

# AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

## Monotheism's eternal triangle

Of the three great monotheistic faiths - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - the first is undoubtedly the oldest and therefore, however much they may deny it, the inspiration for the other two. It is also, and has been for well over a millennium, the numerically smallest and thus the most vulnerable.

From the Destruction of the Temple to the War of Israeli Independence, Jews were not subjects, but near-passive objects, of history. First Christianity then Islam swept triumphantly over continents, bringing vast swathes of the globe under their dominion. (Today Catholicism and Islam number roughly 1 billion adherents each worldwide.)

Size matters, but it does not necessarily confer commensurate power. Though backed by most of Europe, the Crusades made little lasting difference to the Middle East. Islam was predominant globally, and the Christian West appeared on the periphery.

The year 1492 marked a turning point in the history of all three religions. In that year the 'Catholic Majesties' reconquered Andalusia from the Moors and expelled the Jews. Their dispatch of Columbus to America set in motion a chain of events that half a millennium later made the USA not only the world's sole superpower, but also the chief target of festering Islamic resentment.

Jewish expellees from Spain found refuge in Muslim Turkey at a time when France and Tudor England were officially *judenrein*, and Germany still wallowed in the aftermath of the murderous Crusades. In the subsequent centuries the Muslim Turks' initially tolerant attitude towards the Jews deteriorated, while their empire went into an irreversible decline. The 1840 'Damascus Affair', triggered by ritual murder accusations and prompting

foreign intervention, showed how far that decline had gone.

In Christian Europe, meanwhile, two divergent tendencies emerged. One was secularisation, which allowed baptised, or even unambiguous, Jews (Benjamin Disraeli, Adolphe Crémieux) to enter governments. The opposite trend was the increasing recourse to religious dogma in Tsarist Russia and the appeal to racist gut feeling in Germany.



By the 1900s the secular United States, a polity in which church and state were strictly separated, had become an arbiter of the world's, and Jewry's, fate. America not only settled the outcome of the two world wars, but also served as a haven for 2 million impoverished, pogrom-haunted Russian Jews, whose grandchildren today constitute just under half of the world's Jewish population.

Though Israel has rather fewer Jews than the US, it is *the* endangered Jewish heartland. For all that some of the dangers which beset it are undoubtedly 'home-made', the ultimate responsibility for the 50-year-old Middle East crisis rests with the Palestinian leaders - from the Mufti of Jerusalem to Arafat - and their Arab backers. Hannah Ashrawi's phrase 'We are an all-or-nothing people'

is the key to the whole sorry saga - from the rejection of partition plans to the spurning of Ehud Barak's olive branch last year.

In Europe, meanwhile, white racists who target Muslims and Jews alike benefit from Muslim Judeophobia. In France, the police chief Maurice Papon, having deported Jews to the gas chambers during the war, literally drowned Algerian demonstrators in the Seine in January 1961. But how could a case against Papon for Holocaust-related crimes ever be mounted if, according to Muslim propaganda, the Holocaust is a Zionist invention in support of a 'bogus' claim to a Jewish state in Palestine?

Another piece of hard-line Muslim propaganda is the depiction of Islam as a faith transcending race and nationality. In fact, Arabs fought the Turkish Sultan, who, as Caliph, was Mohammed's successor in 1917-18. Bangladesh fought Pakistan in 1971 and Iraq fought Iran in the 1980s.

What flows inevitably from the alleged primacy of Islam over an individual Muslim's nationality is the problem of dual allegiance. Whereas Christians glossed over the contradiction that their priests blessed the arms of both sides in the world wars, Islam allegedly admits of no such 'fudge'. British Muslims who profess to see the War on Terror as an anti-Muslim crusade are therefore impaled on the horns of a sharp dilemma.

It is poignant under the circumstances to recall that the 'dual allegiance' issue split British Jewry at the time of the Balfour Declaration (which Edwin Montagu opposed - unsuccessfully - in the Cabinet). For today's UK Jews, 'dual allegiance' has long ceased to be an issue. Britain and Israel, both being democracies, could not conceivably be on opposing sides in a military conflict.

## Facing Mecca

Richard Grunberger

During the Second World War all Britons abhorred Nazism, but a minority - dubbed Vansittartites after the head of the Foreign Office - abhorred all Germans. Islamophobia, a contemporary mindset deemed important enough for the BBC to devote half a dozen programmes to combating it, is roughly comparable to Vansittartism. In saying this I am not equating the Muslim world with the Third Reich - although some Islamic fundamentalists are indeed as hate-filled, anti-Western and fanatical as the Nazis.

The analogy with Nazi Germany does, however, hold good if one views the recent BBC2 series *Islam, Empire of Faith* as an attempt to fill in the historical background to the present troubled East-West relations. On screen, the medieval societies of Cordova, Baghdad and Isfahan were portrayed as multicultural havens of scholarship and the decorative arts - with due tribute paid to the Arabs as transmitters of Europe's lost classical heritage. They also added to it greatly (though they were helped in this by the proximity of India and China). The baton of Muslim leadership eventually passed to the Turks, at which point the tone of the commentary changed: in contrast to the encomia on the Arabs' mastery of the arts of peace, the commentators now lauded the Turks for creating a 'perfect fighting machine'.

And then at a point where that perfect fighting machine failed to capture Vienna early in the sixteenth century, the series abruptly stopped. The last half-millennium, during which Islam regressed to its present state - exemplified by censorship, religious frenzy, harsh intolerance, martyrs' cemeteries, public executions, schools for pre-teen suicide bombers and relegation of women - was simply glossed over. It was as if, in the 1930s, BBC radio had broadcast a history series on Germany featuring Bach, Kant and Goethe, praising Frederick the Great and omitting Bismarck, the Kaiser and Ludendorff.

## London Holocaust Exhibition draws record number of visitors

The Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum will have received a total of half-a-million visitors by the end of the year, said Suzanne Bardgett, the Exhibition's Director, when she spoke to over 50 people at the AJR-KT Luncheon Club.

Suzanne Bardgett described how she and her young team had set about putting the Exhibition together. They had consulted the Central European Jewish community in this country via the AJR and other groups.

The creation of the Exhibition had posed a number of challenges: how to convey the terror of the camps and the evils of Nazism in a contemporary exhibition; what artifacts could be found documenting the process of mass destruction; whether visitors would stick with a narrative which had so little 'light relief'; and how the Exhibition would sit alongside the museum's other displays. Above all, it was essential to 'get the history right'.

Suzanne Bardgett said the Exhibition maintained links with institutions worldwide, including Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Wiener Library, and the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex University.

The Holocaust Exhibition was receiving 1,000 visitors per day. The response to the Exhibition had been 'overwhelmingly positive'.

Suzanne Bardgett stressed the Exhibition's educational value: school children comprised 10 per cent of all



Suzanne Bardgett

visitors. She emphasised that film was the medium for educating young people about the Holocaust, mentioning the Steven Spielberg film *Shindler's List*. Moreover, the Exhibition worked with young people in the wider community, notably with the Southwark police in an anti-racism campaign.

Early visitors to the Exhibition included Cheri Blair and her children and Jack Straw and Betty Boothroyd. Delegations had come from countries such as Lithuania and Belgium where analogous exhibitions were being planned.

Suzanne Bardgett said she read *AJR Journal* regularly: it was an 'excellent publication'. She was pleased to have joined AJR's Project Development Committee, creating an exhibition planned for 2002 to mark the cultural contribution to the UK of Jewish immigrants from Central Europe. HS

### AJR Journal

Richard Grunberger Editor-in-Chief  
Ronald Channing Executive Editor  
Howard Spier Editorial and Production  
AJR Journal, 1 Hampstead Gate,  
1a Froggnal, London NW3 6AL  
Tel: 020 7431 6161 Fax: 020 7431 8454  
e-mail: editorial@ajr.org.uk  
www.ajr.org.uk

 **JACKMAN  
SILVERMAN**

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

26 Conduit Street, London W1R 9TA  
Telephone: 020 7409 0771 Fax: 020 7493 8017

*The AJR wishes all its members a happy Chanukah*

## Under Nelson's blind eye

Trafalgar Square was recently the venue for an 'interpenetration of opposites' not equalled since Communists and Nazis jointly engineered the Berlin transport strike of November 1932.

Seven decades on, the role of the Communists was taken up by a CND-brokered confederacy of pacifists, Green anti-globalists, 'Trot' class warriors, 'bleeding hearts' and bloody-minded militants, and that of the Nazis by a powerful contingent of UK Muslims. Like the Nazis of yore, British hard-line Muslims nurse a fierce resentment because the hitherto unstoppable advance of their faith towards *khilafa* - global dominance - has been halted and gone into reverse. The sores of Versailles and the Polish corridor which the Nazis delighted to scratch are replicated by the seething resentment over Bosnia, Kashmir and Chechnya in the contemporary Muslim consciousness. The fact that over Bosnia the West sided with the Muslims against Serbia is conveniently glossed over, in accordance with Hitler's advocacy of 'the big lie'.

However, total convergence is achieved on the 'Jewish issue'. Hitler's last message from the bunker preached undying hatred for the Jews as did bin Laden's notorious first video appeal

from his Afghan hideout. What militant Islam envisages - one shudders to write it - is a Holocaust Mark Two, with five million Israelis following the six million European Jews. This is to be taken literally: the Al-Muhajiroun group pasted 'Kill the Jews' leaflets around London and Birmingham last year.

Meanwhile, the demonstrators marched side by side past Landseer's lions - British peace lovers and Muslim *jihad* warriors, British ex-protesters over NATO action against Serbia and Muslims enraged by Serb massacres of Bosnians, British feminists and Muslim advocates of polygamy and female circumcision, British gays and Muslim homophobes, British hedonists and Muslim heresy-hunters.

CND, who constructed this whole peripatetic Tower of Babel, has scored a sorry hat trick. Remember the two previous peaks of CND perversity: while they were castigating Washington over the build-up of its atomic arsenal, Moscow nearly pulled the nuclear trigger in the 1961 Cuban crisis and, while they conjured up images of Western nuclear disaster, typical Soviet disregard for safety triggered the Chernobyl catastrophe. Do they really deserve the epithet *useful idiots*?

RG

## German-Jewish cultural centre planned for Israel

In the late 1930s immigration into the then Palestine from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia reached its peak. Known as the Fifth Aliyah, the immigrants accounted for some 20 per cent of the total population of an area which, in 1948, was to become the State of Israel. The importance of these immigrants to the cultural and economic development of the country cannot be exaggerated.

Plans are well advanced for a new cultural centre which will relate to new generations of Israelis and others the story of the values that were brought by those immigrants from Central Europe. The Heritage Centre will include an

exhibition floor, an auditorium and advanced electronic facilities for educational presentations and other visiting groups.

The AJR's 'twin sister' in Israel, the *Irgun Olej Merkas Europa*, is the main initiator of this project. Both organisations serve on the Council of Jews from Germany. Thanks to the Leo Baeck Institute, a major partner in the project, a library and research facilities will also form an important part of the Centre, as will academic workshops, exchange programmes, seminars and guided tours for the many visitors who are anticipated.

RDC

## NEWTONS

Leading Hampstead Solicitors

22 Fitzjohn's Avenue,  
London NW3 5NB

- All English legal work undertaken
- Assistance given with German, Swiss & Austrian matters
- German spoken
- Home visits arranged

Tel: 020 7435 5351

Fax: 020 7435 8881

## PARTNER

in long established English Solicitors (bi-lingual German) would be happy to assist clients with English, German and Austrian problems.

Contact Henry Ebner

**Myers Ebner & Deaner**  
103 Shepherds Bush Road  
London W6 7LP  
Telephone 020 7602 4631

**ALL LEGAL WORK  
UNDERTAKEN**

## AUSTRIAN and GERMAN PENSIONS

### PROPERTY RESTITUTION CLAIMS EAST GERMANY - BERLIN

On instructions our office will assist to deal with your applications and pursue the matter with the authorities.

For further information  
and appointment  
please contact:

**ICS CLAIMS**  
146-154 Kilburn High Road  
London NW6 4JD

Tel: 020 7328 7251 (Ext. 107)

Fax: 020 7624 5002

Who is privileged to enter Heaven according to Islam? Does a suicide bomber who kills innocent people merit entrance into Heaven? Islam is unambiguous on these questions.

The four schools of Islamic law expressly forbid the harming of non-combatants. These include women, children, monks and hermits, and the aged, blind and insane. In the most authoritative collection of *hadith*, the *Sahih al-Bukhari (The Book of Jihad, chapters 147-47, Muhammad expressly forbids the slaying of women and children. This message, found in a number of authoritative collections, has been formalised in the legal literature. Islam also expressly forbids suicide, the punishment for which is eternal re-enactment of the suicide and revisitation of the pain.*

### Martyrdom for the Islamic cause

On the other hand, martyrdom in war for the Islamic cause is praised extensively throughout the literature. The Qur'an teaches (3:169): "Do not consider those killed [while engaging] in God's cause dead. Rather, they live with their Lord, who sustains them!" The Qur'anic idiom "killed while engaging in God's cause" is a reference to martyrdom for acting on being a Muslim, whether as a persecuted and powerless individual or as a warrior fighting for the expansion of the world of Islam. Perhaps the most compelling expression of this sentiment are the idioms found in the most authoritative sources and attributed to the Prophet: "Paradise is [found] under the shade of swords", or "Paradise is under the gleam of swords" (*Sahih Bukhari, Jihad, ch. 22, #73*). Muhammad's companion Abu Hurayra said that he heard the Prophet say: "By the One in Whose hands is my soul [i.e. God], I would love to be martyred [while engaged] in God's cause, then be resurrected, then martyred, then resurrected, then martyred, then resurrected, and then martyred" (*Sahih Bukhari, Jihad 7, #54*). A *hadith* in *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* states that in contrast to the suicide, the martyr does not even feel the pain of his death

# Islam hijacked

Part Two  
Reuven Firestone

(*Fada'il al-Jihad, 26, #1663*). He is also forgiven all his sins and has the right to intercede on behalf of his own family to enter Heaven.

So suicide is forbidden and the killing of non-combatants is forbidden, but martyrdom is rewarded with entrance into Heaven and, therefore, with great material rewards in the World to Come. The complexity of the problem rests to a great extent on interpretation and the authority of those who make the interpretations. One stable person's definition of suicide may be interpreted as martyrdom by a fanatic. All these categories may easily be manipulated by fanatical, desperate or evil people. A reasonable person's obvious identification of innocent non-combatants may be categorized as Satan's hordes by someone who is desperate and confused. Add to this the fact that most suicide bombers are in desperate economic straits.

### God hijacked by terrorists

We need to add one more ingredient to an already complex soup: the perception of the West (which includes Israel) among many Muslims who live in the Middle East. The West prides itself on having brought many gifts to the civilised world: tolerance, democracy, pluralism, freedom. To the natives of many parts of the world who have been exploited by colonialism, imperialism and today's 'globalism', these noble contributions are meaningless. Many Muslims in the Middle East see them as no more than slogans that attempt to hide the West's true intent: political and religious domination and economic exploitation.

To a poor peasant or even a middle-class urban dweller who suffers the loss of children to disease, the lack of opportunities for improvement, and a

grim and downtrodden daily existence while watching television and movie portrayals of Western wealth and decadence, it is not difficult to conceive of the US and Israel as the greater and lesser Satans. Of course, local corrupt leadership often takes advantage of such sentiments in order to prop up crooked regimes. The secular leaders of Muslim countries have always tried to manipulate Islamic symbols and images in order to manage their populations.

Islam is a noble and compassionate religion but it may be cynically manipulated. It may also be manipulated in good faith by misguided people. The unstable political situation in the Middle East, the terrible economic situation, the lack of freedoms and of a tradition of open inquiry for the past six centuries all contribute to an environment of bitterness. Who can you trust if not in God? But God has also been manipulated, and this is the saddest aspect of the complex we call the Middle East. God has been hijacked by terrorists. Islam is not the problem. Terrorism is the problem, and terrorists have hijacked both Islam and God.

*The author is Professor of Medieval Judaism and Islam at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. The first part of this article appeared in the November issue of AJR Journal.*

#### OUT NOW

### "Where do you come from?"

Hitler refugees in Great Britain then and now:

The happy compromise!

Carl F. Flesch

ISBN 1 900796 79 1  
UK £9.99



What the critics say:

'...enjoyable, thought provoking...a wealth of material...Many readers will enjoy this book, often with a wry smile of recognition as they find their own experiences...mirrored in it...a good read.'

-AJR Journal

'(Flesch has an) extraordinary capacity to see things from a different perspective...often hilarious...entertaining.'

-Edinburgh Star

'A delightful new book...'

-Norman Lebrecht, Jewish Chronicle

Available via all good bookshops or direct from the publishers by sending cheque for £10.99 (incl p&p) to:

PEN PRESS PUBLISHERS LTD  
39-41 NORTH ROAD, ISLINGTON, LONDON N7 9DP

# Were the refugees to be repatriated in 1945?

Anthony Grenville

During the war, a major concern for the Jews from Central Europe who had fled to Britain was the possibility that they might be compelled to return to their countries of origin once hostilities ended. The Jewish refugees had contributed to the war effort and had shared the dangers and privations of wartime life with the British. They had begun to settle here, and in most cases had no desire to return to the lands where Jews had been systematically murdered. The circulars through which the AJR communicated with its members reflected this fear of repatriation. From late 1943 the AJR sought to impress upon the British authorities that the Jews from Germany and Austria did not regard the prospect of returning to their native lands as anything remotely resembling a homecoming, given the complicity of their former fellow countrymen in the persecution and extermination of their entire communities.

## Importance of British citizenship

A vital step towards permanent residence in Britain was the acquiring of British nationality, without which the refugees would have remained stateless and liable to have their former German nationality reimposed on them against their will. The wartime British government refused to grant British citizenship to the refugees, even if they were serving in the Forces. The AJR's circular of November 1944 quotes with approval from a letter to the *New York Times* from the President of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe:

There will be no doubt that among the problems which Jewish refugees from Central Europe all over the world will be confronted after the war, the problem of their nationality will be of great importance. Should they, against their will, automatically become German citizens again? I believe that nobody who considers nationality more

than a mere matter of form would advocate that anyone should be forced to resume citizenship of a nation with which he no longer is connected through any formal or emotional ties whatsoever. Even less would they advocate the idea of forced repatriation. No one should be compelled to return to his former country after having experienced such dreadful persecution as was and still is imposed on the Jews by the Nazis.

In April 1944 the AJR seized on a broadsheet issued by PEP (Political and Economic Planning) which sought to dispel the misapprehensions that surrounded the 'refugee problem'. It demonstrated that the number of Jewish refugees who wished to stay in Britain would be a tiny fraction of the population and hardly likely to increase unemployment; on the contrary, their skills and labour would be urgently needed for post-war reconstruction. The survey concluded by demanding that an end be put to the state of uncertainty and homelessness that the refugees had endured for so long. In June 1945, following the liberation of the concentration camps, the AJR issued a press statement that clarified its attitude to Germany unequivocally:

To the Jews from Germany their former country is the graveyard of their families. There are no bonds left between them and Germany. In their overwhelming majority they have no desire to return to the country where these atrocities were committed and be compelled to live amongst people who perpetrated the murder of the Jews or connived at these crimes. They prefer to live anywhere else in the world than in Germany.

## Churchill intervenes on behalf of refugees

What was the attitude of the British Government? In her exhaustive account *Whitehall and the Jews: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust*, Louise London is severely critical of government policy on refugee settlement. She accuses successive home secretaries Herbert Morrison, R.G. Somervell and James Chuter Ede

of adopting the ungenerous and obstructive stance that allowing refugees the right of permanent residence was undesirable and would provoke an antisemitic backlash. Indeed, her account sets out to cast the entire process of the refugees' reception in Britain as one more chapter in official British inhumanity and callousness towards asylum seekers. But there is a notable omission in Dr London's book, and a very important one. On 15 May 1945 Winston Churchill himself answered a parliamentary question from Austin Hopkinson MP asking whether arrangements could be made for the immediate repatriation of all Jewish refugees. Churchill's reply was unambiguous: 'No, Sir. Quite apart from other considerations there would be very considerable practical difficulties in carrying out this suggestion.' The Jewish Labour MP Sydney Silverman interjected that 'it would be difficult to conceive of a more cruel procedure than to take people who have lost everything they have - their homes, their relatives, their children, all the things that made life decent and possible - and compel them against their will to go back to the scene of those crimes.' This drew a crisp prime ministerial one-liner: 'I agree with that.'

That spelt the end of any plans for compulsory repatriation. Anyone can see that such a statement, issued with the full force of the prime minister's authority, settled the matter; and the incoming Labour Government kept to Churchill's policy. The fact is that the refugees were never subjected to a policy of deportation to their former homelands. Instead, they were allowed to stay, and over the next few years acquired British nationality. That, however, is the next chapter in the history of their settlement in Britain.

*Dr Anthony Grenville is Historical Researcher to the AJR.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### I TOO AM A REFUGEE

Sir - I was very moved by Moise Rahmani's article in the October issue. We can probably agree on answers to some of his questions. Kuwait expelled Palestinians because they supported Saddam, who had fired Scud missiles into Israel. They are not integrated by their host countries because that would stop the pot from boiling, and Israel provides a good alibi for these countries' failings. The Palestinians are poor for the same reason. Arab money could enable the Gaza strip to live in the lap of luxury but poor conditions and dependence on UN handouts make for self-pity, hatred and chanting crowds waving Hamas banners to be seen on world-wide TV.

*Frank Bright,  
Ipswich*

Sir - Certainly the Palestinians have been guilty of terror and bloodshed. Israel's provocative policies and actions, however, have continued to stir up hatred, increasingly producing young recruits for Hamas's terrorism. The sins of the Arabs do not absolve the Jews who support Israel from responsibility. We also have a responsibility as human beings to the Arabs and we have a responsibility to pursue peace. Dr Otto Fleming worries (July issue) that if Israel were to dismantle its Jewishness, 'we need be no more concerned about its existence than that of Guatemala.' Is peace not more important? The generation which created Israel following its persecution in Europe has all but died out. The present Israeli population is not entitled to use that generation's suffering as an excuse for its actions.

*Eric Sanders,  
London W12*

### ANGLO-JEWRY AND THE REFUGEES

Sir - I am in total agreement with Mr Persky's views on the 'superiority

complex' of the German Jews, of whom I am one. It must have been hard for some of my contemporaries to work as domestics, a job they were neither trained for, nor accustomed to. However, I think it is unfair to bring up unpleasant experiences from the distant past and blame Anglo-Jewry for the ill-treatment or different customs they encountered. If we, who were being persecuted, attribute lack of culture and finesse to our own brethren, should we be surprised that other factions do similar things to us?

*Margot Wallace,  
Sarasota, USA*

Sir - It makes me see red to continuously read letters from German refugees about the treatment they received in this country. People still complaining after all this time would have been in a very sorry state, if not dead, if the 'unsophisticated' people in this country had not opened their 'lower middle-class' households to them. I don't mind whether you publish this letter or not, but I had to get my views across to your organisation.

*S Muller,  
Banbury*

Sir - I have had the pleasure of being interviewed by Dr Grenville, and I have read the articles and letters published in the *AJR Journal*. Dr Grenville gave a résumé of bad cases of exploitation of young girls who came as domestic servants. One can assume that he is engaged in further research, which he will publish at a later date. His articles are only part of a whole, contrary to what Dr Lytton suggests.

Dr Lytton is also mistaken in his comments about families acting as sponsors to get the parents of refugee domestics out of Germany. At no point did Dr Grenville mention that a naïve and unreasonable demand, expectation or any expression of

wishful thinking had been made. Nor was anything of the kind ever made in my case. The idea that the family who exploited me, did not pay me, and only returned my family's valuables after a court case, would even have considered supporting an old woman - my mother - for an 'undetermined number of years' is ludicrous.

Dr Lytton suggests that historians are obliged to carry out a scientific survey before publishing their findings. I suggest that Dr Lytton, instead of pontificating about some point he obviously did not read correctly, should accept that for every bad case there was bound to be a place where the domestic servant was treated well. Seeing that he is already Prof Emeritus, I think that his mother was perhaps older and more mature than the average girls who came, and could cope better.

*Polly Zimran,  
Charlbury*

Sir - I was saddened to read the letter from my anonymous colleague in the October issue. I practised at the Revenue Bar from 1958 until 1996 and cannot recollect a single occasion when I became aware that a Jewish solicitor had not instructed me because I was a Yekke. I therefore suggest that my colleague's experiences may not be typical.

*CW Koenigsberger,  
London NW3*

### Dr Grenville comments:

There are some serious misreadings of my articles on Anglo-Jewry and the refugees from Central Europe in your October letters column. While it is clear that the cultural interests of the two groups differed, this is far from asserting the 'superiority' of one over the other, as Mr Persky seems to imagine. In fact, I was scrupulously careful not to make any such assertion. The imputation of 'inferiority' to English Jews derives from Mr Persky, not from my text.

Nor do I use the term 'lower middle-class' in a derogatory sense; in academic discourse it is the only term available to describe the social stratum that lies between the proletariat and

the affluent upper middle class. The underlying point actually reflects favourably on Anglo-Jewry: it was far less excusable for domestics to be subjected to poor conditions in wealthy British homes than in those of Jewish families in modest circumstances.

The reason why there are no positive accounts of refugee domestics in Anglo-Jewish households is that I have so far encountered none, and am not prepared to invent some simply to please Dr Lytton. I stated explicitly that my articles were based strictly on the material that I had so far gathered myself; that is why I was careful to limit the scope of any conclusions to be drawn. The 'by and large' which Dr Lytton misreads as if it were a general conclusion refers in reality solely to conclusions drawn from my own material. If Dr Lytton is going to fling around accusations of casual practice, I suggest that he starts with his own reading of texts.

#### HITLER'S LOSS

Sir - The question asked by Tom Ambrose - whether the exiles achieved more after emigration than 'at home' - can be answered with a resounding yes. The Nobel Laureate Dr Max Perutz OM. FRS implied in print that he could not have done in Vienna what he did here, using the memorable three words 'Cambridge made me'.

*Francis Steiner,  
Deddington*

#### 60th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Sir - I became a member of the AJR in the early 1940s, but at that time there was no Werner Rosenstock as general secretary. Whatever happened to the then secretary Dr Kurt Alexander from Krefeld? Why is he never mentioned?

*(Mrs) Ilse Shindel,  
Wembley Park*

Sir - In your lengthy reminiscences of the AJR's history not once is mention made of the Society of Jewish Refugees which was founded in Glasgow a few years before.

*Dr W Levy,  
London NW6*

Sir - I met Werner Rosenstock in the last years of his life at Heinrich Stahl House. I was ignorant of the important role he had played in the AJR, but chatting to him I soon became aware that he was a very impressive, though modest, man. He was as active as his health allowed, gave lectures to other residents and kept up with his world-wide contacts and interests.

*Stella Curzon,  
Middx*

Sir - The article on Belsize Square Synagogue brought back memories of its architect, H J Reifenberg (incidentally he was the husband of Gabriele Tergit). He was meticulous to the point of madness and I well remember that the builder was instructed to dismantle one of the four concrete columns supporting the roof of the structure because there was a twist of 1/16th of one inch in its 20ft height. Likewise, at the end of the monthly site meeting, all the contractors on the project went to the Cosmo for coffee and cakes. Reifenberg insisted that he pay the bill, so that he could not be accused of corruption.

*F Goldberg,  
W Sussex*

#### TO BALDLY GO

Sir - You may have your own political views 'ex' and present, but what gives you the right to make fun of other peoples' physical disabilities?

*A Goldsmith,  
Wembley*

#### BOUQUET

Sir - I have just read the September issue of the Journal from cover to cover. As a 'non-Jewish' Jew (Mischling grade 1), I must congratulate you on the high quality and objectivity of the magazine. It is one of the few publications I receive that I read from beginning to end. Although my religious beliefs differ, I feel strongly connected to my maternal, Jewish roots.

*(Mrs) U Dumke,  
Ex-Kindertransportee*

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

AJR might be able to offer financial assistance.

*Members who might not otherwise be able to afford homecare please contact:*

**Estelle Brookner, Secretary  
AJR Social Services Dept  
Tel: 020 7431 6161**

### Companions of London

Incorporating  
Hampstead Home Care

**A long established company  
providing care in your home**

*Assistance with personal care  
General household duties  
Respite care  
Medical appointment service*

**'OUR CARE IS YOUR CARE'  
020 7483 0212/0213**



## SPRING GROVE

214 Finchley Road  
London NW3

**London's Most Luxurious  
RETIREMENT HOME**

- Entertainment-Activities
- Stress Free Living
- 24 Hour Staffing • Excellent Cuisine
- Full En-Suite Facilities

Call for more information  
or a personal tour

**020 8446 2117  
or 020 7794 4455**

[enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk)

### Simon R Rhodes M.Ch.S.

STATE REGISTERED CHIROPODIST

Surgeries at:

67 Kilburn High Road, NW6 (opp M&S)  
Telephone 020 7624 1576

3 Queens Close (off Green Lane)  
Edgware, Middx HA87PU  
Telephone 020 8905 3264

Visiting chiropody service available

## RG's INTERFACE

### Stars of the 1930s

Düsseldorf-born Louise Rainer, winner of two Hollywood Oscars, was profiled in an interview session at the Austrian Institute in October. On 9 December Hungarian-born singer Martha Eggert will appear at London's Wigmore Hall to talk about, and show clips of, the films in which she partnered her husband, the Polish operatic tenor Jan Kiepura.

### Verdi centenary

The worldwide celebrations terminate in a blaze of glory with a hugely popular *Rigoletto* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The current focus on the incomparable composer prompts a reminiscence as well as a question in my mind. The reminiscence is of 1930s Vienna when the opera buff Franz Werfel, who once whiled away the best part of a night singing Verdi arias with James Joyce, published a Verdi biography as a counterblast to the prevailing Wagner-mania fostered by the Nazis. The question is: why does the plot of *Rigoletto*, adapted from Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*, bear a strong resemblance to Leon Feuchtwanger's *Jud Süß*, which is derived from a story by Wilhelm Hauff?

### Peter Zadek

The famous theatre director who came to Britain as a child refugee and re-migrated to postwar Germany is about to tackle Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* at Vienna's Josefstädter Theater. He says 'the play is always described as antisemitic but is actually *about* antisemitism'. So now we know!

## Annely Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street  
(off New Bond Street)  
Tel: 020 7629 7578  
Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING  
AND SCULPTURE

# ART NOTES

## Gloria Tessler

The American-born Alfred Cohen spent 40 years in his adoptive Britain until he could no longer call any other place home. He died earlier this year and his retrospective exhibition is on show at the **London Jewish Cultural Centre** until 13 December. The immediate impact of his *Commedia dell'arte*, including *The Entrance of Punch* and *Polichinelle Rex*, sends you reeling, but then the power of the work, the hidden depths, the sense of the person behind the mask, becomes apparent. A certain brutishness in his work adds poignancy and personality to his subjects. Thus his *Toreador* has a slight displacement of head and hands. You wonder whether he is crippled. The face, though Spanish or Jewish, has such sad, knowing eyes that you understand he is not a matador at all.

Cohen's work, most of which is in private collections, has an eerie perspective, as though all his subjects are really somebody else. So *Colombine* is a chaotic, wide, lidless-eyed diva with wire-sprung hair. The subjects' sheer physicality makes them appear both static and energetic, creating an electric sense, as though the despair within his work has become solid.

In a sense, Alfred Cohen's landscapes and waterscapes are even more interesting. What is exciting is that, after closer observation, you begin to realise that all his subjects, animate or inanimate - earth, sky, people and objects - are of equal density. Thus a red and blue ship sails into a red sunset and a red sea. Where is it really going? Three men in a boat with roughcast fishermen faces stare at us with a look of immobility. They are not busy, they are watching us. And the clouds emerge like flags flying from the roofs. Or are the clouds really airships? We cannot say. We only know they move at the same pace, slowly and heavily through space and time and a brilliance of colour conveyed through thick impasto daubing. Cohen handles paint well, with confidence and an iconoclastic touch.

In some work you see the same solid dream-states captured by Chagall, under whose influence he fell. Things flying in the air without perspective or depth. You could call it primitive art, simplistic, but for its power.

It takes courage to launch a new arts magazine in today's times of cutbacks and redundancies, but Janet Levin has done it. Janet, who comes not from a journalistic but a market research background, had a no-nonsense, focused approach on the direction of the much-heralded quarterly **Jewish Renaissance**. It strikes a lighter, more colloquial note than the *Jewish Quarterly*, and its well-designed and whimsical front cover suggests something earthier and less intellectual. At its festive launch party at the Jewish Museum, Lionel Gordon, the Chairman of the Management Committee, spoke of 'the great flowering of Jewish creativity in this country'. In the midst of terror and uncertainty, the launch of this magazine was an oasis of bonhomie. In her editorial Ms Levin asks the same question. Referring to the events of 11 September, she writes 'Without doubt there is a new interest in learning about the richness of Jewish heritage; a new desire to see Jewish culture take a confident place in our multi-cultural society.'

The first issue includes an interview with the actress Janet Suzman on growing up under apartheid and, in a reference to the Asylum Bill, a double-page spread on comparisons with the treatment of today's asylum-seekers with Jewish refugees of the 1930s pointing out the frightening similarities of rejection and suspicion. There is also an excellent, down-to-earth overview of Kabbalah teachings, so popular among Jews and non-Jews today, in the form of questions and answers by Jeremy Rosen, which helps readers to discriminate between genuine research and that peddled by cultist salesmen. There is a listings section, a children's section and a section dealing with the arts in Israel, plus an in-depth report on Iraqi Jews, which may well have paid for the entire issue. Work needs to be done on design and layout, but there is certainly an unusual and refreshing feel to this welcome debut.

## Retribution for conversion?

### MAHLER'S CONVERSION,

Ronald Harwood,  
Aldwych Theatre

Gustav Mahler's Vienna was a city distorted by antisemitism. At the time of his birth in 1860, the *Familiengesetz* laws of the Austro-Hungarian Empire permitted only the eldest son of a Jewish family to marry. Gustav's domineering father Bernhardt was illegitimate according to this law but, despite the ensuing social stigma, he was determined to build up a successful liquor business, one of the few trades open to Jews. An authoritarian father, Bernhardt recognized Gustav's extraordinary musical talent early and made the sacrifices necessary to send him to the Vienna Conservatory, where he studied with Anton Bruckner. But Gustav's volatile nature and his radical ideas frequently courted trouble, a tendency that was to haunt him throughout his life.

Graduating in 1878, Mahler began his first mature work, *Das klagende Lied*, the *Song of Lament*, but he was not psychologically attuned to the life of solitary creativity and soon fell into depression. He earned prestige in the role of conductor, in various opera houses, from Prague to Leipzig, Budapest and Hamburg. However, he became embroiled in sexual scandal, was criticised for his innovative work and suffered much personal tragedy, such as the deaths of his mother and favourite sister, Leopoldine, followed by the inexplicable suicide of his brother.

Mahler's life was a roller-coaster of disputes and rejection and even the friendship of Brahms and Richard Strauss seemed based more on his reputation as a conductor than a composer. And so Mahler set his sights on the apogee of the musical world at the time: the post of director at the Vienna Opera.

It was at this point that the composer considered conversion to Christianity. This aspect of his life is what drives Ronald Harwood's new play, *Mahler's Conversion*, at the Aldwych Theatre, but, although dramatically gripping, it fails to demonstrate the anguish which brought him to this step. You feel that Mahler is merely a talented opportunist who knows that the top Vienna job will

# REVIEWS

elude him if he does not take the road to Christianity. Conversion to Catholicism was unusual in those times and indeed Mahler remained a deeply religious man who never took Catholicism to his soul. Even conversion did not stop him being vilified as 'that dwarf Jew'. The Viennese premiere of his First Symphony in the winter of 1900 was hissed and booed, as was the Munich premiere of his Fourth Symphony.

Anthony Sher gives a compelling performance as the tormented Mahler in Harwood's play, ably directed by Gregory Doran, which considers his life after conversion. And indeed, disappointment and tragedy follow hard upon it. He rejects the deep, if possessive, love of his young violinist-biographer Natalie Bauer in favour of the outspoken society belle Alma Schindler. In the play, Alma insults his music, his lifestyle and his supportive friends. Natalie, in real life, broke off all relations with Mahler on his marriage. In the play, Alexandra Mathie gives a creditable performance of her total mental breakdown.

In the same vein, Alma, an intelligent woman, is portrayed as a capricious, hard-headed flirt, with musical aspirations that Mahler forces her to renounce. It is hard to imagine music flowing from this astringent personality, but there is no doubt that Fiona Glascott's portrayal gives the play its bite.

Did Mahler suffer from Jewish guilt - and did this induce further tragedy? Mahler's work became darker and Alma, in reality, felt his *Kindertotenlieder* (*Songs on the Death of Children*) tempted providence. Indeed, when their beloved first child, Maria Anna, died aged four, Mahler's health deteriorated and he never really recovered. His grief led him to consult Freud - a pained, yet controlled encounter in the play. Harwood suggests that Mahler believes his tragedies are retribution for his conversion. The play concludes with a clear hint that at least as far as his own music is concerned, Mahler has arrived - but at what cost.

Gloria Kessler

## Shy exhibitionist

### BESIDE MYSELF,

Anthony Sher,  
Hutchinson, 2001

Anthony Sher was born with a caul round his neck, so his mother 'knew' he was going to be a great man. We see a picture of her, red in claw if not in tooth, basking in the *nakhes* of his fame. The first, and perhaps the most interesting, part of the book deals with growing up in a Jewish family in South Africa under apartheid. No doubt the Jews, only one generation removed from penniless immigrants, had their own insecurities. However, that black people should be subservient to whites seemed as acceptable to the young Antony (Ant for short) as the ABC. Not until he came to England did he see the situation from a different perspective.

With a remote but successful businessman father, an adoring mother, three siblings, a large extended family and a considerable personal talent in the performing arts, he doesn't strike us as an object of pity. Nevertheless, he describes himself as "a shy, self-hating person uncomfortable in his own skin" for whom acting was an escape from that self. Fired by ambition (that caul seems to be doing its job), he decides to come to England. At first he has a taste of rejection by the major drama schools. Some friendly advice from family friends with know-how gets him into a lesser school where he learns his trade.

In this part of the book, his perceptive reactions to place, people and situations give us a fascinating insight into the life of an aspiring actor. Later this deteriorates into a gazetteer of famous names and plays. One's interest is reawakened by the detailed accounts of his preparation for the great role in 'The Scottish Play' (*Macbeth*) and his novel approach to the part of the Fool in *King Lear*. He also describes frankly but without prurience coming to terms with his homosexuality and how he weaned himself off a drug addiction.

Martha Blend

## A double identity

**WARUM? DER LANGE ABSCHIED,**  
**Hannelore Hausmann,**  
*Verlag Hannelore Hausmann,*  
*Cologne-Brück, 2001*

It was not until Hannelore Hausmann's psychoanalyst daughter-in-law urged her to write her story that the author was able to set down the experiences, memories and pain of half a century ago. She was born in 1928. Her father was Jewish, her mother Catholic. Her older brother was brought up Jewish and she Catholic. Her parents divorced, the brother came to England on the Kindertransport and she spent most of the war years, away from her 'Aryan' mother, being hunted as a 'non-Aryan'.

As a devout Catholic child, her only connection to Jewishness was her love for her father. This makes her story very poignant. She visited him regularly even after he had to wear the yellow star and later, secretly, when he was already in a collection camp, ready for deportation. He perished in Auschwitz.

There are fascinating vignettes of heroism, those seemingly on a small scale but in effect potentially life-saving and those giving an insight into being a Christian 'non-Aryan'.

Hannelore Hausmann carries this double identity bravely and writes about it simply and honestly. This is a book worth reading.

Bea Green

## GERMAN and ENGLISH BOOKS BOUGHT

Antiquarian, secondhand and  
modern books of quality  
always wanted.

We're long-standing advertisers  
here and leading buyers of  
books from AJR members.

We pay good prices and  
come to collect.

For immediate response,  
please contact:  
Robert Hornung MA(Oxon)  
2 Mount View, Ealing,  
London W5 IPR

Email: [hornungbooks@aol.com](mailto:hornungbooks@aol.com)

Tel: 020 8998 0546 (5pm to 9pm is best)



## Keeping the torch burning

On 22 October Club 43 played host to freelance researcher Jens Brüning, from Berlin, who recited extracts from the latest of the volumes of the works of Gabriele Tergit he has edited. Tergit achieved fame during the last years of the Weimar Republic with her novel *Käsebier erobert den Kurfürstendamm* and was also known for her reports from the law courts in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. In 1933 she and her husband, the architect H. J. Reifenberg, both of them Jews, were forced to flee Germany and, after a period in Palestine, they settled in London.

Tergit was an active member of the AJR and a stalwart of Club 43 and for many years served as secretary of the PEN Club of German authors abroad. She was one of the most important literary figures from Germany to settle in Britain, but continued to write in German. Jens Brüning's crusade to re-establish her as a major literary figure and the dedication with which he is editing her *Gesamtwerk* deserve our unstinting admiration. His readings from the volume *Frauen und andere Ereignisse*, with its echoes of Erich Kästner's *Fabian*, made for a highly enjoyable evening and kept the torch of German literature in exile burning brightly.

Anthony Grenville

## Alice Newman - celebrating 100 years



Birthday greetings to Alice Newman

## Search Notices

**Lucie Freud**, born Berlin 02.03.1896. Resident in St John's Wood Terrace, London NW8 in 1958. Tel 020 8906 0582.

**Anna Lisa Kaufmann**, probably born in early 1920s in Germany, engaged as a nanny by Doris and William Cooper of 'Nutfield', Altwood Bailey, Maidenhead, between July 1941 and 1943 to look after Mary Christabel Cooper. Trained at Princess Christians, Windsor, Berks. Interned during WW2. Father, an ex-bank manager, came to Reading, mother remained in Germany, brother in Canada or Australia during the war. Please contact Mary Christabel Cooper, Westwood House, Burchett's Green, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6QS, tel 01628 822096.

**Ludwig Kahn**, famous Jewish clairvoyant, born Offenburg/Südbaden 21.06.1873. Emigrated to England, interned Isle of Man. Researcher seeks information about what became of him in internment and after. Please contact Uwe Schellinger, IGPP, Wilhelmstrasse 3A, 79098 Freiburg i. Breisgau, Germany, tel 0049 761 20721-61, [schellinger@igpp.de](mailto:schellinger@igpp.de).

**Prof Ernst (Ernest) Halberstadt**, friend from Wöhlersschule, Frankfurt. Last met in London around 1939. Please contact Dr John Neumaier, Poughkeepsie, NY, tel 001 845 4522729 or 0208 2090318, [Neuluther@aol.com](mailto:Neuluther@aol.com).

I am looking for women, or relatives of women, interned on the Isle of Man (or elsewhere) in WWII in connection with a book I am writing. I am also interested in women's experiences of working during the war and of evacuation. Please contact me at 79 Sydney Road, London N10 2LY, 0208 883 1124 (phone and fax), [marybraiduk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:marybraiduk@yahoo.co.uk).

I am seeking information on the group of young men organized by Wim Van Leer that left Leipzig for Welwyn Garden City in January 1939. I am the daughter of a member of that group (Werner Leschziner) writing a book on the period. Please contact Judy Lash Balint at [judyb14868@aol.com](mailto:judyb14868@aol.com) or Hagdud Haivri 16, Jerusalem 92345, Israel.

# PROFILE

Richard Grunberger

## Lisette Watson



According to one of the basic tenets of Judaism, 13-year-old boys can mutate into men. At the age of 13, Lisette Watson had already completed her journey into adulthood - not in the physiological, but the emotional, sense of the word. This journey had begun, metaphorically and literally, six years earlier in post-Anschluss Vienna. From there she, a first-year primary school pupil, fled with her mother and father initially to Czechoslovakia, then to Italy, and finally to south-east France.

Nice was their way station en route to the notorious camp at Gurs set up by the Daladier government on the outbreak of war. At the fall of France, the internees were set free and returned to Nice. Here, two years later, after the Nazi takeover of unoccupied France, they were apprehended by the Gestapo. The next stop was a suburb of hell named Drancy from which trains regularly left for Auschwitz.

At Drancy the Austrian camp commandant (and mega-murderer) Alois Brunner observed the 12-year-old Lisette taking a shortcut to the latrines, which was forbidden. He hit her around the face with a piece of wood, which impaired her hearing in the left ear, and sentenced her to cleaning duty in the SS interrogation

room. This meant that every afternoon the slip of a girl had to wash blood, faeces, spilled brains, splintered bones and lumps of flesh off the walls and the floor of the torture chamber. What she found even harder to endure was hearing the cries of the victims.

This unendurable chore paradoxically saved Lisette's (and her parents') life. They were put on the Auschwitz list only in August 1944. As their cattle-truck stood on a siding, American soldiers slid open the doors and told them to 'go home'.

They had no home to go to, but a Swiss Protestant charity provided them with accommodation. All their relatives in Europe had disappeared in the Holocaust; however, the mother had a sister in Uruguay so they eventually went to South America, where Lisette acquired her third language, started work and met her English husband Laurence, which necessitated her learning a fourth language. She eventually became so proficient in English that she took a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) diploma.

Together with her mother, husband and four children, Lisette moved to London a quarter of a century ago. One daughter now lives in Israel, which they visit regularly. Another journey the Watsons undertook recently was to Horn, an Austrian backwater, where Lisette remembers having spent idyllic summer holidays in her grandparents' garden.

This nostalgia for the sights and sounds of her early childhood co-exists uneasily in Lisette's mind with an awareness that Austrians were even more deeply implicated than Germans in the Nazi horror. (All three commandants of Drancy, for instance, came from the country of Lisette's birth.) Though scarred forever by what she experienced as a pre-adolescent, as well as later - her ailing mother committed suicide - Lisette is a survivor. Over and above that, she much prefers arranging her features in a smile rather than a scowl. I emerged from the interview depressed by her tale, but uplifted by her spirit.

## Remembering the Holocaust in post-communist Russia

In Russia, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, memorialising the Holocaust is 'fraught with difficulty', John Klier said in a lecture to the Wiener Library on 31 October.

Klier, Professor of Modern Jewish History at University College London, stated that as early as 1942 Moscow announced a competition for the design of a memorial celebrating the victorious outcome of the war. 'No one shall be forgotten!' was the slogan of the time.

At the end of the war, the Red Army liberated some of the most notorious concentration camps. In 1946 one of the first Holocaust memorials anywhere was erected in the Belarusian capital of Minsk. Subsequently, in a change of the party line occasioned by a mix of factors, not excluding antisemitic sentiment, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, founded to publicise among Western Jews the Nazis' anti-Jewish atrocities, was closed down. Moscow declared that 20 million 'Soviet citizens' had perished in the Great Fatherland War. The Holocaust became a taboo subject.

In 1961 Evgeny Evtushenko wrote his celebrated poem *Baby Yar*, a plea to the authorities to commemorate the special suffering of the Jews, but only in 1974 was an 'anodine' memorial erected in that location, the site of a massacre of Jews near Kiev.

At the present time, official memorialising of the Holocaust is focused on the Poklonnaia Gora memorial complex in Moscow. Currently, the complex contains a Russian Orthodox church, a mosque and a synagogue, including a Holocaust museum and what Professor Klier described as a 'funky' Jewish museum.

Memorialising of the Holocaust in the former Soviet Union is funded almost exclusively by Israeli and Jewish Diaspora support. In Russia, as elsewhere in the former communist Eastern Europe, Professor Klier concluded, the process of memorialising the Holocaust remains 'contentious and fraught with difficulty'.

HS

# INSIDE the AJR

## Bournemouth: 300-year musical journey

On 23 October Alf Keiles took us on a 300-year musical journey encompassing the Jewish contribution to Jazz. Over 40 people were present, including visitors from London. The music was wonderful. Many pieces were sung in Yiddish and English. The quality of reproduction was exceptional given that some of the pieces were recorded over 50 years ago.

*Robert Grant*

## Brighton and Hove *Sarid*: Jewish life on film

The speaker at our October meeting was Judy Ironside, a director of the Brighton Jewish Film Festival. Judy told us there are some 70 Jewish film festivals in the world. A project of the Brighton and Hove Festival is to build an archive of Jewish life in the city. A film made last year at the unveiling of the Holocaust Memorial in Brighton's Jewish cemetery was shown.

*Rudi Simmonds*

Next meeting: 17 December.  
Chanukah Party

## Leeds: How the Holocaust is seen today

'The Holocaust - A Message for Today' was the subject of a talk by Bill Williams, a lecturer in Jewish studies at Manchester University, on 28 October. The Holocaust today, he said, is depicted mainly in terms of the history of Nazi Germany alone and takes little account of fascism elsewhere in Europe and of the inactivity of other countries. A highly thought-provoking afternoon.

*Thea Skyte*

Next meeting: 2 December. Jon Silverman, BBC Home and Legal Correspondent

## Manchester: Claims for compensation

On 16 October Michael Newman outlined the latest position on compensation claims from Germany, Austria and elsewhere. Time is running out (the deadline is 31 December). Michael answered questions from the floor and made notes for further information from his office. Susanne Green, the new Northern Group's Co-ordinator, introduced herself. She will clearly be a great asset to us.

*Werner Lachs*

## North London: The AJR in the 21st century



The group's first meeting, at the Southgate and District Reform Synagogue, was attended by over 30 members. Ronald Channing outlined the AJR's objectives in the field of welfare and social services. His views on future activities embracing wider educational facilities for the community at large - not only the Jewish one - provoked a lively exchange.

*Herbert Haberberg*

Next meeting: 20 December (NB not 27 December). Post-Chanukah Event, including a Nostalgia Quiz. Convenor Walter Woyda.

## Pinner: Insight into Poland

George Vulkan provided an intriguing insight into Poland in the light of three visits to the country. The first was in 1979 in the depressing Soviet era. The second was in 1993 to commemorate the Warsaw ghetto uprising, by which time the local synagogue had been restored. On his third visit, in 2000, undertaken with his son Daniel to trace the family's history, he took part in a moving Sukkot service with many younger people, toured the country and made several fascinating contacts.

*Walter Weg*

Next meeting: 6 December. 'Donuts and Latkes'

## West Midlands: From cap maker to Lord Mayor

The 30 September meeting was a great success. Sir Bernard Zissman spoke on the subject 'From cap maker to Lord Mayor'. The atmosphere was extremely informal and I don't think there was anyone present who did not enjoy the talk. We also managed to raise £74 towards a scanner appeal by the local hospital, of which Sir Bernard is president, to show our gratitude to him for coming to speak to us.

*Henny Rednall*

Next meeting: 9 December. AGM; Theresa Patrick and accordion

## Willing to share

When I first got there I found that, apart from the girls Carol and Sylvia, I didn't know anyone. I more or less decided to go back home immediately. However, the people who were there were so agreeable and Carol and Sylvia so helpful and pleasant that I decided to stay. I'm very glad I did.

The entertainment for our five-day stay was superb. On our first evening, we had a wonderful one-man-band; whatever we asked him to play, he did. Other events included a quiz evening, a bingo session and another musical evening. There was also an outing to a talk with tapes on the Jewish contribution to Jazz. Some of us went to see the musical *West Side Story*; I went out with an old friend instead.

On a coach trip to the New Forest, we enjoyed the beautiful countryside and paid a visit to an excellent tea shop.

Carol and Sylvia looked after us as if we had been their mothers and joined in everything we did. I can't thank them enough.

Since the next outing to Bournemouth, in May 2002, is likely to be oversubscribed, I've put my name down already. I'm even willing to share.

*Henny Rednall*

## KT-AJR Luncheon

Monday 7 January,  
Evelyn Friedlander: Bavarian Jewery

## Central Office For Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

### 31 December 2001 deadlines

Former slave and forced labourers have until the end of December to submit applications for compensation from the German foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future. Those eligible to claim include any labourer under Nazi occupation and those who were interned in a place where labour was performed.

December is also the last month to file an application in respect of property owned in the former Czechoslovakia. Those eligible to a share in the CZK 100 million Endowment Fund for Victims of the Holocaust must support their claim with an extract from the relevant local land registry office in the Czech Republic.

The children of parents deported as a consequence of French collaboration during the Second World War have until 31 December 2001 to claim either a life pension or a lump sum in compensation. Applications are restricted to victims who were under 21 years old when their parents were deported and who are not now receiving a German or Austrian state pension.

The deadline for making an application to the **Stichting Maror-Gelden Overheid** also expires at the end of December. Close relatives of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution in the Netherlands qualify as substitutes if the victim died on or after 8 May 1945.

A deadline extension allows applicants under the Refugees class of the Swiss bank settlement to file claims until the end of the year. Compensation is paid to those 'who were either denied entry or expelled from Switzerland, or were admitted into Switzerland but abused or mistreated there'.

### Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), 1 Hampstead Gate, 1a Froggnal, London NW3 6AL. For assistance with the completion of application forms please telephone 020 7431 6161 for an appointment.

### AJR GROUP CONTACTS

#### North London

Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

#### South London

Ken Ambrose 020 8852 0262

#### Pinner (HA Postal District)

Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

#### Surrey Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

#### Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)

Fausta Shelton 01273 688 226

#### Wessex (Bournemouth)

Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

#### East Midlands (Nottingham)

Bob Norton 01159 212 494

#### West Midlands (Birmingham)

Henny Rednall 0121 373 5603

#### North (Manchester)

Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

#### Leeds HSFA Trude Silman 0113 225 1628

#### Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh and

Newcastle Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

## Day Centre Reunion



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

See October issue, page 16: (from left) Harry Rudel, Mella Segal, Lore Heinemann, Herbert Wolff

### FIFTH GREAT SEASON!

## AJR-KT LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 19 December 2001

15 Cleve Road NW6 3RL

11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Guest speaker:

Ernest Kaye

'Songs my mother  
taught me'

Reservations

£7.50 for everyone!

From Sylvia and Susie

Tel: 020 7328 0208

### AJR 'Drop in'

Advice Centre at the  
Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road,  
London NW6 3RL

between 10 am and 12 noon  
on the following dates:

Thursday 6 December

Tuesday 11 December

Thursday 17 January

No appointment is necessary, but  
please bring along all relevant  
documents, such as Benefit Books,  
letters, bills, etc.

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

Monday - Thursday 9.30am - 3.30pm, Sunday 2pm - 5.30pm

DECEMBER	Afternoon entertainment
Sun 2	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No Entertainment
Mon 3	Kard & Games Klub
Tue 4	Gloria Moss
Wed 5	Cantor Stephen Robins
Thur 6	Jenny Kossew on accordion
Sun 9	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No entertainment
Mon 10	Kard & Games Klub
Tue 11	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
Wed 12	Shelley Weldon
Thur 13	Francoise Geller - The Bagatelles
Sun 16	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No Entertainment
Mon 17	Kard & Games Klub
Tue 18	Opera Pops
Wed 19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 20	Sylvia Eaves

THE DAY CENTRE WILL REOPEN ON WEDNESDAY 2 JANUARY 2002

## Announcements

### Deaths

**Kochmann.** Max Kochmann. Hilde and family want to thank members and staff of the AJR for their support in so many ways during Max's long fight to regain his health. Unfortunately he died on 24 September. His memory lives on.

**Bowman.** Wilfred (born Werner Baumann, Berlin 26.9.15) passed away peacefully on 10 November in UCHL after a short illness, which all the loving care and attention could not avoid. Will be greatly missed by his partner, family and many friends.

**Brenner.** Clive Max passed away peacefully on 2 November after an illness borne with great courage. Sadly missed by his wife Ellen and son Anthony.

**Brett.** Gretel Brett passed away suddenly on 16 September after a short illness. She will be greatly missed. Forever in our thoughts. Her loving husband David and son Michael.

**David.** Rose David née Lewkowitz passed away on 25 July aged 97 after a lengthy illness. Born in Kreutzburg. Sadly missed by her family in Israel and England and all her friends.

**Jaray.** Rudolf Josef Jaray from Vienna and Prague. Passed away suddenly on 3 October. He was 92 years old, a retired civil servant and known for his intellect and gentleness. A great loss to all his family in England and abroad. The light went out for me. Dora.

**Sekules.** My dear husband Kurt Sekules passed away peacefully on 27 September 2001 in his 94th year. He is deeply missed by his wife Edith, son Walter, daughters Ruth, Leah and Esther as well as his 15 grandchildren and great-grandchildren and his many friends and staff. He led an active life with work and travel until very recently.

### Personal

**River Cruises** (continental) and other holidays. Widower (Amersham) seeks travelling companion for 2002. Please contact Box No. 1263.

**Widower** elderly but still active is looking for a skiing companion of either sex for one week's skiing around the middle of next March. For preliminary contact, please phone me on 01883 715304.

**Can anybody invisibly mend** cashmere cardigans? If so please call 020 7435 2289.

## Classified

### Miscellaneous Services

**Manicure & Pedicure** in the comfort of your own home. Telephone 020 8343 0976.

### Day Centre

**Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre.** New clothes for sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans, etc **Tuesday 4 December** 9.45 am - 11.45 am.

**Optician. Dr Howard Solomons** will be at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre on **Wednesday 12 December** from 10 o'clock.

### University of Sussex Centre for German-Jewish Studies

#### Assistant Director

The Centre intends to appoint an Assistant Director for a period of three years to support Professor Timms in expanding its activities. The person appointed will have completed a doctorate in a relevant field. S/he will be a well-qualified and creative person capable of contributing to the longer-term development of the Centre.

The salary will be on the Research and Analogous Scale 1A between £17,626 and £26,491 depending on age and qualifications. The closing date is Monday 10 December 2001. Letters of application accompanied by a CV and the names of two referees should be sent to Professor Edward Timms, Arts B, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QN, from whom further particulars are available. Email: e.timms@sussex.ac.uk.

## ACACIA LODGE

Mrs Pringsheim, S.R.N. MATRON  
For Elderly, Retired and Convalescent  
(Licensed by Borough of Barnet)

- Single and Double Rooms.
- H/C Basins and CH in all rooms.
- Gardens, TV and reading rooms.
- Nurse on duty 24 hours.
- Long and short term and respite, including trial period if required.

From £300 per week  
020 8445 1244/020 8446 2820 office hours  
020 8455 1335 other times  
37-39 Torrington Park, North Finchley,  
London N12 9TB

### Leo Baeck Housing Association Ltd Clara Nehab House Residential Care Home

All single rooms with en suite bath/shower  
Short stays/Respite and 24 hour Permanent Care  
Large attractive gardens  
Ground Floor Lounge and Dining rooms  
Lift access to all floors  
Easy access to local shops and public transport

**Enquiries and further information  
please contact: The Manager  
Clara Nehab House  
13-19 Leaside Crescent  
London NW11 0DA  
Phone: 020 8455 2286**

### BELSIZE SQUARE APARTMENTS 24 BELSIZE SQUARE, NW3

Tel: 020 7794 4307 or 020 7435 2557  
Modern Self-catering Holiday Rooms,  
Resident Housekeeper, Moderate Terms  
Near Swiss Cottage Station

### SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household  
electrical work  
**PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518**

## ALTERATIONS

OF ANY KIND TO LADIES' FASHIONS  
I also design and make children's clothes  
West Hampstead area  
**020 7328 6571**

## SOPHIE'S NURSES

4 Station Offices, Station Road  
Willesden Junction,  
London NW10 4XA  
Telephone 020 8961 4401  
Fax 020 8961 0875  
email: gbalf218@ibm.net

Sophies (SRS) Healthcare at home  
will enable people to live full and  
independent lives within their own  
homes and continue to enjoy  
comfort and security

### A Memorable Gift - A portrait in bronze

Sculptor specialising in portraiture  
welcomes commissions for  
life size heads or bas relief.  
Reasonable fee.  
**Hilary Roodyn 020 8346 6566**

### Colette M Fitzgerald MSSCh. MBChA.

Qualified Surgical Chiropodist  
Registered Member of The British Chiropody  
and Podiatry Association  
**Visiting Practice 0-15 Northwood Hall  
Hornsey Lane, Highgate, London N6 5PF  
Tel: 020 8341 2611**



## BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square, NW3 4HX

We offer a traditional style of religious  
service with Cantor Choir and organ

Further details can be obtained from  
the synagogue secretary  
Telephone 020 7794 3949

Minister: Rabbi Rodney J Mariner  
Cantor: Rev Lawrence H Fine

### Regular Services

Friday evenings at 6.45 pm  
Saturday mornings at 10 am  
Religion School: Sundays at 10 am to 1 pm  
Nursery School: 9.15 am to 12.15 pm  
Belsize under 3's: 9.30 am to 11.30 am

Space donated by Pafra Limited

### BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square, London NW3  
Our communal hall is available for  
cultural and social functions  
Tel: 020 7794 3949

The AJR does not accept  
responsibility for the standard of  
services offered by advertisers

## Esteem of the team

as performed by Kit and the Widow at the AJR's 60th anniversary tea (slightly abridged)

And so let us praise the team  
The ones who realised the dream  
Please let 'em know of the esteem  
They've earned from members near and far  
Toast them all in cream  
And shout a rousing hip-hoorah!  
For these, the stalwarts of the glorious AJR.

First off there's Bertha Leverton  
Miraculous the things she's done  
All those little Kinder at her knee  
Oh how they praised her to the heights  
Those darling, fluffy, tiny mites  
From 90 to as young as 73.

Then there's Ludwig Spiro, 'cos  
His the first idea it was  
To set up this much needed, splendid place  
The long-term plan is still encoded  
They're still trying to download it  
But right now it's lost in cyber-space.

Next there's Marx, the um-no-er  
I don't mean the philosopher  
His um-he's-er-he's Theo, that's the one  
And his daughter, Engels-Angels-yes  
Tho' she's already left, I guess  
Has Eleanor left early? Yup - she's gone.

I feel that I must warn you: Sadie's  
Most persuasive of our ladies.  
She can sell you anything in stock  
I wonder if this hotel cares  
She's flogged their carpet and their chairs  
And Widow's in for quite a nasty shock.

Kaufman, who you'd not have thought a  
Typical football supporter  
On the terraces, he turns quite bad  
Mad Watford fan, yes, aren't you pal?  
(Of course, that's tautological:  
Watford fan; the poor boy must be mad.)

Last, the catering girls: my dear!  
They're better than the Grosvenor here  
We eat like kings: we eat like Billy Bunters  
But G-d! the noise! You have to laugh  
Susie shrieking at the staff  
Or worse yet, Judy yelling at the punters.

## Obituaries

### Rudolph S Lenk

Vienna-born Rudi Lenk, who has died in California at the age of 80, spent most of his adult life in the UK. Of middle-class background, he had attended grammar school before emigrating with his mother and brother; the father went - involuntarily - to Mauritius. In London Rudi combined industrial employment with assiduous evening class attendance and eventually, now married, gained a doctorate in chemistry. He became an academic with intermittent teaching engagements abroad. A man of wide interests, which included zoology, he did some composing and wrote (and published) bi-lingual poetry, mainly for children. Another self-publishing venture was a book on Mauritius, where his father had died in internment. In addition, he once stood as a Liberal council candidate, and latterly organised the annual reunions of UK-based ex-members of Young Austria. He will be missed.

RG

### Manfred Landau

Vienna-born Manfred Landau has died, aged 76. After the Anschluss he emigrated via England to South Africa, where a great-uncle was a rabbi. In 1948 he rejoined his mother in England and began work as an industrial chemist. His career peaked with a key job at Pilkington Glass Works in St Helens. In his retirement he and his wife Mabel worked a plot of land in North Wales until illness struck. Fred was a man of heart-warming generosity, deeply conscious of the refugees - indeed all Jews - forming a community of fate.

RG

## Arts and Events Diary December

November 2001 until April 2002 In commemoration of one-time inmates and victims and survivors of concentration camps and their families, a programme of lectures and events under the aegis of Arbeitskreis der NS-Gedenkstätten in Nordrhein-Westfalen. John Chillag 01937 844353 (evenings)

**Sun 2** Professor Edward Timms, 'Souvenirs of Vienna 1924: The David Josef Bach Collection (a lecture with slides and music, based on a collection of illustrated manuscripts, including works by Kokoschka, Schoenberg and Karl Kraus)' (Centre for German-Jewish Studies), 3 pm Leo Baeck Lodge, 11 Fitzjohn's Avenue London NW3 020 8381 4721

**Sun 9** A Night in Pre-War Berlin: Cantabile Cabaret - Chanukah Special, Highgate School 7.30 pm £45 including reception. Tickets and information from London Jewish Cultural Centre 020 7431 0345

**Tues 11** Clive Marks, 'Are You an Educated Jew or a Jew Who is Educated?' London Jewish Cultural Centre 8 pm 020 7431 0345

**Until 16 Dec** Exhibition of Jewish Cartoonists. Jewish Museum, Finchley

**19 July 2001 extended to 31 March 2002** Exhibition focusing on the Blechners, the fate of a Jewish family during the Holocaust, Munich Jewish Museum

**26-27 January 2002** 'Generations of Genocide', a conference by the Institute of Contemporary History and the Wiener Library on National Holocaust Memorial Day focusing on the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and genocide in the Balkans and Rwanda. Registration £40/\$60 by 24 December 2001; £45/\$65 thereafter; concs £30/35 - 020 7636 7247

### ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex 020 8381 4721

The Jewish Museum, Camden Town 129-131 Albert Street, London NW1 020 7284 1997

London Jewish Cultural Centre Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 020 7431 0345

Sternberg Centre for Judaism/Jewish Museum, Finchley 80 East End Road, London N3 020 8346 2288/ 8349 1143

Wiener Library 4 Devonshire Street, London W1 020 7636 7247

## Payment of Dutch-Jewish Assets

Did you, your father, your mother or your spouse survive the Second World War and live in the Netherlands for some time during that period?  
And are you, or were either of your parents, of Jewish descent?  
If so, you may be eligible for a payment from the Maror Desk.



Please contact us as soon as possible.  
If you have already applied, do not send another application.

Maror Desk, P.O. Box 19008, 2500 CA The Hague, the Netherlands  
Phone 00800 62767 123 (toll free) or 0031 70 3382 344; fax 0031 70 3382 456  
[www.maror.nl](http://www.maror.nl)

# Genocide on trial: War crimes trials and the formation of Holocaust history and memory

Donald Bloxham

Despite the historical emphasis on the prosecution of the 'major war criminals' (Hermann Göring and his co-defendants), the Nuremberg trials were only the greatest of a large number of trials of Germans and collaborators across Europe. Following the four-power prosecution of Göring *et al*, Nuremberg became the scene for a further 12 trials under US auspices of 'major war criminals of the second rank': SS leaders, industrialists, professionals, civil servants and soldiers. Alongside these, in each of the Allied zones of occupation in Germany and in every country that had been occupied under Hitler, the local post-war authorities established courts to try defendants whose wartime actions, as distinguished from the crimes of the major war criminals, were specific to those geographical regions.

In my book *Genocide on Trial*, I examine each of these trial programmes, focusing particularly on British and American policies. I have sought to assess the trials according to the criteria established by the trial planners themselves. Alongside punishment of the guilty, the most powerful argument for holding trials in 1944-45 was to record what had happened in Europe, thereby informing the world of the horrors Nazism had unleashed. Since the trials were, then, to be a part of a grand didactic programme, it was necessary to place them in the context of international politics and of the occupation regimes in Germany, with their propaganda and 're-education' programmes.

What emerges is how much was left out of the record in the post-war period, with ramifications for the subsequent understanding of Nazism. The definitive 'crime against humanity' - the 'final solution of the Jewish question' - was largely absent, and the sheer extent of German participation in atrocities was unaccounted for. The British punishment programme was restricted by a legal conservatism which only allowed victims to be seen in terms of their nationality and not their 'racial' identity, while, as with the Allied responses to the 'final solution' itself, British and American officials did not wish to be seen to be putting too great a stress on Jewish suffering. Even at the trial of Göring, the magnitude of the Holocaust was not brought out despite sufficient potential evidence, because the American-led prosecution strategy was concerned more with outlawing war than

with examining specific crimes. There was also a marked reluctance to use eyewitnesses - particularly Jewish ones - which hindered the examination of the many undocumented murders in Eastern Europe.

## Fate of Jews marginalised

Following the Göring trial and with the onset of the Cold War, British and American diplomats were instrumental in scuppering plans for a second four-power trial of major war criminals in order not to be associated with the USSR. The trial programmes were gradually scaled down, and revealing changes occurred in the occupation re-education schemes. The concentration camps, which had first served as symbols for the crimes of Germany as a whole, were now held up as places where Germans had been victimised by the Nazi regime. Finally, in some cases, to emphasise the general evils of anti-democratic totalitarianism, comparisons were drawn between the Soviet *Gulag* and the Nazi camps. In this process, the Eastern extermination centres were completely ignored, and the fate of Jews as primary victims of the German camp system was marginalised, as indeed occurred in the press reporting of the trials themselves. It was not judged useful to emphasise Jewish victimhood when the Allies were seeking to influence German attitudes.

Into the 1950s what remained of Allied punishment policy played increasingly into the rhetoric of Germany's emerging postwar leaders. The latter sought to establish a dividing line between 'Nazis' and 'Germans', and contended that the Wehrmacht was innocent of the crimes of the SS. Adenauer's CDU government played off the requirement for West German contributions to West European rearmament against the black record of the German military. Churchill was directly implicated in the premature release of a number of prominent convicted soldiers on spurious medical grounds as the simplest route to placating German opinion. Such was the effect of the Cold War that by 1958 war criminals were nowhere to be found in British and American jails. The attempt to assert the rule of law over international affairs had been profoundly compromised.

**Genocide on Trial** is published by Oxford University Press.

## Newsround

### Retirement of Nazi hunter

Simon Wiesenthal says he has found all the Nazis he has searched for and, in fact, 'outlived them all'. 'Even if there are any that I had not looked for that are still alive, it is too late to bring them to justice ... my work is done.'

### TV bans tower ad

Berlin public broadcaster SFB has rejected an ad by the far-right National Democratic Party of Germany showing Berlin's TV tower being blown up. The NPD said the aim of the ad was to warn people of the consequences of Germany being 'a devoted accomplice of American imperialism'.

### Argentina bombing and al-Qaeda

In the trial over the 1994 bombing of the Jewish cultural centre in Argentina, evidence has emerged possibly linking Osama bin Laden to the attack. Argentine authorities said a man claiming to represent al-Qaeda had telephoned Argentina's embassy in Saudi Arabia in September 2000 and delivered a message assuming responsibility for the explosion.

### Croatian president apologises for Holocaust

President Stipe Mesic has addressed the Israeli Knesset apologising for the actions of the Nazi puppet government in Croatia. Mesic said the Holocaust was a monstrous crime which could not be compared to any other event in history.

### Court rejects rehabilitation of General Vlasov

The Russian Supreme Court has upheld a decision rejecting the rehabilitation of General Andrei Vlasov and 11 of his officers who fought on the side of the Germans against the Soviet Union in the Second World War. The appeal was launched by the monarchist Faith and Fatherland movement.

### US intelligence officer claims antisemitic discrimination

An intelligence officer in the US army has claimed antisemitism underlies a decision by army officials to strip him of his security clearance. Major Shawn Pine claims the decision was based on his close ties to the Jewish state.