

# AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

## The Treason of Clerks

This is the title of the post-WWI book in which Julien Benda accused intellectuals of shirking their duty to society through non-participation in its affairs. The author used the word 'clerk' as understood in the Middle Ages, when it connoted a member of the clergy, whose knowledge of reading and writing set them apart from the illiterate mass of the population.

In the late 1940s, at the height of the Cold War, Thomas Mann's son Klaus issued a more onerous challenge to the intellectual community. Morbidly depressed by the ever-worsening East-West crisis, he called for some of them to commit suicide to shock the general public out of their lethargy. *He* actually did so, but it passed unnoticed by the world at large.

Suicide as a 'wake-up call' was, indeed, a feature of world affairs in the mid-twentieth century. In May 1943 Samuel Zygelbojm, the Bund delegate to the Polish government-in-exile, took his own life to draw attention to the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, in 1968 Jan Palach committed suicide in a Prague square to protest the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, and Buddhist monks did the same in 1970s Saigon.

None of the aforementioned were intellectuals in the strict sense of the word. Altogether, one is drawn to the conclusion that Klaus Mann addressed his appeal to the wrong audience. At the time, the leading British intellectuals were George Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell. Shaw, as evidenced by his play *Caesar and Cleopatra*, admired strong leaders like Stalin (a foible he shared with his Mussolini-worshipping compatriot W.B. Yeats). As for Russell, he oscillated vertiginously between advocating the nuking of the Soviet Union and - after the latter acquired the A-bomb - setting up CND.

France's postwar cultural heroes were no more inspiring. Such iconic figures as the novelist Colette and the playwright

Paul Claudel had eulogised Pétain, while the up-and-coming Jean-Paul Sartre deliberately shut his eyes to the existence of Soviet concentration camps.

The German situation was quite dire. For one, the Nazis had left behind a cultural wasteland. For another, some returning émigrés - Brecht, Arnold Zweig - preferred the Sovietised DDR to the insufficiently de-Nazified democratic Bundesrepublik. When Thomas Mann visited the East



Thomas Mann

German Goethestadt Weimar, his stock in West Germany, already low due to the perception that he had approved of Allied air raids on his hometown Lübeck, fell even lower. In consequence, Mann relocated from California to Switzerland. Back in Germany, the philosopher Heidegger remained unrepentant over condoning Nazi crimes, and the physicist Heisenberg obfuscated his part in Hitler's nuclear project.

With such types setting the tone among Western intellectuals, Klaus Mann's appeal would hardly have elicited a response. The only intellectual community with an almost built-in self-destructive reflex was the Jewish one. From 1935 onwards Kurt Tucholsky, Ernst Toller, Joseph Roth,

Walter Hasenclever, Walter Benjamin and Stefan Zweig all died (virtually) by their own hand. Some of them - Hasenclever in a French internment camp, Benjamin at the Spanish border - chose suicide to avoid capture by the Gestapo, but Tucholsky in Stockholm, Toller in New York, Roth in Paris and Zweig in Brazil simply gave up. Tragically, Allied victory did not end the wave of Jewish suicides, as shown by the deaths of the Holocaust survivors Jean Amery, Paul Celan and Primo Levi.

Could the suicides from Tucholsky to Levi be constructed as a 'wake-up call' to others to beware of the Fascist scourge - or as a surrender to black despair? We shall never know.

What we do know, however, is that 80 years after the publication of Benda's book, the intellectuals (also known as the chattering classes) are no closer to discharging their duty to society. In Britain, according to a *Prospect* poll, Eric Hobsbawm, an unreconstructed lifelong Marxist-Leninist, is esteemed as one of the country's top intellects. In America, the chattering classes throng cinemas showing *Fahrenheit 9/11*. The title of Michael Moore's film derives from another movie, *Fahrenheit 451* - the temperature at which paper turns to ash - which depicts Nazi-style book burning. (Meanwhile, Moore sells more non-fiction books than any other author in the USA.)

France's intellectual class is trapped in nostalgia. In the eighteenth century, though Britain became *the* global power, the eyes of the civilised world were still focused on Voltaire and Rousseau, rather than on Locke and Hume. Today, Left Bank intellectuals complain: 'Our possession of philosophers like Lacan and Derrida avails us nothing against Walt Disney and Big Mac!'

All in all, one is tempted to assert that contemporary intellectuals can be summed up in the quip 'PhDs are people who know more and more about less and less!'

## Total strangers with identical DNA

Richard Grunberger

I have a weakness for the rather ridiculous notion of the transmigration of souls (readers may remember me fancifully describing Malcolm Muggeridge as a latter-day Jonathan Swift, and Michael Foot as William Hazlitt re-incarnate).

Now, a glimpse at Bernard Levin's obituary has reaffirmed my belief in the possibility of transmigration, since his character, career outlook and even foibles overlapped in every important respect with those of Karl Kraus.

Levin considered the English language mankind's greatest work of art. Kraus was prepared to kill - or, at least, to character-assassinate - anyone sully the purity of German.

Both wielded their vitriol-dipped pens like rapiers. Their ire was often justified - as when Kraus castigated punitive Austrian treatment of petty criminals, or Levin excoriated Soviet Communism. Sometimes, though, they puffed themselves up with fake indignation over some trifle simply as a hook on which to hang a stream of overwrought verbiage. Levin called a Tory PM and a Labour leader 'cretins'. And Kraus habitually made mince meat of fellow-writers.

Jewish-born, both disavowed Zionism as well as Judaism. Kraus accused Herzl of wanting to set up a Jewish state so he could be its king. Levin said, at the time of the Six-Day War, that British Jews had a primary duty to this country, and should not go and fight for Israel. As regards religion, Kraus joined, and then left, the Catholic Church; Levin espoused preposterous esoteric cults. Levin's spiritual odyssey coincided with his engagement to the 'most upwardly mobile Greek since Icarus', Arianna Stassinopoulos (who eventually left him). Kraus's amorata, Sidonie Nadherny von Borutin, left him too - on the advice of none other than Rainer Maria Rilke, the eminent German poet.

But Levin went one better. The rival Arianna left him for was the American tycoon Mike Huffington - a man so rich that he spent \$30 million of his own money to get into the US Senate as a stepping stone to the White House.

## Bavarian town protests against neo-Nazi hordes

Howard Spier

Every summer for the last three years, thousands of Europe's extremists have staged a rally in the small town of Wunsiedel in Bavaria to pay their respects to Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess, who committed suicide in Spandau prison in August 1987 and is buried in the family plot in Wunsiedel.

This August the visiting thousands of right-wingers were met by unprecedented protests from the townsfolk. At the height of the protests, hundreds of citizens, including the mayor, held a sit-down protest on the town's main street to block the path of the neo-Nazis, who turned out this year in greater numbers than ever before. In a reference to the banned Nazi Storm Trooper uniform, they put up banners around the town declaring 'Wunsiedel is colourful, not brown!' According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, some 70

neo-Nazis and over 30 counter-demonstrators were arrested.

The town had, in fact, begun protest actions two years previously, but this was the first occasion on which they had succeeded in creating a broad coalition comprising youth, clergy, teachers and farmers.

Some anti-Nazi activists favour a ban on the Hess 'memorial march', as was the case for nine years until 2001. Breschkai Ferhad, of the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance, which is based in Berlin, called for a ban on all neo-Nazi marches focused on memorials and former concentration camps.

Wunsiedel is the only city in Germany which contains the grave of a Nazi leader. All other Nazi leaders, who were either executed or died, were burned and their ashes scattered.

## Mixed feelings on back-to-Berlin visit

Howard Spier

Recently some 50 former Jewish citizens of Berlin, among them Kindertransportees and concentration camp survivors, paid a return visit to the German capital. The group was hosted by the city mayor and met Jewish political and religious leaders, visited memorials and explored their once-home city at their leisure.

Many Jewish ex-Berliners who have participated in the programme have experienced disappointment: while they have seen a new, vibrant Jewish community growing there, they know

that what once existed cannot be restored.

Munich and Frankfurt were the first cities officially to invite former Jewish citizens to visit; the Berlin programme began in 1969. There have been two official visits to the German capital by Jewish ex-Berliners annually. Visitors come from around the world, mainly from the US, UK and Israel.

For one Kindertransportee, Ilona Blech, returning to Berlin was a comforting experience, a kind of 'closure'.

### AJR Journal

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## A game of (dire - if unintended) consequences

Richard Grunberger

Earlier this year a Chinese judge, acting as collegiate spokesman for the International Court of Justice, declared Israel's 'security fence' illegal. This brought to mind the 1930s joke pronouncement by the appointee of a regime to which the notion of a separation of powers between executive and judiciary - the foundation of law since Solomon's time - is quite alien. A foreign visitor to Berne notices a building called Ministry of the Navy and, expressing his surprise at this to a local, is told: 'If Germany can have a Ministry of Justice, and Italy a Ministry of Finance, then Switzerland can have a Ministry of the Navy.'

As for Peking sitting in judgement on other people's walls, let them reflect on the catastrophic impact the Great Wall of China had on world history. The motive behind the construction of this 2,000-mile-long barrier was to keep out the Mongol hordes. In this it succeeded - but at what cost! Frustrated in their lust for plundering China, the Mongols turned westwards in their search for loot, and thus triggered the Great Migration of the Peoples (*Völkerwanderung*).

The advancing Mongols set off a westward chain reaction among other groups of hunter-gatherers whose vanguard flooded into Europe and eventually threatened the Roman Empire. The movement of diverse races - Huns, Avars, Turkic peoples, Northern and Southern Slavs, Vlachs, Ostrogoths - across the vast Eurasian landmass permanently altered the population pattern of the Old World.

It also dealt a deathblow to the Roman Empire. This was a huge setback to the advance of civilisation - how huge is indicated by the fact that the centuries after the Fall of Rome were commonly called the 'Dark Ages'.

TV has lately been churning out programmes about our debt to ancient Rome, focusing on such material

achievements as the provision of clean drinking water. However, posterity's greatest indebtedness lies in the non-material sphere. The *Pax Romana* put an end to endemic inter-tribal wars from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, and from Hadrian's Wall to the Sahara. Just as importantly, they allowed their subjects religious freedom - alongside the obligatory worship of the deified Caesars. (The Jews, it goes without saying, were too stiff-necked to accept this.)

Another huge boon was their bestowal of literacy on the top stratum of the hitherto unlettered ancient Britons, Gauls and other Celts. In addition, Rome acted as the conduit through which the legacy of Greek culture reached more backward regions distant from the Eastern Mediterranean. But Rome also bequeathed a beneficent legacy of its own in the form of the Latin language - the medium of communication among all educated Europeans right up to the seventeenth century.

The Great Wall of China meanwhile enabled Chinese civilisation to flourish free of the threat of Mongol invasion. However, by the thirteenth century the dynamic impetus behind China's cultural ascent petered out, and the country entered half a millennium of stagnation, which by the 1800s turned into cumulative decay.

There can be no doubt that, thanks to Communism, contemporary China has turned a corner and is on track to becoming a major player in the global economy. This incipient boom goes hand in hand with the claustrophobia of living behind a metaphorical wall which is most acutely felt in hitherto Western-influenced Hong Kong. Could the recent pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong be the first sign that it is pay-back time for what the Chinese unwittingly did to the West - alias the Roman Empire - when constructing their Great Wall?

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## Arts and Events Diary October

**To 31 October 'Gibraltar Rock: British Fortress, Jewish Haven'.** Jewish Museum, Camden Town, 129-131 Albert Street, London NW1 tel 020 7284 1997

**To 28 October 'West End - East End: Jewish Life Across London'.** Jewish Museum Finchley, Sternberg Centre, London N3 tel 020 8439 1143

**Thursdays at 3 pm Coffee House Chess.** London Jewish Cultural Centre



**Mon 4 Professor Lord Robert Winston,** 'Judaism and Science', the Annual Parkes Lecture, Turner Sims Concert Hall, University of Southampton 6 pm. Tel 02380 595151

**Mon 4 Dr Annette Stannett,** 'A Refugee in Africa'. Club 43

**Mon 11 Dr Jennifer Taylor,** "'Weltschmerz' or 'Something to Make People Laugh'?" The Acceptable Political Content of the Isle of Man Internment Camp Journals, July-October 1940'. Club 43

**Mon 11 'Daniel Pearl Music Day: Harmony for Humanity - A Musical Tour of the Mediterranean Basin against Prejudice and Terror'.** London School of Business and Finance, Grosvenor Place, London SW1. 7.30 for 8 pm. Tel Spiro Ark on 020 7723 9991

**Wed 13 UK Jewish Film Festival** opens with a gala at the Vue Cinema, Leicester Square, London W1 and the UK premiere of 'Rashevsky's Tango'. Among films to be screened are 'Rosenstrasse', 'Roses's Song', 'My Father', 'Twin Sisters',

'Edelweiss Pirates'. Tel 020 7371 5056

**Mon 18 Prof William Fishman,** 'Winston Churchill, the Houndsditch Murders and the Battle of Sidney Street'. Club 43

**Tues 19 Professor Robert Liberles** (Ben Gurion University, Beersheva), 'Jews, Coffee, and Innovation in Early Modern Germany'. Wiener Library. 7.00 pm

**Tues 19 Professor Rodney Livingstone,** 'Some German-Jewish Surnames: An Introductory Survey'. Room 1163, Avenue Campus, University of Southampton. Tel 02380 592261

**Tues 19** An evening with presenter and producer Christopher Nupen, winner of LJCC Cultural Television Award for 'We Want the Light'. London Jewish Cultural Centre, 7.30 pm

**Mon 25 Prof Stephen E. Frowen,** 'Human Imagination - the Centre of Economic Activity'. Club 43

**Tues 28 Book Event** with author **Professor David Cesarani:** 'Eichmann: His Life and Crimes'. LJCC. 7.30 pm

**Mon 1 November** Gerald Holm/Hans Seelig, 'More about Furtwängler'. Club 43

**Sat-Wed 2-6 November Diane Samuels's** play 'Kindertransport'. The Burton Taylor Theatre, Gloucester Street, Oxford, 7.30 pm. Tel 01865 305350

### ORGANISATION CONTACTS

**Club 43** Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

**Jewish Museum Camden Town** 129-131 Albert Street, London NW1 tel 020 7284 1997

**Jewish Museum Finchley** Sternberg Centre, London N3 tel 020 8439 1143

**London Jewish Cultural Centre** King's College, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 tel 020 7431 0345

**Wiener Library** 4 Devonshire Street, London W1 tel 020 7636 7247

## Emigré artist John Heartfield recognised

Ronald Channing

A blue plaque was unveiled in Hampstead's bright sunshine to perpetuate the memory of John Heartfield, artistic innovator and pioneer of photomontage, a German-Jewish refugee who lodged in the house in Downshire Hill from 1938 to 1943.

He was born Helmut Herzfeld in 1891 and served in the German Army during World War I, but anglicised his name in 1916 in protest against the Kaiser's zealous nationalism. With a studio in Berlin, he became one of the founding members of the Berlin Dada group of avant-garde artists. From 1927 he used photomontage (which involves assembling and retouching pieces of photographs) in a left-wing weekly, *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, to attack Hitler and the Nazi Party.



In the 1930s he produced his most famous works, including 'I've Got Millions Behind Me,' 'The Thousand Year Reich,' and 'Adolf the Superman Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk.' No longer safe in Germany, he fled first to Prague and then to London in 1938 following the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Heartfield lived in the home of Fred and Diana Uhlman, who gave refuge to him and to many other refugee artists, and in which they founded the Free German League of Culture and the Artists' Refugee Committee. Their daughter, Mrs Caroline Compton, carried out the unveiling ceremony.

Heartfield held an exhibition entitled *One Man's War Against Hitler* and was published in *Lilliput* and *Picture Post*. Though his work was banned in Germany during the Third Reich, he returned to East Germany in 1950 where he later died. His art continues to influence generations of artists and graphic designers.

### AJR CELEBRATION TEA 2004

SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER 2004

2.30 pm

at the Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London W1

The Carl Rosa Company will perform excerpts from  
*The Merry Widow*

Booking details enclosed with this issue

# Recreation of Kindertransport journey planned for young children at Beth Shalom

Steve Robinson

Plans are well advanced at the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire for the creation of a new exhibition narrating the story of the 10,000 children of the Kindertransport. Aimed at primary school children, this unique 'Primary Learning Centre', which, it is hoped, will open in autumn next year, may well be the largest permanent exhibition of its kind.

To be called *The Journey*, the project will teach children of primary school age with sensitivity, as well as other young people and the wider community. The exhibition will also house an accessible archive of original items brought with them by the children of the Kindertransport and will offer recordings of their testimonies describing their journeys out of Nazi-dominated Europe, their arrival in Britain, and their subsequent lives.

Through a series of themed, interactive rooms, *The Journey* will give today's children an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the Kinder, from their enjoyment of everyday family life to their



flight, leaving their parents behind. The young visitor will sense the disorientation felt by the Kinder as he or she participates in a recreation of a typical journey. One section of the exhibition will depict a train station and the moment of departure. Visitors will be encouraged to reflect on the emotions felt by the Kinder as they faced the trauma of separation, the decision on what could be taken, and the sense of a lonely journey into the unknown. From stepping on to a train, through to a 'new home', the exhibition will portray an environment in which language and everyday activities are alien.

'Holocaust education for primary school children has long been a focus of debate', commented Beth Shalom founder Dr Stephen Smith. 'The challenge is how to engage younger children constructively with some of the very demanding implications of the Holocaust without confronting them with the full horror of the concentration camps. We talk about the teenage years as the formative years, but by 12 or 13, patterns of behaviour can already be deeply embedded. If through this we can help younger children to empathise, to think outside themselves, and to have respect and understanding for others, that lays a valuable foundation - for them and for the future well-being of society.'

*The Journey* will also provide an opportunity for the young visitor to talk to a Kindertransportee who will accompany him or her through the exhibition. 'It is vital that schoolchildren learn from this to combat racism', said Steven Mendelsson, who escaped with the Kindertransport as a teenager in 1939.

## 'German-Jewish Refugees around the World' A Berlin Jewish Museum project

The Jewish Museum of Berlin is planning for 2006 an exhibition on Jewish emigrants who left Germany between 1933 and 1941. The more than 400,000 German and Austrian Jews who began a new life after an often difficult emigration became immigrants in many countries. We will be focusing on the everyday life of these immigrants in the years following their arrival in a foreign country. We will, of course, be dealing with countries such as Israel, the USA and Argentina, but we are also keenly interested in countries such as India and Kenya.

### *Before emigration*

From which town did your family come and what was your parents' occupation? Did Jewish religion play a role in your family life? Was there an immediate cause that made you decide to leave Germany? Was it difficult to organise the emigration? How did you choose

your country of refuge? Did you/your parents prepare for the emigration with special training? Which possessions were you able to take with you? How did your flight and arrival proceed?

### *Life as a refugee/immigrant*

Where and how did your family live after the arrival? Was your country of refuge as you expected it to be? Which jobs did you/your parents do after the arrival? Were you supported by relief organisations? Did your parents try to help relatives get out of Germany or Austria? What experiences did you have as a refugee or 'enemy alien'?

### *Everyday life until around 1950*

When did your country of immigration become a new 'Heimat' for you? Were there things/habits in your new country which you liked very much (for instance, food, landscape, music)? Were there things/habits from Germany which you missed? Were you more in contact with

the local people than with other refugees? Did your family become active in a German-Jewish organisation or a synagogue community?

We are also searching for family photos as well as documents and objects which accompanied the emigration (for example, official letters, maps, ship tickets). Unfortunately, most people did not keep everyday objects such as furniture, clothes or toys. We would like to put on display some of these objects as private loans.

Please do contact me. I am at your disposal (from 12 October) should you have any questions.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### A FAR FROM NEGLIGIBLE ONE PER CENT

Sir - Your article about German Jews in the Israeli political establishment (August 2004) took up a subject that interested readers 40 years ago. In December 1965 Herbert Freeden, one of the journal's founding editors until his emigration to Israel in 1950, wrote in his regular column from Jerusalem about the prominent role German Jews had played in the early years of the Jewish state. For many years the Minister of Justice was Pinkas Rosen (Felix Rosenblüth), who largely created the legal and jurisdictional system. Rosen was in office during two of the most traumatic events in Israeli legal history, the Eichmann trial in 1961 and the 1954 libel case involving Dr Rudolph Kastner, who had made deals with the Nazis in order to save the lives of a trainload of Hungarian Jews. Perez Naphtali, a former editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, held an economic portfolio, and the Minister of Labour was Giura Josephthal.

Freeden saw the political decline of the *Yeckes* as the natural outcome of a generational change, brought about by the arrival of new groups of immigrants and, as he hoped, by the development of Israel 'from a conglomeration of "Landsmannschaften" into what one day will be one people'. Freeden did not mention Dr Siegfried Moses, one of the *Yeckes* best known to German Jews around the world as President of the Council of Jews from Germany, set up in 1945 by the AJR and its sister organisations in Palestine and the USA to represent the interests of the Jews who had fled Germany. Moses was the undisputed spokesman of the emigrated German Jews, a co-founder of the Leo Baeck Institute, and occupier of the oddly-titled office of State Comptroller, in which capacity he

exercised fiscal oversight over Israel's administrative apparatus. He played a key role in securing *Wiedergutmachung* from the West German government and in setting up for that purpose the United Restitution Organisation, which in London shared the AJR's offices in Fairfax Mansions. It was the Council of Jews from Germany that was largely responsible for ensuring that a fair share of the proceeds from heirless, unclaimed and communal Jewish property in West Germany went to the Jews from Germany; in Britain it was used to build old-age homes and to set up the social welfare system of the AJR that does such excellent work for our members.

Anthony Grenville

### TERMINOLOGICAL INEXACTITUDE

Sir - I think the expression 'Islamofascism' is contradictory. Fascism is a Western value brought into being in order to strengthen social arrangements in a world where modernisation has led individualisation to such an extent that there is a genuine risk of the disintegration of necessary social arrangements. It differs from pre-modern thought-forms such as religions. Where religions hold sway, there is no need for political doctrines such as Fascism since they are all-encompassing. Everything social is religious too - and therefore religiously controlled. Some other term is preferable to 'Fascism', for example 'totalitarianism'. Fascism is possible only in a modernised West with a capitalist economy, parliamentary democracy and individualisation. In short, in a West where social differentiation has evolved and 'matured'. But fascist-like phenomena can be discovered outside the West too. With 'globalisation', this is likely to occur more often in the future. It can

occur anywhere in the world where traditional social forms or structures have been smashed by Western 'hegemony' in the name of globalisation.

Jakka Laari  
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

### FILLING IN A BLANK ON THE MAP

Sir - In your July article you state that 'Croats .... behaved like savages only in the early decades of the twentieth [century]'. On the contrary, history shows that they have been butchering each other and their neighbours regularly from the time the Romans left the then Province of Illyria in about the fifth century right up to the Second World War.

It was only during Tito's 40 years' rule after the Second World War that the various South Slavs co-existed peacefully. During that time they totally rebuilt what had been the impoverished and backward provinces of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. They ceased fighting among themselves and created a prosperous, civilised country to the benefit of all their citizens. It was only after megalomania in the shape of Milosevic had come on the scene with his manic idea of a Greater Serbia that they reverted to their centuries-old rivalries and began butchering each other again. It was mainly the efforts of the Croatians, with obvious outside economic help, who rebuilt the economy of the country and it was the Serbs who contributed the least, riding on their coat-tails.

Nina Hofman  
Lugano, Switzerland

### AUSTRIAN COMPENSATION

Sir - I would like to thank the 20 or more Holocaust survivors and heirs who wrote, emailed or telephoned me following my letter (August edition) on Austrian compensation - or rather the lack of it. All I can say is that I will do my best to make sure we get equitable compensation but, at the moment, I cannot provide any good news about the General Settlement Fund. Due to bad negotiations, the Austrians will not pay out until a decision has been made on whether the class actions in the US

are allowed or not. In any case, I believe the \$210 millions on offer is an insult, and that this too was badly negotiated. I have received varied opinions (inevitably!) but, rest assured, I will carry on fighting.

*Peter Phillips*  
Loudwater, Herts  
tel: 01923 778431  
email: peterphillips@supanet.com

#### GOLIATH AUSTRIA

Sir - Readers of your piece on the Supreme Court judgement (July issue) granting Mrs Altman, a US citizen resident in California, leave to sue the Austrian state in the United States for the return of paintings alleged to be wrongfully held in an Austrian museum, may not be aware that the battle with the Goliath Austria and its legion of lawyers was won by a mere David in the person of Randol Schoenberg. He is one half of a two-man Los Angeles legal partnership; he is also the grandson of Arnold Schoenberg of 12-note fame and, not least, a distant cousin of mine. A famous victory which, *inter alia* (as you point out in your report), will put back compensation payments to us all-too mortal refugees well beyond our likely life-span.

*Victor Ross*  
Kent

#### CLAIMS CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Sir - Where has the charitable Jewish heart gone? With reference to the Claims Conference Programme for Former Slave Labour and Forced Labourers, a large number of Jewish organisations have become involved with managing and allocating the huge amounts of money donated by the German industrialists and Swiss banks.

Several American law firms have instituted class claims on behalf of concentration camp survivors. These court cases have taken a long time and, when they eventually waived their claims, the monies accumulated in a Swiss bank were released for distribution. Firstly, the lawyers were paid \$1 million - a veritable sum for their troubles. These disbursements left enough money for every survivor of the

camps to receive substantial compensation for their sufferings and losses.

But no! We, who nearly died of starvation, suffered from ill-treatment and from extortionist labour, were given only the paltry sum of approximately £4,500. Compare this with compensation given to victims of, say, racial or sexual discrimination awarded by an English court and one must admit there has been gross unfairness and a lack of real justice meted out to us camp survivors. And the organisations concerned and the people who hold the purse strings are not willing to do anything on our behalf. Sadly, in our case justice has been swept under the carpet.

*Hedi Fischer Frankl*  
Forced labour camp survivor  
London NW4

#### BRICKBAT

Sir - The August editorial is good at name-dropping, but not so good at knowing about the 'mass of the people'. That some renowned scientists chose not to go to Palestine does not disprove the fact that more of the masses of German Jews *would* have gone had they had the chance! Most Jewish families in Germany that I know of had a KKL collecting tin for buying land in Palestine long before the Nazis came!

*Bettina Cohn*  
Bristol

#### BERLIN OLYMPICS

Sir - Last month's Newsround included an item on Milton Green, an American Jewish hurdler who boycotted the 1936 Olympics in Germany in protest against the Nazi regime. We members of the famous HaKoah Club of Vienna did the same. Our three champions - Judith Deutsch, Ruth Langer and Lucy Goldiner - were nominated to represent Austria in a number of swimming events, refused to go to Berlin, and were disqualified for life. Their lives and achievements are fully documented in the Jewish Museums of Vienna and Berlin.

*Anne Pinsker*  
London SW15

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# ART NOTES

## Gloria Tessler

As the synagogues of the old Jewish East End opened to the public last month for Jewish Heritage Day, visitors pored over the old marriage books, vivid with social history. Jewish names appeared beside Jewish trades: tailors, buttonhole-makers, carpenters. This Jewish immigrant history is personified by a painting in **Ben Uri's** exhibition **Rediscovering Wolmark**, which continues until November. Alfred Wolmark's depiction of *The Carpenter*, created in the tradition of the Old Masters, shows a middle-aged man sitting beside a heavy, wooden table strewn with wood shavings, his eyes burning with Torah wisdom as he studies the holy book in his free moments. His face is full of tender refinement, but his hands are swollen from the work. Beside him is his son or grandson. The arresting thing about this painting is not simply the heritage point, but the fact that the table contains as much life as the man's face and, while his expression seems comfortable with hard work and study, the child's face is already bright with the hope of a different - perhaps more secular - future.

Wolmark's other paintings from this period - *The Elders* and *Succot* - show rabbis with rapt expressions as they recount their individual philosophies. This is a virtual reality of Jewish history, as alive today as when they were painted. But later, Wolmark favoured a more extravagant style, painting his wife Bessie in the exotic finery and colours of a study by Gauguin. Indeed, by 1911, while honeymooning in Brittany, he was painting in a late Impressionist style and he produced 90 works, the largest output of his career. Wolmark by this time favoured the more subtle drama of light on hard surfaces. The *Portrait of Dottie Konstam*, a full-skirted woman with a huge parasol painted in 1915, has a touch of Renoir but for the pointed intelligence of her face and, by 1930, a rather unattractive portrait of his two sons has an almost *Boys' Own* comic feel to it.

Over the next five years Wolmark discarded his earlier styles for post-Impressionism. He returned from France

to find himself hailed as a British Fauve, and he was numbered among the British modernists of his time. His work became enhanced by the mysterious use of dark backgrounds and *sfumato*, and his friendship with the sculptor **Henri Gaudier Brzeska** resulted in works of mutual appreciation. Wolmark's is a dashing full-length matadorial study of the sculptor in red and black, while Brzeska responded with a powerful bust of Wolmark, his Cubist head twisted painfully on the huge axis of his neck.

The Jewish content of Wolmark's work inevitably became more subtle. He admitted to being drawn away from 'rabbis in long beards', in favour of the colours and space of Jerusalem, its bright skies and the 'colour of the resplendent Orient'.



Dorothy Brook with her *Tree of Life* wall sculpture, commissioned by WIZO UK Hon President Leila Wynbourne MBE

Dorothy Brook's *Tree of Life* was commissioned for WIZO by its UK Hon President, Leila Wynbourne MBE, in memory of her four-year-old grandson David, who died in 1979. The tree, delicately made of maple wood, to which each new silver or gold leaf added celebrates a personal event to its donor, now hangs in WIZO's Miriam Sacher lounge between the portraits of Elaine Blond and Rose Hertz. One leaf was placed by David's twin Jonathan and another by deputy Israel Ambassador Zvi Ravner for his new granddaughter. Lady Jakobovits was presented with one on behalf of her numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## RG'S INTERFACE

**Renaissance man I** Carl Djerassi, a Vienna-born American of Sephardi provenance, invented the birth-pill which affected sexual behaviour worldwide. It also made him rich and enabled him to indulge his play-writing ambitions. His *oeuvre* includes *Immaculate Misconception* (a play about artificial insemination) and *Calculus* (about the rivalry between Newton and Leibnitz).

**Renaissance man II** Kipling's search for someone who 'can walk with kings nor lose the common touch' has found an answer in David Baddiel. The inventor of *Fantasy Football*, a TV show catering to a soccer-obsessed public, Baddiel has also been a Booker Prize judge, and recently published his third novel, Entitled *The Secret Purposes*, it benefited from the input of AJR members who had been interned on the Isle of Man (see review on p. 9).

**Cinema I** First prize at this year's Jerusalem Film Festival went to Tawfik abu Wael's *Atash-Thirst*, a film about the fate of a Palestinian family in exile.

**Cinema II** A recent conference of German film historians was told that Ferdinand Marian, who played the lead in Veit Harlan's notorious antisemitic film *Jud Süß*, put in such a sympathetic performance that he received fan mail from female cinemagoers.

**Moguls non-PC** On the occasion of Marlon Brando's death, the New York-based Jewish weekly *Forward* recalled the star's appearance on the *Larry King Live* show in 1996, where he accused Jewish Hollywood 'moguls' of insensitivity towards Afro-Americans and other minorities.

**PS to Yekkes in Israel** Dorothea Wahl's *Lyris Deutschsprachige Dichter und Dichterinnen in Israel* (Beerenverlag, Frankfurt 2004) deals with a dozen men and women poets from Germany, Austria and Bukovina who meet weekly in Jerusalem to read and discuss each other's work. Each session is preceded by the consumption of coffee and Viennese *torte*.

## Barbed wire entanglement

### THE SECRET PURPOSES

David Baddiel

Little Brown, £16.99

This is an ambitious 400-page 'novel' with its heart in the right place. It intersperses imaginary characters with refugee celebrities like Richard Tauber and Martin Freud, and uses a scaffolding of facts - Whitehall memoranda, a Bloomsbury House pamphlet, newspaper articles - to add verisimilitude to its fiction.

Baddiel's not-so-secret purpose in writing this book was, I suppose, to castigate British wartime officialdom's tendency to play down reports of Nazi atrocities coming out of Eastern Europe - as well as to pay affectionate tribute to his German-born forebears.

The story starts in discursive fashion with a rabbi crossing Königsberg's seven bridges, each of which triggers his personal reflections on - or involvement in - the seven deadly sins. The year is 1934, and the rabbi has to battle the sin of anger when he thinks of the surprise - marriage to the gentile Lulu - his Communist son Isaak has just sprung on him.

From here on, Isaak is the main protagonist. Arrested on Crystal Night, he is freed on the intercession of Lulu's parents, and the couple eventually reach England. He works in the kitchen of a Cambridge college, is put into B category by an Aliens Tribunal for blurting out his Communist sympathies, and is interned on the Isle of Man. In the camp he is interviewed by June, a translator at the Ministry of Information who is engaged in a single-handed battle with her superiors for playing down Nazi atrocities. Simultaneously, his wife solicits the help of a Cambridge journalist to get him out of the camp.

Now the plot thickens, with Isaak getting amorously entangled with June, while simultaneously suspecting his wife of infidelity with the journalist - as well as being drawn into a plot to kill a Nazi fellow-internee. Matters come to a head at an officially sponsored Christmas get-together of male and female internees, at which Richard Tauber sings and the soldiers on guard get paralytically drunk.

# REVIEWS

I refrain from giving away the dénouement because I want readers to enjoy Baddiel's dexterous plotting. At the same time, I have quite a few reservations about this book. It strains credulity that a Prussian registrar would marry a Jew and an Aryan a full year after the Nazi takeover, or that an ex-Communist militant would drift around England without any contact with exiled comrades. (German Communists in wartime Britain were tightly organised. One was the atomic spy Klaus Fuchs; others organised the Hampstead-based Free German League of Culture, with luminaries like Oskar Kokoschka and John Heartfield.)

Although the author enjoys satirising blimps and Whitehall bureaucrats he seems to believe that a humble translator at the Ministry of Information could get the better of her superiors. He also gets the German-Jewish atmosphere of yesteryear wrong. No liberal rabbi would have named his son Isaak, or called a gentile woman a *shiksa*.

And, for all that Baddiel has been a Booker judge, he commits stylistic peccadillos like 'fulsome breath' and 'ascribe with' (instead of to).

But my gravest charge against him is that he makes Isaak, who left Germany before the outbreak of war, describe a massacre that could have occurred only in Nazi-occupied Poland. I reiterate: the novel's heart is in the right place - but as for its head...

Richard Grunberger

## Fruits of a distinguished career

DEUTSCHE JUDEN IM KAMPF UM RECHT UND FREIHEIT: STUDIEN ZU ABWEHR, SELBSTBEHAUPTUNG UND WIDERSTAND DER DEUTSCHEN JUDEN SEIT DEM ENDE DES 19. JAHRHUNDERTS

Arnold Paucker

Hentrich & Hentrich, 2003

Arnold Paucker was appointed the first director of the Leo Baeck Institute,

London, in 1959, a position he held, and adorned, for over 40 years. This collection of articles and papers is the fruits of a distinguished scholarly career devoted to the history of the Jews of Central Europe.

Pride of place goes to Paucker's study of the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (CV), the principal Jewish self-defence organisation from its foundation in 1893 to its dissolution in 1933. In his splendid analysis of the strategies developed by the CV before 1914 in face of the antisemitic menace, Paucker mounts a convincing justification of this often unjustly maligned organisation. He shows that its choice of defending German Jewry by fighting for full implementation of the civil rights promised to discriminated minorities like the Jews by the German constitution was the only viable strategy open to it.

Paucker is almost certainly right in maintaining that, but for the political earthquake caused by the First World War and the trauma of Germany's defeat, German Jews would gradually have won equal rights, either under a democratised constitutional monarchy or under a parliamentary republic. He asserts that the CV was correct to pin its hopes on what we would now call a pluralist society. Seldom can the CV's achievements have found a more eloquent advocate than Paucker. He brings out the dialectical process by which assimilated Jews, as loyal Germans deeply wounded by antisemitic aspersions on that loyalty, were motivated to fight back through the CV, thereby gaining a strengthened sense of their Jewish identity and a fresh pride in their Jewishness, which in turn fed back into the CV's campaign of self-defence.

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In the sections on Jewish self-defence under the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, the broad sweep of argument is replaced by studies that rely on detailed historical knowledge, enlivened by a note of genuine emotion when the youth movements, in which the author himself participated, are discussed. It is also pleasing to see mention of the pre-1933 careers in the CV of people who later became notable figures in the AJR: Hans Reichmann, who served as chairman for some ten years before his death in 1964, his wife, the historian Eva G. Reichmann, Kurt Alexander, Ernst Lowenthal and Alfred Wiener, founder of the Wiener Library.

The volume concludes with a selection of essays on a mixture of topics. I recommend the entertaining 'Speaking English with an Accent', a paper given at a conference of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Studies in London, one of the many bodies that benefited from Arnold Paucker's generous support.

Anthony Grenville

## Nebbish joins gun lobby

### ANYTHING ELSE?

Director: Woody Allen

On selective release

A plague on the critics! They laud Michael Moore and declare Woody Allen past his sell-by date. But then, what are critics? Paraphrasing Shaw, one might say: 'Those who can, do - those who can't, criticise.' I state all this as an incorrigible Allen addict who thinks Allen is to American cinema what Molière was to French theatre.

I concede that he has been irritating at times, particularly in films where he cast himself as a superannuated, puny Romeo opposite some hoydenish Julia young enough to be his granddaughter. In *Anything Else*, thankfully, he spares cinema-goers this embarrassing acting out of his private fantasies. Instead, he projects his trademark personal characteristics - intellectuality, hesitancy and amorousness - into the young, personable protagonist Rick.

Rick is entangled with a quintet of characters each of whom Allen endows

with a particular *shtick*. His partner is spectacularly kooky, dispensing sexual favours to everyone but him, her 'live-in' mother is a stage-struck egomaniac, his analyst's stock response to each of Rick's anguished questions is a counter-question, and his agent is an armchair philosopher of awe-inspiring dimness.

Then there is Dobel (played by Woody Allen), Rick's would-be helpful, but increasingly deranged, mentor throughout the film. Dobel stands at the end of a long line of Allen's self-projections as a neurotically driven intellectual at odds with the world. What is different this time is that the root cause of Allen's neurosis is not his sense of personal inadequacy or sexual angst - but Jewish paranoia. Though comically presented, Dobel's hysterical insistence that Rick equip himself with a survival kit and a rifle for self-defence is grounded in his conviction that the Holocaust cannot be complacently consigned to the out-tray of history.

I saw this film shortly after the exposure of the fake allegation that a group of young Algerians had attacked a 'Jewish' woman and her baby on the Paris Metro. The mere fact that everybody in France - from the local police right up to President Chirac - gave credence to the original story, alas, endows Dobel's comic screen paranoia with a counterpart in real life.

Richard Grunberger

## Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Being a grandparent today is not what it once was. And grandparents in Israel are as eager to keep up with modern trends as their peers anywhere else. Of course, no-one today swallows the myth of the kindly old granny beaming over her spectacles as she clutches her knitting. Grannies today are expected to get into leotards and work out in the gym, or lie by the pool sipping a cocktail.

But being a grandparent in Israel has a special twist to it. Many of us who are grandparents today did not have grandparents of our own on which to model our behaviour. Maybe that gives us more freedom to set our own patterns, but it also means that some elements may be missing.

One of the main advantages of living in Israel is that it is small, so that even if your grandchildren live in another part of the country, it's never usually more than a couple of hours away by bus, train or car. My heart goes out to those poor souls in America, whose grandchildren in another part of the country may be as far away as Moscow is from London. In England, the situation is slightly better in that respect.

I am particularly fortunate in having some of my grandchildren living virtually next door. That doesn't mean that I get to see them very often, however, as the older ones are usually busy with extramural activities, scouts and social engagements. They grace me with their presence most Friday nights for supper, however, and, although it goes against my Yekkish grain, I have learned not to object when they march straight into the kitchen and help themselves with unwashed hands to the rissoles I have cooked for the evening meal. Keeping quiet is also part of being a grandparent.

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As I drove bumper-to-bumper along the North Circular Road to Julius Fletcher's home in the sticky afternoon heat, I whiled away the time watching airliners, hazily suspended in the air, on their way to and from Heathrow. I was sure I would hate being a house-owner so close to an airport. Julius, though, as I was to discover soon enough, was hardly likely to share such a view, having both worked for British Airways for a large part of his life and, moreover, having chosen to live in the same Hounslow street for 50 years.

My host, slight of build, sporting a mane of thick white hair and a handlebar moustache to match, softly-spoken, and with a constant playful smile, told me he was 83 years old, proudly showing me an illustration of the family tree, going back to 1690.

Julius Fletcher (original name: Fleischer) was born into an affluent Frankfurt family. His father managed a Jewish-owned jewellery company, besides being a prominent Social Democrat activist. With many members of his large family deeply immersed in the Jewish way of life, shaping a communal involvement that remains with him to this day, Julius was sent to a Jewish school. Early on he showed a flair for drawing, which led to his eventually pursuing a course in engineering, the mainstay of a life-long career.

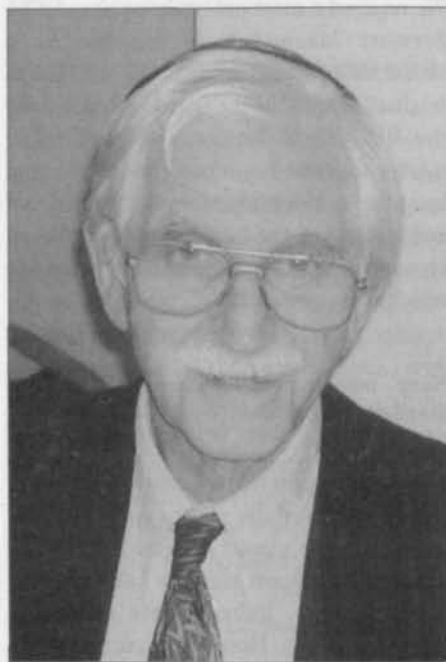
Confident at first that the Hitler regime was more bark than bite, the family felt secure. They 'adjusted', as Julius puts it. Their hope, of course, was misplaced: by 1938 they were impoverished and reliant on relatives and friends to help them out. In July 1938 Julius's father was found dead in a nearby river. Suicide by drowning was the official verdict, though Julius, called upon to identify the body, was told unofficially that no water had been found in it. In the context of the times, the family were too distraught to take the matter further.

Following Kristallnacht, there was a knock on the door of the Fleischer household. Claiming he was only 16, Julius escaped being sent to a camp.

# PROFILE

Howard Spier

## Julius Fletcher Volunteer *extraordinaire*



Julius was one of the first Kindertransportees. His sister, a member of a Zionist youth group, left for Tel Aviv. Their mother's last words to them were: 'Don't worry, I'll be alright.' Two years later she was deported to Riga and murdered.

A month after his arrival in London in May 1939, Julius found a job with an engineering firm in Ealing, in a factory manufacturing top-secret equipment for the war effort, including the platforms used during the D-day landings. He stayed in this job throughout the war. In 1940, following in his father's socialist footsteps, he began a career as a trade union activist and is active in the union to this day.

In 1948 he joined the Metal Box Company, where he was to stay for 25 years, and subsequently he joined British Airways, where he remained until his retirement. On leaving the company, he took on the responsibility of acting as company contact for over 100 British Airways pensioners, some of whom had fallen on hard times.

Following his retirement, Julius's wife Ruth, a former school teacher, strongly encouraged him to keep himself occupied. Which he did. Among many other activities, he now represents his local synagogue on the Hounslow Racial Equality Council, which he currently chairs; is deputy chairman of the Police Consultative Committee on Race Relations; chairs the local neighbourhood watch committee; and lectures on Jewish subjects to national and local Philatelic Society groups, including the British Airways Philatelic Club, of which he is a former chairman and is now vice-chairman. One activity in which he takes particular pride is having acted as a guide to the Anne Frank exhibition when it was staged at the Gunnersbury Park Museum. A member of the AJR, Julius also visits local Jewish retired people on behalf of the organisation.

In January 2003 Julius was invited by the BBC to take part, in conjunction with the Imperial War Museum, in a 60th commemorative programme on D-Day to be transmitted the following year. The Museum subsequently asked him for items which could be shown in a special D-Day exhibition there. A section of the D-Day display on show up to June 2005 now covers Julius's life in Germany and war-time Ealing.

In July 2003 Julius, after 50 years working as a volunteer in the community, was among more than 50 'Local Heroes' nominated by their respective MPs at a House of Commons reception. Each 'Hero' was presented with a certificate by organisers of the event and the volunteers' organisation Experience Corps.

In May 2004 he took part in a recording session at Broadcasting House. A part of this 1¼ hours' recording was used for D-Day and the complete tape handed over to the Museum archives.

Julius is acutely conscious of his debt to the country which adopted him. 'I feel that my community work is in appreciation of the asylum granted to me in my time of need', he says.

# INSIDE the AJR

## Harrogate memorial for 'Dick the Milk'

We chatted once again about our friend 'Dick the Milk', for whom a memorial bench is being erected in nearby Knaresborough. A collection raised £15, which we are donating towards the cost of the bench. Susanne reminded us of the AJR/HSFA get-together on 7 September in Leeds and the HSFA meeting in Leeds on 31 October. Anyone still worried about pension/insurance claims was advised to contact Michael Newman at AJR head office.

*Inge Little*

**Next meeting: Wednesday 3 November, 2 pm at 1 Masham Close, Harrogate**

## Weald of Kent members getting to know one another

Eleven of us, meeting in Tunbridge Wells, watched the Beth Shalom video, which was very interesting, moving and thought-provoking. We are contemplating joining a group visiting Beth Shalom next summer. Janet Weston and her two young nieces provided very tasty refreshments. Though we're a small group, we are getting to know each other and enjoy these get-togethers.

*Inge Ball*

**Next meeting: Tuesday 19 October in Maidstone. Stewart Macintosh**

## Manchester: Similarity of horrors

Jacqueline Passman addressed us eloquently on 'War Experiences of an English Doctor'. The doctor - her father - was a PoW of the Japanese. While she made a point of not aiming to equate what happened in the Far East with the Holocaust, the similarities of the camp deprivations and brutalities was inescapable. The background was very different but the survivors from both horrors would have many awful memories to share.

*Werner Lachs*

## Essex: Dedicated work by MDA

Magen David Adom (UK) Executive Director Eli Benson gave us a detailed account of the work done by MDA helpers and volunteers and showed us a video informing us about the urgent need for legacies and private donations. Sponsored by the MDA (UK), each Israeli ambulance has been fitted

with a geographic Information Satellite System, which has reduced the time it takes to get to explosions to 2-3 minutes.

*Julie Franks*

**Next meeting: Tuesday 12 October, 11.00 am. 'The Rothschilds - the Musical', presented by Walter Woyda**

## Cambridge talk by BBC man

We enjoyed a most entertaining account by Stewart Macintosh of his life as a broadcaster, ranging from a childhood fascination with the media, to a position with the BBC World Service, via broadcasting roles with Radio Brighton, Northern Ireland and others. Many anecdotes added humour and interest to the talk. Mr and Mrs Binks organised the abundant refreshments, to which many members had contributed.

*Keith Lawson*

**Next meeting: Thursday 14 October. Members talking about their lives**

## Shaking a leg in North London

On our third birthday party a good time was had by all when pianist Annette Saville once again took us Down Memory Lane with her nimble fingers. Refreshments served by Helen and Leo Horn were delicious as always. A *Hora* at the end of the party showed that 'us old ones' can still shake a leg.

*Trude Westwood*

**Next meeting: Thursday 28 October. AJR's Head of Finance Gordon Greenfield**

## Happy Birthday, Ilford

We celebrated our first anniversary with a one-candle cake and a resounding round of 'Happy Birthday'. We then enjoyed a lively musical session with Alf Keiles detailing the Jewish contribution to jazz - Benny Goodman and others led to a lot of foot-tapping. After this we partook of a glass of grape juice and plenty of cakes and nosh.

*Meta Roseneil*

**Next meeting: Wednesday 13 October, 10.30 am. AJR's Head of Finance Gordon Greenfield**

## South London tea afternoon

A very pleasant afternoon was organised by Walter Woyda, the tea being arranged for AJR members in residence at Nightingale House, who were joined by other members of South London AJR. This gave an opportunity for resident members to meet other AJR members, which they are not normally able to do. We all enjoyed the lovely tea put on by Nightingale house, who looked after us very well.

*Herbert Wolff*



**This is how I see it ...: Walter Woyda, left, deep in conversation with South London group chairman Ken Ambrose**

## East Midlands group growing

Our very pleasant meeting took the form of a lunch at the home of Gerry and Bob Norton. As we are a very scattered group, we tend to have three or four meetings a year and the format we most enjoy is for members to circulate, renew acquaintances and have a nice lunch. Our group is, in fact, slightly growing, with new members showing up. Once again I was pleased to see people attend from Leicester, the nearest large city, as well as from Derby, Lincoln and surrounding rural areas.

*Bob Norton*

## Brighton & Hove Sarid talk on Jewish demographics

Aubrey Milstein, President of the Jewish Representative Council, examined the composition of the Jewish population of our city, discussing affiliation to synagogues and tackling the problems of assimilation and the shrinking of the community, which reflect a national and worldwide pattern. His erudite exposition of facts and figures kept us enthralled.

*Fausta Shelton*

## Pinner garden party

As so often before, Vera made us welcome in her beautiful garden for talk, cold drinks, delicious scones, cakes, strawberries, cream, tea and coffee. And a 'maxi' raffle - I even won a prize! AJR presented our hostess with a beautiful bouquet to thank her for the work she does for the group.

*Paul Samet*

**Next meeting: Thursday 14 (not 7) October. Alf Keiles plays records of Jewish-influenced jazz and dance bands**

## West Midlands (Birmingham) garden party

We had our annual garden party at the beautiful home of Leon Jessel, who very kindly invites us every year for lunch and a natter. Unfortunately, because of the weather, this year we had to have the party in the house. There were about 30 of us and it is always nice to have a get-together like this where you're not expected to do anything but

enjoy yourself. Gordon Greenfield from AJR head office was able to be with us. Our most grateful thanks to Leon for his kindness and thoughtfulness.  
*Henny Rednall*

### South West Midlands: 'Deep in the Forest ...'

On a gorgeous sunny day I joined a group of friends for a get-together and lunch in Wendy and Richard's idyllic home by the River Wye on the banks of the mystical Forest of Dean. We watched an excellent video on Beth Shalom as well as a film by Wendy and Richard on a relative's wedding they had attended in Tel Aviv. We did appreciate our hosts' hospitality.  
*Robert Humphries*

### Northern joint visit

Liverpool, Leeds, Harrogate, Huddersfield and Manchester AJR groups made a joint visit to the Manchester Jewish Museum, the Imperial War Museum North, and the Lowry Centre. We enjoyed a most interesting and informative day, learning about the history of the Manchester Jewish community, viewing Libeskind's wonderful architecture and ending with the Lowry painting collection on the other side of the Manchester Ship Canal.  
*Gerry Jayson*

### Brighton & Hove Sarid looking on the bright side

Bettine Le Beau gave us lots of good advice in a most charming and entertaining manner.

Her cocktail of ingredients for happiness included 'liking oneself', 'not getting upset by other people's attitude to oneself', and always looking at the positive side of things. She certainly brightened the day for all those present.  
*Rudi Simmonds*

Next meeting: Monday 18 October, 10.45.  
**Rabbi Efune**, 'Tzedaka/Mitzvot (Charity/Good Deeds): How Important are They?'

### West Midlands (Birmingham) visit to Beth Shalom

Some 32 members and friends enjoyed a coach trip to Beth Shalom. With Stephen Smith in Jerusalem and his brother James in Rwanda, we were greeted, both individually and as a group, by Marina Smith, who gave us an update on the principal current activities at Beth Shalom. Having visited the underground exhibition/museum, and had an excellent buffet lunch and a stroll through the memorial garden, we returned to the main hall for an illustrated talk by a Holocaust survivor. He turned out to be one of our Birmingham contingent, Paul Oppenheimer, who addressed the meeting for over an hour. A most successful group event.  
*Corinne Oppenheimer*

### NEXT MEETINGS

HGS Monday 1 November, 10.30 am. Rabbi Frank Dabba-Smith, 'The Leitz Family'  
Norfolk Tuesday 26 October

### AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

**Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**  
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11.45 am for 12.15 pm

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### KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group MONTHLY MEETINGS AT CLEVE ROAD

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Mon 11	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 12	Madeleine Whiteson
Wed 13	Jack Davidoff
Thur 14	Michael Heaton
Sun 17	CLOSED
Mon 18	Kards & Games klub
Tue 19	Mike Marandi
Wed 20	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 21	Katinka Seiner
Sun 24	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 25	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 26	Doreen Kaye
Wed 27	Janet Suckling
Thur 28	Joe Kay

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## Obituaries

### Marcus Jacobson MBE

Marcus Jacobson, who has died at the age of 82, was instrumental in establishing the Automobile Association as the champion of motorists. Marcus Amram Israel Jacobson was born in Frankenberg, Hessen. He was the only child of Dr Jacob Jacobson and Henrietta Goldsmith, who before her marriage had worked with Professor Robert Kock, discoverer of the TB bacterium. A great-grandfather of Marcus was the chief rabbi of Prague, Hamburg and Budapest.

Following Hitler's rise to power, Jacobson arrived in England at the age of 17, with hardly a word of English. Three months later he passed his English matriculation.

He became apprenticed to a manufacturer of earth-moving machinery, becoming the firm's youngest foreman. Subsequently, as chief projects engineer at Perkins, he was responsible for the design and development of diesel engines and industrial gas turbines.

Having been appointed in 1967 the AA's chief engineer, he broadened the service offered to AA members, pushing through a more rigorous appointment of garages, improving the road testing of cars, and the acquiring and evaluation of data gathered by AA patrols.

Following his retirement from the AA he set up Motor Industry Publishing with his second wife, the motoring writer Anne Hope. Their specialist magazine, *Vehicle Engineer*, has subscribers worldwide.

Among other things, he was a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, a Fellow of the Institute of the Motor Industry, and a council member of the Motor Industry Research Association and of the British Standards Institution. In 1986 he was appointed MBE as a 'champion of consumer rights in the automotive field'.

### Heinz Shire

Heinz Shire, who has died at the age of 84, was a GP and a member of the Birmingham Progressive Synagogue.

Born in Breslau, he arrived in Brighton in 1936 and soon won a scholarship to Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied medicine. On qualifying, he went to Norwich, where he practised paediatrics. He subsequently accepted an offer of a partnership in Smethwick, where he was to spend the next 45 years.

Heinz involved himself deeply in Jewish communal work. He became President of B'nai B'rith and Vice-President of the Representative Council. He played a major role at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, of which he was President, then a Vice-President, representing the synagogue on the Board of Deputies for 25 years. He was also a former Vice-President of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues. He was, in addition, an active member of the Council of Christians and Jews. A man of tolerance and understanding, he was never judgemental of others.

## Search Notices

**Mrs Lisbeth Lowy**, born 29.12.1918. In 1999 her address was Lanark Mansions, 14 Lanark Road, London W9 1DB. Information on her family members or, at least, her date of death, please contact Social Affairs Department of Austrian Embassy in London, tel 020 7235 3731.

I would like to hear from any former pupils/trainees/apprentices of the **Anlernwerkstatt in the Fischerfeldstrasse, Frankfurt/Main**. Any information on what was taught, practical and theoretical, who taught what and how it was organised and financed, would be appreciated. Please contact D.H. Hackel, 7 Raby Place, Bath BA2 4EH or email [debeha@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:debeha@yahoo.co.uk).

We are looking for **Margit/Margarit Otilie Hammond née Frieder** (or descendants/relatives) born 19.3.1911. In 1956 she lived at 7 Rutland Gate. We are also looking for her brother, **Robert Frieder**, born 2.5.1915. Any information please to Commission for Looted Art in Europe, 76 Gloucester Place, London W1U 6HJ tel 020 7487 3401.

## Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

### Bank commission refunds

As has been mentioned previously in this column, it is now possible to receive a refund of the British bank commissions levied on Holocaust reparations. The British Bankers' Association (BBA) has issued specific guidance notes advising British banks on how to respond to this problem.

The BBA guidelines make provision for instances in which both banks, or either the customer's bank and an intermediary bank, have taken charges. In all cases, the customer's bank will be responsible for repaying charges taken previously. The guidelines also ensure for all time that charges will not be imposed on any compensation or restitution payment.

This repayment arrangement will affect principally those in receipt of German and Austrian state pensions. The freedom from charges will also benefit those receiving payments from a number of Holocaust-era compensation and restitution schemes, including the German Foundation slave and forced labour compensation, the Swiss Refugee Programme and the Dutch Maror Fund. Commission charges will also not be levied on, among others, monies paid from the French Orphan scheme, the Hardship Fund and the Austrian National Fund for Victims of Nazi Persecution.

Those eligible for a repayment will have to show that they are in receipt of reparations and that their bank has levied charges in the past. Bank statements and remittance advices can be used to prove that charges were taken. Applications for a back payment will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

BBA guidance notes are available from the Central Office for Holocaust Claims.

### Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to [michael@ajr.org.uk](mailto:michael@ajr.org.uk). Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors' Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

## Leeds hosts stimulating and enjoyable Northern get-together

Ronald Channing

One hundred participants from Yorkshire, Lancashire and Edinburgh joined in a day of discussion and consultation at the AJR's third Northern Region Get-together, in Leeds. Held once again in the ideal Sinai Synagogue Hall, the event was organised jointly by the AJR's Northern Region organiser Susanne Green in co-operation with the Leeds-based Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association (HSFA) and was ably chaired by Josephine Jackson.

I was pleased to report the continuing expansion in the number of AJR groups in the North and the success of AJR holidays in St Annes. In parallel with the University of Leeds and the HSFA's 'Making a New Life' project to record the testimonies of refugees and survivors in Yorkshire, I detailed two related projects, also funded by the AJR: the history of refugees in Greater Manchester, and the *Refugee Voices* video project. All three projects demonstrated the AJR's commitment to recording the German-Jewish experience for posterity.

Marcia Goodman, the head of AJR's Social Services, described the services available to members, and Michael Newman of the Central Office for Holocaust Claims outlined the department's work before dealing with individual claims. The day's organised discussion topics included: 'Speaking in Schools and Other Venues', 'Through the Eyes of the Second Generation', 'Re-visiting the Country of One's Origin', and 'Jewish Influence on European Culture'. Participants' contributions and the discussion were of a very high order.

Special guest Professor Leslie Wagner CBE, the dynamic former Vice-Chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University, spoke of his Polish-Berliner father who had escaped to Britain in 1939. German, Yiddish and English



Professor Leslie Wagner, guest speaker at the AJR-HSFA Leeds get-together

were spoken in the Wagner household, but the Holocaust was rarely mentioned, although the family discussed life in Germany before the Second World War. He foresaw a danger in the devaluation of the term 'Holocaust', which, he thought, might have to be differentiated as the 'Nazi Holocaust'. 'The Holocaust was unprecedented in its design and scale - the planned and intended destruction of an entire people', he said.

To answer the question 'Where does one draw the line when criticism of Israel turns into antisemitism?', he quoted three examples. First, the attempt to deny the Jewish people their historical attachment to the land of Israel and the right to have a state of our own. Second, criticism and characterisation of Jews in general with items which would be at home in *Der Stürmer*, an example of which was the *Independent* newspaper's cartoon showing Prime Minister Sharon devouring a baby. And third, the attempts to impose boycotts on Israel, pursued by nation-states which themselves have appalling human rights records.

'Israel has made the world safe for the Jewish people', Professor Wagner argued, vigorously refuting the view that Israel is the root cause of antisemitism and commenting on how different the history of the Jews would have been had the Israeli state existed in 1939.

Antisemitism had been with us from Pharaoh to Hitler, he said, and what he called 'normal service' had been resumed. However, he noted that persecutors had usually disappeared from history, but the Jewish people had flourished and 'brought prosperity to the societies where we live'. There was still a message of hope.

## Newsround

### New representative for Claims Conference in Germany

The Claims Conference has named a new representative to head its Germany office. Moshe Jahoda's appointment follows the death of Karl Brozik last month. Since 1999 Jahoda, born in 1926 in Vienna, has been associate executive vice-president and head of the Austrian office of the Claims Conference. He will divide his time between Germany, Austria and Israel.

### Essex threat from far-right party

Gavin Stollar, prospective parliamentary candidate for Brentwood and Ongar, has called on mainstream political parties to combat the November 9 Society, which has said it will contest at least two Essex constituencies at the next general election. The society, which reportedly advertises Nazi memorabilia on its website, is named after the 1938 Kristallnacht pogrom.

### Museum planned for Treblinka

A plan for a museum to be built on the site of the former extermination camp of Treblinka has been agreed in principle by Yad Vashem and the Polish Council for the Remembrance of Struggle and Martyrdom. The museum is expected to open in two years' time.

### Israel and Russia co-operate over terrorism

Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, arriving in Israel for talks, praised Israeli support following the attack on the Beslan school by Chechen terrorists. Among issues on the agenda were possible Israeli counter-terrorist training for Russian special forces and enhanced intelligence sharing.

### German extremists fail to win seat

A right-wing extremist party failed to win a seat in recent parliamentary elections in Germany. The far-right National Democratic Party, which had not run in the elections five years ago, won 4 per cent of the vote, 1 per cent below the minimum required to earn a seat in the state legislature of Saarland. The mainstream conservative party, the Christian Democratic Union, obtained 47.5 per cent of the vote. The ruling Social Democratic Party received 30.8 per cent.