

Obituary

SAMAI ISAAC DAVIDSON, Medical Director, Shalvata Mental Health Centre, Tel-Aviv University Medical School, Hod Hasharon, Israel.

Professor Shamai Davidson, Medical Director of Shalvata Mental Health Centre, died on 18 March 1986 aged 59.

Shamai, born in Dublin in 1926, was the eldest of four sons. He grew up in a traditional Jewish home in Glasgow and it was there that he completed his medical education. Afterwards he specialised in psychiatry in London and Oxford.

Shamai, along with his wife Jenny and their two elder children (David and Jonathan), made aliyah to Israel in 1955. His decision, as a young British psychiatrist, to live in Israel originated from a strong Zionist affinity to his Jewishness. In a 1976 interview with *Meida Larofe (Information to the Physician)* he said, "I made aliyah because I wanted my children to have a complete Jewish identity, and not a semblance of such as is found in the Jewish way of life in the Western world." In addition, he said: "I saw in Israel a large-scale rehabilitation project of the Jewish people who had undergone vast and massive traumatisation and I felt a need to contribute my own modest contribution in this rehabilitative process."

During his first five years as a 'new oleh' he worked under the tutelage of the late Professor Winnik at 'Talbieh' Hospital in Jerusalem. In 1961 the Davidson family moved to Haifa where he established an ambulatory-psychiatric service in the Linn Clinic, and for the next 12 years was Medical Director of the Kupat Holim Mental Health Clinic in Haifa.

In 1973 Shamai Davidson became the Medical Director of Shalvata Mental Health Centre, replacing Professor Ruth Yaffe on her retirement. From then and until his recent untimely death he devoted his time, energy and proven capabilities in developing and enlarging the once small psychiatric hospital into a major regional mental health centre.

Shamai Davidson claimed that psychiatry itself was often too restricted and encapsulated within the confines of the psychiatric hospital. He believed psychiatry needed to expand and penetrate all branches of medicine and community services.

He strove for psychiatry to become an integral part of the work of physicians at a general hospital, and for more emphasis on the mental components of physical disorders and illnesses. Davidson was aware of the danger involved in developing a too technological, scientific and research-oriented medicine that could bring about the abandonment of the traditional holistic model of the doctor-patient relationship and the dehumanisation of medicine.

In addition to his development of community psychiatric services, which for the last few years was his 'pet' project, Professor Davidson devoted a great part of his time and energy to the Holocaust and its traumatic effect on survivors and their families. This subject, since his aliyah to

Israel, was always of particular interest to him. In one of his interviews he said: "I feel a personal responsibility to work in this field. Unfortunately, it is a problem that has been neglected far too long." Davidson was especially interested in the mental effects of the Holocaust on children of Holocaust survivors, on 'the Second Generation'.

In 1979 Shamai Davidson was appointed Professor in the School of Social Work of Bar-Ilan University, and afterwards he served as Head of the Elie Wiesel Chair for the Study of the Psycho-Social Trauma of the Holocaust. This appointment was especially aimed at teaching and researching the Holocaust and its massive traumatic and psychosocial effects. In 1983 Davidson was appointed to an Associate Clinical Professorship in the School of Medicine of Tel-Aviv University where he was actively involved until his death.

Israeli psychiatry has lost a leading member. His patients have lost a warm-hearted, humane and sensitive therapist and Shalvata Mental Health Centre has lost the man who had been its director for more than 13 years.

MN

LOUIS MINSKI, Honorary Consultant, St George's Hospital, London SW17

Louis Minski, a foundation fellow of the College, died at Cheam, Surrey on 11 September 1986, aged 84.

Minski was born in Sunderland and qualified in Newcastle in 1923. He gained his DPM in 1926, MD in 1927, MRCP in 1929 and was elected FRCP in 1943. He was awarded the Gaskell Prize and Gold Medal of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association in 1933. One of his first appointments after qualifying was at Bootham Park Hospital, York, where he remained until 1929. He then decided to come south and became Second Assistant Medical Officer at the Maudsley Hospital, under Professor Edward Mapother. During this time he became interested in Huntington's Chorea and together with Dr Erich Guttmann undertook one of the first surveys of families with this disease. In 1938 he was appointed Deputy Medical Superintendent at St Ebba's Hospital, Epsom. He was then requested to take over Sutton Training Centre and convert it into Sutton Emergency Hospital, later to become Belmont Hospital. He was appointed Physician Superintendent from September 1939 and remained as such until 1957. The conversion of the training centre into a hospital was no easy task but by October 1939 there were facilities for neurotic as well as general medical and surgical patients. In 1940, following Dunkirk, convoys of wounded of many nationalities were admitted and the hospital was used as a transit one when the

