

# AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

## French connections

The refugees from Central Europe have often acted as a bridgehead between Britain, their adopted country, and the cultures and peoples of the Continent. Less prone than the native Brits to fits of insular super-patriotism, they may also be inclined to look more generously on our neighbours across the Straits of Dover than is currently the mood among much of the population, influenced by the tabloid press. Anti-French feeling has long been a staple of British nationalism, especially when that national feeling is fuelled by an underlying sense of insecurity. That has been the case for some decades now, as Britain, having lost its empire and its role as a global power, has struggled to redefine its position in the world, and its relationship with Europe in particular.

The common perception that France has been notably more successful than Britain in achieving its European objectives has led to a confused sense on this side of the Channel that the French have slyly gained an advantage over the British in such areas as agricultural subsidies, beef bans or Eurojobs in Brussels. This inchoate feeling of indignation at having somehow been outwitted has found expression in a series of anti-French headlines, typified at gutter level by *The Sun's* 'Hop Off, You Frogs' and 'Up Yours, Delors' (Jacques Delors being the then president of the European Commission). It is, of course, impossible to imagine this sort of crude jingoistic insult appearing in the French or German papers - they are far too civilised for that.

Also much cultivated in the anti-European press is the image of France as the 'historic foe' of Britain. To those familiar with the uglier undercurrents of German nationalism in the pre-1914 era, this comes uncomfortably close to the image of the French as the 'Erbfeind' of Germany - cunning Latin plotters whose aim, constant over generations, was to keep Germany divided or, after unification, to undo the glorious achievement of Germanic nationhood. It is also historically



British cavalry charge, Battle of Waterloo

illiterate. To cast France as Britain's consistent foe is to ignore two centuries of evidence, as the two countries have not been at war since the Battle of Waterloo (1815). On the contrary, in all three major European conflicts in which both countries have since been participants - the Crimean War and the First and Second World Wars - they have fought on the same side.

Francophobes would do well to remember that it was the French army that bore the brunt of fighting the German war machine to a halt in 1914-18, rather as the Red Army did in 1941-45. Far from France being in semi-permanent conflict with Britain to its north-west, it was from the east that the great threat to France emerged in the nineteenth century. In the 70 years between 1870 and 1940, France suffered no less than three major invasions by German forces, starting with the Franco-Prussian war. These invasions from the German side of the Rhine even passed into common British discourse, most famously in the First World War soldiers' song 'Mademoiselle of Armentières', which begins 'Three German Officers Crossed the Rhine, Parlez-vous' (and is thereafter unrepeatable in a family magazine).

High-octane nationalism, especially when fired by a sense of national grievance or failure, tends to attach its own

prejudices and obsessions to the foes of its choice, thereby creating a bogeyman that is in reality a mirror image of itself. This is true of present-day British Francophobes, who are apparently convinced that the wicked French are as unrelentingly hostile to Britain and British interests as they themselves are to France. Apart from the historical considerations already mentioned, it is obvious from a glance at the map that Britain mostly does not rank anywhere near top in French external priorities. France has no land border with Britain, but it does have substantial land borders with the three other major Western European powers - Spain, Italy and Germany - as well as with Belgium, Switzerland and Luxemburg. The immediate impact of the British on France occurs in a peripheral northern region, the Pas-de-Calais, where the principal centres of population are Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk; one might compare these with ports of entry like Hull or Newcastle. The nearest large city, Lille, looks to Flanders and the north-east, not to Britain, as its architecture shows only too plainly; the 'beffroi' (belfry) is a feature common to the entire lowland area on either side of the Franco-Belgian border.

French sensitivities to relations with Italy and Spain have been very evident in the modern era. France has been actively addressing its relations with Italy ever since Napoleon III's ill-considered military intervention in the cause of Italian unification in 1859. It was the prospect of the accession to the Spanish throne of a prince from the House of Hohenzollern, the Prussian royal family, thereby giving the principal German power a potential base south of the Pyrenees, that triggered the war between France and Prussia in 1870. The only invasion of France mounted from Britain in modern times was carried out under American command, and was aimed at restoring French sovereignty from Nazi occupation.

Anthony Grenville

# A tale of two secretaries

## Anthony Grenville

The death of John Profumo, who had to resign as Secretary of State for War in 1963 after lying to the House of Commons about his affair with the call-girl Christine Keeler, reminds us of more than the most spectacular sex-and-politics scandal in modern Britain. Another Secretary of State for War who was forced to resign under unusual circumstances was Leslie Hore-Belisha, minister in Neville Chamberlain's government until his abrupt dismissal in January 1940.

Hore-Belisha was one of the few Jews to achieve high political office in Britain before 1945. Born in Plymouth in 1893, he was elected Liberal MP for Plymouth Devonport in 1923. A qualified barrister, he was a brilliant speaker and a flamboyant personality who stood on the right wing of the Liberal Party; he was among the National Liberals who supported Ramsay MacDonald's National Government in 1931, in coalition with the Conservatives and a rump of Labour right-wingers. He held junior office after the 1931 general election and chose to remain in the government when his fellow Liberals withdrew from it in 1932; for this he was promoted to Financial Secretary at the Treasury, then in 1934 to the post of Minister of Transport, where his drive and energy became apparent.

The measures he introduced, which included the driving test and a modernised Highway Code, shaped the emerging face of mass motoring in Britain. The Belisha Beacon, which flashed its warning light beside zebra crossings well into the post-war period, was named after him. In 1937 Chamberlain appointed him Secretary of State for War, a remarkable appointment as Hore-Belisha was a National Liberal, not a Conservative, and a Jew. He adopted a modernising agenda, improving conditions in the armed forces and not hesitating to take on the more hidebound elements in the military establishment.

This earned him enemies within the forces, while he also came under attack from antisemitic elements in the Conservative Party. One of his principal critics, Captain Archibald Ramsay MP, claimed that Hore-Belisha was leading

Britain into a war with 'our blood-brothers of the Nordic race' in order to make way for a Bolshevised Europe - echoing Nazi fantasies of a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy against Germany.

Undeterred, Hore-Belisha pressed for the introduction of conscription in 1938, in face of the threat from Nazi Germany, but Chamberlain, unwilling to increase defence expenditure, refused. Conscription was eventually introduced in early 1939.

When war broke out, Hore-Belisha's relations with Lord Gort, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in France, rapidly deteriorated. Chamberlain decided to remove the war minister from his post in January 1940. The reasons behind this remain obscure. Certainly, antisemitic prejudice was at work. But if Chamberlain had been influenced by such views, he would never have appointed Hore-Belisha in the first place. It seems likely that Hore-Belisha's intense energy, love of publicity and independence of mind had lost him friends, and that, as a National Liberal, he lacked support in a Tory-dominated government. He was thus something of a political outsider, as well as racially suspect in some right-wing quarters. Chamberlain proposed moving him to the Ministry of Information, but the Foreign Office, apprehensive about foreign reactions to a Jew in such a position, objected.

Hore-Belisha's political career never recovered. He was prominent in the parliamentary opposition to Churchill, forming an unlikely alliance with Labour left-wingers Aneurin Bevan and Emanuel Shinwell as one of the principal figures behind the motion of no confidence in Churchill that was debated in July 1942, a low point in the war following the fall of Tobruk to Rommel's forces. Though it failed, it was the most serious parliamentary challenge to Churchill during the wartime period. In the Labour landslide of July 1945, Hore-Belisha lost his seat to Michael Foot. His attempts to secure re-election as a Tory failed. He was subsequently elevated to the peerage, and died in 1957, leaving the enigma of his resignation unresolved.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the  
ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES

TUESDAY 27 JUNE 2006

11.30 AM

at

The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Lunch, if required, £5 payable in advance

#### Agenda

Annual Report 2005

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Discussion

Election of Committee of Management

All questions for the chair should be submitted by 30 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 27 June 2006:

Mr A C Kaufman, Chairman

Mr W D Rothenberg

Vice Chairman & Hon. Treasurer

Mrs E S Angel, Secretary

Mr P Dannenberg

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 30 May.

 **JACKMAN SILVERMAN**

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#### AJR Directors

Gordon Greenfield Finance

Carol Rossen Administration and Personnel

AJR Heads of Department

Marcia Goodman Social Services

Michael Newman Media and Public Relations

Susie Kaufman Organiser, Day Centre

#### AJR Journal

Dr Anthony Grenville Consultant Editor

Dr Howard Spier Executive Editor

Andrea Goodmaker

Secretarial/Advertisements

## My brief career as a tweeny

Soon after the Anschluss it became clear that my only hope of escape from Vienna was to England as a domestic servant. I was not without accomplishments. I could reel off Latin and Greek proverbs; I could recite a number of poems by Schiller and Goethe in their entirety; I had read countless novels by authors of various nationalities; I had a bit of typing, a bit of shorthand and a smattering of English; I could even add up pounds, shillings and pence. But, although by no means to the manor born, I am ashamed to confess that, at the age of 18, I had never so much as held a broom. I attended a crash course conducted by an enterprising Jewish woman who attempted to teach me and other would-be maidservants some basic domestic skills. Alas, all that stuck in my mind was that you had to serve food from the left.

It must have been shortly after my nineteenth birthday that I landed a job in deepest Worcestershire as a between-maid, popularly known as a tweeny. A tweeny was to assist both the cook and the housemaid and, in effect, do any jobs they didn't feel like doing. As it happened, in my case the cook and her husband, the footman, were amiable Jewish refugees from Berlin and the house-parlour maid had been a medical student in Prague in her former life.

It was only fair that I should hold the lowliest position. Not only was I the youngest of the quartet, I was also the least competent. (Although I had been in England for only a few months I had already exasperated a good many police officers with my frequent changes of employer and address, which they had to enter in my Aliens

Registration Certificate.) However, we ignored hierarchy and operated as a team; fraternity and equality were our watchwords.

We worked for the local squire. Our rooms were in the attic, the kitchen and servants' hall in the basement. A bit like *Upstairs, Downstairs*, but not nearly so grand, I am afraid. For one thing, apart from a gardener and a chauffeur, there were only the four of us to look after the master and the mistress, not the regiment of servants then still employed in the houses of the English upper classes; for another thing Madam was no Lady - not even a lady if the grapevine was to be believed. She was, so rumour had it, a former showgirl who had ensnared Sir.

I remember hardly anything about my duties in the household - to scrub floors and peel vegetables isn't exactly memorable - and even less of what we did in our free time, of which there was precious little. Only one image remains engraved in my mind. I can still see those two people, the squire and his spouse, night after night, in full evening dress, facing each other at dinner across the long table. Presided over by the footman, Susan, the Czech girl, and I waited at table. There were never any guests - Sir's family and friends may not have approved of his choice of wife - and if I had hoped to enrich my vocabulary by their sparkling conversation, I was disappointed. Long silences were broken only by exchanges of platitudes.

My one and only encounter with the English gentry ended abruptly when Madam accused Susan of stealing a scarf. In a show of solidarity, we all handed in our notice. Tired of too much rural solitude, we headed for the still undimmed lights of the metropolis.

Edith Argy

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## AJR Annual Report 2005

### Highlights of the year

In 2005 the AJR was involved in several events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

For Holocaust Memorial Day we organised a memorial service at Belsize Square Synagogue. We also hosted a dinner in a north London restaurant for our members who came to London to meet Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip at St James's Palace and to attend the national Holocaust Memorial Day service that followed at Westminster Hall.

Our AGM was held at the Day Centre in Cleve Road, where Ned Temko, who had just retired as Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, gave an interesting talk followed by questions.

We thank all of you who attended the Annual Tea, which was held at the Watford Hilton in September. The enjoyable entertainment was *Around the World in 80 Minutes*, a revue operetta performed by The Garden Party.

### Personnel and membership

We welcomed three new members of staff last year. At Head Office, following the sad death of Wendi Wilson, Nomi Lackmaker started in May 2005 and Susan Lewis started in August 2005 as assistant to the regional groups' co-ordinators. Julian Kaye started in June 2005 as the Day Centre driver replacing Gerry Ingram, who retired.

At the end of 2005 there were 3,196 AJR members (3,292 in 2004), including 167 new members.

### Social services

In 2005 the social work team worked closely with the regional groups, meeting many new members in outlying areas.

Marcia Goodman greatly enjoyed meeting fellow social workers from 19 different countries at a social work conference in Prague organised by the Claims Conference.

The administration of the restitution funds, particularly the Hardship Fund, was enormously time-consuming last year, but it is very satisfying to be able to offer help and support to members who are in need.

### Homecare scheme and Self Aid

The number of survivors and refugees approved for the Homecare service grew to 157. In 2005 the cost of the scheme - £173,472 - was partly offset by a contribution from the Claims Conference. We are delighted that the Homecare

scheme continues to give survivors and refugees support, enabling them to live at home longer and with more dignity and comfort. We are, of course, grateful to the Claims Conference for their generous contribution towards the operation of this scheme.

The AJR Charitable Trust paid £344,322 under our Self Aid of Refugees scheme in one-off grants, special assistance at festivals, and monthly top-ups to income support. A further £45,495 was paid in loans.

### AJR groups

Two new groups were established - Hertfordshire, meeting in the Welwyn Garden City area, and Cardiff - bringing to 19 the number of groups in the southern region.

The North and Scotland gatherings have developed into 16 social groups, meeting approximately every two months, whilst the smaller localised groups, Continental Friends, offer members an opportunity to meet more frequently.

With the increasing activities of the groups, the administration at Head Office has grown considerably. Since joining the organisation, Susan Lewis has made a great difference, enabling the groups to grow in number and strength.

For almost every group there is at least one individual who helps to ensure the smooth running of the group and meetings. These members give support in various ways, including offering their houses, helping with speakers and outings, and writing the group reports for the *AJR Journal*. To all of them a sincere 'Vote of Thanks' is owed.

### Get-togethers

A fixture of our groups are the get-togethers. In the Northern regions two gatherings are arranged - Scotland and Manchester, which comprise workshops, lunch and a speaker. A regional get-together also took place in Cambridge in July (leading to the establishment of the Hertfordshire Group) and, in May, the Ilford Group had a joint luncheon meeting in Westcliffe with the Essex Group.

Also present at get-togethers are representatives from Head Office, which give members an opportunity to meet AJR executives and feel part of the AJR family.

### Holidays and outings

Once again we had two extremely enjoyable holidays - in June in Eastbourne at the Lansdowne Hotel, and in November at the Cumberland Hotel in Bournemouth.

In June we arranged a trip to Beth Shalom. We were again made very welcome on a visit to the Jewish Day Centre in Westcliffe in July.

Northern members enjoyed two days out in May - to the Dewsbury Museum and the Salts Mill - and in July we held our third annual Northern AJR holiday in St. Anne's.

### Volunteers

During 2005 24 volunteers were recruited to provide 30 AJR members with befrienders for the first time. All volunteers continue to receive support and supervision as well as the opportunity to attend volunteer forums, which provide opportunities for them to meet and discuss issues that arise. We also arranged speakers at volunteer gatherings on subjects including disability and practical support for volunteers.

Our volunteer co-ordinator continues to work closely with other organisations, including various London universities and Bnei B'rith 1st Unity Lodge, which arranges Sunday teas for lonely AJR members in Bnei B'rith members' homes in north London. A new association was formed with Action Reconciliation for Peace, which provided us with four young students - from Poland and Germany - who befriended AJR members. The volunteers department also benefited from two US students and an intern from Austria.

### Welfare benefits

Our welfare benefits expert continued to offer advice on state benefits to our members, both by appointment at the AJR offices and through home visits. Members were assisted with new applications for benefits as well as problems they experienced with benefits they were already receiving. The most frequent enquiries continue to be in relation to Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, Carer's Allowance and Attendance Allowance.

### Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Previously a joint initiative of the UK Umbrella Group (organisations which together with the AJR provide services to Holocaust survivors and refugees), the Central Office for Holocaust Claims formally became part of the AJR at the start of 2005.

The Claims Office continued to offer specialist advice and assistance in response to enquiries on Holocaust restitution and compensation schemes. With the deadline to many programmes having passed in the previous year, 2005 was principally a year of following up and settling outstanding claims.

Although mid-2005 witnessed the last official deadline for filing claims in respect of dormant Swiss bank accounts, the Claims Office successfully lobbied the British government to enact legislation exempting from income and capital gains tax awards made by the Swiss banks Claims Resolution Tribunal.

#### **AJR Journal**

It was a traumatic year for the *Journal*. Richard Grunberger, its Editor-in-Chief for 17 years, died suddenly in February. There was a consensus that Richard was irreplaceable: by no means had everybody agreed with his views, but no one could fail to respect his erudition and the elegance with which he expressed those views. Under his editorship lively controversy characterised the Letters to the Editor columns, which invariably featured opinions strongly critical - and supportive - of articles he wrote.

In the months that followed Richard's untimely death, Dr Howard Spier saw it as his main task to keep the *Journal* flowing as evenly as possible. As one measure, he introduced a regular Point of View column, which provided readers with a platform to express their own opinions on topical issues, while maintaining an overall political balance. This, in turn, helped to continue a healthy, impassioned debate in the Letters columns.

In January 2006 the *Journal* was delighted to welcome Dr Anthony Grenville as its Consultant Editor. Already commissioned by the AJR to direct *Refugee Voices*, a programme of filmed interviews with former refugees across Britain, and possessing a specialised knowledge of the refugee community, Dr Grenville began to contribute regularly to the *Journal*, focusing on historical, cultural and political topics of interest to members.

#### **Website - [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)**

Towards the end of 2005 the number of visitors to our website had grown to almost 9,000 per month from over 55 countries. The website is regularly updated with information and news from the Central Office for Holocaust Claims, search notices, regional groups events and reports, Day Centre programmes and, of course, articles from the *AJR Journal*.

#### **Education/grants**

Dr Bea Lewkowicz and Dr Anthony Grenville completed work on the first stage of our *Refugee Voices* project - filming interviews with 120 members - and work is well under way on the filming of an additional 30 interviews.

In 2005, as well as numerous other awards, the AJR Charitable Trust made significant contributions to the Anne Frank Educational Trust and to Beth Shalom for their new exhibitions.

#### **The Paul Balint AJR Day Centre**

In January 2005 Sylvia Matus retired as Organiser of the Day Centre after 29 years' loyal service. She was replaced by Susie Kaufman.

The Day Centre continues to be popular for KT and Luncheon Club meetings, both of which are well attended, and our clothes sales still prove to be popular, as do our monthly chiropody and bi-annual optician visits.

We continue with our well-attended keep-fit classes on Wednesdays and Thursdays and our lively and interesting weekly discussion group. We also hosted a buffet lunch for our volunteers, organised a Chanukah party and, for the first time, held a Kristallnacht service.

#### **Kindertransport**

The Kindertransport special interest group enjoyed a stimulating year under the chairmanship of Hermann Hirschberger. Monthly luncheon meetings, hosted at the AJR Day Centre with guest speakers, continued to foster camaraderie between members.

Fellow Kinder took pride in the award of an MBE by Her Majesty the Queen for 'services to the Jewish People' to Bertha Leverton, founder of the Reunion of Kindertransport. Bertha was also honoured by Germany's Minister of the Interior for her tours to address students and teachers on her childhood experiences. Bertha edited the *KT-AJR Newsletter* and continued to give talks in the UK and Germany.

Marking the 60th anniversary of the Second World War, 100 KT-AJR members were invited to a reception given by Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall at Clarence House. Kinder were introduced informally to the Prince, who expressed his pride in Britain's having given them refuge.

*The Journey*, an ambitious project being created with the help of the AJR Charitable Trust for younger children at the Beth Shalom Holocaust Education Centre - its purpose is to comprehend the experience of being confronted by the alternatives of hiding, staying or escaping with the Kindertransport - was visited during its early stage of formation. A Kindertransport exhibit was also included in the newly opened Yad Vashem exhibition in Jerusalem.

#### **Summary**

All in all, 2005 was an extremely busy and active year for our AJR family, which has now become a genuine national organisation.

**Andrew Kaufman**  
Chairman

## Treasurer's Report 2005

The financial outcome for 2005 has been exceptionally good, and this has put us into a position where we can plan for the future when our members are inevitably growing older and requiring ever more help, both financially and with a range of Social Service support.

During 2005 we received legacies at an unprecedented level. This arose largely because, after many years of legal proceedings, we finally collected a very large legacy from a member who died some ten years ago. Our thanks are due to our lawyers, who persisted in what was a lengthy, difficult and often frustrating matter. It is our legacies which over the years have enabled us to provide an exceptional level of support to our members, and without which we would not be able to do everything that we do.

During 2005 we decided to consider placing the investment management of our funds in new hands; a specially constituted Investment Committee of Frank Harding, Peter Dannenberg and myself was appointed by the Trustees. After a rigorously conducted 'beauty parade' of possible advisers, we appointed Rathbone Brothers, who took over the management of our investments, reporting regularly to the Investment Committee. Whilst it is unwise to judge performance over a short period, they have beaten the benchmarks we set. In the year 2005 the Stock Market rose substantially, and our funds have grown accordingly. We take a cautious approach, investing our funds both in less volatile fixed interest securities and in equities. We are not, however, wholly insulated from the vagaries of the Stock Market.

We have continued working with the Umbrella Group, principally in negotiating with the Claims Conference in New York, as well as with the Austrian Holocaust Survivors Emergency Assistance Programme (AHSEAP), The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), and other programmes which provide assistance to survivors of the Nazi years.

During 2005 the Claims Conference found it necessary to reduce our funding, but that was on the understanding that the shortfall would be made good by OSHA from funds released on the sale of Heinrich Stahl House. I am pleased to say that not only did OSHA make up the shortfall, but they also provided funding towards our expanding Meals on Wheels service. We are very grateful to both organisations, and we continue to work harmoniously with the other communal organisations which make up the Umbrella Group.

One of the more important projects on which we are progressing jointly with Jewish Care is the provision of new Assisted Living accommodation for refugees and Holocaust survivors. The plans are to create a purpose-built facility for about 45 residents, to be constructed in the Golders Green area; a number of our members have already indicated interest in taking places in such a facility.

We have been able to increase the level of Self Aid we give our neediest members and it is heart-warming to see the many letters of appreciation we have received as a consequence. The tireless (and sometimes thankless) work which our social workers, under Marcia Goodman's inspired leadership, together with our volunteers, do for our members spread throughout the country cannot be praised highly enough. Unfortunately the demands for our help are expanding almost faster than we can find the very special dedicated staff we need to do the often arduous work.

I want particularly to thank Gordon Greenfield, our Director of Finance, for his loyalty and dedication to the AJR. Gordon and his team have once again given us outstanding service.

**David Rothenberg**  
Hon Treasurer

## Finance Report

### AJR – Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31st December 2005

Income:	2005	2004
Membership/Donations and Legacies	£ 121,692	£ 134,881
Other	5,324	5,717
	127,016	140,598
<b>Less:</b>		
<b>Overhead Expenses</b>		
Salary Costs	72,797	91,792
AJR Journal	51,309	52,419
Administration/Depreciation	22,361	24,163
	146,467	168,374
<b>Surplus/(Deficit):</b>	<b>(19,451)</b>	<b>(27,776)</b>

### Summary of Balance Sheet at 31st December 2005

	2005	2004
Fixed Assets (less Depreciation)	-	2,982
Current Assets	296,087	341,500
Less: Current Liabilities	(3,299)	(32,243)
	292,788	312,239

### Represented by:

General Fund	312,239	340,015
Net surplus/(deficit) for year	(19,451)	(27,776)
	292,788	312,239

David Rothenberg, Hon. Treasurer 01/04/2006

### AJR CHARITABLE TRUST PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

### Summary figure for the year ended 31st December 2005

	2005	2004
<b>Income:</b>	£	£
Takings – Day Centre and meals-on-wheels	84,963	82,077
Donations received	60	80
	85,023	82,157
<b>Less outgoings:</b>		
Salaries	87,278	106,367
Catering costs	174,956	178,732
Sundry expenses	74,140	83,226
	336,374	368,325
<b>Deficit funded from Charitable Trust</b>	<b>(251,351)</b>	<b>(286,168)</b>

### AJR CHARITABLE TRUST – Summary Income and Expenditure Accounts

### Year ended 31st December 2005

	2005	2004
<b>Income:</b>		
Covenants/Donations/Claims Conference	422,020	468,552
Investment income	443,112	464,836
Sheltered housing	43,110	41,587
	908,242	974,975
Legacies	2,349,838	712,947
	3,258,080	1,687,922
<b>Less outgoings:</b>		
Day Centre	251,351	286,168
Self Aid, Homecare and Emergency Grants	711,520	623,218
Other organisations	148,707	69,000
Administration/Depreciation	806,340	653,855
	1,917,918	1,632,241
Surplus on realised and unrealised investments	1,423,973	635,542
Net Movement in Funds	2,764,135	691,223

Based on final unaudited figures

## ARE YOU ON A LOW INCOME AND IN NEED OF HOMECARE HELP?

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### ARE THERE TOO MANY IMMIGRANTS?

Sir - Peter Prager's carefully reasoned article (February issue) does seem to have stirred up a hornets' nest. The fundamental point overlooked by all three of your correspondents, who all criticise Mr Prager, is that there is a fundamental distinction between asylum-seekers and immigrants.

We can have a long and interesting discussion on who should be allowed to immigrate, and on what conditions they should be allowed to settle. Certain categories are, in the government's eyes, unproblematic: 'persons of independent means', entrepreneurs, or close family reunions. The disputable categories are unskilled labour and the semi-skilled in very low-pay industries (e.g. hospitality or nursing) or scarce-skill workers. The variables are the benefit of their labour to the economy, as against the infra-structural costs they impose, their impact on wage movements, etc. Then there are ethical and moral issues: ability to adapt, whether they help to improve our birth-rate, their religious and cultural practices. These are some of the key issues which determine a more or less liberal immigration policy.

Asylum is quite different. A person is entitled in national and international law to refugee status if s/he is outside his/her country of nationality because of 'a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion'. It is worthy of the utmost condemnation that our government is leading Europe towards the toughest possible stance to prevent possible asylum-seekers from reaching these shores.

One cannot apply for asylum at an embassy or consulate! Hence the

need for people traffickers, phoney visa applications and forged documents.

We, in the light of our experience, and with knowledge of those who did not obtain a visa, should be in the forefront of those fighting for an enlightened and liberal asylum policy. Scared - as ever - of the red-top press, this government and its immediate predecessor have behaved worse than appallingly - not only in keeping asylum-seekers out, but in their treatment of them whilst they are asylum-seekers.

Just for the sake of historical accuracy, your correspondent Mrs A. Saville (March) was perhaps lucky not to qualify. When I neared conscription age, a charming lady came to visit me from the Home Office to explain the merits of naturalisation under the ORM (orphan, refugee, minors) scheme. I jumped at it. She filled in all the forms for me. There was no fee, no police interview, no English-language test, and, subject to taking the Oath of Allegiance, I was a Brit a few weeks later.

Francis Deutsch  
Saffron Walden

Sir - I would like to suggest a more practical response to Peter Prager's article. My Jewish community in Oxford has made a link with Asylum Welcome, an organisation that supports refugees and asylum-seekers. Our first task was to gather information. Who were these people? Where did they come from? What difficulties did they face and what were their needs? The reasons for our interest were twofold. First, as Jews, we are told no less than 36 times in the Bible: do not oppress the stranger. Remember what it was like to be strangers in Egypt. Second, many of us are children or grandchildren of refugees.

We found that, on the whole, adult refugees and families are now not

admitted to Oxfordshire, but unaccompanied children are. Some of them are in school and some of them work, for very low wages. The Asylum Welcome youth worker came to speak to the children in our Hebrew classes and generated feelings of concern. Although the young asylum-seekers receive support now, it is almost certain that when they are 18 they will be deported. Some have lost most of their families.

We have raised funds to help them go on holiday with their youth workers. Every Sunday, a different class in our Hebrew classes brings in food donations, which are distributed to destitute refugees by Asylum Welcome. I believe both sides have benefited from the relationship. I am the synagogue's representative on an interfaith committee which supports Asylum Welcome. It seems to me that our own history should generate compassion in us for refugees. However, we should not expect them to be like us, but be willing to learn about their unique stories. We are likely to find people with whom we can empathise - not the stereotypes encountered in theoretical immigration debates.

Adele Moss  
Oxford

### BACK TO VIENNA

Sir - What an odd letter from Thea Valman in your April issue in which she criticises my family for visiting Vienna on several occasions after the war. (I mentioned this in my Point of View article 'Love-Hate Relationship with Vienna'.) After the ignominy suffered by her father and grandfather in Vienna, she asks 'Why should they have contemplated revisiting the city? Why indeed? Surely we must all be allowed to make our own choice. If her family did not want ever to see Vienna again, fair enough. Mine did, and that is fair enough too. Allow us, Ms Valman, to make our own decisions. Uncalled-for comments from people with a different point of view are neither helpful nor productive. Indeed, I found her criticism most hurtful and upsetting.

Peter Phillips  
Loudwater, Herts

**'AN EYE FOR AN EYE'**

Sir - In his interesting review of the film *Munich* (April issue), Peter Prager quotes 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' yet again. Can we clear up this matter of the eye and the tooth once and for all? Surely this, in its time, was a major advance in justice. Previously, it was a life for an eye, was it not? Why should the Jews be looked upon as cruel since Jesus turned his other cheek?

Joachim Maier  
Wembley, Middlesex

**'SO-CALLED LETTER FROM ISRAEL'**

Sir - I have often wanted to write and protest about your so-called Letter from Israel. Take, for example, the April issue. Surely there are far more important things to write or worry about than having to travel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in order to renew a passport - telling us, in minute detail, about the photographer who took the required passport photo. Such things as, for instance, why many families uprooted from Gaza are still living a sad life in hotels, their belongings and furniture rotting away in removal vans, because they are virtually homeless and jobless. Or that, very recently, a kind couple with two youngsters in their car gave a lift to a man dressed as a Hasid who blew them up in their car. Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. Are we not allowed to know about things like this? And what about compensation and the right to return of 85,000 Jews from Arab lands, driven from their homes and businesses, who have become refugees? Let's have a bit of fair reporting!

Bertha Leverton  
Edgware, Middlesex

**'OTHER SIDE' OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

Sir - Inge Trott (April issue, letters) suggests we look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the Palestinian side. Well, here it is:

- (1) If the Palestinians/Arabs had accepted the UN resolution and not waged war in 1948 there would have been an independent Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state in peace.
- (2) If they hadn't forced Israel to defend herself in 1967 or had not

attacked on Yom Kippur in 1973 - the holiest day for Jews - there would have been no so-called 'occupied territory'.

- (3) If they had gone down the road of Camp David or accepted Barak's generous offer giving them almost everything - even part of Jerusalem as their capital - they would have been nearer their goal.
- (4) What if all the aid they have been given had been used for the benefit of the people?
- (5) What if Arafat had said yes instead of a constant no?

Inge Trott should not adopt the view of journalists seeking headlines but also look at the cause of the present situation, which could have been minimised.

Gisela Feldman  
Manchester

Sir - I think most readers would agree that the time has now come for Inge Trott to pack her bags and go to live among her friends in Gaza, who show their intention to live in a Palestinian state peacefully, side-by-side with Israel, by directing lethal rockets at Israeli citizens - in response to which Ms Trott expects them to turn the other cheek.

H. Schragenheim  
London N15

**HOME FROM HOME**

Sir - We read with great interest Ronald Channing's article on the history of the Paul Balint Day Centre in the February issue. We certainly found out a lot about the beginnings of this excellent home from home. We are not very frequent visitors but, whenever we attend, we appreciate the fine home cooking and the programme.

However, there is one point we'd like to make. In the abovementioned article there is just one sentence given to the recently retired Sylvia Matus. She not only served for many years, she lived with the Centre and she loved it. She also organised various outings such as to the Jewish Museum, the London Eye and a lot more. Sylvia always accompanied us with Carol and Annie to Bournemouth and Eastbourne, worried about us, was happy with us; she was our personal friend.

We all know Susie Kaufman from her

excellent work in her previous job in the Day Centre and we wish her all the best in her present position as the Centre's Organiser.

Hana Nermut, Harrow  
Anna Schlesinger, Wembley  
Anneliese Winter, Mill Hill

**GLENN MILLER MYSTERY**

Sir - I read Ronald Channing's account of Glenn Miller's death (April issue). As a member of HM forces at the time, I attended a performance of the American Band of the AEF at the Olympia Theatre in Paris. Glenn Miller was no longer alive but the performance of his orchestra was remarkable and will long remain in my memory. Neither Miller's body nor the wreckage of his plane was ever found. There is no indication whatever that he was killed by British bombs jettisoned by Lancasters returning from an abortive raid in Germany. Miller made a huge contribution to Allied morale and gave pleasure to millions.

Jack Lee  
London N2

*It is an amazing coincidence that Jack Lee was at the Miller band's emotional Paris performance. Research by aviation historian Roy Nesbit for Channel 4's 2001 New Year's Eve programme established that Lancaster bombers, returning from an aborted mission to Germany, dumped their bombs in a demarcated jettison zone over the English Channel and onto Miller's plane, which had to be two miles off course. A navigator on one of the Lancasters, Fred Shaw, witnessed the rare, Canadian-built Noorduyun Norseman monoplane go down but did not connect it to Miller at the time (Ronald Channing).*

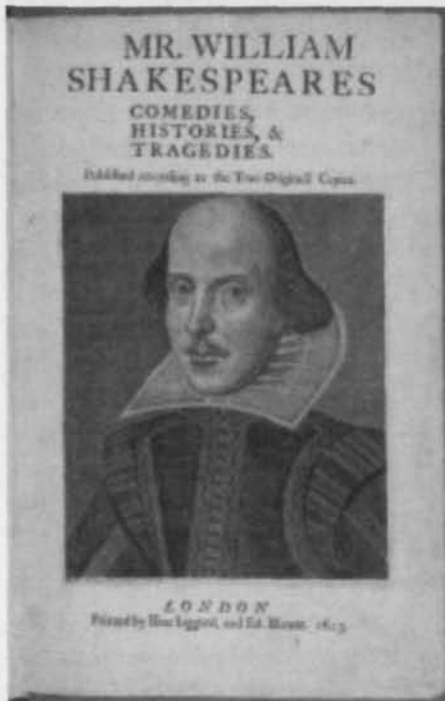
**THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES**

Sir - I just have to tell you how much I agreed with your review of the film *Caché (Hidden)* in the March issue. I am a great fan of French films and, after reading glowing notices, I entered the cinema with great expectations. However, for all the movie's qualities - superb acting and photography - I felt not only frustrated but positively cheated by the time I left. But I suppose this is one of the cult films that it is *de rigueur* to admire - like the emperor's new clothes.

Edith Argy  
London W9

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



William Shakespeare, *First Folio* by Martin Droeshout the younger, c. 1623

Attempts to unravel Shakespeare's life and times are as intricate as the Bard's work. It's enough that his authorship is constantly speculated on: now it's his face we challenge. The search for an authentic portrait produced in his lifetime has been frustrated by lack of conclusive evidence, says the National Portrait Gallery, whose exhibition, **Searching for Shakespeare**, continues until the end of May. Among five other doubtfuls, the *Chandos Portrait* is the most recognised; its provenance, according to the Gallery, is arguably the most genuine. Apparently, the little gold earring in his left ear and the murky, open white collar are the definitive sign of an artist. This is the painting of a reflective, middle-aged man, whose receding, but voluminous hair reveals the domed forehead you expect in Shakespeare. The dark eyes look way beyond the seventeenth century and into the future immensity of his literary power.

But apparently, it's all about dress. The

*Janssen Portrait*, c 1610, is now thought to represent the Jacobean courtier Thomas Overbury. In an expensive, lacy starched collar, he looks nothing like our poet, while the pensive young man featured in the *Grafton Portrait* is too young and too finely dressed in velvet doublet to be an actor-writer of the 1600s. The *Flower Portrait* has been dismissed as a fake because its chrome yellow pigment became available only in the nineteenth century, and the *Sanders Portrait* is chronologically too young.

The Restoration *Soest Portrait*, created long after Shakespeare's death, looks the most naturalistic, conveying a man not yet at the pinnacle of his career, with a raffish smile and amused cynicism in his eyes. It is this painting which puts one in mind of London writer Robert Greene's rejection of Shakespeare as 'an upstart crow'. Although the features compare with the approved *Chandos Portrait*, which Ben Jonson authenticated within living memory of the Bard, it has nothing of the deep austerity which was to come - if the *Chandos* tells the truth.

But even this portrait was rejected - as too Jewish! A nineteenth-century critic declared it was impossible to imagine 'our essentially English Shakespeare to have been a dark, heavy man - of decidedly Jewish physiognomy'.

ArtsDepot linked with the **Ben Uri Gallery** to host an exhibition of **Jewish Artists in Britain**, to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the Jews' return to Britain. Their work indicates how Jewish artists reflect the home country as well as hinting at art movements like the banned Expressionism which they introduced to Britain. Some subjects are notably Jewish, such as **Jacob Kramer's** monochromatic, almost cubic portrait of his parents, *Rabbi and Rebbetzin*, with its implied nostalgia for the *shtetl*. The Solomon family, which included **Simeon Solomon, Solomon J. Solomon** and their sister, **Lily Delissa Joseph**, made an impressive contribution to British art. Solomon J. Solomon appears to break with tradition with his equestrian portrait of his daughter in a red coat, so redolent of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Lily herself was a Suffragette, who couldn't attend her own private view because she was in Holloway Prison!

## REVIEWS

### THEATRE

#### A universal message

##### I CAN CRY

by Miri Ben-Shalom

directed by Lester Richards

*Pentameters Theatre, Hampstead, North London*

The Pentameters Theatre is no stranger to challenging themes, as is evident in their latest production *I Can Cry*, a documentary play by film-maker Miri Ben-Shalom based on the journals of her aunt Ester (formerly Erna) Herschberg. The audience shares in a moving, powerful story compressed into 80 minutes. Beautifully acted and directed, this harrowing, yet uplifting dramatisation of a woman's struggle to survive the horrors of Nazi Europe conveys a universal message.

The youngest of eight children, Erna is a teenager in Cracow in 1939. The family could have settled in America or Palestine but the parents could not agree where to move. *The family swiftly dwindles* - three brothers are taken for forced labour; Manya, a married sister living in Lvov, a brilliant woman with two doctorates from the Jagellonian University, is taken prisoner and killed. Erna's parents are then deported, her mother enjoining her daughter to 'endure and be strong', and Erna is left with her sister, Rosa, and Manya's little daughter, Henrietta.

For much of the war Erna is in Plaszow, the labour camp ruled by the notorious Amon Goeth. There she loses Rosa and Henrietta and also a boyfriend, who, refusing to play hangman to his own father, is beaten to death. The older man quickly follows, inspiring Erna to recite David's lament to Saul and Jonathan. To ensure her Nazi captors will never kill her, she pockets a phial of poison.

Effectively staged, a cast of three - the older Ester (seated), her younger counterpart and a ubiquitous German officer - play against a backdrop of film footage, powerfully conveying an atmosphere of authenticity. There is also an element of suspense. Erna is transported to Auschwitz in January 1945, so we (the audience) anticipate her liberation but instead she joins a death march to Belsen, where she remains until

April. Once again, she is cheated of liberation and transported to Mauthausen.

In the midst of her ordeals, Erna finds comfort in solidarity with groups of friends who become her new family. Sadly, these close-knit groups are often broken up by some incident. As the war nears its end, Erna's determination to survive is enhanced by the power of prayer, as she intones the *Shema*. Paradoxically, she almost succumbs to typhoid in an American hospital.

Emma Paterson is outstanding as the young Erna, with a performance riveting in its resilience and restrained emotion, while Bodo Friesecke is so convincing as the German officer that the prominent Holocaust survivor Ben Helfgott, who was in the audience, was amazed by his transformation at the end into a sympathetic young actor who recounts the aftermath of the story.

*Emma Klein*

### History of an 'invisible' community

#### THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF SALONIKA: HISTORY, MEMORY, IDENTITY

by **Bea Lewkowicz**

London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006, £20.00

The opening chapters of this book read like an academic thesis - which indeed it is. But read on, and you will find a fascinating account of a community tucked away at the eastern end of Greece of which we know little. They hailed originally from Spain and their common language was Ladino. They formed the majority population (50,000) in Salonika before the Second World War and seem to have lived a separate life from that of the Greek inhabitants.

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, co-curator of the AJR's *Continental Britons* exhibition and co-director of its *Refugee Voices* audio-visual testimony project, has taken testimonies from a number of survivors of the Holocaust. They speak of a 'Golden Age' under the Ottoman Empire when they were left alone to pursue their affairs. After the border adjustment which brought about a change to Greek government, some witnesses speak of good relations with their Greek Orthodox neighbours; others point to the beginnings of antisemitism with the arrival of impoverished Greek refugees from

Asia Minor who resented the relative prosperity of the established Jews.

In the Second World War the city was first under Italian occupation; the Germans took over in 1941 and the deportations of Jews began a year later. Most of the community knew little of the atrocities committed by the Germans elsewhere. Survivors speak of their bitterness towards Chief Rabbi Koretz, who gave them a false reassurance that they would not be harmed when deported. Nevertheless, some of the younger and more energetic Jews joined the Greek partisans; others were hidden in Greek villages and on islands.

Lewkowicz notes the difference in attitude between these groups: the former partisans have positive feelings towards their non-Jewish comrades, as have the hidden Jews, while the deportees harbour resentment against the Greeks who allowed them to be mistreated.

The saddest part of the book concerns their return after the war to a 'ghost town' to find they had lost most of their family and their homes had been repossessed. Many emigrated to Israel or the United States.

Today, Salonika is home to some 1,000 Jews, but the community is trying to build up a sense of Jewish identity among the young. As far as the Greeks are concerned, it has become 'invisible'. Christian people to whom Lewkowicz spoke asked: 'Were there ever any Jews in our city?'

*Martha Blend*

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## Letter from Israel

When I first came to Israel my uncle, who was a fairly prominent physician, took me to a concert. I was amazed to see him greeting many friends and acquaintances in the audience. Having been to concerts in England and never having bumped into anyone I knew, I found this a somewhat startling experience. I put it down to his elevated position and didn't give it another thought.

But these days, when I go to a concert in Jerusalem, where I have now been living for almost 40 years, it is quite unusual not to encounter many familiar faces and to be able to exchange a few words with acquaintances in the interval.

The origins of the familiar faces are almost as widely distributed as the population of this country. At one concert series I often bump into a woman who was at school with me in England and is engraved in my memory as the senior who was in charge of Jewish prayers. She sits in the same row as a more recent acquaintance, whom I met at a French language course. I got a shock when I realised that the two women knew one another.

Of course, anyone who has lived and worked in Jerusalem for some time is bound to encounter former neighbours and colleagues as well as current friends at cultural events. After bumping into one another at concerts in previous years some of us now meet for a light meal before the concert, or go back to one another's houses for a nightcap afterwards.

Naturally, London has much more to offer culturally, but there is a lot to be said for living in a town that provides a more intimate atmosphere in which to enjoy its cultural offerings.

**Dorothea Shefer-Vanson**

It's a virtual rule of thumb that the more vigorously someone protests that s/he is unworthy of a profile, the more fascinating their life story turns out to be. So it proved with Renee Goddard, described recently as 'almost certainly the first *grande dame* of the newly emerging European film and television industry'.

One of the first things you sense about Renee is a sharpness - she is a woman used to making decisions. Hard decisions, on which much may depend. When I declared that she struck me as a plain-speaking woman, her response was: 'Not plain enough!' I didn't dare ask to what she was alluding.

Renee and her husband Hanno Fry live in a cottage in the village of blink-and-you're-through-it Nutley, in the middle of East Sussex. It's the sort of cottage in the sort of idyllic English countryside many people dream of settling down in one day.

She was born Renate Scholem in Berlin in 1923. Renee, which she took as her stage name when she became an actress, is a glamourised form of her childhood name Reni; Goddard derives from the need of her first husband, the refugee Gebhard Goldschmidt, for an English name at the behest of the army.

Renee's father, Werner, was the leader of the Communist faction in the Reichstag. He died in Buchenwald in 1941. Renee has, for most of her adult life, felt anger. Perhaps, most of all, anger that her father never got to know her. She was brought up mainly by the parents of her non-Jewish mother in Hanover. Her mother never talked to her about him. She felt her childhood was a series of cut-offs. Each time she had to start again, create a new life - what she sees as the defining pattern of her life.

Renee's uncle, Gershom Scholem, emigrated to Palestine, where he was to become the author of a classic work on Jewish mysticism - the *Kaballah*.

In 1934 Renee was sent over to England. She was taken in by Jonas and Naomi Birnberg, the sister of Norman Bentwich, a former attorney general in the British Protectorate of Palestine.

In 1940 Renee was interned in

# PROFILE

Howard Spier

## Renee Goddard Grande dame of European film and TV



Holloway Prison for several weeks before being sent to the Isle of Man. An account of her experience is included in the Channel 4 documentary *Enemy Aliens*. Released after a year and a half, Renee lived with her mother in Crouch End. She joined the Free German Youth (FGY), first meeting Hanno there in 1943.

Having done some theatrical work in the FGY, Renee studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art from 1945 to 1947. In 1953-54 she acted in theatre, film, television and radio, playing a variety of leading roles, including Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*. On tour in the United States in 1951, she played in Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* and Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* in a company headed by Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. Somewhat to my surprise, Renee told me she warmed more to Vivien Leigh than to Olivier.

Renee starred for two years in a West End production of *I Am a Camera*. On the radio, among many other parts, she played for many years the daughter in the BBC's *Intermediate German for Schools*.

In 1954 Renee joined the Royal Court Theatre, where she was given special responsibility for introducing writers and directors from the Continent as well as new British writers. In the same period, as assistant producer at Woodfall Films, she introduced plays by Sartre, Brecht, Ionescu and many others.

In the mid-60s, Renee headed ATV's Scripts Department under Lew Grade - whom she came to admire a great deal - with additional responsibility for employing freelance producers, directors, script editors and researchers. From 1972 onwards she was a freelance consultant to international TV stations on script departments and drama operations.

In the 80s, among a host of other activities, Renee co-produced the film *Song for Europe* with John Suchet, toured England in a production of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* with Janet Suzman, and played Dr Kraus in the Granada TV series *Jewel in the Crown*.

Renee and Hanno Fry founded the English Theatre in Munich, which, supported by German industry and local authorities, operated from 1980 to 1986.

In recognition of her work on the Archive Committee of the British Film Institute, Renee was made an honorary life member of the Institute. She has been on the board of the Women of the Year event for 40 years. In 2004 BBC Radio 4 broadcast a play, *Reni and the Brownshirts*, devoted to her early childhood.

Renee and Hanno are deeply integrated into their local community. 'He's chairman of everything here!', Renee said. Hanno noted that the locals, in this deeply conservative part of the country, 'say sorry if they mention Germans!'

'What exactly *have* I done in the 14 years we've lived in Sussex?', Renee asked rhetorically. For all that, she finds time to attend the University of Sussex German-Jewish Centre and the local (Tunbridge Wells) AJR group and has helped to initiate and run the Uckfield Film Society. For all her protestations of dullness, I felt I needed at least 8,000 words for Renee's profile instead of the 800 I had at my disposal.

# INSIDE the AJR

## Newcastle discussion on Jewish identity and culture

Despite the inclement weather there was a good turnout for our meeting, at which Professor Paul Novak shared with us his thoughts on Daniel Snowman's book *The Hitler Émigrés*. This led to a lively discussion on aspects of 'identity' and 'culture' as affected by emigration. *Kurt Schapira*

**Next meeting: Sun 21 May. Dr Kurt Schapira, 'Sigmund Freud: His Jewish Identity'**

## Birmingham (West Midlands) choir concert

We enjoyed a concert given by the Kol Kinor Choir. The programme was lively and varied and our interest and enjoyment enhanced by a brief introduction to each item. The music itself, and the generosity of choir members in devoting so much of their weekend to our concert, will long be remembered. *Philip Lesser*

## Pinner panel

Gerald Hellman and a panel answered a wide range of questions from the floor on, among other things, the meaning of Jewishness, the Middle East peace process, and the Jewish contribution to the country in the past 350 years. All done with erudition and good humour. *Paul Samet*

**Next meeting: Thur 4 May. Helen Fry on 'Refugees in Uniform in World War 2'**

## North London talk on Pioneer Corps

Dr Helen Fry spoke to us, a very large and attentive group, on 'The Pioneer Corps - Refugees in Uniform aka HM Enemy Aliens', the subject of her recent book. Some of those present were veterans of this august body. It must have been fascinating to the innocent bystander to hear Freudian philosophy discussed whilst digging slit trenches. *Herbert Haberberg*

**Next meeting: Thur 25 May. Peter Sinclair, 'Journeys through Europe'**

## Leeds HSFA: 'Making a New Life' project

Our AGM was followed by an account of progress made on the project 'Making a New Life: Holocaust Survivors in Yorkshire'. The account was presented by Brett Harrison, archivist to the project, and project researchers Amanda Bergen and Bernice Shooman. *Martin Kapel*

## Herts address by AJR Life President

Fourteen people attended our third

meeting, held in Welwyn Garden City Synagogue. We were honoured by the presence of AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro, who gave a most interesting address on the AJR's history, aims and objectives. *Sam Ostro*

**Next meeting: Thur 8 June, 2 pm at home of Monica Rosenbaum**

## South London: merits of museums and memorials

James Taylor, deeply involved with the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition, Cabinet War Rooms, and Churchill Exhibition, opened a discussion on the merits of museums and memorials in remembering the Holocaust. The conclusion was that museums were far more valuable in explaining the Holocaust than memorials, which were felt to be more suitable for Jewish burial grounds and specific places and buildings insofar as many of the national memorials were criticised. *Walter Woyda*

**Next meeting: Thur 18 May. 'Safety in the Community'**

## Essex: the importance of making a will

Our guest speaker, John Diver, advised us of the importance of making a will. Only if the will was written in a legally acceptable way, he stressed, could we be sure our estate would be distributed in the way we planned it. *Julie Franks*

**Next meeting: Tues 9 May. PC Wyn Sharp, 'Taking Care in the Community, Part 2'**

## Socialising in East Midlands

We held our first spring lunchtime meeting in the home of Gerry and Bob Norton in Nottingham. As usual, we didn't have a speaker but simply enjoyed socialising as, in most cases, we only see each other at meetings. *Bob Norton*

**Next meeting: Wed 21 June, 'in the wilds' of Leicestershire**

## North London outings to Wiener Library

Two groups from North London made separate outings to the Wiener Library. We were astounded at the number of books, files and newspaper cuttings on antisemitism in Europe since the 1920s. Our thanks to the staff, who answered our questions so patiently. *Ruth Jacobs*

## Weald of Kent advice on safe housekeeping

The Tunbridge Wells Crime Reduction Officer told us that a number of devices on keeping ourselves safe at home were available, some of them free. The Neighbourhood Officer warned us about handbag theft and other ruses. Burglars can be very plausible and likeable people, we were told. As always, we thank Myrna for all her hard work on our behalf. *Inge Ball*

**Next meeting: Tues 16 May. Outing to Kathleen Bluh, details being sent out**

## Cardiff cross-section of the community

Nine people were present at our second meeting, seven from South Wales and two from Mid-Wales. Myrna introduced her new colleague, Hazel Beiny. Each member gave a brief introduction saying where he/she came from and how he/she ended up in Wales. We are a good cross-section of the community from Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Offenbach/Main and Czechoslovakia as well as partners from Wales. *Stephen Meyer*

## Jewish contribution to life in Brighton & Hove

Godfrey Gould told us that the first synagogue in Brighton and Hove was built in 1792 and that the Middle Street Synagogue, now a Grade II national monument, was built in 1875. The names of many prominent Jews are now given to Brighton and Hove streets, while Jews also represented the town in both houses of parliament and played an active role in the formation of the University of Sussex. *Rudi Simmonds*

**Next meeting: Mon 15 May. Change of programme, details being sent out**

## HGS and MDA

Magen David Adom (MDA) director Eli Benson gave a most interesting talk, followed by a video, on this remarkable organisation. Among many other facts, MDA receives very little support from the Israeli government and obtains 40 per cent of its donations from abroad. Eighty-seven per cent of its staff are volunteers. *Harriet Hodes*

**Next meeting: Mon 8 May. Katherine Klinger, Wiener Library**

## Ilford honours mayor

A very large audience honoured Charles Elliman JP, Mayor of Redbridge, and his wife Sheila. He explained how, despite his religious principles, from which he will not deviate, he carries out each and every engagement. He has also earned the respect of all the multi-faiths living in Redbridge. *Meta Roseneil*

**Next meeting: Wed 3 May. Yom Ha'atsmaut party with lunch**

## Bristol, Bath and Somerset: 'secret Jews'

We again enjoyed Kitty Balint Kurti's hospitality. Our speaker, John Adler, told us about 'secret Jews'. Descendants of Marranos, who converted to Christianity in the 14th and 15th centuries, may still be found in Spain and Portugal as well as in South America. *Bettine Cohn*

**Glasgow: From farmer to eminent geneticist**

Professor J. H. Subak Sharpe told us of his experiences after arriving in England on a Kindertransport. Remarkably, he gained the first First-Class Honours degree in genetics in the UK despite leaving school at 14 and spending years as a farm labourer.

*Claire Singerman*

Next meeting: Sun 3 Sept

**Wessex talk on crime reduction**

John Williams, the Crime Reduction Officer for Dorset and Hampshire Police, explained, among many other things, the differences between types of keys and gave us warnings about muggings, pointing out the dangers of trying to fight off a mugger.

*George Ettinger*

**New group for Edgware**

The AJR's newest regional group will have its inaugural meeting at the Edgware Masorti Synagogue (Stream Lane, Edgware) on Thursday 30 May, 2-4 pm. We would be delighted to see AJR members living in Edgware, Stanmore and Mill Hill who have not previously attended group meetings. Please come along or call the office if you are interested in participating. Tea, coffee and cake will be provided.

**AJR GROUP CONTACTS**

**Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)**  
Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

**Bristol/Bath**  
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

**Cambridge**  
Lisel Eisner 01223 356721

**Cardiff**  
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

**Dundee**  
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

**East Midlands (Nottingham)**  
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

**Edinburgh**  
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

**Essex (Westcliff)**  
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

**Glasgow**  
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

**Harrogate**  
Inge Little 01423 886254

**Hertfordshire**  
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

**HGS**  
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

**Hull**  
Bob Rosner 0148 2649156

**Ilford**  
Meta RoseNeil 020 8505 0063

**Leeds HSFA**  
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

**Liverpool**  
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

**Manchester**  
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

**OTHER MEETINGS**

**Oxford** Tues 2 May. Graham Milne, Crime Reduction Officer for Oxford, 'Being Safe'

**Norwich** Wed 10 May. Lunchtime social get-together

**Cambridge** Thur 11 May. 'Safety in the Community'

**Surrey** Thur 11 May. Social get-together at home of Saunders

**VISIT TO THE CABINET WAR ROOMS AND CHURCHILL MUSEUM**

Wednesday 7 June 2006

Departing from Day Centre in Cleve Road at 11 am and returning at approx.

3.30 pm. Cost £18 to include transport, entrance and a sandwich lunch.

There are facilities for people with walking difficulties.

Spaces will be limited.

If you have any queries or would like to book please call Carol Rossen on 020 8385 3085 or Joan Altman on 020 8385 3072

**'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

**Newcastle**

Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

**Norfolk (Norwich)**

Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

**North London**

Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

**Oxford**

Susie Bates 01235 526 702

**Pinner (HA Postal District)**

Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

**Sheffield**

Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

**South London**

Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

**South West Midlands (Worcester area)**

Ruth Jackson 01386 552264

**Surrey**

Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

**Weald of Kent**

Max and Jane Dickson  
01892 541026

**Wessex (Bournemouth)**

Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

**West Midlands (Birmingham)**

Ernest Aris 0121 353 1437

**Myrna Glass, AJR South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator**  
020 8385 3077

**Susanne Green, AJR Northern Groups Co-ordinator**  
0151 291 5734

**Susan Lewis, Groups' Administrator**  
020 8385 3070

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

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

**AJR LUNCHEON CLUB**

Wednesday 17 May 2006  
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Joanna Newman

will speak on the London Jewish Cultural Centre

**KT-AJR** Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 8 May 2006  
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Marion Greenfield  
will speak about  
Nightingale House

Reservations required  
Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday  
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

May	Afternoon entertainment
Mon 1	CLOSED BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 2	CLOSED
Wed 3	Joe Kay
Thur 4	Ronnie Goldberg
Sun 7	CLOSED
Mon 8	KT LUNCH Kards & Games Klub
Tue 9	CLOSED
Wed 10	Paul Coleman
Thur 11	Margaret Gibbs
Sun 14	CLOSED
Mon 15	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 16	CLOSED
Wed 17	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 18	Mark Rosen
Sun 21	CLOSED
Mon 22	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 23	CLOSED
Wed 24	Douglas Poster
Thur 25	Sheila Games
Sun 28	CLOSED
Mon 29	CLOSED BANK HOLIDAY
Tue 30	CLOSED
Wed 31	Bill Patrick & Guyathrie Peiris

**DIARY DATES**

May 7-10	Berlin visit
June 7	Visit to Cabinet War Rooms with Lunch
June 11-18	Eastbourne holiday
June 27	AGM
July 9-16	Lytham St Annes holiday
July 11	Day trip to Brighton
August 23	Lunch at Day Centre, afternoon trip to Tiptree for Cream Tea
September 10	Annual Tea at the Watford Hilton
Oct 29-Nov 5	Bournemouth holiday

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

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

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Deaths**

**Friedlander, Sophie**, aged 101, passed away peacefully in her sleep on 20 February. She will always be fondly remembered by Peter, Janet, Deborah, Joel and Esther Lewinson, Peter, Annette, Suzanne and Andrew Kraft.

**Howard, Robert (Bobby)**, our wonderful husband, father and papa, passed away peacefully on 24 February, aged 90. We loved him so very much and we will always miss him terribly. Fond memories will remain with us forever. Shalom from his loving wife Elsa of 55 years, his devoted daughter Ruth, and his adored grandchildren Nikki and Laurence.

**Szuchman, Dina (née Madeisker)** has died in London aged 88. Before the war she lived in Vilna (then Poland). She survived the Holocaust and joined the partisans in Byelorussia. An excellent Yiddish speaker, she worked for the only remaining Yiddish newspaper in Poland, *Folkstimme*. In 1958 she emigrated to Britain and began working almost immediately till she was over 70. Dina was an intelligent, unselfish and generous person loved by everybody who knew her. A great loss.

**In Memoriam**

In memoriam of the passing of Anita Lowry, 28 March 2005. Stephen Lowry.

**Day Centre**

**Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.** Clothes Sale, separates etc. Wednesday 3 & 31 May 9.30-11.45 am.

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London N12 9TB

**Lily Freeman**

invites all her friends to the opening of her exhibition

**HAPPY PAINTINGS**

at Hampstead Museum,  
Burgh House, New End Square,  
NW3

on Thursday 25 May 2006  
6.30-8.30 pm

The exhibition continues until  
6 June 2006 Opening times 12-5

Gallery closed  
Mondays and Tuesdays



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Telephone 020 8959 7086 or email: office@synagogue.org.uk

Minister: Rabbi Rodney J Mariner

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Friday evenings at 6.45pm  
Saturday mornings at 10.00am  
Religion School: Sundays 9.45am - 12.30pm  
Nursery School: 9.15am - 12.15pm  
Belsize Under 3's: 9.30 am - 11.30 am

Space donated by *Pafra Limited*

Meeting Rooms and our refurbished communal hall are available for cultural and social functions.

Tel: 020 7794 3949

**HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS**

Sunday 9 July - Sunday 16 July 2006

AT THE FERNLEA HOTEL, St Annes

The cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, is £410 per person

The hotel charges a supplement per room for sea view or deluxe room

Programme includes ENTERTAINMENT OUTINGS

PLEASE BOOK EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Please contact Ruth Finestone on 020 8385 3070

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## Obituaries

### Ronald Walter Stent

Ronnie Stent, who has died at the age of 92, was born in Berlin. In 1932 he enrolled at the Humboldt University in Berlin to read law and economics. In 1934, when the Jews were banned from higher education, he emigrated to England, where he worked in commerce. He returned to Germany in 1936 to marry his dancing-class sweetheart Gabi. They had celebrated their 62nd anniversary when she died in 1997.

Interned on the Isle of Man (see his book *A Bespattered Page - the Internment of His Majesty's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens*, Andre Deutsch, 1980), he joined the Pioneer Corps attached to the Royal Engineers, ending up as an officer in India in the latter part of the war.

A successful businessman, working in Britain, the USA and South Africa, he never lost his academic ambitions. In his 50s, he studied part-time at Birkbeck, gaining both a BA and MPhil. Taking early retirement, he taught history, first for London University Extramural Department, then as a founder member of the University of the Third Age. He wrote regularly for the *AJR Journal*.

With other survivors in the UK of the Kartell Convent society, he kept the duelling German-Jewish fraternity going until very recently, when most members had died. As his second daughter said in her funeral oration, 'He always dealt with adversity head-on.'

Monica Howes

### Dr Gus Plaut

Gus Plaut was born in Hamburg in 1921. Both his parents belonged to distinguished banking families. With the rise of Nazism, his father was dismissed from his university position, but was accepted as Professor of Economics at Hull University.

Gus went to Cambridge in 1940, reading Natural Sciences and gaining a double first. He went on to the London Hospital, winning a Price Entrance Scholarship and later a prize in clinical medicine. Having completed his medical studies, he served as a Senior Surgical Specialist in the Army Emergency Reserve. He then pursued a career as a surgeon. Having been a Neurological House Surgeon at the London Hospital, he worked as Resident Surgical Officer at the Kent and Sussex Hospital and Surgical Registrar at the Chase Farm Hospital, Enfield and the Gordon Hospital, London.

Gus's German-Jewish background made it difficult for him to find jobs. Having decided to become a GP, after over 100 applications he obtained a position in Tooting, where he worked in 1960-86. Here he met Ivy, whom he married in 1977.

In his retirement, Gus wrote many papers for the *British Medical Journal* and other magazines. He was an extremely modest man and preferred a frugal lifestyle. He made thousands of donations anonymously. Gus was a true 'mensch'.

Margaret Carver

## Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

### Hungarian compensation

By extending the terms of a 1997 reparation law, the Hungarian government is now paying improved compensation to the survivors and relatives of Hungarian victims of the Holocaust. Applicants to the 1997 scheme were initially entitled to an award of \$150 for each parent killed during the Holocaust and \$70 for each sibling.

Rejecting these awards as derisory, many survivors refused to apply. Those who did receive these modest payments became eligible to receive an award of \$1,800 (HUF 400,000) in 2002.

Under the terms of the revised law passed earlier this year in Hungary, anyone who did not receive an award of \$1,800 is now entitled to apply for this compensation payment.

Those eligible for awards include the living spouse, child or parent of a Holocaust victim who died due to the 'political despotism of the Hungarian authority or an official person, or if the injured person died during deportation or forced labour'. In cases where there are no such living relatives, a living sibling is entitled to half the compensation amount. Where applicable, awards should be shared among entitled relatives.

Heirs of those who applied but did not receive compensation under the terms of the 1997 scheme are eligible to receive payments now as well.

Application forms are available from this office and should be returned, once completed, to The Central Compensation Office, 1116 Budapest, Hauszmann Alajos utca 1, Hungary. The telephone number is 0036 1 371 8900, fax is 0036 1 371 89 12 and email [information@karpotlas.hu](mailto:information@karpotlas.hu)

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to [mnewman@ajr.org.uk](mailto:mnewman@ajr.org.uk)

## Arts & Events Diary - May

**Mon 1** No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43  
**7, 8, 14, 15 May** *Dreamlives* Cabaret of Viennese songs commemorating 150th anniversary of birthday of Freud. New End Theatre. Tel 0870 033 2733

**Mon 8** Prof Omer Bartov, 'The Last Days of Buczacz: Perspectives on the Destruction of a Multi-Ethnic Town' Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

**Mon 8** A reading from Ilse Tysh's autobiography *Salò's Song* by Dr Andrea Rauter (Austrian Cultural Forum) Club 43

**Mon 15** Prof Ernst Sondheimer, 'Spitzbergen: An Arctic Wonderland (with slides)' Club 43

**Tues 16** *The Boys: Triumph over Adversity* Film narrated by Sir Martin

Gilbert. Imperial War Museum, 4.00 pm. Tel 020 7416 5285

**Mon 22** Dr Gwen Williams, 'The Early Detective Novel (to 1930)' Club 43

**Wed 24** Prof Saul Dubow, 'Apartheid, Race and Antisemitism: European Antecedents, Local Adaptations' Venue: Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. Tel Leo Baeck Institute on 020 7580 3493.

**Thur 25** Discussion: *Justice Matters* Mona Weissmark's study concerns group encounters between children of Holocaust survivors and children of Nazi perpetrators. London Jewish Cultural Centre, 7.30 pm. Tel 020 8457 5000

**Mon 29** No lecture (Bank Holiday) Club 43  
**Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Hans Seelig on 01442 254360**

## Unregarded Graeco-Jewish world

Even to the informed reader, there is little understanding and less analysis of either the brutal fate of Greek Jewry in the Second World War or of Jews' contribution to the Greek resistance during the German occupation. I was invited to London's Hellenic Centre in Marylebone, where the launch of two new books, published by Vallentine Mitchell, attempts to remedy both these omissions.

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, co-curator of the AJR's 60th anniversary *Continental Britons* exhibition, which broke attendance records at the Jewish Museum, and co-director of our *Refugee Voices* audio-visual testimony project, is the author of a pioneering study of *The Jewish Community of Salonika* (see review on page 10). It was as a Cologne University student in 1984 that she first visited Salonika and made contact with one of the few surviving Jewish families - the owners of a bookshop - and then further reawakened communal memories through a series of interviews with other survivors of this once-flourishing community.

At one time, Jews numbered some 50,000, cohabiting alongside Greeks and Armenians, enjoying their rich, ancient Sephardi Jewish heritage. During the occupation, around 48,000 of the city's Jewish community were taken and the community was almost completely annihilated. Bea Lewkowicz found it difficult to identify sites of former Jewish settlement and questioned why the city appeared indifferent to the history and culture of its former Jewish inhabitants. Even for many of the survivors themselves it proved too painful to evoke memories of the past.

Professor Steven Bowman, who heads Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati, is an acknowledged authority on the history of Greek Jewry. His new study, *Jewish Resistance in Wartime Greece*, reveals that 10-15 per cent of Greek Jews survived the war as, by 1943, many had fled to the mountains and joined the resistance against the occupying Italians and the SS. Many were veterans of the



Dr Bea Lewkowicz autographing a copy of her book on the Jews of Salonika

Albanian war and, with that military experience, knew how to fight.

Among the 650 individual Jews whom he has identified as serving with the Greek resistance forces were veterans and young boys and girls, interpreters, recruiters, doctors and nurses, spies, organisers and non-Greek Jews who were trapped in Greece during the war years. Others remained in urban areas, where they joined resistance cells as active saboteurs and in leadership roles.

This year's Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated in Salonika for the first time. Perhaps there is some reason for optimism that the tragic and valiant history of Greek Jewry will not be lost.

### Rite ballet riot

Did you catch BBC 2's superbly exhilarating recent docu-drama of the first staging of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* ballet, which ended in a riot at its Paris premiere in 1913? Staged by the effete Russian-Jewish creator of modern ballet, Sergei Diaghilev, and choreographed by his incomparable dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, it was the revolutionary pulsating rhythms of Stravinsky's music and its crude primitive interpretation by the choreographer which made for one of the most exciting of television programmes. I still recall my brother playing an overwhelming early LP of the *Rite* more than half a century ago. The only complaint? The BBC didn't tell us who the superb dance company was.

## Newsround

### Leo Baeck Lodges to merge

As from 1 June this year and after more than 63 years, the Women's and Men's Leo Baeck Lodges are to merge and be known as the Leo Baeck (London) Lodge. The latter will continue to render dedicated service to the Jewish community in many fields of philanthropic and social activities. For further information, telephone Richard Fisher on 020 8958 2859.

### Heritage award for Gestapo museum

A German museum housed in a former Gestapo torture centre in Cologne has won a top international prize for its displays on the Nazi era. According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the centre was the only German establishment of its kind to be singled out for a Special Commendation in the 2000 Museum of the Year Award.

### Quelle threatens ban on UK sportswear label

The German mail-order firm Quelle has threatened to ban the British sportswear label Lonsdale from its collection because of the brand's popularity among racist and neo-Nazi groups. While Lonsdale is famous in Britain because of its boxing links, in Germany and elsewhere in Europe the label is often associated with the far right.

### Russian antisemite jailed

A Moscow court has jailed a man for 13 years for assaulting 9 worshippers with a knife in a synagogue earlier this year. The man, Alexander Koptsev, was also ordered to undertake mandatory psychiatric treatment. The court found him guilty of attempted murder on racist grounds but dropped a charge of inciting inter-ethnic hatred.

### Tsunami community centre financed by American Jews

A community centre for tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, financed by a Jewish group, has opened. The centre, in the Lagoswatte Eco-Village, is financed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). According to the *JTA* (New York), the centre is the first of four the JDC is building in Sri Lanka along with Sarvodaya, a Sri Lankan non-profit group.