

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Making a New Life: Education Amanda Bergen

One particularly vivid memory shared by many of our German interviewees is the receipt of the letter informing their parents that they were no longer to attend mainstream schooling. In some instances, this bitter memory is tempered by recollections of the private regret expressed by individual teachers over the loss of their Jewish pupils. Other interviewees were forced to give up places at university and the hopes of following a longed-for career. This loss of opportunities and the aspirations that rested upon them were, of course, a common feature of the refugee experience. As part of our project we have been examining how refugees in the Yorkshire region adapted to these changes in circumstances as part of the process of 'Making a New Life'.*



Thea Ephraim (front right) with class at the Luisenschule, Berlin in 1937 before forced withdrawal in November 1938

As with many facets of refugee life, age upon entry into the UK seems to have played an important part in determining experiences. The youngest refugees were able to take advantage of the English school system and this may have provided many of

them with the education necessary to achieve their full potential. Some interviewees have expressed resentment at not being entered for examinations to the grammar schools, perhaps because their English was deemed not to have reached the requisite standard. In some families, an age gap of just a few years meant that a younger sibling attended grammar school whereas an equally able elder sibling was deprived of this opportunity.

Young people who came over on the Kindertransport or who obtained places as trainees or domestic workers often found their dreams and ambitions abruptly curtailed. Some individuals endured years of frustration and bitterness, trapped in occupations that they considered unrewarding and mind-numbing. However, with diligence and the passage of time some were able to improve their position, obtaining managerial grades and making the longed-for jump from blue-collar to white-collar status.

In some instances, individuals who had already obtained professional qualifications or taken the preliminary steps to establish themselves in a career were able to re-qualify. Those who came over to England comparatively early may have found this easier than later incomers. Dr Ernest Bergen, who had commenced his legal career in Germany, was able to take an English law degree at University College in London before obtaining articles in Leeds. Ruth Sterne obtained her nursery teacher's certificate from the Wangenheim College in Berlin in April 1939. Initially the education authorities in Leeds would only allow her to work as



Ruth Sterne (top right), Whitebridge Primary School, Halton, Leeds 1975

a teaching assistant. During the war the authorities were more amenable and Ruth was able to embark on a teaching career that would lead her to a deputy headship.

In the years since their retirement some of our interviewees have been able to follow their various academic interests and this has resulted in a number of publications. Others have taken up the role of Holocaust educators, speaking to a wide range of audiences about their experiences. Still others have followed the academic successes of children and grandchildren with pride. The project team would be particularly interested to hear from individuals who gained their educational qualifications later in life.

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* See Griselda Pollock, 'Making a New Life Project: Holocaust survivors in Yorkshire', AJR Journal, October 2005.

Yad Vashem

Remembering the past, shaping the future

Henri Stellman

Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Authority has just inaugurated the new Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem, a museum designed to convey the story of the Holocaust to a new generation. The complex also hosts, among other things, a documentation archive, a library, a photo archive, an international school for the teaching of the Holocaust, and an art museum.

The mission of the Yad Vashem UK Foundation is to represent Yad Vashem Jerusalem by helping to ensure that the tragedy of the Holocaust is never forgotten; to honour the memory of those who perished; to impart the legacy of the Holocaust to shape a more humane future; and to ensure that their resources are made available for educational purposes to all denominations.

Educational professionals, adults and youth are our target, both within and outside the Jewish community. Among our activities are: organising visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau and other places of Holocaust interest; promoting lectures, talks, films and theatre on Holocaust topics; organising annual remembrance ceremonies on Yom Hashoah involving survivors, other adults and young people; and encouraging and assisting Jewish communities and youth organisations throughout the country to hold their own ceremonies.

We will soon be launching a Guardian of the Memory campaign, seeking to enlist every Jew in this country to become the guardian of the memory of one victim of the Holocaust. The

guardian will be asked to light a memorial candle on each Yom Hashoah in memory of that victim, ensuring that he or she will never be forgotten and helping us to achieve our goals of honouring the memory of those who perished and imparting the legacy of the Holocaust. We are linking this campaign with one being initiated by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem - the 11th Hour Campaign - to find the names of further victims who perished. They feel that now is the time to make one final effort to obtain details of victims not included in the 3 million presently recorded in the database of the names of Holocaust victims.

Dr Janusz Korczak, the principal of two orphanages in Warsaw, devoted his life to the needs of children to the point of refusing to abandon his Jewish orphans, accompanying them to their deaths at Treblinka. We believe he is the most appropriate role model in educational terms. It is our intention to organise an exhibition on his life in conjunction with the Yad Vashem Museum which will go to schools, community centres, synagogues and other venues.

The Yad Vashem UK Foundation aims to ensure that the tragedy of the Holocaust is never forgotten and to honour the memory of those who perished. We owe this sacred duty to our murdered brothers and sisters.

Dr Henri Stellman may be contacted at Yad Vashem UK Foundation, 6 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP, tel 020 7543 5402, fax 020 7404 1437, email office@yadvashem.org.uk.

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Arts & Events Diary November

Wed 2 David Cesarani, 'Coming to Terms with the Nazi Persecution and Mass Murder of the Jews in the Post-War World: Challenging the "Myth of Silence" and the Myth of the "Holocaust Industry"'. SOAS Centre for Jewish Studies, Room B102, Brunei Gallery, Russell Square, 1-2 pm. Tel 020 7898 4358

Thur 3 The contribution immigrants have made to British culture and society. London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, London NW11. Tel 020 8455 9900

Sun 6 Suzanne Bardgett, 'Objects, Memories, Quests'. The Project Director of The Holocaust Exhibition describes the day-to-day work of her office. Imperial War Museum, 3.00 pm. Tel 020 7416 5439

Sun 6 Watermarks (on 1930s Vienna Jewish swimming team). Jewish Film Festival, Screen on the Hill, 4.50 pm. Tel 020 7435 3366

Mon 7 Bill Tyler, 'Trekking the Inca Trail (with slides)' Club 43

Mon 7 Jonathan Freedland, 'Our Immigrant Past: The Lessons for Today'. The Holocaust Exhibition, Imperial War Museum, 7.00 pm

Tues 8 Michael Meyer, 'Jewish Spiritual Resistance in Nazi Germany: A Tale of Two Rabbis'. Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7580 3493

Wed 9 Hiding from Hitler. Jewish Film Festival, Screen on the Hill, 5.20 pm

Thur 10 Go For Zucker. Jewish Film Festival, Screen on the Hill, 6.40 pm

Mon 14 Peter Ritzer (formerly The German School, Richmond), 'After the Election: Germany Today' Club 43

Wed 16 Prof Peter Longerich, 'Life of a Perpetrator: Heinrich Himmler'. The Holocaust Exhibition, Imperial War Museum, 7.00 pm

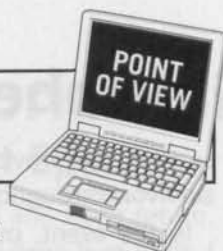
Wed 16 Leon Yudkin, 'Czech and Jewish Nationalism: Comparison and Contrast', SOAS Centre for Jewish Studies, Room B102, Brunei Gallery, Russell Square, 1-2 pm. Tel 020 7898 4358

Thur 17 Dr Joachim Schloer, 'Material Objects of Emigration: German Jews on their Way to Palestine, 1932-1940'. Institute of Jewish Studies. Gustave Tuck Theatre, Gower Street, London WC1, 6.15 pm for 6.45 pm Tel 020 7679 3520

Mon 21 David Williamson, 'The Long Shadow of National Socialism: The British View of Germany since 1945' Club 43

Mon 28 Ernst Flesch MA, 'Germany in All Directions (with slides)' Club 43

A dream gone sour



Following the Anschluss, my family's problem was where to escape to. Having read Herzl's *The Jewish State*, I became convinced that Palestine offered the solution as a home for all Jews. I was offered a 'certificate' necessary for legal immigration under the British mandate. However, had I accepted it, I would have had to leave my parents behind. My brother was already established in England, working for our English cousin, who was now offering us a home. The resulting British visas thus put an end to my Zionist dream.

Naturally I followed Palestine's fortunes with great interest. Following the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948, I was proud that my people 'made the desert bloom' and I feared for their safety when they were attacked by Arabs intent on driving them into the sea. Several wars followed, which the Israelis always won - mainly due to their superior weaponry supplied by the Americans. After 1967 Israel occupied an extensive part of Palestinian territory. The Israeli government established settlements, which needed to be defended by the army, isolated as they were in the midst of hostile Palestinian lands.

About three years ago, the *Guardian* newspaper organised a debate on 'Israel/Palestine: What Next?' at Church House, Westminster. I arrived early. While I was waiting, a young woman asked me why I had come. 'Because I'm Jewish' was my answer. 'Why are you here?', I asked in turn. 'Because I'm Palestinian' came her reply. We began to talk and instantly agreed that we both wanted peace between our two peoples. We became close friends. The debate was between Yossi Beilin, a former Israeli government minister, and Yasso Rabbo, a Palestinian Authority minister. Further meetings resulted in the Geneva Accords. Sadly, they didn't come to anything.

The 'roadmap' has not yet brought peace. Although Sharon achieved the evacuation of all Jewish settlements from

Gaza, were he to attempt a similar operation in the West Bank, his Likud Party would surely replace him with the hard-liner Netanyahu. I firmly believe that as long as any Jewish settlements remain inside Palestinian territories, there can be no just peace.

Before 1948, the mother of my Palestinian friend - like me now in her eighties - lived in Haifa. In those days Jews and Palestinians lived peacefully as neighbours and were often great friends. In 1948 her family was ejected from their home where they had lived for generations. They fled to Lebanon, where my young friend was born. Her mother must have felt just as I did when in 1938 our flat was 'allocated' to a German officer - the flat where I was born and had lived.

Now, my idealistic dream of a home for Jews has gone sour: the countless human rights abuses against Palestinians; the separation wall constructed through Palestinian land; the countless house demolitions and olive tree uprootings; the checkpoints where Palestinians have to queue for hours to cross to reach hospitals, often to give birth or to receive urgent medical treatment; the number of Palestinian civilians, including children, killed by Israeli military action, which is far greater than that of Israeli civilians killed by Palestinians.

Finally, a ray of hope. The Israeli conductor and musician Daniel Barenboim's friendship with the late Palestinian Edward Said, an eminent literary critic and expert on the Middle East, resulted in the formation of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. It is composed of young Israelis and Arabs. They performed at a concert in last summer's Proms and recently in Ramallah, where the locals received them with great enthusiasm. It offers the hope that mutual understanding will finally lead to peace between our two nations.

Inge Trott

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AJR hosts members' Tea in Watford

This year's AJR Celebration Tea took place not in central London, as is normally the case, but in the Watford Hilton Hotel. The decision to meet outside London, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman told a crowded hall, 'reflects our commitment to bring the

services we provide to refugees and survivors throughout the country.'

In the event, over a delicious tea, more than 300 members and guests were treated to a delightful rendering of *Around the World in 80 Minutes*, a revue operetta written by Robert Stolz

in Vienna in 1937 and performed on this occasion by Glenys Groves, Rodney Gibson and David Syrus of the Royal Opera House. This montage - photographs by David Rothenberg - provides a taste of the highly successful event.



Haunting memories laid to rest

T. Scarlett Epstein

Last June I returned to Austria at the invitation of the Jewish Welfare Service (JWS). I went as one of about ten Austrian refugees. Each of us was expected to talk to Vienna school students about our individual Holocaust experience. The JWS paid our flight and hotel expenses and kindly looked after our general well-being, whereas young volunteers from an Austrian NGO that focuses on Holocaust survivors arranged and guided our school visits.

Where possible, each of us returned to the school we attended in our early youth. Thus it was arranged for me to go to the Glasergasse Realgymnasium, from which as long ago as March 1938 I was thrown out for no other reason than that I was Jewish. This return visit was for me a quite traumatic experience. Though the school exterior looked a lot different, the interior had hardly changed. As I walked up the stairs to meet my host, my heart began to beat faster as I relived what had happened to me there all those years ago when I was only 15 years old and determined to continue studying to become a surgeon. This experience has remained ingrained in my mind ever since. We Jewish students were ordered

to leave the school and never return. To give vent to the deep hurt I felt, I then ran down the stairs and out of the school vowing that I would never again set foot in it. Moreover, I would try my best, if at all possible, to make something of my life.

Well, there I was, a retired British university professor, about to tell a group of almost 100 of the school's pupils about my Holocaust experience. I realised, of course, that compared with many other Viennese Jews, I had been lucky for I had managed to get to England with my mother before the last war without ever having to be in a concentration camp. Yet, coping with my own odyssey via Yugoslavia, Albania and Germany had also been pretty trying, and on arrival in England starting work as a machinist in one of London's sweatshops and burying my ambition of becoming a doctor was not easy either. However, I must admit the students impressed me with their thoughtful comments and questions. As I walked out of the school I thought to myself 'I have learned to forgive, but I will never be able to forget!' The remaining three talks I had to give at different schools I found much easier to deliver.

Our small group of speakers was awarded real VIP treatment in Vienna. We had afternoon tea in the Vienna town hall at the invitation of the mayor. We were also received by Austria's president in his Hofburg offices, giving us a chance to see some of the many treasures that used to be part of the residence of the Austrian monarchs. With his speech the president made us feel welcome. Then he asked each of us how we had managed to get out of Austria and listened with interest to our tales.

Attending Friday night service in the inner-city synagogue was another moving experience - first of all to view the list of names of the great many Viennese Jews who had perished and then to see the small congregation largely composed of elderly people who turned up for the service. Afterwards, we had Kiddush followed by a lovely meal in the one and only kosher restaurant in Vienna. For me this week in Vienna was a truly memorable experience and I am extremely grateful to all those kind people who made it possible.

See profile of Dr Epstein in September issue of the Journal.

'The Griffin': Paul Rosbaud - scientist and spy

One of the more intriguing recent lectures at Club '43 was by Dr Vincent Frank about his uncle, Dr Paul Rosbaud. Rosbaud, born in Graz, was refused a British visa before the war; he was brought to London after the Nazi defeat and soon obtained membership of an exclusive club, although he had spent the entire war in Germany. He is now known to have spied for the British under the codename 'The Griffin'.

A metallurgist by profession, Rosbaud was also director of the German Springer scientific publishing firm, had connections with leading German scientists, and thus was in the know about Nazi scientific research.

Dr Frank was unable to provide-much data on Rosbaud's spying activities -

hardly surprising since the British intelligence authorities have never released his file. What seems certain is that Rosbaud published his knowledge of the early successes of German scientists in splitting the atom, the possibility of which was discovered by a team led by Otto Hahn in 1938. This led to the Manhattan Project, resulting in the creation of the US atom bomb.

After the war, Rosbaud posed the question of whether the German scientists had deliberately sabotaged the building of a German bomb or had simply not had the facilities or even the knowledge to build one. Postwar research seems to show that they did not have the knowledge to build one.

The claim by Rosbaud's biographer,

Arnold Kramish, that he was responsible for sending the so-called 'Oslo Report', which contained much information on German military research, to the British during the war is incorrect: it was sent by a German scientist by the name of Maier. This question, as well as others - such as Rosbaud's one-time connection with Robert Maxwell and a link with Kim Philby, about whom he warned British intelligence - arose in the discussion after the talk.

Rosbaud died in 1963, on the same day as Philby fled to Russia. What emerged from Dr Frank's talk was the fascinating story of a character who remains deeply enigmatic to the present day.

Ernst Flesch

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

MAKING NEW LIVES

Sir - I was very struck by a phrase in Griselda Pollock's article (October issue): 'the way they [Jewish refugees in Britain] have made their new lives, while keeping faith with the memories of the one that was stolen from them.' I thought that was singularly sensitively observed, and most elegantly expressed. While some of my friends belittle or deny the significance of a childhood spent in Berlin, and the lasting influence of that unique Prussian/Jewish cultural experience, it would hardly be realistic for me to make such an attempt, having retained my Berliner Schnauze and having enjoyed for 76 years the friendship of Frau Anita Zander, my mother. I accept with relish the duality of being a Berlin-type Londoner in Soho, and a London-type Berliner in Wilmsdorf, where I always spend Christmas and Silvester with my friends there. I am not an 'either-or', I am definitely a 'both-and'.

Peter Zander
London W1

CHILDREN OF BLANKENESE

Sir - Regarding your article 'The children of Blankenese' (September issue), in January 1947 I was posted as an interpreter/sergeant to a British Army unit stationed at a hospital in Blankenese, then run by the British Army. By coincidence, I had spent May/June 1939 at the Warburg villa at 140 Rissener Landstrasse, Blankenese, which had then been a preparation camp for emigration to Palestine. Now, in 1947, I was curious to discover what had become of the Warburg villa. I borrowed a jeep and drove there. To my surprise, I found there about 100 children, all survivors of Bergen-Belsen, aged between four and ten and under the supervision of 20 or 30 adults officially there as Joint supervisors, but in reality Jewish Brigade soldiers organising *aliyah* Beth. Once a week a lorry left in the middle of the night for Trieste. I spent a

very pleasant Chanukah and a further two months there.

O. Findling
London NW4

RESCUE EXTRAORDINAIRE

Sir - Leslie Brent (September issue, review) asks whether the Lubavitcher Rebbe 'really merited this intricate, dangerous and costly mission' that snatched him away from his potential murderers 'while there were so many other Jews equally deserving of rescue.' He adds: 'There can be no answer to this.' I think there *is* an answer. Any person innocently menaced deserves to be rescued, whether he is famous and revered like the Rebbe, or obscure like my sister and me. *Of course* many more should have been rescued. *Of course* the world should have acted to stop the slaughter. But let us not cavil at those who did something, in public or in private, to save whom they could. All honour to all rescuers!

Prof S. S. Prawer
Queens College, Oxford

POINT OF VIEW

Sir - Regarding G. M. Ettinger's article (October issue), while indeed there were many instances of Jews receiving favours from Nazis, it is not true that 'there was little physical persecution of the Jews' in Vienna in 1938. I left in June 1938 and before then there were many cases of arrests, people being forced to clean windows before jeering crowds, and other examples of humiliation. Your former Viennese readers will no doubt recall many such incidents.

F. Tutnauer
London W14

Sir - Mr Ettinger wishes to know what is the difference between expulsion by the Nazis and that by Sharon *et al*, and I will tell him. The West Bank is a landlocked territory, rightly regarded by the United Nations and most countries as occupied by Israel. The vast majority of the settlers

knew they were removing to a territory conquered in war and thought they were on to a good thing. They gambled with their future and lost. To compare this transfer with the expulsion by the Nazis is shameful.

Martin Hasseck
London NW4

Sir - The Jews of Austria were in every respect legal citizens of Austria. The Jews living in Gaza were not legally entitled to reside there. The expulsions of Jewish settlers from Gaza were essential. If some of the descriptions by G. M. Ettinger of the manner in which they were carried out are correct, they cannot be justified, but nothing that took place will ever compare with the treatment of the Austrian Jews by the Nazis.

Eric Sanders
London W12

Sir - Aspects of G. M. Ettinger's contribution manifest a lack of joined-up thinking. My wife's family would not have accepted that there was 'little physical persecution' of Jews in Vienna before September 1939, but to conflate Kristallnacht with the decision of a democratically elected government acting in the perceived interests of its own community really stretches credibility out of recognition.

Alan S. Kaye
Marlow, Bucks

Sir - The Nazis used the von Rath assassination to whip up popular support for Kristallnacht, whereas the unfortunate act of Asher Weissgan of shooting four Arabs had nothing to do with the Gaza pull-out or its timing, which were openly debated and approved by the Knesset.

L. Roman
London N22

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Sir - Anthony Goldsmith's desire to live under a dictatorship (October issue, letters) is terrifying. For that is the logical end of the policy he advocates. His reference to the Human Rights Convention is a below-the-belt appeal to anti-EU sentiments. He is talking about the Human Rights Act 1998, which all must obey, just like the laws on burglary or careless driving. He attacks the independence of the judiciary, yet must know full well that a court which starts subservient to popular or governmental

pressure ends up as a *Volksgesichtshof*, ordering people to be hanged - literally - from lampposts.

The Human Rights Act does not say you cannot deport. Article 3 protects from 'torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. Case law has subsequently extended this to protect persons from the likelihood of torture etc by sending them to a third country where such treatments are practised. It is surely significant that the three or four extremist preachers to whom Mr Goldsmith refers tend to originate in countries with appalling human rights records. Is the absence of the rule of law he seeks to undermine not likely to be a major source of their perverse views?

Antisemitism has been unlawful since 1 June 1977. The Race Relations Act 1976, s70 makes it unlawful to speak or write words which are 'threatening, abusive or insulting' in circumstances in which 'hatred is likely to be stirred up against any racial group in Great Britain'. Further legislation is unnecessary, but this provision ought to be used more frequently.

Undermining civil liberties, excessive punitive state powers without judicial oversight, an over-powerful police, internment or its equivalent - these do half of Bin Laden's job for him. Only free people valuing freedom can protect, and be protected by, a flourishing civil society.

Francis Deutsch
Saffron Walden

A LASTING CONTRIBUTION

On 9 September I attended the memorial service for George Jonas (October issue, obituary) at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham. Some 240 of his family, friends, associates and colleagues from the musical, legal and local government worlds were there. Musicians from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra played two sublime movements from a Mozart quartet and, as he had been a keen follower of cricket, the Ashes result was read out too. The lone, gifted boy from Breslau had made a lasting contribution to his adopted city.

Frank Bright
Ipswich

'NOT ALL GERMANS WERE MURDERERS'

Sir - Mr Bright (July issue, letters) has a valid point. During my army days, following the armistice, I happened to

overhear the following exchange between two intelligence officers: 'Who was responsible for all these horrors?', asked A. 'Silly question', replied B, 'Hitler, of course, and his henchmen.' 'Not so', asked A, 'it was that arch-criminal Hans Schmidt.' 'What the hell do you mean?' 'Well, in 1933 he fraudulently voted for the Nazis 35 million times!'

One should not be facetious about these matters but there's a grain of truth in all this, as I discovered during casual conversations with locals: 'Me a Nazi? Oh no, sir, not me, sir!' It may be true that those actively engaged in unspeakable cruelty were heavily outnumbered by passive onlookers, 'Mitläufer', etc. And it was the latter who approved, and often took personal advantage of, the consequences of this horror, who made it possible.

C. P. Carter
Richmond, Surrey

WIENER LIBRARY MICROFICHE

Sir - Your readers might be interested to know that the Wiener Library holds on microfiche the records of some 1,600 German Jews which were given to the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland in the 1940s, immediately prior to deportation to concentration/death camps in the East. The records typically contain their First World War army records, personal letters, passports and other papers. There is an alphabetical list of names that accompanies the microfiche. Readers could simply contact us to check whether any family members' records are included.

Of course, 1,600 names represent only a small percentage of those deportees (although I managed to find papers of my own great-uncle). However, it is a collection that very few people know about. The originals of these records are buried away in the Bundesarchiv, Germany.

Howard Falksohn
Archivist, Wiener Library

PRINCE CHARMING

Sir - I do so agree with Henny Rednall (October issue, Letters). I too was at the Kindertransport meeting with Prince Charles. I also thought he was so pleasant and patient with so many people there. It was a lovely afternoon, which I will never forget. I was very lucky to have had the opportunity to be there.

Herbert Wolff
London SE1

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



The journey that ceramicist **Jenny Stolzenberg** began with her shoes of Auschwitz installation has now taken her a step further. In her latest work, **Strong at the Broken Places**, she reflects on the meaning of a truncated childhood. Her late father, a Holocaust survivor, was unable to communicate his experiences, so Jenny explores the issue of broken dreams by showing childish figures, seated, playing on the ground in their dungarees and doing the things children do, but for one fact. They are not there. The clothes, which she has shaped into ceramic form, sit on the chairs or play on the ground. Like ghosts in a horror film, the children only exist by their shapes. It represents for her a contemplation of human atrocity - how children can be broken by trauma.

Her new work is showing at the **London Gallery West** at the Harrow campus of Westminster University with that of seven other ceramicists, which included **Hilde Mjolsnes'** symbolic eggs attached to blood-red tubes and **Carole Chebron's** red porcelain apples. The show was stolen by a human installation provided in the

nude person of **Philip Lee**, who robotically walked towards a vessel of soft clay into which - I could only see from a digital camera in front of me - he immersed himself. More revealing than Philip's nudity were the expressions on the faces of the people who packed the room.

The National Gallery has invested £22 million into restoring the grand portico entrance, accentuating colour: marble columns in salmon pink and greens, vibrant Victorian ceiling work and a roomier lobby. The work seems more revelation than change: a monochrome layer cladding has been removed from the pillars to reveal their original marble, the main glass door has been enlarged and there are plans to expand the exhibition space.

Downstairs the NG has swapped its cathedral austerity for a clubbish atmosphere, with several terminals available to the public. This large room is painted in Japanese colours of black and terracotta red, with drawings by artists in the style of **Rembrandt**, **Canaletto** and **Vermeer**.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Gallery's benefactor, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, an exhibition in Room 1 opens with a group of seven paintings, including the stunning *Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling* by **Holbein**.

The NHMF has rescued the Gallery from the need to sell off works of art and the strictures imposed on its ability to buy new ones. In the 1980's things were different and people donated paintings. The economic change is reflected in the seven paintings on the walls which represent £7 million of public money. The top of the stairway now offers a view of Nelson's Column and Big Ben, according to Charles Suarez Smith, NG director. At a stretch you might also get a glimpse of **Marc Quinn's** controversial white marble statue of the disabled, pregnant artist, **Alison Lapper**. There she sits, 355 metres high, 13 tons in weight, staring out with insouciant dignity, at eye level with the high cupola of the National Gallery.

REVIEWS

A loyal and patriotic German Jew

MEIN LEBEN ALS JUDE IN
DEUTSCHLAND 1873-1939

by **Moses Goldschmidt**

ed. **Raymond Fromm**

Ellert & Richter Verlag GmbH,
Hamburg 2004, 208 pp.,
price unknown

This is a retrospective, autobiographical account of Moses Goldschmidt's life up to his emigration from Hamburg to Brazil, belatedly edited by his granddaughter's husband. Goldschmidt came from an orthodox family and the young Moses was required to attend synagogue twice a day. Although he asked for a Jewish funeral, it is not clear whether his religious beliefs survived into adult life. Indeed, there are some curious gaps: although, for example, we are told of his marriage in 1907 to Anita Friedmann, who predeceased him, and we learn quite a lot about his beloved three children, his wife remains a shadowy figure.

For anyone who loves Hamburg, the early chapters describing the history and life of this city, with its international connections and liberal tradition, will make for interesting reading. Goldschmidt gives us a charming and detailed description of his childhood years there, and his love of, and pride in, the city of his birth is evident. He became a doctor and we learn of his student life in Würzburg, where he developed a circle of good friends and was very happy. These were the good old days, at the turn of the century, when antisemitism did not seem to intrude into the life of educated German Jews.

Back in Hamburg, Goldschmidt became a much sought-after doctor and his medical experiences are described in detail, as are his medical friends and colleagues, many of them not Jewish. At one point, he became the resident doctor of the steamer *Itaparica* and this took him to Brazil, a country to which both his sons gravitated when economic conditions in Germany became problematic. His

medical practice in Hamburg flourished until the Nazi period took its toll in the late 1930s. Because of his profession, he escaped military service in the First World War but Goldschmidt was a loyal and patriotic German Jew, as were so many others.

We hear a great deal about his illnesses, his house purchases, his professional life and his children. His older son had the good sense to emigrate to Brazil, via Shanghai, as early as 1933, where he was later joined by his brother, who proved to be a not very successful businessman and gave his father considerable cause for concern. Ellen, his daughter, secured a job in Paris with a German firm and later married an Englishman, whose passport enabled them to leave France after the Germans had overrun it. It is striking that Goldschmidt himself did not consider leaving his beloved Hamburg for safety abroad until late in the day in 1939, when he joined his sons in Brazil.

As the author was of my father's generation, I had hoped to discover more about the life of Jews in the Nazi era but, although several interrogations by members of the Gestapo, in which he stood his ground courageously, are described, especially in connection with his proposed emigration, anyone keen to discover how the Nazis impinged on Jewish life, and how German Jews had to suffer increasing indignities and loss of liberty, will have to return to the brutally honest diaries of Viktor Klemperer. Although Goldschmidt does, of course, touch on this topic, it would seem that he did not feel especially oppressed by Hitler's racial laws, restrictions and humiliations. Perhaps he was partly shielded by his professional status and the more liberal, *laissez-faire* attitude prevalent in Hamburg.

His few years in Brazil - he died in 1943 - were depressing for him even though he developed great affection for his grandsons; he never came to terms with his rejection by the country he loved and he grieved at the loss of much of his wealth. His autobiography was never completed for it ends with his departure from Germany in 1939. Although he was extremely fortunate compared with the majority of his Jewish compatriots, he died, it would seem, a disappointed man.

The book, which is written in elegant,

old-fashioned German, has a scholarly introduction by the historian Ortwin Pelc on Jewish life in Germany between the time of the Kaiser and the National Socialists.

Leslie Baruch Brent

A letter to the stars

A LETTER TO THE STARS: SCHÜLER SCHREIBEN GESCHICHTE

Vienna: *Jugend und Volk*, 2005, 320 pp. www.lettertothestars.at (in German)

Almost two years ago I received, via the National Fund, a letter from Vienna asking for information about my grandfather, who, as an itinerant teacher of religion, had been a key figure in the scattered Jewish community of an area in Lower Austria known as the Mostviertel (Cider Area). The pupils of an agricultural school, the Francisco-Josephinium of Wieselburg, had carried out a project of researching the entire community through survivors around the world to gain an exact picture and, more important, to build a bridge to the survivors - but without forgetting for one moment the crimes committed against them and their families. But the schoolchildren had done more than this: they had rehabilitated the ruined Jewish cemetery of the area and created a memorial to the victims of the *Shoah*. I thought a project like this was well worth supporting and sent the teacher in charge both information and photographs.

Returning from a holiday abroad in June, I found to my delight that I had been sent a beautifully produced book that was a real revelation. The work done by the pupils in Wieselburg, it now emerged, was only part of a project carried out by thousands of pupils in over 400 schools and colleges throughout Austria. They had contacted, by letter and in some cases personally, many of the diminishing number of survivors. In some cases, close friendships had ensued between the refugees returning to Austria to visit 'their' researchers and the youngsters and their families. The book, which is, in fact, the second part of a series begun in 2003, contains a small selection of over 60 family and personal histories, lavishly illustrated

with black-and-white photographs of the young researchers, sometimes together with their 'subjects'. I was delighted to see my own family history and pictures among them. I spent most of my pre-Hitler summer holidays at my grandfather's home in the country and they had printed pictures of those days, supplied partly by myself and partly by a neighbour with whom I played as a child, now an old lady in a home in the same area.

In addition to all this, there are excellent photographs of a large rally of young people on the Heldenplatz, where thousands of balloons with messages to the victims had been symbolically released - 'A letter to the stars' - and of a memorial meeting at Mauthausen concentration camp where pigeons with messages to the 100,000 murdered there were released. The young people have also planted a large field of sunflowers in memory of the victims. The book contains a number of messages and articles by Dr Klestil, the former Austrian president, Simon Wiesenthal, Hannah Lessing and others.

I believe that the importance of the developments symbolised by this book cannot be overestimated. This generation will occupy decisive positions in Austria in the years to come. With their actions, they have no doubt learned an enormous amount. At last, if belatedly, an important section in Austria is facing the past in a way that will surely help in the battle to prevent any resurgence of the evils we all experienced.

Ernst Flesch

THEATRE

Standing up and saying no

SHOAH

Directed by Russ Tunney

Jackson Community Centre, Highgate, North London

'I have no words. I have no face. I have no memory.' So begins *Shoah*, a new play presented by award-winning theatre company Nuffield, deriving inspiration from artwork produced by Holocaust survivors themselves. Written by Helen Newall and Russ Tunney, who is also the director, the touring production is one hour long,

but succinctly tells the story of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved some 100,000 Jews in Budapest in 1944.

For a long time Newall and Tunney had wanted to write a play about the Holocaust and had begun researching the life of Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal. It was while carrying out this research that they found out about Wallenberg, of whose existence they had previously been unaware. According to Tunney, 'It struck me as unbelievable that people don't know about him and it became obvious that this was the story we needed to tell.'

The three actors - Michael Magnet (Wallenberg), David Hey (Adolf Eichmann) and Elena Joy Miller (Pal Szalai, a key member of the Hungarian Arrow Cross who passed vital information to Wallenberg) - use music and movement as well as an expert script to depict the tragedy of the Holocaust, which cannot always be put into words. 'How will the birds ever sing again?', asks Szalai, speaking of the atrocities. 'This is the beginning of the end.' Humour is used effectively but sparingly. Wallenberg reluctantly agrees to dine with Eichmann and, when asked how he finds Budapest, replies: 'Occupied.'

In January 1945 the Russians took over Budapest and captured Wallenberg, who was never seen again, although rumours still circulate about his disappearance. For the play's writers, the aim is to spread his story to a wider audience, which includes schools as well as art venues. 'This is a story of a man standing up and saying no', adds Tunney. 'And he makes such an impact through peaceful means.'

The play is touring on the following dates: 15-19 November - The Studio, Nuffield Theatre, Southampton; 24-26 November - Salisbury Playhouse; 1 December - Hexagon Theatre, Middlesbrough. For more information, contact the Nuffield Theatre on 023 8067 1771.

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Annely Juda Fine Art

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Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

Berlin memorial visit

The AJR is offering members a unique opportunity to visit the new Holocaust memorial in Berlin as part of a four-day AJR-organised trip to the capital of Germany. The visit is planned to coincide with the 61st anniversary of the end of the Second World War early next May.

At this stage, the precise itinerary has not been confirmed but the approximate cost will be £700, which includes flights, transfers, accommodation and breakfast.

In addition to the new Holocaust memorial, we are hoping to arrange visits to the Jewish Museum and the Wannsee Villa, where the 'Final Solution' was conceived and planned.

Owing to what we hope will be a full programme, this visit will not be suitable for people with walking difficulties.

To reserve one of the limited places on the trip, please phone Head Office on 020 8385 3070 or email Mrs Estelle Brookner at socialsec@ajr.org.uk

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Letter from Israel

Weddings in Israel provide endless material for anthropological study. There is no civil marriage; hence all weddings must be conducted in accordance with Jewish law. Since the authorities do not recognise Reform or Liberal Judaism, only the Orthodox rite is permitted. This sometimes gives rise to incongruous situations given the very varied character and level of religious observance of Israelis. Formerly, orthodox rabbis would insist on 'modest dress' for the bride, so that sleeveless wedding dresses were banned. Today, though, bare shoulders are almost *de rigueur*.

I recently attended two weddings which were diametrically opposed in nature. Both were occasions of great rejoicing, but utterly different in almost every respect. The first was that of a very orthodox young couple who had been introduced by a *shadchan*. The wedding was held in a settlement which may well become part of the future Palestinian state.

Men and women were seated separately (although there was also a *treife* area, where men and women could sit together). Dancing was strictly separate and both bride and groom wore long white dresses - the husband wore the traditional *kittel*. The wedding was followed by a week of dinner parties for the young couple, who were not allowed to sleep together after the first night for reasons of ritual 'uncleanliness'.

At the second wedding (which had been preceded by a civil wedding abroad), the bride wore a long red dress, very *décolletée*, and was seven months pregnant. She was radiant, a picture of health and happiness, and this was a true love match as well as a perfect example of the 'ingathering of the exiles'. The guests mingled freely and the atmosphere was very relaxed.

To my amazement, the orthodox rabbi did not bat an eyelid and blithely performed the ceremony, although the bride revealed large amounts of flesh. Once his task was completed, however, he beat a hasty retreat.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

I think it was Andy Warhol who said that everyone has their 15 minutes of fame. Walter Wolfgang, an 82-year-old Labour Party activist, has had far more than his fair share in that case: he became a media celebrity overnight when stewards bundled him out of this autumn's Labour Party conference in Brighton for shouting 'Nonsense' as Foreign Secretary Jack Straw was in full flow. He was then held briefly under anti-terrorist legislation until officials realised they had scored an own goal, providing the other parties with a propaganda gift on the theme of 'control freakery'. The error resulted in public apologies to Walter from the prime minister downwards.

When I phoned to make an appointment to meet, Walter was unable to see me for some time owing to his media commitments - interviews and meetings with, among others, Channel 4 and Radio 2. When I arrived at his flat in Richmond, Surrey - the flat in which his family settled in 1943 and in which he has lived ever since - he politely ushered me in before resuming a detailed telephone conversation with the BBC. In front of him lay a pile of newspaper cuttings on his ejection from the Labour conference.

As Walter chain-smoked away, I told him I was eager to talk about his German-Jewish background. He readily agreed but I sensed this subject was of far less interest to him than his career as a political activist. I was right. Before I could ask even one question, Walter began castigating what he saw as unquestioning pro-Israeli articles which had appeared in the *AJR Journal*, insisting that firm US pressure was essential to push Israel back to its pre-war boundaries and enable a Palestinian state to be born.

Walter was, he told me, an only child, born into a comfortable middle-class family in Frankfurt. His father was a handbag manufacturer. His parents could both trace their family lineage back several centuries. Walter was deeply conscious of his Jewish background; the family belonged to a progressive synagogue and he was sent to a Jewish school.

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Walter Wolfgang Fighter for justice



'Tony Blair is the worst leader the Labour Party has ever had, Ramsay MacDonald included. Mr Blair's instincts are basically those of a Tory. He picked up this cause [the Iraq war] from the Americans without even analysing it. I suspect that he is too theatrical even to realise that he is lying.'

Walter had an aunt and uncle in England with whom he stayed several times between 1937 and 1939. He took to the English way of life from the start. His parents, Hermann and Erna, finally joined him in England, his father having spent time in Buchenwald. Walter told me that his own application to volunteer for the RAF was turned down on the grounds that he was unfit. During and after the war he 'drifted' into accountancy, as he puts it.

I could see Walter was becoming restive, eager to talk about his life as a political activist. I asked what had

spurred his career as a left-wing activist. He gave me two fundamental reasons: his absolute loathing of war and all the suffering it necessarily entailed, and the fact that he was much influenced by the Jewish religion's prophetic call for justice.

Walter joined the Labour Party at the age of 25 after having obtained naturalisation in this country. He was to become a founding member of Britain's anti-nuclear movement and is a veteran of decades of anti-war protests - Suez, Vietnam, Iraq - including a sixties demonstration outside the American embassy in London, on which occasion he was arrested.

Recalling the superpower confrontation of the Cold War, Walter told me he regarded the US as the greater villain: it had conducted an overly aggressive foreign policy, while the USSR had been inclined to the defensive, hanging on with great difficulty to its East European satellites. For myself, I remained curious as to how Britain's abandonment of nuclear weapons would have served the goal of world peace. It seemed to me that such action by Britain could only have been seen by the former USSR as unconditional surrender, while in today's circumstances unilateral disarmament appeared to me an entirely impractical action. Walter brushed these arguments aside with unshakable conviction.

With regard to Iraq, Walter wrote in the press, in typical forthright manner, a day or two after his ejection from the Labour Party conference that 'Tony Blair is the worst leader the Labour Party has ever had, Ramsay MacDonald included. Mr Blair's instincts are basically those of a Tory. He picked up this cause [the Iraq war] from the Americans without even analysing it. I suspect that he is too theatrical even to realise that he is lying.'

I left Walter relishing the prospect of participating in a CND conference due to take place the following day. Perhaps I'm being unfair to him, or perhaps he might even have agreed with me, but I firmly gained the impression that he was a man to whom ideals were all.

INSIDE the AJR

Pinner peeks behind the scenes

The last Chief Clerk to the Queen, Gilly Middleburgh, gave us a fascinating glimpse of the quiet efficiency with which the office staff run the royal household. Among many other things, arrangements have to be made for garden parties, visiting dignitaries and journeys abroad. Gifts received are meticulously catalogued and thousands of letters answered with tact and dignity.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thur 3 Nov, 2.00 pm. Rev Malcolm Weisman, 'Are There Jews beyond Watford?'

Wessex musical lecture

Walter Woyda spoke to us about the musical based on the Franz Werfel story, 'Yakobowsky and the Colonel'. He described how the story was set to music by the well-known composer Jerry Herman and was successful on Broadway under the title 'The Grand Tour'.

George Ettinger

Next meeting: Tues 6 Dec

Ilford: walking for water

Our speaker having cancelled due to illness, Myrna Glass stepped into the breach with a talk on 'Walking for water' in Israel. One certainly has to be fit and able to get up at the crack of dawn and walk 15 miles each day.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wed 2 Nov. PC Mick Mooney, 'Taking Care in the Community'

North London outing to Runnymede

Nineteen of us went by coach to Runnymede, boarded a riverboat and travelled in glorious weather down the Thames to Windsor, where we split into smaller groups for lunch and sight-seeing. A truly lovely day.

Charlotte Stenham

East Midlands get-together in Market Bosworth

Ruth and Jurgen Schwiening hosted our late summer lunch meeting in their delightful 200-year-old house in Market Bosworth. Ruth, a highly talented artist, had much of her work displayed: it showed a Chagall influence and was of great interest to our members. We enjoyed an excellent lunch, socialising and renewing friendships.

Bob Norton

Hampstead Garden Suburb: a lucky life

Kindertransportee Peter Sinclair gave a most interesting talk on his army career and business life. Peter had become a major buyer of all kinds of merchandise when there were still shortages of everything in this country as well as in war-torn Continental Europe. He had been extremely lucky in all things - including his marriage - and could not speak highly enough of all the kindnesses he had experienced from English people.

Eva Frea

Next meeting: Mon 14 Nov. Anthony Newton LLB, 'Where There's a Will There's a Way'

Essex talk on claims payment

AJR's Michael Newman gave us details of the way the Central Office for Holocaust Claims has helped facilitate some £15 million of restitution and compensation payments to refugees from Nazi oppression. Some of the awards have been paid from programmes administered by the Claims Conference. He also described the Swiss Banks Settlement of 1998 and how the proceeds of this agreement were being distributed to survivors and refugees.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tues 13 Dec

South London update on Israel

Tanya Stern, from the Israel embassy, spoke about the controversial disengagement from Gaza, pointed out that the frequently criticised security fence had greatly reduced attacks by suicide bombers, and spoke of the guarded spirit of optimism for peace following the death of Arafat.

Alfred Kessler

Next meeting: Thur 17 Nov: Bertha Leverton

Brighton & Hove Sarid: conversion at 70

Daniel Parsons had been a headmaster and school inspector and had often been taken for a Jew because of his appearance, a fact he could not establish by means of research and which his family had never discussed. Following his retirement, he had finally converted at the age of 70.

Rudi Simmonds

Next meeting: Mon 21 Nov. Michael Newman update on claims and publicity

West Midlands (Birmingham): 'hidden children'

Corinne and Paul Oppenheimer described the conference in Amsterdam they had attended on the 'hidden children' of the Holocaust. Paul told us how, in this setting, he had met again the Birnbaum family who had befriended him and cared for his

sister Eva after the death of their parents.

Sonja Shindler

Lively meeting in Bradford

We had another successful meeting at the Mornington Hall of the Bradford Hebrew Congregation. Though quite a few of our regular participants were away on holiday, it was well attended and very lively. Future meetings are scheduled to be held about every two months.

Albert Waxman

Sheffield group's talented members

With so much talent within our own group we have had excellent meetings without recourse to outside speakers. At our penultimate meeting, Dr Otto Jakubovic reported on the reception on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. At our last meeting, Dr Miriam Jelinek spoke of her impressions of Prague after the war.

Steve Mendelsson

Next meeting: Sun 6 Nov

Busy afternoon in Harrogate

We were entertained by the reading of a selection of children's definitions of the word love. Two York members told us of the Rowntree Foundation's Supportive Housing, Hartrigg Oaks; Rosl and Mark Schatzberger had written to the AJR wondering if something similar was possible for members.

Inge Little

Next meeting: Wed 9 Nov

Glasgow celebrity interviews

Some 40 people attended a talk by Lorraine Jesner, who, as a hospital radio DJ, had had the idea of brightening up the station's daily offering of music with interviews with celebrities. To everyone's delight Lorraine played back conversations with Clive James, Jimmy Logan and the Glasgow actress Ida Schuster.

Steven Anson

Next meeting: Sun 11 Dec. Mid-winter sing-along with Irene Conway

Norfolk Indefatigables

Meeting at the Hebrew Congregation, the Norfolk Indefatigables talked and simultaneously consumed vast quantities of schmalz herring on caraway seed rye, all *shlepped* by Myrna from the fleshpots of the metropolis to us deprived provincials, with everybody contributing something too. Myrna gave us the latest news from Central Office and de-briefed us (not literally) on the joint Cambridge meeting in July. A good time was had by all.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: to be arranged

Liverpool discussion on looted art

Dr James Carmichael, speaking on 'Wandering European Art in the 30s and 40s', said that anything the Nazis couldn't understand, they didn't want to know or see. So modern art was hidden, burned or sold. For this reason pieces of art disappeared throughout Europe and to this day have not all been restored to their rightful owners. Fortunately, the Nazis also disliked 'Jewish physics and maths' and thus failed to develop the atom bomb.

Gerald Jayson

Next meeting: Thur 8 Dec: A musical pre-
Chanukah party

Cambridge: dispensing justice with compassion

One of our own members, Ilse Mann, gave us a delightful talk entitled 'Magistrates are Only Human' on her service as a magistrate in the town over many years. The importance of dispensing 'justice with compassion' was imparted with numerous interesting anecdotes.

Keith Lawson

North London: Kindertransport part of the English language

We were delighted to have the opportunity to hear Bertha Leverton's

account of the origins of the first Kindertransport reunion in 1989. We learned how the expected 100 people swelled to 1,000 from around the world and how old friends found each other after fearing they had lost their identity and were totally alone. Today the word Kindertransport is part of the English language and we know who to thank for that.

Frieda Stone

Next meeting: Thur 24 Nov. Erich Reich, 'Long Past, Ever Present'

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Oxford Tues 1 Nov, 10.45 am. Alf Keiles, 'The Jewish Contribution to Jazz'

SW Midlands Sun 6 Nov. Lunchtime get-together at home of Jacksons

Bristol/Bath Thur 10 Nov. Lunchtime get-together at home of Balint-Kurtis

Herts Tues 22 Nov. Social get-together at home of Monica Rosenbaum

Surrey Wed 23 Nov. Social get-together at home of Saunders

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

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KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
15 Cleve Road, London, NW6
Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 16 November 2005

Robert Rietti

Actor of Stage and Screen
on his experiences as an actor

KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT CLEVE ROAD

Monday 7 November 2005

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

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Sunday 2 pm - 5.30 pm

November Afternoon Entertainment:

Tue 1	CLOSED
Wed 2	Ann Kenton-Barker
Thur 3	Jen Gould
Sun 6	CLOSED
Mon 7	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 8	CLOSED
Wed 9	Kristallnacht Ceremony with Rabbi Rodney Mariner
Thur 10	Ronnie Goldberg
Sun 13	CLOSED
Mon 14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 15	CLOSED
Wed 16	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 17	Michael Heaton
Sun 20	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 21	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 22	CLOSED
Wed 23	Margaret Gibbs
Thur 24	Paul Coleman
Sun 27	CLOSED
Mon 28	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 29	CLOSED
Wed 30	Simon Gilbert

DIARY DATES

3-10 November 2005	Bournemouth holiday
9 November 2005	Kristallnacht
26 January 2006	Holocaust Memorial Day

For information about any of the above events, please call us on 020 8385 3070.

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

Lilo Duschinsky, wife of the late Erich (Dusch), died peacefully on 9 September 2005 with her family around her. She will be missed by her family and many friends. Her granddaughter said it all: 'Perhaps the best that we can ask from our lives is that we live fully - and in that she has been an inspiration.'

Randolph (Rolf) Howard died peacefully on 28 September 2005 at home aged 85. Born in Berlin in February 1920, he came to England in the spring of 1939 and joined the Pioneer Corps for the WW2 years, living for the next 52 years in Oxford, where he brought up his family. Whenever possible, he attended AJR meetings and loved nothing more than speaking his native German. He was a brave, gentle soul and will be sadly missed by those who knew him.

Day Centre

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates etc. Wednesday 2 November 9.30-11.45 am.

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KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE

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West Hampstead on
Wednesday 9 November at 2 pm

To help us plan the programme for the day
and to ensure we have an accurate number
of guests, please phone AJR Head Office on
020 8385 3070 to let them know if
you wish to attend.



A Yahrzeit Memorial in Jerusalem at the Shaare Zedek Medical Centre

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Obituaries

Simon Wiesenthal

Simon Wiesenthal, the most famous of 'Nazi-hunters', has died at the age of 96. Born in Buczacz, near Lwow (Lwow), he was educated at a local gymnasium, studied architectural engineering at Prague's Technical University, and returned to Lwow to set up in practice.

With Poland under Nazi occupation, he was sent to a labour camp near Lwow. At the end of the war he was in the Mauthausen concentration camp, which was liberated by the US Army. He organised relief work for displaced persons and the Americans also employed him to collect evidence for war crimes prosecutions. In 1947 he started his own Jewish Historical Documentation Centre in Linz. He closed it in 1954, moving its files to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

He later re-opened the centre in Vienna. As the Jewish Documentation Centre, it was to remain his base for the rest of his working life. Helped by a network of contacts, he painstakingly assembled dossiers on Nazi war criminals.

Wiesenthal is said to have been responsible for tracking down over 1,000 Nazi war criminals. Perhaps the best known of the cases with which he was

concerned was that of Adolf Eichmann. His role in providing the information leading to Eichmann's capture was vigorously disputed by the Israeli authorities.



In the mid-1970s he sued when Chancellor Bruno Kreisky implied he had been a collaborator. Kreisky backed down, withdrawing his charges in parliament.

In the late 1970s Wiesenthal entered into an uneasy relationship with the California backers of Rabbi Marvin Hier, who set up the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. In well-publicised disputes he clashed with, among others, the World Jewish Congress, in this instance over WJC charges that former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, who sought election as Austria's president in 1986, was a war criminal.

In 2003 he conceded that his work of Nazi-hunting was finally complete. In 2004 he was appointed honorary KBE for his work in bringing the perpetrators of the Holocaust to justice.

John Rayner

John Rayner, the foremost Progressive rabbi in the UK and Europe, has died at the age of 81. Born Hans Sigismund Rahmer in Berlin, he came to England in 1939 as a Kindertransportee. Educated at Durham School, he won a scholarship to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, which he took up in 1947 after serving four years in the Durham Light Infantry.

At Cambridge he read modern languages, philosophy, Hebrew and Aramaic, gaining a double first. Critical of Orthodoxy, he adopted Liberal Judaism. In 1953 he was ordained into the Liberal Jewish ministry, taking up his first pulpit at the South London Liberal Synagogue. Four years later he became associate minister at the St John's Wood flagship congregation, the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. In 1961 he became senior minister.

His sermons and lectures were models of clarity, passionate on occasion but always analytical and leavened with humour, and adamant in defence of humane values. In an article published in

Harpers & Queen in 1976 on the country's best preachers, he was featured along with Robert Runcie, then Bishop of St Albans.

In addition to congregational demands, he served as chairman of the Rabbinic Conference of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, chairman of the European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and three times as chairman of the Council for Reform and Liberal Rabbis.

Even more time-consuming was his involvement over 35 years with the Leo Baeck College, first as honorary director of studies, then as vice-president, and continuously as lecturer in liturgy and rabbinic literature.

As well as writing numerous pamphlets and articles expounding Liberal Judaism, he was a major liturgist, co-editing with Rabbi Chaim Stern outstanding contributions to Progressive worship. Modest, shy but always approachable, he was loved by his congregation and revered by his students. In 1993 he was appointed CBE for his interfaith work.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Hungarian Gold Train

The proposed distribution of monies in the \$25.5 million (approx. £14m) Hungarian Gold Train Settlement was approved by a Miami-based judge at the end of September. The litigation was brought against the US government by Hungarian Holocaust survivors for the plundering of an estimated \$200 million (approx. £111m) of their treasures in gold, jewellery, Oriental rugs, fabrics, personal possessions and artworks by US army troops during the Second World War.

Under the terms of the agreement, \$21 million (approx. £11.5m) is to be spent on social welfare services for Hungarian Nazi victims with limited incomes over a five-year period. While Hungarian survivors in Hungary, Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia or Romania will share \$19.9m, the balance of \$1.1m, or £600,000, will be shared among former Hungarians residing worldwide, including Great Britain.

The agreement also stipulates that \$500,000 will be used for the establishment of an archive relating to the events of the Gold Train and that \$3.75m is earmarked for lawyers' fees. A further \$125,000 is reserved for incentive awards to be paid to 25 class members who initiated the litigation.

The welfare programme is scheduled to begin on 1 January 2006 and the AJR, which is likely to be the administrator of monies for Hungarian survivors and refugees living in this country, will publicise details of how to apply in future editions of this column.

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 Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.



with Ronald Channing

Newsround

Combating racial hatred

It was the first time I had been invited to attend a political party conference, that of the Labour Party in Brighton. Alas, entry to the main auditorium was restricted to bona-fide party members, so I soaked up the sea breezes and the inevitable seafront demonstrations in the company of a multitude of police bent on preventing the repeat of any terrorist threat to the Grand Hotel and the government of the day.

My invitation was from the admirable Holocaust Education Trust, whose evening 'fringe' meeting discussed the significance of education for combating racial hatred. Among an array of contributing Labour stalwarts were Home Office Minister Paul Goggins, Stephen Twigg, former Minister for Education, Steve Simmott of the NUT teachers' union, former BNP activist Matthew Collins of *Searchlight* magazine, and Trevor Phillips, outspoken chairman of the Council for Racial Equality.

Holocaust survivor Roman Halter set the tone of the meeting by recounting his experiences as a young boy in Poland, one of just four children who survived the cold-blooded murder of his home town's Jewish community of 800. He stressed the importance of talking to schoolchildren so that they should learn the lessons of history.

Paul Goggins stated unequivocally that Holocaust Memorial Day 'is here and here to stay' and that the government would continue with its support. 'It is a substantial event of which education is a major element', he added. Stephen Twigg spoke of the Labour Party's pride in having introduced Holocaust Memorial Day. The Holocaust had not been accidental, but the organised policy of 'a modern, industrial and civilised state', said Trevor Phillips. He emphasised that 'it should remain Holocaust Memorial Day' as it was here for a special reason, and he endorsed the day maintaining 'its present format and its single focus'.

Beth Shalom's ten-year journey

Can it really be ten years since the then

completely unknown and independent Holocaust Education and Memorial Centre at Beth Shalom, in far-away Nottinghamshire countryside - the first Holocaust museum in Europe outside a concentration camp - was opened literally as an act of faith by the unbelievably dedicated Smith family? Thanks to an early opportunity for members of AJR's staff to visit Beth Shalom, I was able to put aside initial scepticism and fall under the spell of Stephen Smith's erudite talks, his mother Marina's warmth, and his brother James's compassion, and to communicate the power for good of this unique institution to the members of the AJR in this magazine.

In this decade, literally ten of thousands of adults and children have found a visit to Beth Shalom - its excellent museum of the Holocaust, beautiful gardens, vegetarian catering, modern publications, superb general ambience, and the challenges of a talk - a life-changing experience. This hitherto unknown spot in Central England has become a focus of attention in the study of the European Holocaust, a home from home for many refugees and survivors, and a centre of academic research which attracts scholars from all over the world, forging strong links with Yad Vashem in Israel and the Imperial War Museum in London.

Invited to a tenth anniversary celebration, guests (mostly refugees and survivors) were addressed by Dr James Smith, Professor Richard Rubinstein, Belsen survivor Rudi Oppenheimer, child survivor John Franzman, Holocaust authority Dr Margaret Brearley, the Mayor of Nottingham and Paddy Tipping MP. Dr Stephen Smith, who was recently appointed chairman of the national Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, introduced a compendium of themes relating to the past decade - presented in a marvellously moving book entitled *Witness*.

Throughout the decade the AJR has maintained its respect and support for Beth Shalom's ambitious and highly effective educational programmes.

Government gives reassurance over Holocaust Memorial Day

The British Government has given an assurance of its continued commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day. Members of Muslim groups are reported to have asked for it to be replaced by a Genocide Day.

Vienna 'peace agreement'

The leader of Vienna's Jewish community has come to an agreement with the Chabad Hasidic movement, ending a two-year conflict over the financing of Jewish infrastructures and the representation of the community in the Austrian capital. The 'peace treaty' was signed by Vienna's community chief Ariel Muzicant and Rabbi Jacob Biderman, director of Chabad.

Israeli President to visit Vatican

Israel's president, Moshe Katsav, is to make an historic visit to the Vatican this month, the first such visit by an Israeli president. Since becoming pontiff, Pope Benedict has hosted Israel's two chief rabbis and received an invitation from Prime Minister Sharon to visit the Jewish state.

Anti-Nazi bishop beatified

A German bishop known as the 'Lion of Muenster' has been beatified. Pope Benedict XVI hailed the 'heroic courage' of Clemens August von Galen and described him as a model for those in public roles today. Von Galen died in 1946, at the age of 68. Later, addressing pilgrims in St Peter's Square, Benedict praised the bishop for 'protecting the Jews and the weakest persons, whom the regime considered garbage to eliminate'.

Growth of Israeli population

According to figures just released by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, at the end of 2004 Israel's population was 6,869,500, constituting a rise of 1.9 per cent over the previous year. Jews constitute 5.24 million of the total. Sixty-five per cent of Jewish Israelis are native-born. Forty per cent are of European or American origin, while 16 per cent are from Africa, including 100,000 Ethiopians. In terms of distribution of the sexes, there are 1,000 women for every 967 men.