

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Auto-suggested victimhood

In 1928 Hitler drew deafening cheers from his listeners with the subsequently oft-repeated mantra 'Jahrzehnte lang war Deutschland der brutalsten Unterdrückung preisgegeben' (For decades Germany was subjected to the most brutal oppression). He made this utterance precisely nine years after the so-called *diktat* of Versailles, which, though harsh, did not compare in severity with the treaty of Brest-Litovsk Germany had previously imposed on Russia.

Nothing has greater potential for lashing an audience into a frenzy than the suggestion that they have been victims of history. Slobodan Milosevic never tired of reminding his audiences of an event that occurred 600 years earlier: the Turkish victory over the Serbs at the Battle of the Blackbirds in 1389. In a similar spirit, the Irish still invoke 'the curse of Cromwell' fully three and a half centuries after the massacre of Drogheda.

Victimhood takes different forms. At Drogheda all inhabitants were killed, whereas the Turks 'contented themselves' with wiping out the Serb nobility on the battlefield. While some victimhood is genuine, many forms, especially in the present climate of opinion, are auto-suggested. The elections after the enlargement of the EU showed that there were groups in every one of the 25 member states convinced that their own country was being fleeced for someone else's benefit. Paradoxically, this sense of injury was particularly deep-seated among the East European newcomers to the Union who had been queuing for years to get in.

But even in Britain, which allegedly has the most sophisticated electorate in Europe, the impression that Brussels exists merely to damage the national interest to the advantage of sleazy Eurocrats is widespread.

Curiously enough, myths of victimhood



The European Parliament, Strasbourg

have gained as much currently among the Left as among the Right in British politics. The Green Party's campaign against genetically modified crops portrayed British consumers as victims of the machinations of big firms like Monsanto, to which the government is in hock. The Greens, likewise, charge ministers with subservience to the road lobby and the fast food industry.

The far-left Respect Party concocted two disparate victimisation myths. On the one hand, they depicted the working class victims of exploitative bosses and a government bent on privatisation; on the other, they projected themselves as defenders of the Muslim community from officially fostered Islamophobia.

But at least in the UK both the extreme right and left-wing parties failed to secure representation in the European Parliament. This contrasts with the situation in recent accession states like the Czech Republic and Poland. In the former the Communists made a partial comeback; Poland, with an abysmally low voter turnout, has sent a block of anti-abortionist ultra-Catholics and unabashed Jew-baiters like pig farmer Leppert to Strasbourg.

In the case of the Czechs and Poles we have two countries, which, having disappeared from the map of Europe for centuries, were reborn in 1918 and two decades later endured, in rapid succession, war, Nazi occupation, dismemberment, mass executions and, finally, forcible Sovietisation.

Cannot their citizens see that the cumulative unification of Europe has rendered any repetition of that doleful scenario virtually impossible in future? And cannot the electorate, particularly in Poland (whose numerous peasants still use more horse-drawn ploughs than tractors) comprehend that only further integration into a common market will remove the inertia, as well as the customs barriers, not to mention the farming subsidies in consumer countries, that stand in the way of progress?

Six million Poles - half of them Jews - were killed under Nazi occupation. How can their heirs fail to welcome a new transcontinental order which makes their powerful - and previously ever-threatening - neighbours to the West stress their European rather than their German identity?

Despite a host of such questions, to which there seems to be no logical answer, the numerical evidence points to underlying steady progress for European integration. First there were six, then nine, then fifteen - and now we are twenty-five!

This positive reading of an infinitely complicated situation can be further substantiated by what appears to be negative evidence. It is this: if one were to tot up all the newly elected Euro MPs who go to Brussels intending to sabotage the EU, it would amount to a far from negligible total. But they cannot collaborate effectively - as evidenced by the separatist Belgian Flemish Party's disdain for the French nationalism of Le Pen.

So, although the recent Europe-wide elections engendered ample cause for alarm - not least among Jews in Poland, France and the UK (where the BNP polled 800,000 votes) - we need not yet assume that the EU project is running into the buffers.

Can Levys levitate as well?

Richard Grunberger

The award of the Orange Prize for Fiction to Sandra Levy for her novel *Small Island* raises a tantalising possibility. Could it be that the novelist, who is of pure Afro-Caribbean stock, adopted the pseudonym Levy as a tribute to the extraordinarily talented tribe of that name, just as the Chilean poet Neftali Reyes called himself Pablo Neruda in homage to the Czech writer Jan Neruda?

By the tribe of Levy, incidentally, I don't mean the priestly caste of Ancient Israel - equivalent to Hindu Brahmin - but their celebrity descendants from Nobel Prize winners (the pharmacologist Rita Levi-Montalcini, the physiologist Otto Loewy) downwards.

Some Loewys Germanised their name to Loewe, and, after emigration, Anglicised it, as was the case with Frederick Lowe, composer of *My Fair Lady*. (À propos of smash hit musicals, the title of *Hello Dolly* showcases Thornton Wilder's fictitious matchmaker Dolly Levy.)

But it is the Levys ending in 'i' who are really the pick of the bunch. Since Italian Jewry was a small community, some of them even belonged to the same family. Primo (*This is a Man*) Levi, Carlo (*Christ Stopped at Eboli*) Levi and Natalia (*Voices in the Evening*) Ginzburg were first or second cousins. No less deserving of mention is a duo of double-barrelled Levi-Strausses.

Claude, a French-born anthropologist, wrote *The Cooked and the Raw*; the other, a Bavarian immigrant in gold-rush California, invented hard-wearing trousers now known globally as Levis.

Finally, there is the Levi who changed his name (and nationality). Italian-born Ivo Levi left Italy with his Mussolini-hating parents as a toddler, grew up in France, became a singer, a lover of Edith Piaf and then a screen idol, all under the pseudonym of Yves Montand.

Heinrich Stahl House sale Proceeds to benefit survivors and refugees

Ronald Channing

Heinrich Stahl House, the Otto Schiff Housing Association's (OSHA) residential home on The Bishops Avenue in Hampstead, which was closed in 1999 after having provided shelter and care for Holocaust survivors for more than 40 years, has been sold for £16.25 million. After protracted negotiations, OSHA's Trustees finally obtained planning permission from the London Borough of Barnet for the building of a development of flats on the Heinrich Stahl site which maximised its value.

The proceeds of the sale are to be used to provide care for victims of Nazi persecution, including refugees, and for Anglo-Jewry. A substantial share of the proceeds will be received by Jewish Care and World Jewish Relief, enabling them to continue with projects that meet needs in the UK and abroad.

Jewish Care, which now manages OSHA homes, is to receive £10 million for a new residential care facility for the elderly, where victims of Nazi persecution will receive priority, and to help fund their Holocaust Survivors' Centre in Hendon. OSHA entered into partnership with Jewish Care in July 2000, since when Jewish Care has managed OSHA's three remaining homes on The Bishops Avenue: Osmond House, Leo Baeck House and Balint House. While OSHA will retain the ownership of the properties, it is formally handing over to Jewish Care all aspects of care at the homes.

World Jewish Relief, successor to the Central British Fund, which established Heinrich Stahl House with postwar

reparations from Germany and was a combined charity with OSHA until 1984, is to receive £4 million over three years, WJR having a legal entitlement to part of the proceeds. These funds will support community-building projects and provide care for deprived children and other vital welfare services for Jewish communities in Ukraine, the former Yugoslavia, Belarus, Argentina and Bulgaria.

'A separate fund is to be established which will make grants to other UK charities undertaking similar work in the UK, undoubtedly including the AJR'

In addition, a separate fund is to be established which will make grants to other UK charities undertaking similar work in the UK, which will undoubtedly include the AJR. The Otto Schiff Housing Association has been the specialist provider of residential nursing care and sheltered housing in the UK for Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution for more than 50 years. OSHA is a wholly separate legal entity and entirely independent from the AJR, although chairman Andrew Kaufman and AJR Charitable Trust trustee Frank Harding sit on its Council.

AJR Journal

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PC World

Richard Grunberger

The statue of St James, 'the Moor slayer' - icon of the Christians' centuries-long struggle to wrest back control of Spain from the Muslims - is about to be removed from the great pilgrim church at Santiago de Compostella. For nearly two millennia St James, allegedly a cousin of Jesus, was revered for having spread Christianity to the westernmost reaches of Europe. Legend has it that several centuries after his death his apparition on a cloud above the battlefield inspired a crucial Christian victory over the Moors. Now his statue, with its triumphalist depiction of the warrior-saint treading a headless Saracen underfoot, is considered an affront to the sensibilities of the many Moroccan residents of Spain.

There can be no doubt that such an arresting visual image of battlefield carnage is both sadistic and in poor taste, and ought to have no place in a house of prayer. On the other hand, one wonders how far revisions dictated by political correctness can be extended into the medieval past.

It is no exaggeration to say that the roots of European literature stretch back to the two-pronged struggle - one the *reconquista* of Spain, the other the Crusades - between Christianity and Islam. The *reconquista* gave rise to the great medieval epics of the *Chanson de Roland* and *El Cid*, while the crusades inspired Tarquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

The clash of the two faiths engendered not only high art but also popular entertainment. The derring-do of the 12 legendary knights at Charlemagne's court - the so-called *paladins* - is the staple diet of Sicilian puppet theatres, and Italian coastal communities stage annual naval pageants commemorating their ancestors' repulsion of sea-borne Saracen landings.

My question is this: will the PC offensive, of which ejecting the warrior-saint from the main church of his very

own town - Santiago means St James - is an eye-catching opening shot, follow a logical progression? Will the *Chanson de Roland* and *Gerusalemme Liberata* disappear from university syllabuses, and *El Cid* from theatre repertoires? Will Sicilian marionette theatres be closed down? In this country will the statue of the Crusader King Richard Lionheart vanish from the forecourt of Parliament, and public houses no longer be called 'The Saracen's Head'?

While the Christians were battling Mohammedans they were also making the Jews pay - sometimes in blood - for their stubborn refusal to convert. If the retroactive application of political correctness benefits Muslims, it is only fair - or PC - that it should do the same for Jews.

I would therefore petition the shadowy legislators who devise the canon of political correctness to focus their attention on the following injustices done to the Jews: a street in the historic quarter of Boulogne commemorates Godfrey of Bouillon, leader of the First Crusade that devastated Jewish communities along the Rhine. Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, published by Caxton, shows Joachim a married man (and traditionally considered the father of the Virgin Mary) being denied entry to the synagogue because his infertility proves he is accursed of God. In Piero della Francesca's fresco cycle in Arezzo a Jew hides the True Cross - i.e. the one on which Jesus was crucified - and has to be tortured to reveal its location. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale* levels the accusation of the ritual murder of Hugh of Lincoln against the Jews.

And, to finish in the very country which has sacrificed its warrior-saint on the altar of PC: in Toledo - the Canterbury of Spain - there are churches, such as the Iglesia Blanca, whose pre-1492 existence as synagogues is proven by still visible star-of-David motifs under the eaves.

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Who is the Judge?

Bernd Koschland

As the Days of Awe approach, prayer occupies pride of place. We rise early in the grip of autumnal cold mornings to recite the *Selichot*, the prayers of penitence, which have gripped the Jewish people for so long. The words of Solomon and Gabirol's (1021-1056) *Selichah* lead us into Rosh Hashanah: 'Remember this day your covenant to his [Abraham's] descendants and let the remnant of those who escaped and all that are left be saved.'

With trepidation we welcome in the New Year. We say the simple evening service, without any additions, as on other festivals, because we stand plainly before the Almighty, our judge. But He is not our only judge. There is an additional one - we as individuals. The Hebrew word for 'praying' comes from a root meaning 'to judge oneself'. As we plead with our Divine Judge, so we must put our own case in order by judging ourselves, and reviewing our actions, motives and deepest thoughts.

The welcome we extend to the New Year is a physical, pleasant one, as family and friends sit round the table, radiating the happiness of a festival. Yet there is a solemnity, the many prayers, the *shofar* and white, the symbol of purity. So we stand before the Judge, acknowledging His universal sovereignty, for Rosh Hashanah is a national New Year, which marks the creation of the world.

With further *Selichot* during the days that follow, we reach Yom Kippur, the day of prayer, of judgement, divine, personal and national. We start this day inspired by the haunting melody of the *Kol Nidrei*. While the actual text is not quite a prayer, its music should enable us to reach beyond our everyday existence. It also brings recollections of times when Jews were

forced to forsake their Judaism, but yearned for their former faith and returned to it often in secret.

This lad, who could neither read nor recite any Hebrew prayer, was taken by his father to *shul* on Yom Kippur. Into the boy's pocket went his flute, which he usually played to his sheep in the meadows. Several times during the day he asked his father if he could play it, but was told 'No, not on this holy day.' As Yom Kippur was drawing to a close, despite his father's vigilance, the boy played his flute. The Baal Shem Tov said: 'With the sound of his flute the child lifted up all the prayers. The day kindled a spark in the young lad and lifted his way of prayer to the highest heights.' Likewise, our hearts must be fully in our prayers.

With the conclusion of Yom Kippur, we turn to the joyous times of Sukkot. While Rosh Hashanah is a national festival and Yom Kippur both an occasion for the individual and the Jewish people, Sukkot is an international festival. The 70 sacrifices over the 7 days represent the 70 nations of the world, as noted by the rabbis of the Talmud. This is further emphasised by the prophet Zechariah: 'Any survivors among the nations who fought against Jerusalem are to keep the pilgrim fest of Tabernacles.' The ingathering of the harvest symbolises the ingathering of the nations into a peaceful co-existence and 'the renewal of nature into a harmonious whole'.

Thus the festivals of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot embrace prayers for the individual, for the Jewish people and for humanity as a whole, especially at this time, when the world faces crises and tensions. Soon 'May nation not lift up sword against nation but sit under their vine and fig tree and none make them afraid.'

Rock of Gibraltar

British fortress, Jewish haven

Ronald Channing



The Jewish Museum's latest exhibition illustrates 300 years of British history and Jewish life in Gibraltar, the rock prominence which stands guard at the strategic entry to the Mediterranean Sea between Spain and Morocco. Since 1704 the story of the British garrison and Gibraltar's Jewish community have been intertwined. Despite the Treaty of Utrecht having sought to banish Jews and Muslims from the Rock, by 1805, the year of the Battle of Trafalgar, Jews comprised more than half the Rock's civilian population.

Many of today's Gibraltarian Jewish families originated from North Africa, their forebears having sailed across the straits to trade with the British. Their heritage can be seen in personal and religious artefacts, and in photographs taken by Ruth Morris of beautiful Georgian synagogues, the ancient Jewish cemetery, and members of the families who have lived on the Rock for generations.

'Gibraltar Rock - British Fortress, Jewish Haven' can be seen at the Jewish Museum, 126 Albert Street, Camden Town, London NW1. Senior citizens' admission £2.50. Please telephone 0207 284 1997 for opening times and further details.

AJR CELEBRATION TEA 2004

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The Carl Rosa Company will perform excerpts from

The Merry Widow

Booking details enclosed with this issue

Return to Vienna

Martha Blend

For someone who was kicked out of her country of birth as undesirable at the age of nine, going back is necessarily a bitter-sweet experience. It took me nearly 40 years to make my first return journey. By then, Vienna had become for me a distant nightmare and I was astonished to discover how accurate my memories were. I found the flat in the 5th district where I lived with my parents, my school building, the Prater where I walked with my father, the rose garden where I wheeled my cousins in their pram, and the Stephansdom, the cathedral that dominates the Inner City.

More recently I was part of a group of former Viennese invited back by the Jewish Welcome Service. We were a party of ten which included two spouses, Stephanie Rose and Trudy Gold of the London Jewish Cultural Centre, plus various members of the Gedenkdienst team who came with us at various times.

Our most important task was for each of us to tell our story at two Austrian schools. I wondered how to approach this. I had been speaking in British schools for years. There I was addressing the grandchildren of the 'goodies', men who had fought the Nazis and liberated Belsen. Not quite the same as talking to the grandchildren of possible Nazis. Also, my command of German, though good enough for ordinary purposes, isn't up to making a spontaneous speech. My solution to the first problem was to refer to the Nazi past without attributing guilt to the present generation, and to the second problem, to talk in a mixture of English and German (the pupils all learn English as a second language). I also read some extracts from the translation of my book which described rather more eloquently than I could have done extempore some key events in my life as a refugee. When

we speakers compared notes, we found that by and large our young audiences had been attentive and sympathetic and their teachers enthusiastic.

The other highlights of a crowded programme were an Austrian tea 'Jause' (no one counted their calories!) with the deputy mayor at the ornate Rathaus and a grand reception at the British embassy. There was also a sightseeing trip round Vienna that included the flats designed by the eccentric architect Hundertwasser. These have no straight lines, a façade of brilliant colours and are festooned, almost hidden, by foliage of all kinds. A treat for my husband and myself was a Beethoven concert at the Musikverein and a performance of the opera of my namesake, *Martha*, by Flotow.

The most moving part of the trip for me personally was a visit to the Jewish cemetery: a distant cousin in the US had discovered that my mother had put up a memorial stone to my father who was killed in Buchenwald in 1939 at the age of 47, before she herself was deported. I hadn't known about this and wasn't too sure that the information was accurate. Mrs Mariotto, of the Welcome Service, offered to drive me to the cemetery. It was surprisingly well-kept. At first we found nothing in the place where the stone was supposed to be. As we were about to give up, she scraped away some branches of ivy. Underneath it we found a stone, its lettering just visible as the name of my father, Elias Immerdauer. She backed away tactfully as we cleared away more of the branches and paid our respects.

The last night was an Austrian version of a knees-up in Grinzing, a suburb of Vienna, with much wine (Heurigen) and songs in which two of our party who knew them joined in with gusto. Altogether, a week to remember!

The prophet honoured in his adopted country

Richard Grunberger

Austria has played a uniquely chequered role in modern Jewish history, having been both the birthplace of Hitler and the adopted home of Budapest-born Theodor Herzl. When the latter founded the World Zionist Organisation he gained few recruits among Austro-Jews, though in Galicia the reaction was quite different. Austrian Jews were so sensitive to the potential charge of dual allegiance that on Herzl's death his employers - the liberal newspaper *Freie Presse* - produced an obituary in which his world historic role as Founding Father of Zionism was relegated to the last sentence.

Assimilationists continued to dominate communal life for a further 30 years; it was only in 1933 that Zionists gained a majority in elections to the Kultusgemeinde. In the interim, Hugo Bettauer had written *Die Stadt ohne Juden*, a dystopia with a utopian ending (realising how much the expulsion of the Jews had harmed their city, the Viennese asked them to return).

By the early 1940s Vienna was indeed *judenrein*. Postwar, a trickle of re-emigrants established a community that was a shadow of its former self. However, migrants from further east have meanwhile increased it to a barely five-digit size.

This year, two events mark something of a turning point. The Jewish Museum is staging an exhibition entitled *Wien, Stadt der Juden*, posters for which are displayed on many shop fronts. And in July, on the centenary of Herzl's death, the square near the Ringstrasse where the present offices of *Die Presse* are located, was renamed Theodor Herzl Platz. At a time when the term 'Zionist' has almost become an expletive in some parts of the world, the Vienna Municipality is to be congratulated on this imaginative gesture.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

CZECH RESTITUTION

Sir - My return to Prague was not as welcoming as the impression given by Susan Medas (November 2003). In 1997 I visited Prague to trace what had happened to property left there by my grandmother's brother-in-law, an art dealer. I managed to confirm with the Czech National Bank from a list I had been sent that 13 paintings had been left with them and had later been handed over to a German trust organisation called *Hadega* which organised art auctions throughout the world during the war. Though some countries published lists of art work which they were holding in the Czech Republic, only one museum did so. There is a monastery there which holds 30,000 paintings without declaring who the artists are. The Czech government maintains they were not the perpetrators confiscating these works of art and are therefore not liable to compensate the original owners.

In most civilised countries where restitution has been honestly practised, especially in Germany, there exist goodwill funds in connection with which non-citizens are considered at least to the extent of 20 per cent of the lost values and 80 per cent of the value is paid to the local Jewish communities. In the Czech Republic, no such goodwill fund exists and there are no plans for one.

In 1934 my father and several Czech friends registered and built a ski lodge in Bohemia. It was confiscated by the Germans and later held by the Czech Ministry of Defence. In 2003 it was one of 16 out of 56 properties returned to the Jewish Community, who are now owners of stolen goods. No goodwill payments were offered to the owners' heirs.

For many years a large number of people who are not Czech citizens have experienced similar situations. In fact, a website was created by an AJR member, David Lewin. Also, Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP has queried the discriminatory laws enacted by the Czech government. It is time they faced up to their responsibilities of decent behaviour now that they are full members of the EU.

Susanne Dyke
Eastbourne

AGM

Sir - I feel certain that our chairman was very happy to see so many members attending the AGM of the AJR which was held this year on the premises of the JFS.

That the venue should be in London, where most of our members are living, had been suggested by a number of us as the recipe for maximum attendance of those who are interested in the progress of our organisation. Hopefully, this policy will continue.

One cannot blame the chairman for the fact that his speech and that of the guest speaker was difficult to hear for a large number of members: a quick count showed some 60 people wearing hearing aids, perhaps not surprising in this ageing membership.

Finally, I should like to comment that members of the council, who were after all voted through en bloc by the people who attended, were not visible in front and therefore could not be held to account.

HE Reiner
London NW7

KITCHENER CAMP

Sir - How exciting to read about our beloved Kitchener Camp (May 2004). I

am glad to see this life-saving place has not been forgotten. A glorious chapter for British Jewry and other groups helpful with Richborough Camp. Has a film ever been made on the subject?

Leo Klag
Montreal

NORTH DEVON

Sir - Your readers may be interested to learn that I am writing a book on Jews in North Devon in the Second World War which will be published in 2005. There is still just enough time to include more stories from former refugees, including Pioneer Corps members, Kindertransport & Youth Aliyah, and evacuees.

Dr Helen Fry
38 Temple Gardens,
London NW11 0LL

RENO IN THE RHINELAND

Sir - For two months this spring, the town of Kleve (Cleves) held an exhibition on 'Jewish Life' organised by Wolfgang Krebs, a non-Jew assiduous in uncovering the neglected history of the community whose *yeshiva* issued in the eighteenth century a controversial rabbinical ruling on divorce still known as the 'Klever Get'. As the only remaining Jew with close connections to the town, I participated in the opening ceremony and was happy to talk to the unexpectedly large audience.

Eric Mark
Brussels

FÜR DAS KIND

Sir - I sympathise with the visitors from Belgium (June issue) who expressed their concerns about the current condition of Für Das Kind, the commemorative sculpture to the Kindertransport now standing at Liverpool Street Station.

As the organisation largely responsible for instigating the Kindertransports and wholly responsible for commissioning Für Das Kind, World Jewish Relief is well aware of the teething problems that have arisen since the unveiling last September.

Für Das Kind has generated huge interest for its unique story but also for its pioneering and ground-breaking design and build. Both the Museum of London and the Imperial War Museum are still committed to the project and World Jewish Relief has been working closely with them to rectify all the problems as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, now that Für Das Kind is sited at Liverpool Street Station, what we would all assume should be simple changes become much more complex, and timing for their implementation is entirely out of our hands.

Any changes whatsoever - including, critically, the signage and improvements to the plinth - all require innumerable approvals from the Corporation of London and Network Rail. This is a lengthy and laborious process! The suggestion of a sun canopy, although an excellent idea, would not be acceptable to either of these institutions, on whose property the statue stands. We are pursuing several options to improve the long-term preservation of the precious artefacts and would like to assure all those who have donated items to Für Das Kind that the objects are being closely monitored.

World Jewish Relief is currently responsible for Für Das Kind and feels no differently to the Kinder who have so rightly made their concerns known to us. I would like, on behalf of the organisation, to reassure everyone to whom this project means so much that we are totally committed to ensuring that all necessary improvements will ultimately be made in as timely a period as possible so that Für Das Kind stands in place as the fitting tribute to the memory of the Kindertransports as it was first intended.

Linda Rosenblatt
Vice-Chairman, World Jewish Relief

Sir - I entirely agree with our Belgian friends re the Kinder memorial. I was disgusted by the miserable spectacle. People were munching their sandwiches all around the memorial and didn't take the slightest notice of

my presence. Worst of all, the grim tablet seemed unconnected with the memorial. One has to be exceedingly close to it to read the contents. Something has to be done about this and pronto!

Eric Kaufman
Harrow, Middx

BERLIN 2004

Sir - There is still a great reluctance on the part of many Jewish people to visit Germany, but I feel that after 60 years the present generation of Germans cannot be held responsible for the deeds of their grandparents. In July my wife and I decided to visit Berlin. Our first surprise on leaving our hotel was to find a kosher café round the corner and an Israeli bookshop close by. Later, we discovered that there are several active synagogues in Berlin covering both orthodox and reform practices. Jewish life is returning to Berlin.

In front of our nearest U-Bahn station, Wittenbergplatz, there stands a permanent hoarding listing the concentration camps with the message 'Never Forget'. At the site of the infamous book-burning in 1933, an underground library devoid of books, with an adjoining information centre, is being built. The largest and most impressive memorial, however, is nearing completion close to the Brandenburg Gate. It covers an area of over 200,000 sq. ft and will consist of 2,700 grave-size blocks of varying height with a Holocaust Documentation Centre in the middle.

We visited the impressive former New Synagogue in Oranienburger Strasse whose restored golden dome can be seen on the skyline from many places in the city.

The most obvious Jewish presence in Berlin is the amazing Jewish Museum designed by Liebeskind, which demonstrates the enormous impact on German life and culture made by the community. Jews must not forget the past, but there is no reason why we should not accept the new generation of Germans.

George Vulkan
Harrow, Middx

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The message of the political cartoonist is cynical and revelatory. **Twice Promised Land**, at the **Guardian and Observer** Archive and Visitor Centre (60 Farringdon Road, London EC1), makes few concessions to Israel's troubled land, her political judgements, or the tragic past from which she was born. What it does offer is the cartoonist's *nous* - or nose for the rumbles below the surface, the wit to present them sharply, and the skill to seek out the Achilles heel.

And, of course, there are no prizes for the faint-hearted. Ariel Sharon's physical features entice as much as Ben Gurion's, Golda Meir's or Begin's did in their day. So, contemporary Israel-Palestine is presented as a malign place signposted with jokes about the road map to peace. Sharon attempts to squeeze a dove through a Magen David - an eye-of-the-needle metaphor in a *Times* cartoon by **Morten Morland** in May last year. **Steve Bell** in *The Guardian* shows Sharon with bloodstained hand-prints on a wall. The apotheosis is **David Brown's** in *The Independent* in January 2003 showing Sharon eating babies. Comparisons with *Der Stürmer* immediately arose in the wake of complaints to the British Press Complaints Commission. The timing of that cartoon came on the eve of Israel's elections, when her helicopter gunships were carrying out raids against the Palestinians in Gaza. Yet such are the vagaries of political commentary that in the week this exhibition ended, *The Economist* concluded a piece on Israel's internal struggle with the comment 'in his internal war at least, a world that has grown used to demonising Mr Sharon should now be wishing for his success.'

It is tempting to consider that Sharon's more agreeable predecessor, Ehud Barak, does not feature anywhere, while Golda Meir's cynical smile in a 1970 cartoon by **Keith Waite** prophetically asks 'When do you think it will be

peaceful enough to start peace talks?' But then there's Arafat posting a parcel bomb, or his double grinning widely with a smoking gun on top of the Olympic podium, by **Les Gibbon** in *The Guardian* after the murder of the Israeli athletes in Munich by Black September in 1972. Did the Middle East fare better in the lexicon of cartoonography in the late 1940s?

Vicky pilloried British policy in Palestine in 1947 in his *News Chronicle* cartoon 'Where are we, Ernie?', as Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin blindly leads Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones through the darkness of 'British Policy in Palestine'. **David Low's** portrayal of escalating violence and the murder of British troops, the Peel Commission, the partition plan and Jewish refugees desperately attempting to enter Palestine also receive history's derisive brush-stroke. **Leslie Illingworth's** *Daily Mail* cartoon in the same year has a UN figure separating the warring factions after the Partition Plan was approved by a UN resolution. It refers to the incipient Israeli state as facing *criticisms* from its Arab neighbours!



Crucifixion Emmanuel Levy

But the **Ben Uri's** latest acquisition, **Emmanuel Levy's** *Crucifixion*, says it all. Painted in 1942, it features Christ wrapped in a *tallit* against a background of white crosses and is a powerful protest against Britain's failure to act against the Holocaust.

RG's INTERFACE

The name's the same The violinist Fritz Kreisler (b. 1875) was a household name for much of the last century. The *Kabaretist* Georg Kreisler (b. 1922) fled Vienna after the Anschluss, served a musical apprenticeship in Hollywood under such greats as Friedrich Hollaender and Arnold Schoenberg, and as a GI interrogated top Nazis at Nuremberg. He achieved fame in postwar Vienna with the Kurt Weill-influenced *Tonight: Lola Blau*, which ran for half a year at the Kleines Theater in der Josefstadt (and subsequently in Berlin, Hamburg and Israel). *Lola Blau* will be performed at Sadlers Wells early in the New Year.

Screen catharsis Hitler has lodged like an incubus in the German collective psyche for the last 60 years. The Third Reich was a subject shrouded by public taboos and - on a personal level - by *Verdrängung* (repression of memories). Now two films - *Speer and He* and *The Downfall* - are attempting to demystify the Führer phenomenon and enable Germans to confront their past.

Countess Maritsa Emmerich Kalman's operetta was an unqualified success with critics and theatre-goers alike during a short run at Sadlers Wells in June - and there is now talk of a return visit. Kalman's librettist Alfred Grunwald was the father of Henry Grunwald, prominent in American life first as editor of *Time* magazine and then as US ambassador to Austria.

The Old Masters Simon Gray's play (currently at the Comedy Theatre) has as its protagonist the art critic Bernard Berenson. The latter was a Lithuanian Jew who arrived in the United States aged ten. Some critics have faulted Edward Fox's diction - full of aristocratically strangled vowels - in the part of the erstwhile *Litvak*.

Full circle

LIFESAVING LETTERS: A CHILD'S FLIGHT FROM THE HOLOCAUST

Milena Roth

University of Washington Press,
£18.95 (tel 01235 465500);
Amazon £11.40

The letters mentioned in the title, apparently unusual in their time-scale, are from the author's mother Anka Roth in Czechoslovakia. They date from 1930 to 1942 and are addressed to Doris Campbell, a friend she had made in England while staying here as a young woman. They were brought together by a common interest in the Girl Guides. The letters are chatty and friendly rather than intimate. The women exchange presents and family news, particularly at Christmas, although Anka makes it clear that she is Jewish. She describes the excitement of her wedding and, later, her delight in the birth of her baby Milena. In a letter dated 1933 the Englishwoman has obviously picked up some hostile vibes but Anka isn't too concerned as yet: 'I don't know about politics', she tells Doris.

When in 1938 the Sudetenland is invaded by the Germans, Anka is aware of the consequences to her extended family but not yet ready to contemplate leaving her country in response to an offer of asylum from Doris. However, the final letters, dated 1939, when she has reluctantly accepted the need to emigrate, are full of enquiries about permits and work opportunities. Practical as ever, only occasionally does she give a hint of the very real anxieties that now beset her. It is a measure of the young parents' desperation that when permits for Anka and her husband for England are delayed, Milena's father finally agrees to let his six-year-old child come to England alone on the Kindertransport. Anka writes with tender concern for the welfare of her child, who, in common with others in this situation, makes a show of being happy in her new home. Like many who hoped to join their children, Milena's parents didn't make it and

REVIEWS

were deported to Theresienstadt and Auschwitz.

The rest of the book is about Milena's experiences in England. Her foster parents, the Campbells, are less than ideal, but keeping her mother's letters is one of their few sensitive acts. There is a vivid portrait of Doris, a snobbish middle-class Englishwoman. Of the atmosphere in her large house, Milena writes: 'I could feel no fun or laughter ... it was a house, not a home.' Her foster mother's attitude seems to have been one of disapproval and discouragement. Her foster father has no respect for Judaism. She grows up feeling unwanted and with low self-esteem, too alienated to make contact with other refugees until recent years.

The book is valuable for its account of the rebuilding of a personality and a reminder of the unacknowledged psychological trauma suffered by children removed from their families and everything they knew at such an early age. As Milena puts it: 'Nobody seemed to think that anything happened to me at all. I was alive, wasn't I? I had a substitute family. What impertinence to grieve for anyone else.' This is the experience of many of us who came on the Kindertransport and had to cope with our orphaned state without help or counsel. However, the courage and practical sense shown in her mother's letters have come though to her daughter, so, in a sense, the wheel has come full circle.

Martha Blend

Herr Isservoo

ISHERWOOD, A LIFE

Peter Parker

Picador, £21

Literary fashion is as mutable as the weather. It is hard to credit it now, but

in the 1800s British writers - Coleridge, Carlyle, George Eliot - drew intellectual inspiration from Germany. After Prussia's triumph over France in 1870/71 Germany increasingly fell out of favour. Instead, Paris became a cultural Mecca for English aesthetes from Oscar Wilde to Lytton Strachey and Roger Fry.

The picture changed again after 1918, when Berlin drew English bohemian types like a magnet. For the apprentice writers Auden and Isherwood 'Berlin meant boys' - the city boasted Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute of Homosexual Research - while Strachey's brother went there to have himself psychoanalysed.

Christopher Isherwood gave English lessons to the daughter of the department store owner and community activist Wilfred Israel (who was to die in the same wartime air crash as Leslie Howard). He later fashioned the *Goodbye Berlin* stories out of the rich mix of sexual licence and cultural despair that characterised the dying days of the Weimar Republic. The bestseller *Goodbye Berlin* had three incarnations, subsequently becoming the stage success *I Am a Camera*, and finally the cinematic smash-hit *Cabaret*.

Unfortunately Isherwood never wrote anything as good in the course of a long life filled with literary endeavours. The oeuvre he produced after settling in America on the eve of war neatly divides into two categories: gay literature and books about esoteric Eastern religions. He naturally gravitated towards California, where Swamis - and Hollywood - were close at hand.

In the Sunshine State he led a sybaritic, uneventful life, and one marvels at Peter Parker, who has

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

contrived to base a 900-page biography on it. The Isherwood who emerges from Parker's meticulously researched pages is a lesser man than the one I so admired for his Berlin stories as well as *Prater Violet* (about his work as a scriptwriter with the émigré film director Berthold Viertel) half a century ago.

Isherwood's anti-Fascism, it transpires, was only skin-deep. Having earlier lost his German boyfriend Heinz to conscription into the Wehrmacht, he declared, when war loomed: 'I couldn't kill Heinz - therefore I have no right to kill anybody.'

This piece of twisted logic was on a par with the argument he advanced when Klaus Mann asked him to contract a bogus marriage with his sister Erika (director of the anti-Nazi cabaret *Die Pfeffermühle*) to give her the protection of a British passport. Isherwood refused, saying his deeply-held homosexual convictions prevented him from going through a marriage ceremony. (However, he did suggest Auden as a substitute bogus bridegroom, and the latter duly obliged!)

I would proffer this advice to would-be readers: don't look at the life, but at the work - especially the early stories, viz *Mr Norris Changes Trains*, *Goodbye Berlin* and *Prater Violet*.

Richard Grunberger

Athens in 1896 to Sydney in 2000. He has woven together the historical context of the Games and the achievements of the Jewish athletes and illustrated them with his own eyewitness accounts and interviews.

Born in Germany in 1912, Mayer attended the Olympic Training Course for Jewish athletes in 1934 and 1935 and fled to England with his wife and baby son in May 1939. He joined the British army, later volunteering for the Special Operations Executive. After the war he was Youth Director of the Brady Clubs in East London, taught at the North London College, and continued the journalistic work he began in 1935. He received an MBE in recognition of 'his services to youth' and an honorary degree from the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Potsdam for his 'scientific, journalistic and pedagogic achievements'.

Mayer's objective is to 'present the achievements of Jews at the Olympics for the inspiration of the young and in order to oppose anti-Semitism wherever it is manifested. I hope too that this presentation will inspire other minorities to publish similar works. After all, sport can serve as a springboard towards the emancipation of all minority groups, as I believe it has been for the minority to which I belong.'

Howard Spier

Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

On a recent visit to London, I picked up a copy of the *Jewish Chronicle*, just for old time's sake. The paper seems to have undergone several transformations since the 1960s, when I used to read it.

First of all, most of the personages mentioned - apart from a couple of international celebrities such as Salman Rushdie and Mel Gibson - are completely unknown to me.

But second, and most striking, seems to be the prominent position occupied by Jews in British political life. A Jew who does not conceal his background heads the Tory Party (I wonder if he's the same Michael Howard who was on my Jewish Agency summer youth tour of Israel in 1959). Another Jew, Oliver Letwin, is the Shadow Chancellor. And Malcolm Rifkind is the parliamentary candidate for the safe Tory Kensington and Chelsea constituency. I'd expect it from Labour, but what on earth has happened to the Conservatives?

The name of the actress who plays the Virgin Mary in Mel Gibson's film of the crucifixion - Maia Morgenstern - sounds suspiciously Jewish. And although it's only natural for Jews to play Jews in a film set in the Holy Land 2,000 years ago, it does seem odd considering the film's alleged anti-Jewish slant. Helpfully, the paper passes on the Aramaic phrase published in *The Guardian* for 'I'm Jewish but I wasn't there that day.'

Alex Brummer, whose article about the Letwin-Fagin jibe occupies half a page, is the city editor of the *Daily Mail*. And Daniel Finkelstein is associate editor of that bastion of all that is traditionally British, *The Times*. But the media generally tends to be a haven for Jewish writers, so that is perhaps understandable.

Maybe there is something in those claims about world domination, after all.

Jews and the Olympics

**JEWS AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES
SPORT: A SPRINGBOARD FOR
MINORITIES**

Paul Yogi Mayer

London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004,
272pp., £27.50 hardback,
£16.00 paperback

It comes as something of a surprise that there have been over 400 Jewish Olympic Medal winners since the modern Games began over a century ago. Paul Yogi Mayer - formerly an athlete, coach, youth leader, educator and sports journalist - has collected data for over 70 years and has provided in this valuable work statistics on Jewish involvement in the Games from

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As I occupied the couch in her West Hampstead home that Ruth Barnett normally reserves for clients of her clinical practice, it struck me that it must be a little unusual for Ruth herself to be on the receiving end of an interview. In fact, this was far from being the case: little had I realised to what extent Ruth's own experiences informed her career as a psychotherapist.

Ruth was born in Berlin. Her knowledge of things Jewish was 'absolutely nil'. Her mother was a Christian. Her father, a lawyer specialising in patents, had converted to Christianity (though Ruth says she never thought of him as anything but Jewish), having Ruth and her brother Martin baptised at the same time. Her father's mother owned a cinema advertising business, for which Ruth's mother worked as secretary. This is how Ruth's parents met. Her mother and father could never bring themselves to speak about the Hitler period. Damaged by their wartime experiences, Ruth believes, they both died 'at least ten years before their time'.

Ruth was four and her brother seven when their mother deposited them with the first of three foster families, a rector and his wife in Kent. Her mother left quietly, Ruth recalls to the best of her ability, seemingly without tears or fuss. Her father left Germany for Shanghai after his mother's death in May 1939. Only in 1944, when they were sent to their third foster home, did Ruth and her brother find an affectionate family environment.

In 1949 Ruth was 'repatriated' to Germany by her foster parents. They had wanted to adopt her but had been prevented from doing so by her father's threat of legal action. The visit turned out to be a nightmare. Now her mother was living in a flatlet near Lake Constance, her father, who had resumed his legal career, in a room in Mainz. For reasons she can't fathom to this day, Ruth had had no contact with her mother for ten years. She had become strongly biased against all things German,

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Ruth Barnett Kindertransportee in reverse



Ruth Barnett during a recent visit to Israel

picking up anti-German attitudes not least from the British comics she was reading. She failed to establish any rapport with her mother. She couldn't, and didn't want to, speak German, and her mother could understand barely a word of English. In the six months or so she remained with her parents, Ruth did everything she could to make a nuisance of herself. A 'Kindertransportee in reverse' is Ruth's description of herself during this exceptionally torrid time in her life.

Ruth won the battle and was allowed to return to England. In her twenties she converted to Judaism. Her father clung steadfastly to his Christianity, yet always appeared to display a particular interest in Jewish issues, both professionally and in his private life.

With her third foster family on a farm in Sussex, Ruth had developed a strong liking for animals. But her father insisted that she go to university -

irrespective of what she might study there. In the event, she obtained a degree from Reading University in dairy technology. At Reading too, Ruth met her husband-to-be Bernard, an education psychology student, who, like her, would eventually become a psychoanalyst. Though of Jewish parentage, Bernard too had little knowledge of Jewish matters and, after their marriage, they set out to learn about Judaism together.

Deciding against a career in dairy farming, Ruth became a teacher. Her first job - teaching biology in a girls' grammar school in Chelsea - she particularly enjoyed. She took time off while her three children were young, then returned to teach science at a large comprehensive school in Wembley. In this far more difficult social environment, her work took on an increasingly pastoral side. During her 19-year career as a teacher, in which she reached the position of deputy head, she trained as a counsellor, then as a marriage guidance counsellor, and finally as a psychotherapist. In 1980 she finally 'got out' of teaching, she declares with more than a small sense of relief.

Since 1980 Ruth has practised as a psychotherapist and worked with first, second and third generations of people affected by the Holocaust. Today she has a part-time practice and is clinical director of the Raphael Centre counselling service. Also, through the LINK Psychotherapy Centre and the Shalvata Holocaust Survivors' Centre in north London, Ruth offers specialist advice to Holocaust survivors, refugees and their children.

But Ruth's interest in genocide goes well beyond the Holocaust: she is preoccupied with the phenomenon of genocide, of which, in her view, at least 50 acts were perpetrated in the last century. She points to the Armenian genocide during the First World War as being a close parallel with the Holocaust. In her deep concern with such matters, the significance of what she has personally experienced as a refugee can hardly be exaggerated.

INSIDE the AJR

Essex briefed on AJR's work

Gordon Greenfield, the AJR's Head of Finance, gave us an insight into the work of the dedicated social workers and volunteers who serve the AJR's 3,500 members. He also provided details of the grant schemes available to assist members which are part-financed by the Claims Conference, spoke about the Umbrella Group of charities that work in the interests of Holocaust survivors and refugees from Nazi oppression, and described the Swiss Banks Settlement of 1998 and how the \$1.25 billion will be allocated to refugees and their descendants. The AJR hopes legacies from members will enable more of this valuable work to continue.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 7 September

Richard Grunberger's evolution examined in Cambridge

Richard Grunberger described his personal evolution from turner to teacher to editorship of the *AJR Journal* before leading a discussion on whether a refugee could be English as distinct from British. Twenty members and visitors from Israel and Australia celebrated the group's first birthday. We enjoyed Ann Berger's delightful sponge decorated with one gilded candle to which we sang 'Happy birthday to us!' before partaking of a light lunch, contributions to which she had organised from members.

Francis Deutsch

Next meeting: Thursday 14 October

Weald of Kent: explaining the Holocaust to young people

At Maidstone Friends Meeting House, we had a discussion over tea and cake on talking to children and young people about the Holocaust. Several members had positive results to relate.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: Tuesday 19 October

South London: 'Churchill's Wit'

James Taylor, who had been asked by the Imperial War Museum to set up the Churchill Museum as an extension to the War Cabinet Rooms, gave an interesting talk on 'Churchill's Wit'. He told us about the British leader's intellect, home life and great sense of humour.

Anne Poloway

Next meeting: Thursday 9 September. David Lerner, 'The History of the Jewish Free School'

North London: if MDA didn't exist ...

Eli Benson of Magen David Adom (MDA) ambulances gave a video presentation and a talk on the work of his organisation. If MDA didn't exist it would be necessary to invent it. The marvellous work it does in Israel commands our admiration. It was a revelation to hear that it does so without the benefit of government aid. I hope all will join me in wishing them 'Kol ha-kavot!'

Herbert Haberberg

Outing: Thursday 9 September (no meeting in September)

Pinner sidelight on the 'Dreyfus Affair'

Former *Times* editor Leon Pilpel showed us a copy of the *Times* dated 13 October 1898 carrying the longest letter ever published in that paper. In the letter senior civil servant Godfrey Lushington examined the evidence against Alfred Dreyfus, the French Jewish army captain accused of treason and imprisoned on Devil's Island. Together with Emile Zola's famous article 'J'accuse', published in *L'Aurore*, multiple intrigues were uncovered, the case overturned, and Dreyfus reinstated with full honours.

Walter Weg

Get-together in Edinburgh

Fifty members and guests came from Edinburgh, Glasgow and other parts of Scotland, as well as Newcastle and New Zealand, for a get-together in an Edinburgh synagogue. The guest speaker was Cecile Shea, the American Consul in Edinburgh, who related how Polish people had saved her father's life on many occasions during the war. Rabbi Rose, who spoke about the loss of culture, language and citizenship, welcomed his mother, who had come from New Zealand.

Members later divided into three groups to discuss topics relevant to refugees and the 'second generation'.

The meeting brought together people who, having retained their common experience and culture, gained immense pleasure from contacting others from a similar background, for which they are extremely grateful to the AJR.

JG

Next meeting: Thursday 2 September, 2.00 pm. Daniel Snowman on his book *The Hitler Emigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism*

HGS first meeting

Our first meeting since the group's inauguration was held at Balint House in The Bishop's Avenue. Twenty-nine of us met for coffee and cake and listened spellbound to Alf Keiles's fascinating talk on Jews and jazz, interspersed with evocative and nostalgic musical illustrations. Many not so young feet were tapping and our often slowly functioning brains remembered long-forgotten lyrics. Thank you, Alf!

Marianne Hasseck

Next meeting: Monday, 6 September, 10.30 am at Balint House. Ludwig Spiro, 'Making the Most of Internment'

Ilford members' contribution to UK

Members spoke about their contributions to this country. Every aspect of the 'rag trade' from design to marketing, was covered. Several members had been teachers, covering between them the entire educational spectrum. Engineering too had benefited from our members' talents, again at all levels. We also had a former deputy-mayor among us. A talented lot indeed!

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: Wednesday 1 September. Eli Benson

Kinder guests of the Jewish Museum



Hermann Hirschberger, chairman of KT-AJR (Kindertransport) special interest group, with other guest Kinder at the Jewish Museum, Camden Town, enjoying a specially arranged tea at the invitation of the Museum's director, Rickie Berman. Guests were invited to view the exhibition 'I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Art from Theresienstadt', as well as items from the permanent Judaica collection. In her welcome address, Rickie Berman discussed advanced plans for the Museum's expansion, and Suzannah Alexander, education officer, recalled busy weeks of school group visits. The Kinder expressed their thanks for a most interesting afternoon at the Museum.



AJR Northern members enjoying a holiday by the sea

Enjoying AJR's second Northern holiday

Thirty-four members of the AJR living in the North enjoyed a wonderful week at the traditional Fernlea Hotel on the sea front at St Annes. Their hosts, AJR social worker Ruth Finestone and Northern Groups' Co-ordinator Susanne Green, organised a week full of activities for the 80 and 90-something-year-olds.

The programme included lunch in St Anne's Synagogue Hall catered by the Ladies' Guild, an outing to the Lake District with a boat trip on Lake Windermere, and a visit to Roukes Forge in Burnley to watch ironsmiths at work. AJR groups from Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds came for the day and, joined by well-wishers from St Annes, 80 people sat down to lunch. At the last night get-together Ruth, Susanne and the AJR were thanked for organising this very successful week.

Arts and Events Diary September

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, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 tel 020 7431 0345

Sun 5 Minority Media presents 'A Room at Camp Pickett', a remembrance of service to one's country by Charles Spencer (Kindertransportee) and Sharad Keskar (Warden of St Johns Wood Church). Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St Johns Wood Road, London NW8. 5.30 pm

Mon 6 Dr W. F. Rosner, 'Theodor Herzl (d. 1904) and His Time'. Club 43

Mon 13 Hans Seelig, 'Antonin Dvorak (d. 1904) and His Music'. Club 43

Mon 20 Geoffrey Ben Nathan, 'Ethiopia and Its Culture'. Club 43

Mon 27 Richard Grunberger reads from unpublished writings. Club 43

Active as ever at 95

AJR member Herta Lowenthal, born near Düsseldorf in 1909, celebrated her 95th birthday at St John's Wood Synagogue, surrounded by members of her extended family from Israel, the USA and Britain, and her many friends and admirers. Herta, who was imprisoned by the Gestapo with her husband Karl, escaped to England with her daughter Ruth in 1939, but Karl and other close members of her family perished. In 1947 she and the late Julius Lowenthal began a very happy marriage.

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AJR LUNCHEON CLUB & KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group
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Sun 5	CLOSED
Mon 6	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 7	Joe Kay
Wed 8	JOINT KT LUNCH & LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 9	Stephen Baron
Sun 12	CLOSED
Mon 13	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 14	Katinka Seiner
Wed 15	CLOSED
Thur 16	CLOSED - ROSH HASHANAH
Sun 19	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 20	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 21	Rita & Jack Davis
Wed 22	Guyathrie Peiris & Bill Patrick
Thur 23	Jenny Kossew
Sun 26	CLOSED
Mon 27	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 28	Margaret Opdahl
Wed 29	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 30	CLOSED - SUCCOTH

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Editorials and articles published, and opinions expressed, in *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Benda, Trude (née Bauer), born in Vienna 27 August 1912, died peacefully in London 11 July 2004. Widow of Dolfi (died 22 February 2001), mother of Peter and Monica (Lee), Oma to Claudia, Nicolas, Francis, Andrew, Daniel, Jack and Max, Omama to Primo and Joseph. Will be greatly missed.

Frean, Peter, born in Vienna, has died aged 90. He died peacefully in his sleep on 18 July after a short stay at Osmond House following a long period of illness. He is greatly missed by wife Eva, children Paul, Michael and Ruth, grandchildren Joseph and Luc, and sister Lily.

Halter-Elsbet. Beloved auntie of Lilian and Mattie (Melbourne), died peacefully three days after we celebrated her 90th birthday, together with family from London, Israel and Switzerland and her numerous circle of good friends. We commemorate the life of this remarkable, intelligent and compassionate woman, now reunited with her beloved husband Joe. Shalom.

Stone-setting

The memorial to the memory of the late **Dr Frank E. Falk** will be consecrated at **Edgwarebury Lane Cemetery** on **Sunday 5 September at 2.45 pm.**

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Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the **Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**. New clothes for sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans, etc. **Thursday 2 September 9.45am-11.45am.**

Pamela Bloch at the **Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**. Clothes sale, separates etc. **Thursday 23 September 9.30-11.45 am.**

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Obituaries

Rabbi Dr Albert H. Friedlander OBE

Albert Friedlander was a great rabbi and teacher, whose agile mind and scholarship earned him respect in England as well as in Germany and America. It is not possible to adequately convey all he achieved in his distinguished career so I will share just some aspects of his life.

Albert Hoschander Friedlander was born in Berlin in 1927. His life, and those of his sister and twin brother, were caught up in the evil of the Nazi regime and they were forced to flee Berlin in 1939. They travelled on the last boat which sailed to Cuba and were brought up by foster parents in America. He was ordained to the rabbinate in 1952 and served a number of congregations in the USA before coming to England in 1966 to serve as the rabbi of Wembley Liberal Synagogue. In 1971 he was appointed Senior Rabbi at Westminster Synagogue and Dean of Leo Baeck College from 1982. In 1961 he married Evelyn Philipp and they had three daughters. He and Evelyn supported each other's careers and interests. The world is indebted to her for bringing out the best in him.

Albert was a prolific writer, broadcaster and speaker. His work on Rabbi Leo Baeck has become a classic

text. He displayed an understanding of German-Jewish culture which is disappearing with the passing of a generation. He mourned the loss of those who perished in the Holocaust and, as he reflected in his book *Out of the Whirlwind*, from the voices of the survivors 'we learn what it is to be human and what keeps us human.' His inter-faith work led him to travel the world, often attending meetings and speaking with Church leaders and politicians. He also worked at grass-roots level to improve inter-faith understanding, for which he was awarded an OBE in 2001. In 2003 he was appointed joint President of the Council of Christians and Jews. You could rely on him to give an interesting lecture with wit, yet coupled with a serious challenge for our times. On a pastoral level, he displayed a deep compassion for people in their time of need.

He died as he had lived - with a vivacious mind and intellect, but also a tremendous sense of humour. He had a timeless aura about him and never seemed to age. He was a truly great man and a gentleman in every sense of the word. As he himself sometimes joked: 'I too am famous - it's just that word hasn't got around yet!'

Helen Fry

Mike Woodin

Mike Woodin, who has died of cancer at the age of 38, was the Principal Speaker for the Green Party from 1997 to 2001, and again from last September. He was also leader of the Green group on Oxford city council.

He was born in Hartley in Kent, graduating in psychology from Manchester University and taking his doctorate at Wolfson College, Oxford. He subsequently lectured in psychology at Balliol College and continued his love of singing by joining the Oxford Bach choir.

Elected as Oxford's first Green councillor in 1994, he was instrumental in the party's rise to seven councillors, giving it the balance of power on the council. As a member of

the Green Party's ruling executive, Woodin made a critical contribution to the strategy that saw the election of the first British Greens to the European parliament in 1999. He was an outstanding communicator. He had a vision of how the world could be, as he put it, 'where people can live at peace with themselves, at peace with each other and at peace with the natural world.'

Mike Woodin and his family were active members of the Oxford Jewish community. He served on the Synagogue Council. His mother, Sue, is a Kindertransportee. He leaves his wife, Deborah, the daughter of AJR's Southern Groups Co-ordinator Myrna Glass, and two children, aged five and two.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Holocaust commission's humanitarian payments

The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims has begun the process of disbursing token amounts of compensation in respect of unpaid Holocaust era insurance policies. The \$1,000 (£600) awards were made where a claimant demonstrated strong anecdotal evidence - such as recalling the visits of an insurance salesman to collect monthly premiums - that a policy existed.

To date, 16,472 applicants have received such an award in the first tranche of payments, including 295 in this country, and a second group of cheques will be issued later this year. The decision to distribute the humanitarian cheques is separate to the ongoing process of settling outstanding claims where concrete proofs have been submitted.

Please note that the deadline to submit claims to the Commission expired at the end of March this year.

Government commission completes work

The Enemy Property Claims Assessment Panel (EPCAP) wound up its work at the end of August having distributed more than £16m to 377 claimants over a six-year period.

In 1939 the British government introduced the Trading with the Enemy Act to prevent Germany and its axis allies using money in British banks to fund their war effort. The Panel was convened to examine the 1,121 applications for assets deposited in British banks prior to the Second World War.

Further information about the Enemy Property scheme as well as the list of owners of assets is available online at www.enemyproperty.gov.uk.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to 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.

'Making a New Life' Holocaust survivors in Yorkshire

Ronald Channing

From left, Professor Griselda Pollock, Eva Hoffman, Trude Silman, at the launching of Yorkshire's Jewish refugee testimony project



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Professor Griselda Pollock of the University of Leeds Centre for Jewish Studies, together with Trude Silman, Chairperson of the AJR's associated group in Leeds, the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association (HSFA), launched an ambitious project researching into the lives of German-speaking Jewish refugees in Yorkshire. The AJR is the project's main sponsor.

University of Leeds researchers have already embarked on the region's most in-depth study of the lives of refugees from Nazi persecution, examining recollections of their experiences of immigration and of having to build new lives in a foreign country. As well as collecting detailed oral testimony, the project is archiving documents, artworks, writings and other historically valuable materials. Plans are also in hand for a project exhibition, an illustrated publication and a website.

Today's media were said by Professor Pollock to have encouraged fear of strangers and newcomers, without offering a balanced understanding of their common humanity or recognising society's enrichment by the arrival of people from different cultures. 'To be a just and humane society', she said, 'we need to appreciate the struggle involved in making a new life and to know at even a local and regional level how much it adds to the overall quality of all our lives.' The testimony

being given by the refugees of the 1930s offered unique first-hand accounts of such experiences.

Trude Silman referred to the HSFA's pilot project, which had already achieved the lodging of 20 interviews in the University's Brotherton Library. In celebrating the new collaboration between the University and the HSFA, she thanked the AJR and their co-sponsors, but indicated that the completion of the three-year project in its entirety would still require additional funds.

Author Eva Hoffman, who was born in Crakow in 1945 and emigrated to the USA as a child of 13, discussed her latest book *After Such Knowledge: A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. As the Holocaust receded in time, she said, the guardianship of its legacy was being passed on from its survivors and witnesses to the next generation. She asked what were the effects of a traumatic past on its inheritors and on the 'second generation's' responsibilities to its received memories, and explained that she had attempted to explore the historical, psychological and moral implications.

Further information on the 'Making a New Life' project may be obtained from Brett Harrison, consultant archivist, University of Leeds telephone: 0113 343 1629 email: b.l.Harrison@leeds.ac.uk

Newsround

Israeli ambassador to Budapest honoured

Israel's outgoing ambassador to Hungary, Judit Varnai-Shorer, has left her post after receiving Hungary's highest cultural award, the Pro Cultura Hungarica, in addition to a Republic of Hungary medal awarded earlier by Hungary's president.

Boycotter of Berlin Olympics dies

Milton Green, a Jewish hurdler who boycotted the 1936 Berlin Olympics in protest against the Nazi regime, has died at the age of 92. In a 1997 interview, Green said 'It was a very difficult decision at the time', adding that he 'never regretted it'.

Kosher restaurant opens in Athens

Since its opening at the beginning of August in advance of the Olympics, the Athens Kol Tuv Restaurant has done a brisk business. The restaurant is the brainchild of the local Lubavich rabbi, Mendel Hendel, who opened it with help from Chabad and the Athens Jewish community. It is believed to be the first time a kosher restaurant has opened in Greece since the Second World War.

Bombed synagogue re-opens

Eight months since last year's attack by suicide bombers, Istanbul's Neve Shalom synagogue has temporarily reopened. Most of Istanbul's 15 synagogues still remain closed while the community evaluates the security situation at each building. Many members of the Turkish Jewish community are also alarmed by the emergence of home-grown Turkish militant groups that see Jews as legitimate targets.

Bulgarian Jews eligible for Holocaust compensation

Following negotiations with the Claims Conference, Jews who were forced to work in labour camps in Bulgaria in the Second World War are to be recognised as eligible for compensation from the Article 2 and Central and Eastern European Funds of the German Government. Much of the evidence on Jewish slave labour in Bulgaria has come from records that recently became available, including documents held in archives in Bulgaria.