

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

From police chief in Berlin to refugee in Britain

The story of Dr Bernhard Weiß, who was Deputy President of Police in Berlin from 1927 until 1932 – in itself remarkable since he was Jewish – also has an unexpected final chapter. Weiß was one of the rare officials under the Weimar Republic who was actively committed to republican, democratic values; he defended Germany's young and vulnerable parliamentary democracy vigorously against its political enemies on both left and right and sought to inspire those under his command with the spirit of democratic policing. He ended his days in exile in Britain.

Bernhard Weiß's grandfather was born in Silesia in 1807, studied medicine and in 1837 moved to Oranienburg, outside Berlin, to practise. Weiß's father Max amassed a fortune in the grain trade, allowing Bernhard, who was born in Berlin in 1880, to study law and follow the profession of his choice. The family remained proudly conscious of its Jewish origins, but aspired to full assimilation into German society.

Weiß became a member of the Kuratorium (committee of governors) of the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, one of the most distinguished institutions of Jewish learning in Germany. But he also identified closely with the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith), which represented the assimilated German Jews who believed that their rightful place was in Germany, on equal terms with their fellow Germans; he was a founder member of the Anti-Zionist Committee.

Weiß remained a convinced German patriot throughout his life. After doing his military service in a Bavarian regiment, he succeeded in becoming an officer in the reserve. Unbaptised Jews could not be commissioned as officers in the pre-1914 Prussian Army. But since one of the concessions granted by Bismarck to the Kingdom of Bavaria in return for its



Dr Bernhard Weiß

accession to the German Empire in 1871 had been its retention of control over its army – in peacetime only, a typically Bismarckian stroke – it was possible for a handful of Jews to become reserve officers in the Royal Bavarian Army. When the First World War broke out, Weiß, like his three brothers, went straight into the army, where he rose from platoon leader in a medical company to captain in a cavalry unit, a quite exceptional advance.

In summer 1918, Weiß's talents as a lawyer and an officer led the Prussian Ministry of the Interior to take the extraordinary step of appointing him deputy head of the criminal police (Kripo) in Berlin, the first unbaptised Jew to hold such a position under the Empire. After the war, he presided over the democratisation of the Berlin police, defending and promoting the liberal, republican values of Germany's first parliamentary democracy and remodelling the Berlin police into a citizens' police force.

Weiß's first period of service coincided with the attempts of the radical left to

overthrow the new Republic. He fully supported the firm suppression of these insurrectionary activities by the government, which both at national level and in the state of Prussia was dominated by the Social Democrats (SPD). But whereas the SPD-led coalition government at national level lasted only until 1920, in Prussia the coalition of the SPD, the Catholic Centre Party and the Liberals of the Deutsche Demokratische Partei lasted until 1932. As Prussia covered about two thirds of Germany's territory, with nearly 60 per cent of its population, control over that state, and especially its police force, was a vital lever of power in Germany, where the army had been reduced to a mere 100,000 men by the Treaty of Versailles.

As head of the political police department of the Kripo, Weiß played a key role in countering the threat posed by the radical right to the Weimar Republic. When foreign minister Walther Rathenau, a Jew, was murdered by right-wing extremists in June 1922, in the most notorious political assassination of the Weimar period, it was Weiß's energetic pursuit that led to the cornering of the two killers; the posters the police put up in the manhunt bore Weiß's signature. Whatever their ideological differences, left- and right-wing extremists were united in their hostility to militant proponents of democracy like Weiß, for he was even-handed in pursuit of their illegal endeavours. In 1924, when a suspected spy took refuge in the Soviet Trade Mission's building, Weiß ordered a police search of the premises, ignoring its diplomatic immunity. For this he had to be moved to a position in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior.

Weiß's career reached its highpoint when he was appointed head of the Kripo in 1925, then Deputy President of the Berlin police force in 1927. A more forceful and energetic figure than his nominal superior, Police President Karl Zörgiebel, Weiß became the public face of the police in the capital; Berliners

continued overleaf

FROM POLICE CHIEF IN BERLIN TO REFUGEE IN BRITAIN continued from page 1

simply called him 'ViPoPrä' (Vizepolizei-präsident), in a characteristic combination of affection and disrespect for authority.

Weiß became involved in a highly personalised conflict with Joseph Goebbels, whom Hitler had sent to Berlin in 1926 to lead the Nazi onslaught on the capital. Weiß stood for everything Goebbels loathed: as a Jew in a position of authority in the hated democratic 'system' of Weimar, the Deputy President of Police seemed to symbolise the 'imposition' of 'unGerman' elements on the German people in the wake of the defeat of 1918. Goebbels tried to smear Weiß by portraying him as a caricature Jew and calling him 'Isidor', supposedly a quintessentially Eastern Jewish name. Presumably the irony of a German who himself boasted the Biblical name Joseph foisting a supposedly antisemitic label onto a Jew with the solidly German name Bernhard was lost on Hitler's future Minister of Propaganda.

Weiß reacted to Goebbels's depiction of him in *Der Angriff* and other Nazi publications with a string of lawsuits for defamation; he won his case in court repeatedly, but failed to silence his opponent. As Dietz Bering has shown in his studies *Der Name als Stigma* and *Kampf um Namen: Bernhard Weiß gegen Joseph Goebbels*, Goebbels's use of the name Isidor to stigmatise Weiß was a classic example of the Nazi use of negative stereotypes to marginalise and demonise Jews. More recently, David Irving's treatment of this episode in his biography of Goebbels made it an issue in the libel case that Irving unsuccessfully brought against Professor Deborah Lipstadt.

Weiß's fortunes waned with those of the Weimar Republic. The elections of September 1930 brought 108 Nazis into the Reichstag, precipitating the Republic's terminal crisis. In May 1931 some of these deputies beat up an SPD member, a defector from their ranks, within the Reichstag precincts. When the President of the Reichstag called in the police, Weiß led them in person; he was greeted by cries of 'Isidor' from the Nazi benches. It was a measure of the extent to which the political climate had altered that public criticism focused more on the Jew who had led the police intervention in parliament than on the violence that had necessitated it.

The deposition of the Prussian government by Chancellor Franz von Papen on 20 July 1932, an arguably

unconstitutional act by a reactionary regime bent on eliminating the last remaining bastion of democracy in Germany, led to Weiß's immediate removal from office. Faced with the declaration of a state of siege and the threat of army intervention, the democratically elected Prussian ministers bowed to Papen's show of force and left their posts without resistance. Typically, it was Weiß who convinced Police President Albert Grzesinski at least to issue a written protest contesting the legal grounds for the *Preußenschlag*. In a few months' time, after 30 January 1933, control over the Berlin police force was to pass to a new Prussian Minister of the Interior, Hermann Göring, and with it the means of eliminating political opposition to Hitler.

Weiß had to flee Germany once the Nazi regime consolidated its power. He went to Prague in March 1933, then moved to London in January 1934, where he lived with his wife Lotte and their daughter until his death on 29 July 1951. His name was on the first list of those stripped of their German citizenship by the Nazis. Sadly, he was among those who proved unable to adapt to life in exile. Supported by a generous benefactor, he eventually set himself up in the printing trade. He was interned briefly when war broke out, spending two months in a Butlin's holiday camp at Clacton, which he called 'the best holiday of his life'.

Otherwise, the 17 years that he spent in Britain passed in obscurity. He made one return visit to Germany after the war, and his dearest wish was to regain German nationality; despite everything, Weiß still regarded Germany as his 'deutsches Vaterland'. It was perhaps symbolic that news of the return of his German citizenship reached him as he was about to be taken to the hospital where he died of cancer. He is buried in the Jewish cemetery in Pound Lane, Willesden.

Anthony Grenville

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Views expressed in the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of
THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES
TUESDAY 3 JUNE 2008, 11.00 AM

at the Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Lunch, if required, £5 payable in advance

Agenda

Annual Report 2007
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion

Election of Committee of Management
All questions for the chair should be submitted by Tues 13 May to the Head of Administration at Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx. HA7 4RL.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The following members will be proposed for election or re-election to the Committee at the AGM on Tuesday 3 June 2008:

Mr A C Kaufman, Chairman*, Mr W D Rothenberg*, Vice Chairman & Hon. Treasurer, Mrs E S Angel, Secretary*, Mr C W Dunston, Trustee*, Mrs D Franklin, Trustee, Mrs G R Glassman, Trustee*, Mrs J Millan, Mr E Reich*, Mr A Spiro

*Committee members retiring by rotation and being proposed for re-election

Anyone wishing to propose any other member for election as Hon Officer, Trustee, or Committee member must submit to AJR's Head of Administration such a proposal signed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting and with the signed agreement of the person being proposed no later than 13 May.

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY – MAY

To 29 June 'Lifelong Impressions – Paintings, Prints and Drawings by Milein Cosman', Hampstead Museum, Burgh House, New End Square, London NW3. Contact Dina Wosner on 020 8371 7371. Sponsored by Burgh House and Hampstead Museum, AJR and Jewish Museum

Mon 5 No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43

Mon 12 Hans Seelig, 'Chopin: A Romantic Composer, Innovator and Craftsman' Club 43

Thur 15 Monica Bohm-Duchen, 'Exiles, Emigrés and Eccentrics: Artistic Life in Hampstead in the 1930s-40s' Burgh House, 7.30 pm. Contact Dina Wosner on 020 8371 7371

Thur 15 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. Dr Ross White, 'Anne Frank – Beyond the Diary' Kenton Synagogue Hall, 8.15 pm. Tel Tom Heinemann on 07973 137 718

Mon 19 HE The Austrian Ambassador Gabriele Matzner-Holzer, '70 Years after the Anschluss: How the Austrians Learned to Love ... Democracy' Club 43

Mon 26 No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43

Thur 29 'Milein Cosman in Conversation with Dr Bea Lewkowicz', Burgh House, 3 pm. Contact Dina Wosner on 020 8371 7371

Thur 1 May 'Yom Hashoah – Recalling the Kindertransports' At Pinner Synagogue. This year's focus: the 70th anniversary of the Kindertransports. Speakers: Hermann Hirschberger, Susi Bechhofer. 8.00 pm

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Hans Seelig on 01442 254360

The rabbi and the parish priest

My first contact with Dr Rudolf Kutschera, the parish priest of St Ulrich in Walchensee, a lovely village in the Bavarian mountains, was an email he sent me last year seeking information about the time when my parents had had a weekend timber bungalow in the village. Our family had spent all our holidays there – spring, summer, autumn and winter. There



Dr Rudolf Kutschera, Bea Green (the author's sister), Rabbi Dr Tom Kucera

were mountains and trees to climb, a lake to swim in, a boat to row, woods in which to pick wild mushrooms and berries, and, of course, friends to play with. These were happy times for my parents, my younger sister and me – until the mid-1930s.

Three German-Jewish families had holiday homes in Walchensee: the Bernsteins from Chemnitz in Saxony, the Eisners from Berlin, and my family, the Siegels, from Munich. The Bernsteins' two daughters, the Eisners' two sons and my sister and I always played together. The Seeligers lived there permanently. He, a well-known author, was not Jewish but he had a Jewish wife.

I told Dr Kutschera whatever I could remember about our wonderful holidays. He felt strongly that he had to tell the present local generation everything about the fate of the German Jews who had had homes in the village. This is how the idea of a commemorative plaque originated.

The Nazis had a small presence in Walchensee and by 1938 had made it impossible for the Jewish families to continue to visit the village. All four families were forced to sell their homes for a pittance to non-Jewish buyers. Fortunately, all survived the Holocaust.

The Bernsteins found refuge in Montevideo. The Eisners came to the UK, as did my sister and I. Our parents managed to get a visa as late as 1940 for Peru, where they spent the rest of their lives. The Seeligers, by then elderly, went to live in obscurity in Cham, a small town in the Upper Palatinate in Bavaria (it was sometimes possible for mixed-faith marriages to survive in Nazi Germany when the non-Jewish partner refused to divorce).

I met Dr Rudolf Kutschera in March 2007, when he came to visit me in a Munich hotel, accompanied by three of his parishioners. I was there on the occasion of the opening of the new Jewish museum. I told him about Rabbi Dr Tom Kucera's earlier connection with the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue and his present activity in Munich. Rudolf then invited him to speak on the occasion of the dedication of the plaque on Sunday 10 February 2008 in the St Ulrich parish church in Walchensee.



The rest, as they say, is history. In case you are left wondering about the similarity of the Kutschera/Kucera names, both are of Czech origin and mean 'the one with the curly hair'.

Peter Sinclair

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AJR Annual Report 2007

Highlights of the year

Throughout 2007 we organised various events that helped us reach out to almost 200 new members and we were delighted to welcome many existing members to participate in events for the first time.

Following on from the successful visit to Berlin the previous May, we organised a four-day cultural trip to Vienna. Participants enjoyed a tour of the Austrian capital as well as excursions to the Jewish Museum and the Volksoper. We also organised guest speakers and an opportunity to enjoy *Kaffee und Kuchen* in traditional Viennese coffee houses.

The three-day November visit to London for members living in Scotland and the North of England was also repeated. As last year, members enjoyed a tour of the Bevis Marks Synagogue and a commemorative visit to the Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station. We also organised a guided tour of the Jewish East End of London, a visit to the Wallace Collection and a trip to the Wiener Library. Out-of-town members joined the London regional groups for a dinner at the Belsize Square Synagogue, where we were delighted to welcome Anna Raeburn as our guest speaker. The visit concluded with a lunch at the AJR Centre, where Rabbi Mariner led a service to commemorate the 69th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

We were amazed and delighted to welcome almost 400 guests to our Annual Tea, which we held for the third year running at the Watford Hilton. We were greatly entertained by Glenys Groves and colleagues from The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and the English National Opera who performed *An Afternoon of Opera and Songs*.

Personnel and membership

At the end of 2007 we said farewell to five members of staff who had given dedicated service to the AJR over a number of years. Ernie Goldmann retired from our accounts department, Ronald Channing as a former Director and the

AJR's link to the Kindertransport, and Dee Frankel as a receptionist at the AJR Centre. The social services department had two retirees: Marcia Goodman as Head of Social Services and Norah Gittins, who retired as a social worker after 25 years' dedicated service.

Although she began her work in February this year, Maisie Holland was appointed the new Head of Social Services last December and Darren Aaron was recruited to the social services department. Esther Rinkoff joined the AJR in September as the third southern region's group co-ordinator.

During 2007 we enrolled 197 members (235 in 2006) – including 55 from the 'second generation' – bringing our total membership to 3,202 (3,222 in 2006).

Social and welfare services

The social work team continues to offer the best possible support, advice and assistance to our members throughout the country with an ever-growing number of referrals for help paid for through our Homecare service. As well as visiting clients throughout the country, the social services team makes assessments for a number of programmes to assist members with limited means.

The social workers also make applications to a number of programmes administered by the Claims Conference with monies negotiated from, among others, the German and Austrian governments, the Swiss banks and European insurance companies. The social workers' overriding objective is to maintain clients in their own homes for as long as possible.

Our social workers liaise closely with the AJR Centre, the regional groups and the claims office to identify and assist any member who may be in need of our services.

The team also works closely with colleagues from other organisations serving Holocaust survivors to exchange ideas, share clients and plan the provision of future services.

Our welfare benefits expert continued to help members with claims for Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Benefit.

Regional groups

With the recruitment of Esther Rinkoff as a third group co-ordinator in the south of the country, we were able to start new groups in Radlett and Temple Fortune as well as a smaller Continental Friends gathering in Kingston for members to the west of London. We now operate 41 groups, including 14 in the North of England and Scotland, and hope to expand further throughout 2008.

In 2007 we experienced an overall increase of over 10 per cent in the number of members participating in events, with many members attending regularly and in more than one locality. Altogether, there were 3,496 attendances (3,151 in 2006) at group meetings, with approximately one third of our membership attending at least one regional group meeting throughout the year.

To commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, members of the Newcastle group organised, edited and published a Holocaust memorial book. Like the memorial book arranged by the Leeds group together with the Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association (HSFA), the book contains the names of family members who perished in the Holocaust from our members now living in the Newcastle area. The AJR Charitable Trust was delighted to make a contribution towards the cost of creating the book. By request, copies of the book are now in the archives at Yad Vashem in Israel, the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, and the Imperial War Museum and Wiener Library in London.

Regional get-togethers

We organised a gathering of over 100 members from groups across North London and Hertfordshire at a regional get-together in Radlett, where guest

speaker Professor Geoffrey Alderman gave a fascinating historical overview of the Jewish community's response to the Holocaust.

Stephen Smith MBE was our guest at the northern groups' regional meeting in Leeds last August. He spoke about the work of the Holocaust Centre at Beth Shalom and the continuing need for Holocaust education, especially in the light of current atrocities.

Members of the Scottish and Newcastle groups, meeting in Edinburgh, heard from two guest speakers. Paul Tyack spoke about the work of the Anne Frank Trust, including AJR's support for their prison speaker's programme, while Heartstone director Sitakumari gave an update on the Holocaust Memorial for Scotland.

Holidays

In July we held our annual northern holiday in St Annes-on-Sea, where members from Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford and London enjoyed a relaxing week. As has become part of the programme, the holiday-makers were joined by members from the northern groups during the week to enjoy a day out in St Annes.

We also organised two holidays for our southern members, with trips to Bournemouth at the end of July and Eastbourne in November.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

With the winding up of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, many claimants finally received notifications or payments in connection with claims for insurance policies taken out prior to the Second World War.

The Austrian General Settlement Fund (GSF) continued to process applications, with claimants beginning to receive notices of payments towards the end of 2007. The Fund expects to complete its work by the end of 2009.

The German Government announced the creation of a 100 million euro Fund to make one-time awards to Holocaust survivors who voluntarily worked in ghettos under German occupation during the Second World War. The

Fund was established after criticism that some 61,000 out of 70,000 claims for a ghetto pension had been rejected.

A list of approximately 7,000 names of owners of bank accounts and other properties in Israel that were not claimed after the Second World War was published on a website in Israel.

Volunteers

Our dedicated volunteers continue to assist the day-to-day work of our organisation. As well as making home visits, they helped out at Head Office, at the AJR Centre and at regional group meetings. Rita Rosenbaum continues to arrange for the *AJR Journal* to be recorded and distributed for blind and disabled members.

Volunteers continued to receive support and supervision as well as the opportunity to attend volunteer forums held, in the latter part of the year, in conjunction with volunteers at the Holocaust Survivors Centre. We also continued to work closely with other organisations, including various London universities and B'nai B'rith 1st Unity Lodge.

In 2007 we became part of the Jewish Volunteer Network and have continued to take students on work placements from Jewish secondary schools. We also continued our association with Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, arranging for four students from Poland and Germany to act as 'befrienders' for our members.

Journal

It was a year of continuity. Consultant Editor Dr Anthony Grenville continued to contribute historical articles relating, for the most part, to political developments in readers' lives. Martha Blend, Emma Klein, Gloria Tessler and others contributed incisive reviews of books, plays, films and exhibitions. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson, who took over Ronald Channing's much-appreciated backpage column, provided a thoughtful Israeli perspective. Humour, tinged with more than a dash of nostalgia, was injected into articles primarily by Victor Ross. Reports in the 'Inside the AJR' pages reflected the rapidly increasing number of AJR groups up and down the country.

The correspondence columns remained an especially lively section of the Journal, with letter-writers relating, among many other things, their experiences of the Kindertransport, resettlement in the UK and internment and, of course, vigorously crossing swords over the latest developments in the Arab-Israel conflict.

AJR Centre

The Paul Balint AJR Centre celebrated another active year, providing a warm and friendly mix of food, entertainment and outings, with the monthly Luncheon Club and Kindertransport lunches continuing to thrive.

As well as serving continental-style lunches, the Centre delivered an ever-increasing number of Meals on Wheels. Following the closure of Daleham Gardens, the Centre now caters for members who used to attend the B'nai B'rith lunches there.

Alongside our popular keep fit classes on Wednesdays and Thursdays and our lively and interesting weekly discussion group, we introduced relaxation classes, which have met with much approval from the members.

The Centre also hosted a number of events, including a Kristallnacht service followed by lunch attended by members from Scotland and the North of England, a Seder, led as elegantly as ever by Reverend Larry Fine, and two Chanukah parties, including one for the Kinder. We also organised a reunion lunch for members who visited Berlin the previous May.

For the third year running, the Centre catered for the AGM and provided the Tea for our Holocaust Memorial Day service at Belsize Square Synagogue.

Kindertransport

The KT-AJR planning committee began preparations for a 70th anniversary reunion scheduled to take place in November 2008 at the JFS in North-West London. The gathering will comprise a service of remembrance, presentations and speeches by Kinder and invited guests as well as lunch, a panel discussion and a klezmer concert. As part of the lead-up to the main gathering, Kinder will make commemorative visits to the House of Lords, the Imperial War Museum, the Kinder

Annual Report continued from page 5

statue at Liverpool Street Station and the Bevis Marks Synagogue.

Work continued on gathering information about the Kinder and documenting their lives, their experiences before and after the Second World War and their contribution to life in Britain.

Alongside the ever popular Kinder-transport Newsletter, expertly edited by Bertha Leverton, the Kinder continued to sell out their monthly luncheon meetings – including guest speakers – at the AJR Centre.

Refugee Voices and education

Dr Anthony Grenville and Dr Bea Lewkowicz completed the interviewing of 150 refugees and survivors for the *Refugee Voices* project. Work is now well under way to explore opportunities to make the Holocaust testimony collection, which includes fully transcribed and edited interviews as well as a catalogue of information about each interviewee, available to institutions and academics.

In addition to funding the *Refugee Voices* project, the AJR Charitable Trust continued to meet its commitment to sponsor institutions providing Holocaust education, including the Wiener Library, Beth Shalom and the University of Glasgow.

Altogether another extremely busy year. Our dedicated staff continue to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that we are able to provide for our members in order that they may enjoy a more comfortable life.

Andrew Kaufman
Chairman

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Finance Report

AJR – Income and Expenditure Account
Year ended 31st December 2007

Income:	2007		2006	
	£	£	£	£
Membership/Donations and Legacies	84,456		81,604	
Other	<u>5,323</u>		<u>7,208</u>	
		89,779		88,812
Less:				
Overhead Expenses				
Salary Costs	66,872		84,317	
AJR Journal	54,487		52,646	
Administration/Depreciation	<u>27,186</u>		<u>23,003</u>	
		<u>146,545</u>		<u>159,966</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus:		-56,766		-71,154

Summary of Balance Sheet at 31st December 2007

	2007	2006
	£	£
Current Assets	167,316	223,738
Less: Current Liabilities	<u>2,448</u>	<u>2,104</u>
	164,868	221,634
Represented by:		
General Fund	221,634	292,788
Net deficiency for the year	<u>-56,766</u>	<u>-71,154</u>
	164,868	221,634

David Rothenberg, Hon. Treasurer 01/04/2008

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE Summary figure for the year ended 31st December 2007

Income:	2007		2006	
	£	£	£	£
Takings – Day Centre and meals-on-wheels	74,871		82,862	
Donations received	<u>0</u>	<u>74,871</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>82,862</u>
Less outgoings:				
Salaries	96,666		96,025	
Catering costs	178,497		180,887	
Sundry expenses	<u>93,843</u>	<u>369,006</u>	<u>80,758</u>	<u>357,670</u>
Deficit funded from Charitable Trust		294,135		-274,808

AJR CHARITABLE TRUST – Summary Income and Expenditure Accounts Year ended 31st December 2007

	2007	2006
Income:		
Covenants/Donations/Claims Conference	527,190	678,561
Investment income	644,124	522,698
Sheltered housing	<u>35,145</u>	<u>42,086</u>
	1,206,459	1,243,345
Legacies	<u>1,180,090</u>	<u>1,108,544</u>
	<u>2,386,549</u>	<u>2,351,889</u>
Less outgoings:		
Day Centre	276,800	274,808
Self Aid, Homecare and Emergency Grants	849,256	771,731
Other organisations	243,390	298,223
Administration/Depreciation	<u>1,072,982</u>	<u>941,580</u>
	<u>2,442,428</u>	<u>2,286,342</u>
Surplus on realised and unrealised investments	123,252	1,043,350
Net Movement in Funds	<u>122,556</u>	<u>1,341,910</u>
	<u>245,808</u>	<u>2,385,260</u>

*Figures are unaudited

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

CLOTHES HANGERS 'OUR INHERITANCE'

Sir – I was delighted to read Hana Nermut (March, Letters) on how a simple clothes hanger brought back memories of people who mean so much to us. These anecdotes are our inheritance. We have little else.

I was reminded of my own clothes hangers, which I inherited from my aunt. Tante Liese (Krämer) came to England on a domestic permit. She scrubbed floors in York after having run the 'Hort', perhaps the most desirable Froebel Kindergarten in Frankfurt.

When as a young woman my mother tried to tidy my aunt's wardrobe, she would sneak into her room to 'borrow' a few clothes hangers. Every now and then she would 'make amends' by buying some plain wooden hangers, incising on them the words 'gestohlen bei Liese'.

In June 1939, aged 10, I reached England with the KT. As an adult, I visited my aunt regularly. When she died I inherited her few possessions, among them the clothes hangers. They are my treasure.

Ruth David
Ames, Iowa, USA

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Sir – Having had my naturalisation certificate stolen years ago, I recently needed a copy of it. I visited the National Archives at Kew, where I was able to order a copy. I was charged £50 for a 'certified' one – £25 per page. After protesting to my MP, I received a refund.

While at the National Archives, I also made copies of documents relating to 'Kinder' who found themselves orphans at the end of the war and were granted British citizenship free of charge under a special dispensation (1946-47). Access to these files is restricted to the people concerned.

In February, I received a letter from Catherine Hodgkinson, Freedom of Information assessor of the Records Management and Cataloguing Department at the National Archives, stating that the files the Home Office held on us would now be made available at the National Archives in Kew subject to the provisions of the 1998 Data Information Act. I was locked in a room to examine my file and that of my wife (also a Kind). As there were 80

documents in all, I paid to have them copied. I was surprised to find how much information the 'authorities' had on us.

Anyone whose memory is not what it was and is anxious about his/her past will be well rewarded by contacting the National Archives, whose staff are more than helpful – even to a computer-illiterate like me.

Ernest Kolman
Greenford, Middx

A PLAQUE FOR BISHOP GEORGE BELL

Sir – We are sponsoring a plaque to be affixed in the former home of Bishop George Bell of Chichester to commemorate his exertions, which helped nearly 10,000 Jewish children under the age of 16 to be admitted to this country prior to the outbreak of the Second World War and other refugees during the Nazi period in Germany. The opening is planned for 5 October 2008.

Have any of your readers who arrived on the Kindertransport recollections of fellow children or their descendents who became prominent celebrities? We would like to invite interested persons and hope you will be able to come. Meanwhile, thanks for any help you can give us in good time so that we can plan accordingly.

Mr W. E. Norton
Hermann Maas Stiftung
London SW3

GDANSK ANNIVERSARY

Sir – Last October, I was asked by Mieczyslaw Abramowicz, a Polish-Jewish writer and historian from Gdansk, if I could find men and women from Danzig (now Gdansk) sent to Britain on the Kindertransport.

With the help of *Hadashot* and the *AJR Journal*, I located 30 living in the UK. The mayor of Gdansk, Pawel Adamowicz, came to London to meet them. He also laid a wreath at the monument commemorating the arrival of those children at Liverpool Street Station.

The meeting, at the Polish embassy, was attended by around 20 ex-Danzigers, some with their spouses and even (adult) children. Each of the assembled ex-Kinder spoke about their experiences. Many brought memorabilia, which Abramowicz will use for his forthcoming book on the

Jews of Danzig and which will be deposited in the Gdansk museum.

The mayor is inviting all ex-Danzigers to visit Gdansk in May 2009 to mark the 70th anniversary of the German invasion of Danzig and Poland. Health and old age permitting, I, my wife and our two sons are going!

Alex Lawrence
Marlow

BAD POLES AND GOOD POLES

Sir – Rubin Katz (March) generalises about the Poles. Yes, there were bad Poles. I know about Jedwabne, Kielce and Crakow. But my life was saved by Poles on several occasions during the Second World War. Yes, there were bad Poles. Yes, there were bad Englishmen.

Ron Leaton (*Roman Licht*)
London NW8

THE OLYMPICS: MEMORIES OF 1936

Sir – Watching the 'Free Tibet' protestors on London's streets and wishing I could support them, having seen the horror of the Cultural Revolution in Lhasa and elsewhere, my mind went back to 1936 and the demonstrations over another Olympic torch – this time in Vienna en route to Berlin. Visiting my aunt, who lived on the Opernring, I had to cross the Opernplatz and the Ring. I now know that I was nearer the fringe than the centre of the demonstration and – while I don't remember any slogans – the atmosphere was hate-filled. Frightening. Strange, I don't remember seeing any police.

Francis Deutsch
Saffron Walden

MIXED FEELINGS OVER HAKOAH RE-OPENING

Sir – It was with mixed feelings that I read in your Journal that Hakoah Sports Club has re-opened in Vienna. My late father, Dr Marcus Pfeffer, was one of its doctors and he was very proud of its pre-war achievements. He never tired of telling me that in 1924-25 the Hakoah football team won the Austrian League Championship, and that in 1923 they beat West Ham United 5-0 – the first foreign team to beat an English one on English soil.

But was Dr Ariel Muzicant, the leader of the Austrian Jewish community, right in using Holocaust survivors' money to fund the re-opening, particularly bearing in mind how few Jews remain in Vienna? The money should perhaps have gone to the General Settlement Fund to help compensate victims a little more generously than the GSF was able. I would be grateful to know what your other readers think.

Peter Phillips
Loudwater, Herts

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND THE EU
 Sir – In his article (April) in favour of further EU integration, Mr Grenville admitted that some problems are best dealt with at national level. The question is where the line is to be drawn. The arguments against further European integration are that the present EU is both corrupt and unaccountable.

By and large, MEPs are superannuated politicians who have failed in their home countries and have been pensioned off to Brussels and Strasbourg. They are not approachable. I see my local MP perhaps twice a year without trying. If I wish to bend his ear, he has surgeries. He replies politely to my letters. Most of the time, MEPs are not even in the country. In terms of the European Parliament, the voice of the individual voter is unheard.

The European Parliament is far more corrupt than the UK Parliament, partly because of its lack of accountability. The EU accounts have been rejected by the auditors for the past 12 years. Would you work for a firm with that record? The MEPs have stolidly rejected all attempts to get them to account for their huge expenses – an order of magnitude higher than those of MPs, and MPs are being forced to come clean.

I have done a job for the EU, in the course of which the UN representative in an East European country explained to me that the EU was totally committed to giving money away, even when it could be demonstrated that the money was going astray. The recent report 'Europe's Hidden Hand: EU Funding for Political NGOs in the Arab-Israel Conflict' details the lack of transparency and accountability in the EU. In 2005-07, it provided tens of millions of euros to organisations whose activities directly contradict EU policy. The EU is funding Arab terror. I see no signs that the issues of corruption and accountability are going to be cleared up – hence I oppose any further sacrifice of national sovereignty.

*Professor Bryan Reuben
 London N3*

Sir – I always enjoy Dr Anthony Grenville's brilliant, if occasionally controversial, front-page articles. However, in his current piece on national sovereignty and national interest, there are a number of statements which seem misleading. For instance, how can the writer expect us to swallow his comparison of the United States' obvious national homogeneity with the very different individual, historical, linguistic and traditional idiosyncrasies of each EU member country, large or small? We may be getting on in age, but we are not all senile.

Should a recession hit a country like Germany, would they not love to be in the same situation as the UK or

Switzerland, who are still in a position to control their own individual rate of interest? With a number of East European economically weak countries forming part of the single Euro currency zone, does Dr Grenville expect us to believe that such a financial arrangement can always be immune to potential major fluctuations? There certainly are benefits of belonging to a single currency, but a chain can only be as strong as its weakest link.

Economic history has demonstrated time and time again that free trade can be implemented only between independent sovereign nations.

The mounting cases of convicted criminals to invoke their 'human rights' tend to make people increasingly concerned about their own safety from knife attacks etc. The human rights lawyers are laughing all the way to the bank.

Finally, we all know that Blair and Brown failed to honour their undertakings to hold a referendum as regards joining the EU Constitution. Gordon Brown's semi-clandestine manner of signing the Treaty of Lisbon without discussing it in Parliament speaks for itself. So much for 'democratic decisions'.

*Dr Frederick W. Rosner
 Europ Marketing Consultants
 London E15*

POINTS OF VIEW

Sir – May I be permitted to comment on several topics raised in your April issue.

Helga Zitcer's quotation 'Heil Schuschnigg, unser Führer ...' was not known to me in Vienna. I do, however, recall another one, sung by boys in my seventh form: 'Haut's as 'raus, die ganze Judenbande, haut's as 'raus, aus unserm Vaterlande.'

On another aspect of that period, I did not experience Jussi Brainin's claim that 'one had to become a member of the Vaterländische Front', although I generally share his feelings in respect of Vienna.

Inge Trott pleads for Israel to 'talk to Hamas'. The comparison with British policy in respect of the IRA does not hold good. The IRA did not want to abolish Great Britain. Hamas aims to abolish the state of Israel. The reality is surely that neither side trusts the other: the first step has to be that Hamas (and all other Islamist organisations) recognises Israel's existence.

Alan S. Kaye is surely correct in stating that the name Palestine was applied to the region well before the war, but he is wrong in implying that the Arabs who settled there called themselves Palestinians. What is more, they rejected the United Nations' offer of a Palestinian state. It is very unlikely that the six Arab states which made war on Israel in 1948 intended the creation of a Palestinian state. From 1948 to 1967 Egypt and Jordan were respectively in control of

Gaza and the West Bank. What prevented them from creating independent states in those areas? Before the outbreak of the war in 1967, Israel offered to keep out of the West Bank if Jordan did not join on Egypt's side. Jordan, however, did.

*Eric Sanders
 London W12*

ISRAEL AND HAMAS

Sir – The Middle East is not Ireland: treaties and conventions count for little. The Oslo Agreement is one case in point. Ceasefires had been agreed in the past, then violated by some faction with a previously unheard-of name. And when Israel is compelled to respond, it ends up being blamed. Hamas and Hezbollah will be satisfied with nothing less than wiping Israel off the map.

Inge Trott (April) says Hamas was democratically elected. Some democracy! The Gaza Strip is controlled by a bunch of brutal gunmen and anyone daring to oppose them risks being pushed off a high-rise.

*Rubin Katz
 London NW11*

Sir – When Arab terrorists rain down rockets on Israeli civilians, is Israel not to defend itself? If British cities were subjected to such attacks, the cry would go out 'Hit back at them hard!' Inge Trott must be aware that Arab terrorists have always operated from among refugee camps and, when they were sought out and any innocent civilians were hurt, this was used for propaganda purposes. Ms Trott will also be aware that in World War II, after British cities had been bombed, the RAF carried out many bombing raids on German cities in which tens of thousands of civilians died.

*Henry Schragenheim
 London N15*

Sir – Did the IRA rejoice when civilians were killed? Ms Trott must be aware that Hamas denies the Holocaust and shows programmes to children personifying Israelis and Jews as evil. The Israelis want peace more than anything, but who is there to negotiate with?

*Thea Valman
 London NW11*

A STRAIGHT MAN AND A COMIC

Sir – I like the way you have engaged yourself a straight man (Grenville) and a comic (Ross). They make a good mix, although Dr G can be over-serious. I wish I knew what Ross did in his working life. He must always have been a writer, I think. This sort of skill does not grow on trees. Up the Journal!

*(Mrs) Caroline Sawers
 Guildford, Surrey*

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The sixteenth-century German artist **Lucas Cranach** lived on the cusp of the Reformation, an exciting time for any serious painter. **Cranach**, at the **Royal Academy** until 8 June, was a spirited and witty painter, gracious and delicate. Yet his religious subjects evoked genuine human suffering without ennobling it, which also makes him one of the first Realists. The luminous colours of his altarpieces were preserved through his use



Lucas Cranach the Elder – *Apollo and Diana* c. 1526
The Royal Collection @ 2007, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

of oil and tempera, noticeable in the elaborate triptych he created for Emperor Maximilian I.

Cranach took his name from his birthplace, Kronach, a town in Upper Franconia. He led a school of painting in which human action is infused with the surrounding landscape. His religious works are genuinely spiritual but he was also a shrewd businessman. A close friend of Martin Luther, he did not decline Catholic commissions, such as the portrait of Luther's sworn enemy, Cardinal Albrecht of

Brandenburg, but gave a nod to the sweeping Reformist movement by surrounding Albrecht with symbols like the translated Bible, a pivot of Luther's egalitarian vision for the Church. Cranach's woodcuts for the New Testament translation contrast with his erotic, if stylised, female nude paintings. But he had a taste for the lurid and the bloodthirsty – witness his many Salomes with the head of John the Baptist – while his Crucifixion scenes are presented in all their hideous and fleshy realism.

Much of Cranach's work embodies Realist, Surrealist and Symbolist principles: his *Materomnia* shows Mary holding mankind within her cloak. Another turbulent landscape, *Melancholy*, features horsemen from the planet Saturn above the subject's head, among symbols of discontinuity. But there is a Gothic edge to Cranach's realism. He often takes a mischievous swipe at his uglier subjects – whose rudimentary treatment almost foreshadows Hogarth. Influenced by Luther, Cranach is one of the first painters to show the Virgin as a contemporary woman – intelligent, thoughtful, maternal. His diptych of John Frederick, a widower with his young son, gives us a face as clenched with grief as the hand sporting his wedding ring.

The thoughts of **Noam Chomsky** are paraded at the **Whitechapel Art Gallery** in **Cornelia Parker's** take on the American political and ethical theorist. The 40-minute interview *Chomskian Abstract, 2007* minus questioner focuses on the minutiae of expression on the face of this elegant thinker as he surfs the complexities of the cosmos and the negative effects of Western governments on free choice and consumerism – 'the huge gap in the US between public policy and public opinion'.

It is a gentle, refined rant against post-industrial society, indifference to the planet and religious fundamentalism. 'One third of the population don't care about global warming because of Christ's second coming', he observes. Yet America's unconditional support for Israel stems, he feels, from this religious conviction, in itself deeply antisemitic – 'because all the Jews will get massacred after Armageddon'.

The art installation – questionable as a piece of art – is part of the gallery's collaboration with Friends of the Earth on environmental issues.

REVIEWS

Uniqueness of the Kindertransport

REMEMBERING REFUGEES – THEN AND NOW

by Tony Kushner

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006, viii + 264 pp.

The attitude of a country to its refugees has always been ambivalent, and in this wide-ranging book Professor Tony Kushner explores this ambivalence by examining contemporary views expressed both in the media and by individuals. He also considers how historians have treated the influx of different groups of refugees in different periods. A theme encountered throughout the book is the perceived – but not necessarily actual – conflicting right of refugees to seek safety and that of the host community's wish to preserve its identity. It is also suggested that the self-congratulatory reporting of Britain's attitude to refugees does not always match reality. While the main emphasis is on Jewish immigration to the UK, the author also compares the influx of other groups of refugees, ranging from the Huguenots to those of the present day.

As is to be expected from an academic study, the book includes a comprehensive database of sources and references used, but for the general reader one of its most interesting, and at times poignant, aspects are the quotes from individual refugees and from those coming into contact with them. There are many references to reports from Mass-Observation, the organisation set up before the war to gauge the attitude and morale of the general population. The observations concerning refugees vary from the suspicious and even hostile to pride in the perceived welcome given by Britain to the poor unfortunates. In quoting from the diaries of individual Mass-Observers, it is interesting to see that even sympathetic native-born people have misgivings about the new arrivals. There are particularly interesting references and quotes relating to the many refugees employed as domestic servants.

An entire chapter is rightly devoted to what made the 1938-39 Jewish refugee issue unique: the Kindertransport. As in most of the book, the author concentrates on discussing material written about the subject rather than about the history of the Kindertransport itself, although this is well summarised. The entry into this country of nearly 10,000 children, without their parents, received much publicity at the time and most of it was favourable,

REVIEWS continued from page 9

even from some of the newspapers generally opposed to immigrants. Kushner notes that about 10 per cent of the Kinder subsequently wrote about their experiences, either for publication or merely for their families, and this exceptionally high percentage provides an invaluable record. He contrasts this with the almost forgotten story of the 250,000 Belgian refugees in the First World War where very few of them recorded their experiences. Examples are given of selective memory, where the welcome extended to the children and their gratitude are given considerably more emphasis than the negative aspects and the lack of reference to the parents left behind.

In his conclusions, Professor Kushner draws comparisons between the reported favourable treatment of past refugee movements, such as the Kindertransport, with the present attitude to 'asylum seekers'. The use of refugees as scapegoats for perceived problems remains as evident at the present time as it was over 100 years ago.

George Vulkan

A questionable claim

A GIFT OF LIFE: THE DEPORTATION AND THE RESCUE OF THE JEWS IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM (1940-1945)
by Sylvain Brachfeld

Herzliya, Israel: Institute for Research on Belgian Judaism, paper 316 pp.

Were the Belgian people superior to other populations in Nazi-occupied Europe in their readiness to protect their Jewish fellow citizens? That they were is the contention of the author of this book, which is backed up by statistics, historical narrative, names and portrayals of many of the rescuers – who include no less than the Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth – and stories of children who survived in hiding. Antwerp, where the mayor, Léon Delwaide, and the police force put themselves at the service of the Germans, was, in the view of the author, an exception to the general trend.

Brachfeld's argument has been challenged – indirectly at least – by the work of the recently deceased Belgian author Hugo Claus. In his Nobel-nominated novel *The Sorrow of Belgium*, Claus, according to an obituarist, 'exploded the myth of widespread resistance that provided Belgium with a thin comfort blanket after the war, exposing the extent of collaboration, hypocrisy, religious bigotry and wilful ignorance that had enabled the Nazis to dispose of some 40,000 Belgian Jews with barely a whisper of protest.'

Brachfeld's research, which shows a

much lower number of Belgian Jews as having been deported, may well be more recent. Even so, his narrative, like most books about the Nazi epoch, makes grim reading. The anti-Jewish laws, internment in barbaric conditions in the Breendonk camp and the Dossin barracks at Mechelen, leading all too often to the convoys to the gas chambers, are highlighted in the earlier chapters. To balance this, the courage of those prepared to risk their lives to help Jews is given equal prominence.

While these helpers included individual Jews, who, of course, needed the co-operation of non-Jewish partners to be effective, Jewish organisations had a chequered record. A large number of rescuers were priests and nuns, many of whom were honoured by Yad Vashem as 'Righteous among the Nations' and are listed in an appendix of the book. Occasionally, Christian rescuers were reluctant to let their charges go, anxious to 'save their souls' when, after the occupation, family members returned to find them. A striking case is that of Henri Elias, whose uncle and aunt were continually frustrated in their attempts to claim him and were outraged that his Catholic 'guardian' was nominated as 'Righteous'.

Some children apparently were able to lead 'Jewish lives' in the convents or institutions but the majority probably shared the author's experience of having to pay at least lip service to the Catholic creed. Brachfeld movingly recounts his secret intoning of the *Shema* – 'under the blankets' – after the ritual bedtime 'Hail Mary'.

While the book provides a valuable record of the Belgian-Jewish experience of occupation, the writing – or translation – leaves a great deal to be desired, as does the proof-reading – or lack of it. Even the index is sadly inadequate.

A pessimistic postscript, in which the author acknowledges his long-term suffering and bitterness towards those who facilitated the Nazis' aims and expresses concern at contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, anti-Israel sentiment and neo-Nazism, would seem to belie the claim made in an early chapter that it would be impossible today to accept the conditions imposed on Belgium's Jews without protest.

Emma Klein

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

A 'can-do' man

SNOWS OF YESTERYEAR – A TRANSLATOR'S STORY
by Ewald Osers

London: Elliott and Thompson, 2007, paper 176 pp.

Ewald Osers is one of the twentieth century's best-known translators of European literature and a highly regarded poet. He is the only translator ever to have won the Federation of International Translators' Aurora Borealis Prize for outstanding translation in fiction and non-fiction, as well as many other prestigious awards. Aged 90, he has no intention of slowing down.

This memoir begins with Osers's comfortable Prague childhood. Arriving in the UK in 1938 to study at UCL, he realised that he was not suited to a scientific career and gave up his place. He soon found his way to the BBC World Service, where he stayed until his official retirement at 65. An early sighting of Lord Weidenfeld, dressed in riding breeches, marked his arrival at Wood Norton, where BBC monitoring services were based. Although his destination was 'secret' – he was told to ask for 'somewhere in the country' – the clerk at the railway booking office responded: 'somewhere in the country – ah yes, that's Evesham.' So much for wartime security.

The Wood Norton monitors played table tennis between shifts. Later, headphones were rigged up to allow play while listening to German broadcasts so that if anything interesting came up, the monitors could dash upstairs to work. Knowing that the BBC's reputation for honesty was its strongest point during the war, Osers, who comes across as a stickler for exactness, was a little surprised to learn that not all BBC bulletins were entirely accurate.

The author's almost charmed life has been touched by tragedy. After the war he discovered that his mother had been murdered in 1942, probably at Sobibor. His brother was one of only five survivors to escape from the Polish concentration camp in Zamosc. The brothers were reunited in 1947. Osers's wife Mary suffers from multiple sclerosis.

Osers is a 'can-do' man with a talent for DIY. Without any hesitation he and a colleague successfully tackled bricklaying, surmising that any intelligent person could do it. He later took a three-year cabinet-making course and made several items for the Osers family home.

Ewald Osers is a fortunate man who enjoys his work and says that nothing else gives him the same satisfaction. His aim is to achieve a total of 160 translated books. I for one am sure he will succeed.

Laraine Feldman

Fighting talk

I had a tough war and not enough medals to show for it. An ungrateful nation ignored my encounters with more than one deadly enemy: I got nothing for drinking for weeks from a well at the bottom of which we eventually discovered a dead Jap. While hardship and boredom were the lot of many, few were as unprepared as I. You see, where I come from – a nice part of Vienna – very little Urdu was spoken, so you can imagine that when I stood before the court martial as a defending officer of an Urdu-speaking soldier accused of knifing a comrade, I felt I was being tested on a rather specialised field of battle.

Let me fill you in. When the Army discovered that I spoke more than just English, they had just received a request for a linguist to be attached to the Indian Army. So they packed me off on a troopship bound for Bombay and straight onto a course to learn how to build landing fields in the jungle. When it was decided that it would be the Burmese jungle, they moved the course from Bombay to Calcutta. Life was expensive in the city and in no time I found myself in debt. The only way for an officer and gentleman to earn a bit extra was to go on another course since officers who passed an interpreters' exam received an additional allowance. The trouble was that I needed to learn Burmese and the only course available was for Urdu. But my need was great and, as they believe at the War Office, there is English and there is foreign.

In record time, I was declared a competent interpreter both of Urdu and of American air-strip laying manuals. Off to Burma next? Don't you believe it. They wanted me to teach airport construction to officers newly arrived in Ceylon. And would I mind conducting a crack team of other ranks, including jeeps, lorries, food (including live goats), on the journey south? Kindly observe the distance from Calcutta to Madras, our point of embarkation for Colombo. My sergeant

appointed himself navigator and contrived a route which took in every village that was home to one of my squad. The hospitality I received at our overnight stops was daunting, as were the logistics of obtaining the extra food and fuel to cover a fortnight's journey that should have taken half that time. Not that the delay mattered: no one was expecting us at the other end – which was just as well since I arrived with two men fewer than I had signed for. The goats, I knew, we had

In the darkness I saw some movement, and then, more clearly, German soldiers crawling on their bellies towards me. Wehrmacht, I thought, but who had tipped them off that I was coming? Their helmets were unmistakable. Halt, I cried with a German accent and shone my torch. The shiny helmets continued to advance slowly, propelled by the tortoises underneath, whose shells looked uncannily like German soldiers' headgear. Time to turn in.

eaten, but the missing soldiers ... ?

We arrived late at night, and made for the airport for somewhere to sleep. When the men were fed and watered, I decided to take a walk round the perimeter to get my bearings. In the darkness I saw some movement, and then, more clearly, German soldiers crawling on their bellies towards me. *Wehrmacht*, I thought, but who had tipped them off that I was coming? Their helmets were unmistakable. Halt, I cried with a German accent and shone my torch. The shiny helmets continued to advance slowly, propelled by the tortoises underneath, whose shells looked uncannily like German soldiers' headgear. Time to turn in.

I was made welcome in the RAF officers' mess. One young pilot attached himself to me straightaway. He was a

beautiful boy, straight out of H. E. Bates. I could sense that something was wrong because I found him in tears one morning soon after my arrival. The others kept their distance, and I made it my business to piece together his story.

He had flown Hurricanes in the Battle of Britain and lived to tell the tale. Then he had had some kind of breakdown and got this posting to Colombo and the job of taking up a two-seater aircraft once a day, taking a weather reading, and bringing it down again. His day's work took 25 minutes. There was only one snag: he was afraid of flying. Every day, at 10 am, he turned up in the hangar, sweating and shaking, never knowing whether he could manage as much as taxi for take-off. The MO would not give him calming-down pills because he said he could not allow him to fly under the influence, so I pretended to be badly shaken by having seen a cobra in my hut (no point challenging the identity of a Singhalese snake in Urdu) and got hold of some Benzadrine, which I passed to my friend. It did not help much. In spite of all the talking and reassurance, he got worse. Some days I had to yank him out of bed and help him to get dressed. In the end, he asked me whether I would go up with him. It seemed churlish to refuse. So I put on his spare gear, strapped myself in behind him and prayed that he would not have an attack at 5,000 feet and ask me to take over. We carried on like this for a while, until one day he was mysteriously gone. I never found out where or why, but I was asked by the station commander to pack up his kit, perhaps because I was Army and saved some RAF face. Or perhaps it was intended as a thank-you when he said that he could wangle it for me to do the daily weather flight. I declined, not having the heart to tell him that I didn't know how to fly a plane.

The second and final part of this article will appear in next month's issue of the Journal.

Victor Ross

INSIDE the AJR

Sheffield CF and UN Day of Peace
The 17 Continental Friends who met at Sue Pearson's home were interested to hear and see Inge Joseph's report on the celebration of the UN Day of Peace held at the Imperial War Museum. Three London primary schools heard Inge read from her diary of Kindertransport experiences as well as other survivors of 'un-peaceful' world events. We also discussed plans for the future, including a possible Memorial Book and a collection of 'Remembered Recipes'.

Dorothy Fleming

Next meeting: 11 May at Dorothy's home

Ilford: The Foundling Hospital
Jane King of the Foundling Museum gave an inspiring talk on how children were abandoned in Britain until Thomas Coram created the Foundling Hospital in 1739. Hogarth and Handel later helped in their individual styles. A very worthwhile morning.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 7 May. Lunch celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary

Pinner: The Haifa Technion
Tony Bernstein spoke to a large audience about the Haifa Technion, tracing its rise to become one of the world's leading technical universities. Two of its professors were awarded Nobel prizes in 2004. Interestingly, work on water supplies – of great importance in the Middle East – jointly with Jordanian scientists involves having their meetings in Cyprus.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 1 May. Robert Beiny, 'Audiology'

HGS: The Cedar Boys
Abigail Slavin told us about the Cedar Boys – 31 Jewish boys (and 2 girls) – whose rescue from Nazi Germany was financed by the Rothschilds. The children lived in Cedar House at Waddesdon Manor. Abigail and her husband, himself a Cedar Boy, organised a get-together for 20 surviving traceable 'boys' and their families in 1993.

Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 12 May. 4th Birthday Celebration

Wembley wartime reminiscences
Frank Berg, a passenger on the *Dunera*, brought us back to the time of the indiscriminate internment of Jewish refugees shipped to Australia. Conditions on board were atrocious. As usual, Myrna prepared a splendid afternoon tea for an attentive audience.

Anthony Goldsmith

Next meeting: 14 May. Celebration of group's 1st anniversary and Israel's 60th anniversary

Brighton & Hove Sarid: 'Injustices we have to face'
Aubrey Milstein, a member of the Brighton congregation, speaking about 'The State We Are In', gave examples of injustices we have to face. He was hopeful that the older members of society, whose number is increasing all the time, will be more vocal.

Susanne Dyke

Next meeting: 19 May. Godfrey Gould, 'The First Marquis of Reading'

Jewish humour in Newcastle
Steve Strouzer, a member of the Newcastle Jewish players, spoke about 'A Glimpse of Jewish Humour'. New stories were added to the repertoire and those heard before greeted as old friends! Susanne Green reported on HMD in Liverpool.

Kurt Schapira

Next meeting: 22 June

Norfolk happy breed
This happy breed of AJR members discussed a visit to Berlin – hitherto the very sound of German gave one the shivers. Frank spoke of a moving performance by Felixstowe sixth-formers of the journey by cattle truck to Auschwitz. Myrna and helpers ensured the inner man and woman were well served.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: 8 July. Usual venue

Edgware: The 'Me Now Generation'
Clive Lawton amused us with anecdotes on how the younger generation's

A remarkable woman



'A remarkable woman indeed', says Eva Mendelsson of her step-mother, Kate Cohn (née Brieger), who has just celebrated her 100th birthday. 'Kate came over just before the war as a cook-cum-housemaid with a family, I believe in Devon. Later, she worked as a book-keeper with a hop-growing company in London. She married my father at the tender age of 48 and they had 19 years' happiness together – he died in 1976. I have ordered a telegram from the Queen and hope this will make her smile a little!'

prospectives have disappeared and how they have become non-committal. Relating this to 'Judaism' today, he concluded: 'We must be optimistic but not foolishly so.'

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 20 May. Susannah Alexander, 'History of Jews of England'

Radlett: The Wiener Library
Howard Falksohn encouraged members to visit the Wiener Library, an outstanding Holocaust and Nazi-era collection which includes many unpublished memoirs, original documents and eyewitness testimonies.

Margaret Arenias

Next meeting: 21 May. Alf Keiles, 'Jews and Jazz'

Temple Fortune: History of the AJR
The AJR's Michael Newman told us the AJR began as a self-help organisation in 1941 but is now a social and welfare organisation. It has over 3,000 members with an average age of 82. The second and third generations should be encouraged to join, he said.

David Lang

Next meeting: 15 May. 'Safety in the Community'

LANDMARK LUNCH



Susie with daughter Nicole and Joseph at surprise party

Susie and Joseph. Those who ate at the Centre, Sylvia added, were 'probably the best-fed members of any social club.'

Cleve Road: 'Weekends in Vienna'
Otto Deutsch spoke about his childhood weekends in Vienna. After lunch on Saturday the family would walk to the local coffee house. There were games and comics for the children; the men talked politics; the women looked at *Vogue* magazine. On Sunday - kids' day - the family went by tram to Grinzing in the Vienna Woods. Otto feels that Vienna rejected him and that he did not reject Vienna. (For a full report of this meeting, please contact david.lang119@btopenworld.com) Next meeting: 27 May. Eva Blumenthal, 'History of the Royal Free Hospital'

A remarkable lady visits Herts
Bertha Leverton soon lifted our spirits with her informal manner and her 'talk' turned into a lively discussion. We were also happy to see her re-united with a school member from Munich who is a regular member of our group. Bertha really is a remarkable lady.

Monica Rosenbaum

Next meeting: 22 May. Robin Hamilton-Taylor, 'Middle East Update'

Leeds CF

Susanne Green told us about the Liverpool HMD events at which the Liverpool Memorial Book was displayed. Members were invited to bring recipes for a 'Recipes Remembered' book to be compiled by Pippa Landy. Suzanne Rappaport (Ripton), who was a hidden child in France, brought a DVD of Muslim students in Bradford who had been to Auschwitz following a course of study. This wonderful DVD is to be used as an educational tool.

Barbara Cammerman

North London: *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens*

Over 30 of us, including new faces, listened to Helen Fry speak about her book *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens*, in which she chronicles the episode during WW2 when thousands of refugees from Germany and Austria joined the British forces.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 29 May. Alan Bilgora, 'Famous Jewish Opera Singers'

Kingston CF coffee meeting

Another afternoon coffee meeting at the congenial Thames-side home of Edith Jayne. Members from various parts of Europe were present, as well as a second-generation member from New Zealand.

Alfred Kessler

Next meeting: 18 June at home of Joe and Margaret Allen in New Malden

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 20 July -
Sunday 27 July 2008
at Inn On The Prom
at THE FERNLEA HOTEL
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

The cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, is £495 per person
The hotel charges a supplement per room for sea view or deluxe room
Programme includes
ENTERTAINMENT

OUTINGS

MEET OLD AND NEW FRIENDS

Travel to St Annes by RAIL,
NATIONAL COACH or CAR
Please contact Ruth Finestone on
020 8385 3070

DIARY DATES

Monday 26 May - Sunday 1 June
Bournemouth Holiday (Cliffside Hotel)

Tuesday 24 June
Day trip to Brighton and Hove
Jewish Day Centre

Sunday 20 July - Sunday 27 July
St Annes Holiday (Fernlea Hotel)

Sunday 21 Sept
AJR Tea at Hilton Watford

Sunday 26 October - Sunday 2 Nov
Eastbourne Holiday (Lansdowne Hotel)

For further information, please call us
on 020 8385 3070.

Hendon: Jewish opera singers

Alan Bilgora played recordings of Jewish opera singers dating from 1907. The singing was magnificent. We look forward to a second visit from Alan.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 19 May. Former actress
Renee Goddard

Enjoyable East Midlands lunch meeting

Another enjoyable lunch meeting was held in a member's home. We discussed the recent AJR trip to London as well as a proposed Holocaust Memorial Book dedicated to the memory of victims of Sheffield and East Midlands members' relatives.

Bob Norton

OTHER MEETINGS

Essex 13 May. Joint lunch with
members of Pinner group

OUTINGS

Brighton & Hove Sarid 27 May. To
Wiener Library

Herts and Radlett 29 May. Details
tba

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

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 21 May 2008

Professor Eric Moonman

'Good Health: The Lighter Side
of the NHS'

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the *AJR Journal*, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special
interest group

Monday 12 May 2008

David Williams

A London tour guide will talk about
places of Jewish interest

**KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH
WILL BE SERVED AT
1.00 PM ON MONDAYS**

Reservations required
Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS
CLOSED ON TUESDAYS**

May Afternoon Entertainment

Thur 1	Anita Elias
Mon 5	CLOSED - BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 6	CLOSED
Wed 7	David Peace
Thur 8	Nat Paris
Mon 12	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue 13	CLOSED
Wed 14	Mike Marandi
Thur 15	Jack Davidoff
Mon 19	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 20	CLOSED
Wed 21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 22	Michael Heaton
Mon 26	CLOSED - BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 27	CLOSED
Wed 28	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 29	Simon Gilbert

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

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

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Collins, Margot died suddenly on 14 March aged 87. Will be much missed by her long-term friend Lily Donaldson.

Loewenstein, Fritz died peacefully on 16 March. He is sadly missed by his wife Edith and all family and friends.

Memorial Service

A memorial service for **Edyta Klein-Smith** will be held at the Imperial War Museum on 22 May at 11.30 am.

Classified

Qualified male nurse from Israel speaking English and Russian seeks to share accommodation in exchange for care. Please call 077477 05250.

KINDERTRANSPORT LEGACY

A major TV channel is considering making a documentary on the legacy of the Kindertransport.

They would like to contact second- or third-generation members who have either had an especially interesting life or are known in their field of expertise.

Please contact **Andrea Goodmaker** at the AJR on 020 8385 3070

AJR DAY TRIP

Join us for a trip to Brighton & Brighton & Hove Jewish Day Centre

Tuesday 24 June 2008

Coach leaving AJR Centre, Cleve Road, London NW6 at 10.00 am
£20 per person to include transport, lunch and tea

Please contact **Carol Rossen** or **Lorna Moss** on 020 8385 3070
Places are limited so please book early

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THE HOLOCAUST CENTRE INVITES AJR MEMBERS TO THE POST-OPENING VIEWING OF 'THE JOURNEY' AT BETH SHALOM, THE HOLOCAUST CENTRE

in Laxton, near Nottingham on Sunday 14 September 2008

'The Journey', partly created with a grant from the AJR Charitable Trust, tells the story of the Kindertransport – the refugees' escape from Nazi-occupied Europe to resettlement in Britain.

To reserve a place, please contact **Susan Harrod** at AJR head office on 020 8385 3070 before 29 May.

There are 60 invitations, which we are making available to members throughout the country on a first-come first-served basis.

Please let us know if you are concerned about travel – transport can be arranged from main centres.

Members who have already received invitations from Beth Shalom for the opening of 'The Journey' should reply directly to The Holocaust Centre.

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OBITUARIES

Ernest Shenton

Ernst Schneck (Ernest Shenton), who died on 7 March, came to the UK from Vienna following the Anschluss. He was evacuated from family to family in Manchester and Gloucester. His mother worked as a seamstress, but a £1-a-year scholarship enabled him to attend Marylebone Grammar School, where he excelled in sports. At the age of 19, he served in the RAF, where he learned lessons in how *not* to do things.

Interested in photography, Ernest joined Dixons, which he was to direct for decades. Contrary to later norms, he created a culture in which employers and employees shared all facilities. He pioneered the mail order envelope for film processing and introduced films as promotional and co-promotional items for companies.

In 1960 he married Denise, an orphaned Holocaust survivor. Through 47 years of married life, he felt supported on 'wings of happiness'. They had four 'lovely children' and built inventive homes in France, Ireland and England.

Ernest pioneered one-hour film processing on the high street. Photo Shop was born, fresh

and successful.

Ernest loved his family, Bridge, music, wine, art and dancing. While he had no interest in small talk, he knew when it was important to talk: at a French Chamber of Commerce dinner, with Harold Wilson attending, he questioned French Prime Minister Barre on why the French had released the terrorist Abu Abbas from prison. Monsieur Barre refused to answer – the following day he was revealed as responsible for the action.

In retirement, Ernest worked with Volunteer Business Services Overseas. Volunteering in Bulgaria, he advised young entrepreneurs setting up business ventures and he served on the Business Arbitration Panel.

On learning Ernest's condition was terminal, Denise held a phenomenal party at which friends and family could talk openly and say goodbye. A fitting tribute to quite a mensch. Ernest is survived by Denise, four children – Nik, Jessica, Nadine and Gaby – and eight grandchildren, with one due at the time of writing.

Gaby Eirew



Hans Freund

Dr Hans Freund, who died on 18 November, was a man of many talents.

He was born in Berlin in 1910. His father ran a store specialising in linens and materials; his two uncles were rabbis; his grandfather was the director of Weissensee, the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe.

As a boy, Hans sang in the synagogue choir, something he was to do all his life. He studied violin with a pupil of Joachim and played the harmonica. He studied German Literature and Philosophy at the universities of Berlin, Greifswald and Freiburg, where he gained his doctorate.

Hans came to England and taught temporarily at UCL. At this time he met his future wife Kitty. As foreigners were not allowed to earn money in England, Hans accepted a job in South Africa. In 1936-37 he worked in a store as a packer and became a commercial traveller.

By the time Kitty came as an exchange teacher to South Africa, Hans had enough money to qualify for a Government Teacher's Diploma. He obtained a post at the Gymnasium School Pretoria.

With the outbreak of war, Hans volunteered for the South African army, joining as a private and ending the war as a captain. At Sidi Rezegh, he was wounded and held in a field hospital prison, from which he escaped.

Following the Armistice, Hans and Kitty and their family settled in Cape Town, where he taught at the South African College-High School. He became chairman of the Jewish Museum and local library, a member of the Jewish Board of Deputies, and a keen worker for the Reform Synagogue.

The family returned to London. In 1966 both took up careers as teachers. Hans was active in AJEX and B'nai B'rith. He sang in every possible North London venue, especially those catering for the elderly.

He leaves his wife Kitty, to whom he was married 68 years, his son David, his daughter Erica, his daughter-in-law Nina, and three granddaughters.

Kitty Freund



AJR REPORT

Michael Newman

Poland to enact restitution legislation

According to media reports, the government of Poland is committing itself to introducing property restitution legislation by the end of 2008. Although reports refer to property *restitution*, it is thought the bill will provide compensation of 20 per cent of a property's value to former owners, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The law would apply to properties seized during the Second World War.

Precise details of the law have not yet been disclosed and it is also not clear whether the legislation will make provision for properties in the Galicia region, now located in Ukraine, outside the boundaries of present-day Poland.

Although a 1997 agreement provides for the return of public property in Poland and some claimants have secured restitution for their properties by bringing private cases directly to Polish courts, it is estimated that the total value of seized property is 16-18 billion euros (£12.5-14 billion).

Alongside the efforts of the Claims Conference and the World Jewish Restitution Organisation representing Holocaust survivors and their families, Poland has also been lobbied by non-Jewish Polish nobility, whose extensive assets were confiscated.

Belgian compensation – a clarification

Reports at the beginning of March appeared to suggest that the Belgian government was introducing a new fund to pay compensation to Holocaust survivors who were persecuted or lost assets.

It transpires that these reports were misinterpreted and that the announcements were simply reporting on the monies that the Belgian government had already provided and distributed to Holocaust survivors and their families.

Under the Indemnification Commission for the Belgian Jewish Community's Assets, 110 million euros (approximately £85 million) has been dispersed as reparations for a range of spoliations, including confiscation of personal belongings and life insurances and businesses, as well as in recognition of having been subjected to forced labour.

Enquiries seeking advice and clarification on Holocaust restitution and compensation matters should continue to be sent to Michael Newman at Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to mnewman@ajr.org.uk



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Orphaned art looking for owners

Two sister-exhibitions are currently on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The first is a selection of paintings which have been in the possession of the museum and its predecessor, the Bezalel collection, since the end of the Second World War. The paintings, put together for the first time under the title 'Orphaned Art', were found by the Allies in Nazi homes and collection centres throughout Europe. For obvious reasons, the provenance of most of the artworks was not clear, and in many cases their owners could not be traced. The second exhibition, 'Looking for Owners', has been put together and sponsored by the French government. It contains 53 paintings, many of them by renowned artists, which originally belonged to French Jews.

The systematic looting of thousands of art works throughout Europe, both from Jews and from national collections in countries conquered by the Nazis, was part of Hitler's plan to make his birthplace, the Austrian town of Linz, the art centre of Europe. He planned to build a huge complex containing most of the art formerly on display across Europe. In addition, art works from the homes of wealthy Jews were commandeered. These included some impressive nineteenth-century portraits, as well as pictures by French, Dutch and Italian classicists. Jewish ceremonial objects were also appropriated, in order eventually to be put on display in the 'Jewish Museum' that would portray the erstwhile Jewish people.

Many visitors, both Israelis and tourists, come to see these exhibitions, moving from one exhibit to another with serious mien. Many are moved to tears, and on one occasion someone even fainted. It is hardly surprising. The labels beside the pictures are laconic and devoid of pathos, yet who can fail to be touched by seeing time and again the words 'unidentified owner' or 'provenance unknown', although

some of the paintings came from well-known collections, such as those of the Rothschilds or Adolphe Schloss.

The entire Youth Wing of the museum has been devoted to the exhibition, and its interior has been altered radically to evoke a European ambience, with dim lighting and parquet floors. At several points, one can sit and watch documentary films illustrating the vicissitudes of the pictures, Hitler's megalomaniac plans, and the efforts to trace owners. On my last visit I saw several groups being taken round and given explanations by guides speaking many different languages. There was even a group of Arab school-children from Umm al-Fahm.

For me, though, the exhibition triggers an even more disturbing train of thought. The pictures and objects, all intrinsically valuable and worthy of display in a museum, are no more than the tip of the iceberg. Every home of every Jewish family that was dispossessed, exiled and/or eventually murdered contained objects that had been accumulated over the years – porcelain and silver, linen and furniture – countless precious objects that had been passed down from father to son and from mother to daughter. There can have been few homes in which there was not a well-loved picture hanging on the wall, a sideboard displaying favourite pieces of silver, linen with initials lovingly embroidered by hand, handiwork that showed the skill of the lady of the house, toys, books, writing implements – all the things that combine to make a home.

All that disappeared, whether looted by Nazi soldiers, filched by neighbours or destroyed in some other way. Of course, far worse things happened than the seizure of property, but for me the loss of the things that so many families once possessed and loved seems to symbolise the wholesale destruction of European Jewry.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Newsround

Earliest sign of Jewish habitation in Austria discovered

Vienna University archaeologists say they have found the earliest sign of Jewish habitation in Austria – a silver pendant discovered in a third-century CE grave which bears the *Shema Yisrael* prayer. They said they found the 2.2-centimeter-long object in a golden scroll containing the words of the prayer inscribed in Greek.

European Union keen to strengthen ties with Israel

The EU wants to involve Israel 'more closely in some EU policies like financial services or technological co-operation', says the European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Israel is described as the 'front-runner' among non-EU members participating in EU programmes ranging from scientific co-operation to trade integration. A 'reflection group' was considering 'where we can substantially upgrade EU-Israeli relations to a truly "special status"', she added.

Albert Speer's son submits Berlin building plan

The son of Nazi architect Albert Speer has submitted a design to redevelop a large plot of land in central Berlin. Albert Speer Jr, one of the world's leading architects and urban planners, has come up with a scheme that would overhaul a run-down stadium used during the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Israel and Iran seen as most negative players in world affairs

Israel is seen as the country with the second most negative influence on the world, according to a poll released by the BBC. Only Iran was considered to have a more negative influence. Pakistan was rated the country with the third most negative influence. Germany was considered to have the best influence on the world, with a positive score of 56 per cent and a negative score of 18 per cent.

Dutch Muslims condemn anti-Islam film

Dutch Jews are more outspoken than local Muslims in their criticism of the newly released anti-Islam film by rightist legislator Geert Wilders, according to Dr Ronny Naftaniel, head of the Centre for Information and Documentation (CIDI). The Jewish community central board, of which CIDI is a member, condemned the film as counterproductive to the fight against extremism, saying it had crossed the line of legitimate criticism.