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Gary Simmons and Jeffrey Stein

wish the '45 Aid every success

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CHAIRMAN'S

Comments

This year marked the 60th anniversary of the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto which we commemorated with great solemnity on Yom Hashoa at the Logan Hall. Most of those attending were, as in the past, refugees, survivors and a relatively small number of their children. The support from the Jewish community has, over the years, been insignificant. In fairness, it has to be stated that a reasonable number commemorate Yom Hashoa in their respective Synagogues, but there are many Synagogues where it passes unnoticed. As the numbers of the refugees and survivors dwindle, the attendance on Yom Hashoa diminishes. (Sadly, I note many of our members have passed away this year).

It is very important that the communal Yom Hashoa does not come to an end when all the survivors have gone. This may happen as many Jews consider the Annual National Holocaust Memorial Day embraces Yom Hashoa. I wish to stress that the reason why the Government introduced the National Holocaust Memorial Day was because it recognised that the lessons of the Holocaust are of universal significance and that the Holocaust has become a touchstone for political and moral behaviour. It continues to be of fundamental importance and relevance to each new generation.

However Yom Hashoa is essentially a Day of Remembrance when we, the Jewish people, reflect on the tragedy which befell us during the Nazi reign of terror. It is

a day when we cherish and revere the memory of six million of our people who were gratuitously and viciously annihilated. The second and third generations are the guardians of a legacy not only concerned with preserving the memory of the past but also forging a future as part of the Jewish Community. If they will not take up this challenge, what can we expect from those who have not been affected by the Holocaust directly?

In nineteen months' time we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of our liberation and hopefully this will provide the second generation with the incentive to harness themselves into action.

Many Jews, including sixty from Britain, travelled from abroad to Warsaw to participate in the 60th anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, which was organised by the Polish Government in conjunction with the Polish Jewish Community. In Warsaw, I have participated in five anniversaries of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto over a period of forty years - hence I feel able to gauge the swings in the attitude and perception of the Poles towards the Jews. I have included in this issue four articles relating to the commemoration, one of which is a speech by the President of Poland, Alexander Kwasniewski, and the other by a Polish Officer. They are illuminating because they show how far the Polish Government has come to acknowledge the contribution the Jews have made to Poland and the injustice that was inflicted upon them before the

war; during the war and after the war.

The speech by the President of Israel, Moshe Katsav, also shows how the relationship between Israel and Poland has never been closer. In our world of conflict, this is very encouraging.

Last September, our Society decided to donate a fully-equipped ambulance to Magen David Adom in Israel and appealed to our members to support us in achieving this goal. They responded magnificently and on the 1st June this year we had a mock dedication at the Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue. The ambulance on the cover of the Journal was lent to us by the St John's Ambulance, to whom we are very much indebted, but the real ambulance is already performing a vital function in Tel-Aviv.

We can be justly proud of our members for their generosity. Once again, they have proved when the occasion arises, they invariably respond. This time they have responded to a need that is close to our heart. We share memories of a traumatised past and to see the innocent, mutilated and wounded bodies in the streets of Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Netanya and other places in Israel, affects us deeply. We have been brought up to believe in the sanctity of the human being and the idea of a suicide bomber is completely alien to us as, indeed, it is to all civilised people. Saving a life is to us a sacred duty and by donating an ambulance to Magen David Adom we have demonstrated this commitment.

***Wishing you all a Happy and
Healthy New Year***

P A S T A N D P R E S E N T

On the 6th June 2002 we left for the Ukraine and Poland, I to re-discover my roots, my daughter to discover part of hers.

At Warsaw airport, where we changed planes for Lwow, I had my penknife confiscated despite my assertions that I would use it solely on Ukrainians, Poland's traditional enemies.

Thus, weaponless we arrived in Lwow (now known as Lviv). The airport building must be the most stunning airport in the world in its Byzantine beauty, but bare inside; not even a glass of water was available.

Lwow lived up to its magnificent glory; we bought an old city map in Polish since all the street names had been changed. Eventually, we traced the house where I lived in 1940-1941; the façade was impressive but the inside was a ruin, a pale echo of its former splendour.

We visited the infamous Janowska Street, the Jewish Cemetery and the Synagogue where a rabbi from Kiev was having a spirited exchange with the congregation. Most of it eluded me as it was conducted in a mixture of Yiddish and Ukrainian and I sat at the back, my hearing not being very good at the best of times.

We managed to see the inside of Potocki Palace even though it was closed for refurbishment. I explained to the director that I had left Lwow sixty-two years previously and that there was little chance of a repeat visit in sixty-two years' time. The very obliging director, aged 85, opened the palace specifically for us. His pride in our appreciation of his much beloved building was a delight to behold.

We also succeeded in seeing the inside of the magnificent Opera House showing a performance. Here my three languages, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish, had paved the way.

On the third day we boarded a primitive bus for Podhajce, where my grandparents had owned a vast industrial estate. As more and more people boarded I noticed my daughter's face pale. We were

A RETURN JOURNEY

Roman Becher M.A.
(Econ), B.LITT

Roman came to England with the Rabbi Shonfield group in 1946. He studied at Edinburgh University, served in the British army and had a varied career. He lives in London.

crammed amongst all sorts of different people whose poverty suddenly made us realise how much we take for granted. Daniela looked at me in disbelief and quietly asked me whether we could have afforded another mode of transport, to which I replied that it was important to experience the country with all its flavours. Unconvinced, she smiled and inhaled her aromatherapy oils throughout the journey.

The journey took three hours at a cost of 25p each but, in retrospect, the conveyance as well as the roads left so much to be desired that we felt the fares were quite high.

Upon arrival in Podhajce, due to an incredible coincidence, the one and only so-called "hotel" (my daughter would describe it more like a doss house) was in fact my grandparents' old home, although completely gutted and re-built inside.

The hotel boasted two dormitories with six beds, all empty but with the possibility of having to share with strangers. My daughter gave me such a look of horror that I did not dare to encourage her to make the best of it. We thus had the dormitory to ourselves. The bathroom, if you can call it that, was a sink and a loo, one of those that allows you to fully appreciate your daily waste. The last straw was that there was no running water and after my daughter exclaimed in horror that showering was not a compromise but a necessity, the obliging landlady proceeded to supply her with as much hot water as was required to put her in a good

mood. After many buckets, Daniela's sense of humour returned. Food was excellent and served in mammoth quantities.

A visit to my grandparents' estate revealed utter desolation and total lack of respect for the hard work, huge investment and forward thinking that went into building this town for the communal good. The ravages of time and apathy had rendered this once profitable and buzzing town into a ruin. Gone were the electricity generating station, flower mill equipped with the latest machinery from Switzerland, the parquet flooring plant, the kilns and the little railway which had served to move the finished products. The ruins were a reminder of former days and the tragedy of a newly independent country that is not equipped to manage itself.

Fortunately, nature is more resilient so I recognised the ponds where I used to go fishing with my grandfather, the forests and extensive grounds that were part of the Markus estate.

Daniela visited the Jewish Cemetery and the communal grave marked by a commemorative stone donated by Israel where so many Jews had been murdered. The grave was tragic with many of the gravestones destroyed, unkempt and others victims of subsidence. Tragic, inexplicable loss and overwhelming sadness at human folly permeated the graveyard. Daniela took photographs of the Synagogue, the very same Synagogue that had been burning on the night that both my mother Ina and I escaped. We had driven past it. I can still remember it burning on my left as I was huddled against my mother with our false papers. I can still feel that adrenaline of fear. I will never forget the very brave Polish gentleman who accompanied us to the station and travelled with us all the way to Warsaw.

Our journey back to Lwow was a complete nightmare. We had to catch a small bus, which was crammed packed. We had to stand with our faces literally in each other's armpits. A seat became available after forty minutes and my daughter

insisted that I should sit down. She was less than amused surrounded by sweaty, smelly unwashed bodies. Even these conditions must have been idyllic in comparison to those poor souls crammed in wagons off to concentration camps. The driver was bounding down those roads like a maniac. Every hole in the road or bend would reverberate through the bus and up our spines. My daughter finally got a seat. Dishevelled, tired, fed-up, sweaty, we were delighted when we reached the outskirts of Lwow. To our horror, the driver who had pushed the bus to its limit noticed that fumes emanated from the engine and it stopped dead. I have to say the Ukrainians have a wonderful sense of humour and

are ingenious. It took him twenty minutes to repair the problem. We were so impressed that we started clapping. He smiled in appreciation.

Our next port of call was Warsaw - unrecognisable with 95% of buildings having been destroyed during the war. Photographs of the heaps of ruin once again are a chilling reminder of the evil of man. I survived on false papers on the "Aryan" side but could not recognise any of the roads, buildings or the places where I had more lucky escapes than a cat with nine lives.

We paid our respects to the remains of the former Warsaw Ghetto. Pawiak prison, the Synagogue, and other monuments.

Next on the travel list was Krakow, a medieval town and a former capital of Poland. This was the enjoyable part of the trip as Krakow bears no evidence of war.

We toured the beautiful city, visiting the Royal Castle, the spectacular salt mines of Wieliczka and the characteristic Jewish Quarter. We ate traditional Jewish dishes - a gourmet's delight.

We left, all too aware of the tragic loss to Poland of a once rich and vibrant culture. While the Polish Government is at pains to revive a vestige of the Jewish traditions, this is at best a vestige. The once rich stream of Jewish cultural, scientific and artistic life is now lost in a sea of stagnation.

My first trip to Poland in nearly 60 years was in June 2001. When I first came to England in 1945 I promised myself that I would never return to Poland but, after much deliberation, I decided to return to my roots to see if there was anything I could find out about my family. I was born in Ozarow and moved to Ostrowiec as a young child.

I travelled with my elder daughter, Elaine, and my partner Diane. We flew to Warsaw and next day drove down to Ostrowiec with a guide. On arrival our first stop was the Town Hall and Records Office to see if there were any records of my paternal family. Unfortunately, they were very unhelpful, telling me many of their records had been destroyed, and I had no success. Next, I decided to look for the house where we lived, as I was still carrying a mental picture after all these years. I found the road easily, but I was totally devastated by the dilapidated state of the surroundings. I could not find our house, or my grandparents' warehouse, or the buildings where two of my uncles and their families lived, or my paternal grandfathers Bait-Hamedrish and all the buildings belonging to my grandfather in this area. In another part of the town we did find the house and shop where my paternal grandparents lived, this was now a general store and hairdressers.

It now appears that to a child distances and sizes are not of the

MY RETURN VISIT TO MY HOMETOWN OZAROW

Icek Alterman

Icek came to England with the Windermere group in August 1945. He subsequently went to Manchester, where he now lives.

same proportions. The town was much more compact than my memories. I lived in a medium sized bustling town with approximately half the population of about 10,000 being religious Jews. We visited the cemetery where we found a wire fence surrounding a small portion of the original cemetery, the only sign that Jews ever lived there. There were a dozen very old headstones propped up against the back wall, in a terrible state, most not legible, in front of those was a large concrete mound full of broken headstones. It absolutely devastated me, I felt emotionally drained and extremely sad. I managed to say kaddish and had a good cry.

The next day we travelled to Ozarow where I was born. We went to the offices of the Town Hall where they were more helpful. I explained the reason for my visit was to try and trace any records of my maternal family. They had some record books that survived, but a lot had been lost. I found a record of my parents' marriage and birth records of myself,

my brother and sister. We were amazed to find that my grandson was born on my late sister's birthday. We wandered round the town, found the Synagogue, of which the top half was missing, and the Chedar. The Synagogue had been used as a cinema and now serves as a plumbers' merchant. I also found on the main thoroughfare of the town, one former Jewish house still standing. This was four doors away from the house where I was born. The family who used to live there had several daughters; two of the daughters married two of my uncles. We also visited the cemetery, which was very hard to find and totally dilapidated and overgrown, which made me very emotional and distraught. Once again, I said kaddish and that evening we returned to Warsaw.

The next morning we visited places of interest in the old parts of the town where the ghetto was and visited the Warsaw Synagogue, where we met the Rabbi and a few of the congregants. I said a prayer and davened. Later that day, we flew home, totally emotionally drained. I said that I would never return after this experience.

Never say never! Two months later we were contacted by a group of Canadians and Americans, descendants of Ozarowers who had undertaken to renovate the cemetery in Ozarow. They planned to visit Poland to try to trace their roots, and attend the dedication service of the

renovated cemetery. The dedication service was to be in October, and would be conducted by the Ozorower Rabbi from Israel, a direct descendant of the last Ozorower rabbi of Poland. The Warsaw Rabbi gave my name to Dr Weinberg. Dr Norman Weinberg, who was the organiser, asked me to join this group for the dedication service, as I would be the only survivor, and the only one who was actually born in Ozarow.

Once again we flew to Warsaw, this time to meet up with a group of great people from America, Canada, Israel, and France, who were all descendants of Ozarowers. The following morning the group of about thirty, together with the Rabbi and his three sons, and the American Army Jewish chaplain, set off from Warsaw by coach for Ozarow for the dedication service. On reaching the

cemetery, we were met by the local mayor, the priest, the Canadian Ambassador to Poland, and other dignitaries, TV cameras, and several hundred of the local population. We were amazed by the effort they made to welcome us.

We were also amazed at the incredible transformation of the cemetery that had taken place in such a short time. The clearance of all the cemetery and the cleaning and resetting of the headstones, the rebuilding of the perimeter wall, and the new ornate iron gates, was organised by Dr Weinberg, with local help, and by donations from us all.

The dedication service was most moving and emotional; a headstone was erected in memory to the Jewish community who perished during the Holocaust. After the ceremony, I had the opportunity to meet with some of the older locals and, through an

interpreter, I asked if anybody had known any of my family. There was little response.

The group toured Southern Poland for several more days, visiting many sites of Jewish interest, including Treblinka, Tarnow, Kaszimierz, Lublin, Krakow and Lodz. Again, I found these places very upsetting, but I am glad of having made this second trip, which went some way to satisfying my yearnings as to the outcome of the places and the families who perished during the Holocaust.

Several months later we received the following letter by e-mail. One of the ladies who was at the dedication service recorded her memories of those fatal days when the Jewish people were taken away from Ozarow - see "The Last March Of The Jews Of Ozarow (page —).

Almost 60 years ago, on Thursday October 15, 1942, Jews were forced to leave Ozarow. In that morning, a shofar (ram's horn) was sounded three times from near the synagogue. The Jews of Ozarow gathered. The Rabbi had been preparing them for this moment for a whole week before. The murderers had lied. They had ordered the Jews, through the Rabbi, to give up all their valuables, with the promise that if enough money was raised, then the Jews could stay in Ozarow. Jews had already been brought from Tarlow to Ozarow by carts, very humanely, not to create suspicion and nervousness among the Jews of Ozarow.

Those days are written forever in my memory. I walked back home through the fields from school, so that I would not be mistaken as a Jew, since Jews were being taken away. On that morning of October 15, a policeman, banging a drum, gave notice going through my street, Kolejowa Street, to cover our windows, because the Jews were about to be taken away. "On orders from the German Command," he shouted, "whoever will hide a Jew, the whole family will be slaughtered." Fearful, my parents and I hid in our house. Posted on each vacated Jewish home, was a six-pointed star. In Order to check that no-one stayed

THE LAST MARCH OF THE JEWS OF OZAROW

By Mrs. Franciszka Paniac,
Ozarow, Poland

behind, Germans forced their way in, wearing long green coats and armed with guns ready to kill even small children. We heard shouts "Raus, Raus! Schnell!" coming from the street. They killed old people in their homes, mothers with small children, sick people and those who preferred to stay in their homes and die there.

Cberziek, Slama, Mosiek, and other Jews visited my father on the Saturday before to say good bye: "Stasiek, tomorrow we will be gone, we are being taken away for road work." The Rabbi had told them this. "This is our belief, but we will be back.... we are on a pilgrimage."

Jews were our employers. My father worked for them (with his horse and cart) as a deliverer of goods. The Jews had been very good to us and helped us Poles in hard times, loaning us money or sharing their food. I remember visiting our neighbour Jankiel*. I played there on Shabbos (Saturday). Jews were very religious people. On holy days they did not light fires in their kitchens, so I was asked to help. On

Shabbos they went to the synagogue to pray. Then the Rabbi and his assistant would go to the cemetery to pray in the two small burial houses where the great Rabbis of Ozarow were buried.

That was how their Rabbi had prepared the Jews ... to act submissively. At the front of the procession, on this their 'last march', was the Rabbi leading his people. The Jewish people were marched in rows of four, because Kolejowa Street was not very wide. Then I heard gunfire starting nearby my home. Jews were being taken from the rows of people, mothers with babies, whoever tripped, and older people. In front of my house, a mother and her three children were murdered. The whole street was covered with bodies. We were not allowed to go out. We heard one continuous sound of screaming and crying. To this day, I have never forgotten those sounds. On Monday morning, townspeople with carts and horses were ordered to clean up the streets. When my father came back from this, he was sick. He cried, and we did too.

The Jewish police were forced to help catch all the remaining Jews that had hidden in the nearby forests. They were taken to Ozarow, to the "Koza" - the jail, where they were kept until the following Monday (Monday October 26). On that

day they were all taken to the cemetery, given shovels and ordered to dig a hole to bury their murdered brothers. Then they were forced to dig a second hole where all the remaining Jews were murdered by the Germans. They were all shot in the head. A small baby in diapers was also shot dead.

The police and the Germans left for Zawichost to take the Jews from there too. The Jews (of Ozarow and nearby towns) were marched to the train station in Jasice, where they were forced into cattle cars and taken to Majdanek** to be killed. Those events were hard to endure and they are so strongly engraved in my memory that I will never forget them.

My testimony can be confirmed by fellow citizens living on Kolejowa Street: Kozakiewicz Janina, Tuznlk Julian, Godlewska Helena, Jasinski Jan, Malahowska Leokadia and

Cieszkowski Tadeusz. Other witnesses are now dead or have left Ozarow. The following residents of Partyzantow Street witnessed the crime at the Jewish cemetery: Kazimierz Edward Tomaszewska Janina, Mazur Janina, and Pekalski Kazimierz. These people were witnesses to the removal of bodies from the streets and killing of the last Jews on the cemetery grounds.

For a short period of time after the war, Jews came to find their families, fix the matzevos (monuments) and clean the inscriptions written on them.

Known to me are the Jewish names: Mortka, Slam; Ruchla, and Simsie. Simsie was an owner of a firewood store on Kolejowa Street. About those names my father spoke because he transported goods with his horse and cart for them.

From his Roman Catholic faith,

my father prayed to his last hours for the Jews: "May they rest in peace and receive final salvation."

Ozarow 14, 14.11.2001 Sunday
Mrs. Franciszka Paniac
Ozarow, Kolejowa 49

* Jankiel may well have been Norman Weinberg's great grandfather who lived at 64 Kolqjowa Street.

** Records show that more than 8000 Jews were taken to Treblinka, not Majdanek, to be gassed.

Note: The words in brackets are added for clarification by Norman Weinberg.

First, second and third generations - this is the meaning of survival.

We, the first generation of the Shoah, fought the daily war of survival and we prevailed.

The second generation grew up, studied, and developed marvellously, despite being enveloped in the shadows of parents' memories, shadows that could not be ignored and which without doubt have left their imprints over all aspects of their lives.

The third generation are more liberated from the painful memories, and from the nightmares of their grandparents, walking upright through life, while being aware of their forebears' pain, suffering, and of their struggle to survive.

The third generation of the Shoah, who are the crown of Israel in its process of rejuvenation, are taking a major role in all aspects of the State: academic, professional, in the literary world and in the army.

The Nazi enemy tried to eliminate us as a people. In the initial stages, they directed the war against Jewish children. They were barred from schools and forced them through peril to study secretly and in hiding.

Thirsty for knowledge, endangering our lives as children and the lives of our remarkable teachers, we studied enthusiastically and acquired

THE TRIUMPH OF THE FREE HUMAN SPIRIT OVER THE ULTIMATE EVIL

Ruta Krieger-Horowicz

Ruta was born in Piotrkow Tryb. She was in the Piotrkow Ghetto, in hiding or in various concentration camps. After the war she settled in Israel with her mother. She is very close to a number of our members in Israel. She resisted talking or writing about her experiences until very recently.

knowledge despite all their prohibitions and dangers. We were aware of the spiritual vacuum that stopping learning could cause, and this we wanted to avoid at all costs.

In every place to which the Nazis arrived, the children were first to be exterminated, wishing to eliminate any trace of the Jewish people.

The third generation after the Shoah symbolises the continuity of the Jewish people. A new generation has risen which, above anything else, symbolises the triumph of the human and Jewish

spirit against the Nazi cruelty and brutality.

My good fortune has bestowed upon me and my friends the privilege of seeing our grandsons and grand-daughters growing up and developing - fearless in the free Jewish State of Israel, the only home of the Jewish people.

They study in universities, they serve in key positions in the IDF - the only army of the Jewish people - they are the vital proof to the spiritual, scientific and material existence of the people of Israel.

I have had the privilege to arrive at the fourth generation, filled with hope that end of wars will come and that Israel will dwell safely. However, our skies are being clouded and from the East once again, winds of war are blowing. No-one knows what the future will bring.

We, the living remnants, remember those who perished and who will never return. In our gathering, we remember them and mention their names. Memory is an important element in the principles of the Jewish tradition; it blows life and vitality in those who are no longer with us.

Ruth Krieger-Horowitch

Thanks to Isaac Reichenbom from Haifa for the help he has given me in writing the above.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO DID NOT KNOW HOW TO SMILE

Ruta Krieger-Horowicz

On the 5th September 1939, the Germans conquered Piotrkow and immediately afterwards Jews began to be attacked; murders, cruel beatings-up, kidnapping for forced labour and much robbery of property and valuables took place.

On the 8th October 1939, the German Commander of Piotrkow, Hans Dreksel, published a decree concerning the establishment of the Ghetto, the first one to be built in conquered Poland. All Jews who lived outside the designated area allocated for the Ghetto, were ordered to leave behind all their belongings and to take with them to the Ghetto only what they could carry on their backs or on a small wagon pulled by a horse.

The Jews were obliged to wear a 'Badge of Shame' (a blue Star of David on a white background). Whoever transgressed this decree was to be killed. Soon, some more restricting rules and decrees, which originally were applied to the Jews of Piotrkow spread throughout Poland. These decrees increased rapidly. The hours in which Jews were allowed to stay outside their homes were reduced and they used that precious time for their most important needs; both adults and children used this time to breathe some fresh air. Others rushed to see relatives or went to synagogue to pour out their hearts before the Creator of the Universe.

The Nazis were not averse to any action that could humiliate and oppress the Jews. Showing particular cruelty was the notorious Sergeant William of the Gendarmerie who was stationed in the Ghetto. He used to roam inside the Ghetto, accompanied by a vicious black dog, which was ready to devour anyone. He set the dog on the frightened Jews as they were running for their lives. He used to address the dog in German: "Mensch, grif dem hund",

meaning: "Man, catch the dog". Obeying his master's orders, the black dog attacked children and adults alike and tore them to pieces. In the eyes of this Nazi, a son of the Master Race, the Jew was perceived as a dog, and the dog as a valuable human being. What a perverse set of values held by a son of the German nation, which undertook to annihilate all Jews. The torment and sadism reached immeasurable dimensions. Jews hid their beards under their traditional overcoats (kapotas) in fear of the Gestapo who used to tear off Jewish beards, together with the facial skin.

After the horrors of the concentration and death camps, after the terrible suffering which they went through; those who survived, those who have been to hell, and particularly those who were children at the time and who returned to life. Could any of them show signs of joy or have smiles on their faces?

These children and youths, cinders saved from the flames, tried to be normal, to speak and smile like everyone else, to be accepted by society. The question, however, had to be asked if it was at all possible to return to normal after so many years of suffering and after their childhood and adolescent years had been lost and buried. Was it at all possible?

After the defeat of Nazi Germany on the 8th May 1945, Jews who survived were streaming "homewards" in droves. They wanted to see the homes which they had left behind, in the hope of finding other relatives who might have survived and came back via the same route. No-one could anticipate the kind of "home" to which they would return.

My late mother and I also returned to Piotrkow. The Repatriation Office gave us a tiny room and a kitchen on Krakowska Street. It was in a dangerous and very unpleasant area.

After a short while, the Glatter family joined us with their daughter,

Junya, and my dear cousin, Ben Giladi.

On the 1st November 1945, in that bitter evening, Mr Joseph Glatter and his wife, Paula, went to the cinema. Ben Giladi also left the house at the same time. I stayed on my own. An hour after their departure, I heard fierce banging on the door. These were members of the Z.W.Z., the national fascist and Anti-Semitic organisation, which took it upon them to murder as many Jews as possible. Their targets were Holocaust survivors who returned to look for their dear ones and their homes, which no longer existed. These Polish nationalists were furious that there still were some Jews alive who were coming back to claim their homes and their property of which they had been robbed.

During the war, the forests were swarming with such gangs, members of which murdered those who were hiding or on the run away from the German murderers. Thus, even after the end of the war, they just continued their murderous activities.

These wild rioters broke through the door. I was on my own. They violently threw me on the floor and trampled over me with their heavy feet. I was helpless and saw death in front of my eyes. I wanted to live. In a twinkling, I gathered all my inner strength, which was flickering inside me, and I screamed: "Leave me alone, I'm only the maid here".

And so, with a momentary resourcefulness, I remained alive. I saved myself.

The following morning the Glatter family moved to Lodz. After some time, my cousin, Ben Giladi, joined his parents and after six months my mother and I joined them there. On that very night of murder and riots, the gangs murdered Mr Rolnicki Uszerowicz and Laizer Maltz of blessed memory.

In 1943, a typhus epidemic broke out in the Starachowice Labour Camp. It was raging for several weeks. During this time lots of people died from the typhus, including my dear friend Berek (the "hat maker")

Soon I succumbed and was carted off to the hospital hut. The cure consisted of one aspirin and water instead of food. I cannot recollect how long I stayed there, since most of the time I was in a state of delirium. But I remember the morning I opened my eyes and sat up.

The prisoner in charge came over to me and told me that I am lucky to be alive.

A couple of days later I was discharged into quarantine, I still felt terribly weak. We were not allowed to leave the hut except for head-count and for food.

One day, after the morning's head-count, instead of returning to the hut, we were ordered to run in a circle round the little square in front of it. There stood two Gestapo men at either end of the square with drawn pistols. They were gunning down everyone they considered unstable on their legs and, later, the ones who tripped over the dead bodies.

After a while I felt exhausted and confused, but kept on running with my eyes closed. It was a wonder I did not trip up.

Suddenly I heard somebody give a command, "Shoot him!" - I opened my eyes, I was right close to the Gestapo men. By now they had replaced their guns and were having a smoke.

I just stood there mesmerised.

One of them reached for his gun but could not get it out of the holster. He tugged at it for a while then, in frustration, kicked me in the groin.

I reached the door and collapsed inside.

When I came round, I recollected that when facing my killers I felt no fear. Oddly, in the last moments of my life, I would expect my thoughts to be of my near and dear ones. Instead, I thought that the one who ordered my death did not look Germanic, he looked Italian!

Why did he want to kill me?

Sixty years have elapsed since and I still remember that moment vividly,

KILLERS AND HEALERS

Salek Benedikt

Salek came to England with the Southampton group in November 1945 and lived in the Finchley Road Hostel. He has been a regular contributor to this journal.

with all my senses.

Many a time, during adversity, I would turn my thoughts back to seek comfort from that experience.

In the spring of this year, my son Nicholas and I agreed to visit Poland, the land of my birth. I was born in Lodz and I have been back twice within the last six years. A land he learned much about from me, and he is familiar with the history of the Holocaust.

We booked four nights in Warsaw, with the intention of spending one day in Lodz and five nights in Krakow. We agreed that the best way to visit places and sights is on foot, wherever possible.

The hotel in Warsaw on the Krakowskie Przedmiescie was within walking distance of the Old Town and most of the Ghetto area.

In Krakow the hotel was situated just off the Rynek Główny (the main market square) and within walking distance of the Wawel and Kazimierz. Having made the travel arrangements, I went to see my doctor for a routine check-up. After an examination, he recommended I have a blood test. When the result of the test arrived, I was told that I'm a "bit anaemic, nothing much to worry."

To my surprise, within days I had a notification from the hospital that an appointment had been made for me to see a surgeon.

The Consultant Surgeon, a dynamic young man, examined me both externally and internally. He concluded that I may have two polyps. To be quite sure, he suggested he performs a colonoscopy. I had a polyp, which he removed. He also made other tests to ascertain that it did not affect the kidneys or the liver. All was clear. I would have to be operated on very soon, he said.

This being a potentially life-

threatening situation, I was determined to go to Poland before the operation. I discussed the situation with the Consultant. He was quite sympathetic, his worry was my mental state during the journey.

He needn't have worried. I was mentally well-prepared. Once again, I drew strength from my experience in Starachowice.

The operation was postponed until the 10th June '03. We returned from Poland on the 6th. A letter awaited me from the hospital. I was expected in the afternoon of the 9th.

The operation took place on the 10th, as scheduled. When I entered the operating theatre, I was greeted by the surgeon and his team. The atmosphere was quite relaxed.

I instinctively knew, there and then, that I was going to be alright.

The operation took 2½ hours and was quite successful. I felt no pain at any stage.

I recently asked the consultant what the prognosis is - very good, he replied.

The trip to Poland went as well as expected. In Warsaw we visited many places of historical significance, plus museums of art, etc.

We spent one day in Lodz. My parents and my two siblings lived there, in the Ghetto during the war. We briefly looked around what was once the Ghetto and made our way to Poznański Palace, opposite the apartment building at Ogrodowa 12, where we lived before the war. The building is now in disrepair and for the most part uninhabitable. The part of the building facing the Zachodnia St. has completely vanished.

I was born on the Zachodnia No. 19. This building still stands and is for the most part inhabited. From there, a short walk away, is the Plac Wolności, dominated by the statue of Tadeusz Kosciuszko. We found the spot where my father and uncle Srolek stood in 1938 when the picture (enclosed) was taken. Then onto the Piotrkowska St. with all the restaurants and pubs, full of life, and the architecture, varied and beautiful.

Krakow was probably the most interesting and memorable. The Rynek Główny (main square) a spectacular medieval market square. Full of architectural gems, like the Sukiennice (cloth hall), with an art gallery on the upper floors.

The Kosciol Mariacki (St Mary's Church), founded in 1222, with lone trumpeter who plays the hejnal every hour. Potocki's Palace with a small courtyard with loggias at the back.

Then the Wawel castle where, for over five hundred years, the rulers of Poland lived and governed.

From there we walked to Kazimierz, the site of the Ghetto during the war. We visited some of the remaining or rebuilt synagogues like Renmo, Aizyck, High Synagogue and the Temple. Finally, Nicholas travelled to Auschwitz by himself. A long time ago, I vowed never to set foot there again.

The impression he brought back was one of horror, that he has seen and hope that he learned from schoolchildren, crying at the sight of the horror.



Plac Wolnosci, Lodz 1938. On the right my father, on the left my uncle Israel.

Our second genealogical visit to Lodz in 2001 was easier for both Salek Benedikt and for me. We knew the ropes; where to obtain information, and the government offices that held what one was looking for and, above all, not to have too high an expectation. Henry Frankel, one of 'the survivors' and now living in America, had met us in Warsaw and we dined that evening together with a young Polish University student who had been my guest in London.

The following day the three of us took the train to Lodz and a taxi to the Grand Hotel that seems more decrepit with each visit. I had to change my room three times to obtain one that was reasonably quiet and clean.

For Henry the most important thing was to visit the graves of his parents. The caretaker of the Jewish Cemetery, a Mr Praszker, with whom Henry had been in touch, had previously worked for his father. Henry knew that he would direct us to the exact location. Sadly, he had passed away and his daughter, who had taken over his job, knew nothing. Henry's leg was giving him a great deal of pain, so Salek and I elected to search for the matzevot in the area that Henry thought they were. We combed a very large area but sadly with no success. It was difficult to see through the undergrowth and even though there is a perimeter fence around the cemetery; it is apparently not unknown for people to drive small vans into the area and steal the stones

OUR SECOND VISIT TO POLAND

Phillis Horal

Phillis and her late parents, the Bennetts, have had a close link with some of the "Boys" from the Finchley Road Hostel and have taken a keen interest in our Society. Phillis and her husband are honorary members of our Society.

for building. Henry was disheartened and left for Warsaw the same afternoon.

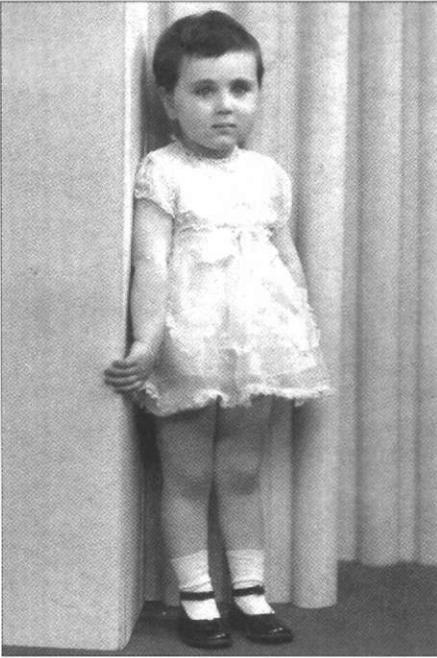
In the evening Salek and I walked on Piotrkowska Street, a street of grand houses that had once reflected the wealth and might of the second most important city in Poland, once called the Manchester of Poland because of its vast textile industry. The Polonia, a small and quite elegant restaurant where we had dined before, was still there. This was comforting in a fast-changing and modernising city.

On this occasion I had engaged a professional genealogist who drove Salek and myself around in her small, rather beaten up car. She was a delight, an attractive Dutch lady who had settled in Poland. She facilitated and made it so much easier to obtain further information to that garnered on our last trip. She found two documents for Salek but, sadly, noth-

ing for me. We met her on Aleja Kosciuszki and she was able to furnish Salek with a copy of his father's birth certificate in Russian and a copy of his parents' wedding certificate. A deeply emotional moment for us both. We then went to Aleja Pilsudski and she showed me a book in Russian Cyrillic that had information about my father's family, subsequently obtaining a copy for me. Each of these papers held a deep resonance for us both. The distance between the two offices was quite far and we were grateful to go by car.

The following day Salek and I set off by coach to visit the town of Podembice where many of my father's cousins had lived before the Second World War. I remember my father telling me that during World War I, when he would have been around fifteen years old, he used to visit the cousins who had farmland for frozen potatoes that he dug up from the ground with his bare hands. Conditions in Poland were terrible and there was a great shortage of food. My father was the mainstay and provider for his family. In 1918 my grandfather died of the Spanish 'flu epidemic that decimated whole swathes of under-nourished people. My father sat the 'shloshim' and left Poland forever, making only one return trip, together with my mother pregnant with her third child in 1935.

I had been given the name and address of the former mayor of Podembice by one of our Podemsky cousins now living in Israel. He had made a return journey, together with



Phillis as a child.

some other people from the same town. They were greatly distressed and angry to find that the Jewish Cemetery had been denuded of tombstones. Speaking to local citizens yielded very little, they shrugged, denying any knowledge of it. My cousin and his friends from Israel announced that for every stone returned the person that brought it would receive US \$10 and no questions asked. The next day quite a sizeable number were returned.

Our newly-found friend, a very honourable man, waited for us in the town square and took us to his comfortably furnished home for coffee and cake. His wife and one son were awaiting us. All the family spoke excellent English. This was a great relief to me as I could ask questions first hand. We were then taken to a small field, the site of the Jewish Cemetery, a small chain and padlock held the rusty gate together. It was very touching to see the way that the stones were fixed to the wall to avoid further desecration and the way that this Polish man took care, in the best way that he could, of our tragic history. I asked him what the stones had been used for when they were prised from the ground. Often to lay paths, he said and then begged me not to ask further as it would be too distressing. There was a long bleak silence.

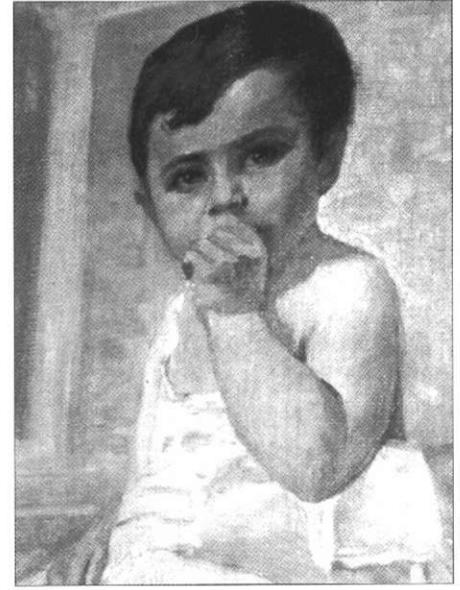
We returned to Lodz by bus. One in five Poles are unemployed. For young people this is a terrible situation and must contribute to the frustration and anger. The outskirts of Lodz were recognisable by offensive graffiti. Magen Davids and

Swastikas were in profusion with suitable expletives, in the international form of graffiti writing. Once again, anti-Semitism without the Jews.

We went with Petje that evening to the newly-opened, well-decorated Esplanade restaurant on the Piotrkowska, far removed from grey communism. On the pavement outside was a newly-installed life-size sculpture of one of Lodz's illustrious sons. Arthur Rubinstein sits at his grand piano on this elegant 19th century boulevard and surveys the world with a twinkle in his eye.

My mission on this trip was to find if any Arbeits Karte of my family had survived from the Lodz Ghetto. A visit to Plac Wolocni where such documents would have been housed proved negative. Wanting to obtain and pay for other new documents that we had traced, we were told that the Director was on leave of absence for three days and that there was no-one present or available to sign the necessary paperwork, not even to enable us to pay for papers that were being held in the building. Bureaucracy at its intimidating worst. Did this mean that the whole department ground to a halt without a deputy? It took several visits and much cajoling to obtain the necessary signature from the Director who suddenly re-appeared moments before we were due to leave the city. The Arbeits Karte were not forthcoming. I was informed that they had been destroyed. My mission unaccomplished, I dream on. Maybe one day they will surface from some dark nether region of officialdom.

A visit to the Poznanski Palace was a revelation. There were two art exhibitions of a high standard. One was modern and the other mostly of paintings done before World War II. A small exquisite painting of a little girl caught my eye. Probably around three years of age with short dark hair and deep blue eyes. She fascinated me and the more I gazed at her, I knew I had seen her before. It was a mirror image, as I recognised myself. It haunted me and returning to London I wrote to the Palace to ask for further information. They didn't reply. Salek and his son Nicholas went to Poland a few weeks ago and kindly went to try to find out who the artist was. Maurycy Trembacz, born in 1881, was a Jewish artist. He had studied in Warsaw, Cracow and Munich. In 1909 Trembacz settled in Lodz,



Phillis likeness.

capturing in his paintings the everyday life of poor Jews. Many were of religious services and excellent portraits. He received international acclaim for his works that were exhibited in amongst other cities, Lodz, Warsaw, Cracow, Paris, Chicago, and in Russia. At the age of sixty, he died of starvation and exhaustion in the Lodz Ghetto in January 1941. This was heart-breaking news. The painting we learned is actually of a small boy. As a child, I had a Danish nurse who was convinced that if my head were shaven my hair would grow back thicker. Albert Cohen, the foremost maker of wigs and sheitels in Whitechapel Road and the person that incidentally took Vidal Sassoon on as an apprentice, shaved my head. I have photographs taken at about the same age as the child on the painting. And there is a striking resemblance. Could it have been a portrait of one of my many cousins that perished? The question is haunting. Alas, I shall never know the answer.

Mr Cohen's salon was on the opposite side of the road to my father's famous photographic studio. As a child, I recall the queues outside the studio lining the pavement to watch the bride and groom arrive in their limousines to have their photographs taken by the legendary Boris. On Sunday evening my mother would give me the small veils that had been used to cover the faces of the brides in the synagogue and I can still recall their perfume.

There was nothing further to keep us in Lodz. We caught the train to Warsaw and thence to London.

Weir Courtney was the country residence of Sir Benjamin Drage, a member of the West London Synagogue. It was in Lingfield Surrey bordering on the racecourse.

When it became known that a large transport of children survivors of the Holocaust and Concentration Camps were expected to come to England, the West London Synagogue decided to assume responsibility for maintaining the youngest group, about 24 children 3-15 years old. And Sir Benjamin Drage put his summer residence at their disposal.

In 1945 I read about this in the Jewish and national press, asking people interested in the work of rehabilitation to come forward. They should apply to Bloomsbury House for more information and interviews. I applied at once (having lost four young brothers in the Holocaust) and resigned from my post in charge of a residential wartime nursery in Birmingham, but it took a year until I was released. I applied again in 1946 and was interviewed by Lola Han-Warburg and Anna Freud. I learned that the person in charge of the youngest group of survivors was Alice Goldberger, a former welfare worker in Berlin, Germany and now in need of helpers. I committed myself without hesitating.

Here is my vivid, unforgettable memory of the day I arrived in Lingfield Surrey by train in May 1946. I took a taxi to Weir Courtney and walked up the long driveway to the residence surrounded by well-tended gardens, green meadows and daffodils. There I stood for a while facing the impressive facade of this beautiful house. Then, looking through the bay window, I saw a circle of young children dancing the Horra to the sound of Jewish music. After introducing myself to Alice and the children I was given my first assignment. All the children needed clothing, shoes, and much more, and I had to measure them for size. This was my first, most gratifying interaction with "my" group of eight girls who had arrived only one day before me. The other children had come from Windermere on Hanukah 1945.

Alice Goldberger excelled in finding the right outfit for each individual child. That was the start of

MY PERSONAL MEMORY OF WEIR COURTNEY

Manna Friedmann

the rehabilitation, only then came all other needs and challenges such as learning English, the language of their new community. English. In the past they had heard and picked up a hotch potch of languages in the camps, Czech, Hungarian, German, Italian, and Yiddish.

Eventually they would leave this paradise in Surrey, but for the time being the children should enjoy the normality of living in freedom without fear. Looking back, the transition to speaking English was easy and went fast, but in the privacy of their comfortable, attractive bedrooms they chatted in their own familiar language for some time yet.

There were four other groups like mine, some smaller, each with their own caretakers and there were many helpers and volunteers offering a great variety of skills. The attachment to the caretaker was very intense and the children would resist being helped or instructed by someone else. For example:

"Dii bin nicht meine, (You are not mine)

"Du hast mir nichts zu sagen." (You can't tell me what to do), said one six year old girl to an adult, not her own caretaker, who told her to get a sweater because she was looking cold.

We were fortunate to be admitted to the local village school in Lingfield with friendly and sympathetic teachers. A short vignette from that time about Denny age 6:

He knew German and Hungarian and had to be told a Mr. is "he" and a Mrs. is "she." On his first day in school he came home and said: "Is all wrong what you told me. We have a woman teacher called Mrs Chapman."

Many visitors came to Weir Courtney. Famous people such as Margaret Meade, the anthropologist, reporters, photographers, and, of course, the junior members of the West London Synagogue, who enjoyed entertaining the children.

The West London Synagogue Women's group organized special "amities" who befriended individual children, inviting them to their homes. There were presents and treats and the experience of family life. Most children enjoyed their visits but seemed happy to return home to Weir Courtney. The idea of being adopted did, at that stage, not appeal to them. But there was a group of six toddlers, aged 3, too young to be placed with the older school children. They were taken care of in a cottage by former staff members of the Anna Freud wartime nursery for one year, before joining Weir Courtney with one of their own caretakers. These "little ones" were adopted within the following months.

The older girls age 12-14 were additionally tutored in English by a teacher, Etta Pickhardt, also highly qualified in literature and art. Their relationship to the younger children was like that of older siblings in a large family. The key words in Weir Courtney were: patience, empathy and sharing. Alice Goldberger was the perfect role model. Here I should not forget Sophie Wutsch, the Austrian non-Jewish cook for her excellent meals and pastry in the Kosher kept household of Weir Courtney.

Alice established regular meetings with all caretakers during which we discussed "current events" and questions of handling difficult behavior. These meetings were scheduled for the evening after the children went to bed or to their activities and play. Once, during one of the meetings, a boy aged six, who had a special attachment to Alice, was angry when he was not allowed to join us. Outside her room he sat on the floor banging on the door with his feet. We ignored it for a while until Alice went out to him and said pleadingly, "Vickie, if you have to kick the door, could you not take off your boots?" - When years later when I told this story to the grown up Vic, adding that I had wanted to go out and give him a spanking, he laughed and said, "It might have done me the world of good."

All of the children had a special attachment to Alice. Once, it was after midnight I heard a child crying and calling "Alice!" I went to his bedroom.



The Lingfield Children

M: "Why are you crying, Denny?"
 D: "I need to speak to Alice."
 M: "Can't I help you? Alice is asleep and I don't want to wake her up. Can't you tell her tomorrow?"
 D: "Tomorrow will be too late."
 M: "Why? What do you need to tell her now?"
 D: "I want to tell her that I have cold feet."
 (I gave him a hot water bottle and he soon was asleep.)

One important topic in our meetings with Alice was the question of whether to encourage the children to speak about their past. Anna Freud, consulted by Alice, advised against it unless the children themselves brought it up, explaining: "When a child falls and his knee is bleeding, a crust will cover the hurt until it falls off. If that crust is removed too soon the wound cannot heal." The children needed time and would recover with the help and experience

of new attachments in an atmosphere of safety.

When I think of Weir Courtney I think of a happy crowd of children active, singing, dancing, celebrating the Jewish festivals, the Purim parties, the birthdays and the presents. I see Sir Benjamin (visiting on weekends) sitting on the bench in the garden watching the children with pride and satisfaction. He enjoyed being interviewed by journalists and telling them: "It all costs a lot of money." He was right. I recall the West London Synagogue Women's Committee admonishing Alice: "Miss Goldberger. You are extravagant." They too were right.

I see before me Alice's 50th birthday celebration and the children performing the Toy Symphony, and Denny, the dreamer, forgetting to come in on time with his wind instrument for the two sounds - too - too during a rehearsal, and the conductor, Joan at the piano, yelling, "Denny, do you need a written

invitation," and the orchestra cracking up with laughter.

Other outstanding memories are the theatrical performances of plays written and produced by Alice and the team of carers.

"The Emperor's New Clothes"
 "Rumpelstiltsken"
 "Lady Precious Dream"

Each child had a role in every production. The costumes were home made. The planning and rehearsals were uppermost in everyone's mind.

This was the atmosphere of Weir Courtney and the enthusiasm and dedication of the carers, working with their hearts.

Slowly it became clear that the children would have to move to London, think of new schools and social needs within the Jewish community. After intensive searching, a place was found in Isleworth London, 42 the Grove and named Lingfield House.

It was May 1949 and before emigrating to Israel, I assisted in the transition to London. Weir Courtney became a happy memory and the children became known as the Lingfield children.

*With best wishes,
 Manna Friedmann*

My father, Chil Enoch Litwak, was born in Wegrow, Poland, on the 20th March 1895. I don't know when they moved to Warsaw. My grandfather was a teacher of Hebrew, my grandmother a business woman. They had three daughters and one son, who was my father. They educated all their children and my father was the apple of their eye. When he grew up he helped them financially, which was a great help to them.

During the First World War my father worked very hard to support his family. He used to do all different jobs until after the war he became an agent of the German firm Hohner, the harmonica manufacturer, where he worked until 1930. In 1922 he married. He became very friendly with my mother's family. My late uncle and

MY FATHER

Rena Zabialak

Rena was in the Warsaw Ghetto and later survived on the Aryan side. She came to England after the war and she is a member of our society.

cousins were importers and exporters of fruit and he joined them in their business. He exported onions to England and I remember the times that he visited England for business during 1937, 1938, and 1939. On the way to England in 1938 he met an old friend at the station in Berlin who told him of the atrocities there. He returned to Poland and was very agitated. He never expected that the same

troubles would occur so soon at home in Poland.

He was a great supporter of Keren Kayemet and many other Jewish institutions. On the 1st September 1939 war broke out. My father at that time had a wholesale business of fresh and dried fruit. When the Germans marched into Warsaw he still carried on with his business until October 1940 when the Germans put all the Jews in a ghetto. The shop with the fruit was taken away. Luckily, our flat was in the ghetto. Other family members lost their home, which was situated outside the ghetto and they all moved in to live with us. We had a large apartment in a block of flats which consisted of four rooms, kitchen and bathroom. There was room for all of us.

As a child, I was happy to have my dear grandmother, aunts, uncles, and

cousins moving in. I didn't realise what trouble was coming. Some people were very poor and my father was concerned that people in our block were dying of hunger. One day he called for a meeting of all the neighbours. He arranged to have food contributions so as to ease their plight. In the ghetto people were very depressed. Every day the Germans used to catch young people and send them away. Nobody heard from them any more. In the ghetto there were Jewish Police. My uncle was a young man and it was decided that he should join the police. He only had to register in the morning and then he went to work in the shop on Solna Street. They were busy selling wholesale dried fruit, delicatessen, and things used in the manufacture of chocolates. When they moved in to the shop, my father bought sweets, which he gave to the poor. In the evening when my father was returning home, he used to take pockets full of sweets, which he distributed to the children. He always used to say that he didn't have enough sweets for all the children and this used to upset him a great deal.

In July 1942, the deportations began, but people working in the factories were not deported. It was to protect us that my father organised work for us in the factories. When we started to work in the factory, we had to leave our flat and move nearer the factory. The adults used to go out at night to the German director's office to hear the news from England. Sometimes at night they had meetings in our flat and decided to collect money to buy guns and ammunition. One of my aunts, together with her husband and son, left the ghetto and went to a small town outside Warsaw but after they left we never heard from them again. My grandmother was not well and was put in a hospital. When I went to say goodbye to my grandmother on the way back to the flat I saw Dr Janusz Korchak walking with the children to the Umschlag Platz. As long as I live, I shall never forget that scene. The doctor held two children and a procession of infants followed him.

Later that day I went home to find that my mother, aunt, and a cousin had been arrested and sent to the

Umschlag Platz. My father knew a high-ranking officer in the Jewish police. He gave him some money, hoping to have his loved-ones released. The following morning I travelled with my uncle to the place where they were being held, hoping to collect them. The roads were strewn with dead bodies. I cannot find words to describe my feelings. My aunt did not want to stay in Warsaw any longer. The following day she was smuggled out by a Pole to Wegrow where our relatives lived.

My father was determined to raise money for the purchase of arms and ammunition. This was difficult. However, a large flat was used to organise the operation.

The following day my brother was arrested. We then had to line up in order to be separated. The selection was based on age and appearance. I remember that my mother never wore lipstick or cosmetics of any kind. On that day, I insisted that she should paint her lips and use rouge on her cheeks. I cannot recall what made me insist on her using "make-up". The German troops made us stand in military style rows. The men were then separated from the women. Those with children had their own line, as did the elderly. It was dreadful! During the selection process, in the row next to my mother and I, was a young woman and her baby - she suffocated her baby so as to pass the selection herself.

The day of that dreadful selection was erev Yom Kippur. When we returned to the factory, it was getting dark and they were looking for people for prayers for Kol Nidre. People said "Why should we pray to G-d to forgive us? We have to forgive G-d for the atrocities being done to us." Every day they used to have meetings in our flat discussing what could be done to save us. The best thing would be to leave the ghetto and to go into hiding. That wasn't easy. The Germans punished by death any Polish family found harbouring a Jew.

My father knew a few Poles and he tried to get in touch with them. Before the war my mother's brother-in-law was a bodyguard of Marshal Pilsudski and Marshal Smigly Rydz and knew quite a few officers. My father had a shop on the Przechodnia

and he knew the caretaker. He got in touch with her and, together with my uncle (who didn't look Jewish), went to see her. There was an empty flat in the block where she lived and she agreed to have us there for a large monthly payment. There was another Pole whose name was Czernovko with whom my father used to do business. This Pole was a drunkard but he knew a lot of Germans in the SS. In the middle of April my mother came out of the ghetto. My father wrote to us that he was like a captain on a boat when he had arranged bunkers in the ghetto for all his friends, then, and only then, could he leave. It was just a few days after my mother came out and the Germans went into the ghetto and met with Jewish resistance. They had guns, ammunition and hand grenades. It was a terrible feeling watching the ghetto in flames. One of my friend's broke through the ghetto wall with a hand grenade and came to the caretaker's flat and told us that my father was well. He said if we had somebody to take him back to the ghetto and then return him, he would go to save my father. Czernovko knew the SS man who was willing to do this for a fee. Money was no object, we wanted only to find my father. During the day the Jews were in the bunkers, during the night they used to go out and one late afternoon Czernovka, with the SS man, collected my friend and left him in the ruins of the ghetto. The next morning they were supposed to collect my friend and my father from the same place.

When they arrived in the morning my friend was alone and he told us how my father had been killed. He said that during the day the Germans came with lorries and tanks to the ghetto to burn the house. My father and a friend of his were on top of the building and when they saw the lorry with the Germans they threw their grenades, which exploded killing quite a lot of them. One of the Germans saw them coming down and killed them. That was the story that my friend told us... My heart was broken. I lost a fantastic father who died like a hero. I don't even know if he was buried.

Only now, in the fifty-fifth anniversary of the first Aktion in my hometown, am I taking them on a class trip to Eilat. A sort of bat-mitzvah party. Or could it be that, unknowingly, I have always taken them everywhere with me?

Standing by the emerald waters of the Red Sea, I look at those who once, long ago, stood with me above the silvery current of the Warta River. There, inspired by Halina Gorska's book, "Above the Black Waters", we swore lifelong oaths of loyalty and friendship. We stood there, all the members of the Order of the Blue Knights: Monius, Lucek, Leika, Mareczek, Chaika, Lucynka, Lilka, Jurek, Halinka, Marylka, Dorcia, Szlamek, Rachelka, Zenek, Szymek and Ntasza. We learned Julian Tuwim's poems by heart and recited our favourites to each other; the gloomy "Piotro Plaksin" and the rhythmical "Locomotive" and later, the steam locomotive took them never to return.

I look at them now standing at the airport, bewildered by our global village, the flickering computer screens, the mobile phones, the flashing television, the cash and condom dispensers and the airplanes, which remind them of the German air raids of 'thirty-nine.

On the shore of the Red Sea, they stand pale, gaunt, fragile and maybe even hungry and thirsty, although on the plane they drank Cola,

GOODBYE, MY DEAD CLASS

Translated from Hebrew
by Riva Rubin

Irit Amiel

nibbled crisp salted peanuts and sweet cholocalte biscuits, served to them with restrained amazement by the dark-skinned stewardess.

Wearing old-fashioned woollen bathing suits that had stiffened and shrunk in the first wash, they wryly enter the chilly water and some lady says to her friend, with a pinch of disdain: "Look at those children, they must be Russian immigrants - lycra hasn't been invented in Russia yet!"

And here, in topless bikinis, some young women jump into the water and the boys peep at them aroused and confused, while the girls hope that they will soon grow sweet, pretty pink titties like those, forgetting that they would never have anything anymore, that they went up in smoke years ago, when everybody, God and man, turned their backs on them.

With growing enchantment, they look at the colourful fish from the nearby coral reef - the yellow zebra fish with the black stripes, the big black parrot fish with the greenish ring around the belly, the agile Napoleon fish, who dive between the

swimmers' legs without a trace of fear - and they ask in utter despair: "What, did all this exist then, too, when we were....?"

Later, they take a rest in striped blue and white beach chairs on the shore, in one row with the athletic, tanned grandchildren, maybe even great-grandchildren, of their murderers, who so love visiting our beautiful, warm beaches.

And they listen to the babble of languages; but nobody speaks Yiddish here anymore.

In the crests of the cloud-kissing palms, clusters of yellow dates ripen in the burning sun while I, with my wilting body, sob silently inside, ashamed that I am still here remembering it all as if it was only yesterday.

At sunset, the friends of my smashed childhood melt and vanish into the pink evening haze of the Mountains of Edom, and the almost black waters of the Red Sea, though I call out to them and plead: "Don't go! Stay with me! It's not only mine, it's yours, too!!"

But they shake their shaven heads in denial, saying: "No, no, you've done very well without us..."

So what could I have done? I reply almost apologetically, either one lives or one dies ... but sometimes it's been very, very difficult. And clever sharp-witted Szlamek calls from a distance: "Difficult, was it? You don't say..."

It was the end of September 1942. It wasn't really cold yet and the gold-red autumn leaves tumbled in the mud. At times one could even find a glossy, moist chestnut inside a dirty, green, thorny shell.

The street lay deserted. Paralysed with dread. Like hollow eye sockets, the windows looked at us through shattered panes. With an air of casualness, Father said we had to reach the Jewish Hospital at the end of the street as soon as possible. But there was the echo of an odd tremor in his voice. I was wearing a light coat, beret, scarf and the green woollen suit Mother knitted for me. Father still made fun of Mother's addiction to knitting, but nobody laughed at his jokes anymore. We

LEAF FROM A DIARY

Translated from Hebrew by
Riva Rubin

Irit Amiel

were at the bottom of the world, and it was going up in flames. Mother gave me a piece of dry bread, kissed me and wet my face with her tears. I chewed the bread with pleasure, not understanding why she was sobbing so. After all, we'd see each other again in the evening. So they promised. But I never saw her again. I can remember her face only from a

yellowing, tattered photograph that her sister in America sent me after the war.

At the other end of the street, bordering on the Aryan side, a Ukrainian soldier stood shooting into windows at the slightest movement inside. Father was very tense and told me to crawl behind him, as close as possible to the houses. In the same street where I used to walk to school, laughing and surrounded by friends, the two of us now crawled on all fours. A sudden gust of autumn wind blew a cloud of dust that blinded me for a moment. The Ukrainian soldier fired three shots. The bullets whistled over our heads. We froze for a second and then, impelled by mortal fear, we

continued to crawl. It was not far, but to me it seemed to go on forever. It was the longest way of my whole life. Lately, those shots have been waking me at night.

Flattened against the heavy gate of the hospital, we banged desperately with our clenched fists. A Jewish policeman, an acquaintance of Father, opened a crack and we slid into the yard. Father gave him a wad of green bills. From then on, everything went very quickly. Too quickly. He led us to a small dark storeroom, lit a flashlight and stripped one, then another, plank

from the wall, revealing a black hole.

Father lifted me and told me to stretch my arms out, like diving into a swimming pool, and slip myself headfirst into the hole. But it wasn't wide enough and I had to quickly remove my coat and then thread arms and head into the black hole again. I was stunned. I didn't even say goodbye to him. I remember only that he was very pale, with something between smiling and crying on his face.

On the other side, a strange man with a moustache caught me and stood me on my feet. Before I could

collect myself, the yellow coat dropped on the floor and when I lifted my head, the hole wasn't there anymore; a gilded picture of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa was hanging serenely on the smooth wall.

That is how, at the height of the Aktion, I escaped from the ghetto for the first time. Childhood, beret, scarf, my beautiful mother and my bald, beloved father, stayed forever on the other side. I was then eleven years old and from that moment I have never felt at home in life again.

It could have been 1943 or 1944. It was definitely not 1942; the random shootings of people by the Ukrainian Werkshutz had stopped, as had the transports of picked groups of young, strong men from the surrounding ghettos.

What I do remember, vividly, was that it was spring. The sun felt warmer and when we came back from our nightshift, it was already light.

It all started with a spoon of marmalade that we got in the morning with our portion of bread. Then we noticed that the soup was thicker. We even found bits of potato and, occasionally, a bit of meat, if you were lucky.

Various rumours started flying about. Our morale lifted. Somebody intervened on our behalf, somebody cared about what was happening to us. The most persistent rumour was

This year's recipient of the prestigious "Jan Karski Award for Valour and Compassion" is Mrs Irena Sendler, aged 93, living in Warsaw.

This award is presented to a person who best exemplifies the criteria established by the Committee, including: courage in undertaking dangerous missions, compassion for people without personal gain, and serving in anonymity. These were the very values the great Dr Karski stood for. The award ceremony will take place on 23rd October 2003 in Washington, D.C.

IRENA SENDLER may be a name not familiar to many - yet, she is a legend in her own lifetime. Between the years 1942 - 43, this remarkable

THE EXPECTED VISIT OF THE RED CROSS

Sam Dresner

Sam came to England with the Windermere group. As he was suffering from tuberculosis, he was taken from Windermere to Westmorland Sanatorium just a few days after his arrival. He was subsequently transferred to Ashford & Quaremead sanatoriums where he stayed till the early fifties. He went to art school and now lives in London as an artist with his wife and family.

that the Red Cross was coming to inspect the camp.

Other activities by the Germans also pointed in that direction. For

instance, they started emptying the sick-bay every few days, whereas before they waited till it was full of people who could not go to work before taking them out to be shot. Another sign that they expected some visit was the way they started cleaning up the camp. Everybody who came back after twelve-hour nightshift from the factory had to work another four hours cleaning and polishing things in the camp. That regime lasted about a fortnight and then it reverted again to just a bit of black bread in the morning and to soup with bits of turnip.

I never found out whether there was any inspection of our camp. Recently, I read an article about the Red Cross where it stated that the Red Cross never managed to visit any Jewish camps during the war, except for Thereseinstadt, which they visited at the end of the war.

IRENA SENDLER - A JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF HUMANITY

Lili Pohlmann

Lili Pohlmann came to England from Poland with the Rabbi Schonfeld group in 1946 and has been an active member of our Society.

woman constantly defied authority by repeatedly risking her life to save infants and children from the genocide of the Warsaw Ghetto.

She smuggled 2,500 - yes! Two thousand, five hundred! - of them out of the Ghetto, having previously found for them safe hiding places in orphanages, convents and with brave non-Jewish families, who would adopt them.

As a Senior Administrator in the Warsaw Welfare Department - and subsequently as the Head of Children's Section of "Zegota" (the clandestine Polish organisation for helping the Jews) - she used her status as "Health Worker" to enter the Ghetto, where hunger, infectious diseases and death were rampant. Greatly influenced by her father - a dedicated doctor, who died too young, having contracted typhus from the patients he treated, many of whom were Jews - this remarkable



Irena Sendler & Lili Pohlmann.

young woman was undeterred in her mission to save the lives of as many children as possible.

In order to enter the Ghetto legally, she got herself issued with a pass from Warsaw's Epidemic Control Department. In this way, she managed to visit the Ghetto daily, bringing medicine, food and clothing. Once inside the Ghetto, she often put on the Star of David armband as a sign of solidarity with the oppressed Jewish people So appalled was she by the conditions in the Ghetto, that she joined "Zegota" and became one of the first recruits to direct their efforts to rescue Jewish children. Assisted by a network of ten Gentile helpers, she spent over one year on this dangerous, courageous, heartbreaking mission. She witnessed Dantean scenes when children were being torn away from their distraught mothers, fathers, grandparents... "Can you guarantee they will live?" Irena recalls being constantly asked. But she could only guarantee they would die if they stayed. "In my dreams I still hear the cries when they were leaving their parents" - she says. This hellish ordeal was described by her after the war in a brief account, entitled "How I saved children from the Warsaw Ghetto."

Such incredible deeds required additional assistance of brave, courageous and, foremost, trusted ambulance and fire brigade drivers, who would help to smuggle the often sedated infants and children out of the Ghetto in body-bags, potato-sacks, wooden crates, coffins... She was the person in charge of this operation. Over 10,000 children perished inside the Ghetto - "Irena

Sendler's children" were the ones to survive. Everyone knows of "Schindler's List" - how many have heard of "Sendler's List"???

On 20th October 1943 - almost exactly sixty years before the Jan Karski Award is to be bestowed on her! - Mrs Sendler (underground alias "Jolanta") was captured by the Gestapo. Suspicious of her activities in the Ghetto, they demanded that she hand over the list of "her children" and of those sheltering them. She withstood inhuman torture, but refused to betray her wards and her associates. They broke her feet, they broke her legs - but they could not break her indomitable spirit. She was sentenced to death. As she was being marched to be executed, in the last minute her "Zegota" friends bribed the henchman-guard, who set her free. In the annals of Nazi records, she was officially entered as having been executed. This made it imperative for her to remain in hiding until the end of the war.

The real names of the children - together with their matching identities in code (known only to Mrs Sendler!) - were preserved by her on tiny scrolls of tissue-paper, inside a jar, which she buried in a friend's garden.

After the war, she dug up the jar, all the names intact, and used the notes to track down the children she placed with adoptive families and in safe-houses. She re-united many of them with relatives - though most had lost their families during the Holocaust in Nazi death camps.

The children knew Mrs Sendler only by her code name "Jolanta". But, years later, after she was

honoured for her wartime work, her picture appeared in newspapers. "A man - a painter - telephoned me" - said Mrs Sendler. "I remember your face" - he said - "It was you who took me out of the Ghetto". She had many such calls.

IRENA SENDLEROWA - as she is known in Poland - shuns being called "a hero": "The children are heroes - not I" - she invariably responds. In her innate modesty, she never claims credit for her actions. Often one can hear her say: "I could have done more - this regret will follow me to my death"...

She has been honoured and decorated by Jewish and non-Jewish organisations. In 1965, she was accorded the title of "Righteous Gentile Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem and planted a tree in Jerusalem. In 1991, she was made an Honorary Citizen of Israel. In the year 2000, four young students at Uniontown High School in Kansas, U.S.A., won the "2000 Kansas State National History Day" competition by writing a play about Irena Sendler's unique wartime achievement, called "Life in a Jar". The play has won wide recognition in the U.S.A., and brought "The Sendler Story" to a wider public.

This remarkable, wonderful woman was one of the most dedicated and active workers in aiding Jews during the Nazi occupation of Poland. Her courage and humanity enabled not only the survival of 2,500 Jewish children, but the existence of generations of their descendants.

Sadly, at 93 - she is too frail to travel to Washington to accept in person the prestigious award - but her spirit remains undimmed, and her mind as sharp and as crystal-clear as ever. She emanates warmth, compassion, wisdom - and has a great sense of humour... To be in her presence is not merely a privilege - it is sheer joy! Interested in absolutely everything, she is greatly saddened by the decline of moral values and mourns the lack of ideals in the world of today. A great believer that GOOD must prevail - she expressed her feelings in a recent interview:

"So long as I shall live and have an iota of energy in my body, I shall declare that only GOOD IS SUPREME; it must be striven for at all costs, and - in the end - IT MUST PREVAIL."

MY NUMBER WAS NOT UP YET

Majer Stern

Majer came from Prague in the winter of 1946 with "The Boys" from Ruthenia..... He and his wife, Marion, emigrated to Israel where they now live. He is a frequent visitor to London and keeps in close contact with the members of our Society.

My name is Majer Stern and my number is A9533.

I was in the Concentration Camp Javozno, about 40km north of Auschwitz, in Block 19, together with 200 other inmates who worked in the morning shift of the coal-mine called Albert. There was an afternoon and night shift as well.

To go down the mine we were packed into a lift (elevator) 50 at a time and lowered down to a depth of 700 metres. Upon arrival the gate was opened and we all went through tunnels to our allocated jobs; some for maintenance, some for building and the rest to the coal surface where you could not stand upright and had to shovel coal, using a heart-shaped shovel, on to a conveyor belt.

To get to my job I had to walk about half a kilometre and then descend another 200 metres by lift where a new coal-face was being worked. The second descent was called 'wasser-schaft' (water-shaft) because when they dug this shaft they came across an underground river, so there was a constant flow of water coming down to the working surface. I was 'the lift man' which meant that, when the lift arrived, I opened the gate to let the people out or in and then I would ring the bell twice to give the all-clear for the lift to go up. Every time I opened the gate, the water from the roof of the lift came down on me and I was constantly wet. One day, the German in charge came down dressed like a fisherman in a waterproof outfit and I asked him if there was a possibility of getting a waterproof jacket. In reply he hit me with his coalminer's pickaxe. A few days later and from a distance I asked him again but only for a waterproof hat and he ignored my plea.

It was about October that I started getting a pain in my rib-cage. So bad was my pain that I could not lay down to go to sleep. One night I got up and went into the Blokelster's (block supervisor) area where there was a stove. He asked me what I wanted and I told him of my pain and that the heat might help me. He let me stay awhile and then told me that I didn't have to go to work in the morning and he arranged for me to go to the sick-bay. I would point out here that because I was only fifteen and the youngest person in the Block, the Blokelster had a certain sympathy for me.

I got into the sick-bay and was examined by an extremely short, young, Belgian Jewish doctor. He told me I could stay in the sick-bay. He took my clothes and gave me a nightgown. The room was warm and I got white bread and semolina soup. It felt like paradise. I don't remember getting any medication and my pain did not go away but it felt so good being in the sick-bay that I even sung Yiddish songs for the other patients.

I don't remember how long I was there, it could have been five or six days and then, very early one morning, I was awakened by the Belgian doctor. He had my clothes in his hand and he told me to get dressed quickly and go back to my block. I cried and begged him to let me stay on but to no avail.

I went back to Block 19 and the Blokelster told me that my place on the bunk was taken by my replacement and that I should go to Block 17, which was the afternoon shift in the same coal-mine.

On my arrival at Block 17, the new Blokelster informed me that my arrival was too early and the shift had not gone out to work yet and he did

not know how many would not return. Therefore, he told me to go away and come back later.

I made up my mind to do something about it. I went to the camp gate to see if I could speak to the Camp Commander. As I stood by the gate a lorry covered with a tarpaulin arrived from inside the camp. It stopped while the gate was being opened and I heard voices and saw that the lorry was packed with all the people from the sick-bay and it was accompanied by a car with SS men.

Later on the Camp Commander entered the camp. I stood to attention in front of him, saluted and told him my number and that I was from Block 19. I told him that I worked morning shift in the Albert mines, that I am doing an important job and, due to a leg injury, I could not go to work and now they are sending me to Block 17. I told him I like my work and would like to go back to my old job. He then asked me again what my number was and I repeated my number - A9533.

I went back again to Block 17 and found an empty bunk and fell asleep. I was awakened in the dark by the rightful occupier whose place I had taken. I went to the Blokelster to ask where I was to sleep. He asked me my number and, when I told him my number is A9533, his immediate reaction was - Where the hell have you been? We've been looking everywhere for you! We had orders from the Kommandant that you are to go back to Block 19.

That day I had two lucky escapes. My number was not up yet. I got out from the sick-bay before the others were taken away and I got away alive after addressing the Kommandant.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

27 January 2003

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

Chief Rabbi Professor Jonathan Sacks

Tonight we've heard the story of humanity's worst sustained act of inhumanity, an eternal memory of the road once taken that we must never take again.

And still today, when I walk the streets of certain European cities I feel as if I'm in the presence of ghosts. I hear the stifled cry of children, one and a half million of them, starved, shot, given lethal injections, gassed in the extermination camps, from all the many groups we've heard about tonight, among them more than a million Jewish children, a whole murdered generation. And why? They were a threat to no one. They couldn't defend themselves let alone threaten anyone else. Why then? Because they didn't fit. Because their race was the wrong race, or their colour the wrong colour, or their religion - even their grandparents' religion - the wrong religion.

And that cry of children seems to say: but we were alive. We were human. Does that mean so little? And the world didn't hear. But now we must. Because whatever else we strive for, it isn't human, it isn't worthy of us, if it makes us deaf to the cry of a child. And still children cry. The 30,000 who die every day from preventable diseases. The hundreds of millions without adequate food or shelter, schools, or medical facilities. And still the children cry.

The Hebrew word for compassion, *rachamim*, comes from the word *rechem* meaning a womb. Because it is there, where a child first comes to be, that we learn the mystery, the sanctity, of life. The litmus test of civilisation is whether we sacrifice

our hatreds for the sake of our children, or risk sacrificing our children for the sake of our hatreds. If children aren't sacred, nothing else is.

And yet tonight we've heard another story also. Of the almost 10,000 children brought to this country through Kindertransport., and of the thousands of children adopted, hidden and rescued in orphanages, convents, and by men and women driven by ordinary feelings to extraordinary acts of courage. Many of the members of our community owe their lives to such acts as these.

Think of the little town of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in southern France where the whole village engaged in rescue. Many of them were Huguenots, who remembered the persecution their ancestors had suffered. Two of their pastors, André Trocmé and Edouard Théis, gathered them together and asked them to shelter Jews, even though they would be putting their own lives at risk. There were five thousand inhabitants and between them they offered sanctuary to three and a half thousand Jews, most of whom survived.

Above all, when I think of children and the holocaust I think of one of the truly great figures of the 20th century, Janusz Korczak. Korczak was a physician, but he was drawn to the plight of underprivileged children. In 1911 he founded a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw. It was so successful that he was asked to create one for Catholic children as well, which he did. In 1940 he and the orphanage were driven into the Warsaw ghetto,

and in 1942 came the order to transport them to Treblinka. He was given the chance to escape, but he refused, and in a scene which no one who saw it could ever forget, he walked with his 200 orphan children to the train that took them to the gates of death, inseparable from them to the end.

Korczak had revolutionary views about the young. He believed in trusting them and giving them responsibility. And when the time came for the children under his care to leave, he used to say this to them: "I cannot give you love of man, for there is no love without forgiveness, and forgiving is something everyone must learn to do on his own. I can give you one thing only: a longing for a better life, a life of truth and justice. Even though it may not exist now, it may come tomorrow if you long for it enough."

And that is what we owe our children today. I can't tell you how moved I was, here in Edinburgh a few months ago, when we launched a programme called Respect, designed to give children the chance to do an act of kindness to people whose race or colour or faith is different from theirs. And when I saw how deeply they took that message to heart, I knew that I was seeing our candle of hope in a dark world. Children are not born to hate, and we may never teach them to do so. And in just a few moments our children's choir sing the ancient psalm, "How good and pleasant it is for children together" - let us empower our children to create that respect for difference that may come tomorrow if we teach them to long for it enough today.

On January 27 2002, Britain's second Holocaust Memorial Day, a public memorial was dedicated in a local park to honour the millions of victims of the Nazi Holocaust. It is set in Valentines Park, in the London Borough of Redbridge, a borough that lies to the east of the City of London and of Whitechapel and Stepney. Redbridge was developed following World War II to re-house the numerous families bombed out of their homes in that East End where so many Jewish immigrants had landed and settled. The majority had fled to Britain from persecution and hardship in eastern and central Europe since the late 19th century. Today Redbridge contains one of the larger Jewish communities in the metropolis so it is a fitting place for remembering those who failed to find such a refuge.

It was a very wet and cold day when more than two hundred people collected to dedicate the commemoration stone. On it is engraved:

To the memory of those who died in the Holocaust and in all genocides.

It is set in a garden of fragrant flowers with the intent of giving pleasure not only to the sighted but also to the visually-impaired - a silent reminder of the Nazi policy of destroying the disabled. For with Jews and gypsies, political adversaries and any other minority group, they were categorised as outcasts by the vile Nazi policy of "racial purity". Alan Weinberg, the Jewish Mayor,

AN UNSUNG ACHIEVEMENT BY ONE OF OUR BOYS

Barbara Barnett

Barbara and her late husband, Richard, regularly visited the Primrose Club and were responsible for organising music appreciation and cultural activities. She contributes articles to our Journal and is closely attached to our Society.

told how so many of his family had died in Auschwitz and Muhammed Javed spoke as Leader of the Council and as a peace-loving Moslem. Both emphasised the deep significance of the garden. Prayers were said by the Rev. Gordon Tarry, Area Deacon of the Church of England, and by the Mayor's chaplain, Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin.

It was Arthur Poznanski, as a Holocaust survivor and a Redbridge resident, who took a focal part in developing and designing the ceremonies. He suggested that other survivors resident locally be invited, as well as dignitaries of neighbouring boroughs, religious leaders and the local press. He brought his choir from Ilford United Synagogue, Beehive Lane, that he had directed and trained for the past twenty-six years. They were joined by South West Essex and Settlement Reform

Synagogue from Oaks Lane, Newbury Park, Essex. They sang together (a noteworthy event in itself) *Shomer Israel*, a beautiful anthem, and Psalm 121 (cxxi). Arthur himself led them and took the solo part. He went on to speak of the terrible memories he carries - of the loss and the humiliation and the sheer physical cruelty that stays with him always. He suggested that those who never had such experiences try to imagine how they would feel if they had lost their parents or their siblings or their children as victims of the Nazi machine. "There but for the Grace of God go I". And as the rain fell over the assembly, it seemed that even the weather was reacting in sympathy.

The inauguration ceremony marked the fruition of a personal initiative by Alan Weinberg. His request had been that local people contribute to a lasting memorial; and to his satisfaction this was achieved without touching Redbridge rates. He paid special tribute to Leon Schaller OBE and his family who were the major donors. At this year's Memorial Service schoolchildren took part in remembering the million-and-a-half Jewish children murdered by the Nazis. May there continue to be an annual service by the Redbridge community for many years to come and in Arthur's words: "... fuel a little spark of hope that may in some small way lead to the eradication of such evils in the future and eventually to the peaceful co-existence of the many races and cultures of mankind".

We must have just hosted our third annual visit from Solly Irving, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, who lives in N.W. London. In the space of two and a half days Solly visited six Secondary schools in Plymouth where he spoke to approximately fifteen hundred young people aged from thirteen to eighteen years of age. In addition, he also addressed a small lunchtime Interfaith group and met with those taking part in our Holocaust Memorial Evening. It was a demanding schedule and we are very grateful to Solly for giving his

SOLLY IRVING VISITS PLYMOUTH - JANUARY 2003

Solly came to England with the Windermere Group. He is a very active member of our Committee.

time and energy in this way.

It is impossible to estimate the effect and impact Solly has had. Throughout his talks, lasting twenty

to thirty minutes, the young people listened with intense concentration, respect and sensitivity. This was evident especially in the question and answer sessions which Solly always invited from his young audiences after his talk. It was his way of being able to address their concerns within a comparatively short space of time.

As Solly repeatedly pointed out, "It is enough that I stand before you as one who has lived through these unimaginable events." This direct encounter with one who has survived transcended all the usual educational

studies of the Holocaust through books, videos or even written accounts by other survivors. It is why these visits are so important and it is why the Centre works to create the opportunity for this to happen.

Solly's message is essentially about the importance of tolerance; to keep talking to those who we may see as different or who hold different views from our own. Behind the differences we are all part of the same human family. As long as we keep talking to each other, even though we may disagree, we will not repeat the horrors of the past.

This conversation and dialogue, required at every level, is surely the

most pressing and urgent need in the world today. Is it not ironic that at this time of unprecedented communication and technological advance we are in danger of drifting further apart?

Solly was often asked about the future "Who will be the witnesses when the present day survivors are no more?"

"I hope," Solly replied, "that young people will be the witnesses. That you will go out into the world with real understanding of tolerance based, in part, on our meeting today. You will be able to stand up and, if necessary, speak out against anyone who tries to deny that the Holocaust

happened. Look forward to the future but don't forget the past and all the lessons it has to teach us."

Perhaps this will be the most important and enduring influence that Solly left us. Having met him, we will live our lives a little differently.

Thank you Solly!

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3rd February 2003

WITNESS TO THE HOLOCAUST HELL

Martin Freeman

(This article appeared in The Evening Herald, Friday, January 26th 2001)

Solly Irving, a Polish-born Jew, was nine years old when the Nazis unleashed their Holocaust against his people. While he survived through luck and guile, his parents and four sisters all died. In 1945 he came to Britain and made a new life, but the horrors that he witnessed remain in his memories. Today, on the eve of the first Holocaust Memorial Day, he shares them.

I remember my childhood: football in the street when I was nine; getting excited about moving home at 12.

And Solly Irving remembers his childhood: German warplanes machine-gunning his town when he was nine; being forced out of the ghetto at gunpoint when he was 12, the start of the extermination of his family.

"The soldiers shot those who were too old or ill to move," he says. "When the children cried, they shot them too."

I don't know how to go on from there.

For a moment, I think Solly feels the same. He sees that yawning gap in experience across generations and cultures; for me to understand he will have to fill that blank by digging into the deep dark place where his own memories lie, and he hesitates.

He shifts his weight in the chair and wrings his hands.

Even 60 years on, the horror he saw and suffered during childhood is fresh in his mind and vivid in his nightmares.

It hurts to talk. But he has to.

Solly is a Holocaust survivor, a Polish-born Jew whose father, mother and four sisters were wiped out in the Nazis' attempt to murder an entire race.

We are in Plymouth City Museum where Solly is, for a day, a living 'exhibit'; he is meeting schoolchildren, giving a public lecture and doing media interviews.

He is entrusting us with his memory, urging us to take it away from the museum and out of history and to remember together tomorrow, the first Holocaust Memorial Day.

After the awkward pause, he starts to talk again and the words pour out

of the short, stocky man, in clipped, unadorned sentences.

Solly was a nine-year-old living with his family in Riky, a small town in central Poland, when war broke out in 1939.

His father was a grain merchant and life was comfortable, although there was open prejudice by the Christian population against the Jews. That autumn, prejudice changed to oppression and persecution at the hands of the Nazi invaders and their Polish sympathisers.

The local Jewish population was forced into a ghetto where they endured beatings and shootings, hunger and disease.

Then, in 1942, without warning, the ghetto was cleared. But Solly was spared.

"My father bribed a soldier to let me go, and told me to go to a farm he knew.

"I got down the road and there

was one of my sisters. He'd done the same for her."

The rest of Solly's family were sent to Sobibor, a death camp in eastern Poland. He never heard or saw anything of them again.

Solly, at the age of 12, lived rough around neighbouring farms until he and his sister were spotted by soldiers searching for runaway Jews.

"I ran and ran with my sister. There were shots behind us and then I was grabbed by a man in uniform.

"I tried to struggle free and he said: 'If I let you go they will shoot me', but I struggled and ran. There was more shooting, but they didn't shoot me. I don't know why.

"I was destined to survive, somehow." But Solly's sister wasn't. In the confusion, they were separated. He presumes that she was shot.

He knew he could not survive in the open so, when he learned that his auntie and uncle were in a neighbouring labour camp, he smuggled himself in with a working party.

He was put to work moving coal and cement to supply an airfield nearby.

A year later, he was moved to another Polish camp, Chensteckowa, and, again, survived by a mixture of chance and guile.

"There was a guard with a stick and he was sorting us out, the adults to one side, the children to another.

"I was pushed in with the other children but I knew I had to go with the adults - those who could work and be useful.

"I ran up to the guard and said I could work, that I had moved bags of cement and he pushed me away with the stick. But he didn't push me back with the children.

"I was told that the younger children were killed. Some of them shot, some of them smashed against a wall and thrown into a pit. I did not see that myself," he says, determined to make the record clear, "but I have no reason to doubt it."

He survived beatings and a starvation diet in a succession of other camps, including Buchenwald,

in Germany.

He lived despite being used as a 'human shield' to deter Allied air raids against military targets.

He lived despite being given poisoned food which he refused to eat because of the bitter taste; others were so hungry they are and died.

He lived despite being caught scavenging for food in the last chaotic days of the war; two Hungarian Nazis argued over who should waste a bullet on the boy as he jumped from a tree and ran.

After liberation by the Russians in 1945, Solly came to Britain, married and settled.

In London, his two children and four grandchildren ask the same questions that the young and the old asked during his Plymouth visit.

Yes, the Holocaust happened through hysteria whipped up

through politics, he says, and it can still happen today on a smaller scale, as in Rwanda and in the Balkans.

Yes, he has kept his faith in God despite the horrors, partly in honour of his devout father.

No, nobody is too old or too ill to be prosecuted for a war crime, 'not if they are still conscious'.

Yes, to remember causes pain and it would probably be easier on him if he tried never to think of the horror he endured. "But I see my children and my grandchildren and I know I have to remember for them," he says. "I was an old man before I was a teenager," he says. "I look at my grandson, who is 11, and I wonder 'how would he survive?'"

But Solly knows that the important question isn't how to survive the next Holocaust, it's how to stop it. And the answer is: to remember the last one.

Nazi Facts

The National Socialist German Workers Party (the Nazis), a right-wing, nationalistic, and anti-Jewish political party, was formed in 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921 to 1945.

Their oppression of the Jews began in earnest when Hitler became Chancellor (prime minister) in 1933.

When World War Two started in 1939, the oppression intensified and spread to the countries which the Germans invaded, including Poland.

The Nazis were aided by sympathisers in occupied countries and exploited local prejudice against Jews.

The mass murder intensified after 1942 with the Final Solution, the Nazis' code for the 'final solution to the Jewish question in Europe'.

Six million Jews, including 1.5 million children, were shot, gassed, starved died of disease or were worked to death.

Millions of gypsies, Russian prisoners of war, gays, mentally disabled and 'enemies of the state', including communists and Jehovah's Witnesses (whose beliefs do not allow them to swear allegiance to any worldly power) also died in the Nazis' concentration camps.

In Sobibor, a camp in eastern Poland where Solly Irving's family were taken, up to 200,000 Jews were killed between May 1942 and November 1943.

THE YELLOW STAR - NORTHWOOD REMEMBERS HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2003

From 27th - 30th January 2003 over 1,000 local students attended the second annual Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) event co-hosted by Northwood United Synagogue and Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue. The synagogues invited schools in Hertfordshire, Harrow and Hillingdon to bring along students from Year 9 and above (13+ years old) to participate in this extremely well planned event. Over 1,000 students from local schools, including Bishop Ramsey CE, Ruislip, Bushey Hall, Westfield Community College, Haydon, Watford Grammar, Northwood College, Sacred Heart, Stanborough, Bushey Mead, Parmiter, St Helen's and John Penrose, attended one of the six, 2½ hour sessions. This was the largest event of its type in the UK.

The official opening ceremony took place on Monday 27th January and was attended by local MPs and mayors. The visiting VIPs took part in a candle lighting ceremony and spent time talking to Survivors who had been contributing to the morning's discussions.

Each of the carefully planned

sessions enabled students to address such key issues as citizenship, participation, the preservation of freedom, bullying, multi-cultural respect, as well as the feelings of exclusion and loss. Every student heard a first hand account from a Holocaust survivor and took part in question and answer session with Holocaust survivors. Students and teachers were deeply moved by the thought provoking sessions that followed the talks.

Other modules to the programme included the story-telling of "The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark" by Carmen Agra Deedy and an exhibition with materials sourced from the UK and abroad.

Two new projects were added to this year's programme. The first was the creation of a living Legacy wall. Following the theme of the initiative to film and record survivors' stories for future generations, all students at the event were asked to record their reactions and comments on material that was used to create a wall of memories and emotions. Everybody who saw and read these memory boards, during and after the event, was deeply moved by the emotions

and feelings expressed by these students.

The second project followed the example of Janusz Korczak (1878 - 1942), a teacher, writer and doctor who dedicated his life to caring for children. He died in Treblinka concentration camp where he voluntarily accompanied children from his orphanage on a transport from the Warsaw ghetto. Children who survived speak about the profound effect he and his stories had in their lives. In particular, a story about the gift of a matchbox and how the box could hold dreams, and wishes; be a gift or a toy but above all could give them hope and a future of dreams. Each student attending the HMD programme was given a matchbox and was invited to record the journey of their matchbox, to create their dreams with it and to make their world a better place with it. The project will track the progress of the box and its journey. We are enthusiastic that this will mark the beginning of an exciting project.

The organisers extend a warm thank you to all members of the community who were involved with this year's event and gratefully welcome all offers of help for next year.

19th April of this year was the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. It was also the 60th anniversary of the complete annihilation of the Warsaw Jewish population, some of whom had managed to survive till then, hiding in bunkers or working as slave labourers for German-owned factories.

The heavily armed Germans and their Baltic henchmen marched into the Ghetto and were surprised to meet organised resistance, the first open resistance in occupied Europe. The young Jewish fighters, mainly members of Jewish political parties, poorly armed, untrained and hungry, tried to defend the people of the Ghetto.

THE CEREMONY IN WARSAW HONOURING THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

Vladka Blit Robertson

Vladka came to England with the Rabbi Shonfield group and she lives in London.

They could not win, and were defeated after five weeks of battle, by artillery, tanks, and fire.

Smoke and lethal gas pumped into the bunkers and sewers.

I came to Warsaw with my hus-

band, my cousin and many others to a special ceremony organised by the Polish government to remember, mourn and pay tribute to our families and to the defenders of the Ghetto. The ceremony was to start at 11 am, but long before crowds of people began to assemble on the large square in front of the monument to the Ghetto fighters.

Because of strict security, people had to wait patiently outside the specially erected gate to be checked and admitted. I listened with great interest to local people explaining why they wanted to be there. Most of them were Jewish or half-Jewish, but there were also some Catholic Poles.

Delegations from foreign embassies, Jewish groups from

abroad and groups of Jewish survivors laid flowers in front of the monument, among them the delegation from the United Kingdom led by the Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Ben Helfgott.

A large group of young Israelis in special shirts were very visible. I noticed many journalists and some Polish priests, a monk in white habit and a group of Catholic school-children.

Representatives of foreign embassies and other specially invited guests took their seats. Marek Edelman, the only surviving leader of the Ghetto leaders, who lives in Poland, was there looking after six surviving Ghetto fighters who had come from Israel and Canada.

The Presidents of Poland and Israel, Alexander Kwasniewski and Moshe Katsar, arrived at 11 am and the ceremony began. A large contingent from the Polish army stood to attention while wreaths were laid in front of the monument. Polish soldiers presented arms and the *Apel* was called by their captain. Names of fighters killed in the Ghetto uprising were called, then the names of streets and individual bunkers were read out. The army responded, presenting arms and saluting and shouting a refrain. Captain Smietana then delivered his extraordinarily eloquent and moving speech. The ceremony ended with the sound of salvos fired in the air.

In the evening we were invited to

a special concert at the Teatr Wielki, the main theatre in Warsaw. The programme included Bloch's Symphony "Israel", Psalm 130 sung by Cantor S Kelly and K Knittel's Choral Cantata. Six participants in the Ghetto uprising were decorated by the President of Poland with the military medal, the White Eagle. We were then addressed by the Presidents of Poland and Israel and the President of the European Jewish Congress.

The Polish nation, together with its army, made this commemoration day very impressive, moving and much appreciated. I would have been pleased if the high dignitaries of the Polish Catholic church had been seen to be taking part in these ceremonies.

ROLL CALL OF THE DEAD

IN MEMORY OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OUTBREAK OF THE UPRISING IN THE WARSAW GHETTO

Polish Officer

This moving, poignant and meaningful "Roll Call of the Dead" was made by a Captain of the Polish Army on the 29th April 2003 at the monument of the Ghetto Fighters in Warsaw.

**Insurgents of the Warsaw Ghetto!
Soldiers of the Jewish Combat
Organisation and the Jewish
Military Alliance!
Countrymen!
Soldiers of the Polish Army!
Hear me Everyone!**

We are gathered today for a ceremonial Roll Call of the Dead, to commemorate the insurgents of the Warsaw Ghetto, participants of the first urban uprising in a Europe occupied by the Nazis. We are meeting here, before their monument, in a place sanctified by the blood of those who took up arms, in order to honour them and pay our respects.

I summon you, warriors of the Jewish Combat Organisation, and of the Jewish Military Alliance, and all Polish Jews who, in the face of the Nazi invasion, of blood-soaked occupation and the threat of extermination,

took up a heroic battle in defence of honour and respect, in defence of the Country and of Humankind. I call to you, insurgents of the Warsaw Ghetto! Your suffering and your deaths were not in vain, they have not been forgotten. You surrendered your lives in the name of your beloved city, of your faith and traditions, of the many centuries' history of Polish Jews, in the name of freedom and brotherhood on this your country's soil.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I call to you, defenders of the Ghetto from the units fighting in the region of Mila, Fanciszka, Niska, Nalewski, Swietojerska, Leszno, Nowolipki and Nowolipie Streets, of Gesia, Zamenhofa, Smocza, Majzelsa, Muranowska Streets. I summon the

defenders of bunkers, tunnels and "shops" who did not falter under the pressure of Nazi genocide and took up arms in heroic battle.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I call to you, Commander of the Jewish Combat Organisation, Mordecai Anielewicz. I summon the legendary defendants of the bunker at no 18 Mila Street, who for many days and nights stood firm at their combat posts under a crushing avalanche of fire. I call to you: Abraham Blunt, Michal Klepfisz, Efraim Fondaminski, Arie Wilner, Lutek Rotblat, Chaim Akerman, Szyj Szpancer, Motel Goldsztajn, Herszel Kawe, Eliezer Geller, Lev Rudnicki, Jurek Grynszpan, Meir Meierowicz.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
THEY DIED ON THE FIELD
OF GLORY!**

I summon all the combatants of the Jewish Military Alliance who fought to the last drop of blood, to the last shell against the overwhelming units of the fascist soldiers. I summon you, Commander of the Jewish Military Alliance David Apfelbaum and your subordinates: Pawel Frenkel, Leon Rodal, Heniek Zylberberg, Chaim Goldberg, Jankiel Akerman, Taube Pinkus.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
THEY DIED ON THE FIELD
OF GLORY!**

I summon you, the youngest defenders of the Ghetto. I summon you, Lusiek and Eliah Blones, Zygmunt Igla, Tadek Szangut, Szaaman Lent, Szlamek Szuster, Rysiek Maselman, Jurek Zolotov, Hoses Finkman.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
THEY DIED ON THE FIELD
OF GLORY!**

I summon the women from the Jewish combat units. I summon the heroic defenders of the bunker at no 41 Nalewki Street who fought to the last shell, Helena Sterling and Renia Niemiecka, I summon the women who died in the command bunker of the Jewish Combat Organisation - Hira Fuchrer and Frania Beatus.

I summon you, steadfast doctor Janusz Korczak, patriot and humanist bringing love to the youngest of the Ghetto's prisoners. I call to you, defenceless children brutally murdered in camps and places of extermination.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I summon you, Szmul Zygelbojm, unbowed defender of the life and honour of Polish Jews. Your

tragic death in protest against the Holocaust was a symbol of the struggle for the country's freedom and of human rights.

**PRESENT YOURSELF FOR
THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE HIS MEMORY!**

I summon you, members of the Council for Aid to the Jews (Zegota), bringing help to those persecuted by the Nazis. I call on you, defenders of the Jewish population. I summon you Zofia Kossak, Julian Grobelny, Padeusz Rek, Emilia Hizowa, Stefan Sendlak, Adolf Berman, Leon Felner, Lusia Hausman, Marek Arczynski.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I summon the leaders of the armed units of the Land Army, the People's Guard and the Safety Corps and those soldiers of the underground who offered help to the fighting troops of the Ghetto and who died a soldier's death in combat. I am calling to you Jozef Wilk, Eugeniusz Morawskj, Jerzy Lerner, Edward Bonsilawski.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I summon Jews, citizens of the Republic and of other states, brutally murdered in camps of mass extermination. I am calling to you, victims of the Holocaust, whose ashes remain in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Chelmno on the River Ner, Belzec, Stutthof, Gross Rosen. I summon those murdered in the forced labour camps of Janow in Lvov, Ponary in Vilno, Gnidow by Luck, Baranowicze and other places of Jewish torture dispersed round Europe.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I call to you - participants of the last battle against the Nazi executioners in the ghettos of Bialystok, Lublin

and Tarnow, in the camps of Sobibor, Trawniki, Treblinka and Poniatowa.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
THEY DIED ON THE FIELD
OF GLORY!**

I summon you, Jews - Polish soldiers fighting against the Nazi invaders from the first day of the Second World War to the last. I call to you, defenders of the Country in September 1939, soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces in the West, defenders of Narvik and France in 1940, sailors of the Republic's Combat Navy, soldiers at Tobruk and Monte Cassino, Ancona and Bologna, Chambois and Falaise, liberators of Ghent and Breda. I call to you Jews - soldiers of various armed units of the Polish underground and of Jewish underground units, participants of the Warsaw Uprising. I call to you, Jews - soldiers of the 2nd Polish Army Corps who died on the road from Lenino to the Elbe.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
THEY DIED ON THE FIELD
OF GLORY!**

I summon you, Jews - prisoners of war murdered in Majdanek in 1942, officers murdered by the NKVD at Katyn and other places of torture.

**STAND FOR THE ROLL-CALL!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

I address these words to you - the Descendants:

Remember for all times the sacrifice of blood and life made by the Jewish soldiers, insurgents and partisans, May their characters and their heroic actions remain for ever in Your consciousness, in the history of Poland and in the annals of the Jewish nation.

**GLORY TO THE HEROES!
SALUTE THEIR MEMORY!**

Mr. President of Israel,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Shma Israel, Hear me Poland! Sixty years ago darkness enveloped your lands as the last act of the drama of the Warsaw Ghetto Jews was playing itself out. Nazi criminals had decided that thousands of men, women, old folks and children herded into the walled-off enclosure would die a cruel death. The notorious deportations by cattle-train to extermination camps meant their wholesale slaughter. The few who managed to stay alive in the Ghetto defiantly turned down the offer of hope extended to them by the enemy. They had chosen to die free instead. And so, young members of the Jewish Combat Organisation and of the Jewish Military Union were getting ready for a fight to the bitter end. Marek Edelman, a leader of the Uprising, said:

"We knew we could not win. Still, we preferred to walk down the sunny side of the street.

Think of the beauty of dignity and freedom. We put up a fight in defence of all that".

The Uprising crowned with glory and honour the drama of the terrorised, starving and systematically whittled down Ghetto community. The outbreak of the fighting was a cry of despair and an accusation levelled at the world which knew what was going on and did nothing... The Polish government in exile and politicians of the Polish resistance movement had repeatedly implored the West to help the murdered Jews. But the world chose to turn a blind eye to the death of Szymon Zygielbojm, a member of the Polish National Council and a representative of the Bund, who had taken his own life in protest against both the Nazi crimes and the Allies' indifference and inaction in the face of the ongoing annihilation of Jews.

The Uprising, which went on for almost a month, could not stop the extermination of the Jews. That was an uneven struggle, there were too few fighters and the support given by the Polish resistance movement did not suffice to tip the scales in their favour. The Ghetto heroes, however, proved that the Nazi steamroller could be challenged, after all. And although the Uprising eventually failed; the values which motivated the Jewish fighters - prevailed. And we, who can now enjoy our freedom, whose dignity and rights are respected, salute the fighters for their bravery in the face of over-

SPEECH

OF PRESIDENT ALEKSANDER KWAŚNIEWSKI OF POLAND AT A GALA CONCERT TO COMMEMORATE HEROES OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING WARSAW, 30 APRIL 2003

whelming odds. I was deeply moved and honoured earlier today when I could decorate some of the surviving Warsaw Ghetto fighters.

Their heroic struggle was inspired by the same spirit which thousands of years earlier had animated Judas Maccabeus's insurgents and the defenders of Massada. The history of the struggle and martyrdom of the Warsaw Ghetto has now become part of the history of Israel. The idea of freedom fight, which was the guiding light for the Warsaw insurgents, is now one of the mainstays of the present-day Jewish State which has in its short history had to prove over and over again that it is capable of defending its freedom, democracy and endangered existence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must see to it that the developments of those days remain enshrined in our collective memory. For events of the dark "age of the ovens" tend to be forgotten when decades separate us from them. The Holocaust must not be allowed to dwindle to a footnote in history textbooks. The Holocaust was a drama of universal proportions. It was the product of an ideology spawned by hatred and demagoguery. Regrettably, one cannot be immunised for life against any of these diseases. Therefore we must keep fresh in our minds the drama of the Jewish people. And human conscience must ever be ready to cry out: never again!

However, the passing years and the world changing before our eyes prompt this pivotal question: what is to be done to keep alive our memory of those days? It was not the statistical data that perished in the gas chambers. The victims were children, their mothers, fathers and brothers. The memory of the Holocaust must be the memory of individual destinies. Writers and artists have an important role to play here. When we read the works of Imre Kertész, the ~Hungarian Nobel Prize-winning author, and when we follow the story

of the pianist ~Władysław Szpilman as told by Roman Polański, the reality of the Holocaust erupts into our consciousness. Culture brings powerfully home to us the horror of those years when it makes us see the world through the eyes of a persecuted man.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In his farewell letter, Szymon Zygielbojm wrote:

"I wish for this mere handful of people left of the several million-strong Polish Jewry to stay alive to see, together with the Polish masses, a liberated Poland, to breathe freely in Poland - and in the world of freedom and socialist justice - as a reward for their torment and inhuman suffering. And I do believe that such a Poland will arise and that precisely such a world will arrive one day."

When I see young Jews and young Poles united in the March of the Living I know that the world of Szymon Zygielbojm's dreams has now arrived, and that a free and just Poland has arisen. These young people will now be building their future while carrying the burden of responsibility for the defence of mankind against fanaticism and intolerance. Contacts of young Israelis and young Poles should become closer and closer in fulfilment of our responsibilities vis-à-vis the past and to raise hopes for the future.

It is our duty to remember not only the Ghetto heroes, but also the cause they fought and died for. The 21st century raises new threats. Many of them lash out at the very foundations of human dignity again. Terrorism, which has its roots in fundamentalism, denies entire nations, groups and followers of other religions the right to existence. Terrorism is contemptuous of principles. It is just eager to kill and maim and destroy. We cannot be indifferent to terrorism. The lesson drawn from history is about more than words - it is, above all, about courage to stand up to an ideology which hurts man and his rights.

The world exists thanks to three things: truth, justice and peace - the Talmud says. This is precious guidance. Peace is, indeed, our most important task and we should never ever lose sight of it. Let us remember justice, dignity and humanity the Ghetto Heroes fought and died for. Let us salute them.

PRONOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL MOSHE KATSAV ON THE OCCASION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING (Wednesday, 30.4.2003, Teatr Narodowy, in Hebrew) (Main points)

Today we are commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. At times it seems that thousands of years separate us from those days of Heroism and Destruction, at other times it seems that those tragic events have occurred only yesterday.

The Holocaust has inflicted a deep wound in the psyche of the Jewish People - a wound that is still bleeding. We are still pained by the terror of Shoah in spite of having built a modern and advanced state for the People of Israel. Our children are growing in a sovereign and democratic Jewish State and Israel belongs to the International Commonwealth of Nations, but that horrible trauma is still present in the collective memory of our people and constitutes an integral part of our life.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was a revolt by people without any resources or hope for victory over the Nazi beast. Indeed, the insurgents were defeated and destroyed, with great cruelty. The Uprising was a desperate expression of the will to live and of the hope for a future against all odds.

During those 27 days, starting with the first Passover Seder (which in 1943 fell on April 19th), Jewish fighters and thousands of Jews that remained in the Warsaw Ghetto after the latest deportations revolted against the Nazi forces. It was the first revolt of civilian urban population in occupied Europe. *Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa* counted several hundred fighters from various Jewish organizations that subscribed to a wide range of ideologies:

Hashomer Hatzair, Revisionists, Poale Zion Left, Dror, Akiva and Bund. Other ghetto residents joined them. And these inexperienced, weak, defenceless people were precisely those who fought for almost a month against a force a thousand times superior.

I bow before those killed in the Uprising, before their bravery and faith. I salute the fighters who participated in the Uprising and who are today with us in this room.

Dear Survivors, we pay homage to your bravery. The Jewish history, indeed the history of the entire mankind, is grateful to you for not having hesitated to raise the colours of revolt in the fight for freedom and justice, for your bold struggle in the defence of human honour.

Jews have lived in Poland for 800 years. Those 800 years knew good times and bad, periods of rise and fall in mutual relations. During those 800 years, Jews played various roles in Poland, were engaged in various walks of life, made a significant contribution to the construction and development of Poland.

Virulent anti-Semitism developed in Poland between the two world wars and many centuries of living in common came to naught. During World War Two, Jews fell victim to Nazi assassins and their henchmen, including Poles who had lost their conscience.

We do not forget the effort and bravery of many noble Poles who took upon themselves the burden of saving Jews during the Holocaust. We owe them our eternal gratitude and we have awarded them the Righteous Among the Nations Medal. Some of the recipients were members of the "Zegota" underground organization.

Today at noon we took part in a ceremony held at the square named in honour of the heroes of the Ghetto Uprising, next to the great monument designed by Nathan Rappaport. This is where the Ghetto once stood. The square is located in the very heart of Warsaw, a burgeoning city both then and now. That is where the Uprising broke out.

We also know how much the Polish nation has suffered under the Nazi occupation, but the life of Poles was, nevertheless, different from that of Jews. The Uprising broke out during Passover, a holiday of spring and love. It is then that a merry-go-round was erected on a square near the Ghetto in 1943. As the Polish poet and Noble Prize winner Czeslaw Milosz wrote:

Salwy za murem Getta
Gluszyła skoczna melodia
I wzlatywały pary
Wysoko w pogodne niebo

Czasem wiatr z domow plonacych
Przynosil czarne latawce
Lapali skrawki w powietrzu
Jadacy na karuzeli

Jewish and Polish histories intertwine. Poland is a birthplace of Zionism - the movement of revival of the Jewish People in their Motherland. Many first immigrants to Eretz Israel came from Poland.

One of the leaders of the Zionist movement, a signatory of the State of Israel Declaration of Independence, Icchak Grinbaum, was a member of the Polish Sejm before emigrating to Israel.

Four Israeli prime-ministers (David Ben Gurion, Icchak Shamir, Menachem Begin and Shimon Perez) were born in Poland.

At the beginning of the past century, Warsaw was the capital of Jewish life and culture. More than three million Jews lived in Poland in the 1930s. Jews made up one third of the Warsaw population.

Mr. President, I hold your decision to erect a Museum of the Polish Jewry in Warsaw in very high esteem. I am confident that the museum will greatly contribute to a further development of good relations between the people of Poland and Israel - a country whose youth flocks to Poland every year in such great numbers. The museum will certainly be a genuine forge of friendship between our nations and a forge of human relations, also for future generations.

Dear Friends, you are surely aware of the difficult period that we have been experiencing in Israel for the past two and a half years. The entire Free World has been struggling lately with horrible terror. Mankind has the right to exist without fear and apprehension. All progressive countries should unite in the struggle for a fear-free world.

The memory of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is engraved in our hearts, in the heart of the Jewish and Polish nations, now and for generations to come. The Uprising symbolised faith and hope of the entire mankind. It is a guiding light for us and for all those who will come after us.

On 24 August, before the close of the Zionist Congress, after reading the political resolution, engineer Kaplinski, a spokesman for the Political Commission, declared: "The Zionist Organisation and the Jewish nation stand on the side of Poland which is preparing to fight for her freedom and independence". The Congress received this declaration with tempestuous applause and cheers for Poland.

Can the Zionist Congress make declarations in the name of the whole Jewish nation? There will be those among Jews and non-Jews who might question their right to do so. These are people who do not grasp what the "nation" means, people who identify the concept of nationhood with an arithmetical total of individuals of the same cultural, religious and historical type. If, however, we bestow on the concept of "nation" a meaning which is not mechanical, if we regard it as an organic human collective, endowed with a shared idea and a shared spirit consciously aspiring to a common end, then there can be no doubt that the Zionist Congress is the only legitimate representation of the Jewish "nation". Therefore, the Zionist Congress had every right to speak in the name of the entire nation and declare that the Jewish nation at this time stands at Poland's side.

The Jewish nation? Who? Those scattered and unorganised groups of Jews in various countries, frequently oppressed and pushed outside the protection of the law? What meaning can that have? What value?

No, the Zionist Congress speaks in the name of a nationally enlightened Jewry, in the name of our national organism which is conscious of its aims and duties, in the name of the slowly evolving Jewish state. It's not just a half-million strong Jewish grouping in Palestine with certain state attributes and with the germ of an armed force that speaks through the lips of the Congress. Behind the Congress stands a sixteen million strong nation whose separate parts, domiciled in various countries, are truly under the preponderate influence of Zionism, listening to every word from the Congress platform which they regard as a moral guidepost for their own actions. Congress's declaration that the Jewish nation is on Poland's side signifies that three and a half million Polish Jews are at Poland's disposal not just on the strength of statutes, but also on the

THE ENTIRE JEWISH NATION - WITH POLAND!

Apolinary Hartglas

This article appeared on 1st September 1939 in "NOWY DZENNIK" (The New Daily) in Krakow. It was the largest of the three Zionist publications in the Polish language - CHWILA (Moment) and NASZ PRZEGLAD (Our Review) being the other two. All three newspapers came to an end with the invasion of Poland by Germany.

strength of a moral imperative, of their own will, as citizens and as Jews. Congress's declaration serves for all the declarations of the various Jewish parties and caucuses, the various organisations and groupings, serves for all declarations of the disparate faith communities. Congress's declaration signifies that:

ALL THOSE POLISH JEWS WHO ARE CAPABLE OF BEARING ARMS ARE READY TO JOIN AND GIVE THEIR BLOOD AND THEIR LIVES FOR POLAND, AND THAT THE WHOLE OF POLISH JEWRY IS READY TO MAKE ANY SACRIFICE DEMANDED OF IT BY THE STATE.

In numerous declarations, speeches and resolutions Polish Jewry had previously given voice to its readiness to make sacrifices of blood and property. Congress has simply endorsed it and given these acts of patriotism the mark of the will of the entire Jewish nation, not necessarily Polish citizens. Because Congress has declared that that is the will of the Jewish nation, and that means English Jews, French, American, Dutch, Belgian, Romanian and other Jews. And that means something. There is nowhere in the world an anonymous Jewish power about which our anti-Semites write: that is the invention of paid or honorary agents of the Third Reich. But there does exist a Jewish nation scattered throughout many countries which has influence and contacts in those countries. If this Jewish nation, through the lips of its most credible representative, makes it clear that it wants to use those influences and contacts for the good of Poland -

then it's moral capital that's not to be dismissed. If this capital had sufficient importance that, in order to acquire it for herself, Great Britain offered the Jews the Balfour Declaration, then we must assume that for Poland, too, the importance of this moral capital of sympathy and support cannot be any the less.

THE ENTIRE JEWISH NATION ON THE SIDE OF POLAND! OUR BLOOD AND LIVES, OUR PROPERTY AND MORAL SUPPORT - FOR POLAND! EVERYONE AT THIS SIGNIFICANT MOMENT TO THE RANKS, TO THE TRENCHES, TO THE DISPOSAL OF THE AUTHORITIES! IN THE DEFENSIVE WALL SURROUNDING POLAND WE MUST BE A BOULDER WELDED TIGHTLY WITH THE ENTIRE WALL.

This is about Poland whose citizens we are - but it's also about our own nation whose mortal enemy the Third Reich is. We, Jews, don't want war - just as the whole of Poland and the whole world doesn't want it. But we must remember that, whether war breaks out or not, Poland must emerge from this historic storm strengthened! And Jewry, as a nation focusing its historical ambitions of statehood in Palestine - will also emerge strengthened. Hitlerism can not triumph. It will either be defeated in a bloody general contest or it will have to surrender and gradually dismantle itself. And any dismantling of Hitlerism and its associated black and red fascisms must strengthen our standing in Palestine. Whether we want to or not - our cause is at present inextricably bound with the cause of Poland.

That's why the whole of our nation, whether in Poland or outside its borders, must walk alongside Poland and fight for Poland. We are not too timid nor too cowardly. We do not hide the fact that we have many complaints stemming from various steps taken to our disadvantage, even at such a critical time, in more or less authoritative quarters and the time will come to discuss them. But now is not the time for reproaches and recriminations. Now is the time to do our national duty. Together, jointly, shoulder to shoulder!

And therefore: the entire Jewish nation with Poland!

A CHILD'S WORLD UP TO 1939

Witold Gutt

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

Memories of Zamek Park and castle in ancient Przemysl.

Panorama of the San from Plac Glowny.

Lipowa Aleja of ancient trees.

Outings with mother to the cinema, a highlight of the week in a box at matinee time.

Summer holidays in Sianki in the Beskidy mountains, the source of the San and climb of the Pikuj the top peak.

Staying in the hotel designed by my father.

Games with my cousin Anka that "Nikt nie musi Wiedziec" ("No-one must know").

My cousin Edek in army uniform teaching me rank insignia, brought gifts of toy tanks and soldiers.

Early morning reading of Sienkiewicz, much patriotism, Mickiewicz, beautiful poetry in Pan Tadeusz

Trying to understand our own Tadeusz Peiper in his avant guard work of Polish poetry.

Reading Slowacki's Mary Queen of Scots, a strange story.

Learning about England and its great power.

The future infinite, so much information in Grandfather's library, wanting to be a scholar like him.

Only the beginning, it seemed then just before the deluge.

Witold Gutt
25.5.03

IN THE WARSAW GHETTO - SUMMER 1941

Rafael F. Scharf

Rafael E. Scharf was born in Cracow and came to England in 1939. He served in the British Army during the Second World War and by the end of it was a member of a War Crimes Investigation Unit. He has written and lectured extensively and most poignantly about the vanished world of Polish Jewry. He was a co-founder of the Jewish Quarterly, as well as of the Institute of Polish Jewish Studies in Oxford.

When the German army entered Warsaw on 20 September 1939, nearly 400,000 Jews were living in the city, roughly a third of the population. Immediately, they become the target of mounting repression, subjected to forced labour, prohibited from using railways and other public transport, made to wear the Star of David, stripped of their possessions. Virtually without protection of the law, they fell to the mercy of hooligans, sadists, and robbers, of whom there was no shortage. The daily food ration for Warsaw's Jews became 184 calories, compared with 669 for a Pole and 2,613 for a German.

On 2 October 1940, the Germans established an area into which all Warsaw Jews - roughly 138,000 people - along with persons of Jewish origin and Jewish refugees from the provinces were herded; some 113,000 'Aryans' living in that area had to leave.

The Germans then declared the district a 'plague-infested' zone, and the Jews were required to build a wall around it. The Germans did not like the word 'ghetto' and forbade its use; they referred to it as the 'Jewish residential district.' (Wolmbezirk). Indeed, the comparison with a medieval ghetto is totally

inappropriate, as it implies a degree of normality, where people were born, pursued their interests, died in their beds. In that 'district', surrounded by a ten-foot-high wall and a parapet of barbed wire, in a space of approximately 1,000 acres, a population of about 500,000 had to sustain itself; thirteen persons to a room, and many thousands without a roof over their heads. Nearly sixty percent of the population was left without a means of making a living.

In Warsaw, as in other occupied towns, the Germans designated a *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) as the body responsible - with their own lives - for the enforcement of orders in the Jewish community. After the establishment of the ghettos, the *Judenrat* was given control of the police, economic management, and all matters of food supply, housing, and education. Although this seemed to be giving Jews a great deal of managerial autonomy, in reality the Germans created the *Judenrat* solely for their own convenience. *Judenrat* members had no option whatsoever but to respond to every command or caprice of their masters. They were often charged with collecting punitive contributions, one method of reducing the Jewish population to penury. As might be expected - and this indeed was part of the German

plan - the *Judenrat* often attracted the fierce hostility and hatred of the Jewish population, deflecting these emotions from the real executioners. The role of the *Judenrat* remains a subject of controversy in the study of the behaviour of Jews under German occupation.

The Germans appointed Adam Czerniakow as head of the Warsaw *Judenrat* - it mattered little to them who would act as their puppet. Czerniakow kept a diary in which he noted his daily dealings with various German officials - a diary that remains a most important source of knowledge of that period. It shows Czerniakow, much maligned by his contemporaries, as an almost heroic figure, pleading and arguing with his implacable masters with great courage and dignity, wringing from them small concessions here and there, trying to persuade himself and those around him, in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary, that the worst would not happen. When it became clear, even to him, that 'resettlement' was a euphemism for murder, he refused to put his signature to a directive ordering the deportation of children, and took his own life. He was condemned by many as a coward, and his contemporaries comment bitterly in their diaries; he should have warned the ghetto, he should have issued a call for resistance. Later judgements are kinder to him. This points to the agonising moral dilemmas that often faced people in those apocalyptic times, dilemmas to which there was and is no answer.

The Warsaw Ghetto was a vast concentration camp with a simple ultimate purpose - to exterminate the Jews through hunger, through cold, through disease. As time went on, it became common to see corpses on the street. Bands of children roamed the alleyways searching for food scraps. Even though the gates were guarded and the penalty for leaving the ghetto without permission was death, the residents tried to survive by smuggling food from the outside. Risking their lives, children proved the most effective smugglers and supporters of their families. The



German governor, Hans Frank, stated in a report, 'It is not necessary to dwell on the fact that we are sentencing the Jews to death. If the Jews do not die of starvation, it will be necessary to step up anti-Jewish measures, and let us hope that, too, will come to pass.' Frank's vision soon materialised in the fulfilment of the Wannsee Conference decision on the 'Final Solution'. In July 1942, under the pretext of 'resettlement,' a mass deportation to the death camps began and continued, with short pauses, until mid-September. During those seven weeks some 265,000 Jews were transported to Treblinka and murdered in the gas chambers. Some of the victims, lured by the promise of food, presented themselves voluntarily at the Umschlagplatz - the railway siding from which the human cargo was packed into cattle trucks and dispatched to the death camps. The deportation drastically reduced the ghetto population; 35,000 inhabitants were permitted to stay - mainly workers employed in German workshops and their families. In addition, some 25,000 Jews were hiding in the ghetto illegally. Under such conditions, as a defiant gesture and in a quixotic attempt 'to die as human beings', Jews organised a resistance. A few hundred desperate people, gathered from the whole spectrum of Jewish society, formed battle units, arming themselves with a few pistols, submachine guns,

and Molotov cocktails. In all, their defence amounted to very little. On 19 April 1943, when German troops entered the ghetto to liquidate the last remnants of the population, they met with armed resistance. To their surprise and shock, the Jewish fighters inflicted losses on them and forced them to retreat. The outcome of the battle was, of course, never in doubt for a moment. General Juergen Stroop crushed the uprising with tanks, heavy artillery and flame-throwers. Avoiding open street combat, he systematically burned the houses, block by block. German bombs and hand grenades killed the fighters huddled in bunkers and canals. In spite of that, the battle continued sporadically until 8 May 1943. As a final, triumphant act in the war against the Jews, General Stroop blew up the Great Synagogue in Warsaw and wrote in his report: 'The Jewish residential district is no more.'

The Warsaw Ghetto uprising had an enormous effect on the morale of the Jews and non-Jews around the world. The longest battle against the Germans in occupied Europe before April 1943, the uprising story has become a legend.

We owe a great deal of our knowledge of that period to the effort and initiative of one man, Emanuel Ringelblum (1900 - 1944). A teacher, historian and social worker, he is one of the unsung heroes of our time. From the initial outbreak of

war, he became one of the chief organisers of Warsaw self-help and mutual assistance committees. He kept a chronicle of events and, at his inspiration, in the autumn of 1940, a group with the cryptonym 'Oneg Shabbat' (the Joy of the Sabbath) started writing bulletins describing and documenting the situation. Under his guidance, *Oneg Shabbat* developed a network of reporters all over the country who collected information in response to a prepared questionnaire. They thought, rightly, that every scrap of paper relating to Jewish life would be of inestimable historical value. Thus they collected official posters, public announcements, diaries, letters, advertisements, packaging, copies of the monitored foreign radio broadcasts and, above all, newspapers and news sheets of the many underground groupings. They commissioned special reports on various aspects of life and fed news items to the Polish underground press.

The Germans took little interest at first in what the Jews were doing among themselves. Jews could write, talk, curse and gossip almost openly. They could discuss in the streets and cafés the illegal news-sheets that circulated freely in the ghetto. Semi-official and clandestine committees sustained the fabric of communal life on all levels, alleviating hunger, providing education, organising cultural events, setting up projects for medical research, generally keeping up the spirits and the morale of the population. Behind the façades of the tenement houses, around the large, typical Warsaw courtyards, cultural and religious life took on new forms adapted to the unprecedented, immediate needs.

The network of the Oneg Shabbat was the first to obtain eyewitness reports of the mass murder by gas in Chelmno, the first to raise the alarm in the Polish underground press and, finally, abroad. On 26 June 1942, the BBC broadcast news of the extermination of Polish Jews, based on reports sent by Ringelblum. He noted: 'By alerting the world to



our fate we fulfilled a great, historic mission. Maybe this will save some hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews. The near future will show. I don't know which one of our group will remain alive, whom fate will choose to make use of our archives, but of one thing we are certain - that our sacrifices, the risks taken, the tension of constant danger, our toil and suffering, have not been in vain.' As the noose tightened, the danger of losing the archives caused serious concern. A few months before the liquidation of the ghetto, all materials were assembled, packed into sealed milk churns and metal containers and buried in a cellar deep under the ghetto buildings. After the war, in 1946 and 1950, two parts of the treasure were found under the mountain of rubble which was all that remained of the ghetto. The third part must be considered beyond retrieval, and the sense of its loss is haunting.

The recovered collection consists of some forty thousand pages, mostly still awaiting analysis and publication. The largest and the most important archive of the era, it remains a priceless source of what we currently know and may yet know about the life and death of the Warsaw Ghetto and the destruction of Polish Jews.

Ringelblum gave of himself unstintingly to the last. In March 1943 he was persuaded to leave the ghetto and find shelter on the 'Aryan

side.' On 18 April, the day before the last deportation and the eve of the ghetto uprising, he re-entered the ghetto, wishing to spend Passover with the last survivors. He was caught in a roundup and sent to a concentration camp near Lublin. When his location became known, a team smuggled him out of the camp and brought him back to his Warsaw hiding place, reuniting him with his wife and son. He continued writing; amazingly, without access to books and sources, he wrote one of his key studies, *The Relations Between Poles and Jews in the Second World War*. In March 1944 the Gestapo discovered Ringelblum's hiding place, which reputedly housed sixty people. All of the Jews and the Polish family who sheltered them were taken to the Pawiak prison and shot - within a stone's throw of the ghetto.

In one respect, at least, the Germans were unlucky in their choice of victims. The Jewish people were determined to leave a trace of their fate, at whatever cost. Feeling abandoned by God and man, they were haunted by the thought that the world would not know how they lived and died. Writing made dying easier. The last entry in Chaim Kaplan's diary before his deportation to Treblinka was his anguished cry: 'If I die - what will happen to my diary?'

Primo Levi, in *The Drowned and the Saved*, imagines members of the S.S.

taunting their victims: 'However this war may end, we have won the war against you, none of you will be left to bear witness, and even if someone were to survive, the world would not believe him. There will perhaps be suspicions, discussions, research by historians, but there will be no certainties, because we will destroy the evidence together with you. And even if some proof should remain and some of you survive, people will say that the events you describe are too monstrous to be believed; they will say that they are exaggerations of Allied propaganda and will believe us, who will deny everything, and not you.'

Because of these writers and scribblers, the truth has been recorded, has become known to the world, and no-one but a maniac or pervert will deny it. These testimonies give us a picture of consummately hideous times. They show us the depth to which humans can descend, and they document how hatred can bring hell on this earth.

The photographs (a few of which are shown here) were handed to me by Willy Georg, a former soldier in the German army, to whose doorstep I was led by friends who knew of my consuming interest in this field. Willy Georg is now over eighty years old - of a generation of Germans with whom I am not at ease without further probing. I am satisfied that he is not suspect; a man of good education and a fairly prosperous background, a professional photographer; at the age of thirty, when these photographs were taken, he was still in the humble rank of Funke-1 radio operator. This does not point to someone who was favoured by or benefited from membership in the Nazi party.

How did these photographs come to be taken: Willy Georg has a clear recollection. He was stationed with his unit in Warsaw (in a district called Mokotow, he thinks). Known to his colleagues and superiors as a professional photographer, he was earning extra money to send home by taking snapshots of his fellow soldiers. One day, in summer of

1941, his officer called him and said, lightheartedly: 'There are some curious goings-on behind that wall. I am issuing you with a pass to enter the enclosed area through one of the gates. Take your Leica, and food for the day, and bring back some photos of what you find.'

He did as he was told. He entered the ghetto, walked around, snapped what he saw on four rolls of film, loaded the fifth. Toward evening a German police detachment entered the ghetto, spotted him, and told him to hand over the camera. They opened the back and removed the film. Georg said nothing about the four rolls in his pocket. His credentials verified, he was led outside the gates. He developed the film himself in a photo laboratory in Warsaw. He is proud of his professionalism; after half a century, the film looks as crisp as new. He sent the film home, to his wife in Munster. He gave it little thought in the intervening years, until lately, when he felt the time was approaching to make his final dispositions.

He felt shocked to the core, he says, when he saw these photos anew and recalled those times. It would have been tempting to ask him how he felt then, fifty years ago, when he came unprepared upon that horrific scene, unlike anything he could have encountered before. But there would have been no point in this; all he would have said is what he thinks of it now, or, rather, what he thinks would be appropriate to say to me now. He remembers how polite these people were to him. Although he might not have known it, they had to be polite; a Jew encountering a German was obliged by order to doff his cap and step off the pavement

This photographic record is not unprecedented. Other photographs still exist that were taken in the ghetto by the Germans around that time and later. (The most famous image - of a small boy in a peaked cap, with his hands raised - stems from one such source.) A team from the German Propaganda Ministry assembled a collection that is now in

the official German archives in Koblenz. These photographs were made with the explicit purpose of showing the degradation of the subhuman race, of their indifference to the suffering of their brethren (look how they pass the corpses lying on the street without batting an eyelid), of people allegedly enjoying themselves playing cards in coffee houses. These photographers and their masters were clearly unaware of the reverse effect of their work ultimately, the images degrade not the victims but those who created them.

Willy Georg's snapshots, on the other hand, were totally spontaneous; they simply record the passing scene. The people caught in these photographs - busy, feverish, emaciated, oppressed, but still living a life of sorts - are unaware of the unthinkable cruel end that awaits them shortly. Virtually none will escape a horrible death. One's instinct is to shout a word of warning - Run! Hide! - but it is too late. At that stage nothing, but nothing, they could have done or left undone would have had the slightest effect on their fate. To many of us who grew up within or next to that human landscape and who remember it lovingly, these people - shameful to confess - did not at that time look attractive. These misty eyes, beards, sidelocks, crooked noses - one looked away, embarrassed by what a non-Jewish onlooker might feel or say. It now seems clear that these faces, etched with worry and wisdom, lit with inner light, otherworldly, Rembrandtesque, were inexpressibly beautiful. Set against that rogue's gallery, the flowers of the 'master race' - Gobbels, Goering, Streicher, Frank, and Hitler himself - little more need be said. These photographs give a last glimpse of a people to be murdered, leaving the world forever and irreparably the poorer for it. The lessons of their lives become more valuable as the time approaches when there will be no living witnesses, and future generations might find such things beyond belief.

A PROMISING BIT OF BUSINESS

Janina Fischler Martinho

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

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

The very first time I visited the Brzesko Ghetto - and I was to visit it three times between July and December 1942 - I went there on a business errand. Today, the mission I travelled on may seem bizarre but, in 1942, in German-occupied Poland where the Jew was being mercilessly hunted and murdered, it was a normal enough transaction, though very perilous.

A Brzesko Jewish family wished to transfer their residence from the town and its Ghetto to the deep countryside, which was still open to the Jews, and where they would join close relations. I was recommended to the family by a mutual acquaintance. I was to be their guide, but what exactly that function entailed I did not know. I would be remunerated for my services. Money and food were in very short supply. I was very pleased to have landed such a promising bit of business.

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

I located the family whom I was to accompany in their bold, and

highly hazardous, undertaking. They lived in a shabby, one-storey house - occupying a biggish room on the ground floor. The room was full of men, and they all seemed to be talking at the same time in loud, excited tones. A tall, fair-haired woman came towards me and asked me what I wanted. I told her who I was and why I had come. She said: "Yes, yes... sit down..." and rejoined the group of gesticulating, squabbling men. Nobody evinced the slightest interest in my presence. They went on talking, quarrelling it seemed to me - their voices raucous and impassioned. And every second word was "geld".

I had come from the Cracow Ghetto, quite a long way, and I felt hot and thirsty. I would have liked a piece of bread and a drink of water, but I would not ask outright. Asking would be tantamount to begging. It was shameful to beg in my world. I had not reached that stage yet. The fair-haired woman was the only one I could have addressed myself to. But she was sitting with the men - though at a little respectful distance from the hotly arguing group - her back to me. Money. It was a male preserve.

The men very brave - the year was 1942 - sporting a beard and side-locks was a direct invitation to torment and death. They were all soberly dressed in dark, heavy garb, the sweat trickling from under their hats onto pale, anxious faces. They were Chasidim. I knew that at a glance. They were permeated by a detachment from others which I had learnt to associate with them. Close proximity to God, to that lofty, supreme Seat of Love and Goodness, removed them from earthly concerns. It rendered them quite obli-

ous, quite distant to other, perhaps less fervent, and thus less worthy, tainted, human beings. And a small girl. No more than a fly on the wall.

I continued to sit in the airless, buzzing room. And then I noticed, near the stove, a bucket of clean water with a tin mug attached to it by a slender chain. I went and helped myself to the water. It was brackish, tepid, but it still refreshed me, quenched my thirst. Nobody said anything.

I sat there for a long time... The men - their eyes feverish, restless, their movements nervous, jerky, their voices rasping hoarsely - continued their arguments punctuated by the word "geld". And then suddenly, but discontentedly, they reached a truce. The woman stood up and came towards me. "Come," she said. I followed her. We left the room and went out into the courtyard. She opened a decaying wooden door to a small communal privy. It was so tiny we could only just shut it again. The stench congealed, solidified hit one in the face like a sharp blow, wrapped itself round one in a thick, glutinous vapour. A most primitive deep pit in the ground, round its hideous rim blue-bottle flies gorged, drunk on the filth, were crawling laboriously.

"We are catching the afternoon train, so as to arrive at dusk - my husband, our boy and I. We are not carrying any luggage. It's been sent on. We want you to carry this for us. Carry it on you..." She plunged her hand into the neckline of her loose-fitting summer frock, right down into its cushioned depths, and produced, along a formidable cleavage, a small drawstring bag. She did not say what it contained. She did not need to. I knew. "Put it round your neck," she

said. "Stuff it into your dress. Oh dear, but you're flat-chested. Look how it bulges out!"

It was a very thick wad of banknotes. It came out against my child's breast in a huge, grotesque outcrop. "This won't do," she said. "Push it onto your side, into your armpit. Keep it there, pressed with your arm. Oh, but you're painfully flat-chested ... Yes, that's better. One can't see it now. Keep your arm pressed against your side.."

The reek rising from the cess-pool against which we were standing was sickening, suffocating. The woman seemed impervious to it, but I wanted to retch, to vomit violently, and I was no hot-house flower. At last she pushed the door open. We came out.

We entered the room again and she, her husband, who was clean-shaven, and their son, proceeded to take leave of the others; kissing and hugging, giving last minute injunctions, urgent recommendations, tender blessings, the Chasidim, tears in their eyes, clung to the travellers unable to let go... They were tenderly affectionate and soft-hearted towards their kith and kin, their own... Their love, their solicitude were so deeply felt, so sincerely manifested that the scene was painful to behold.

The four of us walked down the quiet, dusty street. It was warm and close. We appeared to be a family; parents and two children. They were uncannily unjewish in looks. Fair-haired, light-eyed, with regular, unremarkable features and calm, self-contained expressions and gait. And although they must have been inwardly shivering with fear, they did not show it. They walked naturally, not too fast, not too slow. The man had taken hold of my hand. He twined his fingers round it. The woman was holding the boy by the hand. Over her arm she carried a housewife's shopping basket. We attracted no attention. In any case, there were few people about. We did not see a single German uniform.

We reached the station and entered the large, cool waiting-room. They seemed to know exactly what they were doing. The train was due soon. We sat down on the long

wooden bench. They already had the tickets. The woman quietly produced them. There was no fumbling, no looking ...

I felt the man tighten his grip on my hand. He must have been dead scared. I remembered how my Father and I used to hold hands. The joy, the warmth, the inner comfort I derived from that contact. I would never hold my Father's hand again. He was dead.

The man had not said one word to me. Had not looked at me. Had not smiled. I resented his callous, wooden indifference. I was an object to be discarded once I had fulfilled my function. Someone else's child. They were buying my services. They would pay me off.

It was a dreadful time. No feelings. No concern. No misericordia. The milk of human kindness had dried up. Terror had sucked it out. And yet I was mistaken. It was not so. In the months, in the years to come I would experience, at first hand, I would witness with my own eyes proof that it was not so.

The four of us were the only ones to board the train at Brzesko station. It was not crowded and we sat down; the man and I opposite the woman and the boy. We did not speak. The family remained calm and placid. The woman took out her knitting - a black sock suspended from four needles. Her hands were not trembling. The man rolled himself a cigarette. His fingers were steady. The boy gazed out of the window as children do. And yet it was a most audacious undertaking. For a Jewish family to board a public transport conveyance, to let themselves be carried to a destination of their own choosing in Poland, in the summer of 1942, was an act of mind-seizing boldness. And two of the travellers were of the male gender. The tension, the fear within me were overpowering. I did not want to be caught with them. How must they have felt? They remained so quiet, so composed. The boy's face, glued to the window-pane, had an expression of carefree wonder upon it.

I stood up and went to the wash-room. I locked myself in. My arm was stiff from pressing against my

side. I straightened it out. Let it flop. I got hold of the cotton bag and pulled it over my head. I loosened the drawstrings and peered inside. I had never seen so much money. Such a thick wad and such large denominations! I peeled off a thin layer and slipped it inside my vest. Right down against the barrier formed by the elastic of my knickers. My frock was not waisted. It was lightly gathered from a yoke. The layer of money was so thin. Nobody would notice.

I returned to the compartment and quietly sat down next to the man. I turned my face towards the window.

The woman put aside her knitting and drew a small white bundle from the basket. She placed it on her lap and unwrapped the white cloth. There was a large piece of plain, yellow, home-baked cake in it. She broke it in half pretty equally. She offered one piece to the boy, the other to me. I cupped my hands under the cake so as not to lose a crumb of it. It was good. Made with fresh eggs and sugar. I felt somewhat mollified by the cake. I should have felt a twinge of shame, guilt, mental discomfort... I knew it was very wrong to steal. "Ah," the reader might say: "She would not beg, but she would steal." A nice point to dissect in a dissertation on ethics..." I looked down at their feet and mine. My shoes were virtually disintegrating. Theirs were strong and sturdy. They were well fed. They were decently dressed. Above all, they were a family - together! It was the summer of 1942.

We alighted from the train at the village of Grodkowice. Again, only the four of us. The sky was darkening. Dusk was setting in. The sun-baked country road, white and deserted, stretched before us. The man had let go of my hand, as if it were an inanimate object, as soon as the train had pulled out of the station. The woman said: "... my little bag..." I gave it to her. She stuffed a banknote into my hand.

They marched off briskly. The boy in the middle flanked by his mother and father. They had their arms round the child's shoulders.

TWO DEATHS

Wladyslaw Szlengel
(translated by
Janina Fischler-Martinho)

Szlengel was a well-known writer and poet and his poetry was written as a reaction to the daily events and the atmosphere and thoughts of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Your death and our death
are two different deaths.
Your death is a stalwart death,
ripping, quartering.
Your death upon grey fields
rich with blood and sweat.
Your death - the bullets' death
for a reason - ... for the Motherland.
Our death - a mug's death.
in the attic, in the cellar,
Our death like a dog skulking
round the street corner.
Your death a cross will mark,
a comment on the news,
Our death - a wholesale clearance,
shovelled in - done.
Your death - you greet each other,
half-way, face to face,
Our death - a furtive death
dug in sheer terror.
Your death - an ordinary death,
human and everyday,
Our death - a squalid death,
Jewish and - repugnant.
Our death is to your death
a distant, poor relation.
When yours meets our death,
there, surely, is no greeting.
And on a dark night through a pall of
haze over the city - in hell's dim light
two deaths malign and curse
each other furiously.
On a low wall - looking both ways,
spying on the bickering
sits that same avid, sly, evil
one and only Life

PASSPORTS

Wladyslaw Szlengel
(translated by
Janina Fischler-Martinho)

I wish I had a Uruguayan
passport,
I sigh, what a beautiful land...
I sigh, how pleasant it is to be
the citizen of a land, which bears
the name of Uruguay...

I wish I had a Paraguayan
passport,
That free and golden land,
I sigh, how pleasant it is to be the
citizen of a land, which bears
the name of Paraguay.

I wish I had a Costa Rican
passport,
The freshness of a celadon sky...
for every May...
I sigh, how pleasant it is to be able
to say,
It so happens that Costa Rica is
my land...

I wish I had a Bolivian passport,
Like my two friends...
Bolivia - the country of resinous
scent
I sigh, what a beautiful land...

I wish I had a Honduras passport,
(Honduras - the sound of an east-
ern paradise..).
How pleasant it is to let slip, from
time to time,
Honduras, it so happens, is my
land...

I wish I had a Uruguayan passport,
Or Costa Rican, or Paraguayan,
So as to live peacefully in Warsaw,
For this, after all, is the loveliest
land.

HERE AND NOW

GENERAL PATON PAID A VISIT TO OUR SHTETL

Jack Kagan

Jack came to England to join his relatives and has been a member of our society since its inception in 1963 and a very active committee member.

In 1998 I decided to write my memoirs. When I showed it to a British-born friend, he looked at me in disbelief. And I could understand him.

Like building a tunnel of 250 metres long and making a successful escape; to be in the forest with a detachment of 1,230 Jewish partisans; to stay in an area just 4 - 5 kilometres from a German garrison.

So I decided to travel to Belarus and search for documents to verify the unbelievable story. By the time I finished my book "Surviving the Holocaust with Russian Jewish Partisans" (published by Valletine Mitchell 1998), I collected hundreds of documents from Russian archives from Yad Vashem and Scotland Yard in London. But, as is always the case, after launching the book, I found out that Bielski himself had written a book in Hebrew "Forest Jews". I had it translated into English and with Michael Bielski's permission, I would like you to read an extract from the book about General Platon's visit to our base in Naliboki.

Just a little background to the story.

When the Germans came in to Novogrudok, the Bielski brothers, Tuvia, Zush, Asael, and the 12 year old Archik, went straight to the forest to hide. Very soon some of their families joined them. They were a total of thirty people. By that time there were many Russian soldiers that had escaped from prisoner of war camps, criminals roaming the forests of Belarus; they were not partisans, they were just bands of people trying to survive.

The Jews started to escape from the ghettos and from the camps after the second wave of mass killings in Western Byelorussia, August 1942.

By that time, contact was made with a kind Pole (Bobrovski) and a Yiddish-speaking Belorussian (Kozlovski). They, in fact, lifted the spirit of the Jews. They formed a route of escape.

The real Partisan movement started around 23.2.43 (the day of the Russian army) when General Platon, together with high-ranking officers, was parachuted, and they organised the detachments and brigades of the partisan movements in Western Byelorussia.

General Platon split the Bielski detachment, 200 to remain in the

district of Novogrudok. They were the fighting force and they were named after the Russian General Ordzhonikidze, and the family group of about 900 people, with about 180 fighters, were moved to the Naliboki dense forest, where life was much safer as it was further away from German garrisons. But where do you get food from? Bielski decided to build a Shtetl there, living accommodation and workshops to help the partisan movement in the fight against the Nazis.

And on 31.12.43 General Platon paid a visit to our little shtetl.

Visit to our camp by General Platon and its consequences

By Tuvia Bielski

When we heard that the regional Soviet partisan commander, General Platon, was coming for a visit, the people set to work to clean and beautify the camp. Platon arrived at our camp on 31 December 1943 with an entourage of forty people, mostly from the Kutuzov group, who acted as his personal guards. They were from Russia and their modern equipment was the envy of the entire camp.

While Platon came to our command hut, the rest of his entourage toured the camp. We treated the guest to a meal with the best of our products: sausages, pickled meats, stuffed cabbages and, of course, schnapps (vodka).

We first entered the large light-industries building. Matitiyahu Kabak, a lawyer, called the group to attention. Platon made some conciliatory remarks and told the people to get back to work. We moved from group to group, and the General was astonished at the industriousness and dedication of the workers. Esther Goroditzskaya, from Stolavitzi, was responsible for the twelve women and two sewing machines that continually hummed. Platon shook her hand and asked about the conditions, the way of life and the food. He did this with every workshop leader.

They all praised me, the commander. The hat makers sat close by, and Platon spoke with Leibovitch, the

foreman. He spent some time with the saddle makers and told the foreman that every saddle made in the camp was like ambushing the enemy.

The shoemaker's workshop employed twenty-two people, and he saw a number of rifles hanging on the walls. Kolchak, the foreman of the shoemakers, described how the shoemakers kept their weapons close to hand twenty-four hours a day. There were four hairdressers working and Platon invited the chief hairdresser to make a working visit to his headquarters. With this he finished meeting with the first group of workshops.

Platon started the second round of visits with the tailors. Shmuel Kagan from Novogrudok headed a group of eighteen tailors. Platon was surprised at the quality of the goods. He was even more surprised when he met the watchmakers. They were working on many watches. Pinchuk, the foreman, explained that they did work for many people in the region. This concluded our visit to the workshops.

Then we went over to meet with the three people in the metal workshop. Oppenheim the foreman was also a watchmaker, who had been wounded during the German attack on the Zavidovo forest. He had been on guard duty at the time and was seriously wounded. There were many weapons under repair, from rifles to machine guns, and submachine guns, and they were assem-

bling new weapons from spare parts.

Then we went to the carpentry workshop where Netta Huberman from Mir was in charge. Here we manufactured the stocks for the rifles and submachine guns, and windows and doorframes and other articles. Outside the workshops there was a large wooden tank that served as our tannery. We had six such tanning tanks. Mordecai Berkowitz was in charge of the four blacksmiths and we prepared the charcoal ourselves. We simply burnt trees in the forest. Even the bakery supplied us with large quantities of charcoal.

At the time of our visit, Bashitz the blacksmith was busy manufacturing the upper parts of rifle breeches, very delicate work indeed. This made an impression on Platon and he asked for more information about the work.

Then Platon interjected: "Many breeches Comrade, to attack the German fascists!"

We stopped next to the empty jailhouse, and the visitor wanted to know if there was anything else to see in the camp.

"No", I told him, "these are the flowers. The fruit is still to come."

I took him to see the tannery, where Orkovitz from Baranovitch was in charge. His assistant was Muksay, and they worked with a dozen people. There were six wooden tanks full of hides. With the final product we produced soles and other leather goods. Platon was

amazed at the ingenuity - and all within the confines of the forest.

Then we moved to the bakery where the ovens were full of bread. Mordecai Gershovitz from Lida, a noted baker, was in charge, but Platon was even more surprised when he saw our sausage factory. So I said to him, "Visit us often and we will be glad to share our bounty with you."

From there I took our guest to show him our food stores, where we had a three-day supply of bread, meat, and two kilograms of rusks per person. Small bags of dried produce were hanging on the walls. The guest sampled several of the products.

Then we moved on to the soap-making workshop, and he requested that we send soap to his headquarters. From there we went to the slaughterhouse. There were two ritual slaughterers, Rabbi David Brook from Novogrudek and an old man from Varnuva. They had prepared the knives and they deemed them completely kosher.

We moved to the flourmill and met with the miller Reznick. Finally, the last stop - where we witnessed the production of resins from the barks of the fir trees for use in the tannery. Shmuel Mikolitzky from Novogrudok was the expert in charge of the process.

"Is it possible that you are making vodka here?" Platon asked.

Then we moved on to the hospital, where we met with Dr Hirsch, who complained to Platon about the difficult conditions and the lack of medical supplies. Platon promised that with the next supply aircraft he would send them parachute silk and more medical supplies. There were two other doctors with us at the time, Dr Lepkovitz and a woman, but I cannot remember her name; there were also twenty nurses.

Then we returned to our staff hut where Platon spoke for half an hour, promising help, and praising us. He then requested that I ride with him to visit Sokolov. He also insisted on seconding me to his staff, to stop all further interference and improve relations amongst the groups.

Four of us accompanied Platon. Besides me, there was Lazar Malbin, Gordon, who had known Platon before the war, and Eliyahu Bleicher, my second in command. We visited the Dzerzhinsky Brigade, and all night we partied in honour of the New Year. The following morning

we drank some more and then rode over to visit Sokolov. We reached his headquarters on the afternoon of 1 January 1944, and the partying started again. Later that night we finally sat down to a serious meeting that continued into the morning of January 2. We did not hold back in our drinking, but we never forgot where we came from or who we were.

Besides Platon and Sokolov, Major Valery from the central "Special Section", Sashkin, the commander of the Dzerzhinsky Brigade, Malbin, Gordon and I participated in the meeting. Genia, who was in charge of the radio, and had parachuted in from Russia, acted as secretary.

When my turn came I suggested that we change the name of our group to Platon, but Platon insisted that the group would now be known simply as the Bielski Group. He appointed Gordon to be Deputy Commissar. It seems that Gordon and Platon were friends from Radun. When the Russians occupied eastern Poland in the early summer of 1944, Platon had an important position in the Soviet Regional government. Gordon was a cripple; he walked with great difficulty and it seems to me that he had connections with the Communist Party.

Before we left for home, Sokolov told me that in another week to ten days I would accompany him on a tour to visit the various units in his brigade.

The most important thing that was achieved at this meeting was the cancellation of the orders concerning Asael. He was now appointed Commander of the Partisan Fighting Forces of our group. I pressed for this, and used the fact that Platon was so impressed with our camp as an additional lever. I noted Asael's military prowess and all that he had done up until that time, and what he still was capable of doing in the military arena. Without him, I said, I could not maintain a cohesive fighting force, and without this force I could not maintain the integrity of our group; and we all know how important it was for our group to continue to exist. One thousand productive and loyal citizens were certainly worth preserving.

I rode with Sokolov on his tour. We also visited the Kirov Brigade, whose commander was Vasilayev. We came to inspect conditions, and review his partisans. Sokolov spoke

with several members of the Brigade and called a meeting of the Brigade Commanders, among them, Zusia, who was commander of the Ordzonikidze Brigade. Victor Panchenko presented a report on his group, "October". Sasha Kanonov reported on the "Iskara" group, and the Gypsy gave a report on the Baltiatz Group. This gypsy had served in the Russian Baltic Fleet. Hence the name of his group. I gave a report on the doings of our group. The last one to speak was Vasilayev.

I spoke about what had occurred after Vasilayev had robbed my partisan fighters. I reminded everyone of Sojkolov's promise during the bad days in the dense forest that all the partisans would help us. I reminded them of Vasilayev's promise that our partisans of the Ordzonikidze Brigade, with Zusia at its head, would help us, the families.

Despite these promises, they were delaying our food convoys. Once, some of Panchenko's men had done this, and the second time, Vasilayev's men. I didn't complain about Victor, because I knew that his people had done it without his authorisation, while Vasilayev, as Commander, had given the order personally. Vasilayev interrupted me and said he had only expropriated salt.

I answered:

"Why did you search our wagons if there were no other things than food aboard?"

Loudly and aggressively I said:

"You know that there are women and children and elderly people with us and we have a hospital. We need honey. We need clothes for the women and children. How can you interfere? If you had wanted salt, I would have given you the salt. But what you did was simply an act of plunder."

Sokolov calmed me down.

"Let's not get excited here."

I told him that according to the Soviet law, the guilty should be punished.

Vasilayev apologised and reiterated that he was not against us. On the contrary, he respected my talents. Later, Vasilayev's conduct was noted officially in his military file.

In January, Asael and his partisans destroyed trains, and several German army vehicles and in every case we retrieved much military booty. During that time, Major Shastakov came from the east to the dense

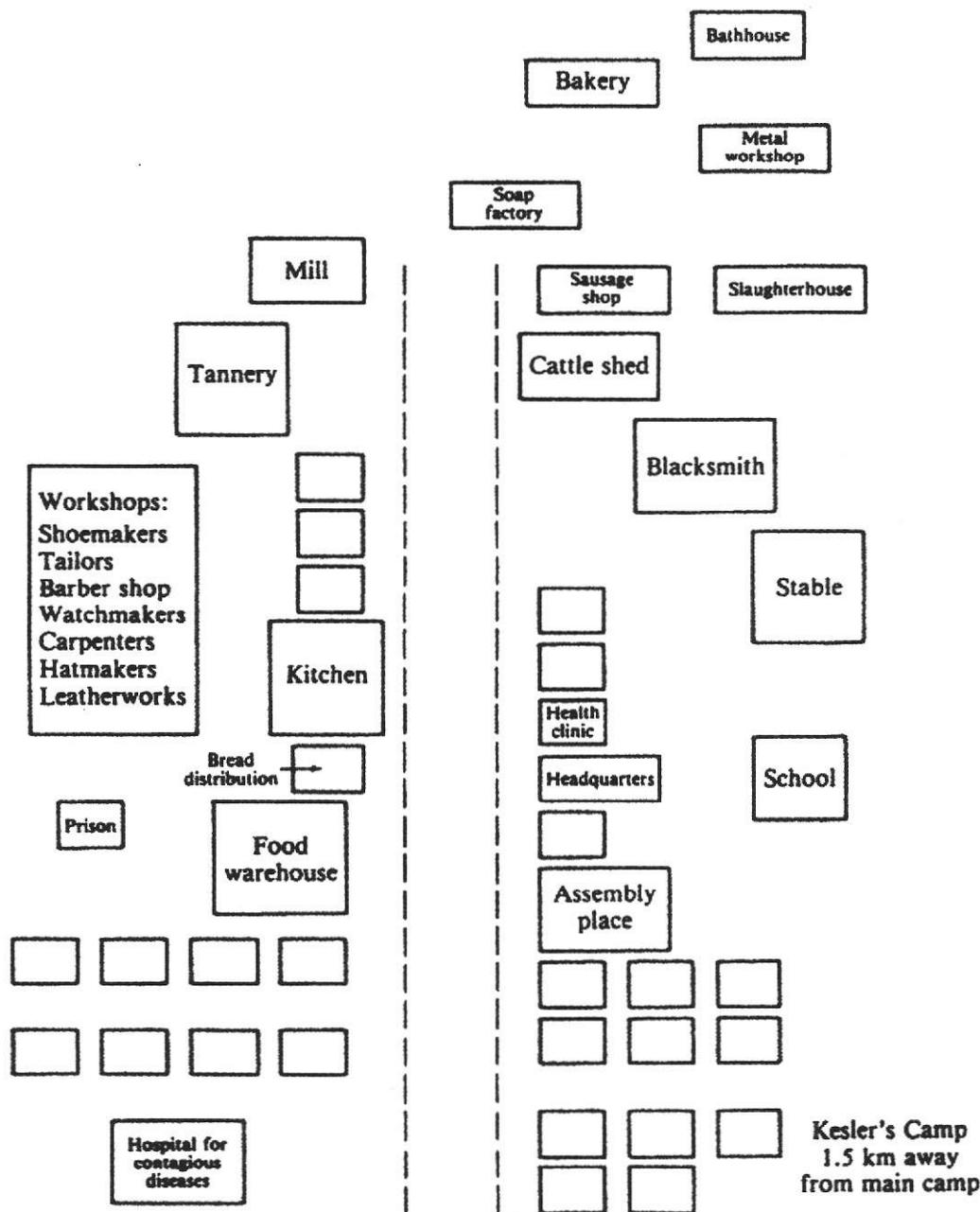
forest with six hundred soldiers. His targeted area was Novogrudok and amongst his group there were some Jews that one did not recognise as Jews. The Major did not pay particular attention to anyone's background.

Shastakov lunched with us and made a very good impression. We

could see that he was a good man. He saw the camp and realised that many people did not have weapons. He promised me a few rifles in exchange for sausages. He sent us fifteen head of cattle, and we completed the work in a few days. I rode over to visit him with the sausages. Shastakov ordered his

supply officer to give me any extra rifles and a 25-kilogram box of explosives, together with parachute silk for the hospital. The supply officer loaded the wagons with seventeen good rifles, the explosives and the silk. Later, I heard that the supply officer was Jewish.

Map of the Bielski Otriad in Nalibocka Forest During the Last Phase of Its Existence (Fall 1943–Summer 1944)



Unidentified structures are living quarters; all other structures are identified by the particular function each served.

This map is based on information provided by Chaja Bielski.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF MY ESCAPE THROUGH A 250 METRE TUNNEL

Jack Kagan

On 7th April 1943, 250 inmates from Novogrudok labour camp were shot, just half a kilometre from the camp. Only 250 remained from the whole district and they were specialists working for the German army.

After that day an escape committee was formed, led by Berl Yoselevitz. It decided to attempt a mass break-out from the labour camp. They had between them six rifles and a few pistols and hand grenades.

The original plan was for a suicide attack on the guards, to attack the guards and run. Ninety-five per cent of the would-be escapees would have been killed. So the attack was postponed. It was then decided to dig a tunnel 100 metres long to the other side of the barbed wire, into a field of growing wheat. To succeed would not only be a major engineering feat, but would also have to be carried out without discovery.

The work started, but had to be stopped for a while as there was not enough oxygen for the lamps to burn inside the tunnel. We had no electricity in our living quarters. Mr Rukovski, one of the inmates, was an electrician. He found the camp's main power cable leading to the workshops, and made a hidden switchboard, so that the camp searchlights could be turned on and off, and the tunnel could be lit up.

The joiners among the prisoners

prepared railway lines and a trolley. The tailors prepared bags and reins to pull the trolley. The loft was reinforced and the dugout earth was hidden there. Work went on secretly twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The tunnel was 1.5 metres below ground, about 60 centimetres wide and 75 centimetres high - just enough for a person to crawl through.

In August 1943 the tunnel was nearly ready. Suddenly there was a serious setback, when the Germans brought in a tractor and cut the corn. The fear was that the tunnel might collapse from the weight of the tractor, but it did not. However, if we had escaped then, probably none of us would have survived, as the German army had brought in 52,000 soldiers to launch a month-long raid on the Soviet partisans - Operation Herman. The main German base was in Novogrudok.

Once the cover of the cornfield had been removed, we were forced to extend the tunnel by another 150 metres.

As the day of the escape grew nearer, a list was drawn up of the order in which we were to go through the tunnel. I was one of the last. In front of me was my friend Pesach Abramovitz. The escape was on the night of 26 September 1943. It was a dark, stormy, moonless night, as if made to order. We assembled in the loft, very quietly, and

waited in a very orderly manner. At 9 pm the line started moving forward. Fresh air was coming in from the tunnel as we broke through to the outside world. We made a big mistake, however, by leaving on the lights in the tunnel. Coming out into terrible darkness, some became disorientated and ran towards the camp. The guards, not knowing what had happened, started shooting in all directions. But most of us ran towards the forest and freedom. Of those who escaped, about 170 made it to the partisans, and about 80 were caught and killed.

Ten elderly people had hidden in a specially built hiding place in the loft, thinking that they were too weak to escape through the tunnel. Five days later, after the Germans had abandoned the labour camp, they simply walked out of the main gates and were able to join the partisans.

The Nazis had wanted to declare the area Judenrein (free of Jews). Would we have not escaped on the 26th, the Germans would have killed us within a few days, according to the German document from SS Wilke.

The only Jews left in Western Belarus at that time, were ninety-eight Jews in Koldichevo concentration camp. They escaped in February 1944.

A model of the labour camp, and the escape route is in the education department of The Imperial War Museum.

THE "HIDE AND SEEK" CHILDREN

Barbara Barnett, M.Phil.

Barbara and her husband Richard took a great interest in our members at the Primrose club. Their musical appreciation sessions were very popular. Barbara continues to take an interest in our Society and is a most welcome member.

This is the title suggested for a book in preparation. It owes its origin to The Boys - AND the Girls - of the '45 Aid Society. How come, you will ask? My interest

and concern dates from 1945 when I met the first group to arrive in London from Windermere. I told you that story (see your Journal, 2000). Then followed the memoir

of **Bertha Fischer**, now Betty Weiss (in the same issue). Her sister-in-law's history has not reached you yet but she it was, **Lily Malmed**, now **Peleg** (*Fish in Ivrit*) who intro-

duced me in 1996 to Olga and "The Hide and Seek" Children. Betty from Rachov, Lily from Kosice and Bratislava, and Olga from Kosice, are today Israeli citizens but they spent contented early years in what is today Slovakia - until the war came. Betty endured Auschwitz. Lily was alone with a false identity in Budapest. **Olga Grossman**, now Solomon, was a Mengele twin.

In 1948 Olga had arrived in London with 147 other children and young people. Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld had brought them from Slovakia to Britain; and one hundred then spent up to a year in Eire. She told me of a plan to celebrate the fifty years since their arrival and they were asked to write up their stories to share at this occasion. Olga wanted help in writing hers. We worked together on her memories and this led to my collecting stories from others, too. I now have thirty personal contributions from her group and six from older Slovakian survivors who have longer memories. Together these provide some history not widely known so it was suggested they be published and that is the job I have undertaken. I am adding as a background an account of the setting before, during and following World War Two, a bit of Irish history and its Jewish communities; and a collection of relevant maps, documents and photos.

The central figure is the charismatic Rabbi Schonfeld. Among his many achievements was the development of the Jewish Secondary Schools in London. In 1938 and 1939 he rescued many hundreds from Nazi Europe. When in 1945 liberation came at last, he recognised that he could best help those parents that had survived by taking care of their children until they had regained their own health and re-organised their shattered lives. He brought groups from Austria, from Poland and from Slovakia. Those orphaned he promised to help plan their future. Meanwhile, he offered the children convalescence in a traditional Jewish setting. Olga was in the last of these groups.

Rabbi Schonfeld had obtained exit permits from the Czechs, transit passes across Europe and group visas

from the British just when Czechoslovakia and the USSR were about to be closed off from the rest of the world. In his contingent from Bratislava about one third were teenagers who had survived incarceration in the camps. Most of the younger ones had been hidden with gentiles, absorbed into families who put their own lives at terrible risk. A number were sheltered in Catholic boarding schools. We can learn a little of the complexity of the exercise from the Schonfeld papers, protected today in Anglo-Jewish archives at Southampton University. Sparse details convey some of the difficulties that had to be confronted by Rabbi Schonfeld in his relentless activities.

Some of the Bratislava contingent were settled in hostels or with families in the London community and then one hundred travelled on across the Irish Sea. The twenty teenage lads were housed in a rented Dublin property. The smaller children were taken another sixty miles to Clonyn Castle, an imposing Neo-Gothic pile, surrounded by gardens, fields and woods. The Rabbi had persuaded Jacob (Yenkel) Levy of Manchester to purchase this "place of safety" as a temporary home for the children from Slovakia. The Irish government had eventually issued visas for them - though these were strictly limited to one year. This venture aroused mixed feelings in the small Dublin Jewish community but the determined Ladies Committee, led by the indomitable Olga Eppel, assured the success of this ambitious scheme. It became a far heavier commitment than had been foreseen for everyone concerned though this was not divulged to the children; but the fear of some that it would lead to anti-Semitic reactions in this Catholic country proved unfounded. Excellent relations were built up with local people.

Some of you may remember Rabbi Israel Cohen and his wife, Trude, on the staff at Windermere; they are now retired in Jerusalem. He was made Principal at the Castle with his wife in charge of health and welfare. They welcomed these children and threw all their energies into organising their care and education.

There were many dilemmas. The language, food and behaviour were all unfamiliar to the young refugees. The smaller ones had received little or no schooling, the older ones none for several years. So lessons were introduced gently in a relaxed daily routine.

Following the trauma of the past and the shock of the present, for the newcomers the strange Castle and its grounds was a peaceful haven - though the occasional sight of police, uniformed men, continued to cause panic for some time. When asked years later what they recalled, many spoke of the lasting friendships they made, and the games they played. "Hide and Seek" became a favourite. For these children it carried in their recent past ghastly connotations. Now they learned what play meant in peace time. It became safe to indulge in fun.

Meanwhile, plans for their future were slowly developed by Rabbi Schonfeld and his tiny, dedicated staff. They worked in close collaboration with parents or other relatives. The process of obtaining visas was exasperatingly slow for the older ones, who longed to study, settle down and achieve independence. At least one third of them joined relatives. Several groups went on *aliyah*. By 1998 the Reunion Committee located about 100 of the original group and found them fairly equally dispersed between Israel, North America and England. And today almost all are proud grandparents retired from a busy and successful working life.

Some twenty-five or so came to the 1998 Reunion. It was a memorable week-end. A few of us flew on to Dublin and to visit Clonyn Castle. The present owners had heard vaguely about the child survivors of long ago and understood how special this opportunity was for them, fifty years on.

Rabbi Schonfeld made every one of his charges feel and believe he or she was unique and special and loved. His concern built in them the strength and security to rebuild their lives. I hope to publish soon this little-known chapter of Jewish history.

When Lodz ghetto was liquidated in 1944, five hundred metal workers from the ghetto were selected for slave-labour in Dresden. We were sent there via Auschwitz and Stutthof Concentration Camp. From the group of five hundred, about forty are still alive.

In October 2002, the municipality of Dresden managed to get twenty, who were fit and willing to travel, to come to Dresden as their guests. This was organised by Dr Elke Preusser-Franke, who works for the Dresden municipality.

Dr Elke Preusser-Franke had arranged a programme that didn't leave much time to relax together and talk amongst ourselves about the past and about our lives since 1945; our friends with whom we worked as slave labourers in Dresden; our time in Stutthof Concentration Camp and in Auschwitz; and our life in the Lodz Ghetto. This was disappointing, but we co-operated graciously.

Elke took us to 68 Schandauer Street to affix a plaque on the wall of what was the factory in which many of us had worked as slave labourers. We went to the cemetery near Pirna where colleagues were murdered.

We spoke to umpteen church groups about our past and answered their questions. She also took us to the new and impressive V.W. factory (we found out that V.W. contributed financially towards our coming and stay in Dresden and so did a number of church and other organisations to whom we were dragged day after day to speak). V.W. managers addressed us, gave us a good lunch in the V.I.P. dining area (a contrast we thought to the way Jewish slave labourers were treated by V.W. during Hitler's time). The coach, arranged, of course, by Dr Elke Preusser-Franke, arrived on the dot each morning and after our quick breakfast took us to Theresienstadt and other places. One morning we were driven to the Berthold Brecht Gymnasium - high school - our group members spoke there with emotion but well and without hate. From the questions put to us it seemed obvious that neither teachers, parents, nor grand-parents told these young people about Jewish suffering and murder during the Nazi period '33 - '45. We tried to fill them in about some truthful facts of the period '39 - '45 and what happened to European Jewry.

I found out interesting aspects of

MY VISIT TO DRESDEN IN 2002

Roman Halter

Roman came to England in August 1945 with the Windermere group. He later lived in the Loughton Hostel. He distinguished himself as an architect and artist and he writes from time to time in the Journal.

Dr Elke Preusser-Franke's life. She was born in 1941, her mother was Jewish and her father joined the S.S. When Elke was born her father became an S.S. officer. He gave Elke to be brought up by his mother, Elke's grandmother, and then he took Elke's mother and delivered her to one of the Concentration Camps to be "dealt with" and left for the front to fight the Soviets in the Barbarosa campaign.

Elke was being brought up as a good Nazi little girl for her grandparents were Nazi party members. She was told by her grandmother that her father was killed on the Russian front and that her mother died in childbirth.

When East Germany was under the communists, Elke became a passionate young communist. She was chosen to be educated in Moscow because they found her I.Q. was high. Then she got her PhD, married another passionate German communist. They returned to Dresden to take up positions as good communists. They had three children and life for the Preusser-Franke couple and their children was very good.

At the time of the collapse of East Germany, Elke's grandmother was dying and she summoned Elke to her deathbed and told her **THAT ELKE'S MOTHER WAS A JEWESS** and that therefore she and her children were Jewish. The shock was enormous. She cried, wept and screamed. "I don't believe you!" said Elke to her grandmother. Then the grandmother said "your mother had a very close friend whose married name is Mrs Hertha Fuchs, she lives in Oberpoyritz". Elke went to see Mrs Hertha Fuchs and Mrs Fuchs told her all she knew about Elke's mother. Elke divorced her husband, decorated her home with Jewish symbols, sent her eldest daughter to work on a Kibbutz in Israel and became a passionate Zionist. Mrs Fuchs told her how she and her husband, Kurt Fuchs, sheltered three

Jewish men towards the end of the war and asked Elke to find Roman Halter.

I went in search of Mrs Fuchs when East Germany was still communist. The people who lived in her house said that they had never heard of the Fuchs's. (Later I found that the Stasi confiscated Mrs Fuchs's house, evicted Mrs Fuchs and gave her two tiny rooms in No. 5 Schmiede Street, but still in Oberpoyritz). All the letters which I wrote to her then came back un-opened.

Elke wrote to Yad-Vashem in Jerusalem enquiring about me. The people there knew me well; I designed and made, together with a firm in Tel-Aviv, the main front gate to Yad-Vashem and some forty smallish stained glass windows in the Hall of Names and other architectural contributions. And this is how I again made contact with Mrs Fuchs. When eventually I met her she told me Elke's story. Then, ten years ago, when I went to Dresden to celebrate Mrs Fuchs's 85th birthday, I met Dr Elke Preusser-Franke. In 1993 Elke fell in love with an Italian, a tenor who supplements his income working as a gardener and is her driver.

Those who slave-laboured and came to Dresden now live in different parts of the world. Nine came from Israel, one from Canada, one from Australia, one came from England (that was me), one from the Czech Republic, one from Austria, one who lives in Germany and five from the U.S.A.

A number of the women brought their husbands with them and some of the men brought their wives. The group from Israel also brought other close relations with them.

It was fifty-seven years since the group that came to Dresden had met. We did not recognise one another but when we began to talk, our stories about the past, naturally, had a similar ring. Where they differed were in the details. Their names sounded familiar to me. "What was your maiden name?" I asked a lovely woman with a sensitive face, who now lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, U.S.A., and the reply came "Wolman".

"Not Kryisia Wolman?"

"Yes, that was my name, but my middle name was Eva, so now my married name is Eva Unterman, then I called myself Kryisia." In my mind's eye I saw that young and lovely

Krysia. It was very exciting.

Dr Elke Preusser-Franke telephoned Mrs Hertha Fuchs to say she was coming to see her and bringing me with her. Elke also invited a small television crew. They bundled me into her car, with Elke's husband driving - he drives Elke everywhere - and the three of us set off for Oberpoyritz. The T.V. crew followed us in their van. I was overjoyed to see Mrs Fuchs who, in October 2002, was 94 1/2 years of age and still clear in her mind - she is now so small and frail.

"Roman, mein sohn, lieber Roman".

I sat on her bed next to her and held her hand. With my other hand I handed her a bag of goodies which I had brought for her. She put it aside near her.

"Danke, danke, lieber Roman", she said.

Two elderly women, I assumed they were her friends, were also in the room and so was the local woman priest, the Pfarrerin Mrs Ulrike Birkner Kattenacker, whom I had

met in 1993 when I came for Mrs Fuchs's 85th birthday. Elke began talking non-stop. The three television youths - they looked so young to us, busied themselves putting up their equipment. There was no room to sit down, the whole space was overcrowded. Elke told her husband to 'amuse' himself outside.

The T.V. people asked me to ask Mrs Fuchs a question. I put to her the same question which I asked her when in 1993 I came to her 85th birthday.

"Mrs Fuchs, why did you and your husband take the three of us in and shelter us when we escaped from the 'death march? Had you been found out, all of us, including you and your husband, would have been shot. That was the punishment for sheltering Jews. You had nothing to gain from hiding us; we had nothing to give you. Why did you and your husband do it?"

Mrs Fuchs replied after thinking about the question for a while and then gave the same answer as in 1993.

"It was not pre-meditated, it was an impulse. Both Kurt and I felt the same way, that we must try and save your lives."

The Pfarrerin, the woman priest, butted in at that moment "It was a prompting from God" she said.

"No, no!" replied Mrs Fuchs, "it was our impulse to do this kind and human deed."

Then she thought for a while, and said "Although we are Germans, we never joined the Nazi Party and the Nazi propaganda against the Jews over the twelve years meant nothing to us. You, Roman, would have done what Kurt and I did, wouldn't you?"

I was put on the spot and had to think fast as the camera swung in my direction.

"Now that you and Kurt were such wonderful examples to me, I'd like to say 'yes' I would do this too and stake my life to save other human beings, but I also know that it is **EASIER SAID THAN DONE!**"

Freedom is a much-used word. As I write, we are engaged in a war "to secure freedom for the Iraqi people." We just celebrated Pesach, the holiday of freedom for the Jewish people. We live in the land of the "free." We are enjoined that we must constantly defend our freedom. Freedom is on the one hand a very abstract ideal and on the other hand it is the stuff of daily living.

Researchers have to invent practical operational definitions of abstract ideas in order to observe and measure them. Their definition of freedom is simple. It is the number of choices that you have in any given situation. If you enter a restaurant with a single price fixed meal, then you have one degree of freedom, only one choice. If you go into a diner and there are 150 items on the menu, then you have 150 degrees of freedom, 150 possible choices. But one can only choose among those things of which you are aware. If you don't know that blintzes are on the menu, you can't choose them.

Often choices are set out for us. An attacker points a gun at you and says, "Your money or your life." Seemingly you have only two choices: either, or. However, if you do not accept those limits set for you, you discover other possibilities

FREEDOM IN DAILY LIFE

Robert Sherman

Robert is the husband of Judith Sherman and is a regular contributor to our Journal.

the wisdom of which can also be considered: attacking the attacker, screaming, running for it, trying to talk the attacker out of it, trying to cut a deal. We need to expand our vision to identify additional choices that might be available. You can inquire if the chef is willing to make something not listed on the menu.

This is particularly true in our personal lives. Often we get stuck by limiting ourselves to only the two choices of "either and or" and cannot seem to open our minds to all the other alternatives that could help us solve a knotty problem and save us from depression, conflict or worse. We can entertain the idea of creating a synthesis or combination of both either and or and invent a third choice thereby increasing our freedom. Sometimes we can increase our degrees of freedom simply by looking at alternative meanings in a situation. For example, we all know that a chair

is an article of furniture to sit on. But there are many kinds and shapes of chairs. Also chairs can be a ladder to stand on or elevate oneself over others; a defensive shield; an offensive weapon, a hanger for clothing; or an imaginary house of one's own for a child. Identifying additional meanings in a situation is a big help. The wife complains, "My husband is a couch potato; he never wants to do anything. He just sits there." He complains, "She is always nagging me and wanting to run and do things; she can't sit still for a minute. I work hard and like to relax." They might see instead that he is the reliable, stable, secure person in the relationship while she is the one in charge of change and excitement. Each is trying to expand the possibilities and freedom of options for the other. She teaches it is okay to try new things and he teaches that it is okay to relax and enjoy the fruits of what you have. They both can find new possibilities individually and as a couple.

The goal in the above examples is to expand the degrees of freedom. The opposite is true for totalitarian societies. Totalitarian and rigid societies act to greatly restrict the number of choices available. Choices then are a threat to containment and must be severely curtailed and controlled.

But it is also true that no functional society permits unbridled, unlimited choice to do your own thing. Every society, through one means or another, provides constraints about what can or cannot be done. Civilisation demands self-discipline and community discipline to help all prosper. Freedom without responsibility is a disaster. The strength of Western societies is that such constraints are democratically imposed through democratic processes and ideally are kept to a minimum necessary. However, to be properly responsible in a free society, we need a moral code and self-discipline.

Judaism is based on such a moral code for living, revealed or inspired by God, and we are to keep God's commandments. In this

sense Judaism is not a democracy. The word of God is to be followed that we may have peace and true spiritual and human freedom; true self-actualization and completion - the true meaning of "shalom," with which God will bless us if we maintain individual and community discipline. But in other ways, Judaism is very much a democracy. We had to choose whether to accept the covenant with God. We choose our leaders. We choose our Rabbis and other clergy.

We choose to give tzedaka or follow the commandments or participate in the community.

We choose where to pray. Our freedom is constrained, but we have many available choices to be made by the individual and the community.

Too many choices can be confusing, overwhelming, and stressful. Too few are suffocating.

So it is in our community. Our choices of what activities to join can be overwhelming. We are fortunate to have a rich diversity of ways to be significant and contribute. There are abundant opportunities for fun; personal development; self-actualisation and for aesthetic and spiritual experiences. In a free society we have a very large menu to choose from and we can also choose to add new items to the menu. Our task is to choose wisely and responsibly.

I think we can be proud that the "45 Aid Society throughout its history provides leadership and good example in making such individual and communal choices in making effective use of our freedom.

As a survivor, I was invited to participate in a unique and marvellous education programme called "Arts For Anyone."

"Arts For Anyone" is an organisation providing arts programmes in primary and secondary schools. The aim is to integrate all the arts across the entire curriculum - to revitalise and enhance the students' learning "from within." The stated goals are:

- To demonstrate that any human being is artistic
- To show that artistic ability is useful in everyday life
- That employment of art concepts and principles are valuable in the future workplace
- That an art infused curriculum helps student achievement over all
- To provide a framework for close collaboration between arts providers and educational institutions
- To set up partnerships between British and American schools to work on a common project."

Here is an abbreviated example of how the programme works with respect to an actual Holocaust project.

The sixth grade of an elementary school chose a novel "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry. The story is set in Denmark during the Nazi occupation. Two ten-year old girls are best friends. One is Jewish and the other Christian. How their lives are affected by the Holocaust is the theme of the book.

Students and their teachers meet

ARTS FOR ANYONE

Judith Sherman

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

with Bruce Taylor, Director of Arts For Anyone, several times during the school year. He and invited professional artists discuss the book with the students. They also focus on the themes, motivation, and central characters. Then Taylor engages the students in creating lyrics based on the story. With him is a professional composer who collaborates in writing the music to the lyrics and jointly they create an art song. (My husband and I sat in on such a class session.) Students work on mood, plot, character, rhythm, punctuation, atmosphere, volume, and pacing in developing a lullaby sung by a Danish ship's captain to quiet a Jewish infant whom he is attempting to smuggle into Sweden. Students are involved on many levels. They read the book, create lyrics, design props and scenery for a dramatic enactment, learn the connection between music and lyrics, art and drama, and literature and life. At the

end of the project well known professional artists perform the students' work in the school auditorium for the entire school and invited guests. On the day of the performance, students sit in on the dress rehearsal and are encouraged to ask questions and suggest changes. Each student also receives sheet music and then audio-cassettes of every production. During the performance they serve as ushers, hosts and introduce each performance set.

Within this project I was invited to meet with all the sixth graders in the auditorium so they could meet with a survivor and hear direct stories about the Holocaust and ask questions. For this event I told two brief stories. The first a narrative called Miriam's Story, a tale of an eight-year old Jewish girl in hiding. The second was a first person account as if told by the SS officer in the book. Both stories highlighted the importance of local rescuers. One class wrote an art song entitled "I am loyal," the soldier's theme, based on my narrative. This was sung during the final performance. I wrote a poem called "Miriam's Letter From Hiding," which was set to music and dance and presented to the audience.

In another school students are engaged in a Holocaust study project called "Recollections" arising out of the social studies curriculum. The objective is to deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. Students initially are given a photograph of a family taken in 1943 in Poland. The photo is of a woman of about 40 and two girls about 9 and 13. The students

develop imaginary profiles for each person in the photograph. They are given a hypothetical time line of ten years before and after in the life of this group. Following this they do research on the context of the photograph combined with use of artefacts of the period - Klezmer music, ritual objects, art, a yellow star, etc. They are immersed in the subject on many levels. A Klezmer violinist is invited to discuss and musically demonstrate the life of Jewish culture prior to the Nazis. A survivor spoke about his experiences as a child of the Kindertransport. I engaged the students in a discussion of "hide and seek" as they experience it and as a child of the Holocaust experienced it. Bruce Taylor had asked them to bring one item from home which would fit into their pockets because only one item would be allowed, relating it to the Holocaust.

Prior to my appearance, Bruce Taylor sent me the following guidelines:

"I have three goals with respect to what I would like to accomplish on November 13th.

1. To cushion the kids from the horror, which you experienced, while not lessening the impact of

their becoming aware of the realities of what happened. These kids are clueless about the Holocaust.

2. To directly connect to and personalise your experiences for them. The advantage here is that you were a child during the period and children can find points of connection to each other no matter what the barriers of time and circumstances.

Your memories of the toothbrush, your shoes, the dress, the apple, are all examples which can resonate with them.

3. To universalise the Holocaust. State-sponsored savagery did not cease in 1945.

These kids will live to witness behaviour and hear opinions expressed of the kind that, left unchallenged, can culminate in tragedies such as the Shoah. It is important for them to realise that they must stand up and speak out before such things metastasise."

This programme was developed by combining respective experience and talents of educators and artists from both the U.K. and the U.S.

Because of the internet, the artists, students and educators were able to compare notes and collaborate in timely fashion. Professor Robert Witkin of the University of Exeter, U.K. functions as the primary evaluator of the programme. He was present at two of my presentations. The Arts Council of England supports Arts For Anyone projects in the city of Bristol and the town of Corby.

In the two examples described here the schools chose the Holocaust as the central theme. But the programme works with a "modifiable template," which can be adapted to the needs of parameters of each participating school and artist provider.

The programme asserts: "The arts are for, by and about human beings. Emotion is the arts' "stock on the shelf." By connecting history to actual people, we can engage the emotions of the students. There are techniques common to the arts which can bring these things to the surface and deepen children's understanding of the world in which they live."

For more information, check the organisation's web site: www.artsforanyone.org. The web site also provides information about the British schools participating in projects.

April, 1945. Ravensbruck Concentration Camp. A moment of redemption - an Exodus moment. And here is why.

I am in the sub-camp of Ravensbruck at age 14. I need permission to go into the main camp. This has to be given by the SS Ausfuhrerin (overseer). She has an office within the sub-camp. Another prisoner and I go there together. The Ausfuhrerin sits at a large desk. She is, of course, in uniform. The whip is on the desk and the German shepherd on the floor next to her. She is young, perhaps twenty. Quite pretty. The hair under her cap is light and straight. Most of the women SS have permanents. I observe her unobtrusively and think she could be my older sister - we look somewhat alike. As we are entering she is petting the dog. I notice some mud on her boots. She asks the other prisoner her name and purpose of visit. The name given is Polish. The Ausfuhrerin signs the permission slip and the prisoner leaves.

"Wie heist du?" she asks me (what is your name?)

"Judit" I say, and before I have time to give her my surname, she

A FREEDOM MOMENT

Judith Sherman

jumps up, grabs the whip and shouts - addressing the dog: "What do you expect with a name like that?! Judit! Bragging about her Jewishness! The swine, does she think her damned star is a medal?! We will teach them about Jewish pride!! Why does she think she is here in the lager? Vernichtung!" (Extermination!).

The dog is now standing and pulling the leash in my direction. Strangely, I do not feel fear. I feel calm. For the first time in this Ravensbruck I look at an SS directly and not down as required (at pain of death). She rages and I keep looking. The dog pulls harder. She looks at the dog, at the whip, at me. Hesitates. Then yells "Raus! Get out you swine. You will be dead before I give you permission of any kind! Never. Never! Raus!"

I leave. Once outside I start trembling. Uncontrollably. I fear the dog, the whip, the rage. But in that place at that time I did look an SS in the eye. My fullest moment of

freedom. Short-lived but full. She does not get my total obeisance.

Why does my name enrage her so? What about the name Judit enrages her? Where did my courage come from? From the mud on her boots - a crack in the order? From her caring gesture of petting the dog? My fantasy perhaps of our commonality in appearance? My anger at her insulting my mother's choice of this name. Anyu liked it. "A good name, Judit, of the Bible and of to-day." I ponder my reasons for courage. Does she question her reasons for hate? Those centuries of teaching, that old contempt intensified in the Heil universe.

The horror of it - a young girl risks her life by merely looking at another female.

The horror of it - that I should see my behaviour as an act of courage.

The horror of it - that she should see this act as death-deserving defiance.

Stupid, stupid, labels defining me, defining her. How boxed in we are. Still, I have less room to manoeuvre than she does.

But a moment of freedom in Ravensbruck.

THE INTERRUPTED SONATA

Michal Garapich

This article was published in the Dziemik Polshei, in the Polish language, in London.

It isn't easy to find one's bearings in a sea of autobiographical literature. There are so many lives, so many stories to be told. But throughout the accounts of witnesses of the XX century's events one recent book stands out. "Saved by my Face" by Jerzy Lando, published by Mainstream publishing is a story of a man entangled in history, from which he is spared only by his facial features. This is a story of survival, courage and tragic fate of Polish Jews. This is a story of Jerzy.

I meet Jerzy Lando in his house in Highgate, the highest point in London, from where Crystal Palace can be seen on a fine day. His is a warm house with a piano in the middle of the living room. Looking at the piano, I greet it knowing how important is this object to Jerzy. A black abyss that incubates Mozart, Bach, Liszt and Mendelssohn, a black friend that acts for Jerzy as a refuge of normality.

A couple of times Jerzy came close to becoming a professional pianist. At the age of twelve, his parents took him to the man regarded in pre-war Poland as the best piano teacher, Professor Turczynski. After hearing young Jerzy play, he predicted to his parents that a shining career of a concert pianist awaits their son. But the destiny had other plans for the son of a wealthy businessman from Lodz, the then Central European capital of the cotton industry.

He was playing Beethoven's "Sonata Pathetique" when the German police turned up in his home on that cold evening of December 1939. Along with the other members of the Lodz elite, the Lando family were forced to leave the city. Jerzy interrupted his sonata. He came back six years later but his own piano was gone. His mother got him a Bechstein left behind in the building by the fleeing Germans. And that is how after surviving the Holocaust, after surviving the Warsaw ghetto and escaping from it, after years of hiding and after the armed fight during the Warsaw Uprising, Jerzy made a full circle. He could finish the "Pathetique". Did he? He wasn't a hunted Jew any more, a man chased by death, human

cruelty and absurd and inconceivable logic of history. He was a normal man again. Was he? "I emerged from the tunnel" - Jerzy tells me. But he wasn't the same man again.

Neither am I. Who are you without your past? And what do you do if your past is marked by death and unimaginable destruction? As another pianist-Holocaust survivor, Wladyslaw Szpilman, in his book "The Pianist", said: "I have to begin a new life tomorrow. But how will I succeed having only death behind me? What sort of life force can I draw from death?"

Jew and a Pole in One

Jerzy tells me that the school he attended as a youngster was very Polish, even chauvinistic. He was brought up as a Pole, and he did not have doubts about it. "I was a Polish Jew" - he tells me. It was simple then. Although anti-semitic feelings at the end of the 1930s ran high in Poland, neither he nor his family felt alienated.

After the Germans invaded Poland, all that changes. Jews are separated from the Poles - in appearance, having to wear the distinguishing armbands, psychologically by being hunted and deprived of the few rights that even the ordinary Poles retained, and then physically, when Ghettos are created. Like many other young assimilated Jews with double identity, Jerzy is thrown into a humiliating role. He lives with that stigma of being hunted through the years in the ghetto, then in hiding in Cracow, Nowy Sacz and back in Warsaw. He meets good Poles and bad Poles. He learns that no matter what your ethnicity people are capable of extreme evil or acts of highest altruism.

Finally, the years of humiliation are over. There comes the moment when the centuries-old plight of European Jews within the Christian countries is being transformed. Helpless acceptance of one's fate gives way to active resistance, the Jewish Ghetto Uprising of 1943. But Jerzy did not take part in it - he was out of the ghetto at that time. He did, however, join the Warsaw Uprising against the German forces a year later. In an equally tragic and hopeless act of national courage, the Polish resistance movement staged an act that some have considered heroic and others totally futile. During 10 weeks from 1st August 1944 some 40,000 young Poles died - the Polish elite perished there. During the fierce fighting nearly 200,000 civilians were also killed. After the last resistance was crushed by the Nazis, Warsaw itself was sentenced to death - the whole city was demolished under Hitler's special orders. And all this took place under the very eyes of the Red Army, just across the river Vistula.

But all that Jerzy saw on 1st August were people of all ages ready to fight. One may say that the education at a Polish school in the late 30s did its job - Jerzy joins the romantic tradition of Poles spontaneously taking up arms to fight for their independence against all odds. "I did it as a Pole" - he tells me without any hesitation. But he is no ordinary Pole, he is a Polish Jew in hiding, and a clash erupts when he decides to tell his father that he is going to pick up a gun and shoot the Nazis. "Do not leave me, wait to see what happens, do not risk your life now. I beg of you" - were the words of wisdom that day from his father, Jakob Lando. After five years of narrowest escapes, after playing a constant Russian roulette with destiny and a cat and mouse game with death, his son's decision must have seemed insane to Jakob. And it did look like a typical Polish madness. After having done all he could to save his son's life, Jakob realised that Jerzy might die in a moment of lightheaded romantic enthusiasm. It was too Polish, too irrational.

But the scene in Lando's home on

the 1st August 1944 wasn't unique. It was a contest between generations repeated all over Warsaw, no matter whether it took place in a Jewish or Polish family. It was a dispute between people that have had enough and those that had patience to wait. For Jerzy the decision was obvious. "I was a Pole and I was ready to sacrifice my life for Poland" - he says. At the same time, I am not convinced that it was just his Polish identity that compelled Jerzy to pick up a gun and shoot. He - like thousands of others - had enough of being the quarry. And I am struck by a paradox, when I realise how Jerzy joins the Warsaw Rising. He enlists in his regiment as a member of the Polish Stronnictwo Narodowe - a strongly nationalistic and anti-semitic political party, the only resistance group he had an opportunity to join while living in hiding, pretending to be a Christian. He doesn't reveal his true identity to his Polish comrades, even when he fights the Germans. "Yes, it's funny" - smiles Jerzy. He smiles very often.

It wasn't easy to be a Jew in Poland in the 1930s and then it was hell during the Nazi period. The Holocaust brought many doubts. "There were moments during the war when I promised myself that should I survive, I would remain a non-Jew. I had no right to expose my children and grandchildren to the fate that I faced" - says Jerzy, adding that it took him many years to visit a synagogue again.

In the course of time he concluded that escape from death put him under an obligation and that he had a duty to remain loyal to the memory of those who did not survive. "It is hard to explain", he says. Yes. This is certainly hard to explain to a non-Jew and to someone born 40 years after the Shoah, in particular. To reject being a Jew had no relevance for me. As I hear his words, I understand what the duty he speaks of has cost him. Two months before our meeting in Highgate there was an Arab terrorist attack in a pizzeria at Karnei Shomron in Israel. Jerzy's 16 year old granddaughter Rachel was killed. His 15 year old grandson Leer suffered serious injuries. "She died

because she was Jewish" - says Jerzy with his soft voice looking straight into my eyes.

Reluctance to Generalisations

Inevitably, during our talk, we get entangled in the web of Polish-Jewish relations. The lesson Jerzy teaches me is: No to generalisations. Stop talking of "Poles" or "Jews" in general. There are people like Bogus Howil and his mother - they saved Jerzy's life. "Bogus why were you saving the Jews?" recalls Jerzy his last conversation in Warsaw with the man that had saved his life. And the reply was: "I couldn't stand the injustice being done." There is no sense in contemplating where one comes from. The truth lies in what that person does when faced with an ethical dilemma. What would I have done in Warsaw in 1941? Whom would I have saved if I had to choose just one person? That half-crazed violinist Izaak from Piwna Street or that ginger-haired girl Ryfka? What would I have done if I could make a choice?" I dare not put these questions to myself.

As a young Pole facing the history of the country I was born in, I find it easy to emphasise the sins that were buried under the Polish carpet of perpetual self-victimisation: the late 30s Polish nationalism, with Jewish students being the subject of abuse at the Universities, the pogroms in small towns like Jedwabne during the war, the existence of "szmalcownicy" - a criminal sort that lived out of blackmailing the Jews, the refusal of the Polish Resistance to recruit Jews to its ranks (Jerzy bypassed that smartly), the survival of Polish nationalism even in today's Polish politics. All that I dig up in front of Jerzy. He smiles. He tells me calmly: "We, Jews, formed such a huge part of the Polish society, and I find it very difficult to express a general opinion on Polish anti-semitism. Poles were not a monolithic group of people - it is a very sad and disastrous way of talking about them all at the same time. You may say: Poles were not Poles - they were farmers, the landowners,

the working class, intellectuals, socialists, nationalists, Catholics, Orthodox, etc. It's easy to say Poles, French, Jews - but within these groups there are cross-sections, whose goals, mentalities and ways of life differ. Beware of general terms." The man who suffered the effects of such generalisations, who was condemned to death by the conclusions they had led to, knows of the peril of looking at a face rather than into a heart. Do not generalise! Take note of a person's actions and not of his identity card. This is the lesson.

History and fate

Of one thing Jerzy has no doubt. He is lucky to be alive. The fate, or rather his DNA, favoured him; it gave him blonde hair and steel blue eyes. During the war someone with such a face was described as having a "good" look - meaning that it gave him a good chance of survival. Someone with a "bad" look had slim chances of avoiding the gas chambers. The title of Lando's book "Saved by my Face" conveys something that still baffles Jerzy. "It helped me survive. I was walking on a narrow path with a precipice on each side of it and I made it." In reading the book I lost count of the times when Jerzy was close to death.

So many strokes of luck have two philosophical implications. First, they encourage a form of optimistic stoicism, the joy of living a full life. The other goes to the heart of Jewish tradition, the eternal unanswered question. "Why?" "Yes, this might have well been the title of my book" - says Jerzy. But this only invites the next question: where did it all start?

The Jews are very often called "the inventors of time". The concept of time being linear was a revolutionary feature of the Old Testament. In contrast to the cyclical perception of time known to the ancient Greeks and to the Eastern religions, Judaism introduced such an innovation. If time is linear, then events don't repeat themselves, thus they are worth recording; they are meaningful. If something goes on recurring

for ever - like the Greeks or Hindus saw it - history is worthless and has no meaning, and God was talking nonsense.

The uniqueness of events had to be confronted theologically - it means that God speaks through earthly events, and that there is a clear beginning and a clear end. This basic idea was later adopted by Christianity, and then by the motion of progress. But it all started when people realised that events were unique and that they were worth recording. But what if history had orchestrated for Jews an absolutely, utterly inexplicable event in theological terms - the Holocaust?

The search for an explanation of what and why it happened is a source of religious despair for the author of *"Saved by my Face"*. Each time he finds himself inside a synagogue reciting the prayers, he asks himself: why? "I have to admit that I cannot silence the thought. God, I don't understand how you could have allowed all this to happen?" Does history make sense? For a Jew,

this is a deeply religious question, one that is close to asking: Is He there? History must make sense, otherwise the last four thousand years have been of no value. It would mean that God has been speaking to Israel in an incomprehensive language.

I am not sure if one can get an answer to what is the meaning of history from a Holocaust survivor. For Jerzy, as for others like him, the Shoah has left an inheritance of ambiguity towards order, substance and purpose of history. "This is my personal hangover - admits Jerzy.

There comes a moment in his book, where his finger points at modernity. During the commemorative days in Warsaw, 60 years after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Jerzy and his saviour, Bogus Howil, watch a parade staged by the young Israelis. They walk proudly, carrying the flags with the Star of David. And then Jerzy recalls that when he was their age, the Star was a symbol of humiliation and shame. History made a turn. The present young

generation of Jews in Israel will not allow anyone's aggression. It is the generation of Jews that do not want to be, and will not be the victims.

Is the Holocaust explainable then? "From the theological point of view", Jerzy speculates, "one might believe that in order to create the state of Israel we had to suffer so much. That was the price to pay."

Is that logic convincing enough? Legions, teams, conferences, tomes of books and dozens of rabbis, philosophers, theologians and scientists are dedicated to come up with an explanation. Jerzy with his smiling scepticism is unable to give his own final answer. Do not generalise, remember? I repeat it to myself when we have a last shot of cold vodka as we stand next to his grand piano in a house in a street from where you can see as far as Crystal Palace in fine weather.

Jerzy Lando's book "Saved by my Face" was published about two years ago and has enjoyed considerable success.

☪ An author who speaks about his own books is almost as bad as a mother who talks about her own children' These words by Disraeli came to my mind when I was asked to write a retrospective article on my book *Saved by my Face* some 16 months after its publication. Not wanting to behave like a Yiddishe mamma I decided to concentrate instead on how the recent events made the book more relevant to the present day. Some of your readers may also find it useful to learn how some of its episodes helped me - and may help others - cope with retirement.

If I aimed at making more people aware of our fate under the Nazi occupation, I was moderately successful. Judging by the number of copies sold, more than a thousand people, many of them non-Jews learnt about what we believe should never be forgotten. As a translation will be shortly published in Poland another important audience will be reached. Amid many people that contacted me I found it fascinating to

REFLECTIONS OF JERZY LANDO, THE AUTHOR OF "SAVED BY MY FACE" I AFTER PUBLICATION

hear from somebody now living only a few miles away who as a child found himself in the same transport of people expelled from Lodz to Cracow on December 11th 1939 as I was.

I have been hoping that my story would at least make a small contribution towards the reconciliation between Polish Jews and non-Jews and counterbalance our community's common view of the Polish attitudes to Jews. Two of the book's heroes have received Yad Vashem medals

some years ago - I was privileged to witness the presentation to the one that had survived, by the Israeli Ambassador in Warsaw. Next September the family of late Edmund Holka, another Christian who helped save my life after I escaped from the Warsaw ghetto will receive the Yad Vashem medal on his behalf. But will all this make anybody change their entrenched views?

When I heard last February that my granddaughter, 15-year-old Rachel, was killed and my grandson, 14-year-old Leor, was badly injured in a suicide attack in Israel, I had a flashback. Some sixty years earlier, after escaping from the Warsaw Ghetto, looking and sounding like a true Aryan, I assumed Christian identity that helped to save my life. Many a time in those days I worried that should I survive the war my future family might be one day exposed to a similar danger if I became known as a Jew again. Last year Cherie Blair faced criticism for expressing an 'understanding' of the motivation of the Palestinian

suicide bombers and two weeks ago, probably as an act of contrition, she invited three relatives of the victims of the suicide bombers to 10 Downing Street. She met them and listened to their accounts of the tragedies. My daughter, Ginette was one of the visitors and her impressions of the visit and of the subsequent reception follow this article.

Last June two local newspapers printed an article under the heading 'Ghetto survivor Jerzy finally able to fulfil a dream' showing me holding my book in my hand. My dream was to study for a degree, what the Nazis tried to prevent when I was forced to leave school in my last year of 'gimnazjum' after they invaded Poland. The article was prompted by the bursary award from Dorothy Schuler's foundation to be presented once a year to two Open University Art Faculty students of retirement age. I turned my recent retirement into an adventure when some two years ago, at the age of 78, I enrolled at the Open University expecting that five or six years later I might be rewarded with a degree. By now I already got out of it a great deal more than I ever expected and I can heartily recommend it. I recently spent a week on holiday in Devon with my wife and during our short stay away from home I realised that I have become a different kind of person, one endowed with a new range of senses. As an example, in my pre- OU days I was not aware of the existence of war memorials in almost every town or village, and of how by their unique character they honoured those of their neighbours who had sacrificed their lives. Now I understood and appreciated their symbolism and felt their appeal to my own emotions. We visited several National Trust properties, their walls adorned with paintings that spoke to me in a language no longer foreign to me. I related to them, they related to me and they related to one another. Very much to my wife's discomfort I brought with me on holiday and kept reading extracts from Gibbon. His writings appeared in an entirely new context stimulating my appetite for further study. Some weeks ago I switched on the radio and got

attracted by poetry readings that would have made me quickly tune to a different station in the pre- OU days. Not now. I found myself engulfed in a new spiritual world just as expressive as the world of music. Going to theatre brings extra pleasure and understanding when characters appear on the stage as tools in the playwright's hands. Need I add that as a result of introduction to philosophy, learning how to draw correct conclusions from arguments I am better able to stand up to - if I am to quote an example - to those obsessed with Polish anti-Semitism. Studying history helps me distinguish between fact and fiction

In conclusion I find that the dreadful events of the past find their echoes in the present. Writing about them enriched my life. It increased my exposure to the outside world and rewarded me with a better insight and understanding.

An Analysis of Inner Conflicts by my daughter, Ginette Thaler

10 Downing Street

I find these days that almost everything I do, everything I say goes through an analysing process in my head. Why did I say that? Why did I do that? How did that affect someone? Did I say the right thing? Did I say the wrong thing? And it goes on and on and on.

Life after Rachel was murdered. It is very hard for me to say that word. That was what happened. So why do I struggle with "murdered"? I heard that last night from Marc, he said Rachel was murdered. It's true. That's what it was.

Last night was very emotional. Cherie Blair, the Prime Minister's wife, a reception at 10 Downing Street. It does seem awesome. I did not want to be in awe. I did not expect to be in awe. But yes, it was in awe. I spent a few minutes with Cherie Blair personally, me and her. And I told her about Rachel, and I told her about Leor. And she seemed concerned. She seemed interested.

Cherie Blair then spoke to the group of donors and the three

representatives of the Life of Terror. I was looking for some spark of interest from her in our struggles. I was looking to see if she cared. I was looking to see if there were tears in her eyes. I wanted to see that we touched her. I hope that we did.

10 Downing Street in and of itself was very special. It is history. It is grand. It is class. It was an honour to be there.

Supper at the house of the Israeli Ambassador with the wealthy members of the London Jewish world.

(With the aim of raising funds for One Family Charity looking after the relatives of Palestinian terror victims)

Again, it was awesome.

So why the conflicts? Why the inner struggles? Why all the analysis?

I guess it's because the real question is: Why am I here? The answer is simple. I'm here because Rachel was murdered. I'm here in the world of the rich and famous because Rachel was murdered.

Who am I in all this? What role do I play? Am I someone to be looked on and pitied? When I sit there on the side, that is what I feel is being portrayed. When I have a role of doing something, then it makes it more okay for my inner psyche. And this is funny for me to say this, because I never believed I could make a difference. But if I stand up and speak, then I am giving back. I can talk of what happened, and I can show how I go on. I believe I can inspire. And in that role of giving back, for those moments, Rachel is alive, and she is right there alongside of me.

Next week I go home to my painful struggles of living without Rachel. I go home to the struggles of raising two teenage sons alone. I go home to the struggles of dealing with my emptiness, with my loneliness where I no longer have any role; I become a robot of life.

1. Published by Mainstream Publishing 2002.

I was sent two books in the last year by their respective publishers with the view to meeting the authors and possibly creating an interesting dialogue.

Both books are essentially a collection of letters written before, during, and after the war respectively. Alas, written in German and I have to resort to translating them.

One of them is called 'My Wounded Heart'. It is the story of Lilli Jahn, born in 1900 and died in Auschwitz in 1944. Lilli Jahn [née Schluchterer] was born in Cologne. Her father was a businessman and she grew up in the typical German assimilated family. They were not wealthy but sufficiently well-off to be able to pursue a lifestyle of what we call 'culture'. Lilli studied medicine, which was not the norm in those days.

She met her husband-to-be, Ernst Jahn (not Jewish) also a doctor and, after a long courtship and many doubts and fears in spite of her family's total assimilation, they got married in 1926 and set up their practice in a small town called Immenhausen. They had five children, one son and four daughters. All seemed to go well until 1933 when the Nazi poison slowly started to affect the family. The young children were excluded from the activities that seemed so attractive to youngsters without understanding the reason why; the thriving practice started to deteriorate, the nameplate of Dr Lilli Jahn, (the Jewish partner) had to be removed from the door. Although the couple lived in a so-called 'privileged' mixed marriage, the 'aryan' husband proved unfit to withstand the outside pressure and eventually had an affair, followed by a divorce. He was warned that his wife and children may now lose all protection but maintained later that he had been assured by the authorities that this was untrue. Being the only Jewish person left in this small town, the National Socialist bureaucracy had their beady eye on her and she had to leave the so-called family home and move to Kassel.

Lilli Jahn put a visiting card outside her new home there: 'Dr. Med Lilli Jahn'. According to the law, it

SECOND UPDATE

Anita Lasker Walfisch

Anita was deported from her home town of Breslaw - now Wroclaw - to Auschwitz where, as an inmate, she played the cello in the camp orchestra. Later, she was sent to Bergen-Belsen where she was liberated. She came to England in 1946 and three years later she became a founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra, in which she still plays. She published her biography "Inherit The Truth 1939 - 1945". She is a supportive member of our Society and she has been a regular contributor to our Journal.

should have read: 'Dr. Med Lilli Sara Jahn' and, furthermore, as a Jew she should have renounced her 'Dr' title. Presumably, someone in the house denounced her to the Gestapo and she was arrested. The five children were left alone to fend for themselves. The eldest was a young teenager, the youngest was two years old. Somehow, the children managed to exist. Only very occasionally someone offered some help.

The moving part of this book is the correspondence between the children and their mother, who is first in prison and was later sent to Auschwitz, where she perished in September 1944. This correspondence had been kept in an unopened box by Lilli Jahn's son and was eventually found in 1998 after his death. There were some three hundred letters.

The five children had survived somehow and just like in any other family, the past was never discussed. One knew that some tragedy had occurred, but one did not talk about it.

I was invited to Hamburg to make a documentary, together with Martin Doerry, Lilli Jahn's grandson. It is called: 'Formen der Erinnerung'.

He is the son of Lilli Jahn's eldest daughter, who had taken on the role of substitute mother for her young siblings. It was a really fascinating interview. When asked what his thoughts were about his late 'Aryan' grandfather who put the Jewish and

half-Jewish members of the family in such a terrible situation, he said that the temptation to condemn him outright for his cowardice was, of course, overwhelming but since he did not experience those days personally, he felt that he did not have the right to judge.

The most touching part about this collection of letters between the imprisoned mother and the more or less abandoned children is the mundane way in which they deal with everyday matters. It is as if the mother simply wants to continue family life. She hardly ever talks about her own despair, but wants to know what exactly went on at school, etc.

It took a very long time before the family could decide on letting such private matters enter the public domain and moreover doubted that these letters could be of any interest now after so many years. Why should the story of their mother be told now?

Luckily, eventually, the decision was to publish and in the introduction to this book, compiled by Lilli Jahn's grandson, he said that the simple answer to these doubts is that every biography, every authentic source of the National Socialism time reaches new readers and contributes to the historical conscience of future generations. Of course he is right.

The other book that landed in my house is again a collection of letters, written during 1944 and 2000. A class of sixth-formers after having made their Abitur in Breslau [my 'home town'] promised to keep in touch with each other with a circular letter. As 'good' Germans, they were all sent in different directions to work on farms or in factories.

With a good deal of humour they record their various adventures and with slightly less humour their flight to the west (or 'east' respectively) in 1945 after the fall of their hometown Breslau.

They manage to keep this circular letter going for nearly sixty years and one gets a good idea how 'the other half' lived.

In May 2000, one of these 'girls', Maria von Loesch [now 75 years old] writes:

What occupies me now is something other than wondering about our former homes. Something that I have suppressed far too long: How could it happen that Hitler succeeded and that his enemies, to whom part of my family belonged since the beginning did not have any impact? Sebastian Haffner's autobiography "The Story of a German" answers that question. For me it was the Diaries of Victor Klemperer that gave me the incentive to occupy myself with this question; but also the writing of Anita Lasker Wallfisch, who was our age and living in Breslau with her sisters and parents before most of her family were murdered ... What could we have known... what have we suppressed ... and how far have we respected the taboos - 'one does not talk about it' - for decades after the war...

Another lady, Lore Buschendorff, writes:...

To our theme: In retrospect and for people who have not lived that time, it is

completely incomprehensible how Hitler was able to wield his evil power so effectively. We experienced the hatred of Jews. People we knew were suddenly 'Jews!' As children we did not understand it. What this meant for people in reality I only understood later in Breslau. Every day I saw people with the yellow star... they were not allowed to sit on benches... to shop at certain hours and only to buy a minimum ... honoured and respected citizens yesterday and today despised and outcasts. About the Kristallnacht and burning of books I knew from my parents. They suffered terribly because of their powerlessness.... We did not live far from the church that Yorck von Wartenberg attended and felt distinctly that secret things were happening around my father. I was very frightened. There were visitors with whom my father talked behind closed doors... he listened to the forbidden broadcasts ... I knew about the transports of Jews to work camps, not that

there were gas chambers... etc. [She is obviously referring to the 'Kreisauer Kreis' where the attempt on Hitler's life had been planned].

There were some 1,300 letters in all that had been preserved.

Our respective publishers arranged two public evenings where the former Breslauer 'girl' who had compiled these letters into a book and the other former Breslauer girl - myself - talked about our very different lives to a large audience of young Germans and answered many questions. It took a while before the ice was broken between my opposite number and myself ... she said that she felt so guilty to even just talk about herself, considering the different directions our respective lives took! We discovered that for a while we lived in the same street in Breslau and could have been talking to each other sixty years earlier ... if ...!

Israel at the moment has a bad press. It is frequently compared to Iraq - it has, it is said, like Iraq, a store of weapons of destruction and refuses to submit them to inspection - so what's the difference? A Minister of State says that if Israel made better progress with the peace process there would be no need for Israel to worry about gas-masks. BBC Radio 4 has a programme ("Your Land Is Mine") where the 'War of Independence' is described as the slaughter of innocent Arabs by Jewish terrorists and the relinquishing of the Mandate and leaving Palestine by the British is described, both by an Arab spokesman and a former British officer as a betrayal of the Arabs, leaving them at the mercy of murderous Jews. A Habonim leader writes in a Zionist Federation magazine that the character of modern Israel is a 'Zionist nightmare' rather than a 'Zionist dream', the country is 'massively materialistic', the themes of daily life in Israel include 'racism, sexism, homophobia, environmental abuse, intolerance, religious coercion, internal conflict and violence'. A writer in The Jewish Quarterly writes:

A state which had been illegally occupying other people's land since 1967, which has systematically impoverished,

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LAPSED REVISIONIST

Remembering Jabotinsky and right wing Zionism in pre-war Poland

Rafael Scharf

Raphael Scharf met and knew many of the founders of the Revisionist-Zionist movement. His book What have I to do with Thee, Poland: Essays without Prejudice, published in a bi-lingual Polish-English edition.

expropriated, tortured and murdered those others, which has invaded Southern Lebanon, which has turned a blind eye while Palestinians were massacred in Beirut, which has passed what are in effect racial laws in its own country and which was ... in the process of seeing fundamentalist, theocratic factions emerge which would not worry too much about the assassination of an Israeli prime minister...

Criticism is fine, nobody would deny that there is plenty to criticise. It is not difficult to distinguish the

motives behind the criticism, whether the intent is merely to blacken for its own sake, or whether - in the prophetic tradition, to castigate the errors in order to root them out. In any event, there is, fortunately, no way to stop it. Let the critics have their say, whilst I want to restate the obvious, without equivocation, that for the Jewish people Zionism was, is, the greatest idea of modern times, perhaps of all times, and the State of Israel is the haven, the core of life and concern, the guarantee of continued existence and the hope for the future.

How this extraordinary idea germinating in a few people's minds, mainly Herzl's, but also Moses Hess's and Leo Pinsker's, Max Nordau's and Ahad Ha'am's, Ber Borochov's and A.D. Gordon's took real shape and materialised, against astronomical odds in a modern, independent State, at the time when the Jewish people was the victim of the vilest crime in history, decimated and in the depth of despair - that is a miracle which can turn a hardened rationalist into a believer 'in God's providence'.

It is Eastern Europe, i.e., Poland and the borderlands of Russia, which gave Zionism its leaders and also the masses which made the dream possible - the pioneers, the builders,

the soldiers. Chaim Weizmann came from Motol in the province of Minsk, Nahum Sokolow from Wyszogrod near Plock, Ben Gurion from Plonsk, Simon Peres from Visjneva in Bialorussia, Begin from Bresk-Litovsk, Ahad Ha'am from Skvire near Kiev, Jabotinsky from Odessa.

It behoves me to say something about Polish-Jewry in the inter-war years at the time when Zionism was growing there, laying the foundations for the future State. Jewish society in Poland was, roughly speaking, divided into four parts: an orthodox grouping inhabiting the district of Nalewki in Warsaw, Kazimierz in Cracow and the innumerable shtetlech, towns and townlets, from Chrzanow to Konin, where Jews were often in the majority (Shalom Asch wrote somewhere that, living in Warsaw, until he was 13 years of age he did not realise that there were some non-Jews living there as well). They were politically organised in *Agudas Yisroel*, *Agudah* for short, with their elected representatives in both chambers of the Polish parliament and in the Jewish local government (the 'Kahal'), with a widespread network of rabbis, religious and charitable organisations - programmatically opposed to Zionism.

The second grouping was the Bund - a political movement which this year also celebrates its hundredth anniversary - representing sections of the Jewish proletariat, propagating Jewish autonomy in the Diaspora ('here' in Yiddish *do, do-beit* was the slogan), socialism, Yiddish language, attachment to the common forms of Jewish life - all diametrically opposed to Zionism. Another grouping were the 'assimilationists' of various shades, people who loved and were imbued with Polish culture and made substantial contributions to it - some of the finest Polish poets of that time, Tuwim, Lesman, were Jews. They considered themselves, despite adherence to a different religion or none, to be wholly Polish, a claim which was hotly disputed, but that's another story. They were opposed to Zionism which, in their view, exposed Jews to a reproach of 'double loyalty'. I remember how in those many debates which was a constant feature of student life and in which I was frequently involved, I learned to deflect this dangerous accusation. 'Double loyalty? Why

not treble, quadruple? I am loyal to Poland, the country of my birth, where my ancestors lived for hundreds of years. I am loyal to the country of my dreams, Palestine, Zion, which is not at war or in competition with Poland. I am loyal to my family, to my teachers, to my friends - surely the more loyalties the better'. This would disarm my opponents but it was merely a rhetorical victory. I was aware that there was a large grain of truth in the accusation and I, and many like me, were indeed less 'patriotic' because our hearts were elsewhere.

The Jewish street was a scene of a perpetual contest, a fight - not always bloodless - for the allegiance of our brethren, and Zionism, the fourth grouping, was gaining adherence everywhere. This was not merely because of its inherent appeal to the imagination for the rising wave of anti-Semitism and the worsening economic situation offered a daily proof that there was no future for the Jewish people in Poland, in the Diaspora. The Zionist campaign, other than in newspapers, was conducted by word of mouth - at gatherings, conferences, cafés, the agitators, 'the missionaries'. I was one such, travelled to the 'provinces', to the towns and townlets where there were local branches of one's own organisation. I made many such journeys, to Sosnowiec, Jaworzno or Debica - to address a group of comrades in some dingy premises. I would unroll the map of Palestine, pin to the wall a photograph of a new kibbutz, palm trees and all, would discuss recent events, encourage people to go to a *hachsharah*. We would sing Hebrew songs - it is astounding how these songs, to the texts of Bialik or Szlonski, produced the right sentiments and brought Zion close to us. At the end always 'Hatikvah'. I have in my album various photographs from such gatherings, youngsters of both sexes, stretched to their full height, with sparkling eyes, proud, hopeful, the flower of the nation. It is unbearably poignant to think what happened to them, to the majority of them. One has the impulse to shout a warning, to urge them to pack up and go, for heaven's sake..

From time to time some important Zionist personage, a member of a kibbutz or a leader would visit the town. When Jabotinsky came - this

was an event which was long talked about, before and after. He would be met, by his supporters at the railway stations, accompanied to the waiting *droschke*, they would unharness the horse and to the amusement of the local population, pull the carriage to the front of the hotel. (I was sometimes honoured by an invitation to share the pulling). When Jabotinsky visited Cracow we would hire a large hall, he would speak, as expected, for four hours, it did not seem a minute too long, the audience was enthralled. He was an orator, in Yiddish, on a grand scale, in the mould, one imagines, of Demosthenes, Cicero or Trotsky, with no equal on the Jewish stage, although aspirants were many. That style of oratory has disappeared. In any event, it would have cut no ice with a stiff upper-lipped Anglo-Saxon audience, but you get some of the flavour if you read Jabotinsky's evidence submitted to the Palestine Royal Commission, in the House of Lords, in February 1937 - a classic text.

Here a little snapshot from memory. In 1935 there was held in Cracow the World Conference of the Revisionist movement and the local branch, of which I was an active member, were hosting it. I remember negotiating the terms with the 'Hotel Saski' where we booked halls and rooms for the purpose. The Conference was split into two parts - the Tsohar, i.e., the major part of the movement and the Betar, i.e., its 'fighting arm' as it were.

The 'Betarniks' wore uniforms, were being schooled in the use of arms. Jabotinsky foresaw that on the road to independence, inevitably, there would be an armed struggle. The colour of the uniform was dark brown (with blue-white flashes), an unfortunate choice because of its subsequent association with the 'brownshirts' and the fascist uniforms generally. Jabotinsky argued that early on he chose brown because it was the colour of the Palestinian soil and in any case it in no way resembled the colour of the SA uniforms.

The language of the 'populist' Conference was, naturally, Yiddish or the so-called 'Congress-deutsch', a *sui generis* hybrid developed at the Zionist Congresses, supposed to be a refined sort of Yiddish, with a larger than usual sprinkling of German words, presumably to make it more

accessible and pleasing to Herzl. However, at the Betar Conference the language was to be Hebrew only - Jabotinsky had warned the prospective delegates that this will be so - 'let no one aspire to be a Zionist and not learn Hebrew' - he said.

He himself, a superb linguist, was a master of Hebrew - in fact, among his many accomplishments was a Hebrew primer *Tarjag milim* (613 words), an attempt to create 'basic Hebrew', on the model of 'basic English', the 830 words supposedly adequate to express all necessary ideas.

This edict - and Jabotinsky's word in this, as in all other respects, was law - excluded a great many delegates who travelled from far and wide and were aching to unburden themselves of their thoughts in front of us. At one of the sessions a young man of pale complexion and a shock of black hair mounted the rostrum and addressed the audience in beautiful Hebrew. The speech was artful and rousing. It was constructed around the 'Hymn of Betar' written by Jabotinsky, which in contrast to the pacific, insipid 'Hatkvah' speaks of pride and defiance, torches and flames, a noble and pitiless race of princes, of conquering the summit or dying in the attempt - heady stuff. The audience was stirred, Jabotinsky was enchanted and he embraced the speaker. 'Such young men' - he said - 'grow around me and I don't even know their names'. You have guessed - it was Begin. After all those years the recollection of that moment lingers in the mind, particularly on my visits to Cracow when I stand in front of the 'Hotel Saski'.

The spectrum of Zionist parties in Poland was wide - from the extreme 'Left Poale Zion' (there was also the 'Right Poale Zion', in conflict with its fraternal organisation of the same name), through 'Hitachdut', 'Et Livnot', General Zionists (A and B), Mizrachi, to the Revisionists, later transformed into the 'New Zionist Organisation'. There were numerous youth organisations: Hashomer Harzair, Gordonia, Akiba, Dror, Hanoar Hatzijoni, Massada, Betar. There were a great many publications, two very influential Yiddish dailies in Warsaw, *Hajnt* and *Moment* (Jabotinsky wrote for one, then, after a quarrel, for the other), three daily newspapers in the Polish language - *Nasz Przegląd* in Warsaw, *Chwila* in

Lwow and *Nowy Dziennik* in Cracow. I used to write occasionally for *Nowy Dziennik* and, in fact, came to England, in 1938, as the *Nowy Dziennik* foreign correspondent.

When visiting Cracow in recent years I always go to the National Library Reading Room and ask to see the old folios of that newspaper. I am very moved turning the crumbling pages. I re-read the articles by Dr. Ozjasz Thon, Ignacy Schwarzbart, Moses Kanfer, David Lazer - dealing with the issues which concerned us then (often, amazingly, unresolved to the present day - like the internal conflict within Jewish society), even the small ads have their poignancy. I discover my own article sent from London late in August 1939 in which I declare for all the world to read: 'I stake my journalistic reputation (sic!) on the prediction that there will be no war.' Was I blind? Everybody knew that war was inevitable. Not so, I was in good company, many pundits held that view, the then mighty 'Daily Express' of Lord Beaverbrook appeared throughout 1939 with a banner headline 'There will be no war'. The British Empire was at its peak, the map of the world was covered in red spots, over which the sun never set - I saw this - does not Hitler? He will not date ... By the time my article reached the editor's desk, probably by the last post from the west, the German Army was in Cracow. Another little tit-bit I found in the paper was a short announcement that on 17th April 1938 (shortly before my departure) 'Felek Scharf will deliver a lecture, on the premises of the youth organisation Massada (of which I was then the chairman), under the title: 'How to throw the British out of Palestine'.

We, the Zionists, led busy lives, activity of one sort or another never ceased, meetings, lectures, elections, excursions, summer camps, conferences, collections for the Keren Kayemeth, protest marches. Now and again someone got a certificate to go to Palestine - there would be a farewell party and a last goodbye at the railway station.

A certificate was like a winning ticket in a lottery - Great Britain controlled immigration through the yearly quota of certificates and these were distributed by 'the Palestine Offices' according to a party-key - another source of grievance and discontent. A certificate was worth

its weight in gold - literally in some cases, the so-called 'capitalist' certificates, outside the normal quota, could be purchased for 1,000 zloty - a large sum of money in those days. An acceptance for a course of studies at the Hebrew University or the Technion in Haifa allowed the prospective student to enter Palestine - many of my friends, later active in the Irgun or the Haganah got to Palestine thus. The Revisionist party in Cracow had its own weekly newspaper *Trybuna Narodowa*; I used to write for it. One day - an important event this - we negotiated with a highly respectable Polish daily *Czas* to put at our disposal a four page supplement to fill as we wished with articles on the Zionist position.

Naturally, the first page carried a leading article by Jabotinsky (in my translation - that was one of my functions, to translate Jabotinsky's articles, which came on my desk from Paris where the party had its headquarters until shortly before the outbreak of war when it moved to Finchley Road in London). The said article was entitled 'A favourable storm'. It began with the statement that Jews in Europe are in imminent and mortal danger, threatened by a terminal catastrophe. There were at that time many leaders, thinkers, writers who saw the mounting danger, the clouds on the horizon were visible to the naked eye. But none expressed it so cogently and bluntly: if you want to escape with your lives - Jabotinsky was warning the Jewish communities - pack up your chattels, leave these inhospitable lands and go, not just one by one, waiting for an odd certificate, but en masse, by your thousands and tens of thousands. Palestine is the only land where there is room for Jews, where Jews can find shelter and build a new life.

That mass movement was not mere 'emigration'; it was to be - so Jabotinsky called it 'evacuation'. How this was to be organised technically, how to obtain the necessary ships, how to get the masses on board, how to break through the cordon of the British fleet - we know how that fleet behaved when the odd ship with the survivors of the Holocaust tried to reach the shores of Palestine - how, above all, to accommodate those waves of new arrivals, to house them, to feed them, to enable them to make a living - those

were details to which Jabotinsky gave little attention, we shall manage somehow, he thought. The proposal - was unrealistic, to put it mildly, yet one cannot ignore the obtrusive thought - what would have happened if against all odds we had heeded Jabotinsky's warning and acted out this scenario?

This pronouncement of the necessity to clear out of Poland, the appeal for Jews voluntarily to leave Poland en masse, a pronouncement not from the mouth of some raving anti-Semite but from one of the great Jewish leaders. That was, of course, sweet music to many Polish ears, it was precisely what they had been saying. It was, in the circumstances, an irresponsible act, which caused a great deal of harm and caused a further rift in Zionist ranks. It is hard to imagine that Jabotinsky was so naive as not to foresee the sad consequences of his day-dreams, but he was an unpredictable genius, carried away by his imagination and oppressed by the vision of the approaching cataclysm which, in fact, all too soon and all too cruelly came to pass. He felt he must set all alarm bells ringing.

He had a potent influence on the

mentality of his adherents, on the youth who adored him, and he left an indelible mark, good and bad, on Zionist politics and Israel. He represented a trend which could be termed 'Herzlean', concentrating on political gains, as distinct from the 'practical Zionism' of Weizmann, who was more of a realist, and thought that the 'conquest of the desert', the building of settlements and creating economic facts will prove more decisive. Jabotinsky always spoke of the Jewish State as the indispensable structure of national existence. Weizmann was content to accept any structure which would allow for immigration and growth. In the event, both these trends played their part and contributed to the creation of the State of Israel.

Jabotinsky died in 1940 at the age of 59 - a tragic and irreparable loss to the Jewish people. He did not live to see the fulfilment of his dream, but also, mercifully, was spared the knowledge of the Holocaust. Had he lived on, it is safe to predict that in the turbulent years to come he would have quarrelled with most of his followers and would have disowned them as heretics - the way great men

often deal with their epigones.

Ahad Ha'am, one of the great thinkers of Zionism, chose an apt title for his collection of essays - he called it *Al Parashat D'rachim* - 'At the Crossroads'. It has permanent validity, we are always at some crossroads and this Jewish nation which - as Bashevis Singer puts it - 'does not sleep and keeps others awake' is certainly, again, at the crossroads, many of them.

The road to peace, even with the utmost goodwill on either side which, in the event is rarely apparent, is long, tortuous and stony. We watch the progress with mixed feelings, fear, anxiety, criticism. If anybody should doubt what an enormously difficult, not to say impossible task it is to bridge, in some way, the two just but contradictory causes, let him consider the 'peace process' in Ulster, which surely, by every possible criterion, should be incomparably easier - and yet, and yet.

In conclusion, I like to quote the phrase of Albert Camus which I think applies to our Arab dilemma: 'I am all for justice, but I shall defend my mother before justice'.

DESTRUCTION

David Ryde

The World decreed that the Holocaust
wouldn't happen again
But such crimes on the Innocent
haven't ended,
For when the villains play it cool
Their evil ways are only suspended.

Here are but three recent events
Cambodia, Kosova and Rwanda,
The criminals had their excuses ready
They're great at propaganda.

An understanding of this paradox
Is that human nature is forever the
same,
Since vanity, sadism, hatred and
greed
Are woven into our frame.

I seek everywhere an answer
To man's barbaric trait,
But only the future can tell us
And that may be too late.

AFTER 9/11 A CHANGED WORLD

Witold Gutt 25.5.03

Today 21st May 2003 Orange alert in
the USA

In Saudi, American and British
Embassies close to protect against
the invisible enemy that stalks the
world.

Suicide bombers in Israel in
relentless sequence, unstoppable.
The Peace Process seems impossible
but the Jewish State must survive!

The mass graves and torture
chambers in Iraq justify the removal
of Sadam

But Al-Queda remains unscathed
after the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

In Europe, Poland is on the way up
despite ill-concealed German
disapproval.

Considerable doubts remain about
the enlarged Europe.

England that let us in 1945 was then
a better place.

THE EFFECT OF THE SECOND GULF WAR ON SURVIVORS OF EARLIER WARS

Dr Witold Gutt

As a survivor of Nazi concentration camps (Dachau prisoner no. 147597) I still have difficult nights when the experiences of the second World War impinge and are relived through dreams, often leading to depression and anxiety on waking. In times of peace it is possible, as the day progresses, to use the reality, absence of danger and the presence of the good things of life to dispel the terrors of the night.

In the present situation in which the UK is involved in a war, whose justification has met some opposition, and the saturation of the media with images of death and injury, refugees running in confu-

sion, street fighting and destruction of buildings, threats of horrific retribution, it is much more difficult to convince oneself by reality testing that the present is quite different from the 1939-45 period.

In these ways the present Gulf War is more evocative of painful memories than the first Gulf War which followed Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, or the Falklands War.

The wars in former Yugoslavia were also different, being designed to protect and indeed save minorities, including Muslims, and provide the kind of rescue that was totally unavailable to European Jews in the second World War.

These observations may be helpful to others who find they have reacted in the same way to the current conflict. These may be found among ex-prisoners of war in

Japanese hands, dissidents tortured by dictatorships, including the Gulags of Stalin, victims of Pol Pot in Cambodia, victims of ethnic cleansing and civil wars, as well as Nazi concentration camp survivors.

Doctors and other health workers who are working with these groups may wish to be alerted to this specific precipitant of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

ENGLAND

Michael Etkind

Michael came to England with the Windermere Group and lived at the Cardross Hostel in Scotland. He is a poet of high standing and was dubbed by our President, Martin Gilbert, as the Society's poet. He has been a frequent contributor to our Journal.

England - my adopted home My refuge from a raging storm

England arise
Don't let injustice raise its head and spread
To terrorise the world.
Don't let dictators trample on man's faith.
Man's faith and trust, in justice, freedom, hope..
Become a beacon and let your spirit rise
Erase the darkness from the heart of man.
Become a beacon and help the world to see
That hatred enslaves - that compassion frees.
Become a beacon for the world to learn
That life's more precious than the purest gem.
But, a life in fetters - a nation in chains,
Is a blot on man's conscience and is man's deepest shame.
Become a fighter - make the world unit
And struggle for freedom - for man's human rights.

Be brave and persist - do not hesitate
Mankind must be freed from anger and hate.

HOW DO "SURVIVORS" SURVIVE

Michael Etkind

How do "Survivors" survive
How do they die in the end
Are they like all other people
Or do they only pretend

Why do they play just like children
Why do they laugh when in pain
Why do they joke when together

Yet swear their "Never Again"

How will they be recollected
By those who might study those crimes

Will History spare a few pages
And show how they fought to survive.

WE HAVE SURVIVED

Michael Etkind

We have survived by hiding
In the shadows of confusion
Like rats
To scatter and to gnaw
Through yet another day
We shared illusion
Of a purpose of a reason
Of being special
In a very special way

We thought that
In our survival lay a mission
We were to warn the world
Of an impending doom
Unless mankind would change
Abandon its old ways
Of spilling blood
And live
In an unbroken
Never ending Peace

But now
That our end is looming near
And our time on earth
Will soon run out
What can we add
To make man pause
And hear
What we have learned
Through suffering and pain

That murder's no solution
For the living
That evil multiplies
Itself
And nurtures hate
That man must learn
The practice of forgiving
And must suppress
The urge to take revenge

Or must we pass
Like rats
With nought to say

Not economically, not materially, but in things of the spirit, in moral standards, the evidence points both ways, yes and no. Seen from Washington, London and a dozen other capitals, earlier this year, yes. Seen from Paris, Bonn and much of the Third World, no. France is a paradox, containing in her history and culture two distinct strands.

One strand elevates the love of liberty, of human rights, of *Médécins Sans Frontières*, of culture, civilised living. The other glories in militarism, imbued with arrogance, racism and a certain contempt for others.

A psychiatrist would have a field-day were *La Belle France* a subject for analysis. Perhaps that process would detect that the lady's main problem arose from fraught relations with her aggressive Anglo and Saxon neighbours.

The French and the English have been at each others' throats for centuries and the French have invariably come off worse. Agincourt was a disaster, Marlborough triumphed at Blenheim, Napoleon had his Waterloo. Such events are traumatic, and sink deep into the subconscious. No wonder the Iraq debacle for France saw graffiti attacking 'les rosbifs', even though chicken tikku masala is now much more popular with the English. Memories and prejudices die hard.

Most disheartening of all for the French, who saw themselves as the vanguard of world culture, is the replacement of their language as a universal tongue by the all-pervasive English, whose grammar doesn't even possess a masculine and a feminine! How galling that must be. So, one hangs on to French culture like the devil, as happens in Quebec and chunks of Africa, yet defining itself always in opposition to the English language and its buoyant all-embracing American offspring.

You think about the anti-war antics of Monsieur Chirac in the first quarter of this year, backed by his compatriots, and you detect the influence of these powerful undercurrents.

Eastwards, look, and the message is even more confused. In recent

FRANCE - THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE?

By a Commentator of
Current Affairs

years France has grappled Germany to herself as a life-saving alliance. We hear of the Paris-Bonn axis, of the two nations as close allies, the main motive force of the European Union. It has not always been thus.

France and Germany have been at loggerheads for ages, whether in the time of Frederick the Great, or Wellington and Blücher, the humiliation of 1870, and the even greater traumas of the two German world wars, German wars as German troops marched into other countries, not the other way round, whatever historians may say about underlying or immediate causes.

Britain and America have never been occupied. Great provinces like Alsace and Lorraine have passed backwards and forwards out of French hands. The German occupation 1940 to 1945 brought out the best and the worst in the French character, the two strands.

There were French fascists and racists, French police who rounded up Jews for the camps of annihilation, French peasants, eager for financial reward, who denounced Jews and Resistance fighters. There were Pétain and Laval in Vichy, willing collaborators everywhere, arguably even including Mitterand.

Yet there was also French heroism, the incredibly brave heroes and heroines of the Resistance, the Free French and de Gaulle, who stood tall, literally and figuratively, the courageous French airmen, other wonderful, self-sacrificing French peasants who concealed and protected so many Jews from the race-crazed, indoctrinated Germans.

Our psychiatrist would have to dig deep to uncover the buried dichotomy in the French mind, heart and soul.

From London we watched earlier this year as the United Nations farce over Iraq was played out, as Jacques Chirac castrated the Security Council as an effective

body, as he, not merely neutral, actually conspired against the United States, sending his minions left, right and centre, to counter American plans.

If I were an American at the time, my thoughts would have been, "Why did American boys have to give their lives on the beaches of Normandy to bring freedom to such a nation? Why did we pour in Marshall-Aid to restore the economy of such a people?"

Thousands of millions of U.S. dollars poured into France to help rebuild her shattered economy. Did Chirac and the French media ever give a single thought to that act of munificence, and ponder on their obligation to America, not merely for such extraordinary help, but for their very freedom?

No wonder by March and April French fries in the U.S. became Freedom fries, why French wine exporters found no takers in New York and protested and complained to the very President they had so vociferously supported. Why could they not see that their anti-American racism would rebound on them? There is such a thing as loyalty and friendship. And make no mistake, it was racism, there ever since de Gaulle removed France from NATO, the same NATO under whose protection France sheltered for years.

That ugly element of racism is no new feature of the French scene. It was always there, corrupt and pervasive in the days of Dreyfus, in kow-towing now to violent inner city Muslims who attack Jews, with no real reaction from the state, in the shameful desecration of British war graves.

Was Chirac afraid of the 'Arab street', not in Arab capitals, but in Paris? Where, in the name of the finest traditions of France, was the Clemenceau, the Emile Zola, of 2003?

Illegality, bleated the French press, echoing their President. This, from a nation being hauled before the courts for illegality by the E.U., a state with fighting troops in West Africa, unblessed by the U.N., a regime that ignores lifting of beef bans, emigration conventions, so much so that Neil Kinnock, a top EU man, complains, "The French do what they

want”, regarding themselves as above the law, seeing Brussels merely as an adjunct of Paris. Such arrogance exploded in Chirac’s self-defeating threat to the ten new joining nations of the European Union. It is worth noting that France has broken more EU rules than any other nation, 228 to be precise. What price illegality!

There was, surprisingly, a similar arrogance in Victor Hugo’s statement, “The new Europe will be one in which England and Russia are excluded. We will drive the English into the sea and the Russian Tartars on to the steppes.” A kind of ‘l’Europe c’est moi’ - moi being France!

On the other hand - there is always an other hand with this extraordinary people - France produced the upsurge of liberty and the Declaration of Human Rights after the 1780 Revolution, France produced René Cassin, the prime mover of the European Declaration of Human Rights. Cassin was a noble Jew and a noble Frenchman. Jews have contributed so much to France, the aircraft of Dassault, the cars of Citroën.

France has had more Jewish Prime Ministers than any other European country, Léon Blum, Mendès-France, Interior Minister Mandel. Yet, barely a year or two ago, France produced a massive turnout for Le Pen, an anti-Semitic demagogue who described the horror of the Holocaust, the premeditated extinction of 6,000,000 human beings, as ‘a detail’. And yet this is also the nation that produced the saintly Father St Vincent!

Poor Mr. Chirac got it all wrong. He was not alone. There are shame-faced politicians and banner-waving demonstrators all over the place, the innocent, the well-meaning, the indoctrinated, the malevolent, all with red faces, in Chancelleries and in back streets.

Mr Chirac tried to mend fences and told Mr Bush he believed one should be ‘pragmatic’. 1984 Doubletalk! He sent bottles of wine to Tony Blair. The French President wants to restore his standing by hanging on to the coat tails of the EU and the UN, even, interestingly, NATO. Maybe by the time you read this he will have done so, but he, and France, should not underestimate the

resentful chord he has struck in the American psyche. He should remember that it was not the Eiffel Tower that was destroyed in September 2001 with over 3,000 deaths, and the deep and lasting imprint the Twin Towers attack made on all the people of the United States. When that blasphemy was committed, there was dancing in the streets of Baghdad and Gaza! And Saddam rewarded the suicide bombers of Arafat’s entity with money.

Nor, at a lesser level, will people in Britain forget the deliberate snub by his welcoming hand-shake to Mugabe, the Saddam-like henchman of Zimbabwe. Chirac, and France, are trying their best to create an influence in Africa and in the Arab world - neither particularly democratic worlds - to advance a kind of political ‘gloire’ for France, the grandeur of days of old.

Our psychiatrist would find this ‘gloire-consciousness’ a potent element in the patient’s make-up. Consider Napoleon. He is revered, buried in the state mausoleum. What did he do? He gave France the Code Napoléon, he gave a certain liberty to French Jews. He also devastated French manhood, leaving thousands upon thousands to rot in the fierce snowdrifts of Russia. What on earth was he doing in Russia anyway? The same as Hitler, seeking conquest and ‘gloire’. The French cherish him as a national hero. He gave them gloire. The French Resistance fighters gave the nation greater gloire.

This extraordinary ‘double moral helix’ runs throughout French history. Thomas Paine was a great Englishman. The British Government of the time never thought so. Today there is a golden statue of him in Thetford, Norfolk. He was at one minute revered by the French for his devotion to the Rights of Man. They even elected him to their National Assembly. The next minute they put him in prison where he languished until rescued by the United States Minister. Lavoisier was a major figure in world science a real ‘gloire’ for France. They cut off his head. And Zola? They persecuted him through the courts, driving him into exile, until even the corrupt institutions had to recognise the

truth of ‘J’ accuse’. Zola’s comment throws light on his compatriots. “It will take a long time before people will pardon us for being right about Dreyfus”.

This strange people are pre-eminent in the material world of the five senses, in art, food, drink, in perfumes, clothes, music, literature, in all the pleasures of the body, taste, touch, hearing, smell and sight. Paris has for long been the Mecca of the five senses. Perhaps these have over-shadowed mere common-sense. Mr Chirac’s ‘pragmatism’ is more evident on the other side of La Manche, the French English Channel.

By the time these words are read, months after they were written, who knows which strand in the French personality will come to the fore. There is a stream of corruption and a stream of integrity. The former we see in the financial scandals, never-ending, in bribery in the oil companies, in the prosecution of French Prime Ministers of yore, in bank collapses, even in the President himself, immune from prosecution because of his office. We see it in the cynicism of their Iraq attitude where oil and money played a bigger role in French policy than the Paris Steet ever realised. The French arming of Saddam put British and American sales into the shade. There was a major mercenary element in Chirac’s opposition to the USA and Britain, camouflaged by glib talk about principles. There was also sheer envy of American power, of American ‘gloire’, of American grandeur!

And yet we see courageous French men and women giving material and moral help to those who are downtrodden, poor and disadvantaged, in Africa, in the Far East, some imbued by religious devotion, others by a sense of common humanity. We see courageous prosecutors who pursue evil malefactors. We see this redeeming strand in the French tradition.

Our psychiatrist might well be puzzled at the paradox of France. He might throw up his hands and conclude that the French were simply human, all-too-human. And yet, on the other hand, he might not.

April 2003

SPIRITUALITY

Robert Sherman

Everybody talks about spirituality. But what is it? How does one achieve it or become a spiritual person? How does it actually affect our lives?

The dictionary defines **spirit** as: "that which is traditionally believed to be the vital animating force within living beings," or as "a supernatural being." **Spiritual** is defined as "not tangible or material; concerned with or affecting the soul; sacred; belonging to a church or religion;... supernatural religious matters." And **spirituality** is "being spiritual."

We are discussing forces or experiences that are intangible, metaphysical. You can't see it or touch it. Yet we do experience it. In Judaism we refer to the spirit of G'd as the "Shechina," which resides over the universe and exists within each of us. We also think of it as a soul which inhabits each being. We see Shechina/spirit/soul as sacred and holy. Spirituality is the act of transcending our usual physical, social and cognitive reality. We separate from that reality and connect to this holy spirit beyond reality and feel part of it. The root of Kadosh (holy) means separation. We experience it whenever: we truly connect to the natural world of G'd's visible creation; we connect in love or deep human fellowship or community; we are able to create something new, becoming ourselves creators in the universe; we perform good deeds; or when we feel that

spark of holiness within ourselves.

If spirituality is an **act of separation in order to connect**, then it is not a passive enterprise. To achieve spirituality we join and participate in religious faiths and religious bodies and engage in prescribed rituals like celebrating holidays, circumcision, Bar/Bat Mitzva, eating Kosher foods, and putting on Tfillin. We develop all kinds of methodologies to become spiritual. The Dervishes whirl, the Buddhists meditate, Hasidim dance and sing, Orthodox Jews "shuckle," some native Americans smoke peyote, and the hip ingest drugs. All kinds of sacrifices are made; human, animal, financial, pilgrimages to sacred places and spaces, self-flagellation, and asceticism. We pray and we meditate.

To help us separate the sacred from the profane (the common, mundane, ordinary), we separate the Shabbat from the rest of the week with Kiddush, candle lighting and Havdalah. We separate the chalah before baking it. We separate the chometz to make Pesach. We say a blessing about all kinds of events to change them from the ordinary to something approaching holiness. We turn washing one's hands or eating a meal into godly acts.

We also create separate (holy/sacred) places and objects. For

us, it is Mt. Moriah, Zion, the Holy Land, The Temple in Jerusalem, the graves of certain holy men; the Ark, Torah, Mezzuzah, the Candlelabra, the Hanukkah lamp. Shabbat/Yom Tov candlesticks and Kiddush cup. We seek to become more spiritual through our emotional connections with these places and objects.

Finally, we seek spirituality by connecting and identifying with charismatic persons to whom we ascribe holiness. For us, such personalities as Abraham, Moses, David and the Bal Shem Tov play such roles.

What we do know is that when we experience "the spirit", it feels good and we feel good. We feel an integral part of the cosmos, close to G'd, and more at one with ourselves and the world. We also know from a great deal of empirical research that people of faith recover from illness more quickly, emotionally deal better with illness and problems, and are less likely to be depressed, with all its attendant consequences. In other words, people of faith are healthier over the long run. See Thomas G. Plante and Allen C. Sherman, Faith and Health, published 2002 (Yes, he's my son).

In addition to all the above, we each invent or discover other unique ways of securing this state of being. One of mine for years was to get out on the water in a boat to get off the world and into the universe.

May the Lord spread the tent of his Shechina over you and over all Israel.

I read somewhere that an M.P. is concerned about Jewish influence on politicians and policies. I just wonder why we have been given this honour when there are so many other candidates.

After all, we are well under 1% of the population. Greater Cairo alone has more people in it than there are Jews in the whole world, America and Israel included.

Now, if this strange M.P. had said we had an influence in the creative arts, literature, painting, sculpture, music, he might have had a point. Or if he felt we were prominent in science and medicine I could understand it.

But politics! Good gracious me, the Jewish people and Israel have had more problems than most in the last 100 years. One third of our people were wiped out in living memory. Influence! What on earth is the M.P. on about! Maybe he's annoyed at

WHO'S YOUR FATHER?

Aubrey Rose C.B.E., D.Univ.

Aubrey Rose is a lawyer of great distinction and has played an active role in many fields. He was a Senior Vice President of the Board of Deputies; he was an original member of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; he set up and chaired a working party on the environment, which led to his book Judaism and Ecology. He spent five years as a Commissioner of the Commission for Racial Equality. He is a co-Chairman of the Indian Jewish Association, a Trustee of various charitable trusts and he is Deputy Chairman of the British Caribbean Association.

himself for some reason, at his own errors and problems and is looking for a traditional scapegoat. Well, he is barking up the wrong tree.

Influence, he says! Does he know that for years every synagogue and Jewish institution has had men and women standing outside on security duty? No, the M.P. should look much further afield. Has he considered the influence of the Christian Church? Gracious, the Prime Minister and his wife are Christians, and good luck to them. Has the Honourable Member analysed the Christian influences on politics and policies?

And Prince Charles and his Muslim connections, other M.P.s and their Indian/Hindu links. I would love to see our M.P. analyse these communities and their influence on affairs. They may have no more than Jews but at least they are entitled to an equal investigation.

And studying family trees, which

seems to be this person's pastime, was shared by some rather less salubrious characters in the 1930s.

Now if you are talking about ethnic influence, what about the Scots? For years I have felt that the Scots, a brilliant people, have largely run Britain, so active in industry and business. Any little influence a few Jews might have ails beside the Scottish role.

It ill becomes the Member to pick out one group. That is favouritism. It

is even more. It is giving all the other ethnic groups less favoured treatment, which is what race relations laws frown upon. The C R E might even look into it.

So here's the challenge to the concerned M.P. Follow up your idea, and treat the other religions and ethnic groups in the same way. Why just honour the Jewish community? Give them all a fair hearing. You never know where it might lead. But, of

course, if you weren't really serious in the first place, you might apologise to anyone you may have hurt. Words are weapons, and you never know when words become actual weapons. We have been there before.

Members should be responsible as well as honourable.

May 2003

DID YOU KNOW?

1. There are more people living in Greater Cairo than there are Jews in the whole wide world, Israel and the United States included. Jews have always been a tiny people, having lost one-third of its number between 1939 and 1945. This has happened to no other people.
2. There are 5,000,000 Jews in Israel surrounded by 150,000,000 Arabs.
3. Israel is a tiny sliver of land less than 1/50th the size of Arab lands.
4. Israel is the only nation in history to give up oil wells in the cause of peace.
5. After 1948 there were 650,000 Palestinian refugees, less than the 800,000 or more Jews who fled or were expelled from Arab lands. The latter were long ago integrated into Israel and elsewhere without international funding. The Palestinians, despite oil-rich Arab states, still receive funding from U.N., E.U., etc. Why?
6. The Palestinians could have had a state in 1948. Instead, they and five Arab armies chose war and, in defiance of the United Nations, invaded Israel. Most have carried on that war, in many different ways, until today, showing contempt for the sovereignty of other nations, witness the racist terrorist attacks in Munich, London, Buenos Aires, and elsewhere.
7. Israel is a democracy. It changes its government peacefully through the ballot box and deserves the support of all who believe in democracy. How

ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE - FACTS NOT FICTION

Aubrey Rose C.B.E.

The degree of misinformation, whether through ignorance or malevolence, that is circulated, is unbelievable. To combat this, if I had enough funds, I would place the following advertisement in every major newspaper in this country

ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

- many surrounding states are democracies?
8. Only one person has been executed in Israel in the last 50 years, the Nazi, Eichmann. Otherwise, Israel has abolished the death penalty, even for the worst terrorists. What is the record in the surrounding Arab states where people are hung, executed, stoned, as in medieval times? Seek the facts.
 9. There are over 1,000,000 Arabs living in Israel. They have held all kinds of public offices, have been able to study in Israel's universities, and can worship as they wish. Contrast the experience of Jews and people of other faiths in Arab countries. Seek the facts.
 10. In 1948 Arabs destroyed over 50 synagogues in Jerusalem, using some as latrines. Respect for religion? What if 50 mosques or churches had been destroyed? Do not pass over this, but reflect on the contempt shown for the

Jewish religion, typified by attacking Israel on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the holiest day in the Jewish religious calendar.

11. Suicide bombers commit a crime against God and humanity, and are condemned in the teachings of all the main religions, Islam included. Why have all religious leaders not publicly condemned these terrible acts and those who train, incite and reward the bombers and their families? Why? Suicide bombers are a world threat as we have seen in half-a-dozen countries. When will the world wake up? When will the U.N. condemn these acts of world terrorism?
12. Palestinians were offered exceptional peace terms in 2000. Instead, they declared war on Israel by whatever name they call war. They complain if Israel takes them seriously. Their action has created so many family tragedies among Jews and Palestinians alike.
13. Racism is at the heart of Palestinian teaching in their schools and media. Their material is no different from that of the Nazis. Why does the E.U. and U.N. subsidise racism? Inspect the material. It is shocking.
14. There is no peace process. Israel wants peace, even, unlike the Palestinians, has a Peace Now movement. Do the Palestinians want peace? Read their literature. Seek out the facts. Do not be misled by a sustained propaganda campaign. If the Palestinian Authority wants peace, why do they allow Hamas and Hezbollah to function, organisations whose aim is the destruction of Israel?

15. There has never been a Palestinian state. Palestine is not mentioned in either the Old or New Testament. Jewish links with the Land is continuous and recorded for over 3,500 years. Jewish history is part of world history and is at the heart of three religions.
16. Whether there is a Palestinian state or not makes no difference. There will only be peace, or at least non-violence, when the hearts and minds of the Palestinians change. That could take a generation if their racism and hatred cease now and the ways of peace and non-violence

are explored. Both peoples could then co-operate, in mutual respect, but violence of word and act has to be abandoned. Each could help the other in so many constructive ways. The Palestinians, and the Arabs, have wasted 50 years, wasted so much talent, denied their young people opportunities to develop peacefully. So many lives have been lost, innocent lives. So much fear has been created on all sides. The vital question is, can the Palestinians and the Arabs overcome themselves? That is the only war that could be holy.

These are the facts I would set out in the newspapers. I have no doubt a Palestinian could set out a different set of facts and describe the pain of his own people, talking of justice and rights. It is important both sets should be defined and considered together. It is only through frankness that an end to violence may be achieved and a start made on a new relationship. If not, the outlook for both peoples is grim, and the cycle of killings will never cease.

**In the Holy Land, life
should remain holy.**

I am a survivor of the Holocaust. My fellow survivors and I are the witnesses who emerged from Nazi hell with a special message, with a sacred legacy of remembrance and justified claims of restitution.

It is crucially important that Holocaust restitution funds and other resources within the Jewish community are used to assist my fellow survivors who need social services they cannot afford. These are brave men and women who are elderly now and need assistance. They may not be able to meet the costs of their utilities. The scars left by the past affects their health and their entire existence. Funds from Holocaust restitution and Jewish organisations must be used to help them live out their days with a measure of dignity.

The situation of the needy survivors has only recently begun to come to the attention of many in the wider Jewish community, but the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany has played a pivotal role for a decade in providing such assistance to survivors. Its funds for such assistance derive primarily from the Claims Conference's recovery of unclaimed Jewish property in the former East Germany.

The Claims Conference fought to recover this property at the same time ensured the right of heirs to stolen Jewish property to file claims for it. If the Claims Conference had not fought to recover this property, the land would have reverted to the state or to postwar non-Jewish owners, a simply unthinkable outcome.

The Claims Conference has used most of the proceeds it has derived

DEFENDING THE CLAIMS CONFERENCE

Sam E. Bloch

(Reprinted from *The Jewish Week* March 21 2003)

Sam E. Bloch is the senior vice president of The American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and the president of the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors

from the sale of or compensation for that German Jewish property to pioneer specialised care for Holocaust survivors around the world. The needs are great and diverse, with assistance in more than 30 countries, including homecare, medical care and equipment, food packages and hot meals, winter clothing, rent payments, nursing beds and emergency cash grants.

The Claims Conference has established Holocaust Survivor Assistance programmes in more than 50 communities in the United States and has helped reinvent care for the elderly in Israel. And although the funds derive from German Jewish property, they are used to care for survivors regardless of their country of origin or current residence.

The conditions and the needs of Holocaust survivors, who have endured so much hardship in their lives, should be a permanent concern to the entire Jewish community and to all Jewish federations, not only to the Claims Conference.

But the Claims Conference has

also come under criticism of late for its allocations that support Shoah education, research and documentation. Some say all funding should go to the survivors themselves. Faced with the imperatives of both caring for elderly survivors and ensuring that the lessons of the Shoah are preserved for generations to come, the Claims Conference has done both. It has used a small portion of the funds from the recovery of German Jewish property to fulfil an obligation to preserve the memory of those who perished.

Survivors like myself want the world to know what happened. We who walked away from the ashes of Nazi Europe knew we had the responsibility of being the voice of those who did not survive. In recent years, as we have become fewer in number, many have acted on that responsibility, trying to tell the world our story while we still can.

It is not enough to repeatedly sound the slogan "Remember". And neither is it the survivors who need to be told to remember. When we sound this command so loudly, it should be directed primarily to the world around us, to those who were not in Treblinka. And this is where grants for education, research and documentation are vitally important. Restitution funds must also be used for this purpose.

Claims Conference allocations in this area are used for Shoah educational programmes and teaching materials, and efforts to document, archive and preserve irreplaceable documents, pictures, artefacts and firsthand survivor accounts of the Holocaust. The funds come from the assets of those who perished. Using

a small portion to preserve their memory is fully justified. It is indeed gratifying.

These Claims Conference grants for education and documentation projects amount to 20 percent of allocations but just 1 to 2 percent of the entire Claims Conference budget. The vast majority of all Claims Conference funds go to direct compensation payments to survivors. Thus, 1 to 2 percent of all restitution and compensation funds distributed by the Claims Conference are used to preserve the memory of those who

perished - to remember how they lived and how they died, and the world that was destroyed.

These efforts must be continued to order that the legacy of the Holocaust may remain with the world long after the survivors - and the generation that learned from the survivors - are gone.

It is my firm belief that any survivor who needs social service assistance should receive it. Those who emerged from the camps, ghettos, forests and hiding places already have endured more than

any human being should. In their last years, Holocaust survivors are entitled to care and comfort, and it is the responsibility of the Jewish community to supplement the efforts already being made in this area with restitution funds.

But restitution funds have many worthy uses, among them ensuring that the names of the Six Million are recorded for all time. Those who perished wished to be remembered. We must honour their last wish.

Feb. 12 - Holocaust survivors receiving monthly pensions from the Article 2 Fund and the Central and Eastern European Fund (CEEF) of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) will receive an increase in payments, due to an agreement negotiated by the Claims Conference with the German government today.

The Article 2 Fund, which currently pays more than 46,000 Jewish Holocaust survivors in 40 countries, will now distribute monthly payments of 270 Euros (approximately \$290), up from 255 Euros (approximately \$275). Monthly payments under the CEEF, which currently pays 16,000 people in 23 countries, will increase from 128 Euros (approximately \$137) to 135 Euros (\$145). The programmes are administered by the Claims Conference on behalf of the German government.

The negotiations also led to the inclusion in the Article 2 and CEEF programmes of additional survivors, including certain survivors from Romania and Hungary and from certain Western European countries. It is estimated that up to 4,000 survivors may benefit from this expansion in eligibility criteria. In addition, a number of technical amendments will be reviewed by working groups in the next eight weeks.

The Article 2 Fund has paid 58,716 people a total of \$1.03 billion since payments began in 1993. The CEEF has paid 18,342 people a total of \$100 million since 1999.

Eligibility for payment under the two programmes is determined through continuing Claims Conference negotiations with the German government. Current eligibility is determined by survivors' conditions of Nazi persecution during World War II, such as internment in a concentration camp or in another

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' PAYMENTS INCREASE DUE TO CLAIMS CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GERMANY

4,000 Additional Survivors May Be Eligible For Payments

er camp recognised as being similar to a concentration camp - including certain forced labour camps or labour battalions - or ghettos or, under certain conditions, life in hiding or life under false identity while under age 18, for a prescribed period. To be eligible for Article 2 payments, survivors must also live under specified conditions of financial need.

The Claims Conference negotiated the creation of the Article 2 Fund with the newly unified German government in the early 1990s as a compensation programme to pay Holocaust survivors who had been unable to apply for or who were ineligible for previous German government payments. As East Germany had previously denied any responsibility to compensate Holocaust survivors worldwide, the Claims Conference was determined that the unified Germany should meet its obligation to survivors who had received little or no compensation.

The fund is named for Article 2 of the Implementation Agreement to the German Unification Treaty of October 3, 1990, which sets out the commitment of the newly established unified Germany to continue its compensation and indemnification efforts.

In the United States, 14,270 survivors are currently receiving payments. In Israel, 24,527 are receiving payments.

The CEEF was established in 1998, after a year of intensive Claims

Conference negotiations with Germany. It allowed some of the most persecuted Nazi victims in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to receive compensation for the first time. This agreement was negotiated for survivors whose living conditions are very different than in Western Europe, Israel and the United States.

"We have been continually negotiating with Germany since the establishment of these funds to increase payments and liberalise eligibility criteria. This is a significant accomplishment, but no amount of money can ever be more than token compensation to Holocaust survivors," said Israel Singer, Claims Conference President. "These pensions that we negotiated are a measure of justice. They improve the lives of people in need, but they can never replace what was taken from survivors of the Holocaust."

The Claims Conference administers five direct compensation programmes for Holocaust survivors that paid a total of \$668 million in 2002. It also administers allocations of \$90 million annually to organisations and institutions assisting needy Jewish Holocaust survivors and that engage in Shoah research, education and documentation.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) represents world Jewry in negotiating for compensation and restitution for victims of Nazi persecution and their heirs. The Claims Conference administers compensation funds, recovers unclaimed Jewish property, and allocates funds to institutions that provide social welfare services to Holocaust survivors and preserve the memory and lessons of the Shoah

For more information: www.claimscon.org

SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION

Londoner Ardyn Halter moved to Israel in 1979, the day after he graduated from Cambridge University, knowing that he was giving up a promising career in one of the centres of international art. Halter had two solo exhibitions behind him before his bar mitzvah, so he was sacrificing more than most.

A little over 20 years on, Halter, now 46, has sold his latest project - a series of prints called "The Water's Edge" - to the British Library and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and to the New York Public Library. Relying heavily on email and courier services, Halter has kept his base in Pardes Hannah, surrounded by citrus, nut and tropical fruit trees. His home, where he lives with his wife Osnat, a sculptor, and their three teenage daughters, has room for three separate art studios.

"Moving here meant giving up London, but I wasn't conscious of that at the time," he says. He squeezes fresh orange juice from fruits he picked earlier in the garden. "Zionism and an art career run in opposing directions. To a large extent, that's still true. If you meet a museum director, curator or critic [abroad], who says 'I must come to your studio' and you say 'fly to Tel Aviv,' people get scared. No matter how much Israel is an active suburb of the art world, it is still a suburb."

"The Water's Edge" consists of 11 serigraph (silk-screen) Halter prints shown alongside 10 poems about the sea. Recently shown at the Horace Richter Gallery in Jaffa (it may still be viewed there by special appointment or by appointment with the artist) and on semi-permanent display in the main atrium of the British Library, the project explores the inter-action between branches of the arts.

Halter rejects labelling his prints as "illustrations" of the poetry. "An illustration limits and is limited by the text." There is no order to the series and the prints do not match any particular poem. The two art forms, he insists, exist "in tandem." Halter's interest in experimenting with the two art forms is his wish

ARTIST ARDYN HALTER PUTS POETRY INTO A DIFFERENT KIND OF PRINT

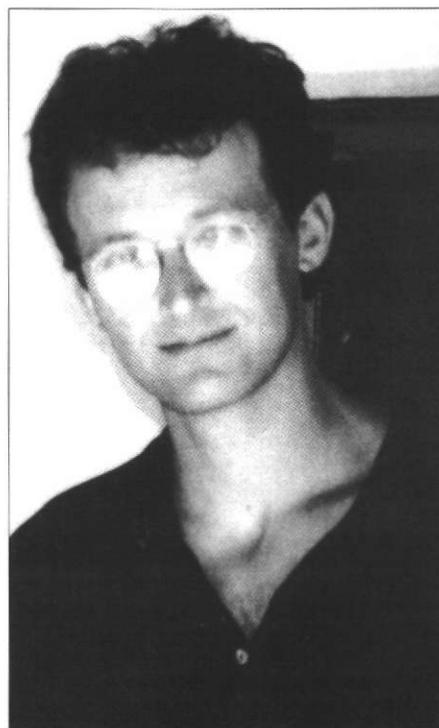
Ardyn is the son of Roman and Susie Halter.

This article appeared in the International edition of The Herald Tribune and printed in Israel with the "Haaretz"

By Charlotte Hallé

"to explore the degree to which we verbalise our response (to an image), and by contrast when we read a poem, the degree to which our response is visual, and how those two do and don't overlap." The images and the poems "make space for each other," he says.

At the exhibition "you are forced to slow down and subconsciously you look for the inter-relationship" between the two. He says the poems provide space, "both physical and in



Ardyn Halter

time," between the prints. Halter, a passionate reader of poetry and an occasional writer, selected the poems he wished to accompany the prints just over a year ago.

To his surprise, the first ten poets and publishers he approached - including Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney, Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, Paul Muldoon, Professor Geoffrey Hill of Boston University and Michael Longley, winner of the Queen's Gold Medal for poetry - all agreed to let Halter use their work. (each received a print of their choice in return).

Sense of water

The common element among the poems selected, says Halter, is "a sense of water as a primary element in the conscious or subconscious of the writer." In the prints, he sought to transpose that same feeling of primary into colour. "When we remember water visually, we usually associate it with a range of greys, blues, greens - usually quite cool. But our memory of the feeling of water is very primary; going into the water is one of the most revitalising experiences there is. It awakens one in a profound way, so when I transposed the text, it was through primary colour. I kept the number of primary colours per print down, to retain the primacy of the experience."

Halter arranged an unconventional launching of the exhibition in Jaffa last month with a poetry reading before an invited audience. Halter and the British Ambassador, Sherard Cowper-Coles, read the poems which accompany the prints and local English-language poets, including Gabriel Levin, Linda Zisquit and Jenny Feldman, and Halter's sister Aloma Halter, read their own works on the subject of the sea. Halter says print-making is no less important than his work with oils - and in fact complements it, although oil-painting takes up more of his time. "Print-making is a voyage of discovery for an artist. There are all sorts of surprises. You need to make impulsive decisions.

There's the entire spectral range of possibilities. If you are creating as you go along and your mind is open and receptive to the processes involved, then print-making can become a very rewarding and nourishing activity."

Yet to print all the time would be very difficult. "You might labour for months to catch the freshness of a single moment, like the moment in summer when the heat is hanging in the air just after the sun has set. A moment which looks as if it will last for ever, but it's gone in an instant."

In the Jewish world, Halter is better known for his Judaica artwork and as the son of Roman Halter, a

well-known artist and architect. He specialises in ketubot (marriage contracts) and other Judaica linked to the Jewish life cycle. It was his father, a survivor of the Nazi camps, who encouraged Halter to draw from early childhood, fuelling his early exhibitions.

His first at the age of nine attracted much media coverage, including a slot on Pathe News, a pre-television newsreel screened between films in British cinemas. "I wasn't really conscious it was out of the ordinary," Halter says, "My parents didn't make a big thing out of it." Neither is Halter, making a big deal of his recent success with "The Water's Edge," even if it was created

in a "suburb" rather than a centre of the art world.

Living in Pardes Hannah does allow Halter to fulfil a non-art-related dream of his - growing his own fruit trees, a desire he attributes to his family history. His Polish-born father lost his whole family in the Holocaust. "That's where we were denied in most countries - soil under our feet which we own. I have always wanted to plant trees round the place where I LIVE OR WORK. You can own property in the Diaspora, but it doesn't have the same rooted sense. There's no sense of permanence. Here you can enjoy a sense of land."

BROTHERS-IN-LAW ON THE RUN FOR CHARITIES CLOSE TO HOME

Reprinted from Times Group Newspapers

It will be a family affair when brothers-in-law Paul Wilder and Gary Keyes run the London Marathon to raise money for charities which have helped their parents.

Paul, aged 48, of Deacon's Hill Road in Elstree, will raise money for Diabetes UK when he runs in the marathon on April 13. Both his

mother and his father, who live in Radlett, have the condition, and his mother suffered a heart attack brought on by the disease last year.

Gary, 42, a London black-taxi driver, from Robeson Way in Borehamwood, will raise money for the Harrow Multiple Sclerosis Centre, which his mother, who lives in Barnet Lane, attends every week.

Paul said: "Everyone looks for a cause they can relate to."

Gary added: "It is my way of doing something for an organisation which helps my mum."

The brothers-in-law ran a half-marathon at Silverstone race track earlier this month, in preparation, and, after months of training, are looking forward to their big day.

B O O K R E V I E W S

Martin Gilbert spent four decades collecting hundreds of stories about righteous gentiles, the unsung heroes of the Holocaust. The seventeen chapters of his new book: *The Righteous*, are a compilation of inspiring, compassionate stories of courage, faith and moral character of relatively few people who risked their lives to help save Jewish children, and families during the Holocaust.

The book is an antidote to Martin Gilbert's other classic historical works, beginning with *The First World War*, his insightful analysis of Winston Churchill, one of the most dynamic historical figures, in an eight volume work: "of the official biography of Churchill (1874-1965), *The Search of Churchill* and the encompassing *History of the Twentieth*

THE RIGHTEOUS - THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST

Martin Gilbert
(Reviewed by Harman Taube)

Herman Taube was born in Lodz and during the war fought with the Polish army on the Russian front. He is a writer and a poet, writes extensively and has written many books. He lives in Betesta, Maryland.

Century; The Holocaust; The Boys and more than fifty other books, biographies, map editions and documents dealing with the

Challenges of Civilisation and Descent into Barbarism.

Martin Gilbert writes about Churchill: "He showed his unmatched mettle during his country's darkest moments. His finest hour was the leadership of Britain when it was most isolated, most threatened, and most weak; when his own courage and belief in democracy became at one with his nation".

The same can be said about Martin Gilbert:

His eight books on Holocaust themes are the history of the darkest period in his people's history. European Jewry was on the brink of extinction by the Nazis and their helpers unmatched in history. Drawing on his forty years of research and his access to the Yad

Va'Shem archives and hundreds of interviews with survivors, the prodigious author-historian presents us with a new, extraordinary volume *The Righteous - The Unsung Heroes Of The Holocaust*, a chronicle of ordinary people in many Nazi-occupied countries who put their lives in jeopardy to save Jews, acquaintances and sometimes total strangers.

Martin Gilbert, with the help of his co-workers and friends at Yad Va'Shem in Jerusalem, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, survivors, liberators and 'hidden children',

Christians and Moslems of many nations he visited and interviewed, discovered that 'in almost every instance where a Jew was saved, more than one non-Jew was involved in the act of rescue, which in many cases took place over several years'.

The book is dedicated to "Mordecai Paldiel, head of the Righteous Among the Nations Department of Yad Va'Shem since 1982. He supervised the preparation of more than fourteen thousand sets of documentation about those who risked their lives to save Jews. Paldiel notes: "Goodness leaves us gasping, for we refuse to recognise it as a natural human attribute. So off we go on a long search for some hidden motivation, some extraordinary

explanation, for such peculiar behaviour. Evil is, by contrast, less painfully, assimilated. There is no comparable search for the reason for its constant manifestation". Dr. Yitzhak Arad, author of: *Ghetto in Flames*, who was Yad Va'Shem chairman for many years and paid homage to more than four hundred Lithuanian rescuers, told me: "We have an obligation, despite the premeditated destruction of European Jewry, the peripheral help given to us when we attempted to fight back, in the ghettos and the forests, to remember that there were thousand of Lithuanians, Poles and other non-Jews, who risked their lives to save Jewish children and families".

Martin Gilbert brings to us, in this time of new dangers from terrorists, war, hatred, a gallery of Christians and Moslems (in Serbia and Albania) who opened their hearts and doors to help Jews in distress, often risking the disapproval of their neighbours for trying to save a Jewish child. And there were cases when the rescuers were betrayed by those neighbours and milled ... When we relate the enormity of the Holocaust calamity with the Righteous, their numbers are only a microcosm by comparison.

Still, as Martin Gilbert is saying in his Preface:

"Whoever saves one life, it is as if he saves the entire world".

Martin Gilbert is an Honorary Fellow of Morton College, Oxford, where he taught and did research for many years.

In 1995 he was knighted "for services to British history and international relations"... In 1999 he was awarded a Doctorate of Literature by the University of Oxford for the totality of his published work.

He has recently held the Herman Wouk Visiting Professorship in Jewish History at the University of California, San Diego, and is a Distinguished Fellow of Hillsdale College, Michigan, where he teaches each year.

Each chapter in this new volume consists of illustrations with maps of the places and countries mentioned in the text. The bibliography of fifteen pages attests to the voluminous research the author did in collecting these stories of *The Righteous*.

This volume ought to be distributed to schools and college libraries like a manual of good-will, a selected collection of stories about rescue, humane values and courage, so greatly needed in our days.

Herman Taube's latest book: "Looking Back - Going Forward" was published last year by 'Dryad Press' Takoma Park, Maryland & San Francisco.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Dear Michael,

We should like to express our sincere appreciation for the effort and care you have shown in arranging for so many of the 'boys' of the '45 Aid Society to attend the Memorial Service for our darling Gillian ????. Your solid support was a tangible sign to all those present of the strength and fortitude which mark you out as survivors.

The passing of our beloved daughter ??? has touched so many people. She was so modest that her many attributes were almost unknown to us. She carried out worthy acts of help to the needy in her field of education and was in contact with countless colleagues

and teachers advising them and liaising with them in doing the best for each and every person.

Her courage during the months of her illness was unbelievable. She protected us from knowing the severity of her diagnosis during a period when we were both unwell. This strength of character was surely due to being the daughter of a survivor. Unfortunately, her own survival was not to be. She and Howard brought up three wonderful children and it is the strength of their religious beliefs that has helped us all to cope during this sorrowful time.

Gillian's last weeks were spent almost entirely in using her limited energy to attend shiurim to learn

more and more about Torah. She imbued the love of a true Jewish way of love into her children and one can clearly see that all her and Howard's efforts were not in vain. It was with great pride that we heard Alex and Simon participate in the Siyum which marked the end of the Shloshim. We are sure that the evening must have left a deep impression on all those present.

In closing, we send warmest regards to Jasmine, yourself and all your family. May the future bring only happiness and joy to us all.

Yours sincerely,

Beatrice and Leon Manders

Dear Ben,

I received this letter from Lodz. I thought it would be of interest to our members.

Dear Sir,

My name is Jakub A. Sadulski and I am a Polish student who was born and raised in Lodz. Just a few minutes earlier I read your "The Return to Lodz", presented on one of the Jewish websites about Lodz.

Let me say that never have I been so touched in my life. As I read your memories about coming back to Poland, to my city of Lodz, I could almost see it in my head. Names of streets and all these things made me visualise your trip.

It felt like reading Tuwim's "Kwiaty Polskie" and his vision of his home city.

I want to thank you for each single word of this article, for the truth and beauty that lies in your words.

It feels so empty almost without Jews in Lodz. I couldn't realise how it was possible for anyone to leave their homeland and settle elsewhere, as we say, "behind seven rivers and seven mountains". Your story about the disgraceful situation at the station made me realise. My mother told me about her Jewish neighbours who were told to leave Poland in '68. Thanks to you, I can feel their despair.

I'm sure I can't picture what I feel now, but I just want you to know that in my opinion Lodz is still your city. I know you said goodbye and I know how painful it can be looking back at that time. Nevertheless, as I will be walking Piotrkowska Street or Kosciuszki Aleja or Balucki Rynek, I will feel the presence of neighbours whose home is still here in Lodz.

Thank you once more
Dziękuję bardzo za Wszystko..
Yours truly,
Jakub A. Sadulski

Best regards

Victor and Lucille Breitburg

O B I T U A R I E S

My father, Jurek, was born in Bedzin, a town in Poland, on December 15th 1925, the youngest of eleven children, with a caring mother and father. He was the only survivor of that close family, sometimes even he did not know what kept him going except his wheeling and dealing to stay alive.

In the last part of his life he told us a little of what he did to survive, selling bread and working in kitchens during those terrible years in the camps.

Apart from those awful times, his life was by no means easy - in fact, it was the opposite. His wife (my mother) Frances died in 1971 aged thirty-eight after a battle with cancer. To him, those days were tougher in many ways than his journey through the camps. In fact, I don't think he ever really recovered.

He tried to be a good father to both Ivor (my brother) and myself and, like many people who went through that awful time, his family meant everything to him. He was very proud of us all but more so of his three grandchildren, Frances, Dawn, and Simon, whom he adored, particularly Frances and Dawn, as they are studying at university in Nottingham and Cardiff respectively. He was constantly in touch with them. In fact, in the last weeks of his life, we took him to Cardiff to see his

JUREK FISCH (My father) 1925 - 2002

By Denise Greenberg



Jurek Fisch

granddaughter's new house. He was pleased with that but, sadly, Nottingham was a little too far.

He loved his time as a market trader and arguably some of his happiest times were spent in Petticoat Lane and Portobello Road with both Ivor and myself helping him. More recently, he had begun to

help his good friend Najib in the market again and I know he really enjoyed this.

He only really learnt to appreciate Ivor and Jacky in the last few months of his life but realised how happy they were and consequently spent a lot of time with them.

To my husband of twenty-four years, Micky, he was like a father and they had a special relationship.

To my children, he was simply the best and, to me, he is irreplaceable.

We had planned to go with him on a family trip to Poland last year (2002) but sadly it was not to be. He wanted to show us where he was born, where his family had lived, as well as some of the camps he was in. We still intend to visit Poland but with him in our hearts instead of alongside us.

The last two or three months of his life were spent with his family, Ivor and Jack, and the last five weeks were at home with us. That is something that we are all grateful for; we were with him when he passed away and I'm sure he knew that.

We all miss him and I especially miss our daily telephone calls recalling events of all the Greenbergs.

HE WAS A TRUE GENTLEMAN.
HE WILL ALWAYS BE WITH US AND WE WILL LOVE HIM FOREVER.

Moshe was born in Lodz in 1924 to a family of staunch Chasidim known as Ger (Gora).

He was deported to the concentration camps with his father who sadly succumbed in the very last days of the war.

Moshe was one of "The Boys" who went to Southampton before coming to London and The Finchley Road Hostel, where he met and subsequently "learnt" with S. Freshwater. I had the pleasure of studying in a group, together with Reb Moshe, meeting regularly every Shabbat over the past forty-two years.

Sixteen years ago, he was diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis, which affected his daily

REB MOSHE KUSMIERSKI

J Moskowitz

routine but, despite the handicap, he continued his regular "learning" with others. His wife, Ruth, who, in spite of having a full time position as a secretary in the local school, continued to attend to his every need throughout the long years of his illness in a most extraordinary and exemplary fashion. Progress of the disease meant he lost control of his limbs and it was his wife Ruth who took him by wheelchair to Shul each evening for a lecture by the Rabbi. In fact, the night before he passed away, he attended a lecture in the Shul.

Moshe had five children - three

sons and two daughters, and was privileged to know grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Four of the children live in Israel and one in Antwerp. All are engaged in extensive learning and one practices as a Sofer writing Sefer Torah and Tefillin.

At the time that the '45 Aid Society commissioned a new Sefer Torah, samples of writing were collected by Srulik Rudzinski and without being aware of the connection, Schmuel, Moshe and Ruth's son, was chosen as the Sofer.

Moshe will long be remembered and he is mourned by all his family; friends in the large community and members of the '45 Aid Society.

At the age of three, Emil lost his father in a bizarre accident. His death was precipitated by a bet. In the factory where he worked, making hats, the workers all bet that he could not lift a blocking machine over his head. He was a very strong man and he managed it but it caused a kind of stroke and he was left paralysed down one side of his body. He died a few years later, leaving Emil's mother, Esther, with six children to care for. In 1934, Esther's father, who had emigrated from Poland to Palestine, came for a visit and took the two eldest sons, Shmuel and Israel, back to Palestine with him - saving them from the horrors to come.

In 1940, Emil's brother, Icky, was taken away for slave labour. The Jews of Bedzin, Upper Silesia (now Poland) were summoned, with identity cards, to the football grounds of the town. The family was moved to a ghetto. Assembling again, this time in greater numbers, everyone was herded onto trains by armed soldiers. The journey's end was Auschwitz.

On the day that Emil walked through the wrought iron gates of Auschwitz, there were twelve men hanging from the gallows outside the first block on the left. This was punishment for the three of them that had tried to escape and was meant as a lesson to all that there was no escape from the camp even though the sign promised "Work

EMIL (JUDA) STEIN 1930 - 2003

Rosalind (Stein) Raphael

Makes You Free". There was only freedom in death.

On arrival at Auschwitz, Emil's mother and his sister Malka were selected and taken to the gas chambers. Emil was later informed that he had been arrested because he was a communist and a tattoo on his arm - a number (125432) with a triangle attested to that fact. He was twelve years old.

Emil was selected with nineteen boys and one of their father's. As they were being selected, Emil called to his brother Moniek to come forward, but Moniek held back - he was not sure. Emil never saw his brother again. Emil and the group were taken to their new home in one of the barracks called "Blocks". The weather was bitterly cold and he could see the skeletal inmates of the camp walking round in what looked like pyjamas with wooden clogs or nothing on their feet. Emil, wearing his own clothes, was kept indoors where it was warm and fed three meals a day. One day he asked a Polish prisoner-of-war, who was guarding them, what was going on. He was told that the group was there to be experimented on!!! Emil took the first opportunity to escape and jumped from a first-storey window.

He later heard that only one other of the original nineteen survived. The Germans had been poisoning every meal to see how much poison it would take to kill a Jew.

One day in the camp a fellow inmate came over to where Emil was and told him that people from his home town of Bedzin had arrived and that one of them had the same surname. Emil was curious but knew he had to be careful. Emil could not believe that the wild-haired, fluffy-bearded, bent old man before him was his strapping brother Icky, now aged twenty-one.

Icky told Emil all about his home life, all the names of family members, but still Emil would not believe him until he mentioned Emil's nickname - a name that only the family used. The name was Chicka-Baba and now Emil knew truly that he stood in the presence of one of his brothers - they would survive together.

Emil was liberated in Theresienstadt at the end of the war. He had typhoid and was taken to the hospital block. His brother Icky was being nursed back to health from the brink of death and asked a doctor to help him search for Emil and eventually found him lying amongst the dead and dying.

Emil came to England with "The Boys" in August 1945 under the auspices of the Central British Fund. In 1948, he went to fight for Israel's independence. After the Declaration of the State of Israel, Emil turned his hand to many things in the new land.

He married Yudit and started a new life in Israel. Life was hard and the young family - he now had a daughter, Esty - decided to try their luck in England where Icky was doing well. Unfortunately, the marriage foundered and Yudit and two-year old Esty flew back home to Israel. Emil worked with his brother Icky. They had mutual friends, especially amongst fellow Holocaust survivors.

A business introduction to a fellow Bedziner, Max Erlichman, led to Emil's marriage to Myriam, Max

Erlichman's eldest daughter. They had three children.

In September 2002, when Emil was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer, he fought death to the last breath with great courage. As they sat in January 2003 discussing what to do with the little time he had left, his daughter Rosalind asked him if he would let her bring the Rabbi to speak to him. He refused, saying that he did not believe, yet, when Martin, his eldest son, came into the room, Emil said "You had better brush up on the Kaddish."

Emil's wife, Myriam, nursed him until he passed away in the early hours of Tuesday 18th March 2003 and he was buried the following day at Waltham Abbey Cemetery on what would have been their 42nd wedding anniversary. Many of "The Boys" came that day to pay their respects and Emil's family and friends pray that the nightmares have stopped and that his dear soul is resting in peace.

Shalom.

William Himmelfarb came to the United States in February 1950. He met his wife Ruth Auerbacher in March 1950. They were married in December 1951. He was drafted in 1951 into the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict. He was doing communications while stationed in the U.S.

He had two children, a son Stuart and a daughter JoAnn. They grew up in the Bronx. William owned a

WILLIAM HIMMELFARB **19.6.29 - 16.3.2003**

luncheonette for seven years and then he managed a factory, manufacturing custom-made bags.

He was a devoted father, a hard-working man, and very active in the synagogue. He was President of The Men's Club and later President of the Synagogue, as well as Chazan of the Temple.

When he retired, he joined the Riverdale Jewish Center, where he eventually became President.

He loved his son-in-law, Steven, and his daughter-in-law, Beverly. His grandchildren, Alex, Rachel, and Max, were the apple of his eye. He was beloved by all who knew him.

He always enjoyed conversations with his friends from the '45 Aid Society.

Having been asked by Ben Helfgott to write an article about my late father, Chaim Avigdor Kohn, I found it very difficult to put into words my feelings about him and the great loss my mother Valerie and I have suffered by his untimely death.

His story must have differed only in the small detail from those of the majority of "The Boys".

He was born in the small town of Zmigrod Novy near Cracow in Poland on the first day of Succot 1928. His parents, Frieda and Simcha, worked hard in their bakery and with their four children lived a typical religious life before the war. My father was the only one of the his family to survive.

He didn't speak to us about his terrible time during the war as he felt he could not bear us to suffer knowing what he went through. In fact, this was typical of my father who sought only to protect us from any hurt. We have only learnt from others and from small snippets we had picked up what a miracle his survival was. Many miracles on

CHAIM AVIGDOR KOHN **10.10.28 - 5.7.03**

Frimette Abrahams (Kohn)

many occasions and every day after that was indeed a bonus.

After arriving in this country in Carlisle and spending time recovering his health in Windermere and Ashford, he went to the Finchley Road Hostel and then to O.R.T. School. However, realising that the next important thing for him was to be able to lead a full Jewish life, he left his studies and went into business with Able Richman - a partnership that was still going strong after fifty years.

His health, however, was never good. My parents had to postpone their wedding because my father was so ill. After being nursed back to health by my mother and her parents, they were able to have their wedding and subsequently I was born, giving him so much pleasure, making him feel once again that he had survived for a reason. He was

proud of my university education but even more proud when he took me under the "Chupa" at my wedding in Jerusalem seven years ago and welcomed my husband Gabi into the family. He was desperately ill again then but sheer willpower and determination got him there.

The last eight years were not easy for him, having to undergo dialysis daily and suffering continual ill-health but, again, he survived. His greatest pleasure was his three grandchildren, Keren, Zac and Maital. They all adored their Zaida and miss him very much.

My father's life was bound up with his love of Yiddishkeit and even when so ill was determined to get to shul and insisted on going to the office even on the day he went into hospital for the last time.

My father was a quiet gentle man who gave others respect and in return was respected by others. The Hespdim given by Rabbi Schmahl and Rabbi Freshwater at his "Levaya" reiterates this. He set us an example to be followed and left us a legacy of loving memories.

He will be deeply missed by us all.

Compiled by Ruby Friedman

BIRTHS:

- Tina & Victor Greenberg mazeltov on the birth of their grandson Toby Max born to Debs & David.
- Harry Fox mazeltov on the birth of your granddaughter Kirran born to Tanya.
- Rene & Joe Rents mazeltov on the birth of their grandson Felix born to Dee & Michael.
- Rachel Levenstein and the late Mordechai Levenstein mazeltov on the birth of your grandson Mordechai born to Vered & Avi.
- Helen Weiger and the late Jerry Weiger mazeltov on the birth of your granddaughter Maya born to Daniella and Michael.
- Millie & Monty Graham mazeltov on the birth of their granddaughter Danielle Rachel born to Helen and Elliot.
- Mr & Mrs Jack Klajman of Canada, mazeltov on the birth of their granddaughter Charlotte born to Patricia & Irving.
- Rae & Sam Goldberg of Canada mazeltov on the birth of their granddaughter Shayla born to Debbie & Brian.

BATMITZVAH:

- Mala Tribich and the late Maurice Tribich mazeltov on the batmitzvah of your granddaughter Miriam, daughter of Naomi & Jeffrey.

MARRIAGES:

- Wendy & Lipa Tepper mazeltov on the marriage of their son Alan to Sara-Jane, and their son Justin to Stacey.
- Shirley & Alf Huberman mazeltov on the marriage of their son Bryan to Juliette.
- Arza & Ben Helfgott mazeltov on the marriage of their son Nathan to Laura.
- Olive & David Herman mazeltov on the marriage of their son Paul to Annabel.
- Rae & Sam Goldberg of Canada mazeltov on the marriage of their son Sol to Bessie.
- Sala Newton Katz mazeltov on the marriage of her granddaughter

Ilana to Benjamin. Ilana is the daughter of Janet & Dennis and the granddaughter of the late Benny Newton.

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY:

- Laura & Joe Carver
- Taube & Mayer Cornel
- Gloria & Krulik Wilder
- Evelyn & Aron Zylberszac
- Valerie & David Kutner
- Betty & Johnny Fox
- Sara & Abe Wertman

Our sincere mazeltov to you all and may you spend many many more happy and healthy years together.

★ ★ ★

SUSAN SMASHES RECORDS

On 24th April 2003, Susan Halter set two new Southern Counties records in the 200m freestyle and the 100m freestyle as well as taking a host of golds at the Southern Counties ASA Masters Long Course Competition at Crystal Palace.

Halter was in spectacular form as she struck gold in the 50m freestyle in 47s, the 100m freestyle in 1.49s, the 50m butterfly in 1.08s and the 50m backstroke in 54s.

Her previous Southern Counties record in the 75 - 79 age group is now 4:04s and her 100m record is now 1:49.62. Her record for the 70 - 75 100m freestyle still stands at 1:50.44.

Meanwhile, 76-year-old, grandmother of seven, Halter also took golds in the 100m freestyle, the 50m freestyle and the 50m butterfly, as well as silvers in the 50m backstroke and 100m backstroke at the recent Guernsey International.

Well done Susie!

★ ★ ★

DEATHS:

It is with great sorrow that we announce the loss of the following

members during the year, our thoughts are with their families.

- Jack Lipman
- Emil Stein
- Mordechai Levenstein
- Willie Himmelfarb
- Alec Perl
- Lothar Singer
- Ignaz Rub
- Moshe Kusmierski
- Chaim Kohn.

Our sincere sympathy to

- Henrietta Kelly on the passing away of her husband Viv.
- Abe Solomons on the passing away of his wife Frances.
- Eva Cowan on the loss of her husband.

SECOND GENERATION NEWS:

- Congratulations to Carolyne Huberman, daughter of Shirley and Alf Huberman in passing her Masters Degree, gaining an MSC Nursing Research with Merit at Kings College, London.

- Congratulations to Paul Wilder in completing the 23rd Flora London Marathon in 4 hours 58 minutes and 32 seconds, and raised almost £3,000 for the charity Diabetes UK. Paul is the eldest son of Gloria & Krulik Wilder.

- Congratulations to Esther, daughter of Rae & Sam Goldberg of Canada in obtaining a PhD in Child Psychology.

THIRD GENERATION NEWS:

- Congratulations to Natasha Mamane on graduating from Queen Mary's University, London, with a B.A. in languages. Natasha is the granddaughter of Evelyn & Aron Zylberszac and the daughter of Fiona & Armand.

- Congratulations to Lara Jackson who has gained 3 'A's and a B in Physics, Chemistry, Biology & French in her A levels. Lara will be reading medicine at Liverpool University in September. Lara is the granddaughter of Laura & Joe Carver

and the daughter of Geraldine and Frank.

- Congratulations to Joel Gordon who has gained 4 'As' in Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Economics and Spanish in his AS level exams. Joel is the grandson of Laura & Joe Carver and the son of Michelle and Henry.

- Congratulations to Marc Wilder on passing his A Level exams

and who will be taking up a place at Birmingham University. Marc is the grandson of Gloria & Krulik Wilder and the son of Mandy & Martin.

- Congratulations to Melody Wilder, who did very well in her GCSE exams. Melody is the granddaughter of Gloria & Krulik Wilder and the daughter of Suzanne & Paul.

- Congratulations to Elliot Stern

who, as part of the football team participating in the Maccabi Games in America, won a Gold Medal and was the highest goal scorer with eleven goals.. Elliot is the grandson of Jeanette & Zigi Shipper.

- Congratulations to Darren Richman on passing his A levels and gaining a place at Southampton University. He is the son of Michelle and Marcus and the grandson of Jeanette & Zigi Shipper

NEWS FROM MANCHESTER

Compiled by Louise Elliot

Once again it is journal time and, as usual, no-one has attempted to send in any news, so if there is anything missing, it is my fault if I have not picked it up on the grape vine.

Herbert and I attended an AJR meeting on the 5th November 2002 held at Steincourt Shool Hall and it was very well represented with members coming from Leeds, Liverpool, Scotland, Newcastle, York and Birmingham.

Michael Newman spoke on the Holocaust claims and an interesting point was discussed and I would like to pass this on to our members. All monies received from Germany and Austria by way of compensation are not to be added to your Estate as it has been decreed that no Inheritance Tax is payable on such monies. You should therefore make sure that if this affects you, you should leave a clear note with your Will and private papers.

I presume that all members have claimed a refund from their bank for charges deducted from pension from Germany and Austria and, if they have not already done so, they should attend to it now as the banks have given a guarantee that this refund will be made.

OBITUARIES:

BLANCHE LASKIER. Blanche died on the 19th September 2002 after fourteen weeks in hospital, leaving her devoted husband Sam and her four wonderful children, Gillian, Shelley, Darren and Jonathon. The whole of the family never allowed her and Sam to be on their own at



Blanche Lasker & Louise & Herbert

any time in the hospital and did everything they could to make her comfortable. Herbert and I were privileged to have been a friend of her and her family for fifty years and most of our holidays were spent together. She was a wonderful warm-hearted and generous person and you could always count on her for charity for any needy cause. When Darren's school announced they were looking for a home for an Iranian boy, she did not hesitate to come forward and he spent at least two happy years with the family until he could join his parents in the U.S.A. and he always kept in regular touch with the family. Our last holiday together was only four weeks before she was hospitalised and we try to remember her as she was then rather than as she was in the final weeks of her suffering. She will be sadly missed by the Manchester members of the Society and, not least of all, by Herbert and me. The enclosed photo was taken in Benalmadina on our last holiday together. Sam took the photo, so he

was not on it. We wish long life to all the family.

MAYER ZWICKER died very suddenly. He was a very well-respected member and well liked in the community. Although he did not attend many social events he always attended our Annual Memorial Service. He leaves his wife Lillian and six children, which includes three sons who all reside in Israel, and also grandchildren. We wish long life to all his family.

NAT SAMSON. Nat was the husband of our member Dorka and was very well-respected by all our members. He bore his illness with great dignity and whenever it was possible, he attended the events in Manchester. As well as his devoted wife, Nat left a daughter, son, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, and grandchildren. We wish long life to all of them.

MAURICE GOLDING. Maurice died after a valiant fight, leaving his wife, two sons, daughter, son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and beloved grandchildren. He bore his illness with great fortitude and the attendance at his funeral was evidence of the respect he had from our members and other friends and organisations. He will be sadly missed by his wife Marita, daughter Sara, sons Jonathan and Warren, and sister Esther and their families, and we wish them all long life.

JERRY PARKER. Jerry fought his illness to the end and never com-

plained and he will be sadly missed by his devoted wife Eunice, daughters Gillian and Michelle, sons-in-law and grandchildren. He was a very respected member of our Society and will be sadly missed by us all. We wish the family long life.

GOLDEN WEDDING:

Sept 2002 - Jack & Marion Cygelman celebrated 50 years together. Mazeltov from all your Manchester friends.

BIRTHS:

Hearty mazeltov to:-

- Marita and the late Maurice Golding who celebrated the birth of a baby girl to their daughter Sara.
- Pinkus and Susan Kurnedz celebrated a granddaughter born to their daughter Danielle and son-in-law Jeremy.

BARMITZVAH:

- Abraham Pawlowski celebrated the barmitzvah of his grandson - Mazeltov to the family.
- Mark & Reginka's grandson, the son of Lawrence and Susan

Fruhman and also Aaron the son of David and Susan Fruhman

Chaton Torah

David Jonisz was given this honour.

DEATHS:

Sept 19th 2002

Blanche Laskier, the wife of Sam

Oct 2002

Nat Samson, the husband of Dorka

Feb 11th 2003

Mayer Zwicke, the husband of Lillian

March 2003

Maurice Golding, the husband of Marita

May 2003

Jerry Parker, the husband of Eunice

June 2003

Abie, the brother of Lily Bomszyk (in Australia)

July 2003

The brother of Mayer Hersh died in Israel

We wish all the families Long Life.

WEDDINGS:

Aug 2003

Mark and Reginka Fruhman's granddaughter - the daughter of Stephen and Jacqueline - Mazeltov to all the family,

BIG BIRTHDAY:

● Ike Alterman celebrated his 75th birthday in May 2003. We wish him many more healthy and happy years.

● Sam & Hanah Gardner, we send to you a hearty Mazeltov on your granddaughter Rochelle (daughter of Estelle and Clive Fisher) qualifying as a Doctor of Medicine.

Once again I apologise for any omissions or mistakes as I have had to compose this list from my own knowledge and information picked up as no-one every 'phones me with news!

We wish all our London friends all the best for the New Year and Well over the fast.

Sincerely,

Louise and Herbert Elliot

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOM HA'SHOAH

The communal Yom Ha'shoah Commemoration will take place on Sunday 18th April 2004 at 11am at the Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London EC1.



2004 REUNION OF OUR SOCIETY

The 59th anniversary of our reunion will take place on Sunday 2nd May 2004 at The Post House Hotel, Regents Park, Carburton Street, London W1.

As always, we appeal to our members to support us by placing an advert in our souvenir brochure to be published by the Society.

Please contact:-

Harry Balsam
40 Marsh Lane
Mill Hill
London NW7
Tel. 020-8959 6517 (home)
020-7372 3662 (office)

THE ANNUAL OSCAR JOSEPH HOLOCAUST AWARDS

The '45 Aid Society offers up to two Awards of £600 each to assist successful candidates to participate in the Holocaust Seminar at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which is held from 1st - 22nd July 2004. The overall cost of participation is about £1,000.

Applications are invited from men and women under the age of 35 who have a strong interest in Holocaust studies and a record of communal involvement. After their return, successful candidates will be expected to take a positive role in educational and youth work activities so as to convey to others what they learned and gained from their participation in the summer seminar at Yad Vashem. However, before applying for these Awards, candidates should obtain permission from Yad Vashem to participate in the seminar.

Those interested should write, enclosing their CV and other details, not later than 5th March 2004 to:

Ruby Friedman
4 Broadlands
Hillside Road
Radlett
Herts WD7 7BH

Best wishes from the
GOTTLIEB FUNDATION



Our visitors from abroad at our Reunion



Enjoying the evening at our Reunion at the Post House Hotel, Regents Park on Sunday 4th May



Some of our members on Yom Hashoa at the Logan Hall

Where are the rest?

This group come to England in 1946 & lived in Milisle Farm in Northern Ireland. We are in contact with the following: William Frischman, Leo Frischman, Rachel Levy, Kushie Greenberg & Isaac Brandstein

