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The 2nd and 3rd Generation Celebrating the
66th Anniversary of our Liberation

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wish the '45 Aid every success

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SECTION I CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This year marks the 70th anniversary when nearly four million Jews were deliberately, systematically and ruthlessly murdered. Never in the annals of history have so many innocent people been killed in a single year.

I don't think it is possible for any human being to imagine what it was like when the selections for the deportations took place. The screams, the commotions, the confusions, the instant decision which meant life or death; the sudden separation from one's loved ones. Very often it was a father or mother separated from their whole family or young men separated from their parents or their younger siblings. Very few women, children and elderly people over forty-five years were left behind. Those few who were lucky to be saved from these selections to the gas chambers had to endure for yet another two and a half years the harsh regimen in the slave labour concentration camps. However hard that regimen was, when those who were still alive, believed that they had reached the limits of their endurance, the events of the last few months of the war surpassed anything that they had experienced hitherto. The little that was left of their civilised life was completely stripped from them. They were subjected to long hours of hard and tedious work; lacking warm and protective clothing, they were freezing to death; they were infested and eaten up by bugs and lice; worst of all, they were steadily becoming demented as a result of utter starvation. The acquisition of a piece of bread or an extra plate of soup, was their main occupation. It was not surprising that the few that had, so far, evaded death through sheer luck or by dint of perseverance were rapidly dwindling away.

Liberation found them in a stupor, in a state of utter exhaustion and emaciation. As long as they had been struggling for survival and had lived from hour to hour, they had not entertained any thoughts about the enormity of their loss or their future. Now it gradually began to dawn upon them that they were at last free. They suddenly realised that they were alone and had no home to go to. There were some emotional reunions but the majority lost their immediate family and many lost their entire family

and relatives. They came out "naked" from the concentration camps without a picture of their family and of their childhood days or a memento of their past. The past that they experienced cannot be understood. That is the measure of the tragedy that only those who were there know what it was.

I have given a short account of what it means to be a Holocaust survivor. However, I must stress that the survivors were not heroes, courageous or clever. Most of their relatives and friends who were killed were endowed with the same qualities as they were, yet they did not survive. After the war, and a few decades later, very few people took notice of Holocaust survivors. Indeed, survivors avoided talking about their experiences lest they evoked pity. They wanted to be treated as equals and earn their advancement on merit.

It is only in the last twenty years or so with the establishment of Holocaust Institutions that were set up in response to the interest that events, media, television and cinema have generated that the public has become more aware about the ordeals of the survivors. They are of especial interest to the second and third generation to whom the 2nd World War is far distant history and the only living link with that history. The government too, has shown greater interest in introducing The Annual Holocaust Memorial Day and being actively engaged in the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. The Task Force was set up in 1998 with the purpose to place politicians and social leaders support behind the need for Holocaust education. What worries me is that just as in the post-war years, the description "Holocaust survivor" was not fashionable, it has now become common currency to the point that anyone who comes out from any kind of catastrophe calls himself/herself a survivor. The term Holocaust survivor should be used solely for those who survived the horrors of Nazi concentration camps or those who survived in hiding under Nazi occupation. I say this not to extol the survivors, to make them into heroes, or to put them on a pedestal above everyone else. It is because of my concern

that the deniers of the Holocaust will exploit it by trivialising the Holocaust.

The deniers of the Holocaust, the revisionist, and historian to some extent, have spent decades toiling in archives looking for minor inconsistencies in the testimonies of survivors or others that they can use to prove that the entire event did not take place or, at best, is grossly exaggerated. They have written pamphlet after pamphlet, book after book, in the attempt to convince the world that something that so obviously happened never happened. They will go on

using whatever falsehood they can muster, take advantage of whatever vulnerability they can find in Society, argue with skill and evil intent.

We must be constantly on the alert and ready to counter any manifestations which will trivialise the Holocaust. The Holocaust serves as a warning to all people of what can happen when the Rule of Law is not upheld and I fervently hope that it will permanently serve to foster respect for human dignity and the fundamental values that underpin our civilisation.

SECTION II PAST AND PRESENT

THE KRIPO

The Lodz Ghetto.... April 1940 – August 1944

Michael Etkind

The Kripo administration building in the Lodz Ghetto was known as the "Red House", and was located on No. 8 Church Street. It had formerly been part of the administration offices for the church, but by 1940 it had become a torture chamber. It was situated in the centre of the ghetto, and as far as I understood, the Kripo, an acronym for criminal police, used it to extract any valuables, such as jewellery, foreign currency, silver, furs, etc., from the ghetto population.

As the Kripo were free to murder any Jew with impunity, without any explanation, they devised a method of mental and physical torture so that people who had been denounced by informers would reveal their hidden valuables. Those who did not have any gold rings or diamonds would not last for more than two weeks, and those who disclosed their

Michael was dubbed by Sir Martin Gilbert as the Society's poet. Here are two episodes and three poems.

possessions were released, but called up again some two or three months later to be forced to give up any further hidden valuables.

I used to pass by this terrifying building twice daily for two years, always on the opposite side of the road, for we were not allowed to pass alongside its wall. I often saw people being carried out on stretchers from the main entrance. As far as I am aware nobody who had the misfortune of being interrogated by the Kripo survived the war.

One evening I returned to my room and saw the green Kripo van standing outside the building. My mind was numbed with fear. I was afraid to go upstairs to my third floor room to see what was going on, so I turned and

walked aimlessly along the ghetto streets until midnight. When I finally returned, to my relief I found my door was not broken and the padlock still intact. However, my neighbour opposite had been taken away for interrogation and his accommodation ransacked. I have never found out what happened to him, for it was safer not to ask any questions, and I have never seen him again.

After the war I heard a joke about life in Russia;

"Happiness is hearing that the lift which woke you up at 4 a.m. did not stop at your floor, but went up one storey higher"....

There were very few lifts in the ghetto, but there was that green horse-driven van with two or three Kripo men whose aim was to rob anyone in the ghetto who might still possess something of value, in the most vicious and ruthless manner.

J.S. Lec, the Polish Jewish poet, who was hidden throughout the war by his

Polish Catholic friends, describes his mental anguish at such times in one sentence: "In times of extreme danger, I tried to abandon myself".

There were many moments during the war when I tried to escape the reality of my situation by numbing my senses and pretending what was happening was not real

but only a nightmare from which I would soon wake up, and during such times I did everything automatically without thinking.

Lagiewnicka 36; September 6th 1942 – early afternoon

I stood with a handful of other people exempt from the general curfew, on the main flight of steps to the hospital, watching this scene.

The "Roll-Commando" truck pulled up outside the gates and the engine stopped. The hospital had been made into an assembly centre for the young, the old and the feeble; the "useless" mouths that had to be sent out of the ghetto.

It was a hot day in early autumn, windless and the sky cloudless. The "Roll-Commando" men jumped down from the truck. They stood aside with their feet apart and folded arms, and waited. Their sleeves were rolled up, and their sun-tanned faces wet with sweat. "Gott Mit Uns", was inscribed

on the buckles of their belts, and large black revolvers bulged in holsters on their right hand hips.

The hospital gates were opened and some fifty children were ushered out. They were aged between two and ten. Nurses and some orderlies in white accompanied them. Many were painfully thin and dressed in rags, but some were neatly dressed. Many children were crying, and a few tried to get back inside and open gates. Two shots rang out. Two children slumped to the ground. An eerie silence spread through the young crowd.

The very young were lifted into the truck and placed on the floor, and assisted by the orderlies the other children

clambered up into the truck. Some more babies were brought out of the hospital until the truck was full. The back flap was lifted up and the bolts secured. The two commando men climbed the sides of the truck with agile strides and sat on each rear corner with their hobnailed boots dangling down over the children's heads. And, as the truck pulled off, they shut their eyes, raising their handsome faces to the sun.

As the van pulled away, I saw a man, who looked like a rabbi, walking on the opposite side of the street, shouting at the top of his voice: "There is no God".

* Lagiewnicka was one of the main streets in the Lodz ghetto.

The curfew in the Lodz Ghetto 1942

Gunter Fuchs, the Gestapo man, was bored.

It was the second week of his engagement in the 'thinning down' of the ghetto population. It was decided to let the ghetto function a little longer, after all the 'useless mouths' had been removed for that 'Special Treatment' in Chelmno.

Each time he entered a courtyard, or some other open space, all the inhabi-

tants of the adjoining buildings had to file past him and those sent to the left were loaded onto horse-driven vans and taken to a collection centre. The healthy looking young people were the first to appear, while all the others were cowering behind.

I had witnessed one of his selections from a ground floor window which was about fifteen to twenty metres away from the unfolding spectacle.

A young man in his twenties was the first to emerge from the building. Fuchs, who was standing with some German and Jewish policemen, did not like the young man's boldness and decided to teach him a lesson. 'Come here!' - he ordered the man to approach him closer. 'Kneel!' - was the second command as he was taking out his revolver. He then seemed to change his mind and ordered the man to

turn round and kneel again. He then began to count one... two... and so on and slowly tip-toed back until he disappeared into some other courtyard.

An hour later we went to see the young man, who was by then in his bed shaking and perspiring.

A few days earlier, when I was sent to the hospital in

Lagiewnicka street, I had been told by the nurses that Gunther Fuchs shot and killed two doctors, shortly before all the patients were deported....

LODZ 1988

New flowers bloom in Lodz where we have spent
Our strange tormented youth
New faces mill the streets we trod and children play
Uncaring unaware of how we bled
The Jews are gone yet life goes on as if we never were
Only the names speak volumes to those who were there
Balucki Rynek Zgierska Lagiewnicka Street Limanowskiego

The Jews are gone
Here where the ghetto stood barbed wire fences bridges guards
Here where Biebow with Rumkowski ruled where pain became
The Nazi form of art where fear reached its highest pitch
Where dying flesh craved bread; no outward signs are left
Only the cemetery still retains its knowledge of the past
Only the graves those with no stones above no names
Contain the tales that will remain untold

The taxi takes us to the gate
Some Polish men now clear the graves and burn the undergrowth
Cover your head they tell our taxi driver this is a sacred ground
The Nissenbaum Foundation is at work
We read the names and walk until our feet refuse to carry on

Next stop Koscielny Plac here where the Kripo torturers drew blood
And their demented victims beaten to a pulp have breathed their last
Now priests Franciscan Order or the Carmelite enjoy their rest
And munch their meals we enter speak explain they take us round
And in the cellar that's now a canteen point to a three prong hook
Suspended from a beam

Piotrkowska Street the Adolf Hitler Strasse of the war where Jews
Were not allowed to set their feet the moment that its name was changed
The Grand Hotel a German week the menu states wild boar a leg of pork
And sauerkraut of course we ask for borsch brown kasha and some greens
The waiter bows a thousand zlotys equals forty pence we all are millionaires
For the day but hardly fit the part

We walk the streets and enter courtyards of our youth peeling facades
And outside loos pale faces gaze at us don't pull them down they plead
We take some photographs excuse ourselves explain we once lived here

Wisniowa Gora next the swimming pool survived the war so did the pine trees
And the oaks even some buildings still remain as dusk descends we pass
The Warsaw suburbs once again the Forum buzzes with a thousand tongues
Yet Poland is the emptiest place on earth

WE HAVE SURVIVED

We have survived by hiding in
The shadows of confusion
And have emerged like ghosts
From the Beyond

We shared illusion of
A purpose of a mission
Of being special
In a very special way

We thought that our survival
Left us with a duty
We had to urge mankind
To change its former ways

Abandon hatred vengeance
Retribution
And live in peace with all
This life contains

But now that our end
Is coming near
And our time on earth
Will soon run out

What can we add
To make man pause and hear
What we have gained
Through suffering and pain

DER FUHRER

"I have freed the German people from such stupid
and degrading notions as conscience and morality.
We shall raise generations before whom the whole world will tremble.
I want youth to be violent, to dominate, to be cruel and unbending.
A free, glorious, wild animal force must burn in their eyes.
I wish to no intellectual upbringing."

He taught that murder was a way of life.
Till it became. His aim was to create a man
who would spill blood without remorse without regrets.
Who says he failed ?

This which he did, is lost, undone and crumbled into dust.
Those, whom he killed, are dead and mingled with the clay.
That, which he said, remains.
His words still ring their hateful notes,
still echo and reverberate.

He taught that nature knows no pity, no remorse
has no regrets and no taboos; that conscience is a Jewish
hoax a lie to undermine the Will.
The victor need not justify his deeds;
for weakness is the only crime.
The weak must serve the strong, the undesirable make room.
He taught that those who do not fight forfeit their rights;
he showed that murder is a way of life.

Who said his teaching has been lost?

I buried my Father

Roman Halter

My father died of starvation in the Lodz Ghetto on the 7th April 1942.

I came to see him after work in the metal factory for my mother and I lived in a place about half a mile away and I was told by the people in the old peoples' home that he was asleep. When I went to his bed and touched his cheek, it was stone cold.

The People in charge of burying the dead gave priority to those with "PROTEKCJA" or food. My mother and I had neither, so they said "We'll put him in the ground tomorrow or maybe the day after tomorrow... or..." Eventually, they showed me where the grave was to be.

I began to dig there myself. My half-sister Sala and mother came with me.

Sala thought it would be too upsetting for her two children, Danusia * and Henryk 6½ to attend the funeral.

"There is nothing but death, starvation and misery.... Let them remember father the way he used to be when we would come for the high holidays and he would smile and lift them both up on Felek (Felek was our tamest horse) I'll tell them about his death when they are stronger".

Sala told Eva (Eva was Szllamek's wife, Szllamek was hanged in 1940) and she came too.

"Why are you digging the grave, Romek?" asked Eva. "Because we have nothing to give the gravediggers", I answered.

Roman came to England with the Windermere group and lived in the Loughton Hostel. He is an architect and a painter and some of his paintings are permanently shown at The Imperial War Museum. His book "Roman's Journey" was published a few years ago. See "Obituary".

She greeted mother but mother didn't reply.

At the morgue, Sala told me later, Eva lifted the sheet and looked at father to identify him, and then she left.

Eva had told Sala that I should drop by to see her in the soup kitchen. Sala said she was sorry she could do nothing to help me because she felt so unwell. She, too, left. Mother stood by, watching and weeping.

I had to return the next morning to finish the job as the ground was hard and I was weak. First, I went to the metal factory to tell my section manager that I needed the day off to finish digging the grave. He made certain that I would be given my portion of soup even though I didn't work that day.

Mother went with me to the cemetery. One of the gravediggers said, "Did you bring us any bread?" I replied that we had no bread so he lent me his spade and said something like "Good luck" and "Bring it back to me when you're finished".

The same gravedigger helped me set father face down, on something that looked like a metal bed frame.

"Don't worry", he said. "When you tip him into the grave like this, he'll fall the right way round".

Mother was in no state to help me carry father, so I kept turning the metal frame round and round in an arc as I advanced. This proved hard work and I had to take many rests before I managed to bring father close to the grave which was now only a short distance away. But the frame had to be lifted over the other graves and I was unable to do it.

"Maybe they could lend you the two-wheeled cart with the horizontal platform?" mother suggested, but they obviously couldn't or didn't want to perhaps, and I don't know whether I could have even coped with the cart all on my own.

We were stuck. Neither of us knew what to do. Mother uncovered father (he was covered in a sackcloth which I had been asked to return to the home for the elderly) and wanted to turn his face and to look at him.

"Max, Max, is this the end of the world?"

Father's name was Mordechai, but mother called him Max.

I went back to the morgue and began pleading with the men to come and help me. "One day, if I have a potato or a piece of bread to spare, I will bring it to you", I said to the man who lent me the spade, and he agreed to help.

"You are not from Lodz?", he asked.

"No, I'm from Chodecz".

"Where's that?"

"Near Wloctawek".

"Aha", he said. "It's always

hardest for the provincials in our Lodz Ghetto. They're like lost sheep!"

He helped me tip father in and I covered him with earth. I found that I didn't remember the KADDISH prayer by heart. Mother did. So I repeated it after her.

"Say another prayer you know. I'm sure God will understand", said mother.

I said the SHEMA and then we stood in silence for quite some time, just looking at the ground, each thinking our own thoughts. I put a few stones on the grave so that when I was able to return later with a metal marker,

which I was going to make in the metal factory, I would be able to recognise where father was buried.

Mother carried the spade and I dragged the metal bed frame and the sackcloth. Before we left the cemetery, we rested and then slowly, very slowly, made our way back to our small dingy room.

I returned to Poland at the end of May 1945.

Before travelling to Chodecz, I went to the cemetery in Lodz. There, I only found my father's grave. I looked for my grandfather's grave but couldn't find it. On

my father's grave was the embossed metal plate engraved with the number 642 (the number given to me by the people who ran the cemetery in 1942), which I made in the metal factory, and the date 07:04:1942, and his name MORECHAI HALTER.

It was a hot day. The sun shone onto the grave. I felt very tired and lay down on top of the grave and fell asleep. When I awoke, the sun was setting. I must have slept for a number of hours, so I thought. But I remember feeling well and refreshed after that sleep.

How I lost my Father

Shmuel Dresner

We arrived in Skarzysko-Kamienna in late autumn 1942. After working in "Werk A" for a week, we were transferred to "Werk C". I don't know why. "Werk C" was the worst one of the three "Werk". Abraham Huberman and Alec Ward were already there.

Radom District was becoming "Judenrein". All the small camps and ghettos were being liquidated.

The SS and their Ukrainian Auxiliaries kept bringing in new transports of people from various ghettos. All picked for their strength and youth. I particularly remember the group from Sandomierz and Opatow. They were dressed so smartly and looked so very strong. If someone survived the first three months he was considered an old timer.

The people from Sandomierz tried to escape but were always caught and

Sam came to England with the Windermere group. He was in Quare Mead sanatorium. He has a great interest in art and is a regular contributor to our Journal.

shot. I think some of them were betrayed by the Ukrainian guards whom they tried to bribe. Every day when we marched to work in the forest we came across crumpled up bodies of young men lying in red pools of blood on the white snow.

If escapees were caught alive they were brought back to camp and hanged. Or if they were dead, the bodies were displayed on a barrow to be viewed as we marched out to work.

In one instance, a group of five Sandomierz men managed to escape without being caught. The next day we were all chased out on the

open ground near the gate. The people from Sandomierz were already standing separate in a group surrounded by Ukrainian guards. A SS man asked every fifth man to step forward and just shot them in the back of the neck. Then he gave a speech that if anyone escapes every second person will be shot in that group.

The "Werk C" camp was built in a clearing in the forest. Surrounded by barbed wire, the Ukrainian "Werkschutz" patrolled on the outside of the perimeter, from where in the night-time they used to take occasional shots for amusement at people going to the latrine saying they tried to escape. No questions asked. It was open season for shooting Jews.

Inside, the camp was controlled by Jewish Police and the Commandant, who happened to be a woman named Markowichowa.

It must have been Spring 1943. The shootings had eased off a bit. My father was still working on the Picrin Presses. One day there was an explosion on his press. The Polish overseer in charge, who had a reputation as a sadist, beat my father up so much that he could not go to work but had to stay in the sickbay. After that beating he was not the same. Our roles reversed. I had to look after him.

My father had an unusual upbringing for a Jewish boy in Poland. He had lost his mother when he was only four. His new stepmother mistreated him so much that he ran away when he was seven to a small village near Magnuszew and lived with a Polish farmer until he was sixteen, looking after the cattle and working in the fields. As a result he never went to school and could not read or write, but he was very strong physically and could do anything with his hands. "Goldene Hendl" they used to say in Yiddish.

One day when I came home from nightshift I found my father sitting on the ground,

leaning on the pillars supporting the barrack. He said he was going to escape. He was not going to wait for the Germans to empty the sickbay and shoot the people on the firing-range in the forest. It was a fortnightly or monthly occurrence depending on how many sick people were in the sickbay barrack. He showed me a wire cutter which he had hidden in his trousers. I don't know how he got hold of it.

He was very weak and his skin and clothing were completely canary yellow caused by the Picrin powder from the press. I said we will go tomorrow. I kept postponing it. I was scared.

One morning when I came back from work he was not there, instead the Commandant Markowichowa and some Jewish policeman were waiting to interrogate me. They wanted to know where my father was.

Now that I think about it, I think they were trying to hide the escape from the SS. They were also scared. Afterwards, I seem to have lost my will to live. Fell ill

and finished in the sickbay. How I survived and managed not to be taken to the firing-range is another story.

When I recovered and went back to work, I clung to the idea that my father survived and managed to crawl his way to the peasants he spent his youth with.

After the war I suppressed the whole memory and in spite of my searches and letters to the elders of the Polish villages, which went unanswered, I could not face the idea that he was dead.

In 1976 on a visit to Warsaw I went to the Jewish Historical Institute. I spoke to the director and asked whether he has any records of Polish Jewish survivors.

He handed me a small, thin book with the names of all survivors. The only name I found of my family was my own, and the fact that I was residing in London. Up till then I was still hoping that my father and my little sister were still alive somewhere.

As time goes by, it hurts more.

Harrow, 28 February 2012

From Slavery to Freedom

Pinny Orzach

It's Choi Hamoed Pesach, and we are going to "Parents Day" for our son, who was recently drafted to the IDF.

The third generation is here and here to stay!

Hundreds of parents from every town and city in Israel have come together to see where their son is training to become a fighter in the Givati Brigade. The word "camp" (used to describe their base)

Pinny is the son of the late Yechezkel (Chaskel) Orzach Z"L

suddenly takes on a new meaning, it still touches a nerve, in English or Hebrew, but it's a camp where Jews are being trained to fight, to protect and to defend. A place of training, to be part of the best and most humane army in the world.

The ceremony begins and the Battalion Commander addresses the parents. Incredibly enough he begins to speak about his experience three years ago when he was chosen to be among a group of uniformed Israeli soldiers who would make the powerful and unique journey to Poland and visit the camps. He described how he stood at the crematoria and made an oath that "his

children would never stand helplessly at a "selection", nor would they dig their own graves ". The silence was deafening, without him saying it, I could hear a screaming of the phrase "never again!" We were told there would be a short army mock-up manoeuvre and then we would be able to see our boys; many of them the same age as "the boys" when they came over to England. The manoeuvre begins and we hear over the PA system, an officer reporting that there is an "enemy unit" approaching and they needed to move forward and capture them. Gun fire & smoke grenades, are going off and the "enemy" is overpowered.

The "smoke" was a protective shield and, yes, out of the

smoke came hundreds of proud "yidishe" soldiers in green uniforms, running down sand dunes into the outstretched loving arms of parents and siblings. If only, if only all "the boys", my late father z"l among them, could be here to see this magical moment where "camp", "smoke" & "soldiers" have all repented and come together to proclaim "!"

Shabbat Choi Hamoed Pesach, and we read the famous or infamous story of the resurrection of the dry bones from the book of the prophet Yechezkel. There is a graphic description of how the dry bones rise from the grave and how G-d dresses them with tissue, muscle and skin, and brings them back to life.

G-d can take those dry bones and have them come to life through us, the second generation and our children the third generation. When an Israeli general cries out "never again!" and has the will, the skill, and the know-how to really back these words, when this general is training our boys the 3rd generation, then, the dry bones do come back to life. Without our past we have no future.

Our job is to ensure that our past is never forgotten and to look forward, to see where we can leave our mark.

"So said G-d, behold I open your graves and bring you up from your graves my people and brought you to the land of Israel."

Sweden Trip

May 3rd 2010, set for a trip which we really don't know "what" or "how" but the why was clear. Sixty-five years have passed and no one knew that all this time you were buried in a Jewish cemetery, having had a Jewish burial where "Chesed Shel Emet" reached new & remarkable heights. Three brothers, second generation and one representative of the next generation, our future.

The story really began about six months ago when Yankee, the oldest of the three brothers, made a remarkable discovery; Yosef Orzech, brother to our late father and uncle that we were never privileged to meet, the uncle that we knew had survived the Holocaust and died shortly after in Sweden, suddenly appeared

in the results of a search and gave us information that we had no knowledge of till then;

Yosef Orzech 1922-1945
Buried in Norkopping
Sweden (Jewish cemetery)
Officiated by
Cantor Idy/Abe Bornstein

Yankee continued on his new found mission and discovered that Idy/ Abe passed away in 2000 survived by two sons. One of his sons, Yan, has remained very active in the Jewish community.

He was more than happy to find out more information and offered to take us to the Norkopping cemetery (a two hour drive each way from Stockholm) and show us the shul. Without his help our trip would have been a lot more challenging and a lot less eye-opening. Not only did

he make arrangements for our arrival to Norkopping, and coordinated with Peter Freudenthal the shul Shamash and another inspiring character whose devotion to the Shul is incredible, Yan also showed us around Stockholm's places of Jewish interest which led to a further remarkable discovery.

The trip itself was full of Siata Dishmaya (heavenly help). Even the weather that according to the forecast was supposed to be pouring with rain, was actually sunny without being too hot. We were privileged to meet and be taken around by the son of the very Chazan who buried our late uncle, and thus the second generation was united by a common mission.

By having my son with us we succeeded in having the

third generation involved. As I said to my son, he is the most important of the four of us. We have already told our children, he and his generation are the continuation.

We arrived at Norkopping and went to the Shul that was being renovated. It was there that we met Peter.

Peter has taken the Shul as a project and with complete devotion is overseeing the restoration of this once beautiful building for the Norkooping Jewish community consisting of approximately thirty Jewish women mostly over eighty years old. Peter gave us the full tour, including a quick sample of what the organ sounded like.



Peter & Yan outside the Noorkoping Shul, holding photos of the late Abe/Idy Bornstein, and the choir.

Peter started telling us about his memories. He had just started school in 1945 and two or three of the schools were divided into two, and half of each one was turned into a field hospital to treat the survivors that were brought over to Sweden directly from concentration camps in the "white buses" that apparently travelled around Germany picking up

survivors. He described to us how half of his school had been cordoned off and the children were told to stay away from the partitions that had been set up. Naturally, each child had to take a look, but as Peter said in an eerie tone "you only looked once and that was enough, I remember the site to this day".

We were taken to all the "back rooms" and there we saw a painting of Yan's late father and his Cantor uniform. In another room we saw the special table upon which the Chevra Kadisha did Tahara. At the end of the tour we sang Ein Kelokeinu in honour of Peter's relative who wrote the song.

We left the shul and walked towards the cemetery, each with his own feelings & trepidations. We saw a church and a cemetery and Peter informed us that the Jewish cemetery is next door to the Christian one. We reached the gates and Yan says to us "you first, it's your family". From anonymity to having connection to an actual place, this place is a concrete memorial. For sixty-five years a lonely grave, unvisited, is suddenly given recognition, is suddenly about to be "reunited" with family. We follow Yan and he takes us to the grave and there, written on a headstone



The Headstone (Matzevah) at the grave of Joseph Orzech(z"l)

is the name: Josef Orzech 1922-1945.

Uncle Yosef, we made it, you survived the horrors that we will never know and survived a few months only to pass away in this town. Here, you merited true "Chesed Shel Emet"- true altruistic kindness. Abe/Idy Bornstein and others gave my uncle a Jewish burial, and sixty-five years later his nephews were privileged to say Tehilim and the special prayer of Kel Maleh Rachamim.

There's no one to thank for this act! We each took out stones that we had brought from Israel as if prearranged, though none of us had discussed it and none of us knew that each had the same thought, to place a stone on the grave, a stone from Israel, the Holy Land. My son, had a thought, all the graves in that row were similar in that, all died in 1945 and perhaps each is waiting patiently for their own family to discover it.

We had a lot of stones for one grave; he took enough stones to place one on each grave in that row. My sadness is suddenly changed to pride. The next generation is already active, Am Yisrael Chai. We stood at the grave in awe, each with his own thoughts running through his mind. Questions that will never be answered. Was he aware that he survived? Did he think about surviving family? Did he make plans to search and reunite? Was he lonely? Josef is reunited with his family. The thought of the biblical Josef comes to mind. He weeps when he reveals himself to his brothers and asks "is my father still alive?" Did Josef Orzech ask about his father? The reunification

of the family that never happened in his case.

We stood at the grave and said Tehillim according to the letters of his name. Four letters between the four of us.



Yankee, Pinny, Shalom & Ari Orzech at the grave of Yosef Orzech.

Parting was sad yet inspiring. The grave is well tended and we have passed on the information to the next generation; our mission has been accomplished.

The next morning we met Yan at the local Shul (not the main one) It too has a unique story. The furniture came from the only Shul that survived Kristalnacht, because it was on the second floor of a building and the Germans didn't know of its existence.

The furniture was later smuggled out of Germany in

coffins and was used to set up a new Shul in Stockholm.

After Tefillat Shacharit, led by Yankee (himself a Chazan), we went to visit the main shul in Stockholm; a truly magnificent building with incredible architectural details. The outside of the Shul has Memorial walls that are divided into different camps, with names of people in different orders, some according to dates and others by alphabet. After the tour of the Shul and meeting the Chazan who joined us in our tour, we were waiting outside and I happened to look at the wall that was on a different side. I noticed that this list of names was alphabetized and

naturally my eyes were drawn to the letter "O". I could not believe what I saw. Among the list of names of survivors was Joseph Orzech!

Our unknown uncle has been commemorated on the wall of the Stockholm Shul. His memory will not be forgotten.

We can go back home knowing that, unlike so many others that have no grave, no name on a wall (among them our own uncles and aunts and grandparents), Joseph Orzech merited great kindness and respect from the Swedish community.

Hashem Yikom Damo!



The list of survivors that we discovered outside the main Stockholm Shul, with Orzech Joseph.

SECTION III HERE AND NOW

Edgar, Wisconsin – my Un-Holocausta American experience

Judith Sherman

Judith (nee Stern) lived with her younger sister Miriam in Weir Courtney. She studied Social Science at the L.S.E and later emigrated to the U.S.A., where she lives with her husband Reuben. Both of them, together with their daughter, are regular contributors to our Journal.

A Holocaust Survivor is always aware of contrasts and connections - before and now. This comparison is an automatic response. Unplanned but unavoidable.

Here is a very recent example.

I am invited to Edgar, Wisconsin, to speak about the Holocaust. Edgar is a farm community in the northern part of the state. The school district has introduced a programme - "To Walk In Your Shoes" designed to sensitize students to individuals caught in the tides of history.

"We are all so thrilled that you agreed to come. And bring along your husband, so you can be here together" - says Colin Hanson, a teacher and the Director of the Programme. And when he hears of my existing connection to Wisconsin - our son David and family live in Milwaukee - Hanson says "Invite David here, so you can have a family reunion."

The Holocaust connection? Family togetherness? At age thirteen I am forcefully separated from my family. The journey I am sent on by the Germans is forced upon me - the tides of history in action.

Upon arrival at the airport in Edgar, Hanson greets us with a welcoming smile. Driving in his car to the hotel I remark - "how do you keep your car so neat and clean with a small child in the family?" "Oh" he laughs, "I borrowed my parents' car in your honour." When pushed into the wagon train by guns and whips, we are assaulted by the smell of dirt and ugliness. It is a long time before I hear laughter again. For this Wisconsin event twenty local organizations unite to raise our air fare and hotel expenses. Members of these various organizations come to the reception in my honour. There is food and

drink, home made pastries and Wisconsin cheeses, friendship and much picture taking. My presence is welcomed and celebrated. On the journey to Auschwitz there is no food; our minds are crazed from lack of water; my presence is destined for annihilation. Here, in Wisconsin, I am honoured to be the first speaker in the school's new auditorium. The audience is attentive, respectful and interested.

To the question "how did you manage to survive?" I answer - "Luck, luck because the boundary between living and dying was so very narrow, so uncontrollable. But also because, in that world where helping others was strictly forbidden, punishable by torture or death, I survive because I do have help... I am hidden by a Christian family and, though betrayed, was helped to escape Gestapo prison by a Slovak guard. In Ravensbruck Concentration Camp a German political prisoner protects me from the frequent selections. My bunk mates and I kill lice together. I share my bread ration with aunt Ella and she in turn sees to it that I get up in time for roll call. (Lateness means the punishment cell). I quote my poem... "in no other place can a friend be of such magnitude as here, where a friend can say and do and be so minimally." I think no one could survive the Holocaust without some help from someone... without some human connection. Those women in Ravensbruck who disconnected - isolated into themselves quickly moved into death territory. In that disconnected universe you had to somehow remain

connected to survive.

After my presentation there is signing of my book - "Say the Name: A Survivor's Tale in Prose and Poetry" The book is a tale of witnessing. In it I also name people who were murdered and have no one to remember them. I sign the book with my name. My name. In Ravensbruck I have no name. I have a number- 83.621.

During this Wisconsin visit I am asked to speak to students in their classrooms about my poetry. In poetry I am witness to images in words - the gassing of my brother; "my brother will forever be eight" - the orphaned Gypsy girl "Gypsy girl, your mother gone, will anybody call your name?" It is easier, more comprehensible to relate to individuals than the incomprehensible, awesome number of six million Jews; of one and a half million children murdered. The millions of other victims.. We discuss my poem - "Judith in Hiding" I ask the students to compare -" How would you compare my hiding experience in the forest with your own hiding experience? How compare my seven year old sister's hiding with a Christian family?" The students enter our harsh reality and compare it to their game-playing experience. Marsha says-"Not hide, and not seek, will ever be the same for me." Sean says "When I lose my cell phone and can't call home I panic." The fear and anxiety of family disconnectedness is now in their pores.

On day three I talk in the auditorium to all Middle and High School students. One of the questions "If you were so

thirsty why did you not eat the snow?" Such a normal question in such a normal world. I explain "Eating the snow is forbidden. Our hands holding the snow are beaten with rifle butts. We are also forbidden to let the falling snow fall into our mouths. We are forced to stand in that snow - all of us coatless and most of us shoeless - forced to stand in it. Forced not to eat it."

Another question. "Mrs. Sherman, After all that, do you have faith that the world can be a better place?" I touch her tear-streaked face and point to all the students. "Yes, yes. Yes I do. You and all the students here will make it so. Where you are and where you will be you can make goodness happen."

The teacher, Ms. Tina Higgins, bakes poppy seed cake for me. She reads in my book that this cake, which my grandmother used to bake every week, is my favourite and reads how I am starved and interrogated in Gestapo prison while the guards feast upon poppy seed cake.

Edgar, Wisconsin, I thank you for my UN - HOLOCAUST experience. Your community and school has united - for me. Not against me. The Germans pronounced my death sentence - you here provided life affirmation. The Nazis targeted me for invisibility, here my visibility is safely recorded in countless photographs, books and local papers. Witnessing in Ravensbruck is forbidden. We are forced to experience the terror but not record it. Here people want to read my

book of witnessing and hear my tale.

This visit is mutually reciprocating. The community is informed of a world that should not be - I name evil - they are jolted into warning. And I am enveloped into a world of normalcy and friendship. How can a survivor not be appreciative and aware of these life-affirming treasures.

I have written a poem for the school to reflect the theme of "To Walk In Your Shoes".

To Walk In Your Shoes

To walk in your shoes
I must feel in my toes
I must know in my heart - that like me -
folks the world over
need bread in the morning
and comfort at night.
I must know, I must know
that people all over need shelter and safety
and laughter and song.

I will walk in your shoes and cherish my own,
come, stranger, walk in my shoes
and step by step and hand in hand
let us connect the universe.

Future significance of the Holocaust

Robert Sherman

We all know of how passage of time and changes in culture and context can reshape views, images, and relevance of the past.

There are two main schools of thought among Holocaust scholars about how to define, study, analyze, and teach the Holocaust. One holds that the Holocaust is a totally unique and incomparable event in human history, unlike any other in recorded history, and can only be properly

understood in that context. The second group holds that the Holocaust is an extreme example of genocidal behaviour that can be analyzed and compared with other genocides, most recently in Africa. Important generalizations can be made from such comparisons with other genocides for understanding these events and preventing future genocides. Arguments and examples are

put forward by both sides and each counters the criticism of the other.

For purposes of Holocaust education both sides make important points. On the one hand we want to stress the uniqueness of the Holocaust in history. On the other hand we need to be able to make comparisons and generalizations. We should avoid the trivialization of the Holocaust with faulty inappropriate comparisons. Just one example of many uses of

Holocaust iconography to enhance and dramatize other events. Both the Palestinians and the ultra orthodox Jews compare the Israeli government and army to the Nazis and proclaim they are conducting a Holocaust against the orthodox and Palestinian communities. Far from the truth. We also want to be able to make appropriate comparisons and generalizations that will help us to better understand the past and fashion a better future.

It is useful to integrate the two opposing positions to give us the power to stress both the uniqueness of the Holocaust in history and its generalizability in relation to other genocides. Most of us have already made that leap in efforts to forge a better future.

If we turn to Jewish history and tradition we are urged to remember — remember those historic times of when our people suffered tragically - and remember those historic

times when the folk triumphed or succeeded.

We are bidden to experience both the slavery and the Exodus from Egypt as if we were personally there and thereby live the experience. Experience in the first person "I" rather than the third person and more distant "they." We learn from Jewish history that after each disaster the survivors gathered themselves together individually and collectively to start anew with the hope and somehow the confidence that they could make a life for themselves out of the ashes and live that life in the community. They created families and as a group achieved success in new and strange places. This process has been repeated many times in the long history of our folk. No less so for the survivors of the Holocaust who somehow rose from the ashes and achieved distinction while also working for a better world. This is like a miracle.

The Dalai Lama convened a group of Jewish colleagues to see what the Tibetans can learn from the Jews about survival in exile.

Jewish history and the history of the Holocaust survivors teach us that we must remember the Holocaust as a singular unique historical event. We must also see it as significant and relevant to humanity forever. We must teach new generations to experience the Holocaust as if they personally were there. Survivor educators supplied the "I". Now more and more, educators must find the means of providing that "I" experience as we do with the Passover Seder. I think many Holocaust museums and educational centres have something like this in mind as they organize their exhibits and programs, putting the participants "in the scene."

May we go from strength to greater strength and succeed in making it so that "Never Again!" will prevail.

Joining last year's reunion

Menachem Silberstein

On hearing the wonderful news that the 2nd and 3rd Generation have become active in our Society, my granddaughter, Tal, my wife Nechama and I decided we would attend the reunion to see our friends.

We were very pleased about the decision and want to thank the Chairman and his committee for all the effort and hard work put in to make it so successful (as always).

At this reunion, being the only representative of the

Israeli Boys, I asked to be allowed to speak so as to bring greetings from the Israeli members to express our pride and gratitude to the younger generation on their decision to carry on.

I was disappointed that I was denied the opportunity so I am writing in The Journal instead.

I want first to offer thanks for the honour conferred on me when I was chosen to light one of the six candles in

memory of our lost beloved ones.

I would like to offer some comments and perhaps an explanation as to why approximately thirty of "The Boys" left England and came to Israel to fight in The War of Independence.

In May 1948, the Jewish State of Israel was declared and the next day it was attacked by four countries — Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. The country was very small, with about 600,000 citizens — a few poorly armed



Our boys in Israel.

men to fight against well-armed forces.

About thirty of us (boys and girls), together with many volunteers – Jew and non-Jew, from all over the world – had come to help in the fight so that, at last, after 2,000 years, the Jewish people should know they have a State of their own.

We have often been asked the question “How come you had the courage to volunteer for another war after all you have been through during the Holocaust?”

For many years, most of “The Boys” did not talk about our terrible experiences of the Second World War.

I suggest there were three persistent and somewhat annoying questions often put to us:-

- (1) Why didn't you fight back?
- (2) Why did you go like sheep to the slaughter?
- (3) How did you survive?

I think I speak for all

thirty of “The Boys” who volunteered to fight in The War of Independence, when I say the motivation came from the answer to these three questions.

- (1) By joining the fight, we were able to take up arms and fight back.
- (2) Having an independent State would mean no-one could lead us like sheep to the slaughter.
- (3) As for the answer to the third question – How did you survive? – Well! I can only answer that during the years spent in camps, etc., my one wish was to remain alive to see the defeat of the Nazis.

Some power helped us to survive and start to rebuild a new life, establish lovely families and renew our future.

I am very proud that having been the sole survivor of my family, I now have my beloved wife, two children,

six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

I offer this as answers to those three questions.

Now we have a country of seven million, of which we are incredibly proud.

- We did quite well!!! -

After The War of Independence, some of the volunteers returned to the countries from which they had come. The majority stayed.

As for me, I decided to stay in Israel and continued in the army as a medic in the Reserve and served in subsequent Israeli wars.

To the 2nd and 3rd Generation, I would like to say – we are proud of you and your decision to take an active part in the Society and continue its work. Keep the fire burning and understand fully the two words that one hears and sees in many places – “Never Again”.

Munich ... Schwerin ... Berlin 2011

Anita Lasker – Walfisch

I had quite a busy schedule lately, and some of my activities may be of general interest.

It started with an invitation by the Bayerische Rundfunk to take part in a programme called ‘Nacht der Zeitzeugen’.

Anita was deported from her home town of Breslau – now Wroclaw – to Auschwitz where, as an inmate, she played the cello in the camp orchestra. Later she was sent to Bergen-Belsen where she was liberated. She came to England in 1946 and three years later she became a founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra. She published her biography “Inherit The Truth 1939-44”. She is a member of our Society and is a regular contributor to our Journal.

The idea was to interview three survivors and one of their grandchildren. They also wanted some music. My grandson Simon went with me. He speaks German and is a singer and a cellist.

I flew to Munich and met with the TV people and the two other participants the night before, in the hotel.

One of them was Max Mannheimerr who is now in his early nineties and a survivor of Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Warsaw and Dachau. The other was a lady by the Name of Tamar Dreifuss.

Her story is quite different from the usual ones.

She was born in Wilna and three years old when her father was taken away. She and her mother were put on a cattle truck on the way to God knows where and were saved ... literally by a dog. Her mother was determined to try and save her child. Twice she tried to escape from the train, was caught and badly beaten. At the third attempt she succeeded and since she spoke Russian managed to find work on various farms. She was very fond of animals and felt sorry for the dog on one of the farms she was working on, and occasionally slipped him some food.

His name was Tigris. He was a very fierce dog, and was never let off the leash. Everyone was scared of him. One day Lithuanian partisans came to the village. They were on the side of the Germans.... they suspected that Tamar and her mother were Jewish, so for two days they both went and hid in the dog kennel. Not only did no-one dare approach this dog, but he actually never

touched his own food before Tamar and her mother had not helped themselves to a bit of potato or meat. Tamar is now a grandmother. She has published a lovely book for children where she tells her story, and speaks in schools.

The venue for the transmission was a theatre. It was packed to the rafters. At first we oldies were interviewed separately We were then joined by our respective grandchildren who told their own version of what it meant to them to have such an unusual family history.

Simon played the Traeumerei on the cello and sang a Schubert song at the end. We overran the allotted time for the transmission by 45 minutes which meant that a great deal had to be cut. This was a pity because the interchange between us and the audience became very interesting.

I admit that it gave me a great deal of satisfaction to see and hear the grandchildren... all of them very good looking and intelligent people, who would not be in this world if the Nazis had succeeded!

My next trip was to Schwerin. I have been there before on several occasions to adjudicate Music Competitions, and was very impressed with the genuine interest in 'Forbidden Music' of the Nazi era by the director of the conservatoire.

I decided that I could not find a more worthy place for the enormous collection of mostly unusual music left by my late husband and I donated it to the town of Schwerin.

It does sound a bit strange, but had I offered this library say to the Royal College or

Academy here, they would not have been interested, and this precious collection would have been lost.

A big van arrived to collect the music, special shelves had been built and the inauguration ceremony took place on the 9th of November, with the usual speeches of thanks and appreciation by the local dignitaries.

There is now a 'Peter Wallfisch Library' with a large picture and his life story on the wall. I know that it will be treated with great respect and preserved.

From Schwerin I was driven to Hamburg and took a train to Berlin.

I was invited on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Jewish Museum and to the annual meeting of the Freya von Moltke Stiftung. I am a member of the committee and we are discussing the progress of generating interest in what happened 1944, i.e. the abortive attempt on Hitler by Staufenberg when all the participants of the assassination plot were either shot or hanged on piano wire. It is interesting how little is known about this in Germany!

The place where the conspiracy took place was the home of the von Moltke family and was called 'Kreisau'. It now lies in Poland and, after years of complete neglect, has been revived and is now a meeting place for young people who traditionally dislike each other...

My next port of call was the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

They staged a whole week of celebrating their 10th anniversary.

There were guided tours, lectures and a special corner where some survivors were invited to sit on a sofa, visitors would gather round and listen to either their stories or to discussions about various themes. My brief was to talk about

'Justice' (!) and the problems of applying it after the event.

My partner was Dr. Werner Kilian, a former Ambassador and old friend of mine. The bottom line is of course that 'justice' in the true sense of the word was not possible to apply in connection with the

Holocaust, since there is no statute book that deals with such mega crimes.

However, it was heartening to see huge crowds queuing to get in to the Museum.

Things have certainly changed since I was in Berlin on Kristallnacht.

Speech at City Hall on Holocaust Memorial Day

Anita Lasker Walfisch

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I was asked at very short notice to elaborate briefly on my life before everything around me collapsed.

I was born in Germany into a typical German Jewish family ... where education played a major role.

My father was a lawyer and my mother a very accomplished violinist ... I was the youngest of three children.

We all learnt to play an instrument ... I played the cello.

All this came to an end, when all efforts to find a safe haven in another country failed ... the war broke out ... and we were trapped.

I was sixteen when my parents were deported ... Needless to mention that I never saw them again ... The rest is history.

The cello seemed to have been a life-saver ... because ... believe it or not there was an orchestra, or Kapelle as it was called, in Auschwitz/Birkenau that desperately needed a cellist.

I became a professional cellist after the war and after many years of wonderful music making ... I have now passed the mantle on to my son and via my beautiful daughter Maya ... to my grandson Abraham...

Thank you for asking me to

represent the ever dwindling number of survivors ...

Sixty-seven years ago the Russian army reached a place called Auschwitz and liberated a concentration camp that has since become a symbol for the abject depravity to which humans can possibly sink.

Forty-four years later that date was chosen as the official day of Remembrance ... The Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer was invited to address the German Parliament, and with superb lucidity and complete absence of bitterness or animosity, he outlined the uniqueness of the Holocaust, and, at the same time, the futility of claiming 'first place' so to speak vis-a-vis all the other genocides that have taken place since ... Because suffering can not be measured.

Not one of us was meant to survive ... that some of us did, was pure luck ... and where you happen to find yourself on the day of the liberation ...

For me it was on April 15, 1945 ... after a three year odyssey in prison ... Auschwitz ... and Belsen ... believe me ... in the nick of time.

We are all concerned about

the future ... and not without reason.

Who will keep the memory alive ... and most important: HOW and WHY ... since alas, we live in times when murder seems to be the order of the day ... sometimes it is quite difficult to understand who is murdering whom ... and why.

We watch it on the screen now ... and get well meaning warnings that ... what we are about to see, ... maybe ... upsetting!!!

I find these warnings highly offensive ... there is no limit to how upset people should be ... sitting comfortably at home.

The great danger about keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive is of course ... that there is a tendency now to equate it with all the other horrendous things that have happened since ... and are still happening now ... All under the name of GENOCIDE.

Believe me ... This is not a competition for first prize ... we seem to be programmed to kill each other for whatever reason.

But since education is our concern ... especially in the absence of survivors, it is of the utmost importance that we are clear in our minds ... what exactly makes this specific Genocide different

from all others ... and so dangerous ... so that it can be taught as a warning ... With all the other genocides we know about, the motives were somehow more realistic ... a fight for territory or power ... Jews had neither ... no power ... and certainly no territory.

It was just simply a pre-meditated ... industrialised mass murder of innocent defenceless people ...

And they had to be brought from all over Europe ... from as far afield as Greece ... just to be murdered ...

And since it proved to be a bit of a problem to kill

so many Jews, ... 'educated' people came up with a really great idea ... Gas chambers!!! ... It was Racism carried to the extreme.

Have we learnt anything ... precious little ... it seems to me

Synagogues still have to be guarded ... security at Jewish schools resemble the security at airports.

We learn that about six million were tortured and murdered ... the number is incomprehensible ... we are talking about people ... not statistics ... people ... like you and me.

Holocaust Memorial Day is not just about remembering the past ... it is also about the future ... about our attitude to our fellow human beings ... and about the fervent hope that similar travesties will never ... ever ... happen again.

AND WHEN WE 'SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT' ... that there may be enough people who will actually be listening.

Thank you

Anita Lasker Wallfisch

My trip to Kozenice

Jake Fersztand

The phone started ringing as I wanted to go out of the house. Fortunately, I decided to take the call. It was Ben calling from London. We had a very pleasant conversation in the course of which we came to talk about my recent trip to Kozenice in Poland, where I was born and lived at the outbreak of war with my parents and younger sister Margie, who now lives partly in Dearfield Beach Florida and a suburb of Detroit called Walled Lake Mich. USA.

To start with, I want to mention a coincidence. Quite a while ago I got a call from someone who introduced himself as Pawel Siczek, a film maker who grew up and lived with his parents in Switzerland; his was also the name of a restaurant in Kozenice before the war where my father used to take me when I was about five years old. In the course of the conversation with Pawel, whose family is from the

Jake came to England with the Windermere group. He now lives in Basle.

same region in Poland, I learned that he happened to visit a certain Pan Mlastek in Kozenice from whom he got my address. Mlastek is the son of the landlord who let the flat where I lived with my parents in Kozenice before the war.

Pawel is a young man about to make a documentary film about Kozenice where half the population was Jewish before the war. When he came back to Switzerland, he subsequently contacted me and visited me in Basel.

We established a good relationship and talked on the phone now and again. He also visited me in my home although it is an hour's journey by train for him, and another ride by public transport to get to me.

Some time ago I was asked by him if I would be

interested to travel to Kozenice with him, if I were invited by the town; to speak at one of the schools to the pupils as well as meet some citizens at the public library and to talk about my past.

I accepted the invitation and followed his suggestions. I travelled with Pawel from Zurich to Warsaw and from there was taken by car to a village about 20 kilometres from Kozenice, to a beautiful new house built by his father recently. There the two assistants who did the filming, Pawel and myself lodged for a week. The breakfast and evening meal we had in the house which we prepared ourselves, lunch we usually took in a restaurant in Kozenice, a modest self service place called a bar. The filming took place between ten in the morning till about three in the afternoon, that is when we broke up for lunch. The first day, a Monday, we made our way to Kozenice. That morning was

so cold that the first thing I did there was to find a shop where I could buy a sweater, then we proceeded to the house of Mr. Mlastek. When the film crew, who were not announced, rang the bell and tried to enter the Mlastek apartment, they were thought to be unwelcome intruders and chased away. They later returned with a letter from the Mayor explaining that they were making a documentary film of the town and were allowed to film in the apartment. All that time I waited outside, reluctant to visit Mlasteks who knew me from previous visits lest they also consider me as an unwelcome intruder! But when I rang the bell and told them who I was, as my last visit was over ten years ago and unlikely that I would still be recognised, I was asked to enter in a very friendly manner. Pan Mlastek is now 95 years old and his wife a lively lady of 86, and both very willing and able to be engaged in conversation. We talked about past visits and details about what happened during the war. In the yard at the back of the house where we lived was a latrine, a type of timber construction that was placed over a shallow pit. The structure was subdivided into compartments one allotted to each family. Each compartment had a type of wooden box with a round hole to sit on, for excrements deposited. When the pit was full it had to be emptied. During the war the Germans issued orders that the Jewish population had to obey, such as to give up their radios or fur coats to the German occupiers. These orders were enforced with the threat that

those who disobeyed were to be shot. In this case a pregnant woman who did not comply with the order, instead of being shot was thrown into the pit of human excrements. I must have been ten years old at the time and understood what happened. This story followed me over the years and I wondered what had happened to that woman. On one of my visits to Kozenice I asked Pan Mlastek; he remembered this incident which he confirmed. I asked whether he knew what had happened to that woman. To my relief Mlastek confirmed that when the Germans left the people got the woman out, physically unharmed. This was one of the details we talked about. A very interesting visit, they seemed to remember and confirm details which were long on my mind. Then the filming in town started. They asked me to walk as visitors usually do in a strange town. I could not remember anything of what I saw from my previous visits although I have been back to Kozenice twice since the year 1990 but on both occasions for only a few hours. This time I was there a full week, filming most days and got a good impression of the town.

Kozenice is a vibrant town of about twenty thousand inhabitants situated in central Poland with almost direct access to the Vistula, which is an impressionable sight. It has several schools and a society called The Lovers of the Land of Kozenice, which issues publications of the towns interesting statistics. In one of the publications I found my maternal grand father mentioned, who was a

Felczer by profession named Aran Bendler, in those days a medic without a university degree, whom the Chinese refer to as bare foot doctors, and his son Srulek Bendler who was a barber and ran his own hair dressing salon until the Ghetto in Kozenice was opened, when the shop was transferred to a certain Henryk Rozanski.

In the year 1931 the population of Kozenice reached a total of 7793 inhabitants, 3934 were cited as Poles and 3859 as Jews. There are 40 streets listed and the number of inhabitants in each street are given, for the ulica Lubelska, the street where we lived, the number of inhabitants is given as 768 Jews and 76 Poles. There are 17 streets listed where only Poles lived, the smallest of which had only 2 and the largest 351 inhabitants. The largest street where only Jews lived had 462, as far as I remember it was ulica Magitowa, now Magietowska. It was one of the streets that had a public water pump as the houses we lived in had no running water or sanitation and from which the water carrier, (Wassertrager) brought our water, 2 buckets each, containing 10 litres for which he earned about 10 grosze (Pennies) per bucket depending on the distance to the house from the pump. The story goes that when the daughter of a certain water carrier called Hirez Leib got married she was given a dowry by her father, the incredible sum of several thousand Zloty, unbelievable that such a large sum of money could have been saved from the small earnings of a Wassertrager.

To go back to my own experience in the week I spent in Kozienice, I was invited to visit the school I would have probably gone to in peaceful times. I was taken to the headmaster's office and so to say dined and wined and engaged in conversation about my past, especially how I survived. They also wanted to know about my life after the war in Britain, about my education and how and why I landed in Switzerland. Later on in the day, I was invited to speak to an assembly of teachers and pupils about my past during the war and answered questions. What followed was lunch at the headmaster's home in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and an excursion to the banks of the Vistula river, only several minutes away by car from the town.

After a short rest at the headmaster's home, Pawel, his two assistants and I, were taken to the public library where the next part of the very busy day's programme took place. Several dozen of the town inhabitants,

including the mayor's assistant, a very charming lady, to whom I spoke about my past during the war and how I, as well as my mother and sister, survived. To crown the day, a small team from the town's television appeared and bombarded me with questions. The headmaster later made a point of sending me electronically the short film taken by the team.

To reward me for the work I did in Kozienice, Pawel took me for a day to Lublin, the town from which my father came and where my grandparents lived before the Shoah. From there they probably perished in nearby Maidanek or Sobibor. Lublin is a lively town mainly inhabited by students of various faculties and, as far as I am told, Chabad brought back some Jewish Culture to the town. As it was one of the days when I had a bit of a problem physically, I had no time to investigate what Chabad's activities are in the town and how many Jewish people live there now. Before the war I was taken to Lublin

occasionally by my father who used to visit his parents and other family members. The next day it was time to leave Kozienice and we made our way to Warsaw.

It was a two hour drive and we were in the outskirts where a cousin of Pawel, who is a young anaesthetist lives. We were cordially invited by him and he treated us to dinner which he himself prepared for us. After that we landed in a pub and enjoyed plenty of Polish beer. After having spent the night in an hotel around the corner it was time to see to some shopping I wanted to bring back home and I was taken to a very impressive store which resembled Harrods in London where I could buy all the goodies I wanted. To my great surprise, I was again invited by the doctor who prepared a sumptuous brunch as a farewell gesture.

All in all, I have pleasant memories of my trip to Poland. I met interesting people who took very kindly to me and even invited me to visit them again in their home in Kozienice.

The Struma Tragedy

Jack Kagan

Many years ago on the first Seder after the MANYSHTANO I used to ask a 5th question WHY?

After that I used to read to the children from the Encyclopedia Judaica about the Jewish suffering during the 2nd World War. One year I read about Odessa, how 80-90,000 Jews were killed by the Romanian Iron Guard and German Einsatzgruppe D.

Jack's continuous efforts to keep alive the memory of his people from Novogrodek is most commendable. He published a book "Surviving the Holocaust with the Russian Jewish Partisans" and compiled a book entitled Novogrodek - "A History of a Shtetl".

The following year I read to them about the STRUMA but not from the Encyclopedia

Judaica but from other books, as I could not find it in the Judaica.

1942 was the worst year in Jewish history. Nearly all of Europe was occupied by the Germans. On the 20th of January 1942 was the Wansee conference where the Nazi's decided to kill all the 11 million Jews of Europe. Some Jews tried to do everything possible to save themselves from the catastrophe. Some ran with

the retreating Russian army. Some went into hiding or joined the partisans and some went to Romania to try to reach Palestine. The British mandate administration refused to give entry certificates for Jews to enter Palestine. The British policy was not to offend the Arabs. They were afraid that leaning towards the Jews could provoke a wide spread Arab revolt. Their excuse was possible infiltration of German spies.

Later in 1941 a Romanian company advertised the sale of a ship called MACEDONIA. It was an old ship used on the river Danube. It was 74 years old in 1941.

The ship was bought by a Romanian. He repaired it and put it under a Panamanian registry and renamed it Struma. Very expensive tickets were sold to 769 Jews, including 269 women 103 infants or toddlers, to take them to Palestine, before they even saw the ship.

They were terribly disappointed when they saw the ship. It had bunks for only 100 people and no toilet. The

ship carried an American flag. The owner told them the real ship that they bought tickets for was outside the territorial waters, but it was not true.

The Struma sailed from Constanza on the 12th of December 1941. It arrived in Istanbul three days later. The engine was malfunctioning and there was a leak in the hull. The captain of the ship requested to stay in port for repairs.

In view of the terrible conditions on the ship, the Turkish authorities allowed the passengers to disembark while the ship was being repaired. The passengers were looked after by the Turkish-Red Crescent, the Joint and the Jewish community in Istanbul.

The Struma stayed in Istanbul harbour for 71 days. During that time everybody begged the British to give permission to enter Palestine. There was a yearly 10,000 certificates available. The British claimed that the refugees were enemy aliens and did not qualify for the quota.

In February the British Embassy gave entry certifi-

cates to the children allowing them to travel to Palestine overland, but this did not materialise. On the 23rd February 1942 the captain of the Struma was ordered to leave the harbour. A tugboat towed her to the Black sea.

The following day, on the 24th, the tragic news came through. The Struma was blown up in the Black Sea. There was only one survivor, David Stoliar, a 21 year old Romanian Jew. (he lives now in the USA)

Later, it was found that the ship was blown out of the water by a torpedo fired from a Russian submarine.

It was not the only accident. In early 1940, a Uruguayan-registered ship called "Salvador" left for Palestine without a compass or weather instruments, no life-jackets. It could carry only 40 passengers but it took on 327. The Salvador reached Istanbul. After she left Istanbul, there was a severe storm in the Marmara Sea. The ship sunk on the 14th December 1940 and 204 passengers, including 66 children, died.

Pitura - what Chutzpah!!

Jack Kagan

I can't remember whether it was in 1993 or 1994, I travelled once again to my birth place Novogradok to erect a monument. The monument was for the first 52 victims that were shot by the SS in the centre of the town.

After the arrival I met a group of Novogradker Jews that had arrived from Israel and other countries. Together

we went to the court house where the labour camp was situated and the place from where we had escaped through the tunnel. Kaddish was said for the inmates that did not survive the escape and for the first 52 victims.

Tamara Vershitskaya, curator of the museum in

Novogradok, approached me and said that there was a man here that would like you to give him a reference. I could not understand fully what she was asking me to do. What reference could I give to somebody here in Belarus? Anyway an old man approached me. We shook hands and he introduced himself as Pitura Micador Nicoliovicz.

He told me that he was a guard in this camp. "I was a good guard. I helped the Jews by selling them bread through the wired gate. My contact was Shabakovski".

That was true, he charged 5 golden Roubles for a small loaf (it is equivalent to about £40.00). I asked him the date when he started the job as a guard and he replied: "From January 1943 to your escape September 1943". I immediately wiped my hand against my jacket and said to him: "You must have been one of the killers that killed the last 250 Jews on May 7th 1943, including my mother and sister". (We found out that the killers were the local police and the camp guards

led by the Gebiets commissar Traub.)

Pitura said "I paid my due: after you escaped the Germans arrested all the guards and we were sent to Buchenwald. We were there until the American army liberated us. After a short while they gave us over to the Russians. With me were mostly Cossacks, Ukrainians and others that had served with the Germans.

"NKVD took over. They put us in cattle trains and we finished off in Odessa. I sat two years in a prison in Odessa while my case was prepared. I was then brought to court in Novogradok. My case was read out. They called me a traitor to the

Soviet Union and I was sentenced to 25 years hard labour in Siberia.

"I managed to survive the 25 years and now in Belarus, because of my past, I get only half my pension. If you can give me a good reference, they might give me a full pension."

I just walked away.

The following year I travelled again to Novogradok together with Jon Silverman from the BBC. I told him the story. On arrival we met Tamara and asked her to make an arrangement to meet Pitura.

The following day Tamara met us and told us that Pitura had died about six months earlier.

The Yiddish Discussion Group at Shalvata

Barry Davis

The Yiddish discussion group meets every Wednesday morning, yomtoyvim excepted. It was started at the initiative of several Yiddish-speaking survivors at the centre, and for many years it was most able led by Bettine LeBeau. I have been chairing the meetings for the past three years.

It is a relaxed forum, where everyone is entitled to have their say, provided they can say it in Yiddish, and even if they've forgotten it a bit, no one minds. The type of Yiddish spoken varies, but the Litvaks, the Poylishe Yidn and even the Rumanishe manage to understand one another and, above all (most of the time) are happy to listen to one another.

We usually start with a discussion of the week's news

and, inevitably, news about Israel and the Middle East often takes centre stage, but there would be also news of Britain, Europe or America, some of it optimistic, some far from so. But everyone reads, watches discussion programmes, keeps up with what is happening. And those who are on the Internet know it even before it has happened.

Quite spontaneously, we might get into discussing areas in which everyone has got something to say - e.g., waiting for buses that don't come or yet more roadworks creating traffic jams - but you can always be assured that on the key political issues of the day, strong opinions are expressed. We have left and right, frum and not so frum, the

spiritually-inclined and the logic-splitting rationalists. If you think that at the Quadrant, Hendon, discussions are carried on with the degree of restraint which befits a North-West London suburb, you would be greatly mistaken. As is appropriate, arguments are expressed with intense passion and sometimes with everyone keen to get their point in at the same time. Fortunately, we have listened to the broadcasts of Parliament and everyone knows what "Order, order" means. Then, we quieten down and listen to a Yiddish song, or to a Yiddish poem, to a Yiddish story or even Yiddish joke. As Sholem Aleichem said: "Doktoyrim heysn lakhn. Lakhn iz gezunt" (or is it gezint? - here the argument begins) - 'Doctors tell us to laugh.

Laughter is healthy' (and this has been scientifically proven).

Occasionally, sad memories will intrude, and people will express themselves. Self evidently, remembering the past is vital and, of course, some memories, particularly of childhood, are warm and happy ones. But whatever is said or felt, in the group there is an affirmation of life - "anakhnu ken, mir zenen do - we are here!" And there is always the future, the children and, so often, the many grandchildren, all of which bespeaks of the triumph of life over the forces of darkness and destruction. So, we usually end with a song of celebration, whether coached in religious terms - "Zol shoy'n kumen (or kimen) di geula" (may redemption

come) or in the secular - "vu (or vi) nemt men a bisele mazl ('how do you get a bit of luck')".

Clearly, I don't speak the same Yiddish as most of the group. Well, I was born in London, and I didn't have the opportunity of mixing with other boys on the street who spoke Yiddish, so that I could learn those terms and that way of speaking that you only learn outside the home. When I grew up, Yiddish was spoken sparingly in London, but I was fortunate that my parents and many of my older relatives from Eastern Europe spoke it. Later on, I was able to study Yiddish language and literature in New York, and I have been teaching it in London now for many years.

For myself, I can only say

what an enormous privilege it has been to be able to chair the group, for it has enabled me to engage with and make friends with a group of people who have experienced such horrors as I would never, thank God, have had the misfortune of encountering, but to have come through them with their humanity, their faith in human beings and their sense of humour intact. They have accepted me into their group, and enabled me to learn so much about their experience. I never know what to expect from the session, but I've always ended with the sense that my life has been enhanced by it, and with the modest satisfaction that others have derived some stimulation and some pleasure from the encounter.

European Masters Swimming Championship 2011

Susie Halter

I was surprised when it was announced that the 2011 Masters Swimming Championship was going to be held in Yalta, Ukraine. I heard of Yalta in connection with the conference between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, but was not quite sure where it was. I looked it up in the atlas and when I saw that it was on the Black Sea, I decided to go. Several swimmers decided against going, saying it was too far, the Ukrainians have committed many atrocities during the war. Still 100 of us from the UK decided to go.

The entry procedure was quite complicated, but I was helped to book 'on line' and we arranged our flight for the 1st of October, 2011. It was a

long journey, from Gatwick to Kiev. We had to change planes at Kiev for Simferopol and from there we travelled by hired bus to Yalta.

In Yalta, we stayed at the fairly small, Miranda hotel whilst many teams, including the Israelis, chose the big luxurious hotel next to the 50 metre pool, where all the races were held.

The synchronised swimming took place in the dolphin pool, from which they removed the dolphins. The hotel and the competition swimming pool area was so big you could lose your way in it. It had many restaurants and from it there was a way down to the sea.

My first race was on

Wednesday 7th September, and I swam all out and got a Gold.

My second race was on Thursday 8th September, first thing in the morning. It was the 200 backstroke. I managed to have a short warm-up to work out my start and turns. I was swimming in the 80 - 84 age group, having had my 84th birthday in September. I was very excited, thinking how not to start too early and turn according to regulations so as not to be disqualified and working out how I was going to do the four lengths. I won the race.

There was an 85 - 89 year old woman from Austria who was swimming in the lane next to me.

In the afternoon, three of

us from England had an outing to the palace where the Yalta Agreement was signed. It was very interesting. They showed us all the rooms and we saw the one where the last Tsar and family used to have breakfast and we saw their big impressive samovar.

On Friday 9th September, I swam the 50 metre freestyle and came 3rd.

I was worried about the diving start as the blocks seemed quite high. However, when I saw a 90-year old German in the race before my race being helped on to the block, I too decided to dive from the block and was helped up. It was only one length and I was swimming well but I only came third as

an 80-year old from England and a woman from the Czech Republic beat me.

I did not have much time to recover from the 50 metre freestyle race as 100 metre backstroke men was the only race between the 50 metre freestyle and my next race the 100 metre backstroke.

I got a Gold in that race. By that time, I was really exhausted. There was a big medal ceremony and it was nice to be in the middle on the podium, having been helped to get up on to it.

Medals were presented by the President of the Swimming Association. I received three Golds and one Bronze medal.

All the time we met a lot of people we knew from earlier

meetings. The next day, since I had no more races, I watched the open-water swim and managed to have a swim in the sea, which was very pleasant, so I swam in the Black Sea, not only in the racing pool.

On the last night, we had a lovely meal in the hotel whose owner engaged four ladies from the Symphony Orchestra, to play for us on the violin. It was a fitting ending for a lovely time.

The next day, I returned to Gatwick. I took the train to London and treated myself to a taxi to come home. It was a long journey, but a very enjoyable swimming cum tourist experience. There was a lot to tell Roman and the children.

A search for Justice

Helen Hyde

"The passage of time in no way diminishes the guilt of the killers" (Ephraim Zuroff, Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre)

Helen is the headmistress of the Watford Grammar School for Girls.



Helen Neuhaus (nee Seligman) her son, Peter and her husband Justin were murdered at Sobibor - my aunt, cousin and uncle)

QUESTIONS

Should one be taking to trial an old, frail man?

Should one try someone so long after the event?

Should one forgive these old people?

Because the Germans did not try the more important Nazi criminals does this negate the necessity for this trial - is he unimportant or not an important enough criminal - a 'bit player'?

Is he guilty or was he merely following orders?

Why is there no case against, the witness, Nagorny, another Trawniki guard?

"The punishment is not important, but it is important that he is judged for the actions he took". (J Schelvis-Survivor)

"Demjanjuk to me is a symbol. He didn't come to Sobibor for vacation - he came to help in the destruction of the Jewish people. The trial gives a message to the world that genocide will be punished" (P Bialowitz - survivor)

Demjanjuk is being charged with being an accessory to the murder of 27,900 Jews in 1943. If he is guilty, neither age nor illness should

excuse him from facing judgment. Anyone suspected of a crime must be brought to justice. What was wrong in the 1940s is still wrong now. If a criminal succeeds in duping the system do we condone it?

WHY I WENT TO THE TRIAL AND RETURNED FOR THE FINAL JUDGEMENT

Before departing I questioned my motives for going.

My cousin and dear friend, Judith, did not want to attend so I decided to attend for her and for our family.

What will I feel when I am confronted by an old, frail man, wheel chair bound pushed into a crowded court room - a court room filled with solicitors, plaintiffs, members of the public and the hungry media? I reminded myself that he and others like him were in their 20s when they committed the crimes. They were not all officers but soldiers and officials - they formed part of the mass of men and women who collaborated and who more or less willingly followed orders and took part in the machinery that resulted in the mass murders.

If others were not convicted for similar crimes in the 1960s does it mean this trial should not take place?

How can this attitude be allowed when the victims' end was so horrific, when so many people turned a blind eye and were bystanders, colluders or collaborators?

If a criminal succeeds in duping the system do we condone it? What was wrong in the 1940s is still wrong now.

WHY I WENT TO THE TRIAL

I have been on this journey all my life - my maiden name was Helen Seligman, my family nick-name is Hell. I am named after my father's sister - her maiden name was Helene Seligman and her family nick name was Hell. She, her husband (my uncle) and her little son (my cousin) died at Sobibor.

I did and do this for those who cannot speak out. For them I attend the trial - I take them with me - I cannot silence their voices in my head. Just justice so those who continue to commit such atrocities may take heed - they will know they will be caught and punished. Their crimes will not be passed over or go unnoticed.

I have spent most of my adult life reading and learning about the Holocaust. I am attending as an educator. I am confronted with growing Holocaust fatigue from young and old. This is dangerous - if we forget or minimize the crimes of the Holocaust we allow Hitler to achieve his purpose, we allow deniers to gain a foothold and we become less sensitive to the signs of other potential genocides.

I cannot be an educator and not believe that injustice must be punished - I teach my students the difference between right and wrong, respect, tolerance and mutual understanding. I teach them that crimes must and will be punished. For younger people and for future generations justice must be seen to be done.

MY TIME IN MUNICH AND A SUMMARY OF THE START OF THE TRIAL (the

trial began on November 30th 2009 and in Munich because Demjanjuk had lived in the area for a short time after the war.)

I spent the first three and then the final three days of the trial with Thomas Walther, an ex judge and chief witness in this case and Margrit Grubmuller a member of the organization called 'Gegen Vergessen fur Demokratie' (her grandfather was a Social Democrat and was persecuted.)

The court room was bare except for a cross. There were only 147 seats available for members of the public. The co-plaintiffs sat on two sides of the court and Thomas Blatt, a survivor, sat in a more prominent position with his solicitor at his side - he faced Demjanjuk's solicitors.

The co-plaintiffs' solicitors were Cornelius Nestler (Professor at the University of Cologne), Herr Koch and Herr Kleidermann. Demjanjuk was defended by two solicitors Herr Busch and Herr Maull - the latter was a legal aide at the Eichmann trial.

When Demjanjuk first entered the court he was covered by a turquoise sheet, was wearing a cap and leather jacket. A Ukrainian translator sat next to him and it was clear to all that he understood all she was saying.

Throughout the entire trial Demjanjuk's defending Solicitor, Herr Busch looked for every reason to halt and delay the trial and he repeated his points many times. I found this difficult - hearing words such as *Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Juden, erschossen, vernichtungslager*; names of other

men who were active at the gas chambers were mentioned - Schmidt, Schneider. We sat and listened - all this in German - and in a harsh tone - Herr Busch was aggressive, he raised his voice and when he was speaking his body language was very domineering; when he was not speaking he appeared to show little interest.

CASE: Ivan Demjanjuk is accused of aiding and abetting the murder of 29,700 Jews.

Summary of the indictment presented by the prosecutor Dr Luz

- The description of activities at Sobibor was extremely graphic. It was run by 22-30 German SS and about 150 Trawniki men, mostly Ukrainians. The role of the Ukrainian Trawniki guards was clearly explained. They were involved in every aspect of the murder from the ramp to the gas chambers.

- 250,000 Jews died between April to July 1943 - 15 transports from Westerbork arrived (29,579 from Netherlands and also others transports including German Jews)

- The list of departures was presented: my family were on the the highlighted transports

The prosecutor then called out the names of the plaintiffs' family members that were on the trains: "sister of...; parents of..., members of the family., parents and brother of Thomas Blatt, **members of the Gutman family** (*were these related to me as well???*)..., father of...., wife of...., **Judith Aschkenazy** (*my dear cousin*) **nee Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus nee Seligman my aunt** (*my maiden name!!!!*)

Demjanjuk's history and background were elucidated: he was drafted by the Red army in September 1940; in May he became a POW of the Germans, in a POW camp in the Ukraine. In July 1942 he was selected as a foreign national by the SS to receive training as a *Wachtman* - the lowest rank. In March 1943 he was assigned to Sobibor - he knew the purpose of this camp and that it was his duty to participate - he had the opportunity to escape - he was well dressed, had food, boots, a weapon and weekends off. He (as all the guards) took part in all aspects of the process-assisting in unloading the trucks, the undressing and forcing the people into the gas chambers with the use of fire weapons. The 'wachtmen' were aggressive to show that resistance was useless. The victims had no opportunity to escape while he obligingly

participated in murder.

If Thomas Blatt, a victim, a Jew, unarmed, poorly clothed and poorly fed, managed to escape - then Demjanjuk could have chosen to do the same.

It is not possible to summaries the case as presented by Herr Nestler, the Plaintiffs' chief solicitor - it must be read in its entirety.

Summary of Defence as presented by Herr Busch and supported by the Court Defence solicitor Herr Maull.

- The documents: He questioned the authenticity of the documents being used in court. Busch questioned the veracity of the Westerbork lists; whether they were the originals - the judge then painstakingly verified every list stating the name/number at the top and bottom of every page

- Trying a non-German: It was a scandal that a German court was trying a non-German while these same courts had not condemned other more important and more involved SS criminals.

- Status of the POW as victims of the SS: The Trawniki guards were recruited by means of threats and they had no alternative but to accept and carry out the work

| Left | Arrived | No. on transport | No. killed |
|------------|---------|------------------|---------------------|
| 4 May 1 | 7May | 1189 | 1100 |
| 11 May | 14 May | 1373 | 1200 |
| 18 May | 20 May | 2461 | 2300 |
| Altogether | | 29,579 | 27,900 rounded down |

of the SS. Demjanjuk was a 'Gehilfe' - a helper

- The legal status of the Trawniki guards: They were POWs; they belonged to the military and did not hold any rank. They were forced to work and were under a death threat. They would be executed if they escaped. Escape was not a possibility for the guards and obeying the orders was an absolute necessity. They had a very low status and were mere 'cogs in wheels'.

- Demjanjuk's places of residence: In April 1943 he was training at Trawniki; he was not present in Sobibor on days when the extermination took place

- The ID Card: a total falsification.

- The pursuit of Demjanjuk. It was a joint 'plot' by the USA and Israeli state lawyers to bring Demjanjuk to trial. He was acquitted in Israel and should not be tried again. Other Trawniki men were not tried in the 60s so why is the trial taking place now?

- Demjanjuk the 'victim': The Stalinist regime condemned Demjanjuk to death by starvation; he was again condemned as a German POW; Israel and the USA fraudulently accused him of being 'Ivan the Terrible'; the corruption of the lawyers resulted in him being condemned and spending eight and half years in prison, five of which were in a death cell. He is a simple Ukrainian farmer who is now being blamed for German crimes. It is a conspiracy.

The Trial

Demjanjuk came to trial in Munich through the dedication of the Chief and Expert Witnesses, Thomas Walter, a retired Judge and attorney working at Ludwigsburg National Investigation Centre for Nazi War Crimes. Demjanjuk's son and others tried to prevent the trial and used his ill health as the reason. However a video was found showing Demjanjuk walking normally and getting into a car without help. German law changed enabling the extradition of Demjanjuk to Germany on 12 March 2009. Walter interviewed other Trawniki guards, one of whom, Nagorny, knew Demjanjuk. Nagorny, also a Ukrainian, told German public television network ZDF that he knew Demjanjuk well and recognized him from a 1940s photo. In a television broadcast May 17, a reporter showed Nagorny a picture of Demjanjuk in a guard's uniform: *"This is Ivan, absolutely. I recognize him.... I'm saying what I saw. We slept in the same room."*

Much investigation was centre on Demjanjuk's ID card: his ID number was 1393. This number places Demjanjuk at Madjanek in January 1943 and Sobibor two months later.



An ID card which was signed by SS Commandant Karl Streibel who was in charge of Trawniki training of POWs and training them for guard duties. The card shows two places of employment - the agricultural domain of Okzow and Sobibor and is dated 27 March 1943. The card was examined numerous times by experts and found to be genuine.

Demjanjuk chose to remain silent throughout the trial

The opinion of the medical experts stated that he was fit to stand trial.

There were many contradictions in what Demjanjuk claimed such as in the 1948 application for help from a refugee organization. Demjanjuk claimed that from April 1937 to January 1943 he worked as a driver for a company in Sobibor; in the 1950 report from the US Commission for Displaced Persons said was an 'independent farmer' in Sobibor from 1939 to 1943. He said an official gave him the name Sobibor or that he picked the name randomly from a map - Sobibor is so tiny and unknown that this makes his random choice of it very unlikely.

He does not deny that he was a Trawniki guard:

A number of unanswered questions remain

Did Demjanjuk have a choice? (He had a gun, boots and food - could he have escaped? Thomas Blatt did escape) Can one say he 'preferred' to be trained as a guard, as an accomplice rather than die in a POWcamp?

Why did he not desert; could he have escaped from Sobibor and hidden in the forests? - he must have realized that by not deserting he would have blood on his hands. Did he believe he had no option in becoming an accomplice in the mass killings at Sobibor.

Did he carry out the instructions because of the racist ideology?

Could a young Ukrainian conscript have put up a fight and objected?

There were deserters from Trawniki - when they were caught they were punished but not one was executed - Did Demjanjuk know this? Could he have known this?

FINAL DAYS OF THE TRIAL

11 May (My birthday) - My thoughts at the airport: I experienced every possible emotion - tears, fear, and trepidation. This is life experience and an important mile stone in my life. I feel I have been waiting for this all my life. Still, Thursday evening will come and whatever happens nothing really will have changed - one man may or may not have been found guilty. Six million will still have been murdered and my family with them. Anti-semitism will still continue, as will hatred, intolerance, and prejudice. I want to find something to do to change this - talking about and teaching the Holocaust, telling my students about the trial - society will punish or will not punish the criminals???

May 12th - the 93rd court session at 12.30

At 12.30 Demjanjuk was wheeled sitting upright without his hat or sunglasses to the front of the judge's bench. The court stood as the judges entered. Judge Alt immediately said, "**Schuldig**" (**Guilty**)! The sentence is 5 years and Demjanjuk will pay the expenses of the court and the plaintiffs'. The court slowly erupted - my tears flowed, I hugged my dear friend Thomas Walther and then rushed to telephone my husband in the UK and Judith in Israel. Judge Alt then explained the judgment in depth.

He went through each transport stating the date the numbers on the transport and the numbers who were immediately gassed and also stating the number of those who had been born in Germany. He also mentioned by name the relatives of those in court who were on each transport - e.g. on the 7th May there were 1189 people on the transport, 1100 were murdered immediately, 103 were born in Germany and Helen Neuhaus, the mother of Judith Ashkenazy (my dear cousin). On 21st May 2300 on the transport, 2000 were murdered immediately, 250 had been born in Germany and the father of Judith Neuhaus, Justin Neuhaus. One particular transport was single out, that of the 11th June known as a Kindertransport - the train contain 3030 young people and children 1000 were younger than 14. This passage in the judgment was, like the Netherlands lawyer Manuel Bloch said, "a

Requiem", a large pain for the co-plaintiffs, who had lost their relatives, and for all who were with them in the court room.

A PERSONAL RESPONSE

It is important to remember and to emphasize that only two groups of people were found at Sobibor - those who would be murdered and those who organized the killing. Every member of the latter group was involved in some way with the murder of the former group.

This Trial is very important - it raises public awareness; it reminds those who partake in crimes that they will be brought to justice no matter how long it takes.

This trial has set a precedent - there are still many elderly people who worked in the Nazi camps and who live in the USA and in Europe. They were all young active thinking people when the crimes were committed. Demjanjuk has been convicted. Now Germany will, I hope, have no option but to pursue the others (such as a guard at Ravensbruck, the dog handler; Nagorny, another Trawniki men)

Already in the USA over 107 of these people have had their citizenships revoked - this is a far greater number than those in Europe. This leads to a number of lingering questions: Why have the other European countries not tried more of the Nazi criminals? Has Europe abandoned its moral and legal responsibility? Do these countries not convict the criminals because of the high costs or out of fear

i.e. highlighting the role their country played in the Holocaust?

MY FEELINGS AND VIEWS

Most of what is below was written on the plane flying home. Looking out of the window I smiled and thought of Judith and my father. What would my father have thought of this? When the verdict was announced I was stunned and then very tearful - I sent a text message to Judith and her response was simply, 'Got him'.

Germany has brought a Nazi criminal to trial and has found the man guilty - this kept going around my head. Germany had spent 18 months examining evidence, hearing testimonies, sifting and analyzing documents, listening to and reading reports by expert witnesses; much time was spent deliberating and reflecting. Throughout this time Demjanjuk was shown every possible care. This is the triumph of democracy! The German Judge Alt and his colleagues pronounced the verdict - *Schuldig/guilty* on 16 counts of aiding and abetting the mass murder of the Jews at Sobibor-16 counts, 16 transports filled with Jews - old, young, men women, Germans, Dutch and Polish Jews and one transport filled with children

under 14 and Helen, Justin and Peter.

The sentence or the punishment is 5 years and he has already been incarcerated for 2 years. His defending solicitor Busch had already informed the court that an appeal to the Higher Court would be filed. Under German law a man of this age and having served 2 years of the sentence is then released pending the appeal. The process is likely to take a year. Where will he go, who will look after him - do I really care? I am not sure. Demjanjuk, a man of 91 is penniless and stateless, he has already exceeded the natural life expectancy, and he is not in good health. He is a criminal now awaiting the judgment of the High Court. The German tax payer will have no choice but to foot the bill. I do hope Demjanjuk will never leave Germany. This in itself is a further punishment and I am not disturbed by this.

Is it important to me that he is a so called 'free man'? Only slightly and on an emotional level. Part of me would like him to remain in prison and perhaps to 'rot in prison'. He should be made to serve his sentence. On another level, it is not important to me - he has been found guilty and he has been found guilty in a German court and in Munich and it has been made known to the

world. The principle what is really counts for me.

An important precedent has been set for the future - no matter how large or how small a part one plays, no matter how important or unimportant one is in the hierarchy, no matter if one has a rank or not and even if one is a mere 'cog in the wheels' of a crime or criminal activity you will be made to accept the responsibility for your actions and you will have to face the consequences. This precedent is vital in relation to the current genocides and future war trials.

Making choices is a further issue - being able to make choices is what elevates us above animals. Choices are not always simple or straight forward. Choice is often hard and complicated and often has to be made in difficult and extreme circumstances. Demjanjuk made a choice and continued to make a choice each and every day that he went to work as a Trawniki guard at Sobibor. As with other SS and Trawniki guards at this death camp, when a train arrived filled with Jewish victims he took part in driving these terrified individuals to their deaths in gas chambers. My family was part of this horror.

Has my search for justice been successful - yes I think it has.

YAD VASHEM

Colette Littman

Colette is the proprietor of The Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation and a staunch supporter of our Society.

Nations have triumphal arches, moving cenotaphs
Great monuments honouring the fallen
Well-kept cemeteries, individual graves
Flags recalling battles fought in the name of freedom.

The Jewish people have communal pits, death camps
Cattle trucks, electric fences and watchtowers
Gas chambers, ovens and pictures of hell
They have columns of ashes searching for God.

People knit to one another by love and trust
Ties that give life its emotional dimension
Years of striving, of hardship, of dreams
Scattered on the threshold of Eternity.

Life desecration is their sad monument
It stands at the very heart of sorrow
Six million worlds died with their death
And as I confront the reality of their absence, the enormity of the crime
I sense their isolation, their helplessness, their loss of hope
The Final Solutions' despicable, subtle and effective outcome.

Memories

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

Aubrey is a lawyer of great distinction and has played an active role in many fields. He was a senior Vice-President of the Board of Deputies; he was an original member of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; he set up and chaired a working party on environment which led to his book "Judaism and Ecology". He spent five years as a Commissioner of the Commission for Racial Equality. He is a Co-Chairman of the Indian Jewish Association; a Trustee of various charitable trusts and is Deputy Chairman of the British Caribbean Association. He has written many books, including his autobiography "The Rainbow Never Ends".

We all live with memories, memories of people, of experiences, of our early years. I cast my mind back. My parents came to Britain from East Europe and retained vivid memories of their young days, but very different recollections. My father remembered "Der Heim", the

large growing family, the parents and grandparents. My mother recalled only the anti-Jewish expressions and acts and had no wish to recall that period.

She was sixteen when she came in 1902. My father came in 1897, at the very time Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond

Jubilee, just as our present Queen will shortly celebrate hers.

I remember vividly my upbringing in London's East end, but, even more vividly, the nightly bombing of London, sleeping on underground train platforms, diving to the ground when the V1 engine cut out before

its descent. Yet, despite all this, there can be no memories in any comparable to those of members of the '45 Aid Society.

How can we, ensconced in safe England, project ourselves into the hearts and minds of those who experienced the bestial horrors of Nazi Germany. I am amazed how survivors have overcome their past and the mental pictures that the past evoked. Not least in the curative process was the welcome from Jews in Britain, such as Leonard Montefiore, the constructive efforts of people like Arieh Handler, but, above all, by forming a common bond in associations of which the '45 is so notable.

What is equally remarkable is how those same youngsters grew to adulthood, achieved so much in daily work, created families, sons, daughters, grandchildren, second and third generations, who maintain their sincere witness to the events of the past.

Yet the memory of events, individuals, especially of names, often becomes hazy as time passes. The present young generation cannot, despite all the films and books, begin to appreciate the courage of Winston Churchill and the British people, the degrading evil of Nazism, or even the terrible experiences of those in the camps. Perhaps that is why older generations give grateful thanks to be living in a free, democratic country, and why

younger generations take so much for granted, are full of the dogmas of rights so often bereft of the elements of duty.

Like many others, my memories of London's East End are always with me. They are happy memories, unlike others who had a hard time. I had no worries about money. Sweets were a penny a bag. Every Sunday a mass of uncles, aunts and cousins, assembled at my cake-making, shulant-making, strudel-making grandma. I felt immensely secure, though unaware of this at the time.

In contrast were the men who lodged at Smith Street School nearby. They had marched all the way from Jarrow in the North, protesting about poverty and unemployment. I often spoke to them. They were the best behaved band of working men I have ever seen. What a contrast to some recent parades and marches!

Yet another aspect on which I ponder is the shortness of our memories, sending into obscurity members of our community who have done so much for us. I remember Sammy Fisher, a twinkle in his eye, Barney and Elsie Janner, Frances Rubens, Zena Cohen and Eva Mitchell, Chief Rabbis Hertz and Jakobovits, and others who toiled for our community. There may still be a word about Rabbi Hugo Gryn, and there certainly is about Lady Jakobovits, a lovely soul, who passed from us far too soon.

When I chaired the Board's

Defence Committee, I marvelled at the energy and dedication of Ajax members and of men like Dr Jack Gewirtz and Martin Savitt, year in, year out, combating anti-Semitism wherever it raised its head. Who talks of them now? Who, outside of their families, remembers them?

For three years I worked closely with Israel Finestein in Communal Affairs. I met with him every week, sometimes every few days. He was a Q.C., a distinguished judge, a splendid historian, a fluent speaker, blessed with a never-failing memory; above all, an upright man of worth. I think of him often. He is among my memories, yet who else remembers him, refers to his work, writes about him?

These are but a few examples. The passage of time can close down the past so effectively. There is something strange and profound about memories. The strangeness reflects our dispatching events, personalities, names, from our minds. The profundity is when we remember that we loved and respected, held in high regard, not merely those close to us in our families and friendships, but those who made such efforts for our communal safety, education, care and wellbeing.

I do hope we can repeat, in memory of those who have gone before, the words expressed in the Cenotaph service, "We will remember them".

Uzbekistan Hospitality

Herman Taube

World War Two was called 'The Great Patriotic War'. Wounded soldiers and their families, were evacuated to Central Asia's Republics, like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, settled in the republics by the secular Soviet rulers, among a Moslem population. Despite the staggering war shortages, high cost of daily medications, foods, textiles, steadily shrinking man-power to work in the production of cotton, needed desperately for the war efforts, the influx of 'bieziences' (refugees) were considered a blessing, despite the strange religious beliefs of the arrivals. The Uzbek people, predominantly Turkic, Sunni Moslems, with a mixture of Persian and Mongol elements, converted to Islam in 1282-1342, they promoted traditions of respect and hospitality to wanderers, particularly to elder people, greeting friends, neighbors, even strangers, with the traditional greeting: "Assalam Aleikum" Many of the refugees were dispersed in villages (Kishlaks), town, "kolkhoze's" (Collective Farms). Jewish refugees from Poland, Lithuanian and Ukraine, learned fast the Uzbekistani language, customs and their daily practices. They got jobs harvesting cotton, building water-canals and becoming book-keepers for the "Sel-Soviets, (Village Councils).

One of the villages in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan, Kyzyl Kishlak, is nested between the Fergana valley in the Chinabaad region. The village is sur-

Herman spent the war years in the Soviet Union. He now lives in Washington and is the author of many books.

rounded by snow-bedecked Tian-Shian mountains. The valley is blessed with succulent fields, growing cotton (chlopok), dziugara-barley, plums, melons, grapes and rice. Thanks to the heavy water drop falls from the mountains and water-ebbs from the cotton-canals, Kyzyl Kishlak became a flies bastion spreading malaria, scabies and many other skin infections. Because Kyzyl Kishlak is located in the center of villages, collective and government farms, the Soviet government opened there a 'Malaria Clinic', a 'First-Aid Ambulatorium' and an 'Isolator' for the homeless refugees, sleeping in the bazaar's, marketplaces, tea-houses (Chaikhanas) hungry and ill, full of lice, unwashed bodies, lack of soap and medications. The Soviet government did not allow these homeless people to embark in Andijan and dropped them in Kyzyl Kishlak. Among the refugees were by-Wolga German's, Tatar's from Krimea, Poles from Ukraine and Jews from WhiteRussia, Bess-Arabia and Lithuania. They were employed in the Kolkhozes, working for a daily portion of soup., a cup of "katik" (Yogurt) and one "Lepioshka" (Pita-bread)

Many of the refugees were not able to adjust to the climate, the hot heat, working in the cotton fields,

so they left the kolkhozes and went to Kyzyl Kishlak, sleeping under the open skies, invading daily the garbage cans of the Chaikhana's, eating the rinds of melons, half-rotten fruits and disposed foods rubbish... By the end of the days, they stayed in line, men, woman and children, at the entrance of the Malaria Station, Crying, complaining of stomach pains from eating the rotten fruits, begging to be allowed to enter the Malaria Center or the Isolator. Their crying did not help, All beds were occupied, people were lying on the folding beds in the hallways.

To the village of Kyzyl Kishlak, among the resettled refugees was a young man from Lodz, Poland, Volodia (Vladek) Golomb, a former medic of the Polish army, 'liberated' on September 17, 1939, by the Soviet armed forces,. The Polish officers were sent to prisoner-of-war camps in Katin and Minsk, Polish soldiers we were sent with transports of war prisoners to camps in Siberia, Kazakhstan and as far as Semipalatinsk. After the German attack on the Soviet Union, in June, 1941, On the intervention by the British and American governments, and an appeal by the Sikorsky Polish government in exile, the Soviet's Solicitor-General, Vishinski, allowed 25,000 Polish prisoners of war, to leave the labor camps, join the Gen. Anders Polish army, or travel freely, to places where they were able to find work, relatives or friends, willing to help them 'until the war will end'...

Volodia picked Tashkent, "The City of Bread", of sunshine and warm weather. Upon arrival in Tashkent, the former Polish war prisoners were not allowed to leave the train. The transport was sent to Andijan, a city in the Fergana valley. He was given a 'napravlenie-komandirovka' a travel-assignment to Kyzyl Kishlak, Malaria Station. His new assignment was serve, help the patients, accommodate their physical needs, assist in administering injections of anti-typhus-serum to the patients, readjust, inspect their beds for unforeseen physical accidents... Among his tasks was the distribution of Quinine-coal tablets to the homeless, suffering of Malaria, laying on the floors of the clinic.

Volodia worked seven days a week, day and night. Only on Fridays or Sundays he was able to sleep a few hours and was called back to work. There was a shortage of medications, soap, Lysol, salt, alcohol, food, medical instruments, a shortage of all supplies needed for running a clinic. But no appeals helped to solve the critical shortages. For all appeals to the "Department of Health" in Andijan, was one answer: "OUR COUNTRY IS AT WAR. Everything for the war fronts! For the 'defenders of our Mother-land!'"

On an afternoon, on September 20, 1942, an old man was sitting at the door of the 'kibitka' where Volodia lived. He was wearing a torn old, cotton 'Kufeika' (unsanitary coat) and tired-up sandals. On his head he was wearing an Uzbek 'Tubeteika', white trousers, which looked like

underpants, needing to be washed... His beard was grey, long, and around his eyes were an outgrow of thick eyebrows. His tall, thin figure looked like an image out of a book...

An Uzbek nurse found Volodia and told him that an old man is sitting outside his Kibitka, is waiting for him.

- Go tell him that I am very busy, let him come later in the evening.

- He is waiting already for a long time, He looks like a real old man.

- Why did anyone tell me this earlier?

- You were busy with giving injections. Go and see him. I will call you if we will need you.

Volodia walked to his Kibitka, looked at the old man waiting for him and recognized he is Jewish.

- "Good day to you. I am Volodia, Vetvel, you're looking for me?"

- Yes! My name is Leizer-Wolf, I live and work on Kolkhoz "Octiabr", one mile from here, in the village of Chakulabaad. I came to you and ask you that you accept me in your clinic as a patient for only 24 hours.

- Are you sick? Does anything hurt you?

- Thank God, nothing hurts me. Tonight is the Eve of Yom Kippur, I don't want to go to work in the cotton fields to pick 'chlopok' (cotton).

- My dear Reb Leizer-Wolf, There is not one free bed available in our clinic today. Patients with high temperature are laying on field beds and on the floors, among them typhus patients and other contagious illnesses. This is not a place for you.

- Then allow me to sit at the clinic waiting room, just give me a note that I was here.

- I can't do even this, also in the waiting room we have patients with typhus symptoms.

- So, please allow me to stay overnight in your kibitka, I will sleep on the floor. Please.

- Tell me, Who gave you my name?

- The barber Getzel, the refugee from Lublin,

- But Getzel has an apartment

- Getzel has a wife, a sister-in-law with five children,- no evil-eye. Getzel is afraid that the NKVD (secret Service) keeps 'an eye' on him.

- They keep an eye on all of us...

- I know. But my heart hurts, my legs are swollen; this must be enough to keep me here for this one night.

Volodia looked around the alley of his kinitka, there were no people passing by, he opened the door and invited Leizer Wolf to his small room;

- Reb Leizer-Wolf, outside this dwelling runs a 'arik'-a creek, you can go outside And wash yourself in honor of the holiday. Here is a towel and soap. You can take a rest on my bed, I will come back and bring you a "lepioshka" and some of my rice.

- Please, don't come too late, After sunset, we must recite "Kol Nidre".

- I don't have any prayer books, to tell you the truth, I didn't even remember that tomorrow is Yom Kippur...

- Don't worry, I still remember some prayers by heart. We will pray together...

When Volodia returned from the clinic he found Leizer-Wolf sitting on the edge of his

iron bed and muttering prayers.

His face was washed, his beard combed. Volodia served him a cup of KIPATOK (hot water) and a small cup of rice.

- Please eat, Reb Leizer-Wolf. May I ask you your family name?

- Sure, My family name is Perlman, my wife's family name was Bursztein, - may she rest in peace. She passed away when we arrived in Chakulabaad. I buried her in the cemetery in Chinabaad. She wasn't able to adjust in this climate, the work in the cotton fields was too stressful for her, she also suffered from depression and anxiety, for not receiving any news of the whereabouts of our two sons, both serving in the Soviet army.

- Reb Leizer-Wolf, please, eat your rice, it's getting dark. I also have for you some 'ugug' (plums).

Leizer-Wolf wetted his fingers in the hot-water cup, said a prayer, and ate a few spoons of rice.

- You know, Velvel, in the evening before Yom Kippur we followed a family tradition, before we went to Kol Nidre services, we blessed our children and grandchildren.

- We also observed the same tradition.

- My sons serve on the war fronts, only God knows where they are... My daughters-in-law and my grandchildren, I don't know where destiny cast them away... In my thoughts all day I pray and bless them that they shall survive this bloody war, find each other and return home... NU, let us stop talking, the sun is already hiding under the mountains. Let us recite: 'Kol Nidre'...

A cool wind descended from the Tian-Shan mountains. Somewhere, close by, a donkey was howling, at the entrance to the clinic people were standing, laying on the ground, sighing, shivering, shaking, sweating from malaria bites by mosquitoes, many with severe fever, many vomiting on the doorsteps of the clinic. Volodia was anxious to return to the clinic, but Leizer-Wolf insisted that Volodia sit with him on his iron bed, Two homeless Jews, one from Vitebsk, the other from Lodz and together hummed Kol Nidre. On the wooden, medication box Volodia used as his table, flickered a candle, spreading dark shadows on the kibitka walls. When Leizer-Wolf got up to

recite in silence the evening (Maariv) prayer, Volodia covered his face with both hand and cried: Heavenly Father, Look down from above, look at all your children, from so many tribes, nations, countries, men, women, children how they lay here, outside this clinic, naked and barefoot, hungry, thirsty. Many die here and are buried with no markers on the mass-graves... Look down on us, Polish refugees, liberated from the 'Gulag's, from the forests, mines, jails, free us from the Kara-Kum deserts, bring victory to all armies fighting against the Nazi's. Let the sons of Leizer-Wolf and all other fighters return victorious to their families. When Leizer-Wolf noticed Volodia was crying, he put his hand on his shoulder and said: "Don't cry my child, it's a holiday. We will cry when we will recite "Shema Koyleiny". (Hear our voices). Volodia wiped off the tears and hurried back to the clinic. He worked there all night and most of the day. He returned to his kibitka gave Leizer-Wolf his note, hugged each other and said; Salam! Leizer-Wolf left. Volodia went back to work in his clinic.

Dear Boys, Dear Second and Third Generations

Professor Daniel Reis

Monday, May 30, 2011

I was born in Berlin in 1930. My name was Klaus Wolfgang Koenigsberger later changed to Nicolas Daniel Reis. I am a retired professor of orthopaedic

surgery and have lived in Israel since 1956. I first met "the boys" at Loughton. The initiative came from Habonim. I myself had come over to England from Berlin in 1939 on a Kindertransport

with my older brother Max. That is how we were saved from the Holocaust. By a miracle our mother also came over two weeks before the outbreak of war but we were not reunited as a family until 1942. My father died when I

was 3 years old, aged 38 of pneumonia and a broken heart after being arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo in 1934. As an "alter Frontkaempfer", decorated with the Iron Cross in the trenches at Verdun, he had thought of himself as the epitome of the patriotic German. He was accused of being a subversive Jew since he belonged to the ex-service sub-section of the Social Democratic Party.

Roman Halter, who became a close friend, sent me your magazine ("Journal") and since it contains recollections of some of your first experiences on arriving in the United Kingdom, I thought you might be amused by some of my tribulations on arriving in February 1939 aged 8, not speaking a word of English, having been plunged suddenly into a foreign world. We came from a soft Jewish assimilated bourgeois background but it did not take us long to become street-wise toughies. Here are some anecdotes which I hope will amuse you all.

Hampstead Garden Suburb Elementary School.

On the Monday, less than two full days after our arrival in England, we entered the Hampstead Garden Suburb Elementary School. We knew practically no English whatsoever. I remember the rise of the road leading up to the school from Finchley Road, the two or three storey ugly red brick school building and the spacious fenced playground behind. Each morning we had to attend school assembly in the great hall. We listened to the

prayer" Our father, hallowed be thy name—" but never spoke it ourselves: although we came from a totally assimilated home, our years at the Theodor Herzl Schule in Berlin had deeply ingrained in us our Jewish Zionist identity. Then there were announcements and we dispersed to our various classrooms. Our classroom was of the old lecture theatre auditorium type with steps going up for each row of seats. At the beginning, somewhat fearful and shy, I sat at the top and back to be noticed as little as possible. As my first introduction, before the first lesson, I witnessed a shocking, humiliating scene with which I was to become familiar on a daily basis. The form master, who was a nasty thin little man, called out names to stand in front of the class: First boys then girls. Then the boys bent down one by one to be caned, their heads clasped between the master's thighs, their necks in his crotch. The number of strokes was determined by the severity of the misdemeanor they had committed. The cane was thin, malleable, whip-like, and the strokes were powerful. It was obvious that our teacher was enjoying himself thoroughly. However, few boys seemed to wince. There was a glow of pride on their faces as they pretended to make light of the pain and the humiliation. Then worse still, came the turn of the girls: the right hand had to be stretched out and the cane came whizzing down. The girls cringed and forced back their tears and some cried quietly. It was very painful and hard to use the hand for writing afterwards. If the

victim snatched her hand away she was given an extra stroke (occasionally a serious offence was punished by caning in front of the whole school. After first explaining the nature of the crime to the assembly, this caning was performed by the headmaster in person. In retrospect this scene was really grotesque since the performance took place immediately after prayers. The victim immediately became the hero of the day, later receiving heartfelt congratulations from his classmates). In the first break the boy sitting next to me, who had been caned that morning, called the "new boy" to him in the playground to give him some elementary instructions. He showed me how he had stuffed thin exercise books between his buttocks and his underpants in order to reduce the sting of the caning. These had to be so thin that the master would not notice any change in the contour of the buttocks on bending down. The application of this "armour" therefore had to be done skillfully and it was necessary for a friend to inspect the buttocks in advance of the caning. There were to be many other salutary lessons in survivorship and street wisdom. The crowded asphalt playground was a jungle: balls were being thrown and passed between various groups. Football and French cricket games were in progress. You had to watch out for yourself not to be pushed, shoved, or tripped. Within days, this soft little Jewish boy from the German Jewish home (ever so cultured and well mannered!), was pushing, shoving, cursing and rumbling like all

the others. Within a few weeks we mastered English. Max, my older brother, took the lessons in his stride: his academic insolence was hard to bear for the locals. At the end of the first term Konigsberger was top of almost everything and at the end of the school year also top of English. At the same time he was a lazy student and busy with other matters as the next chapter will relate. Rapidly we integrated into this rough strict school world. It could not have been more different to the loving tender care intellectual child psychology methods of our previous school. Nevertheless, I do not recall that we suffered or pined. We took to our new life willingly and revelled in our successful adaptation, becoming more independent and tougher. Each morning we went to school willingly. After a few weeks I had forgotten my previous life in Berlin. My mind was fully occupied with all the new challenges. Life was fun!

One famous letter that Max wrote to Grete, our mother, two or three months after our emigration remains in Grete's archive: he complains about me and wrote: "Klaus schmiert auf Absicht" which means "Klaus scribbles on purpose". He was dissatisfied with my handwriting in my school work and angry because apparently I refused to make an effort to improve it. But Max was a good leader. He never pestered me. He led only by setting a personal example.

**The financial wizardry
of Max Konigsberger
(otherwise known as the**

Bookmaker of Temple Fortune).

Life in Ashbourne Avenue was good but for one grievous lack. We had no money. This feeling of poverty and deprivation was felt daily when school broke up for the day. Many children would head straight for the tuck shop, or, in the summer, the ice cream vendor.

True, uncle Lutz gave us one penny each on our monthly Sunday visits. But this did not go far. Max decided to alter this situation. First, he managed to find work with the "United Dairies" milkman every Saturday morning. Saturday morning was the milkman's busiest round: the housewives would have a bigger order to include all the necessities for Sunday, and Saturday was the day that he settled the accounts for the previous week (he served most of the houses on a credit basis for one week). He made door to door deliveries of all dairy products and eggs every day except for Sunday and his catchment area in Golders Green was the streets around Ashbourne Avenue. The work was from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. His great rival was the "Express Dairies" milkman in his white and blue wagon. Ours was white and orange. The Saturday morning shift was organized in the following way: the milkman would ring the bell and at the same time give Max the order which was usually written on a piece of paper stuck in the top of an empty bottle. Max would rush the empty bottles back to the wagon and bring the new order of milk and other products such as butter. Meanwhile the milkman

would have settled up. Then he would give me a nod to move the wagon on to the next house. I would tug on the reins of the horse and if he did not respond because his snout was deep in the fodder bag and he had no intention whatever to pull the heavy wagon, I would have to shout "gee -up" and whack his flank. This was usually effective in his moving him grudgingly forward the required few yards. And so we progressed from house to house to the end of the road and then began the next road. On a pleasant day the work was easy but on a freezing winter day the bitter cold stung into the fingers, the face and the feet. The worst were the days when the road was icy. Also when it rained cats and dogs we finished drenched to the skin. However all was worth while when we received our payment at the end of the day's work: ten pence plus one bottle of Guernsey milk. This was the most expensive delicious high fat milk which we would consume on the spot with intense gastronomic satisfaction. Then Max would give me two pence (my personal share of the wages) with which I ran off to the tuck shop on Finchley Road to buy my weekly favourite butterscotch. The remaining eight pence he kept for more important investments. The Saturday milk round became a permanent feature of our lives for close on two years until our school was evacuated to Oxford during the Blitz.

Like most entrepreneurs, having established a steady, if somewhat modest, income, Max now went for the big time. He trained himself

to become an unbeatable marbles player, both in rolling marbles and pot-shotting. He spent hours practising instead of doing homework. He played with anyone prepared to challenge him in the neighbourhood or on the school playground. He amassed an enormous collection of marbles of all sizes and colours, which I had to sort and classify in bags. Now he was ready for his entry into bookmaking: during the morning break he lined up marbles against the wall of the school yard and drew a line with chalk at a distance of about two yards announcing that he would pay five marbles for every hit. No hit meant the thrower loses his marble. The news spread quickly and a crowd of cocky marbles players lined up to try their luck in true British gambling spirit. I think in the first morning those mugs lost fifty marbles. In no time Max became a marbles baron and trader. Our financial fortunes took an upward turn. We now had money to travel into town to Oxford Street on the No. 2 bus, in order to play the amusement arcades.

More importantly, we could go to the Odeon Finchley Road to see any film we desired, providing we could beat the age restrictions on A (adult only) films. I would achieve this by standing outside waiting to ambush a sweet looking lady: "Please madam", I would begin my plea in an ingratiating cheerful voice, "would you be so kind to take me in to see the film. I so much want to see it. My friends tell me it is wonderful and my parents are away and cannot take me (actually true). Here is my

sixpence". This ploy, if not successful at the first attempt, would inevitably come off with patience. So we became film fans and addicts.

Another lesser, but steady source of income, was dependent on my "sweet good little boy act" outside the tobacconist in which Max trained until my acting ability became perfect. Max had the idea and was the director but I was the major performer. His plan was to acquire as many cigarette cards as possible. I soon learned whom to accost. At first, I tried to beg inside the shop, especially in bad weather, but the tobacconist threw me out. The heavy smokers usually went in to buy because they had run out of fags. Often they would be in the process of opening the pack as they exited the shop, so desperate were they to have a smoke. This was my cue: "please, sir or madam, may I have the cigarette card for my collection?" I asked in a servile pleading voice like a little dog wagging his tail. Instead of flicking the card onto the pavement the desperate smoker would mostly give it to me. Those who had already stashed the packs away in a bag or pocket were more difficult targets. These I had to accompany as they walked away and often they would give me a card after specially opening a pack, just to get rid of me. Men could be aggressive: "piss off you little shit" was not an unusual response. In those days every packet of cigarettes contained a card belonging to a set: football players, ships, airplanes, flags, regiments, etc. Each set had 50 cards. A complete set was very

valuable amongst children, who are all usually obsessive collectors of whatever is in fashion in the peer group at any one time. There were common cards and rare cards. Rare cards were also very valuable. Often one or two rare cards were all that was missing to make up a set. By putting in several hours work a week outside the tobacco shop and by recruiting the chain-smoking Mrs. Kohn and her smoker friends and acquaintances, many of whom used the machine in the hallway, we soon created a stock of valuable cards and even sets. By smart swapping an occasional judicious purchase more sets were completed and sold. A complete set was worth several shillings and rare cards almost as much. The combination of working for the milkman, the marbles and cigarette card businesses made up a comfortable amount of "pocket money". Thanks to Max's entrepreneurial spirit, we had become financially independent!! I was the field operative, the worker, he was the brains.

Now, my dear friends, we are old and must soon go the way of all flesh. Your survival against all odds has always been an inspiration to me. The fact that you succeeded in leading creative useful lives after emerging from years of unspeakable horrors and deprivation is a miracle. Many of you set up families, had children and grandchildren, and some even great-grandchildren. It was my privilege to have known some of you. As one of the lucky ones I salute you and thank you for having proven what human beings can overcome.

Paris, 1948 a Memoir

Stephen Gabriel
Rosenberg

The Academie Julien was an offshoot of the Ecole des Beaux Arts and I sat there with a dozen others drawing nudes. I was interested in their shapes and sizes but there was no sexual attraction. I was too young and had a good Jewish orthodox education, which ignored sex, and I was not a rebel. I used pencil and a pink wash and the studio master liked my work.

Being in Paris was a bit odd, but at seventeen I was still too young to go to the architectural school. I had passed all the exams but they said wait a year and start at eighteen, so my parents sent me for ten months to Paris. Looking back on it, that could have been dangerous but it turned out quite well, I lost neither my orthodox Jewish upbringing, nor my virginity.

The Academie was held in the mornings and in the afternoons I went to a class in Civilisation Francaise, which was good for my French but failed to persuade me of their civilization. There I met two congenial young men, Canadian and American, who were "doing" Paris, as their sort did in those days. George Simpson, the Canadian, was quite mature, and was a trained writer and translator, while Greeley Stahl, the American, came from a famous Harvard family and did not need to work. They both thought they should look after little immature me and in our free time we sauntered around Paris as a convivial threesome.

Now between mornings and afternoons I would eat at the Foyer Israelite, opposite

the Jardin du Luxembourg, on the Left Bank, and there I met the boys from the camps. The Foyer was a kosher soup kitchen where students could get good cheap meals and it was a meeting place for Jews of all kinds, run by the congenial and fat M. Sandler, aided by a clutch of thin young girls. The refugees from the camps, the DPs, all eat there as they got vouchers from the American Joint, who supported them in Paris, waiting for visas to get to the States. I made a lot of friends there, eating lunch there every weekday, and we talked all about our pretty basic life in Paris, and my easier life in London, but nothing about the camps. I did not realize how awful their background had been, and they did not reveal it. We just knew that they were desperate to get to the States, Israel was not mentioned as an option, at least not at the Foyer.

At the Foyer I met Chaim Bertram, middle aged, who had had a furniture shop in Berlin before the war and had been vilified and defamed by name in the Nazi paper "Der Stuermer" and completely lost his livelihood. He was desperately looking for a copy of the paper so as to bolster his claim for "Wiedergutmachung" (Restitution), and even the Red Cross couldn't help him find a copy. When I returned to London, I eventually found him one in the British Museum Newspaper library in Colindale.

My two best friends were

Moshe Rosenwasser and Tibor (Tibby) Klausner. Moshe was a lonely bachelor and we spent time roaming the parks and cafes. He eventually got his visa, and some years later we met again in London. He had married in the States and did quite well in some business or other and used to go back pretty often to his shtetl in Hungary, where he managed to persuade the Town Council to preserve the Jewish cemetery and not drive a road through it. In the States he had married Florence, now a widow, and we still exchange Rosh Hashana cards.

My friendship with Tibby was productive. He was a brilliant violinist and the other DPs were not that interested, but he saw that I admired his playing and we spent many happy hours in his dingy hotel room. He could play all the virtuoso pieces, like Ravel's Tzigane, and Saint-Saens' Havanaise, and I can still hear his playing whenever the pieces come on the radio. At that time the first name in violinists in Paris was Christian Ferras, and Tibby was desperate to get an interview. It did not come off but he got to play chamber music with other musicians and he also eventually got his visa and went off to the States. I lost touch with him but I got the impression he would go on to South America, and perhaps that is where he ended up. I would love to meet him again, and hear those wonderfully impossible pieces, with their double-stoppings and purple-passage pizzicatos.

I was living with a rather uncouth Jewish family but I learnt two useful things from them. They spoke German all the time so I learnt German quite well, better than French. And the three of them were fanatical bridge players, who forced me to join them as fourth at the table, so I learnt bridge the hard way, and kept it up with friends in London after that. Luckily I could get away from their meals and bridge on a Shabbat as I went to the Shul in the Rue de Montevideo, where the chazan, Salli Heidingsfeld, and his wife held court and entertained guests for lunch. She was from London and liked to speak English and I was invited to eat with them every week. Another permanent guest was M. Arnovici, who was the Paris

representative of the American Joint. He had a lovely flat and I was able to look after it for him when he went on his frequent trips abroad, a perfect arrangement for both of us.

The American Joint Distribution Board really kept the DPs alive in Paris and helped them get back to a normal life. I never knew what they had been through, and they never said, but later I wondered how Tibby had been able to train as a brilliant violinist and, in fact, how so many of them had been able to survive all those horrors. They were a cheerful crowd, and lunch at the Foyer Israelite, with M. Sandler walking around rubbing his podgy hands together, was always an adventure. I managed to get lunch vouchers for my two non-

Jewish friends, George and Greeley, it was illegal and luckily they never took to the place. George couldn't stand the plainness of the food and Greeley couldn't understand the lack of a good wine.

What for them was miserable, for me was a whole world of heimische kosher food and good social mixing. I never met friends like Moshe and Tibby again, and I cannot forget them. Although we came from completely different backgrounds, me a spoiled Jewish boy from Golders Green, with little experience of life, they, two tough Hungarian boys who had survived the horrors of the camps, the contacts gelled, I will not forget them. Nor that year in Paris, 1948.

The Adath Yisrael Cemetery in Weissensee, Berlin

Stephen Gabriel Rosenberg

Senior Fellow of the W.F.Albright Institute of Archaeological Research,
Jerusalem

Just before Tisha B'Av the family went to visit the ancestors in Berlin. Their graves lie in the cemetery of the Adath Yisrael (there they spell it Adass Jisroel) in the Weissensee suburb of East Berlin. It is a small cemetery and separated from the large Weissensee one, that was used by the whole community for a hundred years before WW2. The orthodox Adath insisted on having their own plot, away from that used by the Reform community, and great-grandfather

Gustav Hirsch bought the land for them in 1870.

He and Samson Rosenberg were among the founders of the Adath Yisrael Kehilla (Congregation) in Berlin and had invited Azriel Hildesheimer to be their first Rabbi. Hildesheimer was Rabbi in Eisenstadt, in Hungary, but his advanced ideas did not suit the traditional Hungarians. So he was happy to move to Berlin in 1869 and by 1873 Rabbi Hildesheimer (who has a road named after him in the German Colony of

Jerusalem) had founded the famous Berliner Rabbiner Seminar in the Gipsstrasse. It was partly set up as an antidote to the Reform's Institute of Scientific Judaism founded by Leopold Zunz, whose premises were around the corner. Hildesheimer was out to protect traditional Judaism from the Reform, but he was no diehard fundamentalist, he saw the need to apply the modern ideas that he had learnt in the Hebrew school of Hamburg and the University of Halle.



REUNION





N 2011



His was the first orthodox seminary to teach secular subjects together with the traditional Halachik-Talmudic learning, and it went on to train many of the most famous modern orthodox Rabbis of the twentieth century in England and France. One of its graduates, Rabbi Dr. Eli Munk, founder of the Golders Green Beth Hamedrash, had completed his doctorate on the subject of William Wordsworth. Not the normal dissertation for an orthodox Rabbi, but it certainly helped him when he received the call to come to London in 1934..

In spite of the growth of the Reform in Germany, the Adath flourished in East Berlin, the old part of the city, which was then the centre of the Jewish population. A Jewish school was established, an old-age home and a hospital and, along with the growth of the living, the cemetery also filled up. All this came to an end towards 1938, when German Jewry saw the shape of things to come, many left in time and the community fell into severe decline. By 1942 nearly all the remaining Jews had been deported, after being concentrated in the old-age home in the Grosse Hamburger Strasse.

The Adath cemetery was still used for a few individual graves but soon fell into disrepair. I rediscovered it in 1956 when I crossed into East Berlin in British Army uniform and found the place deserted, badly overgrown but not destroyed. With some excitement I cleared the undergrowth from family graves and others, and then determined to find an

authority that might be held responsible for its upkeep.

And there was one. The Adath Yisrael had regrouped in their original premises in the Artillerie Strasse, now renamed Tucholsky Strasse, after a prominent Jewish Communist writer. The Kehilla had little funds, having been cut off from the main Jewish community in West Berlin by the division of the city, between the Russian Communists in the East and the three Allied Powers in the West. The Jews of Berlin, such as they were, nearly all lived on the West side, and any newcomers had drifted there. In Germany, the religious communities were funded through the State, and the East Germans were not rushing to support this small Jewish Kehilla in the East.

Our family arranged to send the Kehilla an annual sum to have the graves cleaned and reinstated but suddenly in 1980 the regular requests for money stopped. Only during a later visit did we find out why.

The East German government had declared the Adath Weissensee cemetery to be defunct, which actually it was, as all funeral activity was now taking place in West Berlin. The East had decided to acquire it unilaterally, by compulsory purchase, for the STASI, the East German police, who wanted to build a regional office in the area, as well as to lay out a football ground for their men.

The Adath did not even know of this until 1984, when the STASI builders started to break ground for the new building. Immediately emergency measures were taken, important Rabbis in

Europe and Israel were contacted and it was pointed out that the cemetery was not completely unused. It had been utilised after 1940 to bury some Berlin Jews who had committed suicide before their Nazi arrest, and also to inter some bodies that had, by miracle, been returned to their families from the camps. This enabled the Community, and the Rabbis, to claim that the cemetery was not totally inactive and that any building work would be a desecration of the recent burials, as well as the ancient ones. Luckily the STASI authorities took note and the work was stopped.

But the East Germans did not give up. Now that it was established that the Adath Kehilla were the guardians of the site, negotiations for parts of the area recommenced. They dragged on and fortunately were not completed by 1989, when the Government collapsed and when, at the end of that year, the Wall came down.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall was an earth-shattering event felt all around the world, a powerful symbol of the fall of the Communist system, and in Berlin, one small side-effect was that the Weissensee cemetery of the Adath Yisrael Kehilla was saved.

Now safely back in its hands, the Adath Community went about restoring the graves. Being still short of funds it managed to use voluntary non-Jewish student labour for the task, which took several years. The perimeter wall was rebuilt, the Ohel (chapel) restored and all the matzevoth (headstones) re-erected. That of Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer,

in the original grey basalt marble, even had its incised Hebrew inscription regilded.

It is usual for an orthodox Jewish cemetery to have no trees, so that Cohanim (priests) can walk around

it without being under the same canopy as a grave. Luckily this has not been enforced here, and the cemetery is wonderfully wooded, giving it an unusually restful and romantic atmosphere. For the family it was a

beautiful experience to see the ancestral graves fully restored and their remains lying in their lasting resting place in such a beautiful setting saved, first from the Nazis, and then from the STASI.

70 Years since the Siege of Leningrad

Limmud FSU St. Petersburg commemorates

Chaim Chesler

The Siege of Leningrad was a prolonged military operation resulting from the failure of the German army to capture the city (now known again as Saint Petersburg). The siege started on 8 September 1941, when the last land connection to the city was severed. Although the Soviets managed to open a narrow land corridor to the city on 18 January 1943, lifting of the siege only took place on 27 January 1944, 872 days after it had begun. It was one of the longest and most destructive sieges in history, and the most costly in terms of casualties. During the siege, the Nazis cut all water and power supplies to the city while subjecting residents to constant air attacks and artillery bombardment. The population of about three million was left to starve or freeze to death, and an estimated one and a half million civilians and Soviet soldiers died during the siege. As German forces advanced toward Leningrad in 1941, the Jewish residents tried to move as close as possible to the centre of the city. Those Jews who were unable to flee from the Nazis and remained in areas that

Chaim Chesler spoke of the triumph over adversity of the survivors of the Holocaust who came to England soon after the war.

had been occupied by the Nazis were tortured and killed.

Pushkin is a town located 24 kilometers south of St Petersburg. It was founded in 1710 as an imperial residence named Tsarskoye Selo. In 1937, on the occasion of the centenary of the death of Alexander Pushkin, the town was renamed to honour Russia's national poet. It was here that the Nazi advance

was halted and it was the northernmost point reached by the German troops in the Second World War. The Nazi massacre of Jews in Pushkin during the Siege of Leningrad occurred on 9 September 1941, when a group of eight hundred Jews were gathered in a cellar of the Tsarskoye Selo palace and then shot to death in a nearby park.

The Pushkin Holocaust Memorial was constructed in memory of those Jews who were captured and murdered during the siege of Leningrad. It was to this site during the recent Limmud Conference in St Petersburg for Russian-speaking Jews,



that a group of dignitaries, Holocaust survivors and young Limmud participants came to honour the Pushkin dead. Among them were Matthew Bronfman, Chair of the Limmud FSU International Steering Committee and Chaim Chesler its Chairperson, Steven Schwager, Executive Vice-President of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Ben Helfgott, Vice-President of the Claims Conference and himself a Holocaust survivor, Dorit Golender, Israel's Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Sofa Landver, Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Roman Polonsky, head of the FSUD

Department of the Jewish Agency and Eddie Shapira, Israel's Consul-General in St Petersburg.

Matthew Bronfman from Limmud said that one of the aims of Limmud was to perpetuate Jewish life throughout the former Soviet Union after the tragedy of the Holocaust. "The importance of this ceremony is to emphasize that the Nazis failed in their endeavour to extinguish Jewish life and here in St Petersburg we are actively restoring it.

Steve Schwager from JDC pointed out that for the last twenty years, JDC, through its Hessed centres and with the assistance of the Claims Conference, has been looking

after survivors. "I hope and believe we have made life easier for those who lived through and survived the siege."

Ben Helfgott, from Claims Conference, spoke on the important work for Holocaust survivors.

A local Holocaust survivor, Ludmila Yampolskaya, spoke about the life of the Jews during the nearly nine hundred day-long siege. "People like living skeletons were roaming the streets," she recalled in tears.

Roman Polonsky from Jafi, emphasised that the tragedy of St Petersburg and its heroic defence must never be forgotten.

CLAIMS CONFERENCE

70 years after Leningrad Siege, working for its victim

On September 8, 1941, German forces surrounded the city of Leningrad, Russia (now St Petersburg), cut all water and power supplies, and began an almost three-year campaign of constant air attacks and artillery bombardment of the approximately 2.5 million people, including 300,000 Jews, living in the city. As we mark the 70th anniversary this week of the start of the deadly siege, the Claims Conference remembers the estimated 1.5 million people who died because of the blockade and continues working to provide for its surviving Jewish victims.

The almost 900-day siege of Leningrad claimed the lives of more than 1.5 million

people. Almost 6,000 were killed during German shelling and bombings, but most died from mass starvation, as the siege prevented fresh food supplies from reaching the city. Between January and February 1942 alone between 700 and 1,000 people reportedly died every day from starvation. With food supplies strained, German bombardments targeted the city's infrastructure, laying waste to factories, schools, and hospitals; 3,200 residential buildings, 9,000 wooden houses and 640 factories were destroyed in Leningrad and its suburbs. About 1.4 million men, women, and children were able to evacuate the city, but many died from hunger soon after.

Those Jews who were unable to flee from the Nazis and stayed in the territories that were occupied were tortured and shot. If the Germans had fully occupied Leningrad, all of the Jews would have been killed.

Adding to the Jews' misery, leaflets dropped over the city held Jews responsible for the city's suffering.

After years of negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference succeeded in 2008 in obtaining Hardship Fund payments for Jewish survivors of the Nazi siege. Certain Jewish persons who stayed in Leningrad at some time between September 1941 and January 1944 or fled from there during this period may receive a

Hardship Fund payment, if they now live in the West. This negotiation marked the first time that Germany recognised the persecution of Jews who lived through the siege, and to date, the Claims Conference has paid more than 6,000 Jews who survived the siege.

Jewish siege survivors still living in the former Soviet Union (FSU) are not eligible for Hardship Fund payments. We continue negotiating to obtain payments fund for siege survivors living in Russia so that they, too, can receive the recognition and funds they deserve.

However, Jewish survivors of the Leningrad siege living today in Russia do receive social welfare assistance from the Claims Conference. Through a network of twenty-two Regional Welfare Communities and Hesed agencies, the Claims Conference funds homeware, medicine, food, winter relief, and emergency services for desperately needy Nazi victims in the FSU, many of

whom survive only with our help.

Sara Bourovik was born in Leningrad in 1921 and stayed in the city during the siege with her parents, who died from hunger in 1942. When she was 20 years old, like everybody who was able, Sara was sent to dig trenches. Sara remembers German planes flying so low she could see the faces of their pilots. Russian soldiers were worried that the Germans would bomb the workers and so they hid during the day and worked at night. Sara received a ration card for 125 grams of bread a day, but it didn't taste like bread; it was small and heavy, and made mostly from sawdust. She would get up early to get her rations each day before supplies ran out, and she would divide it into three parts to make it last.

On January 27, 1944, Soviet forces broke the siege and expelled the Nazis from the southern outskirts of the city. There was no need to wait for confirmation

over the radio, Sara said, everybody was outside crying and hugging each other the day the blockade ended.

Today, Sara is homebound and moves with the help of a walker. Sara receives homeware services funded by the Claims Conference, one of the tens of thousands of elderly Jewish victims in the FSU who rely on vital assistance from our organisation. The Hesed in St Petersburg is Sara's only connection to the outside world. Its assistance sustains her physically and emotionally.

As we mark the anniversary of one of the worst sieges in history, we honour its victims. The Claims Conference continues working to ensure that Nazi victims living in the FSU, like those 6,000 siege survivors living in the West who received Hardship Fund payments, can receive some symbolic recognition of their experiences, even all these decades later.

CERTAIN GHETTO SURVIVORS CAN NOW RECEIVE BOTH "GHETTO PENSION" AND GHETTO FUND PAYMENT; APPLICATION DEADLINE ABOLISHED

In negotiations with the Claims Conference, the German government has agreed to remove the application deadline for application to the Ghetto Work Fund, which provides a one-time payment of €2,000 to certain Jewish survivors of Nazi-era ghettos.

The Ghetto Fund previously had an application deadline of December 31, 2011. In addition, the German government recently agreed that eligible Jewish survivors of ghettos who

worked "without force" are now entitled to receive both German Social Security payments and the Ghetto Fund one time payment of €2,000. Previously, eligible survivors were not entitled to receive both, but Claims Conference negotiations have resulted in a change to German law on this issue.

German government Social Security pensions, widely known as "Ghetto Pensions," are available to Holocaust survivors who were employed for some form

of remuneration during their internment in Nazi ghettos annexed to the Third Reich. The law is formally known by its German acronym, ZRBG.

Previously, the majority of survivors who applied for Ghetto Pensions were rejected due to overly strict interpretation of criteria by local authorities processing applications. In 2007 the German government established a compensation fund to recognize Holocaust victims who carried out work "without force" during their

internment in a Nazi ghetto. The fund's one-time payment of €2,000 was created to acknowledge ghetto survivors who had been rejected for German Social Security payments and it came as a response to intense international pressure spearheaded by the Claims Conference.

The one-time payment of €2,000 is known as the "Ghetto Fund" and is administered by Germany's BADV federal office in Bonn.

Recent changes in German law now allow eligible Jewish survivors to receive both payments. Ghetto survivors who have not yet applied to the Ghetto Fund or the Ghetto Pension should do so at once. There is no deadline to apply for the Ghetto Pension or the one-time award of €2,000 from the Ghetto Fund.

Please see: **Information on how to apply to the Ghetto Fund and criteria** on the Claims Conference website.

Many potential claimants are being contacted proactively by German BADV or ZRBG offices that are alerting them to the change in the former

exclusion clauses. The Claims Conference is reaching out to survivors of Nazi ghettos and to the agencies that work with them in an effort to ensure that every potential claimant has a chance to claim both the Ghetto Fund one-time payment and the Ghetto Pension.

The German government is also in the process of reconsidering 56,000 previously rejected claims for the Ghetto Pension and will contact applicants if their claims are now accepted.

Please see: **Information on how to apply to the Ghetto Pension and criteria** on the Claims Conference website.

**THESE ARE NOT
CLAIMS CONFERENCE
PROGRAMS.**

**YOU MUST APPLY TO
THE RELEVANT GERMAN
GOVERNMENT OFFICES
LISTED ON OUR
WEBSITE.**

The Claims Conference is not involved in the administration, Implementation or processing of applications for the Ghetto Pension or the

Ghetto Fund. The information presented herein is intended for information purposes only and solely as a general guide. The information is not intended as legal advice. It is a summary of specific issues and does not represent a definitive or complete statement of the programs and policies of the agencies or governments mentioned. The information may not address the special needs, interests and circumstances of individual recipients. Individual situations differ and recipients are urged to seek individual advice. Individuals seeking specific information on a program are urged to contact the relevant program or to consult their social service agency or help center representative. While the Claims Conference provides information on a general basis to various help and assistance centers, each help and assistance center is solely responsible for the advice provided by it. To the best of our knowledge the information is correct as of the date of this document and this information may change subsequent to the said date - November 28, 2011.

CLAIMS CONFERENCE

CERTAIN JEWS WHO FLED NAZI ADVANCE FROM AREAS NEVER OCCUPIED WILL RECEIVE ONE-TIME COMPENSATION; CERTAIN ORPHANS, WESTERN PERSECUTEES ALSO TO BE PAID

The Claims Conference announces three changes to the Hardship Fund that will enable thousands of Jewish Holocaust victims to receive one-time payments, following talks with the German government. All changes are

effective as of January 1, 2012.

Flight from Non-Occupied Areas

Hardship Fund payments will now be made to certain Jews who fled ahead of the

advancing Nazi army from some areas of the Soviet Union that were not subsequently occupied by the Nazis.

In recent negotiations, the German government has agreed to include these Jewish victims in the Claims

Conference Hardship Fund, provided they meet the program's other eligibility criteria. The program issues a one-time payment of € 2,556.

Applicants may now be eligible for a payment from the Hardship Fund if they fled between June 22, 1941 and January 27, 1944 from areas of the Soviet Union that were generally up to 100 kilometers from the most easterly advance of the German army (Wehrmacht) but were not later occupied by the Nazis.

Those eligible will include Jews who fled from Moscow and Stalingrad. Eligible victims will also include those who fled from Leningrad after June 22, 1941 but before the siege of that city commenced in September 1941.

This agreement will lead to payments to Jewish victims of Nazism from the former Soviet Union now living in Israel, the United States, Germany and other Western countries. It is the first time that the experiences of these Jews who fled for their lives had been recognized by Germany. These payments are not currently available to Nazi victims living in former Soviet bloc countries...

Nazi occupation in the Soviet Union was immediately followed by the advent of Einsatzgruppen, mobile German killing units charged with murdering entire Jewish communities. More than one million Jews were killed by these units, which operated largely by shooting hundreds and thousands of Jews at a time and burying them in mass pits. Gas vans were also used to kill Jews in these areas.

Jews from areas such as Moscow that lay in the path of the advancing German military fled eastward. The Claims Conference has long contended that these Jews, who suffered great deprivation, should be recognized as victims of Nazi persecution, as they had every reason to believe that they would suffer the same fate as Jews who lived in communities overtaken by the Nazis.

Western Persecutees

As of January 1, 2012, Hardship Fund payments may be made to eligible applicants who were citizens of certain Western European countries at the time of Nazi persecution and also at the time of that country's Global Agreement with Germany, who have not received any previous payment from a German source which include payments under the Global Agreements. "Western Persecutees" who think they may be eligible and have not already applied to the Hardship Fund should file an application. To receive a payment, applicants must also meet the other criteria of the Hardship Fund.

Orphans

As of January 1, 2012, eligible for a one-time payment of € 1,900 may be those living in former Soviet bloc countries who were born 1928 or later and were orphaned due to Nazi persecution (both parents were killed due to persecution). To be eligible, applicants may not have received any previous compensation from a German source and must

meet the same criteria as that of the Hardship Fund.

Background: Hardship Fund

The Hardship Fund, established in 1980 after five years of Claims Conference negotiations, provides a one-time payment of € 2,556 to certain Jewish victims of Nazism, including many from former Soviet bloc countries who emigrated to the West after 1969, which was the application deadline for the West German Indemnification Laws (BEG).

Download the applications and the full criteria for the Hardship Fund.

Applications and information are also available by **contacting the Claims Conference offices** in New York, Tel Aviv or Frankfurt.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) represents world Jewry in negotiating for compensation and restitution for victims of Nazi persecution and their heirs. The Claims Conference administers compensation funds, recovers unclaimed Jewish property, and allocates funds to institutions that provide social welfare services to Holocaust survivors and preserve the memory and lessons of the Shoah.

For more information:
www.claimscon.org



Distances

Monica Stauber

Monica is the daughter of Paul and Edith Gast (Gastfreund)

Distances in the United States are vast. Coast to coast, New York to Los Angeles is 2,800 miles or 4,700 kilometers, flight time almost six hours. Seemingly unmanageable without a good book or a movie. Europe is far more manageable. My daughter Kimberly, studying in Barcelona, Spain during the spring of 2011 proved this with weekend excursions to some of Europe's most prominent cities.

As fate would have it, the end of Kimberly's semester abroad coincided with the annual reunion in London. (A short hop from Barcelona) My father, Paul or Bolek (as Kim likes to call him) and I travelled to London for the reunion as well. (Miami/New York to London... a very long book or movie)

Distances can be geographical or in this case metaphysical. What follows is the "distance" travelled to, from and back to Poland for all three of us.

My father, Paul, had returned to Poland several times both on personal visits and organized trips. Paul visited Poland two years ago when he attended the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the last deportations from the Lodz ghetto. He also travelled twice with the "March of the Living". The March of the Living is an international educational programme that brings Jewish teens and adults from all over the world to Poland on Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) to

march from Auschwitz to Birkenau, and then to Israel to observe Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day) and Yom Ha'Atzmaut. (Israel Independence Day) The goal of the March of the Living is to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to lead the Jewish people into the future vowing "Never Again".

My trip to Poland with my father was long overdue. I had been trying to orchestrate this trip for many years. Following the wonderful reunion, Paul, Kimberly and I boarded a flight from London (flight time under two hours) to Krakow, Poland. When studying Poland in school, it was always taught within the context of World War II and the Holocaust. Poland as a country with its own economy and culture didn't really exist; economic struggle, anti-Semitism and cold harsh winters characterized Poland in my mind. At home, my father spoke of his childhood in Lodz and then the Ghetto.

You can imagine my surprise when arriving in Krakow! We stayed at wonderful hotels and employed private tour guides who made our visit exceptional. John Paul II International Airport in Krakow was a modern, efficient facility. Our luggage

and driver were waiting for us by the time we exited immigration!

Our guide, Ewa, met us bright and early the next morning for our tour of historic Krakow. Ewa possessed a Masters degree in Judaic Studies. The depth of her knowledge even taught my father a few things. Our morning started in the famous Jewish Quarter of Krakow, the Kazimierz District. We strolled along the old narrow streets which echoed the Jewish past of this area. We visited the Museum of Judaism on Szeroka Street, housed in the Old Synagogue dating back to the 15th century and rebuilt to Renaissance tastes in the 1560s. Adjacent to the Synagogue is the Remuh cemetery named after the nickname of the famous 16th-century rabbi and religious writer Moses Isserles. Even today pious Jews come to pray at his grave and the graves of their other great men who were buried here. The cemetery was used from 1551 to 1800.

Kazimierz district has become trendy in the last decade. The area has been transformed in an attempt to recreate the Jewish past and to become a haven for artists, musicians and the like. Klezmer-Hois, the only remaining restaurant/night club regaling the Jewish culture of the past is located directly across the street from the Old Synagogue serving up Jewish delicacies and concerts on a nightly

basis. We then continued on our tour to the Wawel Castle built at the behest of Casimir the Great. It consists of a number of structures situated around a central courtyard. There is evidence that people lived on this site as early as fifty thousand years ago, in the Paleolithic Age. Standing just outside the Castle, one can look down upon the Dragon of Wawel Hill. The dragon is famous in Polish Folklore and the sculpture commemorates its defeat by the Polish prince Krakus. The Dragon is designed to breathe fire every five minutes or upon receipt of an SMS message.

We then walked from the Wawel Castle to the Main Square, a historic area filled with shops, restaurants and lots of activity! It was placed by UNESCO on the list of world heritage sights. Kimberly commented that Krakow was sorely underrated. Prague, was often described as a fairly tale land. Krakow to her seemed far more magical. Krakow is also a vibrant city due to its concentration of educational institutions. Its twenty five universities enrol approximately 180,000 students from all over the globe. We met a friendly medical student from Canada, proudly wearing her degree and planning for her residency training in the US.

Our visit to Krakow, of course, took us about an hour drive to Auschwitz. It was a beautiful sunny day, not grey, as I always imagined. There were grass and trees and the sky was blue with a few fair weather clouds. We were joined by a second guide from the museum who gave us a more in depth and personal

tour. She allowed my father to elaborate on her comments with his own experiences. The depth of understanding is hard to describe. In retrospect, Auschwitz in its current state is a museum. It didn't seem to convey the powerful evil that was portrayed in films shown to us in school. People, which is what makes the difference. Void of people, it is just a place. There were exhibits displaying common Nazi practices. I was especially affected by a room detailing the Nazi use for human hair.

We left Auschwitz and drove to Birkenau. Upon entering the gates I was overcome with a feeling of vastness. The buildings remaining and land utilized stretched further than the eye could see. How could this intricately planned facility be just one of many? The thought is mind boggling even when it stares you in the face. My father found the bunk and perhaps the bed he slept in. I got the impression, that he never had the opportunity to walk into it on his previous trips back. After that he said, "I don't need to come back anymore".

We saw a group of people charging down the tracks with an Israeli flag on their backs, presumably shouting "Never Again". I know this is the thing to do...why? I hesitate to say I was offended by this display. This is a solemn place, treat it as such. The lives of those lost here, know those words well, proclaim them to the rest of the world.

We explored, with the help of our guide, the Salt Mine in Krakow and then headed to Paul's birthplace of Lodz. As luck would have it the

weather was damp, cold and rainy. The city too exuded this dreary weather. We tracked down Paul's childhood address which revealed a condemned boarded up building. Lodz was suffering from economic strife, common to many manufacturing centres. In our short visit there we had lunch in a modern mall with many stores and family entertainment. We toured the Radegast Railway Station Memorial. This is one of the most important historical sites connected to the Lodz ghetto. From this place, tens of thousands of people were herded off to the death camp at Chelmno- nad-Nerem in the years 1942-1944 and then to Auschwitz in August 1944. The exhibits contained the ledgers kept by the Germans of the "prisoners" transported to camps. The Germans, in their desperate attempt towards the final solution, were unable to maintain these in the last months of the war, so Paul's name was not listed.

We then drove the rest of the journey to Warsaw and said goodbye to Ewa and met the second Ewa who was to be our tour guide for the remainder of our trip. Our trip, soon ending, had allotted only one day in Warsaw, so our tour encompassed pretty much every important Jewish Historical location. We saw the remaining part of the Warsaw Ghetto Wall, the Nozyk Synagogue, and the Memorial of the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto. Finally we saw the Bunker on Mila Street, the site of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. This location was chosen for the construction of the future

Jewish Museum projected to open in 2013. The museum's focus is not solely on the Holocaust, but will document Jewish history in Poland since its inception through to present day.

Three generations back to their origins, viewing history that will be etched into memory forever. At Ben Helfgott's urging, Paul and I have endeavoured to reach

out to the Boys of the '45 Aid Society in the United States and their children to form the Second Generation in North America. To date, out of the eighty seven Boys on the US list, we received only eighteen responses. I in turn contacted the second generation with little success. DISTANCES, I feel are the reason. The Second Generation of the Boys in the

US live all across this vast continent! Coming together as a group is an important step in bonding with those of a common past and protecting our heritage. If you are reading this article please contact me! Distances can be short! As I wrote last year, social networking makes small work out of geography!

Full circle – half-way around the World

Philip Goldberg

Philip is the son of Fay and the late Moniek Goldberg.

Upon considering an article, I was at a loss on how to begin, not what to say. I would preface this by stating: life has certainly been an adventure; a constant refocusing and recalibrating, within the parameters of who we are, and what we see. I have been blessed with two wonderful boys, both having the same values my parents instilled in me, my brothers and my sister. I assume that people reading this, are similar in background to myself - children of Holocaust survivors, children of immigrants, children always wondering about the world our parents grew up in. What were our parents' nuclear and extended families like. How did they cope? How did they see the world?

One thing I came to understand is that while there is certainly a great amount of commonality amongst the survivors, they each have their own individual perspectives. By the same token, as a child of a survivor I am the product of my unique experiences. I do believe, however that I share with other 2nd generation

men and women a certain "pair of glasses" that we all wear when viewing history and interacting with the people we encounter.

First, I should offer a short history: I grew up in and outside Detroit, the eldest son of immigrants, adjusting to the after-effects of the war, a new country and culture. We moved to Oak Park, bordering Detroit when I was still in elementary school. This suburb had a strong Jewish presence. The public schools would close Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The majority of the kids I grew up with were not only born in Detroit, but their parents and usually their grandparents also were from Detroit. It was a very strange experience, when riding around Detroit when I was about 16 and having a friend point out the high school his grandfather went to. There were some that were also children of survivors; although, I must, admit there was no special bonding or

special relationship amongst us. It wasn't until we grew older that we would develop an unspoken, feeling of fellowship with children of the "boys" or of my parents' landsleit.

My father started a business when I was eight years old, and struggled to become independent and raise our family. In 1976 we left Detroit for Costa Rica and Miami, as this was the only way for my father to feel he could secure a future for our family in the garment business. Needless to say this was a sacrifice for both my mother and father, leaving Michigan when they had spent close to 25 years building relationships and achieving a comfortable life, but as my father said, you only have one family.

We spent 20 years in Costa Rica and built a successful business partnered with parents and two brothers. Roman Catholicism is written into Costa Rica's constitution. Upon arriving and learning that fact, I felt that, besides being in a different culture, with a different language, that living in a country where

Catholicism was the National religion would be a negative factor - especially for my father. Surprisingly, it was a non issue. Quite the contrary, we were accepted as part of the community. No disparaging remarks; no solicitations to convert; and although not part of the establishment, as any new immigrant would not be, we had a very comfortable life. We actually had a close relationship with the Barrio Pastor, and we contributed to welfare of all the people in our Barrio. Living in Costa Rica - a predominately Roman Catholic country was a small Jewish community which mostly immigrated between the wars from two Polish towns. The Jewish community there is quite established and has a very nice orthodox Shul. They also have a Day School which runs from Kindergarten through High School, teaching in both Hebrew and Spanish. The Chabad came when we were there and although small, through their dedication, established a Shul, and a kindergarten. They also started the importation of kosher food, which prior to their arrival would be obtained by having the Mohel (who doubled a schochit) to prepare the lamb or beef (in live form) that you bought to him.

In 1996 we sold our business. My father went into semi retirement to enjoy life with my mother and his grandchildren, and we ended our family business. My brothers and I all went out on our own. I ended up after several years with a sourcing position for a garment company. This was interesting for two reasons, one being on the

other side of the desk and the other has been spending time in about 45 countries, some for only a week, some for a total of about 15 months, and being stationed in Shanghai, China for the past 10 years.

It is these experiences; working in different cultures, different languages, different food, and different attitudes that I wish to share. Spending time in factories, negotiating prices, getting out products, gives you a different insight into the country than being a tourist. I will make some generalities and certain specific comments about certain countries. I recognize that my impressions are shaped by my life experiences and by virtue of the fact that I am the son of a Survivor with a clear sensitivity to anti-Semitism and history.

In Latin America, I pretty much knew what to expect, having spent so many years in Costa Rica. I received warm hospitality from all the people and visited with the Lubavitch in Peru and Brazil.

Eastern Europe, and Turkey were more of a mixed bag. In Turkey there are more mosques than we had gas stations in Detroit. The people were extremely nice, especially in the small towns, the food was great - a most interesting country- their current politics aside. Bulgaria has the same warm feeling, and it's interesting to be; in a country that really felt indebtedness to the USSR, as they helped them fight the Turks and the Germans. It's amazing how very primitive the Soviet Union era factories were. There was persecution and death visited upon the

Jewish community in the early 14th century that lasted about 10 years. During WWII Bulgaria protected the Jewish population which held Bulgarian citizenship, and did not turn over any Jews to the Germans for deportation and certain death. Bulgaria also controlled Macedonia, Thrace, and parts of what became Yugoslavia, as well as parts of what is now Greece. Their non-Bulgarian Jews, however, were deported to Polish Death Camps established by the Germans. Most of the Bulgarian Jews emigrated to Israel after the War. I visited the Sofia Synagogue which is still standing although there are reported to be fewer than 1,550 Jews still in Bulgaria today. The Synagogue is quite an ornate building and in very good condition, in the heart of the city.

In the Ukraine, I had the good fortune to go with Ukrainian Jews (who had a garment factory near their old hometown). They had left the Ukraine in the early 70s, went to New York, and made a lot of money with taxi medallions. It was amazing driving in the countryside and seeing how similar it is to Michigan. My father used to compare Michigan and Poland. The food, needless to say, was great. The stories they told me about growing up there were not. We went through the city they were from, and they pointed out where they had fights with local Ukrainians, vicious fights where people got hurt. But the local people they knew were very hospitable and upon leaving I was given six different vodkas from six factories. Still I could not get out of my mind the stories my

father told me about the Ukrainians in the camps. Knowledge of that history always tempered my view.

Hungary is a beautiful country but knowing what I knew, it was very easy to smell Fascism.

Romania was, to say the least, one of the most uncomfortable countries I have ever been in. The trains are dangerous, and the streets of Bucharest run down. There was that haunting feeling of the atrocities that took place there, ready to occur when opportunity permitted. Driving through the countryside was like going back in time, not a nice time.

Germany was very modern and although we have done business with Germans and German companies and had very good experiences, it is hard to be there and not think about "what did you or your parents, or relatives do during the war".

All in all, with maybe the exception of Turkey and Bulgaria, you knew you were walking on ground stained with Jewish blood, and this begs two questions: What if Germany had won the war? And, if you scratch the surface will you reignite the same base, primitive, superstitious, ignorant emotions which manifested itself only "yesterday"?

In Dubai it is startling as to how hot it is and the dichotomy between the citizens and the imported workers. In restaurants the local men in white gowns sit at one table while their wives sit at another, and the children with the hired help at still another. You feel the culture arrogance, of a people who throughout history made a living as pirates. The

airport is amazing, not because they raffle a Rolls Royce every week, but because of the different groups of Arabs and other Muslims clustered together praying with their travel prayer rugs. I was with an Indian fellow from Morocco who starts identifying these groups by their headscarves: over there with green are Taliban, those with red and white checkers are Jordanians, yet another indicated Saudis, etc. Most all the manual labour is done with Indians or people of Indian descent. The airline management was almost all British.

In Pakistan - the overriding feeling is that you must question the notion of a nation state. The newspapers are amazing, seemingly written by twelve year olds that live in a fantasy world. The book stores are stocked with books raising question such as: Does the Jewish history really exist? Or, are Jews running the world? Karachi is hot and dusty, swarming with motor cycles and buses. The buses have every square inch decorated with brightly coloured paint and tassels. In Lahore, and Karachi, the hotels are as fortified as foreign embassies. On a one to one basis, the Pakistanis are quite cordial and hospitable. It is comical when you meet older, educated, Pakistanis, they still feel that emulating the British customs are a sign of refinement. But in general (apart from individual encounters) you feel you are in a "Country" of maladjusted adolescents with atomic weapons. This is an incredibly fragmented society. The bulk of the

factory workers in contrast to other countries are male. Poverty is rampant with small clusters of big houses walled and protected with armed guards.

In Asia the feeling is quite different in general. You do not feel any issues with being Jewish at all, their issues are mainly between Buddhists and Moslems, and Thailand in particular has this tension. Thailand is quite westernized, with many foreigners stationed there for many reasons.

In Cambodia you get an overwhelming feeling of sadness, a country that killed over about 20% of its population (one criterion for death was wearing glasses as this was interpreted as being able to read, hence, educated) and still not recovered. The Cambodians are very nice and down to earth, appearing more humble than the Thais; there is predominance of young people. It is a very poor country. The first store with an escalator went up about five years ago. There is no official bus service or taxis, taxis are generally motorcycle-driven pulling a cart with wooden slates. With the textile industry making up about 80% of its foreign earned dollars, not one factory has Cambodian ownership and very little local upper management. The management is mostly Hong Kongese, Singaporean, Taiwanese, and Chinese. The Cambodians hate (possible a strong word, but close) the Thais and vice versa. The place is crawling with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) everything from anti-slavery, schooling, to medical services. Also there are quite a few

backpackers from the U.S.A, Canada, Australia and Europe.

Laos is sleepy and quiet with no Western influence.

Vietnam is bustling - motorcycles swim like fish on the roads. The South is much different than the North in terms of religion and open enterprises. The North is more Communist (more State owned companies) more Buddhist, and quieter. The South is more open, (private companies) more churches, as missionaries were quite active in the South, more foreigners, and much more bustle. In the North I was in places where some people had never seen a Westerner, being Jewish was not even in the psyche of the common person. The people were generally very nice, and there is still good bread, a legacy from the French.

Malaysia, apart from having a terrible Prime Minister for a couple of decades who was virulently anti-Jewish, is quite nice, with friendly people, and probably the best all-round food in Asia. Singapore is just like what it is; a large upper class suburban city.

Hong Kong still has a Jewish community, and some monuments (Peninsular Hotel) built by a Jewish family from Shanghai via India and Iraq. The Chabad is also quite active there. There is still a British influence on the culture there although this is fading with influx of Chinese from the Mainland. Taiwan is what China could have been had they not had the Cultural Revolution. Taiwan is very Chinese with a slight influence in food of the Japanese. In neither locale is

there any question about being Jewish; it is simply accepted as any religion.

Korea is different, a very structured society based on Confucius. They are very nationalist; have a love/hate relationship with North Korea; hate the Japanese (with good reason) yet want to emulate them. There are a surprising number of Korean Christians, and Churches are not an uncommon sight. I never felt any issues with being Jewish although one Korean Company we did business with had Christian prayer meetings and bibles on a shelf under the conference table top. When asked to participate, I respectably declined saying I was Jewish which was accepted without comment.

Mongolia is like no other country - in the countryside they live like they lived 1000 years ago, (although some have generators and four-wheel drive vehicles). It's amazing that after having the world's biggest empire they have nothing there now. A man in the countryside is still judged by how big his herds of horses, or Yaks are or by the size of his flocks of sheep or goats. They are nothing at all like the Chinese, they are transient herders. The Mongols are extremely hospitable. They subsist in the winter on meat and in the summer on dairy products from horses, sheep and yaks, with very little vegetables. Although they're Buddhists it is fair to say that they are more basically Shamanists. They are one with their surroundings; they never built any buildings apart from Buddhist monasteries until the Russians took over.

All "buildings" were Gers, the round portable homes, that are communal one large circular room with a stove in the centre for heat and cooking that vents straight up through the roof (to accommodate either the entire family or community) that they break down and set up four times a year as they move their flocks and herds. They are great hunters, and still great horsemen. The Capital city Ulaanbaatar does have buildings now in the western sense though there are still no international hotel chains or franchised restaurants. By the way, it is cold there, with only about 3-4 months a year when the weather would be considered "nice". In the summer when they are not burning coal to stay warm, the sky is crystal clear. When asked if I was Christian and I said no, I was Jewish, there was a blank stare.

China - such a big and old country. That sounds clichéd and is certainly overused. But it is true. Jews have been going in and out of China for thousands of years. Jews have been documented in China since the Han Dynasty 600 CE. There are also stories that there were Jews there BCE. There were Jews in Harbin, Kaifeng and Canton over a thousand years ago. Marco Polo comments on Jewish traders in Beijing. No doubt they followed the Silk Road and also, as Jews are known to do, migrated for a better life free from persecution. With one exception there was no wholesale killing or persecution in all this time. There were some uprisings directed against foreigners when Jews were killed. They

were not singled out but were attacked along with other foreign merchants including Arabs, Persians, and Christians. Peaceful coexistence has been the rule with a short exception of the Yuan Dynasty which lasted about 80 years. Jews were lumped with Moslems because of the issues of circumcision and Kashrut practices. During this short time there was a decree forbidding both.

In modern times, the first big influx of Jews came with the British annexation of Shanghai. China control of Shanghai, along with other territory, lost to the British in the opium wars (fought as the British wanted the Chinese to buy opium so they would have a "balance of trade". Other territory was also lost to other European countries, through military force. Jews, along with many other traders, came from India to set up trading business in Shanghai as both places with commercial centres of the British Empire. The majority were originally from Iran and Iraq, both places heavily in the British orbit. They were successful as they were in "virgin" territory and already had substantial trading companies in India. The next wave came more or less during the Russian Revolution, feeling the progroms and the breakdown of Czarist Russia. This brought Yiddish newspapers, bakeries, butchers, and built Jewish schools, athletic

social clubs and several synagogues. In other words, there was a vibrant Jewish community, cohesive and rich with culture. The last wave came to Shanghai in the 30s and very early 40s fleeing Eastern Europe. This was facilitated as Shanghai was an open city – no passport needed. Many Harbin Jews fled to Shanghai in the early 30s after the Japanese occupation. The famous ghetto in Shanghai was set up by the Japanese. An interesting footnote here; the Japanese, even though "harassed" by the Nazis to enslave and exterminate the Jews, did not comply. The reason; the Japanese read the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and believed it. They felt that if the Jews did really rule the financial world, then they might come in handy after the war, which they expected to win, and, secondly, there was no reason to bring down the wrath of such an important power base.

The Jews in Shanghai and other parts of the country left China, en masse, after WWII for the U.S.A., Palestine, and Hong Kong. A second surge of emigration came after the establishment of the State of Israel. Shanghai was "given back" to China by the U.S.A. Needless to say, things were not tranquil in Shanghai at the time; a civil war was being fought amid the after-effects of the Japanese occupation.

Many of the remaining Jews left for Hong Kong after the Communist victory in 1949 as Hong Kong was still in British hands. There had always been a strong connection between Hong Kong and Shanghai. Many Shanghai people of means went to Hong Kong during the miserable Shanghai winters, and Hong Kong always had a trading relationship with China through "Canton".

After 1949 as the Communists were consolidating China after about 150 years of fragmentation, there were no Jewish Issues. There were foreigner issues which the Jewish population was a part of. China also followed the USSR in the early years as a non-aligned nation which put it at odds with Israel. In Shanghai today there are still two buildings standing that were synagogues. One is now a museum near the old Jewish Ghetto. This Ghetto was established by the Japanese. The other is the Ohel Rachel synagogue which was built in the 1920s by Sir Jacob Elias Sassoon, a successful Iraqi Jew. This has been used recently by the Chabad who are very active and growing in Shanghai with three full-time Rabbis, mostly administering to Western Jews. Two large synagogues were raised during the break-neck development of Shanghai, along with Taoist and



Buddhist temples, and some churches, all of which were in desirable locations.

There are some churches, administering to Christians. Should they be Roman Catholic, they operate without the blessing of the Vatican. China refuses to have "priests" that administer to their people who owe their first allegiance to foreign entities, i.e., the

Pope and Vatican.

In China today, as in other places in Asia, it is assumed that if you are Westerners then you are Christian. In China, when I tell them that I am not, I am Jewish, the reaction is usually very positive, they hold a high regard to Jews, as they now they hold a high regard for development and commercial success. When the conversa-

tion goes further and mention that Judaism is about 3,500 years old, they are very impressed. There is no institutionalised anti-Semitism, never been a program, and no ground stained by Jewish blood. When you really think about it on a personal basis, it gives you a sense of feeling like a normal citizen of the planet earth.

Survival

Darren Richman

Darren is the grandson of Zigi and Jeannette.

a restaurant I have always been in awe of my grandfather's confidence. A warm, engaging man, Zigi will flirt with a beautiful woman in the street as instinctively as I might flee. Some say the art of conversation is dead but I say it's alive, well and residing in my mother's father. Embarrassment is not part of his vocabulary. And, given what he's been through, why would it be?

During my formative years we knew little about Zigi's own. Suffice to say my mother informed us that he had been in a concentration camp during his youth. We also knew this was the one topic he did not care to discuss. The dark spectre of history the elephant in the room. Like Basil Fawlty, but with a greater degree of success, we were not to mention the war. But then, much to our surprise, he did.

Martin Gilbert was putting together a book entitled *The Boys* in which he intended to

collate as many testimonies of British holocaust survivors as possible. Zigi was reticent at first. The very mention of the topic had reduced him to tears for half a century. But my mother and her sister are very insistent women. They wanted to know what their father had been through. Eventually he reneged. The three of them sat in a room and he told his story. It would not be the last time.

It is impossible for me to do justice to the enormity of the tragedy in these pages. Countless words have been written on the topic and yet still one cannot begin to compute the sheer extent of the bloodshed. It would, however, be remiss of me to write about my grandfather without reference to the place Primo Levi described as 'hell on earth' without any sense of hyperbole. Theodor W. Adorno went as far as to claim there could be 'no poetry after Auschwitz' and hearing Zigi talk about his time there it is not difficult to see why. At an age when I was celebrating my bar mitzvah in the most famous of London hotels, my grandfather was witnessing the murder of his friends and

Having studied English from primary school through to university, I noticed one assignment recur time and again. From GCSE to A Level, kindergarten to BA, I was repeatedly asked to write about the person I admire most. Over the years I was tempted to pen a tribute to heroes as diverse as Eric Cantona, Winston Churchill or Mel Brooks but I always ended up musing on the same man. The only person I possibly could choose given the nature of the assignment. A survivor in every sense of the word. My grandfather, Zigi.

It is a cliché to describe anybody as requiring no introduction but in the case of Zigmund Shipper, it happens to be true. Nobody that has so much as shared a train carriage with the man would consider him a stranger. In an age of iPods and smart phones, Zigi is a man out of time. He engages his fellow passengers in that most outdated of pastimes; conversation. As a man so self-conscious I rehearse stating my order in my head before the waiter appears at

family. He saw men sentenced to be hanged kick away their buckets in a bid to deny their captors the satisfaction. He admits to a horrific feeling of relief on the train when a fellow passenger could last no longer, a little more room meant a greater chance of survival. Survival was all. When you have been robbed of your humanity, it is not possible to be humane. Little wonder he chose not to speak about the issue. Nothing is forgotten. There are some wounds time cannot heal.

"The Boys" opened the floodgates. Zigi began to talk about his experiences, not just in private but in public. Schools, universities, prisons, he has visited them all and told his story. Even more remarkable, at more than eighty years of age, he speaks for over an hour without so much as a sheet of paper in front of him. And this from a man who cannot describe a football game without at least a dozen 'what's-his-names'. But when Zigi is telling his story, regardless of the nature of the room, you can hear a pin drop. For evidence, simply investigate the Facebook group established in his

honour. The internet, a forum ordinarily concerned only with abusing, belittling and bemoaning has made a rare exception. Reams of positive comments from students he's enlightened fill page upon page. Typical remarks include, "What an absolute hero", 'I don't think I will ever meet a more genuine, inspiring person' and 'I wish he was my grandpa'. Fortunately for me, he is.

What of the man's adult life? My grandfather suffered a heart attack at the age of fifty. The doctors declared him dead. Clearly, they didn't know him. He was instructed to cut down on cigarettes, alcohol and football. As anyone who's had the dubious pleasure of Zigi's company whilst Emile Heskey is playing will attest, two out of three ain't bad. The man that saw the Busby Babes win 5-4 at Highbury in their final English league game was unlikely to give up on the beautiful game without a fight.

And work? Fifty years of Vogue Printers, a stationery life far from stationary. His shop off Oxford Street lasted half a lifetime and has already changed hands half a dozen times since his departure from the West End

a few brief years ago. And still he works. A survivor to the end.

Occasionally we will mock Zigi for his propensity to praise his grandchildren regardless of their achievement or his inability to do anything but compliment the cooking of his daughters. But if the worst of his flaws is a tremendous pride in his family then I suspect the joke is probably on us.

I hope that Grandpa Zigi won't mind my mentioning that he feels a certain degree of embarrassment over his lack of education. But, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's immortal words, 'character is higher than intellect'. Love, forgiveness, compassion. These things are far more important than diplomas and certificates. Zigi understands something far more important than anything else, people.

I appreciate there is a certain irony in the fact that I have praised my grandfather's understanding of things more valuable than mere books, yet opened this piece with reference to my university education and proceeded to quote Levi, Adomo and Emerson. But then, I'm not half the person Zigi is.

The Journey

Ilana Gelb, age 18

Ilana is the grand-daughter of Robert and Judith Sherman.

Ilana was accepted into Macaulay College – this is an Honors Program of the City University of New York. The university will pay her tuition so she asked her parents to use the saved tuition money to fund a year's program of volunteer work in different parts of the world. She deferred her college attendance and has travelled to Guatemala, India, Tanzania, Kenya, New Orleans (USA) and is now going to Peru. She is involved in building houses, helping in orphanages, working on farms, etc., etc. Her poem is a reaction to her experiences which are influenced and affected by her Holocaust legacy.

At the end of a four month voyage studying sustainability and community through Guatemala, India, Kenya, and Tanzania, I write a poem of my journey. I am rooted in my grandmother's hometown of Kurima, Czechoslovakia, and spreading those roots into the world. My grandmother's vibrancy and poetry transcends the Holocaust's darkness. I carry this spirit with me.

THE CALL: my motivating force to break boundaries.

I am chocolate cake, matzah ball soup, and penne a la vodka breakfasts.
I am day dreaming, short story writing, dog beaching Sunday afternoons.
I am basement soccer tournaments with my little brother and sister.
I am dancing in the rain, singing in the shower, shouting in the dark.
I am standing up, speaking out.
I am acting, skipping, believing, fighting, struggling, leaping.
I am supporting, sustaining, suggesting, requesting.
I am divorce and disappointment.
I am trapped.
I am hungry.
I am deliberate.
I am needing more, from myself, from life.
I am bubbled in.
I am popping out.
I am coming through.

THE EXPERIENCE: snapshots of the sojourn.

I am flying over oceans, falling under backpacks.
I am rickshaw riding, tick plucking, recycled crafting, Indian home-staying.
I am wandering the streets for perfect Poha and cramming into public autos where I am always sure to get lost.
I am rice and chapatti for every meal.
I am twenty hour train rides where I never eat and always make friends.
I am bread making in Kenya and garden designing in Tanzania.
I am tutoring children, making bracelets, cracking nuts.
I am sharing bread and jam on the streets of Delhi while an elephant walks by and a Holy Man hands me his business card.
I am Kundalini yoga on the shores of the Gonga with the orphans of Ramana's Garden and hundreds of Madonna worshipping yoga fanatics.
I am curious under the stars of the Cotry sky and storytelling around the campfire in Amani.
I am understanding and not understanding and breathing and trying to breath.
I am sleeping under the stars in the mountains, sleeping in the only bed an Indian household with the entire family on the floor next to me – at their insistence, sleeping on a bus at 3 am through the comings and goings of passengers.
I am living under the world's skies with the world's people.

THE STRUGGLE: transcending personal barriers.

I am closed and untrusting and not willing to let go.
I am holding back – but what I do not know.
I am pushed and pulled and flopped upside-down.
I am churning inside.
I am about to spill, with nothing to catch all that is overflowing.
I am nauseous and clogged in my heart and head.
I am moving, still learning, still pushing.
I am stripping myself raw.
I am ready.

THE RESOLUTION: Here I am!

I am alive.

I am living at the edge of myself.

I am asking for what I need, and taking it.

I am filling with air in my heart, light in my soul, and wings on the extra bones in my feet.

I am knocking down the walls of judgment, distrust, closed-off emotions that I had once built as my army fort.

I am stepping outside of myself and into the world.

I am possibility and love and creation and desire.

I am vulnerable, ready to be knocked around and lifted up.

I am in love with the so-called strangers who showed me more kindness than I'd ever known.

I am dancing on a rooftop full of candles on Dewali.

I am singing Tanzanian songs while picking lice in rural Africa.

I am packed in a chicken bus on the Guatemalan shores, riding through purple sunsets.

I am part of a family spanning the world.

I am up up and away.

THE CONNECTION

I am rooted in the arms of the orphans in Rishikesh, in the used tires that support the walls of a new school I helped build in Comalapa, and in the plum trees that line the fields of my grandmother's childhood home in Kurima.

I am fighting for the right to education and food and freedom whether it be in the fields in Thika or in the audience of my Grandmother's Holocaust remembrance presentations.

I am pushing through barriers of time and space and oceans and cultures to make connections, for my grandmother has taught me the importance of personal connection.

I am prancing across continents exercising my feet's freedom.

I am dining with the people of the world- for today they will share their food with me.

I am picking lice to the tune of African spiritual music as my grandmother picked lice in Ravensbrück Concentration Camp to the cadence of violence.

I am singing at the top of my lungs.

I am carrying on my grandmother's legacy of life and light and love, even in darkness.

I am showing myself that the love that people give forever outweighs the Nazi's brutality.

I am a child of the third generation and I have a will to LIVE as strong as my grandmother.

The Holocaust viewed through a child's eyes in two films: *THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS* AND *AU REVOIR, LES ENFANTS*

Katie Gelbart

Katie (grand-daughter of David & Olive Herman and the daughter of Ros and Jeff Gelbart) is in her final year at Sussex University studying French and Spanish. This article is an edited version of one of her final year essays.

Any portrayal of historical events is subject to debate over authenticity and the artist's entitlement to this representation. These considerations are crucial as both of these films are works of fiction; there are no claims for authenticity although the directors have deliberately included elements of verisimilitude. *Goodbye, Children (Au Revoir, Les Enfants*, in the original French) is based on director Malle's experience as a child. Malle acknowledges the subjectivity of portraying personal experience in hindsight, from a child's viewpoint, stating 'memory is not frozen, it's very much alive, it moves, it changes'. The film seeks to convey the universal corruption of humankind: of the Nazis who ruthlessly hunt down children, of the French who collaborate with their German invaders, and even of young Julien, who inadvertently betrays Bonnet's Jewish identity.'

In *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, the Holocaust drives the plot forwards, forcing the characters to make decisions that tear the family apart. Author Boyne's representation of history derives from collective memory; he admits that the real-life circumstances of the Holocaust would have made the friendship between the two young boys unlikely. Although the director adapted authentic propaganda videos and researched costumes to make the film realistic, his knowledge of the Holocaust is second-hand – fact which has already been 'narrativized' several times. Boyne is aware

of the importance of humility in such a sensitive subject area. He states, 'a work of fiction set in the time and place of the Holocaust is contentious... It seemed that the only respectful way to approach the subject was through innocence, with a fable told from the point of view of a rather naive child who couldn't possibly understand the horrors of what he was caught up in. I believe that this naiveté is as close as someone of my generation can get to the dreadfulness of that period'.

This naiveté, and everything it implies, is the most powerful effect of the child's perspective in these films. Children embody innocence and in Holocaust films this demonstrates the utter senselessness of the scape-goating of Jews. The child's perspective illustrates the immorality of the Holocaust by drawing on our own memories of childhood. The presence of children 'make the wrongs of war seem all the more wrong', as 'tears and emotion erupt when the innocent... are seen to suffer' (1). In both films the children are initially portrayed as innocent, naive and fragile; their loss of innocence parallels the increasing presence of the Nazi regime in their lives.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas begins with a quote on childhood and the loss of innocence, followed by a Nazi flag which sets the scene. Enter Bruno: a carefree child, playing with his friends, oblivious to the Nazi violence taking place in the background. We sense the foreboding, understanding that these scenes anticipate the denouement of the film:

the tragic loss of a child at the hands of the Nazi regime. However, the cinematography puts us in Bruno's position, his main concern – moving house and leaving his friends behind – becomes our own. Throughout the film he questions Nazi idealism and actions, illustrating its immorality through illogicality whilst drawing our attention to his childish curiosity. He assumes that the barbed wire is to stop animals escaping, that the numbers on the internees' pyjamas are part of a game and is shocked to discover that Schmuël can't leave the camp because he's Jewish.

In *Goodbye, Children*, Julien shows a similar naiveté. From the start he is powerless, forced to obey adults against his will. The opening scenes – Julien hugging his mother and then wistfully looking out of the window as the train carries him away – prophecy his loss of innocence: as the train takes him from his mother, so too, will his innocence be taken from him. Indeed, when he next sees his mother the war will have further invaded his life, after his friendship with Bonnet leads him to question anti-Semitism and encounter German soldiers in the woods. The scene in the restaurant marks Julien's emotional development, it is the moment when he understands 'what it means to be another person, and a Jewish person at that'. His confusion and desire to understand the inexplicable increase as the film continues, culminating when the German soldiers enter the school and arrest

Père Jean and the Jewish students. Through Julien's eyes we question prejudice against the Jews and experience his struggle to reconcile the dictates of the Nazi regime and his relationship with Bonnet.

War is a time when adults are placed in a child's position, experiencing loss of control, loss of mastery. Filmmakers often use children in war films to suggest that adults have something to learn from what children feel. In both films, the children are powerless victims of adults' wrongdoing, involuntarily at war, and struggling on a personal level in a microcosm of the destruction created by the circumstances. Bruno suffers from his father's poor judgement and indiscriminate obedience, which leads to the family moving house, the start of a fatal chain of events. He asks his tutor how one Jew could be responsible for the nation's collapse; the tutor replies that 'the Jew' refers to 'the entire Jewish race' and tells Bruno that if he found 'a nice Jew' he would 'be the best explorer in the world'. The close-up of Bruno's face shows his barely concealed satisfaction; he has misunderstood the tutor's sarcasm and has taken his answer literally.

Whilst Bruno is a child struggling in an adult's world, Julien is a child in a child's world, safe in the confines of his school. In contrast, Bonnet is wary and secretive; he has already lost his innocence and avoids revealing information about himself: his life depends on concealing his identity. Although neither Bruno nor Julien is Jewish, the viewer

suffers more with them than with their Jewish friends. Bruno and Julien experience moral dilemmas, illustrated through the theme of friendship: whether or not to follow their intuition and be friends with their Jewish counterparts who display no signs of the Nazi stereotype of the Jews, albeit 'against the rules.' In the context of the Holocaust these friendships are dangerous and lead to Bruno and Bonnet's deaths, turning morality upside down to illustrate the immoral nature of this period of European history.

Both films present an original perspective on the Holocaust. Kerner's 'Jew-as-victim motif' is turned upside down as the two Gentile protagonists are portrayed as powerless; although they try to help their friends, everyone suffers as a result (2). Whilst Elsa, Bruno's mother, finds herself torn between her conflicting roles as mother and wife, it is through Bruno's father, Ralph – paradoxical in his attitudes as Nazi commandant and father – that we experience the troubling 'banality of evil'. The ambiguity of his character, and the difficult situation into which it places Bruno, is shown through the child. Bruno questions Schmuël, asking him if his father is 'a good man' whom he never doubts. After seeing the propaganda video, faith in his own father is restored, which he demonstrates by embracing him. This shows the power of Nazi propaganda, illustrated by the effect it has on an innocent child.

In *Goodbye, Children*, Père Jean's unfair actions cause

Joseph to betray the school to the Nazi authorities. Thus the moral focus of the film lies with the priest's 'two crucial decisions: first, to harbour Bonnet and two other Jewish boys under false names; and second, to sack Joseph while not expelling... his accomplices among the pupils – a discrimination whose inequity causes him evident pain, and leads to tragedy' (3). Critic Sanders writes that 'by showing the flaws of each character, Malle places the Nazis on a continuum of human failing', and goes on to explain that 'any of us... could become like them' (4). Even Julien's backward glance – a childish error, either a gesture of reassurance or an involuntary reaction under the pressure of the moment – reveals flaws in his character which ultimately give Bonnet away.

In conclusion, the depiction of the Holocaust in film gives rise to questions of morality and authenticity. Both Malle and Boyne have established their works as fictional pieces, employing the child's perspective as it allows fundamental details to be shown 'from a distance and unclearly'. Although it could be disputed that these films are the best evocations of the Holocaust, as they only focus on a few of the many lives affected, the use of the child's perspective plays on the viewer's sense of nostalgia and perception of innocence, creating emotionally charged scenes and allowing for lack of attention to certain details. The expressive nature of children, not yet socially conditioned to conceal their emotions, is an effective way of making the protagonists'

characters transparent. As viewers, we feel, think and discover the horrors of the Holocaust alongside the child protagonists. We agonize over the evasive answers they

receive to questions of primal importance and experience the collective memory and guilt left in the wake of one of the worst genocides in history. As we identify with

the characters in the films, we understand that we too are flawed, and that the Nazi regime was not evil beyond human comprehension. Rather, it was all too human.

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Telling my Father's Story

Julia Burton

Last year, Karen Pollock from the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) approached me about making a short film for them. It was to be about the Second Generation education programme, where children of survivors go into schools to talk about their parents' experiences.

Initially I was very reluctant as I am not really a 'public' speaker and I certainly didn't want to be filmed doing something I wasn't terribly confident about. But then I watched their appeal film from the previous year and that changed everything. I found the film very powerful and I realised what a worthwhile project it was and that I would have to overcome my insecurities to get this

important message across especially if it would help HET to raise money and awareness of their work and, ultimately, reach more school children up and down the country.

At the beginning of June I met with the film maker, Laura Granditer, who talked me through what was needed - it sounded like a lot: the research, the talk, the power point of slides, the preparation and practice and a final presentation in a school. We agreed at short notice (and with a new puppy on board!) that they would come to my home to start the filming. And so I embarked on the journey of compiling my dad's story to present in schools. I had already

attended several workshops organised by HET on this topic, and was fortunate that my father had already written his story, which was an invaluable resource.

I had begun to assemble images for a Power point presentation and HET supported the process by finding archive photos, maps and other relevant material. I also used some video footage of my father talking about his experiences and HET helped me to insert clips into the presentation as well as a voice over at the end.

The filming started with the research process at my house. My sister came round to help me go through my father's photos and videos of our trip to Auschwitz with him in 1999 and my family's trip to our father's home town

of Munkacs (former Czechoslovakia) in 2008. I started practising my presentation in front of the family and my daughters were quite shocked by much of it as they had not really known much of the detail of my father's story. I also had a practice run at the HET offices, in front of staff who gave me helpful feedback. By then it was July and I felt sure there was no time to find a school, before the school holidays, where I could deliver my first presentation. But through Karen's excellent contacts, she managed to secure a slot at Broomfield school in Enfield where I could be filmed giving my first presentation to a class of year 10 students and who they would also interview before and after my talk.

The day came and I was nervous about standing up in front of a class of kids and opening up so personally about my father and his war time experiences. Fortunately the children were well prepared and had studied the Holocaust beforehand and were really looking forward to my talk. My daughter Emily, also in Year 10, came along on the day, with my husband, Philip.

On the day I realised the practise and familiarity with the story had really paid off and I was no longer nervous and was keen to be heard. I spoke for about an hour and showed some 25 slides - the time went remarkably quickly. I was surprised at how fluently it came after all the practise and I could see how the children were engaged and moved by the account. Afterwards they

explained how hearing one person's life story helped them understand the impact of the Holocaust on a real family. They particularly liked the videos and photos as it brought the story home to them. They asked a few questions in the group, and at the end came up to me to ask many more questions. One girl even gave me a teary eyed hug and said how now she could really imagine what it must have been like.

The film that came out of this experience was used as part of HET's 2012 appeal for funds. In addition, I set up my own JustGiving page and

have managed to raise £2,500 so far which will go towards HET's educational projects and trips to visit Auschwitz. Every sixth former that visits Auschwitz is greatly touched by the experience and if they come home and tell their friends and families and the story is passed on it is a step in the direction of increased tolerance and better understanding. I really hope my children and future generations will benefit from all the good work that HET does and I hope that my film brings them nearer to achieving their goals.

To find out more about HET, go to:
<http://www.het.org.uk>

To see the film, go to:
<http://vimeo.com/29251599>

To go to my Justgiving page:
<http://www.justgiving.com/Julia-Burton>



Julia Burton and her father, the late David Herman.

Agnes Erdos: *Advocates of Exile:* *A history of Orthodox*

Jewish anti-Zionism in Hungary. 2008, VDM Verlag, paperback, 84pp.

Review by
Marilyn Herman

Marilyn is the daughter of the late Abe Herman.

In accordance with the title of her work, Erdos sets out the history of Orthodox Jewish anti-Zionism in Hungary. She is mainly concerned with the question as to why Zionism evoked such controversial responses among Hungarian Jewry. In doing so, she examines the key arguments relating to the issue, and locates the key players: the ultra-Orthodox, the less extreme Orthodox, and the secular sectors. Also, in proceeding with her main objectives, she undertakes much else: she points to the differences of the situations and contexts in Hungary, in relation to and comparison to other countries in the region; she shows how debates and attitudes progressed over 50 years preceding the start of World War II; she points out the heterogeneity of the Jews in Hungary, and how attitudes differed accordingly, as well as focusing in on Orthodoxy, the main subject of her work; she situates her topic within the historically deeper, and geographically wider, and constantly changing contexts of modernisation, secularisation, and debates on emancipation. Finally, she clearly sets out the theological arguments of Orthodoxy against Zionism.

Erdos looks at what characterises the way in which Zionism was received in Hungary in distinction to its reception in neighbouring countries in the Eastern European diaspora during

the first fifty years of its history. She points out that while in most countries in the European diaspora, Zionism was a minority movement, Zionism was significantly more marginal in Hungary. She attributes this to two main factors: firstly, a "passivist theological interpretation of Judaism", and secondly, to "Magyarisation", and Hungarian patriotism which were distributed across all sectors of the Jewish population of Hungary.

One of her most significant contributions to the subject is her scouring the archives in order to peruse various Jewish Hungarian journals spanning some 50 years, to give a picture of the situation as it changed over the years, in title freshness of its discursiveness and contemporary dialogue.

She points out that in Hungary, Jews were more profoundly affected by processes of "modernisation and secularization" which took place in the 19th century, than elsewhere in Europe. In fact, she differentiates the two major Jewish groups in Hungary on the basis of the severity with which they were affected by these processes: the Neologues, and the Orthodox. Within Orthodoxy, she points

to a variation in degrees of conservatism, from the ultra-Orthodox among whom she classifies the hassidim, and the neo-Orthodox.

Erdos traces the bumpy road of the Jews to emancipation with its bends and dips according to the contemporary attitudes of the Hungarian nobility – inextricably linked, it seems, to those of the political elite – these two groups must have overlapped considerably in composition.

By 1867, Erdos informs us, Jews in Hungary had chosen "emancipation", which involved relegating Judaism from being a matter of an "all-encompassing identity", to one of "ancestral religion". Then, in the 1870s, anti-emancipatory ideology started emerging as part of a more international anti-Semitic wave sweeping Europe at the time.

Erdos briefly outlines the views of various Jewish sectors – some of whom overlapped with the Orthodox – towards Zionism. Magyarised Jews, for example, were in denial about the failure of assimilation, and attacked Zionism on the grounds that by claiming that assimilation was not a possibility, one was sharing ground with anti-Semites.

Erdos sets out a central paradox that "... while its first precursors and founders were Hungarians, it was also among Hungarian Jews that the movement met the fiercest opposition." However,

for the main part, she tells us that the Zionist movement met with indifference in Hungary, and was seen as irrelevant to their experience. She does also however point out that the more recently settled East Hungarian Jews, whose Hungarian identity was not strongly established, were more amenable to Zionism, and it seems that it was essentially in West Hungary that the lack of interest existed. Moreover, even though there was little mention of Zionism in the Jewish Hungarian journals of the late 1920s, it is significant that in Zaido Ujsag (Jewish Journal), there were regular travel reports from Palestine – something that indicates that there may well have been more interest than Erdos gives credit to. Nevertheless, Erdos explains the difference between the situation in Hungary and the rest of the Diaspora: Hungarian Jews did not experience the mass impoverishment and the degree of anti-Semitism suffered by Jews in some other parts of the Diaspora.

Erdos's position is that Zionism in Hungary was viewed as a means of preserving one's Jewish identity in a modernized context. It involved a shift from defining oneself in terms of religion, to defining oneself in terms of nationality. Thus, it presented itself as an alternative means of self-definition to Neologue or Orthodox. Zionism represented emancipation without the need for national assimilation.

Erdos clearly depicts the extreme, unconditional patriotism prevailing among

a significant proportion of the Hungarian Jewish population, independent of the degree of anti-Semitism. She finds the explanation for such vehement patriotism in the "simultaneous emergence of Jewish emancipation and Hungarian nationalism." However badly affected by anti-Semitism they may have been, they did not automatically look to Zionism as a solution, and in fact actively rejected it "However outraged they were by anti-Semitic manifestations, they rejected the solution offered by the Zionists, i.e. to re-define themselves, not as Hungarians but as a separate ethnicity." Erdos therefore paints a picture of a direct conflict between assimilation and Zionism: Zionism in this context is only supported, or given validity, to the extent to which assimilation is or is not possible. She shows that it was not until anti-Semitism took on such extreme manifestations as in the Holocaust that Zionism won the general support of Hungarian Jews.

The second Zionist Congress revealed that the religious authorities were not included in plans for a Jewish State. At this point: "The Eastern European rabbis went up in arms against Herzlian Zionism...". The rabbis generally – in Eastern Europe as well as Hungary – saw Zionism as a threat to their authority, and to tradition as a whole. Russian and Polish rabbis issued a publication condemning Zionism. The Orthodox banned all organizations that encouraged or supported settlement in Palestine. This ban was issued on Mizrahi and Agudah, but not on the secular Zionist organization,

which was obviously not taken as seriously. Those perceived as a threat were those that had the potential of attracting defectors from Orthodoxy.

An attempt to establish Yishuv Eretz Israel was made by Rabbi Klein of Eisenstadt following the Balfour Declaration (1917). Objections rang out from the Orthodox sector, on the grounds that "the settlement of Eretz Israel should under no circumstances be realised through physical work."

One of most significant rabbis in his opposition to the attempts of the Orthodox to establish settlement societies was Munkaczer Rebbe Hayyim Elazar Shapira. Erdos clearly depicts the intense animosity and hatred of this Rebbe towards the settlers, and his wish to denigrate them, and to impede their progress. The Rebbe was pro-active in opposing the pamphlet of the Yishuv. This is, of particular interest to me because of the impact it had on the fate of my family. It is also one more aspect of a theme recurring in Erdos's work of the observant Zionists being considered more threatening than secular Jews.

Erdos dedicates a significant section of her work to explaining the theological arguments held by the Orthodoxy against Zionism. Although the main points of their objection were the secular nature of the Zionist movement and the irreligious behaviour of settlers, their objections were more extensive than this. Erdos sums up these theological arguments against Zionism as the "basic approach of ultra-Orthodox religiosity to

humanity's role in history, according to which all action and initiative had to take place on God's part while the task of man was to accept the present situation as a manifestation of the Divine will." She shows that the rabbis veered between leniency and stringency according to their view of their flock's behaviour: if they feared that they were taking too much initiative: they "prescribed total passivity as

the only correct behaviour, in order to hold back their flock from excluding the Divine from their world view."

Erdos has produced a well-researched piece of work – one which opens up many areas of discussion that it is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this book to go into. It provides a clear and vibrant picture of the debates and disputes occurring amongst the different sectors of Orthodoxy and other

Jewry in Hungary, and their contextual situation within Hungary, and Europe. Erdos's work is enlightening in many respects and I am left with some answers to the question which I think my father asked himself from the time of his survival: how it could be that their religious leader could "lead his people to the slaughter", when the option had existed to settle in Palestine and be saved.

Windermere Boys Exhibition - Manchester

Maurice Helfgott

I had the opportunity to visit the exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Manchester entitled "From Auschwitz to Ambleside", produced by Trevor Avery. I went with my wife, Danielle, and two sons, Sam and Nicky. The exhibition uses documents, artifacts and photographs to bring to life the story of the 300 boys who were flown to Windermere from Theresienstadt on Tuesday, 14th of August 1945.

One of the most interesting documents is a report from HM Immigration Office Liverpool, dated 18th August, 1945. Writing in a clear and factual style this report describes the practical logistics of expecting and then receiving 11 aeroplanes in an afternoon, full of what were described as "a party of Jewish refugees from Prague". The Inspector said that: "Fortunately, it was a very fine day, because it was impossible to check the papers and medical situation of the children inside the hut that had been allotted without electricity and we

therefore organised a table to be set up on the grass beside a path." The medical inspection arrangements were somewhat nebulous and he precisely describes the way that the first plane landed at 5 pm and the 10th at 8:45 pm, each with a specific number of adults and children. An amusing extract: "We (and the other staff concerned) were without a meal from lunchtime until we arrived back at our hotel at 11:30 pm. We had, it is true, been given a cup of tea and a cake by the WVS at about 4:30 pm."

There is also a list with each of the 300 boys names on it, with country of nationality and their dates of birth. My dad, Ben's date of birth is noted as 12.20.1930; like many of the boys he gave a date of birth which suggested he was a bit younger than he was! A touching extract.

The combination of photos and materials makes for an enjoyable and interesting exhibition and is on at

Manchester's Jewish Museum until 31st May until 2012.

Trevor Avery continues his sterling work and wrote to me:

We are currently trying to track down the Immigration Officer in archives in Liverpool, just to see if his family are still around. We are also tracking down the families of the Stirling aircraft crews who brought the Boys over. We have located the career records of the aircraft themselves, and they are a history including Arnhem, Special Ops, D-Day.... They had been converted to freight transport in 1943 (taken away from bombing duties).

We have a huge children's art exhibition across the region in the summer "dedicated to all those children who were, and are, denied a happy childhood through cruelty, hatred and intolerance".

Children from throughout Cumbria and Poland will be showing their version of

"Paradise" as a direct link to the Boys description of the Lake District as "Paradise". Hopefully it will be a regular project.

The development of the Groves Library and our Lake District Holocaust Project is now being worked up into a five year strategy involving regional and local authorities, and ourselves. It will be a fitting commemoration of the link between the Lake District

and the Boys with permanent exhibition of their story, and archives, and a gallery to exhibit temporary exhibitions relevant to the project.

Recently a chap donated some wonderful sculptures to our project. They were commissioned using funds he had received from the government when art works stolen from his family in Germany (his family were all killed, though this chap's

parents had been children sent to safety in 1934) were discovered in the government art collection.

He commissioned the sculptures in memory of his grandparents and, although his story does not have a direct link to the Boys, he and his family were touched by their story. It is all very moving, and unexpected.

Another Space

Trevor Avery, Director

Another Space is an education charity that produces projects at the heart of the community and organises The Lake District Holocaust Project.

Visitors to the pretty little village of Windermere are surprised to come across The Lake District Holocaust Project, nestled in the fading grandeur of Windermere Library, a former country house that sits in the centre of the village.

The project is inspired by the story of three hundred Jewish children who arrived in the Lake District from Eastern Europe in August 1945. During the time the children were in the Lake District the library building was still in private ownership, and an act of generosity saw it handed over to the people of Cumbria shortly afterwards.

It now plays host to an archive, gallery space, education initiative and a permanent exhibition called From Auschwitz to Ambleside, all established to commemorate the remarkable connection between the Lake District and one of the defining moments of human history, namely the Holocaust.

In 2005 I had spent time listening to local Windermere

people reminiscing about Windermere in wartime, and about the three hundred Jewish children who lived amongst them in 1945.

We wondered what had happened to the Jewish children after Windermere and set about trying to discover their story.

Arrangements were made for us to meet with some of the Boys, and in late 2005 we waited anxiously in the Midland Hotel in Manchester for their arrival. We need not have been concerned because from the moment Mayer Hersh, Jack Aisenberg and Sam Laskier walked through the door they made us feel totally at ease. We spent a wonderful afternoon with them, an afternoon that was full of fun, humour and goodwill. We were immediately struck by how full of life they were, and how welcoming.

We knew how inspirational their story was, and we also knew that the connection between the Lake District and these remarkable survivors had to be commemorated. Given that my colleagues and I organise an education charity it seemed that the Boys' story had what was required to teach young people in Cumbria about the unimaginable tragedy of the Holocaust, and also about the life enriching spirit of survival that these Boys personified.

We set about researching how the children came to be in Windermere. We met with Ben Helfgott in London, read Sir Martin Gilbert's book "The Boys: Triumph Over Adversity", and interviewed many of the Boys and their families. We scoured archives in Cumbria, London and abroad to uncover whatever we could about the children's journey from Eastern Europe to Britain, and their stay in Windermere.

The reaction of the visitors to the exhibition in Windermere can be seen in the positive comments

written on the pages of the comments book, which can be emotionally overwhelming at times. It is striking to see the addresses where the visitors have come from, and they include England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, Wales, France, Holland, Germany, Spain, Poland, Israel, India, China, Japan, Australia, United States, and many more besides.

As well as showing how far people travel to visit the Lake District, it is also very moving to see how the story of "the Boys" affects people from so many diverse countries. We have worked with the BBC, Manchester Jewish Museum and with museums and archives in Europe, and are all fascinated by the Boys story.

The project goes from strength to strength and we are working with several partners and organisations in what is a local, national and international initiative. There are plans to expand the project and Windermere Library thereby cementing forever the remarkable connection between the Lake District and an inspiring story of survival.

Party of Jewish Survivors from Prague

H.M. Chief Inspector

Word being received that the expected movement of three hundred children from Prague was likely to take place on Tuesday, 14th inst., the first plane being expected to land at Crosby-on-Eden at 2 p.m., I proceeded to Carlisle on the afternoon of the 13th, accompanied by Mr. Slade, arrangements, having been made for Mr. Bain from Liverpool and Mr. Duthie from Heysham to travel up the next morning.

It was confirmed by telephone next morning from the aerodrome that the first of eleven planes was expected at 2 p.m. but that there was some doubt as to whether all the machines would make it as the weather was worsening. There being very little in the way of transport facilities at the aerodrome the Adjutant regretted he was unable to send a car for us; there is a sparse bus service from Carlisle running near the aerodrome and it was necessary to wait 2 hours and 10 minutes until 11.50 a.m. for the next bus.

The aerodrome was found to be a large one and the buildings (huts) temporary

and well dispersed, there being literally miles between them. The Adjutant kindly drove us, in his car from his office to the Mess, where we were given lunch; after this we walked three-quarters of a mile to the Control Tower where we learnt that the first plane had given an expected time of arrival at 3.45 p.m. From here we were given a lift in a van. to the hut where the passengers were to be examined, a distance of about one-and-a-half miles in yet another direction.

The Station Commander had detailed Fl. Lieut. Balfour to make the arrangements required. The hut allotted was one of five rooms, with a door into the middle room and another at the end. This hut was expected to accommodate the R.A.F. medical officer, ourselves, Security, Customs and the W.V.S. canteen. There was no electricity or other means of lighting laid on to the hut.

Fortunately it was a very fine day. The Customs at once decided to set up their table outside the hut. Seeing the

impossibility of checking the children inside the hut I arranged for a table to be set up on the grass beside a path. I asked the medical officers whether they thought they could do their inspection in the open air taking any child needing a particular examination into the hut; to this suggestion they agreed at once.

Miss Joan Stiebel, the assistant secretary of the Jewish Refugee Committee, with helpers, was present to look after the passengers. The Army provided buses and lorries to transfer the passengers and baggage to Windermere by road, the original intention of using trains having been abandoned.

The medical inspection arrangements were somewhat nebulous. The R.A.F. medical officer was interested but the Air Ministry instructions on the medical inspection of passengers arriving at R.A.F. aerodromes seem not to have reached this aerodrome. To some extent this may be accounted for by the fact that the M.O. was there on relief only, yet he had never seen the

instructions. I was able to show him those sent to us for which he was grateful. The medical officer for the district in which the hostel to which the passengers were proceeding is situated was represented by Mrs. Eric Crewdson, J. P. of Kendal. The Customs had independently informed the Medical Officer of Health of the Border Rural District in whose area the aerodrome is situated. He attended and assisted the R.A.F. M.O..

The W.V.S. had to use two rooms of the hut in which to set up their tables and urns.

I took the middle room with the entrance door for our examination room for the adults; Messrs. Bain and Duthie functioning there with the Security Officers.

The first plane arrived at 5 p.m. The two adults and thirty children were mustered and escorted to our centre in an orderly group. They were checked by Mr. Slade with the list and seen by the Medical Officers. The adults passed into our room, the children filed past the Customs Officers and then into the W.V.S. canteen for food and drink, out again into the open air to eat and await transport. They were put into a bus and were away before the second plane arrived at 5.50 p.m. Unfortunately, this (the first) plane carried a stowaway, a boy of fifteen, who claimed to be a Polish Jew and gave his name as Icek KOROTNICKI. There was some evidence which suggested he might be a Soviet citizen. The Medical inspection was based on knowledge that the children had been in quarantine for three weeks. The presence of this un-quarantined boy

upset calculations and it was desired by the Medical Officers to segregate him for observation. Miss Stiebel was ready to accept responsibility for him.

The planes began to arrive at shorter intervals, the third and fourth together at 6.20 p.m. and congestion appeared inevitable, there being over thirty-five persons on each machine. However, I was able, with the assistance of all concerned, to keep the passengers in groups and despite the lack of facilities, everything was kept orderly. Some of the adults were elderly people in the sixties and seventies and these were provided with seats and given food and drink by the W.V.S. until they could be dealt with.

The following table shows the times of arrival of the machines and the passengers on each, and it will be seen how the examinations had to be speeded up in order to keep pace.

| | | Adults | Children |
|------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 1st | 5.00 p.m | 2 | 30 |
| 2nd | 5.50 p.m | 2 | 30 |
| 3rd) | 6.20 p.m) | 4 | 29 |
| 4th) | 6.20 p.m) | 4 | 28 |
| 5th | 7.00 p.m | 3 | 32 |
| 6th | 7.05 p.m | 4 | 29 |
| 7th | 7.30 p.m | 4 | 28 |
| 8th | 7.35 p.m | 3 | 28 |
| 9th | 7.55 p.m | 6 | 38 |
| 10th | 8.45 p.m | 3 | 28 |
| | | — | — |
| | | 35 | 300 |
| | | — | — |

The last adult passenger was cleared at 9.10 p.m. when it was quite dark in the hut, and all the passengers remaining on the airfield were ready to leave by 9.15 p.m., but the Army had

miscalculated and there was insufficient transport. There were some thirty children and two adults left and no bus remaining. The adults and half the children were put into an Army lorry, the only vehicle remaining, which left at 9.30 p.m. Mr Duthie went by the previous bus in order to get his train for Heysham at Carlisle. Mr Slade left at 9.30 p.m. in the Security van for Carlisle. Mr Bain and myself, Mrs Nathan of UnRRA (who came over in charge of the movement), Miss Stiebel and her assistant and some fifteen boys were left on the airfield in the darkness. We were told by the Army Captain in charge that we would have to wait only about five minutes. A little later it was learned that he had to get transport from a depot at Carlisle, and it was turned 10.30 before a lorry came to pick us up. Although it had been a fine warm day, it was very cold and windy on the aerodrome at dusk and

we were all very cold. We actually left the airfield at 10.45 and Mr Bain and I left the lorry at Carlisle.

We (and the other staffs concerned) were without a meal from lunchtime until

we arrived back at our hotel at 11.30 p.m. We had, it is true, been given a cup of tea and a cake by the W.V.S. at about 4.30 p.m.

It was understood that all passengers, including those in the last lorry, were to be conveyed by road to the Hostel at Troutbeck Bridge, Windermere, that night.

Eleven of the adults were for employment at the Hostel, to look after the children, seven being females and four males, all Polish except a married couple of German nationality. The remainder were 16 Germans, 5 Czechs and 1 Pole, sixteen being females and six males; all have come to join relatives already in U.K. One Czech female, Mrs KIPPEL, was accompanied by her husband who, although a Czech, is serving as a Captain in the British Army and had obtained leave to go to Austria to search for his wife. Many of the refugees were elderly people, three being over 70 (one 77), three between 60 and 70 and six

between 55 and 60.

It was originally intended that 23 'planes should be used, carrying about sixteen passengers each, but weather conditions were such that it was found possible to send only eleven of the machines that day, and in order to complete the movement it was decided to put double the number of passengers in each 'plane, one actually carrying 44, but in this case many of the children were very small. Ten machines actually arrived with passengers, the eleventh being used for carrying the baggage. This last machine was unable to complete the journey and had to return to the continent (Holland) for the night. All the passengers having been accounted for, I decided it was unnecessary to visit the aerodrome again next day.

The 300 children, mostly boys and mostly between 12 and 15, shown in regard to age and nationality are as follows:

These figures are liable to correction, the particulars being those supplied by Mrs Nathan of UnRRA who organised and accompanied the party.

The adults were 1 British subject (Mrs Nathan), 1 member of the British Forces (Captain Kippel, a Czech) and 33 aliens.

None of the adults had visas. Those going to the hostel for employment were landed conditionally "to register at once with the Police, engage in employment at Ambleside Hostel, Windermere, not to leave that employment without the Ministry of Labour, etc., and does not remain in the U.K. longer than six months". I.B.23(A)s were issued in most cases.

The children were landed conditionally on a nominal roll "on condition that they register at once with the Police and that they emigrate from the U.K. on completion of their training.

I conclude by repeating that it was fortunate that the

| Born in | Poles | Germans | Austrians | Czechs | Slovaks | Uncertain ? Soviet |
|---------|-------|---------|-----------|--------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1928 | — | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| 1929 | — | — | — | 4 | — | — |
| 1930 | 161 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 1931 | 53 | 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 1932 | 26 | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1933 | 8 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1934 | — | 4 | — | — | — | — |
| 1935 | 2 | 2 | — | — | — | — |
| 1936 | 1 | 4 | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1937 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1938 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1939 | 1 | 1 | 2 | — | — | 1 |
| 1940 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1941 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 1942 | 1 | 5 | 1 | — | — | — |
| | 253 | 27 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 3 |

weather was fine; had it been wet the accommodation provided was useless in the circumstances of the landing.

The co-operation between all the parties concerned was excellent and the behaviour of the children

was exceptionally good, all instructions being immediately obeyed.

18.8.45

SECTION V THE ANNUAL LEONARD G. MONTEFIORE LECTURE

Montefiore Memorial Lecture

William Tyler

1941 - 70 YEARS LATER

1941 - The world is at war. Well not quite true. Britain and its Empire are at war with Nazi Germany. France had surrendered in June of the previous year. The Soviet Union had entered into the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, back in August 1939. Japan, although at war in China, and by the beginning of August in Indo-China, is yet to launch its war across the entire Pacific Region. The United States is yet to be bombed into this wider war by the Japanese at Pearl Harbour.

In Britain it feels very much as though we are alone. The disasters in Norway and the retreat from Dunkirk now lie in the past, as does the victory in The Battle of Britain. The blitz of our cities, begun the previous year, continues with the same intensity in this new year of 1941 and the threat of invasion still hovers over us.

Writing in his diary on 1st January 1941, E J Rusdale, Curator of The Castle Museum in Colchester, observes: "A year ago today I wrote of a prospect of unrelieved gloom. I said it would be a miracle if New Year's Day 1941 found me

alive and at Colchester Castle. That miracle has come about.... The great dangers now are (a) bombing or machine-gunning by solitary 'planes in daylight (b) bombs dropped by 'planes returning from London and (c) an invasion. This last is always in our minds, although hardly anyone mentions it, except in joke."

The wartime spirit survives in Coventry, with Mrs Milburn, despite the blitz of 14th November 1940, writing in her diary: "The new year dawns with hope and we look forward to progress towards peace... At 10 a.m. I went down to the service at Berkswell and was home again, and renewed by 10.40... then I did little jobs for the Institute party and arranged a fancy dress for myself.... The party began at 2.30 p.m. and there was a prize for the most amusing and the prettiest costumes, and I was very pleased to win the latter."

It is a matter of economics, however, which exercises our Government. Our ability to trade is being seriously undermined, and thus we are not earning the money to pay for American armaments. The United States demanded the handing over of our

remaining gold reserves and the liquidation of British assets in America. But in December 1940, Roosevelt had come to our aid with the idea of Lend-Lease. This was passed by The House in February 1941 and by The Senate the following month.

A new Front was opened up after Mussolini declared war on 10th June 1940, and in November the Italian fleet had been caught by British planes whilst in port at Taranto. Mussolini lost half his battleship strength. A welcome British victory.

Following the Italian invasion of Egypt from Libya, General Wavell drove the Italians back to Tobruk, which surrendered in January 1941. Another hard earned victory.

British arms followed up their success in North Africa against the Italians by capturing the entire Italian East African Empire - Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somaliland - by early summer.

The Italian invasion of Greece was an ill advised move and was a serious blow to the Germans who had to divert troops there to support Mussolini's failing army. Yet Germany defeats Greece and their British allies, the last British troops surrendering

on 28th April. Yugoslavia had surrendered to Germany some eleven days previously.

On the 9th February Churchill made a world broadcast. He made the most of Lend-Lease which fell far short, however, of full American involvement in the war when he began by saying: "...the fate of this war is going to be settled by what happens on the oceans, in the air and – above all – in this island. It seems now to be certain that the government and people of the United States intend to supply us with all that is necessary for victory."

He next turns to the issue of invasion: "...the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, has warned us all that Hitler may be forced by the strategic, economic and political stresses in Europe, to try to invade these islands in the near future."

Churchill finished the broadcast with these words: "We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle, nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

The Blitz on Britain - London: 10th May 1941: "May 10, 1941 was the most devastating night of the London Blitz. In a final great raid ...the Luftwaffe took advantage of a full moon and a low tide to start almost 2,500 fires in the capital. Nearly 1,500 people lost their lives and 5,000 houses were destroyed.... And though no one in Britain realised it that night, it marked the end of the Blitz." (Joshua Levine, *Forgotten Voices*).

London was not alone in

facing the might of the Luftwaffe. In Bristol, between 24th November 1940 and 11th April 1941, there were 77 air raids, nearly 1,300 people killed, and nearly 90,000 buildings damaged. Of one raid, the Lord Mayor said, "The City of Churches has in one night become the city of ruins".

And 1941 saw the holocaust gaining dreadful momentum. As early as 1922 Hitler is reported to have said to a journalist, "Once I really am in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews".

A short catalogue begins to tell the horror: January 1941, the first mass killing of Jews took place in Romania. In April, over 3,500 Jews were rounded up in Paris. In June, the puppet Nazi state of Croatia ordered all Jews to wear the letter 'Z'. In the same month 12,000 Jews in Dubno, Poland, were handed over to the Ukrainians to do with them as they pleased. Meanwhile in Lithuania nearly 2,500 Jews were massacred. This deeply horrifying story, almost beyond words, continued to worsen month by month. In September all German Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David. The same month nearly 34,000 Jews were massacred in Kiev in just three days. October saw the infamous Birkenau extermination camp being constructed. The same month witnessed the first of numerous deportations of Jews from Germany to Eastern Europe. 16,000 Jews were massacred in Odessa on 15th of the month. The final month of the year saw up to 30,000 Jews shot in the forest outside Riga.

The wider war now encompassed fighting in Eastern Europe and in North Africa, followed after June 22nd with the German invasion of The USSR. The invasion, codenamed Operation Barbarossa, began on 22nd June. Within two months the Germans had seized over 500,000 square mile of Russian territory. On 30th August the Siege of Leningrad began. By October 16th the Germans were within 60 miles of Moscow. But, unlike Napoleon's, Hitler's armies were unable to take the city, and on 27th November the Russians began the counter-attack which eventually would take The Red Army to Berlin itself.

In North Africa the German Afrika Korps, under Rommel, pushed the British and Imperial troops back towards Egypt from the end of March onwards, but they were unable to break the stubborn British resistance at Tobruk. A British offensive, led by Wavell's replacement General Auchinleck, in turn pushed the Germans and Italians back from November 1941. But Rommel's counter attack pushed the British back, and this time Tobruk did fall to the Axis Powers. The Germans advanced over the Egyptian border and were only held 90 miles short of Alexandria.

Matters didn't look particularly improving from a British point of view despite the involvement of Russia in the war against Germany. The signs from The Far East as Imperial Japan began to gear up for total war were not promising either. As early as 16th

January the American Admiral, Bellinger, was warning his Government that a Japanese attack on The American Pacific Fleet's base at Pearl Harbour was a possibility. Bellinger was the senior Naval Air Commander at Pearl Harbour when the Japanese did finally attack on 7th December.

Churchill continued to attempt to put pressure on The United States. On the 14th August Roosevelt went further than ever before by signing The Atlantic Charter. Not a declaration of war but rather a declaration of peace aims and a statement of democratic principles.

On 10th November, a month before the attack on Pearl Harbour, Churchill promised to join The USA 'within the hour' in the event that it came under attack from Japan. And, on 7th

December the attack came just before 8 o'clock in the morning. America was now in the war and declared war on Imperial Japan; this was followed by Germany declaring war on The United States.

On the same day as the attack on Pearl Harbour Japanese troops landed on The Malay Peninsula. Three days later The Prince of Wales and The Repulse were sunk in Malayan waters by Japanese aircraft. Churchill later commented, "In all the war, I never received a more direct shock."

On 22nd December Churchill arrived in Washington for talks, and on 26th December addressed a joint meeting of Congress. He suffered a heart attack that same evening when trying to open a window in his White House bedroom.

The war is to continue for nearly four years; but Mrs Milburn, up there in The Midlands, has survived 1941 and is quietly confident, "And what of the year that is fleeting fast to its end? In spite of huge losses, undreamt-of catastrophes and setbacks, it has been a wonderful year."

We carried on, we did our bit. We dug for victory, we made do and mended, we did what had to be done.

Our Front Line is our island itself, as Churchill had said after the Fall of France the previous year: "And now it has come to us to stand alone in the breach". We had stood alone at the beginning of 1941, we had survived against all the odds, and we were now, as the year drew to a close, no longer alone. It felt that little bit better.

SECTION VI CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR BEN

Judith Sherman

I have read the Journal cover to cover. I love the feel of the smooth rich paper and clear print. The photographs provide a continuing visual story of the group - which is unfortunately being diminished by the loss of some and fortunately enlarged by the addition of second and third generation members as well as interested friends. Unavoidable life stages events and enrichments. I am impressed with the quality and range of content. Helpful information, i.e., re Claims Conference and poignant personal narratives. I think the Journal encour-

aged and helped many people to break silence and become public witnesses - to the benefit of self and others.

The Holocaust is unquestionably the most reported event in History. (deniers take note!) and the story is unending. The journal is adding important first hand information to Holocaust History. And now the Second and Third Generation are bearing witness to the witness.

My family is so pleased and honored to be among the contributors. At this stage five of our family members have been included in the Journal. And more are lining

up to do so. Writings of Second and Third Generation further encourages this group to read the Journal and elicits further interest.

On behalf of our family I thank you and your committee for your work. It bears results, it continues to connect us to each other and others to us. Connections and continuity. Who is more aware of these essentials than Survivors?

Shalom
Judith and on behalf of
Robert - husband; Ora
Daughter; Ilana and Ariel -
Grandchildren
18/06/2011

Alfred Huberman

Loved and admired by everyone who met him, from his darling wife of 56 years to a casual acquaintance, Alfred made an immediate and lasting impression.

Born in Pulawy Poland, the only boy with five sisters, he had the most wonderful family life, shattered by the outbreak of the Second World War. At the age of 13 he was torn away from his family and thrust in to the centre of the Nazi Holocaust. His war was spent in the horrific world of five slave labour and concentration camps – Skarzysko, Czestochowa, Buchenwald, Rhemsdorf, Leitmeritz and, following a death march, ended up in Theresienstadt where he was liberated by the Russians.

Malnourished and suffering from TB, he was liberated from the Terizin Concentration camp and given sanctuary by the British Government who agreed for 1,000 Jewish orphans to come to England. Alfred was one of only 732 who could be found. This group were and are still known as 'The Boys'.

He began the search for his family and discovered that

they had all been murdered. This was his perception until he placed an announcement in a Yiddish newspaper in France. An uncle attending a funeral in Paris noticed the announcement and informed the surviving members of his family. He received a telegram from his eldest sister Idessa "your sister is alive living in Paris". He was reunited with his eldest sister Idessa, which he described as his personal miracle. Her legacy provided him with two wonderful nieces and their families of whom he was so very proud.

As a result of this "miraculous" find, he discovered some distant relatives in Brighton. This is why he settled in Brighton and married Shirley. He and Shirley were inseparable, being married for 55 years. They were soul mates and best friends. Shirley's love and dedication showed no bounds, caring for Alfred with unbridled determination right up to his death.

He worked tirelessly and built his very successful tailoring business. Having arrived as an orphaned

refugee, he built a wonderful family, with three children, Caroline, Maurice and Brayan, who he encouraged to achieve so much, along with six grandchildren and a warm, extended family.

A loving, caring, thoughtful and, above all, extremely sensible man, with a marvellous sense of humour and an intelligence way beyond his meagre schooling. He cycled, played tennis and football and won medals for table tennis in the County League. He had an exceptional talent for languages and the written word.

Despite his early life experiences, he was never bitter, made many friends, only seeing the best in people. He overcame many serious illnesses, and maintained his zest for life. Shirley's love and dedication showed no bounds caring for her lovely Alfie!

He said only a few days before he died – "I may be a survivor but I am not immortal". He may no longer be with us but his influence, inspiration and legacy will survive.

He was indeed a true 'Survivor'.

Israel (Krulik) Wilder

Born 3rd December 1928, Piotrkow, Poland.
Died 24th May 2011, Hertfordshire, England

Simon Wilder

My father was born eleven years before the outbreak of World War II in the town of Piotrkow in central Poland. It had a population of around 55,000, about half of whom were Jewish. The family's small apartment had no running water or sanitation and no luxuries. His father, Lajb, who sold hosiery in the town's market, was active in the Bund, a socialist political movement. On 1st September, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. With bombs falling all around them, the family hid in a cellar. After two days of this, Lajb decided they should escape to the East. They got as far as Radom, about 140km away, before the German army caught up with them. They returned to Piotrkow to find the town under the Nazi boot and on 1st November, they were moved into the newly established ghetto, the first Jewish ghetto in Poland.

Krulik, still not twelve years old, earned money smuggling cigarettes into the ghetto, then selling them on the streets. One day, while standing on his regular corner, a Gestapo officer with a large black Alsatian grabbed him, and told him to run. My father ran. His nickname 'Krulik', is Polish for 'rabbit', given to him because he could run quickly. He ran.

On another occasion, six men from the Gestapo caught him with smuggled cigarettes. He was sure they

would shoot him, but they didn't; instead they formed a circle and kicked him from one man to the other.

Lajb, not allowed to work in the market anymore, found work in the Hortensja glass factory. He also worked at home, making armbands with yellow stars of David that all Jewish people over the age of twelve had to wear. In August 1942, my father, along with his lifelong friend Ben Helfgott, began working in the same glass factory, where they hoped they would be protected from deportation.

On 14th October 1942, 22,000 Jews from Piotrkow were taken in cattle trucks to the death camps, leaving only 2,400 in the ghetto. Many people, including Israel's mother Chaja and his older sister Basia, tried to hide, but were soon found by the Germans who were helped by the Jewish police. They were sent firstly to the synagogue, then to Tomaszow Mazowiecki, 28 km away, and then to Treblinka, where they were murdered as part of the 'liquidation' of the town.

During the next few weeks, terror reigned as Jews were killed randomly, brutally, without reason. An announcement was made that anyone that had evaded deportation could register to be allowed to stay in the ghetto. One day, at a checkpoint on the way home from the factory, the Germans selected twenty-five of the smallest boys, including

Krulik, to be taken to the synagogue. Five hundred of those who had registered were also there.

Lajb pleaded with Dr Michlfried - one of the volkdeutsche directors - to persuade the Gestapo to save those boys. Three days later the synagogue doors opened, and all the twenty-five names were called out. They were released back to the ghetto. (Two of them, Harry Spiro and Gary Winogrodski, have been life-long friends of my father). Everyone left in the synagogue was taken to the forest and murdered.

In July 1943, my father and Lajb were still together, working eight-hour shifts in the glass factory, living in a small room with twelve other men. The Germans had shut down the ghetto. Everyone not working in a factory had been taken to the concentration camps of Blizin or Ostrowiec.

In November 1944, with the Russians advancing from the East, the Germans closed the factories. Lajb and my father were sent to work in the ammunition factory at Chestochowa, but after a few weeks they were transported to Buchenwald. His number was 12070. The new arrivals were stripped naked in the snow before being herded into a large shower room. Many people were screaming and crying - by now they knew about the killing methods of the Nazis. But this time the shower room was actually for showering.

Their hair was shaved off, and they were sent to be disinfected, where their genitals were painfully scrubbed. They were given striped trousers and sent to the barracks.

Krulik was paralysed with fear by the horrors that he saw. He was lucky to have his father still with him, still looking after him. After a few days he found a job in the kitchens. He stole food to keep him and Lajb alive, but soon they were separated when Lajb was sent to a concentration camp nearby.

In March 1945, my father recognized a skeletal figure lying on the Appel Platz. It was his father. He managed to smuggle some food to Lajb, but in a few days the Germans began to move the younger inmates on. He tried to take Lajb with him but the guards wouldn't allow it. He had no choice but to leave his father to perish in Buchenwald.

He was marched to the train station, loaded onto a cattle truck along with a few thousand others. The trucks were open and bitterly cold. The journey was slow, the death train stopping every few miles. Occasionally they were allowed off to receive a thin soup. Every morning they threw the dead out, making room for the living. It took four weeks to arrive at Theresienstadt, in Czechoslovakia.

On 8th May, 1945, the day after they'd arrived, they were still on the train when they were liberated by the Russians.

Krulik was hospitalized with typhus for a month, but then rejoined the other boys. Later he told me how generous the Czechs had

been to the survivors, giving them the food, warmth and friendship that they had been denied for so long.

In June 1945 the British Home Office offered to bring in a thousand teenage orphans of the Holocaust. After some searching, only 732 could be found, including some three hundred children from Theresienstadt. There were a few girls - it had been much harder for girls to survive the death camps - but they called themselves 'The Boys', bound together for life by their experiences during the war.

Krulik was first sent to a hostel near Windermere. My father was given his own room, a bed and blankets. Luxuries! At meals the children stuffed food into their pockets - they couldn't believe there would be another meal coming. They went boating and to the cinema, walking and sightseeing, and began to recuperate from the years of slavery and sadism. From there twenty of the boys were taken to a hostel thirty miles from Glasgow, where they were taught English and other subjects to help with their new lives.

Krulik started an apprenticeship in watch-making in Glasgow, but in 1948 he decided to fight for Israel in the War of Independence. Together with several friends, he - clandestinely - made the journey first to Marseilles, where they received a week's training, and then by boat to Israel. After another three weeks' training in Israel he was sent to the front, where he saw action.

When the war was over he decided to return to England

and make his life here. He lived at the Primrose Jewish Youth Club in Belsize Park. After six months he found a job as a watch-maker. In 1951, he and a partner started their own business repairing watches.

In 1952 he met my mother, Gloria Leigh, and a year later they married. By 1960 they had three sons - Paul, Simon and Martin. By this time his partner had emigrated, leaving him to grow his business on his own in a shop in Hatton Garden.

In 1963, along with several others, he was a founder member of the '45 Aid Society, a charity for and by The Boys. Its aim was to relieve poverty of members, their children and others, and to provide scholarships where needed. He served as chairman for several years and also as treasurer from 1973 until a year before his death. He acted as MC for many years at the fundraising ball held each May.

In 1983, and again in 1993, he returned to Poland where he visited Piotrkow, the synagogue where he was held and the glass factory where he worked as a child. He went to the camps and could visualise the trains on which so many had died.

After the war, when a survivor told someone of their experiences, the reaction was often either disbelief or shock. The Boys soon began to speak about what had happened to them only with each other. But in 1993, the film *Shindler's List* was released. Krulik felt the world was finally hearing about what had happened during the war. He spent hours being recorded by the

Spielberg Holocaust Archive. He spoke in schools and was interviewed on television and radio. In 1996 Martin Gilbert published his wonderful book, 'The Boys' which told the story of the 732 children that came to Britain in 1946. Krulik met Princess Diana and every British Prime Minister since, including Margaret Thatcher.

After the terrible beginning, my father's life

was a full and happy one. He had friends all over the world, was always cheerful and would talk to everyone he met; a member of the Diamond Bourse for many years, it would take him an hour to walk along Hatton Garden greeting everyone he knew. Sadly, after a painful illness, at the age of 82, he died on the morning of 24th May. As a testament to a well-lived life, over two

hundred people came to his funeral later that day. He would have been pleased to see so many friends and would have wanted to talk to every one of them.

Survived by his wife, Gloria
Sons Paul, Simon and
Martin

Paul's wife and daughter
Suzanne and Melody
Martin's wife and sons
Mandy, Marc and Max

Roman Halter

ABA

Ardyn Halter

You were a loving father. You gave a lot of love. You had greatness of spirit. You savoured every day and your past taught you that there is nothing but this life. That is all we can truly know of. So "Im lo achshav, az matai?"

- If not now, when?

Every day is a gift. And I think that all of us here today can think of you, of your vivid blue eyes, the timbre of your voice, remember and feel the warmth of your large personality, your capacity to enjoy life. You made the now more vivid.

In Poland you lost all your family, grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and cousins.

You survived. You swam into life. Though for six long years you were denied colour and beauty, were dehumanized, for the rest of your life you made up for it. You rebuilt your body. You

studied, worked, built a career, a family, friends, colleagues, you fulfilled the promise you made to yourself and to your grandfather to tell what happened to you, to the Halter family, to the Jewish people. And you embraced the values and tolerance of Britain.

In the last decade of your life, your book was published and then broadcast; your paintings were shown at Tate Britain, and now are housed at The Imperial War Museum; a film was made of you and a longer film completed – which will be screened this year. You communicated your experiences to everyone who knew you.

More than once you said to me that we come into this world alone and depart it alone, in one obvious sense you did not.

You have a family who love

you and were with you in thought and in person through your extended illness.

We were here for you – and you knew this.

Susie was with you every day, the family was with you at your bedside, on the 'phone or fortifying you with their caring thoughts. Friends, fellow swimmers, neighbours, Shoah survivors who knew you for close to seventy years, like so many brothers and sisters, all proved how much they cared for you. Your kehila – Alyth Gardens – Rabbi Goldsmith – visited and tended you. The Whittington doctors, nurses, all the staff who knew you, cared for you over those six long weeks....

We are all here as proof of our love and to show you that in an important sense you were not alone.

What a wonderful father you were, how lucky I was to have spent so much time together with you.

FOR MY FATHER

Aloma Halter

STAINED GLASS

The blues in my father's stained glass
are more constant than his eyes
which lost their colour
on the day he saw.

Cerulean, cobalt, aquamarine;
with relief he turns to metal structures
whose heavy permanence
outstays the brittleness of bone,
The bayoneted flesh.
The red, the unforgettable red.

His spirit, rising
from the black of memory's anchorage,
soars like glass from its leading;
flights of blue pull away
from the tendons of despair.

Often these fragments of his life
filter light from a world
I have not known,
cannot see through.

Aviva Halter-Hurn

Ben Helfgott asked my brother sister and myself to write something for the '45 Aid Society magazine about our father Roman. It suddenly feels very hard to write about someone who pulses through my veins, whose words, smile, touch still feel so near, whose support, encouragement and unconditional love have always been so strong. A force within me a strength to stand next to a sense of humour shared, a look, a glance, the most amazing light blue eyes.

Roman and I worked together on many projects. In 1974 when I was 10 we lived in Nahariya together. He was then painting the work that is now in the Imperial War Museum. I remember coming

back from school and seeing the most amazing images that must have been flowing around in his head for years whilst he was practising architecture. Huge, powerful, black and white, bold paintings and then on closer observations a delicacy of detail, women and children huddled together making up a veil. We also worked on many stained glass windows together, choosing the glass was always exciting. It was like a dance, a joy seeing the colours unfolding the windows springing into life. When we worked on the windows for Bet Shalom, the window with the Grandmother leading her grandchild to the gas chamber, the colours of the stained glass smokey grey

and dark rising into light blues colours of hope showing Roman's love of life.

The last windows that we worked on were the New North London Synagogue; the plans for them still hang on our sitting room wall. I remember when we fitted the windows in their place in the synagogue, the room came alive with the vibrancy and colour and the room took on another energy.

I could go on and write about all his achievements but for me being with my father made me feel whole, a soul that I needed to have in my life and hopefully now he will be forever inside me filling me with his joy and zest for life, his strength and his unconditional love.

Berek Wurzel

David Stahl

How does one sum up the lifetime of a person, and succeed in doing justice to their unique character and achievements

in this world? The task is formidable, especially when it comes to my wonderful cousin, Berek Wurzel, olov hashalom (O.B.M.), who

returned his soul to his Maker last week, on Hoshana Raba, a special day on the Jewish calendar, second in holiness only to Yom Kippur.

For those who were privileged to know Berek, the following thoughts will probably be familiar, and perhaps, even superfluous, yet, I feel compelled to set them down on paper for several reasons:

For the sake of the next generations of the Wurzel family, i.e., great-grandchildren who love and cherish him, but perhaps at this early stage of their life lack the big picture of who this wonderful Gramps was and what he meant to so many.

Berek is the last Holocaust survivor in the Stahl/Wurzel family. In the next decade or two, the last of the Jews who lived through the horrific experiences, will be gone. There will be no one left to directly transmit to future generations these experiences, and how they shaped their lives and the lives of their children. In our family, Berek is the last of that line, which places an enormous responsibility on all of us to continue to convey that experience to others through stories, lessons and actions learned from him.

Berek's special personal qualities included: a wonderful, patient listening ear; an ability to put himself in a secondary role to everyone else's needs and wants; unlimited consideration for fellow human beings; unbounded love for his family; an unsurpassed work ethic, putting others before himself as boss and manager of a successful business; an overriding respect for religion and Jewish tradition on which he was imbibed in his native Radomsk, Poland; an ability to laugh at the not so

great deck of cards that life sometimes deals out to you, and especially, the ability to laugh at himself; and a sense of caring for those less fortunate than himself, and doing everything in his power to leave this world in a better state than it was left to him.

Berek arrived in England after surviving the horrors of the Holocaust, and met my cousin Carol O.B.M. They forged a relationship that was nothing short of majestic. There was nothing too difficult for Berek when it came to pleasing Carol or making her life better. Their love for each other was so strong that it is difficult to capture in words. The family that they built together, which stands firm and steadfast today, is a living testimony to the values and day-to-day labours of love in which they invested. The time since Carol's passing in 1998, was very difficult for Berek. What kept him going more than anything else was his feeling that this was what Carol wanted him to do, as well as his limitless love for his two daughters, Lorraine and Michele, their husbands Philip and Warren, whom he loved and respected greatly, and his grandchildren and great-grandchildren whom he adored.

Berek, in his second chance for life, following the War, started with not a penny in his pocket. But with a great deal of toil, and with a life partner whom he loved so dearly, he forged a vision of family and stability which came into being and which survives them as a clear beacon of light.

In our family, the Stahl family, Berek was never regarded as the married-in

husband of our cousin Carol - my father's niece. To my parents, Elias and Yolana Stahl, Berek was FAMILY, first degree! He felt completely at home in our house, and was always aware of the special relationship that Carol had with her Uncle Elias, nay, surrogate father, after her own father was murdered by the Nazis in Germany, even before the onset of World War II.

On their/his various visits to Israel after my wife Shifra and I moved here in 1984, rather than being hosted by us, Berek and Carol insisted on hosting us and our children in the finest hotels, and we were all always made to feel we were their most important guests. We all reminisce often about the wonderful times we had with Uncle Berek and Aunt Carol at the hotel pool, at the beach, walking along the beach, enjoying ice cream in the lobby, and the many other great experiences we had together. During our son Shmuel's service in the Israeli army, Berek made what turned out to be his last visit to Israel. He was no longer well enough to make the trip to Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, and stayed in Eilat. But he insisted on having Shmuel, whose base was not too far from Eilat, come to him for a royal Shabbos in Berek's Eilat hotel suite, a memory cherished dearly by Shmuel. Berek even managed a visit to Shmuel's army base, which Shmuel remembers with love and pride.

I've often said that anyone who had any doubts about the horrors of the Holocaust should catch a glimpse of the truth by spending a single

night in the Wurzel Ringley Close residence, experiencing up close what that cataclysmic period for the entire Jewish people wrought on just one person. For Berek, every night was a mini-reliving of that experience, and to anybody who had the experience of sleeping over there it was

clear that the piercing cries of pain that interrupted every night of Berek's well-earned rest were testimony to events that happened long ago, in another time and place, but which were never forgotten. Yet Berek, who miraculously survived the horrors, did yeoman's efforts to rebuild his world in a positive way,

without hate or rancour.

May we merit achieving in our own lives a measure of what Berek accomplished in his days on this earth. May the family be comforted among the mourners for Zion and Jerusalem.

With love to you all,
David Stahl

SECTION VIII MEMBERS NEWS 2011

Compiled by Ruby Friedman

BIRTHS:

- Mazeltov to Moshe Nurtman and Jessie Nurtman on the birth of a grandson, Samuel Charles, born to Victoria and Mickey
- Mazeltov to Marie and Bob Obuchowski on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Freya Sadie, born to Louise and Benjamin. Louise is the daughter of Sue and David Bermange.

BARMITZVAH:

- Mazeltov to Solly Irving on the barmitzvah of his grandson Benji, son of Ruth and Jeremy Shebson and grandson of the late Sandra Irving.

BATMITZVAH:

- Mazeltov to Rifka and Jack Rubinfeld on the batmitzvah of their granddaughter Orly.
- Mazeltov to Olive Herman on the batmitzvah of her granddaughter Georgia, daughter of Julia and Phillip Burton and the granddaughter of the late David Herman.

ENGAGEMENTS:

- Mazeltov to Solly Irving on the engagement of his grandson Pinni Shebson to Elana Friedman of Jerusalem. Pinni is the grandson of the late Sandra

Irving and the son of Ruth and Jeremy Shebson. The marriage will take place in Israel on October 25th.

MARRIAGES:

- Mazeltov to Denise Kurer on the marriage of her daughter Samantha to Michael, granddaughter of the late Michelle and Izak Pomerance.
- Mazeltov to Anita Shane on the marriage of her grandson Daniel to Ariella. Daniel is the son of Linda and Michael Shane and grandson of the late Charlie Shane, and on the marriage of her granddaughter Katie to Mike. Katie is the daughter of Linda and Michael and the granddaughter of the late Charlie Shane.

DEATHS:

- Sidney Farkas
- Michael Honey
- David Borgenicht
- Sala Kaye
- Y Riseman
- Alfred Huberman
- Lou Blobstein
- Krulik Wilder
- Issy Haber
- Leon Manders
- Berek Wurzel
- Yitchak Mendelson
- Stefa Rosenberg
- Roman Halter
- Menachem Wakstok
- Sheila Winogrodzki.

3RD GENERATION NEWS:

- Congratulations to Lauren Harris on obtaining a degree with a First in Chemistry from Oxford University. Lauren is the granddaughter of Jasmine

and Michael Bandel and the daughter of Gaynor and Daniel Harris.

- Many congratulations to many other 3rd generation who have done well in their exams.

SECTION VI MANCHESTER NEWS 2011

Compiled by Louise Elliott

26th Jan 2011 - The Manchester Jewish Theatre Group performed "Ghetto" a play with music about the Vilna Ghetto. The performance by all the cast was wonderful and the story heartbreaking. Unfortunately only a few members of the '45 Aid Society and the AJR were in attendance. There were many school children in attendance and a discussion with the audience took place after the performance but unfortunately because of travel arrangements I was unable to stay to hear what transpired at the discussion.

27th Jan 2011 - The Bury Council hosted Holocaust Day which was at the Radcliffe Civic Centre and was a sell out... Many school children of all nationalities took part and seven remembrance candles were lit, one each by Jack Aizenberg and Mayer Hersh. As well as remembering the Nazi Holocaust mention was made of the tragedies in Rwanda and many other places and two minutes silence was observed. Rabbi Guttentag recited The Memorial Prayer both in Hebrew and English and two screens with the words on were available for anyone who wanted to join in... The Mayor of Radcliffe and other dignitaries were present.

Jan 2011 - News has been reported of the wedding of Nicola Ferster, the daughter of Sharon and Warren Ferster and granddaughter of Chaim and Nan Ferster and we wish all the family a hearty Mazeltov

Feb 2011 - Just heard that Marita Golding, the wife of the late Maurice Golding, has become a great grandma - twice within a two month period - babies born to daughters of her son Dr, Jonathan Golding and his wife. Mazeltov from us all.

Feb 18th 2011 - Miracles do happen. Sam Laskier has phoned me with news - the first

member to do this. However one news is sad in that Sammy Stern has passed away and I have sent condolences from all our members. However, the other news is good in that Pinky & Susan have become great-great-grandparents and again I have sent them a Mazeltov from all of us.

March 2011 - Just heard the news that Jack & Rhona Aizenberg's granddaughter Linzi has won a place at Manchester High School for girls. A wonderful achievement and we wish Mazeltov to her parents and grandparents.

Further news filtered to me that the late Berek Wurzel had become a great-grandfather and we wish his daughter Michelle and father Warren a hearty Mazeltov and all the best for the future.

More Mazeltovs to Gillian and Peter Swead when Charlotte, their daughter and granddaughter of Sam and the late Blanche Laskier, became 18.

Again, Mazeltov to Adash & Zena Bulwa and the 28th birthday of their granddaughter Zoe, the daughter of Frances and Neil Rose. A double whammy - Zoe also passed her driving test.

April 2011 - I was asked to help Sam Laskier, Berek Wurzel and Jack Aizenberg with their application for a Ghetto Old Age pension and I am proud and pleased to say that all three were dealt with surprisingly quickly by the German authorities. I have two more applications going and hope I will be as successful with these.

2nd May 2011 - The Yom Hashoah presentation took place this year at the King David School in Manchester which has recently been

rebuilt to a very high standard. The hall was absolutely crowded, every seat taken, and eventually some people had to stand through the whole ceremony. This was a wonderful presentation and thanks must go to Tania Nelson (the daughter of the late Mendel & Marie Beale) who is the Chairperson of the Yom Hashoah Creative Commute. A lot of very hard work was put into this presentation. The theme was the examination of the "choices" made by the key figures in the main Ghettos. The Shofar was blown by Alex Buchsbaum of the third generation and Leon Kupfer played on his violin very ably the theme from Schindler's list. Six memorial candles were lit by Adash Bulwa, Itzek Alterman, Sam Laskier, Dorka Samson, Eva Neumann and Rachel Kahan. This was followed by D'var Torah by Daniel Moise of the 3rd Generation. Chazan Michael Isdale (2nd Generation) beautifully sang Habet Mishamayim and later Kol

Nidrei and Kel Malei Rachamim. The Survivors legacy was given by Henry Ferster, after which Tania spoke on "choices" and Merton Paul spoke of Freddy Knoller's story. Marilyn Bar-Ilan told the tale of Janusz Korczak and Deborah Finley of Adam Czerniakow (the latter two being members of the Jewish Theatre Group). Rabbi Chaim Kanterovitz of the 3rd Generation recited Kaddish and called for 60 seconds of Silent Reflection. Finally, Hannah Goldstone of the 3rd Generation spoke of her late grandfather, Martin Wertheun, and Jackie Field (2nd Generation) read the Pledge to Remember. The National Anthem and the Hatikvah ended the programme and everyone filed out in a very orderly manner.

May 2011 - I have been informed that Aaron Jonisz, the son of the late David Jonisz, has married.

June 2011 - Sadly, Rosalind, the daughter of Henny and the late Fischel Newman, died and we send to her and her family our sincere condolences.

19.06.2011 - I reached the grand age of 80 and hope I will be able to continue my reports for very many years. News has just reached me that Marion Cygelman has caught up with me - many happy returns from us all.

July 17th 2011 - Just heard that a baby boy

has been born to Emily Harris and her husband - another grandson for Joan and Harold & another great-grandson for Alice Rubinstein and the late Joe Rubinstein - Mazeltov to all.

July 27th 2011 - The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain brought to Manchester a very special exhibition named "From Auschwitz to Ambleside" which told the story of 300 Jewish Holocaust Survivors who came to the Lake District in 1945, as featured in the BBC One documentary "The Orphans who survived the Concentration Camps". The opening day was by invitation and included many of the survivors and their family and friends and was very well attended. The exhibition was open to all for a week.

9th Aug 2011 - Zoe, the daughter of Frances and Neil Rose and granddaughter of Adash & Zena Bulwa, achieved 3A** and has a place at Nottingham University to study Medicine. Mazeltov to all.

Charlotte, the daughter of Gillian and Peter Swead and granddaughter of Sam Laskier and the late Blanche Laskier, also had good results and has a place at Sheffield University.

Just heard the good news that Jack & Rhona's granddaughter has got 12 A* in her GC.S.E - Mazeltov to all the family.

Nov 16th 2011 - A great day for Estelle and Clive Fisher when their daughter Rochelle gave birth to a baby girl (Sophie Mimi) and we wish a hearty Mazeltov to them and also to great grandparents Hannah and Sam Gardner.

Dec 2011 - Another Mazeltov to Warren & Sharon Bomszyk when their son Dan became engaged - a grandson of the late Lily & Mayer Bomszyk.

Also a Mazeltov to Chaim and Nan Ferster on the marriage of their grandson Marc, the son of Shelley and Stuart Ferster.

It's my turn now to quell nachas. My grandson, who had a first at Durham, has now got his Law degree and my son Steven and I had an enjoyable day in London with the graduation in the Great Hall at Westminster. I only have two grandchildren

but have had the pleasure of going to four graduations (two for each of them).

26th Jan 2012 - Bury Council again sponsored a Holocaust Day presentation. The children of two schools, one Jewish the other not, took part in the presentation which referred also to the countries who suffered Genocide etc. The Lord Mayor of Bury spoke very movingly and there were speakers from the Muslim community, Christian believers and others. It was very well attended by people of all walks of life.

At the same time, the Manchester Jewish Museum was fully attended by their Holocaust Remembrance Day and I

understand that Jack Aizenberg spoke of his experiences... The evening before, he also spoke at a meeting organised by a solicitor for a group of fellow members. Jack has become a very popular speaker and gets very emotional but his aim is to tell as many people as he can of his horrific past to make sure that when he is gone (and we hope not for a very long time) that more and more people are convinced at what did happen.

Jan 2012 - Just heard the news that Michelle Ferster has got engaged to James Sterling. Michelle is the daughter of Sharon and Warren Ferster and the granddaughter of Chaim and Nan Ferster. Mazeltov to all.

SECTION X

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOM HA'SHOAH

The communal Yom Ha'shoah Commemoration will take place on Sunday, 22nd April 2012 at 11 am at Hyde Park. Further details will be announced in due course.

* * *

2012 ANNUAL REUNION

The 67th anniversary of our reunion will take place on Sunday 6th May 2012 at The Holiday Inn Hotel, Regents Park, Carburton Street, London W1.

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

Please contact:- Angela Cohen, 262 The Ridgeway, Botany Bay, EN2 8AP

* * *

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

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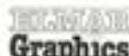
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