

# JOURNAL

## J OF THE '45 AID SOCIETY

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**They should, if possible, be typed in double-spacing and reach the Editor not later than the  
end of January.**

## EDITORIAL

Members of the '45' Aid Society will know that initiatives for new ventures by the Society come mainly from one source; its ever energetic Chairman Ben Helfgott. Therefore it will surprise no one that the initiative for this new JOURNAL also came from him. Ben got together an Editorial Board, and arranged the appointment of an Editor, whose first duty is to set out the aims this Journal is designed to achieve. These aims may, and probably will, change as experience accumulates.

The JOURNAL will continue to perform the functions hitherto performed by our Newsletter, i. e. it will convey Members' News in a column of that name.

While the Newsletter was devoted mainly to news about members, our new JOURNAL is intended to deal with matters which relate to the reason for our membership of the '45' Aid Society, namely our shared experience during the War. To outline more clearly what is envisaged it will be helpful to indicate the kind of articles we would like to receive for the various Sections into which the JOURNAL will be divided.

"Youth" Remembered. The reason for the inverted commas is that, under this heading, we hope to publish pieces in which the writers share particularly poignant memories of the War with other Members of the Society. Given that 30 years have passed since the War ended Members may now be willing to write about memories which until recently they might have found too painful to commit to paper. In other words, this Section is partly designed to implement the proposal made by Hugo Gryn in the Autumn 1974 issue of the Newsletter that we should try "...to write in our own way.../part of/. . our particular stories and histories." Jacob Hecht's piece which we publish in this issue seems to us an example par excellence of the kind of writing we would like for this Section, whose contents, we hope, will be such as to warrant sending our JOURNAL to the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Here and Now. Under this heading we would like to print accounts of our current doings, but especially those related to, and affected by, our experience during the War. Roman Halter's and Felix Berger's pieces are the kind of thing we particularly have in mind for this Section, although as Norman Friedman's piece shows we would print any other interesting accounts of Members' current doings.

From our Sons and Daughters. This Section is designed to feature contributions from our offspring. Many Members now have children who are of an age at which they might not only wish to exercise their literary talents, but are also mature enough to begin to reflect on the experience of their parent(s) and might wish to communicate these reflections to our Members; or they may have done something which will interest our Members, as was the case recently with Aloma Halter. We have said repeatedly that our experience should be remembered, not because it was our experience, but because it was of a kind that should not fall into oblivion with the passage of time. This surely suggests that our children should be encouraged to be involved with, and contribute to, our JOURNAL.

There will also be a Letters column in which we shall print letters on any topic we think of interest to our Members.

In the Reviews Section we would like to print reviews, not only of books, but also of films, plays etc. which have a bearing on the Holocaust. Arthur Poznanski's review is an example of what we have in mind and if you have occasion to write something of this kind, please send it to us.

It will be clear to you that our JOURNAL can be published only if Members send us material for publication. Very occasionally we may be able to publish articles by "outsiders", but as a rule this must be a JOURNAL by our Members for our Members. The Editorial Board trusts that your response will be such as to ensure the success of the JOURNAL. Lest you think that our hopes are misplaced, let me say that we interpret "success" in a modest way. To begin with we would like to publish the JOURNAL once a year, to appear at the time of the Anniversary of our Liberation. Should contributions simply pour in we would be happy to publish more often.

Managing Editor  
Kurt Klappholz



#### MESSAGE FROM MRS. MONTEFIORE

It is a long time since I first knew "the Boys" and though many years have passed, "the Boys" they will always be to me, as they were to my husband who took such a fatherly interest in them.

I first met them on our visits to the various hostels, and sometimes hospitals, in and around London. Looking back, I can best describe my feelings for them as being threefold. First, compassion for all they had endured during those terrible years. Then, wonder at their fortitude in spite of all the difficulties that faced them - in many cases sickness - and then admiration for their courage and for all they have achieved at the end of their ordeal.

Many memories come to mind - one in particular, when my husband and I were most concerned about a boy who was sick, and I must say, looked dreadful. We thought he must at least have appendicitis and then we were told, rather shamefacedly, that he was suffering from a hangover!

The '45' Aid Association Reunions are to me, deeply moving occasions and I know how proud my husband would have been of the success so many of "his Boys" have made of their lives. And I know, too, that he is still remembered with great affection by one and all.

Mrs. Muriel Montefiore

## "YOUTH" REMEMBERED

## REMEMBERING OUR BROTHERS

We had been marching for days and days. We did not know where from or where to. We were a thin straggling group. But at least the four of us were still together - my three brothers and I. We had managed somehow, by devious means, to remain together for the duration of the camps. Now the two older ones - Schmul and Israel - were looking exhausted. Their feet were swollen from all the walking. They were reaching the end of their tether. How long could we go on like this ? We did not know what day, week, month or year it was.

Our captors kept driving past in trucks urging us to ride with them, for a rest. Something told us not to accept their generous offer.

Now it was evening - we had stopped for a while. Schmul and Israel felt desperate. We had a family conference. They wanted us all to go in the trucks. We said no - then we agreed to separate for the first time. They should go on ahead in the trucks and we would meet again the following evening. It seemed the only solution.

Next day we said our farewells little knowing they would be the last. Have you guessed ? By the time we arrived for our evening stop we learned the worst. The prisoners at the head of our straggling column had seen it all. The truck arrivals - the shootings in cold blood - the bodies left by the wayside .....

So poor Schmul and Israel were gone for ever. If only we had managed to keep them on their feet - would they forgive us ?

Our captors seemed desperate, although at the time we did not know why. Soon we learned of the reason: because the Allies had been closing in. Three weeks later the war ended. What irony - if only we had known.

Since those distant days I have married. I have a family, a beautiful daughter named Hannah (Nina) after my mother. When our son was born we thought of the names Schmul and Israel. They had not yet been remembered. Could we give one boy two names from different brothers ? Yes - and so our little boy has the great honour and responsibility of bearing two precious names.

Jacob Hecht

**HERE AND NOW**  
**IN PRAISE OF OUR 'BOYS' IN ISRAEL**

I talked to Ben the other evening (always a useful start to an article), we discussed the 'Boys' in Israel. I was eulogizing them and he said "Why don't you jot it down and send it to me, we could print it in our next newsletter".

"Because, . . ." I hesitatingly began.

"Because, schmecause - , do it Roman and send it to me".

But I wasn't going to be cut short - I had a reason.

"Because, you see, Ben, I find writing so hard, as soon as I pick up my pen most of what I want to say simply evaporates, and then... how to say it . . ."

"Listen, does it come easily to me, or to Hugo, or Kurt, or to Fishek ? . . . . I want most of the 'Boys' to come forward and contribute, this should be a newsletter by the 'Boys' (and their wives and children) for the 'Boys'. Roman, it's not important how you say it, it's what you say that matters. We must keep in touch, we must communicate with one another." Have you tried arguing with Ben ? If you haven't don't try, because you will lose, as I know from long experience.

There is one important thought which I would like to share with you, although what was a discovery for me may be obvious to you. We, all of us, so loosely termed "the Boys" have grown into a unique bondship, a relationship lying somewhere between close friendship and kinship. Think back to the autumn of 1945, when this group of ill-assorted youngsters most known to one another only by nicknames, Cygan, Shimak, Pysher, Kulfon, Ruski, Shmeroov . . . . , each holding a tiny packet full of worthless rags or junk, landed in England thanks to the generous help of the CBF. These boys and girls, with their different endowments, and their different interests, but sharing the experiences of the Holocaust have grown to become this closely-knit, caring group of Friends.

Whether you agree with my definition, or whether you call it a Family or a fine friendship matters not; we are imbued with a feeling towards one another and for one another which is warm and true, which is caring and altogether marvellous. "Okay, okay", I can hear some of you saying, "here goes Roman romanticising and full of his Utopian starry-eyed opinions, what about the facts."

Some of the 'Boys' in Israel I haven't seen or been in contact with for over twenty years yet within minutes of our meeting we picked up where we left off. "What size shoes do you wear now, Roman ?" They also wanted to know if I came to Israel to settle. This question comes up a lot and I found that their main reason for asking it is that despite the wars and tough economic conditions they are all very happy there and would like us all to be there, close to them and sharing in the life of Israel.

They meet every second or third Friday at different homes for a chat, some good food and drinks and, of course, the usual game of cards. I went to several of these evenings, the last one was at Yankel's (Yakov Winer's) lovely home. We talked about life in Israel, and Yankel showed some of his pictures of Eilat taken when there wasn't a single building there; they drew comparisons with life outside Israel. I think it was Jackson who said that although he had lived in a number of countries and found them alright he just felt that 'bit' better in Israel and to him this is a difference which makes all the difference. Someone else added, "Here you live intensely, sorrows are often deep, but our moments of joy are also very intense, we seem to live a lifetime in each decade".

We talked of 1945, of the time when the CBF brought us to England; and here too someone hit the nail on the head, "The greatness of the CBF lies in the way they act, in our case, generously and quickly; they didn't let us rot in D. P. camps - no sooner was the war ended than, hey-presto, we were brought to England, without fuss or rhetorics".

Before midnight Menachem Silberstein came, glowing with joy, his daughter had given birth to a girl some three hours ago. Moshe Rosenberg proposed a toast and we all drank to the health of mother and child and to Shalom in her lifetime in Israel; we slapped the "Zaide" on the back and sent him home to a happy "Booba" smiling. Dear Menachem, he carries out repairs on us all, and so very willingly. I have reason to be grateful to him for teaching me how to cast silver. In two hours I learnt from him, in his well-equipped dental laboratory, more than I would have learned in one year at an art school.

The party went on, the card players were cracking jokes, more delicious food was brought and whilst guzzling and chatting one felt the bonds of affection unify the gathering, nothing which might be said could offend; there were no barriers between us, we felt a oneness of friendship. Perhaps I am biased but I think that our 'Boys' and their wives are fantastic.

We went on talking about all the immigrations to Israel from '48 onwards; of the Maroccan intake of the early 50's, of the Yemenites who believed Ben Gurion to be the Messiah because they were brought to Israel by 'mighty birds' as the Scripture foretold, of the Russians who told of the drab and boring life they had left behind, the shabby goods, the dull education, the forced labour camps always around the corner, the perpetual presence of the police. "If you have no interest in work and society you tend to vegetate," one of the wives chipped in - I like these Golda Meir type of commonsense capsulated sayings - and she went on, "You cannot say that it works because the theory is good when in practice it kills all interest. In a country you either vibrate or vegetate, and we don't vegetate in Israel."

They certainly don't; if lifes enrichment and true learning come from experience, our 'Boys' are certainly rich and learned. Take Menachem Wakszok, after 4 years in Auschwitz he went from England to Israel in '48, fought in every war since then and rose to the rank of Major. Between the wars he has done many things, he worked as a foreman road builder way down in Eilat and way back in the early '50s when it would take two days to cover the distance now done by a car in four hours. He made building blocks in Beersheba; "Why did you do that work Menachem?" "Why?, because Israel needed building blocks, but it was hell, I tell you. Beersheba then was like an egg lying in the middle of a great frying pan of desert and we all sizzled without air-conditioners or even adequate shading. Then he led a group of tough men laying irrigation pipes. He is now in his middle forties, father of three lovely children, the youngest, Moshe, is not yet 2. Menachem is full of bounce and goodwill, he starts his day at 5am. does his office work before his staff arrive, sits on various town committees, helps people....quite fantastic! Unique? You will say. Yes, unique as an individual but not exceptional in his generosity, his love of life his feeling for friends and for humanity.

There is my very good friend Zwi Dagan, there is Beinek England; we three were together in ORT here in England way back in '46. They left together for Israel in '48 and truly pioneered mechanical engineering there; in time they saw their industries grow and prosper and they grew with them. Beinek is the technical manager of a large plant which employs over a thousand people. Zwi Dagan, one of Israel's most creative precision mechanical engineers is boss of his own factory, employing 120 people, who all respect and love him. One night we entered the factory when the third shift was working, the men and women who saw him beamed with pleasure and I found myself remarking, "They didn't know that we were coming and yet they were all working", Zwi looked at me as though I came from the moon; "of course they work, we are lucky to have work and in a way we are all partners in this enterprise but I work the hardest", he said with a chuckle. "You see I love my work and communicate this feeling to them all".

I spent a number of happy days with Zwi and Shoshana, Menachem and Sara, they are great hosts and their town of Ashkelon throbs with life; on Thursday the open market is second only to that of Beersheba, extraordinarily fascinating faces from Yemen, Georgia, Marocco, Gaza,

Poland, Ashkelon, etc., etc. mingle and bustle amongst the fruits and vegetables. There are parks and Roman antiquities in Ashkelon and of course the lovely blue sea with sandy white beaches, (it reads almost like an advertisement brochure, but it's true - Ashkelon is a lovely place).

My stay with Anna and Raymond Jackson was equally happy. Shai, their eldest boy, aged 5½ gave me a painting and drawing lesson - and I am always grateful for some good tips from a great master! Rutti, aged 3½ was teaching me Hebrew. Together on Saturday we visited Family Golan, I am sure that I am not alone in feeling friendship and affection for our "Haimi", we were lucky to have him as the head of our hostel in Laughton.

After the Golans in Saryon - there could be a geographical joke about this - we went on to Family Rozenweig (Tulek) who lives only around the corner from Haim, I was leaving for England in a few days time and this was my chance to say Le-hit-ra-ot. We embraced and wished each other well, his boys, dark eyed and handsome asked me when I was coming back, "Soon, in a few months," "Oh good!" they exclaimed.

I would like to return to that Friday night party at Yankel's - well past midnight Haim Liss 'phoned, he was doing his annual army service somewhere in Sinai. We took it turn to speak to him, he was in great form and asked me to convey his love to all the 'Boys' in England - "and do it in person Roman." Coffee and lovely cakes were served and Zwi Brand looking round-faced and jolly and Moshe Rozenberg were relating what they did when they first came to Israel and how they slowly helped to build up their section of work and how they rose to positions of responsibility in time. I was very impressed and kept on muttering "fantastic" and "what a success story."

Jackson with his penetrating intelligence, was sitting next to me and would have none of this. "You talk like Ben with your 'fantastic' and 'success story'. We 'Boys', he went on, and this goes for all of us, failed only when we thought of ourselves as failures. When an individual feels and thinks that he is finished then he is finished, and I am happy to say that there are very few amongst us who failed. As to success, by whose standard ought we to measure it? By the achievements of Einstein, Rockefeller, Bar Shemtov, Rembrandt? It's ridiculous, we are neither failures, nor successes, we are individuals who went through much and thereby learned a little more than other people from life's experiences; we learned to fight for what we believe, to be compassionate to and help others; we learned to overcome some shortcomings and to make the most of our talents and qualities. We learned not to believe in false prognoses - there is no Messiah on the tail end of Marx - life is a process. We 'Boys' found from the past that we are Jews and when we came through hell we found life and grew to love it and to love one another" and so we all drank Le-haim.

Roman Halter

## ISAIAH CAN YOU HELP ?

When one has four nearly -grown-up sons, conversation at meal times can be fun; heated discussions are as amusing as the sentimental ramblings about the first house and garden (this is our sixth since we married), a long forgotten holiday, a nude baby photograph.

The democratic process is not completely eroded in our house, and provided one sticks to a discipline in which one is acknowledged to have a certain expertise, the "mob" will give one a fair hearing. And so mum holds the "chair" of English history, my oldest son that of political philosophy and allied subjects; sports and the humanities are chaired in rotation by the middle ones, and the youngest is the expert on love, sex and play. I have been allocated Jewish history and Hebrew studies.

Here I must declare my interest. Having been nurtured by our ancient heritage, the precept "thou shalt teach it to thy sons", and our neo-hasidic table-talk do not embarrass me, nor do I hide my satisfaction when a serious discussion of the Tnach develops in our weekly sessions. The beautiful language of the bible has on many an occasion competed successfully against a potentially interesting T.V. programme, and a recent remark by my eleven-year-old- "gosh dad two hours: that went quick", more than boosted my ego. Of course our Tnach sessions have benefited from the fact that we spend the major part of our holidays in Israel, and thus we purr with delight whenever the bible mentions places where we often picnicked.

So far so good.

But we have run into considerable difficulties when we reflected upon the tragic history of our people. Take, for example, the "minor tragedies" - the crusades, the Spanish inquisition and the Kishinev pogroms. Such crude happenings, such indefensible slaughter. We may be separated by miles and centuries from those barbarities, and the cosiness of a Sunday afternoon may act as a temporary physical anaesthetic, but our spirit revolted - why, why, why ?

The poetry of our liturgy has helped to some extent to lessen the impact of those cruelties, but I thank God for Bialik and Tschernichovski, our classical Hebrew poets who wrote after the Kishinev pogroms: "Heavens plead mercy for me  
if there is God amongst you"

and "Cursed be you barbarians for ever"

I am, however, dreading a discussion on the holocaust. I have groped amongst its vast literature, looking for some epic poem which we could all read and thereby ease our feelings. Alas, many of the holocaust books, stories and episodes disturbed my mind for days. The much quoted poem "A night out", by the Anglo-Jewish poet Dannie Abse left me suspended in mid-air. My insomnia lasted for weeks when a "well-known" survivor in Israel related how Hillel Zeitlin (writer and poet, who adorned the rich Hebrew and Yiddish press in pre-war Warsaw) refused to be rescued by the Polish underground, and chose instead to march with his fellow Jews to that "Place".

I am a "witness" and ought to tell all. Oh Lord ! I am a mere mortal and a father. Please let Isaiah come and tell my sons what happened at Auschwitz. I can't.

Felix Berger

## MY HEAVENLY HOBBY

Since time immemorial men have looked up to the sky in fear and awe at the thousands of twinkling lights up above, pondering at the significance of their formation.

My interest in astronomy started as a school boy in Poland. I can recollect quite vividly my teacher explaining Mikołaj Kopernik's (Copernicus) theory of the solar system using the simple Polish saying *Zakrzynał Słońce, Wzruszył Ziemię*, 'He stopped the sun and moved the earth'.

In later years I realised what a brave man Copernicus had been. Born at Toruń in Polish Prussia in 1473, he later became a doctor of Arts and Medicine and left Rome as professor of Mathematics to become a Canon. Although not trained for it, his real love was astronomy.

The Ptolemaic theory of the universe existed for nearly 14 centuries, stating that the earth was the centre of the universe. So brilliantly were Ptolemy's ideas conceived that nobody dared think otherwise and they became the official teaching of the church, to dispute them was considered as heresy and could be punished by death.

Copernicus had secretly written his new theory of the solar system. Later the Pope approved of the work and asked for a complete presentation. It was printed in 1543 and Copernicus received it on his deathbed; a new dawn in astronomy had begun.

My fascination with all the heavenly bodies always engaged my thoughts and with the outbreak of war all this interest ceased and I only gazed at the heavens in prayer for some miracle to happen.

A few years ago I decided to further my hobby, which up to then had just consisted of reading, by enrolling for a three year course at Mill Hill Observatory which is very near my home. The Observatory is attached to London University and therefore has the advantage of top class lecturers on the subject.

Whenever weather permitted we made observations. One particular event that stands out in my mind and which I shall never forget was when one cold winter night Saturn was at a most favourable position in the sky.

As I walked into the cold night air from the warm lecture room there, almost overhead, a star shone more brightly than its neighbours; this I was about to observe on the 24" telescope.

The sight I witnessed will remain with me for ever, the star-like object I saw was transformed into a luminous ball surrounded by coloured rings suspended in black space. It defies description. I stood there for some time entranced, unwilling to move in case this wonderful picture would disappear for ever.

On arrival home my wife noticed the excited look on my face. That was the only evening in our married life when my wife did not get a chance to utter a single word. All the adjectives at my command could not possibly adequately describe that heavenly sight (Saturn of course ! ! !).

Astronomy is a science where new discoveries are constantly being made and so interest never wanes. Pulsars and Black Holes are the latest topic for discussion.

Already new projects have been inaugurated sending up into space rockets with specially designed x-ray telescopes to ascertain the formation of new stars and even new worlds forming as ours did c. 5,000 million years ago.

"NEVE YERUSHALAYIM - A BROADER AFFINITY"

It is strange how seemingly isolated events can sometimes link up, forming a momentum of their own. . . . Jolting along on an Egged bus in the heat of a sultry Tel-Aviv July, and fumbling clumsily with a pair of nail-clippers; the sun brittle nail flakes drop on the ground, joining the eddies of discarded pages of "Maariv" and chewed sunflower seeds. "No, no, don't do that. Its assour (forbidden)".

I look up in surprise to hear the admonitions of my neighbour - a portly Dati lady. The youngest of her children is on her lap, tugging at her headscarf whilst other children, hanging on to the seat rails and from the straps of the lurching bus, gaze reproachfully at me. So, from the Central bus station to Zikkon Yaakov, in Ivrit which I only partly comprehend, she bursts into voluble explanations. Glimpses of a rich and vivid world seething with prohibition and taboo, injunction and commandment; and catching sight of this rich terrain from the uniform, rationally ordered secular standpoint of one born and bred in London, it seems so mysterious, intriguing. . . . But then we have reached the stop, for the children are already spilling out of the bus. The bus has moved on and the door has swung shut.

I unexpectedly bump into a former boyfriend, fellow student at a Jerusalem Ulpan the previous summer. He tells me that he has given up a place at Harvard and an overseas scholarship to Oxford in order to study full-time at a Yeshiva. It's hard to recognise any traces of the casual American hippie in this serious, bearded youth - but I stare at him in astonishment. Is he out of his mind ? ! To quieten my incredulity he begins to talk about the Yeshiva atmosphere, the intensive studying of Torah, Tanach, Gomorrah all day; the participation of the teachers, the enthusiasm of the boys; how on festivals they would dance, singing all the way through the streets of Meah Sharim to the Kotel. . . .

Women's Lib instincts rising, I demand: "Why are Yeshivas only for men ? Isn't it important that women should know about Judaism also ?" And that was how I came to meet Valerie, from Neve.

NEVE YERUSHALAYIM SEMINARY is one of the few 'progressive' Yeshivas for women. Progressive in that its doors are open to girls from all over the world, of any age (after high school) and from all ranges of Jewish backgrounds; the only password being the desire to learn more about their religion. Here the girl from orthodox parents in Brooklyn, and the teenage 'drop-out', doing Israel, dissatisfied with Kibbutz life, meet in the same classroom, sharing alike their discovery of living Judaism.

Most people find their way to Neve by talking to others who have shared a similar experience, by hearsay - but the seminary is expanding at a phenomenal rate. From a nucleus of some eight or nine pupils four years ago, there are now more than eighty full and part-time students and the numbers swell weekly. At the time that I stayed at Neve the seminary was bursting at the seams in its old quarters. To accommodate the yearly influx, it was moving down the road to spacious apartments in a nearly completed block in Bayit Vegan. All the lessons were held in these bare, light-filled rooms and, nearby, individual apartments dotted around Bayit Vegan had been converted into 'dormitories', three or four girls sharing a room. The room to which I was allocated was representative enough of the diversity of which Neve was compounded. . . . Sandy, an open, loquacious primary school teacher from South Africa, who had already outstayed two deadlines that she had set herself for leaving, and couldn't bring herself to fix another one ! Ruth, a nurse from Chicago, working part-time at the Hadassah as she continued to learn. . . .

Michelle; straight from a Paris lycée... Then there was Leah who had been working on a Ph.d in Mathematics in the States.... and Debbie, a young drop-out from Toronto, charming and imaginative; who on arrival, after propping up a guitar against the wall, was to drape a gorgeous, red tasseled silk scarf over the table to give the room 'atmosphere'. She used to 'freak out' the more she 'got into Judaism'. 'It's so real, it just blows your mind.'

The view from Bayit Vegan was breathtaking, but seemed to have particular significance for us at Neve. From the half-finished road the rubble merged with the hillside, taking in all the mellow beauty of the Judean hills. In the evenings, walking back from the last class we would see Jerusalem unveiled amidst the mystery of a trailing sunset; palest cyclamens, pinks, wafted across the sky .....

The aims of Neve are to give the basic knowledge of Judaism and teach the fundamental laws, precepts, practices, historical background: the prerequisites of a deeper understanding of the unique relationship of the religion to the individual.

A typical day at the seminary begins early, the girls groping their way to the bathroom, reciting morning prayers, hurrying down coffee and light breakfast. Lessons start at 8.00, lasting an hour each - Chumash, for historical insight; the Laws of Kashrut, of Observation of the Shabbat, the explanations of the Mitzvot, lessons from the Prophets, the Ten Commandments..... Then at noon, a two hour break. Just enough time to have lunch in the canteen (which the girls themselves run by rota, taking turns weekly to cook, clean and serve) - and then hanging up washing in the bleaching midday sun, catching up on some work, or simply taking a short snooze in the heat of the day. Then, from 2 - 4.30 the staple fixture of the afternoon: Ivrit. So far the morning's lessons were all in English, common tongue for the American, French, English, South African and Israeli girls - all of whose Ivrit was at various stages of development! But to read partly in translation, even to struggle with the texts, is, at best, but a poor means of gaining insight into 'eternal truths'(!), and so the daily sally into Ivrit is of great importance; it is also the only streamed class, enabling those who improve to move up a level. Ivrit... living language. Risen from the bible as a phoenix rises from flames and ashes; language of psalm and prayer. Staring at the page, I wish that the bold and graceful characters would leap into my mind and remain there.

The afternoon mellows, through the window the light shows golden on the hills, olive groves nesting in the undulations. The class grows restive as the teacher chalks more vocabulary to the list already on the board... Then, from 5.00 to 6.00 the last lesson of the afternoon: supervised private study in small groups. Here it is at last possible to take stock of the morning lessons, to begin to talk over and assimilate the barrage of new ideas and thoughts. The discovery of a world in which everything has its place and purpose. Where every tiny unit, perfect in itself, forms part of a greater, all-pervading unity.

Some evenings the lessons continue after dinner, from 8.00 to 10.00, thus enabling those girls who have full-time work in Jerusalem to partake of the life of the Seminary and continue to study. Other evenings are free - perhaps to get on a bus with a group of friends and alight at the Old City, joining the flow of people streaming down to the Kotel, to that open floodlit square of the Temple Mount, the shrubs forcing their way between the ancient ruins, and the timeless, stone-hewn wall, all cast their still and eerie shadows.

The timetable at Neve makes for full and busy days. Since Neve insists that the only way really to appreciate and come to terms with Judaism is by living it, and as undiluted theory has a way of passing in one ear and out through the other, as much emphasis is placed on the community life as on the lessons. One of the most vivid memories I have is of about six of us (that week's victims of the kitchen rota system!) peeling bucketful after bucketful of potatoes, and exchanging life stories at 3.00 in the morning!

The atmosphere before a Shabbat was always one of fervid activity: a race to get the washing done, that letter finished, and still be in time at the Central Bus Station to catch the last bus... Some girls going early to their relatives, others spending the Shabbat with a religious family inside Jerusalem... Flower stalls have appeared at the Central Bus Station, there is expectation in the air, shops closing and the shutters being let down, children called sharply indoors, and later emerging scrubbed and spruced up in a flurry of pretty dresses and white shirts... the last buses running in the emptying streets, and then dusk; catching glimpses from open windows of tables laid for Shabbat, and candles being lit. Suddenly the streets are full: families walking to Synagogue, people strolling down the centre of the carless roads, fathers pushing prams, groups of people greeting one another and gossiping together. A sense of the week's work over and time being held, suspended in the precious hourglass of the Shabbat. Shabbat: a party to which all are invited  
a 'happening' from which no-one is excluded  
a festival in which all can participate;

Witnessing this spirit of the Shabbat, I wonder at my former misunderstanding of the religious intention behind this precious gift. Before, all the religious observances, all the paraphernalia which accompanied 'keeping Shabbat' had seemed nothing but a tedious bundle of 'do's' and 'don'ts' - from the last bus to the light switch - nothing but an elaborate network of waiting traps, limitations and restrictions. But what was this, then... this visible descent of peace and serenity with the falling dusk? Accompanying the preparations for Shabbat, a sense of purposeful activity. From nightfall to nightfall, a day to think, to reflect and to spend with the family. To forget all the cares and frustrations of the week. The drawing in of one week and the sallying forth of another. A check, a point of reference in the amorphous flow of time. A day to look forward to, linger over, and then look longingly back on.

People came to Neve for many reasons. Whether it was dissatisfaction with the French University system (which refused to exempt even religious students from sitting exams on Saturdays), or disillusion with the frenzied life style of New York - the relentless meaningless pace of a wholly materialistic environment, or simply a longing to look beyond appearances and try to hold on to something beyond the reach of immediacy. Whatever it was that they were searching for, people stayed on for the same reason: it was to be found.

The spirit of Neve is one of warmth and pioneering. That the Rabbis should attach such importance to the teaching of women shows their genuine broadmindedness. But the unique atmosphere at the seminary is entirely due to the teachers: a small group of dedicated Rabbis; remarkable men who demonstrate - more clearly than by any lesson - in their own enthusiasm for studying, their willingness to listen, their constant eagerness to exchange, explain, discuss what Judaism is really all about.

Girls stayed at Neve for as long as they were able to: sometimes that meant two years, sometimes only a few weeks. To all of us the experience meant very different things... to me it was a reaching back to my roots, like the rediscovery of something only obscurely remembered and then buried by layers of time. It meant coming to comprehend what the pious Dativim dovening at the Wall, perspiring in their fur-brimmed hats and long black coats - what these Jews stood for; and what they were upholding in their unquestioning acceptance of the tradition. It meant beginning to respect them intensely. It meant an understanding that the difference between myself and the religious woman on the bus was only a question of degree: for both of our lives rested on the same foundation. Perhaps, above all, it meant gaining, through a deeper knowledge of Judaism, a broader affinity with the Jewish people.

"OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND" Book Review

It is hoped that in each issue of this JOURNAL we will be able to bring to the attention of the readers, and through them perhaps to other friends, books published on the theme of the holocaust. The literature by now is fairly extensive. Some is in the category of documentation and this is of more value to historians, and others with special interest. Some are eye-witness accounts in the form of autobiographies or very thinly disguised fiction. As one would imagine the intensity of feeling is quite strong in literature of this nature but they vary very widely so far as style and specific points of view are concerned.

Finally there is literature about the holocaust written by scholars as well as novelists and poets.

An excellent introduction to the more creative kind of literature is Albert H. Friedlander's "Out of the Whirlwind" subtitled "A Reader of Holocaust Literature" (published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in New York). In Britain it may be ordered through the Bookshop of the Jewish Memorial Council, Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H OEP. Several of our members had the privilege of meeting and hearing Rabbi Friedlander at our recently held symposium at the Ben Uri Gallery, and will therefore already know that he is sensitive, intellectually honest and has profound understanding of the holocaust. Himself the author of a most valuable biography and appreciation entitled "Leo Baeck: Teacher of Theresienstadt", in the Reader under review he has selected chapters from such broad range of literature as The Diary of Ann Frank, a chapter from Bruno Bettelheim's "The Informed Heart" which describes his experience in Dachau in 1938 before the extermination programme got underway. Social scientists from whose works a selection is included are Salo Baron, Eugene Heimler and Robert Weltch; theological writings are represented by Abraham Heschel, Emil Fackenheim and Dr. Friedlander himself. The creative writers are represented by the work of Andre Schwarz-Bart, Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Piotr Rawicz and there is also a most moving selection of poems and songs (with musical notes provided) as well as some illustrations. The ones by children in Theresienstadt are especially moving.

In brief I recommend this volume highly because it not only reflects some of the best writing of holocaust which emerged from the end of the war until the end of the '60's, but because it can also serve as a very fine introduction to further reading and a considerably deeper understanding of how our very personal experiences were perceived, understood, and interpreted by others.

Rabbi Hugo Gryn

## SYMPOSIUM AT THE BEN-URI GALLERY

The symposium on the influence of the holocaust on art held on the 24th February at the Ben-Uri Gallery could be a landmark in the history of our Society.

It is true that the exhibition of designs for stained glass windows and paintings by one of our talented members, Roman Halter, provided an ideal background and opportunity for such a gathering, which is a complete departure from the policy long adhered to by our Committee to limit the activities of the Society to sumptuous feasts and banquets on each anniversary of our liberation, coupled with fund raising for charity here and in Israel, and an occasional card playing evening for those in favour of such recreation.

Of course, the above activities are apart from the original aim of the Society of rendering assistance to any member or his family in need or in trouble.

Power to the elbow of our Chairman who finally succeeded in steering the interest of our group to intellectual fields, and may the brushes of Roman be exalted for giving us this opportunity.

May we also hope that this novel trait in the activities of the Society will continue.

The symposium was an entertaining and an emotional event for most of us, having on the panel such celebrities as Rabbi Dr. Friedlander and the renowned actor and story-teller, Robert Rietty. There was not a dull moment during the whole evening and the lively discussion was cut short by sheer lack of time.

But why did 30 years have to pass for any expression of what we felt to manifest itself in art form and be freely discussed without the trauma and pain of most horrible memories? Rabbi Dr. Friedlander suggested that maybe it took us so long to clarify our own thoughts and feelings and see things in the deeper perspective of time and life in normal conditions (if there is such a thing). Present-day further demonstrations of inhuman behaviour on the part of sections of apparently civilized society may also have contributed to this development.

My own opinion is that maybe most of us were too hard at work in trying to establish ourselves economically and socially and so absorbed in the rat-race, that we had no time, or simply forgot any other aims.

Could the life of Roman Halter prove my theory? A great athlete and champion swimmer in his youth, although even then he loved drawing and painting, but could devote little time to it, absorbed in his studies which led him to become a very successful architect. Now, he spends part of his time painting, but he has not given up architecture completely.

It has also been recorded and confirmed by the experiences of Mr. Rietty that Jewish art-form, pertaining to the holocaust, is rather unpopular and actively discouraged by most commercially minded promoters and receives no encouragement whatsoever even from the Jewish leadership in this country, who seem to think that we cannot win anything by possibly offending the heirs to the Nazis, or the moguls of the present era, who may have favoured, abetted or condoned the mass-murders.

Is this the right attitude to take?

We may decide to forgive the malefactors for past wrongs, but should we forget them, or refuse to learn from history ?

Rabbi H. Gryn suggested that we must not forget and moreover, as the very few who survived, ours is or should be the sacred mission of bearing witness to what happened and to remind our own kind and the rest of humanity of its true destiny, and maybe point the way to a different kind of progress than that dictated by jungle law.

We must realize, however, that what we want to express can be done effectively only in one etier - that of art; music, painting, sculpture, drama and literature - the only forms of expression which know no boundaries, or barriers of time, space or even language and survive generations, wars and disasters.

Few of us have any significant creative talent in these fields but we all owe our wholehearted support to any phenomenon of art which expresses the quintessence of our very lives.

And maybe sometime, somewhere, someone will listen, see, feel and think .....

Arthur Poznanski



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LETTERS

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TO THE COMMITTEE

On behalf of the staff and patients of the Rebecca Sieff hospital, Zefat, Upper Galilee, I would like to send you and your members greetings and thanks for your continued generous help. Your support encourages us to continue in our work and cements the bond of friendship between us.

We hope the 45 Aid Society will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Chazak Ve-emaz,

Daniel Reis (Dr)

## OBITUARY

### DANNY WIERNIK

Danny Wiernik is with us no more. I just cannot reconcile myself to the fact of his tragic death. The recent memorial stone setting had seen the end of one of my closest friends.

I have been requested as a member of the '45 Aid Society to write on its behalf about the great loss our Society has suffered and the void that can never be filled.

Danny had always been a most generous supporter of all the Society's functions; one of the most kind-hearted people I had ever come across. He truly had a heart of gold, always helping those less fortunate than himself and yet never revealing the financial or material help he so willingly gave.

It is just over a year ago since he casually and calmly revealed that people at the hospital were not too pleased with the X-rays they had taken. I shall never know how with indomitable courage he faced a serious operation, knowing all its implications; attended a wedding before the operation and was the life and soul of the simcha.

After the successful operation at the London Hospital, where so many loyal friends visited, we were all astounded by his cheerfulness and zest for life and the plans he had for starting a new life in America with Anita.

Danny has shown us all by example how to face adversity when the going is rough. He enjoyed life to the full, yet he provided financial security for Anita and his children.

I shall never forget when Danny told me with tears of joy in his eyes: "Norman, I am going to be a Zayde" and I jokingly replied that he must start growing a beard !

Why, Danny, like a healthy flourishing tree in its prime should cease to function is beyond comprehension; may healthy branches carry on sprouting vigorously in those dearest he has left behind.

We all remember Danny's happy cheerful smile at our Annual Reunions and he will be sadly missed, and his memory will always be cherished.

May I therefore on behalf of the Committee, members and friends extend our sincerest condolences to Anita, Belinda and Stephen and wish them all 'Long-Life'.

Norman Friedman

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## MEMBERS NEWS

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### Mazeltov on the birth of a:-

Granddaughter	Mr. & Mrs. B. Newton
Granddaughter	Mr. & Mrs. B. Pollack
Granddaughter	Mr. & Mrs. W. Gutman
Granddaughter	Mr. & Mrs. M. Silberstein (Israel)
Granddaughter	Mr. & Mrs. R. Orzech
Grandson	Mr. & Mrs. H. Wajchandler
Son	Mr. & Mrs. E. Steinbrecher

### Mazeltov to parents of the Barmitzvah boys:-

Mr. & Mrs. S. Laskier  
Mr. & Mrs. M. Graham  
Mr. & Mrs. R. Obuchowski  
Mr. & Mrs. S. Pearl

### Mazeltov on the engagement of:-

Eve Lewkowicz  
Susan Obuchowski  
Michael Shane

### Mazeltov on the marriage of:-

Daughter	Mr. & Mrs. B. Wurzel
Daughter	Mr. & Mrs. C. Igielman
Daughter	Mr. & Mrs. M. Kaminski
Son	Mr. & Mrs. Denderowicz

Congratulations to Mala Tribich on gaining her B Sc (Sociology)

### Congratulations on their Silver Wedding Anniversary:-

to Adam and Zera Bulwa  
Sam and Hannah Gardner

REMINDER - There are still many subscriptions outstanding; please send these to:

Frank Farkas, 49 Sherwood Rd., Hendon, NW4. Tel. 2032692

1976 REUNION

The Reunion will be held on Sunday, 9th May, at the Piccadilly Hotel, Piccadilly, W1.

For tickets please contact the Tickets Chairman: N. Zwirek, Tel. 550 9426

Price £18 per couple.

BROCHURE

The Joint Chairmen for the Brochure are:

H. Balsam	Tel. 906 0895
F. Farkhas	Tel. 349 0856
D. Sommer (Manchester)	Tel. (061) 773 5080

The Brochure prices are: Gold page	£75.00
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ERRATA

P.7. Rosenberg	should read	Rosenberg.
P.7. England	" "	Englard.
P.8. Saryon	" "	Savyon.
P.9. Isiah	" "	Isaiah.