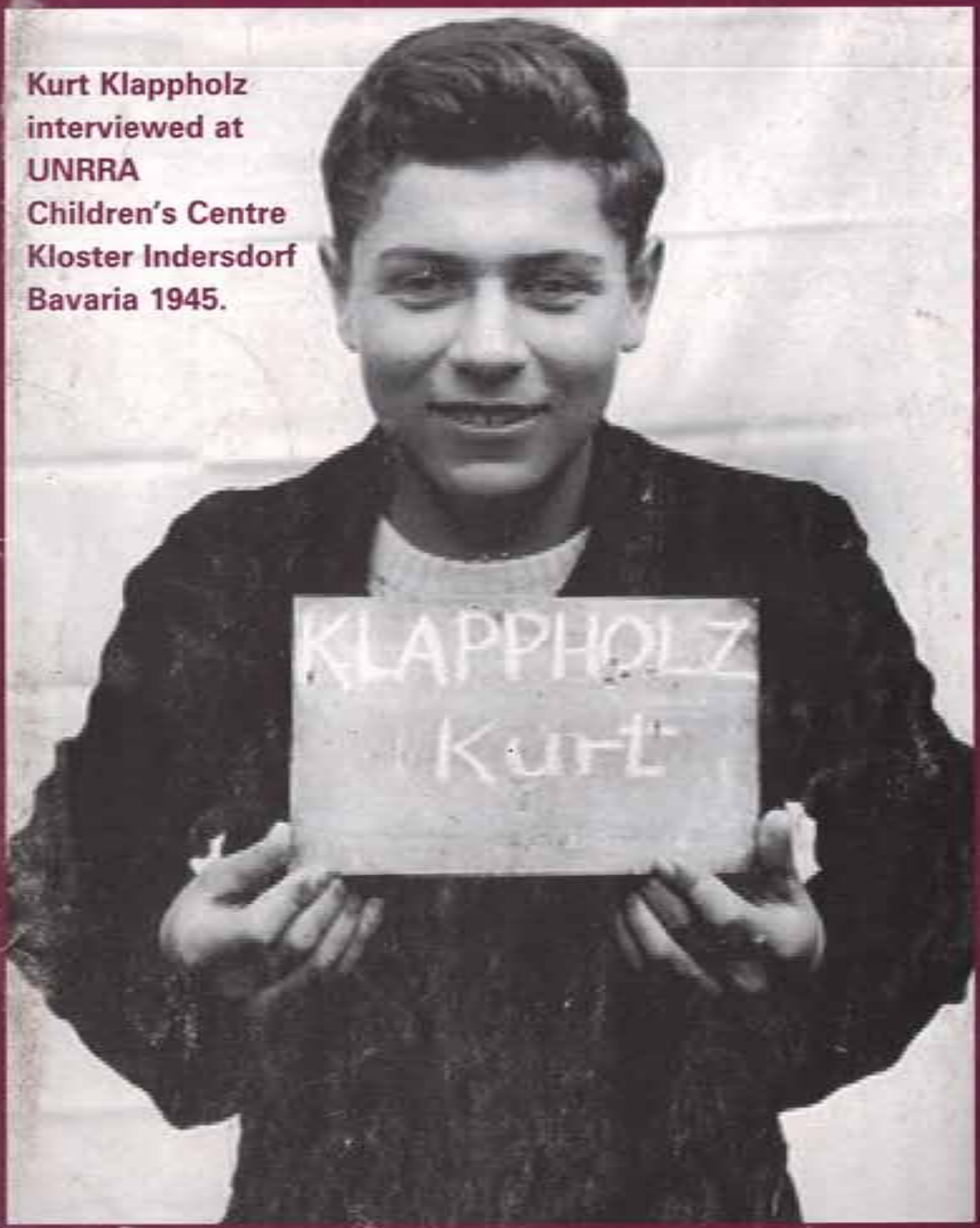
David and Ellen Goldshild's home.

Some of our members in 2007

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
'45 SOCIETY

JOURNAL



Kurt Klappholz interviewed at UNRRA Children's Centre Kloster Indersdorf Bavaria 1945.

Issue • No.32 • 2008

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 2008.

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 28th March 2008 to:

Ruby Friedman
4 Broadlands
Hillside Road
Radlett
Herts WD7 7BH

THE '45 AID SOCIETY
(HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS)

JOURNAL OF THE
'45 AID SOCIETY
EDITOR
BEN HELFGOTT

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

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

SALEK BENEDICT for the cover design.
RUBY FRIEDMAN and **ARZA HELFGOTT** for their kind assistance.
PEGGY LUCAS for the typing of the Journal.
ANGELA COHEN (daughter of Lottie and Moshe Malenicky)
for facilitating the printing of the Journal.

Design by SG

INDEX

Sept 2007 – Sam Lasker attained the age of 80 and hosted a Kiddush at the Whitefield Synagogue which was attended by many members of our Society and other friends and afterwards 80 guests returned to his home for a L'Chaim and a wonderful buffet lunch.

November 2007 – A memorial stone to the late Elaine Walshaw will be unveiled at Phillips Park.

Mazeltov to Herbert and Louise on their granddaughter receiving an M.Sc Distinction in French Literature – October 2007.

October 2007 – Mazeltov to Rezinka Fruhman on two new great-grandchildren – to her grandson Benji and his wife Sharon a baby boy (grandson for Steven and Jacqueline Fruhman) and then to her granddaughter Talia and her husband James, a daughter (another grandchild to Stephen and Jacqueline Fruhman).

SECTION X

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The annual Leonard G Montefiore lecture will take place on Tuesday, 11th March 2008 at 8 pm at The London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, 94 – 96 North End Road, London NW11 7SX. The title of the lecture is "Hitler's Gift" – Contributions of Jewish refugees to Britain and the United States. Speaker – Patrick Bade.

YOM HA'SHOAH

The communal Yom Ha'shoah Commemoration will take place on Sunday 4th May 2008 at 11am at the Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London EC1.

* * *

2008 ANNUAL REUNION

The 63rd anniversary of our reunion will take place on Monday 5th May at The Holiday Inn Hotel, Regents Park, Carburton Street, London W1.

As always, we appeal to our members to support us by placing an advert in our souvenir brochure to be published by the Society.

Please contact:- Zigi Shipper
57 Oundle Avenue
Bushey
Herts WD23 4QG
020-8420 4035

* * *

We look forward to many of the 2nd and, perhaps, 3rd generation joining us for all or any of these events.

SECTION IX MANCHESTER NEWS 2007

Compiled by Louise Elliot

April 2007 – Yom Hashoah remembrance was again at King David High School Hall where, as usual, six candles were lit by survivors and their grandchildren.

April 2007 – Mayer Hersh was honoured by Ormskirk University for his work over a decade describing the horrors of the Nazi era and they presented him with a framed print of Lake Windermere where he spent the first few months of peace after being liberated from Theresienstadt by the Russians in 1945. Mayer declared that he owed it to his late parents, brothers and sister, and other members of his family and community who were brutally murdered, to tell their story and give them a voice and identity once again. Mayer has spent his life sharing his testimony and is a wonderful man. I understand that Whitefield Shool also honoured him. There are so few of our members now who have the courage to relive their traumatic teenage years spent in concentration camps and he gives so much of his time and energy to do this.

May 2007 – We had the usual service at Stenecourt Shool to celebrate the boys' liberation and this was well attended by our members and wives. This was followed by a lovely Kiddush.

The following day, Jacky and Rodney Field (Mayer and Lily Bomsztyk's daughter and son-in-law) gave their home for a get-together of our members and there were only one or two who were unable to attend (they don't know what a lovely evening they missed). At that meeting, Jacky told the members that it was intended at some time in the future, if it was possible, for the 2nd Generation to take over the running of the Manchester Branch of the Society but, first of all, they were contacting all the second generation to a meeting in her house to see if a positive group could be formed to take over and once this has been ascertained, a meeting of all our members would be called to see if agreement could be reached as to the take-over and, of course, the terms, but this would definitely depend on the response by the 2nd Generation and, in the meantime, we would carry on as normal.

July 2007 – Sam and Sheila Gontarz became grandparents when Robbie and his wife gave birth to a baby boy.

July 2007 – Martin Wertheim died suddenly and we send sincere condolences to his family.

July 2007 – Unfortunately, Mayer Bomsztyk could not carry on as Chairman owing to ill-health and it was decided to see if the Second Generation could form a working party and at this stage help to continue with the branch in Manchester. After several meetings, Tania Nelson (the daughter of the late Mendel and Marie Beale) was appointed Chairperson with Michael Rubinstein as Vice-Chairman, Jacqueline Field (daughter of Mayer and Lily Bomsztyk) became Secretary and Warren Bomsztyk the Treasurer. They are forming sub-committees to continue to promote education and fund-raising efforts and have taken over the responsibility of arranging the service each year to celebrate the boys' liberation at Stenecourt Shool followed by a Kiddush, the annual memorial service at Agecroft Cemetery, the sale of raffle tickets, etc., and Louise agreed to continue to keep records of events for publishing in the Journal, collection of subscriptions and notifying members of events, etc., and we think that this will work well. They will represent the '45 Aid Society and the 2nd Generation at the Communal Council and attend the various meetings.

August 2007 – Elisa, the daughter of Helen and Edward Harrison and granddaughter of Dorra Samson and the late Nat Samson, was married.

The Nicky Alliance had an exhibition of work done by its members and Dorra Samson, who does excellent tapestry work, was mentioned in the Jewish Chronicle with a picture of a recent tapestry, many of which depict scenes from Israel.

SECTION I CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

It is not often that one can obtain, in English, an interview of one of our members that was taken soon after the war by 74 year old Mary Heaton Vorse – "one of the most compelling and representative figures in the history of American radicalism, and a foremost pioneer of labour journalism in the U.S.A". It so happened that Anna Andlauer, a teacher in Indersdorf, who is a volunteer worker at the Dachau Memorial Site, found a list of the names of the 'Boys' who were sent at the end of October 1945 from Indersdorf, which is near Dachau, to Wintershill Hall in Hampshire. When she discovered that no-one in the area had ever heard of these young survivors, she felt that their experiences have to be made known to the German public. She contacted me and asked whether I could give her Kurt Klappholz's address. Unfortunately, I had to inform her that Kurt passed away a few years ago. During our conversation, she informed me that she had found Kurt's interview in the archives and I immediately asked her to send me a copy. When I read Mary's comments and Kurt's interview, I felt the need to include it in our Journal, not only to share with you my admiration for Kurt's ability to describe his moving and poignant experiences, but also that he was able to convey it so well in the English language. His testimony is very important, not so much for the searing emotional impact, but for his extraordinary memory and his ability to recapture the immediacy of his experiences in the concentration camps.

At a recent meeting, at Yad Vashem, the Directorate Chairman, Avner Shalev, announced to hundreds of Holocaust survivors that their story will take the centre stage next year. He also thanked the participants for their willingness to summon their inner strength to recount their painful personal experiences many times. "You decided to believe both in man and God – each one of you in your own way – and to continue to claim life. That is a tremendously powerful message and yet it is not patently obvious. That is who you are".

Our members have always been conscious of the significance of the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel. Most of us can be proud that soon after our liberation and our arrival in England we harnessed all our energies and concentrated all our efforts on rebuilding revitalising our lifeline and spiritual revival. We did not allow Hitler to enjoy a posthumous triumph over us. In our early upbringing, our parents inculcated in us a deep sense of purpose, compassion and responsibility towards our fellow citizen and this stood us in good stead. No matter how much we were degraded and deprived of all vestiges of human dignity, we did not succumb to corruption. The idea of revenge hardly ever entered our minds. Nor were we consumed with hatred, venom, or bred a mentality of morose despondency. We have demonstrated by our swift adjustment and integration into the community that the positive approach and integrity taught by our parents have stood up against all evil influences. This has further been demonstrated by the way our attitudes and values have permeated to our children. Their success story has yet to be told. Also, a small exhibition about them will be shown at City Hall, the new home of the Mayor of London near London Bridge, between 14th January – 7th February 2008. They are a great source of pride to us. Our parents, too, would have been proud to know of our achievements and those of our sons and daughters. It is also gratifying that many of our members, since their retirement, have taken an active part in relating their experiences to schools, universities and institutions of all kinds. This is not an easy task as many of them are reliving their painful past several times during a week. However, they understand that against a background of growing anti-Semitism, the danger of revisionism and the persistence of Holocaust denial, their contribution in resisting these tendencies is of the utmost importance.

A century ago, Theodore Herzl's statement that anti-Semitism would exist as long as Jews exist, remains disturbingly valid. The irony is that he believed that the creation of a Jewish State will solve the problem of anti-Semitism. Alas, now that there is a State of Israel, not only is anti-Semitism ripe, but it has also extended from being part of the prejudice of the Right to that of the Left. The Liberal and Socialist elements find it convenient to criticise Israel under the guise of anti-Semitism. The Holocaust offers mankind for their reflection and the acme, the culmination of the unprecedented spectre of man's inhumanity to man and the intolerable perversity of human nature. It points to the extent of the depth of degradation, humiliation and cruelty to which mankind be subjected within the Rule of Law is manipulated and abused. This is the message that survivors have to submit when they give their talks to the public at large.

However, there are also two important issues that the Holocaust has taught us is that anti-Semites make no distinction between one Jew and another, that Jews can ill-afford to meet the challenges of anti-Semitism in disunity. Unfortunately, many Jews ignore these lessons to the detriment of the future of World Jewry.

As the youngest and fast dwindling band of Holocaust survivors, we must not falter in our responsibility in transmitting to our co-religionists this most vital message.

An interview with Kurt Klappholtz in Indersdorf at the end of October 1945 before leaving for England with the Southampton Boys

By Mary Heaton Vorse
A member of the
UNRRA Team 182

Mary Heaton Vorse was a foremost pioneer of labour journalism in the U.S.A. and a prominent participant in the women's universal suffrage movement.

This is the story of Kurt Klappholtz. I have written it as he told it to me in what he calls his "own easy words". I have kept it with all the repetitions of hunger and homesickness and whippings. His story is the story of the lost children of Europe. The children who have lost all trace of their families. The little slave labourers who were taken from their homes to work in Germany.

I know his story is true for I have heard it over and over. I have heard other versions of the terrible march from Grossensee to Flossenburg in the middle of winter. I have looked through hundreds of the dreadful laconic records.

I have heard Kurt's story with variations over and over. In Ecouis, near Paris, where 500 children from Buchenwald found asylum through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, they sat on the grass in the sun and sang the prison camp songs. They sang Treblinka, the extermination camp. This is the awful song of the asphyxiated, the song of the gas chamber, which they sang as unconcernedly as our children sing the latest song hit.

Kurt's story is not the worst. I have talked with boys who have seen their fathers starved to death, who have had their parents killed before their eyes. There are many who have seen their mothers and sisters taken off to the gas chamber.

They tell you these things unemotionally. They have lived with death and brutality so long that they chat about starvation, torture and gas chambers as our children talk about the latest movie. The doctors say they can do this because they are emotionally anaesthetised.

Although no-one knows the exact number of the lost children, two things are known. Between the ages of the two-year-olds and those older than twelve, there are almost no children at all. Among all the lost children found in concentration camps or picked up throughout the country, there are almost no little children.

The Germans gassed and cremated little children when they did not die quickly enough.

As nothing was done by chance, here is something we should never forget. In the heart of this regime of terror lay the plan of exterminating whole peoples and forever weakening others.

It dawns on you gradually that it was part of a plan of the high command that boys and girls were to be taken to the munition factories to be worked to death. When they got sick, they were to be killed.

When you wish to destroy a people you begin with the children. They are the ones upon whom the attack must be made. Every one of these boys and girls you see is a miracle of survival – only the strongest lived.

These unaccompanied children are but a few of the children in the master plan of extermination and weakening whole populations of countries. There were, exclusive of the Russian territory, roughly ten percent children. The army was faced with the return of these millions to their homes and performed a miracle of logistics. By September only a few hundred remained and they and their children are now in the care of UNRRA. They are, by army reports, in need of everything. This is not the whole toll of the slaughter of children.

In Russia, in Poland, in

- Beatrice and Leon Manders. mazeltov on the marriage of their grandson Alex. son of Howard and the late Gillian Hamilton. to Dena.

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

May you share many more happy and healthy years.
Pauline and Harry Spiro.

DEATHS:

It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of the following members during the past year:

- Peter Brandstein
- Sol Erreich
- Sam Rosenblatt
- Joseph Fischler
- Isaac Baum
- Paul Oppenheimer
- Doris Frydman
- Ray Winogradzki
- Nadia Huberman
- Rene Zabialek
- Peretz Zylberberg
- Fievel Dzialowski
- Charlie Orzech
- Leon Rosenberg.
- Eli Cohen

Sincere condolences to:

- Ann and David Peterson on the loss of their daughter.
- Toby Biber on the loss of her husband.
- Barbara Stimler on the loss of her husband
- Lea Gaedman on the loss of her husband
- Joe Kiersz on the loss of his wife Shirley.

3RD GENERATION NEWS:

Mazeltov to Lauren Harris on attaining 3 As in her A levels. Lauren is now at Brazenose College. Oxford. studying Chemistry. She is the granddaughter of Jasmine and Michael Bandel and the daughter of Gaynor and Daniel Harris.

Monty and the Chief Rabbi

14th September 2007

WATFORD SYNAGOGUE UNVEILS MEMORIAL WALL

The Chief Rabbi. Sir Jonathan Sacks. unveiled a memorial wall at Watford and District Synagogue in Hertfordshire in June to commemorate these members of congregants' families who have passed away. It was a particularly poignant moment for Montague Graham as the memorial includes the names of four members of his family who perished in the Holocaust. At an emotional ceremony. Montague (known as Monty) was joined by his wife Millie. his four children and their families. including his four grandchildren: Jonathan Kingsley. James and Danielle Gerden and Naomi Graham.

He says. "I am the only survivor of my family. It is the first time I have seen my parents Zlata and Kalma Gramot and brothers Zelek and Benek remembered as the records of all their lives were destroyed. It was also a pleasure and honour to meet Sir Jonathan Sacks and to share this moment with my family."

Leon Rosenberg

Leon Rosenberg

Max and Alan Rosenberg

Here is the eulogy for their father, Leon Rosenberg, from his sons Max and Alan, which was read by Reverend Englemeyer before the levoyah:-

Warmth, honesty, wisdom, compassion with humour – our dear father's core qualities are legendary. Indeed, in our mind he has always been 'a man for all seasons' with so many wonderful friends across the broadest spectrums of religious and social divide. Despite the unimaginable torment of his early years in Nazi-occupied Poland, he refused to become embittered and remained positive throughout his life. What a special lovely man – our dear father, Leon Rosenberg.

SECTION VIII MEMBERS NEWS 2007

Compiled by Ruby Friedman

BIRTHS:

- Sala Newton-Katz and the late Benny Newton, mazeltov on the birth of a great-granddaughter.
- Doreen Wajchendler and the late Harry Wajchendler, mazeltov on the birth of a great-granddaughter.
- Anita Wiernik and the late Danny Wiernik, mazeltov on the birth of a great-grandchild.
- Anza and Ben Heligott, mazeltov on the birth of their grandson, born to Laura & Nathan.
- Beatrice and Leon Manders, mazeltov on the birth of a great-granddaughter.
- Yael and Naftali Rosenzweig, mazeltov on the birth of their 12th grandchild.

ENGAGEMENTS:

- Rachel Levy, mazeltov on the engagement of your daughter Shelley to David, daughter of the late Phin Levy.
- Evelyn and Aron Zylberszac, mazeltov on the engagement of their grandson Eli to Stacey, son of Fiona and Armand.
- Beatrice and Leon Manders, mazeltov on the engagement of their grandson.

BARMITZVAH:

- Pauline and Harry Spiro, mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Jonathon, son of Tracy and Michael.
- Marie and Bob Obuchowski, mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Joe, son of Ivor and Laurie.
- Pauline and Harry Spiro, mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Ben, son of Ros and Leslie.
- Tina and Victor Greenberg, mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Sam, son of Janie and Alan.
- Carol Farkas, mazeltov on the barmitzvah of your grandson Jack, son of Emma and Alan and grandson of the late Frank Farkas.
- Shirley and Alfred Huberman, mazeltov on the barmitzvah of their grandson Joel, son of Susan and Maurice.

MARRIAGES:

- Olive and David Herman, mazeltov on the marriage of your son Paul to Sarah.
- Rachel Levy, mazeltov on the marriage of your daughter Shelley to David Irvin, daughter of the late Phin Levy.

Yugoslavia, children were killed wholesale. Entire schools of children in Yugoslavia were taken out and shot. 400,000 children perished under the Germans in that country. In Holland, Belgium, France, Norway and Greece, populations were systematically starved and their children with them. Germany planned on a docile, civil population, weakened by insufficient food. The careful Germans were conducting experiments in starvation, on how little food a human being can live and still work. You can weaken a race of people by poor feeding so that few children live. So a vast slaughter of the innocents, unparalleled in history, was carried out.

Here is a survival, Kurt.

I met Kurt in the old monastery of Indersdorf, which is one of the many homes for unaccompanied children now being set up by UNRRA, the largest number of whom are in Bavaria. The homes are being set up under the direction of Miss Dorothy Lally, Head of UNRRA Welfare for Bavaria. The Indersdorf home is directed by Miss Lilian Robbins.

Before the war this was an orphan asylum run by the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul. Hitler put them out and now they are back at their immemorial mission of caring for unfortunate children.

It is a wonderful sight to see these children eating good food in the ancient refectory, the older children helping; or to see a band of boys and girls rush in from one of the excursions they make daily. Seeing them so gay, it is hard to believe that this is the first kindness they have known since they were seized by the Germans and torn from their homes. Out in the courtyards, the babies lie in their cribs. The two-year-olds, in crimson rompers made on the premises, went on their adventurous voyages of discovery. The very nationality of some of these children is unknown. It was a fine sight to see a big boy feed a baby its bottle, or romp with the little ones, for the big children cannot keep away from the babies, the blue-gowned Sisters with their white-winged caps looked on and one of the UNRRA girls kept attentive watch.

Miss Robbins has seen to it that there shall be as little of an institutional atmosphere and as much of a home one as possible, and you feel that if instead of its immense task, UNRRA were to have done only this work, its name should be blessed.

Kurt's father was an accountant. They were not rich but lived comfortably and Kurt had private lessons in English which he "kept in his mind" throughout the three years of his captivity since he was taken from Bielsko in Upper Silesia. He is a fine looking boy, well grown, with hazel eyes set wide apart, thick brown hair, irregular features and eager friendly ways, and a great desire to tell his story, which he knows is the story of all children like him.

His father and mother surrounded him with such affection that their influence and the constant thought of them carried him through the unbelievable years between the time the Germans took him away and liberation. He even kept his ambition for the future. His father had intended to send him to college and he still wants to be a doctor. "A surgeon I would wish most of all to be", he says, "but maybe now not possible.

"It was in June 1942 that I saw my mother and father last. They took us away in trucks. My father stood there at the top of the hill and waved. He kept smiling to me but my mother cried. I shall not forget that moment. The girls, they were taken away, too; how they cried! How they cried! Our parents stood on one side, we on the other getting in the trucks and they cried and we cried. They took us in trucks, all the boys and girls. The old people they took, too. These went away in the railway train to the gas chamber. We and the girls were taken away to work. We went to one camp, the girls to another, and we never saw any of them ever again.

"Four weeks I was in a transfer camp. I was in many, many camps. I will tell you about all of them so you can write how it happens to children who are in camps.

"In the first camp, they taught us how to work. If you didn't do the bed right they gave you discipline exercise. You had to do the frog. You sit like a frog and hop and hop until you fall over. If one boy did wrong, we all were punished. Like the German proverb 'All for one and one for all'. It was hard after a long day on the building place to do the punishment frog exercise. I had to load 312 cubic yards of sand and I was thirteen. In that first camp I only was afraid I couldn't do the work and then I would be cremated.

"My first impression is that of hunger. I had never thought about food before. I

didn't think about anything else for three years. I didn't understand at first when they would say to me in the evening, 'Save your bread, save your bread!' I would think all the time of the beautiful bread in our bakery. We had had a Polish servant and I wrote to her and said, 'Send me a greeting from Mr Pasternik' – that was our baker's name. That Polish girl was a nice girl. She had been with my grandmother. She was like one of your family but I never heard from her with a greeting from Pasternik.

"Now it is a long time since April when the Americans came. I am never hungry any more but my eyes, as I walk, still look for bread. I cannot bear to see a crust – I save it. For so many months, so many, many months, I looked, always searching for something, anything I could eat."

"In all that time", I asked, "did you have no friend? Was no-one kind to you?" He thought.

"There was the Jewish elder, that was all. No-one is kind in a camp. In a camp, everyone is bad. When you get to know someone, he went away soon. Everybody gets to be like an animal by and by. It is everybody for yourself. Everybody thinks about only one thing – how can you get more bread? If you go to sleep, you know where you must put your bread. Inside your shirt: even then they might steal. You are kindly only when you got something. Now I give anything if someone asks me. You give me this chewing gum. You can get more. I cannot believe now how it was in the concentration camp. I cannot believe how I was then, here where there is always food and always kindly, but I know it was true.

"They took me next to a camp in Upper Silesia where there were SAs instead of SS. I cleaned shoes for SA. I did errands. Here I was not so hungry. They gave me sometimes potatoes. They began having a kind of typhus so we were taken to a quarantine camp.

"About that camp, what stories I can tell you!

"It was an old Russian Prisoner-of-War camp. Here there were lice like that – as long as my nail! In that camp there was really great hunger. After each meal I was more hungry than before. Around the camp were civilian workers in the field. We weren't allowed to move, we couldn't leave the camp, but one or two of our boys swapped things with the civilians for rutabagas out of which they always made our soup. Rutabagas, big turnips, the whole time, they fed you that. One of our boys gave a shirt, a new good shirt, for some.

"One of the guards saw him and caught him. They called us all to see them beat him a hundred strokes. They gave him the chair. They made him lie on a chair. You know how they do. One holds the arms, the other legs, then two beat with a rubber hose a hundred strokes while we watch him swell up all colours like pulp.

"Seven weeks we are in this camp. Many died. Now I came to a transfer camp called Branica, near Oppen in Upper Silesia. When I first came to this camp I was shaking from fear. The Commander of the Guards was OT, Organization Todt – Organisation Death. He had a big whip hanging from his belt. This man was a sadist. In this camp you would hear nothing but people being whipped and screaming. First they searched us for money, jewels, and arms. If anyone didn't give his money and they found it, he was beaten 50 or 100 lashes. There was a garden. If you stepped off the path, you were whipped. Then there was another thing. We were lined up in our winter clothes. He hit us to see if any dust is coming from your clothes. If there is, you get 35 or 50 strokes.

"This man, will they get him for a war criminal?

"They told me in the 345 Battery they will punish war criminals. I can tell you all about him. He is the worst sadist there is. His name is Kurt Pompay. He is middle height with a little moustache. He has a wooden leg which he got in the last war. He made up things so everyone is whipped.

"In this camp not everyone went to work every day. One week I went to work Monday, then Tuesday, but not on Wednesday. In a camp you do as small as you can. Here all of us work willing and hard. We unload wood all the morning. There in camp everyone thinks, 'The less I do the more I save myself'. You know if you wear out, you are killed. So I don't go to work. I didn't go and I got 50 lashes, 25 at noon, 25 at night. I had to cut wood and take slops to the latrine.

"Now they change us after four weeks in this camp to another forced work camp where we take up the track of a small spur railway. Here was an SR called Pietraszak who is a Volksdeutsch. He

prisoners that he made without hesitation. There was one occasion where he swopped places with another prisoner so that this man could remain with his brother. Many years later my father was contacted by this same man, William Samelson from the United States of America, who had spent years trying to track my father down to thank him for what he had done.

Even during those most horrific, unbelievably inhumane times he thought of his fellow man more than himself.

After the liberation he was sent to England with his next "family" – The Boys. At Windermere he was able to convalesce from his experience. He told me that when he was learning to speak English he and the other Boys would spend many an evening at the cinema to help with this task.

He met my mother Sheila in 1951 at the Astoria dance hall and they got married in June 1954. It was with great joy that he learnt via an advertisement in the Jewish Chronicle that his father's brother had also survived and was now living in Israel.

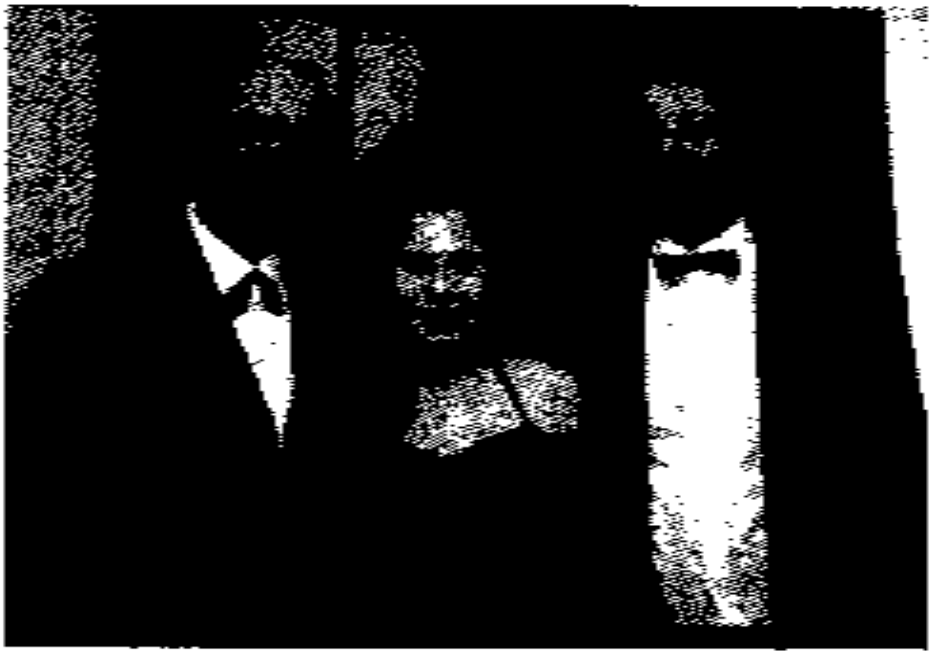
Over the years he worked in the clothing trade for, amongst others, Ben Heligott and George Kayson and in his later years, until he retired, for Harry Spiro.

In 1985 I met my husband-to-be Robert and we married in 1988. My father never looked upon Robert as a son-in-law, treating him with as much generosity and kindness as if he was his own son. It was an emotional and joyous occasion for him when I gave birth to firstly Elana and three years later Ben. The grandchildren were a constant joy to him and he always took an interest in whatever they were doing. Once he retired both he and my mother looked after the children while Robert and myself were at work. He enjoyed this time with them immensely.

In the last couple of years he faced his illness with dignity and determination to try and live as normal a life as possible. I never once heard him complain. It was with great pride that he met the Queen and visited 10 Downing Street to have tea with Cherie Blair along with a group of other Boys. He told me afterwards that if someone had said to him all those years ago in Poland that he would one day meet the Queen of Great Britain he would have laughed.

I cannot begin to imagine what it would be like to have family and friends and a whole way of life and to suddenly have all that you held dear ripped away and then to start "life" all over again, gaining new family, making new friends and living in a totally different country.

As his daughter I get comfort from the fact that even after all the horrors and pain of his early years he enjoyed the rest of his life and was loved by everyone who came to know him. He will be sorely missed forever.



Roy and Karen and her husband Robert.

no harm to anyone. He was the epitome of gentleness and goodness."

"If he's alive, we'll find him," Roman admonished.

In my life-long endeavour to educate generations about the meaning and consequences of the Holocaust, I took recourse to copious references. In my search for material, I had made inquiries with various archival institutions, notably with the Yad Vashem in Israel and many other Holocaust museums, never allowing the memory of my dear friend Shlamek to fade. Where I succeeded in my factual historical research, I had failed in my search for Shlamek Winogrodzki. Gradually, I was forced to accept the inevitable conjecture. "He didn't make it."

During the early 90s, I had volunteered my linguistic services to a dear friend, Harry Mazal, who had the passion to assemble one of the most voluminous privately owned Holocaust libraries in the world. His mission was to combat Historical Revisionism: convenient euphemism for Holocaust Denial. I helped catalogue and identify foreign language books on the subject as well as those in the English language. It was there I came upon a book by the great British historian, Martin Gilbert, entitled *The Boys of Pionkow Trybunalski*. The story dealt with one of the survivor boys shipped to foster homes in England.

Needless to say, it was a well documented work, replete with survivors' testimonies as well as photographs of places and individuals. And there, to my great joy, after half a century of searching, I came upon the youthful photo of the subject I longed to find: the face of my dearest boyhood companion, Shlamek. The caption beneath the photo revealed the reason for the years of my unsuccessful search. It identified the boy in the photograph as Shlamek Wino, and London was his new home.

When we connected via the trans-Atlantic call, we talked as if there had been no time lapse at all. He was giving me his jacket, and we said our farewells. He remained in Buchenwald, and Roman and I had left for Colditz. We were the boys of yesteryear, chatting about old and new, and the sound of each other's voice was so intimately familiar. We continued to talk from time to time. We had made repeated plans to visit. Personal and health problems caused delays. And then, a few months back, I had received a call from Shlamek's dear wife Sheila. She had informed me of his final journey.

God rest your gentle soul, my dearest friend Shlamek. You live on in our hearts and we shall miss your inimitable smile...

Solomon Rafael Winogrodzki (17/3/1929 – 23/5/07)

by his daughter Karen Hanna Permutt

My father was a most loving, generous, warm man. As a child growing up I was at first unaware of the horrors he had witnessed and the loss he had sustained during his own childhood. Here was a man who to me was a strong and emotionally balanced person who I could look to for comfort and advice at all times.

As I grew up I began to learn the background of my father's youth. Although he did not speak too much of his experiences during the war I did over a period of time hear about his family who were so cruelly taken away and of his selfless fight for survival.

My father was born in Poland on 17th March 1929 to Hanna and Chaim. He had two sisters, Esther and Ruth. He had a happy childhood which I am sure moulded his own personality into that of a real gentleman; who really was a gentle man.

When my father and his family were in the ghettos he was assigned to work in the glass factory. Once he was sent to the camps he did not see his parents or his sisters again. The last camp he was sent to was Theresienstadt from where he would eventually be liberated. He did tell me of his selfless acts of kindness to other

killed 17 Jews while I was there. He would take them out to the woods and he would shoot them. He said they were shot trying to escape.

"Now again they moved the whole camp to a suburb of Breslau by real railway cars, not box cars.

"Now I am going to tell you something. It is about psychology. In this camp I lose my morale. The first is you eat up your whole bread. You can't save it. You have no more self-control. I eat it all up, a whole pound, it was so good, with the tea water. Oh, this piece of bread it's more than gold or anything else, how **good** it tastes (he made a long pause and shook his head). how good it tastes! Next is how I go downhill. First you don't save your bread. Next you don't wash any more. I don't try any more to be clean. You don't clean your clothes any more or put shoe string in shoes – you don't care – you are gone. So then you begin to die. My legs all swell up. If I press my fingers in my legs, the hole stays there. I get to be a 'muselmann', a camp slang for a no-good. And why? I have too much work to do, too little food, but it is when I now don't care I lose all strength. I was a kid and I have no-one ever to tell me like my father. I was too lazy. I get beat. I didn't care for nothing. I lose my morale so I don't even go to the latrine. I was just like an animal. I was only want to eat, to eat, to eat!

"I am not the only one like this, there are many, many. If you could see the people in the concentration camp. What a misery! What a misery! Most intelligent people, doctors, lawyers, teachers, they lose their morale. It is when you can't bear no more dirt, bearing, hunger, then you give up – then your morale is gone. So intelligent people, especially those, they lost their morale: people who weren't working people, they died. His legs swell first, then he dies. The Czechs, the Dutch – they died. The Poles, the Russians, they don't have much ever. They live. There are some intelligents who live. The politicals with the red triangle – they are wonderful. They keep up everybody's courage. They make up the songs. To kill them, they must shoot them. They never die because they lose their morale.

"Once I got beat with an ox whip so I could not move for a long time and I get sick. This is why. On the building place where I work is a small house. The window was broken and you know I was always looking for food. You know how a hungry dog sniffs everywhere. So me. I think maybe an old piece of bread? I went in through the window. I find an old bottle. I took it home. I want to save it for coffee. It is not coffee but sometimes it is hot.

"A guard saw me. He made a report to the Commanding Officer. He said this was the house of a German soldier who is away fighting for his country so they gave me 46 and I am cut up and can't move a long time. The doctor says, 'He is no good for work', so they sent me to Ludwigsdorf, Lower Silesia. In this camp I worked in a hand-grenade factory. In this camp the powder turns your face yellow and your hair. I am four weeks there. I went to Graditz and I am only three days on the building place when I am sick with diarrhoea. They sent me to the infirmary, a funny infirmary, you lie on straw. But I don't get well, and they send me to Brande, which is a place for sick people.

"While I am lying there sick I think, I think, and in this place Brande I get my morale back. Maybe, too, I rest. I don't have to work: there is a little more food. I am there four months when I get well. They put me to work peeling potatoes. I could sometimes steal a potato. We managed in the night to cook the things we stole. I get well quick now. I get my morale back. For when I am sick I keep on thinking – **I have to wash. I have to keep myself clean.** If I don't, I would have died. In a camp it means so much. At home you don't wash yourself. You are dirty – you are not really so. If you are dirty in camp, you lose your morale and then you die. It is the same with food. You do not know hunger. You do not know to think nothing else, always, always, how can I get to eat? When a man has enough bread, he was like a king. We would say 'Look at him! He has enough bread!'

"Now I am well. They took us to Blechhammer Camp in Upper Silesia. Here there were 4,000 people. I came there on the 4th September 1943. I lived here the longest time of any until January 1945. At first it was a forced labour camp, until April 1944, they then made it a concentration camp. They put us in striped clothes and tattooed on us the numbers. This is my number." (He rolled his sleeve up to show me tattooed in blue 177717).

"When they change it I had good luck. This is because I

have got my morale back. If I am dirty, they will not have had me. They make me striker for the infirmary. I am not hungry at Blechhammer the first eight months.

"But other things there I do not like I should think about. I have to help burn people in the crematorium. About this time the Americans came over and a great many people were killed. They were all in pieces and were burnt.

"Then many were hanged. This is why: On the building place there was a siren. When it blew the guards and everyone went to the bunkers. There were many small houses and while the guards hid from bombs, our people were hungry and searched the houses for food. So they took them and hanged them. They called it plundering. They made me help take them down.

"So there I was until the 21st January 1945 when the Russians came close. They gave us two pounds of bread, a little margarine and some synthetic honey. That was all we had for several days until we got some potatoes boiled in their skins. We went on foot for two weeks. The first night we slept in a field, the next night in a barn. This was the coldest winter. And in the barn they suffocated us. You couldn't see anything. It was black, black. When I lay down a man was lying on one leg, a man over me on my arms. I was fighting myself free. I got angry, mad. If they had given us a ray of light! We killed each other in the barn. If anyone had a knife they cut bread from each other's pockets in the dark. They took out 40 dead in the morning, it was so crowded.

"We walked for two weeks till we came to Grossrosen. When we started we were 3,500 people. We were 2,000 when we got there. 40 or 50 children were dead. Whether you die or not, it all depends on the food. There were 150 women, but no women died.

"We arrived at 10 at night and went to a barracks with a stone floor. There were 2,000 people and the door was open. I lay down on the floor.

"At Grossrosen they disinfected us and gave us a shirt and pants. Every evening we had to stand two hours. People got crazy from the cold.

"Next more Capos and SS. They came with clubs. Everyone who didn't stand straight, they hit them on the head. Each reveille they killed some people. Some Capos have the green triangle and they are the worst of all. I was only three days there and more Russians came. We got two pounds of bread and a little bologna and again in the boxcar, 80 men to the car. I ate my bread up right away and I didn't get a sip of water for four days. It was hard to keep on my feet. Then in four days we got to Buchenwald.

"Next we were taken to an old salt mine in Bad Salzungen, 120 kilometres from Buchenwald, where we built a munitions factory 300 meters underground. It was the end of February and I didn't see the light of day for four weeks. Until the 3rd March the Americans came closer. We walked for six days to Buchenwald. We were there only three days when they took us in boxcars, 90 men in a boxcar. We started to go Flossenberg. Now, after a while, the Americans started to bomb the train. A gasoline train caught fire.

"Now I want to tell you how in concentration camps you lose all feeling, all sentimentality. As the Americans came, the SS were distributing bread. The first eight boxcars got bread but then they had to stop. Dead people were all around. Dead from airplanes, so everywhere were dead pieces. I wasn't thinking, 'Oh, God, I thank you I am alive'. I wasn't thinking of the dead all about. I was only thinking, 'Oh, God, I have lost my bread!'. So you will see what I mean by no feelings. I saw the danger, I knew I might get killed. I think only of bread. I was not the only one with no feelings. It was not only me. When we got back to the boxcar everyone asked, 'Will we get our bread?' So you see how it is with people, how they get.

"I remember that day the boxcar was so crowded everyone couldn't lie down. The guard said, 'Anyone who gets up gets shot'. I remember the time two people who got shot when they got up.

"We got to 20 miles from Flossenberg and we had to get off the train. Everybody who couldn't walk was shot. That was the first time I cried. We were so near our destination when it happened. A Hungarian boy of 14 or 15 was crying. I said, 'What is the matter?'. He said, 'My father was so near where we are going. He fell. They shot him.' It is not so bad to hear as it is to see it – your father getting killed. An SS man came while I was crying. I could have killed him. It is so bad people in

of the dreaded gas. Even the subsequent formaldehyde dunking was bearable, though the acrid substance was biting into the mutilated skin after the body hair was removed with the use of dull steel tools. The Nazis drew the first blood, but the pain of irritation only indicated that there was still life. "They will never defeat us after this, if we only manage to stay together." Shlamek was his confident self on our way toward the barrack.

He was first to climb onto the uppermost tier. There were four of them, counting the first being the floor. "That way, nobody will piss down on us." In addition to being practical, Shlamek maintained his sense of humour. We slept in tight quarters, next to ten other men, squeezed onto an area not much larger than three square yards. Sleep was a rare commodity, as we lay head to toe, the only way to fit into the sparse space. Shlamek lay between Roman and me. He was the carrier of the daily crumbs of bread we've saved up. He put them under his jacket that was tucked into the trousers tied with a rope round his hips. It was imperative to safeguard our savings from possible theft, and we "feasted" on the few additional grams of bread when weekend arrived.

A loving bond had developed over time between the three of us. At first, we helped each other at the quarry, later on, when we were assigned to the incendiary bomb manufacture at the I.G. Farben in Weimar. As the welcoming inscription had told us on our arrival, we knew that, as long as we were able to work, our lives were spared.

The Allied bombing raids put an end to our "job security." It was bitter cold on the morning of January 12, 1945. The Capo's brutal voice sounded the familiar order: "Out for reveille!" (In German it was *"Raus zum Appell!"*) The northern freezing winds howled, as we stood in formation, stepping from foot to foot to keep whatever traces of blood we still possessed in circulation. The SS hierarchy was assembled up front, and we knew something important was to happen. They called numbers, and inmates responded with "here" when their number was called. The inmate numbers were sewed onto our jackets. It was our only identity. Those called assembled to the right of the main formation.

"Labour transport!" The dreaded word circulated through the ranks. The numbers sounded endlessly. First it was Roman's number. I waited and prayed for mine to be called. It wasn't to be. After a long interval, Shlamek's number resounded. The SS man calling numbers readied to depart. That was it. No more numbers.

"Merciful God!" I thought. We'll be separated. What will I do alone? I was desperate, tearful. No!! They can't do that to us after all this time together. Roman looked back. His eyes said goodbye. Now Shlamek was leaving as well. I was disconsolate. Suddenly, Shlamek handed me his jacket and took mine in exchange. He would stay behind so that I could join Roman. "Go, quickly, Wilek," Shlamek whispered. We hugged. "What will happen here?" I managed to ask. He smiled showing his characteristic tooth: "I'll manage. We'll meet when we're free." I heard him faintly, as I walked toward the departing formation. This time, Roman and I would stay together at the expense of Shlamek's sacrifice. It was clear to my mind that "if work meant life" in the Nazi order, then lack of work would mean death.

Our destination was Coldtz, a small satellite labour camp in the East of Germany. They put us to work on the assembly of the anti-tank weapon called Panzerfaust, the equivalent of the bazooka. There was not a day passed when we would not pray for Shlamek's safety. His last words resounded clearly in my memory. We would be reunited soon, I had hoped.

Indeed, my brother and I saw freedom on May 1, 1945. Too weak to begin our search for our adopted brother immediately, we had spent several months in recovery. It was early on the following year when we had undertaken our search for Shlamek. As the saying went, "If there is life, you will meet." We made inquiries everywhere. "Have you seen Shlamek Winogrodzki?" I asked whenever I recognized a familiar face. "No, I haven't," was the usual response. I immersed myself in playing catch-up with my formal education while waiting for our visas for the United States.

Years past and hope faded with each day gone by. "Why?" I asked the tormenting question. "Why would God give up on our dear Shlamek? He had done

Shlamek, we shall miss you...

By

William (Wilek) Samelson

The shocking news of your untimely passing has, once again, caught us asking that salient question over again: "Why you, so soon?" It had seemed to me quite obvious from the very moment of our liberation from Nazi hell, that God, in His infinite wisdom, would grant each of us special extension of life as compensation for the time we have wasted in slavery.

I remember you, Shlamek, my dear friend and loyal companion, even from the moment of the Pietrków ghetto liquidation. We huddled together on the *Umschlagplatz*, you, me, and my brother Roman. It was the last transport to depart from the Hortensia Glassworks, as we were unaware that there may have been others left behind. The Nazi roster had us under the names Shlamek Winogrodzki, Roman Samelson, and Wilhelm Samelson. The bureaucratic Nazi henchmen recorded religion, age, and the alleged competence for slave labour. One thing was clear to the three of us: we would have a better chance of survival if we stayed together. The "if" was conditioned by the knowledge that the perpetrators delighted in separating families.

I remember you, my dear Shlamek, as a young and handsome boy. Even under stressful circumstances, there was a smile on your face and encouraging words that challenged the dismal fate. And when your lips parted in that inimitable laughter, there was one front tooth that protruded forward from the row of even, healthy teeth. And even in that small flaw there lay the indomitable humanity you so well represented, an added touch of humour. For who could fail to return that cheerful smile when faced by the friendliest of friendly faces: yours?

After a brief "stopover" in Czestochowa, where we were "engaged" in one of several steel mills, we were again on the move. The problem we had faced each time of our "resettlement" journeys was that our destination was unknown.

"Wonder where they are taking us now?" We would question one another, knowing full well that only our jailers were privy to that sinister information.

Loaded like cattle into overcrowded freight cars, the three of us managed somehow to lay "claim" to one of the corners directly beneath the small barbed wired window. "We can breathe better and, occasionally, spot a name of a township from our lookout." Roman chuckled. From our vantage point, we could ascertain the direction of the transport: westward into the Third Reich.

After many hungry, almost sleepless days, with occasional stopovers in wooded areas for food rations and relief, we have arrived at our destination: Weimar. The locks on the wagon's sliding doors clicked open, the doors slid to one side, and we heard the now familiar order: "*Raus! Schnell!*" ("Out! Quick!)

We stood in ranks together, fidgeting in place, soon to march the five tedious kilometres up the picturesque rolling hills toward our new home, Buchenwald KZcamp.

We were greeted by the inimitable irony of the welcoming wrought iron "greeting" that arched above the camp's entrance gate: ***ARBEIT MACHT FREI*** (WORK MAKES YOU FREE). They marched us swiftly toward the "Disinfection Chamber" of which we've heard some sinister rumours in the past. Could they be true? Is this to be another Nazi ruse to entice us into the gas chamber?

Once in the cavernous chamber naked, having unburdened ourselves of all clothing previously, we looked up toward the ceiling where we located numerous shower heads. This is where Shlamek's optimism quieted our fears. "Why would they go through all the trouble of making us sort our old clothing and hand us the new camp uniforms only to gas us?" He asked a rhetorical question.

What a relief it was when cold water sprouted from the ceiling shower heads instead

concentration camps. If a man cried, 'Help me!' – who would help? In the concentration camp, you say, 'I'm feeling bad. I'm mad.' They say, 'So am I'. When people are shot, they don't look. They could kill each other for a cigarette butt. They watch an SS man smoking. When he throws the butt, five people perhaps fall on it and he laughs and for fun he shoots. That is their fun.

"We get there Friday. The next afternoon they gave us a quart of raw wheat. These wheat grains are nourishing. Some boys cooked them. They are worse than raw.

"Now I will tell you how they shot the people. We were walking on the main street. From a side street there came another transport. Two SS men walking behind shot at us and kept shooting as we passed. In a little while they shot 20 people. Our people looked at each other, their eyes said more than if they should speak. It was on the 23rd April in Oberpfalz Bavaria the SS came and began to yell 'Alles auf! Alles auf! Get going.' We got on the street. They are crying out, 'Forne halten! Halt there in front!' I didn't even have an idea the Americans were there.

"I see the first American tank charging around the corner and shooting the SS. I start to cry. An American soldier is stopping his jeep. A band of our people fall over him and start to kiss him. We were so happy! You never, never can see such a thing! You never can know! You never see such happy, happy people as we were when the Americans freed us!"

(Kurt brushes aside the fact he had typhus after liberation. What is important to him is that he worked in the kitchen of the 99th Division Battery C 345 Field Artillery).

"The first day I came down and said, 'I am here to work and do you know what they said, - 'Get your plate and go eat!' In the concentration camp I had to work the whole day first and now they say, 'Go eat.'" (He still can't get over the wonder of being told 'Go eat', nor can he get over the food thrown away).

"I would say, 'How can you throw away food when there are such a lot of hungry people everywhere?' There were a lot of prisoners of war around and I would give them those good leftovers. Though they are my worst enemies, I would rather give them the food than see it thrown away. I worked for the field artillery until I came here. I know all their names. I have them all. They are the first ones who are kindly to me since I am put in a truck and see my parents standing on the little hill. I have a certificate."

He pulled out his certificate proudly. It read:

Battery C345 Field Artillery
APO 90. C/o P.M., N.Y.
20th August, 1945

I certify that Kurt Klappholtz worked for Battery C 345 Field Artillery Battalion.

He can speak good English.
(Signed) J.C. Serras
Commanding

"This is my proudest thing because for the first time all were kindly to me.

"Now word came that boys can go to England so I came here to Indersdorf. There are 36 boys who are to go. I never slept so well as here since home. I never ate so nice at the table as here, a plate for soup, a clean plate for meat. I have never seen people always so kindly.

"I have a question to ask – I hear my Professor is in Kattowitz. His name is Richard Wagner, Professor of French and English. How can I get word to him? Maybe he knows about my mother and father. Always, always I think about him. In the concentration camp when I am walking. He had so many patience with me. I understand it today. Then I didn't know. I wish I had my father here. When I had a great misery, I think about my mother. When I didn't know what I should do, I think about my father. I loved him so much. He was like a law to me. I cannot believe my father he is dead. Maybe if they read this written in my small easy words and see my name printed, maybe they will find me."

This cry of homesickness goes up from all lost children. Wherever you see them, they crowd around you. They write addresses of relatives on bits of paper. The lost children search perpetually for someone, anyone who belongs to them.

I wish that hundreds of people, educators, legislators, plain people, could see the things I have seen, watch the children in a place like Indersdorf, hear their stories, and then let their minds stray over the destruction of Europe and grasp the master plan of the slaughter and starvation of the innocents, and I wish they could hear these lost children sing the Buchenwald song, the song made up in the midst of torture and death, a triumphant song of Freedom.

Who was Kurt?

Ben Helfgott

Kurt was greatly influenced by his father who was a well educated man with a degree from Erfurt University. His experiences in the concentration camps made a profound impact on his actions and thinking. It was characteristic of him that he was always a champion of the weak and oppressed. Soon after his liberation, Kurt came across an American lieutenant with two soldiers who had picked up two SS men. They recognised Kurt as a concentration camp prisoner and encouraged him to take revenge on the SS men by beating them up. Kurt, however, declined and told the American lieutenant that he was far too weak to try to beat them, moreover even if they were lying defenceless on the ground he would not wish to do so. He added that he got the impression that the lieutenant seemed to feel ashamed of himself. Reflecting on his action, he said that he was grateful that his father brought him up in this way. As a child, he heard his father saying that revenge only leads to a vicious circle which never stops.

Kurt was one of the 732 teenagers who were brought to England in three stages between 1945/6. He came with the second group to Windermere, near Southampton, in November 1945. A few weeks later, in a current affairs discussion, chaired by Dr Friedmann, one of the 'Boys', Arthur Isackson, argued most vehemently that all Nazis should be killed without a trial and that the English and Americans are too soft on them. He was strongly supported by most of those participating in the discussion. Kurt's response was just as passionate. "If the English kill them without trial and the Germans have felt that the English are no better than the Nazis themselves, then they have given up hope and maybe another Hitler finds it a good time to come into power." Kurt evinced this sense of justice, fairness and belief in a strong democratic government throughout his whole life.

Kurt was sent from Windermere to 833 Finchley Road Hostel, which he found most uncongenial. He did not like to be coerced to go to the Synagogue and to pray. As he said, "it led him to become more anti-religious, quite explicitly so much more than he had ever been in his life." His father was an atheist and did not expect him to be religious. Kurt was wooed by Mr Freshwater with all kinds of promises, to become religious as he had a great influence on many of the 'Boys' in the Hostel. However, Kurt, who spoke and acted always in accordance with his conscience and ideals, would not budge.

Kurt maintained close association with the 'Boys' but the bond became stronger with the passing of time. In 1975, on the 30th anniversary of our liberation, Kurt expressed his feelings in the Society Newsletter. "For us the anniversary of our liberation is literally a second birthday anniversary. The liberation not only snatched us from certain death, it also ended a period during which, though physiologically alive, it could hardly be said that we had lived. Thus, our celebration commemorates a communal resurrection which is one of our bonds that has united us hitherto and will continue to unite us until no-one of us is left to celebrate another anniversary. We have no alternative but to live with the memory of lives gratuitously and wickedly destroyed. Each one of us has to decide for himself how to cope with these memories for which time does not seem to be the proverbial healer."

Kurt was a member of the Committee of the '45 Aid Society Holocaust Survivors and the editor of the Society's Journal until, unfortunately, he was struck down by a severe stroke. He was highly respected by all the members and he himself held them in great esteem. In fact, he had a great admiration for them as many of them, unlike him, had very little education and were very successful in business. Although he was an economist, he certainly was no businessman, as he so often used to stress.

Kurt's time as a Reader in Economics at the London School of Economics was perhaps his most exciting period in his life. He associated with people who were interested in intellectual pursuits. His intellectual gifts and charm of his conversation was recognised by all those with whom he came in contact. He had an engaging personality and his affability was all-embracing. He was very proud of his sons, Adam and David, and was aware of and appreciated their care and devotion to him during his tragic illness. He died on the 17th December 2000.

Joan watched us mature into adults, create our families and integrate with our local communities and this gave her tremendous pleasure. We are grateful for the interest she continued to display in our rehabilitation and welfare and we were delighted to have her join us at our annual reunion each year until she was prevented from doing so due to ill-health.

It needs to be stressed that throughout Joan's working life with the C.B.F. spanning 45 years, she cared about people and the cause that was close to her heart – the rescue of Jews and those in distress. Joan was always correct and straightforward in her dealings. These qualities stood her in great stead and earned her the respect of all those with whom she dealt. Joan was held in high esteem at the Home Office with whom she worked closely. They always sought and relied heavily on her advice.

In the autumn of 1956, the Hungarian uprising and the expulsion of Jews from Egypt by Nasser meant that many Jews sought refuge in Britain and it was Joan's intervention with the Home Office that secured their admission to Britain.

In the 1960s, when the Iraqi government promulgated certain laws under which Jews could be deprived of their Iraqi nationality, a group of Jewish students from Iraq needed help to regularise their position with the Home Office and the intervention by Joan made it possible for them to continue their studies in this country. In some cases they also received financial help from the C.B.F. as the funds from their parents were disallowed by the Iraqi government.

Over the years, there were many occasions when individuals or groups of Jews were prevented from staying here by immigration officers but Joan's diplomacy and integrity was such that her intervention secured their admission into this country.

I have given only a few examples of where Joan made a difference to people's lives but her work was multi-faceted and there were many other ways in which she gave help to those in need.

It goes without saying that Joan was greatly assisted by a dedicated band of volunteers but it was she who was the conductor...

She set the tune....

Her reputation, her standing in the Jewish and non-Jewish community enhanced the prestige of the C.B.F. which enabled it to raise funds – never enough – to help the poor and distressed in many parts of the world.

When Joan retired from the C.B.F. in 1979, she was approached by Alan Montefiore, whom she had known as a teenager, to help him at the Wiener Library. His father Leonard had been a great supporter of the Library.

How could Joan refuse such a request?

Needless to say, she threw herself energetically into her new task, making a significant contribution at a time when her help was most needed. She brought with her a huge network of contacts within the community to whom she wrote to secure funds for the library at a time when their resources were few.

Joan was a creative writer and wrote articles for various publications. She was a member of the Romantic Novelist Association and had articles published.

In her personal life, Joan enjoyed entertaining her many friends in her home in the West End. She enjoyed cooking, loved flowers and had a talent for flower arranging, for which she won many prizes.

Joan was a dedicated communal worker – accessible, sympathetic, patient and always helpful and able to work well with others. She displayed determination when in spite of failing health, she overcame practical difficulties in order to attend a reception in 2006 as the Guest of Honour at the House of Lords celebrating the achievements of the C.B.F. - World Jewish Relief - and the Jewish Refugee Committee.

This remarkable lady rarely displayed anything but calm and bore her disabilities in recent years with dignity and continued to be interested in communal affairs and the welfare of all those she knew and loved.

Joan has our abiding affection. We shall forever remain grateful to her for her compassion and her devotion to us.

history of Jewish art. He put out a book detailing the history and art work of the father-in-law whom he had never met, but whose life he strove to perpetuate and celebrate.

The term "proud" in the title of his book on Kaspest was significant. Steve was a proud Jew. He remained, to the end, a product of the Betar movement of his youth. Any manifestation of weakness or appeasement that he discerned in Israeli policies aroused his ire. He unrelentingly pursued a frustrating, ultimately unsuccessful, campaign to induce the Hungarian government to eliminate or amend the obscene memorials throughout Hungary that equated the Jewish victims of the Nazis and of their Hungarian collaborators with the so-called "Hungarian victims of fascism".

Steve's humour had a bitter, sometimes cynical edge to it. But he could also mock himself. Not far beneath the surface was a warm and caring heart. As one of the eulogisers at his funeral put it, "he was a diamond in the rough." For all those who knew him and loved him, he will remain unforgettable. And his blessed memory will shine forever.

Cremation Joan Stiebel Feb 1st 2007 A tribute to Joan Stiebel – died 26th January 2007

Address by Ben Helfgott

When Joan started her employment as secretary to Otto Schiff in his office in the City of London, she could not have envisaged the path her career would take.

Otto Schiff was chairman of the Jewish Refugee Committee and she soon became deeply involved in refugee work and less and less in the work for which she was interviewed. Six weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War, she was asked to work full-time for the Jewish Refugee Committee.

Soon after the end of the war, Britain was not prepared to allow any large scale Jewish immigration and the Jewish Refugee Committee, together with the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, applied to the Home Office for permission to admit some of the orphaned children who had survived the horrors of Nazi persecution and had been liberated in the Concentration Camps in Europe.

The Home Office gave their consent for a maximum of 1,000 orphaned children – of whom I am one – under the age of 16 to come to this country.

The Committee for the Care of Children from the Concentration Camps was set up with Leonard Montefiore as its chairman. Included on the committee were Mrs Neville Blond and Lola Hahn Warburg. All three were extremely active throughout and it was Joan who made all the arrangements for getting us over to England.

It was decided that Joan and Mr. Montefiore should meet the first group of 300 of the children who came to Crosby-in-Eden, an airfield near Carlisle.

They stayed to meet all the arrivals. I was among those that arrived on the last of the planes and it was my privilege that they were the first two people I met on my arrival in England.

Later on, in October 1945 Joan accompanied Leonard Montefiore to Southampton to meet the second contingent of our group.

Over the years, I met Joan on many occasions, but it was not until the early 60s when Oscar Joseph invited me to join the committee of the Central British Fund – now known as World Jewish Relief – that I got to know her well.

Joan continued to take a keen interest in our group, affectionately known as "The Boys", and visited us in our hostels and later at the Primrose Club.

"The Dress"

Steffen Hänschen

On a study tour to Lviv, Ukraine
21st to 28th April 2007

The Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz has been offering study tours to Poland for many years, with the aim of educating the public about the extermination of the Jewish population under the Nazi occupation. We want to understand how the German extermination-machinery worked and, above all, to find out about the victims themselves, their fate, how they were repressed, persecuted and murdered. Presenting live witness reports, letters and documentation in the actual places where it happened, enables us to achieve a better understanding of what went on in Europe only 65 years ago. Contact with survivors and their accounts are therefore an essential part of our tours.

Two years ago we decided to organise a tour to Lviv, Ukraine. Since we have already organised trips to Eastern Poland for years, on the trail of 'Aktion Reinhardt', it has become more and more interesting for us to find out about the situation on the other side of the Polish-Ukrainian border, not forgetting that the vast majority of the 110.000 Jewish inhabitants of the city of Lviv were transported to the death camp Belzec, on the Polish side of what is now the border.

To make this idea a reality initially seemed almost impossible. How should a small, non-profit organisation like ours organise such a tour at a distance of almost 2.000 km? We neither had any idea of the current political or financial situation in the Ukraine, nor did we expect to come across any interest in the Ukraine, as there is little tradition of processing and acknowledging the Holocaust there. Would it be possible to come into contact with the Jewish community in Lviv? How would the people there react to our interest in the topic? Our idea would have stayed an idea if it hadn't been for Robert Kuwalek's assistance (the director of the memorial in Belzec), who we had worked together with in Poland for years. Robert, however, not only made enquiries for us, speaks Ukrainian, and put us in touch with people in Lviv who would give us support, but also told us of a Holocaust survivor from Lemberg who he had met at a conference in Lviv, **Lili Pohlmann**. The subject of the conference was the somewhat controversial behaviour of the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytskyi. On the one hand, he initially welcomed the Nazi occupation but, on the other, he also saved more than 150 Jewish lives, including Lili and her mother, by organising them a hiding place in one of his convents.

Lili and Sister Chryzantia.

Lili Pohlmann was 12 years old at the time of the liberation of Lviv and East Galicia. In 2005, after 60 years, she returned to the city, because she felt compelled to put in a plea for the Metropolitan who ultimately had saved her, her mother and many more Jewish lives, a fact for which he had never received recognition!

Lili managed to escape during the mass deportations of the Lviv Ghetto in November 1943. Her mother, who was then working for the German civil administration, asked one of the German staff if she would take Lili in. This would have been an utterly inconceivable request at that time. Who would take in such a child, condemned to extermination? However, miraculously, a certain Frau Wierb agreed, and Lili was able to hide in her apartment, in the SS-and-Police District of Lviv, until the retreat of the German administration. Meeting Lili obviously made a great impression on Frau Wierb, as she then gave refuge to a further three Jewish people over the following months. This is how four people came to live in a house in a quarter, where otherwise only high-ranking SS-and-Police and German functionaries, including the Ukrainian Head of Police, lived.

The first conversation sounded extremely promising. We were welcome to

visit her in London to discuss our Lviv trip. She had emigrated to the UK through a children's resettlement programme (Rabbi Dr Schonfeld) shortly after the war. In London, she told us not only the incredible story of how she and her mother had survived, and how the Germans and Ukrainians in Lviv lived, but also of how she had lost her brother and father in the massive purge of August 1942. The question at the end of the conversation was if we could invite her to join us in Lviv when we would travel there with a group in April 2007. Reluctantly, she agreed. Although she never wanted to return to these sites where 'the extermination' was carried out, she felt obliged to pass on her experiences.

Shortly before the trip, it seemed that things would not work out. However, in the end, Lili decided to come back to Lviv for the second time since her experiences in the '40s.

The 25 Germans and Dutch who came with us in the group tour to Lviv were deeply impressed as Lili finally told her story in the B'nai Brith Jewish charity centre. 'But you wouldn't believe me', Lili suddenly interrupted herself. It almost sounded too incredible how she had cheated death again and again. On the next day we visited the places where she had stayed in Lviv, the apartment in the city in which she had originally lived with her family, where her father and brother had been taken from her. 'There,' she continued, 'lived the Ukrainian house-master. He always wanted my father's watch and our radio. After my mother and I came out of hiding after the purge, we found our apartment had been sealed off. The Ukrainian house-master, who now was a policeman, was wearing my father's suit and watch, and we could hear our radio playing loud music...'

Lili and her mother never heard anything of her father or brother again. They will never find out whether they died in the Belzec death camp, or had already been killed beforehand. The two of them moved to her grandmother's in the Lviv Ghetto, which had been set up by the Nazis for the people who had been condemned to death. Lili's mother worked as a dressmaker for the German civil administration, until it came to another 'Aktion' by the Germans in November 1942. Her mother had stayed in the town on this day, but Lili knew that when she would come back the next day, even her work permit wouldn't save her from deportation, so she slipped out of the heavily-guarded Ghetto under the cover of darkness to warn her. Dressed only in her pyjamas, she climbed over the railway embankment, dogs were alarmed, shots were fired and she let herself fall into the metre-high snow. And then another of these amazing coincidences, the German guards didn't look for her any further. Maybe they thought they had already killed her? After a while, Lili rolled down the embankment and made her way into the town. In her pyjamas, the 10-year-old girl must have seemed to have been from another world. All the other people she met on the way would have understood without a doubt who she was and where she had come from. Anybody could have given her away, as she huddled in a corner of the tram. Nobody said a word, and she reached her mother's workplace. All these people are her unsung heroes.

She met Frau Wieth at her mother's workplace – the 'Wohnungsamt'. This event did not, however, mark the end of Lili's odyssey. She was not allowed to make a sound in the apartment in which no-one was allowed to live. Every time she was on the street she ran the risk of being discovered or betrayed. Would someone recognise her? Would she be asked for papers she didn't have? One false step, one wrong encounter could mean certain death.

With the Russian offensive nearing Lviv in 1944, the German civil administration withdrew. Where should she go now? Where could she find a place to hide? Who could she turn to? This is when the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytskyi played his part. The couple who had stayed with her at Frau Wieth's had heard that he was hiding Jewish people and, as it turned out, Sheptytskyi made sure that Lili and her mother found refuge in a Greek Orthodox convent and orphanage until the end of the war, Lili as an orphan, her mother as a deaf-mute dressmaker.

On the day of her departure, we wanted to go with Lili to visit the Greek Orthodox Order of Sisters who had given her refuge. The Mother Superior who was responsible at that time, was no longer alive. After we had found her grave, Lili wanted to be sure that it would continue to be well-tended. But what should we have expected? Would

emotion that could no longer be suppressed. Some of his artwork is handsomely illustrated in this volume. As Jonathan Safran Foer says in his powerful foreword, Petr Ginz was creating life while surrounded by death.

Chava (formerly Eva) Pressburger edits the book with sisterly devotion, though leaving gaps in biographical information and general context. She herself followed Petr to Theresienstadt and was there on 28 September 1944 when he boarded a train for Auschwitz, where he was gassed soon after arrival. He was 16. His appetite for life and passion for creativity lend these pages a quiet heroism.

SECTION VII OBITUARIES

In Memoriam: Steven (Istvan) Kanitz (1927-2007) Yitzak Ben-David, Z"L

Steve Kanitz passed away in Israel on the evening of February 4, 2007 (17 Shevat 5767), not long after celebrating his 79th birthday. He was interred in the Ramat Hasharon cemetery, beside his beloved wife, Hassia (née Perelman), who had died in 1996, at age 58. His funeral was attended by a large group of friends, members of Hassia's family, and his devoted cousin Vera from Prague who had faithfully tended to him during his final illness. During his hospital stay, the steady stream of concerned visitors had amazed the staff: it was not often that patients were visited by so many people who were not their relatives. The eulogies recited at the funeral reflected the admiration and love that Steve had inspired among those who knew him well, who appreciated his warmth, sensitivity and sterling character, and who were never deceived by his rough exterior.

Steve was the sole survivor of his family. His parents perished at Auschwitz; his only brother was murdered by Hungarians. Steve's own miraculous survival through the horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau and beyond was chronicled by him in a chapter of the book on the town of his birth, Kispest, that he published in 1998. The chapter was written in third person – the only way that he could bring himself to write it at all. Compared to Birkenau, Steve often said, Auschwitz was a luxurious five star hotel.

Against all odds, Steve managed to resurrect his life from the ashes. In England he was associated with fellow young survivors who formed a cohesive group and whose members, though later dispersed, continued to cherish and nurture the bonds that they had forged. Steve's path as a civil engineer led him from England to Israel and other countries and finally back to Israel again.

Steve always celebrated life. The name that he gave his book reflected this: *A Proud Tribute to the Jews of Kispest: 1876-1944 A Town in Hungary*. So too did the fact that his own tale ends with his marriage to, and life with, Hassia and with a photo of the happy couple standing in 1979 under the Chupa (wedding canopy) on the lawn of Hassia's cousin, Bezalel Perelman, in Ramat Gan. Steve avoided any mention, in his chapter, of Hassia's untimely death two years prior to the publication date.

Undoubtedly, the best years of Steve's life were those he spent with Hassia. They travelled widely – to Europe, South Africa, South America, the United States and Canada. Mostly they visited cherished relatives. In Paris they met with people in Paris who had sheltered Hassia and her parents from the clutches of the Nazis. Prague was particularly enchanting to both Steve and Hassia.

After Hassia's passing, Steve set about completing projects that she had not managed to bring to fruition. Sparing neither time nor money, he worked assiduously to recast in bronze the sculptures of Hassia's father, Mordechai Perelman, and to ensure that the ones left in France would be properly exhibited in the Parisian museum on the

achievements." Standing in front of a joint session of the U.S. Congress, he confirmed his support for the National home. He told Ben Gurion "*You are a brave leader of a great nation.*"

I would love to quote more and more from this invaluable book, with its insights into what moves governments and leaders. Sir Martin Gilbert has performed yet another service to history, and to a renewal of vision.

Ecclesiastes said "*of the making of books there is no end,*" but he never referred to reviews, so regretfully I must conclude my remarks

Read this book. There is so much to learn from it.

Diary of Petr Ginz 1941-1942

Edited by Chava Pressburger
Translated from the Czech by Elena Lappin
Atlantic Books £16.99
pp161
Reviewed by Theo Richmond

Theo is a journalist and author of "Konin – A Quest"

Sixty years after schoolboy Petr Ginz wrote a diary recording life in Nazi-occupied Prague, his sister recounts its improbable rescue from oblivion. He did not survive, and his words too might have been lost had it not been for the 2003 Columbia space shuttle disaster. One of the doomed astronauts, the Israeli son of an Auschwitz survivor, wanted to take a symbol of the Holocaust with him into space. The Yad Vashem Memorial Museum gave him a copy of a picture Petr Ginz had drawn as a prisoner in Theresienstadt – his imagined view of our planet as seen from the mountains of the moon.

When Czech television, reporting the Columbia tragedy, showed the boy's drawing, a Prague viewer recalled a box he found in the attic when moving home years before. He had thought of throwing it out. Inside were revealed Petr's diary, an unfinished novel, short stories, drawings and linocuts, which his sister confirmed to be his. The collection eventually went to Yad Vashem.

The Czech Republic issued a commemorative stamp picturing Columbia, Moon Landscape and its young artist. The diary sparked further national interest when it was published in Prague two years ago. Now Elena Lappin provides a sensitive translation.

The entries begin in 1941 when Petr was 14, living in a middle-class home in Prague with his parents and sister Eva, who has edited this book. It was a mixed marriage – father Jewish, mother gentile – but it did not spare them persecution.

Some of the entries could be those of any schoolboy: "Did homework all morning. In the afternoon went for a walk." He records classroom pranks, birthday treats. But there is also a creative intelligence at work, absorbed in writing, drawing, painting... an artist and writer in the making. Eschewing emotional display, the teenager observes life with cool objectivity even while it is disintegrating around him. Wry humour defies Nazi humiliations: "The weather is foggy. Jews were told to wear a badge... When I went to school I counted sixty-nine sheriffs."

As the transports get under way, leaving for Poland and the transit camp of Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, the desks in Petr's classroom lose their occupants one by one. A teacher vanishes. At the railway assembly point, he says goodbye to departing friends, an aunt and uncle, a grandmother...

On 22 October 1942 the order comes for him to report that night for the next transport to Theresienstadt. In a note written there some time later, he recalls the events of that day: how the news reached him while he was intently cleaning a typewriter; how he "lovingly" packed his suitcase with paper, watercolour paints, an unfinished novel, pieces of fine leather for book-binding. Only after that came the warm clothing supplied by anguished parents he was never to see again.

In Theresienstadt he read Descartes, worked on a Czech-Esperanto dictionary, and studied the geography of the moon. He wrote articles for a secret magazine, and poetry expressing his yearning for Prague with

anybody remember the saintly Mother Superior Yosifa? Would they welcome us or send us away?

Lili was hesitant – it took some convincing to put aside her doubts. The little medieval abbey at the centre of Lviv exudes peace and tranquillity. Sometimes tourists come to marvel at the architecture of the courtyard. The nuns living there opened a small "store" inside to sell handmade devotional artefacts and mementoes. The young nun who ushered us inside listened to Lili, whereupon she asked us to wait a moment – there still was one elderly Sister among them who may, possibly, remember the Mother Superior Yosifa, after whom Lili was enquiring. Within a few minutes, she was back in the company of a frail, elderly Sister who not only remembered the Mother Superior, but had been to the same orphanage as Lili, run by her. Yes – she remembered very well: the saintly Mother Superior Yosifa Wirter – a young Jewish girl who was brought into the orphanage one winter evening (could it have been Lili??) – and, foremost, she remembers a beautiful Jewish lady by the name of "PANI CESIA", who pretended to be deaf and mute. "PANI CESIA" made for me a beautiful dress and a coat – I never owned anything like it, having been an orphan since I was 3 ½ years old" – said Sister Chryzantia. "THAT WAS MY MOTHER" – exclaimed Lili, sobbing .... They fell into each other's arms, unable to stop crying. A few minutes later, still hardly holding back the tears, Sister Chryzantia took Lili to the Chapel, where they lit candles in memory of Mother Superior Yosifa ..... and in blessed memory of "PANI CESIA", Lili's beloved mother. At that moment Lili knew why she was **meant** to come to Lviv/Lemberg/ber Lwow....

Lili and her mother took care of Frau Wirth who saved their lives, until her death in England, in 1951. Just like Mother Superior Yosifa, she was commended by Yad Vashem with the "Medal of the Righteous". As for His Holiness, the Metropolitan Andrey Count Sheptytskyi, Lili and others saved by him are **still** fighting for this rightly deserved accolade to be posthumously bestowed on him by Yad Vashem...

Our Bildungswerk is organising another trip to Lviv sometime next year. We very much hope that Lili will be joining us again.

She certainly wants to spend more time with the wonderful 84-year-old Sister Chryzantia, who by now must be the only living person in Lviv who so vividly remembers her beloved mother "PANI CESIA" from the days when the world was in darkness....

(Article written by
Steffen Hänschen, Berlin).

A glimpse of my Family

Michael Etkind

My mother

Michael came to England with the Windermere group and lived in Cardross Hostel in Scotland. He is dubbed by our President, Sir Martin Gilbert, as the Society's poet. He has been a frequent contributor to our Journal.

My mother was born in a village called Rozany near Vilnius in 1889. Later the family moved to Lodz, where she attended a Russian Gymnasium (High School) and received a silver medal on graduation. All my older relatives in the United States and Israel told me that she should have received the Gold Medal, but the authorities were reluctant to give it to a Jewish person. She became a teacher, and for a while the headmistress of a Jewish girls' public school, and continued teaching in the ghetto until the end of 1940.

She spoke fluent Russian, Polish, Yiddish, German, French and Esperanto.

At home she spoke Polish with us and occasionally

Michael Etkind Mother.

Yiddish with my father but with her former school friends, and relatives from Odessa she spoke Russian. Our book shelves were full of German, French, Russian and of course Polish books.

Her father, my grandfather Moses Rudnianski, became a vegetarian when he was twenty years old and it was well known by all our relatives that he was corresponding with Tolstoy, who also became a vegetarian at more or less the same time. And this is the reason why we were all brought up as vegetarians, which was very unusual in Poland at that time.

As there were few charitable organisations helping the poor and the refugees from Germany, she was constantly helping those who were either illiterate or did not speak Polish needing to fill various documents at that time.

She listened to Hitler's speeches and always at ten o'clock in the evening listened to Moscow radio, although the programmes were interfered with. I believe that she was hoping that communism would somehow save us from the Nazis.

She never discussed anything political with me, as it was dangerous in pre-war Poland to have sympathetic views towards communism.

My father and my older brother Jacob left Lodz in March 1940 in order to find some accommodation in Warsaw for all of us, but instead of arriving in Warsaw, they were taken to the Kielce ghetto. Therefore my mother was left with me, my younger sister Henka and my brother Lolek and a month later in April we had

Michael Etkind Father.

to move into the Lodz ghetto. Lolek, who was ten years old, died of typhoid fever in September and from that moment my mother lost her will to live although we still had enough food to eat.

She died in the ghetto on Saturday, the 8th of March 1941 at ten to four just as her younger sister Fania and her husband Szolym Elgert arrived in our room. Szolym, who was a very religious Jew, immediately covered the mirror, stopped the clock, and arranged for two old women to arrive in the evening, to prepare the body for burial on Sunday. The two women ignored me as they busied themselves all night while speaking Yiddish to each other. I understood two words which they repeated a few times - "Gute Neshome" – Good Soul.

My Father

My father, who was the oldest of four brothers, was born in Russia in Mogilev in the 1880s. He trained as an accountant, but a year before the outbreak of the First World War he and one of his brothers were called up to the Tsarist army and served there until 1916, when he was captured and his brother was killed. My father's captivity in Germany was not too bad because he became the interpreter for the other prisoners of war.

In the meantime, his younger brothers and his widowed mother were living in Tel Aviv as they had managed to leave Russia in 1913. Abram, the older of the two brothers, became the manager of the Anglo-Palestine Discount Bank and came to see us once or twice while we were on holidays before the war. I found out after the war that my father was giving him money to purchase land in Tel Aviv, which he sold during the Second World War.

On his release, he stopped in Lodz where he met and married my mother. He soon started working as an accountant for a number of large textile establishments, which were now in predominately Jewish hands. In addition to doing the accounts he also held stock in some of the firms.

He usually worked on Saturdays, but he observed the High Holidays and fasted on Yom Kippur, while my mother would urge him to have something to eat and drink in the afternoon.

He was very secretive about his work and investments. It was only one month after the outbreak of the war that he took a "dorozska" – a hansom cab and took me to one of the firms of "Kanel i Zbar" in Pietrowska street which was by then changed to Adolf Hitler Strasse and Jews were not allowed to walk on it.

The Germans were going to take away all the stock from Jewish businesses and since

the Great Blasphemy of the Concentration Camps, a crime against humanity of unimaginable magnitude, and the story of the descent of a once admired people into the depths of barbarism.

Churchill, with his intuition and his vision, was a lonely voice warning of dangers ahead. As early as 1933 he told the House of Commons that, in Germany "you have a dictatorship, most grim dictatorship." He was shocked by the racist Nuremberg Laws, details of which were passed to him through the efforts of Leonard Montefiore of the Central British Fund. In his evidence to the 1937 Peel Commission he foresaw "there might well be a great Jewish State there numbered by millions." His vision became reality, but, in the meantime terrible events were taking place.

Whilst this book revolves around Churchill and the Jews, there is much else of general historical interest. Martin Gilbert portrays, paints, the background scene so expertly as to highlight the foreground characters and events even more graphically. An example is the debate, here and abroad, especially in the U.S.A. that ensued on the 1937 Peel Commission recommendation of partition of Palestine. Under that policy, according to Churchill, "conflict would be inevitable."

Appeasement was in the air, as well as fear, for the security of the Suez Canal, control of Persian oil, appeasement of Germans and Arabs, two groups who supported each other. The British government in 1939 issued a White Paper (the book describes it as a 'Black Paper') which dealt a severe blow to all Jewish hopes, with its restriction on immigration and land purchase. Within months there erupted the Second World War.

Wartime events are described so clearly that there is a great temptation to quote page after page. It is a drama known to most, if not all, of us, the kowtowing to Arabs, the creation of the Jewish Brigade, the revolt in Iraq, the world battle that swung to and fro, the impact on Jews everywhere, all is set out with the detail and balance of an expert historian.

It was Churchill's speeches as Prime Minister in 1940 that gave inspiration to David Ben-Gurion, then in London, for his resolve in the tense and uncertain days of 1948. Martin Gilbert recounts the background of the world conflict. Churchill was at the heart of the Allied effort yet, despite this, "Churchill always made time to deal with Jewish issues."

After the war, these issues came powerfully to the fore, the hopes of the survivors, the restrictive policy of Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, based according to Churchill, on bias and prejudice, Arab threats and attacks, the war of independence, and the foundation of the State in 1948.

Churchill, the historian, described the Holocaust as "probably the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world." He would not know that one Jewish inmate of a camp declared later, "we have no bread but we have Churchill." This was a Churchill who never wavered in his support for Zionism, whether faced with Irgun and Stern Gang atrocities, assassination of his friend Lord Moyne, destruction of part of the King David Hotel, the Suez Canal crisis, American pressures, a statesman who was consistent in public and in private, as a true friend of the Jewish people.

He often linked Jews and Greeks together declaring,

"*No two races have set such a mark upon the world. Each of them have left us the inheritance of their genius and wisdom. No two cities have counted more with mankind than Athens and Jerusalem.*"

On the other hand, being realistic, he commented that,

"*Wherever there are three Jews it will be found that there are two Prime Ministers and one leader of the Opposition.*"

On 14th May 1948, in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion proclaimed the independence and the name of the State of Israel. The only person now alive who was then present is Arieh Handler, a devoted and tireless worker for Jews and Israel, now in his 90s and living in Jerusalem, just as Churchill, immediately on hearing of the declaration of independence, rushed publicly to the support of the new State, and castigated the Labour Government for its tardy recognition of Israel's sovereignty.

Churchill regarded the coming into being of a Jewish State in Palestine as "*an event in world history to be viewed in the perspective not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand or even three thousand years.*" Perhaps influenced by Chaim Weizmann, he declared that "*there are none of the arts or sciences which have not been enriched by Jewish*

Paine's words. The great heart and body of this work is admirable and, to me, a revelation. The Jewish people and the Zionist cause never had a truer and more courageous friend than Winston Churchill. He never wavered in his unstinting support for the Zionist 'experiment' in Palestine, despite a barrage of lying accusations and base insinuations levelled against him at home, and Arab violence and virulence in the Holy Land.

There is no doubt that Sir Martin Gilbert has done Jews, Israel, and history itself, a notable service in producing this detailed account of but one aspect of the life of a great man, an aspect so close to our hearts.

The story can be divided into three parts. First, Churchill's efforts for the Zionist cause, for the National Home from the beginning of the 20th Century until the outbreak of the Second World War. There follows the war period itself with the unspeakable horrors of the Nazis, when, for a time, Churchill bore the whole world on his shoulders, followed by the post-war battle for the establishment of the Jewish State.

Many of us thought we knew the story. Well, I did, having written a documentary on the subject, but, with this book, I confess I remain but a pupil and Martin the teacher.

A word about the author. He must be accounted one of the finest historians of our era. He was Churchill's official biographer, with studies that included 16 volumes and documents and a separate Life of Churchill. Not content with that he has given the world 79 works, some in several volumes, on many historical subjects, including an Atlas of the Holocaust, ranging from American to Russian history, and including, of course, his account of "The Boys: Triumph over Adversity".

He was eminently suited to write the story of the great war leader, both of them sharing a vision of history across the millennia. I would love to fill this review with Churchillian quotes. Just a few perhaps.

"A Jew cannot be a good Englishman, unless he is a good Jew."

"I am in full sympathy with the historical traditional aspirations of the Jews."

He saw the restoration of a national centre for Jews as "a tremendous event in the history of the world." He praised Jews for their sense of "corporate responsibility", as well as their bravery in the First World War.

"50,000 had fought in Europe, Africa and Asia, 2324 gave their lives, 6350 were wounded, and 5 won the Victoria Cross."

Churchill went further than any politician, or priest for that matter:

"No thoughtful man can doubt the fact that they [the Jews] are beyond all question the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world"

having produced

"a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious of mankind."

What can one say after that?

It was this perception, so carefully set out in this book, that impelled the whole of Churchill's actions and speeches as to our Jewish people. We see his efforts as a local M.P. for the Jews of Manchester, his strict action to prevent anti-Jewish riots in South Wales, his strong reaction to the 1904 Aliens Bill, his championing of Chaim Weizmann's efforts in producing much-needed war material at a tense time in 1917.

Churchill hated, with all his heart, totalitarianism of every kind. He despised "tyrannical Bolshevism", even though many of its leaders and adherents were Jews, with as much force as he opposed the Nazis, describing Hitler as "the embodiment of many forms of soul-destroying evil."

Having served in the Sudan and seen the effects of the "Mohammedan", particularly in relation to the status of women, he referred to Islam as a "retrograde force". No wonder, despite Arab protests to him when, as Colonial Secretary in 1921 and later, he remained loyal to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, opening the way for Jewish immigration and development, later legally confirmed by the League of Nations Mandate. As far as Churchill was concerned, Jews were in the Land as "of right" not on sufferance.

As one reads this clear, comprehensive account of events before, during, and after the 1914-18 war, one realises the crucial, indeed vital role Churchill played in the history of the Jewish State. What an ally he was! One wonders what might have happened had he not been at the centre of events.

The second part of the book deals in detail with the rise of the Nazis to power, leading to

the two main owners were in Warsaw. my father was asked by two former Polish employees to sign a document stating that the firm had been sold to them six months earlier and therefore it was no longer a Jewish establishment. My father refused to sign. but before leaving pointed out a room to me whose shelves were full of textiles. which belonged to him. and answering my question said that its value was one million "zloties" about two hundred thousand U.S. dollars before the war.

My older brother Jacob. who was four and a half years older than I. was very artistic. From the age of seven he was attending a private gymnasium – a school taking boys from the age of seven to eighteen – where nearly half of them were Jewish. Very soon he was the best in art in the whole school. but he was neglecting other subjects. When he was fourteen he joined a textile design college and also became apprenticed to a well known Jewish painter. Mauricy Trebacz. who looked after six or eight apprentices.

Michael Etkind Sister.

From time to time we went to see their exhibitions and I was very impressed by the high standard. But there were no modern paintings and Jacob started corresponding with some Parisian school of art and learning calligraphy and other designs. A year before the war when he was nearly eighteen he started talking about father giving him one hundred thousand "zloties" to enable him to go to Paris and become a real painter. He was convinced that by the time the money ran out he would be able to support himself as an artist.

My sister Henka. who was two years younger than I. was attending the same school where our mother was teaching. Unlike me she had a good singing voice. and our mother took her to the cinema to see "The Merry Widow". "Dybuk" and other films. after which she would not stop singing and acting. The only picture that my mother took me to see was "All Quiet on the Western Front" by Erich Maria Remarque.

In the ghetto Henka joined a small group of young people who were taught by a famous impressionist. who was blind. but whose name I do not remember. She developed the ability to imitate people's voices and this made her popular in the ghetto orphanage and later in the tailoring workshop. She could imitate Rumkowski's speeches and this never failed to amuse those who heard her.

My youngest brother Lolek was quite fragile. When I went skating with him. he broke his leg. and our mother was always treating him as the baby of the family. Unlike me he was never street-wise. but he was very clever and quick to learn.

14th Waffen SS Ukrainian Division – The 'Galizien'

By Dr. Leonard Kurzer

The late Dr. Kurzer came to England with the Polish Army. He was for many years the Chairman of the Polish-Jewish Ex-servicemen.

Before it is finally too late. there remains an urgent need for belated justice after the murder of the three million Polish Jews and the complete annihilation of the Jews in Galicia. then the south east of Poland. during World War II. From the researches in David Cesarani's book. Justice Delayed: How Britain Became a Refuge for Nazi War Criminals' and the campaigning by Dr. Ankier. we learned about the murderous activities of the Nachtingal Battalion and others that were later incorporated in the SS Ukrainian Division. Last year. Mr Andrew Dismore. Member of Parliament for Hendon. brought this matter to the attention of the House of Commons in London.

We know about the fate of the Jews in Lvov. where my extended family lived. the Jews in Brody. Kolomyja.

Komarno and the surrounding villages who, before the Second World War, lived there in comparative friendship with their Ukrainian neighbours. Those places were seats of learning and culture, inherited from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire before 1919.

At the end of the Second World War, the Ukrainian SS Division surrendered in Austria to the British and were sent as prisoners to camps in Italy, between Rimini and Riccione. The Soviet Union demanded their repatriation which meant certain execution or being sent to "Gulags" in Siberia. This led to tension between the Foreign Office, who did not want to comply with the Soviet's demands, and the Home Office, who had suspicions about the war time record of the 'Galizien'. In the end, thousands of the 'Galizien' Division were admitted into the United Kingdom and dispersed across the country, crucially without a rigorous scrutiny of each man's war time record!

The new arrivals then got jobs in agriculture, married English girls, became members of society without any later suspicion that some may have had a murderous past. With the operational limitation of pursuing enquiries in the absence of any specific allegation against individuals, the police have not brought even one case before a British Court. It is also claimed that the alleged culprits are too old for legal proceedings to be initiated. I refute this from my personal experience. I was a medical officer of my Unit which guarded the prisoners of war camp and had unrestricted access there. I remember they were boys in their late teens and early twenties. At the time, I did not know of their past atrocious activities and, although they spoke Polish, I did not fraternise with them.

It is worth mentioning that there was an exception to the atrocious behaviour of this section of the Ukrainian population. It was the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Lvov, Metropolitan Andrew Szeptycki, who saved about a hundred and fifty Jews. Amongst them were two sons of Rabbi Yechezkiel Lewin of the famous progressive temple in Lvov, who he dispersed in convents, orphanages and monasteries. Many survivors still alive bear witness to the noble and humanitarian gesture of this man. They will never forget him. His name deserves a hallowed place at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem as a "A RIGHTOUS GENTILE" and this omission should be corrected.

There is no limit of time to prosecute war criminals and I feel that even now we should get belated justice for our families and the victims. We can never forgive or forget what some members of the Ukrainian SS Division have done. Therefore, if any witness or anyone has any relevant information that will help bring belated justice for the murdered innocents, please address this in confidence to Holocaust researcher, Dr. Ankier, by contacting me on telephone number +0044 (0)20 7722 1767.

The Jewish Cemetery in Monte Cassino

By Dr. Leonard Kurzer

The 60th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino having recently been commemorated, member Dr Leonard Kurzer (then Regimental Medical Officer of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Polish Corps) has written to remind us of its significance, and also of the Jewish Cemetery there.

Another Allied Force invaded Southern Italy at the end of 1943. This army included the Second Polish Corps which had a great many Jewish soldiers and officers. By January 1944, the advancing Allied Forces had come to a standstill. Their progress was halted by the so-called "Siegfried Line" which was running between Naples and Rome and included a range of mountains dominated by Monte Cassino and its Benedictine Monastery. The area was defended by elite German Panzer Divisions who were 'dug in' in Monte Cassino, thereby forming an impregnable barrier on Highway No. 6 and preventing access to Rome. Continuous bombing by the Allies had failed to dislodge them.

After an unsuccessful

Bloomsbury, 2000).

li. Diane Samuels, Kindertransport (London: Nick Hern Books, 2004 [1995]), Act Two, Scene One. See Neumeier, 'Kindertransport', pp.66-9 for an interesting reading of this text.

lii. Samuels, Kindertransport, p.xviii.

liv. Baumel, Unfulfilled Promise, p.27 on this argument against creating an American equivalent of the Kindertransport. For an incisive analysis of the film and its gothic renderings with influences from the genres of film noir and thriller, see Neumeier, 'Kindertransport: Childhood Trauma and Diaspora Experience', pp.64-5.

lv. Inside cover of Harris and Oppenheimer, Into the Arms of Strangers.

lvi. Vera Gissing, Pearls of Childhood (London: Robson Books, 1988), p.11.

lvii. Kranzler (ed.), Solomon Schonfeld, p.84, testimony of Frieda Stolzberg Korobkin.

lviii. London, Whitehall and the Jews, p.13.

lix. Fred Ahearn, Maryanne Loughry and Alastair Ager, 'The experience of refugee children' in Alastair Ager (ed.), Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration (London: Continuum, 1999), p.215.

lx. John Carey, 'Digging in the Sand', New Statesman, 20 May 1966.

lxi. 'Innocents Abroad', The Times, 26 May 1966.

lxii. In Leverton and Lowensohn, I Came Alone, p.8.

lxiii. Lotte Kramer, The Phantom Lane (Ware: Herts: Rockingham Press, 2000), p.13.

lxiv. Hoare in Hansard (HC) vol.341 col.1474, 21 November 1938.

lxv. In National Archives, HO 213/1772.

lxvi. Jewish Chronicle, 30 March 2007, corrected 6 April 2007. This was in relation to Ben's appearance on 'Desert Island Discs'.

lxvii. Martin Gilbert, The Boys: Triumph Over Adversity (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996).

lxviii. In National Archives, HO 213/1793.

lxix. Ibid.

lxx. Testimony of Kleiman in National Sound Archive, British Library, C410/097.

lxxi. Perec Zylberberg, 'Recollections', 3-6 October 1993.

lxxii. National Archives, HO 213/781 and 782.

lxxiii. National Archives, HO 213/781.

lxxiv. National Archives, HO 213/781 and Gilbert, The Boys, chapters 13-16.

lxxv. Bevin in National Archives, LAB 8/93.

SECTION VI BOOK REVIEW

Churchill and the Jews

by Sir Martin Gilbert, C.B.E., D.Litt.
published by Simon & Schuster (£20)

Aubrey Rose C.B.E., D.Univ.

Aubrey 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 & 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. He recently published his fascinating autobiography "The Rainbow Never Ends"

This book is typical of Sir Martin Gilbert. It is written with consistent clarity, based on immense research as to facts, evidenced by the detailed extent of acknowledgments, maps, references, private papers cited, bibliography, newspaper articles, and, particularly, graphic, fascinating, and heart-warming photographs.

Yet all these are the trimmings, as a tailor might say, or the plumage, in Tom

gramaphone record version see The Times, 15 December 1938.

xxii. For further analysis of the role and mindset of the refugee organisations, see Claudia Curio, "Invisible" Children: The Selection and Integration Strategies of Relief Organizations', Shofar vol.23 no.1 (Fall 2004), pp.41-56.

xxiii. Louise London, Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.115.

xxiv. Hoare in Hansard (HC) vol.341 col.1474 (21 November 1938).

xxv. Beate Neumeier, 'Kindertransport: Childhood Trauma and Diaspora Experience', in Ulrike Behlau and Bernhard Reitz (eds), Jewish Women's Writing of the 1990s and Beyond in Great Britain and the United States (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004), pp.64-69 comments on the gothic influence on two very differing readings of the Kindertransport, the film Into the Arms of Strangers (2000) and the play, Kindertransport (1995).

xxvi. Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, First Annual Report: November 1938 - December 1939 (London: MCCG, 1940), p.3.

xxvii. John Presland [Gladys Bendit], A Great Adventure: The Story of the Refugee Children's Movement (London: Bloomsbury House, 1944), p.3.

xxviii. Ibid, pp.3-4.

xxix. Loshitzsky, Spielberg's Holocaust, passim.

xxx. Bendit, A Great Adventure, p.16.

xxxi. Ibid.

xxxii. Ibid.

xxxiii. Andrea Hammel, 'Representations of Family in Autobiographical Texts of Child Refugees', Shofar vol.23 no.1 (Fall 2004), pp.119-20 indicates how this tendency has continued in recent Kinder testimony.

xxxiv. Karen Gershon (ed.), We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography of Refugees (London: Gollancz, 1966), p.7, Gershon to Gollancz, September 1965.

xxxv. Ibid.

xxxvi. Ibid.

xxxvii. Ibid, p.151.

xxxviii. Egon Larsen, 'What Every Child Should Know', AJR Information, June 1962; Kenneth Ambrose, The Story of Peter Cronheim (London: Constable, 1982).

xxxix. Karen Gershon, A Lesser Child (London: Peter Owen, 1994); obituaries in The Guardian, 22 April 1993 and The Times, 15 April 1993. See also Peter Lawson, 'Three Kindertransport Poets: Karen Gershon, Gerda Mayer and Lotte Kramer', in Behlau and Reitz, Jewish Women's Writing, pp.57-9.

xl. Gershon, We Came as Children, pp.150, 155.

xli. 1989 edition (London, Papermac), p.9.

xlii. Gershon, We Came as Children, p.111; Ambrose, The Story of Peter Cronheim, p.58.

xliii. Testimony of Vera Schaufeld in National Sound Archives, C410/008, British Library.

xliv. Bertha Leverton and Shmuel Lowensohn, I Came Alone: The Stories of the Kindertransports (Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild, 1990).

xlv. Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (eds), Narrative and Genre (London: Routledge, 1998).

xlvi. Leverton and Lowensohn, I Came Alone, front cover illustration.

xlvii. For a review of this documentary directed by Sue Read see Ronald Channing, 'Kinder's lifetime odyssey', AJR Information, July 2000.

xlviii. Kindertransport 60th Anniversary (London: Reunion of Kindertransport, 1999), p.6. See also Hammel, 'Representations of Family', p.132 for the emphasis on successful integration in Kinder autobiographies.

xlix. Jewish Chronicle, 18 June 1999. The plaque features in the film Into the Arms of Strangers (2000) and on the cover of Kindertransport: 60th Anniversary.

l. The statue and installation were outside the Liverpool Street station where many of the Kinder arrived and were organised by the RCM. This work is now being replaced with another devoted to the Kindertransport.

li. Produced by Deborah Oppenheimer and directed by Mark Jonathan Harris. See idem, Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport (London:

frontal assault by Allied units of six different nationalities resulted in very heavy losses, the Polish Second Corps was given the unenviable task of capturing Monte Cassino and the adjacent hills in May 1944. Jewish soldiers displayed great heroism and they were highly commended by their commanders. Cadet Officer Abraham Jekiel single-handedly manned a heavy machine gun and held at bay a fierce German counter-attack. This action enabled his platoon to retreat without losses. His heroic act was witnessed from afar through binoculars by General Anders and other high-ranking officers.

Jekiel received the highest Polish military decoration, the "Virtuti Militari" – equivalent to the British Victoria Cross – for exceptional valour on the battlefield.

The casualties had been horrendous and many Jewish soldiers were killed. Amongst them was a well-known surgeon, Dr Adam Graber, a friend of mine. On the slopes of Monte Cassino where there is a Cemetery with 1051 graves, there is a separate section with headstones with the Star of David on them.

Several years ago on the anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino, next-of-kin visited the graves of Polish soldiers, but no relatives were seen at the Jewish Cemetery because none are alive. They too were killed but in different circumstances – in the Holocaust. Only a small delegation of ageing Polish Jewish ex-Servicemen visited the graves of their fallen comrades. Rabbi Rosegarten, a Chaplain in the Polish Forces, came from Jerusalem to conduct prayers.

We hope that some Jewish tourists going to Rome will make a detour to visit the Jewish graves in Monte Cassino and say a prayer for those who gave their lives so that we should live in freedom.

From Denmark to Theresienstadt

By Silvia Goldbaum Tarabini Fracapane

Silvia studied at the University of Copenhagen where she obtained an M.A. degree in Comparative Literature. From 2001 – 2005, she worked at the Department of Holocaust & Genocide Studies. Since 2005, she has been researching the history of Danish victims of the Holocaust.

Danish Holocaust history is mainly known for the unique and exceptional rescue of around 7,000 Jews in October 1943. These events have logically and rightly been the focus of much attention, whereas the interest in the history of the victims has been markedly low. Despite the relatively low number of people who perished, a complete list of victims remains missing.[1]

The purpose of this short article is to give an overview of the deportations of Jews from Denmark and the special conditions they lived under in Theresienstadt.

Deportations

Due to the 'policy of co-operation' implemented by the Danish government after the German occupation April 9 1940, the 'Jewish Question' was not raised in Denmark until after the government stepped down in August 1943.[2]

The Jewish Community was warned about the impending raid, and so on Friday evening October 1 1943 when it began, most Jews had already gone into hiding. During the night between October 1 and 2, the only night where an actual house search took place, approximately 200 people were arrested in the area of Copenhagen and a bit less than 100 people on Funen and Jutland. In the following

[1] No Danish attempt has been done to establish the complete number of Danish Holocaust victims. However, H. Weiss, "Denmark" in W. Benz (ed.) *Völkermords – Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, München, 1991, estimates that 116 Jews from Denmark perished, a number partly based on L. Yahil's findings from the 1960s, which however were based on a roughly estimated number.

[2] While the 'policy of cooperation' staved off persecution of the Danish Jews for some time, it also resulted in the expulsion and subsequent death of at least 20 Jewish refugees; cf. V.D. Vilhjálmsson

weeks, the number of arrested persons increased to about 500 people.

All in all four transports of Jews left Denmark. The first one departed from the peninsula on October 2 and brought 83 persons to Theresienstadt, where they arrived on October 5. Transport 2 left Copenhagen by ship for Swinemünde (Swinoujscie) also on October 2, and arrived with 198 persons in Theresienstadt on October 6. Transport 3 left on October 13, from the internment camp in Horserød.[3] Northern Zealand, where people who got caught after the raid were imprisoned. This transport carried 175 prisoners, who arrived in Theresienstadt on October 14. The last transport also departed from Horserød, where 19 prisoners left on November 23. Three young men managed to escape and therefore just 16 continued to Sachsenhausen (men) and Ravensbrück (women and children). 14 of them arrived later in Theresienstadt. One remained in Sachsenhausen and one was deported on to Majdanek where he perished in January 1944.

All in all, 472 persons were deported with the four transports. Of them 470 arrived in Theresienstadt. Often it is stated that mainly old and sick people were deported from Denmark.[4] going through data it appears, however, that 'only' 111 people were more than 60 years old while the group also consisted of 48 children 0-15 years old.

Of the 472 deportees from Denmark, 51 adults perished in Theresienstadt and two babies born in the camp died there as well; furthermore, one man perished in Majdanek and one man presumably in Auschwitz. The two last ones are rarely mentioned in a Danish context and only one of them is mentioned on lists of people who perished.

The agreement

In early November 1943 Adolf Eichmann visited Copenhagen and concluded a special agreement with Werner Best, the plenipotentiary to Denmark. The agreement consisted of three points. (1) that Jews above the age of 60 should no longer be arrested and deported. (2) Considered on a case-by-case basis *Mischlinge* and Jews in 'mixed marriages', who had already been deported, should be released and transported back to Denmark. (3) All the Jews deported from Denmark should remain in Theresienstadt and there receive a visit from representatives of the Danish administration and Danish Red Cross. It was added that a visit from Denmark's was not considered desirable until the spring of 1944 and, whereas the Danish prisoners were allowed to correspond with their homeland, they would not be allowed to receive food parcels.

Subsequently, the Danish administration continually reminded German authorities of the promise of the return of *Mischlinge* and Jews in 'mixed marriages': in January 1944 five persons were actually returned from Theresienstadt, most probably as a gesture aiming at pacifying the Danish officials.

Although the prisoners began noticing that no groups of Danes were deported, the inmates from Denmark were not aware of "the agreement". During spring 1944 food parcels started to arrive from Denmark, even if this was not part of the agreement. The parcels were sent partly from private people, partly organised by different help organisations - and later on through the Red Cross.[5]

& B. Bludnikow, *Rescue, Expulsion, and Collaboration: Denmark's Difficulties with its World War II Past*. Jewish Political Studies Review 18: 3-4. http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-vilhjalmsson-f06.htm

[3] Communists were interned here in the summer of 1941 by the Danish authorities; they were deported to Stutthof on October 2 1943. In August 1943 the Germans took over the camp and used it also for the 200 "hostages" taken among prominet Danish men. In October and November 1943 Horserød was used for Jews arrested on their way to Sweden.

[4] E.g., E.E. Werner, *A Conspiracy of Decency*, Westview Press, 2002, p. 101; T Straede, *October 1943 - The Rescue of the Danish Jews from Annihilation*, The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Museum of Danish Resistance 1940-1945, Copenhagen, 1998. http://www.um.dk/Publikationer/UM/English/October1943/oktober.doc.

[5] Telegram 1353 sent by Dr. Best on 3 Nov. 1943 and the answer from 5 Nov., *Danish Record Office Auswartiges Amt, "Inland II geheim Juden Massnamen" box 226.*

[6] The costs were paid by the Danish state and by private donations: c.f. H. Sode-Madsen, "The Perfect Description. The Danish Jews and Theresienstadt 1940-1945", p. 277-280 in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 38, p. 263-290.

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Notes

i. See Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), introduction and chapter 1 on Holocaust memory and survivors.

ii. Hugh Cunningham, Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500 (London: Longman, 1995), pp.4-18 provides a succinct overview of historiographical development. See also Kathleen Alaimo, 'Historical Roots of Children's Rights in Europe and the United States', in idem and Brian Klug (eds), Children as Equals: Exploring the Rights of the Child (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2002), pp.1-24.

iii. Deborah Dwork, Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

iv. Ibid, p.253.

v. Ibid, p.256.

vi. Ibid, p.254.

vii. Ibid, p.256.

viii. Claude Lanzmann, Shoah: An Oral History of the Holocaust (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) and in discussion about the film.

ix. See Yosefa Loshitzky, Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) and especially Bryan Cheyette, 'The Uncertain Certainty of Schindler's List', pp.230-237.

x. See, for example, the essays in Dalia Ofer and Lenore Weitzmann (eds), Women in the Holocaust (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) which deal with gender but only with regard to women's experiences.

xi. See, for example, Jon Blair's Oscar-winning Anne Frank Remembered (1995) and comment on it in G.Jan Colijn, 'Anne Frank Remembered', Holocaust and Genocide Studies vol.10 no.1 (spring 1996), pp.78-92.

xii. Benjamin Wilkomirski, Fragments (Basingstoke: Picador, 1996) and for sensitive analysis of the 'affair', Elena Lappin, 'The Man With Two Heads', Granta no.66 (summer 1999), pp.9-65 and Blake Eskin, A Life in Pieces (London: Aurum Press, 2002).

xiii. Jane Marks, The Hidden Children: The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust (London: Bantam Books, 1995 [1993]), pp.viii, x.

xiv. Benigni quoted in Melanie Wright, 'Don't Touch My Holocaust: Responding to Life is Beautiful', Journal of Holocaust Education vol.9 no.1 (summer 2000), p.29.

xv. Bruno Bettelheim, 'The Ignored Lesson of Anne Frank' in idem, Surviving and Other Essays (New York: Knopf, 1979), pp.246-57.

xvi. Henry Feingold, The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp.148-153; Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut, American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp.66-73,107,232; and Judith Tydor Baumel, Unfulfilled Promise: Rescuee and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States 1934-1945 (Juneau, Alaska: Denali Press, 1990), chapter 2.

xvii. W.D.Rubinstein, The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis (London: Routledge, 1997).

xviii. Sir Samuel Hoare in Hansard (HC) vol.341 col.1468 (21 November 1938).

xix For the best overview see Saul Friedlander, Nazi Germany & the Jews: The Years of Persecution 1933-39 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).

xx. Hoare in Hansard (HC) vol.341 col.1474 (21 November 1938).

xxi. Baldwin's broadcast of 8 December 1938 was printed as The Plight of the Refugees (Ottawa: Canadian National Committee on Refugees, 1939), p.9 for this quote. For the

designed to offer children from liberated Holland the chance to recuperate in Britain. Later extended to include children from France and Belgium, it brought up to 10,000 children to Britain before it came to an official close in June 1946. Schiff argued that a similar scheme, voluntarily funded, could be used for the children from the camps with an absolute assurance that their stay in Britain would be temporary. Second, according to Maxwell, Montefiore suggested that they

> should be brought to England not because there is no other means of providing for them... but because he thinks it right that England should do something to show sympathy, and also because he thinks there is no better way of impressing on the British people the horrors of the concentration camps than by bringing some of the actual victims to this country.[lxxii]

Initially, Maxwell suggested it would be better to help the children in Germany itself only to be convinced by Schiff and Anthony de Rothschild that this would be impracticable. It was Schiff's and de Rothschild's argument that France and the USA were helping and that it might not help the good reputation of Great Britain if we took no share' that proved decisive. Yielding reluctantly to their moral pressure, Maxwell wrote to the Home Secretary that he 'would like to have avoided any scheme for bringing more refugees into Britain, but obviously this proposal with reference to children will receive [a lot] of public sympathy'. Nevertheless, Maxwell laid down strict criteria: it ought not to be limited to Jewish children; it would depend on careful arrangements with regard to transport and screening the health of the children; and, lastly, finding suitable accommodation in Britain. Maxwell stated that if money to fund the operation was found and all these conditions were met then 'I do not think it would be justifiable for the Home Office to refuse... on the understanding that it is the responsibility of the refugee organisations to make arrangements for their emigration as soon as emigration becomes practicable'. It was, he added,

> an exceptional arrangement made for dealing with the specially pitiful conditions of children found in concentration camps, and must not be taken as a precedent for requests to bring to this country other children or young persons, or older persons, who are in a distressed condition on the Continent.[lxxiii]

The children were flown to Britain in autumn 1945 and the first half of 1946, initially cared for in reception camps/homes set up in Windermere in the Lake District and Wintershill Hall in Durley, Hampshire.[lxxiv] The Lake District and Hampshire countryside locations were not accidental. Those involved in the newly created CCCOC were determined to restore the health of their charges: country air and food were seen as crucial. But other factors included: the availability of suitable accommodation, the closeness to RAF bases (the children were flown on planes returning or taking troops to Prague and then Munich), and their isolation from the wider community (continuing the desire for invisibility which the Jewish refugee organisations had followed since 1933). Avoiding urban locations was not for medical reasons alone: it was a response, also, to government concern, especially articulated by Ernest Bevin, that Jewish refugees were congregating on towns, thereby in his belief creating a 'Jewish problem'.[lxxv]

In conclusion, it is crucial to separate out the experiences of the Kinder from those Jewish children who came to Britain after 1945 in order to be faithful to the experience and nature of the Holocaust and its chronological evolution. There are points in common - not in relation to the life stories of those involved, which were essentially different - but with regard to British governmental responses (even if they were more open in 1938/39 than in 1945). There is also the communality of those involved from a Jewish organisational perspective including Otto Schiff and Leonard Montefiore. What also ties them together is the subsequent positive memory work, the dominant theme of which is to view Britain as essentially fair and decent and the experience as a whole as redemptive. What we now need, I would suggest, is a more open and critical approach, and one which will enable us to differentiate one Jewish experience under persecution from another - that of the Kinder on the one hand and the child survivors of the Holocaust on the other.

this did heighten the prisoners' living standards considerably. Before that period, according to several testimonies, and contrary to a common opinion amongst Danish historians, a number of Danish prisoners died of hunger and hunger-related health damages.

The Red Cross visit

During spring 1944 the big *Verschonerungsaktion* of Theresienstadt took place: houses were painted, grass sowed, playgrounds installed, etc. By mid-May approximately 7,500 people were sent to Auschwitz to make the camp seem less crowded.[1] On 22 June 1944 several Danish families were allowed to move into newly furnished private rooms. The long prepared visit of the Red Cross took place the following day. Two Danish representatives participated. Dr. Eigil Juel Henningsen of the National Board of Health, also delegate of the Danish Red Cross, and Frants Hvass of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Swiss doctor Maurice Rossel of the International Red Cross headed the delegation, which also comprised a few German participants. The Danish efforts to 'look after' the Danish prisoners have, of course, in a Danish perspective always been emphasised, whereas the role of the Danish visitors as a tool for the Nazi propaganda has never really been dealt with.

Examining the existing reports of the visit, nothing indicates that the delegates actually realised that it had all been staged, which is also confirmed by the 1979 interview Claude Lanzmann conducted with Maurice Rossel.[2] In fact, the three reports are exceedingly similar in nature, which suggests that they were all based on the pre-approved introduction given by Paul Eppstein, "Chairman of the Elders", forced to play the role of Theresienstadt's mayor for the day.

The visit carried significant importance for many Danish prisoners, who subsequently were allowed to remain in the private rooms. Furthermore, the shipment of food parcels became more regular after the visit.

On 15 April 1945, 423 prisoners, both Danish citizens and stateless, were released from

SUMMARY TABLE OF THE FOUR TRANSPORTS OF JEWS FROM DENMARK

The four transports	
1st transport on Oct 2 (XXV-1)	53
2nd transport on Oct 2 (XXV-2)	198
3rd transport on Oct 16 (XXV-3)	175
4th transport on Nov 23 includes:	
Arr. to Terezin Jan & Apr 1944 (XXV-4- Est	10*
Arr. to T. from Berlin Jan & Apr 1944	4*
Stayed in Sachsenhausen	1*
Dep. from Sachsenhausen to Majdanek	1*
All in all deported w. the 4 transports	472
Of them arrived in Theresienstadt	470

Those who perished	
Deportees who perished in Theresienstadt	50
Babies born and dead in the camp	2
Deportees who perished in other camps	2

Those who returned	
To Sweden in April 1945	423
Incl. children born in the camp	3
foreign women married and a child	7
Danish child deported from Germany	1
Originally dep. from DK back in April 1945	412
Back in January 1944	5
Back on May 1945	2**
Survivors of the originally dep. from DK	419

*These people were taken to respectively Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen

** The man from transport 4, who had remained in Sachsenhausen and a prisoner from Theresienstadt, who had been imprisoned in the *Kleine Festung*, and who were therefore missing when the buses left.

[1] Cf. www.terezinstudies.cz/deu/TDdatabase/tr_cnt_date and D. Czech *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*. Rowohlt, 1989. For some reasons the number reported in Danish accounts is 17,500/17,000 people, cf. H. Sode-Madsen, "The Perfect Deception", p.25; T. Strøde, *October 1943*, p.17.

[2] C. Lanzmann, *Le rapport qui passe*. Why not productions, 1997.

Theresienstadt, picked up by the White Buses and taken via Germany and Denmark to Sweden. On 4 May 1945, the radio announced the surrender of Germany, and soon after the travel back to Denmark began.

The numbers

Since the 1990s the number of deportees from Denmark mostly quoted is 481 and the number of people who perished 53, including the two babies. This figure is, however, not fully correct. Even though no original deportation list exists in Danish archives, several different lists do exist on the basis of which the actual numbers can be established. First, there are lists detailing the Danish prisoners who perished in Theresienstadt as well as lists of the Danish transport numbers[1]. Secondly, there are lists of people who arrived in Sweden from Theresienstadt in April 1945[2]. Finally, the names of the five people who were sent back to Denmark in January 1944 are also known[3]. Furthermore, a lot of useful information can be found in survivors' testimonies and interviews[4]. Pamatnik Terezin lists 466 Danish inmates, to whom should be added four Danish men who arrived to Terezin from Sachsenhausen via Berlin, and as such were not listed as Danes.

Conclusion

When going through Danish historiography, one can be surprised to note that not much interest has been paid to the fate of the Jews who were not rescued. And, in fact, in addition to the prisoners in Theresienstadt, other stories could be told: people drowned on their way to Sweden, others committed suicide in fear of deportations. Also, a few Jews were deported to different camps with other transports from Denmark than the four "Jew transports". Furthermore, a group of *chaluzim* travelled out of Denmark hidden in or under trains to find a new way to Palestine; six were caught in Germany and sent to Auschwitz. There is also the case of formerly Danish women, who had lost their citizenship by marrying foreigners, and who were deported – often as stateless – from other countries. Some were helped by the Danish authorities to get to Denmark, some were let down. And, finally, a few Danish Jews were deported from abroad despite the fact that the racial laws should not be applicable to Danish citizens[5].

Due to the amazing rescue, the number of Danish victims to the Holocaust is much lower than the death tolls of other countries, on that background it is even more remarkable that the precise number of people has yet to be established.

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[1] Most of them had originally been deported from Denmark, but some Czech women had married Danish men, and a few children had been born in the camp.

[2] J. Margolinsky: *Jødiske dødsfald i Danmark 1693-1976* [Jewish Deaths in Denmark 1693-1976]. Copenhagen, 1978, p.414-416; *Danish Record Office*, 120D-13-2 annexes, "Liste der dänischen Staatsangehörigen", July 1944 and "Liste der zurzeit in Theresienstadt befindlichen Emigranten aus Dänemark", July 1944.

[3] Cf. World Jewish Congress, "List of Jews arrived from Denmark to Stockholm", May 1945, USHMM archives Washington, Collection 1997.A.0235.

[4] C.I.H. Sode-Madsen, *Reddet fra Hitlers helvede* [Rescued from Hitler's hell]. Copenhagen, 2005, p.146-148.
In particular to establish the name and fate of one prisioner who was deported presumably to Auschwitz. His name only figures on a list F. Hvass brough to Theresienstadt in June 1944, but when the answer there was "not in Theresienstadt", his name seems to have been deleted from all later Danish lists. He was not in Theresienstadt in June 1944, since he had been deported already in March.

[5] E.D.I. A. Glück, *Der neue Weg*, Wien, 1995; V.Ó. Vilhjálmsson, *Medaljens Bagside* [The reverse of the medal], Copenhage, 2005; L. Rünitz, *Af hensyn til konsekvenserne* [On grounds of the consequences] Odense, 2005; S.G.T. Fracapane, "Født i Danmark, myrdet i Auschwitz" [Born in Denmark, murdered in Auschwitz], in RAMBAM 15, Copenhagen, 2006, p.62-69.

The same faces with stencilled age
We are survivors of circles of hell
Having slid through some six decades.[lxiii]

As has been highlighted throughout this lecture, creating a 'safe' Kindertransport narrative necessitates a downplaying of the vulnerable adults left behind in the Third Reich who lacked, in the eyes of the receiving countries, the appeal of childhood innocence. Even then, the children were regarded with some suspicion. In November 1938 the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, justified the Kindertransport scheme as being 'Without any harm to our own population'.[lxiv] The Home Office's official history of British refugee policy, written in 1950, hurried through this movement in one paragraph and simply outlined how this damage limitation was to be achieved. The children were allowed in 'on condition that they would be emigrated when they reached 18... [and] no encouragement was given to them to qualify for the professions or for "black-coated occupations"'.[lxv] Until there is a film, book or memorial echoing such official proclamations, rather than redemptively desiring that they first witnessed Britain as a place where The Policeman Smiled before falling comfortably Into the Arms of Strangers, we will not have done justice either to the experience or to the legacy of the Kinder.

The remainder of this lecture will focus on the children on the children who came to Britain after the war through the committee created by Leonard Montefiore and Otto Schiff - that for the Care of Children from the Concentration Camps (the CCCCC). Until recently through the efforts of Ben Helfgott and the '45 Aid Society, and its historian, Sir Martin Gilbert, the survivors that came after the war have been relatively neglected, especially in relation to those that came on the Kindertransports. The confusion brought about by labelling the kinder 'survivors' has perhaps added to the marginalisation of those known, a little misleadingly, as 'the Boys' Indeed, shortly after this lecture was delivered, Ben Helfgott himself was described by the Jewish Chronicle as 'this child of the Kindertransport', revealing the problems that can emerge if precision in understanding is lacking.[lxvi] What follows is perhaps a more critical reading of the scheme for children from the concentration camps than that offered by Martin Gilbert.[lxvii] It is offered not to be deliberately controversial, but to highlight further the tenacity and achievements of those that re-made their lives in Britain after the war.

In 1945, in lip service to public pressure, a small scheme which had been proposed by the Jewish Refugee Committee (JRC), to allow up to 1,000 child survivors of the concentration camps to enter Britain temporarily to recuperate, was accepted by the Home Office. As with the proposals put to the Cabinet in 1933, Jewish refugee organisations promised to cover all costs. Eventually some 732 children, almost all Jewish, were found qualifying for the scheme - an indication of the narrowness of its restraints. Otto Schiff of the JRC visited Sir Alexander Maxwell, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office, on 4 May 1945, putting forward a request from Leonard Montefiore for the temporary admission to this country of about 1,000 Jewish orphan children from the camps in Buchenwald and Belsen'. By August 1945, the JRC's secretary wrote to Maxwell limiting the scheme to 800 'for no other reason but that of finance'.[lxviii] The initial restrictions to concentration camps in Germany is indicative of their notoriety in Britain but also the more general ignorance in 1945 of the Holocaust's geographical scope. Eventually the scheme was extended beyond Germany to incorporate other camps, particularly Theriesenstadt.[lxix]

Another problem in finding those eligible for the scheme was the refusal of Zionist leaders in the displaced persons camps to allow the children to go to anywhere but Palestine. Having been liberated from Dachau, Karl Kleiman was determined to go to Palestine: 'I didn't want to go to England'. Fed up of waiting, however, 'I said to myself and a few other boys: "Why not? Let's get away from here at least".[lxx] Perec Zylberberg, as a Bundist, was less difficult to convince about the 'whispered rumour of a British option'.[lxxi]

Schiff and Montefiore advanced arguments designed to convince the Home Office which they knew would be hesitant to accept more Jewish refugees. First, they stressed that a scheme was already in existence, the 'Young People from Occupied Countries', which had been initially

sought recognition, has been transformed into 'Britain's Schindler', as has Foreign Office bureaucrat, Frank Foley. Vera Gissing, one of the Czech girls brought to Britain by Winton, states that 'He has become the much cherished father-figure of the largest family in the world, because our own parents had perished in the holocaust as surely we would have done without his swift and timely intervention. To him we owe our freedom and life'.lvi The complexity of the actions of Foley, Winton and of course Schindler himself are lost sight of in the desire to create what are in essence 'secular saints', or for the orthodox, a Jewish equivalent in the form of Solomon Schonfeld, perhaps one of the most difficult people to have operated at an organisational level in British Jewry during the twentieth century. In one testimony he appears almost as a timeless Golem, rescuing the Jews from their violent oppressors:

Where is this Rabbi Dr Schonfeld?... A man has entered. But no, he is not really a man, he is more like a giant. Like the giants in the Bible stories our father used to tell us on Friday nights. He is big and tall and broad-shouldered with a firm, strong stride and a ruddy beard and an undulating voice that is craggy like mountain ridges. He is quite old, like our father, forty at least. But no, on the other hand he seems quite young, in fact ageless.lvii

The narrative structure is thus completed - the innocent children are rescued by the righteous nation and specific righteous individuals. They become a saved remnant of a lost people whose parents sacrificed their own happiness for the well being of their children who subsequently made good. It is a neat storyline and one that is understandable given the need to respond positively to the unfathomable scale of the Holocaust. Its appeal, however, explains the lack of critical history on the subject and in such narratives we forget the essence of being a refugee, that of loss, and in the specific case of the Kinder, the irreparable fracture of their parents' absence. As Louise London puts it: 'We remember the touching photographs and newsreel footage of unaccompanied Jewish children arriving on the Kindertransports. There are no such photographs of the Jewish parents left behind in Nazi Europe, and their fate has made a minimal impact.'lviii Self-contained and self-congratulatory, the story becomes cut off from the messiness of modern refugee movements, including the existence of enormous numbers of unaccompanied refugee children today who can be counted not in the thousands but in the millions. Indeed it has been estimated that 'approximately one-half of the global refugee population comprises children under the age of 16'.lix

It is worth at this point returning to Karen Gershon's We Came as Children which remains the most powerful exploration of the identities and experiences of the Kinder in any genre. When the anthology was reviewed in 1966 there were those who desired to place it within the context of the general refugee experience and others who linked it more specifically to the Holocaust. The critic, John Carey, writing in the New Statesman, whilst putting the emphasis on the latter, was not oblivious to the former:

Over here they froze in converted seaside chalets, then went to foster-homes. Often they were treated as servants by the wife. Still, they lived. Brothers and sisters who stayed behind were made into fertiliser at Auschwitz. Some who got as far as Holland were returned to Germany and used for medical experiments.lx

The anonymous reviewer in The Times similarly raised the problems they faced in Britain but ultimately dismissed them with the crude moral sledgehammer of the alternative raised by Carey: 'the overriding moment must come from Auschwitz and Buchenwald. They did survive.'lxi

A generation later, the Kinder experience has increasingly been placed in the Holocaust context, the former children describing themselves as 'survivors' and unwittingly or not, a barrier drawn up with other refugee experiences. Bertha Leverton introducing I Came Alone in October 1989 wrote to her 'Friends and Readers' that 'Most of the children lost their parents in the Holocaust and thus became part of history.' She continues that 'If some of the stories seem repetitive, please realize that our experiences were often identical: for instance the journey... was a trauma, as was the realization of having become orphans when the rest of the world celebrated victory'.lxii Lotte Kramer's poem, 'Kindertransport Reunion' continues with similar themes of uniformity under the impact of the Holocaust:

Wales meets Poland – July 2007

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 Sister?" Like many others who didn't come to England with the "Boys", she joined our Society in recent years. She is a regular contributor to our Journal.

Although I visit Krakow twice a year, I avoid the summer. I have not experienced the Polish summer since August 1945, when I left the country. I remember it as scorching and airless – the sky blazing, the soil parched, the vegetation seared. Deep down I know, of course, that my dread is tied up to the Krakow – June 1942 "Resettlement Aktion" which lasted eight days and was conducted in a sweltering, stifling heat-wave. This year, 2007, I relented....

On 7th July 2005, I travelled from Paddington railway station to Wales. I had undertaken to address a group of students at a secondary school in Newport. I must have been in the vicinity of Edgware Road underground station on that fateful morning, minutes before the explosion. I missed it by a whisker....

The journey took much longer than two hours, but the students waited for me and welcomed me with great enthusiasm. One could have heard the proverbial pin drop, they listened so attentively to my sad tale. A deluge of questions followed. We then made for the school refectory where a splendid spread, a feast, was laid on.

A few days later I received a telephone call from Miss Annie Grooms, the teacher in charge. "The boys and girls want to visit Krakow, and so do I," said Miss Grooms.

It took the youngsters two years to save the necessary funds: no job was too modest, too boring; they beavered away in the evenings, at weekends, during the holidays...

Two years later, Miss Grooms was in touch again. "We are booking the trip with a local travel agent – for July. It will be nice and warm. Sunny." "Yes", I replied, in what I hoped was an eager voice. "Yes, the Polish summer is sunny..." I asked my 16-year-old grandson, Daniel, if he would like to accompany me. "Not half, granny, any time..."

On Sunday, 15th July, we met the Welsh party outside St Mary's Church in Krakow's main square... Seventeen youngsters and four teachers. Danny and I – shaking hands, hugging, talking, laughing – all at the same time...

Dinner!

On Monday, the party went to Auschwitz and when I telephoned in the late afternoon, Miss Grooms said: "We are very downcast, deeply sad... An early night..."

We arranged to meet the following morning at 11 o'clock on the other side of the Vistula in what was once the "Umschlagplatz" (The Assembly Point) and is now "The Ghetto Heroes' Square."

The temperature that morning was 35°C. I felt very apprehensive about conducting the party round the Ghetto area in that heat. Am I going to be able to cope? Danny said: "I'll help you all I can. I'll carry your bag for you in my back pack. We'll take it gently... We couldn't let them down..."

Indeed, we couldn't!

We started "the tour" at the remnant of the crenellated Ghetto wall where we placed a posy of fresh flowers and I translated the inscription on the plaque mounted into it. We bowed our heads and remained silent for a little while. It so happened that the heavy, oaken twin doors of No. 42 Limanowskiego Street, where I had once lived with my parents and brothers were wide open. We piled into the long hallway, cool and shadowy, and stood there just as I had done 65 years earlier – Bartus, my eight-year-old brother, and I wedged between our parents... The SS were inspecting documents and our parents were holding their Kennkarten (identity cards) in their outstretched hands. The twin doors were wide open and we were looking out...

1st June 1942 – it has been a torrid day, the sky in flames... Now, at six o'clock in the afternoon, the heat is abating, the Krakow sky is again blue, the promise of a mellow evening – the first day of an eight-day long "Resettlement Aktion..." The SS continue to demonstrate undiminished energy and

ruthless zeal. The lorries parked along the bright, sunny thoroughfare are filling up...

I ask the youngsters to look at the tenement right opposite No. 42 – its façade grimy, peeling... Three stone steps lead from the doorway to the pavement...

"Ah, they are coming out – the old Orthodox Jew in his fine Shabbath garments, his long silver beard gleaming... his tiny, shrivelled, black-clad wife by his side. What with their frailty and the large suitcase, they have difficulty in negotiating the three steps...

From the nearby Ghetto pedestrian gate, a young SS officer, tall, slender, graceful, waltzes along the pavement – a black object in his elegantly-gloved hand... The old man has caught his keen eye. We witness a point-blank range execution! The old man, like a gigantic blackbird, slumps to the ground..."

The youngsters ask: "You saw that, Janina?" "Yes, I did, I still do..." They remain silent. Then: "What happened to his wife?" "I am not sure – one minute she was there, the next she had been snatched up..."

We walk on..... We shelter in a patch of shade. I extend my hand towards Dabrowka, a turning to the left.... "There was a children's library in Dabrowka. – In the spring of 1942, in the Ghetto streets, I ran into Erna Zelinger – she and my mama were childhood friends. 'Yasia, how are things?' She smiled. She had very crooked, dazzlingly white teeth. They made her. 'There is a children's library right next door to us. Children from every corner of the Ghetto are joining... My Stas has joined...' (Stas, her 12-year-old son). I was there, in Dabrowka, like a shot. The librarians were so helpful and friendly. It was not an official library, but very properly run. A middle-aged couple and their two teenage daughters put their enormous collection of books at the disposal of the Ghetto children. Shared their riches."

The Welsh youngsters, fast learners: "Janina, did they... did they survive?" "I don't know. I doubt it. The parents were too old, the girls too young..."

"And Erna Zel... and her son?" "Ah, Erna, her husband, 12-year-old son? No! I remember Erna and Stas so well. The husband is a dark blur. Before the war, they had been the owners of a fashionable children's wear shop in Krakow's elegant Florianska Street. When the family moved into the Ghetto, in the spring of 1941, Erna still had a few hundred pairs of smart children's socks which she had managed to salvage from the shop's stock. Little by little, I disposed of the socks for her outside the Ghetto – always receiving a generous commission. She used to say: 'We are eating socks...'

The Zelinger family was dispatched to "The East" on Thursday, 4th June 1942, a date known in Krakow ghetto annals as "Bloody Thursday. It was the hottest day of that very hot week. The sky was pus-yellow and the heat was searing and the Germans went berserk. They were grieving 5 and who better to take out their grief on than the Jews? For that morning, at dawn, one of the brightest stars of the SS constellation – Heinrich Reinhardt – the fatly cold, monstrously cruel governor of Czechoslovakia, his rancid breath leaving his putrid body in one long jet of brown vomit, was claimed by Satan who had been hovering over the hospital bed jealously guarding his property.

The Zelinger parents and son were driven in a multitude of 3,000 men, women and children, towards the cattle trucks... Yes, from here, from this square, past the Ghetto wall where we had left the flowers...

Tired, subdued, quiet – we cross the Third Bridge. We stop by the peacefully flowing Vistula and take photographs. After lunch, the youngsters and Danny go off to explore the city. I have a rest at my hotel. We meet again for dinner – their last evening in Krakow. The friendliness, the warmth, the goodwill – I am still to meet more courteous, more appreciative youngsters and teachers than these representatives of Wales. They made the trip a truly memorable experience. Heart-gladdening!

My stories nearly always end on a sad note. This one is different. It ends on an amusing note.

On our last evening in Krakow, I invited Danny to a "posh" restaurant for a slap-up dinner. As we approached the entrance door, we saw a large black-board and upon it in large capital, chalk-white letters: "Air-conditional". Danny smiled. I shook my head. A very pleasant manageress led us to a window-seat table. Danny tucked into roast duck with all the trimmings; I had a modest, but tasty, salad. Danny had profiterole. I had a coffee. Eventually, the bill

the countries in which they settled.[xlvi] Indeed, the success of the scheme and of the individuals in rebuilding their lives, creating their own families and successful careers is an increasing feature of Kinder representation, including the television documentary, Rescued: A Sixty Year Journey (2000).[xlvii] Similarly, the organiser of the sixtieth anniversary, Bea Green, entitled her entry into the accompanying brochure 'Survival and Achievement'.[xlviii]

By the time of the first Kinder reunion in 1989, the condescension of the 1930s and 1940s, and then the indifference and invisibility of the postwar years, had given way to respect and increasing interest. In June 1999, Bea Green organised the unveiling of a plaque at the House of Commons: 'In deep gratitude to the people and Parliament of the United Kingdom for saving the lives of 10,000 Jewish and other children who fled to this country from Nazi persecution on the Kindertransport 1938-1939'.[xlix] At a time when rampant anti-refugee sentiment was beginning to develop exponentially in the media, as well as in public discourse and in government behaviour, the prominence given to this plaque provided an intriguing example of memory work where the past and present were brought together in potential conflict. In September 2003 Flor Kent's memorial to the Kindertransport outside Liverpool Street station, Fur das Kind, was unveiled with an almost identical message, with only the words 'and parliament' removed.[l] By this stage, the campaign against asylum seekers had reached fever pitch. That connections were not generally made between British refugee policy then and now was an indication of the respectability and acceptability of the Kinder. Some sixty years on there had been time enough for them to become viewed as decent citizens of Britain and no longer somewhat undesirable or pitiable aliens.

The Kinder, by the turn of the twenty first century, had become a safe story, put together neatly and with a redemptive ending. In the case of the Oscar-winning Into the Arms of Strangers (2000)[li] even the losses were minimised with some of the children featured reunited with their parents after the war.[lii] Sadly, this was not a very typical experience, and when it did happen, it was not always an easy one for all concerned, a theme deftly explored in Diane Samuel's Kindertransport, first performed in London in 1992. Samuel's play explores the tension between mother and daughter when the former returns from the camps. Neither can overcome their trauma based on the guilt of survival on the one hand and anger at being abandoned on the other. It leads to the daughter suppressing all recognition of her origins.[liii] It still remains the case, however, that Samuel's play, which owes much to the testimonies in Gershon's We Came Alone,[liv] and more critical individual autobiographies act counter to the increasingly dominant representation of the Kindertransport in which there are few questions asked about the generosity and wiseness of the scheme as a whole.

The Kinder have been incorporated into a Holocaust narrative, one with a powerful American influence. Into the Arms of Strangers is to be firmly located within this context, the cover of its book version proclaiming it tells the story of 'The British scheme that saved 10,000 children from the Nazi regime'. And just as with the earlier Hollywood blockbuster, Schindler's List, it has its happy ending in the form of the former child refugees successfully re-creating their lives across the world. Unusually for Hollywood, Britain emerges as the hero, with America as the (minor) villains for refusing to emulate the scheme in 1939. In the film, one of the arguments used against the Wagner-Rogers Bill, that separating children from their parents ran 'contrary to laws of God', is dismissed as a puerile excuse. Nowhere is it asked why Britain excluded their mothers and fathers.[lv] Into the Arms of Strangers is thus 'Heartbreaking, but also inspiring and not without humour'. It consists of the stories of those who survived with the help of others: they are stories of courage and hope, stories about the strength and resolve of children; and most astonishingly, they are stories not yet heard about the impact of the Holocaust.[lvi]

More generally, in the British context, the Christian rescuer has been personified in the form of Nicholas Winton, a British businessman who helped set up the Kinder scheme in Czechoslovakia. In documentaries, media features and now in biography, Winton, who has always downplayed his role and not

question. 'But why did you leave?', quite convincingly, and those teenage readers could then have passed on that explanation to their parents, who still did not know what this Hitler business was all about.xxxviii

But most striking is the richness of Gershon's deeply moving and desperately unsentimental collection created by the desire of the former Kinder to explain to themselves who they were. The anonymous contributions are terse and therefore do not reveal fully the complexities of each of the 234 individuals that would have emerged from a full life story. Nevertheless, they are artistically crafted together by Gershon, a neglected talent in the post-war British literature scene, to produce not one smooth narrative, but an astonishing collection of voices that show the complexities of belonging and not belonging and the contradictory pressures past and present operating on the former Kinder.xxxix Floating between history, biography, literature and psychology, it offers one of the most profound insight into being a refugee in twentieth century Britain. In the final section, 'Summing Up', the former Kinder reflect on that status: 'A refugee is someone who is not wanted in one place and given shelter in another out of pity. He is therefore forced to choose between death and charity'; 'If we had not remembered that we were refugees there were always others to remind us'.xl As Gershon herself wrote in a later edition of the collective biography, from her home in Cornwall: 'I feel more at home in Israel than I do in England, but I don't feel at home there either, and that is worse, because I still expect to be able to feel at home. Here I am reconciled'.xli

One of the most important chapters in the collective autobiography is entitled 'Death and Survival'. It opened with a quotation from Ambrose's The Story of Peter Cronheim, a didactic novel aimed at British children: '"I won't go!" he shouted at his parents. "Why should I have to be pushed out on my own? I've done nothing wrong! I hate the Germans and I hate you!". We Came as Children provided the first public forum for the grief of separation from parents before September 1939 and anxiety and depression caused by the lack of contact with parents after the outbreak of war.xlii The pattern of knowledge in kinder accounts is relatively similar. Letters became increasingly infrequent and were replaced at best my messages from the Red Cross, eventually with the information for most, either in the war or after it confirming the death of parents. But each individual reacted differently: from total denial at one end to publically expressed grief at the other and including elements of anger, shame, guilt and heartbreak. Vera Schaufeld, who came to Britain from Czechoslovakia, was 15 when the war ended. Vera relates how she: then started having fantasies that really they were alive, and that they's started a new life in Shanghai or one of the places that they'd tried to get to, and had another family but just didn't want me... I couldn't accept the reality... I never saw anything [confirming their death]. [When the letters stopped from my parents] that was dreadful... I think that I always thought somehow I hadn't written... back enough [or] that they hadn't wanted to write... I thought that they could come to me if only they wanted to enough.xliii

Just as Karen Gershon had been alone in attempting a commoration of the Kinder for its twenty fifth anniversary, Bertha Leverton in 1988 realised that there were no plans to celebrate the jubilee of the scheme. A huge reunion took place in 1989 achieving national prominence - indeed, the success of the meeting reflected the initial media attention given to the idea of a reunion. For the first time, the Kindertransport was becoming part of the national history and heritage of Britain and was more generally connected to what were by then the beginnings of the huge growth in interest in the Holocaust. A collection of autobiographies was published, I Came Alone (1990) which was similar to Gershon's We Came as Children only in the large number of contributions that made it up - 243. In this later anthology, however, the autobiographical fragments were self-contained and presented alphabetically.xliv The individuality, as indicated in the title, reflected the growing interest in the life stories of ordinary people.xlv Unlike the earlier collection, however, the truncated stories reveal little of the emotion and complexity of the Kinder experience. Perhaps the best summary of this somewhat unwieldy collection is that provided in its original cover: 'It is a fitting tribute to the Kindertransportees and the generosity of their hosts, that so many survived to become upright and useful citizens of

was presented in a smart linen pouch. The manageress came over, smiling, to ask if everything was to our satisfaction. "Yes, indeed – a delicious meal, excellent service..." As she seemed a very nice, sensible woman, I tackled, quietly and discreetly, the difference between "Conditional" and "Conditioned." Her English was good. She was quick to grasp the difference. "It's incorrect English... the board must be instantly removed..."

When I took out my purse to settle the bill, she reappeared. "The management would be very pleased if we would accept their hospitality." Pleasantries were exchanged and it seemed churlish not to accept this generous offer. We were escorted to the very door. Once outside, Danny shook his head: "I don't know how you do it, Granny!"

Croydon August 2007-10-02

Historic gathering to Commemorate the Rebuilding of Three Oiholim in Piotrkow

By Yisroel and Yossy Rudzinski (words in italics by Yisroel)

Yisroel came to England with the Windermere Group and studied at the Yeshiva in Gateshead. He is a committee member of our Society.

Although no one really wants to go back or even remember our lovely country, somehow something always pulls us back. We were so young and we can't remember all the details so we come back to prove that we were correct, although it hurts very much. Sometimes we can't find things anymore, either the buildings were demolished or we simply can't remember so we go back again to try and find it or we go to show our children and grandchildren that we did not come straight from heaven, we had parents, a town and homes.

Our last trip in Elul was extra special for us. Instead of seeing ruins, we came to commemorate the rebuilding, by the Dessau Family, of the three magnificent Oiholim of the Great Tzadikim buried in our Beis Olam in Piotrkow. I have been to dozens of towns in Poland and I can vouch that nowhere have they rebuilt an Ohel as beautiful and bekovodik as these three in Piotrkow.

We arrived in Katowice airport at 11.00. We hired a car and drove directly to Piotrokw (about 2½ hours). *Our first stop was at our impressive Shul, never mind that it is now a library, in our minds we remember it as a beautiful Shul. I am writing this on the day after Yom Kippur and I can't help remembering how we as children used to come and visit our Mothers, Bubes and sisters davening and crying. There we were joined with the main group of about seventy people who came from Israel. We had the great Kovod to have with us the emeritus Israeli Chief Rabbi Horav Yisroel Meir Lau, together with his brother Naftali and son.*

We davened Mincha together and I was the Baal Tefilah. Rabbi Lau was standing next to me and I was imagining that here stands his Father, the last Rav in Piotrkow. Rabbi Lau had previously mentioned that his Bris was in this Shul and my father said that he remembered it. We might be upset that the Shul has now become a library but at least it is being looked after. In many towns, unfortunately, they turned the Shuls into factories or warehouses or demolished them completely. We all then went next door to the Beis Hamedrash, which is now a children's library. On the upper floor on the back wall there is the original mural above the Oron Hakoidesh which is riddled with gun shots from the Nazis YS.

Our next stop was at a restaurant in the square at the top of the Yidden Gass. We were all invited, by Family Dessau to a very delicious strictly kosher lunch. The caterer, a Gerrer chasid, came from Lodz. He brought with him his own pots etc., and everything was served on paper and plastic disposables. It was a

Kiddush Hashem to see a Kosher meal complete with freshly baked challas being served in 2005 in the middle of Piotrkow.

We then made our way to the Beis Olam for the main event of the day. There many dignitaries from the town joined us and we all took our seats on the chairs laid out near the entrance. It was a pleasure to see the many younger second and third generations mixing with the fifteen or so survivors who were present. *Although it was a solemn occasion, for me it was a pleasure to see my nephew, Yisrael Zylberstajn, my sister Esther's son (we were the only survivors of nine children) conducting the service with confidence and organisation.* Actually it was Yisrael who organised all the arrangements for the week long trip for the Israeli contingent and he, together with Mr Dessau, arranged the day in Piotrokow. Anyone who has organised group trips knows all the hard work and commitment that goes into making sure that everything klapt and that every participant is kept happy. KOL HAKAVOD.

Yisrael opened the ceremony with a speech in Ivrit. All the speeches were translated into Polish or Ivrit. Then the President (Mayor) of Piotrkow spoke in Polish. Yisrael responded wonderfully to each speaker. Next we heard from the Israeli Ambassador to Poland, followed by the Chief Rabbi of Poland. Rabbi Lau did not speak as he had to return back to Israel. I was then asked to say one Kapitel of Tehillim. We then heard from our chairman of the '45 Aid Society, Mr Ben Helfgott. He spoke in his native Polish and conveyed a message from Mr Ben Giladi. Finally the Chazan from Lodz sang Keil Molei Rachamim. All the speakers' main points were to address the Mayor, firstly to thank him for the past but mainly to tell him that the Jewish community will be back for further visits and that he should always cooperate and also to use his powers to preserve all that remains holy to us in Piotrkow. *Mr Giladi, I know that you must have been upset not being able to join us but I must say that you were well represented by Mr Ben Helfgott who gave over your message beautifully. Mr Helfgott and myself were the only survivors representing England, although there were many more "Boys" who came to England after the war. I say "boys" as the Nazis YS only allowed young workers in the factories from where we were saved from the deportations. Unfortunately, a few have died, some are unwell or their wives need looking after.*

We wish all a speedy Refuah Sheleimah and may we join only at Simchos.

We then went to pray at the newly rebuilt Oiholim of the three holy Tzaddisim, Rabbi Meir Menachem Fuckler of Radoshitz ZTL, Rabbi Yissocher Dov Ber Turnheim of Wollborz ZTL and Rabbi Menachem Moishe Weltfried of Rozprza ZTL. We also prayed at the Oihel of the great rabbi and doctor Rabbi Chaim David Bernard ZTL. My father then said a Keil Molei Rachamim for his father and grandfather who are buried there but as they died during the war they do not have Matzeivos.

We left Piotrokow at about six o'clock. We then drove to Pshischa (Przyschai) to daven at the kever of the holy Reb Bineem of Pshischa whose Yarzeit was on that day. *The next day we travelled to Skarzshisk (Skarzysko Kamiennal) to visit the concentration camp where I had worked. We had made an appointment with the deputy Mayor who was very keen in building up a relationship with all Jewish visitors to the town. He took us to the ammunition factory where we worked, which is still currently active. I did not really recognise anything but we visited the mass grave in the middle of the woods, which I helped to dig.* A local worker also showed us the memorial at the site of a crematorium used by the Nazis YS. *They then took us to the memorial stone they erected in the town centre to commemorate the Jewish people who lived in there and to the Jewish cemetery.*

We then drove to Radoshitz to the Kever of the holy Rabbi Yisochor Dov ZTL and from there to Radomsk to the Kever of the holy Tiferes Shlomo and his sons, one of whom had Yarzeit on that day. We landed back at about 7.00 pm.

All the best and a git gebensht yur in men zoll hoben gepsilt alles gits.

argue, through Spielberg's depiction of Oskar Schindler.xxix The charge of Christian influence on the RCM was also levelled by its contemporary critics.

Bendit ended by acknowledging that 'Nothing ha[d] been said of the personal histories of all these children, of the miseries from which they escaped: of the fear and bewilderment with which they found themselves refugees in a strange land, having different habits, ways of thoughts and speech'. Instead, the emphasis was that trough the 'untiring efforts of the Movement's workers, the natural kindliness of the public and the humanity and patience of the authorities has restored to a large number a sense of security in this society of ours'. In turn, the Kinder had shown intense loyalty and contributed intensely to the forces and war work.xxx Without the Movement, however imperfect, Bendit stated categorically 'these children must have suffered death, or a fate far more horrible than death, if they had been left within the frontiers of the Greater Reich'. Anticipating so much recent commemoration, she concluded by stating that whilst 'In the appalling total of refugees with which post-war Europe will be faced, the figure of ten thousand is a small one', it was still the case that 'each one of these ten thousand [was] a sentient human being' who had been rescued and saved.xxxi

Throughout A Great Adventure, reference to the children's parents is notable by its absolute absence. This silence is not accidental but crucial to the dynamics of the RCM's and government's justification of the project: in essence a younger generation had found what Bendit called 'not only an abiding place among us, but a spiritual home'.xxxii What had happened to the parents, or the children's grief and anxiety over their fate, were not allowed to interfere with the overarching narrative of the RCM's achievements.xxxiii

It was to be another two decades before attention would again focus on the Kinder, their stories lost in different post-war narratives of the Nazi era. In 1966 Karen Gershon, a post and former Kind, published her collective autobiography of the Kindertransport, We Came As Children. She explained her motives in a letter to her publisher: 'At the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first children's transports I discovered that most of the documents of those days had been destroyed, and that many of the people who were concerned with our rescue no longer remember the events clearly or, like Anna Essinger, are dead. I decided then to collect what material I could before it was too late.'xxxiv There was no organisational structure of former Kinder and Gershon advertised in the national press for people to contact her. Some three hundred responded and her anthology uses the words of 234 of them. Emphasising further the fluidity of the movement, Gershon stressed how 'We all came in transit and there is no record of how many of us eventually stayed'.xxxv Recent Kinder commemoration, organisationally and in terms of representation, has been international. It is telling that Gershon's account was confined within the nation state: 'Most of us had a choice at the end of the war; I have confined my enquiry to those who chose England. With their help I have compiled this record, in gratitude and as an explanation.'xxxvi

Gershon's last phrase, 'in gratitude and as an explanation', neatly summarises the internal tension in Kinder testimony that has existed since she compiled the volume in the 1960s. The need to express gratitude was there from their arrival in England, and has never gone away, producing an ambivalence among the refugees. As one contributor put it:

> I shall always be grateful now for what was done for us then, although I wish it had not been rammed down my throat so much as a child who after all does not understand what wars and being refugees are all about. Now I understand better and I could have given my love and gratitude even in those early days if love had been given to me more freely.xxxvii

The need to explain was equally complex. Within the collection, it emerges as the need to explain to friends, acquaintances and especially family of who they were and where they came from. It was reflected in a review in the Association of Jewish Refugee's journal in 1962 of the first fictionalised account of the Kinder, Kenneth Ambrose's The Story of Peter Cronheim:

> Twenty odd years ago [this book] would have fulfilled the most important task of explaining to English children why so many young Central Europeans were turning up in their classrooms and at their playgrounds. It would have answered the recurring

way of children coming here'.xx The former Prime Minister, Lord Baldwin, in his famous radio broadcast on behalf of the child refugees in December 1938, which itself became the stuff of instant and iconic memory work (with, amidst other promotions, a record of it sold to raise money), echoed Hoare's comments: 'Thousands of parents are appealing to the refugee committees to take their children out of Germany, even though they may never see them again'.xxi But Baldwin and Hoare were not probing very far: whilst it was, of course, the Nazis who were responsible for persecuting the Jews, and making the process of emigration as tedious and humiliating as possible, it was the receiving or potential receiving countries that were ultimately determining who could and could not leave. From 1936 through to autumn 1941, emigration, alongside maximum financial extortion, remained the official Nazi policy towards the Jews of Greater Germany. The dilemma outlined by Hoare was one that his government and state apparatus had created. The scheme to rescue children alone had been suggested by the Jewish refugee workers not out of callousness but from a calculated assumption that it was as far as the government could be pushed.xxii As both shared an obsessive, and mutually reinforcing, fear of domestic antisemitism; it also suited their mutual nervousness. As Louise London states bluntly: 'Admission saved the children's lives. Exclusion sealed the fate of many of their parents.'xxiii

Right from the start, rather than acknowledge the inherent problem with the scheme, policy was couched in the most positive and humane terms. Hoare told the Commons that 'Here [was] the chance of taking the young generation of a great people'. Rather than ignore reference to their mothers and fathers, Hoare emphasised that we might 'mitigat[e] to some extent the terrible sufferings of their parents and friends'.xxiv The parents were presented as fundamentally damaged by Nazism and fatalistically beyond rescue, a theme that was to re-occur in later memory work on the Kindertransport.xxv Similarly the organisation set up to administer the scheme - the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, later to become the Refugee Children's Movement, or RCM - was anxious both in terms of its contemporary reputation, and, it must be argued, for the sake of posterity, to justify its actions. Its first annual report, covering the period from November 1938 to December 1939, started in defensive mode, arguing that it was 'thought worth while for the benefit of all to restate some of the facts that made it necessary to bring into this Country nearly 10,000 children, between the ages of 2 months and 16 years and to explain to the more critical why mistakes were made and why delays occurred'.xxvi

The same approach to the RCM's first annual report was adopted by Gladys Bendit, writing under the pseudonym of John Presland, who published an account of the organisation in 1944. Significantly its title was more suited to a 'Boy's Own' tale than the harrowing one it described: A Great Adventure: The Story of the Refugee Children's Movement. In this first history of the RCM, the Kindertransport was domesticated and made palatable to a British Home Front audience. Again, the persecution of Jewish and non-Aryan children in Nazi Germany, as opposed to adults, was highlighted:

> They were set apart from other children in the class rooms, they were forbidden to join in sports or games and the pupils were encouraged, sometimes even instructed by the teachers, to torment them in a hundred ways. Reliable witnesses stated that the number of child-suicides greatly increased in these years and was a sad indication of their suffering.xxvii

Emphasis was also placed on 'Generous British hospitality', especially from ordinary people, Jewish and Christian, and how this helped over 9,000 be 'saved', a term used frequently in recent years in relation to the Kinder, especially in the Hollywood documentary Into the Arms of Strangers (2000).xxviii 'Saved' had clear Christian connotations but it is also implied that the rest, the adults, were, in the depths of the Nazi beast, beyond reach. A Great Adventure was thus an early example of what has become a powerful trope of Holocaust representation - the portrayal of rescuers of Jews as redemptive figures or, more unusually, as redemptive communities - in this case the British nation. The potential for such saviours to be presented through a Christian discourse was realised, many

Address given by Ben Helfgott at a Memorial Service Honouring 560 Jews brutally murdered in the Rakow Forest on December 20th 1942

Piotrkow-Tryb Sunday
26th August 2007

On an occasion like this our thoughts inevitably focus on the shattering event that occurred on this spot nearly 65 years ago. Indeed, they are closely associated with the deportation of 22,000 Jews from the Ghetto of Piotrkow between 14th – 21st December 1942 and the days leading to this horrendous tragedy almost two months later. These days are indelibly engraved in the forefront of our minds.

It was difficult enough to endure the nightmarish conditions that prevailed in the Ghetto, but what followed after the deportations is unimaginable to a civilised mind. The scenes that were unfolding in front of our eyes are impossible to comprehend. Ukrainians driving out innocent, frightened people from their homes to where the selection took place and shooting at them at random. Those infirm and weak who could not leave their beds and those who were found hiding, were shot on the spot. At the selection place, families were torn apart, their crying and grief reached out to heaven. Within a week 90% of the Jews were deported to Treblinka and the remaining 2,400 were herded into the small Ghetto. There life turned into a living hell. Most of those who survived the deportations were like a body with its limbs cut off. Many lost their parents,

Ben and Former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Lau.

many lost their wives and children, many their husbands and children, others lost their brothers and sisters. Those who were discovered in hiding were either shot or sent to Tomaszow and from there to Treblinka. No day went by without killing taking place. Our morale was at its lowest ebb.

Then came the round-ups of those who had no legal status in the Ghetto. There were those who returned from their hiding places, both inside and outside the Ghetto. They were taken to the Synagogue where for about ten days their fate was being decided by the Gestapo. Among those in the Synagogue were my mother, Sara, and my sister Lusia, as indeed, were families of some of you here. We all have vivid recollections of those days. I remember the exchange of letters between my father and mother and my mother's description of the inhuman conditions that prevailed in the Synagogue. I also remember that fateful Sunday morning of 20th December 1942 when I heard the shocking news that all the 560 mainly women and children who were in the Synagogue were killed in the Rakow Forest just outside our town. We were all stunned and overwhelmed by a helplessness and despondency. I often wonder how we survived our ordeal because our hell continued until our liberation over two and a half years later. I would like to thank Robert Dessau and his late brother Saul and Ben Giladi for their generosity, initiative and endeavour in erecting this monument nine years ago in memory of those who were so innocently and prematurely killed here. I would also like to express our appreciation to the municipal authorities for their help and co-operation. Indeed, also for the five commemorative plaques which were unveiled in the town ten years ago.

One wonders why it has taken so many years to show some sign that Jews once lived here. The Jewish presence has disappeared from this town and it was as if their memory too was being

consigned to oblivion. After all, memories are an essential part of our being. They bring us together and help to define us. Without memories we would have no identity. Shared memories are no less important than individual ones. Shared memories define us in relation to other people. The Jews lived here for many centuries, shared many memories with the Polish people. The purpose of remembering is to keep in mind the dark side of human existence of which the attempt to exterminate Jews from the face of the earth was an unspeakably evil expression. The Jewish people put great emphasis on the way the Holocaust is remembered which is consistent with their cultural and religious sensitivities. To us the Holocaust is not only an indelible memory of horror, it is a permanent warning as it should be to the Polish people as well as to the people in the whole world. Part of the process of reconciliation has to be the healing of memories in shared grief and the patient effort to accept the other's history and identify with it.

The history of Polish Jewish relations was a history of two nations who throughout the centuries suffered greatly and survived brutal foreign conquests. The great tragedy, of course, occurred during the Second World War. After the war, when Jews returned from the concentration camps, anti-Semitic outbursts and discrimination against them received worldwide condemnation. The Communist authorities often exploited this situation for their own political ends.

Today Poland is a democracy, its people's destiny is in their own hands. Poland is now a member of the European Union and the world is watching to see how Poland fits into the new system. One of the ways by which a country is judged is how their minorities are treated. Another way is how people reflect on their past and how they are reconciled to it and how they behave to each other in the present and in the future.

Nine years ago when this monument was consecrated, the former President of Piotrkow, Mr Andrej Kol, concluded his speech as follows: "Let this ceremony, which is a tribute to those who remained here not from their own free will, provide the opportunity for the living to work more closely together."

Among us are many Jews and Poles who belong to the post-war generation and our task should be to support them in order that they attain mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Every day in Auschwitz was like a year

This address given by Sala Newton-Katz at the Shul's Yom Hashoah Service in May

Sala is one of the few girls who came to Windermere and subsequently lived in a girls' hostel in Manchester. She now lives in Israel but keeps in close contact with our Society.

There is no way I can convey or describe what I and my fellow survivors of the Shoah went through. Whatever impression I give you, it was a thousand times worse. It was very traumatic and for 50 years I wouldn't speak a word of what I had been through. It was a stigma I carried – that somehow we were different from other people.

I remember after liberation, when a group of us, all around 15 and 16 years old, were airlifted to Manchester and housed in a hostel, how people who came to visit looked at us as though we were from another planet, as if we were a museum exhibit.

I was born in Lodz, the second largest city in Poland before the Second World War. It was a major textile manufacturing centre, with a population of 500,000, 200,000 of whom were Jewish. I was a normal 10-year-old when the Nazis rolled into the city in September 1939, days after their invasion of Poland began. The members of the SS looked like giants to me and they inspired the kind of fear that is hard for anyone, let alone a child, to imagine.

As they marched in, people ran for their lives. Almost instantly, they started taking terrorising measures, especially against the Jews. Deportations began at once. I saw people being punished for no reason. Religious Jews had their beards shaved and

New York in 1991. Its preface was written by Abraham Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League and himself a former hidden child. Her book was, according to Foxman, 'an extraordinary contribution to an understanding of the Holocaust'. The first person accounts 'by those who survived the war against Jewish children preserves for history the courage and resources of the hidden as well as those who rescued them'. For Foxman 'these inspiring accounts symbolize the triumph of good over evil... [it] is also a story of hope. Those who survived depended on the goodness and kindness of others'.[xiii]

The desire for a happy ending is also revealed in Roberto Benigni's Life is Beautiful (1998). For all of its powerful attributes, the success, popular if not critical, of this Oscar-winning film is based on the survival ultimately of the hero's son, Giosue. The film is self-consciously and explicitly a fable or fairy tale: it is, as the director has stated 'a story about a father who is trying to protect a child' and not, as he has made clear, 'a story about the Holocaust'.[xiv] The story of the Holocaust is about the utter impossibility of parents to protect their children, a fact that the influential child psychologist, and Jewish refugee, Bruno Bettelheim totally failed to understand in relation to his criticisms of Otto Frank.[xv]

The post-1945 memory of the murdered and hidden children in the Holocaust thus fits within a complex and dynamic matrix made up of longstanding ignorance and marginalisation, celebration, sentimentality and hope for the future. It will be argued here that the parallel memory of the Kindertransport can be understood within a similar framework. It is one that has allowed intense contemporary engagement, followed by a period of amnesia and then the present abundance of memory leading, on the one hand, to the beginnings of heritage construction and, on the other, to the absence of history and critical reflection. If the refugees from Nazism have received privileged status in recent memory construction, the children amongst them have become doubly set apart, both special and celebrated. It has led to a distortion and representation of the Kinder as survivors and confusion with, and marginalisation of, those children from the Holocaust who came to this country after the end of the Second World War.

It must be emphasised at this stage that I am not arguing against the significance and importance of the Kindertransports. For example the British government could have followed the example of its American counterpart and rejected a child refugee scheme. The Wagner-Rogers Bill was introduced in February 1939 and called for the entry of 20,000 German children over a two year period above normal immigration quotas. The scheme was rejected. President Roosevelt refused to challenge the restrictionists in Congress and in the American public as a whole - in spite of much evidence of humanitarian sentiment in support of the Bill.[xvi] One of the great failings, for example, of W.D.Rubinstein's best-selling The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis (1997), is its failure to give contemporaries any choice.[xvii] It was not inevitable that the Wagner-Walters Bill would have been defeated nor that the proposal put forward by Jewish campaigners in November 1938 would have met the approval of the nervous Home Secretary who, in the parliamentary debate, stated that there was 'an underlying current of suspicion and anxiety... about alien immigration on any big scale'.[xviii] Nevertheless, the generosity of the Kindertransport scheme cannot simply be seen as a response to the increasing desperation of its recipients - those had largely been ignored before the pogrom. Nor can the specific focus of the scheme be explained by particular need: it was essentially Jewish male adults who were especially vulnerable after the pogrom with up to 30,000 interned in concentration camps such as Dachau and Buchenwald.[xix] It is thus important to focus on the question that few now seem willing to ask: why just the children?

The question was in fact raised from the start. Sir Samuel Hoare himself stated in the House of Commons 'I could not help thinking what a terrible dilemma it was to the Jewish parents in Germany to have to choose between sending their children to a foreign country, into the unknown, and continuing to live in the terrible conditions to which they are now reduced in Germany.' Having been told by a Quaker representative that the parents would be willing to part with their children, the Home Secretary announced that 'we shall put no obstacle in the

of adults.v

It is asked of adult victims, either implicitly or explicitly, why they did not do more to resist. Such questions, however inappropriate, cannot be asked of the defenseless child. It is obvious, remarks Dwork, that the only meaningful question is not "why did you allow this to happen to you?" but "why was this allowed to happen?".vi Dwork thus explains the absence of attention to children through our attachment to the core of civilised values - studying the persecution of children enables 'an understanding of the Shoah stripped bare of all rationalizations, explanations, or justifications, in other words, with an apperception of the quintessence of this evil'. The Shoah, argues Dwork, represents the 'most radical challenge our society has experienced' and the failure to focus on the 'heart of that catastrophe', the murder of the children, reflects our failure to confront that challenge.vii

Dwork embraces the 'emotional difference' relating to the one and a half million who, she suggests, her fellow historians have failed to confront and 'so, like everyone else, they have been loath to pursue the subject'.viii Dwork is right to point to this absence in the literature, one that has been distressful particularly to the young survivors of the Holocaust. The young undoubtedly experienced their persecution differently, and were treated in specific ways by the perpetrators. Her book is a brave one, stripping away the moral failure to confront such a huge and distressing part of the Holocaust. Nevertheless, there are potential dangers if sentiment, as demanded by Dwork, comes to the fore: there is the implication, however indirect, that adult victims, especially men, were somehow less innocent than the children and the possibility that mawkishness might, unless one is careful, replace critical engagement. Aware of these pitfalls, the film maker Claude Lanzmann, whose film Shoah (1985) avoids any form of sentimentality, has refused to accept that the murder of the children was somehow worse or different from the murder of adults.viii Not surprisingly, however, more commercially oriented representations of the Holocaust do use the murder of the children differently, as exemplified in Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List (1993). Filmed in black and white, only one Jewish figure amongst the multitude - a little girl dressed in red - is differentiated. Such individualisation culminates with her being shot dead in the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto. The girl becomes the only personally identifiable victim in the mass murder, enabling a gesture towards the humanisation of the Jewish masses but also part of the film's descent into an irredeemable sentimentalism.ix But it remains the case that the progress made in the areas of women's and children's experience of the Holocaust has left other areas under-researched - for example there is also a need for the study of older victims in the Nazi era. Moreover, whilst most of the studies of the Holocaust have in their general focus been biased towards males, there are few if any studies on men as men and the impact of persecution on their sense of masculinity.x In short, we require an inclusive gender analysis of the Holocaust and similarly a life cycle approach rather than regarding children as the only group with age specific experiences.

Whether sentimental or not, there has been some attempt since Dwork's book was published to confront the murder of the children. Taking the case of Anne Frank, the most famous victim of the Holocaust and of the Second World War more generally, there has been a move away from the Broadway and Hollywood portrayals in the 1950s, which ended on notes of optimism and within the secret annex, to Oscar-winning documentaries and television serialisations in the 1990s and in the twenty first century which at least accept her and her sister's death in the filth and misery of Bergen Belsen.xi Similarly, the desire amongst critics and public alike that Benjamin Wilkomirski's Fragments be an authentic autobiographical account of a Holocaust childhood, rather than fiction, reflected at least in part the hope that the child victims had found a true voice to communicate their collective experiences.xii Nevertheless, it is extremely doubtful whether we are yet ready to confront the searing questions posed by Dwork in relation to the million and a half Jewish children.

One indication of that failure is the attention given to those who were successfully hidden during the war. In 1993, The Hidden Children: The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust, by Jane Marks, was published, prompted by a reunion of survivors held in

their peyot cut. I saw our beautiful synagogue, the Altstershe-Shul, go up in flames, dying a slow death, as though the life was being drained out of my body.

In February 1940, they delineated the Lodz ghetto and enacted laws to resettle all the Jews of the city. By May 1st, 160,000 were sealed within its confines. Barbed wire surrounded us and we lived in wretched conditions. My mother used to make cakes from potato peel and on occasion we would have the luxury of a meal of horse meat.

We lived in constant fear of being taken away. The Nazis would close off a street to block any means of escape and then systematically go through the flats, rounding up the occupants. They never left anyone behind. They even took away the body of a dead baby – everybody had to be accounted for.

The ghetto was run by the leaders of the town. Chaim Rumkowski, who was in charge, was completely subservient to the Nazis but felt that survival depended on the ghetto population becoming as useful as possible to the Germans. To this end he introduced a law that everyone over the age of eight had to be employed in workshops, manufacturing initially all the needs of the ghetto but subsequently everything from uniforms to munitions for the occupying forces. I worked as a runner in one of the tailoring factories until my deportation to Auschwitz.

The productiveness of the ghetto resulted in tensions between those determined to wipe out the Jewish population and those responsible for the supply of the German war machine. Almost 43,000 ghetto inhabitants died in the torrid conditions in which we lived until its liquidation in 1944.

I was in one of the last groups to be deported, together with my mother and brother. We went in August 1944, days before my 15th birthday, bundled onto trucks and taken to a train station. From there we were crammed into closed cattle trucks which stank of stale air and urine.

I cannot remember how long the journey took but we arrived at night at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The platform was filled with men and women in uniforms. There were bright lights, music was playing, and people were running all over the place.

The Germans were separating the men from the women and children from their parents. There was lots of crying and screaming. We lined up in groups. My mother and I were pushed to the same side and taken to a place where we had to strip. Then they shaved our hair and we went into the showers. I clung to my mother. The Germans looked over the naked bodies and performed another selection. This time I went one way, my mother the other. I never saw her again – a wound that has never healed and will never heal. I came out of the shower and was given a "shmatter" to clothe myself and clogs to wear.

We were assigned to barracks and slept on concrete floors. I was fortunate to be kept at Auschwitz for only eight weeks before being sent to work at the munitions factory at the Aderan camp. They were eight weeks of continuous selections, standing in all weathers naked in front of Josef Mengele and his assistant as they chose. Once, Mengele asked me my age. I lied and told him I was 18. Every day in Auschwitz was like a year.

We were supervised by Kapos who were mostly from Slovakia and very cruel. One night they dragged me out to pick up a large pot of coffee. I was so weak that I couldn't carry it so they beat me with straps. The Kapos were the worst: they hit or beat us all the time. It was a relief to be moved because then you were not thinking every second that you might be selected for the gas chambers.

Eventually I was selected for a work detail and sent to Aderan, a camp near Chemnitz, inside Germany. I worked there for nearly a year until April 1945. Without warning, we were loaded into open trucks without any provisions. It was a gruesome journey – the worst ever. Many people died.

We travelled for about a week and finally arrived at Theresienstadt, the camp to which the Germans brought most of the transports towards the end of the war because they had built a large crematorium there to destroy the remaining Jewish prisoners. They were due to cremate us on May 10 1945 but the Russians liberated us two days earlier.

We stayed in Theresienstadt until August, when a British Red Cross doctor arranged for a group of us to be flown to England. We were deloused and examined by a team of

doctors and psychologists but it was a long time before I really felt it was all over.

For many years I tried to forget all this so that my children should have a normal life and the educations and opportunities that I missed.

Recently my grandson, who is studying at Yavne Yeshiva, went to Poland. He and his group put on tefilin and davened Shacharit in one of the barracks at Auschwitz-Birkenau – our response to the Nazis and their aims.

Hitler never achieved his goal of a Final Solution to the Jewish problem but the world should not be allowed to forget, lest we allow such atrocities to happen again.

Alec Ward's Story

Edited transcript of talk and interviews April/May 2007

By David Onnie

Alec came to England with the Southampton "Boys" in November 1945 and lived in the Finchley Road Hostel. He has been a staunch supporter of our Society from its inception.

Introduction

At the beginning of the war Alec was, he thinks, approximately twelve years old. On that basis, Alec recently celebrated his eightieth birthday with his wife, Hettie, to whom he has been married for over fifty years. The name of their Elstree home is "Serendipity" or "happiness". It is a peaceful home, immaculate and there is absolutely nothing out of place – items are perfectly aligned on shelves, there is no clutter anywhere and the obvious contrast to the disorder, trauma and turbulence of his life during the war is immense. When Alec recalls his suffering it is touching to see Hettie tilt her head to look at him, to watch him as he talks. It is a look of deep love, admiration but also concern. When Alec speaks to you it is impossible not to notice his eyes – a piercing bright blue, undimmed by the passage of time and perhaps an indication of the inner strength of this man. I have no doubt that many demons rage within Alec and indeed he still suffers from nightmares. This is Alec's story.

Part 1 – Concentration camps, Slave Labour camps and Ghettos

As you already know, my name is Alec Ward, formerly Abram Warszaw, and I am a Holocaust Survivor. I survived two ghettos, two concentration camps and three slave labour camps.

I was born in Poland and lived before the war in a shtetl called Magnuszew. I had one older sister called Lea and three little brothers. Let me first tell you about life before the war. I had a very happy childhood and when I was young I sang in the synagogue, which was very beautiful, with a dome and a stone floor. The cantor's voice reverberated around the synagogue which is still very vivid in my memory. My parents were very proud of my singing. One day whilst collecting potatoes which were stored in the cellar I sang a rendition of a synagogue service and when I came up the neighbours had gathered to listen and clapped to my embarrassment.

As a young boy I never experienced any anti-Semitism and the Jewish community lived in complete harmony with the Christian community. We had many Jewish shops, artisans and merchants and Jewish children played in the street in complete freedom. We had a Mikveh and a well kept cemetery.

On Friday afternoon the Jewish town crier proclaimed the coming of the Sabbath and announced it was time to go to the synagogue. On Saturday afternoon the whole Jewish community seemed to walk in the streets in Yiddish Spatzerin. On Purim people were criss-crossing the streets with presents consisting of freshly baked cakes and biscuits. On Yom Kippur one could hear a great amount of crying in the ladies part of the synagogue. On Simchat Torah there was great rejoicing by the whole community in the shtetl and on Pesach we were proud of our new clothes.

Alice Zylberzac 16

I've never really understood the concept of Auschwitz.

I mean, from a young age I've always known who 'The Boys' were and the reason why my grandfather and many of his friends were so special. I've always known that they survived the Holocaust in which six million Jews were brutally murdered, but I had never really been met face on with the notion of Auschwitz, the Nazi death camp.

The only adjective that I could use to describe this living hell would be grey. The floor was grey, buildings were grey, the skies were grey and my thoughts were grey. The wind was so bitter that it pierced through me like a knife but all I could think of was my grandad, Aron Zylberszac, who must have walked up and down the path I was walking along hundreds of times in a thin blue and white striped uniform.

Alice is the daughter of Gary and Mandy and the granddaughter of Aron and Evelyn.

It is the most surreal thing I have ever done and probably will do in my life. I expected to feel distraught with the inhumane living conditions of Auschwitz, Birkenau. I was standing in the sanitation room when I realised that after the war my grandad was left alone. In the whole world he had, at my age, lost every single member of his family. The truth is as I was walking through the camp I was filled with an uplifting sensation and a feeling of pride that someone so close to me had lived through what I can't even begin to imagine and come out the other side, married with two children and four grandchildren. On this occasion and several other occasions, when we trudged from one part to another, I tried to put myself in my grandfather's shoes, but the concept was just too hard to grasp.

I've never really understood the concept of Auschwitz and I don't think I ever truly will.

SECTION V ANNUAL LEONARD G. MONTEFIORE LECTURE

Tony Kushner

Remembering the Children: Britain, Refugees and Survivors from Nazism (2007 31st Leonard G.Montefiore Memorial Lecture)

It is estimated that of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, one and a half million were children. Given that little was written of the victims, other than by the survivors themselves in their memorial books, or in privately published memoirs and by obscure publishers in small print runs, as was the case with Primo Levi,i and given also the general failure until recently to accept the importance of the history of childhood,ii it is not surprising that these Jewish children would fail to achieve recognition for so long. The first major history, Children With A Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe, by Deborah Dwork, was published as late as 1991.iii

Reflecting on why, some fifty years on, in spite of what had developed as a massive literature on the Second World War, Nazism and the Holocaust, 'Children are conspicuously, glaringly, and screamingly silently absent', Dwork concluded that it was not surprising that this should be so. When we think of 'society' we understand this to mean the world of adults. Our dominant paradigm is that society consists of productive, or voting, or participatory members. The only place children have in that scheme is as future participants, the citizens of tomorrow... Indeed, the usual theme of children's history has been child-rearing practices and education, in other words, how adults develop the next generation

mailings so if we do not have up-to-date email addresses we will not be able to contact you

'45 Aid Society Second Generation – London Committee
Chair: Philip Burton: philip@2ndgeneration.org.uk; Secretary: Rosalind Gelbart: ros@2ndgeneration.org.uk; Treasurer: Thea Helfgott: thea@helfgott.co.uk; Committee: Maurice Helfgott: maurice@helfgott.com; Ben Leon: ben@2ndgeneration.org.uk; Steven Faulk: sfaulk@ebg.uk.com; Gaynor Harris: gaynornh@yahoo.co.uk; Julia Burton: julia@2ndgeneration.org.uk; Gary Zylberszac: thelondoncabbie@aol.com

Holocaust Memorial Day Exhibition at City Hall, London

The contribution of "The Boys" and their families to UK Society

Two exhibitions are being planned as part of a high profile commemoration for Holocaust Memorial Day 2008. The exhibitions will be held concurrently at City Hall, London from 14 January to 7 February 2008. Initial details are provided below

The Jewish Museum, London, the Spiro Ark, '45 Aid Society and the Second Generation of '45 Aid Society are working together to bring a fascinating and inspiring story to City Hall for Holocaust Memorial Day 2008.

On display will be the Jewish Museum's compelling exhibition *"The Boys – Triumph Over Adversity"*

In 1945 the British Home Office gave permission for up to 1,000 young survivors of the concentration camps to come to this country. 732 were found and were brought to Britain where they gradually rebuilt their lives.

This exhibition, produced in association with the book "The Boys" by the eminent historian Sir Martin Gilbert, tells the inspirational story of this group who have became known simply as 'The Boys'. But what has happened since to these young men and women who survived against the odds?

For the display at City Hall, it is proposed to produce three new panels to highlight the integration of The Boys and their descendants into London life. These exhibition panels will draw on new research to explore the many ways in which The Boys have rebuilt their futures. Focusing on the significant community of survivors who made their lives in London, it will examine the numerous ways in which these resilient individuals have gone on to contribute to society as part of London's wider diversity.

The research for this project is currently underway and it is anticipated that it will look at the many different ways in which The Boys and their children, 'the Second Generation', have enriched London life through family, work, leisure and religion.

The exhibition aims to show how survivors and subsequent generations have made enormous contributions to the fabric of society and therefore how an adopted country can benefit from immigration. It will take place at City Hall, near London Bridge, from 14 January to 7 February 2008. Final details have still to be confirmed between City Hall and Spiro Ark. Details will be published on www.2ndGeneration.org.uk

"And I still see their faces ..." - Exhibition at City Hall, London

"And I still see their faces..." is a magnificent exhibition of huge scale and high impact - using photos of Jewish families who were murdered in the Shoah. Their neighbours collected the photos, which in turn were selected for the exhibition.

This powerful exhibition will be brought to the UK by the Polish Cultural Institute. It will be on display at City Hall, the magnificent new home of the Mayor of London, near London Bridge. The exhibition will take place from 14 January to 7 February 2008 and is being organised jointly by the Polish Cultural Institute and the Spiro Ark.

Final details are yet to be confirmed. When available, additional information will be published on www.2ndGeneration.org.uk.

I remember many Jewish weddings which lasted for two days with beautiful klezmer music and Brit Milahs which we as children were very happy to attend as we received sweets and cakes. Although there was a certain amount of poverty in Magnuszew, there was also a great amount of laughter and happiness.

My father, who was a glazier, was one of fourteen brothers and sisters and my mother had five brothers and one sister. All my grandparents and great-grandparents were alive at the beginning of the war but did not survive the duration.

When war broke out we were still living in Magnuszew and when the German army occupied our town they imposed impossible restrictions on the Jewish community. From the age of twelve we had to wear the Star of David on our arms. Jewish children were not allowed to attend school or play any games. We were forbidden to walk on the pavements and were not allowed to travel on the railways or slaughter any animals for consumption.

One night my Uncle Mendel and his business partner had a cow slaughtered and distributed the meat to the Jewish inhabitants. The following morning the Germans shot my uncle's partner and my uncle went into hiding. We never saw him again.

Later, the Jewish community of Magnuszew were put into a ghetto which comprised a very small part of the shtetl near a lake. My family lived in an outhouse in very cramped and inhuman conditions without any facilities whatsoever. When we were put into the ghetto I became the breadwinner for my family. I smuggled myself out of the ghetto on to the Aryan side and smuggled in cigarettes which I sold on the streets of the ghetto. In order to attract customers for my cigarettes, I sang little sad Yiddish songs on the streets of the ghetto. One such song is still very vivid in my memory. *(Editor: this is the "Papiросn" song featured on the front page which Alec sang in Shul).*

One day, a group of Hitler Youth arrived in the ghetto and gave us a few hours notice to be evacuated to Kozenice ghetto in the district of Radom. They marched us the 15 kilometres and we were only allowed to take items which we could carry. My parents could not take anything as they had to carry two small children – one of 3½ years and the other a baby. It was impossible to survive there for long. Many thousands of Jewish people were taken from the surrounding shtetls and villages into a part of the town of Kozienice. Many died of starvation and disease every day. My father realised that we were not going to survive much longer and ordered me to take my little brother Laib aged 9 (I was 13½ years but without a Barmitzvah) and try to escape. I had no fear then and did as my father ordered me. When one of the guards was busy searching another I picked up the barbed wire at the fence and my little brother crawled under it and landed on the Aryan side. Then, my brother did the same and I was free too.

Our parents' hearts must have been torn to pieces when they decided to send away their two young sons, knowing only too well that our chance of survival was so slim. We walked the 15 kilometres back to our town where we used to live and knocked on the door of a former Christian neighbour's house and asked for help. When the lady of the house appeared, we begged her for some food. The former neighbour gave us two thick slices of black bread and some cheese and told us not to come back for more as she said that she was frightened that someone would betray her to the Germans for helping Jewish boys.

For three months we lived in the forests and fields. We slept in haystacks in the fields in our clothes and shoes. We did not brush our hair or our teeth and we did not wash. We lived like two wild, frightened animals. During the night in the haystacks my little brother would wake me to tell me that he was frightened, cold and hungry. I used to pacify him by telling him that in the morning I would make a camp fire to warm us up and bake some potatoes to eat. But it tore my heart and was absolutely unbearable for me during those nights when he would tell me that he wanted his mummy and daddy. I also craved for them and I cried bitterly on those nights.

Whilst walking in a field one day we came across a group of Jewish prisoners who were irrigating the land for German ethnic farmers. My little brother and I decided to join the prisoners as it was autumn by then and it was too cold to sleep in haystacks. The prisoners told us that they lived in a wooden fire station in a

village called Chmielow. They were very kind to my little brother and me. They even shared their meagre rations with us as were there illegally. Early one morning German SS men surrounded the fire station and ordered us onto lorries which took us to our first slave labour camp. On the way to the camp we stopped in a town called Radom where I experienced the first Selection, one of many during my incarceration in the death camps. During that Selection, the German SS men picked out some elderly prisoners and my little brother Laib and shot them in front of us. That brutal and inhuman act left an indelible effect on me. I still often think about my little brother. I cared and loved him so much that I would have preferred him to survive the Holocaust instead of me. During our three months in hiding I became little Laib's mother, father, teacher, guardian and protector. Our young grandson Liron is named after his great uncle Laib.

All the Jewish people from the second ghetto, including my entire family, were taken by the Nazis to the extermination camp at Treblinka and gassed there. This barbaric tragedy is well documented. I am the only survivor from the entire Jewish community of my shtetl, Magnuszew.

I once gave a talk to the children of Rosh Pinah Primary School on Holocaust Memorial Day. At first I addressed the whole school during the Assembly, which included many very young children. I had to be very careful what I told these young children. Afterwards I was led into the library where there were 60 boys and girls aged 10 and 11 and told them the story of my little brother. After my talk I allowed them 15 minutes of questions and every one of them put their hand up. One girl asked, "Did your brother have any hobbies and what were they?" Another boy asked, "Did your little brother like playing football?" A very poignant and clever question was asked by a bright 10 year old boy and I doubt that I will ever forget it. He asked, "Alec, how did your father know which one of your three little brothers you should take with you when he ordered you to escape from the ghetto?" At that point I broke down and cried like a child.

The first of the slave camps to which I was sent was called Werk A in Skarzysko Kamienna, Poland. On arrival all prisoners had to strip and were forced to give up all possessions. I spent about two months at Werk A as a sweeper and general cleaner. The atmosphere in Werk A was comparatively more relaxed than in the following camps and everyone dreaded the thought of being transferred to Werk C. It was therefore my utter misfortune after about two months in Werk A to be sent to Werk C with a group of other prisoners. Male and female prisoners lived in separate huts and slept on bare boards in four-tier bunks without any blankets. Our meagre rations consisted of a slice of black bread and some black coffee in the morning and some watery cabbage soup in the evening – nowhere near enough to stop our hunger pains.

For the first three months at Werk C I worked with a group of other Jewish prisoners building a road through the forest. It was winter and the temperature was minus thirty degrees. When one touched anything made of metal one's hand stuck to it. The German SS guard was extremely brutal and derived great pleasure from his brutality. When he noticed a prisoner was not working fast enough he would beat him savagely with a shovel or spade. I was often beaten by him and he was the most brutal Nazi I encountered during my entire incarceration in the ghettos, slave labour and concentration camps. That sadistic guard was dressed in high black boots, black breeches and a warm green jacket. The jacket reminded us of the greenery we had in our homes in the shtetls for the festival of Shavuot. Consequently, we nicknamed him "Shavuot".

When Shavuot was out of sight we would stop working and rested. However this was not always to our advantage as when starving prisoners stop moving about in sub zero temperatures hypothermia sets in – many prisoners just fell down and went into what looked like a deep and serene sleep but in fact they were dead. Four prisoners would occasionally come by pulling a wooden cart and collect the stiff corpses which were then buried in ditches. When Shavuot reappeared, the word "Shavuot" was whispered along the line of prisoners and we all very quickly resumed our toil. To this day I cannot comprehend how I, a mere teenager, survived such conditions for three months. Tragically,

Second Generation Report

The Second Generation of the '45 Aid Society has developed a significant contact network and a programme of successful London events. The Second Generation – London Committee – would welcome the support and involvement of all Second and Third Generation to take part in shaping the future.

Activities

Over the last 18 months we have held many successful activities. We have launched a web site for Second Generation www.2ndgeneration.org.uk.

We have shown the documentary film "The Boys" to a full house in London in April 2006. In June 2006, moving stories of survival were delivered in person to members of the 2nd Generation by Members of the '45 Aid Society.

A poignant performance was given by 2nd Generation story-teller Lisa Lipkin in London in November 2006. And in October 2007, the Second and Third Generations and their friends and families met in North London to learn about the Bielski Partisans and how Jack Kagan had survived in the forests of Belarus during the war.

The Second Generation have also worked with film Producer/Director Herb Krosney to publish a DVD version of his film "The Boys – Triumph Over adversity". Copies of the film can be purchased from info@2ndGeneration.org.uk

A number of Second Generation went on a day trip to Auschwitz on 7 November 2007. The trip was organised by Yad Vashem UK and included talks by survivors. A full report will appear on the Second Generation web-site in due course.

Coming up

We welcome you to join upcoming activities. Details of all events can be found by visiting www.2ndgeneration.org.uk

On 14 January to 7 February 2008 – a major exhibition & events will be arranged at City Hall, London including the exhibition "And I Still See Their Faces". Details will be published shortly on www.2ndgeneration.org.uk

Help support us

We would ask you please to offer any practical support and help you can to the development of the Second Generation. Our small committee is happy to work hard but we could and need to achieve much more and your practical support would be much appreciated.

Please let us know if you can support us in this.
Can you provide:-

- administrative support with the website, mailings, organising events, or
- send funds to our Treasurer, or
- join the committee to take an active part in shaping the future.

Please let us know if you can help - contact us any time at info@2ndgeneration.org.uk

Thanks for your support to date. The future is yours to shape – come and help ensure it meets your expectations.

Yours – The '45 Aid Society Second Generation – London Committee
info@2ndgeneration.org.uk

P.S. - We need your contact details!
We only have 150 email addresses for 2nd Generation Members – we are missing many, many more.

Please help us to get email addresses for all your family members and for other 2nd Generation you know. Send us their email addresses to info@2ndgeneration.org.uk. Alternatively, please encourage them to send us their contact details or to sign up at http://www.2ndgeneration.org.uk/register.php . We will not continue to send out paper

Lessons Learned

Jack Kagan Talks to Second Generation

Survivor and former partisan Jack Kagan captivated an audience of more than 130 people with the story of his surviving the Holocaust.

Jack Kagan addressed a full house in London on 9 Oct 2007. Jack Kagan's talk was attended by members of the 2nd and 3rd Generation and many of their friends and families, including a significant number of school children aged 10 and upwards.

The talk, at the Land Theatre at UCS School in Hampstead, North London, was preceded by the BBC documentary "Extreme Survival" made by Ray Mears and featuring Jack Kagan. The film told the story of the Bielski partisans and how they built a community of 1,200 people hiding from the Nazis in the Naliboki forest of Belarus and how Jack escaped twice from the Nazis' Novogrudok concentration camp and went on to survive the rest of the war in the Naliboki forest of Belarus.

After the film, Jack Kagan was interviewed by 2nd Generation member Ros Gelbart. Questions were also raised by members of the audience. The many children in the audience also asked questions of Jack about his survival. Below is an article written by one of the attendees

Lessons Learned – The Jack Kagan Night - 9 October 2007

The lights are dimming, the crowd is growing silent. The last whisper dies with curiosity of what might happen next. I squeeze my friend's hand excitedly.

The film was called "Extreme Survival - Belarus". It was extraordinary, but it touched me all the same. One of my favourite parts was when the presenter, Ray Mears, made a spoon out of wood from a tree. I personally think he is extremely talented and clever to be able to make such a thing with his bare hands in the forest.

I was and always will be devastated about the effect of the Holocaust on Jews during World War II. So, that night, I was amazed to meet one of the actual survivors, Jack Kagan, from the forest in Belarus. Lots of my friends asked Jack questions after they saw the film, but I didn't ask any questions because, in a way, I was a little scared of what the answers might be.

Jack Kagan's experience is something beyond imagination. He tried to escape a couple of times from the Novogrudok camp. On his second attempt he succeeded. Everyone had helped dig a tunnel that was 250m long and went under the fence of the camp. As some of Jack's toes had fallen off with frostbite when he first tried to escape, he could not walk well and so he was told to go last, but he still managed to run to the nearby forest along with many others. Although Jack and his friend were split up from the group because of Jack's feet, they managed to stay together and hid miles away from everyone else. Jack was freezing to death and about to give up when a wagon passed by with a man who agreed to take them to the place where the partisans were hiding. Jack survived the rest of the war in an unbelievable way, hiding in the forest with the Bielski partisans.

That night had many lessons to be learnt and many stories to be told. I think that World War II is a very important time in our history and we are very lucky to still have people around who were there at the time and can tell us once again about history and the astonishing tales of their survival.

My grandpa, David Herman, is a Holocaust survivor too, and I know about his terrible experiences in concentration camps. Every survivor has a story to go with them, and every story is special.

By Emily Burton, age 10

there were only two survivors from my group of prisoners: the other prisoner was Sam Dresner. It was simply hell on earth in that forest.

When the road was finished, I was transferred to the mines factory *(Editor: anti-shipping mines)* where I worked exhausting twelve-hour shifts. We were producing mines from dangerous chemicals, which was devastating to our health and turned our skin yellow. *(Editor: the chemical causing this was picric acid).* Fellow prisoners lived only three months whilst doing that work. I was often beaten by brutal SS guards when I did not manage to complete the required number of mines per shift as I was so desperately weak. We had three main German guards – Schneider, Walter and their senior who was a tall elderly man and walked with a stooped back but whose name I cannot remember. They set us impossible tasks to fulfil during every shift and threatened us with punishment should we not achieve their targets. Schneider never carried out his threats. Walter invariably did so and their senior was an utter beast of a man who derived great pleasure from bestiality, especially towards defenceless Jewish women and young girls. When he noticed a girl or a woman not working fast enough he would take her out and shoot her on the spot. The camp was constantly being replenished with Jewish prisoners, men and women, from ghettos and concentration camps.

As there were no washing or delousing facilities in my camp, we were marched under heavy guard every few months to a nearby camp to use these facilities. Kopel Kendal was one of the prisoners in that camp and when he saw us for the first time he was convinced we came from another world. We were bright yellow skeletons, shuffling along instead of walking. Most of us had distended stomachs. Kopel never saw the same yellow prisoners twice except one young boy who kept returning. He called this boy the "Miracle Boy" and that boy was me. *(Editor: Kopel became a bespoke gentlemen's tailor in England after the war).*

Various incidents in Werk C are still very vivid in my memory – the hanging of prisoners; the selections; the dead bodies of Jewish prisoners who had been shot trying to escape during the night lying at the barbed wire fences early in the morning; the painful hunger and malnutrition; the beatings; the man who cried every time he saw me as I reminded him of his young son who had perished at the hands of the Nazis. I also remember the time when I was very weak and could not walk up the two steps leading to our hut and the miracle which saved my life. I was queuing up for my rations of soup when a girl asked me who I was. When I told her, she informed me that she was the girl friend of my Uncle Yidl and that they were planning to marry when he was shot by the invading German troops. That angel of a girl did some knitting for the Polish Christian women who came into the factories to work as paid workers and gave Henia some food occasionally, some of which she passed on to me. It was not long after meeting Henia that I began to negotiate the two steps into the hut normally. As far as I know she did not survive the war but should I ever meet her again I would be prepared to give my all to her for saving my life.

I have a memory of sitting with my friend Chaim Itkowicz on the end of a bunk, feet dangling below us. Two SS guards came in saying "Komm!" and took us both to the place where prisoners were shot. They ordered us to dig a communal grave. Sixteen prisoners were led from "sick bay" to the grave and then shot in the back of the head. We were then ordered to cover the grave with earth. Normally the "grave diggers" would also be shot afterwards but we were lucky to be taken back to the camp. I had blotted this memory out for fifty years but when I visited Chaim in Israel several years ago the memory came back to us both and we broke down in tears.

After that unspeakable place we were taken to slave labour camp Rakov in Chestochowa, Poland. The accommodation was the same as in Werk C, the only difference being that we were eaten alive by wood bugs and other vermin during the night and although we were very tired after such hard work, we could not sleep. The work was physically harder than in the previous camp but less dangerous to our health. I worked in the iron foundry. When the molten steel emerged from the furnace I guided it into sand made forms. Afterwards I cooled the steel with a water hose and when it was semi-cool, I threw the steel into wagons which were

transported to the ammunition factory. The Christian Polish factory manager liked the way I was working and occasionally he would give me a corner of his sandwich and some white coffee.

After Rakov they took us to Buchenwald in Germany. There we lived in gigantic huts each with one thousand prisoners. In my hut there were mainly Jewish Hungarian prisoners who did not understand my two languages, Polish and Yiddish, and I did not understand Hungarian. Many died from the hardship, disease or malnutrition and every morning many bodies were taken away from our hut on wooden carts. Early each morning we were driven out from our huts to be counted on the appelplatz *(Editor: place for roll call in the camps)*. We were standing for hours in bitterly cold weather, thinly clad in our striped uniforms, without socks or underwear, and with rain and snow falling on to our emaciated bodies. It was simply utter hell on earth.

From Buchenwald a group of us were marched to the nearby town of Weimar where we worked clearing up the town after the constant bombing by the Allies. Occasionally we would find pieces of dirty and stale bread which we took back, at the risk of being shot at the gate, to our fellow prisoners in the hut.

After some time in Buchenwald I was taken to the concentration camp Flossberg, near Leipzig. At Flossberg I worked in an ammunition factory producing panzerfausts *(Editor: anti-tank rockets)*. The camp was built in a forest, was very swampy and we had to walk in deep mud to and from work. The German Commandant was an absolute sadist who took great delight in beating us over the head with a stick as we passed through the gates of the camp on the way to work. None of us believed that we would come out alive from that place. By some miracle I made friends with a boy of a similar age to me who helped me keep up my morale. He had a most wonderful voice and we would often sing together to while away our painful and hungry time.

As the Russian army was approaching that part of Germany, the Nazis put us on a cattle train to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. The journey took fifteen days due to the railway lines being bombed by the Allies. There were one hundred prisoners in our wagon, including thirty boys, and we had hardly any food or water. Many died of starvation, thirst and suffocation. We sat on dead bodies. After realising that we were unlikely to survive the journey, we organised an escape party. A number of prisoners had jumped from the train and I was supposed to be the eighteenth person. However, in order to deter further escapes, the SS guards put a few bodies (of boys who had been shot trying to escape) back into the wagon and there was a guard for the rest of the journey. My friend, the boy with the wonderful voice, was shot by the guard and this was an unbearable blow to me just as had been the earlier loss of my little brother. *(Editor: the "boy with the wonderful voice, Arthur Poznanski", had actually only been wounded in the leg and somehow survived the rest of the war before going to live in England. By coincidence, a few months after the war Alec recognised Arthur in a London street whereupon the friendship was rekindled. Arthur's wonderful singing voice has been heard in synagogues around London).*

Many more prisoners died marching up to the camp, which was built in the Alpine mountains with the purpose of exposing prisoners to extremes of temperatures. Undernourished people could not survive such conditions for long. How I envied my little brother and my close friend, the singer. They were dead and did not have to suffer any more. Those of us who reached Mauthausen concentration camp alive endured further degradation and torture. They took our clothes away from us on arrival and we were left naked for some time until we were liberated by the American forces on 5th May 1945.

The first item of food which I received after the liberation was a tin of peas from an American soldier. I drank the liquid first and was going to leave the peas for later. Unfortunately, the liquid turned out to be too rich for my shrunken stomach and I became ill from it. I gave the peas to a friend. I have a delicate stomach to this day, although food is very important to me as I have known true starvation.

Due to torture, hardship and degradation which I suffered in the ghettos, slave labour camps and concentration camps, I forgot my birth date. It was

emotion. Friends and family would drop beside me, unable to hold on any longer. I would be alone.

The small bread slices and cups of cold soup would be my life. The crumbs others sacrificed would keep my feet planted unsteadily on the ground. Unsteadily, but planted. The scars, the numbers. The pain etched into my heart and skin. My round face would become oval, flesh sinking into my body – the final source of food. I would cry myself to sleep until there were no tears left. Difference between days and nights would disappear. All would feel dark.

Roll call, child labour, bullets, famine, mismatched shoes that would not fit. Someone else's clothes, hair shaven from my head. Beds with no mattresses. No lessons to complain about. No bedtime to whine for. No parents to fight with ... all would be gone.

Hope would be stolen as the murdering men in green told us we were less than human. They took our identities, our rights, our dignity, our lives. They took everything we had. They would do it. I knew. They were inhuman.

Scapegoats they made us. They seemed to take the term literally, for we would be treated like animals – cut, kicked, sliced, abused. We became toys, animals, things... We would soon become an it and every last strand of faith would be lost.

Every night when I am drifting off to sleep, I conceive of the inconceivable.

Article reprinted from "Jewish News"

Relatives of Holocaust survivors in the UK have distanced themselves from calls for Germany to fund therapy for children of Shoah survivors. It comes in the wake of a multi-million pound lawsuit filed in Tel Aviv on Monday which sees thousands of litigants demand that the German government pay for their treatment, claiming the scars of the Nazi genocide have been passed onto them.

Around 4,000 Israelis have joined the claim initiated by the Fisher Holocaust Fund, which states that the second generation was raised "in the shadow of depression, grief and guilt of their parents, which created a powerful inclination among the children for pain and suffering."

The claimants say they have a "twisted relationship with their parents" that has impeded their development and led to psychological problems.

Children have complained that they fear riding on buses because of the way their parents were transported to concentration camps and are scared of dogs as it reminds them of animals used to control crowds of Jews.

But a group of children of British-based Holocaust survivors, including Ben Leon, the son of Judith and the late Leo Leon, and Maurice, the son of Ben Religott, said it should not be up to Germany to provide support.

Their statement read: "As a Second Generation group in the UK and children of the 45Aid Society Survivors, we aim to guard the testimonies of our parents so that we can help teach the lessons of the past to a wider society, celebrate the values of those that were able to overcome adversity and rebuild their lives, and remember all those who were lost.

"We empathise deeply with those who face serious psychological and psychiatric conditions as a result of growing up with parents who are survivors. We recognise that a small but significant number have serious challenges due to their upbringing, and we believe that there is a role for support for those in need.

"However, we do not believe there should be any compulsion on the German Government to provide for this support. It is unfortunate that the informal discussions broke down between the Fisher Fund and the German officials. However, we want to make it clear that we have nothing to do with the proposed class action to be taken against Germany, and recommend that alternative approaches are made for raising the much needed funds."

stand here for hours while they accounted for everyone in the camp. Suddenly, I picture myself in this spot sixty years ago. Recalling my grandmother's description, I hear the barking of orders from the guards, smell the terror emulating from each prisoner, and see the blood on stark white snow. My grandma told me that the prisoners received tattered, mismatched clothing and shoes that never fit correctly. I look at my own outfit: solid boots, a nice jacket, comfortable clothing. How did these people survive during one of the coldest winters on record without coats, without hats, and without heat? Many times, they did not even have shoes. How did they kneel on this sharp, painful surface? Another survivor wanders with us and feels cold. I offer him my discarded jacket, thankful that we have that option.

We continue to walk toward my grandma's barracks. In the camp, an indent in the ground of the exact shape and size of the barracks remains. We look at the rows and rows of holes and imagine the people that were once forced to live in them. We trek to the most unpleasant areas of the camp: the punishment block, the crematoria, and the shooting block. I look into the narrow area between two cement walls. Officials forced prisoners to line up here, trapping them, and summarily executing them. A deafening silence fills my ears. Everyone speaks in hushed whispers. Many people pray for those who perished.

Next to the camp lies a lake. The water glimmers in the dazzling sun. Everyone throws a rose in the water for each family member and friend who had been killed or who died here. Through this tribute, the ghosts appear to finally gain freedom and leave the camp forever. As the roses float away, the juxtaposition of so much gentle beauty in contrast to so much destructive brutality shocks me. Seeing all those roses brought to light the magnitude of people affected by the Holocaust. People mourn the loss of loved ones and say prayers for those still alive. I think of all the lives that could have been. I think of what the world lost forever when thirteen million souls vanished.

We leave the camp at the end of the day. Night wraps around us like a cloak, bringing with it a sense of calm and serenity. I contemplate the fact that we do not live consumed by fear. Generally untroubled and content, we face only small and insignificant problems in contrast. The next day we travel around the city. I see the vibrant youth of my generation playing outside, carefree and undisturbed. I hope that I will never suffer the horrors endured by my grandparents. On the plane ride home I reminisce over our experiences. I look at the booklet we received at the ceremony. It contains the quote expressed by Jews everywhere, "Never Forget." From that day forth I vowed never to forget the six million Jews and seven million non-Jews whose lives were cut short, and I vowed always to be thankful for the wonderfully ordinary circumstances in my life.

Inconceivable

By Ilana Leah Geib
(Age 13)

(The following article is submitted by Ilana Geib, age 13, who lives in Bedford, New York, U.S.A. She is the granddaughter of our member Judith Sherman of New Jersey, U.S.A. This article is a third generation current reaction to the Holocaust)

Every night I greet sleep in my warm bed in a four bedroom house filled with family, not unlike my grandmother's childhood home. A series of bangs and booms shake me from my dreams. A door slammed down, wood cracking, booming voices. I grabbed my belongings and obeyed the sharp orders in foreign languages. Starvation, hunger, fear become my life. All comforts of home are gone.

Such things I could not conceive. The pain I could not endure. The willpower I could not muster. The strength I would not find. Life around me would crash, falling into sharp pieces of cruelty. The fragments would tumble, slicing my bare body, stripping it of both fat and

indescribable how I felt when I realised I did not know how old I was. Even a dog has a birthday. The Red Cross traced my records from Buchenwald which stated my birthday to be 1 March 1927. However, this may not be completely accurate as it is possible that I gave the Germans the wrong date in order to survive – the younger one was, the least use you were. I cannot remember what I did under these terrible circumstances.

If someone would ask me what were the major factors of my survival I would say friendship in the camps, meeting that angel of a girl called Henia and an innate will to survive to be able to tell the story. I had a feeling in the camps that my mother was watching over me "up there" in the form of a guardian angel.

Zvi Dagan's story

Hersh Mlynarski

I was born in Piotrkow and during my childhood my parents to Lodz, a large town near Piotrkow. We lived in an apartment house on 59 Srodmieska Street. My father owned a cardboard factory, together with my uncle, Wolf Witorz. My brother and I went to an elementary school in Lodz and on Sundays we went to "Cheder".

When World War II broke out in September 1939, I had already finished three years of elementary school. Since my father was inducted into the Polish army, my mother decided to return to Piotrkow to her parent's house on 1 Pil.Sudskiego Street in order to be with her family during the war. After Germany conquered Poland, my father returned and it was decided that we would remain in Piotrkow since the Germans confiscated the factory in Lodz.

In 1940, Piotrkow became the first town to separate the Jews from the Gentiles and place the Jews in a ghetto. We were no longer allowed to travel from one place to another. Suddenly the tables turned and overnight we were driven from a comfortable life to an impoverished one.

My father became a labourer in a glass factory, Fenix, and my brother Yacov and I began to sell cigarettes on the street (black market). After a while the Germans put the Jews to work and I was sent to work in a glass factory, Huta Hortensia, which worked three shifts.

During this time, my uncle, Jacob Witorz, had a Turkish passport because during World War I he went to Palestine and stayed there when the Turks occupied Palestine, and received the passport from them. As a Turkish citizen he was able to stay outside of the Piotrkow ghetto.

My uncle had three children, boys, and a wife. They were very wealthy before the war and became even wealthier during the war because my uncle did business with the Germans and wealthy Jews gave him their valuables for safekeeping.

Instead of leaving Poland and going to Turkey, he decided that nothing would happen to him or his family and stayed until 1942 when the ghetto was closed and he was deported to the gas chambers at Treblinka. Later, his house was taken apart brick by brick and all valuables were confiscated by the Nazis.

The ghetto was closed on October 14 – 22, 1942, and I was separated from my mother and grandparents. I was only left with my brother who worked with me at the glass factory while my father worked at a different glass factory.

We were then concentrated in a small ghetto with much harsher living conditions and I had to walk a great distance every day to get to work.

One afternoon, during this time, part of a shift was arrested by the Germans and put into a synagogue, together with all the families discovered outside of the small ghetto. About

Zvi and Shoshana at the opening of his factory with Ezer Weitzman, his wife Roma.

550 people, men, women and children, were put into this synagogue. The Ukrainians guarded the synagogue and we heard sporadic gunfire of them killing Jews trying to escape or found hiding.

I was certain that I would be killed with all the people in this synagogue, especially since we were not given any food or drink.

Suddenly, a miracle occurred, and about eleven children my age were called out and sent back to work. I believe that my workplace intervened on our behalf. After about 3 – 4 days all the Jews packed into the synagogue were forced to dig a common grave outside of town and were shot to death.

At the end of July 1943, the Germans closed the small ghetto and deported my brother to another labour camp – Skarzysko, and my father to a different labour camp whose name I do not know.

I was left by myself and had a choice. I could go back to the glass factory or jump the fence and join my uncle, Wolf Witorz, at work in the Bugaj wood factory. I chose to go to work in the Bugaj wood factory.

The small ghetto was closed at the end of July 1943, and in Piotrkow there were two camps for forced labour, one was in the Bugaj wood factory and the second was the Hortensia and Kara glass factories. In the Bugaj factory we were put into wooden tents and slept one on top of the other in the harshest conditions. Jews only occupied these camps.

In the Bugaj wood factory we worked as labourers making wood shelters and tents for military use. I continued in this camp until November 27, 1944. We were then put into cattle cars and sent by train to Buchenwald concentration camp during a very cold winter. Here we were stripped naked and received wooden shoes, a number and a common uniform for concentration camp prisoners. We lived in barracks on wooden beds with only one thin blanket to cover ourselves. Every day we had to go out into the bitter cold for roll call.

On December 12, 1944, in the afternoon, names were called out and these people were told that they would be sent out to a work camp. My uncle was among those called out and even though I held the next number, I was not called. I decided to step forward too in place of someone else not willing to go so that I could be together with my uncle.

We marched for about 10 kilometres until we reached a railway station very late at night. The Germans checked off each number according to their list and found that I didn't match the list. First, I was severely beaten, then showed them my hands that I could work as good as anyone else. I looked older than I was and told them that I was 16 or 18 years old, and not 14. Since the train had to leave, I was thrown inside and we arrived at a munitions factory in Schieben in Germany, near Leipzig.

There we replaced a group of Jewish inmates killed in an explosion a week earlier. We worked seven days a week, in twelve-hour shifts. The food was inedible, potato peels without any salt and after a short time people became swollen due to the lack of nourishing food.

It took about an hour to walk to work in the freezing cold in wooden shoes with just a uniform on our backs. We tried to warm ourselves by putting paper from cement bags around our chests but the Germans checked us with a stick and anyone with paper had to undress in the snow and receive a serious beating. I was one of those caught with the paper under his shirt and beaten without mercy.

This camp was terrible and its attitude to the Jews was appalling. We suffered great hardship in this camp and prayed that whenever there was an air raid the factory would be bombed, but this never happened.

In April 1945, it seemed that the war was coming to an end. We were put into wagons and taken to the railroad, packed into cattle cars and sent to Theresienstadt, a journey that should have taken a few hours but took two weeks. During these two weeks, we were only given water and people only existed by eating other people's bodies. Whenever the train stood still on the tracks we were let out due to the fear of bombings, and at these opportunities we ate the weeds at the sides of the train tracks, just like animals.

We arrived in Theresienstadt like animals and were packed like cattle into wooden barracks, and stayed in these sub-human conditions until the end of the war. The Russians liberated us on May 9, 1945.

When the Russians freed us, for the first forty-eight hours we ran to get food in the surrounding German villages and gorged ourselves. This only made us more sick and, together with

their mules, would arrive. They did not treat us too harshly but schools were immediately barred to us. That was the end of my formal education. The Germans followed. They rounded us up, travelling to Vicsu as a designated ghetto. It was there that my father was forced to shave off his beard. I was heartbroken, he looked strange and forlorn.

They wasted little time before transport would take us to concentration camps, starting with Auschwitz. What followed has been well documented – deprivation, hunger, treated worse than animals. My two brothers, Schmuel and Israel, survived until toward the end of the war when they were shot on a death march.

In October 1945 Martin and I were brought to England by CBF (Central British Fund). My sister Baskoo went back to our home, married and began to rebuild the farm. She was unsuccessful and settled in Israel where she brought up her family until her death. Moshe and Riksa led happy family lives with children and grandchildren but they leave only Shoshanna as my remaining sister.

Maureen and I went to Roscowa for a visit some years ago. Ceaucescu was still in power and we felt sorry for the people under his rule. When he was toppled, however, our attitude changed because they started rioting and pillaging, resulting virtually in the destruction of our shul.

Our walk was now ending and we pondered on whether it mattered when or where you are born and if you are rich or poor. What matters is how you conduct your life, in spite of adversities. To be a decent human being. The 'Boys' cover this description but some people experience them as a calm and inviting stretch of water hiding dangerous currents which can erupt at any time, especially when Israel is affected.

SECTION IV SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION

My visit to Ravensbruck with grandmother Judith (Prisoner #83,621)

By Ariel Sherman, age 15

(This article was written by the granddaughter of our member Judith Sherman and represents the reactions of a third generation family member. Ariel lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.)

In life, certain events imprint themselves in our minds forever. These events influence our everyday actions and bring a new perspective into our lives. I received this package of awakening in Germany when I accompanied my grandparents, my father, and my uncle to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of Ravensbruck concentration camp. My grandmother was fourteen years old when the Nazis rose to power, casting a veil of darkness over Europe. They invaded her town, her home, and her life. Her family fled, but most were caught and forced into brutal death camps, such as Ravensbruck.

Sixty years later, my grandmother returned to the camp with three generations of family beside her. While we drove to the camp, I looked at the surrounding town. The sun shone through the bright sky, illuminating the trees and flowers. An overwhelming feeling of Life permeated the scene, oozing through the open window. Unbelievably, barely a mile away death had reigned. When we arrived, survivors were showing their families the camp. On this day, the camp is full of survivors with healthy, robust bodies in stark contrast to the starving, broken ones from years previous.

My grandmother takes us to her bunk. As we walk, slight perspiration appears on all of our faces. Wearing a nice jacket and elegant boots for the occasion, I walk on the rocky and uncomfortable ground. I stumble and almost fall. We stop at an open area before reaching the bunk. My grandmother tells us this is the location of apell (roll call). Guards forced prisoners to

A letter to my Chairman

Jack Hecht

Dear Ben. I have just been listening to your broadcast on the BBC's Desert Island Discs. It was so moving, especially when remembering your dear parents. Imagine how proud they would be to hear it and to experience all your many other achievements. But, as with all our family events, the parents were robbed by those wicked perpetrators. I recently took a walk with some of the 'Boys' from shul. One of the grandchildren had read his Barmitzvah Portion. Naturally, everyone felt happy and proud. If only every day was like that day.

The conversation eventually turned round to whether we all had our barmitzvah. Some had and some not. However, I remember mine – how nervous I was, and the kiddush we all had afterwards.

My friends had not realised that my family had been farmers, as most of the other 'boys' were children of tradesmen mainly in Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The village we lived in was Roscowa up in the Carpathian mountains. It was a small village but we boasted three shuls and two pubs.

My father owned a lot of land and employed several people from the village. It was hard work tending the crops and caring for the sheep and cattle, but we were rewarded by leading a comfortable life. My elder brother, Moshe, loved the farming life but my father sent him to yeshiva in Sighett. Moshe did not like this at all and threatened to run away. About this time emissaries were visiting the districts around trying to encourage young boys to go to Palestine. Now the second part of my story begins and explains briefly my connection with Israel.

Moshe begged my father to emigrate and finally he relented. It took a long time to arrange because of the farm and other businesses. My father decided to take only part of the family, being Moshe, Shoshanna, (who would be able to work), Rifka and young Schmuel Avrum. My mother stayed at home with the other children. It was now 1935.

The day came to collect everyone. The transport was horse and carriage (none of your mini-cabs then). I was sobbing uncontrollably as it left and clung onto the side as long as possible. Several people from surrounding villages would join them – including Moshe's future father-in-law.

They would then travel by sea to the Promised Land. I forgot to mention my grandfather who was in his nineties who did not travel with them as he was terrified of being buried at sea. He was suffering from some senility and did, in fact, die a while later.

Rifka was sent to school, maybe with Schmuel Avrum, while Shoshanna and Moshe were found work. I remember that Moshe was with an American farmer called Arbiter. In fact, that is how I contacted him after the war. That period in Palestine (Israel) were terrible times. Shootings, uprisings, no-one was safe. How my father must have longed to be home in Roumania. As for the rest of us, life carried on as normal, with little knowledge of what was to befall us.

My father and Schmuel returned to Roscova and had the sad task of sizing down the assets. However, it was already too late because war with Germany was imminent. Early 1944 the Hungarian army, astride

Jack and Maureen Hecht.

the unsanitary conditions we endured, many contracted typhus and died after liberation. I was one of the lucky ones and endured all these hardships.

The first thing people did was to gather information about surviving family from relatives, the Red Cross, inmates from other camps, etc. I discovered that my father was killed about two weeks before liberation in Austria, marching, and when he couldn't take it any more and stopped marching, he was killed.

I later discovered that my brother was killed in a concentration camp in Poland, Skarzyska, in 1943, because he contracted dysentery and was shot dead by the commandant.

We began to recuperate from the deprivation and sickness while the Red Cross collected information from us. I was part of a group of three hundred orphans, boys of the same age, and, on August 14, 1945, we were picked up by the Central British Fund (now World Jewish Relief) and sent to England in military bombers. One of the pilots gave me some chocolate and this was the first time in years that I tasted chocolate after completely forgetting what it tasted like.

We arrived in England in Windermere, in the Lake District, and were put into a military camp. My main concern after all the hunger I suffered, was with food, and was always worried if there would be something to eat. There was always enough food on the table, and what we didn't finish we took to put under our beds just in case we weren't fed the next day.

During this time I discovered that I had family in the U.S. and in Israel, and, of course, my uncle, Wolf Witorz, who I worked with in the wood factory, who was temporarily now in Germany.

We were taught English and after six months of receiving some education and learning to be civilized again, about thirty-five of us were sent to Loughton Hostel, outside of London. There, every boy either worked or continued studying. I chose to study and attended a technical school in London with some of the other boys, and stayed there until 1948.

In 1948 the hostel was closed and we moved into rented apartments and continued studying until the beginning of 1949. In the meantime, my uncle in the U.S. sent papers for me to come to the U.S. I was very indecisive and after hearing that Israel received its independence, I decided to go there. The Jewish Agency advised me to finish my studies and then emigrate.

On September 12, 1949 I came to Israel and was prepared to come to a country without roads, only with deserts and people riding around on camels. I was very pleasantly surprised to find a country with roads, cars and civilisation, just like in England.

Here I started to learn Hebrew and immediately applied for work. Since I had engineering skills learned in England, I received a job as a tool designer in the Israel Military industry. There I also did my compulsory military service and continued working until 1956.

During this period I met and married my wife, Shoshanna. We had one daughter, Zehavit, in 1954 and another daughter, Tali, in 1960. In 1956 I went to work for a private company at a much better position and higher salary and was able to purchase my first automobile. This factory moved to Ashkelon in 1962 and, in the meantime, I became the Technical Manager. This factory employed 450 people. In 1967 this factory was sold to the Israel Military Industry and, again, I found myself working for them.

In 1973 I received an offer I couldn't refuse – to be a partner in a screw machine factory in Ashkelon. Since then I have been managing my own factory which, in the meantime, has changed to Deutsch Dagan Ltd. Deutsch is my American partner, and Dagan is myself. Deutsch Dagan is very profitable and presently employs 110 people, of which 45 are immigrants from Russia.

When I came to Israel I decided to put the Holocaust behind me and only kept my thoughts occupied with providing for my family and being successful at business. The Holocaust only came back to me when my grandchildren (we have six) started to ask me questions and then I began to tell my story. Even today, my closest friends and business associates in Israel and abroad do not know my true story and all that I lived through.

To conclude, I am thankful and lucky that I was able to start my life over and achieve my successes in business with the help and support of my loving wife, Shoshanna, and daughters Zehavit and Tali and their families.

January 2007 in the Erzgebirge

Anita Lasker Walfisch

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

I promised to write an account of my last trip to Germany and here it is.

The story starts in 1942 when I was in prison in Breslau prior to my departure to Auschwitz. We were given work to do. We had to paint toy soldiers according to their nationality. These were brought into the cell by a young girl in her early twenties. She told us what paint to use. It was there that I saw for the first time soldiers in skirts i.e. kilts! She was a slight small person and we nicknamed her 'Pueppchen', (little doll). She used to breeze in and out of the cell. The only conversation was relating to the work.

One day I found at the bottom of the cardboard box containing the unpainted soldiers some bread! Another time a piece of cake!

The joy and surprise was unbelievable since we were very hungry. Even more unbelievable was that such a thing could happen at all. Eventually we started talking more openly. She wanted to know what had happened to us, etc., and said that her mother had sent the food. In short, Pueppchen became a friend and the centre of my bleak life. She used to open the door of the cell and, for the benefit of other guards who may be within earshot, ask loudly if we needed anything. Then she would shut the door a little and we would chat in a whisper about this and that. Nothing profound but for me it was the highlight of the day. There was somebody who was actually 'nice' and did not treat me like dirt. Eventually I was transferred to another cell prior to being sent to Auschwitz. I was given back my civilian clothes and waited to be called, when in comes Pueppchen (who had no business whatsoever in that cell) and brought me some bread and some very naïve but touching sayings and proverbs to give me courage for whatever was in store for me! She said that her mother sent them. I was very touched.

There were still some human beings left after all. I am sure that whoever reads this will understand what I am saying.

Half a century later when I started going to Germany again I had many TV interviews and always hoped that 'Pueppchen' might come out of the woodwork and that I could say 'thank you' and tell her what her friendship had meant to me.

Nothing happened and I assumed that she was probably no longer alive.

Some four years ago my sister Renate and I had an hour TV interview with 'Biolek'. This is a very popular TV program something like 'Parkinson' and I am told that it is watched by millions of people. Some days after this I got a letter from a certain Hella Bartsch. It said that she was the daughter of 'Pueppchen' and that she and her mother had watched the programme and that she felt as though she knew us because her mother had always told her about these two Jewish girls in the Breslau prison but she was sure that we would not remember her, etc., etc. (How wrong can one be!!)

The letter goes on saying that she immediately bought my book [Inherit The Truth] and read that far from having forgotten her mother, I had, in fact, devoted two pages to her. Very sadly, her mother had died two days before she got the book, so she never knew that she had been unforgettable to me.

I was really sad. I would so much have liked to have thanked her for her simple humanity. I wrote back telling her how very sorry I was that her mother had died before she knew that we had not forgotten her, that I had

Hidden Treasures

By Moniek Goldberg

Moniek came to England with the Windermere group in August 1945 and lived in the Loughton hostel. He emigrated to the States in 1949 and now lives in Florida. He has been a frequent contributor to our Journal.

Dear Friends.

It has been a while since I last contributed to our Journal. I hope you will find the following of some interest:

In January 1977, we opened a factory in Costa Rica. We sold the business in January 1997. I stayed on as a part-time consultant for the new owners and continued to travel to the factories on a regular basis. After a year or so, during a visit, one of the factory managers picked me up at the airport. While we were en route, he asked me, "Mr Goldberg, what are Sefardim?" I offered an explanation and asked him what prompted the question. He told me that he had been watching a television show on Costa Rica's educational station about the country's early settlers. The religious affairs, at that time, fell under the authority of the Bishop of Guatemala who would take inspection tours of the territories. There were two small farming communities: one near the village of San Ramon and the other near Palmares. When the Bishop stopped at the first community he saw a church with a cross on a steeple, as was normal for each of the hamlets across the countryside. He went inside to meet the priest. Everything appeared normal except that there were no paintings adorning the walls or statues on the altar. When he moved on to Palmares, he found what appeared, from the outside, to be a typical church but, upon entering, he found the "church" to be virtually bare. He called his entire escort, which included some heavily-armed men, inside the building. As a result of all the weight, the floor collapsed exposing a basement. They were shocked to discover a hidden Synagogue full of Hebrew books. The Bishop summoned the people from both the settlements to gather in his presence. He told them that his authority could sanction having them all burned. Instead, he confiscated their titles to the land, their belongings, and resettled all of them in Palmares. At this point, the narrative on the television show ended.

My companion asked me if I ever noticed anything different about Palmares. I told him that I'd always liked the central park and all the beautiful flowers. He went on to tell me how every Spring all the municipalities in Costa Rico have their Ferias (Fairs). They charge a Patente (licence fee) to the companies that run and profit from the fair. In Palmares, however, they make the Feria a community affair and all the profit goes for education. People come from far and wide to attend this fair and Palmares is known to have the best schools in the country.

I'd like to share another encounter during my years in Costa Rica: When we first came to the country, I knew of two families from Kozienice (my second hometown in Poland) who came after the War. One day I went to visit the younger of the two in San Jose. She introduced me to a lady friend. This lady was a Costa Rican of Spanish roots whose family had long ago settled there. The family was Catholic and very prominent, well established in quite a few enterprises. She told me that her family has a number of curious practises for which there is no explanation except to say that the family always did things this way. Every year, late in September, all their business enterprises shut down for two days and then, after ten days, they would shut down again for one day. This practice, dating back hundreds of years continues to the present day, offering evidence that our traditions, in all shapes and forms, persist and survive in all corners of the world.

has yet to be measured by future historians.

Societal collective memory transforms into collective amnesia when it comes to accounting for its errors in judgment. Good times are more pleasant to remember than bad times. We have come to the crossroads of decision making: do we heed the warnings based on past experiences or do we allow our addiction to entertainment to prevail and anesthetise our psyche?

One only has to glance at the persistent daily media newscasts to realise that there is something fundamentally wrong with the direction contemporary society has chosen. A culture of hatred has spilled into the 21st century. Some of the surviving Nazi symbols of hatred are demonstrated in the recurrent shooting episodes plaguing our schools and resulting in the death of countless innocents. Violence occurs when neo-Nazi euphemisms invade not only present day language but also music, art, literature, and other means of cultural expression. Hatred is expressed when someone attaches a rope fashioned into a noose onto a university classroom door where an African-American professor conducts a lecture.

Late 20th century has ushered in the age of global terrorism which has spilled into the 21st. Some of its causes stem from religious intolerance; others are rooted in rising national fascism. What ought to be our response to these phenomena as survivors of that most infamous episode in the history of civilization we call the Nazi Holocaust? Can we say that "if it happened then, it can happen again?" Or, should we say: "Beware, the hour-glass of history has returned to its former mischief based on blatant disregard of inherent civil rights of the individual?"

Whatever we choose to utter as a warning to the globalisation of hatred, will our words be heeded? After all, we are the conscience of society, but society has turned a deaf ear. There are too many choices that are much more promising than the appeals for the return to rational thought. One of them is the worship of technology, at any cost.

Technology has always been a two-edged sword. On the one hand, society can benefit from its rapid exponential progress. Yet, at the flip of the coin, we can perceive serious drawbacks. The problem lies in the fact that the vast majority of people are unable to keep up with the new technologies, thus giving an unfair advantage to those who have mastered its manipulative potential.

Radical problems demand radical solutions. Counterterrorism tactics challenge people's privacy rights. They go against the principles of free democracies. Deplorably, having to safeguard our way of life in combating terrorist activities we become, of necessity, like *them* by being forced to abandon the basic principles of human rights. Have we not experienced it in our past? To mind come words uttered by Nazi leaders: "Democracy is our ally; her weakness will aid us in destroying her." (Paraphrase Goebbels.)

Lately, governments have used technology to collect foreign intelligence through electronic eavesdropping. Though it serves the purpose, electronic surveillance, under any name, is still infringing on democratic principles. What might come next? Will it be confiscation of registered weapons? Does that sound familiar?

During the last few decades, we have seen a rapid proliferation of nuclear capacity. We have also experienced a renewed version of the Goebbels technique of the Big Lie, notably from the mouth of the Iranian number one spokesperson of state Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. His blatant declaration, which advocates the extermination of Jews everywhere, undermines the legitimacy of the sovereign State of Israel as well as our sacred right to exist. Does this not sound familiar? Astonishingly, all of that only sixty years after the Holocaust, coupled with the intense global denial campaign and the propensity for human forgetfulness of devastating historical events, is rapidly gaining momentum. It encourages doubt even among the most stalwart optimists.

In spite of it all, we must not allow the spirit of negativity and the culture of hate defeat the ideals etched in the memory of all Holocaust survivors. They echo persistently in my mindset as they were sounded loud and clear on the day of our liberation from Nazi hell: "NEVER FORGET! NEVER AGAIN!"

always been hoping to be able to thank her and that she could tell her children that their grandmother and great-grandmother most certainly were not Nazis but thoroughly decent people. Ever since then Pueppchen's daughter – her name is Hella – tried to arrange lectures for me at her home town Tschopau.

She had never done anything like that before and it was not easy to get enough local support to realise this

However, with a great deal of effort, she managed to get the support of the 'Landeszentrale fuer politische Bildung'.

On January 27th I flew to Dresden via Munich, was collected by her son and we drove to Tschopau. Tschopau is a tiny village not far from the Czech border. Very picturesque... mountains... hills... but.... I learnt a lot about the former east Germany'. This was the first time that I was confronted with a bunch of truly brainwashed people. Forty years of Communism, where everything was laid on automatically. Everybody had work, there were nurseries, etc., etc. Nobody had to think or plan, it was all done for them. Now there is 80% unemployment, and this is precisely where the Neo-Nazis come from. I spoke in three schools and looking at this bunch of youngsters I was quite prepared for trouble, especially in one of the schools for kids who were already considered hopeless cases. There were some questions. Not as many as I would have liked, but I learnt that people – even this postwar generation – are still afraid of each other. Altogether a rather depressing picture.

I gave one talk to adults in the local, very ancient and beautiful castle. My friend Hella was demented with fear that no-one would come after all her efforts. She was wrong. There was room for 100 people and nearly twice as many turned up and there was standing room only which is, of course, 'streng verboten'. Some had travelled a considerable distance and I found that very encouraging. I doubt that any of these people have ever met a Jewish person before.

Well, now they have.

Of Nightmares and Miracles

By Arthur Poznanski

Arthur came to England with the Windermere group. He is an accomplished singer. He has written a number of musical compositions and has conducted a number of choirs.

Most of my friends had suffered, like myself, a fair share of nightmares. Visions of our tortured and martyred parents, siblings, relatives and closest and dearest friends suffocating in poison gas chambers should be sufficient to compete in visions of horrors with the contents of Dante's Inferno. Also months and even years of avoiding the same fate by submitting to an existence as slaves in concentration and forced labour camps have been sufficient to affect even the toughest of minds. But, as one of my friends keeps reminding me, we, or rather the few of us still left alive and fairly sane, though scarred and bruised physically and psychologically, are the survivors.

Mainly in order to avoid imparting the trauma of our hurt to our partners and children, I managed to sweep my conscious mind of the most intrusive visions of past horrors and to keep them locked in the darkest recesses of our memory.

As for miracles well, these, if you choose to believe in their authenticity, happened at the dawn of civilisation. There are no survivors to attest to or confirm the written accounts of these events. So, even with scepticism, we tend to give some credence to the writings of sages, prophets and chroniclers. Unable to ascertain which events were due to Divine intervention motivated by angels or other spiritual sources or were the results of warps in the laws of nature, we seek after the "truths" most of our lives, unless we are given a special cause to BELIEVE.

With my wife (the love of my life) I endeavoured to overcome many difficulties, while I valiantly tried to ignore the nightmares which kept returning on some nights. Singing gave me (and the listeners, I hope) a lot of pleasure and I gained the prestigious position of choirmaster in the synagogue of one of the largest Jewish

communities in this country. We hoped for a future of well earned tranquillity. Fate decided otherwise.

Both, Renee and I had many serious health problems. In order to cope with these we decided to budget ourselves and live in a Spartan fashion but invest in a limited private health insurance. During 1998 Renee had to undergo open heart surgery and had a ceramic aortic valve implanted in her heart. These were early days of successful open heart surgery. Her life was in serious peril. My brother Jerzy had recommended special prayers at the grave of Rachel in Israel. In spite of complications Renee soon recovered. Since the operation she has had to have frequent blood tests to establish how much warfarin she would need to maintain that valve free of blood clots. We treated it as a relatively minor inconvenience.

Reality turned into a nightmare on the 9th September 2004. Late in the evening, for no apparent reason, Renee fell over in the kitchen, knocked her head hard and fainted. In panic I called a doctor. A voice on the phone informed me that it would take three or four hours for a doctor to come. But Renee felt nauseous and a protrusion appeared at the back of her head. I put on her head a compress of a cold wet towel as I used to believe helps in the case of a headache. Greatly troubled I decided to drive her to the emergency ward of the nearest hospital which happened to be King George Hospital in Barley Lane (about four miles away).

On arrival Renee still felt nauseous and ill. A doctor recommended a scan. As a result of what it revealed, she was admitted to the hospital and placed in a ward for observation. I returned home about one am to get her a nightdress, toothbrush and slippers. Still hoping that it was but a minor injury but in a rush, I forgot the slippers and promised to bring them with a few more items in the morning.

Early next morning, the 10th September, poor Renee was unconscious and was taken to a special unit and put on a respirator. They told me that a scan revealed a haematoma in her head which needed immediate surgery. There is no neurological department in this hospital: she was therefore to be transferred to Oldchurch Hospital in Romford as soon as they found for her a bed in the intensive care unit. She was already anaesthetised and was connected to a ventilator.

Stunned by the news that my little darling was in grave danger, I felt helpless, unable to think of anything that might help. With my mind in turmoil, I just held on to the bag with her slippers. In the meantime a registrar neurosurgeon from Oldchurch Hospital telephoned to inform me that regretfully they had no bed available for her in the intensive care ward.

This reality was worse than any nightmare. A search began for a hospital with an intensive care bed and a neurosurgeon. I phoned my Health Insurers for help but they said, if I could find a surgeon and a hospital with a bed in intensive care unit, they would be willing to approve my choice and pay for the procedure and hospital fees but they could not find or recommend one. I felt desperate: vital time was passing and I was unable to help my little darling.

The administrators of the King George Hospital eventually found a neurosurgeon and a bed in an intensive care unit in a hospital in Camberwell.

But it took sixteen hours to transfer Renee by ambulance to Kings College Hospital in Denmark Hill, Camberwell, while I paced the waiting room frantic with worry. They refused to allow me to go with her in the ambulance owing to the space needed for the attending nurses and equipment.

On the advice of the London Transport office I took the tube to Bank, changed for another line to Elephant and Castle and from there walked over to the main line station to take one of the suburban trains which stops at Denmark Hill. The journey took over two hours. In a desperate mood, I phoned my son Victor in Oxford for help. His wife Phillipa told me that he actually was in London and she was able to contact him on the mobile phone.

More than two hours later I arrived at the Kings College Hospital. Renee was still in the operating theatre. Quite soon Victor appeared and joined me in anxiously waiting for news. When the surgeon, Mr. Chitnavis, came out of the theatre with his team he had no good news for us. "We did all that we could", he said. "She is alive but on a ventilator. She had a very big assault on her brain, part of which was pushed against

ageing survivors' confidence to recall the salient details of distant events. For those reasons, many survivors have, in general, been reluctant to giving testimony.

There is danger of leaving out or inadvertently embellishing historical facts when appearing under the unforgiving scrutiny of the camera lens. This has given rise to an inherent presentiment of feeding the ongoing propaganda efforts of the so-called historical revisionism. This undercurrent of the denial menace corrupts the unsuspecting minds of youthful Internet browsers whose memory span is limited to current events that offer maximum entertainment potential.

A significant number of survivors have thus far been unable to shake their aversion to discuss their private experiences, while facing neophyte interviewers who display a remarkable lack of sensitivity as well as the much needed socio-political skills for this arduous task.

Be it as it may, the horrific tragedy of our losses in lives and property, compounded by the grievous effect they will exert on future generations, can be measured in juxtaposition to the irretrievable eradication of the once virile European Jewish cultural energy. The consequences of this criminal act perpetrated by a pagan Nazi cult on all things pertaining to the benign evolution in human development shall bear unmercifully upon millennia.

My own introspective viewing of the destructive Nazi influence generating recurrent catastrophes in the aftermath of its debacle, is evident in all of my writings. The belief of invincibility in the minds of some tyrannical national leaders was evident in the second half of the twentieth century. World class assassins can be categorized by the *Originals*, such as Kemal Ataturk, Adolf Hitler, Josif Stalin, and their subordinates: skilful benchmen. Their *Copycats* are too numerous to cite; they include such "outstanding" personalities as Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Muammar Khaddafi, Augusto Pinochet, Miroslav Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, and untold others who are lurking in the shadows awaiting their opportunity. The latter have one common character denominator prevalent in their psyches: the belief that if their prototypes succeeded in their acts of terror and mayhem they, too, will be able to accomplish their goals to turn rational human behaviour into bizarre, lawless acts.

It is a well-known fact that age is a terminal malady. But the reservoir of experience gained during one's lifetime does not have to be interred with the individual. The spirit lives on, unencumbered by corporeal mortality. Knowledge coupled with experience yields what we have come to know and emulate as wisdom. It was the philosopher Santayana who stated that "those who forget the past will repeat its errors" or something to that effect. May I presume to add another salient part to that wise dictum? My view is that we must take the human element as symptomatic of perpetuating errors by not being able to recognise earmarks that foretell impending disaster.

The year 1922 saw the publication of a monumental work by Oswald Spengler entitled "The Decline of the West." In it he had foreseen what is happening today by his keen analysis of the causes for the demise of previous "civilisations", and having collated them into common denominators.

One does not have to be a clairvoyant or a so-called "prophet" in order to determine the impending changes in the behaviour of a given society. Spengler was a pessimist, and his prognostications did not bode well for the future. Our track record is fraught with elements that lead us to a habitual disregard of rational warning signals.

Hitler's radio broadcasts and sabre rattling had not succeeded to alarm the European Jewish community sufficiently for them to take necessary precautions. Many among our elders had been anesthetised by their belief in world opinion. There were those who succumbed to their attachment to material possessions in their hope to salvage the results of their lifetime toil. Needless to say, some among the well-to-do had the means at their disposal to escape in time but did not. Then there was a vast impoverished majority within the Jewish community who had appealed for help but was fated to become victims of the Nazi onslaught. We, the survivors of the Holocaust, witnessed the tragic failure to heed logical prognoses of things to come. The price we had paid for that disbelief was too steep and its enormity

man's ability to transcend evil. And we continue to devote ourselves toward that end.

Still, we are left personally to face the challenges of ageing. The title of a book my brother once gave me proclaims: "Old Age Is Not For Sissys." The same qualities that helped us to build our lives – courage, tenacity, optimism, recognition of reality, flexibility and creativity in the face of reality–help us to meet the changes wrought by ageing. We become more creative in dealing with the tasks of life even as they become more difficult to handle. We substitute new interests and activities for those we can no longer perform. We make use of our remaining strengths to compensate for growing weaknesses. If we can't run, we walk. If we can't see, we listen more carefully and listen to recorded cassette tapes or C.Ds of books, lectures, music. If we don't hold a job, we volunteer our services for worthy causes. If we no longer have young children of our own, we spend time with grandchildren. We know from experience that every day that we are here we will make count somehow.

We know that death awaits us sooner or later. This is the way of all flesh. We know that we came naked into the world and will leave all worldly possessions behind. We also know that death is a natural part of life. We may have different visions of what comes next. For some, they believe nothing comes next. Others believe that there is a heaven and all walk with God and their ancestors. Some believe in reincarnation. Some believe that when the Messiah comes, we will all be brought back to life everlasting in a beautiful world. Several things are certain. Nothing in the universe is lost. It continuously transforms. Our lives have had meaning and are indeed worthwhile. Through our lives we touch the lives of multitudes in ways we cannot even imagine. And we cannot imagine how the lives of those we touch are transformed and enriched and how they in turn impact on others through the generations. And then there are the children and grandchildren and great grandchildren with our genes.... We may notice that the "we" more and more includes the second, third and fourth generations.

We know for certain that we do not live in vain.

One of the great gifts of Judaism: we celebrate life and are constantly enjoined to choose life. Our lives are for a blessing and a celebration.

We also continue to carry on the traditions and mission of the '45 Aid Society. We are still here.

Bridging the Past with the Present;
An Historical Introspective

William Samelson

William obtained a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Philosophy. He has written many books, both fact and fiction. He worked during the war in the glasswork 'HORTENSIA' with many of the 'Boys' from Pietrkow who came to England. After liberation, he emigrated with his brother to the U.S.A. He keeps in touch with some of the 'Boys' by contributing articles in our Journal.

Finally, six decades past, there are signs that the present global society exhibits some evidence that it is gradually becoming sensitive in regard to a striking phenomenon: it is seemingly mindful of the rapidly waning presence of World War II Holocaust eyewitnesses. Among those in the forefront are the military veterans: so claims a recent magazine editorial. The media have eagerly joined the clamour and general accolades for the veterans, intensified by the ongoing Iraq conflict.

Alas, missing from public attention are the rapidly diminishing ranks of Jewish Holocaust survivors. The past few years have generated a small measure of attention getters: the now prominent archives of Yale University recordings of Holocaust eyewitness accounts and the subsequent–similar in nature–data gatherings of oral video reports. The sum total of both efforts has yielded only a small portion of this valuable resource of historical facts. This happened for many reasons: one of them being the fear of recurrent traumatisation: another is the lack of many

another. Fortunately it was a subdural haematoma: this means we were able to clear all of the blood clot. However, it is impossible to tell how much damage was done. I cannot even guarantee that she will wake up but she has got a good chance. We have to wait and see how her brain will react to external stimuli".

As he spoke I froze and lost the control of my bladder. "Is there anything I can do?" I asked. "All you can do, is pray and try to stimulate her brain to regain consciousness when the anaesthesia wears off", he answered.

Victor, seeing the state I was in, decided not to return to Oxford but to stay with me. During the next few days we were both allowed to remain for many hours at Renee's bedside in the intensive care ward. The anaesthesia wore off but she remained unconscious in a coma. On occasions when a nurse lifted her eyelids and shone a light, her pupils contracted. It was the only sign (I was told) that she was still alive.

I did not eat. I could not sleep. I prayed in Hebrew, in English and in my own intensive brain waves. Victor valiantly stayed at my side and, on our return home at night, poured for me some sips of brandy to dull the pain. As days passed, the nurses consoled me saying, that there was some progress and that she was now partially breathing on her own, though assisted with a lot of oxygen.

Renee presented a pathetic sight with several wires sticking out of her head and tubes, broad and narrow, connecting various parts of her body to humming machinery. One of these taped to her face led through her nose directly to her stomach from a drip of specially prepared food and water sufficient to keep her alive. For five days she was connected to a recording device which monitored her brain responses twenty-four hours a day and required an operator watching her ceaselessly all the time.

Fearing any adverse effect it might have on her recovery, I objected to further research, which was then discontinued. In the meantime I left messages over the internet for all my friends and relatives all over the world asking them to pray...

Angela, informed of the crisis, jetted in on Sunday from San Francisco. On Thursday, the 16th September I was told that Renee was able to breathe on her own when assisted with only sixty percent of oxygen but, unless a tracheotomy was performed, she would choke on the mucus from her damaged throat and most likely die. On such dicta I signed my consent for the operation and she was now breathing through a tube in her trachea. At least she was alive: but in what a state.

Still in a deep coma, she developed pneumonia. By now she started to respond to pain by twitching eyelids. With Angela and Victor, all of us kept up a vigil at her bedside, talking to her but unable to tell if she could hear us.

Tous Rosh Hashana, our New Year, passed without much of any visible change. Exhorted by Angela and Victor, I left the hospital during the lunch hour for a breath of fresh air. In reality I walked the streets tearfully looking at the cloudy skies and formulating prayers in my mind. At one point I noticed a figure of a gaunt old woman with her face covered by a black veil. Oh no, I thought, not the angel of death on a mission.... Then a voice of reason interjected, "No one has seen the angel of death and lived."

With my mind in a turmoil and full of despair, I turned back towards the hospital building, when a hand on my shoulder stopped my stride and a clear voice said, "Do not worry, she will be all right". Astounded, I stopped and thought: "Who was it and how did he know my thoughts?" I turned my head but whoever it was, vanished round the corner. Was it a real person, or was I hallucinating? Was my mind strained beyond endurance playing tricks on me or could it have been a spirit?

In whom could I confide what occurred, when I could not even recall in what language the person spoke to me. Was it a sign of an approaching nervous breakdown?

Somehow this incident did make me feel better and with renewed confidence I returned to the hospital to resume my daily vigil at Renee's bedside. Angela, Victor or I were talking to her unceasingly, trying to gain her attention, asking her to open her eyes. I played tapes of various types of music and tried to sing to her, but drew no response. A faint smile greeted the tape of granddaughter Ilana's voice which I played when Angela stopped reading aloud a book borrowed from the library.

In the meantime, Renee had a "whitecut" lung infection on both sides which made her very weak and

drowsy. Then, more heartache: diarrhoea set in due to a severe stomach bug. Angela and I persevered, begging her to open her eyes. She nodded affirmatively when asked to listen to a tape of me singing Neapolitan love songs.

A team of doctors came to examine her and adjusted her medication. Angela, Victor and I persevered by playing tapes of Ilana chatting and singing and myself singing arias in Italian and popular songs in Polish which in the past she had heard me singing on the radio. Both doctors and nurses, kept giving us useful hints and encouraged us to keep up our efforts. They allowed us to stay at her bedside for many hours outside the official visiting periods.

At times Renee seemed to wish to communicate and tried to mouth soundlessly but as she was breathing through the tracheotomy tube, she was unable to speak, which was very frustrating for her and for us. Even with her eyes closed she was trying to give us signs. Normally the nurses looked in on her at infrequent intervals but when summoned, they came in pairs to be able to clean her or just to move her position in bed.

Sometime during the day, when our attention was momentarily distracted, she dislodged and pulled out from her nose the tube through which her feed and water were dripped directly into her stomach. The tube had to be re-inserted by a senior, experienced nurse. It was a tricky and unpleasant procedure. The nurses bandaged both her hands to prevent her dislodging the "tracby" or the nose drip tube during night-time with fewer of them in attendance.

I abandoned all my other activities, commitments and hobbies and concentrated on attempts to help my little darling back into consciousness. And yes, I prayed in my own way for Divine help and some sign of grace from Above.

Our house and garden were neglected, so were friends, societies, synagogue, voice practice, writing, the piano and guitar. I spent most of every daytime at the hospital and ate what was available in the canteen or cafeteria as fast as I could. On some days Victor virtually forced me to accompany him to the nearest restaurant: he said we both needed a break.

At dawn on Saturday, the 25th September, I woke early. It Was Yom Kippur. Glad to have rehearsed the choristers quite well during the previous months I was confident they were able to sing the extensive programme of the Service in our Synagogue with a deputy conductor. My place and duty was in the hospital at Renee's bedside even if she was asleep, or comatose most of the time.

Suddenly, late in the afternoon, close to five o'clock, she spontaneously opened both her eyes and tracked from Angela to myself. In spite of some doctors' and nurses' prognostications that she would never regain full consciousness, she remained conscious for over twenty minutes.

Not only did she recognise us, but replied by nods and reject signs to our questions and indicated that her favourite choice was to listen to tape of Ilana speaking and singing. Second on her list was a tape of my Italian and Neapolitan serenades. She was lucid and communicating. This was the longest "awake and recognition time" to date. What a pity she was not yet able to talk. These spontaneous signs of returning consciousness made me and Angela so very happy. Victor, who also witnessed this miracle, professed his amazement, but had to return to Oxford to be with his wife and children.

While Renee drifted back to sleep I journeyed with Angela back home and rushed to the Synagogue. To me what occurred today was a SIMAN, a sign from the Almighty that our prayers had been granted.

I was convinced that in response to my prayers I was granted a miracle, and although Renee was still very ill, her life had been spared, or rather that I was given a sign that my efforts to get her well would be effective. The miracle was dependent on my concentrated care and it was now my sacred duty to safeguard it.

I felt the need to pray and was glad to have arrived at the shul in time for Neilah service. My eyes filled with tears at the sound of the shofar, the signal of the end of the fast. It did not occur to me then that with a transfer to another hospital a long struggle still awaited me against nightmarish realities lurking in the background. My troubles were far from over. A long struggle against evil, titanic forces of inadequate hospital nursing

Getting older, but still here

Robert Sherman -
October 2007

Robert is the husband of Judith and both are regular contributors to our Journal.

So here we are. We who are here have exceeded the traditional three score and ten and then some. Not as spry as yesteryear. Many of our dear friends in the Society and elsewhere have joined their ancestors. Some of us are frail. All of us are encountering that process called ageing. Many Society members remain amazed that they lived beyond their youth and survived.

Society members have endured the pain of losses of loved ones: the loss of personal powers: the loss of skills, and the status of respected positions in the socio-economic and community order and the identities that go with such statuses.

Having so long relied on yourselves, you hate to have to ask help of others. After all, are you not the well-practised helpers? The ones in charge? The ones who "fix it? "We wonder what tomorrow will bring in terms of health and well-being. Will we recover from today's ills? Will new troubles befall us?

(In this piece I use the term "we" to represent the Holocaust survivors and members of the '45 Aid Society. I am not a Holocaust survivor, though my wife Judith is and she is a charter member of the Society.)

When someone asks, "how are you?" we answer, "Fine," understanding that we are speaking relatively. We are fine in relation to our stage of ageing and whatever chronic conditions we learn to live with.

To read the literature and media about ageing, one would assume that people live forever as active, fully engaged, healthy people who travel the world and are financially secure. But we know that some Holocaust survivors have died and some are neither well nor financially secure.

We are still here and Hitler and most of his henchmen are dead and buried. We who are still here, who are we? What is our current role and meaning?

First, we recognise that we have the good fortune to be alive and to be parents, grandparents and some of us even great grandparents. What a privilege! We encounter the joys of celebrating with our children, grand children, and perhaps great grand children. We count in their lives and they know who we are

Second, we have had and can continue to have an impact on our families' lives and help to shape them as good people. We are the repositories of family history, pride and continuity. We can share our knowledge and stories.

Third, we realize that no books, teachers, clergymen or politicians can ever replace us in the role of eye witnesses of the Holocaust. Therefore, we continue to bear witness as long as we can and support Holocaust Education, Israel, and others less fortunate than we in our communities and in the world. We remain active and engaged like Ben Helfgott who, thank God, devotes enormous time and energy to the Society, this publication, and the International Claims Conference. Some members write memoirs, give speeches, teach, and engage in all kinds of activities to perform "Tikun Olam" (repair the world).

Fourth, we look back in pride and satisfaction at all that we have accomplished in life and all that we have become in spite of all the horrors and obstacles. We know that inside the frailer body is the same "Gebor" (hero) who moved mountains to get where he/she is. We serve as living examples of the ability to rise from the ashes of horror and severe trauma to live good and productive lives. This is a miracle of the human spirit and personal courage and tenacity.

Fifth, we have the advantage of decades of life experience and the historical perspective and, hopefully, the wisdom that such long experience provides. We know about the ups and the downs, adversity and triumph, and we know about the fact that the world and we ourselves are constantly changing and that somehow, in spite of change, the human condition seems to transcend time and change. It remains our great advantage and a great challenge. When will human kind learn not to pursue hatred and war no more? Because of our experiences we remain optimistic about life and mankind and

My Shtetl Revisited

Sam Freiman
(Dundela)

Sam came to England with the Windermere group in August 1945. He lived in the Ascot hostel and has been for many years an active member of the Committee of our Society.

I returned again to Poland with some reluctance, but I wanted to find my birth certificate and anything I could about my family.

The local registrar does not have any Jewish births registered. I discovered they are kept separately, but first I decided to try my old school. The director and staff were very helpful. They searched out old records and photocopied my reports and even my little sister's report. They are still looking for my brother's report.

On leaving we saw displayed in the hallway some old war posters of the Nazi occupation and newspaper cuttings of local heroes who helped liberate them. I took some videos of it. Driving back to Warsaw with Moshe, who was with me, I remarked to Sonja, who can't read Polish, that there was not one word about the 300 Jewish families who were driven out and murdered. We didn't say anything about it at the time to the staff – perhaps we should have done. So we are trying to put that right in a small way. Below is the letter I sent to the school, which was published in a newspaper.

"I can never forget those awful days of my youth in German-occupied Poland. One of my most vivid memories, apart from having to leave my family, was the day my two uncles were hanged in front of me.

"My family were shoemakers by trade. Two of my uncles were hanged as an example to everyone else when they dared to take a few scraps of leather while making shoes for the Germans. It was terrible. I saw them hanged just a few steps away from me and could do nothing. It still haunts me.

"The rest of my family died in the concentration camps, but I have never been able to find out where. I had not wanted to leave them, but I had no choice. My father wanted me to survive. When we were liberated, I was in Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. I was offered a choice of making a life in Britain or Palestine and, being a Jew, Palestine was my first option. But that is where everyone wanted to go, so I was sent to my second choice, Britain.

"From the moment I arrived in Windermere I was glad I had come to Britain. I stayed in the hostels for many months as I adjusted and was shown nothing but kindness by the people from the hostel. Eventually a friend of a friend recommended me for a job with a furrier, as a fur cutter. Afterwards, I worked in many different jobs over the years.

"I met my wife at the Primrose Club and we married in 1949. She was 16 and I was 22. We bought a lovely house in Kew, London. When I was told it had been a guest house, we turned it into one again and that is how I became an hotelier. We have had a happy life, but had to endure the tragedy of losing our younger son James.

"My life here has been good and I have my close extended family with The Boys, but I always felt a need to rediscover my roots. I went back to Poland last week. It was emotional. My wife and a friend came as well, and I am glad they were there. I went back to my old school and traced my old registration records and school reports. It gave me a sense of where I had come from and it has helped to give me an inner peace. The awful memories will never go away but this has helped me – I have been able to come to terms with my past".

care and uncaring, hostile bureaucracy of the National Health Service was to be my daily agenda. But my Guardian Angel whispered "you are a survivor and you have been given the Sign from Above to show your mettle and persevere in the fight for your and your wife's rights to survive. For as long as you are alive you must neither give up your faith nor your pursuit of improvement".

END OF PART ONE

A Synopsis of my Post-Holocaust life

Alex Gross

Alex came to England in February 1946 with the third group who originated from Ruthenia. He emigrated to the USA where he became a successful businessman. In 1995, he received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Emory University. He published his memoir entitled "Yankele" in 1999. He keeps in close contact with our Society.

Hopefully, you will remember me, my sister, Rosalyn, and brother Sam, who later came to London then left for Palestine. Unfortunately, he passed away a couple of years ago. We were first in Scotland, then Lancashire. I was working in London with Jerry Hornstein whom I stay in touch with even though he lives in Los Angels CA, which is a long way from Miami, FL. Of course, it was great to get together in Belsize Park. Soon after I arrived in America, Jerry Hornstein got in touch with me so I joined him in Chicago, IL making contact lenses.

I left England in December 1949 on the Queen Mary for America to be united with my American aunts, uncles, sister Rosalyn, my other brothers and family.

When the Korean War broke out, I felt obliged to try to stop the Communist expansion so I joined the U.S. Army in early 1951. I was put in the Intelligence where I served for a while with one of our boys, Jack Rubenfeld. When I left the army, I started a packaged home business with my brother, Bill. The business was called Albee (for Alex & Bill) in Ohio. It took a lot of hard work, good decisions, and we were blessed and I started expanding into several other areas.

When my brother, Sam, arrived in America after being severely injured in the fight for Israel's independence, we took him in as a partner. Then Jack Rubenfeld, one of our boys, joined us as a salesman; later he became a partner and officer. He lives in Michigan.

As our business had its ups and downs, we also had a few other of our boys working with us. Abe Grabia was with us for many years. He retired a few years ago at the same time as I retired and moved to Miami, FL where I got remarried and blessed with a wonderful woman whom my children and grandchildren adore.

Living in Miami is great, not only because of the wonderful weather, but we have a lot of survivors moving to Miami when they retire from all over the U.S.A., Canada, etc. I am in close touch in Cafe Europa and with Paul Gast, David Mermelstein, Magda Bader and Joe Sacks, where we provide three lunches a year in Miami-Dade Co. to Holocaust survivors. We have over three hundred most of the time. We provide food, music and entertainment.

We also are in touch with Alex Moscze, Victor Brightberg, Martin Buki (who unfortunately is not well) and many of the people that were with us in England.

Unfortunately, we are not getting younger, but fortunately many of us are still alive and able to function properly.

It's always great to hear from friends that were in England with us and it is very special when we can get together.

About ten years after I came to the U.S.A., and our business flourished, I was blessed and got married to a wonderful woman, Linda, who came with me for a few gatherings of the '45 Aid Society to England and Israel. She blessed me with four wonderful children, three daughters and one son.

As we were in the process of moving to Atlanta, GA., our only son, Benji, was accidentally killed with our farm equipment on the Gross Lake property while he

was beautifying it for some elderly people to enjoy a picnic at our lake. It, of course, devastated us, and just as we had begun to get our lives back on track, my beloved wife, Linda, became a victim of a rape murderer, and I have lost four brothers, including Sam, in the last five years.

We have had to go on with our lives, suffering those tragedies, just as all of us had to get our lives together after the Holocaust, losing our beloved parents and so many uncles, aunts, cousins and friends.

I was fortunate to have five brothers and sister, Rosalyn, survive the Holocaust. She was a roommate with Mala Tribich (Ben Helfgott's sister). Our oldest brother died just before liberation in Berger-Belzen.

Unfortunately, all of us have experienced and lived through the most unbelievable horrors.

In Atlanta, I got very involved, heading up the Hemshech survivors' group, and especially with teaching and lecturing to many schools, civic, and other organisations about the Holocaust. The Governor appointed me to the GA State Holocaust Commission, and I received an honorary doctorate at prestigious Emory University in Atlanta.

I have written and published a book called, "Yankele (A Holocaust Survivor's Bittersweet Memoirs)". It was published by University Press.

I hope all of us will stay healthy for many years, and derive pleasure from seeing, getting together, or hearing from each other as often as possible.

With best wishes to each and every one of us and our families.

Alex Gross, Yankele
10155 Collins Ave., #804
Bal Harbour, FL 33154

Alex Gross

Born September 18, 1929 in Czechoslovakia, annexed by Hungary, taken over by Nazi Germany. Incarcerated at age 14 in a ghetto, shipped to the extermination camps of Auschwitz, Birkenau, then Buna and Gleiwitz. Finally liberated in Buchenwald by the U.S. Army where he found brothers, Bill and Sam. Went back to Czechoslovaki, found three brothers and one sister had survived. His parents were victims of Auschwitz extermination.

Sent to orphanages in England, then came to America on December 16, 1949, to join his surviving family (uncles, aunts, and family) in the United States.

Started the building business with brother, Bill in 1956. During the Korean war voluntarily spent two years in the U. S. Army Intelligence & Medical Corps, attended Washington University, re-joined his brother, Bill (who passed away) in business. They were joined by brothers Sam, then Ben, (who passed away) who relocated to Atlanta in 1960. They continued to build every kind of housing: single and multi-family, office complexes, and shopping centers. Since 1962, they have developed a planned community in Atlanta, Georgia. The Gross Brothers have built housing in eighteen states, as well as office and shopping centers.

Married to his wife, Linda, for over 25 years, she became a victim of rape-murder. Their only son lost his life at age fourteen in a farming accident around their Gross Lake property, may he rest in peace. He is blessed with three daughters, three sons-in-law, four granddaughters, and one grandson.

Recipient of many awards from Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, and many schools. Was active in many civic and charitable organizations, was acting Chairman of the State of Georgia Holocaust Commission appointed by the Governor, was on the Board of Atlanta Jewish Federation, past Chair of Israel Bonds Metro Atlanta, past President of

HEMSHECH, an organization of Survivors of the Holocaust, was honored by schools, B'nai B'rith, Veterans Organizations, O.R.T., and the Governor of Georgia

He has lectured in Emory University, Mercer, Vanderbilt, Georgia State, University of Miami, Alabama, and many other colleges, universities, schools and civic organizations.

He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa at Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

He has been written up in USA Today, Good Fortune Magazine, New York Times, Angels on Earth, TN, Ohio, Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. He appeared on

who lives nearby, asked if we would be interested to join a small group of people who were coming to spend a couple of weeks at the spa of Bardejovske Kupele from different countries. They were all acquainted with each other and were all originally from Poland.

They all now live in Warsaw, Copenhagen Malmo, Stuttgart and Dietikon near Zurich or Basle. After long deliberations we decided to join the group.

The lady and her husband who live near Zurich (she was originally from Warsaw, her husband from Kosice in Slovakia), arranged accommodation for the whole group in Bardejovske Kupele. The transport was booked by each participant individually. The arrangement included full board and a variety of medical treatments for each person, which were suggested by a doctor at the spa after medical examination. The treatment included classical massage, mineral baths, magnetic and oxygen therapy and the drinking of individually recommended natural healing waters from the mineral springs. A treatment plan was set up for each individual which specified the type of therapy, place and time of each treatment, which could be taken before mid-day, allowing free time after lunch for rest, long walks along well kept trails, excursions or other activities; all in all a perfect plan for rejuvenation and wellbeing. The group was assigned a separate dining room and usually met at meal times. In the evenings there was a get-together for those who wanted to join. Israeli and Jewish music was played, jokes told and the sad part of the conversations turned to the parents and relatives who suffered and who were lost in the Shoah. The subject of why they left Poland in the years 1965-1970 was never raised.

Although the conversations in the group were mostly in Polish, Erika and I must have fitted into the much younger group quite well, for, prior to our departure, we were asked if we would come again next year, i.e., in 2007.

We decided to join the group once more, and made travelling arrangements for July 23rd. A few weeks before our departure, I got an unexpected call from the curator of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, a lady by the name of Teresa Pollin (Tel. 202-488-6128) formerly from Warsaw, who is working at the museum to arrange an exhibition in Washington about the pre-war Jewish community of Kozienice in Poland.

Through Teresa's contact with a person from Warsaw, by the name of Adam Jasny, who was also at the Spa with our group in 2006, and who remembered that also I, Jake Ferszrand was from Kozienice, Teresa Pollin got in touch with me. Through our contact we exchanged information about events and people in Kozienice. I could give her some information that she required, especially about Selig Berman, a photographer who was our neighbour who had his studio on the ground floor of the building we lived in.

Teresa was also interested to receive pre-war family photos and possible correspondence with family members and friends. I sent her some photographs from before the war of my family which were saved by my uncle in Paris who emigrated from Lublin to France long before the war, also my cousins who live in Israel, preserved some photographs which their parents, who came from Poland, brought with them when they came before the war.

I also sent Teresa photographs which I found by accident on my first trip to Poland in 1990 when I visited Kozienice, where I lived with my parents and sister before the Shoah. On that visit, the son of the person who let the apartment to my parents at Ulica Lubelska 19 now 13 in Kozienice, now lived in the same apartment. When I introduced myself to him, he remembered the family name Ferszrand and asked us to come in to what was now his home.

In the course of the conversation, Pan Mlastek, put a carton box full of pre-war photographs onto the table which must have been taken from the photographer Selig Berman who had his studio on the ground floor after the Jews were deported from the ghetto in Kozienice. Among these photos, I found pictures of my parents, which I took with me, and now donated to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Anyone reading this story, who happens to be from Kozienice or surroundings and interested in the project of Teresa Pollin, and who is able to give any information about the Jewish community or individuals who lived in Kozienice before the war, is kindly requested to Contact Teresa Pollin, Curator of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Teresa can be contacted under the telephone number 202-488-6128.

A journey to the Spa of Bardejovske Kupele in Slovakia

Jake Fersztand

Jake came to England with the Windermere group in August 1945. He lived in the Cardross Hostel in Scotland. He studied engineering, married and settled in Switzerland where he has lived for many years.

The town of Bardejov is situated in the north eastern part of Slovakia. To the north lies Krynica in Poland, a spa in its own right, to the south Budapest in Hungary and to the east Kiev in the Ukraine. The town of Bardejov now has a population of about 30.000inhabitants.

Between the war years 1918-1939, the population numbered about 6.000 people, about half were Jews. There were two synagogues, a Jewish cemetery and other institutions.

After World War Two in 1945, the Jewish survivors who came back to Bardejov numbered about 500, the majority of whom later emigrated to Israel, the USA, Canada and other countries. We are told that there are now only two Jewish families living in Bardejov. The cemetery we visited there was totally neglected, nearly all of the tombstones damaged and unreadable and the whole place was overgrown with weeds and shrubs.

One of the synagogues we saw, had been turned into a storehouse for steel parts, but some signs of the original use of the place were still visible. The second synagogue which was still there, was left in its original condition, but it is totally neglected and all the contents, including the old prayer books, are falling apart, are full of dust and everything is in a lamentable condition. Both the cemetery and the synagogues are taken care of by a non-Jewish person from Bardejov who is paid by a Jewish man, a former citizen of Bardejov who now lives in the USA.

In the year 2000 Bardejov was taken onto the Unesco World Heritage List.

The spa of Bardejovske Kupele (Polish kompiel) is located about 6 kms further away from the town of Bardejov it lies in the midst of natural beauty surrounded by dense forest. The entire spa was built up in a forest clearing about 200 years ago and contains a variety of old trees, shrubs and flowers which makes it very conducive to a relaxed and pleasant holiday. From Basle in Switzerland, where we live, it is easily accessible by plane with Skyeurope, a low cost Slovak airline. The flight from Basle to Bratislava takes about 90 minutes where we had to change places and wait for a connection to Kosice, another flight of 45 minutes. Having arrived in Kosice, a car awaited us in order to bring us on the last lap of the trip to the spa of Bardejovske Kupele.

Kosice, the final destination of our flight is the second largest city in Slovakia. In November 1938 the Hungarian Army occupied the city. At that time the Jewish population there numbered 11,500 people: it was the largest Jewish population in occupied Slovakia. When the Germans took over Hungary in March 1944, the fate of the Jews of Kosice had already been decided by them.

According to restrictions, ordered against the Jews, it was decreed that they were obliged to wear the Yellow Star of David on their clothing, they were no longer allowed to use public transport, visit theatres, cinemas, coffee houses or spas. There was a curfew for Jews from 7 pm. to 6 am. In April 1944 the Jews were herded into the brick factory concentration camp in Kosice. Other groups of the Jewish community were located in the city ghetto, the prison and various other places, by now there were about 13.000 Jews in the city of Kosice. The deportation of the thus concentrated Jewish population begun in May 1944, in four train transports, all those assembled were sent to Auschwitz, where about 12.000 Jews from Kosice perished in the gas chambers. Once a sizeable portion of the entire city population, only fragments of the Jewish community returned to Kosice after the war in 1945.

According to the demographic census from Kosice of the year 2001, the population of the city numbered 236.000; the number of Jews was given as 35 souls.

In the spring of 2006 a lady acquaintance from Warsaw

television programs. Good Morning America. Cable News Network. and local TV stations. A strong supporter of youth sports. was active in soccer. racquet ball. business. served on many boards and devotes much of his resources to various charities.

Now retired. his life story. "Yankele" has been published by University Press of America and can be ordered at www.univpress.com or 1-800-462-6420. All proceeds go to charity.

John Fox presented with the Dennis Clark Solas Award

Lesley Fox Testan

Dennis Clark told the story of immigrants in Philadelphia! He never tired of highlighting the contributions made by immigrants – building infrastructure, contributing their scholarly and literary genius, their inventions to fuel progress and their making the nation a patchwork quilt of vibrant diversity. Dennis was also an ardent and tireless advocate who tried to end inequality and unfairness wherever he found it. His life challenges us to see ourselves in others, to reach beyond narrow sense of self, and to be enlarged and enriched by embracing a common humanity. This award honours those who do so. It celebrates the achievements of immigrants to our city and nation and it acknowledges Dennis for showing us the way.

The award itself takes the form of a bronze sculpture, designed and crafted by Robert K. McGovern, to represent the idea evoked in Newgrange – that the darkest day of the year is the day that light penetrates the interior most deeply. It is given to those whose vision, voice and achievements inspire all of us.

Dennis Clark 1927 – 1992

From the first days that John Fox was connected with the industry and trade unionism. he fiercely advocated for the quality of life issues and working conditions of working men and women. Even in semi-retirement. he continues to be a firm believer and advocate of equal opportunity for all.

John Fox was born in Poland and. as a young Jewish boy of 11 years of age. he learned first-hand about human suffering. In 1942. when the deportation of the Jews began. Fox. his younger brother and father. were separated from the rest of their family. who were all taken to the gas chambers of Treblinka. John Fox lost 75 members of his family. The men were used to perform hard labour. until 1944. when they were put in a train cattle car and taken to a series of concentration camps: Czestochowianka. Buchenwald. Dora and Nordhausen. On his way to the Lynz extermination camp in May 1945. John Fox was liberated by Czech partisans. He spent the next 10 years in England and apprenticed for 7 years as a tailor. before moving to the United States with his wife Betty. Throughout the years. Fox has educated people about the Holocaust. and has been featured in the book *The Boys* by Sir Martin Gilbert. He has also worked with Steven Spielberg on

John's Award.

Spielberg's Holocaust Project. His approach in how he advocates for what he believes has earned him the respect of many. He has been the recipient of numerous achievement awards, including the E. Luther Cunningham Humanitarian Award in 1989, recognition by the Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikva for his contribution to the Children's Cancer Ward in 1989, the A. Philip Randolph Institute Philadelphia Chapter Award in 1991, the Shaare Zedek Medical Center's Raoul Wallenberg Award in 1995, and the Coalition of Labor Women Annual Award in 1999.

Additionally, he has served as co-chair of the American Trade Union Council for Histadrut, and the Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee, and been the National Chairman of its Administrative Committee. He has also been a member of the National Trade Union Council for Human Rights and former Vice-President of the Jewish Community Relations Council, as well as the Negro Trade Union Leadership Council. He was also co-chair of the Labor Division of Federation Allied Jewish Appeal, and was a member of the Delaware Valley Labor Committee for Full Employment, a trustee and Vice-President of the Sidney Hillman Medical Center and the Sidney Hillman Apartments.

Fox and his wife Betty have three daughters, Lesley, Lynne and Jacqueline. They also have five grandchildren.

John Fox has never faltered in his firm belief in the rights of individuals. As a newly arrived immigrant in Philadelphia in 1956, he very quickly became involved with the union in the clothing industry, where he worked for 10 years. He ultimately became a union Business Agent, then Manager of the Philadelphia Joint Board, UNITE HERE! from 1980 to 1999.

John Fox and his Family

John came to England with the Windermere Group in August 1945. He lived in the Loughton & Belsize Park hostels. He married his wife, Betty, in England and emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1956 where he distinguished himself as an outstanding trade union leader.

My family and I toured Poland in August 2007. My goal was to retrace my own travels through Poland and the Czech Republic after the war's end in 1945 and to share my memories of that time with my children and grandchildren.

I flew from Philadelphia to Warsaw with two daughters, son-in-law, three grandchildren and a family friend. A cousin flew from Virginia and met us in Warsaw. Another daughter and her son flew from California and she brought along two friends who were also the videographers. We rented a large bus as there were in excess of 20 people joining us.

The first morning, after a one and a half hour journey, we arrived at the memorial to Treblinka. We found the stone for Pietrkow and said kaddish and toured the small museum. I knew in advance that this would be the saddest part of our journey. The family already knew that my mother and sister had perished here but, for the first time, I told them all of the other names of family that I could recall who had also perished here. Uncles, aunts and cousins. Most of the Fuks and Gotesman family from Tuszyn died at Treblinka. I felt a sense of closure in that I was able to bring this generation of our family to pay their respects to those they had never met.

We returned to Warsaw. The highlight of the afternoon was our visit to the Warsaw ghetto memorial, where we happened to meet a tour group of Jewish teens from New York and Israel. What a small world! Accompanying them was a 78 year old survivor who had been liberated at Theresienstadt. We spent a long time sharing our life stories and then joined their group for a memorial service in honour of the Warsaw ghetto.

That evening, we were joined by even more family. Five cousins from Paris, accompanied by several friends. They had arranged to meet us in Poland in order to visit Tuszyn with us. Tuszyn, where their father had lived. (He died two years ago). After dinner, we all walked through old Warsaw and spent hours catching up with each other's memories.

The Claims Conference allocates approximately $100 million of Successor Organisation funds every year. Demographic studies (available on the Claims Conference Web site) show that there will be extensive needs on the part of survivors over the next 10 to 15 years. As survivors who are currently around age 75 get older, their needs will become greater. Yet the sources of restitution funding that are supporting current Claims Conference allocations for social services will not last nearly that long.

Those who know the Claims Conference know what we have accomplished and, more importantly, our devotion to what still needs to be done. The time is short and work monumental. Read our Web site to see what we do and why. Together, let's help those who suffered so much while we can.

In breakthrough, claims conference secures $250 million from Germany for additional 6,000 Holocaust survivors worldwide

In a breakthrough for Holocaust survivors, the Claims Conference has successfully obtained a major revision in its Article 2 Fund pension programme. The change will result in an estimated $250 million in payments over the next 10 years to an additional 6,000 survivors worldwide. The shift came following months of negotiations with the German Ministry of Finance, which will provide the funding for payments to those who are eligible.

Under the Article 2 Fund programme, as specified by German government criteria, the annual net income of an applicant may not exceed the local currency equivalent of US $16,000, after taxes. The relevant income limit for residents of Germany and other European countries can be obtained from the Claims Conference office in Germany. Due to Claims Conference negotiations, many benefits paid to elderly survivors will no longer count toward that income limit. With 51,000 survivors currently receiving Article 2 payments, this will lead to a more than 10 percent increase in the number of people who will now qualify for payments.

These negotiations established that as of October 1, 2007, all old age pensions – including governmental pensions, social security payments, occupational pensions and retirement plans - as well as pensions awarded for a reduction in earning capacity, industrial injury, occupational disease, and loss of life, or any comparable payments will not be counted towards calculation of the income limit, effectively granting payments to thousands more survivors. In addition, only the net income of the applicant will be considered, and not the income of his or her spouse, changing the previous rule.

Specific details including which payments constitute comparable payments and limitations regarding assets of the applicant) are available on the Claims Conference website.

These changes reflect the long-standing Claims Conference position that compensation payments, which recognize Nazi persecution and suffering, should not be based on income criteria and should be paid irrespective of financial need. In previous negotiations, the Claims Conference had obtained the exclusion of social security payments from the computation of income for persons age 70 and older who met all other fund criteria.

The Claims Conference has implemented an international outreach campaign to inform survivors of these major changes in the program.

Persons currently receiving a monthly pension under the German Federal Indemnification Law (BEG) or a pension from the Israeli Ministry of Finance under the Israeli Nazi Persecutions Disabled Persons Law 5717-1957 cannot also receive a pension from the Article 2 Fund.

Eligibility for the Article 2 Fund is determined by the German government and is also based on a survivor's persecution history, including incarceration in certain camps or ghettos, forced labor, and time in hiding or living under false identity. Full eligibility criteria are available on the Claims Conference website at: http://www.claimscon.org/?url=article2/eligibility

the facts.

The Claims Conference goes to extraordinary lengths to be open and transparent, more so than virtually any other major Jewish organisation. We take our fiduciary and moral responsibility seriously. Accountability and oversight are central to who we are and what we do.

The Claims Conference posts on its Web site every year the full financial statements resulting from its yearly audit by Ernst & Young. www.claimscon.org/audit. Accompanying the financial statements are summary charts, www.claimscon.org/financial, of Claims Conference revenue, expenses, and liabilities and net assets as of Dec. 31 of the preceding year. As soon as the independent auditors sign off on the financial statements for 2006, they, too, will be posted on our Web site.

Also on the Claims Conference Web site you will find the following:

- A complete list of allocations made by the Claims Conference: www.claimscon.org/grants
- A description of the allocations process: www.claimscon.org/allocations-process
- The guidelines for allocations: www.claimscon.org/guidelines
- Data on needs and demographics regarding Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, including reports regarding current and projected needs of Nazi victims, a significant basis for allocations decisions: www.claimscon.org/demographics
- An overview of the Successor Organisation, which recovers unclaimed property in the former East Germany: www.claimscon.org/successor-process
- A report on current assets and pending claims: www.claimscon.org/successor-assets
- A Chart showing revenue 1993-2005: www.claimscon.org/successor-revenue.

Information on the Independent Review Authority for individual survivors regarding compensation programs: www.claimscon.org/appeals.

This is just some of the information available to the public concerning the Claims Conference. There is plenty more to be found on the Web site.

All kinds of numbers have appeared in the media regarding the assets of the Claims Conference. The following is the reality. As detailed in the 2005 financial statements, the Claims Conference had $900 million in total assets at the end of the year. This amount falls into two categories, funds that are committed for specific payments and those that are not, all of which is detailed in the audit:

A. Funds with commitment: $587 million

- $253 million for payments to identified heirs of property in the former East Germany that the Claims Conference has recovered under German law.
- $47 million in reserve generally for specific heirs of property in the former East Germany who are in the process of producing documentation and/or may be eligible for such payments.
- $238 million in grants payable, which are funds already allocated to programs for survivors but not yet disbursed by the Claim Conference to the agency that is implementing the program.
- $20 million designated for contractual obligations: funds exclusively for distribution to designated survivors and heirs (which was done in 2006).
- $29 million is designated as "other," which are 2005 accrued expenses that were paid in 2006.

B. Funds not yet committed: $313 million

- Of this $313 million, $38 million was designated for allocations to be made in 2006.
- The remaining $275 million is set aside for the long-term needs of Nazi victims as they age.

Additionally, East German properties that the Claims Conference has recovered but not yet sold are described in the financial statements. While we have estimated a value of $50 million for these properties, we recognise that they are the remainder of the properties we have put up for sale and, as expected, will be the most difficult to sell. The number of pending claims is available on our Web site.

John Fox and his family in Piotrkow.

The next morning, we arrived in Tuszyn. At the city hall, we met with another four cousins from Paris. They were successful in finding some of our family history certificates (birth, death and marriage). We came away with an earnest promise on the clerk's behalf to email us any further information that he could find. He remained true to his word. He has since sent a copy of my parent's marriage certificate and an entry for my sister's birth. He is now working on school records and has emailed me many pictures of students.

The Mayor of Tuszyn presented me with a book about the history of this town that he says now has a population of about 12,000. He even suggested that I consider buying some property to build a home. I can't really put into words just how absurd I found this suggestion to be.

Tuszyn has changed significantly in twenty years. I found it to be almost unrecognisable. The water pump that I used as a child was now covered by a decorative flowerbed. The school house has been renovated and enlarged. Our family's home is gone and nothing has been built on the lot where it stood. The cobblestones have been replaced with asphalt. The kosher butcher is now an apartment house. The bakery where the children watched the matzos being made is now a travel agency.

There is nothing left to indicate that this had once been the Jewish centre of Tuszyn. It was as if the neighbourhood, that I remembered, had never existed. I found myself wishing that I hadn't come back at all. I had to remind myself why I had returned ... to show my grandchildren their history.

It was time to start the journey to Piotrkow. The same journey that I and my family had taken so long ago in the winter of 1939. Today, the train station in Piotrkow is a busy place. The street is lined with busy restaurants and shops. As the train arrived, I couldn't help but remember the boxcars that took so many to their fate at Treblinka. Our family gathered around and I told them my memories of the deportation of the ghetto dwellers.

I pointed out the Hortensia-Kara glass factory where I had worked during the war. We found it to be closed and in bad condition. The windows are broken and the property is overgrown with weeds. I showed the children where the furnaces once stood.

In the Piotrkow ghetto, we walked to the synagogue. It has been a public library for many years. Upon entering, I wondered how anyone would even know that this building had ever been a temple. The librarian told us that the smaller building next door housed the "torah room" and that was what I wanted our family to see. Up two flights of stairs and through stacks of books, there, hidden from view, is the mural of the torah that I remembered from my childhood. The paint is very faded and the bullet holes have not been patched. The only visible evidence of the crimes committed in this building during World War II.

The next morning, we set off to Krakow and to Auschwitz. About a mile outside of Auschwitz, we find our bus travelling parallel with a train on its way there. One cannot help but look at the train and think what a different purpose it once had.

Once inside Auschwitz, we did not take a guided tour but opted to walk around at our own speed. A French cousin takes the floor and shares some of her father's experiences in this camp. We were grateful for her courage in telling the stories because it was so emotional for her to do so. Some of her father's stories jogged memories of my own and I would add whatever details I could remember from my time in the camps.

We stopped by the crematoriums which housed the ovens, some of which are still intact, as are the chimney stacks. It is an emotional visit but the visuals are well worth the lesson that they deliver.

We return to Krakow. Our driver takes us to the street where the movie "Schindler's List" was filmed. The FABRYKA OSKARA SCHINDLERA EMAILA is a factory off the beaten track in a rundown neighbourhood. Outside is a plaque in honour of Oskar Schindler which reads "Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world".

We decided to have dinner in the Jewish quarter. This is where the original Jewish ghetto existed but there is little evidence of a Jewish population now. We chose a restaurant called Alef Restaracia because they offer Jewish music in the evening and kosher-style food. There were twenty-one in our group.

Next stop Prague. We cross the Czech border easily. It is definitely a lot simpler to travel now than it was in 1945. I wanted to give the children a feel for how far I had travelled back and forth after the liberation.

We travel to Theresien. Inside the fortress it has the feel of a village, complete with a book shop and a café. There are sculptures dedicated to those who died here during World War II. The building where the "300" were housed, is now the site of the museum. The several hundred graves have been made into memorials and there are red roses planted everywhere. I recognized the Olympic-sized swimming pool (which is now empty) from my own visit in 1945. Roman Halter and I swam in this same pool in July 1945. The orchard is flourishing and we all ate an apple picked fresh from a tree.

The whole family posed for a photo on the steps in front of the museum - the same building where my brother Harry and I had sat, as boys, over 60 years ago.

My life in England and the States

David Borgenicht

It has been a long time since I wrote to the Journal. For those of you who cannot remember who I am, I shall again identify myself. After spending the years from 1942 – 1944 in six concentration camps in Poland, I arrived in Buchenwald. After two weeks, I was "on the road again" to Schlieben, where I worked on the Panzerfaust shoulder guns. After a while, I was transferred with some of you to Zinderpackung, where we packed the zinders in boxes, with German ladies sitting between us. In April of 1945, I was on a three week journey to Theresienstadt. I was liberated with many of you by the Russian Army on May 5 1945. On August 14th, about 300 of us flew to England. We stayed a short time in Windermere, then we were divided into groups of 25 – 30 to live throughout the British Commonwealth. In order to avoid the London fog, because I suffered from Pleurisy in Biezenow in the winter of 1942, I was sent to Bedford. When the O.R.T. opened up the vocational school in London, I asked the Refugee Committee, to transfer me to London. I stayed at 93 Stamford Hill from 1946 to 1947, while attending courses at the O.R.T. school. I asked to be in the electrical department because I used to follow my uncle on his electrical jobs. I was told that I have to try other courses first. I joined the "radio" department, where I learned theory and practice and we repaired radios that private people brought in for repairs. They were only charged for material. Last year, I received a letter from Canada from my former O.R.T. teacher.

From there, I transferred to "welding". I like it and I successfully completed "acetylene (gas) welding, and started on "electric welding". I was doing well and my instructor wanted me to stay in welding but, due to the fact that I had suffered from pleurisy in the Camp of Biezenow (near Cracow) in 1942 - for which I was not treated – by the end of the day of electrical welding, I did not feel well. The dust from the electrical welding, apparently, was settling on my lungs and I had trouble breathing. I was sent to the hospital for a check-up and X-ray. The doctor returned with a proposition, that I go for nine months to a

A press-conference was held which was chaired by Jerzy Halberszadt, with – among others – Jan Chodakowski in the Museum panel facing the press.

The groundbreaking ceremony was followed by lunch in Warsaw Town Hall at which diplomas were offered to various supporters of the project.

Many in attendance thought that the groundbreaking ceremony was very successful as an event, but more significantly served to remove any residual anxieties about whether the project would be finalized. "I now know it is going to happen" was a phrase that echoed throughout the day.

Images

Written on the occasion of the 61st anniversary of the Holocaust

Colette Littman

Colette is a Director of the Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation.

Tell me friend how to imagine the unimaginable
how to visualise what has no visual images,
the mental agony, the terror, the helplessness and the pain
of a people sentenced without appeal.

Tell me how to relate to their experience,
how to grasp the chaos which destroyed faith,
how to realise the stark finality of the final solution
because I could have been one of them.

Tell me how to forgive the unfounded accusation
the age-old curse, the loss of future generations
and let me question man's humanity
with six million unanswered questions.

Tell me how to deal with evil
how to believe that man is in G-d's image
man who destroys G-d's creation
man who kills G-d's image.

The claims conference: Perception and Reality

Julius Berman

Julius Berman is Chairman of the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany.

The Claims Conference is approaching its annual meeting in July, during which the board of directors explores the search for additional restitution assets to alleviate the physical and emotional problems of ageing Holocaust survivors. The board also determines policies concerning the allocation and distribution of available funds, among other items.

Recently, the Claims Conference has been subject to some criticism in the media, most of it based upon myths that persist about this organisation despite all evidence to the contrary. The topic of Holocaust restitution and the distribution of compensation funds is an understandably emotional issue, but that does not excuse statements about the Claims Conference that are simply wrong and that can be easily disproved by a look at

Apocalypse or Armageddon in the Middle East

Michael Etkind

This is the place where it all began
Is man now watching his impending doom...?

Iran will make the bomb
The terrorists will get it
Soon
And then –
All hell breaks loose
And spreads
Around the globe

Will Israel destroy the plant
As in Iraq
Will Europe blame them
If they do
And will America assist
Or turn her back

What should man do
Before it is too late
And radio active dust blots out the sun

Is man now watching his impending doom

Groundbreaking Ceremony

Shanni Ross
Chairperson of the Friends of The Museum of Polish Jews in Warsaw

The groundbreaking occurred on 26th June 2007 and was given wide and enthusiastic coverage by the Polish media.

The ceremony was held on the site of the future Museum of the History of Polish Jews (site of the Warsaw Judenrat during the war), and in close proximity to the Memorial to the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The central event of the day was the interment of a Foundation Charter signed by both Polish and international personalities in attendance. Prime among the latter were the current President of Poland (Lech Kaczynski), an ex-President of Poland (Alexander Kwasniewski), an ex-German President (Richard von Weizsacker), the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Meir Lau), the archbishop of Warsaw (Kazimierz Nycz), and the current Mayor of Warsaw (Hanna Gronkiewicz-Walet). The Charter was signed on behalf of our own fundraising committee by Shannie Ross.

The interment of the Charter was preceded by a series of speeches. The President of Poland referred to the project as a "belated success story which should have been brought to fruition much earlier." The very charismatic former Chief Rabbi of Israel began by saying that "...for all to see, the heavens are weeping with joy" (the groundbreaking ceremony had begun with a heavy downpour), and then, after a pause, added "and better late than never", a reference again to the late fruition of the project. He also spoke about his own Polish origins, and warmly touched upon his friendship with Pope John Paul II. Further speeches were made by - among others - the very popular Shevah Weiss, an ex-ambassador of Israel in Poland, and former Speaker of the Knesset and a short but enthusiastic one was given by the personal envoy of President Bush, Tevi Troy, who the previous day had been to visit the birthplace of his grandmother and of whose community nothing remained. Shimon Peres was unable to attend, but a letter from him was read out by the current Israeli ambassador in Poland.

The speeches were punctuated with music brought to the ceremony by a section of the Vienna Philarmonic, a leading Polish jazzman, a Jewish lament was sung in Yiddish by a well known Polish-Jewish singer.

T.B. Sanatorium. I protested: "I lost my education during the six years of war and now I am trying to make a persona of myself. how can I take off nine months and stop my education. The doctor came up with this answer: "You are now 18 years old. you have at least another 50 years to live – that is 600 months: what is 9 months out of 600 months if you know that you are going to get well?" It was an offer that I could not refuse. I was sent to Ugley, outside Ashford. Kent. After nine months, I returned to London and moved into the Finchley Road Hostel. I returned to the O.R.T. school and joined the electrical department. I graduated in 1948. I could not get a job in the trade, so I joined Chaim Cohen in a new ice cream factory in the East End of London. While in the Finchley Hostel. I was elected treasurer for one year and asked not to be elected for the year of 1949, but I was drafted and, together with Moishe (Religious adviser) we ran the place. It was not an easy task. I even had to tell the cook to vary the meals from day to day and not to burn the soup.

In December of 1949 – after three years of waiting – with two affidavits. I obtained my visa and travelled with two other of our boys to New York City. I could not get a job in my trade. I worked in a radio factory for a few months and then I was out of a job. I went to the employment office, willing to take any job. I was offered a job as a shipping clerk. When I was willing to accept it, I was asked if I had a High School Diploma. My reply: "To take packages to the Post Office. I need an H.S. Diploma?" He replied that I did not, but the next guy had an H.S. Diploma. He got the job. Eventually, I got a job from a distant cousin – to repair electrical instruments and taking packages to the Post Office.

In the spring of 1951, my O.R.T. friend, Marian Rosenblum, arrived in Buffalo, N.Y., where he stayed with his uncle and aunt. He had no friends because all our boys came to New York City. He called me, asking if I would like to come to Buffalo (400 miles from New York City). I replied: "I would, if you can get me a job as an electrician." He answered: "My boss is hiring." A few days later, I put my basket suitcase in the bus in the evening and, the next morning, I was in Buffalo. I immediately had a job and also registered in evening High School. Monday, Wednesday and Friday I had classes, while Tuesday and Thursday evenings I had off. Over the weekend, a neighbour died and the family was sitting Shiva, with evening prayers. On Tuesday evening I attended the prayers when a man in his 30s was observing me. After the service, we both went outside and it was still daylight. He asked me where I was during the war (one greenhorn recognises another). I mentioned the four camps in the Cracow area and then Skarzysko. He said: "I was there." There were about 5,000 people there. As we stood there talking, his wife approached us on the way to do some shopping. She said to me: "Have I got a girl for you!" I asked: "How old is the girl?" She replied: "She is 16 years old." I said: "I have nothing to do with girls under 18." Two days later, on Thursday, again I attended the prayers. After the service, the man asked me if I would like to see his house. I agreed – it was only half a block away. My future father-in-law and his sixteen-year-old daughter rented two rooms in his apartment on the second floor of a two-family building. When I arrived, the man's wife did not waste any time but went downstairs to the tenant where my future bride was watching "Milton Berle" on T.V., and called her upstairs. She was 16 and I was 23. After we talked for a while across the table, I found out that she went through the war with her mother and her mother was killed after the war by her neighbours. She was 9 years old when her mother was killed. She was sent by the Jewish returnees on a long journey, with wounded Russian soldiers, to join her aunt in Uzbekistan-Russia. She returned to Poland in 1945, not knowing if her father survived. She was reunited with her father, left for Germany, waited for a U.S. visa until 1950, and then arrived in Buffalo.

She was shopping, cooking and doing laundry for her father and herself. She was not what we call in America a J.A.P. (Jewish American Princess). Within a couple of months we became engaged. On June 8th 1952, we got married. In 1955, I graduated High School. I attended the University of Buffalo for two years until I lost my job. I studied for my business licence and went into business for myself.

On June 8th, 2007, my wife Rose and I will have been married 55 years.

Memories of the Holocaust

Roman Halter

The Imperial War Museum mounted a permanent exhibition of Roman's paintings which are reproduced here. It was with great pride that many of our members attended the launch.

Born in Chodecz, Poland, the seventh and youngest in his family, Roman Halter was twelve when the Second World War broke out. As Nazi measures against the Jews of Poland intensified, he was moved with a part of his family to the ghetto in Lodz where he became a metalworker. Conditions in the ghetto were appalling and by 1942 his entire family had died either through starvation, ill-treatment or murder. Work in the Lodz Ghetto nonetheless gave Halter some protection until 1944 when he was deported to Auschwitz. There he was fortunate to be selected to work and weeks later was sent on to another camp – Stutthof, where the cold winds of the Baltic made the camp inmates' lives barely endurable. From there he went to Dresden, where he survived the Allied air raids in February 1945 and eventually found freedom through escaping from a death march.

At the end of the war Roman Halter returned to Chodecz to find he was one of only four survivors from the town's 800 Jews. Halter was one of the 732 young survivors of the camps to be flown by the RAF to Britain in 1945. There he rebuilt his life and became an architect. Only twenty-five years later was he able to use his memories of those terrible times to make these paintings.

Quite soon after his arrival in Britain Halter started visiting the National Gallery and found windows into his own experiences within the paintings, most notably in the images of the Crucifixion. In the painting 'Shlomo', for example, the anguished body of the crucified Christ known from Renaissance painting comes to represent the body of Halter's brother, hanged by the Nazis for an act of compassion. These familiar sources are overlaid with script and imagery that reflects Halter's own Jewish upbringing, and by barbed wire that binds the faces and bodies in pain. Together they merge Jewish identity with atrocity and judgement with race. Interwoven into these broken patterns are the faces of the masses, caught innocently in this tragedy.

A few of Romans' friends at the inauguration of Romans' exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.

Roman's Paintings

Woman Wearing Mantilla

Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

On the Sabbath, sitting in the ladies' gallery in the synagogue, it was fashionable for Polish Jewish women to wear a Mantilla. My mother looked wonderful in it. The mantilla was itself covered by a fine veil. This fashion may have arrived in Poland with the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492.

Holocaust Memorial: A Timely Reminder

Ramaa Sharma (Interviewed by BBC radio)

A Holocaust survivor urges people to unite and learn from the mistakes of the past at the borough's annual memorial service.

Arthur Poznanski described himself as 'one of the last Mohicans' at this year's memorial service held in Valentines Park, Gants Hill.

Saddened by the current state of the world's affairs, he talked about his responsibility to share his brutal experiences.

He says:
"We have a lot of trouble all over the world. Hatred, discrimination and violence is still erupting... and even genocides on larger and smaller scales. I think maybe by quoting what happened to us we can influence people to abandon this type of pursuit and live in peace."

Arthur calls himself one of the lucky ones. His parents, like many others, tried to find labour work for their children so they would escape deportation.

He recalls:
"Deportations were actually to a death camp, nobody believed it was so. Our parents sold their jewellery and by all means, bribed the authorities to give their youngsters a chance of life ... giving them up as slaves to German war industries."

Arthur urged people to learn from the terror of his past.

The service was a public event, inviting local dignitaries, as well as students from local comprehensives. Teenagers from the King Solomon's school were applauded for their touching contributions.

However, Arthur believes that young people today don't give the event enough importance and he thinks that must change. It's why Arthur is in the process of touring schools and writing a memoir. One that he hopes to publish in the near future.

We have Survived

Michael Etkind

We have survived by hiding
In the chaos of confusion
To scatter and to plough
Through yet another day
We shared illusions
Of a purpose and a mission
Of being special in a very special way

We thought that with survival
Came a duty
We were to urge the world
To change its former ways
Abandon hatred murder retribution
And live in peace
With all that life entails

We saw that hatred's
Not the answer for the living
That hate breeds hate
And urges men to slay
That man must learn
And practise real forgiving
To build a better future day by day

This earth is not as yet a space
Of calm and peace
But for as long as we're still here
We must convey
The horrors we have seen
And pray
The world becomes a better place

Before we disappear

painted this. I looked in the religious paintings in the National Gallery for the gentle young that reminded me of the face of that young girl from the wagon that I have carried all this time in my mind.

Mother with Babies
Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

In October 1943, Himmler addressed a group of high-ranking SS officers, heads of the GAU (administrative regions) and many members of the Nazi party. His speech, delivered at the SS retraining centre in Pozen, concerned the Jewish people. He gave the order that the rest of European Jewry must be done away with and that the task should begin with the youngest. He argued that if they were allowed to grow up, then they would revenge themselves by murdering the German children. Following that speech the SS began to murder mothers with their babies. Other murders continued with great intensity.

I was in the Lodz ghetto in October 1943 where Rumkowski, the head of the Jewish Ghetto committee was told by the SS to announce in the market square that mothers should give up their children. Instead the mothers chose to go on the transports together with their children.

Moses the Prophet
Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

After the destruction of the First Temple, the Jewish People were dispersed and gradually settled around the world. In some of these countries they formed welcome minorities. In others, they suffered pogroms, persecutions and all sorts of tribulations. But throughout their dispersion, they held on to their trust, and worshiped their God. They did not blame God for the calamities that befell them; rather, they blamed themselves for having sinned. Even today, I have heard Orthodox Jewish people explaining that the Holocaust occurred as God's punishment for the transgressions of the Jews in Europe in the last century. In this painting, we see the strong, angry face of the Prophet, Moses. He is wearing a talit – a striped Jewish prayer shawl, and tefilim - phylacteries, little black boxes containing sacred texts of prayers which are bound by leather straps to the forehead and the upper arm of a man while he is praying. This is taken from the Shema – Hear, O Israel prayer: And you shall bind them . Here, Moses is looking down onto the mothers and children, all naked, as they are led towards their death in the concentration camp. Within the faces of Moses are the images, painted small, which form the subject of the other six paintings in the series.

***Shlomo* 1**
Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

My eldest half-brother, Shlomo, was hanged in 1940. This was a few months before we were sent to the Lodz ghetto. He was taken with other Jewish men from our town of Chodecz to work on the Berlin-Pozen highway. He was in charge of a group of men, and tried to get extra bread for them from outside the compound enclosure. He was caught.

We received a letter telling us that Shlomo had been hanged and that his best friend was made to do the hanging. My father, holding the letter with trembling hands, his tears running down his face, read the letter out loud to us. When he was hanged his feet touched the ground and he couldn't die. So the noose was removed and he stood and swayed. Then he fell. At the time of his death Shlomo was thirty-one.

In some of the paintings I saw later in life, where Christ is being taken down from the cross, I saw Shlomo. Although he must have had his hands tied behind his back before he was hanged.

Before producing this painting, I visited the National Gallery in London and came across Goya's portrait of Doña Isabel de Porcel. His painting reminded me of my mother's dignified look. My mother had a longer face.

Each time I see the portrait of Doña Isabel de Porcel I imagine my mother sitting in the balcony and looking down on the men praying below.

Starved Faces

Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

Starvation was one of the methods used to murder the Jewish people. Those of us who held onto life and existed on a starvation ration found that our facial appearance changed greatly. The Nazis wished to show that the Jews looked physically different and therefore were different from the German master race.

Under normal circumstances we all read faces. In this painting I wanted to show that we, the starved, could no longer read each other's faces. They had all become haggard, ugly and distorted. We could only read the eyes, search there for a response. The eyes communicated friendship, courage, defiance, compassion and life.

On the forehead of the main central face the words from the Yiddish song – Do not ever say that you are walking along the last road..

Man on the Electrified Barbed Wire

Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

Auschwitz-Birkenau was the extermination section of Auschwitz. I arrived there in 1944, aged 17. On arrival, our group of 500 were selected for slave labour, but while we were in Birkenau nothing was certain and all the time we were kicked and beaten for no reason at all.

Yet nothing could take away my desire to go on, to live, to survive. Hope or no hope, I wanted to live. It was not something I pondered or thought about. Life drove me on. I never saw myself dead, no matter what. When I was hit I nursed my bruises. The day's portion of bread was eaten up moments after it was handed out; when it was gone and nothing was left for the afternoon and evening. I starved like the others, but I still wanted to live.

It was different for those over thirty. A man over thirty knew what life was like before the war and what the world was like then. He could understand that, whether the Germans were winning or losing, they were continuing to murder Jews. He could see no hope in the present or the future.

This man on the wire has lost his children. They were taken from him. This broke the spring of his life. His daily tortures, starvation and the lack of hope made it easier for him to do away with himself than live. So he ended his life on the electrified barbed-wire fence that surrounded us, where it took only seconds.

Transport

Production Date: 1974-77
Medium: oil on canvas

Jewish people were transported to extermination camps in goods wagons and cattle wagons.

When I was sent from the Lodz ghetto to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944 we were locked in, eighty people per wagon. The train journey, which normally would have taken a few hours, took two and a half days. We travelled without water, food and with very little air. This was done intentionally. The purpose was to deliver us semi-dead at the end of our journey.

The cattle wagons were dirty and the grime became ingrained into our skins. Tightly though we were packed we tried to make a bit more space for mothers with their young. I remember the face of one mother in particular with dirt ingrained in the grooves of her face as she held an angelic, pale looking young daughter. Before I


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