

An odious comparison: an open letter to Anthony Howard

Dear Anthony Howard

I was dismayed to hear you draw an explicit comparison, on BBC Radio 4's *Any Questions* of 21 July 2006, between Israel's military operations in Lebanon and the systematic murder of hostages by the armed forces of the Third Reich, in retaliation for the killing of German soldiers in occupied countries. I feel bound to respond because of the respect in which you are held, not least by me.

The Association of Jewish Refugees represents the Jews from Central Europe who fled to this country as victims of Nazi persecution, almost all of them having lost family members in the Holocaust and having seen the Jewish communities in which they lived wiped from the face of the earth. As the largest concentration of Holocaust victims in this country, they are now surely old enough to be spared ill-founded comparisons between the Jewish state and those who murdered their loved ones simply and solely because they were Jews.

When considering Israeli attacks on Lebanese targets, you said, your mind goes back to the reprisals taken by the wartime German army when its troops were killed by members of the resistance. In that case, I have to tell you that your mind was playing you tricks. The most obvious difference is that the Nazis had a clear tariff, whereby a set quota of civilian hostages was executed for each German casualty, whereas it is plain beyond dispute that the Israelis have no such tariff – the casualties they inflict are random in number and unplanned, indeed unintended. Many non-Jews (and Jews) found the level of the Israeli response to the initial Hezbollah provocation unacceptable, but recoiled from resorting to the easy inference that 'the Jews are just as bad as the Nazis'.



SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, whose assassination triggered the Lidice massacre

To criticise the Israeli reaction to the initial provocation as disproportionate is one thing, but to leap from that straight to a comparison of the Jewish state with the Third Reich displays a deplorable lack of proportion itself, as well as gross insensitivity to the feelings of Jews like the AJR's members. How do you think I feel when I hear the Jewish state equated to the murderers of my grandparents, deported among millions to a nameless death in the East for no other reason than that they were Jews? Or were you so keen to impress your radio audience with your facility for historical parallels that you didn't bother to think properly about moral equivalence at all?

You started from the mistaken premise that the ratio of Lebanese to Israeli civilian casualties – about ten to one – equalled the ratio of hostages executed by the Nazis in reprisal for attacks on their soldiers. To begin with, the notion that the ratio of one to ten is

intrinsically significant is false. Nazi Germany's casualties in the war, at around 10 per cent of the population, were very close to ten times those suffered by Britain. What does that prove? More pertinently, the number of German civilians killed by the British, mostly by bombing, was close to ten times the number of British civilians killed by the Luftwaffe. Does that make the RAF the moral equivalent of the SS?

In reality, the usual ratio exacted by the Germans was savagely higher – in the case of senior figures, like the 'German general' whom you cite, tens or even hundreds of times higher. When Reinhard Heydrich, Reich governor of Bohemia and Moravia, was assassinated in Prague in 1942, the ratio was over one thousand to one; it included the entire village of Lidice, whose male population was shot and its women and children deported to concentration camps, whence some children were shipped to German 'homes'. Hitler himself repeatedly demanded the execution of 50 or 100 hostages for each German soldier killed; 50 Frenchmen were duly shot on 21 October 1941 in retaliation for the assassination by the French Resistance of the Feldkommandant of Nantes, and a similar ratio applied when 100 hostages were executed on 15 December 1941 at Fort Mont Valérien, Paris.

In the East, the Germans massacred hostages with such ferocity that one can hardly speak of anything as rational as quotas at all. But in the West, the German Army and the SS did use quotas, sometimes setting a ratio as low as ten hostages for one German soldier, though that was the exception. One such case was the notorious massacre carried out in the Ardeatine Caves near Rome in March 1944,

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

where 335 people were executed in retaliation for the killing of 33 soldiers by the Italian Resistance. The SS had the victims transported to the Ardeatine Caves in groups of five. They were led into the caves with their hands tied behind their back and shot in the neck. Many were forced to kneel down over the bodies of those who had been killed before them. During the killings, it emerged that five extra hostages had been taken, but they were killed too.

The manner of the killing, cold-blooded and sadistically systematic, clearly differentiates it from anything that the Israelis have done in Lebanon, which is perhaps closer to the bombing of German cities by the RAF – but who, apart from apologists of Hitler à la David Irving, leaps to a comparison between Bomber Command's pilots and the Nazis? The first to use air power in the Middle East as a deterrent against guerrilla activity were the British, during their earlier, interwar occupation of Iraq, when the RAF strafed villages in retaliation for attacks on the occupying forces. Distasteful, yes – but hardly comparable to Nazi practices. The American bombing of Vietnam and the Italian bombing, under Mussolini, of Abyssinia were much worse, but nobody sensible now seriously compares them with the Nazis. Why must that ultimate insult be reserved for Israel, the Jewish state?

As for occupations of Muslim territories, the Russian occupation of Chechnya has been immeasurably more brutal and costly in lives than anything the Israelis have done in Lebanon (or elsewhere), but I doubt that it would ever occur to you to compare Presidents Yeltsin or Putin with the Nazis, even though the First Chechen War (1994-96) cost tens of thousands of civilian casualties. Much the same applies to the Indian occupation of Kashmir, though you would no doubt dismiss as absurd any comparison of Nazi Germany with India.

That is because only a regime like Hitler's can take the kind of measures that it did. After all, the killing of hostages was – if one may put it like that – at the mild end of the scale of Nazi atrocities. At the other end were such measures as the killing of over three million Soviet prisoners of war, the mass liquidation of the mentally and physically handicapped in Germany, and the racially inspired extermination of millions of Jews and gypsies – men, women and children – in the Holocaust. These measures have no parallel in anything ever done by the Israelis, hard though they have sometimes struck at their Arab foes.

Israel is a democracy – almost the only one in the Middle East – where Israeli Arabs, some 20 per cent of the population, enjoy rights unknown in Arab countries. Israel is a country

under the rule of law, where the extreme repressive and murderous measures of the great totalitarian dictatorships are impossible, even in the occupied Palestinian territories. Hitler was able to treat his victim groups outside Germany with such savagery only because he had first destroyed all vestiges of democracy and democratic values inside Germany. That was the necessary precondition for the Nazi reign of terror in occupied Europe, and it does not apply in Israel.

So why is it that people who ought to know better leap so readily to the comparison between Nazi Germany and Israel? It is, of course, the most profoundly wounding insult that one can hurl at the Jewish state – and by extension at all Jews, including British Jews. If someone called me a 'bloody Jewboy', I'd merely think him/her mildly deranged; but the Nazi-Jewish comparison infuriates me, because it dishonours the memory of my grandparents and those countless others who were shot, starved, gassed and burnt by the million in the camps and ghettos of the East. Anyone who cannot see that is afflicted by grave moral and emotional insensitivity.

When people like you, the moral arbiters of the political press, open the door, those less fastidious flock through. On the right, Tory MP Sir Peter Tapsell, a throwback to the 1930s, compares Israeli actions against Hezbollah guerrillas with the annihilation of Warsaw Ghetto fighters by the SS. On the left, my local rag, the historically illiterate Camden New Journal, prints a letter using the Blitz to show that Israel takes 'Nazi' retaliatory measures, while Britain forbore from retributive bombing (tell that to the inhabitants of Dresden). God help us!

I appeal to you to reconsider your remarks, in the light of the hurt they cause to the community of Holocaust survivors in Britain.

Anthony Grenville

Volunteers' thank you tea



AJR volunteers from all over London came together for a delicious cream tea, and musical entertainment, at Wizo House. The volunteers, who fulfil a variety of essential roles, including befriending and helping at the Day Centre and Stanmore offices, were thanked for their support over the year by AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman and Volunteers' Co-ordinator Carol Hart.

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How to be a technophobic VEP

Let me tell you at once that anything remotely mechanical, technical or scientific terrifies me. Even back in the 1950s, when I was learning to drive a car, I wished the wheel had never been invented. That my marriage survived my L-plated months is nothing short of a miracle.

Yet those were the innocent days, when you could still phone your bank by just dialling a number instead of having to press endless buttons and being exposed relentlessly to taped messages and music between them that I for one would pay *not* to have to listen to. Sometimes, when I finally hear a human voice, I am dumbstruck. It was also possible then to read a book on a bus in peace without having to listen to one end of a conversation all the way from Marble Arch to Victoria.

Those were the days when I wrote long personal letters by hand and typed others on my little portable Adler Gabriele typewriter, Tipp-Ex, carbon paper and all. And when the most sophisticated item in any office was a telex machine.

They were also the days when I was still young – in my thirties. Not that I am old now. Perish the thought! We are senior citizens, pensioners or the elderly. People like me, who get free TV licences and extra fuel allowance, are delicately referred to as 'the very elderly'. I have gracefully submitted to my status as a VEP – a very elderly person.

A few years ago, when I was already a VEP and still using my little Adler Gabriele typewriter, I got an insane urge to learn to use a computer. My contemporaries, when I mentioned this to them, were largely dismissive. At our age? Whatever for? They wouldn't. Undeterred at least outwardly – inwardly I was quaking – I enrolled for an absolute beginners' course at an adult education centre.

I was lucky with my tutor, a woman as close to being a saint as you can get. She needed all her saintliness and infinite patience to cope with me. Talk about learning difficulties! Thanks to her, I finished that course, and another, and another, until I had acquired some basic

knowledge. I could now produce a good-looking letter, I could send e-mails, and I could get information from the internet.

More than a little proud of myself, I acquired a computer. My relationship with my computer is a complex one. My feelings towards it range from smugness – I've just booked myself on Eurostar – to frustration: the printer not only refuses to print, it also refuses to shut down. Documents just disappear, as do e-mails. My computer is capricious and inscrutable and always has the last word. When it sends me incomprehensible messages I just click on OK and hope for the best. One day it went on strike. No amount of clicking would move it. I panicked and, in desperation, unplugged it. When, a day or two later, I logged on apprehensively, it was at its most co-operative. You'd think butter wouldn't melt in its mouth. And just then, the name of a nineteenth-century German writer had escaped me – many names escape me these days. I simply had to know it, there and then. All I could remember was the name of one novel he had written. I went to Google, typed it in, and within seconds I had not only the name of the author, but his biography, a list of his works, and the plot of the novel. Pure magic.

So when in moments of utter exasperation I ask myself, do I really need this? my honest answer has to be yes. Not only can I now be in instant touch by e-mail with my friends and relatives all over the world but, more importantly, I feel I have taken one small step, however tenuous, into the twenty-first century.

Edith Argy



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A Stolperstein for Irma Zancker

In a number of German towns you can find, embedded in the pavement in front of blocks of flats, concrete blocks as tiny as cobble stones, capped with brass. Inscribed on these stones are the personal details of Jewish individuals who lived here under the Nazis until they were deported and murdered. The stones are called *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks). They are the brainchild of the German artist Gunter Demnig and are paid for by sponsors. Here is the story of one of these 'stumbling blocks' in Hamburg.

It begins in 1942 or 1943, when I was nine or ten years old. From September 1941, Jewish people had been forced to wear a six-pointed yellow star on their clothes, the so-called *Judenstern*. They were treated unfairly in many respects. Opposite the house in which our family lived was one of the few stores where Jews were permitted to do their shopping. One day, I happened to meet Irma Zancker, a friend of the family; I believe she was a fellow student of my parents. I hadn't seen her for a long time – likewise her son Klaus, a boy about my age. She greeted me in a friendly manner and I was very confused because she wore a *Judenstern* on her overcoat. What was I to do? We were told Jews were evil



Stolperstein for Irma Zancker



The author in front of Haynstrasse 5

and we must keep clear of them.

I think Irma must have been aware of my confusion for she said goodbye after a short while. It can only have been an unhappy meeting for her. I never saw her again. When the war was over, my mother told me she had been deported and murdered in a concentration camp, and that Klaus had managed to escape to England with the Kindertransport.

Several years ago, I heard about the *Stolpersteine* and decided to sponsor one in memory of Irma. I looked through various archives and found out her last address and her personal records. In front of the house at Haynstrasse 5 in Hamburg, there is now a *Stolperstein*.

I attempted to trace Klaus Zancker in England, but all my efforts were in vain. The search notice I placed brought no results. Perhaps Klaus is still alive, and perhaps he will see this article. If not, all who read this will know that there are people in Germany who remember the darkest period of German history. They keep in mind the fate not only of Klaus's mother but also that of many of their Jewish neighbours.

Dieter Sienknecht
Hamburg

Enrol-a-Friend

It's not every day that an organisation whose membership has an average age of 82 embarks on a membership drive, but we at the AJR are seeking to reach out to new members to offer them the extensive services we already provide to 3,500 members nationwide.

This year alone, through increased awareness of our activities, we have already recruited more than 180 new members, but we are convinced there are many more people throughout the country who could benefit from our services.

This month we are launching our Enrol-a-Friend campaign and asking our members to encourage their friends who are Holocaust survivors or refugees – or their relatives, who may be members of the 'second generation' – to join the AJR.

As those of you who already avail yourselves of our services know, the AJR welcomes as members anyone who experienced Nazi persecution, regardless of their country of origin. Today, the AJR counts as its members former refugees from all Nazi-occupied countries, including those

who came before the outbreak of war with their families or on domestic visas – whether on the Kindertransport, as children hidden in Europe during the Second World War or as survivors of ghettos and concentration camp survivors. We know that this diversity makes the AJR what it is today.

We are also in the fortunate position of being able to help our members with social and welfare services as well as financial assistance thanks in part to grants we receive from the Claims Conference, with monies that come from, among other sources, the German and Austrian governments as well as Swiss banks and insurance companies.

While the assistance provided by the Central Office for Holocaust Claims and our network of nationwide regional groups have helped us identify new members and re-invigorate our membership, we would be delighted to hear from you if you know of someone else who could benefit from our services.

Michael Newman

Critical moments

Most people can remember where they were at the time of major world events. Here is an account of times of crisis I recall. In 1939, when I was 13, Gwen Clarke, the wife of the geography master at Bradford Grammar School, of which I was a pupil, invited us to spend a few days' holiday with her at Cleveleys. At 10 am on Sunday 3 September we huddled round the radio to hear that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had issued an ultimatum to Hitler. At 11 am Chamberlain came on the radio personally to give his famous speech, ending 'No such assurance has been received and therefore this country is in a state of war with Germany' – at which Gwen burst into uncontrollable weeping as well she might, as if she had prescience of the horrors to come. The announcer said 'Please stand by for further announcements', but we switched off. We had heard enough.

Fast forward to 1953, when I was in the British Army of Occupation in Austria, enabling me to attend fantastic opera performances in Graz and Vienna. One day in mid-summer there was a market in the small town of Spittal, where a middle-aged man, apparently picked for the occasion from the nearby refugee camp, was trying to demonstrate newly invented ball-point pens but, embarrassingly, couldn't make them work (as sometimes happens nowadays). He tried every trick under the sun, but in vain, when news came through that Stalin had died. No one knew Stalin had even been ill. But what interested me even more was that Prokofiev had died on the same day.

Fast forward again to 1963. I had sung at our Erev Shabbat service and took our organist, Miriam Clayton, home. Her sister Nellie opened the door and in great agitation told us that President Kennedy had been shot. A similar situation occurred when we visited my school friend Henry Gunby and his wife Ilse in New York State in 1995 – I had last seen him in 1937 and had only 're-



discovered' him a year or two earlier. We had had a magnificent reunion, retired to our bedroom and put on a crackly radio – when we heard the news that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had been assassinated. We gathered round the TV in our nightclothes to get further news.

Then in 2001 I had been invited by Leonore Maier, Curator at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, to bring family artefacts to coincide with the opening of the Museum. Coincidentally, a film was being made by Sissy von Westphalen of myself both at home and in Berlin, and part of the filming took place at my old Jewish school in the Grosse Hamburgerstrasse. I sang part of Schubert's *Heidenröslein* accompanied by the same piano the music teacher had used before the war. When, after six attempts to get it perfect, the film was safely in the can, Sissy's mobile phone rang: it was her husband to tell her about the Twin Towers' attack in New York. All the Jewish, national and international people who mattered had already assembled for the Museum's pre-opening dinner and celebration when one after the other was collared by the broadcasting authorities to give their opinion on the tragic events. One German, mirroring Kennedy's *bon mot* 'Ich bin ein Berliner,' declared: 'Heute sind wir alle Amerikaner.' My appointment with Leonore was the next day and, though the Museum was closed for security reasons on what should have been its opening day, we had special permission to

enter. I deposited the artefacts and we had a private tour of the Museum as its only visitors.

Three coincidences occurred while we were on various holidays. Our first long-haul break was to the Far East. On arrival at our hotel in Hong Kong in 1984, we saw CNN, our main provider of news in all the venues, describe the explosion at Chernobyl. In 2004, while we were in Lanzarote, the train bombings in Madrid took place. In 2005, while we were celebrating our Golden Wedding on holiday in Austria, Hurricane Katrina engulfed New Orleans. In the spring of 2006, in Carcassonne, France, when it was impossible to go outside for the rain, we watched the riots in Paris and, as we were holidaying in Malta later that year, the Middle East crisis broke. Each time we spent almost more time in front of the TV than holidaying. All venues were special to us for we had been there – except Chernobyl. I had actually been at the 'Good Fence' at Metulla on the Israel-Lebanese border, where Lebanese workers could cross into Israel to work on a daily basis.

Rudi Leavor

Daniel Finkelstein at the Imperial War Museum

Times columnist Daniel Finkelstein will be the guest speaker at an AJR national get-together at the Imperial War Museum on **Wednesday 8 November**.

The day-long gathering - **open to all members of the AJR** - is part of a three-day trip to London by members from Scotland and Northern England and includes an opportunity to meet members from around the country.

The visit also includes a tour of the Holocaust Exhibition and lunch at a price of £12.50.

If you would like to reserve one of the limited places for this visit and lunch, please contact Susan Lewis on 020 8385 3078 or at susan@ajr.org.uk



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

If there are any ex-Schindler pupils, why not contact one another? My name has not changed – even the Wolfgang in the middle is still there.

Hardy W. Seidel
London NW7

BOMBING OF DRESDEN

Sir – I have Agata Schindler's book and appreciate her penetrating research into Dresden's 'musical' Jews. Frank Bright's review (June) is his opinion of the book – which I share – but for its political observations, which I find too strong for my taste. It is his review and his right to say it.

Likewise, I find David Kemp's outburst (August) disturbing. May I recommend to him just two books out of the numerous publications on the Dresden air raids: Goetz Bergander, *Dresden im Luftkrieg, Vorgeschichte – Zerstörung – Folgen* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1977) and the more recent book by Frederick Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday 13 February 1945* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004). This will, I think, soften Mr Kemp's condemnation. On the other hand, I could also recommend Norbert Haase, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, Hermann Simon, *Die Erinnerung hat ein Gesicht: Fotografien und Dokumente zur Nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung in Dresden 1933-1945* (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1998).

Peter C. Rickenback
London NW3

Sir – Those who do not shed a tear for German casualties of a war of their own making are not necessarily morally deficient. Dresden was a perfectly legitimate target. Apart from being a railway junction to the Eastern Front, the German High Command's Weapons Office recorded 127 factories there working on war products – as we now know, a low estimate. Zeiss Ikon had stopped making cameras and made fuses for the German Navy. The Wiener Library has a copy of a film made by an employee. The vast majority of the slave labourers shown working there perished in the death camps of Poland. Whether Guernica, Warsaw, Rotterdam, London, Canterbury, York, Bath, Exeter, Norwich, Ipswich etc were equally legitimate strategic targets is doubtful but they, and many others, were bombed nevertheless.

I have a bone to pick with Francis Deutsch as well, also in the August issue. The end of the war did not mean that from then on we lived happily ever

BACK TO LEIPZIG

Sir – What a refreshing article by Naomi (September)!

Big heart, clear thinking and forward-looking – that's what we ought to be doing, rather than bemoaning the past. I too am an Opa, lucky in having grandchildren similar to Naomi. Let us encourage them to build a better future than our, and even our children's, generations.

Marc Schatzberger
York

VIENNA, MOZART AND DA PONTE

Sir – Just a footnote to the recent anti- and pro-Austria correspondence. On a one-day 'transit' journey via Vienna, we visited the Jewish Museum and enjoyed a wonderful exhibition – during this Mozart year – about Lorenzo da Ponte, his major librettist. We had no idea he had been born Emmanuele Cogneliano, of a Jewish family in Canada. When his mother died early, his father, on remarriage, had the family baptised by the local bishop, whose name was... Lorenzo da Ponte.

Da Ponte's adventurous career – as a renegade priest, librettist, resident in Venice, Vienna, London, Trieste and finally 33 years in New York – is beautifully presented in original documents, photos and letters in Italian, with commentaries in German and English. He married Nancy Grahl, the daughter of a London trader in – what is suspected but cannot be proved – a Trieste synagogue. Casanova advised him to make a career in London rather than Paris. Da Ponte founded the first Italian opera in New York. His Jewishness was acknowledged by the Nazis, who promptly invented a different librettist for a Germanised Mozart.

Eric Mark
Kraainem, Belgium

REFUGEE CHILDREN IN NORTH CORNWALL

Sir – Miss Marjorie Moos, whom Harry Grenville mentions (August), taught

me Jewish religious studies at South Hampstead High School for Girls, where I was in 1940. She was generous in her marking of our examination papers in that we Jewish girls always got embarrassingly high marks compared with those gained by the others in their papers.

One day, during assembly, our headmistress announced that we were privileged to have with us the sister of Miss Moos, who had just returned from a visit to Belsen and would tell us all about it. It happened to be the very morning on which I had received the news that my parents and little brother had perished in Auschwitz, dashing all my dreams of a reunion with them. However, since I did not wish to attract attention to myself and as I had by then learned the art of the stiff upper lip, I sat through the talk. Years later, I heard that Marjorie Moos was still alive and, I believe, she lived to a ripe old age – she may even have reached 100.

Bronia Z. Snow (née Ringler)
Esher, Surrey

Sir – I am one of the children from Regent's Park School and was more than interested to read the article by Günter Guttman. Now, being over 81, I cannot remember the names of my fellow students, but I do remember playing the triangle in the school concert at Hampstead Town Hall.

My memory of Mr Petley, a first-class teacher who pole-vaulted to the first-floor platform on the back staircase, will always be vivid. Having caught me smoking grass rolled up in cigarette paper, he gave me lines to do. These were not done, so they were doubled. On the Thursday before the end of term they were doubled again, with the threat of six on each hand the following day should they not be there. Knowing the lines would not be ready, I asked if I could get the six on each hand in advance. This was done and, after that, I was allowed the king-pin job of helping him to set up his telescope. We were the best of friends.

after. With no home, no relatives, a lost youth and resentment that we had had the temerity to survive, we turned to Palestine as our salvation. The British, subservient to Arab demands, shut the door in our faces. All of us could have been saved. The then Labour government carried on where Hitler had left off. If Francis Deutsch can think of an alternative to fighting the British and their Jordanian allies, who shelled Jewish Jerusalem in 1947 with British guns, in order to prise open the gates of Palestine – or at least a small part of it – I for one would like to hear of it.

*Frank Bright
Ipswich*

IRELAND, JEWS AND ANTISEMITES

Sir – While I am unable to refute any of your – as always – thoughtful points completely, your views on the country in which I've lived longer than any other (June issue) leave me with a very possibly biased unease. This is despite the fact that I can easily add to your list of Irish antisemitism as follows.

First, there is the case of the parliamentary deputy Oliver J. Flanagan, who said in 1944 that the Jews perhaps deserved what was happening to them – and went on to ministerial office and to become a cheerful, self-important old boy when I met him.

Second, there is De Valera's defence of the rights of small nations like Abyssinia at the League of Nations and acquiescence in Hitler's seizure of the Sudetenland.

And, third, in my own times, there was a sense of latent antisemitism when Israeli-supported Christian forces regularly killed Irish UN soldiers in Lebanon.

Moreover, at least one older friend admitted to me with horrified hindsight that 'Of course we supported Hitler.' And this is where I begin to take issue with you. If, as one family member always told me, he thought he was an assimilated German Jew before Kristallnacht, can often far less educated Irish people all be totally blamed for being so wrong?

As for Peadar Kirby's *Blut und Boden* sentiments, they were part of a European nationalist war psychosis. Rupert Brooke was not all 'And is there honey still for tea?', using Pearse-like language in *The Dead*.

Freud, as I and many of your readers first sadly learned from the pages of *AJR Information/Journal*, wrote in 1915 that only with the prospect of 10,000

daily deaths did life recover 'its full content and become interesting again'.

Carl Zuckmayer admitted that he experienced instant conversion from pacifism to military mania in 1914 when even the beloved Max Liebermann allowed himself to be tempted into war-slogan 'art' – albeit briefly.

In De Valera's lifetime, a significant proportion of Jews were not prevented from making significant contributions to Irish life, winning election to parliament and the mayorships of Dublin and Cork.

While the Jewish population declined through emigration in the economic hard times you noted – often through lack of potential marriage partners rather than antisemitism – the Celtic Tiger has boosted that population again, mainly through young Israelis in the computer industry.

As for today's Sinn Fein: if Islamic extremists had learned as much as Adams and his co-signatories of the Good Friday Agreement, might both Jews and the whole planet be happier?

*Andrew Sheppard
Dublin*

NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM

Sir – Further to my letter in your August 2006 issue, the National Railway Museum in York have now confirmed that they would like to acquire a Güterwagen such as was used to transport Jews to concentration camps. Herr Gottwaldt knows where one is available and it remains to work out logistics and cost.

In the review of Martin Gilbert's book *Kristallnacht* by Marian Maler in the same issue, she missed a mistake – not surprisingly in the wealth of information – namely, that the synagogue in Bayreuth was not destroyed as it was adjacent to a theatre.

*Rudi Leavor
Bradford*

'ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH CONTINENTALS'

Sir – One of my relations has pointed out to me that 'You cannot be a refugee after 60 years in a country!' What about Association of Jewish Continentals?

*Adele Gotthelf
New Barnet, Herts*

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ALL STAFF SCREENED AND VETTED

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Amedeo Modigliani, *Jeanne Hébuterne*, 1919, Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 73. Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Mr and Mrs Nate B. Spingold, 1956. Photo © 1985 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Few artists achieve such a range of expression within so limited a scope as **Amedeo Modigliani**. The **Royal Academy** exhibition **Modigliani and his Models** gives us the artist's trademark – the pared-down symmetry of long neck, almond eyes and sensual body. Poets, peasants and sometimes rapacious art dealers – several made a mint out of him on his early death from tubercular meningitis – are all treated with a light touch and a sharper perception. It is almost caricature but for the vivid empathy.

However, it is the languid odalisque – the female nude which derives as much from Eastern and African influences as from the shape of the models themselves – which makes this exhibition so luxuriant. Sometimes the eyes are a mere slash of colour, pale blue or brown.

Among the few artists working in Paris in the early twentieth century, Modigliani was a practising Sephardi Jew. The emancipation of Italian-Jewish artists generated a host of portrait painters for him

to follow. Spinoza and other humanist philosophers were among his influences, as was Cubism. He befriended Jacob Epstein, whose sculpture shares a similar robust, African simplicity.

Exceptionally handsome, Modigliani attracted many young women of Montmartre, who were only too happy to pose for him. His two closest lovers were the intellectual Russian poet Anna Akhmatova and the beautiful French teenager Jeanne Hébuterne, with whom he had a daughter. On his death, Hébuterne, nine months pregnant, threw herself from her parents' fifth-floor apartment. Only several years later did her upper-class Catholic family permit her body to be buried with that of the Jewish artist.

Modigliani's models have been described as Page 3 prototypes, but they are not even soft porn. The reclining nudes emanate a bizarre knowledge. His saddest work is his prophetic portrait of the pregnant Hébuterne, hands folded over a black maternity dress, her expression resigned. It is eerily funereal.

Howard Hodgkin at **Tate Britain** is full of primary colours and primitive emotion. Landscapes, memories, love affairs, bodies are the subject matter of this celebrated abstractionist, whose paintings extend seamlessly into his frames, as though he can't bear them to end. Some, but not all, of his mood pieces work brilliantly, such as *Bombay Sunset*, *Waking Up in Naples*, or *Venice at Night*. There is a sense of humour, and a nod to other artists, writers, even songs – like his pointillistic masterpiece *Come Into the Garden, Maud*. But for all its lushness, there is little sense of development. From the late 1950s to the turn of the twentieth century, nothing more in his garden seems to grow.

Sarah Lightman curated a **Fortnight of Solo Shows** at the **Ben Uri**, including the fabrics of **Yael David-Cohen** and the ceramic art of **Jenny Stolzenberg**. On the night I went, the Holocaust was predominant in the vision of Hungarian artist **Moshe Galili**, who sees skulls beneath the flesh. Sculptor **Adam Kops**, the son of the poet-playwright Bernard Kops, shares his father's flinty originality in sculpture made from bolts, nuts and screws.

REVIEWS

Object lesson in political manipulation

BLACK SHIRT: SIR OSWALD MOSLEY AND BRITISH FASCISM
by **Stephen Dorril**
Viking, 2006, 715 pp.

This book is not for the faint-hearted. However, it does nail once and for all the claims of previous biographers such as Skidelsky that Mosley's antisemitism was a late development. *Black Shirt* begins with a detailed history of Britain in the 1920s and 1930s which is readily available elsewhere. It becomes more interesting as it traces the career of Sir Oswald Mosley, a scion of the minor aristocracy.

An unsettled early home life – his father was a rake and a gambler – left him without a firm sense of direction – but with a 'vaulting ambition', which was almost fulfilled. The Speaker of the House of Commons is said to have remarked: 'Watch that young man. He will probably become Prime Minister.'

Following service in the First World War came marriage to Cynthia, the daughter of Lord Curzon, and a decision to enter parliament as a member of the Independent Labour Party. This went against the grain of his upbringing and antagonised some of his own class. His motives seem to have been a mixture of post-war idealism and opportunism. It was said that he picked up other people's ideas 'like a magpie'.

Disappointed in not gaining a post in the Labour government he thought he deserved, he set about forming his own party, the British Union. The strong influence of the emerging dictators – Mussolini and Hitler – was to shape the structure of his own party with its uniforms, marches, rallies and ranting speeches. Hecklers were dealt with

savagely, though Mosley always insisted that the violence was provoked by the anti-Fascists – an obvious lie.

What is disturbing about this book is the list of Mosley's new supporters, which reads like pages from Debrett. Add to this Lord Rothermere of the *Daily Mail* and other important names, and the slowly developing liberalism of this country one is taught about at school becomes more questionable.

Throughout the 1930s there were rallies and marches in many British towns and cities, though the Public Order Act later forbade the wearing of uniforms. Propaganda against Jews was a common feature, afterwards denied by Mosley. I looked in vain, however, for a reference to the Battle of Cable Street, where the Jews and dockers of the East End forced the Fascists to abandon their march. The author provides evidence of support and financial help for the British Union from Mussolini and from Hitler, who attended Mosley's wedding in Berlin to his second wife, Lady Diana Mitford.

The Second World War brought internment for the Mosleys and an end to the marches, though not to Mosley's plotting for a negotiated peace with Hitler involving the Duke of Windsor and the Duke of Bucchleuch. Hitler continued to believe in the possibility of a revolution which would result in Mosley becoming prime minister and the Duke of Windsor becoming king.

After Mosley's release from internment and when the war was over, the Mosleys seem to have led the life of Riley in Ireland, France and Italy, unrepentant about their earlier activities. (Both Diana and her sister Unity had been ardent worshippers of Hitler.) When finally acknowledging that Jews had been murdered in Auschwitz, Diana is said to have remarked: 'But darling, that was the kindest way!'

Years after Mosley's death, his baleful legacy lingers on in the racism of the British National Party. His life is an object lesson in how political manipulation can spell death to millions.

Martha Blend

Chronicle of an important congregation

THREE RABBIS IN A VICARAGE: THE STORY OF BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

by Antony Godfrey

London: Larson Grove Press, 2005, 366 pp., £20.00

The Belsize Square Synagogue is a unique institution in this country. With its background in the *Liberale* convention of pre-Holocaust Germany and its current status as an independent congregation loosely affiliated to the progressive movements but with a traditional form of service, it would find its place in the *Neolog* formula which still exists in Central Europe. A similar formula is also found in synagogues of the Masorti movement, the most flourishing of which is led, as it happens, by the grandson of Rabbi Dr Georg Salzberger, whose ministry inspired a disparate collection of refugees from Germany and Central Europe to form a closely-bonded community.

This community, with its links to the founding members of the AJR, undoubtedly helped to provide a focus and emotional and spiritual lifeline for the uprooted newcomers scattered, for the most part, across the bedsits and rooming houses of Belsize Park and Swiss Cottage. And the story of how such a community developed into a vibrant contemporary enterprise, jokingly referred to by its current rabbi as 'Belsize Square plc', is undoubtedly a fascinating one. Not least is the account of its links to the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St Johns Wood, whose founder, the iconic Lily Montagu, was unsparing in her welcome of the newcomers and in helping them set up their own

individual congregation. No less significant is the congregation's eventual struggle for independence from the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, which, in essence, shared a very different ritual and ethos from that of Belsize Square.

The 'vicarage' of the title is 51 Belsize Square, to which the congregation moved in late 1951, after years of functioning in various rooms or suites in the neighbourhood. And indeed there have been just three rabbis – Dr Salzberger from Frankfurt, Rabbi Jacob Kokotek and the current incumbent, Rabbi Rodney Mariner. The congregation was also served by outstanding cantors, principally Rev Magnus Davidsohn from Berlin, Rev Joseph Dollinger, Rev Louis Berkman and the recently retired Rev Lawrence Fine. Their contribution to the enjoyment of services was invaluable.

The author, who grew up in the community, has recorded several intriguing anecdotes, not least the debate in February 1946 about the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, ironically under the auspices of the Claude Montefiore Society, named for a pinnacle of progressive Judaism which was vocally anti-Zionist.

Regrettably, however, there are a number of flaws in the execution of the book. First, there is a plethora of excessive detail – not least in innumerable names scattered on most pages. While these might very well be of interest to readers who know or knew these people, there is no index, which could have facilitated access to a particular person. Second, there is a slightly portentous tone, which attempts to link the happenings in the congregation with contemporary world events. It is not entirely clear why this was found necessary. Finally, it is to be regretted that frequent non-sequiturs and a somewhat florid style detract from what could well have been a more satisfying read.

Emma Klein

Classic available in English at last

A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE WORLD by E. H. Gombrich

Yale University Press, 2005, 304 pp.

Ernst Gombrich, the author of the international classic *The Story of Art* and other bestsellers, was probably the best-known art historian of his time. Born in Vienna in 1909, he moved to London in 1936 to work for the Warburg Institute, of which he later became director. He also worked for the BBC and was made Professor of the History of the Classical Tradition at London University. Among his honours were the Wittgenstein and Goethe Prizes. He was knighted in 1972 and appointed a member of the Order of Merit in 1988.

In 1935, with a doctorate in art history and no prospect of a job, the 26-year-old Gombrich was invited by a publishing house acquaintance to attempt a history of the world for younger readers. He completed the task in six weeks and *Eine kurze Weltgeschichte für junge Leser* was published in Vienna to immediate success and is now available in 18 languages.

Towards the end of his long life, Gombrich embarked upon a revision and, at last, an English translation. *A Little History of the World* presents his lively and involving history to English-language readers for the first time.

In 40 concise chapters, Gombrich tells the story of man from the Stone Age to the atomic bomb. In between emerges a colourful picture of wars and conquests, grand works of art, and the spread and limitations of science. This is a text dominated not by dates and facts but by the sweep of mankind's experience across the centuries, a guide to humanity's achievements, and an acute witness to its frailties.

The book is translated by Caroline Mustill, who worked as Gombrich's assistant and researcher from 1995 to 2001. In a preface, Gombrich's granddaughter Leonie writes that he 'was still engaged in the task of translating and updating when he died, at the age of 92. [Caroline Mustill] has completed this difficult task meticulously and beautifully.'

Kurt Winter

University of Sussex MA in Modern European Jewish History, Culture and Thought

This MA programme offers a thorough introduction to modern European Jewish political, cultural and intellectual history from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century, from the Enlightenment to the destruction of Jewish life during the Holocaust through its partial renewal in recent decades.

All courses for this programme will be held in central London on the premises of the Leo Baeck Institute/Wiener Library and taught under the auspices of the University of Sussex. Thus, students will have access to both internationally renowned research institutes for the history and culture of German-speaking Jews in London, as well as to the faculty and academic resources of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex in Brighton.

The MA programme is divided into four courses, and can be undertaken either full time or part time. The University of Sussex has a tradition of admitting mature students. There is no upper age limit. Because of the value of experience we take a flexible approach when extending offers to mature students. You are not necessarily expected to fulfil the general entrance requirements, but you must be able to demonstrate the potential to handle degree-level work before we can offer you a place.

There are still places available for the autumn term; the closing date for applications is 6 October 2006. Please contact Dr Raphael Gross (r.gross@sussex.ac.uk) for further information. To apply, please contact Postgraduate Admissions, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RH; tel +44 (0)1273 678412; email pg.applicants@sussex.ac.uk.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE



Letter from Israel

About twenty years ago my family lived for a year in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA.

The area of the Great Plains is renowned for its wheat fields and flat topography. What we were not told in advance is that the climate is catastrophic, with blazing, humid summers and arctic winters. The experience gave us a new appreciation of Israel's climate. Even Tel Aviv seemed an attractive proposition to us Jerusalemites.

There is a traditional rivalry between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Tel Aviv is bigger, it has the sea, it is not dogged by religious restrictions. The population of Tel Aviv believes itself to be freer and more open-minded than that of Jerusalem. All this may be true, but no one disputes the fact that in summer Jerusalem's climate, with its mountain air and cool evenings, is far superior.

For various reasons, I was obliged to spend a weekend in Tel Aviv in mid-May this year. The view from our hotel room was of the sea in all its glory, with the yacht marina on one side and the picturesque old houses of Jaffa on the other. Below us stretched the promenade, with its patterned surface and endless procession of people walking, biking or rollerblading, some scantily dressed, others more modestly clad, all enjoying the balmy spring days and evenings.

On Shabbat morning music wafted up to our window. I peered down and saw people dancing on the promenade. The dances were new, but the songs were old, just like the ones I used to sing and dance to in the youth movement to which I once belonged. I quickly got dressed and went down to have a look. Before too long I was drawn into the circle, and stumbled along with the rest of the dancers. I may not have been the best dancer there, but I was certainly the happiest.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Ilona Jaffe A woman of culture

For many people, living in a quiet, leafy suburb of Bournemouth a few moments from the city's beach and renowned cliff tops would be as close to idyllic as it gets. Not so for Ilona Jaffe. Ilona craves the lively cultural life and stimulation of London. In Bournemouth, she explains, there's little opera, theatre or cinema – and, above all, little interest in art, even among the Jewish population of the city. Bournemouth has 'no soul'. Being without a car doesn't help either. A very private person, Ilona is deeply appreciative of the AJR for its support and attends meetings of her local, Wessex group whenever she can.

As we talk in Ilona's spacious flat – each square inch of almost every wall covered by her vivid paintings – she puts on a CD of arias by the great Italian tenor Tito Schipa (1888-1965). 'His voice has such an emotional effect on me', she declares. Certainly, there is in Schipa's sweet voice an indefinable element, a sense of otherworldliness.

Ilona, born in Cracow, was an inmate of three camps in Poland before being transferred to Ravensbrück and, eventually, Bergen-Belsen, from which she was liberated by British troops. She was incarcerated along with her mother and brother; she never saw them again. She searches for the words to describe her feelings of this time of her life but can't find them.

Displaying a good command of English, Ilona, a natural linguist, was taken on by the British Army immediately at war's end, helping them locate displaced persons. Soon after, she went to Sweden with the Red Cross. The Chief Rabbi there found her a job with the World Jewish Congress locating foster parents and obtaining visas for liberated Jews.

In 1948 Ilona made the long trip to South Africa to stay with a prosperous uncle in Johannesburg. Against his wishes, she worked for a year for a shipping company. The following year she married Heinz Jaffe, who had left Germany for South Africa in 1936 and had built up a thriving business selling bicycles and mopeds as well as farm materials. She moved to Port Elizabeth to join him, but showed little interest in the business. It was at this time that she made a fateful decision: to enrol in an art college. Aware that she possessed exceptional artistic talent, she couldn't go ahead without exorcising the demons from her earlier



existence. 'Grateful to the Almighty' that she had finally found her role in life, she remained at the art college for five or six years. Her artistic career prospered.

But her husband became ill and, over a period of many years, the business fell apart. He died in 1978. The business had collapsed to such an extent that there was hardly a penny left. Ilona decided to move back to Johannesburg, where, helped by a family inheritance, she was able to make a reasonable living as a professional artist and art teacher.

Ilona's paintings are characteristically vivid, containing strains of naïve, expressionist and abstract styles. Standing



out even to my untrained eye is a strongly Chagall-like element. Scenes from her childhood in Eastern Europe – scenes obscured by her incarceration in concentration camps which can no longer be repressed – are splashed onto the canvas. 'I've no idea what I'm going to paint – it just comes out of my head!', she says.

Besides her paintings, Ilona produces tapestries and makes prints on her own press. She has held solo exhibitions in, among many other places, Antwerp, Berlin, Boston, London, Malmö, Munich and Pretoria. Her works are exhibited in public collections in Freising, Johannesburg and elsewhere. Last year, one of her paintings was chosen for a Mandela's Day poster. She works daily, as and when the mood takes her, in her spacious studio, a large former bedroom. She uses the professional name of Ilona Langdorf-Jaffe; her website is www.todres.fsnet.co.uk.

In 1993, as the political situation in South Africa deteriorated, Ilona decided to join her daughter in England. (She has a second daughter in Canada.) She bought the flat she lives in now not far from her daughter – it was in a run-down condition – at a knock-down price.

Presently, Ilona has one pupil and would like to sell more paintings. She is looking forward to getting a computer which, she trusts, will broaden her outlook on what's going on 'elsewhere in the world'.

Ilona has had a complicated life, experiencing many difficulties. She has returned to Germany and Poland on a number of occasions, the last time to Cracow four years ago. She is firmly of the view that, with regard to Jews and Jewish matters, there has much positive change in Germany, and is equally firmly of the view that this is not the case in Poland.

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INSIDE the AJR

Norwich, or how to turn a one-way system into a maze

The youngest among us a cheerful two-year-old, we began with a lively discussion. Despite the multiple opinions said to be found among even a small number of Jews, we were unanimous in finding that Israeli PR was deplorable, that the BBC was biased, and that isolationist multi-culturism was threatening us and everyone else. Then we had a fantastic nosh.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: Thur 23 Nov. Usual venue

Oxford: the history of the bagel finally revealed

Why is the bagel the shape it is? Frank Miller came up from Hastings to tell us the bagel's story through the ages as well as its method of manufacture. Bagels owe their golden shine to the egg which is brushed over them before baking, and they are round to denote the symbolic circle of life, he told us. An interesting morning.

Anne Selinger

Essex talk by faith healer

Faith healer Lynne Fisher spoke to us about the mysterious way in which the spirits of our departed ones seem to influence our actions. Positive thoughts may make these powers help us combat illness and, if not actually heal it, at least control it. Today's medical scientists accept that your mind can control your body – that is if you believe wholeheartedly in this healing process.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tues 10 Oct in succah (details to follow)

Leeds HSFA address by prison deputy governor

Ruth Kerr, a prison deputy governor, described the background of typical prisoners, many of whom, particularly women, have a history of psychiatric disorders. In institutions for young offenders, she told us, training is given in such fields as hairdressing and business administration and, in preparation for their release, inmates do community work in charity shops, hotels, supermarkets and elsewhere.

Martin Kapel

Next meeting: Sun 10 Sept. Prof Howard Cuckle, 'My Family's Shtetl'

Pinner garden party

Our annual party in Vera's beautifully kept garden was hugely enjoyed by over 40 members, all comfortably accommodated under cover. A well-organised band of

helpers served tea with home-made scones and cakes followed by delicious strawberries and cream. A raffle with fantastic prizes added to the fabulous occasion.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thur 5 Oct, 2.00 pm. Brian Moser: 'Happy Birthday My Dear Mozart'

Cambridge: a psychotherapist's tale

We heard a fascinating talk by Bella Robinson-Zel about her experiences as a psychotherapist. As well as hearing about her training in Switzerland and Israel as well as the problems of some of her clients, we learned the difference between psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychoanalysts. A pleasant lunch was provided by Ruth Clapham and Ann Bender.

Ruth Cooper

Next meeting: Thur 19 Oct. Lunch and visit to Genizah Manuscripts at Cambridge Univ.

Third anniversary of Ilford group

There was a good attendance for our third anniversary. We sang Happy Birthday not only to our group but also to one of our members who was celebrating her special day. Myrna asked everyone to recall the happiest day in their lives and it was fascinating to hear how the birth of children, reunions with loved ones, and other poignant tales figured in these stories.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wed 4 Oct. 'Any Questions'

Interesting afternoon with Harrogate and District Continental Friends

We spent an interesting and informative afternoon. One of the three friends who sent apologies was Suzanne Repton, who recently returned to France, amid considerable media interest, to present a Yad Vashem medal to the daughter of the family who saved her from the Nazis. My husband and I were delighted to meet a couple of AJR members from Buckhurst Hill who were holidaying in Harrogate. Susanne Green told us about recent events, including another successful holiday in St Annes.

Inge Little

Next meeting: Wed 1 Nov at 1 Masham Close, Harrogate

Hendon members in happy frame of mind

The well-known actress Bettine Le Beau, speaking on the subject 'Happiness is a State of Mind', emphasised that self-esteem and an optimistic and constructive attitude were essential to a happy life. To keep old age at bay, we had to have a number of varied interests. This most interesting talk was spiced with humour and we left the meeting in a happy frame of mind.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: Mon 30 Oct. Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith, 'The Leitz Family'

Herts: a rather delicate subject

We met once again at our local school, 16 of us on this occasion. Our guest speaker, Lynne Fisher, outlined her belief in faith healing, a rather delicate subject. Time flies: our growing, adventurous group will celebrate its first anniversary at Monica Rosenbaum's home.

Sam Ostro

Next meeting: Thur 26 Oct

North London: Happy Birthday to us!

Happy Birthday to us! Our fifth birthday was celebrated in style thanks to Lily and Graham Curzon, ably assisted by Lore Bodek. Entertainment was provided by Naomi Hyamson, whose beautiful rendition of songs from musicals, opera and operettas, splendidly accompanied by Jenny Gould, was an absolute joy. There were over 30 of us there and a great time was had by all.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thur 26 Oct. 'Care in the Community'

'Gemütlich' times recalled in Edgware

Around 25 of us enjoyed an interesting talk by Otto Deutsch on the coffee houses of pre-war Vienna. Some of us had personal experiences, while others knew about it from hearsay. Otto talked about the 'gemütlich' times - when subservience was often exaggerated and titles played an important role in one's social standing. But tragically there came a time which one cannot erase from the memory as the scars are too deep.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: Tues 24 Oct. 'Jewish Genealogy'

A lunch-plus affair in Bath/Bristol

Our fourth meeting was, once again, at the home of Kitty and Gabriel Balint-Kurti and, as on previous occasions, a lunch-plus affair. Rural Somerset harbours a surprising number of ex-Kinder - we welcomed new faces from the county, all part of Myrna's co-ordinating activities. Myrna also brought with her from London Walter Woyda, who gave us a presentation on *The Rothschilds: The Musical*, which came from the same team that created *Fiddler on the Roof*.

D. H. Hackel

Stimulating morning in Brighton & Hove Sarid

Susannah Alexander, Education Officer at the Jewish Museum in Camden Town, gave us a most instructive talk on the history of UK Jewry. An enormous amount of material was covered in much too short a time. I had not realised, for example, that the availability of kosher meat was a reason why communities formed. A most stimulating morning, which will encourage me, and I hope others, to read more about it.

Susanne Dyke

Next meeting: Mon 16 Oct. 'Ask the Rabbi'. With Rabbi Pesach Efuno

Scottish Holocaust exhibition at planning stage

If you are a Holocaust survivor or refugee from Nazism, we at Heartstone want to hear your story. It may be your whole experience or your experiences when you reached Scotland.

Heartstone is a Scottish-based charity with a strong record of working in education to challenge racism, prejudice and intolerance through projects for young people. It has been commissioned by the Scottish Executive to create a commemorative exhibition about the Holocaust for Scotland.

The team at Heartstone first created an exhibition for Holocaust Memorial Day in 2004. The result was a powerful and moving exhibition which attracted much attention in Scotland.

Each of the testimonies in the exhibition will be approximately 250 words in length so that they can be read on display.

If you wish to be part of this project, or would like further details, please contact the following:

Heartstone, Holocaust Project, Mayfield,

High Street, Dingwall, Ross-shire, Scotland, UK, IV15 9SS tel 013498 65400

Questions and testimony to info@heartstone.co.uk; Lady Cosgrove at hazelcosgrove@blueyonder.co.uk; pkitching@hotmail.com

Second Generation meeting in Leeds

The Northern Second Generation Gathering will be meeting in Leeds on Sunday 12 November, 1-5 pm. All members of the second generation are welcome. For further information, contact Barbara Dresner Dorriety on 0161 368 5088 or at barbara@ajr.org.uk.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Surrey Wed 25 Oct. Coffee morning

HGS Tues 31 Oct. Visit to Wiener Library. Details to follow

Cleve Road Centre New outreach group. Details to follow, or call Susan Lewis on 020 8385 3078

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 18 October 2006

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

TO BE CONFIRMED

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 9 October 2006

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Dr Margaret Brierley
'Jewish Creativity'

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

October	Afternoon entertainment
Mon 2	CLOSED
Tue 3	CLOSED
Wed 4	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur 5	William Smith
Mon 9	KT LUNCH
Tue 10	CLOSED
Wed 11	Mike Mirandi
Thur 12	Nicola Smedley
Mon 16	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 17	CLOSED
Wed 18	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 19	Madeleine Whiteson
Mon 23	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 24	CLOSED
Wed 25	Michael Heaton
Thur 26	Katinka Seiner

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KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

DIARY DATES

October 29-

November 5 Bournemouth
holiday

November 8 Visit to Imperial
War Museum

November 9 Kristallnacht
service at
AJR Centre

For further information about any
of these events, please call us on
020 8385 3070.

'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


FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Braun Ern. My beloved only cousin passed away peacefully on 30 July. She will be deeply mourned and sadly missed by Susi Linton (née Braun) and her Manchester family. May her dear soul rest in peace.

Guhrauer Hella passed away peacefully on 3 August aged 93. A special and loving friend who will be missed by us. Ursula Heymann and family.

Stanhope Henry, born Heinz-Helmut Schwarzstein in Berlin on 27 May 1918, has died in London. Husband and friend of Ursula for 70 years, beloved father of Alan and Nicola, grandfather and great-grandfather. He came to England in 1939, making a successful career in machine tools. He was also a published author (an autobiography and a novel) and a talented artist. The most 'English' of immigrants, he loved his new home country unreservedly as well as his part-time home in Canada. He will be missed immensely by his family and friends. A true gentleman. Nicola Stanhope.



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Obituaries

Arnold R. Horwell

My father, Dr Arnold Horwell (Horwitz), who has died at the age of 92, was born in Berlin; his father, Hugo, was the director of the state spirits monopoly. Arnold studied economics; his 1938 doctoral thesis was the last to be published by a Jew in Germany. He was active in student Jewish organisations, particularly the Hilfsverein, which aided German-Jewish communities. He became its secretary, touring Germany to give support to Jewish emigration. He escaped to Britain in 1939.

Having initially being detained as an enemy alien, Arnold joined the British army and rose to the rank of captain. A member of a small liaison group, he was among the first British troops to enter Belsen. Here he was part of the administration team, supervising the rescue of many of the inmates, but sadly having to arrange the burial of many others for whom liberation of the camp came too late.

After the war, he developed a successful business while maintaining a strong commitment to communal work. He was a longstanding member of the AJR Executive and he took an active part in the Association's social activities. He and his wife Susie hosted *seders* for the AJR Club. Their Chanukah gramophone recitals for the Club, playing rare recordings of German and Austrian singers, comedians and cabaret artistes of the twenties and thirties, were

greatly loved. He was a member of the Board of Belsize Square Synagogue and a popular president of the B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Lodge. In all these spheres he expressed pride in his German-Jewish heritage and, as a Berliner, exhibited a certain degree of snobbishness about his origin in what he considered to be the cradle of civilisation.

Following Susie's death in 1992, Arnold continued to be involved in many activities but, with the development of deafness and short-term memory loss in his mid-80s, his communal participation decreased. He continued to live at home, looked after by a devoted team of carers. This April he became a great-grandfather.

Of many tributes paid to him after his death, one, from a non-Jewish friend, summed him up: 'It is to his eternal praise that he came through turbulent times both sane and with such a balanced, liberal view of life and his fellow man, and was willing to help so many over the years.'

David Horwell

Lily Bardi-Ullmann

My aunt Lily Bardi-Ullmann was born in Vienna in 1914, the elder child of Philipp and Helene Faith. She had a happy childhood but, as for so many in Austria, her family was torn apart in 1938 with the arrival of the Nazis. Lily abandoned her studies at Vienna University for the home

of cousins in London. My father followed on the Kindertransport.

Lily often described life in London during the blitz. She had vivid recollections of being stuck in a lift during an air raid with my father, who was on leave from the army. After the war, Lily ran a book-import business and married a Berlin professor who died in the early 1970s. In subsequent years she often spoke nostalgically of life in Vienna, in particular of a dashing, motorbike-riding boyfriend, Eric, with whom she had been very much in love. The war had separated them and, despite many attempts, she had never found out what happened to him.

All that changed one day in the late 1980s. A friend spotted a search notice in the *AJR Journal*. It said that Eric Ullmann of New York was looking for Lily Veit (he had forgotten the spelling of her name!). Lily rang immediately. It was indeed her long-lost boyfriend who, despite the passing of the years, had never forgotten her. The next thing we knew, she was on a plane to New York. They married soon after and had several contented years in New York before Eric died. Albeit late in life, Lily had found great happiness thanks to this journal. She died peacefully in August.

Diana Preston

Michael Newman is currently on holiday.

Arts & Events Diary – October

From Mon 24 Oct to 11 Jan 2007
Absence and Loss A photographic Holocaust memorial exhibition
Manchester Jewish Museum tel 0161 834 9879

To 12 Nov *Identities 2006* Exhibition marking minority identities in Britain.
Jewish Museum, Camden Town, tel 020 7284 1997

3 Oct-12 Nov *Abayudaya: The Jews of Uganda* Exhibition of photographs on the 'Children of Judah'. Jewish Museum, Camden Town

Mon 2 No lecture (hall not available)
Club 43

Mon 9 Dr Anthony Grenville, 'Refugees from Hitler during the First World War: Some Recent Research' Club 43

Mon 16 Charles Dreyfus, 'Some German Mates for British Monarchs' Club 43

Sun 22 Jewish Genealogy Workshop
Jewish Museum, Finchley, 4 pm. Tel 020 7284 1997

Mon 23 Dr Rudolf Muhs Subject to be announced Club 43

Wed 25 Who's Not Who with Andrew Sachs. Reading of extracts from Carl Fleisch's guide to 'being interesting even if you're not famous'. London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC), 2 pm

Thur 26 The Voice of Freedom: An Evening with novelist Evi Blaikie (*Magda's Daughter: A Hidden Child's Journey Home*). Evi Blaikie discusses

her novel, which describes her experience of being hidden in Hungary as a child during the Holocaust. LJCC, 7.30 pm

Sun 29 *The Voice of Freedom: The Third Man* Charles Drazin introduces a screening of his most famous work. LJCC, 7.30 pm

Mon 30 Gerald Holm, 'Henrik Ibsen (d. 1906): What Was He Really Like?' Club 43.

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

London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, North End Road, London NW11 tel 020 8457 5000

Resolution and irresolution

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted on 12 August 2006, expressed 'utmost concern at the continuing escalation of hostilities' and categorically stated that 'Hezbollah's attack on Israel on 12 July 2006' had already caused 'hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides, extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons.' It emphasised 'the need to address urgently the causes that have given rise to the current crisis, including by the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers.'

In its specific provisions, Article 3 stated that the government of Lebanon 'should exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the government of Lebanon.' Article 8 called for 'The establishment between the Blue Line [the Israeli-Lebanese border] and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL', and further called for 'No sales or supply of arms and related material to Lebanon except as authorized by its government.'

Further still, Article 14 'Calls upon the government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related material.' And Article 15 'Decides further that all states shall take the necessary measures to prevent ... the sale or supply to any entity or individual in Lebanon of arms and related material of all types, including weapons and ammunition.'

Thanks to the steadfastness and perseverance of a much-maligned US government, backed by Britain and other EU states, the Security Council resolution, which brought a ceasefire to the 34-day Hezbollah-Israel conflict, spelled out the circumstances of an unprovoked attack on a sovereign country, across an internationally recognised border, by irregular forces operating untrammelled from Lebanese territory.

Further, that huge quantities of armaments, massive underground fortifications and forces owing allegiance to, and trained and led by the officers of another country, had been put in place. The solution was to be the insertion of 15,000 Lebanese troops, backed by a similar number of UN peacekeeping forces, and the disarmament and exclusion of any paramilitary forces, i.e. Hezbollah, south of the Litani River.

No sooner had the ink dried on the resolution and the guns and rockets mostly fallen silent, than the French attempted to renege on the key role they had played - in the main representing Arab interests - by withdrawing from a pledge to supply the core element of the peacekeeping force and its command structure. No doubt the willingness of the Italians to replace them helped to bring about a change of heart.

With threats from the Syrian president to close the Lebanese border, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wasted no time in reinterpreting the resolution so that the Lebanese-Syrian border would not be secured by UN forces to prevent the importation or smuggling of rockets and other armaments to Hezbollah. For good measure, Lebanon's prime minister declared that there could be no disarming of the Hezbollah irregulars by the Lebanese army. Hezbollah's immediate reaction to the ceasefire was for Nasrallah's men, in civilian garb, to lead a return to South Lebanon to reoccupy much of the territory lost to the Israeli IDF. Neither of the abducted Israeli soldiers has been released.

How can Israel best prevent Hezbollah from using the interim period, while the UN force is probably brought up to half-strength, to be rearmed and re-equipped by Iran and Syria for a further aggression? With a proportion of its forces still dangerously exposed in occupation in South Lebanon, Israel has few options but to maintain a blockade and sit tight until a substantial UN force is in situ. Can it be that armaments flowing freely through from Egypt into the Gaza strip will encourage Hamas to emulate Hezbollah's perceived success?

Newsround

Grass criticised by German-Jewish leader

Charlotte Knobloch, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, has criticised the novelist Günter Grass for waiting decades to reveal that he had served in the Waffen-SS. She said the admission negated Grass's long-time criticism of German society for not adequately dealing with the Nazi past.

Hungarian woman honoured

The Israeli government has given a Righteous Among the Nations award to Clara Ambrus-Baer. Now aged 81 and living in Buffalo, she was 19 when the Germans invaded Budapest in 1944. Her family turned its home into a safe haven for Jews hiding from the Nazis and provided elaborate hideouts in a vacant textile factory which her parents once managed. Her husband, Julian Ambrus, said she also bribed German guards to free imprisoned Jews and provided the ex-prisoners with a hideaway.

Neo-Nazi training camp

The citizens of Delmenhorst, a small town near Bremen, have failed to thwart a far-right group's plans to buy a hotel overlooking a park for use as a training ground for neo-Nazis from across the country. Jürgen Rieger, a Hamburg lawyer and well-known far-right activist, was poised to buy the City Park Hotel in Delmenhorst's centre despite attempts by residents to raise enough cash to buy it themselves.

Controversial Berlin centre

An exhibition – seen as the first step towards creating a permanent centre in Berlin to commemorate the 12 million Germans deported from Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War – has opened in Berlin. Polish President Lech Kaczynski said the aim of the centre was to portray Germans as victims.

Hitler's Cross restaurant row

A Mumbai restaurant named Hitler's Cross has been renamed the Cross Café. After meeting members of the Indian Jewish community, the restaurant's owner, Puneet Sablok, said the swastikas that adorned signs advertising the restaurant would be removed and the new name would appear on billboards immediately.