

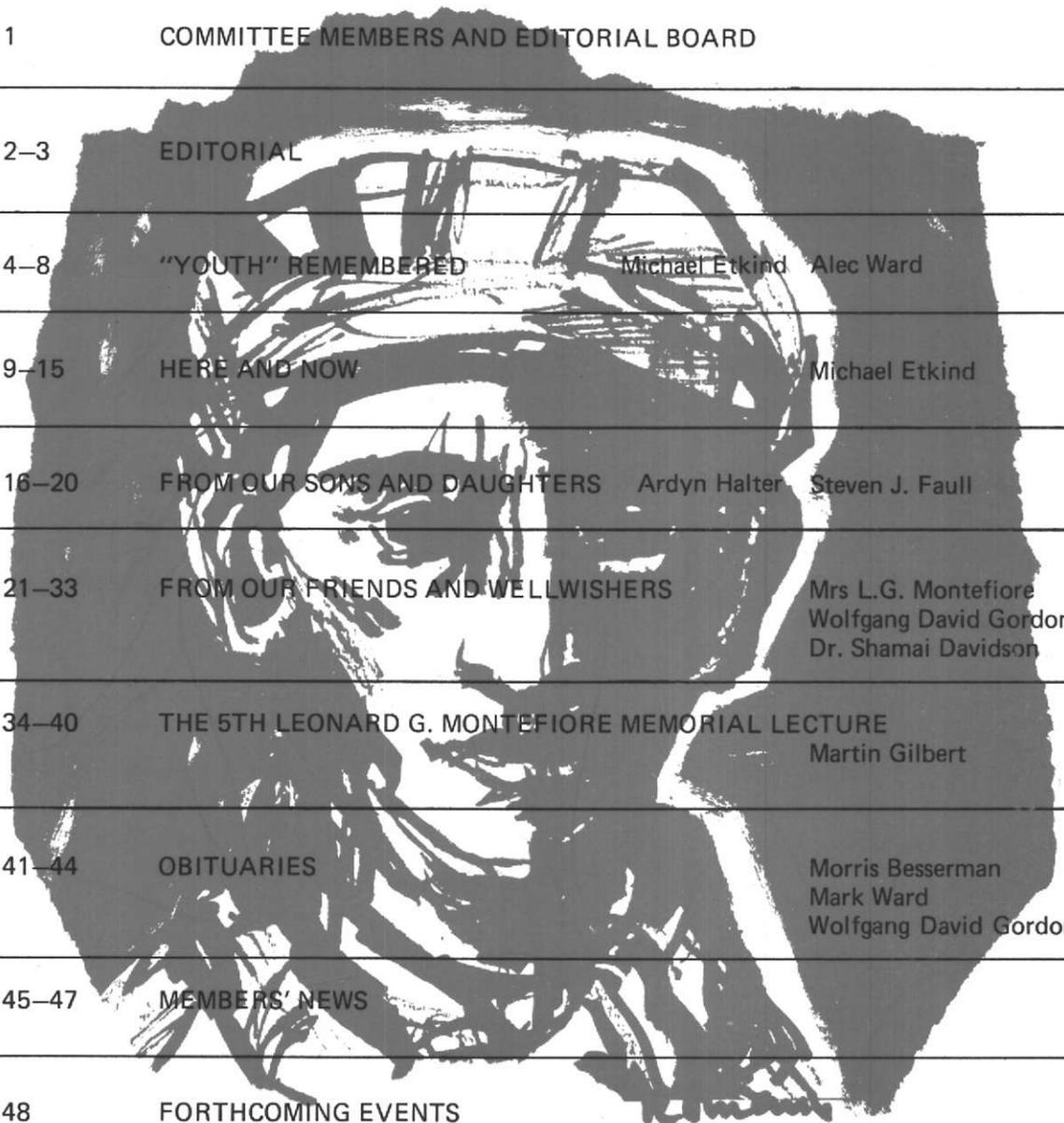
JOURNAL

'45

OF THE AID SOCIETY

No.9

DECEMBER 1981



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JOURNAL OF THE '45 AID SOCIETY

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

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They should be typed in double-spacing and reach the Editor not later than the end of February 1982.

EDITORIAL

Our last three Editorials - as well as earlier ones - contained several appeals to our Members. All these appeals have evoked uniformly stunning responses, which indeed can be quantified: they amounted precisely to zero. This phenomenon, no doubt, has various possible explanations, of which the most plausible is that the readership of the Editorials is as large as has been the response to our appeals - zero. Those who notice the continued presence of the Editorials might well ask why we publish them. The answer is that we apply democratic principles. A majority of the Editorial Board is in favour of having Editorials and the Editor, being a principled democrat, carries out majority decisions. In this particular instance abiding by majority decisions admittedly implies a degree of schizophrenia - like talking to a person one regards as deaf. To minimize the schizophrenia there will be no further appeals in this Editorial, which will be confined to some comments on the present issue.

We are honoured indeed to be able to publish Mrs Montefiore's reminiscences of her late husband's work. While our devotion to his memory stems mainly from our contact with him, we are delighted that no less a person than his wife should record in these pages references to his other manifold charitable activities. The late Wolfgang Gordon's article is an interesting reminder of how others saw us when we first arrived here. Then we were not told, but now we can be. In retrospect it is perhaps not surprising that we conveyed to others our strong feeling that, while in the camps, we had not been normal human beings, and that it might take us a little while to regain that status. At the same time the late Wolfgang Gordon inadvertently reveals that, as late as 1946, he, like so many others, still could not grasp what had happened to Jews during the war in Nazi-occupied Europe. Thus he wrote that among East European Jews "relations between parents and children are exceptionally close". Alas, in 1946 one could no longer use the present tense to describe East European Jewry, a point relevant to Steven Faull's article. We would like "our sons and daughters" to be aware of certain aspects of the history of the last war. Steven's article suggests that this desire may have unfortunate, if unintended, side effects. The question naturally arises: can our desire be satisfied in the absence of those side effects? Perhaps this is one of the topics which will be discussed at the 2nd Generation Meeting on 6th December (see Forthcoming Events, p.). The events of the war which remain most vivid in our memories were undoubtedly discussed at the Gathering in Israel, on which Michael Etkind reports. We must be grateful to him for being not only such an interesting but also such a reliable contributor to our Journal. When it comes to expressing thanks for efforts on behalf of our Journal we cannot but mention Romek Halter. Observant recipients of the Journal will have noticed its much improved appearance and

layout, all due to Romek's energetically felicitous intervention in the whole process of producing the Journal. On behalf of the Editorial Board, and especially the Editor, "thank you, Romek".

Believe it or not, we last published the Journal at this time of the year a full three years ago, in November 1978. At that time "... your Committee and Editorial Board (belatedly) ... [took] ... the opportunity to wish all our Members and friends a very happy New Year. L'Shana Tova Tikatevu". We repeat these wishes now.

"YOUTH" REMEMBERED

MY FRIEND THE SINGER

The author came to this country with the Southampton group and was one of the Finchley Road (Freshwater) Hostel boys.

by Alec Ward
(formerly Abram
Warszaw)

The Editor does not normally comment on the degree of his acquaintance with various contributors to the Journal. In this instance, however, he feels almost compelled to reveal that, although he has known Alec since our simultaneous arrival in this country, and lived in the same Hostel, he had never before heard the story which Alec now tells (Ed.).

After having lived through the appalling life in two ghettos and three slave labour camps in Poland, I found myself in Buchenwald in January 1945. Four weeks later I was taken to Concentration Camp Flossberg near Leipzig. In Flössberg I worked in an ammunition factory, producing bazookas. The camp was built in a forest, was very swampy and we had to walk in deep mud on the way to and from work. The German Commandant was an absolute sadist. He derived great pleasure when he could beat us over our heads as we passed the gate to work. None of us believed that we would come out alive from that hell. By some miracle I made friends with a boy of my age, who helped me enormously to keep up my morale. My friend had a most wonderful voice. Very often he would sing to while away the very painful and hungry free time. Friendship in the camps was very vital and was a major factor in surviving the Holocaust.

As the Russians were approaching that part of Germany, the Germans put us on a cattle train which took us to Mauthausen in Austria. The journey took 15 days, most of the time without food or water. The reason why it took so long to get there was that the railway lines were being bombed constantly by the Allies. The majority of that transport perished on the way.

Our wagon included 30 young boys. After realising that we were unlikely to survive the journey we organised an escape party. I had already tried to escape once before when my father ordered me to take my younger brother Leib aged 9½ and escape from Ghetto Kozenice. I dutifully obeyed my father and when the guard was busy searching someone we both crawled under the barbed wire and escaped. For a few months we managed to hide in barns and haystacks in the fields. Occasionally the Poles would give us some food. It was not long before we were caught by the Germans and while being

taken to Skarzysko slave labour camp Werk C, I experienced the first selection when we stopped in Radom. They took my brother, Leib, and some elderly people to be shot.

Coming back to the original story, 16 boys had jumped the train and I was supposed to be the 18th. However, in order to deter further escapes the SS put a few dead bodies (those of boys who had just been caught and shot) into our wagon, together with a guard, for the rest of the journey. My friend the singer was one of the 16 who had jumped and had been shot at by the guards who were perched between the wagons. I saw him being hit by a bullet and fall to the ground. This was an almost unbearable blow to me which I was unable to get out of my mind for a long time, just like the earlier loss of my brother.

Only a small proportion of the original number of prisoners arrived in Mauthausen. Many died during the journey and others while marching up to the camp from the railway station. The camp was built in Alpine mountains with the purpose of exposing people to extremes of temperature. Undernourished people could not survive such conditions for long. How I envied my friend the singer. He was dead and did not have to suffer any more. Those of us who reached Mauthausen alive went through further degradation and torture. They took our clothes from us and we were left naked until we were liberated by the American forces on May 5th 1945.

In October of that year I came to England, a mere teenager, together with a group of young survivors. We were intoxicated with the freedom of this country, where everyone was so kind and helpful. How my friend the singer and my brother would have loved that freedom.

A few months later in a London street I noticed a boy who resembled my friend. When we got nearer we instinctively embraced, had tears in our eyes and for a while found it very difficult to talk. He had not been killed after he jumped from the train, and a woman found him wounded in a Czech forest and got him medical treatment. He arrived in England a few months before me with another group of survivors. He is an active member of our Society and his name is Arthur Poznanski.

BEFORE THE GHETTO (THE FIRST SIX MONTHS)

by Michael Etkind

This is the second instalment of the author's recollections of events during the early part of the War. The first instalment was published in our last issue. (Ed.)

Warsaw had fallen. Hitler was speaking on the radio. Every now and then a deathly silence would be interrupted with perfect timing, his rasping voice rising to a crescendo until it was drowned in an outburst of cheering. Every sentence ended to rapturous applause and roars of "Sieg Heil". I was straining my ears in a vain endeavour to understand what he was saying. Eventually, during a prolonged bout of cheering, I asked my mother to translate his last sentence. "Die Juden müssen von Europa verschwinden", she said, it means: "The Jews must vanish from Europe". She got up and went into the kitchen. A shiver ran down my spine - we had been sentenced to death. The radio began to play "DEUTCHLAND, Deutschland über Alles" ...

Every day brought new misfortunes. An all-night curfew was imposed. All Jewish property was to be confiscated. Overnight, the money we had in the bank (P.K.O.) was blocked. German marks appeared and somehow my father managed to get hold of those strange looking banknotes with swastikas and pictures of Hitler. The buying of food became an ordeal, even if you had the money. Queues would suddenly form in front of bakeries, but often, after waiting for hours, you would walk away empty handed. How proud and happy you were when you managed to buy and bring home a loaf of bread. It was safer for me to go outside than it was for my father, or my older brother Jacob who was then eighteen (and had returned home after trying in vain to reach Warsaw). I was fourteen but, being small for my age, looked younger and was therefore less likely to be caught for work. In fact, while everybody older, and many of my friends even a year younger than I were caught at least once, somehow I managed to evade this experience for the time being.

One morning my father asked me to accompany him to one of the textile firms, "Kanel i Zbar", for which he worked as an accountant. The offices and warehouse were situated in Piotrkowska street, about a mile from where we lived. There were thousands of bales of material stacked up to the ceiling, which the Germans were going to take away the following day. The two major shareholders of the firm, Mr Kanel and Mr Zbar, had escaped to Warsaw and could not be contacted. A couple of Polish employees, who worked for the company in some minor capacity, were asking my father to sign certain documents stating that the business was sold to them before the war and therefore it was no longer a "Jewish business". My father refused. He told me that a part of the stock belonged to him, and thinking aloud decided to take a

few bales of material home. We managed to find a "doroszka", a kind of hansom cab on four wheels, and took with us half a dozen bales of silk.

Some days later there was a knock on the door. A soldier and a German civilian entered our flat. The civilian, a middle aged man with a small swastika in his lapel, did the talking. He spoke German to my mother while going from room to room and opening all the cupboards and drawers. I followed them gingerly. I had the feeling that the soldier felt uncomfortable. My mother took off her wedding ring and handed it over. After searching a little longer they found the six bales of silk my father and I brought from the warehouse. The soldier picked up a walking stick my brother Jacob brought from Zakopane, examined it carefully, but then seemed to have changed his mind and replaced it. We breathed a sigh of relief when eventually they left with two loaded suitcases. My mother explained later that the civilian was a "Volksdeutscher", an ethnic German.

Winter was approaching. Life was becoming harder and more precarious. We had to wear armbands with the star of David, (this was later changed to two yellow stars with the word "Jude" on them). We had to take our radio set to the police station. Piotrkowska street, the Oxford street of Lodz, was renamed "Adolf Hitler Strasse", and Jews were not allowed to walk on it. Every day another sinister looking placard in German and Polish would appear in the streets announcing some new restrictions and ending with a warning. We soon learnt that the slightest infringement of the rules meant the death sentence.

In addition to these official orders, Jews were being rounded up, ostensibly for work, but in more cases than not simply to be tormented. The Germans would catch people in the streets, or they would enter Jewish dwellings and take away one or more members of a family - usually the adult males. Some of those taken never came back and no one knew what happened to them, but more often those caught for work would come back, beaten, degraded, demoralised. The stories of sadism beggar description. Ten Jews would be ordered to push a car, while the German driver would put it into reverse gear. Public lavatories had to be cleaned with tooth-brushes. A friend of mine was caught, with a number of others, and taken into a school converted into barracks, where they were surrounded by a group of smiling soldiers. Two men in white coats, looking like medical orderlies, entered the room; one of them held a long knife. They ordered one Jewish man to follow them. Ten minutes later the two Germans returned splattered with blood, and selected another victim. The soldiers were roaring with laughter. Eventually my friend's turn came: he was led across the yard into a shed, in the corner of which was a cage with geese. My friend had to hold a goose, while the German with the knife cut its throat. After plucking off its feathers, my friend was allowed to go home.

On the night of the 10th of November 1939 we were awakened by a loud explosion. The following morning we learnt that the monument to Kościuszko (the Polish national hero) in Plac Wolności had been demolished by the Germans. The equivalent in London would be the demolition of Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square. On that very day, several people were hanged in public and left hanging for three days as a warning against any possible acts of resistance to mark the 11th November. There were none.

Łódź, with its surrounding area, was to be annexed to the Third Reich, and its name changed to Litzmannstadt. There was panic; surely the Jews would not be allowed to live inside Germany; if only one could escape to Warsaw, or somewhere else inside the General Government, as it was now called. Pinkus Gierszowski, a textile magnate and my father's friend, together with nine other prominent Jewish leaders were arrested. Most of my father's friends fled to Warsaw, and so he too decided that we should follow. My mother was not keen; it was dangerous enough to venture outside for a few hundred yards, let alone travel to Warsaw. After lengthy discussions, it was decided that my father together with my older brother would go first and try to find a place for all of us, before we would try to join them. A German officer was bribed by a third party to smuggle a group of Jews across the border. They left at dawn, at the beginning of February 1940. That was the last time I saw my father and Jacob.

A few weeks later posters appeared announcing that all Jews would have to move into the ghetto area, a notorious part of Łódź, known as "Bałuty". Three days before the final date for leaving for the ghetto, there were raids and many Jews living in the vicinity of Piotrkowska were shot inside their dwellings. This was designed to stampede the Jewish population into leaving for the "safety" of the ghetto. Needless to say, it succeeded. During the next three days, thousands upon thousands of makeshift sleighs could be seen converging on the ghetto area, loaded with bundles of bedding. The ground was frozen and there was a blizzard blowing as I was pulling my sledge loaded with our belongings. My mother, together with Henka my younger sister and my little brother Lolek, were pushing from behind. We made a number of journeys. We were lucky that my uncle, Szolym, already had a room and we moved in with his family for the time being. There were three adults and five children in a room of about 250 square feet. The ghetto was filling fast.

(to be continued)

HERE AND NOW

A DIARY OF THE WORLD GATHERING OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
IN ISRAEL, 14th-18th JUNE 1981

by Michael Etkind

As soon as the "Fasten Seat Belts" signs lit up above our heads the voice of the captain announced that the aircraft was approaching its destination. The morning sky was overcast, but, as the 'plane was preparing to land, we could see through the windows the tilting landscape around Ben Gurion airport. Five minutes later a group of tired travellers waited patiently in the reception hall. A plaque on the wall reminded us that this same area was the scene of a terrorist attack some years ago. The girl, who was stamping our passports, was not in a hurry. A long day lay ahead of her and she did not share in our excitement. By the time we had walked through customs the sun dispersed the clouds and there was no need to worry about the weather. After a warm welcome from Greville Janner, Gloria and Frank Green, Ray Jackson, Romek of El-Al, and some of the other boys who had arrived earlier, we found ourselves in a taxi speeding towards Tel-Aviv.

The Ramada hotel had not changed since our last visit, and we seemed to have been allocated the very same room we had eighteen months earlier. No sooner had we unpacked, than the telephone rang. My eighty-seven year old uncle, who came to Tel-Aviv in 1913, was on his way and any ideas about sleeping or resting had to be completely abandoned.

In the evening, having eventually obtained our registration badges at the Hilton, we found ourselves in a stampede for coaches which were supposed to take us to the Tel-Aviv sports stadium for the welcoming ceremony. After arriving at one of the entrance gates we were told to proceed to another, halfway round the stadium, only to be informed that we needed entrance tickets. By that time I had the feeling that it must be easier to get into Wembley stadium for the Cup Final without a ticket than to attend our Gathering. However, before long, Harry Balsam had managed to get behind the ticket collector and was ordering him to let us all in. Obviously his experience during the war as Hauptputzer to Oberscharführer Müller gave him the authority needed for this occasion. The main speaker of the evening was Simone Weil, the President of the European Parliament, whose mother had perished in Auschwitz. She spoke in French and apparently referred to herself as being first and foremost French. For me, born in Poland, such dual identity problems ceased to exist from about the age of two, when I first began to understand the most often repeated sentence in Poland before the war: "scabby Jew - to Palestine".

Between the speeches in English, French, Hebrew, Yiddish and even Ladino, we were entertained by young Israeli dancers and singers. The enclosed stadium was hot and airless and by eleven o'clock we decided to leave while the others remained till midnight.

After an early morning swim and an Israeli breakfast which can be best described as the opposite of "too little, too late", we began to wear out the pavement between the Ramada, the Diplomat, and the Marina. As soon as we arrived outside one hotel somebody said the coach would arrive outside another. Looking at Ben one would never have believed that he used to be a champion weight-lifter; he looked much more like a sprinter, or long distance runner. "Where is Ben?" was the phrase on everybody's lips, as Ben disappeared into one hotel lobby and reappeared from another. "Everything is under control", he would say each time he overtook us. Eventually we found ourselves inside a coach, but many of us had to stand. It must have been the wrong coach, because we arrived at the Tel-Aviv bus depot instead of in Jerusalem. The coach driver turned round and said in Yiddish: "By your cackling like a herd of geese, I know I am with my family"! Of course it sounded much better in Yiddish.

We had to change our coach and eventually arrived in Jerusalem at the "Survivors' Village", a large assembly building containing the computer hall where young Israeli students were feeding information to the computers, in an effort to find out the whereabouts of other possible survivors. The two names I submitted produced negative results.

After lunch we arrived at Yad Vashem via Roman's gates, described on postcards which were being sold to visitors as "designed by Herman Halter". Here we were shown a film on the Holocaust, after which Jenny Young, the BBC reporter who accompanied us throughout the week, suddenly asked me why I wanted to see such films. Jenny was collecting material for a prospective programme on the Gathering for Radio 4. I told her that when a crime is committed, the least, although possibly the only, thing that ordinary people can do is to try to express their outrage. It would be a sad world if crimes such as the Holocaust provoked only indifference, silence, and the shrugging of one's shoulders. Young people everywhere, and especially in Israel, should see the results, the fruit of hatred. I was there to add my share to the publicity. After all, one of Hitler's main aims was to silence us forever, as his operation named "Night and Fog", which so nearly succeeded, demonstrates by its very name.

Yitzhak Navon's speech was excellent. His main point was that nations should not be judged by their philosophers, composers or artists, but by the way in which they treat human beings. There are single sentences which often say more than whole volumes.

Ernest Michael, the American organiser, followed with a moving speech. No one who heard him will ever forget his phrase: "... and now they say that it never happened ... these hands carried more corpses than I dare to remember ..."

The film, the music, the lighting of the six columns, the songs, and finally Rabbi Lau's speech were all beyond description. It was one of those "once in a lifetime" experiences, which cannot be repeated or recaptured, and none of the five thousand people present will ever forget that evening.

On Tuesday morning we went to Ashkelon to see how Jewish refugees from North Africa are being helped and educated, and no amount of praise can do justice to the volunteers from Britain engaged on this project. Seeing us take an interest in them was a tremendous boost for the morale of the refugees, and seeing our boys' antics helped them to realise how normal and well balanced they are. Watching Ziggy and Harry Fox dance with the children in the Kindergarten was a sight for sore eyes. Since their teacher must have told them that we came from Britain, those children are bound to grow up nursing some funny ideas about this country. Fortunately, Hugo Gryn's speech at the dedication of a transit van and at the Holocaust Square redressed the balance, so that perhaps the young Mayor of Ashkelon might have formed a more favourable opinion of us.

That evening we were in Aloma's flat in Jerusalem discussing literature with Ariel Hirschfeld, a young professor from Jerusalem University. "The reason why Holocaust literature is rather limited in its scope is that literature deals with imagination, and cannot possibly do justice to this subject, because as far as the Holocaust is concerned the reality outstrips imagination". Ariel was quoting the thoughts of Israeli thinkers on this subject.

Roman and I returned to the Ramada, while Elaine remained in Jerusalem with Aloma in order to go on a conducted tour next day.

"Symposium on Antisemitism" was on the agenda for Wednesday morning and I joined Ben, Frank and Gloria Green, Hugo and Jacqueline Gryn and thousands of others for that event, which took place in the auditorium of the Holocaust Village. One always learns something new at such events. Professor Yehuda Bauer stressed the point that the structures of both ancient Greece and Rome were based on slavery and since Judaism preaches equality, the Jews were looked upon as trouble makers even in those early days. No matter how many reasons and explanations I come across, I feel that they are all inadequate to explain this hatred that leads to such terrible crimes. One can understand the superficial antisemitism, such as the annoyance with people who are loud and pushy (as most Mediterranean nations are), but the hard-core antisemitism is beyond comprehension. I liked the speech by H. Foxman, and especially his phrase: "Who would have believed that thirty-

six years after our liberation, we would be meeting here to discuss the rise of antisemitism - and the revival of the new-Nazis".

The proceedings were interrupted by Rabbi Kahane who demanded to be allowed to address the meeting. Tempers flared and suddenly Ben jumped up and ran towards Rabbi Kahane, who calmed down a few minutes later. Apparently Ben appealed to him in the name of a mutual cousin to simmer down and not to interrupt such an important meeting.

After a swim and a light lunch at the King David Hotel we went to the Knessef to hear Samual Pissar, whose book, "Of Blood and Hope", should be on everybody's bookshelf.

Thursday was the last official day of our gathering, and again we set out for Jerusalem after breakfast. After leaving the Jerusalem Great Synagogue, which was being dedicated to the Six Million, Elaine and I made our way towards the Old City. We entered through the Jaffa Gate intending to go across towards the Lion Gate and the Mount of Olives. An inedible cheese sandwich at "Moses" Caffe cost one pound Sterling, coca-cola nearly two pounds. Against my will I found myself buying presents in one of the shops of the bazaar. Pointing to my label I asked the middle-aged shopkeeper, "Have you heard about the Holocaust? Do you know who Hitler was? ... the Nazis?" The Arab looked at me as if trying to make out what lay behind my questions. "Yes, yes" he said eventually, "I know all about the Second World War". "Can there be real peace in this area?" I carried on. The shopkeeper shook his head and looked sternly at me. "I have nothing against the Jews, it is the Israelis, they took our land. Wait a minute", he added, and went out to call a neighbour, a younger man who joined our discussion.

"We are not Arabs", said the younger man, "we are Palestinians", and went on about the crime committed against them by the Israelis. I replied that the United States, and the North and South of America are composed of refugees. New Zealand, Australia, every part of the world consists of people who, at one time or another, moved from one side of the globe to the other for innumerable reasons. I mentioned that two years ago I went to Poland and saw my father's house. There were people living there with their children. I did not hate them and not for a moment did I dream of tossing a hand grenade at them. We are all refugees on this planet, wherever we live, and we should be able to discuss our problems without killing one another. The Nazis were not allowed to talk to us, because Hitler knew that if he would allow his troops to talk to Jews, they would begin to think and to have doubts about his extermination policy. I ended, "We are talking now, and I am sure that you could sit down and talk to the Israelis, who are no different from me. Is there no hope of real peace in this part of the world?" The younger man looked straight at me and said "Can you make peace between a rat and a cat?" I walked out depressed, and while we were trudging

through the Via Dolorosa, I thought I should have enlightened him on the point that we were not of the same species as a rat or a cat.

The Via Dolorosa was hot and dusty, and hard to negotiate because of roadworks. We finally reached the Lion Gate, and before us across the valley lay the Mount of Olives, its refreshing greenness and glinting domes in sharp contrast to the dust and bustle of the Old City. A taxi stopped by us and the driver offered his services. He took us into the Kidron Valley, where we visited Absalom's Tomb, and then to King Solomon's Pool, where a group of school children were dipping their feet in the clear cool water. As we wound our way up to the viewing-point on the Mount of Olives, the taxi driver told us he was a Christian. I asked him if he had any Jewish friends, and his reply was, "Oh yes, too many. We don't mind doing business with anybody". I then asked him how life had been here before 1967, under Hussain. "It was good," he answered, "there were many tourists and food was much cheaper than it is now, especially meat".

"Food is very expensive now, everywhere", I responded, "since your friends in Saudi Arabia increased the price of oil, everything went up by leaps and bounds all over the world". He looked at me suspiciously and shook his head. "No, it is because of the Israelis that the cost of living has gone up". "How many children have you?" I changed the subject. "Eleven", he answered with pride, "the youngest is one and a half and the oldest is twenty-three, and is at Cairo University studying to be a doctor". "Do you intend to have any more children?" I asked the man who hardly looked forty. "No more cement" he answered with a smile.

The view from the Mount of Olives is very exciting, although I find the projections into the skyline of the numerous tower blocks somewhat distracting. A little further down the Mount we stopped and looked across the desert towards the Dead Sea. We noticed that the groups of Israeli schoolchildren were accompanied by an armed man, so I asked the taxi-driver why the Jewish school children had to be protected in such a manner, while Arab children visiting Jewish areas did not require such protection. His answer was simple: "We are not allowed to carry guns, so our children carry hand grenades in their pockets." Now my efforts as a peacemaker came to an end.

That afternoon thousands began to converge upon the Western Wall. We each lit a candle and placed it before the especially erected platform. After the lighting of six memorial candles, and the passing on of the Survivors' Testament to the Second Generation, Menachem Begin climbed the rostrum and began to speak. "From the Baltic Sea in the North to the Mediterranean in the South and the Black Sea, there lived communities of Jewish people. All that they wanted was to live in peace with their neighbours, but ...". His passionate and emotional speech struck exactly the right note with the audience, and his phrases seemed to reverberate inside one's head long after he stopped speaking.

Whatever one might think of his policies, no one can deny that he is a great orator. A good speech, in my opinion, must contain what I would call poetic ingredients, and Begin manages to infuse his speeches with these qualities.

Eli Wiesel's excellent speech came after Begin's, when many people, who could no longer suffer the cold breeze, unfortunately began to fidget, and to leave.

We spent Friday morning at the Hilton swimming pool, and from there we went to visit Ardyn and Asnat Halter in their flat in Maoz-Aviv. Roman came with us together with Johnny and Betty Fox from Philadelphia.

Saturday evening's reunion was the best ever and Marion Stern and the other Israeli boys and girls who made the arrangements deserve our thanks and congratulations. There was a buffet and everybody could choose to eat as little as or as much as possible. Nobody was glued to one spot and it was a pleasure to circulate and meet everybody. I made the acquaintance of Eli Pfeferkorn of Haifa University, who devotes his life to the study of Holocaust literature.

"Holocaust literature", he began, as soon as we sat down away from the music, "can be divided into three sections. Firstly, the writing which took place during the war, and secondly, that which was written in the vernacular of the survivor immediately after our Liberation, and lastly, years after the event, the writing which is being done in the retrospective tranquility of one's adopted country".

"What is the purpose and the value of all this writing?" I asked, "can human beings, by learning and understanding the horrors inflicted, become better, or, is the study of Holocaust Literature purely an intellectual exercise? Or to put it another way - are we doomed to go on killing one another in smaller or larger waves, until with present day technology we end all life on this planet, or can we, with our deeper knowledge of mans' inhumanity to man, by communication through writing prevent this from happening?"

"Unlike Elie Wiesel", Pfeferkorn continued, "I am a pessimist. I don't think this writing is likely to have practical results, but the study of human behaviour under extreme conditions opens new fields for research ..."

My thoughts do not coincide with his. I believe that the study of the Holocaust has a practical value. Recent history since the collapse of the Third Reich suggests that dictators of Hitler's type have not re-emerged in countries with first hand experience of his regime, and are unlikely to appear there for as long as accurate knowledge of the Nazi era remains imprinted in people's minds. It is in countries like Uganda, Libya, Syria and Argentina that pale replicas of the Nazis have been allowed to emerge.

Later on I discussed this subject with Moniek Goldberg. "How can one address a Catholic audience" Moniek asked, "and say to them that their Pope, by speaking against the Nazi crimes, could have saved a million Jewish lives?"

Long after midnight we were still in Ray Jackson's house drinking coffee. Unlike eating and drinking, which have their limits, talking can go on for hours on end and yet so much be left unsaid.

The last hours of Sunday were spent with relatives who were already getting annoyed that so little time was devoted to them on this occasion. My cousin Dvorah, who is an unrepentant supporter of Menachem Begin and the Likud party, became embroiled in a heated discussion with Ben, and only the arrival of the taxis for the airport put an end to the argument. Twelve hours later our aeroplane landed at Luton Airport.

FROM OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

SECOND GENERATION DAY

by Steven J Faull
MA (Cantab) ARICS

The author is the son of Stanley Faull -
formerly Salek Falinower, of the
Windermere Group. Stanley now lives in
Brighton (Ed.).

Wednesday June 17th 1981 was the day devoted entirely to the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. So important was this group considered by the organisers that a whole day of speeches, discussion groups and workshops was allocated for their benefit, with Holocaust survivors specifically excluded from the Conference on that day. Anyone actually attending the Conference could not help being emotionally moved by the meetings, and because the impressions received will obviously differ from one person to the next, the opinions which I formulated at the time and express in this article are purely personal and hence necessarily subjective.

The first question that was put to us at the Conference was why were we there and what did we hope to derive from such a meeting. For me, the first part of the question was easier to answer than the second. Having completed my studies and obtained my professional qualification, I was, at the time of the Conference, living and working on a Kibbutz between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Having qualified as a Second Generation participant by virtue of my father's wartime experiences in the Warsaw Ghetto, Majdanek, Buchenwald and Theresienstadt, I felt interested in attending the Conference to attempt to discover the feelings and experiences of other offspring of Holocaust survivors. I wanted to know whether there exist common factors between all children of survivors and whether our generation does in fact have any special responsibilities towards perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust.

The day itself was organised into several distinct sections. First, there were introductory speeches at the Plenary Assembly, followed by Discussion Groups, Workshops (where participants chose between subject headings such as Psychosocial Issues, Political Issues, Teaching the Holocaust, Philosophical Implications of the Holocaust, or Oral History), and concluded with poems and songs, and later at the Knesset, a commemoration service for more than one million children killed during the Holocaust.

For me personally the most moving and interesting part of the whole day, indeed the whole Conference, was the Discussion Group. This involved twenty to thirty people sitting in a circle and discussing firstly, their parents' experience during the war, how the Holocaust had affected their own lives, why they were attending the Conference, and, finally, how they believed its memory should be perpetuated, if at all.

My discussion group contained about thirty people, ranging in age between about 20 and 35, predominantly from the United States although Great Britain, France, Spain, Australia and Argentina were also represented, and I believe they were reasonably representative of the six hundred or so people who attended the Second Generation conference. I was continually looking for similarities between others and myself in an attempt to better understand their feelings and attitudes, and hopefully to add a further dimension to my own life.

The most immediately noticeable difference between me and the American participants was the degree to which the Holocaust had affected and even - at least in some cases - dominated their lives. This fact evidenced itself in two ways. Firstly, it was obvious that the Americans were used to discussing the Holocaust in relation to their everyday lives (which certainly wasn't true of the two British participants in my group), were very lucid in discussing their emotions, and secondly the professions that the Americans tended to choose were psychologically based: sociologists, psychiatrists, social workers, lecturers and students of psychosocial matters.

This continual consciousness of the Holocaust is certainly not evident in my everyday existence nor in my relationship with my father. I believe that this fundamental difference exists for two reasons. In the first instance, the Holocaust survivors that went to America tended to be older than those arriving in England. It is possible that the Holocaust affected them more, having perhaps lost wives and children in addition to the parents, brothers and sisters that the British survivors lost, or at any event spending their most vital formative teens and early adult life in Nazi death camps, while our parents were able to lead more normal lives during their formative years, namely after the war had ended. Secondly, the Americans tended to live in "survivor communities" being brought up and going to school with children of other survivors where the topic of the Holocaust was allowed to remain a recurring if not continual subject of interest. In my own case this was not so, partly because I was privately educated, which involved living away from home from the age of seven, and partly because, while my father has never been reticent about discussing his wartime experiences, he decided, quite rightly in my opinion, to wait until we asked questions (normally following television programmes) rather than continually reminiscing with friends in our presence or discussing or telling or even lecturing us about them. This, I feel, enabled me and my brothers to get the Holocaust into some sort of perspective and didn't allow it to dominate our lives, which I believe would be counterproductive and retrogressive and serve no useful purpose. That is not to say that we are desensitized to the horrors of the Holocaust and indeed because we are the sons of a survivor it has heightened our sensitivity and most importantly made us particularly aware that the lessons derived from it should never be forgotten and that such events should never be allowed to happen again.

The desire to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust and ensure that it is not repeated was probably the main theme of the day. However, the burdens that these twin goals impose bring with them their own pressures. Many participants, especially the large American contingent, felt these pressures keenly and were often neurotic and depressed, which is partly explainable by the continual surveys which they underwent and which often concluded that they had every right to have psychological problems. Indeed, a US journalist wrote that the day for the Second Generation at the Conference was intended for therapeutic reasons where a "whole load of 'sickos' could get together and cry on each other's shoulders". While this is really wide off the mark, it is true that we, the Second Generation, often do feel enormous pressure from our parents, either explicit or implicit, to achieve near perfection in our studies, professions and life in order to justify our very existence and commute our parents' guilt complexes that they were in fact the ones "chosen" to survive.

This pressure is sometimes given expression in rage and anger. Many children felt that their parents were over-protective towards them, didn't understand them (not having led a normal early adult life themselves), and some were even browbeaten with the constant references to the Holocaust. Thus an additional gap had to be bridged, that is, in addition to the normal generation gap between parents and children. Curiously though, this rage and anger was often not vented against their parents, whom the children wished to avoid hurting because of their wartime experiences, but in other spheres, especially at school. How the individual handled these additional problems and pressures obviously varied from case to case, but if academic and professional achievement can in any way be used as a yardstick then it would seem in most cases these pressures have been handled successfully.

In conclusion, I felt enormous pride and a sense of satisfaction at the achievements of all those attending the Conference, as a special kind of kinship sprang up between us. My one disappointment was the fact that only three children of British Holocaust survivors were present. I found the experience very therapeutic and worthwhile and would recommend it to all Second Generation people. Indeed, I would be delighted to hear, through the '45 Aid Society Journal, from any other member of the Second Generation who would be interested in having a similar discussion group in England. The organisers of the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors are, I believe, attempting to form international organisations to keep in touch with and monitor the progress of other groups in other countries. I believe that this is a worthwhile cause, because if we, the children and grandchildren of survivors, don't care, then who else will?

THE SECOND GENERATION

by Ardyn Halter

After the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors here in Israel I have two questions to put to you. The first I put to both generations: what is the value of the '45 Aid Society to us, the second generation? The second question I put to my generation: who are we? Let me talk about the second question first and then, by considering it, come to include the first question.

Who are we? First, we are Jews. We are the children of the members of the '45 Aid Society; we are the offspring of survivors of the Shoah. These are the easy answers and they explain why we read this magazine. As the "second generation" we will always be the offspring of the holocaust survivors, though not always the children: the "boys'" boys. But are these answers enough? Are they invested with real meaning? Are they the only serious answers that we will ever be able to return to the question "Who are you?"? Are the answers always going to be passive? I am this and that because of my parents. At the time of the outbreak of the war they were much younger than most of us are now and they were orphaned, oppressed, starved by others. Are we to accept passively our roles as links in an ineluctible chain of causation? Others oppressed our parents and thus we are defined as the sons and daughters of those who were oppressed. This is passive, this is too resigned. This is the way to continue the past, not to learn and build from it. From the past we can learn what it really means to be a Jew in the eyes of the world. From the past we must learn to be vigilant. We must believe that every word that is spoken against the Jew is spoken in earnest. But what else can we glean from the past? I believe that from the bondage of the past we must learn to understand the freedom offered to us today.

I believe Spinoza was right when he saw that there are two freedoms, one lesser, the other complete. The lesser freedom is only ostensible freedom. It is the freedom to choose, it is the freedom of those who elect to keep their choices open. The greater freedom is the freedom of a committed man, the freedom of spirit of one who has chosen the path that he knows to be right. To be truly free is to control one's own destiny. As Jews our responsibility extends beyond our own immediate concerns and convenience. The lesser freedom is that of the Jew in the Galut, in the diaspora, longing for Ha Shana Habaa be Yerushalayim, but never taking himself sufficiently seriously to get up and go there and stay there. True freedom consists in doing what is right for us and for the Jewish people, the State of Israel, for only there will we find true freedom as Jews, as citizens of our own state.

What have we, the second generation, in common? Clearly we have our parents, and what they have, in common. Their past is part of them. I saw that during the World Gathering of

Holocaust Survivors. What we have in common is less clear. Psychiatrists and psychologists try to make out that we have complexes as a result of what happened to our parents, they interview, question and probe; they look for patterns and categories. They will have a tougher job when they look into the next generation: the grand-children. It will be harder to find coherent patterns there. And the generation following that? What will come of the '45 Aid Society then? I do not think that it will exist. I only wish that the reason it will not exist were ALIYA.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND WELLWISHERS

LOOKING BACK

by Mrs L G Montefiore

Looking back through the years of my married life, the memory that never fades is of my husband's constant work for charity and education and his desire to help anyone in need.

My first introduction to his many activities was to the West Central Club for Boys which he ran in his bachelor days. In fact I remember being taken there soon after our engagement and seeing for myself the affection with which he was greeted. Soon after that, there was a visit to a school in Poland Street where he received the same welcome and by this time, I found myself wondering whether I could live up to all this, but glowing with pride all the same.

Then, of course, there was his interest in the Settlement, founded by his close friend Basil Henriques, and later to become the Bernhard Baron Settlement. He and Basil had worked together at Toynbee Hall in their younger days. Fortunately, they both had a great sense of humour and it was fun listening to their reminiscences - their calls to the occasional difficult homes in the district - sometimes amusing and sometimes not so amusing.

As the years went by, there was his Presidency of the Anglo-Jewish Association and I must not forget the Jewish Colonization Association, which I used to enjoy as it meant a visit to Paris when the meetings were held. When he was not "on duty" we would roam about Paris, enjoying its wonders and usually he would find his way to the bookshops on the Rive Gauche, where he would love to browse among the books, while I wandered about trying to look learned - without much success!

Then came his work for the Central British Fund, and for many years, his great interest in the Froebel Educational Institute, of which he became President on the death of his Father, and subsequently to be succeeded by our son Alan. He had a great fondness for "the Froebel" which I shared, and we had many happy times there, talking to the staff and students, looking around and enjoying the beautiful grounds and often unobtrusively spending time chopping off the dead roses.

And I know I need not mention his pre-war, wartime and post-war endeavours to be of help to the victims of the Nazi regime. You have all shown such very great appreciation of that particular effort.

I cannot end without mentioning his work and anxiety for the Wiener Library, which was so close to his heart. Dr Wiener brought the Library to London in 1939 to save it from destruction by the Nazis. It contained, and still does, Nazi

literature and my husband considered it to be of the utmost importance as a means to fight anti-semitism. It was, and still is, used by Jews and non-Jews alike, by scholars and non-scholars and by anyone who wishes to study there. The great hope is to be able to maintain and preserve it, and if we succeed, I shall feel it to be a very great tribute to his memory.

SOME NOTES ON THE WORK WITH CONTINENTAL
YOUTH FROM THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

by Wolfgang David Gordon

May 1946

The author was a member of the staff at Windermere and subsequently Madrich at the Nightingale Road Hostel, Stamford Hill. We understand that this article was written as a report for Hashomer Hazair on behalf of which he was working with us. See also the obituary on page 42. (Ed.)

The observations related in the following report are based on my experiences with Jewish children with whom I worked at the Reception Camp in Windermere between August and December 1945. I consider what they reveal could have a universal application in the care of refugees from whatever area of conflict or misery.

Before giving an account of the conditions and problems of these children, I should point out that this is necessarily a general report which does not claim to do justice to every individual child concerned. Also a different group might present another set of problems calling for a different psychological and educational approach.

The 300 boys and girls who went through our camp at Windermere were predominantly of Polish descent. Some remarks on their background and early environment may help in understanding their reaction to the experiences with which they were confronted during the second world war.

East European Jews are known for their strong family ties. Relations between parents and children are exceptionally close and, as a result, there is a very great dependence of the child on the family. Consequently, separation brings with it greater strain and hardship.

To understand the extraordinary capacity of these youngsters to endure their terrible fate, it should be noted that their consciously Jewish upbringing never allowed for any feeling of racial inferiority; a feeling which was present with many assimilated Jews from Western European countries. Our boys' and girls' knowledge of Jewish history and their consciousness

of belonging to a great and ancient people, served as a source of strength, and reinforced their moral resistance. The majority of them were separated from their parents early in the war and put to work in labour gangs. Later they were sent to a number of different concentration camps.

Shortly before the end of hostilities the Germans marched these children from all parts of the Reich to Theresienstadt (Czechoslovakia) which was to be the last big extermination camp. Here they were liberated by the Russians in May 1945.

When preparing ourselves for the reception we expected to meet frightened and intimidated youngsters who would approach us with distrust and scepticism. Reality proved us wrong and we were soon face-to-face with a lively crowd of children who seemed completely uninhibited and active.

The majority of the boys and girls were between the ages of 14 and 19.

Although only 15% of them were in need of hospital treatment (suffering mostly from TB), nearly all were in poor health and in need of some months of restful life. Their general physical weakness was reflected, at least during the first period, in a certain lack of endurance and an inability to concentrate on lessons for more than about 2 hours.

Far from being reserved, they talked freely about their sufferings, and showed themselves very eager indeed to relate their experiences. It was not long before a very good relationship of trust and confidence between staff and children was established. The reason for this success lies, in my opinion, in the fact that most of the workers were young and experienced youth leaders. That they were also Jewish, and that all that happened to the children could have happened to them, made it undoubtedly easier for them to gain their confidence.

The childrens' genuine respect for almost all the educational staff was remarkable. They would repeatedly express their gratitude for the help extended to them, and for the fact that they were treated as normal and equal. Soon regarding us as real friends, they frequently told us of their wish to become the normal human beings they saw us as, insisting that they themselves were in many ways inferior, having been robbed of a normal healthy and secure development.

Consequently, their main concern was to make up speedily for all they had missed, to acquire knowledge and generally to become "a human being like you". Although it can be seen from this that a very healthy attitude to life was the basic characteristic of those youngsters, which was expressed in a strong urge to build their own future, it was, of course, natural that their experiences did affect their behaviour.

Aggressiveness was one of the results of those past experiences. It found an outlet in the rather destructive treatment of furniture and, especially in the initial period, in the many quarrels and fights between the boys. These fights were often of a serious nature, and the highly excited state of the boys made intervention very difficult. Much tact as well as calmness were needed in the handling of such situations. So frequent were these conflicts during the first few weeks that it was inadvisable to leave the boys to themselves, even for a short while.

As a consequence of starvation, and because they had usually had to fight for food, the children were extremely greedy and would ask for larger helpings than they could manage. However, when they discovered that food was plentiful, this greediness receded after some weeks.

The distribution of clothes created a fairly serious administrative problem, and was found to have a direct bearing on the relationship between staff and children, touching as it did one of the most important problems of the individual girl and boy. Whilst being sincerely grateful for our educational endeavours, the children showed an altogether different attitude towards material possessions. Having been stripped of all their belongings, they came to this country full of hopeful assumptions and illusions, and presuming that they would be generously equipped. These confident expectations were reinforced by a very deep-rooted conception on their part that they, the victims of a cruel fate, had every right to demand material help from those who were spared the horrors of German persecution.

Due mainly to an acute shortage of clothing coupons and general supply difficulties, only a few items of clothes were available for distribution. There were therefore from the beginning not enough suits, shoes, shirts, etc. to satisfy everybody at the same time. This aroused suspicion and distrust, provoking many of the children to resort to dishonesty, when often they would claim not to have received their due share. They would frequently complain that one or other of their comrades had been given more. Rather than wait for further supplies, many would take shoes, etc. which did not fit them, in order to exchange them later.

The importance of clothing cannot be over-rated. The problem of clothing caused the only real disturbance in the childrens' relationship towards us, and proved to be a disruptive problem in the life of our otherwise very happy community. This anxiety to secure one's share of clothing not only signifies the childrens' wish to be well dressed, but is a material expression of their desire to regain their individual personality. They wanted to have things which they could call their own, and about the use of which they alone could decide. This was borne out by the fact that after receiving their share, both boys and girls would often, and without regret, give some of their belongings away to others.

After discussing the distribution of clothing, and the problems arising from it, the staff agreed that it would have been better not to give out any item before a sufficient quantity had accumulated, for all the children to have their share at the same time.

The majority of the boys (I cannot speak about the girls, knowing too little about their particular experiences) had of course developed a strong interest in sexual matters. Having come across the most varied forms of sex life - often in its ugliest form - in the labour and concentration camps, their knowledge and experience in this field was naturally far greater than that of the ordinary adolescent. They had seen sex in its ugliest forms, when it was hardly an expression of love and affection, but an almost animal desire for physical satisfaction. Having had to witness this kind of sex life around them, and having listened to numerous discussions on the subject, many consequently developed the conception that they too must have opportunity for physical satisfaction, and that any friendship with a girl was predominantly a means to this end. Generally they were not at all hesitant to voice their views on sexual matters, regarding them as a natural part of living.

This uninhibited attitude proved very positive as it made an open approach and discussion comparatively easy. Many of the boys would in the evenings leave the camp and seek the company of local girls. It was our policy not to place any obstacles in their way, and we never punished late-comers. I believe this was the wisest, and in fact the only possible course to take, as the boys would in any case have disregarded all restriction in this direction. Such disregard could easily have resulted in an estrangement between them and the educational staff, as the leaders would soon have been regarded as figures in authority who were bent on infringing on their liberty. Such restrictions would not have served any educational purpose, as we were unable to offer a positive alternative to this problem. As it turned out, nothing serious ever happened, and I am convinced that there never was any physical relationship resulting in sexual intercourse. We were, on the contrary, glad to see that most of the boys did, in spite of their previous experiences and original attitude, adopt a very nice and considerate approach to the girls.

Judging from this, I would not regard the sex problem of our boys as presenting greater educational difficulties than those of the average adolescent. The boys frequently voiced the wish that their future hostels should be in the vicinity of a Jewish community, or not far from girls' hostels so that they could have the opportunity of making friends with girls of their own people.

Although they may well give rise to greater immediate difficulties, I am of the opinion that co-educational hostels offer the best solution. They will ultimately prove more satisfactory and, in addition, furnish the educator with the

possibility of observing and controlling the sexual development and activities of the boys and girls, as they will form a natural part of the hostel life.

The educational and social activities of the camp were of a very varied character. The mornings were taken up by school, and the children revealed an extraordinary interest in almost all subjects. Especially popular were English, history and mathematics. Most of the boys and girls proved rather intelligent and their progress was remarkable. The afternoons were either free or taken up with sports and games; football and other outdoor games were most popular. Evenings saw the children busy with a number of different activities; some played chess, others gathered for a brains trust or discussion circle, still others could be found preparing and rehearsing for a play. As time went on, it was interesting to observe how much more relaxed they were in the way they spent their spare time.

Mental alertness and a strong sense of group solidarity were undoubtedly amongst the most outstanding characteristics of these youngsters. Their deep concern for each other manifested itself on many occasions. If, for example, one of them fell ill or received news from relatives or friends, the whole community soon knew about it, and everybody showed the greatest interest and concern.

Rightly regarding the camp as a temporary arrangement, they looked upon the hostel as their new home which would at long last give them the opportunity for a normal and regular life. Consequently they were extremely careful in their choice of hostels.

Since the first group which left the camp was rather disappointed with its new home, the remaining ones insisted that they should be allowed to inspect their hostel-to-be before leaving the camp. For this purpose they elected one or two representatives whom they entrusted with this inspection. We agreed to this procedure, since we considered this concern for their future was a healthy attitude. We thought that once a group had decided in favour of a particular hostel, we could confidently expect them to make the best of it. We also left it entirely to the youngsters to form themselves into groups for these communities.

Orthodox organizations provided hostels for religious children. However, 80-90% of them were not religious and insisted that they should not be asked to live in orthodox homes. Jealously guarding their right to intellectual and spiritual freedom, one of the groups actually refused a certain religious hostel, declaring that they were not prepared for concessions or compromises where their conscience was concerned.

They also took great care in the choice of leaders who were to go with them to their hostel. The youngsters readily accepted authority from really trusted adults whose leadership they

recognised. These children had, during the war, met many people, and had thus acquired the ability to judge and scrutinise them. In this respect they can be compared with experienced grown-ups, and those responsible for the selection of educational staff cannot afford to ignore this.

I have tried to convey some glimpses of our experiences at Windermere, and will now attempt to give my views on the problems of adjustment to hostel life, and on the educational approach which should, in my opinion, be adopted.

I believe the hostel to be the most desirable social frame-work for such boys and girls. I have already mentioned their deep feelings of solidarity and mutual concern, based on their common experience. This fact together with the need to facilitate a healthy psychological adjustment to the new and so far unknown "normal" life necessitates for the individual girl or boy a familiar surrounding. With few exceptions the youngster wishes to be with his friends, and feels comfortable in their company. Life in a private family might, could even in the majority of adolescents, result in loneliness. The atmosphere in the private home consisting of educated adults and children might increase the young person's existing feelings of inferiority.

For these reasons alone, I regard the hostel as the most suitable frame-work for our refugee youth, at least until they have got used to the new environment of a strange country and a strange language.

The educational problems in the organization of the hostel life were manifold and demanded a well defined approach. At Windermere, great freedom was given to the children, because they needed a period of rest, and were not yet in a position to adjust to the reality of a regular disciplined life. In the hostel this adjustment must be aimed at and the daily life should, as nearly as possible, take the form of that of normal adolescents.

In this connection I wish to stress that the boys' attitude to work provided one of the most difficult problems. Having slaved for the Germans, most of our boys developed an aversion to physical work, being unable to regard it as anything but an unfortunate necessity. They argued that having suffered enough hardship, they should not now be asked to do any physical work. Many well meaning people accepted this argument. Not realising the educational and psychological implications of this reasoning, they maintained that these "poor children" should be given the greatest possible comfort, and protected from the realities of life.

In actual fact, this attitude could bring nothing but harm to the children. It would not help them in their readjustment to society, but it would, on the contrary, increase their feeling of being different from others. Inactivity, if continued over some months, is bound to have a demoralizing effect on

children. Without physical work no adequate outlet is provided for the creative energies of the boys and girls, nor for their normal aggression.

I am therefore of the opinion that the educational staff should insist on physical work. In most of the hostels the children worked half time, spending the other half of the day studying English, science or other technical and cultural subjects. Although most of the boys did not initially like the requirement for physical work, many found a great deal of satisfaction through it, and most of them came to realise that work is an essential part of the reality of life and was in no way exploitation. Work, of course, should not be expected of children under 17 or 18 for whom schooling should be provided.

Of equal importance to educational work with our children is the creation of a feeling of confidence in the future. Only this confidence in their future will effectively counteract their inner restlessness, anxieties and tensions. Educators must discuss with the children their ideas and plans and then help them to adjust their present life and work to future plans.

In conclusion, I would like to say how greatly moved I was by the way in which these boys and girls proved able to regain self respect and to achieve a positive attitude to life, and without forgetting their terrible experiences during the war years.

These notes barely touch on a few aspects of work with refugee children. Nevertheless I hope that they will be of some help to those who devote themselves to the hard but gratifying task of rehabilitation of European youth.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS

Director, Shalvata Mental Health Centre,
Hod HaSharon, (Tel-Aviv University
Medical School), Professor of Holocaust
and Social Trauma Studies, Bar-Ilan
University, Ramat Gan.

by Shamai Davidson

As part of his research work the author has interviewed, and thus got to know, many Members of our Society. He clearly belongs among "Our Friends and Wellwishers". (Ed.)

In Israel the survivors form a large and integral part of the population. They are our neighbours, friends, and colleagues at work. They are our husbands and wives and their children become our daughters-in-law and sons-in-law.

A specific part of the identity of each Israeli who was not born in the country relates to the country of origin. Thus people are often referred to as "Yotzei Hungary", "Yotzei Lita", "Yotzei Iraq".

Holocaust survivors, however, are often referred to as if their country of origin was the "Shoa" - as "Yotzei Shoa". Having been in the "Shoa" thus displaces and takes precedence over the country of origin and becomes the central feature identifying the individual survivor and his family in the eyes of his fellow-citizens. Designating survivors in this way demonstrates an important aspect of the Israeli attitude to the survivors. It means that identity is defined in relation to exposure to the trauma of the Holocaust and may even be used as a stereotype for certain characteristics and reactions. In general, however, in Israel the survivors have not been singled out for special recognition and they - like all the other olim - were expected to play down their origins and traumatic past and become active citizens contributing to the building and defence of the new State and embrace the new emerging Israeli identity.

There was a powerful relevance and coincidence of psycho-historical and personal themes in the "rebirth" of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel with the need to fight for its survival and in the creation of new lives and families by the survivors.

The re-establishment of links and continuity with the values and goals of the pre-Holocaust past was a powerful influence in overcoming the trauma of loss of family and community. For many survivors who came to Israel in their late teens and early twenties activity, belonging, and identification became fused into a cohesive whole infusing meaning into their new lives. In these ways Israel became a huge rehabilitation project for the survivors of genocide.

At community and national levels in Israel, the Holocaust has always been given central significance and expression in annual memorial meetings for the destroyed communities, in the Holocaust Remembrance Day, in teaching programmes in the schools, and through constant reporting in the media.

At the interpersonal level, however, the individual survivor's Shoa past was in general avoided. In our culture people are uncomfortable in the presence of the survivors of man-made disasters. In the personal encounter with them images arise of victimization and helpless confrontation with death and horror, of humiliation and loss, and the misery of the struggle to survive in extremity. These images arouse feelings of anger, fear and guilt, emotions which we prefer to avoid, although we also want to know what really happened.

For many survivors themselves the recalling and relating of their experiences was extremely painful and humiliating - hence the natural tendency to try to forget. The reluctance that they often sensed in others to listen to what they had been through reinforced their tendency to avoid talking about their dreadful experiences. They justified their silence in the general society in terms of the inability of the others to understand what they had experienced. In this way both the survivors and the surrounding society interacted to maintain, by and large, a shameful silence.

Accepted as citizens with more or less full rights and opportunities in most of the societies of the democratic world in the post-war era where they settled, their survivor identities and experiences were avoided and remained shadowy and unexpressed except when meeting with fellow-survivors in the special intimacy and solidarity of mutual aid or social groups.

For many years we have been studying the impact of trauma on the life cycle of individual survivors, as well as the possible transgenerational influence of this impact within the families of the survivors and on future generations.

The degree of recovery and the quality of integration of survivors of massive trauma are related to an interaction of many factors and results in a wide range of differing outcomes. Despite the catastrophic dimensions of the trauma and the immense losses, the experiences and their significance were different and unique for each individual.

Many factors determined how the individual was affected, such as age during the Shoa, personality resources, the quality of family life in childhood, the capacity to form relationships, and confidence in one's ability to affect one's fate. Furthermore, belonging to a community, group or ideology, the marital and family relationships as well as material and professional success, have been important factors in the struggle to overcome the effects of the traumatic past and to find meaning and satisfaction in the years since the Holocaust.

For many survivors who had been married and had children before the Holocaust, the multiple losses of spouse and children, of siblings and extended families, created tremendous burdens of mourning. The memory of the former unmourned spouse and children sometimes cast a shadow over the new marriage and family relationships. In this age group, the symptoms of the so-called "concentration camp survivor syndrome" such as depressions, fears, flashback associations, guilt feelings and nightmares have been more evident.

Survivors in general tend to be vulnerable to disappointment, separation, illness and death in members of their families and close friends. Furthermore, for some who have lived lives of constant activity and overactivity and are often highly successful achievers, cessation of activity can create serious problems. At such times when facing stressful life events the suppressed painful memories of past suffering and loss can flood back causing or reinforcing depression and anxiety.

However, the vast majority of survivors did not become psychiatric patients and have shown remarkable capacities in overcoming the effect of the extreme experiences and multiple losses, creating new lives and healthy and successful families. Unfortunately, generalizations were made from clinical symptoms which did not do justice to the strength and complexity of the lives of survivors and their families.

Our research studies today are mainly concerned with understanding the processes and strengths within the individual and his environment in the recovery, adaptation and integration of survivors. We have been focussing these studies on those who were in their teens and early twenties at the end of the war. This age group in general seems to have been less adversely affected by the traumatisation and made the best recovery despite the fact that their adolescent years were spent in ghettos and concentration camps. "Survivor syndrome" symptoms were present to a much lesser extent and survivor guilt often entirely absent.

It was much more possible for this age group to resume development, education and occupational training. As a result, marriages which occurred years later were usually on a more solid basis than with many of the older survivors who made hasty liaisons and gave birth to children very soon after liberation.

An important finding in our studies of survivors has been the role of small groups, friendships, and protective relationships in enhancing the chances of survival in the camps.

Almost all the well functioning "teen-age survivors" interviewed had experienced helping relationships in the camps and for many these experiences have remained as valuable memories often cherished as a humanising and ethical influence throughout their lives. Furthermore, the bonds which were created in the concentration camps and during the

rehabilitation period after liberation have continued as an important social support system for many of them throughout their lives up to the present. In the different countries in which they now live, mainly Israel, England and North America, many have maintained close contact and affection for each other, often of a sibling bond nature, throughout the past thirty-six years with much mutual caring and helping behaviour. The intensely supportive quality of the network of relationships of small and large groups, such as the '45 Aid Society, enabled much exchange of reminiscences and mutual support and encouragement. These self-help survivor groups have been of considerable help for many individuals, allowing for a slow "working through" of losses and other traumata in solidarity with others who had similar experiences. Some of these groups, especially if spouse and children were involved, became substitutes for the lost extended families. Such support systems may well have replaced a need for "therapy" which might have arisen without it.

Today, thirty-six years later, many survivors who were adolescents or young adults during the war feel a need to talk about their past; to return to and even to attempt a belated "working-through" of their Holocaust experiences. Now middle-aged and older, they are confronted with a return of suppressed Holocaust memories as part of the normal process of reflection on and review of past life at this stage in the life-cycle.

In the early years after the war the attempt to come to terms with concentration camp experiences and Holocaust losses would have been so painful that it was avoided and postponed until this later period in life when the passage of time may have rendered the traumatic events more distant and less intolerably painful.

Furthermore, until then all the psychic energy of many survivors was mobilized to meet the demands of work and growing families which provided purpose and meaning in their lives. Some of the survivors who now feel the need to talk even connect the return of Holocaust memories with an increasing disillusionment and disappointment with the state of society and the world.

The ways of "coming to terms" with, and "overcoming" Holocaust traumata utilized by individual survivors are multiple and complex. Each phase of the life-cycle presented new opportunities for "dealing with" the traumatic memories and losses with great variations in individuals (for example episodes of delayed mourning). Creative artistic expression (painting, sculpture, writing prose or poetry etc), Holocaust studies as well as communal and social activity have been of considerable value for survivors in "working through" their experiences as well as constituting meaningful communication of real importance for the rest of society.

We have recently set up a counselling service for survivors and their families as part of our Study Centre for Holocaust and Social Trauma at Bar-Ilan University. Our object is to provide a suitable framework for those seeking to communicate their Holocaust experiences and express the hitherto unarticulated feelings of fear, guilt, shame, helplessness, anger, etc. Many who have turned to us have been "waiting" for thirty-five years to deal with these experiences and the associated feelings.

They wanted "to speak" but waited because they "did not know how and with whom". Nowhere has this been better expressed than by the gifted survivor - writer Aharon Appelfeld:

"Human suffering is the lot of everyone,
but the way to the suffering of extremity,
like to death itself, is the escape from it;

but what can we do when each attempt to escape
always returns us in the end to ourselves,
to our childhood, to the camps, and to the ghettos?

In this circuit of escape and return our self-
awareness moves,
and until we 'work through' it we shall not be free".

(From "Essays in the First Person" by Aharon Appelfeld. Zionist Library, Jerusalem, 1979, p.144.)

THE 5TH LEONARD G MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

WHY WAS AUSCHWITZ NOT BOMBED?

by Martin Gilbert

Delivered at the Stern Hall on 25th March 1981

The following article was published in The Jewish Chronicle on 18th September 1981, and is reprinted here with its kind permission, for which the Editorial Board is most grateful. The article offers a faithful summary of the lecture (Ed.).

There are two quite separate ways of looking at the Second World War: the war as battles (dominated by Dunkirk, Alamein, Stalingrad, Monte Cassino, D-Day, the Ardennes); or the war as suffering (in which names such as Auschwitz would predominate). Until recently, historians have focused principally on the military aspects of the war. So, too, have the popular books and magazines. But in the past few years, more and more is being written about the suffering (of Jews, Poles, gypsies, Soviet prisoners-of-war, homosexuals, and many others).

In my new book, Auschwitz and the Allies,* I have tried to trace the link between suffering and the battles, and, above all, between the Western Allies (chiefly Britain and the United States) and the deportation of Jews to the death camps: deportations which were at their most intense from the early months of 1942 until the autumn of 1943, although continuing until the late summer of 1944.

Certain factors need to be stressed from the outset. First, Hitler's plan to murder every Jew in Europe was a closely guarded secret, which even potential victims on the eve of deportation found hard (and at times impossible) to believe.

Every type of deception was practised. In Greece, for example, Jews were told that they were to be given work on farms in Poland, and were given official receipts for their railway tickets. Others were deported (or "resettled", as the Nazis called it) in order, so it was said, and seemed, to help with the harvest, or to work (as many millions of non-Jews were working) in labour camps far from home, as forced labourers in German factories. Conditions would clearly be harsh: but it made sense to believe that what the Germans wanted was productive work and service, not blood and bones.

As the deportation trains rolled eastwards, from France, Holland and Belgium in the summer of 1942, for example, their destination remained a close secret. The most alert and well-informed of Western observers, Jews and non-Jews alike, knew of the location of the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau only as the "unknown destination."

This phrase occurs again and again in the letters and messages smuggled out of Europe; messages which were given publicity in the British press, and over the BBC, in 1942 and 1943. But both the name and purpose of Auschwitz-Birkenau remained obscure for more than two years from May 1942, when the first gassings of deported Jews began there, until the summer of 1944, when the truth about the four gas chambers of Birkenau was brought westward by two young Jews (both Slovaks) who managed to escape from the camp itself.

During those two years, throughout which Auschwitz remained, as far as Jewish deportees were concerned, the "unknown destination", more than one and a half million Jews were murdered there. Yet, because this fact remained a secret for those two years, there was no way that any Allied response, or Jewish response in the Western world, could take place. Only in June 1944 did any response become possible. And by then it was too late to save the mass of European Jewry.

Other death camps were known about in the West much earlier than the summer of 1944. Indeed, in May 1942, the very month in which gassing of Jews began at Birkenau, a report was smuggled out of Poland, and reached London, telling of the mass murder of Jews in the east, and of the gassing in February, March and April 1942 of thousands more at the first of the death camps, Chelmno (near Lodz, in German-annexed western Poland).

But this smuggled report, which was copious and horrific in its details, and widely publicised at the time, made no reference to Auschwitz. Within five months, details about the three other main death camps, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, had also reached the West. These details were likewise copious, accurate, and terrible.

Long reports, many based on the eye-witness testimony of escapees, were arriving in London and New York almost weekly by November 1942. Each report told of mass killings, gas chambers, and every conceivable form of cruelty and murder. Although none of these reports mentioned Auschwitz-Birkenau in its Jewish "context", the names and nature of the other death camps were increasingly widely known, so much so that, after a Polish non-Jew, Jan Karski, had brought news of his own eye-witnessing of killings at Belzec (but not at Birkenau, which he did not visit or mention), the Allies issued a solemn declaration, in December 1942, warning of a Nazi extermination plan, and condemning what was called, quite bluntly, "this bestial policy".

Yet even in this declaration, no mention was made of Auschwitz, nor does the name Auschwitz appear in any of the discussions (Jewish or non-Jewish) leading up to the declaration.

By the end of 1942, condemnation of the murder of Jews was loud, and frequent. Less easy to determine was what could be done. Both Churchill and Roosevelt took one step which the Jewish leaders in the West had continuously urged upon them: a promise to bring to trial those responsible for the murders, once the war was won. But at the end of 1942, it was the Germans, not the Allies, who were the most confident of victory. Indeed, it was the military weakness of the Allies at that time which most prevented any effective efforts at retaliation or rescue.

While the mass killing of Jews was at its most intense, the Soviet forces were being pressed back on Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad. The British were at grips with Rommel in North Africa, with Egypt itself endangered. The United States was locked in battle with the Japanese across much of the Pacific.

Europe was, at that moment, and for more than a year, at Hitler's command. No Allied armies could come to the rescue of Jews or of non-Jews; no Allied aircraft could do more than pound almost indiscriminately Germany's major cities, principally in western Germany.

Untroubled by any invasion threat, Hitler could, and did, pursue his diabolical plans without interruption.

Long before the military advantage had turned towards the Allies, long before British and American troops had landed in Europe, more than a year before Allied bombers had the bases and ranges to reach the Auschwitz region, the majority of the six million had been murdered. In that perspective, it is clear that the Allies were powerless to save Jewish lives, at the moment of greatest slaughter.

The documents which I have studied - the hundreds of messages from Nazi-occupied Europe to London, New York and Jerusalem, and the publicity given to those messages in the Western press and radio - make it clear that for more than two years (in fact, for 28 months) the four gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau had kept their secret, as the destination of the deportees of several hundred deportation trains.

And during those 28 months the sole reason why Auschwitz was never bombed was that its existence was hidden from all those who studied the intelligence coming from Nazi-occupied Europe. Even the famous Riegner telegram of August 1942 (sent from Geneva to New York and London by Gerhardt Riegner, of the World Jewish Congress), the telegram which first revealed the existence of a German extermination plan, made no reference to Auschwitz.

On August 17, 1942, the Reuter news agency had accurately reported, and "The Times" had published in London, the news of the deportation of 100,000 Jews from Poland. Their fate, it was said, was "probable massacre". But the location of the massacre site was stated to be "an unknown destination in the east".

Throughout September 1942 news of the deportations from France, Holland, Belgium and Croatia continued to reach the West, on an almost daily basis. In a speech in the House of Commons, on September 8, 1942, Churchill called these deportations "the most bestial, the most squalid, and the most senseless of all their offences ... illustrating as nothing else can the utter degradation of the Nazi nature and theme, and the degradation of all who lend themselves to its unnatural and perverted passions".

But even Churchill, with his access to the best Allied intelligence, had no idea of the exact destination to which the deportees were being sent. Intelligence reports and agents could trace the trains to Moravska Ostrava, to Cosel and to Cracow - even to Dziedzice (a railway junction only a few miles from Auschwitz), but not beyond.

Nine days after Churchill's speech, on September 17, 1942, one of the very best informed of all the Jewish intelligence centres, Geneva, reported to London - the letter writer was the Zionist (and former Revisionist) Richard Lichtheim - that practically the whole Jewish population of Croatia had been deported.

Lichtheim wrote to London of two destinations: the first, simply "to labour camps" and the second "to Poland (Ost-Oberschlesien)." This latter region (east upper Silesia) was in fact the exact region of Auschwitz: but Auschwitz itself was not named.

On the following day, September 18, 1942, Lichtheim reported again to London that Jews were being deported almost daily from Belgium, Holland and France, as well as Croatia. But all that he knew of their route was that they were being taken from internment camps in the west, "to Poland".

On October 22, 1942, all the Swiss intelligence which had reached the various Jewish organisations by that date was presented in a substantial portfolio to the American and British diplomatic mission in Berne. It was more than five months since the gassings at Auschwitz had begun, but no mention was made of them. The crux of the report read as follows: "A great number of the deported people are starving in the trains in consequence of the indescribably inhuman conditions in which the transports are carried out".

According to a report from a German source, "many of the deportees from the Western countries are no longer alive when reaching the German frontier, but are killed before by various methods. Younger deportees are being taken to work either in the industries of Silesia or for the construction of fortifications in the coastal zones of France or at the Eastern front. Those unfit for work are killed, and those engaged in slave labour are nearly worked to death, and if unfit for work, they also are killed."

Every message reaching the West, throughout October, November and December 1942, was as explicit - and as vague. Of the weekly deportation of a thousand Jews from Holland to Auschwitz, Lichtheim (who was in contact with the Jewish Council in Amsterdam) reported to London on December 17, 1942: "Of the deported people there has been no news". With the exception of a few senior SS officials, Lichtheim added, "nobody knows to what place the transports are being sent".

This mystery of the destination of the deportation trains remained a mystery throughout 1943. In the House of Commons debate of May 19, 1943, a high point of Parliamentary sympathy for the plight of the Jews, Treblinka was the only camp mentioned by name. Of the Jews of Belgium, in fact deported to Auschwitz, it was said that they had been deported "to concentration camps in Poland or in Germany".

On June 1, 1943, "The Times" reported the deportation of tens of thousands of Polish Jews. But it did not know to where they were sent, reporting only that the conditions of the deportation journeys were "harder than life can bear for long", and that the journeys themselves "are often very long".

On July 20, 1943, another Jewish listening post, and intelligence centre, Istanbul, sent on to Jerusalem a digest of all that was known so far. Treblinka and Belzec were both named. Auschwitz was not. Of two groups of deportees actually deported to Auschwitz, the Istanbul listening post could report only that one group had gone on a journey "of which none knew the end", and the second to "an unknown destination".

This pattern of report was repeated until the summer of 1944. Thus more than one and a half million Jews were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, without the location or name of the camp becoming known in the West.

One example: on January 2, 1944, a British intelligence report on the fate of the Jews of Salonica stated: "After being persecuted by the Germans in Salonica, the majority are believed to have been sent to Poland". In fact, since March 1943, all had been sent to Auschwitz.

In February 1944, the Jewish Agency's listening post in Istanbul believed that it had solved the mystery of the "unknown destination". For a letter had reached them, telling of "the increased number of Jews at Birkenau near Auschwitz." The letter went on to tell of the large factories in the region, and of "seventy thousand Jews recently concentrated there" who were serving as a "labour force". It seemed clear, therefore, Istanbul reported to Jerusalem, that labour was the fate of the French and Dutch Jews deported to Poland.

Other observers, among them Lichtheim in Geneva, insisted, however, that most of the deportees were being murdered. If this were indeed true, where they were being murdered was still not known. On March 24, 1944, Roosevelt himself warned of dire

penalties for anyone who took part in the "deportation of the Jews to their death in Poland". Where in Poland he did not say.

In March 1944, Auschwitz was still a secret, as the destination and killing centre of Jewish deportees. That same month, the Germans began to plan the deportation there of three quarters of a million Hungarian Jews, who had only just come under Nazi control. They were to be Hitler's final victims.

But at this very moment, in April 1944, as plans to deport all Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz were reaching readiness, the news of the truth about the gas chambers of Auschwitz finally left the camp itself: born by two escapees, the young Slovak Jews, Rudolf Vrba (formerly Walter Rosenberg) and Alfred Wetzler, both of whom had been at Birkenau since the autumn of 1942.

The two escapees fled southwards, reaching Zilina in Slovakia on April 25, 1944, and telling their story to a representative of the Bratislava Jewish Council. He passed it on, three days later, to a Hungarian Jewish leader who had come to Bratislava by train: Reszo Kastner.

The report which Vrba and Wetzler prepared was detailed, factual and horrific. Even today, with all the subsequent memoirs and historical research, it is as accurate and terrible an account as exists. What, then, went wrong? Why did the Vrba-Wetzler report not lead to an immediate demand for action - and for bombing - a demand that could have been passed on from Budapest to Switzerland within a matter of hours, even by telephone?

The answer is one of the greatest tragedies of the all too tragic history of the Jews: a Nazi deception plan which worked, a deception on a mammoth scale even by Nazi standards.

On April 25, 1944, the very day on which Vrba and Wetzler were telling the story of Auschwitz to the Slovak Jewish leaders in Zilina, less than 150 miles away in Budapest, Adolf Eichmann was proposing a deal whereby the Jewish leaders in Hungary would help the Gestapo to open direct negotiations with the Allies, with a view to saving the lives of Hungarian Jewry, in return for money and goods: Blut gegen Waren.

The news of the Gestapo offer reached Jerusalem on May 24, 1944, a week after the first Hungarian Jews had in fact reached Auschwitz. But for the next six weeks, while more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to their deaths, the Jewish Agency leaders remained convinced that the Gestapo offer was genuine, and made as its top priority pressure on the Allied Governments to open negotiations with the Gestapo. Not bombing, but negotiations, was the overriding Jewish Agency request.

As a result of a brilliantly successful Gestapo deception, the faith that negotiations might succeed in saving all Hungarian Jewry coincided with the destruction of more than half of the Jews of greater Hungary.

In my new book,* making use of British, American and Zionist archives, I trace the principal phases of the deception: first, the arrival of the emissary of Hungarian Jewry, Joel Brand, in Istanbul, and the telegram from Istanbul to Jerusalem announcing his arrival on May 24, 1944.

Second, the appeal, in Jerusalem, on May 26, 1944, by David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Shertok, to tell the High Commissioner that if the Nazi offer was rejected, the Nazis "will proceed with their programme of wholesale liquidation". (Neither Ben-Gurion nor Shertok had any idea that for nine days a total of more than 10,000 Jews a day were being gassed at Auschwitz.)

Third, Chaim Weizmann's request, on June 7, 1944, that Shertok should be allowed to interview Brand (who was then under British protective custody in Aleppo), and Shertok's actual interview with Brand, on June 12, 1944, in which Brand convinced Shertok that the Gestapo proposals were genuine - and that even if Jews were being deported to Germany from Hungary, they were not being killed, but kept in special camps in expectation of an exchange deal.

The fourth phase, the Allied response, was typified by Lord Moyne's report to London on June 20, 1944, that it was important not to impose "a mere negative to any genuine proposal involving the rescue of Jewish victims."

The fifth phase was dominated by Shertok's and Weizmann's interview with Anthony Eden, in London on July 6, 1944, in which the two Jewish leaders pressed Eden to agree to follow up the Brand proposals, and to open negotiations between the Allies and the Gestapo; and by Ben-Gurion's telegram to Roosevelt on July 11,

urging the American President to give instructions for the Brand proposals to be followed up and, as Ben-Gurion phrased it, "not allow this unique and possibly last chance of saving remnant European Jewry" to be lost.

As we now know, a total of 435,000 Hungarian Jews were gassed at Auschwitz during the period of these five phases: a period of six weeks, in which it seemed to the Jewish Agency leaders that not one single Hungarian Jew need die, if only the Allies would agree to send Brand back to Budapest with an Allied offer to negotiate.

There had been one individual for whom the Gestapo offer posed a cruel dilemma. This was a Slovak rabbi, Dov Weissmandel, who had been among those shown the Vrba-Wetzler report in Bratislava in the last week of April.

Two weeks later, on May 16, 1944, as the Hungarian deportations to Auschwitz began, Weissmandel realised what, on the basis of the Vrba-Wetzler report, their fate would be. He had therefore telegraphed, to his Orthodox colleagues in Switzerland, urging an Allied air bombardment of the railway lines from Hungary to Auschwitz where they crossed Slovakia.

Weissmandel's telegram was dated May 16, 1944. Thirty-three days later, on June 18, 1944, it reached Washington, together with a second telegram which he had sent on May 24. They were forwarded to Washington by Jacob Rosenheim. Nearly four weeks had passed between the dispatch of the second bombing appeal telegram from Slovakia and its arrival in Washington.

Nor did either telegram refer to Auschwitz or Birkenau: only to "Poland". Nevertheless, in forwarding it to Washington, Rosenheim asked the head of the War Refugee Board there, Pehle, to use his "decisive influence" to have the plan realised, and asked for the decision to be taken "after thorough consideration, without any loss of time", adding that "every day counts, as you will see, for the destruction of thousands".

On June 24, Pehle went to see the Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy, about the bombing proposal. In a memorandum written later that day, Pehle noted how he had told McCloy that "I wanted to mention the matter to him for whatever exploration might be appropriate by the War Department". But Pehle added that "I had several doubts about the matter".

Pehle then listed his doubts: (1) whether it would be appropriate to use military planes and personnel for this purpose; (2) whether it would be difficult to put the railroad line out of commission for a long enough period to do any good; and (3) even assuming that these railroad lines were put out of commission for some period of time, whether it would help the Jews in Hungary.

Having expressed these doubts, Pehle had gone on, as he himself noted, to make it "very clear to Mr McCloy" that he was not, "at this point at least, requesting the War Department to take any action on this proposal, other than to appropriately explore it."

McCloy promised Pehle that he would "check into the matter." And two days later the Operations Division of the War Department General Staff recommended that McCloy should reply that the suggested air operation was "impracticable", for the reason that "it could be executed only by diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations". The Operations Division added that "the most effective relief to victims of enemy persecution is the early defeat of the Axis, an undertaking to which we must devote every resource at our disposal."

Among the "decisive operations" of the Allies was a newly launched bombing "shuttle" known as Operation Frantic, whereby American bombers, based either in Lincolnshire or in southern Italy, could fly over every square mile of German-occupied Europe, using the Russian air base at Poltava to refuel, and pause.

The flight of Operation Frantic, in June, July and August, frequently took these bombers - and their fighter escort - over the deportation railroads, and led them to targets several of which were within only thirty or forty kilometres either side of Auschwitz itself.

There had, indeed, been an even earlier set of Allied reconnaissance flights over Auschwitz, from southern Italy, the first on April 4, 1944, the second on May 31, 1944, the third on June 6, 1944 and the fourth on June 26, 1944. The sole aim of these reconnaissance flights was to photograph the I.G. Farben synthetic oil and rubber plant at Auschwitz-Monowitz.

In the aerial pictures of May 31, June 6 and June 26, however, the huts, railway ramp, gas chambers and crematoria of Birkenau are clearly visible. At the time, they were not commented on, as they had in them no oil or rubber production plant: the sole objective of the reconnaissance. At Birkenau, the Germans had already taken the precaution of preparing pits of water in order to put out fires in the event of an Allied air attack.

The dismissal of Rabbi Weissmandel's bombing appeal took place on June 26, 1944 (the day of the third Birkenau air photographs). At that date, the overriding Jewish Agency hope remained the Brand negotiations. But new information was about to reach the West, to cast that hope into turmoil.

Two more Jewish prisoners from Birkenau, Czeslaw Mordowicz (from Poland) and Arnost Rosin (from Slovakia) had escaped on May 27, 1944. Both had witnessed the first ten days of the gassing of Hungarian Jews. Now they brought proof that the Brand proposals were a grotesque deception. Their information, together with full details of what had happened in Auschwitz from the day of the Vrba-Wetzler escape until their own, reached Geneva on June 23, 1944.

The news brought out of Birkenau by Mordowicz and Rosin was also telegraphed by the British legation in Berne to London, reaching the Foreign Office on July 4, 1944. On the following day, at Moshe Shertok's urgent request, the BBC broadcast an appeal by a leading British trade unionist to the railway workers of Hungary urging them not to help transport Jews to the death camps.

Other pressures were mounting on the Hungarian Government: telegrams of protest from the Vatican, the King of Sweden and the International Red Cross president, urging the Hungarian Regent, Admiral Horthy, to halt the deportations.

At their meeting with Eden on July 16, 1944, Weizmann and Shertok, while still stressing the need to follow up the Brand proposals and making this the dominant purpose of their visit, did also ask Eden if something might be done "to stop the operation of this death camp" - Auschwitz - by bombing the camps themselves "so as to destroy the plant used for gassing and cremation."

On the following day, July 7, 1944, Eden passed on this request to Churchill, who minuted: "Get everything out of the Air Force you can, and invoke me if necessary." That same day, July 7, Eden passed on the bombing request, and Churchill's authority, to the Air Minister. A week later, on July 15, 1944, Sinclair replied that Auschwitz lay outside the British night bomber range (this was true), but within the American day bomber range (which was also true).

The Air Minister's letter continued (about an American daylight raid): "I am proposing to have the proposition put to the Americans, with all the facts, to see if they are prepared to try it. I am very doubtful indeed whether, when they have examined it, the Americans will think it possible, and I do not wish to raise any hopes.

"For this reason, and because it would not be fair to suggest that we favoured and the Americans were unwilling to help, I feel that you would not wish to mention the possibility to Weizmann at this stage. I will let you know the result when the Americans have considered it."

Sir Archibald Sinclair's letter was dated July 15, 1944. Three days later it was learned in London that the Hungarians had halted the deportations to Auschwitz. They had in fact stopped on July 8, the day after Eden had sent the Air Ministry Weizmann's bombing request. Nevertheless, Sinclair instructed his officials to continue to examine the request.

For the Jewish Agency, however, for the next month and a half, the top priority in the West had become pressure on the British and American Governments - not to bomb the camps which were thought to have ceased operation as far as Hungarian Jewry was concerned - but to agree to take in tens of thousands of Hungarian Jewish refugees whom the Hungarian regent, Admiral Horthy, offered to release.

For their part, the British and American policymakers were increasingly worried about how to prevent ill consequences of the Hungarian offer. "We are afraid", wrote one British official, "we may be on the verge of a flood of refugees."

The deportations to Auschwitz were in fact continuing from elsewhere than Hungary: from France, Belgium, Slovakia, northern Italy and the slave labour camps of Silesia. On August 15, 1944, the first of more than 40,000 Jews were brought to Auschwitz from the working ghetto of Lodz (Litzmannstadt). But these new deportations remained unknown in the West for more than a month.

Meanwhile, on August 7, 1944, American bombers of the Operation Frantic shuttle, flying from Poltava, had bombed the oil refineries at Trzebinia, thirteen miles north-east of Auschwitz, and on the following day, August 8, a cluster of Anglo-Polish aircraft from southern Italy flew over the Auschwitz region on their far longer journey, to drop arms and supplies to help the Polish insurgents in Warsaw, who had taken up arms to shake off Nazi rule, even as Soviet troops approached the Polish capital.

Once the Warsaw uprising had begun, and the appeals from Warsaw had reached the West, it was not the plight of the Jews at Auschwitz, but the agony of the Poles in Warsaw, which became the central focus of Allied concern and response. Within two months the Warsaw uprising had been crushed. And within three months, the gassing at Auschwitz had ended: not before a cluster of American bombs had been dropped, by mistake, inside Birkenau itself, within fifty yards of the gas chambers.

* "Auschwitz and the Allies" was published on September 28 by Michael Joseph/Rainbird at £12.

OBITUARIES

Morris (Mojsze) Besserman

Some Members of the Society have heard that Morris Besserman died on 18th June 1981.

Mojsze arrived in this country with the Southampton group and belonged to those who had spent several weeks at Kloster Indersdorf. Among them Mojsze will be always remembered for his famous reply to an UNRRA worker who had chided him for (allegedly) spending too much time with one of the Polish girls who were also among the residents at Kloster Indersdorf. With an unforgettably innocent expression on his face Mojsze issued this rejoinder: "if she loves me and I love her, surely everything is alright". After 36 years it is difficult to remember that this memorable phrase was not uttered in English, but it is still easy to remember that it had the desired effect: the UNRRA worker left the room, apparently at a loss for words.

In this country Morris had a somewhat chequered career, but in the end established himself quite well as a market trader. Whenever one met him he still showed that boyish innocence and charm one remembered from Indersdorf. He suffered his first heart attack in June 1980.

He was married twice. With his first wife he had a son, now aged 27, who lives in this country, and a daughter, now 23, who emigrated to Australia. His second wife lives in Hackney with the 8 year old daughter she had by Morris. We extend to Morris' widow and his children our most sincere condolences.

K.K.

Mark Ward

Mark Ward, the only son of Alec and Hettie Ward, died on 30th August 1981 after a brief illness. He was buried on 31st August at Bushey Heath Jewish Cemetery and many Members were present at the funeral.

Mark was born on 29th May 1958 into a home in which he was to be always surrounded by the loving care of his parents and in due course that of his elder sister, Lyla. As a young child he already showed the talent for acting which was later to dictate his choice of career, and he appeared in TV commercials, films such as Attack on the Iron Coast, The Ghost of a Chance, and the TV series The Growing Summer. Yet, he also pursued a conventional academic career, taking O and A-levels at the Hasmonean School. He went to Exeter University to study drama, in which he obtained a B.A. (Hons.) degree. Acting and drama continued to be his main interests. He toured the UK with several theatre companies and, at the

time of his death, was on the threshold of success as an actor, having recently obtained a post with the National Theatre Company.

As might be expected from a pupil of the Hasmonean, Mark was much involved in the life of the Jewish Community. He played a prominent part in the B'nai Brith Youth Organisation, was President of the Jewish Society at Exeter University, put on one-man shows at Jewish Youth Clubs, led parties of Jewish children on visits to Israel, was an active member of the Stanmore United Synagogue, and acted as Bal T'phila at Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services at other Synagogues.

Members of our Society, perhaps more than others, have an inkling of what it means to parents to lose an only son at the beginning of his adulthood, and words cannot possibly express the sympathy we feel for the Wards. All we can do is repeat to Alec, Hettie and Lyla the expression of our heartfelt condolences.

K.K.

Please see also the notice from the Ward family in MEMBERS' NEWS, p.46.

Wolfgang David Gordon

20th March 1920 - 27th February 1981

Wolfgang David Gordon was born in Berlin on March 20th, 1920, into a family of distinguished German Jewish physicians. When he was only two and a half years old, and shortly before the birth of his younger brother, their father Conrad died. Eventually their mother remarried.

Alarmed by the anti-Semitism sweeping Germany, their stepfather tried to protect the boys by having them baptised. But Wolfgang's grandparents encouraged him to preserve his links with the Jewish people. When he was thirteen he joined the Werkleute, an idealistic Jewish youth movement influenced by the teachings of Martin Buber. This organization, which merged with the Socialist Zionist movement Hashomer Hatzair, advocated a Jewish "return to the land" in Palestine and Wolfgang began a training in agriculture in Germany.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War he and his fellow trainees came to this country to a training centre in Wiltshire. It was there, when they were both still in their teens, that he met Bianca, another refugee from Nazism. That meeting grew into a lifelong partnership in which the couple shared their values and beliefs, as well as their hopes for a better future for men and women of all races and creeds.

In 1942 the young couple took up youth work in Birmingham, principally with young people from Nazi-occupied Europe. While still themselves in their early twenties, Wolfgang and Bianca were acting as counsellors and mentors to many people who were little younger than themselves. Their single-minded dedication to this work made them models for their young charges. This same devotion to their work led them later to turn their home into a haven for people from many lands, among whom were those who came to seek solace for loneliness or personal difficulties: indeed it was a kind of mini-kibbutz to which friends were welcome by day or night.

In September 1945, shortly after the International Red Cross had confirmed that Bianca's parents had perished in the Holocaust, Wolfgang and Bianca got married, thereby setting an official seal on their partnership. Characteristically, it was only a few days after their wedding that Wolfgang was selected by Hashomer Hatzair to undertake a new task. He had to leave for a former RAF base near Windermere to receive and care for Jewish children from Europe, who were survivors of Nazi concentration camps and ghettos. After organizing the camp school, he returned to London to care for a group of these children at a hostel in Hackney, while at the same time serving as national secretary of Hashomer Hatzair.

On completion of these tasks Wolfgang began academic studies, working for a joint degree in philosophy and psychology. Subsequently he specialised in occupational and industrial psychology, focussing on social and market research. His theories and his approach to research had led him to a point where he needed to be independent of and unconstrained by other people's horizons, and in the late 1960s he started his own company. He enjoyed his work, especially meeting and interviewing men and women of all strata of society, and drawing from such interviews findings of their social and commercial needs. Many clients appreciated the creativeness, profundity, and honesty of his approach. He did not seek to create a large business, but endeavoured to make an important contribution to his clients' thinking, by revealing new insights into influences lurking behind the more obvious parameters which others had explored.

Wolfgang Gordon's interests ranged far beyond his job and embraced a wide spectrum. Having received a classical education at a humanistic gymnasium in Germany, he retained a lifelong feeling for Latin and Greek and had a great love of music. He was politically active, and a member for many years of the Labour Party. He maintained close ties with Israel, particularly its kibbutz movement, but in recent years became increasingly apprehensive about the political situation in Israel, always having believed that a Jewish-Arab rapprochement was the only route towards the restoration of peace in the Middle East.

A high spot in Wolfgang's life was the birth in 1953 of his daughter Tania, whom he adored, and who is now a doctor. His joy and absorption in fatherhood continued to his last day.

Six years ago Wolfgang was injured in a road accident, and in 1977 he had to undergo neuro-surgery for a brain tumour. In spite of having enjoyed excellent health all his life he bore these tribulations with cheerful fortitude and inexhaustible humour. Not content to be a passive patient, he used his own hospital experience to write some incisive observations on the emotional needs of sick children and adults. Displaying his unique blend of self-depreciation and wise empathy, he penned his comments with an easy elegance only two days after undergoing critical surgery: an act which reflects Wolfgang's character, embracing a boundless humanity, a droll zest and a profound intelligence.

Wolfgang Gordon was a gentle, kind and modest man, with firm and unswerving loyalties. His sparkling wit lightened many dark hours and his friendly compassion was a source of strength to all who knew him. Most of his free time was spent tending his beautiful garden, listening to music, and enjoying the company of his family and friends. Both he and Bianca took much pride in their home, which they built up over many years with great joy, and always with the desire to share it with their many friends.

Wolfgang died suddenly on February 27th at his home of a heart attack, in the arms of his beloved Bianca, with whom he had spent forty one years. His death came as a very great shock to his friends and to all who knew him. He will be widely and deeply missed.

MEMBERS' NEWS

SOCIAL CALENDAR

compiled by Kitty Dessau

February 1981

John Fox (brother of Harry) made President of Garment Workers' Union (USA)

Marriage of Ziva, daughter of Yochevet and Pelek Lev (Israel).

March 1981

Birth of a son to to Henry Green and his wife.

Another grandchild for Thea and Israel Rudzinski (B'lee Ayn Hora).

April 1981

Birth of a granddaughter to Fay and Moniek Goldberg (USA).

Rosalyn Newton qualified as a doctor.

Birth of a first grandson to Ella and Romek Weinsctok (Israel).

June 1981

Wedding of Bonnie, daughter of Howard Chandler (Canada).

Wedding of Ilana, daughter of Yochevet and Pelek Lev (Israel).

Barmitzvah of Paul, son of Olive and David Herman.

Pearl wedding of Carol and Berek Wurzel (Manchester) celebrated in Israel during the Holocaust Gathering.

Death of Moshe Besserman.

Jeremy Turek gained his BA degree (Econ.).

July 1981

Steven, son of Pauline and Harry Balsam, got married.

Marriage of Debby, daughter of Marion and Myer Stern (Israel).

Consecration of "Memorial to 6 million Jews" presented by Sala and Benny Newton to Cricklewood Synagogue.

August 1981

Re-marriage of Vicki to Leon Rosenberg.

Marriage of Maxine, daughter of Alf Kirzberg.

Batmitzvah of Chava, daughter of Menachem Waksztok (Israel).

Tragic death of Mark, son of Hetty and Alec Ward.

Death of Betty Lewcowitz's brother in Miami.

September 1981

Engagement of Hirshl, son of Goldie and Monty Tabacznik, to Esther (Canada).

Marriage of Mandy, daughter of Moshe Diamond.

Birth of a grandson to Maralyn, daughter of Sam and Hannah Gardner (Manchester).

Leslie Spiro gained his B.Sc. Elec. Eng. (Hons.).

First granddaughter to Rachel and Yaacov Weiner (Israel).

Gerald Kaye gained his F.R.C.P. (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians)!

Engagement of the daughter of Monty and Milly Graham.

Marriage of the Kirshbergs' daughter.

Apologia

I made a "giant" error in the last edition, stating that a granddaughter had been born to Anita and Charles Shane. This should have read "grandson"!!

Omissions

Birth of a grandson Itamar to Jack and Barbara Kagan, July 1980.

Mr and Mrs A Wolreich's Pearl Wedding in June 1980.

Caroline Huberman gained her S.R.N. and R.S.C.N. qualifications.

Barmitzvah of Barry, son of Mr and Mrs Schwimmer.

We have been asked to publish the following, and do so in all humility (Ed.).

Hettie, Alec and Lyla Ward would like to express their heartfelt thanks to Members of the Society for all the wonderful support they received from them in the wake of the tragic loss of their son and brother Mark.

NEWS FROM MANCHESTER

compiled by Louise Elliot

Engagements

March 1981 Sharon, daughter of Mayer and Lilian Zwicker.
" " Michael, son of Martin and Marie Wertheim.
July 1981 Michelle, daughter of Mayer and Lilian
Zwicker.
" " Harvey, sn of Nat and Dorca Samson.
August 1981 Heather, daughter of Marion and Jack
Cygelman.

Weddings

February 1981 Frances, daughter of Adash and Zena Bulwa.
September 1981 Jacqueline, daughter of Mayer and Lily
Bomsztyk.

Pearl Wedding

Carol and Berek Wurzel.

Births

May 1981 A first grandson for Marie and Mendel Beale.
" " A second granddaughter to Joe and Alice
Rubinstein.

Academic Achievements

Malcolm son of Michael and Amelia Flasz, qualified as a
doctor.

Jonathan, son of Maurice and Marita Golding, qualified as a
doctor.

Congratulations

to Brenton Walshaw on his 18th birthday
and to Heather Cygelman on her 21st birthday.

In April 1981 most of our members attended the Annual Martyrs'
Memorial service which this year was held at the Heaton Park
Synagogue. Six black candles were lit by Itzek Alterman and
his daughter Elaine, Berek Wurzel and his daughter Lorraine
and Pinkus Kurnedz and his daughter Danielle.

On March 17th we held a Reunion Party at The Holmes in
Manchester and practically all our members were able to
attend. The party was a very lively and happy one and we
think enjoyed by all who attended.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

6th LEONARD G MONTEFIORE MEMORIAL LECTURE

The 6th annual Leonard G Montefiore Memorial Lecture will take place sometime next March. Full details will be announced in due course.

1982 REUNION

The reunion to mark the 37th Anniversary of our Liberation will take place on:

Sunday, 16th May 1982

4.30 for 5.45 p.m.
at the Rainbow Suite,
99 Kensington High Street,
London, W8.

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

Brochure

The Joint Chairmen for the brochure are:

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

The Brochure prices are:

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

SECOND GENERATION GROUP

At 8 p.m. on 6th December 1981 a meeting will take place at the home of Mr and Mrs D Herman, 8 Neville Drive, London N2, to inaugurate a Second Generation Group in this country. As is well known, such groups have existed for some time in other countries and its absence here has been regrettable and has meant that we could not play our part in the international arena. Martin Gilbert will address the meeting and we look forward to a "full house" of all "our sons and daughters" who have reached the age of sixteen.

