

JOURNAL

'45

OF THE AID SOCIETY

No. 6

MAY 1979

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JOURNAL OF THE '45 AID SOCIETY

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

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They should, if possible, be typed in double-spacing and reach the Editor not later than 10th September 1979.

EDITORIAL

This time we have to begin with an important announcement.

Readers who have a sense of history will be aware that 1980 is the year of the 35th anniversary of our liberation. No doubt the attendance at the 1980 reunion will reflect that fact. However, it has occurred to some of us that, after 35 years, the time has come to take a closer, and more systematic, look at our group to record where we came from, and where we are today. There is, in practice, only one way to do this, namely by means of a questionnaire, which is currently being prepared with the help of expert advice. The questionnaire will contain quite straightforward questions, and none that anyone would have any reason not to wish to answer. We therefore trust that we shall get a very good response.

It is hoped to publish the results of the questionnaire survey in time for the 1980 reunion. The results will certainly be of interest to our Members; to take but a simple example, they will enable us to meet requests such as that made in Mrs Ayalon's letter published in this issue. Furthermore, there is now considerable interest in medical circles in the long term effects of the kind of experience we had, so the results of our questionnaire may also be of some scientific relevance.

The questionnaire will, of course, be accompanied by an explanatory note, and the main purpose of the present announcement is to keep Members informed of the Society's plans, and to solicit any suggestions Members may have in this connection.

The contents of the current issue - as can be seen from the Section HERE AND NOW and from LETTERS - suggests that our readers are most interested in material which contains reports of our Members' current activities. If this is the case, the Section HERE AND NOW may gradually take over the whole Journal. The Editorial Board does not have any views about the appropriate contents of our Journal and, even if it did, would not wish to impose them. The contents of our Journal should be determined by the interests of our readers and contributors. Are you perhaps going to become one of the latter?

"YOUTH" REMEMBERED

THE DAY I COUNTED MY BONES

by Felix Berger

It was late September morning
The sun was full of promise
And I was very young.
A mild autumnal wind
Scattered russet-coloured leaves
And the fields were green.

A scintilla of hope
Emerged from the graves,
Pushing aside
Five years of bodies.
My God-given life
Almost secure.

Not many hours later
Through a circular hole
In a cattle truck
I surveyed heaven and earth,
I turned to Zion
There where it all began.

In a beautiful sunset
I walked slowly in shock
In a tree-lined avenue
Mocked by man and God.
What is there beyond
What is there beyond?

Evening came
A million years passed
The pains had gone
The nightmares began
Winter settled in my bones
I was no more young.

A RESPONSE TO ARTEK

by Michael Etkind

Artek I read
each one and every word
you wrote
a dozen times

and cried

Your brother was
my younger one
as well

and million others
who
have perished

to make Lebensraum,

more living space;

who failed
to re-emerge
like I and you

And now,
it seems important
to me
that we say,
in this,
the only way we can,

what they

would wish us to

HERE AND NOW

- 1) Moniek Goldberg . The author came to England with the Windermere group, whence he went to Loughton and then to Belsize Park. He went to North America in the late 40's, now lives in Florida and manufactures ladies' clothing.

- 2) Perec Zylberberg The author came to England with the Windermere group, then went to Alton and is now in the clothing business in Montreal. He is known for his love of Yiddish and its literature.

- 3) Jake Fersztand The author was one of the younger members of the Windermere group, went to Cardross, came to London to study structural engineering which he now practices in Switzerland.

WE AND THE HOLOCAUST - TODAY

by Joesph Goldberg - (Moniek Goldberg)

Hollywood's latest spectacular has brought the subject of the Holocaust into millions of living rooms around the world and generated wide discussion. But for me, and others like me, the subject has always been present.

Ever since the end of the war, in England and later in the United States, people would approach the subject. Invariably they would say, "if it is too painful to talk about...", or "I imagine you would rather forget about the past..." Many questions have been asked of me, such as the one from my former British employer, Mr Levy, which he posed in 1946: "Was it all true? Or was it just war propaganda to make us hate the Germans more?" How was that for empathy? To another question often asked, "how

could you, a mere youngster, have survived if it was so tough?" Or, "why didn't you do something? Why did you let yourselves be slaughtered like sheep?" I answered Mr Levy, "... it was propaganda." As a rule I have avoided such discussion.

At first I felt hurt but as I grew older I came to realize that I cannot expect people to understand; or to comprehend the incomprehensible; to believe the unbelievable. The tragedy that befell our people was so great, so complete, that one cannot imagine it. Six million people - the mind boggles - and so it becomes a statistic, along with other statistics; a symbol rather than a reality.

To me and to others like me, the tragedy is not a statistic. It is not a six and six zeros that is so often used at fund-raising and communal yizkors. I can see the faces of my mother and father; of my sisters - not a six and six zeros. But the faces of aunts and uncles, and close to fifty cousins whom I knew and many others whom I never had a chance to know. I see faces of neighbours and playmates who are no more. If I want to indulge in statistics I think of all the children with whom, at the age of seven, I started primary school. Then I take from that number my gentile schoolmates who are still alive and estimate the number of children and grandchildren they have. Then I think of my Jewish schoolmates of that year and I know that besides myself only Andzia is still alive today. She was lucky because her parents left Poland before 1939. I do not know how many children or grandchildren she had. I have four children. So much for statistics.

Our tragedy is so great, the places of death are so numerous, that it is no wonder that people have a hard time remembering any except the few most infamous ones: Buchenwald, Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Treblinka. Whoever heard of Kurszyn? It is never mentioned yet I lost six cousins and many more friends and landsleit there. Nor does it ever come up that in Kruszyn a group of Jews threw themselves at their guards near the pits and with their bare hands grabbed a few of their murderers to die with them.

We are told that we have an obligation to talk about the Holocaust. That we must tell our children. But what do I tell them? Do I take them by the hand and say "come, I'll guide you through a wilderness, a devastation, I shall recount to you a litany of deaths, suffering, and annihilation in all its gory detail"? Shall I do that? I do not think I can. After all it isn't quite like our Rabbi's telling of the Exodus; they were relating a miracle not a bitter tragedy. What do I tell them then? What is the miracle of the Holocaust? Who delivered the Jews? The Poles? The Germans? The Ukrainians? The Latvians? The Hungarians? The Pope? Franklin Roosevelt? The British Government? They all delivered the Jews. But to whom? Or to what? Some a greater number, some a lesser number, some by acts of commission, some by acts of omission but a total of six million were delivered to their deaths. There is no doubt about Eichman's guilt but had he refused (as he should have) there were others eagerly waiting to do his murderous job; which would have resulted in the same tragedy. Had Mr Roosevelt given haven to the Jews on the ship (as he should have) they would have been saved.

Finally, I can tell them, and perhaps this is the miracle of the Holocaust, that they are of a people with whom I was during their darkest hour of a long history of suffering, and never did our enemies succeed in bringing us down to their sub-human level. I can tell them that Jewish heroism stands out as a beacon of light in a dark sea of collaboration of the non-Jewish populations, whether it was in Warsaw, Vilno, Kurszyn or in many other places. I can tell them that Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto took longer for the Germans to conquer than did the whole of Poland. And I can tell them about a man named Chaim who gave us encouraging words from the gallows in Buna. Yes, we have paid a terrible price, but when I look at my children and the children of my friends I realize more than ever that the victory is ours. We are able and useful citizens of society and have families who give us a lot to be proud of.

A number of academicians have also written on the Holocaust. Alan Montefiore, as a moral philosopher, presents the subject to us. And I would like to address this concluding portion of my article to him. Mr Montefiore, you pose the question of whether or not you have the right to engage in discourse with us, survivors, and conclude that you do because you are Jewish and British and only the English Channel divided us during the war. In Jewish tradition it is considered one's duty to visit the bereaved in order to console them. But I seem to remember that it was the custom to delay the visit for the first day or so except for prayers, and to leave the family to themselves. When one thinks about it, it is quite logical; for what one might do is to try to console the inconsolable and offer such phrases as "... you have to think of yourself" and "try to forget", or "I know how you feel", the most trite of them all. Your father seemed to understand this and so did Mr Friedmann. The few times I met either of these gentlemen there was no discourse about the Holocaust. To your credit, Mr Montefiore, you mention feeling uncomfortable when talking to this group.

You state that people who have suffered look to others for the answers as to why they have suffered or for the causal conditions of their suffering. As to the causal conditions, this I leave to the academicians and philosophers; this is within the realm of their expertise. But as to your remark about looking to others after having "suffered", permit me to correct your use of the past tense. You should ask my wife when was the last time she woke me up from a nightmare. You see, the suffering is still very real although it may not be so visible on the surface. With all due respect, Sir, your comments reflect a basic lack of understanding about the feelings of us survivors that perhaps precludes the dialogue you seek. As to the "suave" feeling at having survived: I was not standing on the seashore watching the ship sink. I, Sir, was on the sinking ship and while I managed to swim ashore part of me went down with the ship and is still going down with the ship. I do not feel now, nor have I ever felt, the feelings of pleasure that I am supposed to feel according to "Lucretius ...Hume" or whoever else. Nor do I have any of the guilt feelings that I am supposed to have according to some other scholars. And that, Sir, is my point. While to most people the Holocaust is an academic subject, a television series, or an object of curiosity, for those of us who are survivors it remains today a very real nightmare.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT PARIS, MONTREAL AND LONDON

by Perec Zylberberg

Having very recently paid a visit to both London and Paris I caught on impulse the "French connection".

There is no tale of two cities involved. Nor is there any comparison to be drawn or unrequited love to be discussed as a result of this event.

When one of us, which means one of the few lucky survivors, goes anywhere or gets together with others, be it survivors like himself or herself or for that matter any person, Jew or Gentile alike, he or she will sooner or later stumble upon some thought, event, escape or anything that has a connection with the Holocaust.

We are in a way a remnant of a tribe and the sheer magnitude of the past or the whole impact of its meaning, follows one around wherever one goes.

I don't believe this is special or traumatic, I think it's a natural outcome of a most unnatural happening. Hence the continuous preoccupation with details, dates, encounters and the whole complex of what we call the aftermath. Since we are that much concerned, certain conclusions ought to be sought.

Here I come back to my French sojourn. Friends in Paris suggested that I go to visit the shrine of the "Unknown Jewish Martyr". Unfortunately I couldn't do it because of circumstances outside my control. But the idea never left me alone. After all, whilst still living in London I was very active in getting together as much as I could in support of this very imposing monument. It was erected by French Jewry with the active support of British Jews and I am sure others too. But aren't we poorer for not having a "weeping wall" in London? Does not our inner drive to live and relive the war years need a physical object to gaze at and embrace? I know these thoughts are heavy and poignant. I share them with my co-survivors in an attempt to find a fitting way to express our longing for some kind of fulfilment.

Montreal, where I have lived since 1958, has a variety of Jewish things which enhance its deeply rooted devotion to its Jewishness.

Maybe one day I shall drop a line to our crowd in London and elaborate on the various facets of this sprawling Jewish life.

Now I only want to add to my previous musings, by reporting to you that the city of Cote St. Luc, which is a heavily populated suburb of Montreal with a predominantly Jewish population, has named a street after Janusz Korczak, the martyred doctor of Warsaw, and a park after Arthur Zygielboim, the Jewish deputy in the Polish Parliament in exile.

Arthur Zygielboim chose voluntary death whilst in London, so as to share the fate of his brethren in Poland. Both Janucz Korczak and Arthur Zygielboim are symbolic names that tell the world, including the Jews, that their sacrifice was not in vain. It will be remembered.

One cannot finish sharing thoughts with old buddies and leave out London. It was certainly a very warm and pleasant encounter, when my wife and I arrived at the house of my old friend Lipa Tepper. The small reunion with friends of long standing was captivating. After all, we did spend many days, months and years together, under all kinds of circumstances. It was nice of the Tepper family to afford us such an opportunity.

Thanks to the hosts and all who came to participate in this get-together.

A LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

by Jake Fersztand

While visiting England for the reunion I was most warmly greeted by Ben at the end of the function. When Ben found out that Erica and I were planning to spend only a few more days in London, he insisted on having us over at his house before we left England.

Michael and Elaine, with whom we were staying in Watford and who spared no effort to make our visit very enjoyable, navigated Leon Freemans car to Harrow where we all spent a very pleasant evening with Ben and his wife. In the course of the evening, the conversation turned to the fact that I was the only one of "the boys" to have settled in Switzerland and Ben asked me to write something about my experiences there.

Although I have by no means severed all my ties with the rest of the crowd, one could say that I am pretty well isolated from it. Apart from the occasional passerby from England in search of the sun, my contacts are limited to at most half a dozen of "the boys". Because the meetings are rather rare, the pleasure of seeing one another is all the greater and on my part they are a great source of strength.

From the many aspects of living in a group or belonging to it I would like to say something about the strength and protection an individual can draw from the group and the feeling of security within it, as well as the fear of being exposed and misunderstood without.

The group was quite certainly a substitute for the family lost by most of us and it had a very strong influence on our development. The security we experienced through being protected by this group till we were able to stand on our own feet emotionally was invaluable and I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that within it one never really felt abandoned.

It is true that loneliness and a deep pain at the awareness of being the only one left (in many cases of quite sizeable families) prevailed in the hearts of most. I personally don't know what emotions were harboured by others after having found themselves uprooted from their families; one just didn't communicate feelings in those days. Yet, looking back, I would venture the guess that through our common past we found a higher level of understanding for one another in this group than is often possible among brothers and sisters in the normal family-cell.

After recent hijackings it was recognised as advisable for the hijacked, when liberated, to be kept together for several days before letting them rejoin their families at home.

The "digestive process" of such an experience is faster and more complete when one can communicate with those who shared the same fate, for one is likely to feel better understood. Similarly, the coherence of our group helped to accelerate the integration-process into "normal life" at a time when we hadn't digested any of our wartime experiences. It can doubtlessly be said that the group had a therapeutic as well as a protective value, and prevented overexposure to a way of life which most of us envied, and few thought attainable.

People of all backgrounds, ages and interests look for some group, be it simply in the form of club membership where one pursues a hobby, in the form of professional affiliation, or because of deeper feelings of faith or "Weltanschauung". A group can radiate an enormous amount of strength and those who belong to it can just draw on it. It's as simple as that providing they are sensitive enough to feel it.

I know that some of us who stopped to reflect on the subject are aware of this but I would think that most drew strength from this group subconsciously, and perhaps became aware of the significance of the group ties through a special experience.

There are comparatively few people who, by fate, were drawn into a group like ours and who, judging by the number attending the last reunion, adhere to it with such intensity (although I was told that not as many attended this time as on previous occasions). The fact that many of "the boys" founded "Colonies" in the USA, Canada, Israel etc. shows their will to keep the common experience alive and thereby ensure that the strength of the group is not lost. It is a strength that supplements that which most of us draw from our own families, but without which many of us would lack something.

As one who is at a geographical distance from it but in spirit has a strong sense of belonging to this group I began asking myself how much strength actually emanates from it. Is it a measurable quantity? Of how much is one deprived by being away from it and not actively participating in its activities? The fact that the need to meet and to have contact with one another does not diminish but, in fact, becomes greater, is shown by the formation of the new sections in the USA and Canada, that those in Israel instituted the Friday-night-parties, that sporadically someone shows up from as far afield as Australia or South America and looks for contact with some of us.

Is it possible that the one single component that makes happiness a single whole is missing from our family ties and other contacts we have, and that it can only be found in the group with whom we shared those early and unhappy experiences?

Or is our relationship to this group as individuals similar to that we would have had to our parents? Does it mean that we have to mature in order to become independent of it?

If one is fortunate one may become independent of one's parents but one never breaks with them. That's why I believe that there is no substitute for the ties that have grown through our common experience.

A friendly environment, an understanding family, success and satisfaction in our life can give us everything except that missing component which we can only draw from the group. That is why the reunion will not be obsolete as long as the last of us still has the strength to hold a leg of chicken in his hands. And even when some don't, it may be possible for them to regain some of their strength in the company of the remaining few who don't lack it.

A RECENT VISIT TO ISRAEL

by Kitty Dessau

I would like to write an open letter to our "boys" in Israel to thank them for the hospitality shown to myself, my husband Kopel, and Bob and Marie Obuchowski when we visited them in November. It had been 19 years since I was last in Israel and the changes since then are impossible to describe - it really was like visiting a completely new country for the first time! Of course, it was much bigger in size alone - and more built-up! I must say the heart of Tel-Aviv - ie. Dizengoff and Allenby were the only places I recognised! As for the part of Tel-Aviv with all the biggest hotels - 19 years ago that was only beach!

We paid a visit to Mischa - a must on the list - and would tell anyone else to do the same. It really was heartwarming to see the work carried out there, and with such love and kindness. It is good to see "our" money put to such beneficial use. But, I must tell anyone hoping to visit the School for Deaf Children - it is not residential and the school closes (mainly) at 12 o/c midday! To get there ask for the PLANETARIUM in Tel-Aviv. They use the most advanced methods and equipment and it really is an eye-opener to watch a deaf child being taught. Also I would advise any potential visitor to pay a visit at the same time to the New Museum quite close by to see the very interesting DIASPORA EXHIBITION.

But most enjoyable of all is the small "re-union" to see old faces! (Not so old!!!) Anyone (of the boys) has only to phone another member resident in Israel on arrival - to be offered the warm hand of friendship and hospitality. They are only too glad to see anyone so don't leave them out when you are visiting.

We saw Zvi Brand, Chiam Liss, Menachem Friekorn, Romek Weinstock, Moishe Rosenberg, Mordecai Levenstein, Shyer Brandweiss, Jacobowitz, Zef Trekiner, Myer Stern and many more. We also met Abraham Solomon there, who lives in the States and tells me he "builds cities"!! He originally came from Dzialoszyce and wonders if anyone remembers him? He now has two daughters aged nineteen and fifteen respectively - the elder one is at university studying speech therapy. He hopes to come to a reunion in the near future with his wife. Either 1979 or 1980. All the boys are only too proud and eager to tell of their clever children (and I don't blame them!) And as many of them who can, promised to come to the 1980 re-union. The BIG ONE!!

Our visit to Israel was all too short and over too quickly but we look forward to going again - before another 19 years! It's very nice to see friends one hasn't met for a long time, and spend a few happy hours in their company.

N.B. I have addresses of all the above-mentioned boys if anyone would like them.

A VISIT TO MISCHA

by Carol Farkas

Earlier this year, whilst Frank and I were in Israel we decided to pay a visit to the Mischa Home for Deaf Children, situated in Ramat Aviv.

No doubt you all know that Mischa is one of the homes to which the '45 Aid Society donates some of the money we collect at our annual reunions, and it was certainly one of the most rewarding and memorable places that we have ever visited.

When we arrived, we noticed at the entrance of the building, a few plaques inscribed with the names of the donors, and it was with great pleasure we saw the name of the '45 Aid Society.

We introduced ourselves to the Director, a very charming woman, who immediately upon hearing that we were from the '45 Aid Society, took us around the building to show us how our money was being spent. It is a very modern building, and we were very impressed with all the modern technological aids.

We went there on a Friday morning, and were shown a classroom with about twelve children, their ages ranging from about three to four years, being taught how to light the Shabbat candles and to take part in the Service. Each child was given a cup of 'wine', (which I could see they thoroughly enjoyed) and being taught to say the blessing. We were able to watch the children without being seen, as every classroom has a 2-way mirror.

This is to enable the parents to watch the progress of their children, so that when the children go home the parents themselves can continue to teach them by the same method. There is a microphone in each classroom so that the parents can also hear how the children are being taught.

Some classrooms are quite small, and these are used to give children individual attention. We watched one child being taught to speak by playing a game with the teacher, and when the child suddenly grasped what the teacher meant, and said a word, the teacher caught up the child in her arms and kissed her! It was amazing and really touching to see the patience and love being given to these unfortunate children. I say unfortunate, because of their disability, but they are really very lucky to have been born at a time when such advancements, and a place like Mischa, are at their disposal.

We were told that about two hundred children attend these classes. The earlier a child's deafness is diagnosed and the sooner it can start to learn, the better its chances of being able to speak. We were amazed to learn that they try to start teaching babies at the age of six months!

Everyone at Mischa was so pleased to see us, and asked us to thank all the members of the '45 Aid Society for the invaluable help we give.

I must add that after visiting such a wonderful place and meeting such devoted and unselfish people, Frank and I felt that we ought to give a lot more to such a worthy cause.

FROM OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Marilyn Cornell

The author, a teacher, is the daughter of Maier Cornell (formerly Cohen).

THE HOLOCAUST - SOME REFLECTIONS

by Marilyn Cornell

Come Purim, each year, we celebrate the downfall of a man - Haman, who set about to annihilate a people - the Jews. The plan misfired very badly for the intending villain and we see good in the forms of Mordechai and the fairy-tale like Queen Esther, dramatically triumph over bad, at the eleventh hour.

The build up to these events, as described in the Megillah, strikes eerie parallels with those of recent history. The Persia of Haman and Ahasuarus, was a vast empire, rich and powerful. They had overthrown the might of Babylon and the dispersed Jewish population fell under their jurisdiction. Into this situation arrived a man, in an elevated position, with what can only be described as an irrational hatred of Jews. This man was Haman and the scene was thereby set for the destruction of the Jews of Persia.

Now consider the Germany of 1938 - 1940. She was swelled to an Empire, as a result of her expansionist, military activities, an Empire which had swallowed up the greater portion of European Jewry. This Germany was lead by Hitler, who like Haman before him, was a pathological Jew hater, and to push the analogy further, planned a systematic mass genocide!

The time lapse between Haman and Hitler is enormous but their aims were identical. For the Jews of Persia, the story as we know ends happily. It ends sadly where the two stories diverge. There was no Queen Esther to intervene on behalf of the Jews of Europe. The eyes and ears of the allies, unlike those of Ahasuarus, were shut to their plight; the result - a Holocaust.

Purim with its gaiety and abandon, rejoices in our redemption from Haman. Will there in the year 20,000 be a day to similarly dance on Hitlers' grave? No, such a day would be inappropriate, for any celebration would be sobered by the memory of 6,000,000 dead; relatives yours and mine! You who survived the death camps, the sub-human conditions, the utter degradation and brutality and we, the off-spring of that remnant, have an obligation to ensure that the sacrifice of 6,000,000 is never forgotten.

What happened in those dark days of 1939-1945 is something that has always been in the background as I grew up. Strange really because it has been the policy of my parents to shelter us from the ugly facts of their adolescence. But, the spectre of the Nazi inheritance couldn't be shut out. As a young child I couldn't conceptualise events as an adult would, nevertheless certain aspects of my world were distorted. Until the age of 12+ I believed that not to have grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins was a norm, and to this very day find the demands of a typical Jewish family very hard to cope with. Similarly, I had an expectation that everyone's parents had some terrible story to relate about their past, when I was supposed to be out of ear-shot!

When I first began to hear, read and see things about the Holocaust, I was filled with a sense of utter incredulity, as if I was witness to some ghastly, perverted fiction. It was as if it was all so outrageously horrific, disgusting and non-human, that it couldn't be true. Now, it has sunk in that things beyond the imaginings of many a sadist happened, and happened within living memory. As I stood in Yad Vashem, the photographs and exhibits finally brought it home just how close to me it all is. What happened happened to my mother and father and I could visualise their faces in place of the pitiful faces staring out at me. Worse was to come, the awareness that had I been living there then I, too, would have come under the hammer of Nazi destruction. And why? For no other reason than that I was a Jew, a member of a group identifiably different from the main-stream culture. It was a very frightening realisation for someone who had grown up proud of Judaism, yet unaware of any basic difference from the average person in the street!

From Haman through Torquemada to Hitler, history has told the same grim tale - persecution of the exiled Jewish people. The death toll of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and the like, the callous, premeditated nature of them, must serve to remind Jewry today and in the future that though thousands of years have past, the nature of man remains essentially the same. This is why the institution of a fitting day of memorial to the Holocaust is so essential lest this lesson taught in blood be forgotten.

A Jew living in the Diaspora can never feel secure. Remember how pleasant life was for the German Jews in the pre-Hitler period, so pleasant indeed that they closed their eyes to the signs of trouble. Have we learnt anything from this? In the same way the Iranian Jews refused to accept that Khomeini was a real threat! For us living in England, are we not also guilty? Should we not take note of the rise of the National Front? If the Holocaust taught us one thing, it is that the only future for the Jews lies in their own state. Israel is the metaphorical Esther of today, it is the only thing we can rely on.

COUNTLESS TRAGEDIES

by Karen H Winogrodzki (Age 15)

The years 1939-1945 were a time for weeping,
Blood was shed without even thinking,
Bodies were scattered all over the ground,
Everywhere they were to be found.

A countless number of lives were taken,
The whole world was completely shaken,
No one would help to stop this killing,
It just went on while blood was spilling.

Some people were lucky to stay alive,
They ran and hid to save their lives,
They tried to survive to the end,
To keep in touch with all their friends.

People still remember those days,
Unfortunately they still remember in many ways,
Their life style has now changed,
But their memory still remains.

REVIEWS

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION *

by Michael Etkind

The road to Eilat winds
across the desert sands
 past hills
 which stand
and saw it all begin;
the silent witnesses
 to claim:-
there's nothing new
 beneath the rising
and the setting sun

Masada rises
from the sandy ground
to speak of freedom
at the price of death,
 while
from still warm ashes
 of the recent past,
the ghost of Auschwitz
 looms:-
its silhouette
so firmly hatched
 in red and black

Jacob is wrestling
with his angel still:-
his task unfinished
till the end of time

And in the midst of it,
oblivious to it all,
 they pray,
 immersed;
armed with their beards
and their praying shawls
and swaying gently
as they stand their ground;

their thoughts
 more solid
than the rocks around

The bird of paradise
 turns
and proudly preens
his lovely plumes,
while flowers bloom
 eternal
on the shining
 screen of glass

There were some very emotional scenes. People who had not seen each other for over 30 years, and could not even speak the same language, embraced each other and seemed to have a mutual understanding.

I called at Alice's flat the following day; she looked tired but very pleased. The house was full of visitors, the atmosphere friendly. When I mildly suggested that she perhaps should have a short rest, she replied that a small party must be held before the visitors return to America and Australia and, indeed, this took place on the following Sunday.

The TV programme was of a very high standard and I must add my praise for the organisers. All the people I met who watched the programme were moved to tears. I believe the whole viewing public was moved to tears: certainly all the members of the '45 Aid Society were deeply moved.

At such a time, when emotions are high, I would like to take the opportunity of reminding the boys of a less happy recollection. In 1965 Alice asked me to approach the Society with a request for four free tickets for members of the original home to attend our annual reunion. The Committee responded by telling me to write two formal letters stating my request, and after due consideration, reduced the price of 3 tickets from three guineas to two, and gave only one ticket free.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

On Sunday afternoon, December 17th I was at a gathering of "boys" and "girls" from the original Primrose Jewish Youth Club and others who had resided in London and Scotland following the end of the war. Moris Gantz brought back with him a bulletin from a recent visit to London and, reading it, we were made aware that you are soliciting letters from those who were members of the Primrose Club, no matter where they are now residing, in order to renew old friendships which have drifted by the wayside and across so very many miles. I think this is a marvellous way to find long lost friends and to inform each other what has been happening over the years. I, for one, have often wondered what has happened to "so-and-so", especially when looking over photographs from my youth.

I'll introduce myself by stating that I was a very active member of the Primrose Club from its inception. At that time I was Phyllis Fleischer - born and raised in London of Jewish-British born parents. I met a number of girls at school- The John Howard School for Girls, Laura Place, Clapton - girls like Gita Weinberger and Marta Gruber (I would love to know how they are) who took me along to the Primrose Club where I felt more than "at home" amongst the wonderful Eastern European youth who were determined to "live for today and tomorrow", not forgetting the past, but trying to find a way to prevent a reoccurrence of the atrocities of the past. Our home was always open to the friends I made at the club, as so many with whom we are still friendly in the United States remember. I even got myself married to one of the guys - Maurice Vegh. Remember him?

Maurice and I have been married for 22 years and have three wonderful sons - Warren, who is 20, and who is a Physical Education major at Hofstra University, Robert, who is 17, finishing his last year at High School, and Darryl, who is 15 and who is presently ski-ing in the Swiss Alps.

There are at least six couples, former Primrose members, with whom we meet socially here in New York and whose Simchas we each attend. There are others like Zita Weber, formally Zdenka Markowitz and her brother Max, who now reside in Detroit, Michigan and Rose and Max Schindler, residing in San Diego, California, whom we see periodically and with whom we correspond regularly. We attempt to attend each other's Simchas too, in spite of the great distances between us.

Maurice and I were delighted last year to learn of the formation of a group here in New York, and it was a very nostalgic reunion that we had in May 1978 with so many whom we hadn't seen or heard from in approximately 30 years. It was great to learn of their achievements in the business world, to hear of their marriages and the families they were raising. It was a very successful Dinner-Dance which promises to become an annual event - May 6th 1979 has been set aside for this year's reunion and I was selected

to be a member of the Dinner Committee. It would be great to have some "boys" and "girls" fly over for the occasion from London!! Our boys and girls flew in from far and wide - we were so glad to be able to accommodate a number of them from other States in our home for that glorious week-end.

We both feel a necessity to strengthen the bonds of our friendship with those with whom we spent our youth and would love to hear from those who still remember us. As for our status - Maurice owns a Beauty Salon here in Long Beach and I am the Secretary of Temple Israel in Long Beach.

Kindly put us on your mailing list. We hope that one day we will find ourselves in the position to attend one of your annual events in London; however, let me personally say how happy it makes me to learn that it was my country in which you first found a sense of belonging after the war and which has now proved home to so many of you.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Vegh
330 E. Olive St.
Long Beach
New York 11561
U.S.A.

We regret that Mrs Vegh could not find the addresses of Gita Weinberger and Marta Gruber on the list of Members we published. Fortunately, Salek Benedikt was able to supply the missing information, which we are now delighted to publish.

Gita Weinberger is married and her married name is Weissbarth. She emigrated to the U.S.A. some time ago and lives with her husband at the following address:

1611 55th Street
New York City
Telephone No: 436 7620

We were not told whether it is East or West 55th Street, but Mrs Vegh should have no difficulty in making contact.

Marta Gruber's married name is Cordell. She has been living in the USA for a long time. She has a son and a daughter, practices as a psychologist and her address is:

4168 King Arthur
Palo Alto
California 94306

Mr & Mrs Vegh's name will certainly be put on our mailing list. (Ed.)

Dear Editor,

As always, I felt honoured and deeply moved to receive "The Journal" - Thank you sincerely.

Although I was one of the 1939 arrivals to England, my happy and fulfilling life with Moshe and our friendships with many of the "Boys" will always make me feel one of you.

According to the Israeli Members list in the November 1978 Journal you were not informed that our beloved Moshe passed away after prolonged illness, on March 9th 1976

May I be allowed to make a suggestion? - the lists of members in the so very valuable Journal of the '45 Aid Society are a marvellous idea. No doubt they will bring renewed contact between old friends. That is, if they are good at guessing and able to recognise each other! I like to think that, as in our case, the lovely sounding English and Hebrew family names are a sign of the owners' thorough adjustment to their new environment. But, I am sure you will agree, for those who are out of touch, the identifying is a bit of a secretive business.

So may I please suggest giving full names including the original family name.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,
Helga Ayalon
11 Rechow Samech He
Kiryat Cherim
Haifa

We are very sorry that we were not informed of Moshe Ayalon's (formerly Hershelikovitch) death and therefore did not publish his Obituary. We take this opportunity to extend to Mrs Ayalon our belated, but no less sincere, condolences.

We hope to be able to implement Mrs Ayalon's suggestion when we print a new list of Members' names and addresses, based on responses to our forthcoming questionnaire which is explained in the Editorial. (Ed.)

Dear Editor,

Just a brief note to say that we enjoy reading all the news of what's happening in England and the views presented in the Journal.

Sincerely
Fay Goldberg
(wife of Joseph (Moniek) Goldberg)
2571 W. 6th Lane
Hialeah, Fla. 33010
U.S.A.

Dear Editor,

My dear friend and fellow camp-inmate, Herman Ziering, gave me your address. He told me something of our mutual interests.

For many years now some survivors of the Riga Ghetto, and the umbrella organisation through which we act, have been trying to bring former Nazi executioners to the bars of justice. We pursue our efforts not only in the Federal Republic of Germany, but also here in the U.S.A. where we have a large number of former murderers who grievously mistreated members of our families.

I would be very glad if your Society and our Federation could co-operate more closely, and if we could exchange such relevant information as we may have.

If we can be of any assistance to you, I should be most grateful if you would turn to us.

Yours sincerely
Elliot Welles
Executive Director
American Federation of Jewish
Fighters, Camp Inmates and
Nazi Victims Inc.
315 Lexington Avenue
7th Floor
New York
N.Y. 10016
U.S.A.

The above letter was written in German but the Editor was advised (much to his amazement) that many, if not most, Members probably can no longer read German. The letter was therefore translated into English.

Our Society, as such, has never dealt with the issue raised by Mr Welles, and his letter might provoke some correspondence. Meanwhile, if anyone has information relevant to Mr Welles' enquiry he/she will no doubt convey it to Mr. Welles. (Ed.)

MEMBERS' NEWS

Two years ago, in the 3rd issue of our Journal (April 1977) we decided to expand this Section by "...including news of what might be called our Members' public or social achievements". That issue, however, was the only one which included such news!

In this issue we are glad to report that John Fox - brother of Harry - described as "a veteran union leader" by the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin as long as 4 years ago - chaired a Conference on Teaching the Lessons of the Holocaust, which was held in Philadelphia 18-20 October 1978. He did so in his capacity as President of the Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee, an office he has held since 1975. How many families can boast of having among their members a successful Trades Union leader and a highly successful business man? One wonders whether this circumstance ever gives rise to friction within the family!

Various Mazeltovs to our London Members -

(compiled largely by Kitty Dessau).

MAZELTOV ON THE FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE OF:

the daughter of Mr & Mrs M Shapiro in May 1979.

MAZELTOV ON THE ENGAGEMENT OF:

Sidney, the son of Mr & Mrs M Frenkel in December 1978.

Trevor, the son of Mr & Mrs N Friedman in February 1979.

Fiona, daughter of Mr & Mrs A. Zylberszac in March 1979.

MAZELTOV ON THE BARMITZVAH OF:

Mr & Mrs F Berger's son in October 1978.

Mr & Mrs E Stein's son in February 1979.

MAZELTOV ON BECOMING GRANDPARENTS TO:

Mr & Mrs N Friedman, whose daughter Dena Coleman had a son, who is the Friedman's second grandchild.

Mr & Mrs I Rudzinski, whose daughter had a baby son in December 1978.

Mr & Mrs Goldfinger, whose daughter Michelle had a baby son in December 1978.

Mr & Mrs H Kaye, whose son Philip had a baby son in April 1978 (Philip's wife gave a helping hand).

Mr & Mrs I Stein, whose daughter, Avril Greenbaum had a baby son.

MAZELTOV ON THE PEARL WEDDING OF:

Mr & Mrs J Gutman, in January 1979.

Mr & Mrs H Kaye, in February 1979

Mr & Mrs M Dessau in March 1979.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SECOND GENERATION:

Mr & Mrs H Kaye's son Gerald qualified as a doctor last July - their other son Philip qualified as a solicitor two years ago.
Dr E Friedman, son of Mr & Mrs N Friedman passed Part I of the M.R.C.P.

Judging by the reports in this Section, our Members' children are going to monopolise the professions!

One other, and hitherto unique MAZELTOV, must be added here: it goes to Maurice, eldest son of our Chairman, who won the gymnastics championship at the 78-79 National Preparatory Schools Championships. The son is clearly a chip off the old block, and we understand that his two younger brothers also show considerable talent for sport. We look forward to seeing another Helfgott as a member of the U.K. Olympics team.

Various Mazeltovs to our Manchester Members -

(compiled by Louise Elliot)

MAZELTOV ON THE MARRIAGE OF:

Suzanne, daughter of Mr & Mrs A Bulwa, in September 1978.
Maralyn, daughter of Mr & Mrs S Gardner, in October 1978.
Stephen, son of Mr & Mrs M Beale, in February 1979.
Helena, daughter of Mr & Mrs N. Samson, in March 1979.

MAZELTOV ON THE ENGAGEMENT OF:

Michelle, daughter of Mr & Mrs B Wurzel.

MAZELTOV ON THE BARMITZVAH OF:

Mr & Mrs S Gontarz's son Adrian in September 1978.

MAZELTOV ON THE SILVER WEDDING OF:

Mr & Mrs M Fruhman, in March 1979.

Mazeltovs to Members outside the U.K.

THE U.S.A.

On the marriage of Karen, daughter of Mr & Mrs Moniek Goldberg in October 1978 (in case you have missed it, Moniek has an article in this issue!)

ISRAEL

On the birth of a baby girl to the daughter of Mr & Mrs Zvi Degan in October 1978.

The stone setting for Sam Cooper, whose Obituary we published in issue No. 4 (March 1978) took place on 4th February 1979 at Waltham Abbey. Many of our Members were present.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VISIT TO PRAGUE AND THERESIENSTADT

On Page 40 of the last issue of our Journal we announced that our Society was proposing to organise a visit to Prague and Theresienstadt early next September. Up to now the response to that announcement has been such as not to warrant the organisation of this tour. Unless, by 31st May, at least 60 people apply to join the trip, this particular venture will have to be cancelled. Anyone who wishes to go on this tour should get in touch at once with:

Ben Helfgott
46 Amery Road
Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3UQ
Tel: 01-422-1512

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR KORMAN

In early June Professor G Korman, this year's '45 Holocaust Fellow at the Centre for Post-Graduate Jewish Studies at Oxford, will give a lecture to our Society. As soon as the precise date of the lecture has been arranged, invitations will be sent out.