

MENTAL HEALTH
IN
RAPID SOCIAL
CHANGE

Edited by
LOUIS MILLER

JERUSALEM ACADEMIC PRESS

based on
PROCEEDINGS OF
THE WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH
ANNUAL MEETING/JERUSALEM 10-12 AUGUST 1970

Copyright © 1972
All rights reserved
Jerusalem Academic Press
Printed in Israel

Opening from the Ministry of Health

1970

The Ministry of Health is pleased to participate in the annual meeting of the World Federation for Mental Health, which is being held in Jerusalem for the first time. It is a privilege to have the representatives of the various countries gathered in our city to discuss the problems of mental health.

The Ministry of Health is committed to the improvement of mental health services in Israel. We are currently working on a comprehensive plan for the development of mental health services, which includes the establishment of a national mental health authority, the expansion of the existing services, and the implementation of a research program. We are also working on the development of a national mental health curriculum for the training of mental health professionals.

We are confident that the meeting will be a successful one, and we hope that it will lead to a better understanding of the problems of mental health and to a more effective approach to their solution. We are grateful to the World Federation for Mental Health for its invitation to participate in this important meeting.

Adaptation in the Kibbutz of Holocaust Survivors and their Families

HILEL KLEIN* AND SHULAMIT REINHARZ**

Introduction

The task of this paper is to clarify the influence of the kibbutz ideology and social structure on the adaptation patterns of severely traumatized concentration camp survivors and their families. Studies of extremely disturbed as well as normal families demonstrate that external psychosocial variables as well as interpsychic patterns within the family are significant determinants of the individual's and family's behavior. Our study is part of this general perspective: the relation between psychosocial forces and interpersonal behavior and attitudes. Our discussion analyzes these families in the context of their past and present psychosocial environments—the holocaust and the kibbutz. We examine these environments and the adaptation of the individual survivor and his family with the goal of understanding the unique interaction between the two.

The survivors: during the holocaust

The holocaust is still the organizing principle in the lives of its survivors and their families. This statement is best understood in the context of the survivors' experiences. In every case the protracted, cruel persecution resulted in multiple problems. Some individuals emerged from the holocaust as the sole survivor of an extended kinship network or of an entire community. Their bodies had become emaciated, abused, or diseased. Through the long years of unremitting horror, they were gradually reduced to passive, ineffective victims despite their efforts to maintain an aura of activity. Their physical and social destruction was matched by an erosion of the sense of self, evident 25 years later in feelings of discontinuity in their existence.

The survivors: in Israel and on the kibbutz

After their liberation, most of the survivors spent a few years in Europe, waiting in displaced persons camps or recuperation facilities, undertaking revenge, pursuing

* Eitanim Government Psychiatric Hospital, Jerusalem.

** Brandeis University Sociology Department, Waltham, Massachusetts. U.S.A.

an education, or attempting to reunite shattered families. None sought psychiatric care. After this initial post-trauma period in Europe, the holocaust survivors immigrated to various countries, but particularly to the United States and to Israel. Within Israel a substantial portion integrated into the general society. The survivors whom we studied, however, were all members of kibbutzim, some of which were homogeneously composed of holocaust survivors, others of which included nonsurvivors as well. Some of the survivors gathered to build kibbutzim in which all the members shared similar experiences and memories. Conscious unification around the holocaust theme demonstrates their acceptance of their suffering and their need to reaffirm their unique self-image as "courageous fighters against tyranny."

The holocaust-derived identity was augmented by a new group identity as builders of the kibbutz. The socially homogenous kibbutz composition and their feelings of being valuable "insiders" counteracted their self-image as blighted, displaced persons. Their collective bonds were forged of both the positive and negative aspects of their common experiences: the horror of witnessing the destruction of their own families; the hope awakened during liberation; and the joy of realizing their ideals in the kibbutz. These newcomers to what they called their homeland invested all their emotional and physical energies in the kibbutz and demanded from each other fierce loyalty to their abstract ideology and physical community. These young adults epitomize Erikson's concept of fidelity: "the vital strength which (youth) needs to have an opportunity to develop, to employ, to evoke — and to die for."*

The survivors: remembering the past

During the intensive interviews of 25 survivor families conducted by one of the authors (H. K.), the survivors showed a low tolerance for expressing traumatic memories. Feelings of shame and guilt were associated especially with the Ghetto since there the basic principles of trust and security in the family were undermined with the inability of family members to protect one another. One of the fathers interviewed complained of compulsive memories. He remembered how Germans had killed small children by throwing them against the wall. While relating this he became extremely anxious and was unable to master his emotions. His reaction at that moment was, "I'll not let them; I'll kill them!" He contrasted his helplessness and shame in the Ghetto with his new-found power and strength as a soldier in the War of Independence. "When I fought for the first time with a gun in my hands during the war, I thought — what a pity I did not have a gun then."

In recollecting their experiences, the survivors often cited the Abraham-Isaac parable, the Job story or other themes from the Bible — tales in which a person sacrifices his beloved against his will or in which one is sacrificed without knowing why. These served as paradigms of their own experience. They expressed their anger at the injustice of God and their loss of belief in His beneficence. They had also

* Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968, p. 233.

lost their sense of security about and belief in the real world and its justice—"Why should that have happened to us?" All interviewed survivors see themselves as people who, despite their traumatic experiences and loss of inner belief, have made a good life for themselves and their families. They emphasized their economic and material achievements and were proud of their ability to work hard and take care of the community's security.

Kibbutz ideology

By definition, the kibbutz community elicits labor and voluntary commitment from its members in return for material and emotional support. Since these rights and responsibilities are an integral part of the ideology, the survivor families do not have to appeal to the community as survivors in order to receive support. The kibbutz does not pose issues of competition for material and physical survival. Instead, the generally supportive atmosphere and economic assistance is automatically provided for all members and not to individuals because of their unique deprivation. This egalitarianism has helped the survivors develop positive self-images and self-ideals as individuals and families who do not need pity. This is in keeping with living in a social environment which is unwilling to pity them but is willing to share. This attitude has been incorporated by the children who insist that their parents not be pitied: "They are saved and they are here, healthy and happy! Those who died are to be pitied."

The valued time perspective of the kibbutz ideology is to the future; the valued life style is leadership and intense activity. This activity provides an antidote to the enforced passivity which was an especially oppressive feature of the persecution. The perversion and meaninglessness of activity and the suppression of aggression towards the persecutors had a destructive impact on the self-esteem of all the survivors, but more so on the males who were struggling to create a sense of masculine identity as part of their adolescent phase. The high value accorded to meaningful activity in the kibbutz and the reduction of guilt through fulfilling individual and community ideals probably account for the lower percentage of chronic depressive states among the survivors in the kibbutz than among survivor populations in other social settings. The opportunity to exercise initiative and to undertake personally meaningful, productive work was denied or perverted during the holocaust. Its continued absence in the lives of survivors outside the kibbutz is conspicuously problematic.*

Kibbutz ideology demands that members invest their whole selves in actual situations and the fulfillment of future goals. It provides members with a self-ideal as *halutzim* (pioneers) which is highly valued and compensates for guilt feelings about the past. Survivors in the kibbutz derive satisfaction from its value system which

* This issue is developed in a forthcoming paper concerned with the adaptation of holocaust survivors to life in the New York City area.

emphasizes present and future contributions rather than yesterday's failures and guilt, and provides them with feelings of acceptance and security. This collective ideology answers personal needs; it is not considered alien.

The ideology translated into daily life allows the survivor to stop struggling as an individual and to abandon certain regressive survival mechanisms of the concentration camps which are no longer adaptive. These mechanisms included suspiciousness; the binding of instinctual energy to the outside world as a constant source of danger, culminating in "identification with the aggressor"; hyper-cathexis to the body (in the form of hypochondriasis and complaining), the body-image and the self-image; clinging and oral striving connected with physical and emotional deprivation. These defense mechanisms become progressively unnecessary as feelings of security develop. The reacclimation and resocialization processes of the survivor families have provided them with means of adaptation which concur with the demands of the social and ideological structure of the kibbutz.

The kibbutz environment provides the survivor families with an opportunity to incorporate the values of the social system into a personal egosyntonic coping mechanism in the service of maintaining a sense of order and purpose. The social structure allows the survivor himself to mobilize anxiety and aggression as part of a group rather than as a lonely, struggling individual. The humanistic, democratic, goal-oriented, structured, and predictable quality of daily life, contrasted with the former chaotic world which he experienced, evokes in the survivor on the kibbutz the lost feelings of basic trust and security in his environment and allows him to take positive active responsibility for his fellow members and to structure his life according to a living social model.

Family case studies*

We present here three representative family studies from among 25 survivor family studies on several kibbutzim.

JOSEPH

Joseph and his wife were in Poland during the holocaust and came to settle in Israel after the war. They have two children, a girl aged 13 and a boy aged 9. The father is an intellectual, a leader of the kibbutz and very active in the affiliated political movement. The mother works as a nurse on the kibbutz.

Both of Joseph's parents and an older brother were killed by the Germans; he is the sole survivor of his family. He was for a time in a concentration camp but succeeded in escaping and lived for a number of years in hiding on "Aryan" papers. Since in his adolescence he was in constant danger of being discovered as a Jew, he had to guard against revealing his real emotions and had to maintain a cold

* This case and that of Deborah appears in Hilel Klein, "Problems of Continuity of Life Experience in Holocaust Survivors in the Kibbutz," to be published in *Israel Annals of Psychiatry and Related Disciplines*, 1971.

detached attitude. This experience has had a permanent effect on the way he experiences life and is manifested in the subconscious fear that he is being watched and that the disclosure of his real feelings may lead to his death.

Joseph said that he never experienced feelings of hatred or revenge toward his oppressors. After his escape from the camp he dedicated himself to a constructive solution of his own needs which he found in the idea of building a new home in Israel. In such a way he would fulfill the ideal of his older brother who had been an active Zionist.

In speaking about his memories, Joseph tried to maintain a detached, intellectual stance. He related his own experiences as if they were a part of history and rationalized them as one facet in the "continuity of Jewish experience." When he talked about his own experiences he always used the plural form "we," perhaps as a kind of defense against emotion.

Joseph valued his image as a hero and was proud of his ability to master difficult situations. His most rewarding experience was his role in the War of Independence. "Here I found myself, and my brother," he said. "Here I felt I was fulfilling something which was his ideal." He identifies with his brother and introjected idealized representation and has adopted an heroic identity. During the Six Day War he was able to fight at the front despite the fact that his daughter was critically ill, having been invalidated by a traffic accident. He stressed that his experiences during the holocaust gave him strength to overcome any crisis situation.

Joseph's wife, the sole survivor of a family of seven, spoke more freely than her husband about her own experiences and, in contrast to his rationalizing stance, allowed herself to express feelings and emotions. She came from a more religious background and told her children warmly of her Chassidic father and her home in Europe. Although her kibbutz family is not religious, they observe the Sabbath Eve ceremony in an effort to stress the continuity of their own existence with the generation that has perished.

The children spoke without anxiety about the experiences of their parents. The warm emotion of the mother and the abstract thinking of the father seemed to provide a healthy framework for the children's responses. They mentioned the forthcoming annual day of remembrance of the holocaust observed by the kibbutz. They demonstrated feelings of warmth, security and belonging in their relations with the other children on the kibbutz. Their ability to express aggression seemed quite adequate and neither one showed evidence of neurotic symptoms.

RUTH*

Ruth is the only survivor of her family, her parents having both been killed by the

* This case appears in H. Klein "Children of the Holocaust: Mourning and Bereavement" in J. Anthony and C. Koupernik (ed.). *The Child and his Family*. Vol. 2. *The International Yearbook for Child Psychiatry and Allied Professions*. 1971 (in press).

Nazis. She is married and has one child, a girl of 14 1/2, and is a teacher on the kibbutz. At the beginning of the interview she spoke reluctantly of her experiences but later she opened up and spoke with a great deal of emotion.

In her childhood she felt very strong ties with her father who was a member of a Chassidic sect but was a very tolerant man. Her mother, who was much more orthodox was, she felt, a strong and obstinate woman. Her feelings towards both her parents changed when she saw their response to the coming of the Nazis. She was disappointed in her father's reaction of running and hiding from the Gestapo and her prior image of him as a strong and good man was consequently shaken. Instead she came to admire her mother who was apparently not afraid to stand up to the Gestapo. As a result she now identifies much more with her mother's position toward life and tries, as her mother did, to suppress her emotions and face danger with courage.

During the holocaust Ruth was in the Ghetto as well as in the concentration camps. She escaped from a death transport and lived for a number of years as a Polish girl on "Aryan" papers. During and after the war she was actively involved with the Communist party and married a non-Jewish man who was a Party member. She felt the Party was not a political but a humanitarian movement which would liberate mankind from slavery as well as put an end to anti-Semitism.

After 1 1/2 years of marriage, Ruth felt that she was running away from her identity and betraying her parents by living as a Polish girl. After her divorce she went to Israel and there married a man 15 years her senior. Her second husband, who was not a concentration camp survivor, provided for her the security of a father image and symbolized her return to her Jewish identity.

Ruth was aware that she had problems resulting from the Nazi persecution. She suffered from neurotic symptoms of depression and anxiety mainly related to her child. It seemed that with the death of her father her unresolved Oedipal conflict was marked with a sense of tragedy, influencing the further course of her life. She felt that her experiment of living in Poland as a non-Jew and marrying a non-Jew was a neurotic attempt at its solution. On the kibbutz she said she found a sense of security that she could not find elsewhere. In describing her feelings about the kibbutz she said, "Sometimes I feel a need to run away from the closeness of the kibbutz but the sense of community and security is so strong that it gives me strength. I couldn't live in any other surroundings."

Her daughter, a sensitive, intelligent child, demonstrated a conspicuous defense mechanism in the denial of aggression toward her parents and her surroundings. She defended herself against her ambivalent feelings towards her mother by blaming the mother's depression on the oppression she experienced in the past. She stressed too that she and her friends on the kibbutz are never angry at each other since they feel that anger is "dangerous." At the beginning of the Six Day War she feared another holocaust at the hands of the Arabs and doubted that the "grown-ups" of the kibbutz could defend her. She, as well as the other children, were strongly affected by the death of one of their teachers in the war. At that time she cried despite

the fact that she had never seen her parents cry and was ashamed of it. She denied the importance of "heroic death" vis-a-vis the importance of life itself.

DEBORAH

Deborah, one of the active members of the kibbutz, was born in Poland in 1924. During the war she participated in the underground of the Warsaw Ghetto and was an important member of the Polish resistance. She was eventually caught by the Nazis and sent to the concentration camps. She has been very active and popular all her life and sees herself as an ambitious woman who has a need for a purposeful life. Even in the camps she strove to master its terrors and was able to develop meaningful relations.

In the concentration camps she was very ill but nevertheless provided a source of strength for her many friends. After every "action" (e.g. selection and mass murder) she would wash her body "to make herself feel like a human being again." This was an attempt to restore her own self-image. She said that it was her hatred of the Germans together with the belief that her two brothers were alive that helped her to survive. After liberation when she heard that her brothers had been killed, she attempted suicide. Her guilt feeling is evident in her reproach of her mother, who is still alive, for not helping the brothers to survive.

When she came to Israel she immediately joined the kibbutz on which she now lives. She has a deep relationship of dependency and inter-dependency with the other veterans, many of whom she knew in the Resistance, and whom she views as an extended family. She feels that they share a history of glory and that they have to live up to the expectations of the other people on the kibbutz. To be active and "to save others" are expressions of the fulfillment of her self-ideal. In her exaggerated patterns of activity we can see both a denial of the feelings of helplessness, passivity, loss and despair engendered during the holocaust period and a restoration of herself and her lost family. Even though there is now much less danger, the pattern continues as a response to suppressed needs for love and affection.

Deborah says she did not marry for love but because she wanted a home. She sees her husband as a father figure who "does everything for her." The husband himself was also a concentration camp victim, but rationalized his and his wife's experiences as part of Jewish history. Through his identification with the kibbutz he is able to overcome his own traumatic experiences and sees in the growth of the kibbutz and the State the fulfillment of his and his family's aspirations and emotional needs.

There are two children in the family, a boy aged 14 1/2 and a younger girl. Deborah admitted that she could not free herself of the fear that something might happen to them. The children like to visit home and often hear their parents' stories of experiences in the Ghetto and the Resistance movement. The son is quite introverted. The daughter does not have the same inhibitions as her brother and on the surface is quite aggressive towards her mother although she actually is very proud of her. She has some anxiety about death and fears separation from her parents. She denies every

expression of aggression both against her playmates and against the Arab enemy. Although at the time of the Six Day War she feared an "Arab holocaust," she said there was no reason to be angry with the Arabs. She tried to intellectualize and rationalize to defend herself against expressions of anxiety.

The kibbutz as continuity

We understand the establishment of kibbutzim in which most of the members are holocaust survivors as the transformation of the model of communal living from that of a passive, coercive experience in the total institution of the concentration camps, to an image which is positive, active, and voluntary. The survivors correlate the past with helplessness, dependency and death, in contrast to the animation of the present in which they see themselves as the energetic, resourceful masters of their own lives and the lives of their families and community. For them the kibbutz is a symbol of life, a reaction to the destruction of their former world. The vitality of the survivors' new environment is founded on accepting the importance of their persecution and transforming it from a negative to a positive symbol.

These individuals attribute their survival to the existence of tightly-knit supportive groups during the holocaust. Survival is intimately linked with community. This principle motivated their establishment of a kibbutz and informs their continuous emotional investment in it. The kibbutz is invested with the meaning of life, survival and the importance of the "group." It is also a link with and continuation of their former, pre-holocaust existence in small East European towns (shtetls). Both the shtetl and the kibbutz have similarities with closed social systems in which daily life and relationships are stable, interpersonal ties are strengthened by feelings of distance toward "outsiders," and all sources of gratification are defined as contained within the boundaries of the community.

The kibbutz is also a symbol of the stable, supportive, warm environment formerly provided by their extensive family networks. It not only replaces the family structure which was methodically destroyed by the Nazis, but represents all those cathected individuals who perished. Some of these interpretations are consciously elaborated by the survivors, e.g. they refer to the kibbutz as their family. Other symbols are maintained on the level of fantasy, e.g. they dream of the kibbutz as a resurrected extinct family or community, or bridge over a gap, or all-encompassing shelter. The kibbutz embodies both basic elements of the family: the father image (activity, protection from the outside world, provision of physical needs) and the mother image (emotional nurturance and unconditional acceptance). The unification of these two universal representations in the image of the kibbutz underlies the survivors' ability to utilize it as a replacement of the lost family constellation.

Finally, most of the survivors who joined kibbutzim had been members of socialist Zionist youth organizations during their adolescence. Their ideological fervor and binding ties of interdependence which characterized the "movement" of their younger years are continued as elements of their present-day environments. In this way the

kibbutz symbolizes for them their ability to create links with their childhood (family and shtetl), their adolescence (vitality, fidelity, and the ideology of youth movements), and their common trauma (bravery, loss-recovery, and common fate).

Survivor families

The preceding discussion has been concerned primarily with the impact of the ideology and structure of the kibbutz on the individual survivor. This section considers the impact on the survivor family of the two crucial psychosocial factors: the holocaust and the kibbutz. These two major sources of influence have created within the survivor family a distinctive pattern of parent-child relationships and a distinctive family theme.

Parent-child relationships

The unique childrearing system in the kibbutz with its separate sleeping quarters for children and specially trained "metaplot" (house mothers) to care for the children in groups intensifies separation anxieties among survivor families but reduces the mothers' fears that their own mothering would harm their children. The intervention of the metapelet and other substitute mother-figures provides relief to the survivor mother. As the children grow, the mother's sense of security develops parallel to that of the child. Throughout these years the survivors recount stories of their experiences during the holocaust to their children. They defend themselves against identifying with the "victim in their parents" by transforming them into heroes who performed miracles. The children perceive the memories of their parents through a "happy ending" perspective, interpreting all of their parents' experiences as occurring for the sake of the reestablishment of Israel and the birth of the children.

The adolescence of the first-born presents unique problems to the survivor family because the parents suffered the persecution during their own adolescence. In a previous article* we suggested that the achievement of a relatively normal level of adaptation after massive traumatization is most likely to occur when the victims undergo external trauma during their adolescence. The unique qualities of adolescence are intimately related to the ability to survive and readapt. Adolescence is a period in which one is old enough to have developed the necessary strengths and skills to survive and young enough to begin life again if given a chance. Although traumatization during adolescence possesses certain compensatory features as compared to the impact on other stages of psychosocial development, it also creates certain stage-specific difficulties. The moratorium on responsibility, the opportunity to experiment with various roles, the satisfaction of sexual curiosity and longing were denied these survivors because of the abnormal circumstances of their adolescence.

When their own children reach adolescence in the supportive environment of the kibbutz, they strive for independence and libidinal freedom. The kibbutz ideology

* Hilel Klein, Julius Zellermyer and Joel Shanan, "Former Concentration Camp Inmates on a Psychiatric Ward," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 8, 1963, 48-56.

predefines the adolescent role as one of intense activity, burgeoning responsibility, and increasing independence. This ideology makes it possible for the children to compensate for their parents' bypassed adolescence by engaging in role experimentation and expressing libidinal strivings. The conflictual feelings awakened in the parents who observe their children fulfilling what had been impossible during their own youth are mitigated when the parents allow themselves to remember some of the joy which they experienced even during the persecution.

Family themes

These distinctive parent-child relations are part of a dominant family motif of rebirth. The restoration motif underlies the naming of the children and the meaning which each parent invests in his child. Most children are given names that symbolize life, rebirth, hope, or names of those who perished (a Jewish custom). The first-borns are more likely to be identified with the victims of the holocaust than are the later-born children, but all the children are seen as substitutes for those who did not survive. Parents frequently interpret the very existence of their children as compensation or restitution. Many of the feelings which the parents retain of their holocaust experiences are displaced onto their children (guilt, anxiety). Despite these distortions, the parents also perceive their children as a source of security and gratification. They sometimes remark with real surprise that they have wonderful children despite the fact that their parents suffered so greatly.

Since the children acquire the role of compensators for their parents, they are frequently invested with exaggerated expectations and their abilities are overestimated. To a certain extent there is a burden on these children to "restore the dead," relive their parents' lost opportunities, and also live their own lives successfully. This overinvestment in the children (the "princeling" phenomenon) frequently corresponds to a lack of concern by the parents in their own needs and ambitions. In a few cases, parents spoke of their lives as a sacrifice for their children, just as they felt their own parents had sacrificed themselves during the holocaust. All of these elements of overinvolvement between the parents and their children lead to a family style of intense closeness and much affect. The survivor families are deeply involved with the very notion of "family" and continuously demonstrate, both verbally and non-verbally, their very strong ties.

The problem of aggression

The most significant problem of the children as well as their parents is the handling of aggression. This problem acquires additional importance in the light of the military conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Survivor families do not consciously identify the Arab enemies with their Nazi persecutors and, in keeping with reality, do not give them identical diabolical features. In the dreams of survivors, however, there are numerous indications that they are symbolically reliving their past experiences e.g. Arabs with German faces. In these dreams their spouses and children are

in a desperate situation, running away from the enemy that is overpowering them. In the interviews, however, these same individuals stress that they are not paralyzed by fear because they live in a community in which they can be sure of everyone's help. In addition, the war situation enables the adults to express their suppressed aggression of the past as members of the army or other para-military groups.

We investigated the children's aggression on the levels of fantasy and response to actual situations. Posed with an imagined but potential threat, the children's first reaction was anxiety connected with vivid fantasies of what happened to their parents as victims of Nazi aggression. The children acknowledge these fears and imagine themselves running away, hiding, clinging to their mothers, but not panicking. The second reaction of the children which emerged, in the elaboration of the T.A.T. and in the interviews, is the mobilization of ego strengths in syntonic interaction with the superego. They elaborate responses of cooperation and helping each other in danger so that there is a "happy ending" in which all the family is saved. The children have the tendency to deny interpersonal conflict as well as conflict between themselves and their parents. As teenagers they take an active role in the defense of their kibbutz and their country, and they continue to express their fear of becoming the aggressor. In their attitudes to war and in their interpersonal relations they reject the positions of aggressor and passive victim. The survivors were generally uneasy in the unfamiliar role of conqueror after the Six Day War. In their fear of being identified as aggressors, they sought to justify the Israeli victory and stressed the positive difference between the Israeli occupation and that of others (Germans, Russians).

Relatives outside the kibbutz

One feature of the kibbutz social structure not mentioned in the literature* is the relationship between those individuals and families who live on the kibbutz and their relatives who do not. The kibbutz tends to weaken or even destroy family ties between members of the kibbutz and their relatives "on the outside." In general, former interpersonal ties are minimized when one becomes a member. Although kibbutz members are aware of the attenuation of ties with relatives and friends outside the kibbutz, they see its cause in reality factors rather than in an explicit proscription. By this they mean that to be a member of a kibbutz is to interweave one's destiny with a group of fellow members, to share the unique responsibility of child-rearing with other parents, and to find the major source of one's identity in the kibbutz and in the political movement to which it belongs. They thereby express their conviction that the kibbutz satisfies the physical and emotional needs usually fulfilled by the family, as well as providing for all the social needs typically satisfied by the community.

The ties with outside relatives are weakened by discrepant vested interests, political

* With the exception of Talmon-Garber, Y. see: Social change and family structure. *International Social Science Journal*, 14:3, 468-487, 1962, with reference to the first phase after immigration.

outlooks, physical environments and social milieux. An invisible wall, composed of all these differences, arises around the physical entity of the kibbutz.

This feature of the kibbutz is especially supportive for the survivors who have lost family members during the holocaust. Unlike those survivors who live elsewhere and feel some guilt for not providing their children with a network of relatives, those who live in the kibbutz are deeply involved with a social milieu composed of other members who have almost extinguished their ties with relatives outside the kibbutz. The survivor nuclear family can more easily accommodate to these nonsurvivors who are similarly "without" an extended network of relatives on the kibbutz. They do not feel deprived in comparison with nonsurvivor families who also do not "bring their parents and sibling into the kibbutz."

But just as kibbutz members, especially those members not born on the kibbutz, reaffirm their connections with the past and with outside relatives at times of birth, marriage, death, and certain holidays, so too the survivors on the kibbutz need to mark highly emotionally-charged experiences by visiting fellow survivors outside the kibbutz. The survivors whom we interviewed spoke of their need to contact these friends and continue the association; these friends were never referred to as outsiders."

Family coping mechanisms

Children and parents in our study shared similar defense and coping mechanisms. One coping mechanism involves diminishing the conflicts of present situations by contrasting them to the cruel experiences of the past. One frequently hears the parents comment, "How can you be so upset now in comparison to what we went through?" The effect and importance of problems are denied by placing them within the perspective of the holocaust experience. This injunction against exaggerating the conflicts of the present is probably an instance of a general curtailment of dwelling on conflicts with its resultant restriction of the free flow of energy.

In the children there is a diminished fantasy life. They are more secure in everyday situations with well-known solutions. They learn from their parents that the themes that govern interpersonal relations are helping, soothing and not letting each other down, rather than loving passionately. Similarly, the children do not display much free fantasy in expressions of cruelty or in strong love investment in objects.

Both generations utilize memory traces and connected fantasies to work through the previously suppressed and traumatic experiences of the parents. We observed corresponding fantasies of idealization in the two generations which we interpret as being in the service of close, intimate ties. The children's fantasies are elaborations on the themes of their parent's heroic activity and righteous suffering, with eventual overcoming and triumphing in the end. These fantasies are based on factual material told in fragments by the parents. The children attribute anything bad in their parents to their having gone through a hellish experience. In this way they retain their image of heroic parents and minimize their own anger by denying their parents, responsibility.

The parents similarly idealize their children and see them as better than the older generation. They believe that the children will overcome both the frightening aspects of the present and the burden of the past. We have emphasized the importance of the parents' recounting of the past in terms of developing a sense of historic continuity. In tales of their former lives before, during and after the holocaust, which the parents tell in a repetitive, ritualized way, they permit their children to experience a sense of ego continuity, which is essential to the mental health of the developing adolescent.

Community coping mechanisms

In the kibbutz milieu of tolerance for residues of trauma, techniques have been devised for regularized, collective, public expression of emotions which are of personal origin, but have been experienced as a group. Just as cultural ceremonies are created in every society to manage life crises and personal transitions, the survivors in the kibbutz have created vehicles for the handling of their traumatic experiences. These provide a legitimate avenue for the public expression of grief, relieve personal anxiety by making it possible to share memories, and serve to socialize the younger generation to accept the identity of "children of holocaust survivors" without fear. The enormous sense of relief afforded by this ritualization is evident in the children's correctly perceiving it not only as public mourning but as a joyous celebration of rebirth of the survivors. The children of nonsurvivors as well as those of survivors accept the holocaust and survival in the existential framework of the individual and his group.

The desire to deal consciously with the unspeakable horrors of the past is vividly demonstrated by the establishment in the kibbutz of a "Museum of the Holocaust" to which is affixed the motto "Don't Forget".* The permanent public display of this history of holocaust atrocities which is simultaneously the history of their lives reduces feelings of secret shame. The publishing of a periodical, "Moreshet" (heritage), which contains historical and philosophical articles and memoirs dealing with the holocaust, demonstrates the importance of the coping mechanism of intellectualization for adaptation after trauma. The survivors who are able to employ this device find relief from anxieties and conflicts related to their past in discussions, research and diary or article-writing. These activities have culminated in the establishment of an "Institute of the Holocaust" which attempts to deal scientifically with various aspects of the persecution.

Lest these multiple activities be misinterpreted as compulsive repetition and exhibitionism rather than healthy coping in the service of readaptation to life, we emphasize the liberating qualities of these ceremonies and intellectual undertakings. Each provides the community with an opportunity to share and reaffirm the positive value of life as part of the Judaic tradition: survival and life are obligations; they

* This motto has roots in the Biblical story of the attempt by the Ameleks to annihilate the Israelites on their way from Egypt. God's injunction to the Israelites never to forget (or forgive) is considered in the Bible the appropriate manner to deal with attempted annihilation.

are not a source of stigma. For these reasons the individual reveals less of a tendency to engage in denial or to become overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and helplessness. As a further proof of the essentially positive aspect of this ritualization and intellectualization, we found that the survivors' children know very few details about the horrors of the holocaust aside from a general emotional gestalt. Despite all the public exposure, they have chosen the positive meaning without becoming paralyzed or obsessed by horror. We would like to emphasize the importance of collective mourning not only for the integration of the generations and the community, but also for the feedback which the individual receives that affirms his own feelings. This affirmation, the vital aspect of sharing, is continuously re-experienced by the survivor families.

Our observations lead us to an appreciation of the nature of such collective instances of mourning occurring in larger communities, even on a national and international level. The identification of the group with the individual mourners has reciprocal qualities. The group projects its own feelings, mourning its own losses, consoling itself and the mourners. The recognition of the deeds and horrors of the past enable a group to experience a sense of historic continuity and to mobilize group empathy as a positive force.

The survivors of the concentration camps and ghettos of the holocaust were unable to mourn during or immediately after the war. It was in the kibbutz, in the secure environment provided by the other members and by their own families, that they were gradually able to work through their grief. The children's healthy ability to mourn their own losses are continuations of their parents' successful attempts to work through these feelings. The children fulfill the function of continuing the mourning for the past while simultaneously representing the hope for the future.

Survivors and non-survivors

In the mixed kibbutzim, it was not only the survivors who shared in the common identity of the nonsurvivor members, but the reverse was true as well. On the Day of the Commemoration of the Holocaust for example, the entire community mourns together in a collective spirit. The rituals which they have created e.g. burning six candles before every home to symbolize the six million who perished, or displaying flowers and fruits to symbolize the hope and vitality of the present and future — become a bond which enables the individuals to express together their grief and feelings of rebirth. The non-survivors utilize the occasion of mourning to express the grief about their own lost relatives and to acknowledge that, although their histories were different from those of the survivors, they too experienced a rebirth in the kibbutz.

In the kibbutz there is a definite community pressure on the survivor families to deny the holocaust experience as a negative symbol and to accept it as a positive force. Although there is some denial of the affective quality of the holocaust experi-

ences and an attempt to suppress feelings of guilt, there is no general suppression of the memory of the past as such. Other members (nonsurvivors) are able to express empathy with the survivors without merging with them into a depression. Mourning, although in some ways incomplete on an individual level, is accepted on a collective level and participated in together. The ability to share pain makes even more meaningful the kibbutz members' ability to share rebirth.

The ability of the nonsurvivors to express empathy with their fellow kibbutz members' experience without merging with them in a collective depression serves as a model for the survivors in dealing with their painful memories. The nonsurvivors' behavior and attitudes present alternative models of handling the traumatic past as well as providing a possibility of dialogue about the most basic experiences of the survivors' lives.

For many years after immigration to Israel the survivors maintained coping mechanisms which had been in the service of their survival during the holocaust — suspiciousness and projection vis a vis the outside world. With the gradual subsequent satisfaction of their extensive need for security, support and compensation, these defenses subsided within the kibbutz. Nevertheless, the holocaust survivors looked upon those who had not shared their experiences with a certain measure of wariness and hostility. These attitudes reinforced their self-image as “not understood” and “different from normal people” and tended to isolate them as an exclusive group.

The population that lay outside this exclusive circle reciprocated by maintaining social and emotional distance from the survivors, probably because the holocaust-survivor-newcomers evoked in them feelings of guilt, anxiety, and fear of revenge of their own lost families (the Cain-Abel motif: “Where is Abel your brother?” Gen. 4:9), on the one hand, and feelings of “moral superiority” on the other. In their reference to the survivors' behavior as “sheep”, those who did not go through Nazi persecution implied that they would have behaved differently (i.e. fought back). These attitudes were characteristic more so of the nonsurvivors outside the kibbutz than those who were members of kibbutzim in which survivors lived.

The Eichmann Trial had a decisive impact on destroying the mutual isolation of the survivors and the nonsurvivors outside the kibbutz by clarifying many myths and emphasizing the collective fate of the Jewish people. In contrast to the analysis of Hannah Arendt, who stressed the helplessness of the holocaust victims and the cowardliness of their leaders, we found that the Eichmann Trial brought to public awareness the positive experience of solidarity, camaraderie, and the strength of life forces in the ghetto in the face of death. The trial provided an opportunity for a national emotional catharsis. In the sharing of grief and anger, those who had not personally known the horrors of the holocaust became aware of the historical facts and no longer clung to the stereotypes of survivors as “sheep,” “devils,” “heroes,” or “holy men.” The process of consciously dealing with this traumatic material served to weaken the needs for denial and distortion. Today an Israeli national

memorial “Day of the Holocaust” has been established through the pressure of the survivors. This day provides links between survivors throughout the country with all other citizens for the symbolic re-experience of death, re-birth, liberation, and the re-establishment of families and communities.

Conclusions

Although the survivors in the group whom we interviewed achieved a satisfactory adaptation to their new life circumstances, the holocaust remains with them in their conscious and unconscious life in dreams memories, discussions and writings. The intense affect of their traumatic experiences is not continuously re-experienced, however, because the survivors have developed coping mechanisms of ritualization, intellectualization, various forms of sublimation, and idealization of “the family.” The children of these survivors identify with their parents' attitudes toward the holocaust as a basic experience of their own lives and deal with it by adopting similar coping mechanisms. These families demonstrate that both healthy patterns of adaptation to massive traumatic experiences as well as conflicts derived from these experiences are transferred from one generation to another.

A second major conclusion is that post-traumatic psychic stress among survivors on the kibbutz is minimized by collective identification and expression of loss, mourning and aggression toward the past tormentors. Their common experience of suffering at the hands of the Nazis is expressed in many forms of group mourning, stressing always that they suffered as part of a group and not only as individuals. Similarly, it was as part of a group that they survived the past and are sustained from the massive denial with which most of the modern world reacts to the holocaust. The life style of the survivors and their families on the kibbutz provides an alternative to denial without approaching the extreme of obsession or victimization. We suggest that the relatively healthy adaptation of these families is related to the solidarity and values of their kibbutz-communities, the meaningfulness of their work, and their ability to express their suppressed aggression in socially legitimate forms. These factors counteract the meaninglessness and helplessness experienced during the holocaust.

We have also been impressed with the impact of the survivor and his family on the external environment. With the passing of time, nonsurvivors in the kibbutz and in the rest of Israeli society have approached a resolution of their conflictual feelings of guilt and anxiety *vis-a-vis* the survivors. At this stage there is a process of mutual identification between the survivors and the larger society, a process which was catalyzed by the Eichmann Trial. The unique characteristics of the kibbutz and the ability of Israelis to empathize with these survivors have allowed them to consider themselves merely “different” rather than “abnormal and helpless.”

Summary

Through intensive in-depth interviews of 25 survivor families on several kibbutzim we were able to develop a framework for understanding the process of adaptation to life after the holocaust. This particular group of survivors experienced a relatively normal childhood and then had undergone extreme persecution and loss of their families during adolescence. They then immigrated to Israel as young adults at the time of the creation of the State and established families on kibbutzim which they helped to develop. We have demonstrated that survivors of the holocaust are characterized by typical psychological residues of massive trauma. We found that the various tenets of the kibbutz ideology and qualities of its social arrangements tend to minimize their intrapsychic and interpersonal difficulties, although some psychological problems persist. The multi-determined symbol of the kibbutz is discussed with respect to its meaningfulness in providing survivors with a sense of personal continuity. Finally, we discuss the holocaust survivors as family members who develop in the setting of the kibbutz a special set of parent-child relationships which derive from their basic family theme of rebirth. We stress the mechanisms by which these survivors and their families have learned to cope with their trauma and the ways they are influenced by their kibbutz community and the larger Israeli society.

We are indebted to Mrs. Tamar Shushan psychologist, for her excellent work in testing and interviewing the children of the survivors in our group.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Klein, H., Zellermyer, J. and Shanan, J. Former concentration camp inmates on a psychiatric ward, *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 8: 334-342, 1963.
2. Klein, H. Problems in the psychotherapeutic treatment of Israeli survivors of the holocaust, in Krystal, H. (ed.) *Massive Psychic Trauma*, New York: International Universities Press, 1968.
3. Klein, H. Symposium on psychoanalytic treatment of holocaust survivors: May 1966, *Israel Annals of Psychiatry*, October 1968.
4. Klein, H. Problems of continuity of life experiences in holocaust survivors on the kibbutz, *Israel Annals of Psychiatry* (in press)
5. Klein, H. Eichmann trial and holocaust survivors in Israel, reported in: *Courier Express* December 29, 1966.
6. Klein, H. Treatment of an adolescent daughter of survivors, Minutes of discussion group: Children and Social Catastrophe: Sequelae in survivors and the children of survivors. (chairman, Krystal, H.) Am. Psychoanalytic Assoc. Fall 1967 (manuscript).
7. Zellermyer, J. On the Eichmann Trial, *Psychiatric Digest*, November 1968.
8. Krystal, Henry. Dynamics of adjustment to migration, *Psychiatric Supplement*, volume 37: 1963, 118-133.
9. Krystal, Henry. Minutes of discussion group: Children and Social Catastrophe: Sequelae in Survivors and the Children of Survivors. Am. Psychoanalytic Assoc. May 1968. (manuscript).
10. Krystal, Henry (ed.) *Massive Psychic Trauma*. New York: International Universities Press, 1968.
11. Eitinger, L. *Concentration Camp Survivors in Norway and Israel*. Oslo-London: Universitetsforlaget, 1964.
12. Eitinger, L. Preliminary notes on a study of concentration camp survivors in Israel, *Israel Annals of Psychiatry*. 1: 1963.
13. Arendt, H. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. New York: Viking Press, 1963.
14. Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Informed Heart*. Glencoe: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960.

15. Blos, Peter. *On Adolescence*. Glencoe: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.
16. Hillberg, R. *The Extermination of European Jewry*. New York: Quadrangle Press, 1962.
17. Lifton, Robert J. *Death in Life, Survivors of Hiroshima*. New York: Random House, 1968.
18. Niederland, W. G. Psychiatric disorders among persecution victims, *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. 139:458-474.
19. Zborowski, M. and Herzog, E. *Life is with People*. New York: International Universities Press, 1952.
20. Erikson, Erik H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton. 1968.
21. Miller L. Child rearing in the kibbutz in: Howells, J. (ed.) *Modern Perspectives in International Child Psychiatry*, Edinburgh: 1964. Oliver & Boyd.
22. Talmon-Garber, Y. Social change and family structure, *International Social Science Journal* 14:3, 468-487, 1962.
23. Jarus, A., et al. (eds.) *Children and Families in Israel*: Gordon and Breach: New York, 1970.
24. Winnik, H. Z. Concentration camp survivors in Israel, in H. P. David (ed.) *Migration, Mental Health and Community Services*, Geneva, Switzerland: A. J. D. C., 1967.
25. Rabin, A. L. *Growing up in the Kibbutz*. New York, Springer: 1965.
26. Spiro, M. E. *Children of the Kibbutz*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1958.