

Philanthropy, Consensus, and broiges: managing a Jewish Community

A history of the Southport Jewish Community

by John Cowell

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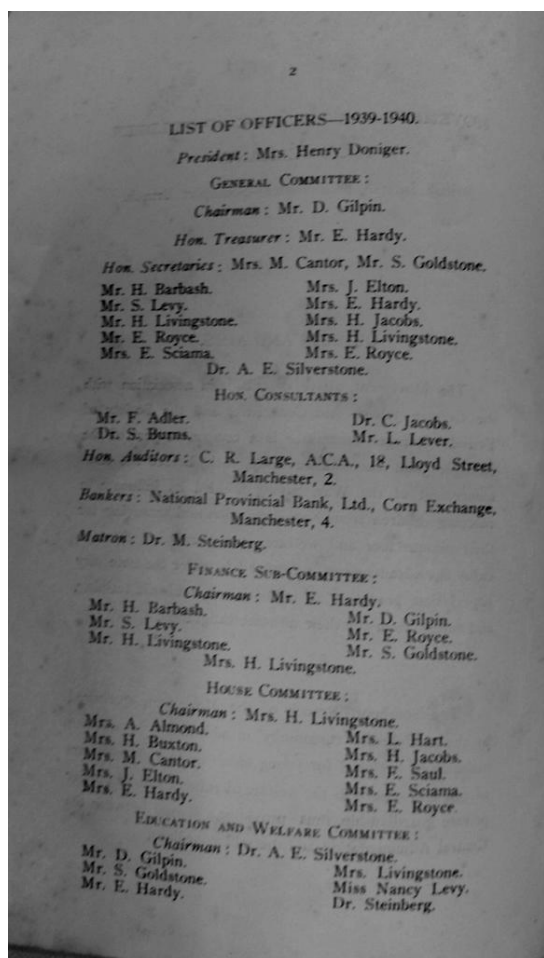
Chapter 6: World War 2 and the Holocaust

“The new war will be a thousand times worse than 1914...we have no idea what new horrors this war will bring – I am expecting everything from those criminals. What a breakdown of civilisation!”- Stefan Zweig’s diary in exile in England, 3 September 1939 (quoted in *To Hell and back*, by Ian Kershaw)

“The Chairman welcomed new residents and members who by the misfortune of War, had perforce to leave their own homes and synagogues.” (Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting, 14/2/1943)

A Red Cross appeal was before the Council meeting on 7 January 1940: it was agreed to send to all members circulars, with perforated forms attached, for filling in the amount. It was also agreed to continue Miss Sussman’s employment (perhaps as secretary) for a further ten weeks. A grant was given to Rev Meisels on the birth of his daughter.

The *Annual Accounts and Report of Movement for the care of children in Germany, Southport Branch, 1940* is an interesting document on the Harris House hostel. It’s clear that not all the donors were Jewish, though it is probable that the gifts from Jewish donors were more than half the total, and the officers and committee members were entirely Jewish. As regards the amounts donated in the year, the largest were donated by Mrs Melita Goldstone, her son Sampson, Max Cantor, Stanley J. Levy, L. Lever, L.D.S., each of whom donated £10 or more. Charles Aveling, a gentile member of the Town Council, is one of the next in order of amount, with £5. It should also be noted that there were previous donations, almost certainly, and that the Livingstones, the prime movers in the move to have a hostel for kindertransport girls, would certainly have given generously.] The report on the year ending 31 January 1940, covers the previous five months, and begins with a brief survey of the history of the local movement. Later there was an afternoon bridge party, organised by the Ladies’ Aid committee, with free use of the Floral Hall (the Council’s kindness was also acknowledged) and this raised more than £90. Kindness of members of the community, local tradespeople and other friends contributed to the furnishing and equipping of the Hostel, opened and consecrated by Rabbi Silverstone on 12 February 1939. The House Committee guided the supervision and care of the girls, on strictly orthodox lines, and their health was under the observation of qualified medical advisers. The girls attended divine service on the Sabbath and Holy Days, and the committee thanked the Executive and Committee of the synagogue in this regard.



Movement for the care of children in Germany, Southport Branch, 1940, officers

entertained at the home of Rabbi and Mrs Silverstone. Lillie R. Price and Myer Fletcher were credited with the arrangements.¹

In February 1940, Rabbi Silverstone was reported as having spoken to several non-Jewish gatherings “because he feels these lectures afford him an opportunity of promoting better feeling between Jew and non-Jew.” At the end of each of his lectures, Dr Silverstone distributed a large number of Jewish defence leaflets. His subjects included “What is Freedom?”, “Liberty and Law”, “Hebrew Legends” and “The Jew and Tolerance.” About the same time there occurred the first meeting of the recently formed Polish Refugee Fund Committee in Southport, with Dr Alfred M. Abrahams as Chairman, Mrs H. Brodie as Treasurer and Miss Nancy Levy as Hon. Secretary.²

In late March 1940 there was a report in the JC on the £250,000 appeal for the purchase of land in Palestine for the settlement of refugees, which said that the total already secured was £63,889. The report included the third list of donations under covenant, with a column for Southport, giving the gross value of their covenants as £2,340. The total amount collected in Southport for the Polish Jewish Refugee Fund was by late April over two hundred pounds – two social events in local hotels raised a total of £37. The JC reports that extracts from a book on their experiences, by the eighteen girls of the Harris House Refugee Hostel, were included in an article by Rhoda Goodman in the Southport Guardian.³

Ten of the girls were receiving trainee employment, whilst two others were attended local schools (Brentwood Girls’ School and Dagfield Day and Boarding School) One of the girls, Ruth Hammer, left the hostel in June 1939, to join her mother in Colombo (then Ceylon, now known as Sri Lanka) en route for Australia, where her family would make a new life. During the year some of the girls had helped at the Mary Willet Creche and thus rendered useful service, as well as (apparently) all the girls asking permission to help in a sale of work and bring and buy sale, under the supervision of the Ladies’ committee, to support the fund that maintained the Hostel. This raised £40. In September 1939 the three Rojt sisters arrived from Tynemouth Hostel as evacuees, and regular subscriptions for their support had been received, presumably from a north eastern community association of a similar kind to that in Southport. The help of all donors and subscribers, voluntary workers, the Police force, and many other friends and helpers, was acknowledged.

The Southport Zionist and Literary Society held a screening of “A Homeland in the Making”, at the Coliseum Cinema in late February 1940. The Mayor introduced Dr Dov Biegun, saying that he and the Mayoress were always ready to help to further any Jewish cause, as “the Jews had always proved themselves ... loyal subjects. The Jews in Palestine had volunteered to a man to support Great Britain in the present struggle for democracy.” Later the Mayor and Mayoress and the committee of the Society were

¹ JC 1/3/1940, p 22. The web page <http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/4773> says that the film was first seen in 1941, and covered Zionist settlements in Palestine. It ran for 41 minutes, of which 7 minutes can be viewed on the internet, at http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x32m16g_steven-spielberg-jewish-film-archive-homeland-in-the-making_school_and_elsewhere. (True on 24/4/2018)

² JC 9/2/1940, p 18. Rev Abrahams, the father of Dr Abrahams, after twelve years of chronic illness, following his ten years as chazan-shochet to the Congregation, died in 1940 (9/2/1940, p 20).

³ JC 29/3/1940, p 13 & 26/4/1940, p 18. It seems very likely that the Polish Refugee Fund mentioned on this page is the same fund as the Polish Jewish Refugee Fund.

At an SHC Council meeting on 14 April 1940 there was discussion about Mr Zaitz and refugees: Meyer Goldstone disclosed that Mr Zaitz had attempted to borrow money from refugees in Southport promising as an inducement a very high rate of interest. It was proposed that Mr Goldstone investigate a certain case already discussed and report to the next Council meeting. This meeting continued on 21 April 1940. It was agreed, after hearing the results of Mr Goldstone's investigation, that Mr Zaitz be asked not to have any other business or interfere with any other matter outside synagogue affairs without permission of the Council. Mr Zaitz was called in. Sydney Harris, the Senior Warden, asked him whether it was true that he had asked Dr and Mrs Grau⁴ to call at the house of Mrs Higham and induce the refugee maid to come out into the car and be questioned by Mr Zaitz under false pretences. Mr Zaitz

LIST OF DONORS.							
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Anonymous	0 12 0	Knight, Mr.	...	...	0 5 0
Aveling, Chas.	5 0 0	Kaitiff, Mr. B.	...	...	0 10 0
Brown, Mrs. G.	0 2 6	Lemberger, B.	...	...	2 0 0
Bremmen, Mr.	5 5 0	Lever, Mr.	...	...	0 10 6
Brooks, Mr.	0 10 0	Levy, Mr. Alf	...	...	1 1 0
Blackburn, Mrs.	0 10 0	Lewis, Mr. A.	...	...	0 10 6
Brodie, H.	3 3 0	Levy, Stanley J.	...	...	10 10 0
Coleman, F.	5 0 0	Long, Mr. R. J.	...	...	1 0 0
Cook, Miss	1 0 0	Long, Miss	...	...	1 0 0
Clarke, Mr.	2 0 0	Lavery, Mrs.	...	...	0 2 0
Cookson, Mr.	0 10 0	Lever, L., L.D.S.	...	...	10 0 0
Cantor, Mr. Max.	10 10 0	Meyers, R.	...	...	0 10 6
Challinor, Miss E. R.	6 10 0	McAdoo, Mr.	...	...	0 3 0
Culshaw, P.	0 10 0	Mills, Mrs.	...	...	0 5 0
Cantor, Mr.	1 1 0	Nicholls, Mr. Fred	...	...	5 0 0
Cohen, Mrs.	2 2 0	Powell, Mrs.	...	...	0 2 0
Dean, Mrs. S.	0 2 6	Parkhouse, Mrs.	...	...	0 1 0
Dean, Mrs. M.	0 2 6	Rawstron, Mrs.	...	...	1 1 0
Dykes, Mrs.	0 10 0	Rhodes, Mrs.	...	...	0 2 6
Ferguson, M. L.d.	1 0 0	Radcliffe, Misses	...	...	2 2 0
Goldstone, Mrs. M. H.	40 0 0	Rosenweig, Mrs.	...	...	5 5 0
Goldstone, S.	25 0 0	Rosenberg, Mrs. F.	...	...	5 0 0
Graff, L.	0 10 6	Sissons, Messrs.	...	...	1 1 0
Grey, Mrs.	0 5 0	Sykes, Mrs.	...	...	0 2 6
Grey, Miss D.	0 2 6	Shaw, Mr.	...	...	0 5 0
Gaskell, Mrs.	1 0 0	Selman, Mr.	...	...	0 5 0
Horrocks, Miss B.	1 1 0	Slingsby, Mrs.	...	...	1 10 0
Hymans, Mrs.	2 2 0	Swallow, Mrs.	...	...	1 0 0
Hough, Mrs.	0 10 0	Ventbys, Miss	...	...	0 10 0
Howarth, Mr.	0 5 0	Whittaker, Mrs.	...	...	0 5 0
Hirshman, Mr. E.	0 10 6	Winram, Miss	...	...	1 0 0
Hirshman, Mrs. Ellen	0 10 0	Wainwright, Wallace	...	...	5 0 0
Hogben, Miss E. I.	1 5 0	Williams, Mrs.	...	...	0 10 6
Jackson, Miss M.	0 5 0	Weller, Jnr., Mrs.	...	...	0 10 0
Kemp, Mr.	0 1 0				

admitted this. It was agreed that three members of Council plus the Executive should investigate whether Mr Zaitz did his duty to the satisfaction of the Congregation and report to the next Council meeting. Messrs Halpern, Krawitz and Manson were the three added to the Executive.

A fifth list of contributions to the Central Council for Jewish Refugees and the Keren Hayesod appeared in the JC in early May 1940, with generous contributions from Southport, including £238 from Meyer Goldstone, £105 from Ephraim Marks, £87 from Isaac Freedland, £80 from Lewis and Harry Livingstone, £58 from N. I. Adler, £58 each from Hyman and Myer Fletcher, and £58 from David Weller.

The meeting of the Sub-Committee investigating the duties of Mr Zaitz was held on 4 May 1940. The Executive members were there, but the three Council members added to the Executive for this purpose did not attend, for whatever reason.

After careful discussion the

Donors to the Harris House hostel

committee unanimously concluded that Mr Zaitz's explanation about the complaint concerning the refugees brought by Meyer Goldstone was unsatisfactory. A letter from Mr Zaitz was read at the Council meeting on 12 May 1940, in which he asked for an opportunity to explain matters relating to the refugees discussed at the previous meeting. He said that with the exception of one case in which he had borrowed £25 from a refugee (which he said he was prepared to return any time he was asked) he completely denied having attempted to enter any other transaction with any refugee or of borrowing money at a higher rate of interest than the Post Office Bank. Mr Goldstone said that the refugee employed by Mrs Higham still maintained emphatically that Mr Zaitz tried to borrow money from her, at a certain rate of interest, on security of property mortgage and she added that he did get her out of the house since then by an untrue excuse and tried to get her to withdraw her statement, which she refused to do, as she said it was true. Mr Goldstone reminded the meeting that Mr Zaitz had admitted to the Executive that there were other refugees he had borrowed from. (Behind the statements on him in the minutes may have been questions, such as "Why did he need/want to borrow from these people? Did he intend to repay the money? If he

⁴ Dr Ignaz Grau, from Austria, who had trained at Vienna University, married Gertrude Atlas in 1939 at Southport Synagogue. (see *The Chair maker of Yellow House Lane and other Southport Jews*)

wanted the money for gambling, was it likely that he would be able to repay it? Wasn't he taking advantage of his position on the Synagogue's staff to get access to vulnerable people?)

Another letter read to the meeting was from Maurice Joseph, offering his resignation as Treasurer: he explained that [while he was trying] to maintain the decorum of the synagogue the day before, in the Sabbath service, the beadle, Mr Zaitz, adopted a threatening attitude and grossly insulted him. The Treasurer thought he couldn't remain in office until this kind of thing was satisfactorily dealt with. The Council asked him to reconsider his decision to resign – and decided to write instructing Mr Zaitz to send Mr Joseph a written apology and undertake to the Council that he wouldn't repeat such conduct to any member of the Council or the Executive. Mr Joseph withdrew his resignation. Mr Zaitz admitted at the Council meeting on 2 June 1940 to having received the letter sent to him on 16 May about an apology to Mr Joseph. It was agreed that the question of Mr Zaitz be dealt with at a General meeting. It was agreed to recommend to Council that the mortuary and convenience should be built at the cemetery, and the 10% voluntary levy to the Board of Deputies should be used for this project.

At the Annual General Meeting on 9 June 1940 it was agreed unanimously to build a mortuary at an estimated cost of £158. The elections of Executive members resulted in the re-election of Sydney Harris as Senior Warden; of Hyman Fletcher as Junior Warden; of Abraham Arlick as Baal Segan; of Maurice Joseph as Treasurer; and of Jack Reuben as Hon Secretary. The clearly controversial matter of Mr Zaitz's conduct was referred back to the Council for a sub-committee to deal with it. The next Council Meeting, on 16 June 1940 resulted in the formation of a sub-committee, as recommended by the General Body, on the subject of Mr Zaitz: its members were Messrs Manson, Gilpin, Cowen, Dessser, Jacobs, and Lawson, four of them new to the Council. The game of passing this particular parcel had yet to reach its final round!

An interesting item in the JC in June 1940 lists people arrested under Defence Regulation 18b in various places, most of them members of the British Union of Fascists. "At Southport....five men were detained after the police had searched various premises and removed documents, firearms and ammunition...."⁵

The Council Meeting on 7 July 1940 agreed that the 10% Board of Deputies levy money be sent to the Board of Deputies for the original purpose, reversing the decision of the meeting on 2 June. The Chairman said Mr Tarshish had raised almost £50 for the mortuary – but it was thought at least £100 should be raised by voluntary donations. The findings of the sub-committee on Mr Zaitz were read, and it was agreed the Executive should read them to Mr Zaitz and ask for an immediate written apology and an undertaking. Mr Zaitz had written to the Council meeting on 21 July 1940 in response to the the special sub-committee's demand for an apology and an undertaking not to repeat the behaviour: his letter contained the apology but not the undertaking. It was accordingly agreed that his services be terminated immediately, with four weeks' salary being paid in lieu of notice. (In view of his prolonged inattention to duties, culminating in the most serious neglect of kashrus at Dewhurst the butchers) Sydney Harris placed on record that the Congregation thanked Rev Meisels for his excellent work while he had been with SHC. (He was moving to be First Reader at Higher Broughton Synagogue, in Salford)] A chazan was to be engaged for the high festivals only, and this to be advertised.

It was agreed by the Council Meeting on 11 August 1940 that Isaac Levy and Sydney H. Harris represent the Congregation at the Beth Din in the matter of Mr Zaitz, who must have appealed to that helpful body.

The Extraordinary General meeting held on 18 August 1940, had an agenda devoted to Mr Zaitz, with just two items, namely 1. Dismissal of an official without an opportunity for him to make a statement to Council, and 2. "That it is not in the interest of the Congregation to dismiss an official in the present serious times leaving him destitute." It was agreed that £100 be held in trust for Mr Zaitz and £2 per week be paid to him. Two members were to be elected from the General body "to administrate the £100 in co-operation with the Council": H. Bernstein and S. Glynn were elected from General Body to do this. (If this seems remarkable, it appears that the Council had been unable to explain fully *to a general meeting*, what Mr Zaitz had done to incur their wrath, and the fact that he was about sixty-four may have gained him some sympathy)

The recent death of Rev Noah Blaser, the Congregation's former minister, who died on 9 September 1940, was on the mind of the Council Meeting on 15 September 1940. Rabbi Silverstone wrote an

⁵ JC 14/6/1940, p 6. Defence Regulation 18b allowed the internment of people (including Oswald Mosley) suspected of being Nazi sympathisers, which took place in various camps, including those at Huyton and in the Isle of Man. The Southport men weren't named.

obituary for the Jewish Chronicle, saying inter alia that “He was a man of exceptional strength of character, unyielding when a question of principle was involved.”⁶ It was agreed that Mr O. Zicherman be reader for the High Festivals and Tabernacles (Succot) only and that the upper small room at the Temperance Institute be rented for overflow services, reflecting the numbers of Jewish people who had already moved to Southport, to escape from cities being bombed in the early stages of the War.

The Congregation advertised its arrangements for allotting seats for the High Festivals – with the note that it was for the Synagogue and Overflow services – in September 1940: the Executive would attend on Sundays, 15, 22 and 29 September, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the Secretary would attend every morning from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Clearly the numbers were high, with all the migrants from other places to the safety of Southport.⁷

In late September 1940 the Southport Zionist and Literary Society held the inaugural social of the session at Salt’s café, in Nevill St. More than one hundred and sixty people attended, including visitors from other towns; the chairman, Jonas Finestone, announced that the Society had decided to inscribe the name of Mrs Bertha Claff in the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund, in recognition of her services for over twenty-five years to the Zionist cause and the J.N.F.⁸

The Senior Warden reported in detail on the services and overflow services in High Festivals at the Council Meeting on 27 October 1940 and thought the arrangements were successful. He thanked Rev Segal for his untiring work “which was tremendously augmented owing to the influx of the evacuees, and for his preaching at the overflow on Yom Kippur.” In response to an Appeal it was agreed that the community should raise £250 to provide a mobile canteen for the YMCA which would bear the name of the SHC, and that members be appealed to by circular and Dr Silverstone and Hyman Fletcher should call upon members and collect for it, so that the sum could be raised as quickly as possible. It was agreed that 1d per pound, as per the instructions of the Ministry of Food be charged to the butchers for kosher meat instead of so much per beast. Halsall would incur an extra charge of 10/- per week for the services of the porger. In view of the increased number of children attending the classes it was agreed by a narrow majority to employ Orland Zicherman at £5 per week until the next general meeting. Yet another sub-committee was formed to interview Mr Zaitz about the grant to him by the General Meeting on 18 August 1940 – he had said he was willing to come before the Council. This time the sub-committee included Messrs Gilpin, Stonefield, H. Jacobs and the Executive. Rev Swift⁹ addressed the Council on evacuees, thanking the executive for their co-operation and help. It was decided that the London Evacuees who were members of United Synagogue be made honorary Members of the Congregation for which the United Synagogue would grant a certain amount per annum per member.

At the Council Meeting on 17 November 1940, someone enquired why Dr Silverstone couldn’t devote his time to the collection for the mobile Canteen Fund – Sydney Harris replied that his “time was now taken up a great deal with the Chaplaincy work.” It was agreed that a further teacher could be engaged if necessary but the engagement must be temporary. The report of the sub-committee on Mr. Zaitz was read – Mr Zaitz had refused to accept the sum suggested to him (which would have had to be approved by the Council and General Meeting) – it was agreed that the Senior Warden should see the Hon. Solicitor for advice as to how he might be induced to vacate his rooms at the synagogue, and that the Hon Solicitor should write asking him to vacate his rooms. An Evacuees sub-committee was set up, with Messrs Barbasch, S Kaitiff, H. Lawson, S. H. Harris and M. Joseph elected to this committee to co-operate with the Ladies’ Committee.

In November 1940 Dr Nathan Morris visited Blackpool and Southport to inaugurate arrangements for the Jewish education of evacuated Jewish children as part of education authorities’ co-operation with Jewish communities. This appears to have included Hebrew language learning and Jewish education. Two weeks later the problems of the evacuees of all age groups were considered by a minister addressing the St

⁶ JC 20/9/1940, p 5. It is possible to read between Rabbi Silverstone’s elegant lines.

⁷ JC 13/9/1940, p 3.

⁸ JC 4/10/1940, p 10.

⁹ This was presumably Rev Harris Swift who is described as a liaison officer between the emergency committee of the Board of Deputies and provincial congregations, sent by the United Synagogue to the North West of England in the JC for 1/1/1941, p 15. In that article he described how canteens and a common room had been provided for southern evacuees in Southport, as well as in Preston, Blackpool and Lytham St Annes. Elsewhere, in JC 10/1/1941, p 14, a northern resident attacked the “vaccies” as expecting synagogue services from northern congregations free or at low prices, because they had to continue to subscribe to their London shuls.

Anne's Congregation, which inspired a move towards co-operation among the communities of Blackpool, St Anne's, Preston, Lancaster and Southport. Real problems had been discovered, including Jewish people dying in institutions where nobody was responsible for the burials; an aged Jew seriously ill in an institution, but unable to speak or understand a word of English; and Jewish women and children among those evacuated by the Government, without clothing or money and anxious to be placed where kosher food was available. The St Anne's Hebrew Congregation suggested that all the districts should unite in a central board, pool their resources, and establish a central office at Blackpool with a permanent clerk, and arrange for a visiting committee and a visiting Minister; the members of each congregation would contribute to the general fund – it was estimated that between £500 and £1,000 could be obtained immediately, to provide for the immediate relief of distressed cases in any of the districts. A Finance Committee had been formed by St Anne's Congregation with Hyman Weinberg as Chairman – ready to help a central board composed of various west Lancashire congregations to deal with the problems of evacuees.¹⁰

The Senior Warden, Sydney Harris, told the Council Meeting on 1 December 1940 that the covenant scheme introduced by Mr Joseph had gained in the current year over £80, and suggested, as the office work had been greatly increased because of the increase in membership and influx of evacuees into the town, that Miss Susman's allowance be increased by 5/- per week, which was agreed.¹¹ He also said that as Rev Segal, was Secretary, Second Reader and now responsible for the education of a hundred and twenty children, organising the classes and teaching they should show their appreciation of his work: it was decided to bring this matter up at the next Council meeting. In view of dissatisfaction with the allocation of seats, a sub-committee was formed to investigate the seats occupied by members and prices paid for them – Messrs Barbasch, Levy and Manson were elected to the sub-committee. The letter written to Mr Zaitz as a result of the Chairman's interview with Finklestone and Sandler, the Hon. Solicitors, was read. Mr Zaitz wrote asking for a larger amount of grant from the Congregation; it was now suggested that Mr Zaitz's letter be brought before the next General meeting and the matter finally settled – this was apparently agreed. Mr Harris suggested he approach Dr Silverstone to devote only two days a week to the Chaplaincy work – this was agreed. £110 had been collected by the 10% levy on members for the Board of Deputies appeal. The half yearly General Meeting on 8 December 1940 heard from the Senior Warden, Sydney H. Harris, that since last March, the community had nearly doubled, so there was a complete change in communal life: a third teacher had been engaged because of the increase in the number of children. There were two overflow services for the High Festivals; Rev Segal preached the Appeal Sermon at the overflow service on Yom Kippur. Rev Orland Zicherman was appointed as First Reader for three years, at £5 per week in the first year, £5-10s per week in the second, and £6 per week in the third. It was agreed to pay Mr Zaitz £300 on vacating the premises.

One result of the outbreak of war in 1939 was the arrival in Southport of a large number of Jewish families from Manchester and Liverpool, which became main targets for German bombing raids. Bombs in Liverpool caused chaos, falling not only on the docks, but also on factories, houses, department stores, and even the Central Synagogue, in Islington (in 1940). A typical move from Bootle, at the northern side of Liverpool, was that of the Cohen family, Myer and Kay, and their two sons, Brian and Michael. They arrived in 1940, and found a flat in Hartwood Road, which they rented from Vera and Harry Israel. This was a good residential area, a short walk from Arnside Road and the synagogue. Unfortunately a German bomb landed on a house opposite, blowing out all the windows in their flat, after which they moved up the road to number 13. The Cohens later moved to south Manchester. Before he left Southport, Brian found time to marry Sidney Hepworth's eldest daughter and to become a member of Shalom Lodge, and its Worshipful Master in 1978/79.¹²

Rabbi S. M. Lehrman, of Liverpool, preached at Southport Synagogue in mid-December, appealing to the evacuees to be loyal to the institutions they had left behind in the large cities: he was perhaps most concerned about his own city of Liverpool, which had a number of small synagogues,¹³ some of which

¹⁰ JC 29/11/1940, p 12, 13/11/1940, p 12, & 20/12/1940, p 13. Any evacuees in Lancaster, mentioned in the second of these reports, would be isolated by a distance approaching twenty miles from Blackpool and Preston, the nearest congregations, unless some kind of wartime congregation had arisen in the town.

¹¹ This suggests that Miss Susman was doing secretarial work, but she may also have helped as a teacher.

¹² Brian Cohen, *When Dad bought a house while taking dog for walk*, Jewish Telegraph, Wednesday 25/9/2013.

¹³ JC 27/12/1940, p 10. The most likely small synagogues in Liverpool to suffer were Crown St, Fairfield, Fountains Rd, Grove St, and the Liberal Synagogue.

probably existed near the headline. He did specify that for those “who could still afford the attachment to their synagogues and other institutions ...no more unpardonable crime could be committed than resignation of membership or curtailment of subscriptions.” Viewed from the position of those who were receiving them and providing for their religious needs, this may have seemed to be fostering an ambivalent attitude to towns such as Southport, which were trying to care for them. There would be, as we shall see, stresses between the evacuees from Liverpool and Southport’s congregation. In the same column the appointment of Rev Orland Zicherman as First Reader was reported. His career was typical of many appointments of the kind at this time, as Rabbonim and Chazanim escaped to the west from central and eastern Europe. (See his entry in *The Chair maker of Yellow House Lane*, and other *Southport Jews*, at the end of this volume.)¹⁴

Early in January 1941, the JC reported that a Habonim Chavurah had been formed recently in Southport, “consisting of evacuees from Liverpool, Manchester, London and Sheffield”, and had organised many cultural activities. The committee of the Southport synagogue had co-operated by allowing the use of the synagogue rooms, and local Jewish youth had helped. “Mr Brachus”, a local Hebrew teacher, had given untiring assistance.” The people managing this group were Y. Pink, I. Levitsky, E.I. Waldman and S. Swift.

The stresses and strains that were to open up between the evacuees and the congregations they moved to were written up in the JC early in 1941, in a report from a correspondent, with the title “Eating their cake – and having it – Londoners in the Provinces.” First we should acknowledge that the correspondent was obviously not a Londoner, but a person resident in the north west, almost certainly: the sentence “a curious state of mind – and of affairs – seems to exist among many Jews self-evacuated from their beloved London to the despised Provinces”, strongly suggests the former, whilst a sentence shortly afterwards, “it is seen in North-West England in an acute form”, seems to confirm that the correspondent was in the north west, in which case he or she was probably in Southport, or Blackpool, or Preston or St. Anne’s, places where efforts were being made to support the evacuees, as we have seen. They are called “vaccies” (a belittling expression) in the report, which goes on to say that they expect seats in the synagogue and service from kosher butchers to be provided “either freely, or at best at ridiculously low cost.” “We have our own (i.e. London) shoals to subscribe to. You can’t expect us to pay you as well,” naively remark the evacuees. Poor and needy London Jews are to be fed, married, buried by the provinces.” Truly the stresses were being felt in the North West and perhaps elsewhere.¹⁵

A landmark in the history of the Southport community was the death of Samuel Aaron Claff on 18 January 1941. He had been a divisive figure, yet one whose heart was in the right place, constantly supporting good causes, such as the Talmud Torah, Victoria Memorial Jewish Hospital and the Talmudical College in Manchester, and collecting from house to house. He had also been President of the Southport Congregation more than once. A sketch of his life appears in the *Biographies* at the end of this work.¹⁶

At the Council Meeting on 19 January 1941 Mr Max wrote complaining of a shortage of meat especially because of the influx of evacuees. Council thought the matter was between Mr Max and the Food Office, but Mr Levy (a butcher by profession) thought with careful distribution Mr Max could give each customer a good proportion of their rations. An appeal for the Polish Refugees Appeal came from London, as the congregation had usually allocated a large amount to the Polish fund from the Kol Nidrei appeal. The Council decided to give £100 for the purpose and a committee was formed to consider the best methods for raising further funds for the purpose. The Zionist organisation of Great Britain had written asking for the help of the local Zionist organisation in launching its appeal on behalf of the Keren Hayesod in aid of refugees in Palestine. The meeting left the matter entirely to the Zionist Society. The matter of Mr Zaitz was assigned to the solicitors to deal with legally, and to obtain possession of the premises after 31 January 1941 as advised to Mr Zaitz on 21 November 1940. Rev Bruches, in view of his extra duties in killing poultry, was awarded a temporary increase of 10/- per week.

¹⁴ JC 27/12/1940, p 10. Rev Zicherman also sang opera, learning Italian for the purpose. He had, according to his widow, blond Aryan looks, which helped him to evade capture by the Nazis.

¹⁵ JC 10/1/1941, p 14. Mr Brachus would have been Rev Bruches. This Habonim group may have been the one that the wife of Gerald Jackman joined. Mr Jackman referred to three active groups, of which his wife was in one, in Southport – see his letter in JC 21/10/1994, which refutes a claim that Habonim barely ticked over in World War 2.

¹⁶ JC 24/1/1941, pp 3 & 8, Probate index, 1941; he came from Lithuania. He was buried at Urmston Cemetery.

A reply to the article entitled “Eating their cake and having it”, appeared in late January, over the name of Rev Harris Swift, of 32 Leyland Rd, Southport, the liaison officer between the Emergency Committee



Southport Guardian cartoon, 5/2/1941, showing personalities at the Grand Gala Ball of the Zionist & Literary Society.

In Southport the Zionist and Literary Society planned a Grand Gala Ball, under the patronage of the Mayor and Mayoress, in the Cambridge Hall, on 1 February. When Jonas Finestone announced the beneficiary, the Infirmary, he said that it had performed excellent services for Jewish evacuees, refugees and others. At the same meeting, Ministry of Information films on first aid were shown. An advertisement in the JC showed that manufacturing firms could also be evacuated to the provinces: a “Designer-Manageress” was sought for an evacuated firm in Southport manufacturing “Medium Class” Ladies’ Gowns—the Alexander Works Ltd, at 32a Virginia Street.¹⁸

A further rise of 10/- for Rev Bruches was referred by the Council Meeting on 23 February 1941 to the Finance committee. The Education sub-committee advised that the local education authority be approached for school accommodation for the use of Hebrew classes: the Council decided to write to the authority that the Congregation required the accommodation because of the influx of evacuees, so it would only be temporary.

At the beginning of March 1941 Professor Selig Brodetsky visited Southport, where he spoke to the Congregation on the appeal from the Board of Deputies, saying it was a kind of insurance for the continuity of their faith and race. Rabbi Silverstone was later elected Chairman of the Keren Hayesod Appeal, with Sydney Harris, the President, and Jonas Finestone as Vice-chairmen, and other officers. It seems likely that the appeal referred to by Professor Brodetsky was the War Appeal of the Palestine Foundation Fund (Keren Hayesod) which was soon afterwards reported as having raised £40,000 already – this campaign had been launched on 23 February, according to the Appeal. “Jewish Youth have adopted the slogan of ‘A week’s salary or a week’s wages as a minimum contribution’” was one of the more inspiring statements in the report, which also lauded the efforts of Blackpool, St Anne’s and Southport, and mentioned the active participation of Hyman Weinberg in both St Anne’s and Manchester.¹⁹

An extraordinary Council Meeting was convened on 9 March 1941, to consider the demolition of the outer buildings. It was apparently agreed at the Council Meeting on 16 March 1941, that estimates for the demolition of the outbuildings be invited, the material to be stored on site, protected from interference by the children, and the Executive be left to deal with it. It was agreed that Dr Silverstone be paid £50 p.a. in monthly payments, this to continue during hostilities, and Rev Segal to be paid the same, for the same period, and Mr Bruches be paid 10/- per week extra for the killing of poultry. For the Board of Deputies

¹⁷ JC 24/1/1941, p 19

¹⁸ JC 10/1/1941, p 14, 17/1/1941, p 11, 24/1/1941, pp 4 & 16. By 1950 the company appears to have gone, at least from the address in Virginia Street. (In 1935 it was in Balls Pond Rd, London N1)

¹⁹ JC 7/3/1941, p 16 & 14/3/1941, p 21. Selig Brodetsky, 1888-1954, was from 1940 President of the Board of Deputies, and later President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was a brilliant lecturer and mathematician. For Keren Hayesod see footnote 198, p 59. It seems more likely that this explanation of the Appeal is correct than that it was the Board of Deputies’ appeal for evacuated Mothers and Children.

Appeal a sub-committee was formed of J. Cowen, M. Joseph, A. Arlick and S.H. Harris, with power to co-opt others.

The death of Abraham H. Rose at St Anne's in March 1941 illustrates some of the pitfalls of using JC obituaries for factual information. This does not make it any less interesting. He is stated to have been one of the founders of the Southport Hebrew Congregation, a statement that was unlikely, as he was only about thirteen years old, when it was founded! A statement follows that may be just hearsay, which is not to suggest that it is remote from the truth – "the Rose family...in the course of 25 years, are said to have given away £100,000 to their fellows." (It is, however, a woolly claim repeated from an unstated source, and may even have understated their generosity) The statement that he was a past treasurer of the Southport Hebrew Congregation, highlights, unconsciously, the omission of a reference to his also having been once Junior Warden of the Congregation – a fact of which he reminded the paper in July 1929. Another feature of this wartime obituary is the information it provides that his three sons were in the Forces, as well as one of his sons-in-law.²⁰

There was a little evidence of movement to Southport from other north-western places in the advertising in the JC in May 1941, when Nathan's appeared, at 8 (or perhaps 3) Bath St, inviting adults, and offering "moderate terms", which probably means nothing, though all rooms had hot and cold water, and the accommodation purported to be superior. The Nathans were late of Wallasey, in the Wirral; at the same time Mrs Freedman, formerly of the "Brereton" in Blackpool, had taken over the Cumberland, at 43 Promenade, described in her advertisement as "The most luxurious hotel on the Promenade", and equipped with an "approved indoor A.R.P. shelter."²¹ Two weeks later the JC carried a brief and (to this gentle author) baffling report of the Chavurah Kadima at Southport: it had recently intensified its activities; there were two series of sichot, and the Tzohut and Hebrew sessions. Onegai Shabbat had been arranged on Saturday evenings; members were busy on an allotment and had had three Tyulim. I have recorded this development because there has been little evidence of Lubavitcher activity in Southport, and it may be that some readers will understand most of the brief report quoted.²²

At the Council Meeting on 18 May 1941 the Senior Warden, Sydney Harris, thanked Maurice Joseph, the Treasurer, on behalf of the Council for his work in connection with covenants which had increased the income of the synagogue substantially. Mr Harris said an increase in the Rabbi's salary was needed: it was agreed that he be given £50 per annum for travelling expenses, telephone etc for the duration of the war. Mr Harris mentioned appointing a temporary shammas at the next Council meeting, presumably in place of Mr Zaitz.

About the same date there was a conference of evacuee teachers from Manchester, Liverpool, Blackpool, Southport, Preston, Lytham St Anne's, Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Clitheroe, at Blackpool. The Chief Education Officer for Blackpool, F. E. Harrison, said that they wanted to get to a stage when people "can believe unashamedly (in their own religion) while realising that there are others holding opposite views, which they must respect. It is very seldom that during a domination by any one sect there is toleration shown for the minorities" - comments which seem to have general application. Rev S. Segal, of Southport, said that Southport had 250 evacuee children, about half of them now incorporated in their Synagogue classes. At the AGM of the congregation in late May the Senior Warden, Sydney Harris, said that 150 children were attending the classes, so it is possible that the figure Rev Segal gave was incorrectly transcribed. Whichever was correct, it suggests that Southport was far more favoured than anywhere else

²⁰ JC 28/3/1941, p 7 & 12/7/1929, p 15. The Rose, formerly Rosenson, family, started what became G.U.S. (Great Universal Stores). He was not the only member of SHC to move to St Anne's: Sidney Schama made the same transition.

²¹ JC 2/5/1941, p 2. The approved indoor shelter may have been one of the table-type shelters called Morrison shelters, which could be used as tables, and slept under. They were meant to avoid the crushing of those under them by falling masonry from higher up the building as the table top would be strengthened.

²² JC 16/5/1941, p 16. Kadima means "Forward". Sichot seem to be identical to sichos, meaning talks by Rabbi Mendel Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rabbi. It isn't clear in the online edition of the JC whether the next obscure word is Tzohut or Tzofit. Tzofit, which is close to the latter, is a female first name meaning a watcher. Onegai Shabbat are gatherings in a synagogue or private home to express pleasure in the Shabbat holiday, and may include music, drama, discussions and singing of religious melodies. Tyulim are hikes – long-distance walks.

– as Blackpool had only 73 evacuee children at this time. There was a flourishing Habonim Gedud, meeting in the Synagogue premises. He was surprised at the low standard of religious knowledge.²³

In May 1941 Rabbi Silverstone was elected Chairman of the League of Nations branch in Southport; the Vicar of St. Philip's spoke of "his brilliant attainments as a man of letters, author and lecturer. In his numerous addresses to the churches of the town he had created an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill." The Rabbi then gave an address on the future of the League, opining that only by infusing religion into politics could the world be saved. This seems like the kind of view that might well be disputed now, if it were expressed, but in those times religion held a sway that was often unchallenged.²⁴

The Council meeting on 15 June 1941 agreed that the architect should be asked to pass the work done on the mortuary before any money was paid to Mr Evans. Permission was given to Liverpool Yeshiva "to commence a class on condition that it does not in any way conflict with the interests of the congregational classes." This may perhaps have been in the Synagogue or related buildings.

In June 1941 the JC reported on the Southport Youth Centre's mission to deliver food to those bombed out in Liverpool. This worthy group had collected from the Southport Jewish community enough food and about £25 in cash, to take a small convoy and nearly two hundred parcels of food "into some poor district." The parcels contained tinned food, vegetables, sugar, tea and biscuits, and the convoy set out from Southport Town Hall in a small convoy, in cars lent by friends, using petrol supplied for this special mission by the Corporation. A first-hand account was provided by Miss Betty Kramer, Chairman of the Southport Youth Centre, who said, "The Liverpool Citizens' Advice allotted us a couple of streets in one of the worst damaged areas, and we began by distributing the food from door to door, but soon the whole neighbourhood heard about us, and we were almost mobbed. We had disposed of everything within 10 minutes, including a few cheese sandwiches we had brought for our own lunch!" The report adds that the Youth Centre had often assisted in the distribution of food, furniture and clothing among evacuee and other centres.²⁵

At the end of June 1941, the Southport Zionist Youth centre was inaugurated in Southport. Miss S. Pink, probably a relative of Mr Y. Pink (who took the chair, mentioned above, page 141, in a report on the formation of a Habonim Chavurah in January 1941), was elected chairman, with M. Hovsha as Vice-chairman, C. Newman as Secretary, and Rev Zicherman as Treasurer. The Centre intended to meet each Tuesday and Thursday in the Synagogue.²⁶ Not to be confused with the Southport Zionist Youth Centre was the Southport Jewish Youth Centre, which in July 1941 started its summer programme of indoor and outdoor activities, including cycling, walking and tennis. The Southport Zionist Society held its annual meeting at the same time, with Rabbi Silverstone being elected its Hon. President, Bertha Claff its Vice-President, Jonas Finestone its chairman, Mrs N. I. Adler and Alfred Hasleton vice-chairman; Mrs Elsa Krengel, Treasurer; and Miss Lily Price, Hon. Secretary.²⁷

At the Council Meeting on 27 July 1941 Mr Dewhurst agreed to pay 10/- [50p] per week for the porger. The Council agreed the maximum hours of attendance for the 10/- per week fee be six per week. It was agreed that 25 guineas [£26-25p] should be spent on a suitable gift for presentation to Rev Segal. It was agreed efforts should be made to obtain a large hall for the overflow services for the High Holy Days.

The Congregation, like many others, was often happy to invite rabbis from elsewhere to conduct the service from time to time. In August 1941 Rev J. Goldstein of the New Synagogue, in London, conducted the service, and "a crowded congregation, deeply impressed by his rendering of the service, accorded him an enthusiastic "Yasher Koach" at its conclusion."²⁸

In the next week's issue of the JC it was reported that a recent function, organised by Mrs S. Halpern and Mrs D. Weller, in aid of the Polish Jewish Refugee Fund realised £40 – to which was added a

²³ JC 23/5/1941, p 1 & 6/6/1941, p 17, report of the AGM. The Minutes of the AGM on 25/5/1941 state that the chairman said there were now 150 children in the classes. I have no information as to whether these children were all being cared for in Jewish homes.

²⁴ JC 23/5/1941, p 15

²⁵ JC 20/6/1941, p 16.

²⁶ JC 4/7/1941, p 17. Miss S. Pink may have been Sadie Pink, who married Beniamino Ottolenghi at Princes Rd Synagogue Liverpool in 1948.

²⁷ JC 11/7/1941, p 16.

²⁸ JC 15/8/1941, p 13. A Yasher Koach is an expression in Yiddish or Hebrew meaning "Well done" or "congratulations."

donation of £25 by Mrs Sara Good, a generous donor in her eighties, who had given in recent years to J.N.F., Youth Aliyah, Delamere homes, and a mental hospital in Jerusalem.²⁹

Not much evidence appears in the JC about the overflow services, some of them as a result of evacuees swelling the numbers of the congregation, but in late August 1941, an announcement under the heading “Ainsdale and District” conveyed the news that arrangements had been made for High Festival Services there. Anyone interested was invited to communicate with S. Kinshuck, 7 Sandbrook Rd, Ainsdale. More information about the allotment of seats and an overflow venue appeared in September. One announcement said when the Executive would attend to allot seats for the High Festivals (for the Overflow Services) and that the Secretary would attend every morning from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. This was followed by an advertisement for an “experienced Chazan (not Baal-Tefillah) for overflow services for large hall for the High Festivals.” The fact that this application was to be to the Secretary at Arnside Road, indicates that it was under the aegis of the Southport Hebrew Congregation, which probably means that the venue was the Baptist Tabernacle at the junction of Scarisbrick New Rd and Southbank Rd, and that these services were probably quite distinct from those planned at Ainsdale.³⁰

An Extraordinary Council meeting on 3 September 1941 considered the question of blacking out the main synagogue: it decided to obtain estimates. If the amount were £50 or less, the Council could decide at next meeting, but if above £50, it would have to go to another General meeting.³¹

A perhaps remarkable event occurred shortly after, when the Mortuary at the Duke St Cemetery was consecrated by Rabbi Silverstone and the Revs Zicherman and Segal. Dr Silverstone said that it was only after existing for almost half a century that the Southport Congregation had built a mortuary, and it was mainly through the efforts of Samuel Tarshish that this was accomplished.³²

On Sunday 12 October 1941 there was a Youth Rally for the Palestine Victory Campaign in the Temperance Institute, with the showing of the film “Collective Adventure”. Quite a different meeting was a luncheon to be held on 22 October, at the Cambridge Hall, by the Women’s Appeal Committee, for the Youth Aliyah to Palestine. The speakers were to be the Marchioness of Reading, Dr Vera Weizmann, and Mrs Barbara Ayrton Gould, J.P. Mrs Sara Good was the President of the Committee that organised this luncheon, which also supported the establishment of hostels for children in England, and aimed to raise £500. In the event, it raised £1,000, perhaps without the participation of the Marchioness and Mrs Gould, though with the substitution of Theodore Kollek and local speakers such as Rabbi Silverstone and Mrs Bertha Claff.³³

Armin Klein, Czechoslovak-born, was appointed as temporary shammos for a three months’ trial at the Council Meeting on 12 October 1941. He would do the duties of the shammos as defined by the constitution of the congregation and those of the collector if called upon, at salary of £4 per week. He was also to be choir leader. The Council passed a vote of confidence in the Executive. It was agreed that 10 guineas be given to Rev Bruches and 5 guineas be given to Miss Susman, as wedding presents³⁴.

The same issue of the JC reported that Zvi Reisman, Chairman of the Organisation Department of the Federation of Zionist Youth, toured provincial societies, and in Southport, though it was a well-populated area, found no Young Zionist Society; indeed an attempt to form the nucleus of one had met with little success. Mr Reisman’s summary of his tour was that he thought “A large section of Jewish Youth, even when attached to various societies, is apathetic to its faith.” This was a challenge they would try to meet in the future.³⁵

Eli Belovitch outlined a scheme for the reconstruction of the stables at the back of the synagogue at the Council meeting on 9 November 1941: the Council decided to put this scheme on the agenda for a forthcoming General meeting.

²⁹ JC 22/8/1941, p 16.

³⁰ JC 29/8/1941, p 4 & 12/9/1941, p 4.

³¹ The requirement to get approval of a general meeting for expenditure for anything over £50 seems now to have been too low, running the risk that the Congregation might make a decision in conflict with British law!

³² JC 26/9/1941, p 14

³³ JC 10/10/1941, p 13. Vera Weizmann was the wife of Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel. Teddy/Theodor Kollek was Mayor of Jerusalem from 1965 to 1993.

³⁴ Probably Esther/Ettie Susman, who became the second wife of Michael Plesner at Blackpool, Dec ¼, 1941.

³⁵ Ibid, p 8. The Habonim services mentioned below in March 1942 suggests that this was an unfair verdict at least on the Southport Jewish youth.

In November 1941 a campaign was launched by the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, to recruit members and spread the Zionist message. The list of chairmen or secretaries included the name of Rev S. Segal, at 6 York Terrace, Manchester Rd, Southport.³⁶ The Southport Zionist Society staged a debate at the end of November, on the motion that “Anti-Semitism has proved beneficial to Judaism”, proposed by Gerald Abrahams, an eminent barrister, and seconded by Jack Dehaas. The successful opposition to this was led by Sydney Needoff, from Manchester, and seconded by Theo Ramm. At the same time a meeting of the Warships Week Committee in Southport decided to ask Rabbi Silverstone to form a committee representative of the local religious bodies, with a view to fostering interest in Warships Week. This would, no doubt, help to support the idea that the Rabbi was a patriotic member of society.³⁷

The Council meeting on 7 December 1941 recorded its pleasure that Sergeant Air Gunner Aubrey Weldon, the twenty-five-year-old youngest son of Louis Weldon, an old boy of King George V School and a solicitor, had received the Distinguished Flying Medal (D.F.M.) in recognition of his bravery whilst carrying out his duties in the Forces. The citation was for “conspicuous bravery and resourcefulness in air operations over enemy territory.” Aubrey Weldon had been the chief wireless operator in a bomber hit by shell-fire in a raid over Mannheim: he used his hands to beat out the resulting fire, after rescuing the injured rear-gunner. He was able to put out the fire with an extinguisher, and tried to get the turret in working order again, but it was jammed. This all happened at a height of 16,000 feet in a temperature of minus 25 degrees centigrade, without a supply of oxygen.³⁸

At the half yearly General Meeting, on 14 December 1941 Rev S. Segal and Rev R.S. Bruches were congratulated on their marriages. The proposal to black out the synagogue was amended to no additional blackout. Rev Zicherman wrote saying he wanted a previous letter he had sent to be read “to the General Body.” The Senior Warden, Sydney Harris, ruled the letter should be read but its contents were referred to Council. The Senior Warden said that after three and a half years as chairman this (the Rev Zicherman matter) was the first time his ruling had been questioned, and he had always carried out the constitution as laid down, therefore he must resign in view of the lack of confidence in his ruling.³⁹

Sometime in the year 1942 perhaps the only victim of the Holocaust with a Southport connection I have discovered, died at the hands of the Germans, having been deported from Salonika, where she then lived. This was Mathilde Hassid, the eldest child and only daughter of Moise and Jamilla Michael, and the widow of Moise Hassid. She had lived at 23 Waterloo Rd, Birkdale in the 1920s.⁴⁰

The eminent Dayan Harris Lazarus visited Southport early in 1942, preaching in the synagogue on Jewish education and examining the classes. He also attended a reception given in his honour by Mr and Mrs Harold Brodie. Another event was the election of representatives of each charitable institution by the recently formed Southport Jewish Women’s Personal Service Guild, which had organised working groups to try to raise as much as possible for war work and charities: an American tea, in aid of the Blind Babies’ Home and the Liverpool Women’s Hospital, was arranged, and there had been collections for Palestine welfare and the Russian Red Cross. Whilst the idea of an American tea sounds like something with a novelty element, which might be very effective in attracting people, which was always a consideration.⁴¹

There had been an appeal at overflow services at Tabernacle Hall, which raised £40, collected by Jack Smush, who divided it between Manchester and Liverpool charities. A more unusual event was that rehearsals for a mixed choral society, being formed by Rev O. Zicherman, were being held in the synagogue, under the direction of Armin Klein, now beadle of the synagogue.⁴²

By the Council Meeting on 11 January 1942, Hyman Fletcher was acting Senior Warden till the end of the Financial year. Miss Susman’s resignation as secretary was read, and Miss (Betty) Kramer was appointed as Assistant Secretary in her place at “not more than Miss Susman’s salary.” Yom Kippur

³⁶ JC 28/11/1941 p 9.

³⁷ JC 5/12/1941, p 17. Theo(dore) Ramm was probably the person born 1912, likely to be a younger brother of Ezra, the chair maker. For Gerald Abrahams, see entry in The Chair maker of Yellow House Lane and other Southport Jews.

³⁸ JC 28/11/1941 p 9 & 5/12/1941, p 1. His father was described as a founder of the Southport Synagogue and a Governor of the Southport Infirmary.

³⁹ SHC GenMtsMins, 14/12/1941. It is clear that the job demanded a lot of time, and that disagreements with colleagues and the Council could be difficult to tolerate.

⁴⁰ Yad Vashem page of testimony; Collins, Lydia, The Sephardim of Manchester: pedigrees and pioneers, Manchester, Shaare Hayim, 2006; Seed’s Southport & District Directory, 1924-25.

⁴¹ JC 16/1/1942, p 17.

⁴² JC 30/1/1942, p 15

appeal allocations were made: to Liverpool Charities £25; Southport Infirmary, £25; Manchester Talmudical College £10; Southport Philanthropic Society £50; Board of Deputies Essential services £20; and Chief Rabbi's United Relief Appeal £40. Total £170. The Council accepted the ruling of the Education sub-committee recommending the appointment of Mr Kaufman as teacher at a salary of £2-2s per week, and the appointment of Rabbi Kyanski⁴³ as supervisor in conjunction with Dr Silverstone.

There was unwelcome publicity for the Southport Community in late January 1942, as a large group of people were caught up in a police raid on a gambling club, on a day when Southport was in the grip of a blizzard, referred to as the "Russian winter". The headline read POLICE RAID DISTURBS CLUB CARD PLAYERS and the sub-headline was SWOOP FOLLOWS LETTER OF WARNING. The first line of the long report said, "Poker tables, packs of playing cards, and score cards were exhibited at Southport police court on Wednesday when, in a five-hours' hearing of a case based on a club raid, fines totalling £150 were imposed, with costs of £38-16s-0d." To a modern reader this kind of event must seem old-fashioned – people doing something harmless in private, for their own entertainment – but these were different times, when such things were criminal. So what happened? Joseph Plesner, 40, and his wife Irene, also 40, were fined for keeping a common gaming house and allowing the use of premises for unlawful gaming; David Platt, 43, was fined for similar offences and for managing a common gaming house; his wife, Millicent Leslie Platt, 39, was fined for essentially the same misdemeanour.

The magistrates ordered the tables and other material that was shown in court to be confiscated, but allowed the cards and score cards to be used in a bridge drive for the benefit of Mrs Churchill's Russian Red Cross fund in the following week. This may seem surprising, but one point that emerged from the court proceedings reported in the newspaper was that Mrs Platt was known for her charitable and philanthropic endeavours, including helping people who had been bombed out. This was said by her K.C., E.G. Hemmerde, who represented the Platts and the Plesners. The prosecuting counsel, A.E. Baucher, said that the case related to the Carlton Club, at 121-123 Lord St, Southport, which had been let to the Plesners and the Platts in July 1941. The yearly rental was £250 at that time, but much larger sums may later have changed hands, as one defendant had £709 on him and another had £96. Despite these large amounts, possibly on the defendants' persons because they were there between or after spells at work, Mrs Platt said that the club had made £236 for war charities. She also mentioned that each Monday afternoon, there was a "knitting bee" to provide comforts for the troops, through the Southport War Comforts Fund.

The full list of people present seems to have been largely or entirely Jewish in religion or ethnicity: it included a famous chess-playing barrister from Liverpool, Gerald Abrahams, representing himself, who had taken a First in P.P.E. at Oxford, and later married Elsie Krengel, who had also been present, and with Leslie Black representing the rest of the defendants, apart from the hosts and Captain Lionel Husdan, who sent a letter to the court.

The full list of those present, charged with "resorting and playing in a common gaming house," and bound over was as follows:- Mott Alexander, Fannie Finn, Maxwell Glassman, Kate Lippa, Myer Lister, Gertrude Mannheim, Joseph Mannheim, Rita Mannheim, Simon Mannheim, Harry Peters, Sadie Peters, Lily Leah Ross, Harry Sapiro, Benjamin Stone. Those charged with "resorting in a common gaming house" and bound over, were:- Gerald Abrahams, Joseph Appleton Bach, Samuel Myer Barnett, Herbert Solomon Isaacson, Elsie Krengel, Manuel Mannheim, Louis Michaelson, Abraham Ross, Bernard and Elsie Ross.

The background to this case is that the police had been watching the house for some time from an adjoining building, on various dates, from 3 p.m. until blackout. There were two days of watching in November 1941, and two in January 1942. As long beforehand as August 1941, the Chief Constable had written to Mr Platt and Mr Plesner to tell them that he had been informed that certain games of chance



Headline of newspaper report of the raid on the illegal gambling club 1942

were being played in the club, and that he hoped that they would take the letter as a warning not to commit any offence that would bring them within the law. A warrant was then obtained and executed on 18 January 1942, under the Gaming Act of 1845, with two Police Inspectors, three sergeants and a number of constables simultaneously visiting the premises at 10.30 p.m.

⁴³ Rabbi Julius Kyanski was a former Rabbi of Leazes Park Synagogue, in Newcastle.

Gerald Abrahams, the barrister charged, said he was interested to protect his reputation from being stigmatised by a conviction, and asked Sergeant Laycock about alcohol: the latter replied that none was being consumed. He submitted that the club was not a gaming house, and that draw poker had not been proved other than as a game of skill. Charges were dismissed against Henry, Eva and Marjorie Black, Myer Waldman, and Captain Lionel Husdan, of Ryde, Isle of Wight, all of whom had said that they were merely taking refreshments in the club, and had not played. David Platt said that he had not the slightest idea that they were breaking the law, and Mrs Platt said that it had not been a paying venture.

It does appear, from the report, that the only feature of it that would cause any suspicion of an anti-Semitic intention on the part of the newspaper or its writer, is the fact that those present were, clearly, all of Jewish origin, though this is nowhere mentioned in the report. The way the report reads does not impute any particular immorality to those present, unless the contemporary reader brought to his or her reading of it a principled objection to gambling. The headline, reproduced above, merely gives the article a semi-humorous character, suggesting that the police raid had “disturbed” the players. Bearing in mind the extremely inclement weather at this time of year (the headline on the same page said, “Southport shivered in the blizzard – town swept by gale and buried in snow”) it is even possible the report was something to relieve the surrounding gloom⁴⁴.

Less riskily the Southport Zionist and Literary Society had been busy: Miss Lily Price had given a lecture on the Youth Aliya, and Theodore Ramm had lectured on Palestine: a concert had been arranged by Habonim and Mr S. Barnett; and there had been a hat debate. The next event, in mid-February 1942, was a social and concert, apparently with a Brains Trust, modelled on an early BBC programme, the event being held at Salt’s Café, in Nevill Street.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the senior members of Habonim had been conducting services each Sabbath morning, with the Rosh Vatikim, Yoel Pink, addressing the children in successive weeks on “The Meaning of Prayer” and “Freedom, a law and a land.” Attendances had been around seventy each time, and all youths from eight to eighteen were invited.⁴⁶

It was agreed, at the Council Meeting on 22 March 1942, that a minimum of £200 be put aside for the building fund per annum. It was also resolved that Rev Segal’s salary be increased by £1 per week, making his salary £6 plus the war bonus of £1, with effect from March 1st. At the next Council meeting, on 12 April 1942, it was proposed, and perhaps carried, that a plan should be made of the Cemetery showing the positions of graves, and then allotments could be made.⁴⁷

The Palestine Foundation Fund mounted a Second War Appeal early in 1942, and this had raised, in six weeks, £47,000 towards its goal of £100,000. News of the progress was carried in the JC in late April 1942: in Liverpool fewer than fifty individuals had subscribed £4,500, whilst Southport had raised over £700 – the two are mentioned because so many of the Liverpool community now lived in Southport, even if their business was still in Liverpool.⁴⁸

At the Council Meeting on 3 May 1942 it was decided to employ a regular gardener for upkeep of the garden. Simeon Kaitiff, Chairman of the Education sub-committee said it was doubtful whether the classes should be closed owing to the epidemic of mumps; it was agreed to ask Doctors Burns and Nurick to become Hon. Physicians to the Education Committee for consultation on the health of pupils.

Indications of joint working by the Southport establishment and their Liverpool colleagues then resident in Southport can be found in the announcement that the Southport Federation of Women Zionists, with the members of the Liverpool societies who had evacuated to Southport, had formed a joint cultural group meeting regularly to discuss Zionist matters.⁴⁹

In 1942 the M.P. for Southport was Robert S. Hudson, the Minister of Agriculture from 1940 to 1945. When he visited his constituency in May 1942, Rabbi Silverstone and Jonas Finestone, respectively

⁴⁴ SG, Sat 31/1/1942.

⁴⁵ JC 6/2/1942, p 16, 13/2/1942, p 13, 20/2/1942, p 11, & 27/2/1942, p 11. In a hat debate subjects are offered in a hat, and those who draw them have little or no time in which to prepare their remarks.

⁴⁶ JC 13/3/1942, p 14.

⁴⁷ It is not clear whether this means that part of the cemetery could be used for temporary allotments for the duration of the war (digging for victory). It seems strange that no plan would have been made by this time.

⁴⁸ JC 24/4/1942, p 8.

⁴⁹ JC 15/5/1942, p 14.

President and Chairman of the Zionist Society, discussed with him the Jewish problem in relation to Palestine, and the desirability of raising a Jewish army.⁵⁰

At the Annual General Meeting of the Congregation on 17 May 1942 it was agreed that Finklestone and Sandler of Manchester and M.J. Mass of Liverpool be asked to act as Hon. Solicitors. H.M. Brodie was elected Senior Warden; Leopold Lever became Junior Warden; A. Arlick, Baal Segan; M. Joseph, Treasurer; and Joseph Cowen, Hon Secretary. Maurice Mass, of the firm of Mass Davidson, had been elected to the Council for the first time.

A letter from the Emergency Hospital thanking Dr Silverstone, S. Tarshish, Harold Brodie and Rev Segal for good deeds and kindnesses was read at the Council meeting on 31 May 1942. S. Kaitiff brought up the fact that new members were told there were no seats for them – the Chairman said “seats would be found for new members irrespective of country members, provided seats were available.” The Council decided that a list of country members should be prepared.

The Hon. officers and executive of the Congregation advertised a meeting at the Temperance Institute on Sunday 31 May, 1942, in the afternoon, with Messrs Neville Laski, K.C., Hyman Weinberg and I.W. Goldberg as speakers on “A vital matter of interest to Anglo-Jewry”. The first two speakers were important members of the community in Manchester. The chair was to be occupied by Meyer Goldstone, and the topic would emerge in a short report in the JC the following week. That report explained that the meeting was in support of the Deputies’ Appeal for the Maintenance of Essential Communal Services, and that an Appeal committee was formed with Harold Brodie as Chairman, Maurice Joseph as Treasurer and Mr E. Kahn as Hon. Secretary.⁵¹

The decision of a sub-committee to withdraw the licence from poultry dealers was considered, at the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 21 June 1942: the Senior Warden, Harold Brodie, said that Messrs Lewis and Seddon were willing to supply at government-controlled prices. The feeling of the Council was that dealers should cater as far as possible for members. [But apparently not to non-members] Seddon and Lewis were called in, and said they were willing to supply poultry at government-controlled price, and they both asked for renewal of their licences. The Council decided to continue licensing them, and the poultry dealers were told they could have their licences, and asked if they would distribute supplies equitably and in proportion among the members of the Congregation. A letter was prepared to send to them and to Mr Oldroyd, as follows: “I am directed to confirm the decision of the Council meeting of the 21st June at which you were present that your licence is continued subject to the condition to which you agreed, that you will as far as possible distribute your own supplies of poultry equitably and in proportion amongst the members of the Congregation. ... “I am also desired to express the pleasure of the Council that ... you continue to supply poultry at the prices controlled by law.”

Doreen Davis must have been one of the best pianists ever produced by Southport – not just the local Jewish community: the daughter of Mr and Mrs Daniel Davis, she was awarded the Gold Medal in the Final Grade by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music – something given to the candidate gaining the highest marks in the U.K. This occurred when she was fifteen, in 1942, following previous Gold Medals in the Intermediate and Advanced Grades: she had also broadcast on three occasions already. By 1946, when the JC again reported on her career, she had become the holder of the Julius Scholarship at the Royal Manchester College of Music. Her father was a furrier in Lord St.⁵²

A letter from Rev Zicherman was read at the Council Meeting on 29 June 1942, and it was agreed that a bonus of £1 per week be granted to him from the date of this meeting till the end of his agreement. Seat rentals and the abolition of offerings were discussed, and it was agreed to recommend changes to the general body, with slight increases in seat rentals to compensate – the most expensive seats for couples would be raised from 5/3d to 6/-, and the most expensive seats for single men from 4/5d to 5/-, “Preference to be given to children of members to be accommodated for Yomim Naroim as against visitors and country members, and members should be asked to look out for unused tip-up seats which could be placed in front of Bimah.” Hyman Weinberg, a former Treasurer of the congregation, proposed

⁵⁰ JC 22/5/1942, p 11. Mr Hudson, (1886-1957) later Viscount Hudson, was M.P. for Southport from 1931 to 1952.

⁵¹ JC 29/5/1942, p 10 & 5/6/1942, p 14. I am unable to identify either I.W. Goldberg or E. Kahn, but of course Maurice Joseph was well-known as Moe Joe, and H. Brodie was the then Senior Warden. I assume that the phrase Essential Communal Services refers to national services, such as the Chief Rabbinate and the Board of Deputies.

⁵² JC 26/6/1942, p 14; Local Directory, 1950.

to come and speak to the Congregation again. Mr Brodie brought up the scandal of allowing casuals⁵³ to sleep on synagogue premises.

A very typical engagement announcement in July 1942 is worth repeating in full here. “The engagement is announced of Emanuel (Mannie) elder son of Mr and Mrs Louis Rubin, of 43 Menlove Avenue, Liverpool 18, to Rosie, daughter of Mr and Mrs S. Kinshuck, of 3 Elm Terrace, Beech St, Liverpool (Present address, 7 Sandbrook Rd, Ainsdale, near Southport.)” The salient features of this announcement are the very typical indication of someone living in or near Southport, but still thinking of themselves as residents of the city of (in this case a handsome terrace near to Kensington). In early 1944 a dance was organised, through the combined efforts of the “Liverpool Huldah (Southport Branch)”, Liverpool Ladies’ Zionist and Southport Women’s Zionist Societies, in aid of persecuted Jewish children in Europe, raising £222. Mr Kinshuck was a prime mover in the attempt to provide a local, Ainsdale, base for services, back in the autumn of 1941 (see above, page 153 and below this page) There were also similar examples of people from Manchester and London, but not so many of them.⁵⁴

This author has heard it said, by gentiles who were adults in the Second World War, that they had no idea what was happening to Jews in the Third Reich. This kind of selective amnesia – or perhaps refusal to accept unpalatable facts – is achieved despite the evidence presented in parts of the press, and by Jewish notables at different times, to gatherings including gentiles. Such an event was an address by the Chief Rabbi, Dr J.H. Hertz, at a service in the Arnside Rd Synagogue attended by members of the Town Council and the Mayor and Mayoress, reported in the Southport Guardian of 29 July 1942: Dr Hertz referred to the concentration camps, mass killings and the fact that over seven hundred thousand Jews had already been “done to death in lands under German rule since the beginning of the war.” (The Wannsee Conference had determined the course of the Holocaust on 20 January 1942) He continued, “Nazis had decreed the annihilation of the whole Jewish populace at the rate of 1,000 murders a day, using the lethal chamber and the machine-gun.” He provided details of individual atrocities, such as thirty little Jewish children drowned publicly by the Nazi police in Warsaw⁵⁵.

As the High Holydays approached in 1942 no seats were available in the synagogue at Arnside Rd by the fourth week of August, so an announcement appeared in the JC saying that the Executive would be in attendance to allocate seats for the overflow services only, on Sundays 23 and 30 August. A later announcement shows that the Tabernacle was again in use for the Overflow service on the second day of Rosh Hashonah, with Rabbi Silverstone preaching at Arnside Rd on the first day, and at the Tabernacle on the second.⁵⁶

Harold Solomon, the *eleven-year-old* son of Leslie Solomon, probably established a national record in 1942, when he passed the School Certificate Examination of the North Universities, normally taken at the age of fifteen or sixteen. He gained four “credits.” As a pupil of Southport College, he had “simply shot through the school,” according to the Principal of the College. He had now been asked by a newspaper to write a short story, already having tried writing plays and a novel; he also took the main part in a Jewish play, “Judas Maccabeus” produced by the Liverpool Young Zionist Society (evacuated to Southport) when he was nine years old.⁵⁷

Mr Kinshuck was again busy organising “Holy-Day services” for the “Ainsdale and District Congregation” in St John’s Church Hall, Liverpool Road, Ainsdale, in September 1942. Interested people were invited to contact him at Sandbrook Rd, or B. Brown at 120 Station Rd, Ainsdale.⁵⁸

On 5 October 1942 the Palestine Solidarity Campaign held a meeting in Salt’s café, in Nevill St, at which the speakers were Dr Norman Maclean, ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rabbi Silverstone, H.M. Brodie, the Senior Warden of Southport Hebrew Congregation, and

⁵³ Probably either paupers or people in only occasional work, who might be sleeping rough. (Chambers’s Twentieth Century Dictionary) It isn’t stated who had allowed this.

⁵⁴ JC 17/7/1942, p 9 & 14/1/1944, p 10. Huldah was one of the five women in the Bible referred to as prophet. Perhaps used in Liverpool at this time as the name of a group of women.

⁵⁵ The source for this horrible incident was the American Friends of Polish Democracy, as this internet reference shows: <https://www.jta.org/1942/07/03/archive/nazi-police-publicly-drown-thirty-jewish-children-in-warsaw-ghetto>

⁵⁶ JC 21/8/1942, p 4 & 11/9/1942, p 9.

⁵⁷ JC 18/9/1942, p 15.

⁵⁸ JC 4/9/1942, p 4. The title “Ainsdale and District Congregation” suggests something more permanent than before.

the Rev B. Cherrick. A later brief report of the meeting says that the Chairman of the Southport J.N.F. Commission, S.M. Barnett, announced that over £350 had been raised so far.⁵⁹

Detailed evidence of a separate evacuees' congregation appears on page 3 of the JC for 16 October 1942, under the unambiguous heading, "SOUTHPORT EVACUEES' CONGREGATION", which continued, "The Organising Committee announce the holding of regular Sabbath Services at the hall adjoining the Hoghton St Baptist Church commencing Saturday October 17, at 9.30 a.m. All welcome." It appears, from a 1909 O.S. map of the town centre, that this was the hall used as a Sunday School at that time, which stood behind the Hoghton St Baptist Church, approximately facing the Anchor St end of Post Office Avenue. Neither the hall nor the church exists in 2019. It is clear from the last few paragraphs before this one, that in 1942 there were four different places in the Southport area at which services were being held for the High Holydays in 1942: (1) Arnsdale Road Synagogue, (2) the Baptist Tabernacle at the junction of Scarisbrick New Rd and Southbank Rd, (3) St John's Church Hall, Liverpool Road, Ainsdale, for the Ainsdale and district Congregation, and (4) the hall adjoining the Hoghton St Baptist Church, for the Southport Evacuees Congregation.

Probably more interesting in the long term was a Regional Zionist Conference, in Manchester, announced in October 1942: this was attended by delegates from all over Lancashire, as well as Birmingham and Buxton. The opening session included a review of the last year's activities in Great Britain by Janus Cohen, Hon. Secretary of the Zionist Federation, who said that fundraising should not be the be-all and end-all of Zionist activity – an intensive education of the Jewish masses in every aspect of Jewish Zionist knowledge must be carried out: Jews must learn to understand all the causes which had led up to the deplorable situation of world Jewry. This suggests a conference that provided plenty of food for thought for those who attended.⁶⁰

Further evidence of the existence of the Southport Evacuees' Congregation emerged at the Council Meeting on 25 October 1942. A letter was read from this congregation, signed by Councillor Sydney Needoff,⁶¹ stating their reasons for forming this Congregation and complaining against the Senior Warden, Executive and Council for a lack of courtesy by the first, and lack of sympathy by all about their position in Southport. The Senior Warden denied "any act of discourtesy"; however, the Hon. Secretary, Joseph Cowen said he had a conversation with Mr I. Dover⁶² at which Dr Silverstone was present; the general feeling of the Council was that if the Executive had adhered to the laws of the synagogue Constitution by calling Council meetings at least once a month, this situation might never have arisen. [The Council hadn't met between 29 June and 6 Sept 1942] Covenants were mentioned: H.M. Brodie and the Hon. Treasurer both said that signing a covenant had never been made a condition of membership. It was resolved that the Council must be convened before the High Festivals to plan all aspects of the celebrations; a vote of confidence in the Executive was carried with some abstentions. H.M. Brodie, the Senior Warden, said he regretted his failure to convene council meetings in accordance with the constitution. Mr Cowen's letter also dissociated himself from the unconstitutional practice of making deductions from the salaries of stipendiary officials – Mr Brodie said it had been in the interests of the Congregation, but the Secretary said it was a direct contravention of the rules, and Maurice Mass said it was also illegal; Mr Brodie assured the Council that the practice would cease immediately and the deductions would be repaid at a meeting between the Executive and the stipendiary officials.

The Council meeting on 1 November 1942 continued that on 25 October. Presentations to children of members on their marriage were discussed, members deploring that no presentation had been made to the son of Louis Weldon on his marriage, in view of Mr Weldon's long record of service to the congregation. After discussion of the filling up of the gangways "to the evident discomfort of the ladies" and doubts on the safety of the altered seating, and Mr Belovitch's comment, "Why have a building sub-committee if they are not consulted on building matters?" the Senior Warden said alterations had been made solely in the interest of the congregation "in view of persistent and clamouring demand for ladies' seats"; it was decided that an Architect and Building Surveyor should be consulted on this matter.

⁵⁹ JC 2/10/1942, p 11 & 16/10/1942, p 11.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p 11

⁶¹ Sydney Needoff, 1906-2002, was a Liberal Councillor in Manchester, a candidate for Parliament in Salford in 1950, a communal worker, and Vice-President of Manchester Talmudical College.

⁶² Probably Isaac Dover, a leading figure in Liverpool communal affairs for many years. Born Poland, came to Liverpool in 1890. He died 1964, aged 91, having been President of Liverpool Talmud Torah and of the Central Synagogue, and Senior Warden of Greenbank Drive Synagogue.

Leonard Friend thought the principle of abolishing offerings in the synagogue should apply to visitors, as well as members. It was agreed that alternative schemes be submitted to the General Body: (1) Visitors could shnodder. (2) No shnoddering by anyone at all. The 10% voluntary levy had produced anomalies, so it was decided to recommend to a General meeting that this be discontinued. It was agreed to recommend the appointment of Rev Bruches as teacher-shochet, and any other duties the Executive might define, at £6 per week, his salary to be backdated to the date of his Kabolah.

The first item at the Council Meeting on 8 November 1942, was a report that the architect had checked the Ladies' Gallery and said everything was quite safe, and Mr Lever, the Junior Warden, had seen the Corporation Surveyor at Town Hall, who said everything was fine as long as there had been no interference with exits. The Council agreed to the Finance sub-committee's recommendation that a 10/- bonus per week be granted to Mr Klein, the beadle/collector. A delegation from the Southport Evacuees' Congregation were then invited in: the Senior Warden hoped a spirit of amity would prevail, and asked them what it was they wanted. "...Mr Dover said it had been in their minds for ...two years or more, to start a little home of their own, but previous Executives had tried by all means to prevent that by giving them thefacilities of country membership and sympathetic consideration at the overflow Services." [It appears that the Executive under Sydney Harris had been more sympathetic than the one headed by Mr Brodie] "He (Mr Dover) saidit had been completely mutual ...the present Executive and Council seemed to be lacking in sympathy, ...to the exclusion and seeming indifference to their position as evacuees, and also as members of another synagogue which had to be kept up." He said the letter of June was contrary to the spirit of the memoranda between Greenbank Drive Synagogue and Southport Congregation. Jack Smush said he had been refused membership of the synagogue because he wouldn't sign a covenant offered to him by the Chairman.⁶³ Rev Segal said that overflow seating arrangements meant that the evacuees had been given £1-1s seats for 10/6d and he had tried to please them in every way possible. At the end, Mr Brodie thanked the visitors for their present and their statements and the delegation retired – the other members being Messrs Sydney Needoff and Bieber. After a short discussion, the Hon. Secretary, Marks Manson and Isaac Levy suggested that as the evacuees had already established their congregation, the best thing was to write wishing them success.

Among the records of the late Bertram B. Benas, the Liverpool barrister who took a deep interest in the history of Lancashire Jewish communities, are notes for a paper by him on the first fifty years of the Southport Jewish community; these include the statement that he read a paper on the first chapter of the Jewish community in Southport in November 1942, to the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, an "occasion...graced by the then High Sheriff of Lancashire, Francis Weld"; the Jewish Chronicle, however, reports that this was a meeting of the Jewish Historical Society, in the Temperance Institute, on the subject of "The first chapter in the History of the Southport Jewish Community," mentioning that it was attended by the High Sheriff of Lancashire, Francis Weld, J.P., Vice-President of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire and other members of that society.⁶⁴ The file in Benas's papers also includes a reference to "the Southport Symphony Orchestra, Louis Cohen, conductor". Louis Cohen had conducted the Southport Municipal Orchestra in light music on the Home Service in early August 1942. They were on the Home Service again at the end of August, broadcasting from the Cambridge Hall, Southport, again under the baton of Louis Cohen.⁶⁵

A letter from the Southport Evacuees' congregation appreciating SHC's letter was read, at the Council Meeting on 29 November 1942, and the Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, said members had been circularised by the Evacuees' Congregation to join them – as the persons in question were "only recent residents in Southport" it was decided to make no comment on the matter. The Ministry of Works had

⁶³ One reason that the covenanted membership might have been unattractive at first was the likelihood that people from Liverpool and Manchester would return to their own synagogues, and that the war was probably not expected to continue for several years. Jacob Smush would not merely stay in Southport, but became the Senior Warden.

⁶⁴ JC 13/11/1942, p 11. It was perhaps a joint meeting of the two societies.

⁶⁵ These documents are at 296 BEN/5/4, in the Liverpool Record Office. Louis Cohen (1893/1894 – 1956), born Liverpool, was conductor of the Merseyside Symphony Orchestra. Perhaps he was *guest* conducting the Southport Orchestra. He formed the Merseyside Symphony Orchestra, guest-conducted the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and presented free concerts for members of the armed forces in St George's Hall, Liverpool, in World War 2. He also conducted the Palestine Symphony Orchestra for three seasons after World War 2. JC 7/8/1942, p 16 & 288/1942, p 15.

refused the application for a licence to continue repair of the outbuildings to be used as school rooms, and Harold Brodie said he had written to the Board of Deputies for their assistance in trying to obtain the licence. It was agreed the synagogue should be adequately firewatched by the stipendiary officials, bedding and a bed to be provided, and a rota for these duties to be established “consistent with their present duties” and appeal to the General body for further volunteers. It was stated that Rev Bruches and Mr Ginsberg were regular firewatchers on the government scheme of compulsory firewatchers. A letter was read from Manchester Jewish old age home, asking for permission for representatives to visit Southport to obtain monies for their £10,000 appeal. It was decided to write that the Hon Treasurer and a member of Council (Leonard Friend) would canvass members for funds, and it was agreed that 5 guineas, the usual annual donation, be sent, plus £20 for the special appeal, from the Yom Kippur appeal. Further donations from the Yom Kippur appeal were agreed, including £25 to Southport Infirmary, and £50 to the Philanthropic Society. The Hon. Treasurer, Maurice Joseph, said expenditure was high, and needed to be watched, as there could be a steep decline in income at the close of hostilities, if membership suddenly fell.

What might perhaps have been a political flirtation took place around the end of November 1942, between the Zionians, a newly-formed young Zionist group and the Young Communist League, who had an “inter-society debate” at Salt’s Café. The motion for discussion was “Zionism – Socialism: where does the Jew stand?” The widely-held Socialist views of many Zionists at this time may have meant that there was much less of a gulf between the two groups, than later.⁶⁶

By the time of the half yearly general meeting on 6 December 1942 the Senior Warden was able to say that fifty-eight extra seats had been installed in the Synagogue, [probably] adding £300 p.a. to revenue. Dr. Lehrman had examined the classes, finding them “on the whole quite satisfactory.” Rev Bruches was elected as shochet and teacher (“and any other duties...the Executive may define.”) at a salary of £6 per week. The Council’s recommendation that the custom of making offerings (shnoddering) should be discontinued at all synagogue services was carried unanimously – for 12 months, then to be reviewed.

Sometimes the boasts of officers of organisations provide useful information about the range of their activities, and this was the case at the annual meeting of the Southport Jewish Women’s Personal Service Guild in late 1942. The Chairman, Mrs Harry Livingstone, presented the report on the year: more than £2,000 had been collected for different causes; members of the Guild were working in hospitals, canteens, Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, the A.R.P., the Red Cross, Children’s welfare and other organisations; hundreds of knitted garments had been sent to the Mayor’s Comfort Fund, and the Guild’s Saving Group had sold more than £500 of certificates. Many branches of Zionism had had the Guild’s support. This strongly suggests that by this time Zionism had taken root in the community, and was widely supported and always taken into consideration.⁶⁷

The last issue of the JC of 1942 carried the news that “At a general meeting of the recently formed Southport Jewish Evacuees’ Congregation the following were elected: Isaac Dover, President; Councillor Sydney Needoff, Vice-President; Jack Smush, Treasurer; and Mr M. Greenman (31 Scarisbrick New Rd), Hon Secretary. The article continues: “The congregation provides religious facilities for all Jewish evacuees in Southport and district, and services are held regularly on Sabbath mornings at the schoolrooms of the Baptist Church, Hoghton St, Southport.” This appears to make it clear that the evacuees – or at least some of them – had decided to go their own way, or been cold-shouldered by the Arnside Rd Congregation, or felt that to be the case. This appears to have been the first time there were two congregations in the town. Councillor Needoff was from Manchester, but Messrs Dover and Smush were from Liverpool.⁶⁸

An interesting development at the beginning of 1943 was a plan to form a Mizrachi Colony – Nachlat Southport – in Palestine. At the same time a Mizrachi Society was formed in Southport, with Rabbi Silverstone as its Chairman. He urged the need to further the appeal to create the Nachlat Southport in Israel, for which £2,000 had so far been collected.⁶⁹

Divorce proceedings in respect of Dr Silverstone were mentioned at the Council Meeting on 3 January

⁶⁶ JC 11/12/1942, p 11.

⁶⁷ JC 1/1/1943, pp 13-14.

⁶⁸ JC 25/12/1942, p 11.

⁶⁹ JC 1/1/1943, p 14 & 30/4/1943, p 11.



Sampson Goldstone, the son of Meyer

1943, by Mr Brodie, who said Dr Silverstone had told him that his wife had briefed a King's Counsel to plead, and after Mr Goldstone agreed that it was a matter for the whole community in Southport to interest themselves in the adequate defence of Dr Silverstone, it was proposed that he be loaned £50, and the Senior Warden and Mr Smith undertook to collect monies for his defence from "sympathetic friends and admirers." There is a short item on Miss (Betty) Kramer. It was thought expedient to have her as a standby in case of a teacher being absent so it was decided she could help out, but not be asked to teach. [Underlining as in minutes.] The collection on 13 December, amounting to £93-1s, was all to be given for purpose of rescuing Jewish refugees from Nazi-oppressed countries.

Armin Klein, the beadle/collector, told the Council Meeting on 24 January 1943 that lights and boilers were being left on, and doors [unlocked] because others had keys, and said unless he alone had the key he couldn't take the responsibility of looking after the synagogue. It was agreed that Mr Klein should be solely in charge of synagogue keys, and no other person have keys unless with Hon Officers' permission. Harold Brodie, the Senior Warden, appealed to members not to violate the confidentiality of the information he was sharing with them on Dr Silverstone. He said a letter from the council stating their confidence in Dr Silverstone would give him support, but others thought it best to leave well alone. It was suggested a leading member should go to London on the day to give evidence of the confidence of the Council in their Rabbi. It was agreed unanimously to write a letter of confidence and wishes for success, and Mr Brodie said that Meyer Goldstone was going to London on the day and would represent the Council. Sampson Goldstone thought that if the application to complete the work was renewed in a month or two, it might be granted by the Ministry of Works. (Mr Belovitch said expenditure to date was about £250, and it would need another £300 maximum to complete the work, which seems to suggest that work was proceeding despite the lack of

permission) On the resignation of Mr S. Kauffman from teaching the classes, an application from Lionel Becker as teacher was accepted, with a trial period until April. It was agreed that children should be in synagogue at Sabbath Services from 10 a.m. and should be prevented by teachers from damaging the outhouses on arriving and leaving classes.

Rabbi Silverstone, as we have seen, was still an energetic man at this time of his life (his mid-forties) and in the middle of the war, started a study circle in Mishnah (in English) every Sabbath morning after the service for adolescents. Starting on 16 January 1943, Baba Kama was to be studied. Rabbi Silverstone also held a Mishnah study circle, in Yiddish, every weekday evening, when Menachot was studied in Yiddish – this was for more advanced students.⁷⁰

Under the heading "ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE CHRISTIAN CHILD/Is Education to Blame?" the JC carried a report in late January 1943 of a combined meeting of the Southport Zionist and Literary Society, and the Zionians, addressed by the Mayor's chaplain, Rev S. T. Stratford. He asked for greater cooperation between members of the two faiths and suggested the formation of Christian-Jewish societies for mutual enlightenment. In the discussion that followed, among the points raised was the need for greater care in the education of Gentile children so that anti-Semitic feeling might not be instilled into them, and become too deep to eradicate.⁷¹ The Women's Appeal Committee, at a meeting at the Queen's Hotel, launched an appeal to save destitute children from Nazi-occupied Europe and Madame Pearl Katz, (who had recently escaped from Vichy France) described the condition of the Jews in France.⁷²

⁷⁰ JC 8/1/1943, p 11 & 15/1/1943, p 122 The treatise Baba Kama covers tort laws, relating to damages caused to person or property, theft and robbery, and concludes with a discussion of waste materials produced by a worker in the course of his work. These lectures for beginners were held between Mincha and Maariv [i.e. between the afternoon and evening services] Menachot is part of the Talmud, and the interest here is in the fact that the teaching was in Yiddish as late as 1943.

⁷¹ JC 22/1/1943, p 10. It is clear from a notice in JC 23/4/1943, p 11, that the Zionians were the "Young Zionist Society" – see above [page 162](#).

⁷² JC 5/2/1943, p 13. The resulting appeal was very successful – see [below \(page 165\)](#)

There were further questions about Dr Silverstone at the Council meeting on 7 February 1943: it was decided that the Congregation should write to the Beth Din asking if there was any religious “din” or ruling governing the new situation arising from the decree nisi against Dr Silverstone. On Greenbank Drive Synagogue country members – the Hon Treasurer, Maurice Joseph, was asked about prospects for payment of the account due, and said the account had been rendered, and he thought it would soon be settled in full. At an Extraordinary General Meeting on 14 February 1943, the Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, welcomed new residents and members “who by the misfortune of War, had perforce to leave their own homes and synagogues.” It sounded as if Mr Brodie was trying to make up for his earlier perceived lack of a welcome to the evacuees.

A letter from Beth Din was received, and discussed at an Extraordinary Council Meeting on 28 February 1943 as well as a letter from the Chief Rabbi to the Senior Warden. Dr Silverstone was allowed to make a statement, on which he was questioned, and he denied all allegations “that were current” categorically. (This does not tell us much, apart from the presence of rumours concerning the Rabbi’s behaviour. He did not marry for the second time until 1946)

Bertram Benas, the barrister and Liverpool Jewish historian, returned to Southport in early March, to lecture the Zionist and Literary Society on the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, so effectively that it was decided to form a local branch of the Friends of the University.⁷³

In March 1943 a local undercurrent of anti-Semitism burst into the open, when Councillor M.D. Ball, a Conservative, made an anti-Jewish statement, regarding International Jewish financiers, which was reported in the *Southport Visiter*, after which replies to Councillor Ball’s points were printed; the *Newspaper World* then stated that the *Visiter* had lost the support of some Jewish advertisers. On a recent previous occasion the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* had printed a highly abusive letter about the Jews, followed in this case by replies, then by one Jewish advertiser writing to the paper, threatening to stop advertising in its columns, and this letter was also published. Whilst the JC refers to the principle involved, this is not made clear in its report: it seems most likely that the newspaper should bear in mind that it might lose a lot of advertising as a result of publishing such sentiments; it certainly doesn’t appear that the principle was that the newspaper should print views expressed by someone of the prominence of a councillor, however objectionable, though it may be that the JC felt that the newspaper publishing the views should simultaneously state its objections to them. The JC appears not to have been aware that advertisers pursuing the course of withdrawing their advertising might be exposing themselves to abusive correspondence at the least, and a boycott at the worst.⁷⁴ This controversy appears not to have affected the usual good relations between the Southport Town Council and the Jewish community: a week later the JC announced that as a result of the campaign launched by the Southport Women’s Appeal Committee to raise funds for rescuing the persecuted children in Nazi-occupied Europe, over £1,600 had been raised. Councillor Ball appears to have relented shortly afterwards, too: in a report of a meeting held in June 1943, chaired by Mr Sampson Goldstone, on the suffering of the Jews in Europe, a letter from Councillor Ball, enclosing a donation and expressing deep regret at the plight of European Jewry, was read. This suggests he was trying to build bridges with the Jewish community.⁷⁵

A letter was read from the Army Welfare local committee, from Councillor H. W. Barber, appealing for a donation, at the Synagogue Council Meeting on 21 March 1943. The meeting decided to make up a £10 collection from sympathisers to £20, from the Yom Kippur appeal. Mr S. Kaitiff told the Council he regretted that the children would have to take the scholarship examinations on the Sabbath. He urged the officers to see that it did not happen again, and invite Dr Silverstone’s attention for the future. By the time of the Council Meeting on 4 April 1943 the Home Guard had written refusing to release Lionel Becker (a teacher) from Sunday parades. The Chazan, Rev Zicherman, hadn’t fulfilled his rota of firewatching and had to be seen by Hon. Officers to explain his absence. The donations [or perhaps “promises”?] in response to an appeal for needy clergy in Palestine amounted to £20. Miss Kramer was teaching voluntarily at schools attended by Mr Ginsburg – it was agreed not to interfere as long as she fulfilled her stipendiary duties. The Treasurer said The Congregation should soon be free of debt to the bank.

The Zionians (the Young Zionist Society in Southport) opened their new club-rooms at 289 Lord St early in April 1943. Salomon and Geertruida Henrietta Frankenhuis opened the premises, which, it was

⁷³ JC 12/3/1943, p 11.

⁷⁴ JC 19/3/1943, p 8.

⁷⁵ JC 26/3/1943, p 11

stated in the report, would be open to all members of H.M. and Allied Forces on Sundays (3 to 6 p.m. and 8 to 11.30 p.m., Thursdays (8 to 11 p.m.) and Saturdays 10 to 11). An unrelated item of news in this report was that Douglas Mellor had been elected Chairman of the Small Traders' Section, of the Chamber of Trade.⁷⁶

There were congratulations at the Council meeting 9 May 1943 to Rev and Mrs Segal on the birth of a son⁷⁷; it was agreed that £10 be given in appreciation of Rev Segal's services. Mr Max, the butcher, applied for permission to import and sell poultry, which was granted subject to his complying with the same conditions as other poultry dealers. The fact that the meeting felt Seddon and Oldroyd should give written undertakings to comply with government price regulations suggests that they were doing nothing of the kind. Dr Slotki, Hon. Superintendent of the classes, told the meeting there was no supervision of the classes, the largest in this part of the country. Dr Silverstone had told him that he couldn't supervise properly because of his other varied duties. Dr Slotki proposed a strict check on the marking of the registers by teachers and a weekly rota of two members of the Education Committee for this purpose. He thought private tuition might lead to teachers favouring private pupils in the classes, and they should discourage it by recompensing teachers for loss of their private pupils. "It was emphasised to Dr Slotki that whilst [the] rabbi would collaborate with him, Dr Slotki was in the final analysis responsible to the Council and the teachers were subject to the decisions and instructions of Dr Slotki." [But as Dr Slotki wasn't on the spot, in Southport, this seems unworkable] The meeting deferred any decision on the rôle of Dr Silverstone, but wanted him to give some assistance to the classes rather than none at all.

By May 1943, Southport Hebrew Congregation was advertising for another Hebrew teacher for its classes, asking applications to be sent to the Senior Warden, at Arnside Rd Synagogue. The Evacuees' congregation had Rabbi S. M. Lehrman, of Liverpool, lined up for Saturday June 12. So they were still independent.⁷⁸

It was agreed, at the Council Meeting on 16 May 1943 that the Rabbi and Isaac Levy should meet Mr Seddon to ask why he hadn't complied with the recommendation that sealing should be on the part of the wing of the fowl nearest the carcass. It was agreed that Dr Slotki be appointed as Hon. Superintendent of the classes for a year, and an honorarium would be needed. Lionel Becker had to resign as teacher because he couldn't comply with the hours of teaching, and Mr Kaitiff said his nephew Mr Rothstein would help temporarily – a letter was to be sent accepting his offer with thanks. Mrs David (or perhaps Davies) of 123 Lord St said the new class hours were too great a strain on children.

The Council Meeting on 23 May 1943 heard that Dr Slotki was to be in Southport from 26 to 27 May and was dissatisfied with rearrangement of the classes without his sanction. It was emphasised that he had full control of classes and teachers, and Mr S. Kaitiff mentioned that Mr Bruches hadn't attended Linaker St Day school morning prayers, so it was decided to call an Extraordinary Council meeting for 8 p.m. on Wednesday 26 May. It was felt that one person should be in authority, but responsible to Dr Slotki, and as Head Teacher between Dr Slotki's visits. In the discussion of nominations for officers and council, the Hon Secretary, Joseph Cowen, was complimented on the way he had carried out his duties.

Rev O. Zicherman explained to the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 26 May 1943 that he had an opportunity to attend a London Yeshiva and advance his prospects and studies: he had no appointment to another congregation in mind, and wanted to part on the friendliest terms. He was happy to officiate in Southport till after the Holy Days and to the end of his current service agreement. The Council set out the terms, and would pay his third class railway return to and from London, this to be set out in detailed letters. The Senior Warden, Harold Brodie, expressed the Council's regret at losing his services, but wished him well and wouldn't place any obstacles in the way of his personal advancement. There were complaints about the failure of Rev Bruches to attend a service at the synagogue on the previous day; he had travelled to Manchester to see Dr Slotki, but realised he should have had permission. He didn't propose to firewatch that night because his wife was ill, and he wanted to be with her. The Council decided he should find a substitute or do the firewatching duty. Dr Slotki reported on arrangements to reorganise the classes, which were warmly approved and supported by the Council. Dr Slotki had seen various parents of forthcoming barmitzvah boys that afternoon, and would later hold a teachers' meeting

⁷⁶ JC 23/4/1943, p 11. The fact that the wealthy Frankenhuis couple opened the club suggests they might have contributed towards its establishment. The item about Douglas Mellor is included because of the confidence of the other traders in this Jewish organiser.

⁷⁷ David A. Segal born June ¼, 1943, Southport, mother's maiden name Hirshman.

⁷⁸ JC 14/5/1943, pp 4 & 17, & 4/6/1943, p 9.

to allocate each pupil to respective teachers. In Dr Slotki's absence Rev Segal would be responsible for decisions in the classes, subject to Dr Slotki's confirmation at the earliest opportunity. For the Sabbath children's services (perhaps started only recently) Mr Ginsberg was to be in the Beth Hamedrash each Sabbath; Rev Segal and Rev Bruches would attend on alternate Sabbaths. There had been an attempt to alter the Classification of pupils in his absence, but Dr Slotki wouldn't brook interference from any source, and was supported fully in this. He recommended the formation of an attendance and social committee of parents, to secure better attendance, provide suitable entertainment and social functions and extra class activities by children. He also suggested periodic reports on children's progress to be sent to the parents. And he undertook to arrange for Jewish children to take Scholarship examinations on a day other than the Sabbath in future.

Ninety-eight members attended the Annual General Meeting on 6 June 1943. The Senior Warden specially mentioned Harry Smith, who had been Segan at overflow services in the Yomim Noroim and was now Hon. Teacher to the classes. The Treasurer's report said they had 352 members, but only 40 of them had signed covenants. Expenditure was approximately £80 per week, and they must guard against a possible rapid decline of membership on the cessation of hostilities; a fund for repairs, building and decoration was necessary. H.M. Brodie was re-elected Senior Warden, unopposed, with Leopold Lever, unopposed as Junior Warden. Joseph Cowen was unopposed as Hon Secretary, and Abraham Arlick was re-elected Baal Segan; Maurice Joseph was re-elected Hon. Treasurer. On the delicate position of Dr Silverstone, Max Cantor and Harry Livingstone said "the town was seething with discontent". Meyer Goldstone said that as an Orthodox Synagogue, the SHC was bound by the Beth Din decision that they saw nothing in the verdict of the Civil Court to interfere with his status of Rabbi, Minister and Teacher.

Rabbi Dr Silverstone's other activities were summarised in a paragraph in the JC of 18 June 1943: he had just been appointed Vice-Chairman of the Southport branch of the Famine Relief Committee; he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Southport Wings for Victory Week; he had been re-elected an Associate Member of the Council of Christians and Jews. The Rabbi was chairing a meeting of the League of Nations Union on the 27 June, when Nancy Abrahams chose to ask him publicly about the JC's report that he had not been elected to any position on the Union committee, rather than speak to him privately beforehand, they being the only two Jews at the meeting: he retorted, waspishly, "I replied to her question. If she has forgotten the answer I can only suggest a course of memory training." He explained that at the General Meeting, "at which I presided, I did not seek re-election, but I am ... *ex officio*, a member of the committee." It seems that at this point his own personal difficulties had become widely known, and disapproved of by some members of his community.⁷⁹

Two letters of regret and assurance of future co-operation from Mr Bruches were read to the Council by the Senior Warden, Harold Brodie, at the Council Meeting on 20 June 1943. The mother of the "Boy White" had complained that her son had learnt hardly anything in three years at the classes, but after only three months of private tuition he had made good progress. The Senior Warden said a Decorum committee should be formed, and Mr. Cantor should serve on it. Mr Cantor replied that the service and the Rabbi were to blame, and he saw no useful purpose in being on a decorum committee till they started "at the top." In a general discussion Mr Finestone thought the Rabbi was the main cause [of problems with decorum], due to lack of respect; it was proposed that Dr Silverstone be given leave of absence till the decision of the Civil Court on his appeal was known. This was withdrawn until the next meeting, when the subject would be on the agenda. Messrs Manson, Smith, Davidson, Nyman and Cantor agreed to serve on the Decorum Committee.

The Council meeting on 4 July 1943 agreed that the Senior Warden should use his authority to call an extraordinary General meeting, carried by 10 votes to 9. Consideration was given to the idea "that the best way to proceed was first to ascertain whether the Council did, in fact, desire the resignation of Dr Silverstone; they could then discuss with a select committee... the question of the amount of the gift to be made." Mr Manson said Dr Silverstone had lost their confidence and the best thing was for him to resign. Mr Goldstone reiterated that the Council had no power to ask for a resignation: that was entirely a matter for the General Body. Joseph Cowen said he had often heard every Stipendiary Official called, at some period, incompetent, but no-one suggested that they should resign. Mr Finestone said the children were now belittling and laughing at Dr Silverstone; Mr Desser said that children only repeated what they heard at home. Mr Lever said Dr Silverstone was willing to resign if there was a minority against him

⁷⁹ JC 18/6/1943, p 11, 6/8/1943, p 13 & 20/8/1943, p 12. Nancy Abrahams was the wife of Dr Alfred Abrahams, the son of the former minister, Rev Hermann Abrahams.

(This surely meant a majority?) but the condition was that he receive £3,000.⁸⁰ The Chairman agreed, following the defeat of the amendment of Meyer Goldstone and Joseph Cowen, to call the Extraordinary General meeting on 11 July 1943. Rev Segal wrote asking for modification of hours of work – “i.e. to be freed from office duties Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, owing to the pressure of work, due to an increase in membership [of the classes] from 150 to 260 and extra work due to re-organisation of classes,” having to daven every other week due to the absence of the chazan etc. It was agreed Betty Kramer should be engaged for afternoon work as well as mornings, that Rev Segal should be on hand in the synagogue as before, and the Senior Warden would talk it over with Rev Segal. The Council agreed to a temporary increase in Miss Kramer’s salary by 10/- per week, to be reviewed periodically. The Senior Warden said all staff should have agreements, and he thought a one-year term for the agreements should be decided: there was a majority for the one-year term.

All the Hon officers and one hundred and seven members attended the Extraordinary General Meeting on 11 July 1943. The vote on the retention of Dr Silverstone produced a decisive majority of support for him: 76 for, 29 against.

At the Council Meeting on 1 August 1943 the Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, thanked Harry Smith for the great interest and care he was taking with the children. Mr Smith said he had curtailed the length of the Sabbath service. The view that the minutes should be as brief as possible was expressed. “The Hon Secretary [Joseph Cowen] in agreeing to this wished to emphasise that there could be no interference in his sole responsibility for the straightforward unbiased unprejudiced recording of the minutes.” [This was deleted at the reading of the minutes at the next meeting, but is interesting in showing this Hon Secretary’s idealistic intentions]

The Southport Jewish Youth Congregation was formed in 1943. The inaugural meeting occurred in August 1943, with the election of Aubrey Cohen as Senior Warden, Myer Goldman as Junior Warden, and Alec Weinberg, as Segan. Their services were held on Saturdays, at 9.30 in the Beth Hamedrash, in the basement at Arnside Rd Synagogue. Boys and girls between the ages of six and eighteen were welcome. Its first annual report, issued in 1943, showed that Myer Goldman was now President, with Alec Weinberg as Vice-President, and Raphael Ross as Segan. The Hon. Treasurer was Elkan Lewis, and Miss Kramer was the Hon. Secretary, with an assistant Hon. Secretary, Ruth Grasin. The report explains that the Youth Congregation was formed from members of the existing Children’s Service and others. High Festivals Services and a Simchat Torah party had been held in the Beth Hamedrash, and a Chanukah party was held in the Temperance Institute. The Congregation boasted a membership of ninety-seven. Like the adult congregation, it aspired to decorum, without reaching it at this early stage.⁸¹

In 1943 the Congregation again planned its overflow High Holy Days services for the larger number of Jews in Southport, advertising times and days on which to book seats, which were available for 10s 6d (52½p), though it is not clear whether this was for each day, or for all the High Holy Days. At the same time an advertisement appeared for a teacher for the Hebrew classes, perhaps indicating the failure of a recent advertisement for this post. Meanwhile the steady Rev Sholom Segal, now married to a daughter of Simon Hirshman, was awarded the annual prize in modern Hebrew for advanced students at the University of Manchester. He would later go on to Childwall Synagogue, in Liverpool.⁸²

Maurice Joseph proposed, at the Council Meeting on 22 August 1943 that in future, reports to the Jewish Chronicle be countersigned by a member of the executive – this was agreed unanimously. [This suggests some reports had been sent to the JC by [unnamed] Council members, who didn’t reflect the view of the rest of the Council and Executive] The Senior Warden said arrangements had been made for a suitable service for children for the High Festivals in the Beth Hamedrash, with officials to conduct it. It was agreed that one or two members of Council should volunteer to help. It was suggested that overflow seats go to non-members, with priority in the synagogue for children of members and members of H M Forces. Mr Brodie assured members that there would be no overcrowding in the synagogue. It was agreed

⁸⁰ Perhaps the Rabbi, who had so often been denied an increase in salary when he asked for it, needed this substantial sum, in order to leave the town and try to secure a suitable appointment elsewhere. It seems likely that he had not been able to save much in the first fifteen years of his stay in Southport.

⁸¹ JC 13/8/1943, p 10 & 1st Annual Report of the Youth Congregation. From the early years of the Jewish Chronicle there were references to shortcomings in the decorum in synagogues. The problem appears to be insoluble.

⁸² JC 20/8/1943, pp 4 & 10

that exceptional cases of need for private Jewish tuition be placed before the Executive, and that officials be notified of this change.

At the Council meeting on 5 September 1943 Mr Brodie said the Hospital Sunday service would occur shortly, with Rabbi B. Cohen of Sheffield as preacher. Joseph Cowen suggested they should set Chanukah Sunday as the regular hospital Sunday for the future, and this was agreed. Chazan Zicherman was to be asked to attend on 11 August, and Rev Goldman of Ormskirk, an applicant for chazan at the overflow services, was to come on 8 September 1943 to be heard by Maurice Joseph and checked to see “if efficient.”

At the Council meeting on 19 September 1943, the Senior Warden, Harold Brodie, and Maurice Mass, the Hon. Solicitor, gave a résumé of conversations between them and Dr Silverstone, in which the Rabbi had indicated that he might be willing to resign for £3,000 given to him as a loan or over a period. It was agreed that if he would resign, the Council recommended that £3,000 be paid to him over 5 years. Called in, Dr Silverstone said that as the conditions were different from those previously given by the Senior Warden and Hon. Solicitor, he would consult his legal advisers and family before deciding, and he asked for the resolution in writing.

The Evacuees Congregation were continuing to organise their services at the High Holy days of 1943. On Kol Nidre (8 October) they had Rabbi Dr Lehrman as their preacher, for the Liverpool members a familiar face and voice. For Yom Kippur they again had Rabbi Lehrman, both services at Hoghton St Baptist Church hall.⁸³

Two weeks later an announcement of Southport news in the JC carried the surprising news that at a meeting of the Beth Hamedrash “Neveh Samuel” Congregation, Mr P. Smith was elected Warden, and Mr M. Plesner was thanked for his kind presentation of an Ark. The explanation of this news of a third congregation in Southport is almost certainly that the hotel at 9 Victoria St, leading off the Promenade, called Neveh Samuel, run by Mrs Rebecca Hovsha, contained a small synagogue, for the use of her husband, Rev Samuel Joshua Hovsha, a former Minister at Shaw St Synagogue in Liverpool, who used to conduct shiurim in the Liverpool Yeshiva.⁸⁴

A letter was received from Dr Silverstone at the Council Meeting 24 October 1943, declining the Council’s offer and “intimating his decision to continue in his office. After a short discussion the letter was accepted and the matter closed.”⁸⁵ It was agreed to recommend the appointment of Mr Ginsburg (a teacher) as a stipendiary official with other duties to be defined for 12 months, at £5-10s per week. Meyer Goldstone wrote resigning as a trustee, which was accepted with deep regret and expressions of thanks and good wishes. The Chazan (Orland Zicherman) was willing to continue to attend to daven only, fortnightly or monthly, but “the meeting, whilst appreciating the good services of the Chazan and his fine rendering of the Service, regretted that they could not continue to engage him on the terms stipulated,” and it was agreed to advertise for “A competent chazan, other qualifications an asset.”

The Southport Jewish Discussion Group scored a success with a “Brains Trust” in the Cambridge Hall, which attracted almost a thousand people, at the end of October 1943, to a discussion of Anti-Semitism and racial prejudice. The panel was composed of Neville Laski, the Jewish K.C. and communal leader; Leary Constantine, the West Indian cricketer; Professor W. Lyon Blease of Liverpool University; Rev E.H. Morris, Southport Unitarian Minister; Rev B. Cherrick, Chief Organiser of the J.N.F; Mr B. Ainley, a Communist politician; and Mr H. Rule, a Liverpool trade union official. All the questions were about anti-Semitism and racial prejudice, and the JC summarised some of the answers. Mr Laski’s answer to the question “Is there Jewish control of the black market?” included the statement that there were lots of offences that Jews didn’t commit ... “we rarely beat our children or come home drunk ...yet when people commit black market offences we get all the black marks in the ink pot.” Other questions were, “Why did the rich Jewish industrialists of Germany support Hitler, financially and morally, for a number

⁸³ JC 8/10/1943, p 11.

⁸⁴ JC 22/10/1943, p 10, and obituary of Rev Hovsha in JC 30/8/1946, p 17. The late Abraham Goldberg confirmed the existence of the small synagogue in Neveh Samuel guest house, suggesting that it was more a minyan than a formal synagogue, and that his father was Assistant Minister for some of the time. (E-mail to the author, 26/10/2012) Rev Hovsha died in 1946 and was buried in Rice Lane Cemetery. Michael Plesner was the father of Joseph Plesner, who was involved in the gambling club police raid in 1942. (see above, pp 155ff)

⁸⁵ This sudden end to the attempt to pay off the Rabbi, in which he was perhaps being offered more than the Congregation could really afford, and which he perhaps didn’t want, suggests a mutual agreement to leave well alone.

of years after he came to power?"; "Could religious denominations do more to eradicate racial and religious prejudice?"; and "Are Anti-Semitism and colour prejudice instinctive or instigated?" To the last Neville Laski said "both"; nobody else agreed that these problems were instinctive. The question of whether racial discrimination should be made a crime evoked negative answers from Neville Laski and Professor Blease, but the Communist panel member, Mr Ainley, pointed out that the USSR had a law making racial and religious discrimination an offence, and said that there had been no major demonstration of anti-Semitism in the USSR in the last twenty-five years.⁸⁶

In the same issue of the JC as the Brains Trust was reported, appeared the news that Blochs' Clifford Hotel, in Bath St, had its kashrus vouched for by the Beth Din and Kashrus Commission in London, along with only four other hotels in England. The announcement makes it clear that they were "*the only ones* under the supervision of the Commission for whose Kashrus the Beth Din hold themselves responsible." Southport later set up its own Kashrus Commission for this purpose.⁸⁷

In November 1943 there was a service at Arnside Rd synagogue, to help the Southport Ward of the Stalingrad Hospital, British Red Cross and the Army Welfare Fund (I assume, in default of further information on the first of these that it was a ward adopted by the Southport Hebrew Congregation). The entire ministerial team of Rabbi Silverstone, and the Reverends Zicherman, Segal and Bruches officiated. At a reception at the home of Harold Brodie, the Senior Warden, Leopold (Pip) Lever, the Junior Warden, made a presentation to Rev Zicherman as a token of esteem for his services in the past three years.⁸⁸

In view of what turned out to be Meyer Goldstone's fatal illness, the Council Meeting on 14 November 1943 resolved to send him a letter wishing him a speedy recovery. Dr Silverstone had requested financial assistance, at the Council Meeting on 22 November 1943, and a £50 grant to him was agreed by a majority of 9:6. It was agreed to re-introduce offerings⁸⁹ at the end of the 12 months' trial period in which they were suspended. It was resolved to leave the decoration and ventilation of the Beth Hamedrash to the Building Committee, and arrange an early meeting in view of the urgency. The Council decided to plan for a Communal Hall to be built as soon as permission was granted, the money to be separate from normal synagogue accounts, and any collected money to be used only for the building and maintenance of the communal hall and to ask the General Body to pass the required resolutions.

The Half yearly General meeting, held on 26 December 1943 agreed unanimously to authorise the Council to build up a reserve of capital for a postwar planning account – to be invested as Council and Trustees decided was in the best interests of the Congregation. It was also agreed that a communal hall was essential. The Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, said every effort would be made to collect £5,000; they had £500 already and would keep money collected specifically for purposes of building and maintaining a communal hall. £75 was collected at the meeting. The Congregation was now free of any indebtedness to the Bank for the first time since the synagogue was built. Meyer Goldstone, President of the Philanthropic Society and a former Senior Warden – in the words of Rabbi Silverstone, "the recognised lay leader of the community" – had died. Mr Brodie asked the meeting to vote a further £100 to Rev Slotki for improving the classes. There was some opposition, based on the alleged "incompetence" among the stipendiary officials.

Mr Ginsburg, one of the teachers, wrote to the Council meeting on 9 January 1944 asking for release from his duties to take a course in London; he was released from duties and it was agreed to leave his post open on the expiry of his course, and consider an ex gratia payment if he restarted service with the Congregation. It was agreed to form a sub-committee to further the Communal Hall project.

As 1944 began the Evacuees' Congregation held a meeting, at which excellent progress was reported, and tributes were paid to the Rev J. Zalud, the Chazan. As he was the father of Rabbi Norman Zalud,

⁸⁶ JC 5/11/1943, p 12. The Brains Trust was a popular long-running BBC discussion programme, which started on Radio in 1941, later transferring to television. Its participants included academics and other "cultural" figures. (Sam Almond also remembered a local market trader known as the "Ganeff" [thief] who was able to supply black market chickens during the time of food rationing.) The USSR's discrimination against Jews is nevertheless widely remembered.

⁸⁷ JC 5/11/1943, p 18.

⁸⁸ JC 26/11/1943, p 13. Various places in Britain contributed to collections for the Stalingrad hospital, in the city the Germans failed to capture in heavy fighting at the end of 1942 and beginning of 1943, a major defeat for the German army.

⁸⁹ Otherwise known as shnoddering.

later Rabbi of the Reform Congregation, this is an unusual case of two generations of the same ministerial family being involved in Southport.⁹⁰

In the same month a suggestion was put forward to establish an organisation to further the friendship between Jews and Gentiles by Rev William Paxton, Minister of Chapel St Congregational Church, when he spoke to the Southport Jewish Discussion Group. It is touching to read his optimism about the relationship between the two communities, referring to a “new era of tolerance, understanding and sympathy.” But it is also surprising to read that he believed there was a danger in magnifying the anti-Semitism existing in Southport.”⁹¹

The Senior Warden, Harold Brodie and Leopold Lever, the Junior Warden, reported to the Council Meeting on 30 January 1944 that they had met representatives of the Evacuees’ Congregation, who wanted to become country members of SHC with a capitation fee of £2-2s per family, to include the cost of seats for the High Festivals to be provided at an overflow service. It was agreed, on the Chairman’s recommendation, not to make an agreement with them, but to allow them to worship at will in the synagogue, and pay for any seat occupied during the High Festivals. The meeting considered whether they should instruct the Rabbi not to preach as and when the occasion arose; some members thought that there could be no interference with the pulpit. It was decided to invite Dr Silverstone to an Executive meeting to discuss this. Mr Lever expressed the meeting’s pleasure at the election of the Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, to the Council and Board of Management of the Southport Infirmary.

Sidney Silverman, M.P., a former member of Liverpool City Council, spoke to a meeting arranged by the Southport Jewish Discussion Group on plans for settling minority problems, in February 1944. He proposed the principle of free citizenship without discrimination, and that national groups be allowed to develop in freedom their national life on their own soil. The prevention of such an infringement would incur action by the world community.⁹²

At the Council meeting on 20 February 1944, the chairman said that Dr Silverstone would preach on all Sabbaths except when a candidate for Chazan was officiating, and even on those, if they were Rosh Chodesh⁹³ or a Barmitzvah or other special occasion. Dr Slotki was congratulated on altering the date of exams to Friday from Saturday – a “great victory”. Max Cantor gave a summary of preliminary Communal Hall committee proceedings and read a memorandum which was unanimously approved by Council. The Trustees gave permission to build a communal hall on synagogue property. The Memorandum of the preliminary communal hall committee said it should include schoolrooms, a lecture room, facilities for Jewish culture, but not be built until two-thirds of the cash amount required to build it had been collected towards the amount; if this were not available, the General Body should be asked for permission to build. The management of the hall should be vested in an elected council which would elect its own executive for the first year – but transferred to the Synagogue for management with its effects after the first year.

The Jewish community raised £1,235 for the Southport Infirmary in February 1944, by a concert in the Palladium Cinema, featuring “Afrique”, Eric Portman and Jean Colin among the artists.⁹⁴

At the Council Meeting on 5 March 1944 there was an unspecified problem between Hyman Claff, a son of the late Samuel Aaron Claff and Mr Arlick, the Segan, and a letter from Mr Claff’s solicitor had been sent to Mr Arlick. The Senior Warden had tried to make peace, and the Hon Solicitor, Maurice Mass, had the matter in hand for Mr Arlick. The Executive and Council said they would support Mr Arlick and deprecated the resort to a solicitor in a matter concerning the officers of the synagogue. It was agreed that Maurice Mass should accept any proceedings on behalf of Mr Arlick that Mr Claff might

⁹⁰ JC 7/1/1944, p 13. Rev J. Zalud was originally Jakob Zaludkowski.

⁹¹ JC 21/1/1944, p 12

⁹² JC 25/2/1944, p 13. If this sounds Utopian, it probably is, as the experience of the Jews and Gypsies and Armenians and Bosnians and Native Americans in various states has shown over many decades. But near the end of a War is probably a time when such thoughts are appropriate.

⁹³ Literally “head of the new moon” – a celebration of start of the new lunar month, which in the Jewish calendar are of 29 or 30 days. At the end of a 30-day month the last day of the previous month and the first day of the new month are Rosh Chodesh, but at the end of a 29-day month only the first day of the new month is Rosh Chodesh. (www.chabad.org.)

⁹⁴ JC 18/2/1944, p 13. The Palladium Cinema was next door to St George’s Presbyterian Church, where there is a branch of Sainsburys the grocers in 2019. No information on Afrique found.

institute.⁹⁵ The press publicity and appearance in court of the case for the payment of costs of divorce against Dr Silverstone was raised. "The Council viewed with serious concern the unfavourable publicity thus caused to both Jews and non-Jew."... "The Council desired the Senior Warden to see what steps could be taken to end this disrepute and he promised to interview Dr Silverstone and report if arrangements could be made with Dr Silverstone, the Council were prepared to accept the Rabbi's resignation. (Though previous attempts had not proved effective.) It had been alleged that Mr Zaitz had been killing poultry otherwise than in the abattoir. It was agreed to write asking for a convenient date for him to meet the Executive.

The Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie reported at an Extraordinary Council Meeting on 12 March 1944 on his interview with Dr Silverstone and the latter's agreement to resign his position in consideration of a sum of £2,500 – not more than £500 upon his resignation, and £2,000 to be spread over a minimum of 4 years, the terms to be legally drawn up and legacy safeguarded. (It was not clear whether this meant that in the event of Dr Silverstone's death, his widow would receive the balance, nor whether there was a maximum period over which the £2,000 would be paid, though the latter seems likely) It was agreed to recommend the acceptance of the terms by the General Body and to write to the Rabbi asking for his verification in writing of the terms agreed verbally with the Senior Warden, so the General Body could be called soon to ratify the agreement.⁹⁶ It was agreed at the Council Meeting on 2 April 1944 that Maurice Mass should draw up the document for the Rabbi to resign, and the Senior Warden should call a general meeting as soon as the signature was obtained, and the finance committee should recommend the best means of raising the money. The Council agreed to an increase of 15/- per week in Mr Klein's salary, as War Bonus, on the chairman stating that Mr Klein was considering a position elsewhere. There was a complaint from Mrs Claff, at the 7 May 1944 Council Meeting, that there were no watchers available for the late Mrs Good.⁹⁷ It was agreed that the Chairman of the Burial Committee should be informed immediately news was received of a death. (If the news wasn't received, perhaps more likely where the deceased was elderly and living alone or in a nursing home or hospital, where they might not be known to be Jewish, the problem might still, surely, arise) There had been contact with the Rabbi's solicitors, and some variations to terms agreed, namely that the £2,500 payment be spread over three years instead of four, and there should be £600 payment on retirement instead of £500, and a surety required that the money was on call at the bank. Joseph Cowen decided to stand down as Secretary.⁹⁸ As Mr Ginsburg had left the congregation without any notice, and no replacement was available it was agreed to ask Betty Kramer to teach temporarily, advertise for a teacher and for Harry Smith to approach the Yeshiva and Talmud Torah in Manchester and for Mr Davidson to approach similar organisations in Liverpool with the aim of finding a suitable teacher.

The finances of the Congregation were pronounced good at the Annual General Meeting on 21 May 1944: it was clear of debt and £100 was put in the Deferred Decorations and Renewals Account. Maurice Joseph, the Treasurer, said it should be built up for work when conditions allowed. Harry Finklestone and Maurice Mass were reappointed Hon Solicitors. In the elections for officers, H.M. Brodie was unopposed as Senior Warden as were the Junior Warden, Leopold Lever, and Maurice Joseph, the Hon Treasurer. Max Cantor became the Hon Secretary. Sampson Goldstone asked that Council might consider extending the franchise to female members of Congregation. (It would take more than another fifty years to achieve this)

At the Council Meeting on 11 June 1944, "One minute's silence was observed in respect and prayer for the Invasion." A vote of confidence in the Executive was passed unanimously, as some comment had been made by some members of the Council. ⁹⁹ It was agreed that during the invasion the synagogue should be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and that in these circumstances, despite the rule that only a stipendiary official could officiate in the synagogue, a layman could officiate. A letter from the Southport Zionist Central Council invited members of the synagogue council to act as delegates on the Zionist

⁹⁵ Hyman, or Harry, Claff, joined the New Synagogue as early as 1948, and was still a member in 1966.

⁹⁶ It is difficult to see why Dr Silverstone might accept the March 1944 terms, which were worse than those offered to him in October 1943, which he had rejected: perhaps the pressure was becoming too much for him.

⁹⁷ Sara Good, a generous benefactress, died aged 84, Southport R.D., June Quarter, 1944.

⁹⁸ As Joe Cowen won election to the Council at the AGM he continued to play a part in the running of the Congregation, despite the refusal of the Senior Warden to accept his right to be ex-officio after standing down.

⁹⁹ The invasion of Normandy, also known as Operation Overlord, was launched on 6 June 1944, and began the Allied invasion of western Europe. The nature of the comment by some members of the Council is not specified.

Council. Maurice Joseph and A. Ross were elected. It was agreed that letters of importance shouldn't be read at a general meeting until the Executive had had the chance to discuss them.

A letter from Mr Hamburger was read at the Council Meeting on 5 July 1944, and the Hon Secretary was instructed to write to the effect that his presence in the synagogue wasn't welcome. (Assuming that this was the later Sir Sidney Hamburger, it is interesting to know what he might have said or done on a previous occasion) The Education Committee recommended that (1) extra teachers were needed for the classes. The Council agreed. (2) Dr Silverstone should take up the position of superintendent and teacher of the classes and the council should review their condition in 6 months' time. (3) The position of Dr Slotki in relation to the classes be reviewed. It appears that recommendations (2) and (3) were passed on the casting vote of the chairman. It was agreed that Dr Silverstone take up his duties at the beginning of the next term of classes, and a neutral examiner examine the classes at beginning of term and then six months later and report to the Council. (This also makes it clear that Rabbi Silverstone wasn't leaving, perhaps because the sum to be paid him would have crippled the Congregation, which had other quite expensive plans in mind.)

The Council Meeting on 15 August 1944 recorded that Samuel Tarshish, a Trustee and senior member of the Council and Congregation had died.¹⁰⁰ It was agreed to seek further applicants for the post of Chazan after Holy Festivals. It was agreed that Mr Goldman (of Ormskirk) should officiate at the overflow services on the same terms as last year.

In August 1944 the United Palestine Appeal in Southport was launched at the Queen's Hotel, with Councillor J.D. Mack, M.P. as the chief speaker. Councillor Mack appealed for a self-denial effort by the Southport Jewish community to rescue as many children as possible from German-occupied countries; there was only one hope, he said – Palestine. He was supported by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and Rabbi Silverstone. Southport's target of £5,000 had largely been contributed already, and a cheque for £1,548 was handed to Mr Mack by Mrs Ruth Livingstone, on behalf of the Women's Committee, of which she was chairman.¹⁰¹

At the Council meeting on 1 October 1944 it was agreed to accept the invitation of Leslie Solomon for three members of Council to attend a Wingate Club canteen meeting on same day, to pave the way for the Council to send the official delegates. Mr Nyman, Joseph Cowen and the Hon secretary, Max Cantor, offered to attend. (See next paragraph, too) A letter from Southport Jewish Discussion Group about a mass meeting was read: it was agreed that the Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, should represent the Congregation on the platform of this meeting. The Wingate Club for the Forces was opened in Lord St, by the Mayor, who said they were glad it had at last been possible to provide in Southport facilities where members of the Forces, Jews and Gentiles alike, could spend their leisure. There were now two hundred Wingate Clubs in the United Kingdom; they were Jewish inasmuch as they were run by Jewish people, but were open to all members of the Forces. The chairman at the opening was Stanley Levy, Chairman of the Southport Hospitality Committee, and Leopold Lever, representing Southport Hebrew Congregation, said the Synagogue would co-operate in making the club a success. The report on its closure, in late 1945, says that wounded soldiers from Southport hospitals paid weekly visits to the Club and were entertained by the volunteer staff. A leading part was taken in the organisation by the Southport branch of the Jewish Hospitality Committee, of which Stanley Levy was Chairman, Mr L. Hart, Hon. Secretary, and Leslie Solomon and David Platt, Treasurers. This venture clearly was a good way of showing how the Jewish community cared about the community around it, particularly members of the Armed Forces; the effort of keeping such a club going must have been considerable, and involved a lot of volunteers and their time.¹⁰²

A new venture was the formation of a Southport Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, attended by the Mayor, who said the Jewish people were "the most loyal citizens, with a constancy that claims our admiration." The first meeting of the Southport branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, was held on 23 October 1944, the day after Neville Laski K.C., had declared at a great meeting at the Casino Theatre, organised by the Southport Jewish Discussion Group, that Southport had its anti-Semitic problems. Mr Laski enlarged on this by saying that in Southport and many other towns, there was a number of people who practised against the Jewish community a social and economic form of exclusion which amounted to anti-Semitism. There was also a message from the recently-deceased Archbishop of

¹⁰⁰ Jacob S. Tarshish died aged 75, Southport R.D., Sep ¼, 1944.

¹⁰¹ JC 25/8/1944, p 19. John David Mack was the Labour M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyme from 1942 to 1951.

¹⁰² JC 3/11/1944, p 10. The Wingate Club's closure in late 1945 was reported in JC 28/12/1945, p 10.

Canterbury wishing those forming the Council every success. The Council of the Southport Hebrew Congregation agreed unanimously to co-operate fully with the Southport branch of the C.C.J., and nominated Dr Silverstone and the stalwart Leslie Solomon as its delegates. One of the main aims of this new organisation was to foster good understanding and co-operation between Christians and Jews, and to combat religious and racial intolerance.¹⁰³

The Council meeting on 5 November 1944 had before it a letter from the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council about the consecration of a mobile synagogue. It was agreed that the Executive try to engage a competent teacher for the elementary class and that if no other application was brought up, they were empowered to engage Miss Betty Kramer within fourteen days on terms to be agreed with her. It was agreed that a Chazan-teacher be advertised for at £8 per week.

The Southport Mizrachi Organisation wrote to the Council meeting on 3 December 1944 asking for two delegates to be appointed from the council. The Senior Warden said the organisation had SHC's moral support, and several members were nominated, but none would accept. Maurice Mass was nominated to Liverpool District Jewish Representative Council.

The Half yearly General meeting, on 10 December 1944, discussed the report of the Southport Visiter of 9 December 1944 on the local branch of Council of Christians and Jews – the Senior Warden, Harold Brodie said it was a misstatement of fact and it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Visiter, the Trades Council and the Labour Party. (See also next paragraph) This should be approved by the Executive and signed by the Hon Secretary. A notice calling a meeting about forming a Communal Hall Council was at the printers. There had been delay in acknowledging the letter from Southport Mizrachi – then there were other complaints of similar delays. The meeting suggested printed cards of acknowledgement be sent to all correspondents. Maurice Joseph offered to act as delegate to the local Mizrachi.

The Southport Visiter of Tuesday 12/12/1944, p 4 shows that the Jewish discussion group denied what Mr Mellor had said, namely that the CCJ didn't have the support of the local Jewish Congregation, listing other Jewish representatives on the CCJ including those from the Women's Personal Jewish Service Guild, the Wingate Club, and the Southport Central Zionist Council, naming Mrs Levy, Mrs Beaver, Mr Franco, Mr Haselton and Marcus Davis.

The Agenda for the Extraordinary General Meeting, on 17 December 1944 was about the proposed Communal Hall – twenty-two members were nominated for the Council on the Communal Hall, and it was agreed that all should serve.

In a period of growth, and new societies, one organisation had closed its doors: the Evacuees' Congregation had closed its "synagogue" (the rented hall in Hoghton St), most of the members having returned to Liverpool, Manchester, and other centres. "The available funds of the congregation have been distributed by the Treasurers among Liverpool schools and institutions."¹⁰⁴

Young and older members of the Southport Hebrew Congregation disgraced themselves and their community in shul, leading to police court proceedings in December 1944: the cause of these court proceedings occurred on Saturday 9 December 1944, a case of assault by Joseph Finn, a tailor, aged 46, of Scarisbrick St, who pleaded not guilty, on Merton Craingold, aged 18, of Arbour St. The details were that Finn had alleged that Craingold had hit his (Finn's) two children, which Craingold denied. Craingold was praying at the Youth Congregation on Saturday 9 December, when Finn caught up with him in a classroom where he was removing his prayer shawl; Finn removed his own prayer shawl, before punching Craingold on the left shoulder. He then pinned Craingold against a wall, with the words "I have been a boxer at the University. One punch and it will all be over." This account, however, was disputed by Finn, who described Craingold's allegations as "absolute lies." The Chairman of the magistrates, Charles Aveling, a former Mayor of Southport, said, at the end of the case, that the "Jewish Executive" [by which he must have meant the officers of the Synagogue] could not be congratulated on the way they had handled the case, adding "if the case had been handled differently it would never have come to court." (In this he concurred with the Executive of the Congregation, as the next paragraph shows) Mr Aveling also added that "I hope we shall never again have anything in this court that arises from the Jewish Sabbath." It is perhaps interesting that two of those who gave evidence, Leopold Lever and Harold Brodie were

¹⁰³ JC 10/11/1944, p 12. The other source for this report, on what Neville Laski said, appears to have been a local newspaper.

¹⁰⁴ JC 29/12/1944, p 10.

respectively the Junior and Senior Wardens of the Congregation, which is not mentioned in the report. The verdict was that the case against Finn was proved, and he was bound over for six months.¹⁰⁵

The debate at the Council Meeting 31 December 1944 produced strong criticisms of the Shechita sub-committee. The Senior Warden, Harold Brodie, said a letter had been sent to Mr Zaitz, with no result to date. Complaints about kosher poultry were made, and it was agreed to have a special council meeting on 7/1/1945 to deal with kashrut and Shechita and the Youth Organisation, Dr Silverstone and Mr Bruches to be available for this meeting. The Senior Warden announced that Rev Raphael Levy from Preston “who was highly recommended” would officiate on 5 and 6 January 1945. A question was asked about the case of Craingold and Finn – Mr Brodie related efforts of the Executive to keep the case out of the courts: at the end a vote of confidence in the Executive was carried unanimously. The Hon Secretary (Max Cantor) announced his resignation from his post and the Council.

It was agreed at the Council Meeting on 7 January 1945 that Maurice Joseph should carry on as Hon Secretary till the end of the year. There was a letter from Mrs P. Smith saying that a Ladies’ Mizrahi had been formed in Southport. It was resolved to write to Mr Zaitz asking him to meet Dr Silverstone and the Executive at the synagogue, and show his Kabola, then if he refused it would be assumed that he was flouting the rabbi’s authority, and Dr Silverstone would take the matter up in London. There was a complaint of the purchase of a goose without a head from Mr Lewis: it was agreed that Mr Lewis be asked to appear before the Shechita sub-committee and Dr Silverstone and asked to explain – he had said that an assistant had sold it in his absence. It was agreed that laws relating to conditions of licence for Shechita and kashrut be produced, and based on those in operation in Manchester and Liverpool. It was agreed that an advisory [panel, I presume] be formed to guide the Youth Congregation, consisting of Harry Smith (chairman) and Messrs Pakman, Ross and Nyman, and that nobody over the age of 17 could be a member of the Youth congregation, executive, or its Council or take an active part in it. In reply to a complaint that the special class had not had any lessons for weeks, Dr Silverstone said he had been teaching other classes, owing to the illness of the teachers: “the Council felt this was not a satisfactory excuse, and ... he should have informed the executive.”

An amusing advertisement in the first issue of the JC of 1945 came from the Clifford Hotel, formerly and later known as Bloch’s, now managed by Sophie Olsberg. It had been “redecorated etc”, but the most eye-catching line was “Now booking for Christmas-time.”¹⁰⁶

By the end of January 1945 planning was afoot for a future Communal Hall, to be built at the rear of the Synagogue grounds. Maurice Joseph (Moe Joe, as he was popularly called) was the Treasurer and several sub-committees had been elected.¹⁰⁷ The 21 January 1945 Council Meeting received a report by Dr Silverstone on poultry Kashrut, including an explanation why Mr Zaitz killed poultry. Mr Zaitz wanted to speak to the Executive and Shechita sub-committee and it was agreed to ask him to come to the next sub-committee meeting. A Dr Fishman [not mentioned elsewhere] had recommended a reference library of history books be formed, and that an extra teacher be engaged, and these recommendations were adopted. It was also agreed to adopt a miniature museum. Miss Kramer was calling on parents of children not attending the classes regularly – it was decided to give this a three-month trial and that the Executive would decide on her remuneration. It was agreed that Mr Klein teach the children traditional tunes with the help of the organ. The upper age limit for membership of Youth Congregation was agreed to be increased to 18. It was agreed to advertise for a Chazan with First class qualifications, and to give Mr Frankenstein a trial for three months as teacher and minyan man, his remuneration to be left to the Executive.

A moving letter was written to his two-year-old daughter, Suzette – whom he had never yet seen - in 1945, by Major Albert Cohen, of Southport, still on army service in Italy. In 1993 this was included in a book of wartime romances and reminiscences with the title *Forces Sweethearts*, compiled by Joanna Lumley, the actress. Major Cohen wrote, “Suzette, my darling, do you think you will love your Daddy, whom you have never seen? I hope and think you will, because our whole life is going to be devoted to your

¹⁰⁵ SV, Thursday 28/12/1944. The general effect of the report seems to be to suggest that Jewish people would behave in a violent way on the Shabbos, and that the Youth Congregation was a place where such conduct was acceptable.

¹⁰⁶ JC 5/1/1945, p 2.

¹⁰⁷ JC 26/1/1945, p 13. The committee structure, installed when S.M. Harris was still a leading member of the Congregation, appears to have worked well, in involving more people than a structure dependent on individuals to carry out particular roles in isolation, and allowing more ideas to be generated.

happiness....You have no choice as to who shall be your Daddy, my darling Sue, because your Mummie has made the choice, but I hope that you like the choice. But I'm sure you will – especially when you come into our bed on my first morning back in Southport. That will be an occasion which I shall never forget...You see, my darling Sue, you are 'one of the family' – just three of us – and as such you are entitled to know all the family secrets. My whole life is mapped around you and that is why I wish you a very happy birthday. With all my love, and to Mummie. Your own Daddy XXXX.” At the time of the review that quoted this moving letter Sue Greenberg, as she had become, had been the secretary to the editor of the Jewish Chronicle for seven years. This clearly affectionate father and husband died a few months later, after fifty years as a Liverpool solicitor, many years' activity in AJEX, and a distinguished career as a cricketer in the Bootle and Southport cricket clubs.¹⁰⁸

Max Cantor returned as Hon Secretary at the Council Meeting on 18 February 1945. There was a letter from the Jewish committee for relief abroad about Siphrei Torah and it was agreed to present one Sefer Torah to this committee. Dr Silverstone wanted to form a Kashrut committee; it was agreed that the chairman of the Shechita committee call a meeting and invite the ministers. At the Council meeting on 11 March 1945 a request from Southport Mizrachi organisation to use the synagogue for a public meeting to be addressed by Cecil Roth, the eminent Jewish historian, on the Sabbath, was refused, because the synagogue couldn't be used for a public meeting unless it was organised by the Congregation. A change of heart appears to have occurred at the Council meeting on 8 April 1945. “[It was] agreed to circularise all members about Dr Cecil Roth's lecture and invite him to speak at 7 p.m.” (Which suggests that the Congregation was taking over the meeting, to assist the Mizrachi)

An unusual event in March 1945 was the marriage of two sisters on the same day: they were Sandra Moonman, the second daughter of Boris and Leah Moonman, who married Alfred Tucker of Edgware, Middlesex, and her youngest sister Sylvia, who married Morey Greenbaum, of Philadelphia. Boris (Boruch) Moonman, who spent his working life in Liverpool as a dairyman, moved in his later years to Southport, where he was for a time a Minyan Man. His son, Eric Moonman, became a Member of Parliament in due course.¹⁰⁹

A report on the Jewish Women's Personal Service Guild in late April 1945 draws attention to the large amount of money they were able to collect. The report says that in the last year (1944-1945) the Guild was instrumental in collecting over £7,000 for War Savings and local charities, and a recent dance had raised over £200. Measuringworth, the website, provides the following equivalents for the sum of £7,000 in 2017 terms: they range from £260,900.00 to £1,471,000.00. So the collections of the Jewish Women's Personal Service Guild were of some consequence!¹¹⁰

It was announced at the AGM on 29 April 1945 that £2,000 had been collected for the Communal Hall. Elections resulted in the narrow re-election of Harold Brodie as Senior Warden, but the defeat of Leopold Lever, the Junior Warden, by Harry Smith. The first Kashrut Committee was formed under the leadership of Dr. Silverstone. The Senior Warden asked Sampson Goldstone to read letters sent to the Congregation about the formation of a Congregation of British Jews.¹¹¹ Mr S. Beilin asked why youths and visitors weren't given Aliyahs and said it wasn't right that the minister should be shown so little respect: “no answer was given to these criticisms.”

The day that World War II ended, a group of local Jews, led by Harold Solomons, Valerie Caplan and Tina Isaacson danced the Hora on the Promenade at the pier entrance – a treasured memory of Harvey Kay, writing from Stanmore, in Middlesex, in 1990.¹¹² On both V.E.(Victory in Europe) and V.J. (Victory over Japan) days¹¹³ it seemed that the entire Jewish and gentile population of Southport gathered round the Monument to celebrate the end of World War Two; Ruth Becker recalled that all the Habonim members danced the Hora till the early hours of the morning, and everyone else joined in.¹¹⁴

A meeting of the Southport Jewish Discussion Group in May 1945 discussed the topic of Community Libel, more broadly the question of defamation of communities. Harry Samuels, the speaker, said the

¹⁰⁸ JC 5/2/1993, p 18 & 25/6/1993, p 15.

¹⁰⁹ JC 16/3/1945, p 9.

¹¹⁰ JC 27/4/1945, p 13 & www.measuringworth.com

¹¹¹ It appears that this was the name of an umbrella group of Reform Synagogues.

¹¹² *In Touch*, April 1990, page 12. The Hora, also known as a Jewish wedding dance, is danced in a circle, and appears to be related to similar dances common in many Balkan countries, which have similar names.

¹¹³ Respectively 8/5/1945 and 15/8/1945

¹¹⁴ “As we were”, by Ruth Becker, in *In Touch*, Number 28, December 1988, p 3.

Board of Deputies saw the possibility of public support after the war for amendments to the law, and had appointed a standing sub-committee to keep the matter under review.¹¹⁵

The Council meeting on 23 May 1945 wished the Executive to meet the representatives of the proposed Congregation of British Jews to hear their suggestions but Sydney Harris, the former Senior Warden, couldn't see the need for this "as we must remain an orthodox Synagogue." Grants of £30 each were given to Rev Segal and Rev Bruches, for special services rendered. Mr Harris referred to an article in the *Clarion* headed "shool fireworks" – the whole council deplored the action of the editorial committee of this paper in allowing such unnecessary publicity which was likely to do a lot of harm for the Jewish people of Southport. It was agreed to send them a letter and to write to Youth Congregation telling them that in future they couldn't invite speakers to the synagogue without the permission of the Executive.

As the War drew to an end, the sale by auction of the Orleans private hotel was advertised for 12 June 1945. This had been a Jewish hotel, run by Mrs Yetta Samuels, at 8 Lathom Rd, since 1932. Included with the freehold property were the equipment, furniture and effects, and goodwill. By 1950 it was no longer a Jewish hotel.¹¹⁶

The Council meeting on 13 June 1945 had a letter from Childwall Hebrew Congregation, asking for the release of Rev Segal, who would go with the Council's best wishes for success. Leslie Solomon was given permission to communicate with Rev Isaacs of Stoke on Trent for the position of Chazan. An advertisement for a first class Chazan was to be put in the JC. A meeting had taken place between the Executive and three representatives of the proposed Congregation of British Jews. A select committee was formed to try to improve decorum and the length of the service.

There was a recital by a young pianist, Irene Beaver, under the auspices of the Southport Music Guild, on Sunday 24 June. The JC's music critic, or perhaps a local correspondent, J.R.S.D., described it as a "stimulating recital of pianoforte music ranging from the 18th century to the present day" – there was a Mozart sonata, and "a fine performance" of the 'Wanderer' Fantasia by Schubert-Liszt." The other works were by Chopin, Debussy, Poulenc and Rachmaninoff. Later known as Mrs Basil Toubkin, she was clearly a brilliant pianist.¹¹⁷

Rev Segal's resignation was accepted, at the Council meeting on 4 July 1945 and it was agreed to write that he would be released at the latest by 7 October. It was decided that the Executive should tell Sampson Goldstone that the Congregation didn't recognise him and his colleagues as a separate body, but welcomed their interest and would bear in mind their suggestions for an improved service.

We have already mentioned the connection of the Jewish community of Southport with the Infirmary, and a further connection was that of the appointment of Sylvia Endbinder, the daughter of Mr and Mrs H. Endbinder, of Liverpool, as Lady Almoner at the Infirmary. She had been appointed in 1944, but received a tribute in the local press. The earliest Lady Almoner was appointed back in 1895, in London, and the office was a precursor of the Medical Social Workers of the present day. Sylvia Endbinder was also appointed by the Ministry of Labour to be a member of the Disablement Advisory Committee, in late 1945.¹¹⁸

The emergence of postwar anti-Semitism was a problem for the community, but Malcolm Rubin recalls "the Jewish population was spread the length and breadth of Southport, with the Hesketh Park/Churchtown area having probably the largest concentration of Jews but even here they were very much in the minority. There were, as far as I know, no organised outbreaks of anti-Semitism, no shops damaged" but there were undoubtedly incidents, including the posting of anti-Semitic notices in trees, which Sam Almond recalled. His friend Ivor Frankel (or Frankl) once set about a group of Fascists in Southport, using his car to make a quick getaway after "roughing them up."

A landmark letter from Sampson Goldstone, Stanley J. Levy and Barnet Sykes, was sent from 35A Weld Rd, Birkdale to the Council of the Southport Hebrew Congregation "for and on behalf of the sponsors of a progressive service," in August 1945. It explains they worked to improve decorum by abridging the service to something more "lucid and progressive," with a view to stimulating interest in the youth of the community. They were "open and conciliatory to the Executive and Council of the Synagogue" throughout. Many of the Congregation (they said) were attracted by the form of service prescribed by the

¹¹⁵ JC 18/5/1945, p 12.

¹¹⁶ JC 8/6/1945, p 4.

¹¹⁷ JC 22/6/1945, p 4 & 29/6/1945, p 20.

¹¹⁸ JC 6/7/1945, p 13 & 12/10/1945, p 13 & see web page, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3792647/> on the first Lady Almoner at the Royal Free Hospital.

Congregation of British Jews¹¹⁹. There had been a meeting with the Executive and Dr Silverstone in June 1945 at which it was proposed that there be an early a.m. service on Shabbos, 9.15 – 10.00, then a morning service 10.15 – 11.45. “As now practised by other Orthodox synagogues,” more of this service would be in English at the Rabbi’s discretion, and representatives of the progressive movement would be attached to the Council, without votes, till the year end. “After many weeks of deliberation this has been rejected by the Council.” The letter then invites [presumably all members of the SHC] “to attend a meeting of the community, to be convened after the August holiday recess, to discuss these facts and enlist your view,” and deplores [the fact] that “the unanimity and concord created by mutual compromise was not acceptable to the Council.”¹²⁰

The 19 August 1945 Council Meeting decided to give Armin Klein, the Shammas, a rise of 10/- per week, dated back to 3/7/1945. It was decided to buy an addressograph for use in the office at £30. Dr Silverstone was called into Council, and agreed to relinquish the position of Superintendent [of classes]. It was agreed to advertise for a headmaster. (This may have ended any chance he had of any increase in salary for some time)

The Arnside Rd synagogue was again in the position to need overflow services as the High Holy Days approached in autumn, 1945, so a notice in the JC stated that the Wardens would be in attendance on three successive Sundays, in late August and early September, to let seats for the Overflow services. Seats would be 10/6d (52½p) and 21 shillings (£1-05p) each. This notice appeared on 24 August, 1945, on page 13.

Southport’s Jewish community has produced a number of professional and amateur actors and actresses over the years. Cecily Gilpin, a sixteen-year-old daughter of David Gilpin, of Albert Rd, gained the bronze, silver and gold medals for acting (two of them with honours) in the examinations of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA), in 1945 and 1946.¹²¹

The Council, at its meeting on 26 September 1945, *did* make a grant of £50 to Dr Silverstone on the grounds of straitened circumstances. It was agreed to grant a licence to E. Ellis of 50 Poulton Rd to sell kosher poultry, and in the case of Mr Davies of Wennington Rd it was decided to reconsider his application when he produced a food licence from Southport Corporation. Dr Silverstone was to interview Mr Ellis and explain the conditions of the licence. It was agreed that Rev Bruches be appointed headmaster at £9; this was backdated and the Congregation would engage Mr S. Goldman of Ormskirk as a temporary teacher on a month’s trial, at £3 weekly.

In October 1945 there was a resolution by Southport Trades Council and Labour Party, submitted by Southport’s no. 5 branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, that the Labour Government should agree – “in the name of humanity” - to provide certificates enabling 100,000 Jews to immigrate to Palestine. There appears to have been no involvement by the local Jewish community in the passing of this resolution.¹²²

The Council meeting on 24 October 1945 received a letter from solicitors about Cantor Friedlander, now in Hungary, who desired appointment as Chazan. It was agreed to write to the solicitors to see if they could ask him to come over for a trial. The Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, said he had received a requisition for a meeting about Rev Segal, but he didn’t propose to convene a special meeting, as he interpreted Law no 7 as designed to meet a grievance on the order of service or anything contrary to the Constitution. Sydney H. Harris, because names on the requisition included those of members of Council, who [he said] should have resigned, said *he* would resign and not sit on the Council with them, and he left. It was decided to confirm that Mr A. Joseph (probably Alan Joseph, the son of Maurice Joseph, the Treasurer) be temporarily engaged as full-time assistant Secretary and Junior teacher at £4 per week. Mr Lever proposed that the next meeting agenda should include the motion “That seat-rentals be reduced and tuition fees abolished.”

¹¹⁹ This probably means the Manchester Congregation of British Jews, now known as the Manchester Reform Synagogue.

¹²⁰ It is also possible that the “Reformers” wanted to take the whole congregation into the new type of congregation.

¹²¹ JC 24/8/1945, p 13, which also states that her elder sister, Greta, had been serving with the W.R.N.S. for two years, attached to the Fleet Air Arm. Also JC 26/4/1946, p 15.

¹²² JC 19/10/1945, p 12. (It is possible that the resolution was discovered by the JC, and that the local Jewish community had been influential locally, without stating their part in it.)

In November 1945 “*Shofer*,” [scribe] the Bulletin of the Southport Jewish Discussion group, appeared, edited by Stanley S. Goldstone. Page 1 expressed the aspiration: “Something of the Sal6n [sic] atmosphere we hope will be generated and a focus for the Jewish intelligentsia of Southport erected.” It welcomed all, irrespective of religion and political convictions... race, creed or colour.” The magazine refers to “still existent Fascist and anti-Semitic elements in the town. On page 2, “Scrutator” writes in *Local Commentary* that a new Youth Magazine, *the Young Judean*, edited by Rev Bruches and Raphael Ross, Leon Rosenberg, Russell Nyman, Arnold Chazen and Miss Barbara Cohen, had also been produced and congratulates those who launched it. The local Torah Va’Avodah¹²³ had a meeting at the home of Mr Smith, 30 Alexandra Rd to set up a local branch. A pro tem committee was set up and cultural and literary aspects of Jewish life were on the agenda.

Rev Sholom Segal, after a nine-year stay in Southport, was “called” by the Childwall Hebrew Congregation, Liverpool, to become their Minister/Secretary, in the autumn of 1945. Coming from a family of Rabbonim – he had a father and grandfather who were Dayanim in Kharkov, Russia, and his mother’s father was the late minister to the Edinburgh Jewish community. In Southport he played a major r6le in the foundation of the Zionist and Literary Society, and was Honorary Almoner of the Southport Hebrew Philanthropic Society. His departure was recognised with a reception, and an illuminated address was presented to Rev Segal on behalf of the Congregation.¹²⁴

As the momentous year 1945 drew to an end, Rabbi Silverstone was again busy lecturing, this time to the Clergy Union of Wigan (on Liturgy) and he presented a certificate for trees in Palestine, in appreciation of their support for Jewish causes, to the Mayor and Mayoress of Southport.¹²⁵

Joseph Cowen, supported by members of Council, proposed a vote of censure against Harold Brodie, the Senior Warden, at the Council Meeting on 25 November 1945, but the Junior Warden, Harry Smith, in the chair, wouldn’t allow this to go forward in Mr Brodie’s absence. (As we shall see, this had the desired effect, shortly afterwards) Rev Bruches asked for £10 weekly, to act as Shochet, Headmaster and Secretary and agreed to give up teaching at Bickerton House School. This was agreed for recommendation to the General Body. Dr Silverstone’s application for an increase of salary was postponed to the next meeting. It appears that Miss R[uth] Grasin was engaged as temporary assistant secretary and teacher, including daily attendance at Trinity School, at £3-10s weekly. It was also decided to advertise for a capable teacher and assistant secretary capable of other duties. It was agreed to recommend to the general body the building of a temporary structure as Communal Hall, and that a £2,000 grant be given to the Communal Hall Council for the purpose – part of the money being for e.g. drainage, which would be used in the final building, this being temporary. At the half yearly meeting on 2 December 1945 the agenda was never reached, because, before the meeting started, Harry Smith, the Junior Warden, read a letter from the Senior Warden, H.M. Brodie, offering his resignation as Senior Warden and Trustee. Maurice Joseph mentioned “matters to which the general body had taken exception” and the Senior Warden hadn’t consulted the Executive on them - but the person taking the minutes didn’t record what they were. The resignation was accepted and a vote of confidence in the rest of the Executive passed. The meeting thanked Mr Brodie for the services he had rendered.

There were two Council Meetings, apparently, on 5 December 1945, at the first of which Mr Jacobs had a list of suggestions which seem to indicate that Mr Brodie had sometimes been high-handed, and sometimes not carried out the wishes of the Council, for example, “The Chairman must see that the matters decided upon by the Council are carried out...” Despite some vagueness, one of them conveys that the Executive had a duty to call the Chairman to account. The second of these two meetings on one day proceeded to the election of a replacement Senior Warden: Harry Smith and Leopold Lever tied with seven votes each, but Mr Lever withdrew, and offered his support in the future. Dr Silverstone requested an increase – it appears that it was agreed to pay him £13 per week but that a superannuation policy costing £100 per annum wasn’t agreed.

It was proposed at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 9 December 1945 that there should be a two-part Shabbos morning service, 9.15 – 10, and 10.15 to 11.45 and that more of the service should be in English “at the discretion of the Rabbi.” Also that the representatives of the Progressive Movement be

¹²³ This was a German Jewish movement combining religious faith with a progressive social outlook, otherwise known as the Religious Jewish Chalmutz Movement. (See Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, Vol 6, Issue 1, 1 Jan 1961, p 236.)

¹²⁴ JC 31/8/1945, p 12 & 28/9/1945, p 12.

¹²⁵ JC 30/11/1945, p 13.

attached to Council, without the power to vote, till the end of the year. Sampson Goldstone, the son of the late Meyer Goldstone, told the meeting he and his colleagues wanted a more modernised service, “not unorthodox, but more attractive to our youth.” S.J. Levy said they weren’t “trying to upset the Congregation....their proposals were carried out by all synagogues affiliated to the United Synagogue in London.” The motion was withdrawn after discussion.

The Half yearly general meeting was reconvened on 9 December 1945. Thanks were expressed to Hyman Harris Glassman¹²⁶ for help procuring the timber for draught excluders, and to A.M. Kaye for a gift of £50 for the use of the new library. It was decided to display the Roll of Honour in the Synagogue entrance. There was still a large waiting list of prospective members. The classes were doing well: there were a hundred and five children, with a Head and four teachers. The Senior Warden, Harry Smith, wished success to the new magazine edited by Rev Bruches. About seventy children over 15 years needed a youth centre. £200 of Yom Kippur Appeal money had been sent to the European Relief Appeal. Rev Bruches was unanimously voted to be engaged as Shochet/Headmaster/ Secretary at £10 per week.

Just before the year ended there was another great concert at the Palladium Theatre, under the auspices of Mizrachi. It raised £800 for the Bachad Fellowship for accommodating children from the camps in Europe, at a time when there were large numbers of children separated from their families, many of whom had been murdered in the camps in the East. Prominent in the organisation of this event were Mr and Mrs Myer Goldberg and Mr and Mrs Sam Goldberg, with Mr A. Smith as Hon. Organiser of the concert.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Probably a brother of Aida Cantor, who was sister-in-law of Max Cantor. He had also helped by obtaining permission from the Ministry of Supply to have bookcases made for the Reference Library.

¹²⁷ JC 14/12/1945, p 13.