumps of meat, potatoes, kasha, gruel-  
a soup in which the spoon could stand.  
Each sip, each mouthful, was a lease of life.  
And bread, we all were given half a loaf.  
The mood improved, we sang, made jokes,  
and Favel was the loudest of us all  
when suddenly the news arrived:  
a man from the cell above had jumped,  
and broken his leg. He'd tried to kill himself,  
and botched it. An ambulance took him away.

Out of the pause, the awkward silence,  
someone tried to joke;  
'Why rush to die, there'll be plenty of opportunities'  
A strange foreboding hung about our group,  
But none expected Favel to break down.  
"At least", he stammered in between the sobs,  
"people will know his burial place. He'll not  
be buried like a dog, somewhere beside a fence."

Two months passed - a lifetime and a half in camps,  
and Czestochowa was far from Lodz.  
One day they took a dozen of the strongest men  
to clear some burning buildings, bombed by partisans.  
The rumour had it thus: at dusk they brought him back,  
his face a purplish blue, and doubled up with pain.  
The men'd found food and beer inside the burning sheds.  
One of the bottles Favel found was brown, resembled beer.  
But it contained a poison painters used.  
Next day we buried Favel in the camp, beside the wire fence.

THE PIOUS FIRST

And he who prayed  
    from dawn to dusk  
to his revengeful, jealous,  
    silent God.  
who wore his "JUDE"  
in its gothic script  
upon his chest and back, his badge  
of shame of shame;  
as he, who placed his trust  
in his uncompromising  
    Fuehrer's hands,  
whose "GOTT MIT UNS"  
would shine upon  
the buckle of his belt;

both lost to time;  
the pious first,  
    the other, afterwards.

And you, whom death has spared awhile;  
whom luck has placed outside  
the reach of hate; don't gloat -  
    self-righteous and content -  
but thank some deity for your luck,  
and ponder on man's lot,  
    of strange unfathomed twists of fate.

## HIS FAVOURITE VERSE

Since then, a lot of sky has passed above my head  
and yet I still recall that song with its refrain,  
the men who marched with me in snow and rain  
whose song stopped there.

He was the German head of our Ukrainian guards  
who watched us night and day, and led us  
from the camp to work and back, and back to work again.  
And as we marched we had to sing the song he loved -  
the better singers marched in front -  
the rest, back in the rear, had to repeat in tune,  
and to a perfect beat - eins, zwei, drei, vier -

He used to quote from Goethe (I believe):  
'Man is naked when he comes,  
and just as naked when he leaves'  
as, of the few possessions still our own:  
a watch, a ring, a leather case...  
relieving us. His black revolver  
bulging on his hip, the leather whip  
he would so lightly pat against his boots.  
Polite, he smiled as he explained,  
'Man does not need possessions when he's dead'.

I still recall that song. I learnt the words by heart.  
They speak of clouds blown by the winds,  
above the lands and seas, blown to and fro;  
and man who lives but once, and dies, and is no more.  
About the home he wanders from.  
It sounded better in the German tongue:  
more real, more bitter-sweet.

## HEARING OF HITLER'S DEATH

The column reached a small Sudeten farm. The guards announced a stop. A barn was found for the night. Again, there was no food. We crowded in and lay down on the straw. The guards, posted at the open doorway, sat on stools with their guns resting on their knees. They were talking quietly in their alien, Germanic tongue when someone closeby overheard the words: "Hitler is dead".

Those three words were like a match thrown into the barn: in seconds the fire had spread from mouth to ear, from ear to mouth. And then there was a moment of silence. Suddenly, the 'Joker' - the man who'd kept the rest of us going with his humour and jokes - the man from my hut in Sonnenberg, jumped up. Like a man possessed, like a lunatic, he began to dance about waving his arms in the air; his high-pitched voice chanted with frenzy:

"I have outlived the fiend,  
my life-long wish fulfilled,  
what more need I achieve -  
my heart is full of joy.."

he sang in a transport of ecstasy. We watched him in horror, speechless. His lanky frame was swirling round until it reached the open door. No-one could move. He'd run into the field outside.

One of the German guards lifted his gun, took aim.

We saw the Joker lift his arms again, stand up, turn around, surprised (didn't they understand, hadn't they heard, that the Monster was dead?) and, like a puppet when its strings are cut, collapse into a heap.

## WILL HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

Why should the poison plant  
not yield its poisoned fruit?  
The seeds are there, the climate  
and the fertile soil.  
Why should the times through which we lived  
not come again, albeit in a different form.

Unless the outrage  
at what happened there  
is greater than the force that gave it birth  
it will recur.

## HERE AND NOW

By Dr A Polonsky

The author is Reader in International History at the London School of Economics.

### OXFORD CONFERENCE ON POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS

Between 17-21 September 1984, over 100 scholars from Poland, Israel, Western Europe and North America met in Somerville College to discuss Polish-Jewish relations in modern history. The Conference was held under the auspices of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London University, All Soul's College, Oxford University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, The Russian and East European Studies Council, Yale University, the Institute of Jewish Affairs in London and the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. It was made possible by financial contributions from a large number of bodies and individuals, including the Grabowski Foundation, the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the Lanckoronski Foundation, the John F. Cohen Foundation, Blackwells, the British Council, the British Academy, the Association of Jewish ex-servicemen and the Association of Jews of Polish origin.

The Conference built on the achievements of the similar meeting which was held in New York in March 1983 (discussed in Soviet Jewish Affairs, vol.13, no.2) and indeed many of the same individuals participated in both events. The official visit of over 20 Israeli academics to Poland in spring 1984 cemented personal ties which further contributed to the open, frank and uninhibited nature of the discussions. The peaceful and yet stimulating character of Oxford and Somerville College also helped to create an atmosphere in which the reasoned exchange of views prevailed. Indeed it was generally agreed that a genuine dialogue had been established and with it the prospect of further fruitful collaboration on the history of the Jews in Poland. The success of the Conference was partly the result of one of the significant differences between the New York and Oxford meetings, the participation in the latter of a considerable number of individuals from Poland. Nearly 15 Polish scholars were present, including Professors Jozef Gierowski and Jan Blonski, Rector and Vice-Rector of the Jagiellonian University, the editor of Tygodnik Powszechny, the principal Catholic weekly in Poland, Dr Jerzy Turowicz and Professor Jerzy Kloczowski of the Catholic University of Lublin. In addition the Director of the Polish Cultural Institute in London, which is attached to the Polish Embassy, Mrs Irena Gabor-Jantczak, was present at most of the sessions. This is not to say that all those invited were able to attend. The Polish Academy of Sciences refused to allow any official participation by its members and a similar ban seems to have been placed on the attendance of members of the University of Warsaw. This was a matter of considerable regret and it is to be hoped that in future all those asked will be able to take part.

The Conference opened with messages of support from Pope John Paul II and the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Sir Immanuel Jakobovits as well as from the Warden of All Souls' College. Introductory statements were made by Dr Antony Polonsky, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Dr Stephen Roth, Director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, Professor Gierowski and Czelsaw Milosz, who, in a short but moving address, stated that before the war he had lived in Wilno, a town of many nationalities but dominated by its Polish-Jewish communities. The present gathering reminded him of the atmosphere in which he grew to intellectual maturity. The Conference then proceeded to plenary discussions in which the problem of Polish-Jewish

relations was analyzed chronologically. The first session was devoted to the period down to 1795. It began with the submission of a paper on the beginnings of Jewish settlement in Poland by Professor Alexander Gieysztor, who unfortunately could not be present as he had to attend another meeting in Greece. In his absence his argument was ably summarised by Dr Norman Davies. Dr Andrzej Ciechanowiecki read an elegant account of the ennoblement of Jewish converts, based on the history of his own family, and Professor Jakub Goldberg of the Hebrew University presented a characteristically erudite discussion of the privileges granted to Jewish communities in the Polish commonwealth and the way these secured Jewish support for the state. Dr Daniel Tollet of the Centre for Polish Studies at the University of Paris compared the position of merchants and businessmen in Cracow and Poznan between 1588 and 1668 and Professor Hillel Levine of Boston University attempted to establish a link between the role of Jews in the liquor trade and the increasing frequency of blood libel accusations. The final paper in the session was an impressively thorough survey by Professor Gershon Hundert of McGill University of the implications of Jewish economic activities for Christian-Jewish relations in the Polish commonwealth.

The afternoon session was devoted to the period of the partitions. It began with an elegant tour d'horizon by the doyen of Polish historians, Professor Stefan Kieniewicz on 'Polish Society and the Jewish problem in the nineteenth century', which in Professor Kieniewicz's absence was summarised by Antony Polonsky. Professor Daniel Beauvais of the University of Lille then discussed Polish-Jewish relations in the territories directly annexed by the Tsarist Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century and Professor Ryszard Bender of the Catholic University of Lublin gave an account of the political attitudes and activities of Jews in the Lublin region in the run-up to the 1863 uprising. Professor Moshe Mishkinski described the views of Polish socialists towards the Jewish question in the early 1890s when both the PPS (Polish Socialist Party) and SDKP (Social Democracy of the Congress Kingdom) were founded. Finally, Professor Frank Golczewski of the University of the Federal Armed Forces in Hamburg placed the nature of rural anti-semitism in Galicia before 1914 in the context of the bitter political conflicts which racked that part of Poland.

The session devoted to the interwar period was opened with a passionate defence of the Jewish assimilationists by Dr Joseph Lichten of the anti-defamation League of the Bnai Brith in Rome. He was followed by Dr Jacek Majchrowski of the Jagiellonian University, whose attempt to equate the views and activities of Polish and Jewish nationalists aroused strong objections from the floor. Jerzy Holzer's subtle and penetrating account of the relationship of the Polish and Jewish left in these years was summarised in his absence. It was followed by the well-researched account of Dr Shlomo Netzer of Tel Aviv University of the Polish-Jewish political confrontation between 1918 and 1930. The session concluded with one of the outstanding papers of the conference, Professor Ezra Mendelsohn's survey of the historiography of the Jewish 'problem' between 1918 and 1939 under the provocative title, 'Interwar Poland: Good for the Jews or Bad for the Jews'.

As was to be expected the most heated discussion was aroused by the complex and difficult subject of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War to which a whole day was devoted. Dr Lucjan Dobroszycki of YIVO, New York, opened the session with a clear and well-argued account of the way this issue has been handled in post-war historiography and the mass media, while Dr Teresa Preker of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw gave a straightforward description of the role of the Relief Council for Jews in

Poland which was established by the Home Army in 1942. Dr Shmul Krakowski of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, in a paper which aroused strong criticism from a number of Polish participants, described, on the basis of personal accounts in the Yad Vashem archives, the attitude of Polish society to Jewish fugitives in hiding outside of Warsaw. The next 3 papers were less controversial. Dr Jan Ciechanowski of Ealing College of Higher Education and London University set out the response of the Polish government-in-exile to the Holocaust. Dr Jozef Garlinski outlined the course of the revolt in the Jewish Sonderkommando in Auschwitz on 7 October 1944 and Professor Jerzy Kloczowski of the Catholic University of Lublin gave an account of the way religious orders aided Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The discussion concluded with a great set-piece debate between two of the principal experts on the painful and tormenting subject, Professor Israel Gutman of the Hebrew University and Professor Wladyslaw Bartoszewski of the Catholic University of Lublin. They are both men of transparent intellectual honesty, both men who survived Auschwitz (and in the case of Professor Bartoszewski several subsequent imprisonments). Moreover, both had the moral credentials to speak on the subject. Professor Gutman because of his desire to go beyond narrow anti-Polish stereotypes and Professor Bartoszewski because of his role in the Relief Council for Jews in Poland during the war, for which the title 'Righteous among Nations' was conferred on him by the Israeli government. The debate, which was conducted in Polish, was often tense and difficult, but at the end both sides had a much better understanding of how the other thought and felt and some degree of catharsis was achieved.

The discussion on the post-war period proved much less controversial. Dr Michael Borwicz of Paris gave a moving account based on his own personal experiences of Polish-Jewish relations in the tense period 1944-7. Dr Lukasz Hirszowicz of the Institute of Jewish Affairs presented a characteristically well-researched and documented account of the role of the Jewish question in Polish communist politics since 1948 and Dr Bogdan Cywinski, who could not be present, sent a paper on Polish-Jewish relations within the opposition in the '70s. The role of national minority questions - not only relating to Jews, but also to Germans, Byelorussians and Ukrainians - in Solidarity's political stance between the Gdansk agreements and the introduction of martial law was penetratingly analyzed by a young Ukrainian scholar Dr Roman Laba of Harvard University. The session was concluded by Boleslaw Sulik of London who gave an account of the controversy aroused by Andrzej Wajda's film version of Reymont's novel The Promised Land.

Two sessions were devoted to non-historical topics and they illustrated how helpful other disciplines can be in elucidating the historical problems connected with Polish-Jewish relations. That devoted to literature was chaired by Czeslaw Milosz and it proved to be one of the most interesting of the Conference. It illustrated well the ignorance of each others ways of thinking in which Poles and Jews lived, an ignorance which only began to break down in the period after 1918. Both Dr David Patterson of the Oxford Hebrew Centre and Dr Israel Bartal of the Hebrew University dealt with Perez Smolenskin's Hebrew writings in which he attacked Jewish participation in the Polish revolt of 1863. Professor Mieczyslaw Inglot of Wroclaw University examined the image of the Jew in Polish prose fiction of the romantic period, while Dr Magdalena Stomma-Opalska described the way Polish-Jewish relations during the 1863 uprising were handled by Polish writers. Two papers dealt with the twentieth century: Professor Jan Blonski of the Jagiellonian University provided a subtle group portrait of the Polonized Jewish writer, examining the works of Adolf Rudnicki, Julian Tuwim, Kazimierz Brandys, Artur Sandauer and Julian Strykowski, while Professor

Chone Shmeruk of the Hebrew University gave a penetrating account of the manner in which Polish-Jewish relations were portrayed in the anthology of Yiddish prose edited by J Trunk and A Zaitlyn, Antogye fun yiddisher proze in Poyln tsvishn beyde velt-milkhomes (New York, 1946).

Similarly many insights were provided by the session devoted to ethnology. Dr Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett of New York University sketched the Polish contribution to the study of Jewish folklore while Dr Wladyslaw Bartoszewski jr of Cambridge University gave an account of the relationship between Polish peasants and Jews living in shtetleykh which aroused some criticism for what some participants felt was its underestimation of the strength of popular anti-semitism. Dr Olga Goldberg of the Hebrew University gave a description of the figure of the Jew in the Polish Folk Theatre while Professor Dor Noy of the same institution outlined the influence of Polish traditions on Yiddish balladic folksongs.

The final day was devoted to an attempt to sum up the discussions at the Conference. Important contributions were made by Professor Chimen Abramsky, Professor Gierowski, Professor Shmul Ettinger and Dr Jerzy Turowicz. Mr Rafal Scharf, Treasurer of the Conference, made a moving personal statement and Maciej Jachimczyk, secretary of the Organising Committee, protested at efforts to cover up the role of the Catholic Church in creating and perpetuating anti-Jewish stereotypes. The proceedings at the Conference were considerably enriched by the evening meetings. These included Monika Krajewska's impressive set of slides of presentation of their film Image before my eyes and poetry readings by Jerzy Ficowski and Czeslaw Milosz. All these evenings were deeply moving, and contributed greatly to the atmosphere of the Conference.

All in all the Conference was a considerable success. Close personal ties were established and the real exchange of views was made possible in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. As one of the speakers put it, this was a meeting for those who believed they had something to say to each other. Those on both sides who saw no need or purpose in a dialogue naturally stayed away. There was a general desire to continue the intellectual interchange. It was agreed that future conferences should be smaller and devoted to specific topics so that more detailed discussion would be possible. Such meetings were mooted for the future in Cracow, Jerusalem and Brandeis. In addition the project of an international journal devoted to Polish-Jewish relations received much support and it is expected that it will soon be established. Finally, it is to be hoped that the many fine papers presented at the Conference can soon be edited and published so that they can reach a wide audience.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND WELL WISHERS

Address given to the Cambridge University Jewish Society on 18th October, 1946

by the late Leonard G. Montefiore

When your Secretary was kind enough to ask me to address this Society he suggested as my subject - Reform Judaism. Such an address should have completed a series, Orthodox, Liberal and then Reform, which as some people think, should follow a middle path. I hope, perhaps on another occasion, I may be allowed to attempt that subject. It will keep. But I wanted, while it is still fresh in my mind, to say something about an experiment in education or rehabilitation that before so many months or years will be concluded and become, unlike Reform Judaism, a piece of past history.

For the past 15 months, I have been looking after some 700 Jewish orphans brought to this country from the concentration camps in Germany and Austria for a period of rest, re-training and rehabilitation in mind and body before leaving for their permanent homes, wherever those permanent homes can be found, in Palestine, in America or the British Commonwealth.

The Anglo-Jewish community has had long experience of refugees, displaced persons that is, people compelled by force to leave their homes and start life afresh in another country.

It is a problem that has been growing steadily more difficult to solve. The large numbers of Jews who left Russia in the eighties of the last century and the steady stream that followed the first exodus almost all went to the United States. Many of them came here for a few weeks. All that was needed in those days was money to buy a steamship ticket. Arrangements were made to shelter and house each fresh batch and then they left by the next boat. Shipping companies competed for the traffic. The immigrants did not ask for expensive accommodation. It was a kind of human freight useful to fill up odd corners on the boats.

Then came 1933 and the emigration from Germany. By this time, the difficulties had increased. Immigration laws and quotas and formalities of every kind had been introduced. Nevertheless, there was no shortage of shipping and by one means and another thousands were helped to proceed on their way.

But in 1945 matters were very different. Before any thought could be given to displaced persons, prisoners of war had to be sent home, troops in their thousands and millions had to be redistributed, G.I. brides, British brides, Canadian brides had to be provided for. Priorities of all kinds had to be considered.

We had, in this country, in the six years between Hitler's accession to power and the outbreak of war, raised by voluntary contributions something like three million pounds for assisting Jewish refugees. We had brought through the Baldwin Fund some 10,000 children in 1938 from Germany and thus saved their lives in the very nick of time. Some time I hope the history of those children will be written and the contribution they made, are making and in my opinion will make to the country which provided a safe refuge. All this work ceased in September, 1939. The Government took over much of the actual relief work when it was necessary and shortage of labour very soon made it easy to absorb all the refugees in industry.

With the end of the war in sight, it became necessary to consider what, if anything, could be done to help the Jews who had survived on the Continent. The concentration camps had been liberated and appalling stories were reaching this country of the conditions disclosed. There was a very widespread and urgent feeling that something must be done. We could not just sit down and say the task must be left to UNRRA, to AMGOT or to the American Joint Distribution Committee.

I was in Paris myself in May, 1945, and I saw some of the first arrivals brought by air direct from the camps. I have never seen anything so ghastly in my life. The people I saw were like corpses that walked. I shall never quite forget the impression they made. But when we got down to considering what could be done, there were immense difficulties. No money could be sent out of the country, and if money had been sent, there was nothing to buy. But if we could bring the people we wanted to help to this country, then the currency difficulties were cleared out of the way.

In June, 1945, the Home Office gave permission for 1,000 orphans under the ages of 16 to be brought over for recuperation and ultimate re-emigration overseas. We pointed out immediately that it was unlikely that any documents would be available giving proof of age, and that children rescued from the concentration camps would most probably have no identity papers of any kind.

Then we went back to the Army and enquired if they had found any children still alive in the camps. At first we were told there were no children left alive at all, and it seemed as if our plans had been made in vain. But in August, relief workers for UNRRA told us there was a group of 300 children from Theresienstadt who could be evacuated. This group had been collected at Prague and had been passed fit to travel by a local doctor approved by the British Embassy.

The camps had been overrun by Allied troops in April or May and it was now August. But I still had in mind the walking skeletons, with sunken eyes and yellow parchment skins I had seen in Paris a few months earlier.

It was a shock and a pleasant surprise to see the first batch get out of the planes, looking much fitter and stronger than anything we had expected. With them came some adults who had acted as escorts and who had near relatives in this country. By this means in some cases, women who had escaped to this country before the war met their husbands whom they had never expected again to see alive.

Relief work is rather a drab and tedious business. The highlights are few and far between. People usually cry from sorrow or from pain, or from fear, but tears shed from pure joy are one of those sights that must rejoice God in heaven, always assuming He is interested in affairs of this earth. A room full of people hugging each other, and splashing their cups of tea with tears is a very beautiful sight, something that is more moving than any human words can describe.

But so far as the 300 boys and girls were concerned, there were no family reunions of that kind. Occasionally uncles or aunts turned up, but the children had never seen them, or if they had seen them, it was long ago and they had become strangers.

A number of these orphans have distant relatives and when relationship can be proved, they have every right and indeed the duty to take these children into their own homes. Probably in most cases the arrangement works well, but I wish I could feel confident that it works well in all cases. With a

small child, who can be petted and made much of and can rapidly adapt itself, I have no fears, or much fewer, but with the adolescent in its 'teens, there must be mutual give and take and compromise. It is asking a lot from both sides. The boy or girl is bitterly averse to being regarded as an object of charity. On the other side, there can hardly help being some consciousness that this is a duty to be performed, and that some gratitude should be shown for hospitality. But these domestic problems arose only in exceptional cases. For the remainder, we had a team of workers, nurses, teachers, cooks, a Rabbi, most of them drawn from Jewish youth groups, and, on account of the language difficulty, people who could speak German, or Polish, or Yiddish.

At the big Windermere Hostel, the children lived for about three months. They were given a complete medical and dental overhaul. Some had to be sent to hospital and we arranged a mass X-ray for suspected tuberculosis.

Then we started to try and find out which each child wanted to do. Most of us have had, to a very large extent at least, our lives made for us. "So free we seem, so fettered fast we are," as Andrea del Sarto says in the Browning poem. Most of us take the line of least resistance and that line is not always the worst to adopt. Few people strike out for themselves. In your generation as in mine, circumstances over which we have no control fashion our lives. Family tradition, military service, it is only in very exceptional cases there is a really free choice. So when we asked these children what they wanted to do and occasionally were told they would like to spend seven years in this country studying to be a doctor, or a professional pianist, or to become a portrait painter, we had to say. "Think of something else". Somehow we had assumed that the answer Palestine or the USA, the reply given in most cases, would be given in all cases. We had assumed, too easily perhaps, that an answer could be given after five years spent in prison, and those five years from 13 to 18. They had gone to prison, children, and they came out in some ways mature beyond their years and in other ways just as when they had been separated from their parents for the last time. For years these boys and girls have been accustomed to be treated as a mass, a group, a unit, call it by what name you please, but not as individuals. We, too, have in a different way experienced group treatment. The school thinks so and so, or the class or the regiment or the college. We take our opinion in all indifferent matters from our neighbours, some things are done, others are not, some things are thought, others are not. How many of our reactions are the result of training, environment and not the result of our own thoughts? For instance, we assume, most of us at least, that the public good takes precedence over private advantage. Unless we thought that instinctively, no civilized state would work. We dimly realise it, and if we pick up a ration book that someone has dropped, we return it to the Food Office. We have formed social habits, we form queues, we accept discipline. But life in a concentration camp taught a very different lesson. Life was prolonged firstly by physical strength and endurance and courage. Those were the primary requisites. But almost equally important were ingenuity, fraud and disregard of others. It is quite true there were many examples of self-sacrifice, of prisoners taking the place of those too weak to move, of escapes concealed by volunteers taking the missing numbers in some convoy destined for death. Nevertheless, it was those who broke rules and regulations who survived rather than those who observed them. "The reason I am alive", one boy said to me "is that I was strong enough to take a piece of bread from someone who was too weak to eat it". None of us have ever experienced the law of every man for himself. We have never been thrown completely on our own resources in order to remain alive. We have remained civilized and civilized people co-operate. They must co-operate in order to remain civilized. Co-operation is civilization's hall-mark.

Nearly a year after their arrival in this country, I suggested to one of these boys that it would be a useful piece of work to help in the harvest fields. After all, he was a guest in this country and food was short. I used the stock arguments that would have been accepted with resignation, if not with enthusiasm, by any Sixth Former. Not so the ex-inmate of Buchenwald. He merely said that he was not interested in the British harvest. His work among the sheaves was unlikely to increase his bread ration and that was the only thing that interested him. The reply was unexpected, but when you come to think of it not unnatural. The only work that boy had ever done in his life was forced labour for the Nazis. Work pro bono publico was unknown. Or again, a boy was found tucked up in bed about eleven o'clock in the morning. To suggestions that it was about time to get up, he merely replied, "For the past three years I worked 16 hours a day for the Nazis. If you imagine that I am going to do another hand's turn for the next three years, you are greatly mistaken."

Yet, in other cases, boys will make considerable sacrifices in order to acquire learning, and have had to be restrained from sitting up till the small hours of the morning over their books.

They are still very group conscious and reluctant to form their own opinions and judgments. Here again the contrast between these camp boys and the average Sixth Former, or for that matter of that of most English lads, is very marked. When they first arrived, the divisions were sharply marked, the Orthodox, the Zionist, and the various shades of opinion within these groups. Jewish politics played a big part in their lives since their liberation and they had been carefully drilled in their opinions.

It may conceivably be a not unimportant part of the work of rehabilitation to give these boys and girls an opportunity to notice that in a free and civilized country, men and women of very different political and religious views can live together and work together amicably without saying or believing that those who differ are necessarily scoundrels and traitors. They will learn, I hope, that there are other things of value in life besides politics, religious or secular. If one can imagine that, in the future, they may realise there are many people who were interested in them, not as possible recruits to some particular party or section, but merely as human beings, a useful result will have been achieved.

Oppression and cruelty breed intolerance. These children have been cruelly treated and one of the results is they are very intolerant, very reluctant to make the smallest concession or compromise. I suppose it is also reaction. For years they were made to do things by physical compulsion and menace. Now all rules are suspect. In camp, unless they were on the spot to seize their ration of food, they went hungry. Now they are in a free country and therefore meals must be ready for them at any time. In camps they were driven off to any destination their gaolers chose. Now in freedom they refuse to realise that accommodation is limited, that housekeeping is difficult, although they are free to come and go as they like. If they want to visit a friend in Liverpool or Glasgow why not, they are free, free to do what they please. "We are not at Buchenwald any more, we thought England was a free country; those are concentration camp methods." We are used to self-discipline, we depend on it. These children have only experienced discipline imposed from without. The mark of civilized man is self-control, and it is a lesson most easily learned in childhood. The concentration camp children tend to suspect ulterior motives. One group accused me of wanting to make Englishmen of them. I tried to explain that I had no wish to do that, but I wished very much to teach the virtues of compromise, of level-headedness, of readiness to see and appreciate the

other fellow's point of view. I do not think peace can be achieved, and still less maintained, if we train children to be fanatics however sincerely we believe in any particular cause. That I admit is an idea which many Jewish educationalists do not share. They believe that, having themselves a perfect knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, it is their duty to train up pupils who will conform to the rules, think as they are taught to think and act as they are taught to act.

In dealing with what is in effect a very large school with 700 pupils, with no home influences to help or to hinder, we have only aimed at giving freedom, freedom of movement from place to place, freedom to choose employment, and, so far as funds permit, freedom to choose training and education.

One day, perhaps, we shall learn what the effect of some months or years spent in Great Britain (we have hostels in Scotland) has had on these Jewish children from Poland.

I think certain things have impressed them, or some of the more intelligent of them. They were impressed by the kindness of the RAF who gave them a great welcome and very special teas at the airports when they arrived. They have been impressed with the kindness of educational authorities who welcomed their attendance at evening classes and continuation schools. They have been impressed by the absence of anti-Jewish prejudice.

No doubt there have been certain disappointments. They thought England was a very rich country where all the things they had missed for so many years would be provided by the incredible number of incredibly rich Jews who lived here. They had not the faintest conception of economic conditions prevailing in this country.

I wish they could have made more contacts, but they are not very keen on private hospitality. "We don't want to be made to feel schnorrers", they say! And they do not like leaving the protective familiarity of the group, the hostel where they are among friends who have been with them during their camp life.

The seven hundred have been split up among 24 or 25 residential hostels, and a number have gone into Jewish boarding houses, while others are being looked after by relatives. Many are now at work and earning reasonable wages, others are at school.

On the whole their health is good. But we have a few hopeless invalids, boys of 17 or 18 who are consumptives and who can never hope to recover. It has been very difficult indeed to provide for these cases that need specialised treatment. However kind and well-meaning the English staff may be, these Polish boys are lonely figures in the ward, and there is very little one can do to mitigate the loneliness.

But the hostels are happy places. The boys and girls live in the present and do not worry unduly about the future. And yet, one cannot help wondering how one would feel if at sixteen one had been left utterly alone without a single relation in the whole world, with no one who cared very much if you lived or if you died if you were happy or if you were miserable.

We take so many things for granted. The home that always has been and always will be open to us, under all circumstances, whatever we do or leave undone. I contrast my own boyhood with that of the boy I visited a few days ago. He has spinal tuberculosis and is semi-paralysed. He is having every care and attention but the clinic is in the country and some distance from London. On Sunday afternoon, visitors come and there is a cheerful buzz of

conversation in the ward. But the Jewish boy lies alone staring into vacancy. Yes - Hitler has passed this way.

Not all the gold of Ophir or the wealth of Croesus can help him, but for the majority of these orphans, so long as they remain in this country, money can do a good deal if it is wisely spent. I admit the numbers we can help are very small and I admit if I were working in a DP camp in Germany, I should look enviously on the care that is being lavished on the fortunate few who have been brought to this country. I think one can call them fortunate on account of the freedom that is theirs, the nearer approach they can make to the life of an ordinary boy and girl who has not been in a concentration camp and whose parents have not been murdered. However much is done in a DP camp, it remains camp life.

Something in fairness must be put on the other side. For the comparatively small number of young children (the Germans ruthlessly destroyed nearly every Jewish child too young to work at munitions or in the mines), a first-class country home is maintained and staffed by the American Joint Distribution Committee.

Moreover, in the case of the adolescents, it seems likely that Youth Aliyah Certificates for entry into Palestine will be distributed on the Continent rather than in this country. Zionists sometimes have said to me that for those who wish to settle in Palestine, in a Kibbutz or Kvutzah, training in Germany is a better preparation than the rather freer life led in this country. I think it can be argued that, in the long run, there is a compensating advantage in having seen life in many different aspects, town as well as country, and for having made contacts with non-Jews as well as Jews. For those children who have relatives in America and will eventually go to the United States, there are obvious advantages in opportunities for learning English and for industrial training. Totalitarianism is, in my opinion, an evil thing, in education just as elsewhere. There is no one kind of existence that is supremely good. God and man can be served on the farm or in the workshop, in the school or in the university, behind the shop counter or the street stall. So far as it is possible to avoid pressure in one direction or another, it should be avoided. Let those children, this handful of survivors be free. Let them be free to fashion their own lives after their own wishes so far as that may be. Above all, perhaps, let them become individuals, each with a mind and an opinion of his or her own, not selfish but social, not egotistic but co-operative.

And thus I come back to where I started - the West London Reform Synagogue in Upper Berkeley Street. By no stretch of imagination is it conceivable that any one of these children will become a member of the Reform Synagogue. So I can, at least, say that I am not seeking recruits for my own particular tabernacle. I hope when they leave this country there will be the same diversity of outlook among these children as when they arrived. That diversity has made them a very interesting group. I hope they will have gained insight into and appreciation of the essential virtues of this country, its kindly tolerance, its profound sympathy with suffering, its willingness to help if given the opportunity. And, just here and there, perhaps, there may be a few people who would otherwise have remained ignorant, who will have learned the virtues of the Polish Jew, his courage and patience, his humour and gaiety, his many engaging characteristics which have survived undimmed the years of persecution and cruelty.

## THE 7TH LEONARD G MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

Delivered at the Stern Hall on Thursday, 17th February 1983.

By Walter Laqueur

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### The View from the Reichstag

They began to arrive an hour ago, and some are still queuing up. There was a far-ranging keynote speech, greetings were conveyed by the President of the Bundestag, the television cameras were whirring. Now my turn has come; I'm chairing the discussion. The panel is first rate, nothing much should go wrong - except that any debate can go astray. The occasion is not commonplace, for we are meeting in the Berlin Reichstag, the date is January 1983, and the discussion is about the events that occurred in this very place fifty years ago, almost to the day. I have the suspicion that even these veterans of a hundred speeches, discussions, and conferences are a little more agitated than usual, which is not unnatural under the circumstances. The spiritus loci affects the mind: once upon a time a great disaster took place, many millions of people were killed, world history took a different turn - and it all began on this spot. So this is something more than a routine academic occasion, and most seem to feel it.

Fifty years ago Hitler came to power, partly as the result of a genuine national mass movement, partly as the result of old-fashioned intrigue. President Hindenburg, the war hero grown senile, was persuaded to invite Hitler to head the new government. It was not an inevitable decision; Hindenburg had turned down the idea several times before. True, Hitler was the leader of the biggest party in the land; true, its rise, within four years, had been phenomenal. Still a mere sect in 1929, it had become almost overnight the second strongest party, and three years later it polled 37 percent of the total. But then, in the second half of 1932, there were signs of decline. In the elections of November 1932, Hitler lost two million votes. The party was financially bankrupt; it could make no further headway against the hard core of working-class and Catholic voters. There were splits among its leaders. Many contemporaries predicted that unless Hitler had some quick successes, the impetus of his movement would be lost forever. "The great onslaught of the Nazis has been defeated," the Frankfurter Zeitung stated in an editorial on January 1, 1933. Harold Laski, the oracle of the British left, said that Hitler would end his days an old man in some Bavarian village, telling his friends in the local Biergarten the same story time and again: how it had almost come to pass that he had overthrown the German state. And Goebbels noted in his diary on the last day of 1932: "What a horrible year it has been - away with it!" But Hitler did not spend his declining years in a Bavarian Biergarten, and this is why we are discussing him tonight.

The new Reichstag is a very modern, even elegant building, at least inside, with the stress on space and light. Seen from the outside, it has hardly changed; it is more or less the same castle-like site - minus the enormous glass dome that was the main landmark before 1933. The big meeting hall is full tonight: young people, old people, people well known and obscure. They follow the debate with evident interest. Seats were sold out weeks before, which I am told, does not happen in the former German capital these days, even for the most famous pop stars. There was a long general debate in Germany a month or two ago, about whether the media and the authorities were not overdoing it. Would there ever be an end to the ruminations about Nazism

and Hitler? One understands the impatience. The right thinks it detrimental to German prestige abroad; for different reasons, the extreme left feels uneasy with the subject. But the fascination among the general public is as strong as ever before; it is probably greater now than it was in the 1950s, when Germany was preoccupied with more immediate tasks.

The dead Hitler will not go away. Even looking out of the window, one is reminded of the legacy of Nazism: the television of East Berlin, and, right down at our feet, the Berlin Wall, symbol of a divided Germany, and the East German border police. When repair work is to be done on the eastern wall of the Reichstag, the East Germans must be asked permission; it can be approached only from the territory of a foreign country. If not for Hitler... We shall have to return to the subject.

How to commemorate the greatest disaster in German history? Many German leaders pondered the question in recent weeks. How to explain to new generations that there was more to National Socialism than a handful of demagogues and criminals, the Mafia-Arturo Ui-Bertolt Brecht version of recent German history? That there was an immense amount of goodwill, of faith, of intense belief, and yes, even of idealism? Why did German soldiers continue to fight for years after it was clear beyond any reasonable doubt that the war had been lost? It was not only, not even mainly, the fear of the Gestapo that made them fight. One remembers the shining eyes, the quasi-religious faith, the willingness to accept sacrifices. Among the lessons to be learned from the Nazi experience, one of the most important is that the intensity of belief of the believers, and even their personal integrity, should never be the yardstick for judging whether an idea is good or bad. A great many excellent people have believed the most pernicious nonsense throughout history, and not only in Germany.

The Reichstag: an older friend took me around when I was a boy, and I remember some of the sights, above all the impressive entrance. I only later learned that the Germans had not been lucky with their parliament. There has been a Reichstag ever since there was a Reich, which is to say since 1871, but for the first twenty years it met in a porcelain factory. By the time they finished the new building in 1894, Bismarck was no longer there, and, in any case, parliament was not the place in which the important decisions were made. The inscription, "To the German People" was chiseled on the entrance only during World War I, when the going was no longer good and popular support was badly needed. Then there came a time, ten years perhaps, from 1919 to 1929, during which the German parliament did play a political role broadly comparable to that of the United States Congress. At the end of the decade, the anti-democratic parties of the left and right had a majority, and effectively prevented parliamentary government. They also made the Reichstag a laughing stock; there were obscene interruptions, sessions had to be suspended. In the public mind the Reichstag became the Schwatzbude, the symbol for idle talk. The real decisions, the Nazis predicted, would be made in the streets.

Then Hitler came. How they underrated him, his allies and his enemies alike! "Berlin Remains Red," the Social Democrats and the Communists proclaimed in their editorials and leaflets. And Hitler's conservative allies were so sure: when the coalition was set up on that January day they said, "We've got him tied hand and feet." True enough, apart from Hitler there were only two Nazis in the Cabinet. Surely they could outvote him any time. Poor idiots. They did not realize that there would be no more voting.

Hitler was appointed at 11 am on January 30, 1933. On the same evening there was a huge torchlight parade right here in front of the Reichstag, with flags and drums and sundry brass bands. Among the observers was his French

Ambassador, Francois Poncet; the balcony of his embassy, next door to the Reichstag on Pariser Platz offered a grandstand view. "A stream of fire advancing mightily into the heart of the capital," he noted in his diary. The clacking of the jackboots, the rhythmic slogans, the fighting songs, evoked some dark premonitions. Francois Poncet was a formidable intellect; he was made a member of the Academie Francaise in later years. He saw what was coming, which did not prevent him from extolling the virtues of appeasement for six more years. Marinus van der Lubbe, the young Dutchman arrested the fateful night of the Reichstag fire, never attended a university. He was not a formidable intellect; he left school at fourteen and became a vagabond. But he had realized, as he told the German police interrogating him, the moment Hitler came to power that there would be war.

The subject of the discussion is "Fascism as a non-democratic method of solving a crisis," a topic not of purely academic interest. We again confront a crisis, and the great majority of the members of the UN have chosen nondemocratic solutions in any case. There is more than a little Western ethnocentrism in the assumption that parliamentary democracy is the norm and dictatorship the exception in the contemporary world. In 1933, on the other hand, the civilized world was thought to be democratic - Mussolini's Italy was an aberration, Russia was a backward country, and the Balkans did not count. As the Depression deepened in the early '30s, there were rumors in the air about coups. The Voelkische Beobachter reported in January 1933 that a distinguished American named Colonel House had declared that President Roosevelt would be a dictator, and a great many Americans (German readers were told) thought like Colonel House. Anything seemed possible in America, but it still appeared most unlikely that a civilized, democratic country in the center of Europe would become a dictatorship. Surely the trade unions, the churches, the army, the police, the whole state apparatus would not stand for it, nor would Britain and France and the Little Entente stand idly by. It seemed impossible to imagine.

Again the scene shifted to the Reichstag. Hitler had no majority; he needed one more election. It was a gamble, but he had taken, and was to take, much greater gambles in his life. Nazi propaganda had been far more effective than the rest taken together, and now, from an inside track, with the authority of the state supporting him, with his speeches broadcast three times daily over the state radio, he thought he was bound to get what he wanted. Hitler and Goebbels also made it clear that this would be the last election for a long time, perhaps forever. When he entered his new office, Hitler said to his confidants that no one would get him out of this building alive. This prediction was borne out by events, but the immediate task in January 1933 was to make sure that no one could displace him.

On the evening of February 27, at five minutes past nine, Hans Floeter, a student of philosophy and theology, was passing by the front entrance of the Reichstag on his way home, minding (as he said) his own business. Suddenly he heard a noise as if the glass of one of the windows in the building had been broken. He stopped, and within a few seconds he heard the same noise again and saw, or thought he saw, the figure of a man leaning out of the window of the Reichstag restaurant. Next he saw a flame, whereupon he started running, to tell the police guarding the building. Only two or three minutes passed before he found the sergeant in charge, who needed another couple of minutes to ascertain that it was not a false alarm. At 9.18 the fire brigades started to arrive, but they realized presently that they had come too late. There were several fires spreading rapidly, and there was little they could do. The fire raged for two hours; in the end little more than the walls were left. Meanwhile, another police patrol had seized a young man in the corridor, half-naked, obviously a foreigner: "Why did you do this?" the

lieutenant shouted. The young man responded weakly, "Protest, protest." It later appeared that he had used his jacket and shirt to set fire to the curtains here in the great meeting hall.

Hitler was having dinner that night at Goebbel's apartment. In the middle of the evening there was a phone call, but Goebbels (he later said) refused to believe the news, and told Hitler only after he had verified it. They left the meal in a hurry, and, sirens wailing, sped to the Reichstag along the Charlottenburg Chausee. Hitler shouted, "Now I've got them!" Goering had already arrived at the Reichstag and had reached the same conclusion independently. The Nazi leaders could not have cared less what happened to the Reichstag, but they realized that a golden opportunity had suddenly arisen to smash "the Marxists", which meant the Communists, the Social Democrats, and generally speaking, all who opposed the Nazis. Their newspapers and meetings were banned, and a few thousand politicians and militants were arrested. It was enough to give the Nazis the power they wanted.

Did Hitler and Goering really believe that the Communists had burned the Reichstag? They probably did, or they would not have gone through the legal niceties of the Reichstag fire trial in Leipzig, which found that although van der Lubbe was guilty, neither Georgi Dimitrov nor the other Communists arrested had been involved. But by that time, in late 1933, the Nazis were so firmly established that they could afford such minor embarrassment. Who, then, had set fire to the Reichstag? No one doubted that it was a case of arson. Many people all over the world thought that Goering had been responsible on Hitler's orders. It was obvious that it would have been an act of lunacy for the Communists, whereas for the Nazis this was exactly the pretext they needed. Poor van der Lubbe. The Nazis hanged him as a Communist, and the Communists denounced him as a provocateur, homosexual, and confidant of Nazi leaders.

But hard as many people tried in later years, no conclusive evidence was ever found for a Nazi conspiracy. On the contrary, a technical expert named Tobias concluded, after a meticulous investigation in the late 1950s, that difficult as it would seem for a single man to set this great building on fire so effectively, it must have happened that way. The Tobias report led to heated discussions, bitter polemics, even legal actions. Committees were formed and manifestos published. Some historians regarded it as no more than yet another attempt to whitewash the Nazis. The controversy is not over yet. But on the basis of evidence available today - and it is doubtful that we shall ever know more - it seems likely that neither Communists nor Nazis were involved and that the half-naked, unbalanced Dutchman did it alone.

In retrospect, does it matter greatly? I doubt it. The Nazis were looking for a legal pretext to dispense with the law. If there had been no Reichstag fire, they would have used some of the documents found in the headquarters of the Communist party, claiming that the "Marxists" were preparing an armed coup and that Hitler had to be given unlimited power. Once Hitler had been made Chancellor, it was clear that there was only one way to stop him: by force. Neither the Communists (who still saw the Social Democrats, not the Nazis, as the main enemy) nor the trade unions (with a third of their members out of work) nor anyone else was in any way prepared to do it. The Nazis were not playing according to the old rules, and their antagonists suffered from a disease that proved fatal: lack of will.

For the last twelve years of its existence, as during its early period, the Reichstag had no home of its own. It did not really matter, for its meetings in the Kroll Oper were short and infrequent. The Reichstag was convened once or twice a year to listen to a speech made by Hitler on important occasions,

such as the invasion of Poland in September 1939 and the defeat at Stalingrad. They would shout "Heil," there would be a standing ovation, and then they would file out: no questions, no discussions. "The world's most expensive choral society," irreverent Berliners called it. In April 1945, the old Reichstag became the scene of the last real battle in Europe, and the Russians made a movie about it.

The Reichstag had some five hundred members in 1933. About a hundred emigrated, two hundred were arrested, some forty were executed - thirty-one by Hitler, seven by the Allies following the Nuremberg trial, four in the Soviet purges of the 1930s. Six committed suicide. When the Bundestag was convened in Bonn after the war, it included thirty veterans of the old Reichstag. Several are still alive. The new German Parliament, or rather its committee, still meets in the Reichstag, rebuilt in 1972, on the very rare occasion of a visit to Berlin. The tragedy of recent German, and European, history could be written on the basis of the history of one building.

The meeting has now been in session for three hours. Everyone has had his say. The time has come for some concluding remarks. But I suspect that the short speech I really would like to make would be out of place. It would be more or less as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen, historians too often tend to believe that everything happened because it was bound to happen. But the catastrophe would not have been a foregone conclusion if those opposing the Nazis had shown more tenacity and courage. Had Hindenburg resisted a little longer, the Nazi Party might have gone into decline; there could have been a split. The arrest of a handful of its leaders would have been sufficient to decapitate it. Hitler was irreplaceable; had he been eliminated, those who in January 1933 predicted the impending downfall of his party would have been proved true prophets.

But wasn't German democracy too far gone by January 1933, wasn't there a longing for strong leadership, a savior, a Führer, irrespective of Hitler? True, the prospects for democracy were not bright at the time. The Nazis might still have seized power. But a political general confronting them - one who was luckier, cleverer, and stronger than Kurt von Schleicher - might have come out on top. A year or two of quasi-military rule coupled with an upturn in the economy would have brought about a general sobering. Nor would Nazism in power without the unquestioned authority of a Hitler have been the same; try to imagine Iran without Khomeini. The struggle for power among the satraps would have weakened the regime. Goering was a repulsive bully, but his ambitions were not limitless. The fate of the enemies of the regime would not have been enviable, and the same is true with regard to the Jews. Austria would probably have been incorporated, and since the small countries of Eastern Europe preferred to quarrel with each other rather than cooperate, chances are that some of them would have become part of the German sphere of influence, whereas others would have passed into Stalin's orbit.

But would a Second World War have broken out in Europe? It seems unlikely, what with the likes of Chamberlain and the French prime ministers, the deep longing for peace all over Europe, and the strength of American isolationism, some arrangement would have been made with the Germans, and it would have lasted for a decade or perhaps two. Imaginary question from the public: "Do you imply that the borders of Europe today would still be those of 1938?" Answer: I imply nothing of the sort. No one can project beyond a decade or two. Czarism would have disapperaed even if Lenin had never lived. History does not stand still. All I am saying is that the acute crisis of 1933 would have passed without a Hitlerian solution, that in all probability Berlin and Germany would not be divided today, that Europe and the world would be a

different place. Question: "Mr Chairman, you are no doubt aware that the fission of uranium was first demonstrated in 1938, not far from where we meet tonight. What if Goering would have been more interested than Hitler in scientific-technological problems?" Answer: I still doubt whether Germany would have beaten America to it. There would be a Committee for German-American Accord in Washington now, similar to the Committee for East-West Accord. "In other words, an attempt would have been made to freeze the world situation - but isn't this impossible?" My answer to the first part of the question is "yes," and to the second, "I don't know."

As we walk down the steps of the building, toward the exit, searchlights are directed at the Wall only a few steps from us; the border runs along Brandenburg Gate, and the Spree Canal a stone's throw away. The DDR, a perfect illustration that political situations can be frozen: 1984 with a semi-human face. The East Germans have been in some ways more efficient than the Russians in building Communism. There is no freedom, and they too face serious economic problems. Their per capita indebtedness is on the Polish level. But they have excellent runners and swimmers and the most efficient political police in the world. They have not been doing terribly well with their literature and the arts; half of their leading writers have left for the West in recent years. A regrettable matter, no doubt, but a country can manage with second- or third-rate talents.

And on this side, West Germany, no longer the country of the economic miracle. The city of Berlin is struggling with various social problems, not the least of which is demographics. As a result of its years of economic growth, Berlin now has the third largest Turkish population in the world, and every second child born in Frankfurt is of foreign parentage. The good years are over. There is more trouble ahead, and once again Germany is facing general elections.

How deeply rooted is German democracy? Chances are that neither of the two big parties will get an absolute majority, and the Greens may hold the balance. They believe in a better quality of life and they want to neutralize Germany, remove it from the mad arms race. They want to escape not only history but also geography. Wonderful young people, highly motivated, true idealists in an age of materialism. They will probably prevent a stable government during the next few years, something Germany needs more perhaps than any other major Western country at all times and more than ever when the going will be rough, as in the years to come.

Back, then, to 1933? Certainly not. History, contrary to widespread belief, does not repeat itself; it is, as Schopenhauer once noted, the same always different.. A decade of economic stagnation or of small economic growth would not be the overture to the apocalypse. The country is as immune to Nazism as the rest of Europe.

But Nazism is not the only danger. At a time of danger, people still tend to get confused and are inclined as in 1932-1933 to do foolish things. They tend to listen to pied pipers who have changed both their apparel and their tunes. Next year the city of Hameln should commemorate the 700th anniversary of the appearance of the man who made this city famous all over the world. 1984 is a good date for the purpose, but they may of course, prefer to abstain from excessive publicity. Nothing dramatic is likely to happen in Germany in the short run. Once the danger was militarization, expansion and conquest. Today the country is no longer a great power, and Europe is no longer the political center of the world. Today "national interest" will be more often invoked in the speeches and articles of the left than of the

right, and what they mean is not aggressive war but something between taking a low profile and neutralism. Had anyone predicted in 1942 that four decades later the US would admonish Germany (and Japan) to make a greater defense effort, to stiffen its backbone, not to give in to blandishments, not to surrender to threats from outside, he would have been arrested, or, at the very least, his sanity would have been called into question. Yet such are the ironies of history and the end is not yet.

## THE 8TH LEONARD G. MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

Delivered at the Stern Hall on Tuesday 27th March 1984.

By Martin Gilbert

### Jewish 'Refuseniks' in the USSR

The two million Jews of the Soviet Union constitute at least fourteen per cent of world Jewry. They also form the third largest group of Jews in any one country, after the United States and Israel. For ten years, between 1971 and 1981, it seemed as if all those who might wish to leave would be allowed to do so. In 1971 alone, 13,022 were given their exit visas. In 1979 this figure reached 51,333. In a single decade, more than 260,000 Jews left the Soviet Union.

Suddenly, the granting of exit visas was drastically curtailed. In 1982 the number had dropped to 2,688. In 1983, only 1,315 Jews were allowed out, the lowest number for thirteen years. The era of mass emigration was at an end. The hopes of hundreds of thousands more Jews were dashed, including the hopes of more than 400,000 who had asked for, and received an official 'Invitation' from a relative in Israel, without which they cannot even begin the slow and complex process of seeking to leave. Throughout 1983 the Soviet authorities have made it clear that a new era has arrived.

Innumerable Soviet signals made the new policy crystal clear. The number of Jews who were refused their exit visas at least once multiplied drastically, reaching more than 12,000 by the end of 1983. Almost all of these 'refuseniks' found themselves dismissed from their professions overnight, to be forced to do humiliating menial work for minimal wages. Those who were most active in the struggle for exit visas inside the Soviet Union found themselves attacked by name in the Soviet press. Some of them were physically harassed and assaulted; others were invited for 'conversations' with the authorities, and warned that if they persisted in demanding their right to leave, or in seeking those rights for others, they would risk criminal charges and long prison sentences. A series of newspaper articles denounced all Jews who wished to go to Israel as enemies of the Soviet state, as traitors, as tools of foreign agencies, and even as the agents of foreign powers. Repeated applications, which the Soviet authorities require every six months, were met with repeated refusals.

To underline that these pointers were not a mere passing show, legislation was introduced in 1984 establishing severe penalties for giving information to visitors from the West. Individual Jews were warned that even to give details of their own worsening circumstances could come under this category. At the same time, the Soviet authorities announced drastic curbs on the welfare parcels through which many Soviet Jews 'in refusal', as well as other Soviet citizens, had received a means of economic survival.

Most at risk by this new Law, were the families of prisoners who had been sentenced for the public expression of their wish to leave the Soviet Union, or for their religious convictions. These families receive no social security or welfare benefits from the Soviet Government. Most, therefore, depend for their livelihood upon the generosity of families and friends.

Under the new Law, mere receipt of a gift from abroad could, if the authorities wished, serve as the basis for a charge of intent to engage in

'anti-Soviet actions'. The new Law states that any such actions carried out 'with the use of monies or other material gifts received from foreign organisations or persons acting in the interests of such organisations' are punishable 'by deprivation of freedom for up to ten years', with a possible five years of internal exile.

The new pressures, new Laws, and the new venom injected into the newspaper articles which repeatedly denounced the Jewish desire to leave, would not perhaps have been so serious if they had remained on paper alone. Soviet propaganda has always been noted for the extremes of its language. But these signals and pointers of the last three years, have been marked by a series of arrests, trials, and prison sentences, the most severe of which, in the period immediately following the virtual halt to emigration, was the action taken against Dr Yosef Begun, one of the leading figures in the teaching of Hebrew and of Jewish culture.

Yosef Begun had first applied to go to Israel in 1971, at the age of 38. Soon after applying for his exit visa, he had lost his job as an engineer and was dismissed from the Moscow Engineering Institute where he was doing postdoctoral research. Since then, he had become an active champion of the rights of all those Soviet Jews who, even when the decade of mass emigration was at its height, were nevertheless being chosen for harassment and punishment.

The arrest of Yosef Begun on 6 November 1982 came at a time when the pressures against Soviet Jews had reached an alarming scale, indicating to them that the Soviet authorities were serious in their determination to bring mass emigration to an end. Within two months of Begun's arrest, a number of leading Jewish activists in both Moscow and Leningrad had been told emphatically that their current refusal of an exit visa was the 'final refusal': that they need not even bother to apply again.

Begun was held in prison, without trial for more than 11 months. At his trial on 14 October 1983 he was sentenced to 7 years in prison, to be followed by 5 years in exile. The savagery of this sentence confirmed the activists in their view that the clamp-down on exit visas was no mere temporary aberration, or part of a pattern of ebb and flow, but was intended to be permanent.

Dr Begun's sentence was his third in ten years, and by far the longest. It automatically denied him any possibility of emigration until 1994 when he would be sixty one years old.

Even as Begun began his third sentence, the pressures against him continued. On 14 April 1984 he was refused the right to make food purchases in the labour camp store. On 10 May 1984 he was removed from solitary confinement, and sentenced to 6 months in the labour camp's own prison for some unspecified breach of the camp rules. At the same time, his wife, Ina Shlemova-Begun, was refused her statutory visit to him, and denied her statutory letters for both May and June 1984, due their 'doubtful contents'. Nor was Begun allowed to receive her letters, for the same reason.

Serving an even longer sentence than that of Dr Begun, Anatoly Shcharansky passed the half way mark in his sentence in the summer of 1983. From that moment he was technically qualified for a remission of sentence and even to release. But massive public campaigns on his behalf in the West, some at the highest level of international politics seem (at the time of writing) to have been in vain.

American Independence day marked the 10th anniversary of Shcharansky's marriage to Avital Shtiglitz. She had received her exit visa for the day after their wedding, and he had been assured that he could follow her to Israel within a few months. Avital left Moscow on 5 July 1974. But Shcharansky continued to be refused his exit visa.

More than a decade has now passed since husband and wife were last together, on that bright Moscow morning, as she boarded the aeroplane for Vienna.

Of all the Prisoners of Zion, Shcharansky is the best known to the world's journalists, and the most championed by Western statesmen. At his trial, Shcharansky did not defend himself alone: he also defended the right of every Soviet Jew to go to Israel. When challenged with the evidence of his 'Zionist activity', he replied with a short historical lecture. 'There is', he explained to his accusers, 'a growing Jewish national movement. Every nation goes through a stage of development of its natural growth, and now Zionism is a manifestation of the growth of Jewish nationalism'. It was a fact, he added, 'that there is a Jewish state'.

Calmly and with dignity, Shcharansky told the court: 'Five years ago, I submitted my application for exit to Israel. Now I am further than ever from my dream. It would seem to be cause for regret. But it's absolutely otherwise. I am happy. I am happy that I lived honestly, in peace with my conscience. I never compromised my soul, even under the threat of death'.

Shcharansky ended his defence: 'For more than 2,000 years the Jewish people my people, have been dispersed. But wherever they are, wherever Jews are found, each year they have repeated, "Next year in Jerusalem". Now, when I am further than ever from my people, from Avital, facing many arduous years of imprisonment, I say, turning to my people, my Avital: "Next year in Jerusalem!" And I turn to you, the court, who were required to confirm a predetermined sentence: to you I have nothing to say'.

Neither before, during, nor after his trial, did Shcharansky denounce Soviet Jewry's national aspirations, which he so courageously shared and upheld. Nor did the other leading activists turn their backs on the movement, or on their colleagues, when they too were arrested, interrogated and tried.

Shcharansky and his fellow Prisoners of Zion know that they are not forgotten, that they are not alone: that their friends and relatives fight for them: that the Jewish world, with Israel at its core, cares for their fate and future, and awaits their return to their nation and their people. But the hardships of their punishment are real, and severe: their isolation is intense. Uncertainty is a cruel weapon used against them, and cruellest of all is the constant assertion of the Soviet authorities that they are alone, that nobody cares about them, that their western champions are silent.

During World War II, Martin Buber pleaded with the Jews of Palestine to practise a permanent grief, a daily alarm. For the Prisoners of Zion today, this plea is being answered by their many and devoted supporters in Israel, in Western Europe, in Britain and in the United States. For Shcharansky, Buber's plea is answered above all by Avital.

Those who see Avital Shcharansky's efforts on her husband's behalf can only marvel at her stamina and faith. He too, in his prison cell, knows of her

struggle. Early in 1983, in a letter which he was permitted to send her only after the four months' hunger strike which greatly weakened him, he wrote: 'What does my tireless traveller do now? In what kibbutz does she take her rest?'

A shy and private person by nature, Avital drives herself to the verge of exhaustion, and is reluctant to rest, believing that each day's exertion may lead her to her husband's release a day earlier. As she completed a mission to France, Britain, Holland and Sweden in January 1984, she commented: 'Maybe with this last push we can succeed'.

The conditions under which Shcharansky and his fellow Prisoners of Zion are held in prison and labour camp has always been one which alarms those who fight for them in the West, as well as exercising the concern of their friends inside the Soviet Union. Frequently, the monthly visit permitted to a wife, or in Shcharansky's case to his 75 year old mother is cancelled. The limited correspondence allowed by Soviet prison regulations is also often curtailed.

Several Prisoners of Zion, as well as Jews being held in detention, have resorted to hunger strikes in order to obtain their basic rights, as laid down by the Soviet Union's laws and practices. When Dr Yuri Tarnopolsky, serving three years in labour camp, discovered that his meeting with his wife due in January 1984 had been cancelled, he warned the camp administration that he would declare a hunger strike unless the meeting was allowed. The meeting remained cancelled, and Dr Tarnopolsky began his hunger strike on 1 February 1984. Three days later he was sent to solitary confinement for seven days.

In a letter which he sent to his wife on 2 April 1984, Tarnopolsky described something of the conditions in the punishment cell, 'a small concrete room with a concrete floor'. Tarnopolsky explained: 'An especially powerful heater heated the air to an unbearable temperature. There was absolutely no inflow of fresh air. During the day the heating was turned off and the heat turned into a freezing cold. During those days the temperature fell to -39 degrees centigrade. The wooden bunk was lowered only during the night for sleeping. One could only sit on concrete inclined pedestals constructed in that way in order to make them uncomfortable to sit on. One could only lie on the floor, in a layer of icy air. Warm underwear was taken away from me (although it was not taken away from other prisoners) and I was only wearing a pyjama type shirt. I was thus held in the exact kind of conditions which, as the doctors knew, I found especially hard to bear and which were detrimental to my health'.

Inside the Soviet Union there are Jews who maintain links with the prisoners and seek to transmit their basic needs. But the names of most of the prisoners are unknown to Jews in the free world, except among the dedicated but small groups of active campaigners. Nor does the sentencing of new prisoners make any real impact beyond these activist circles. Between January and June 1984 at least three Soviet Jews were sentenced to prison terms, but it is doubtful whether even their names will be known to most readers of this article, however alert, intelligent and caring.

One of these prisoners, Moshe Abramov, is only 26 years old. A religious teacher in Samarkand, he was sentenced on 6 January 1984 to three years in a labour camp on the routine charge of 'hooliganism'.

Like many prisoners and refuseniks, Abramov has been refused permission to join his close relatives in Israel: in his case his three brothers. Indeed the Soviet authorities have specifically stated that no more families remain to be reunited, at a time when there would actually appear to be more than a thousand such families, part of whom are already in Israel, and part of whom are refused permission to leave the Soviet Union.

Another prisoner, Simon Schnirman, who had been sentenced in January 1983, had been refused permission for more than five years to join his father, David Schnirman, in Israel. At the beginning of 1984, as Schnirman entered the second year of a three year labour camp sentence (his second labour camp term in 5 years), his father died in Israel.

Certain trials and sentences, such as those on Shcharansky in 1978 and Begun in 1983, are widely publicised by the Soviet authorities themselves and held up for Soviet citizens, Jewish and non-Jewish, as an example and as a deterrent. But many other trials take place in complete secrecy, and Jews are sent to prison and labour camp without any knowledge of this reaching the West at the time of the trial.

During 1983 several such cases came to light where Jews had been sentenced in the previous year. This pattern continued in 1984. For example, at the beginning of May 1984 it became known in the West, for the first time, that Mark Ocheretyansky, who had first applied for an exit visa in 1979, been given permission and then had his permission rescinded, had been sentenced in October 1983 to one year in labour camp.

Mark Ocheretyansky thus became a Prisoner of Zion for Western Jewry more than six months after he had become a prisoner in reality.

Among the many signals which the Soviet authorities had given since 1982, to discourage any further applications for exit visas, and to demoralise those who have already applied and been refused, is the keeping back in the Soviet Union of all prisoners who have already served their term and been released. Before 1981, every released prisoner could expect to receive an exit visa within months, and even within weeks of completing his or her sentence.

The arrival of each released prisoner at Vienna was a cause for rejoicing, not only to those who had campaigned for their release in the West, but also for those prisoners and other activists still in the Soviet Union. For ten years, every prisoner could survive the harsh conditions of incarceration in the confident knowledge that once the ordeal was over he and his family would be on their way out of the Soviet Union.

No such confidence has existed since 1980. Former prisoners like Ida Nudel, herself the 'guardian angel' of dozens of those who had been in prison, labour camp and exile, has served her term but continues to be refused her exit visa. Not only is she not allowed to leave the Soviet Union, to join her only living relative, her sister Ilana Friedman, who lives in Israel, but she is confined, without any legal justification, to the remote town of Bendery in Soviet Moldavia.

Another released prisoner, Kim Fridman, back in Kiev since 1982 having served a year in labour camp, is not allowed to join his wife Henrietta, his daughter Victoria, or his grand-daughter, born in Haifa in 1981; he first applied to leave in 1972.

Another former prisoner, Mark Nashpits, released in 1979 after five years in exile, is still not allowed to leave the Soviet Union, although he first applied for his exit visa more than twelve years ago. Nor was Dr Victor Brailovsky given an exit visa after having completed a 5 year sentence of exile in remote Kazakhstan, far from his wife Irina, and their 2 children, Leonid and Dalhia, who remained in Moscow.

The fifty year old Vladimir Slepak, eventually allowed back into Moscow after a 5 year exile in Siberia, received not an exit visa, but yet another refusal. 'We will let you go when it suits us', he was told. He and his wife Masha have been waiting since 1971 for their exit visa, to join her sister Henrietta in Israel.

Even less publicised than the plight of the prisoners and former prisoners, but no less distressing, is the plight of those Soviet Jews who have never been sentenced on a criminal charge, but who have served another sort of sentence. These are the Jews who have been refused exit visas for more than a decade.

For these long term refuseniks, deprived of any chance of work in their professions, denied the basic human right of emigration, cut off from the National Home they have so long ago applied to join, the 'dull luxury of time', as one of them described it to me, has turned into a prison sentence of its own.

The long term refuseniks ask for an internationally accepted plan whereby, rather like the demobilisation plan of war-time armies, the principle of 'first in, first out' can apply. Under such a plan, those in refusal since before 1974 would be given their exit visas now. Those in refusal since before 1976 would receive their exit visas a year later. Those in refusal since 1978 would receive their exit visas a year after that.

Such a scheme, the refuseniks note, would offer the Soviet authorities a 'controlled, rational' emigration, and would offer the refuseniks themselves a finite prospect of seeing their Promised Land.

Once such a scheme had led to the release of the long term refuseniks, a maximum time could then be set for all other Jews in refusal, between their first application and their exit visa. Something like 5 years could be made the outside period before an exit visa was granted.

Among the ten year and more refuseniks are many men and women who long ago paid the penalty for having been active in the Jewish movement; men like Pavel Abramovich, Vladimir Prestin and Yuly Kosharovsky in Moscow, Aba Taratuta and Lev Shapiro in Leningrad. They have been forced to give up their contributions to Soviet society long ago. They only ask to be allowed to take their talents elsewhere, to the land of Israel for which they have given up so much; and to give at least their children the opportunities so long denied to them. The long term refuseniks have seen their own creative years pass by without their being allowed to fulfil their capabilities, even inside the Soviet Union.

Among those who still wait for exit visas in Moscow are Professor Alexander Lerner, now in his thirteenth year in refusal, and unable to join his daughter, Sonia in Rehovot; Natasha Khassina, who continues Ida Nudel's work on behalf of the prisoners, and whose husband Ganady was refused permission to go to his mother's funeral in Israel in 1983; Abe Stolar, in his seventies, an American citizen, who in 1975 was given his exit visa but then had it taken

away from him at Moscow airport, as he was about to board the aeroplane; Michael Krèmen, both of whose parents have died while he has been in refusal; and Judith Ratner-Bialy, badly hurt in a car crash in Moscow, whose father died in Israel, and whose mother still awaits her there.

Another long term refusenik couple, Ben and Tanya Bogomolny, who live in Moscow, have been in refusal since 1966, a fact which has earned them a place in the Guinness Book of Records. Ben Bogomolny is now 38. His parents and his three sisters, have lived in Israel for more than a decade. Of the entry in the Guinness Book of Records, his wife Tanya has written: 'Surely this is the kind of record no country would wish to keep for a long time!'

When the struggle to go to Israel seems, for the long term refusenik, to be a struggle without end, it can be a demoralising one. A Jew who had just entered his fifth year of refusal wrote from Leningrad in December 1983:

'We refuseniks live neither on the earth nor in the sky, but somewhere between them, not much comfortable. Those, who are weaker, gave up the idea to get their visas and don't apply for them any more. Some people have already died while waiting for their turn to leave. Some are getting mental disorder or cancer or other illnesses on the ground of uncertain life. Only the stronger continue the struggle for their rights, against anti-semites, or find themselves in Hebrew teaching, cultural activity or religion; and nobody can predict what will be tomorrow'.

Soviet Jews are isolated from the outside world, and denied open access to anything that might teach them about Jews, Judaism or Israel. Nevertheless they make enormous efforts to find out the sort of things that Jews in the West can so easily learn by a visit to a library, a bookshop, a Hebrew class or a lecture.

Throughout the Soviet Union, individual Jews, and Jewish families, struggle to keep their faith and culture alive, while awaiting the exit visas which are now denied them. These Jews are neither enemies of the Soviet State, nor dissidents who seek to change Soviet society from within, but devoted Jews, who wish only to be united with their national centre and their national home; with their people. It is the Soviets, not they who inscribed the word 'Jew' as a nationality in their internal passport; granting them in law the national status which they deny to them in practice.

In Moscow and Leningrad, religious classes such as those given by Ilya Essas and Girgory Vasserman, both Jews by 'nationality', draw a growing number of Jews back to their religious roots and practice. Hebrew classes, and discussion of all things Jewish are in evidence every day in private apartments throughout Moscow and Leningrad. The standard of Hebrew speaking among refuseniks can be a source of shame to the Jewish visitor from the West who cannot match it, or even come near it.

No-one who has been to a Jewish 'event' in the Soviet Union will ever forget the inspiration of shared enthusiasm amid adversity. How well I remember in the winter of 1983, sitting in on a Hebrew lesson in a remote Moscow suburb, as the eager, laughing pupils discussed, in Hebrew, such issues as the Lebanese War, the Kahan Report, and 'Who is a Jew?'

In Tbilisi, in the Soviet Republic of Georgia, the Goldstein brothers, Isai and Girgory, also Jews by 'nationality' continue their long, hard, harrassed struggle for Jewish culture, and for emigration, with a humour

which deserves a better reward than the reiterated refusals of the last 13 years.

In Minsk, a group of young men, likewise Jews by 'nationality' play and sing Yiddish songs, and seek through these songs to absorb as much as possible of Jewish culture. Recently they went to the nearby city of Kovno to play these songs at a Jewish wedding. Many of the listeners wept. 'Tears are all that is left to us', one of the singers wrote to me. If they could find a Hebrew teacher, these Jews would plunge eagerly into the language of the State in which they wish to live.

Even when emigration was at its height, many Jews in the Soviet Union had tried to equip themselves with a basic knowledge of Jewish culture. Under the active guidance of Grigory Kanovich, the Jews of Leningrad had established a Seminar in which historic, cultural and religious aspects of Judaism were the theme of weekly discussions, held of course, in private apartments. At first all seemed to bode well for these Seminars. Indeed, three of the main lecturers were given permission to leave the Soviet Union, Alexander Kot and Lev Utevsky in 1980, and Kanovich himself in 1981, but not before the windows of his apartment had been smashed by 'persons unknown' during a lecture on the 'Compilation of the Talmud'.

Beginning in April 1981 all those who came to the Leningrad Seminars had their documents checked. In May 1981, the police stopped anyone entering the apartment at which a seminar was to be held in commemoration of Israel Independence Day. A week later, at what was to have been a seminar to discuss 'The Meaning of the Sabbath' the police burst into the apartment as the seminar was about to start and arrested one of those present, Evgeni Lein, who was held in prison, charged with striking a policeman, and sentenced to a year in Siberia 'working for the national economy'. Lein is now among the growing number of prisoners who have served their term but are still not allowed their exit visas.

The pressure against the Leningrad Seminar continues to mount. In July 1981 another of the Seminar leaders, Pavel Astrakhan, was told by the Leningrad Prosecutor that gatherings were only allowed 'if they do not lead to public disorder', but that gatherings of a hundred people 'inevitably do lead to public disorder'. One much smaller meeting that was broken up in September 1981 took place in Kiev, at the Babi Yar massacre site. Pavel Astrakhan and Mikhail Elman were among a group of Leningrad Jews who had travelled to Babi Yar. As they tried to put flowers near the monument to the victims of the war-time massacre, they were arrested. Both received a ten day prison sentence for 'petty hooliganism'.

The authorities now moved against all efforts to continue with Jewish teaching in Leningrad. On 23 September 1981 they searched the apartment of one of the Hebrew language teachers, Roald Zelichonok, confiscating Hebrew dictionaries, text books and prayer books, as well as books by Saul Bellow, Eli Wiesel and Isaac Bashevis Singer and an album of paintings by Modigliani. On 15 October 1981 the authorities invited Zelichonok for questioning. That evening, after his return home, the window of his apartment was smashed by a heavy stone thrown from the street.

Roald Zelichonok, who holds a Doctorate in Electrical Engineering, was first refused permission to emigrate in 1978. He was then 41 years old. The threats to his teaching did not deter him from what he believed to be a need and an obligation. Nor did similar threats deter Leonid Kelbert, a former

film director whose films had won international acclaim for the Soviet cinema. He too had first applied to go to Israel in 1978, when he was 35 years old.

A graduate of the State Institute of Cinematography, Leonid Kelbert knew nothing about Jewish culture, spiritual heritage, or traditions. Having been refused permission to emigrate, he found himself drawn to these Jewish values: 'plunged into all of this', as he later recalled, 'greedily because the lack of real spiritual food was an important component of my creative dissatisfaction'.

Leonid Kelbert began his new 'Jewish' life by lecturing on Jewish topics. He had six themes: Heinrich Heine, Judaism and Christianity, being mainly the genesis of Christianity; Jews and the Christian world, up to the seventeenth century; the Spanish period, the genesis of the culture and the interaction of Hebrew and Arabic cultures in philosophy and poetry; the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls; and the history of the Jewish Theatre in the Soviet Union.

Arising out of these interests, Kelbert began to stage short plays in the apartments of friends. The presentation of these plays arose, he later wrote because of 'my own strong wish and the desires of two enthusiasts to act and to direct; an interest in Jewish Drama, which appeared to be strikingly interesting & real', reflecting the mentality of the young Jews around him, with their search for 'the ethical principle of the World and of Man'.

The first experiments were Purim plays. Later, Kelbert produced a play called 'The Lot', the story of the Jews trapped on Masada by the Roman Legions. Early in 1982 he decided to perform one of his plays in Riga. But when a friend of his, Boris Devyatov, travelled to Riga to find an apartment for the performance, he was stopped in the street and told: 'Boris Ivanovich, you may return to Leningrad. Your friends will not come to Riga. Riga is a hospitable city, but not for all'.

A few days later, on 13 February 1982 Kelbert accompanied two French visitors to the Metro. His wife, Maria, who remained at home, was eight months pregnant. After being accosted in the street, Kelbert was accused of striking a bystander, and sentenced to 15 days in detention. He served his 15 days, and then returned to his wife, and to his theatricals.

Shortly after his release, Kelbert gave his twentieth performance. All those entering the apartment were stopped at a police picket and forced to show their documents. The policeman in charge of the picket was Captain Semenov, the officer who had led the raid on the seminar at which Evgeni Lein had been arrested nine months earlier.

To those whose documents he checked, Captain Semenov made a sign with his fingers, the sign of crossed bars, as if to signify, 'all you will be imprisoned'. And yet, as Leonid Kelbert himself stresses, 'my theatre (if it can be called so) is not only Jewish but first of all, a purely cultural undertaking. It is not anti-Soviet, nor pro-Soviet but unofficial theatre, a natural continuation of old traditions of folk theatres'.

In this, as Kelbert calls it, 'theatre without any stage', the response of the audience became 'a kind of self identification' with their Jewish souls. 'For most of our audience', Kelbert noted, 'it was the first meeting with their history, with their culture - and unexpectedly, it appeared that the circle of the problems was far wider than individualistic'. They were the same

problems, he reflected, 'which were not solved by our fathers and grandfathers, and which we have to solve: to be a Jew or not to be a Jew'.

Hundreds, even thousands of young Jews, in all the Soviet Union's principal cities, have made the decision 'to be a Jew', even with the many risks involved. Shortly after Leonid Kelbert had been released from detention, in February 1982, three Leningrad Jews, Grigory Vasserman, Yakov Gorodetsky and Abram Yatzkevich, appealed to the Leningrad Municipality, and to the Leningrad Party Committee, to stop the persecution of Jewish cultural activity. The three Jews were told that they were trying to revive the 'anti-Soviet tradition' of the pre-revolutionary Jewish Social Democratic party, the Bund, and that no 'non-Russian activity' would be permitted in Leningrad.

The three Jews replied that before the Second World War there had been Yiddish schools in Leningrad, operating legally. This, they were told, was a consequence of the fact that 'Soviet Democracy had not yet developed its full measure - at that time'.

As pressure grew, the young Jews of Leningrad decided to form a Leningrad Society for the Study of Jewish Culture. An organizing committee was set up headed by Yakov Gorodetsky and Eduard Erlich. On 19 July 1982 the committee held its first meeting. About 50 young men and women had already asked to join the Society.

Determined not to break any laws, Gorodetsky and Erlich asked the Leningrad Regional Executive Committee to give their Society its imprimatur. On 2 September 1982 Gorodetsky was invited to the Leningrad City Department of People's Education and told that his attitude was not in accordance 'with the moral image of a Soviet teacher'. Gorodetsky was at that time teaching mathematics at a city adult education evening class.

Erlich, too, was warned against pursuing such activities as Leningrad Jews regard as their preparation for life in Israel. Seized by the KGB, and driven off to a museum, he was taken into the room devoted to the Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobikjan, and told: 'This is where we are going to send you. Not to the Zionist-Fascist State, but here'.

The pressures against Jewish culture mounted, reaching the attention of the Soviet public on 23 October 1982, when an article in the Soviet government newspaper, Izvestia, attacked the study of Hebrew, and of Jewish culture, as 'only fig leaves, covering unlawful actions'.

This article went on to attack the activity of 'Zionist emissaries' reaching the Soviet Union from the United States in the guise of tourists, bringing 'instructions for renegades'. In their turn, the article alleged, these 'renegades' had agreed to supply those who had sent the tourists with 'slander and tendentious materials' against the Soviet Union.

Within a few days of the publication of this article, several Jewish activists in Leningrad had their telephones disconnected. That winter, Gorodetsky was sacked from his adult education teaching job.

The Leningrad Society for the Study of Jewish Culture had no anti-Soviet or anti-Communist aspect. Its aim was to give Jews some knowledge of their past, just as every other Soviet nationality is taught, and indeed encouraged to learn, about its history. But the authorities would not accept this initiative, or this argument. 'Your Society', the organizers were told, 'does not exist, and will not exist'.

Most of those who had signed the application for official recognition were summoned to a local Communist Party committee, and urged to withdraw their signatures. They replied that elsewhere in the world, even under the most severe dictatorship, Jewish communities and societies existed. Why then, in Leningrad, was such a Society as their's dangerous for the State? Only Arab countries, so the refuseniks argued, deprived the Jews of their 'internal' life. Even in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, with Jewish populations 'hundreds of times smaller' than in the Soviet Union, such as the 8,000 Jews of Bulgaria or the 5,000 Jews of East Germany, or the 30,000 Jews of Rumania, 'they have their own cultural life, clubs, societies, etc.'

The authorities hesitated to declare the Leningrad Society to be an illegal one. 'Judicially our Society exists', one of its members commented, 'because we received no written reply to our application for a whole month'.

Unfortunately, as the refuseniks know only too well, the gap between legality and reality is a vast one. When Gorodetsky was invited to the KGB on 1 March 1983 and told to stop all cultural activities, 'or else', he resigned at once. Two days later, Leonid Kelbert was warned that no Jewish cultural activities, 'legal or illegal' would be allowed. Kelbert was also told that whereas, in the past, he and other activists could expect 15 days detention as a mild punishment, henceforth a 'criminal file' would be prepared, and anyone involved in such 'illegal' cultural activities could face the serious criminal charge of 'anti-Soviet activities'.

The Jews against whom these pressures are imposed want only to be allowed to leave the Soviet Union. Deprived of this goal, they find themselves forced to fight for rights and fair dealing in a land they had long ago wished was far behind them. Of the activists in the Leningrad Society, only one, Edward Ehrlich had received his exit visa by the summer of 1984.

Soviet Jews 'in refusal' search for some means of persuading the authorities to let them go. During 1983 several, among them Evgeni Lein, renounced their Soviet citizenship in an attempt to signal their determination to leave. At the same time, they sought, and were granted, Israeli citizenship.

On the last day of March 1983, the Soviet authorities launched an Anti Zionist Committee of the Soviet Republic a body made up entirely of 'regime Jews', one of the declared aims of which was to show that Soviet Jews were 'an inseperable part of the Soviet people'. Soviet Jewish activists refused to be intimidated. On 4 April 1983, six Moscow Jews, all of them refuseniks, wrote an open letter to General Dragunsky, one of the members of the Anti Zionist Committee, and a Jew, 'What right do you have', they asked, 'to declare in the name of all the Jews who are Soviet citizens that they do not want to leave the Soviet Union? How is it that you have not noticed the 300,000 Jews who, in spite of enormous difficulties managed to leave the Soviet Union during the last 12 years? Among them was, by the way, your newpnew, Boris Dragunsky. How is it that you do not see the tens of thousands of Jews who in vain are trying to get permission to emigrate to Israel?'

The Anti-Zionist Committee insisted that Soviet Jews had no need of outside 'defenders': that their rights inside the Soviet Union were such that they needed no defenders at all. 'Yes, we need to be defended', the six Jews declared. 'We have no other defenders besides our brothers who call themselves Zionists, brothers from whom you want so much to isolate Soviet Jews'. The six Jews added: 'You say we are an inseperable part of the Soviet people. But we say we are an inseperable part of the Jewish people'.

The six Jews ended their letter: 'We will struggle for our return to Israel. We will be reunited with our own people'.

Following the establishment of the Anti Zionist Committee, no week passed without substantial pressures and accusations against those Jews who wished to go to Israel, or who were active in the struggle to maintain some vestige of Jewish cultural activity and of Jewish identity. On 17 April 1983, two days before General Dragunsky's interview was published, eleven Leningrad Jews, among them Mikhail Salman, took a home-made Israeli flag to a picnic area in one of the woods outside the city, intending in this private way to celebrate Israel Independence Day. They were immediately arrested and questioned for four hours. Then, after the flag, and every piece of paper bearing Hebrew writing on it, had been taken from them, they were allowed to return home. That same evening they sent a telegram to the Israeli President, Yitzhak Navon, 'with congratulations on this holiday'.

Two days after this incident in the Leningrad woods, the city's principal newspaper published an article covering 30 columns, in which the demand by Leningrad Jews for cultural facilities was denounced as 'nothing but a smoke screen for Zionist infiltration'.

Among those singled out for criticism in this article was one of the organizers of the Leningrad Society for Jewish Culture, Yakov Gorodetsky, a man who, according to the article 'treads the path of Nationalism'. Another Jew named in the article was Aba Taratuta, who was described as 'a tool of foreign emissaries'. Taratuta was abused for receiving a foreign visitor, in this case a leading Western campaigner for Soviet Jewry, Lynn Singer, President of the Washington-based Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. 'Of course', the article noted, 'we have to suggest that both of them were not talking about the unsettled Leningrad weather because she can't afford to waste time and Taratuta wasn't inclined to talk about the weather!'

In provincial towns throughout the Soviet Union, the pressures on Jews who have sought to go to Israel have been considerable. One such sequence of pressures took place in Odessa, on 4 May 1983. That evening, six people, one of them in police uniform, the others declaring that they were 'concerned citizens', entered the home of Yakov Mesh, a refusenik of several years. A number of Moscow refuseniks who were visiting Mesh had their names taken, and several items were confiscated from his home. Half an hour later, in another part of Odessa, another policeman searched the home of the Niepomniashchy family, taking away books, cassettes and tape recorders.

At the age of 20, the Niepomniashchys' daughter, Yehudit, is one of the leading lights of the Odessa refusenik community. Visiting her that evening was a Moscow refusenik, Mikhail Kholmiansky, his wife Ilana and their teenage son. Mikhail Kholmiansky, a Hebrew teacher, was arrested on the following day, and sentenced to 15 days detention for being in Odessa 'without permission'.

Following the Odessa raids, several local refuseniks who had been with Yakov Mesh on the evening of 4 May were 'invited' for questioning. In the following week, an Odessa newspaper described him and Yehudit Niepomniashchy as among those 'dealing in Zionist propaganda'. The writer of the article declared that Mesh had committed a further 'crime' in receiving foreign visitors.

Of Yehudit Niepomniashchy, the article stated: 'It is known that she invites young people to her flat in order to spread Zionist propaganda'. Not Zionist propaganda, however, but the strong spirit of Judaism, is

Yehudit's unique contribution to her friends in Odessa. In April 1983, a Western visitor to Odessa was struck by what he described as her 'incredible strength of character'. Asked when she and her family had last applied for an exit visa, she replied: 'We don't bother to ask for permission to leave. Why should I go crawling on my hands and knees to the authorities? I'm a proud Jewess. Why should I go crawling to them? They know we want to go'.

In an attempt to challenge the pressures and disappointments which pursued them throughout 1983, a number of Soviet Jews decided to make their protests in a series of outspoken letters. These letters were signed collectively, and sent openly to the Soviet authorities. At least seven such letters were sent in the first three months of 1984, each of them signed by a number of Jews, by name, and with their addresses attached.

One of these open letters, signed by 50 Leningrad Jews, protested at the sacking of Yaakov Gorodetsky from his post as a teacher, because of his involvement in setting up the Leningrad Society for the Study of Jewish Culture. The 'only crime of our friend Gorodetsky' the signatories wrote 'is that he is a Jew who desires openly, hiding nothing, to take an interest in the culture of his people'. Their letter ended: 'We declare that we, who are Jews, just like the representatives of any other people, are fully entitled to develop our own national culture and are not obliged to account to anybody for the reasons for our interest in the fate of our own people'.

A second letter, signed by 18 Jews from Riga and Leningrad, was sent to the editor-in-chief of Izvestia, rebuking him for recent anti-Israel articles about the Middle East. These articles, the protesters wrote, are 'deliberately intended to sow seeds of mistrust, dislike, hostility and national discord towards the Jews'. Current Middle East reporting inside the Soviet Union, they write, contains 'many obvious twistings and jugglings of the truth and suppression or distortion of historical facts'.

The signatories note that 1984's articles in Izvestia on the events of 1948, go entirely against what Soviet leaders, including Mr Gromyko, said in 1948, when the State of Israel was established. Then, scores of times, Soviet spokesmen referred to the 'aggressions, interventions, and attacks by the Arabs against the State of Israel'. To write now of 'Israeli aggression' in 1948, the 18 signatories claim, is counter to Article 36 of the Soviet Constitution, which makes any advocacy of 'racial or national exclusivity, hostility or disparagement' punishable by law.

The signatories go on to ask whether the editor-in-chief of Izvestia did not consider that 'tendentious reporting' on the Middle East contributed 'to the centuries-old cultivated hostility towards the Jews'.

The 18 signatories included one non-Jew, Ivan Martynov, who had earlier resigned as a contributor to a Leningrad magazine, in protest against an article in the magazine which alleged that the figure of 6,000,000 Jewish dead in the holocaust was 'two to three times exaggerated'.

A third letter was signed by 52 Jews. It criticized a specific article in Izvestia which stated that only 'downright hooligans' would want to study Jewish culture and religion. The article had gone on to state that such studies were encouraged by 'international Zionism', and were undertaken only by the 'unwitting accomplices of World Zionism'.

According to 52 signatories; 'to see the intrigues of international Zionism in the desire of the Jews to study their history and culture is just as absurd as seeing 'the hand of Moscow' on any organized demonstration of workers in the West'.

A fourth open letter, signed by 40 Jews, and sent to, among others, the General Prosecutor of the USSR, described the three year sentence against Moshe Abramov in January 1984 as a 'juridical mistake' which, they added, 'may be considered as religious persecution'.

A fifth letter, signed by 32 Jews, was also sent to the General Prosecutor of the USSR, in protest against the forcible feeding and 'violence' against a young Leningrad Jewess, Nadezhda Fradkova, during her hunger strike, in protest against the refusal of the authorities to grant her an exit visa.

A sixth letter was signed by 20 Jews, and was sent to the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. Each of the signatories having sought an exit visa to Israel, has been accused in the Soviet Press of 'nationalism'. 'It is unreasonable to accuse us of nationalism', they argued. 'Our nationalism is no more than that of other people who have sovereign states'. Their desire to go to Israel was not as divided families, but as candidates for national repatriation. 'The desire to repatriate', they insisted, 'is the need for a home'.

The 20 signatories of this letter stress that they 'feel no hostility to the Soviet State'. But their desire to emigrate is, they pointed out, 'intensified' by the recent spate of anti-Semitic articles in the Soviet press.

These six letters - and there are almost certainly several more which have not yet reached the West - serve as a focus of unity for Jews who, denied an exit visa, remain determined to give up neither their search for a visa, nor their rights as Jews to cultural and religious expression.

Signing such letters is not without risk. One of the signatories of the last letter cited here, Zahar Zunshein from Riga, was arrested on 6 March 1984. On 20 April, while still being detained, he celebrated his 33rd birthday. In a courageous attempt to have him released, his mother, his wife and his sister protested outside the Latvian Supreme Court. All three were then arrested, and detained for several days. Twice, Zunshein's wife Tatiana travelled to Moscow to demand her husband's release. Zahar Zunshein had first applied for an exit visa in 1981, when it was already clear that the gates of emigration had been shut. This had not deterred him either from applying to leave, or from demanding for himself and for his fellow Jews in Riga, the right of repatriation.

On 28 June 1984, Zahar Zunshein was tried in Riga. His sentence: three years in prison.

On 31 March 1984, while Zunshein was still being held in Riga, a group of nine activists (as they are sometimes called) met in Moscow. At their meeting they discussed the worsening situation, and tried to set out certain parameters for thought and action. The first speaker stressed the need for negotiations with the Soviet authorities to 'reopen the gates'. Such negotiations, he argued, now superceded in importance the overseas demonstrations of sympathy and outside campaigns which had undoubtedly helped to obtain exit visas in the 1970s. It was not that the demonstrations were counter-productive. 'Morale was very important', he stressed, and 'helps us to feel we are not alone'. But by themselves, demonstrations

would not influence the authorities. Such outside support, another of those present commented, 'helps us survive, but does not solve the main problem'.

There was a general feeling during the discussion that private meetings, between Soviet and Western officials and scientists, and also private trade between the Soviet Union and the West could be used as a part of the 'bargaining lever' between the Soviet Government and Western Governments willing to 'help in the struggle of Soviet Jews for their exit visas'. It was also felt that simply to wait upon an improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States would be wrong. If one relied upon this, one refusenik commented, 'it's a long way to Tipperary', and he added: 'In the present situation, the European Governments can do much more'. Europe, he explained is now an important place in international relations, and, therefore, countries that in the past were not in the first line of importance have now become so, and the Soviet authorities are more sensitive to them than in the past'.

Several of those present at the meeting stressed the Soviet Union's need for trade with the West, and the extent to which a change in emigration policy could be made a factor in the improvement of trade relations. If the Soviet Union wished for improved trade relations, it could send, as one of its signals, an easing up of the halt to exit visas.

Several activists expressed their deep concern at the decision of a majority of the Jews who left Russia during the final four years of the 'miracle' decade of emigration to go to the United States rather than to Israel. Throughout the years of emigration, they pointed out, the only country for which the Soviet Union was willing to issue exit visas for Jews. As one of the activists remarked: 'to leave, but not to go to Israel, is not cricket. It doesn't fulfil the rules of the game. It undermines the movement and insults the prestige of the Soviet Union'.

It was felt by all of those present that the gates of 'emigration' might be re-opened all the more quickly if henceforth the problem should be seen in terms of 'repatriation', the return of the Jews to their National Home, and the Jews themselves show, by the direction of their journey, that they did not intend to go elsewhere, at least in their initial choice of destination.

The Moscow discussion of 31 March 1984 also highlighted the growing Soviet propaganda against Jewish national aspirations, including recent lectures for school children on the subject of Jewish emigration. These lectures stressed that Jewish emigration, to whatever destination, was proof that the Jews were not loyal citizens. Such propaganda, one speaker commented, had the effect of polarising the feeling of Soviet citizens 'some people become more and more anti semitic, while the more educated people become less'. Another speaker, a distinguished Hebrew teacher, described the current definite process of pushing Jews as an ethnic group out of different activities'. This now seemed to be an accelerating process. In many enterprises, this speaker pointed out, 'the Administration won't promote the Jew and he makes himself more vulnerable for accusations of incorrect national attitude'.

It was this very stress by the Soviet authorities on the alleged 'national' disloyalty of the Jews that has made so many activists feel the need to assert far more strongly the 'national' basis of their own aspirations to leave, rather than to argue their case on the basis of human rights issues such as the right to leave or the re-unification of divided families, both

agreed upon in theory by the Soviet Union, in its signature of the Helsinki Agreements of 1975. In practice, however, the Soviet authorities, deny the right to leave, and ignore the divided families. But on the issue of national repatriation, so many activists feel, Soviet policy could yet be made more flexible.

In the past, repatriation has been accepted by Moscow for Poles, Germans and Spaniards living within the Soviet Union. The activists at the meeting of 31 March 1984 feel that the Jews, with their existing National Home in Israel, could likewise be considered a people seeking not human rights, not reunification, not even emigration, but repatriation.

As the debate continues among the Jews of the Soviet Union, the year 1984 has confronted them with a situation both demoralizing and, it might appear, without hope. But Soviet Jews have enormous powers of resilience, and great reserves of courage built up over many years of tribulations and set-backs. Recently I wrote to one of those who was present at the Moscow meeting of 1 March 1984, asking him Lenin's question: 'What is to be done?' He answered: 'Don't despair of success, don't cease your activities. After all, we have been waiting for 2,000 years, if need be we have to wait one or even two generations more. The most important thing now is to keep the hope and the will to wait'.

'However', my friend added, 'to keep their hope, people must know definitely that they are not forgotten by their brethren'.

## REVIEWS

THE RAW MATERIAL OF HISTORY by Ben Helfgott

Review of: The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-44. Lucjan Dobroszycki.

This first English edition is an abridgement. It marks the culmination of 30 years devoted effort by Dobroszycki, a native of Lodz and a survivor of the second largest, and longest established, ghetto in Poland. His introduction to the Chronicle shows great insight but does not go far enough.

He is too even handed with the "Eldest of the Jews", Chaim Rumkowski, and does not appraise the behaviour and attitude of the Jewish police and the various other officials. He could have speculated on such questions as why did more Jews survive in the Lodz ghetto than in the Warsaw ghetto in spite of the fact that the Lodz ghetto was hermetically closed? How much was this due to Rumkowski's collaboration?

It was prescient of Rumkowski to authorise the creation of the archives which gave rise to the chronicle. It was intended, as defined by Henryk Naftolin, "to be a basis of source materials for future scholars, studying the life of a Jewish society in one of its most difficult periods."

The chroniclers, well known historians, scholars, and journalists, (of whom only one survived) were employees of the Judenrat and, mindful of the Nazi threat, had to restrict themselves to bare facts.

They also refrained from criticism of the Judenrat and presented Rumkowski in a favourable light which was contrary to the general opinion of the ghetto dwellers. Nevertheless, the chronicle, which comprises about a thousand bulletins, is of universal significance. It remains a powerful and eloquent testimony to the vicissitudes of ghetto life; a life that was ruled by the spectre of calamity and marked by heroism and cowardice, weakness and strength. It is all vividly described; the resettlements, births and deaths, weddings, religious observance, starvation, disease, epidemics, suicides, struggle against vermin, prices on the black market, smuggling, cultural activities, population counts, workshops and Rumkowski's exhortations that work would save lives.

From the day the ghetto was closed on April 30th 1940, with its 163,177 Jews, it became an island with 31,721 old flats, most of them one room, without plumbing and with limited gas and electric supply. Ninety five per cent of the dwellings had no toilets, water or sewer connections.

The average person living in relative comfort and security reading "The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto" must find the story as it unfolds beyond comprehension. Can one imagine the state of mind of a person who in exchange for two loaves of bread and one kg. of sugar goes forth into bondage, into uncertainty and perhaps death?

On the other hand, during the resettlement people went into hiding preferring to remain "in the utterly bleak and hopeless condition of the ghetto. People refused to leave hell because they have become accustomed to it." Accustomed to what?

Seven workdays a week, starvation, degradation, humiliation, daily beatings and during the summer being eaten up by bugs! And how does one react to this description? "Right after the incidents and during resettlement actions the

populace was obsessed with everyday concerns, getting bread rations - so forth. Is this some sort of numbing of the nerves, an indifference or a symptom of an illness that manifests itself in atrophied emotional reaction? After losing those nearest to them people talk constantly about rations, potatoes, soups, etc."

The "banality of evil" as Hannah Arendt referred to the Nazi outrages is strikingly portrayed in the pages of the chronicle and this in spite of their official nature. From time to time questions are asked, as on August 30th 1942. "The decentralisation of the ghetto by means of mass resettlement remains to this day unexplained and the fact the Jews are being resettled here, from small towns in the vicinity as well, defies reason. What is the determining factor here? What influences this situation? Why do omens of improvement so often end up worse and vice versa? These are questions that disturb the entire population and for which no answer can be found before the war is over!"

We now know that this was a plot, a deception to demoralise the Jews in the ghetto before they were sent to their death.

The sad story of about 20,000 German and Czech Jews who arrived at the Lodz ghetto is illuminating. When they first appeared they showed great discipline, fortitude, pride and composure but within six months their metamorphosis was unimaginable. "From being well fed and beautifully attired, they became ghosts, skeletons, with swollen faces, extremities, ragged and impoverished, stripped from their European finery". Many committed suicide rather than opt for further resettlement.

The chronicle ends on July 30th 1944. Within a few weeks the remnants of the ghetto, 68,561 inhabitants, with the exception of 970, were deported to Auschwitz. It has been estimated that out of a pre-war Jewish population of 225,000 Jews a mere six thousand survived.

The chronicle provides a wealth of information not normally available in other literature. Those concerned with the multifarious facets of human behaviour will be amply rewarded by reading this book.

OBITUARIES

GRETA LEVENT (nee DAWIDOWICZ)

Greta Levent (nee Dawidowicz) passed away on Saturday 14 July 1984, after a prolonged and serious illness.

Greta was born in Czestochowa, Poland, and, being a member of our Society, spent the war years in ghettos and concentration camps in Poland and Germany.

She arrived in England in October 1945 with the 'Southampton Group'.

On her arrival in London, Greta lived in the Cazanove Road Hostel, where we became close friends.

On leaving the hostel, we both shared 'digs' in Golders Green. Among her friends she was known for her dry humour and forthrightness, which she never lost, not even after the death of her husband in October 1965. She was like a breath of the 'old country', with her Yiddish sayings and homely virtues. She is survived by two children, a son, Howard, and a daughter, Estelle.

Greta was very popular and attracted a large circle of loyal and devoted friends. We shall all miss her sadly, and extend our sympathy to her children. God rest her soul.

Charlotte Benedikt.

## MEMBERS' NEWS

In the April 1977 issue we decided to expand this Section by "...including news of what might be called our Members' public or social achievements". Apart from an item in that issue, we had one more item in the May 1979 issue. That item related to John Fox - brother of Harry - and we wondered "how many families can boast of having among their members a successful Trades Union leader and a highly successful businessman?" It gives us much pleasure to reproduce below a tribute to John Fox. The tribute appeared in the programme for the dinner at which John Fox was honoured. The dinner took place on 23rd September 1984 in the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia.

Just in case any of our readers have forgotten they might be reminded that John and Harry Fox came to England with the Widermere group and subsequently lived at the Loughton Hostel. At that time their first names were Jeneh and Chaim-Aszer respectively; however, unlike some others, they did not change the meaning of their surname, which at that time was Fuchs! (Ed).

"The American Trade Union Council for Histadrut proudly presents its Distinguished Service Award to John Fox, Co-Manager of the Philadelphia Joint Board and International Vice-President, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, AFL-CIO, in recognition of his outstanding contribution and unstinting dedication to his Union and to humanitarian causes...

Arriving in the U.S. in 1956, he worked for ten years in the clothing industry and then joined the Union staff as a business agent.

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

In the spirit of his great union, it is also natural that his interests should include the future of the State of Israel and of Histadrut, its labor movement, which maintains such close contacts with the AFL-CIO in the common struggle to broaden the frontiers of freedom and ensure the right to a free life for every individual and nation.

An activist in the best sense of the word, John Fox was elected Co-Manager of the Philadelphia Joint Board in 1981 and was recently re-elected to a second term as an International Vice President of ACTWU. In addition to his duties at his Union, John Fox is Co-Chairman of the American Trade Union Council for Histadrut; a member of the Executive Board of the National Trade Union Council for Human Rights; a Co-Chairman of the Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee and National Chairman of its Administrative Committee. He is a former Vice President of the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council; Member of Delaware Valley Labor Committee for Full Employment; Trustee and Vice President of Sidney Hillman Medical Center and the Sidney Hillman Apartments; Chairman, Memorial Committee for the Six Million Martyrs.

John Fox joins an impressive list of Trade Unionists of distinction who have received this honor. We are proud to bestow upon him our 1984 Award."

MEMBERS' NEWS AS REPORTED FROM LONDON  
(Compiled by Kitty Dessau)

FEBRUARY 1984

JACK and MARGARET GLIKSOHN's daughter JUDY had a baby boy (first grandchild) ISRAEL.

MAY

ANNA and DAVID TUREK's son got engaged to SARA MILSTON.

MOLCK and ANNA ZAMEL's second son ALBERT got married. (BRAZIL).

JUNE

JEANETTE and ZIGGY SHIPPER's daughter, LORRAINE, married DAVID STERN.

PEARL WEDDING of SHEILA and RAY (CARY) WINOGRODSKI.

WARREN, son of MR and MRS MAURICE VEGH, got married in Long Beach, New York.

JULY

PEARL WEDDING of CAROL and FRANK FARCAS.

ANITA and CHARLES SHANE's son MICHAEL and his wife LINDA, had a baby girl. (Second grandchild).

DOREEN and HARRY WAJCHENDLER's son, LESLIE, and his wife, SANDRA, had a baby girl. (Fifth grandchild).

Wedding of RABBI and MRS CHEMIA KLEINMAN's daughter, AVIVA. (USA).

SEPTEMBER

BAR MITZVAH of ARZA and BEN HELFGOTT's son, NATHAN.

WEDDING of MARIE and BOB OBUCHOWSKI's son IVOR, to LORI SYVIER.

WEDDING of PAT and ICKY STEIN's son ARON to LYNN.

WEDDING of RINA and ZVI BRAND's second son AVI to VARTI. (ISRAEL).

WEDDING of JULIE and STEVE PEARL's daughter, KIM to BRUCE FLEMING.

WEDDING of RABBI and MRS SIMCHE LIEBERMAN's son, YAAKOV, to TOHBE. (ISRAEL).

ROBERT, son of MR and MRS MAURICE VEGH, got engaged. (Long Beach, New York).

## OCTOBER

Birth of the first grandchild for MR and MRS MOTKE LEWENSTEIN, a girl. (ISRAEL).

## DECEMBER

Birth of the SIXTH grandchild, a boy, for FAY and MONTEK GOLDBERG (USA).

## JANUARY 1985

Engagement of GLORIA and KRULIK WILDER's son, PAUL to SUZANNE.

Sad death of PAULINE SPIRO's father.

## FEBRUARY

Wedding of ANNA and DAVID TUREK's son JEREMY to SARA MILSTON.

Wedding of JOAN and JACK BAJER's son, DAVID to MARYSSE.

Baby boy born to LINDA, daughter of HENRY and LILLY KOHN, and her husband VICTOR.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### JUNE 1984

MR and MRS GEDDY's son PAUL qualified as a DOCTOR.

MR and MRS JOHN FOX's daughter recently passed the PENNSYLVANIA BAR EXAMINATION and is now a PRACTISING LAWYER in PHILADELPHIA, USA.

The same MR and MRS FOX also became grandparents of JONATHAN born SEPTEMBER 1983. (Whose achievement was that? Ed.)

## MEMBERS' NEWS AS REPORTED FROM MANCHESTER (Compiled by Louise Elliott)

### SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

HARVEY SAMSON son of NAT and DORCA passed the TAX INSTITUTE examinations.

WARREN son of MARITA and MAURICE GOLDING qualified as a DOCTOR.

MICHAEL son of JOE and ALICE RUBINSTEIN passed his ACCOUNTANCY examination.

### ENGAGEMENTS

ADRIAN son of SAM and SHEILA GONTARZ.

WARREN son of LILY and MAYER BOMSZTYK.

### BIRTHS

DORCA and NAT SAMSON another granddaughter born to their daughter HELENA and her husband EDWARD.

LOUISE & HERBERT ELLIOTT first grandchild - a girl to their son STEVEN and his wife LINDA.

LILY and MAYER BOMSZTYK first grandchild - a girl born to their daughter Jacqueline and her husband Rodney.

CAROL and BEREK WURZEL a first grandson to their daughter MICHELLE and her husband STEVEN.

SAM and HANNAH GARDNER another grandson to their daughter MARILYN and her husband HARRIS.

MENDEL and MARIE BEALE another grandson to their daughter TANIA and her husband SIMON.

EUNICE and JERRY PARKER another granddaughter.

#### BARMITZVAH

ROBBIE son of SAM and SHEILA GONTARZ.

#### WEDDINGS

SIMONE, daughter of EDNA and CHARLIE IGIELMAN.

FIONA, daughter of MYRA and IZEK ALTERMAN.

ELAINE, daughter of MYRA and IZEK ALTERMAN.

#### PEARL WEDDING

MIKE and AMELIA FLASZ.

#### COMING OF AGE

21 years - BRENTON son of ELAINE and SAM WALSHAW.

FIONA, daughter of MYRA and IZEK ALTERMAN.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The ninth Leonard G Montefiore Lecture will take place on Monday 1st April 1985 at 8.00pm at the Stern Hall, 33 Seymour Place, London W1. The speaker will be the Rev. Isaac Levy O.B.E. T.D., Ph.D. and the topic, "The Effect of the Holocaust on Christian-Jewish Relations".

1985 REUNION

The Reunion to mark the 40th Anniversary of our Liberation will take place on:

Sunday 28th April 1985

5 for 6 pm

at the KENSINGTON TOWN HALL

HORNTOR ST., W8

For tickets please contact the Ticket Chairmen DAVID HERMAN: 01-458 7959 - MICK ZWIREK: 01-550 9426.

REUNION BROCHURE

HARRY BALSAM	959 6517
DAVID HERMAN	458 7959
JACK KAGAN	435 4677
HARRY SPIRO	203 4836
DAVID SOMMER	061 773 5080
MANCHESTER	

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

ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR LIBERATION  
WE APPEAL TO YOU TO HELP US IN OUR FUND RAISING EFFORTS.

EXHIBITION AT THE WIENER LIBRARY

"LIBERATION OF THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS"

APRIL 24TH - MAY 12TH

4 DEVONSHIRE ST. LONDON W1

VE DAY COMMEMORATION

The Board of Deputies of British Jews have arranged to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Defeat of Nazism at 11am on WEDNESDAY MAY 8TH, at THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL IN HYDE PARK.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE  
WORLD ASSEMBLY TO COMMEMORATE THE  
40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEFEAT OF NAZI GERMANY

ISRAEL MAY 5TH - 9TH 1985

The official registration fee is \$175 per couple. However participants from the United Kingdom will pay only £50 per couple and a sponsor will cover the difference between that sum and the official registration fee. It is imperative that the registration fee be paid if the participants wish to benefit from the facilities the Israeli organisers will provide. The registration fee should be paid to:

WEST END TRAVEL, MR DAVID SEGEL, BARRATT HOUSE,  
341 OXFORD STREET, LONDON W1R 1HB.

Tel: 629 6299

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMME FOR  
THE WORLD ASSEMBLY

SUNDAY MAY 5 1985

All Day - Registration, Briefings, Distribution of Material, Group Meetings - at the JERUSALEM HILTON HOTEL.

MONDAY MAY 6 1985

DAY ONE: IN GATHERING AND IN DEDICATION

Morning - YAD VASHEM:  
Ceremony of Solitude  
Unveiling of Statue of Victory  
Plantings for the Righteous of the Nations

'45 AID SOCIETY' - A CALL TO THE 2ND GENERATION

SUMMER INSTITUTE, YAD VASHEM, JERUSALEM

1. Up to three awards of at least £500 each are to be granted to enable the recipients to participate in The Summer Institute on Modern Jewish Life and History to be held in Jerusalem 4th - 31st July 1985.
2. The Institute will be held under the Auspices of the Yad Vashem Hebrew University and W.Z.O.
3. The subjects to be studied are indicated below and additional details of the course and arrangements are available from the '45 AID SOCIETY'.
4. Applications for the awards are invited from children of those survivors of concentration camps who arrived in the U.K. in 1945 or thereafter.
5. The overall cost of the course is likely to be between £700 and £800. In cases of need, the full cost will be covered for successful applicants.
6. Successful candidates will be expected, on their return, to take an active role in Educational and Youth Work with a view to conveying and expounding to others their experience, perceptions and understanding.
7. Application should be by letter to the '45 AID SOCIETY', c/o 46 AMERY ROAD, HARROW, MIDDX., and contain information on personal and parental background, present activities, aspirations and motivation for wishing to attend this course. Applications should be received not later than 4th April 1985.
8. During April there will be personal interviews with a Panel under the Chairmanship of Judge Israel Finestein Q.C. and it is hoped that the successful candidates will be announced at the '45 AID SOCIETY 40TH Anniversary Reunion on Sunday 28th April 1985.

THE SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Institute offers a thorough investigation of the subjects of the Holocaust and Antisemitism which will equip the participants with the historical information, conceptual frameworks and alternative didactic methods. Participants in both courses attend all the general lectures together but separate into their respective study groups in order to further their particular focus of interest.

The general lectures address the following subjects:

- \* European Jewry on the Eve of World War II
- \* Growth of Antisemitism
- \* The Nazi Rise to Power
- \* The Ghetto: Daily Life of Jewish Leadership under the Nazis; Art and Literature; Religious Responses
- \* The Final Solution: Planning and Implementation
- \* Jewish Resistance
- \* Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust
- \* Aftermath of the Holocaust and the Birth of Israel

- \* Impact of the Holocaust on Contemporary Jewish Life
- \* Holocaust Literature
- \* Theological Responses to the Holocaust
- \* Antisemitism and anti-Zionism today.

The teaching of the Holocaust course, offered for a sixth year, places an emphasis on methodologies and techniques for the teaching of this subject. It is primarily directed to educators who are actively involved in teaching adolescents and adults in formal or informal educational environments.

The Studies in Antisemitism course encompasses additional topics and themes not covered in the general lectures. This course is directed towards community leaders, clergy and interested lay people.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

##### FACULTY

Professors: Shlomo Aronson, Yehuda Bauer, Eliezer Berkowits, Shmuel Ettinger, Emil Fackenheim, Martin Gilbert, Yehoshaf Harkabi, Gideon Hausner, Simon Herman, Franklin Littell, George Mosse and other distinguished scholars from Israel and abroad.

##### LECTURERS

Sunday through Thursday 8.30 - 15.00  
 Several evening sessions are also held.  
 Friday and Saturdays are free.  
 A study-tour will be held each week.

##### CREDITS

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem offers six credits at either undergraduate or graduate levels. Students wishing to receive undergraduate credits will be required to pass a final exam; graduate credits will require, in addition to the exam, a research paper to be submitted before December 31, 1985.

A separate fee of \$120 is to be paid directly to the Hebrew University for course credit.

##### LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION : ENGLISH

Participation in these courses is limited; acceptance is based on qualifications and suitability.