

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Purification by Fire

"The amount of tears and laughter in the world are always in equilibrium", says Beckett in one of his plays. One is tempted to add that the same balance exists globally between love and hate. Since 1945, while in Europe such erstwhile enemies as France and Germany and NATO and the Warsaw Pact have begun to feel a degree of affection for one another, in the Muslim world hatred for the West has festered and intensified.

The grievances behind this vicious hatred are often artificially exacerbated to assuage the vengeful longings of a disturbed - not to say diseased - national psyche. (What else could explain the phenomenon of hundreds of thousands of - mainly underage - Iranian soldiers throwing their lives away in the 'human wave' tactics of the 1980s war against Iraq?)

That grievances can be ratcheted up to monstrous proportions is demonstrated by how differently the German public reacted to similar events only 27 years apart. While the Germany of 1918 went into paroxysms of outrage over territory lost to the 'Polish corridor' under the Treaty of Versailles, the Germany of 1945 accepted far greater territorial losses with relative equanimity.

The birth of Israel generated 'Polish corridor' style outrage in the Muslim world and, just as Germany's vengeful assault on Poland in 1939 triggered a world war, so Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden and other Arab megamurderers view attacks on Israel as a potential trigger for a cataclysmic showdown between Islam and the West.

Bin Laden, in particular, harks back to a Muslim theological scheme which separates the world into two distinct halves - *dar-al-Islam* (the Sphere of Islam) and *dar-al-harb* (the Sphere of War). The latter term, by implication, places a religious obligation on Muslims



to make war on the infidel part of the world.

Nearly one and a half millennia ago the faith which, in undiluted form, still fires today's Islamic fanatics, was spread over huge areas of Africa, the Middle East and Asia *by the sword* under the banner of the crescent moon. Turkish armies even reached the centre of Europe just over three centuries ago. Since then Islam has gone into reverse, and over the last 200 years Muslim countries have declined into Western colonial possessions or dependencies.

This decline dealt a humiliating blow to Islamic self-consciousness. In some countries, notably Turkey, the elites realised that they had to break out of their medieval cocoon and opted for secularisation. Elsewhere, the tide flowed in the opposite 'direction'. When the Raj withdrew from the Indian sub-continent Islamic religious fervour found political expression in the bloodsoaked creation of Pakistan (even though Gandhi and Nehru had promised Muslims equal rights in a secular India). The intransigence with which Jinnah insisted on partition mirrored that of the

Palestinian leaders (including the pro-Nazi Mufti of Jerusalem) in resisting partition in 1936 and 1947. The 1948 Israeli War of Independence ended in a de facto partition, which the Arabs again rejected. Their renewal of conflict in 1967 led to the total disappearance of Palestine from the map.

At the lowest ebb of their strength - the result of a half-century of intransigence - the Palestinians brought the terror weapon into play by firstly blowing up three hijacked planes in Jordan and then murdering 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. Thereafter terrorism became the Palestinians' preferred weapon and, after losing East Jerusalem (which contains Al-Aqsa, the third holiest place in Islam), the secular nationalist Arafat could also pose as a warrior for the Islamic faith.

The same blurred image - half-nationalist, half-Islamicist - characterises Saddam Hussein. And this despite the fact that he made war consecutively on clergy-led Iran and fellow-Arab Kuwait. The latter breach of international law provoked the Gulf War, in which the Saudis - guardians of Islam's two holiest

places - permitted the stationing of US troops on their soil. It was this 'defilement' of Saudi Arabia's sacred Islamic soil by an infidel presence that bin Laden cites - alongside the existence of Israel - as his main motive for fighting a *jihad*.

Bin Laden's monstrous atrocity of 11 September informs the world of a painful truth - that pure hate 'legitimised' by a purifying religion is a force powerful enough to mobilise multitudes to the point of suicide. This hate is a far more all-embracing phenomenon than reaction to Israeli ill-treatment of the Palestinians, or to the US sanctions on Iraq - it is a rejection of the last half-millennium of world history. During that time both the Mogul empire in India and the Turkish empire in Europe collapsed - and Islam turned from a triumphalist faith into a religion of the conquered and colonised. When the formerly Christian, and now increasingly materialist, West - which strict Muslims hated on both counts - gained global dominance, a gulf opened up between the First and Third Worlds. In consequence, bin Laden and his psychopathic cohorts can tap into the frustrations of millions of desperately poor Muslims.

The led are desperately poor and the leaders desperately ignorant. Mullah Omar, the leader of Afghanistan, is so benighted that he has never met a non-Muslim. In his eyes, this is a virtue which enables him to keep the air he breathes pure. Purity is likewise an obsession with bin Laden. He turned against the Saudi regime because it allowed contaminated infidels on to its soil. He targeted the World Trade Center because trade promotes intercourse between peoples of all faiths and of none - and because in making all participants richer it makes them less desirous of the celestial paradise. And finally he targeted dynamic, hedonistic New York, the city that never sleeps, because it is the embodiment of modernity - a modernity which so offends Islamic zealots that they wish to extirpate it with fire.

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Standing by Israel and the USA

Ronald Channing

Following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, at a rally in central London British Jewry expressed its support for the United States, as well as its solidarity with Israel after a year of continued indiscriminate and murderous attacks directed at its civilian population. In a powerful speech, Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks recalled how the campaign of terror had immediately followed the Palestinian rejection of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's unprecedented offer to secure peace. "The only state to offer the Palestinians a future has

been Israel", he said, "and for this Israel stands condemned."

More recently, the UN conference against racism, held in Durban, "became a platform for the new racism", said Dr Sacks. The Jews of Israel were attacked by the very countries which were the perpetrators! He asked, "Should Jews have to defend our very right to exist and be blamed for it as well?" Hatred spreads like fire, said Sacks. "Free, open, liberal and democratic societies" were the "ultimate threat to repressive regimes".

Mayor of Camden joins AJR Shabbat at Belsize Square Synagogue

The Mayor of Camden, Councillor Roger Robinson, will recognise the unique contribution made to this country by Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution, many of whom settled in the Swiss Cottage and Hampstead area, by participating in a service of commemoration and celebration at Belsize Square Synagogue on Saturday 10 November.

To mark the 60th Anniversary Year of the Association of Jewish Refugees, he will be joined at an *AJR Shabbat* by founders, officers and members of the AJR, together with their families and friends, other members of Belsize Square Synagogue's congregation, and representatives of associate organisations.

The service is to be led by Belsize Square's minister, Rabbi Rodney

Mariner, who will recall the anniversary of *Kristallnacht* before celebrating the exceptional achievements of the German-speaking Jewish refugee community, which contributed a continental atmosphere to the character of the area. Following the service, members of the congregation and guests are invited by the AJR to a celebratory *kiddush*.

All AJR members and friends, from London, the South East and the provinces, are invited to *AJR Shabbat* at Belsize Square Synagogue, London, NW3. The service commences at 10 am and will be followed by a *kiddush* at 12 noon. (Prior notification of attendance at the service is not required.)

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God Bash America

In mid-February 1945, 18 days after the liberation of Auschwitz, the ultimate horror of Nazi Germany's assault on civilisation, Bomber Harris targeted Dresden, incinerating thousands of civilians. I am certain that, had a newsreel showing Dresdeners leaping to their deaths from burning buildings been screened in a London cinema frequented by refugees, it would not have triggered scenes of jubilation among the audience!

Yet the televised horrifying carnage at the World Trade Center prompted spontaneous eruptions of joy in places as far apart as West Bank towns and Finsbury Park mosques. This dehumanised reaction to a thousand-fold human tragedy was 'explained' - and thereby sanitised - by Messrs Benn and Pinter, recycling Franz Werfel's dictum *Nicht der Mörder, der Ermordete ist schuld* (Not the murderer, but the victim is guilty).

One would not expect anything else from those eloquent scourges of America, the 'Great Satan' in Pinteresque Ayatollah-speak. Though marginally the more moderate of the two, Tony Benn has for decades counselled supine inaction in the face of murderous evildoers - first Gaddafi, next Saddam Hussein, then Milosevic, and now bin Laden. As for Harold Pinter, he is so consumed with Americophobia that he is in danger of upstaging the mysteriously unmotivated psychopaths, such as Goldberg in *The Birthday Party*, who populate his own plays.

Such obsessional anti-Americanism, alas, taps into a more widespread undercurrent in the British national psyche. Just as in oceanography a surface current can

mask an undertow flowing in the opposite direction, so Prime Minister Blair's declaration of Anglo-American solidarity overlays a virulently anti-American (as well as sanctimoniously 'highminded') strand in UK public opinion.

For our native Stars-and-Stripes burners the US is too powerful, too self-confident, too denuded of historical patina, too future-oriented, too *nouveau riche*, too efficient - after all, weren't thousands already at their desks in the World Trade Center by 9 am on that fateful Tuesday? - too corporate, too globalist, too oblivious of the Third World and, last but *by no means* least, too pro-Israel.

In the Americophobes' view, bin Laden's mega-atrocity articulates the despair and frustration of a Third World exploited by Wall Street, oppressed by the Pentagon and forced by McDonalds. 'Ask yourself why you are so hated!' is a cry frequently raised since Black Tuesday.

This, like every other rhetorical device in the Benn-Pinter vocabulary, is based on a misrepresentation of the truth. Islamic suicide bombers do not express the impotent frustration of the great majority of the world's poor, i.e. billions of Indians, sub-Saharan Africans, Latin Americans - or even Moslem Bangladeshis! The paradise-seeking *ihadis* simply act out the lurid revenge fantasies of zealots for a faith constitutionally incapable of adapting to modernity, and of their captive audiences.

Laying the blame for the 11 September outrage at the feet of a US riding roughshod over Muslim susceptibilities differs only in degree, but not in kind, from ascribing the guilt for Auschwitz to the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles.

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RG

The queries have come in steadily since the great increase in suicide bombings by Muslim Palestinians during the past year - and since 11 September virtually non-stop. 'Does Islam condone suicide?' 'Does Islam condone killing non-combatants?' 'Does Islam teach that a martyr who enters Heaven has the pleasure of 70 virgins?' 'Does Islam really teach the universal doctrine of "Islam or the sword"?' 'Does Islam hate Jews and Judaism?', or 'Does Islam fundamentally hate anyone and anything not Muslim or Islamic?'

Americans know almost nothing about Islam beyond what they pick up from films, novels and news reports (much of it erroneous). Israelis probably know even less, though many have the bad habit of claiming that *they* know Muslims because they live with them. The truth is that Israelis hardly know Muslims beyond what they see on their own televisions, and tend to have an extremely distorted view of Islam. Simplistic clarifications by so-called Muslim scholars often confuse the situation even more: virtually any Muslim can claim to be a scholar and speak on behalf of Islam.

Religion and violence

Is Islam a fundamentally violent religion, as its detractors have claimed? Or is it a religion of compassion and reason as its Muslim adherents insist? To answer this question we must first of all look inward. How has Judaism been characterised by its champions and its enemies? We have suffered the abuse of religious character assassination by not only those who have hated us, but also by those who have feared us. Anyone can find excerpts in translation from the Bible and from our Talmud and Midrash that would curdle the blood of any reader who does not know the context of the citations. King David arranged the murder of an innocent man because he lusted after the poor man's wife (2 Sam. 11). Rabbis incinerate their opponents (Shabbat 34a, San. 100a). The Torah even calls for mass extermination, for genocide of the native Canaanite inhabitants of the

Islam hijacked

Reuven Firestone

land (Deuteronomy 7). It is just as easy to find violent material in the Qur'an and in the second most important source of Islamic religious teaching, the Hadith. It seems hardly worth adding that one can just as well find material urging compassion for the needy, the poor, the homeless, the orphan and the widow.

Pundits fail to cite sources

One of my criticisms of self-proclaimed pundits of Islam is that they do not cite their sources. Let us take a look at some of the key issues that lie at the core of the questions listed above. About a week before the suicide massacres, the TV programme *Sixty Minutes* claimed to have interviewed a Palestinian working with suicide bombers intending to kill Israelis. Interviewed in Arabic, the English voice-over translation had the man claiming that a martyr who entered Paradise would enjoy the pleasures of 70 or 72 virgin women.

A number of self-proclaimed Muslim scholars accused *Sixty Minutes* of distorting the transcript and demanded an apology. They claimed to have heard the original Arabic despite the English voice-over and emphasised that he had said nothing of the sort. They even claimed that Islam would never teach such a thing. This was clearly an attempt to avoid public embarrassment, but the truth is that according to Islamic lore and tradition, a male who enters Heaven enters what we in the West would consider a hedonistic paradise full of physical and sensual pleasures. This is simply a fact. The origin of this view most certainly lies in the context of the extremely difficult life of ancient Bedouin Arabia. Since anything as simple as the constant flow of water in a stream was considered miraculous, it would have been natural to imagine Heaven flowing with streams of water under the shade of huge trees.

Entering Heaven

But there are other delights as well, according to a *hadith* in the authoritative collection *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*. In my edition, published in Beirut, it can be found in a section entitled 'The Book of Description of the Garden', chapter 23 ('the least reward for the people of Heaven'), *hadith* number 2562 (Vol. 4, p. 599). The *hadith* reads as follows: "Sawda [Tirmidhi's grandfather] reported that he heard from Abdullah, who received from Rishdin b. Sa`d, who in turn learned from Amr b. al-Harith, from Darraj, from Abul-Haytham, from Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, who received it from the Apostle of God [Muhammad]: the least [reward] for the people of Heaven is 80,000 servants and 72 wives over which stands a dome of pearls, aquamarine and ruby, as [wide as the distance] between al-Jaabiyya and San`a." That these 72 wives are virgin is confirmed by Qur'an 55:74 and commentaries on that verse. Al-Jaabiyya was a suburb of Damascus according to the famous commentator Isma`il Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), so one personal jewelled dome would stretch from Syria to Yemen, some 1,600 miles.

Was this tradition intended to be believed literally? This particular *hadith* has technical weaknesses in its chain of transmitters and is therefore not considered impeccable, though it is listed in an authoritative collection. As a result, Muslims are not required to believe in it, though many inevitably do (but an even more respectable *hadith* with virtually the same message can be found in *Tirmidhi K. Fada'il al-Jihad*, ch. 25 #1663). I am sure many believe they will experience incredible physical pleasures when they enter Heaven. I personally have no problem with that. Religions inevitably expect their adherents to believe things that would seem absurd to believers of other religions.

The author is Professor of Medieval Judaism and Islam at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. The second and final part of this article will appear in the next issue of AJR Journal.

The Jewish Museum Berlin opens

Tom Freudenheim

'... and now the Germans love you to death!' That has been my mantra for a number of years, but I was compelled to reconsider it when the new Jewish Museum Berlin opened. In the light of what occurred two days later in the USA, the significance of such a gala event does pale somewhat. Nevertheless, the museum is a bold assertion that life does indeed go on - a sentiment in need of repetition in these difficult times.

Though unco-operative weather had settled on Berlin, arrangements, handled by the phenomenal Gräfin Isa von Hardenberg (Germany's premiere party manager), were close to flawless. Daniel Barenboim conducted 'his' Chicago Symphony Orchestra, playing Mahler's Seventh Symphony. Museum Director Michael Blumenthal had long ago invited Barenboim to the celebration and I loved having an American orchestra inaugurate the celebrations.

A seemingly endless bevy of young blond debutantes took care of keeping the guests dry with umbrellas. The former Berlin Museum, of which Daniel Libeskind's extraordinary new architecture is really 'just' an extension, has also now been allocated to the Jewish Museum and beautifully renovated. As Blumenthal explained in his talk, celebrity guests were distributed everywhere, so that no one should feel prejudicially placed. Although the 850 guests included an impressive array of celebrities (from Gerhard Schröder to Henry Kissinger), the elegant three-course dinner served was punctuated by only two speeches. The first, by Bundespräsident Johannes Rau, was eloquent, recounting the entire history of German Jews *al regel achat* - which was well-intentioned, if excessive, for a dinner talk, and reminded me of being loved to death. Philosemitism lives! Michael Blumenthal spoke beautifully about the meaning of the museum and its significance for a Germany still



The new Jewish Museum

uncomfortable with issues of 'the other' or with strange ethnicities and so-called foreigners.

Guests were invited to view the museum exhibition, the first time anyone had had access to the museum. So the element of surprise was something in which everyone shared.

The museum itself must be understood in the context of a reality different from all the hype surrounding its opening. First of all, there is the near-impossible achievement of having mounted a complex exhibition in the Libeskind building in little more than a year. This is a major accomplishment by any standards. Second, we need to remember that the opening of a museum is only a beginning: endless adjustments are made once the place is open to warm bodies using it, while labelling and object placement are constantly being rethought. Moreover, the complex technologies, which enliven most history museums these days, need a fair amount of shakedown time, and that is no different in Berlin.

Given all this, the museum is impressive. One may argue with this or that historical interpretation, or feel that the urge to make arguments on behalf of feminism and/or multi-culturalism is a bit heavy-handed. But every museum reflects its moment of creation, and those nuances will presumably change in accord with our own shifts in priority. I was especially impressed with a couple of low-tech vignettes: the 3-D stereopticon images of German soldiers



President Johannes Rau

in Jewish settlements on the Eastern front during the First World War (better than today's virtual reality!), and the full-sized Christmas tree, surrounded by photos of German Jewish families with their trees and a discussion of this issue in the early part of the twentieth century, not unlike the discourse one might have read about late-twentieth-century American Jews. I was personally happy to see that the German Jewish history as recounted here dealt with the porosity of borders that makes the entire concept of 'German Jews' a good deal less precise than the classical *Yekke* definitions would have it. Menasha Kadishman's overwhelming installation of faces lying in the largest of the Voids is also memorable.

As for the integrity of Daniel Libeskind's building - a matter of great concern to many - I was thrilled to see it enlivened by an exhibition, by a real museum. Having listened for many months to visitors asking whether it would work as a museum (I was never in doubt), or why it should not be left empty (a dreadful prospect), I was thrilled to see the building engaged in the business of being a museum - imperfect (was there ever a perfect one?), but engaging and challenging, ready for its real life as a dynamic institution in a complicated society. Will it keep the Germans from loving us to death? One can only hope.

Tom Freudenheim is the Director of the Gilbert Collection, London.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

ARAB - ISRAELI CONFLICT

Sir - Freddie Ingram is wrong to state that "whenever progress is made... immediate further demands are put on the table by the Palestinians." In 1993 Arafat made the historic compromise by recognising the 1967 border, i.e. the Palestinians gave up their claim of 78 per cent of the former Mandate of Palestine. Instead they claimed only 22 per cent, i.e. the West Bank and Gaza, in which they wanted to set up their state. In 1993 there were 100,000 settlers in the occupied territories; seven years later there were 200,000!

*Peter Prager,
Ilford*

Sir - I am rather puzzled by your attitude. In your September issue you refer to the bigoted policies of the Afrikaners who you say left Holland "in quest of land they might appropriate for themselves." You also say "they backed up this appropriation with a version of Calvinism in which Blacks were predestined to be the White - man's servants." This is a point of view which I share. What I cannot understand, however, is how you can justify the establishment of apartheid settlements and their extension into Palestinian territory, or the use of Palestinians as servants and low-paid labourers.

*Anita Feldman,
Essex*

TROTSKY RECYCLED

Sir - Your excellent article (September 2001) about Trotsky reminded me that Trotsky is able to cause havoc even for his disciples. Some 25 years ago Bernadette Devlin (now Bernadette Devlin McAliskey), the well-known IRA spokeswoman and then the youngest MP, came to the USA to raise funds and make propaganda. Appearing on CBS's *60 Minutes* programme, she was asked by the interviewer about her politics. "I'm a Trot", she replied. This did not go down well with the average Irish - American. Sinn Fein, Noraid and the other republican propaganda organisations had to work very hard to hide from their supporters in the USA, who had fled from British landlords in

the 1840s or British troops in 1916, the fact that the most active body trying to rid the island of Ireland from the British yoke was in fact politically radically leftwing. Many Irish-Americans who had no love for Britain learned the difficult lesson: "The enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend."

*Ernest H Simon,
Merstham, Surrey*

Sir - If you wish to be taken seriously it's OK to have a definite point of view, but historical accuracy is essential. Both Trotsky and Zinoviev were murdered by one of Stalin's agents. You say Trotsky died in Mexico and you say nothing about the demise of Zinoviev (a bullet in the back of his head) but mention he changed his name - a crime no doubt many of your readers are guilty of to escape antisemitism.

Whatever you think of the atheism of the early Bolsheviks, including Zinoviev, they proscribed the antisemitic organisations (e.g. the Black Hundreds), which you omit to mention. It is true that Stalin, campaigning against Trotsky, used the weapon of antisemitism. In fact, he used it against Zinoviev, Radek and others in the purge trials of the 1930s.

In my youth I read a great deal of literature by Trotsky. Perhaps you would be good enough to cite in which publication Trotsky argued that "socialists should not ameliorate the conditions of workers". To put it absolutely bluntly, this is a little creative writing on your part, and is as accurate as your attempt to argue that there was an alliance between the BNP, young Muslims and "Trots". Hatred for Muslims (Arabs?) and the far left should not be a substitute for historical accuracy.

*David Finch,
South Croydon*

BACK TO FRONT

Sir - I was pleased to read the article by the Rev Bernd Koschland (September issue) giving a brief insight into the forthcoming High Holy Days. I found it scholarly and excellently written. However, I would have preferred to find

this article on the front page, and the editorial on Trotsky on the back page. I fail to see of what interest Trotsky is to AJR members, except perhaps a very few who may be communists. I am aware that the majority of readers are not very religious and that you have to cater for 'popular demand'. If so, you might also have to report on the activities of the Spice Girls, the Beckhams, Madonna etc!

*Henry Schragenheim,
London N15*

SLAVE LABOUR COMPENSATION

Sir - The answer to Hedi Fischer's cry (September issue) "Does anyone care about us enough to fight for justice on our behalf?" is in the negative. As far as the Americans were concerned, the sole purpose of the negotiations was to find the smallest sum which would enable German business to enter the US market without the threat of lawsuits from whingeing Jews. Groups of actual slave labourers were not even represented at the talks, and the Jewish organisations mentioned in her letter were either not interested or had no backbone. Nor was there any need to employ an army of avaricious lawyers.

*Frank Bright,
Ipswich*

Sir - Far from criticising the US lawyers for their "excessive" fees, we should be thankful to them for their expertise and dedication in having obtained compensation for about 100,000 slave and forced labourers worldwide. Some 50 highly qualified American attorneys worked tirelessly for several years, without fees and covering their own expenses. They have encountered hostile and antisemitic opponents. It is unfair and unjust to expect them to waive their fees. Without them, we would have received nothing.

Instead, we should be highly critical of the Claims Conference, which in spite of having received several billion DM a few months ago, still has not paid the victims. They should distribute part of the compensation NOW, and pay the remainder when all pending claims have been processed.

*Lucy White, former slave labourer,
London NW11*

TO BALDLY GO ...

Sir - Your political preferences are showing. You should not assume that all your readers share your outlook. Furthermore, get your facts right.

Elisabeth I was bald and wore a wig most of her middle to later life. Secondly, Sir Winston Churchill was bald - and he was instrumental in helping to defeat Hitler. So that particular theory of yours doesn't wash.

I have been a member of AJR for years, as was my mother before me. Generally speaking, it is useful and informative. I really do not want to see it politicised - even by the 'editor-in-chief' - airing his very personal political programme.

*E Holden,
London N14*

AUSTRIAN PENSIONS

Sir - H E Reiner writes (September issue) that, according to correspondence from Austria, "the standard payment to ex-Austrian refugees will no longer apply for reasons, they say, of fluctuations in the exchange rate" and that in future "payments - to be made in the payee's local currency - will be the equivalent of a fixed sum determined in Austrian Schillings." How does that avoid fluctuations in exchange rates?

The sum of AS 105,000 mentioned seems to be the equivalent of the \$7,000 that we have been told about. This means that it will be conversion from Schillings instead of from dollars. Or am I missing something in all this?

*Paul Samet,
Pinner*

ONCE A JEW

Sir - E M Kenneth may have been unaware of his Jewish ancestry before he was 14; however, the fact that he converted from RC to Anglican is irrelevant. His parents must have been ashamed of their Jewish ancestry to withhold the fact from their son until, presumably, Hitler forced them to own up. Since then Mr Kenneth (Kohn, maybe?) should have had ample time for reflection!

*Inge Trott,
Surrey*

WELL-TENDED MEMORY

Sir - I have recently returned from Switzerland where I paid a visit to Saas Fee in the Valais where Stephen Munns died in 1963. He succeeded Dr Horwell as Quartermaster Sergeant in 93 Coy Royal Pioneer Corps. I found his grave, in the communal cemetery, in good

order. The communal gardener was just cleaning it up and expressed himself pleased that Stephen had a visitor

*F H Edwards,
London N2*

THANK YOU

Sir - At this time of paying my annual subscription, I wish to express my deep feeling for the AJR, which is not just an organisation but our 'transferred roots' to this country. A great thank you also for the magazine with all the interesting articles and invaluable search notices.

*C Haar,
London NW8*

ANGLO-JEWRY AND THE REFUGEES

Sir - I am sure Anthony Grenville is right about those of us who got to England. But he could perhaps have added a sentence to the effect that 'working class' Jews didn't get out, partly because they didn't have the necessary connections, and partly because they couldn't cope with the paperwork that would-be emigrants needed to undertake. Those of us who got out were not a random sample of German Jews.

*Prof W Elkan,
London NW8*

WHAT'S IN A NAME ...

Sir - The USA has also had its collection of strangely named persons in recent times (September issue). Consider Linda Tripp, whose activities surely tripped up former President Clinton. Kenneth Starr, the Clinton prosecutor, surely had ambitions to be a star. Congressman Henry Hyde had much to hide because he had his own affairs to consider while moralizing about Clinton's peccadilloes. For most of us John Ehrlichmann was nothing like an honest man, but Harry Truman was as straight and truthful a man as we had in our country in the entire twentieth century.

If you like homonyms you may well think one of the most aptly named men in President Nixon's administration was Edwin Meese. Only a non-Jew who didn't know what that meant would have willingly borne such a name and been an intolerable individual to boot.

*Stephen Adler,
Seattle, USA*

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To refashion parts of a city requires both money and vision. The former was supplied in ample measure by two recently deceased co-religionists. Paul Hamlyn contributed lavishly to the restoration of the South Bank arts complex (including the Royal Festival Hall), while Sir Arthur Gilbert's gift of his silver collection to the nation triggered the restoration of large sections of Somerset House. Vision is supplied by Daniel Libeskind (architect of Berlin's newly opened Jewish Museum), whose design for the Victoria and Albert Museum could, if implemented, revolutionise the South Kensington skyline.

Breaking Viennese records

Romanian-born Ioan Holender has completed his first ten years as director of the Vienna Staatsoper. His period of office has been accounted a huge success - with 95 per cent in-house attendance figures on average, the highly popular outdoor transmission of operas on huge TV screens, the installation of a state-of-the-art subtitle system and, last but not least, the commissioning of new works including a children's opera based on Erich Kästner's *Der 35. Mai*. Himself a Jew, Holender is going to take the Staatsoper ensemble to Israel with a Richard Strauss programme the year after next.

'Balance' on the silver screen

London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, which has been hosting a retrospective of the works of the Israeli film director Amos Gitai, whose *Kadosh* won wide critical acclaim, followed this with a season of Palestinian films. The flavour of their orientation was conveyed by the title of one of them: *The Living Martyr - Hizbollah Unveiled*.

Obituary: The world-renowned violinist Isaac Stern has died, aged 81. Russian-born and American-educated, Stern was deeply imbued with a sense of Jewish identity. He refused to perform in postwar Germany, got the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to withdraw an invitation to Wilhelm Furtwängler in 1948, performed in the first concert to mark the recapture of Old Jerusalem, and in 1974 organised a boycott of UNESCO events in response to that organisation's anti-Israel stance.

Art Notes

Gloria Tessler

The Surrealist movement swooped into our dreams and changed art for ever. From the day it was born in the mind of the Parisian poet **André Breton** in the 1920s, all the barriers were down. Now the world of the imagination could dictate our responses to life through art. Surrealism is considered one of the most important movements of the twentieth century. Its arrival was influenced by Freud and its departure was hastened by the end of the Second World War, after its 'decadent' exponents had fled Nazi Europe and returned to find their crazed fantasies rejected in favour of Existentialism.

But Surrealist influences freed subsequent generations of artists, writers and film-makers, from Luis Buñuel to Stanley Kubrick, to look again at what we consider reality, the power of dreams, the darker side of sexuality. Here was an opportunity to enter the human psyche with power, with poignancy - and yet the sad truth is that much of the work is crude, obsessed with the mechanics of sex and in denial of the artists' own humanity.

In what is claimed to be London's first major exhibition of international Surrealism for over 20 years, **Surrealism: Desire Unbound, Tate Modern** concentrates on its major theme, sexuality as the primal drive. The problem is that the artists' desire to shock has crushed any creative or romantic instincts.

Marcel Duchamp and **Max Ernst**, however, were more concerned with the symbolism of the technology to come: the movement of the steam train, the gas lamp, the steaming factory outlets, the vast cooling towers. **Giorgio de Chirico's Ariadne** features the reposing statue against the distant passing of a steam train. The curves of her body and the Palladian shape of the edifice to her left all suggest contrast between her romantic history and the

sharp angles of industrial modernity. The position of her body makes you question whether she is really a statue at all or a metaphor for the past dreaming of the future. **Paul Delvaux's** work offers a similar example of industrial sex.

Such artists as **Salvador Dali** internalised these images and



Venus with Drawers - Salvador Dali
© Kingdom of Spain, Gala & Salvador Dali

developed their symbolism into the stuff of dreams. We think of him as the surrealist supremo - he seems to take literally Polonius's words "Not where he eats, but where he is eaten." People turn into knives, forks and spoons against a desolate landscape, rendered "super-real" by his painterly professionalism.

Max Ernst's disturbing painting **The Robing of the Bride** arguably derives from his wartime imprisonment as an enemy alien in France. The bride's body is beautiful but she has a vulture's head adorned with red feathers. The imagery of this painting implies interrogation and medieval terror and sums up, for this exhibition, all that is dark in the life of dreams, sex, the unconscious, the hidden psyche.

Dreams of a different kind dominate **Barbara Jackson's Dance of Life** at the **Sternberg Centre**. In her mixed media exhibition, the British-born artist uses sepia to convey moments of memory based on everyday scenes in her parents' wartime Germany. Her work accurately conveys people caught in fleeting moments, luminous - as ghosts, the way memories become.

Reviews

Accentuating the positive

"WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?"

HITLER REFUGEES IN GREAT
BRITAIN THEN AND NOW,

Carl F. Flesch,

Pen Press Publishers Ltd., 2001

Having lived in Britain for over 60 years, Carl Flesch, who will be known to music-loving refugees as the author of *And Do You Also Play the Violin?*, an autobiographical account of life as the son of a famous violinist, was exasperated to be asked by a shop assistant if he was from Germany. But exasperation led to inspiration, for the sensitive subject of his enduring accent caused him to ponder the broader field of the integration into British society of the Jews from Central Europe who had fled to Britain after 1933. The result of that process of reappraisal is this enjoyable, thought-provoking book.

The book consists of nine chapters, arranged partly chronologically, with chapters on the early days of the refugees in Britain, on the war and on the outlook for the future, partly by theme, with sections on such varied

subjects as language and humour, customs and morals, and relations with Germans after the war. It contains a wealth of material, often conveyed with an attractively dry humour, mostly taken from the author's own experience, but broadened out by his reflection so as to reach more general conclusions about the development of the refugee community in Britain and its relations with its semi-willing hosts. It is this combination of personal experience and more distanced objective reflection that gives the book its special character, since it fills a gap between memoirs and autobiographies that tell the stories of individual refugees, and academic studies that have been carried out on the refugees from Central Europe as a group.

Many readers will enjoy browsing through this book, often with a wry smile of recognition as they find their own experiences of life in Britain mirrored in it. Carl Flesch seems to me to hit the right combination of appreciation for what Britain did for the refugees, with clearly stated reservations about the limitations on the welcome extended to them by

the native population and its government. This is reflected in his judicious remarks on the mass internment of refugees in 1940, for instance, or on the establishment of the Thank-You Britain Fund under the aegis of the AJR in 1966. Flesch's refugee's-eye view of Britain in the distant days of refugee settlement conjures up a world where utterly different values held sway, as baffling to the refugees then as they seem antiquated to us now. He does well to make the point that the Britain in which the refugee community first took root was a vastly different place from what it is today, especially with regard to very small numbers of people of non-British origin then resident here. He is surely right to identify the consequent suspicion of all foreigners as a more important source of hostility towards the refugees than antisemitism aimed specifically at Jews; as he says, the non-Jewish political refugees from Germany fared little better. This book is a good and not too demanding read.

Anthony Grenville

Enigma: Fact and Fantasy

It's all there! The mansion at Bletchley Park lent by Lord Leon (a friend of the Rothschilds) to the War Office, the listening equipment, the huts in which several thousand staff worked, the clothes, the hairstyles, the dispatch-riders and their motorbikes. We who remember those days can't help but feel a frisson of nostalgia. The setting is the centre for the remarkable organisation that broke the complicated German code aptly named 'Enigma'. The Enigma system enabled the German High Command to send out scrambled messages which could be decoded only by a special machine. The breaking of this

code at Bletchley Park is said to have shortened the war and to have saved many Allied lives.

The film teems, as the place must have done in reality, with filing clerks, typists, War Office personnel, mathematicians and linguists. There are some tense scenes in the map room when the position of a convoy carrying food and raw materials for the war effort across the Atlantic is plotted in relation to a waiting U-boat pack.

From then on fantasy takes over. We are treated to a spy story involving a beautiful girl and a lovesick code-breaker, a mysterious defection, stolen messages hidden under floorboards, and a car chase.

This is a travesty of what actually happened, as the whole point about the breaking of the Enigma code is that it was Britain's best-kept secret. The film has also offended the Polish community as it pays scant attention to the efforts of the Polish government, which pioneered the code-breaking. It also fails to include in the story the chief code-breaker, Alan Turing, who took his own life after the war due to harassment he suffered as a homosexual.

If you are in the mood to see a thrilling spy story with some good acting by Kate Winslet, go and see *Enigma*. If you want to find out the real story, go to Bletchley Park.

Martha Bland

Eyes right for clear vision

VIEWPOINT
by Ronald Channing

Even before war starts, truth is often a casualty. In the 1930s *Times* editor (and Chamberlain crony) Geoffrey Dawson doctored his own correspondents' dispatches from Germany to play down the Nazi horror and 'sell' appeasement to his readers. In those days the deliberate distortion of facts was a rightwing ploy; today it comes from the Left.

The *Guardian*, which in its Manchester incarnation championed the unvarnished truth, currently - in tandem with *The Independent* - offers a platform to peddlers of anti-American and anti-Israeli prejudice as well as of sheer 'globaloney'. Militant Islamic terror is piously interpreted as the backlash of our planet's 'have-nots' against the 'haves' - a misdiagnosis of the disease affecting the Islamic world that beggars belief.

When Jenny Tonge, MP tells the Liberal Assembly 'Let's bomb them by all means - but with food parcels!' she conjures up a lunatic image of the RAF flying wartime missions over Germany to drop copies of John Stuart Mills's *On Liberty*.

Tracing a causal connection between Islam's 'holy war' and Third World poverty is gratuitously, almost

criminally, wide of the mark. The militant leadership consists partly of salaried clerics and partly of middle-class professionals. The mass following is admittedly poor - but for reasons hardly attributable to Western capitalism. Afghans starve because of draught and decades of internecine warfare stoked up first by Russia and then Pakistan. Pakistan's poverty stems from a crushing arms burden - this largely peasant country is a nuclear power - and the huge economic dislocation caused by Partition.

Oil-rich Iran's and Iraq's poverty can be traced back to their own murderous eight-year war, as well as to the Gulf War, and to sanctions. Egypt's poor are doubly disadvantaged by militant Islam, which has impacted on tourism - the country's single greatest money-earner - by massacring Western visitors, and has nullified desperately needed birth control measures. In Algeria the economy languishes because of a seemingly endless bloody civil war between the government and Islamic militants.

In none of the above instances is Wall Street, the IMF or the World Bank the main culprit; culpability must be ascribed to a faith that is inimical to all progress, in society and relations between men and women alike.

There is a bizarre symmetry in the fact that, just as in the 1930s the Left was more clear-sighted about Nazism, so today rightwingers have a far less astigmatic take on Islam. Mrs Thatcher has chided UK Muslim clerics for their perfunctory condemnation of bin Laden, the *Daily Telegraph* talks of a 'war of civilisations' and Signor Berlusconi has (undiplomatically) asserted the superiority of Western values over Islamic ones. Though the Italian prime minister falls far short of being a democratic role model himself, he is right. Democracy is astronomically superior to the rule of benighted Koran-and-gun-toting backwoodsmen.

Third World war

With years of indoctrinated hatred, terrorist training and planning, backed with financial resources and an international network of co-conspirators, the perpetrators of the massacre in New York and Washington attacked the world's most advanced state at its heart. Against a nation built entirely by immigrants and their progeny, civilian aircraft were launched as weapons, sacrificing defenceless victims' lives on the altar of some atavistic god of vengeance.

Having failed in 1993, they were still set on destroying the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center, an icon of international commerce and prosperity. Of a typical day's 50,000 office workers, those who survived the planes' impact below the inferno fled down endless flights of stairs in the interval prior to the towers' improbable collapse. Had the quarter-mile-high blocks not imploded, but immediately toppled, the perpetrators might have succeeded in devastating downtown Manhattan and killing 100,000 people.

This unparalleled terror was nothing short of an act of war. The history of the appeasement of Nazi Germany informs us that unless the civilised world embarks on military action to combat the terrorists and frustrate their intentions, further acts of terror will be perpetrated, with the prospect of biological, chemical or atomic weapons being employed without compunction.

The dictatorships and fundamentalist theocracies which harbour fanatical terror groups may indeed have once fostered the world's great cultures, but today they are the very nations from which millions of their fellow Muslims are fleeing to the open and liberal democracies of the West as asylum seekers! Though they exhibit the resentment of under-developed, corrupt and backward societies, paradoxically their countries often rely on the generosity of the US for donations of food supplied under the UN banner. The Third World has not nominated those Islamic states to protect, encourage or support terrorist groups which indiscriminately seek to kill unarmed citizens of a perceived Judaeo-Christian enemy. War with the Third World can be averted by targeted and determined action.

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PROFILE

Marion Koebner

Simon Reiss



Simon Reiss exudes a strong but calm presence which belies a childhood and adolescence marked by the Nazis' disruption and devastation of his family. This may be because - as he says, warmly - life has been good to him since the end of the Second World War.

Born in Berlin on the eve of 1924, of Polish Jews who came to Berlin immediately after the Great War, Simon and his twin sister grew up in a home where Yiddish was the *lingua franca* for his grandparents, although his parents spoke German. Both parents were reasonably well integrated into German society despite being branded *Ostjuden*. His father had a successful tobacco and cigar business and cultivated foreign contacts.

Attending an Orthodox Jewish school, Simon found himself looked upon, even by Jewish friends, as a 'second-rate citizen' by virtue of his parents' Polish background. He belonged to a Jewish *Sportverein* and became very involved in, and good at, athletics (running and high jumping), something which he continued when he came to this country. His first real encounter with antisemitism was in a sporting context: at the age of nine, he was queuing for the goalkeeper's autograph after a football match. Someone from the back of the queue shouted: 'Don't sign his book - he's a Jew!' And the goalkeeper declined to provide his autograph to the young fan. Simon also witnessed dreadful scenes during the boycott on 1 April 1933. All this sharpened his awareness of Germany's growing antisemitism during the years which followed and made him realise that there was no future for him in that country. A visit to relatives in England in 1936 convinced the 12-year-old even more.

Like many of his fellow Jews in Germany, Simon's father was convinced the Nazis would not last. But by the time he acknowledged he had been mistaken, it was no longer possible for him to emigrate. His business was 'aryanised' at the

beginning of 1938 and in late October 1938 he - a Polish citizen - was deported to the Polish corridor, forced to leave his wife and children behind. Kristallnacht was, recalls Simon with emotion, the nadir of his life in Germany. Thanks to his mother, Simon and his twin sister were on the second Kindertransport and arrived at Dovercourt in December 1938. At the age of 15, Simon was very clear that what he wanted was a room and a place at a school in an English-speaking environment. Over a period of six weeks, he was interviewed and visited several times at Dovercourt by representatives from Bloomsbury House and obstinately refused to leave as long as a foster family or hostel were the only alternatives offered. Meanwhile he was looking after children ranging from four to six years old. He finally agreed to be placed with a family in London's East End, where he attended a school to learn English and, through a friend, found work for four hours a day 'translating' school books.

Through a fellow refugee, he was approached by Dr Solomon Schonfeld,

who offered him a place in his hostel. Reluctantly, he agreed to a trial of 28 days, at the end of which he concluded it was 'not for me' and returned to live with the family in Dalston. Thanks to its headmaster - who saw that the young man's only real weakness was in English - he was given the opportunity to attend a school close by. After the outbreak of war and a short stay near Market Harborough, Simon was evacuated with his school to Norwich and passed his Matric. Although offered a place at university, he felt he must make a living and turned it down. An uncle in London found him a job in the fur business, to which he commuted from his first independent digs in Golders Green. After a short spell in the army, stationed in Britain and avoiding internment because he was a Polish national, he continued working in the fur trade after the war and by 1950 had started his own business. He married in 1947.

In 1967 Simon sold his company to a public company and was appointed to the board, where he remained active until his retirement two years ago. His work took him all over the world including to pre-*glasnost* Russia, where he was able to help Jews in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) and became involved in some none too pleasant 'adventures'. On more than one occasion, the Russian police visited him in his hotel room, interrogating him and going through his luggage with a fine tooth comb. Despite the risks, he continued to help financially where possible.

In his time, Simon has served as chairman, and later president, of the Fur Trade Committee, president of the International Fur Trade Federation, and president of the Marble Arch Synagogue. Of all the charitable projects to which he has lent his expertise, the one closest to his heart is Yad Vashem. He sees his fundraising and raising of awareness activities for Yad Vashem as the best way of commemorating those members of his family who perished in the Holocaust.

INSIDE the AJR

West Midlands



Henny Rednall, Chairman of AJR's West Midlands Group (centre), Leon Jessel and other members from Birmingham join in celebrating the AJR's 60th anniversary at London's Grosvenor House Hotel.

Brighton and Hove 'Sarid' celebrates New Year

At a well attended meeting, Rudi Simmonds reported on the AJR's 60th anniversary celebratory tea at London's Grosvenor House Hotel. To everyone's surprise and delight, Fausta Sheldon and Myrna Glass greeted members with honey cake and passed round slices of apple dipped in honey to welcome the New Year, a custom with which the writer was unfamiliar.

F Goldberg

Next meeting: Monday 19 November, Aubrey Milstein, 'Racial Harassment in the City of Brighton and Hove'.

Edinburgh members motivated to pursue claims

This second meeting of the Edinburgh AJR Group was addressed by Michael Newman of the Central Office for Holocaust Claims and also attended by AJR's Northern Groups Co-ordinator Susanne Green. Michael Newman's talk motivated a number of people to pursue their entitlements; some had been reluctant to attend in the mistaken belief that nothing more could be done for them. He listened carefully to individual cases and noted down details in order to renew enquiries on members' behalf. Certain claimants might well be entitled to as much as £7,000, but applications had to be speedily initiated.

Judy Gilbert

Next meeting: Sunday 18 November, 'A Taste of the Past'. Enquiries to Judy Gilbert on 0131 667 4266.

Liverpool: Get-togethers appreciated

A highly successful pre-Rosh Hashanah meeting of the newly formed Liverpool AJR Group was held in Harold House. Susanne

Green reported on the luncheon meeting with Michael Newman of the Holocaust Claims Office, for which much appreciation was expressed. Poignant memories were evoked in a session on 'Nostalgia - YomTov in Yester-year'. Kay Fine gave a short talk on her recent return to Bad Neustadt and the unveiling of a plaque in memory of her parents and other Holocaust victims. The consensus was that these get-togethers and lively discussions should continue on a bi-monthly basis.

Norman Fyne

Next meeting: Thursday 6 December, Norman Heller, 'Jazz Collection'.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne's new group

At the well-attended inaugural meeting of Newcastle AJR, former local girl Susie Kaufman, wife of the AJR's Chairman, outlined the wide range of services which the AJR provides to former refugees. Northern Groups Co-ordinator Susanne Green invited everyone to introduce themselves by giving a brief account of their lives, which proved a very moving experience. A lively discussion ensued as to the kind of activities that were feasible in relation to the potential local membership. It was agreed that the contacts made at this first meeting should be widened.

Kurt Schapira

Pinner: Journey to Morocco

Howard Midgen spoke to Pinner AJR on his recent trip to Morocco, illustrating his talk with photographs he had taken. He began his journey in Casablanca and continued via Rabat and Fez along the edge of the desert to Marrakesh before returning to Casablanca. Morocco was attempting to become a modern country, while retaining its traditions. He discovered three active synagogues in Fez and gained much satisfaction from attending a Friday evening service. Everywhere he went he found the people to be friendly and keen to show their country to advantage.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 6 December, 'Donuts and Latkes'.

South London hear talk on voting systems

In an informative talk on 'Democracy, Voting Systems and Referenda', Monty Alfred explained the 'first-past-the-post' system, which we have in the UK, and various other systems in use including the 'single transferable vote', the system he preferred. He also wished voting to be made compulsory and favoured regional parliaments (as in Scotland and Wales) and a predominantly elected House of Lords. With regard to referenda, the wording of the questions should be unambiguous.

Anne Poloway

Next meeting: Thursday 15 November, 7th Birthday Party, Rabbi Frank Dabba-Smith, 'How the Leitz Family Helped Jews during the Nazi Regime'

Further Meetings

Leeds: details to be announced

Manchester: Sunday 2 December, AJR 60th Anniversary Celebration

North London: Thursday 29 November, Susannah Alexander, 'The Jews in England: An Overview'

Surrey: Wednesday 14 November, details to be announced

Wessex: details to be announced

KINDERTRANSPORT NEWS David Jedwab

The horrendous terrorist acts in the USA overshadow everything and it is difficult to concentrate on our own mundane activities. Nevertheless, we must continue our daily lives and not give in to our enemies.

The KT-AJR Planning Group met recently to discuss and approve the handing over of the Kindertransport Archives to the Wiener Library. Most of the material has been collected by Bertha Leverton over the last few years and comprises letters, books and a large number of photographs, some of which have been displayed at various functions. To honour her indefatigable efforts on behalf of Kindertransport, it was unanimously agreed that the archives would henceforth be known as The Bertha Leverton Kindertransport Archives, a recommendation that was warmly welcomed by the Wiener Library.

The RoK and Kindertransport papers will be 'at home' because the Wiener Library was created by Jewish refugees and represents a unique and central repository of material concerning the story of Jewish refugees, accessible to scholars and students for many years to come. This material will supplement the 45 Sue Reed Video interviews of Kinder for the film *The Children Who Cheated the Nazis* plus the RoK99 Reunion Video source material. Over and above that, we hope that Kinder wishing to donate their letters and other documents will contact us.

Other topics discussed by the Planning Group concerned future programmes for the Kinderlunches at the Day Centre.

The next Kinderlunch will be on 12 November. The speaker will be Susi Bechofer on the theme 'Search for my Jewish Roots'. To reserve your place, please telephone the Day Centre on 020 7328 0208 a week in advance.

Central Office For Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Slave labour payments

When the process of paying compensation to former slave and forced labourers has been completed, every eligible applicant will have received two payments from the German Foundation as well as an award from the Swiss Banks Settlement. To date, the Jewish Claims Conference has made the first payments of DM 10,000 (around £3,000) to 22,000 victims, of whom 71 live in the UK. Separately, payments of \$1,000 (approximately £700) from the Swiss Banks Settlement have been issued to 110 UK residents out of a total of 30,000 worldwide.

Dutch update

A letter to the Dutch parliament analysing the work of committees set up to investigate the war-time role of the Dutch authorities has been published. The full text of Prime Minister Kok's letter can be seen by visiting the Claims section of the AJR website and is available through the Central Office.

Scotland

Approximately 50 people attended meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh for advice and information on how to pursue compensation and restitution claims. Following an introductory talk, questions covering several application procedures were answered and participants were able to leave their contact details in order to receive further information. Further meetings are planned in Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle in October.

Deadlines

The timeline for certain compensation and restitution claim procedures is 31 December 2001. Applicants wishing to file claims in respect of Slave and Forced Labour compensation, Czech property restitution and reparations from the Dutch and French governments in respect of Nazi persecution should contact the Central Office.

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 SHABBAT

at Belsize Square Synagogue
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Sunday 25 November 2001

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AJR 'Drop in' Advice Centre at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6 3RL
between 10am and 12 noon on
the following dates:

Wednesday 7 November

Thursday 15 November

Tuesday 20 November

Wednesday 28 November

Thursday 6 December

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

NOVEMBER Afternoon entertainment:

Thur	1	Rita and Jack Davis
Sun	4	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No entertainment
Mon	5	Kard & Games Klub
Tues	6	Rosemary Wiseman
Wed	7	Guyatherie Peiris & Bill Patrick
Thur	8	Nicola Smedley & Jan Cunningham
Sun	11	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No entertainment
Mon	12	KT LUNCH & Kards & Games Klub
Tues	13	Angela Arratoon
Wed	14	Hounslow Community Centre
Thur	15	Ronnie Goldberg on guitar
Sun	18	DAY CENTRE OPEN - No entertainment
Mon	19	Kard & Games Klub
Tue	20	Annette Saville on piano
Wed	21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	22	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
Sun	25	TEA DANCE
Mon	26	Kard & Games Klub
Tue	27	Christine Fisher - A Seat at the Opera
Wed	28	Wizo Choir
Thur	29	Ann Kenton Barker, Basil Taylor & Margaret Gibbs

Announcements

Deaths

Brown. Ernest Brown, widower of Ann, passed away after a short illness 22 September 2001 aged 85. Will be greatly missed by his son Peter, daughter Susan, sister Lottie (Ruth), son-in-law Steve, grandchildren Jessica and Charlotte.

Teddern. Gaggi Teddern, born in Hamburg 11 April 1923, died peacefully in her own home on 15 September 2001. Deeply mourned as a much loved wife and mother. Teddy, Ruth and Sue.

Turner. Elfriede Turner born Poppelau 1905, died peacefully at Heathgrove Lodge, Golders Green, 21 September 2001, widow of Hans Turner. A fine lady.

CORRECTION

In the October 2001 issue, the announcement with respect to Lottie Meyer should have read 'her two godsons, Anthony and Michael'. We apologise for this error.

Classified

Miscellaneous Services

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Day Centre

Shirley Lever at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. New clothes for sale, dresses, underwear, cardigans, etc **Thursday 8 November & Tuesday 4 December** 9.45 am - 11.45 am.

Societies

Kaffee Klatsch Klub, established 1986. Monthly entertainment for Jewish Europeans, 60 plus. For further details telephone 020 8554 0443.

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

North London

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Fausta Shelton 01273 688 226

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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

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Obituary Max Kochmann

With the death of Max Kochmann at 80, the AJR, and the wider refugee community, has lost one of its truly outstanding servants. Communal service was a Kochmann family trait. Max's father, Hans-Heinrich, had been a warden of Berlin's Fasanenstrasse Synagogue and over here his mother Friedl occupied various voluntary communal posts until she turned 90.

Max arrived in the UK in mid-1939, having taken his Abitur after Kristallnacht. He entered an engineering apprenticeship, and made such strides that at 21 he was a manager in a factory whose 300-strong workforce made cutting tools for arms production. Two years later he married Hilde Kohn, a Gleiwitz-born pre-war acquaintance, with whom he had two children.

After the war Max Kochmann transferred his engineering and management skills to chemical firms engaged in the manufacture of pigments before starting up his own company, Pafra, in 1960. A medium-sized enterprise, it produced adhesives and had a Research and Development laboratory at Cambridge Science Park. Max involved himself in the work of the British Adhesives and Sealants Association and the British Standards Institute. He also immersed himself in the civic life of

Basildon, where he served for 14 years on the local Magistrates' Panel.

As far as the refugee community is concerned, Max put his financial and organisational expertise unstintingly at the service of no less than four institutions. He was, at different times, Honorary Treasurer and Chairman of the AJR, Honorary Treasurer of Belsize Square Synagogue, President (as well as Housing Committee Chairman) of the Leo Baeck Lodge of B'nai B'rith, and chief fundraiser for the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex University.

Truly, Max could 'force the unforgiving minute to give him sixty seconds' worth of distance run'. The entire AJR extends condolences to Hilde and her family.

Richard Grunberger

A personal note from the Chairman: When I became chairman in 1996, Max gave me every possible support. His real and lasting legacy to the AJR can be seen in the healthy state of our investments, to which he devoted an enormous amount of time. His financial skills and husbanding of our resources have given the AJR the financial skill to deliver the present wide-ranging services to our members. Max was a true servant to our refugee community. He will be sorely missed.

Andrew Kaufman

Husband Julius Feiwel died 28.07.1964 in Vienna. Son Alfred Feiwel born 23.03.1912 in Rzeszow. Any information, please telephone 020 8908 0582.

Matthias Sindelar. Documentary-maker seeks information about the Viennese footballer. If you remember seeing him play in Vienna, knew him, know of anyone in England or Vienna who knew him, or know of any ex-footballers who played or trained with him during his career, please contact Tamara Barshak, 38 Loveridge Road, London NW6 2DT Tel 020 7681 7746 or 07958 577 372.

Lisa (Elisabeth) & Berthold Bodenheimer (twins) born 7.3.1930 in Giessen, where they lived with their parents Fritz and Dr Rosie Bodenheimer before moving to Frankfurt/Main, Wehrheimerstr. 5. May have left Germany for England by train in 1938. Any information, please contact their friend Adelheid (Heidi) Bednarek, Schäfflestrasse 2, 60386 Frankfurt/Main Tel 0049 69 411131.

Arts and Events Diary November

Mon 5 Hans Seelig: Aaron Copland - A Belated Centenary Celebration. Club 43. 7.45 pm

Tues 6 Dr Henry Abraham: Psychological Aspects of the Holocaust: The Mentality of Perpetrators. Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, Room A155. 5.15 pm

Wed 7 Terry Charman (Imperial War Museum): Swing under the Swastika: Nazi Policy towards Jazz and Swing Music. Wiener Library

Mon 12 Gerald Holm: Ernest Hemingway. Club 43. 7.45 pm

Tues 13 Robert Miller: Testimonies of a German-Jewish Refugee: Ludwig Marx as a Poet and Self-translator. Centre for German-Jewish studies, University of Sussex, Room A155. 5.15 pm

Wed 14 Monica Lowenburg (University of Sussex): Be a Good Jewish Girl and Make Sure You Learn Something: The Educational Experiences of German-Jewish Children in Nazi Germany and Great Britain, 1933-1945. Wiener Library

Mon 19 Dr Thomas Otte: The British Establishment and the Kaiser. Club 43. 7.45 pm

Wed 21 Dr Sue Vice (University of Sheffield): The Holocaust 'From Below': Children's-eye Perspectives of the Holocaust. Wiener Library

Thurs 22 - Fri 23 Symposium on Various Aspects of Diary Writing. University of Sussex. For registration, contact Chana Moshenska on 01273 678837

Mon 26 Robin Hanau: Iraq, Its History and Present Crisis. Club 43. 7.45 pm

Tues 27 Dr Jon Hughes: France as a Cultural Ideal in the Work of Joseph Roth. Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, Room A155. 5.15 pm

Sun 18 - Mon 19 Jewish Artists of the Year Exhibition. Candid Arts Gallery, 3 Torrens Street, London N1 Tel 020 7691 1474

Until 2 December Rags - An American Musical (part of Jewish Chronicle Festival of Jewish Arts and Culture). Bridewell Theatre. Tel 020 7936 3456

Until 16 December Exhibition of Jewish Cartoonists. Jewish Museum, Finchley

Search Notices

Billerbeck/Westphalia and the **Jüdische Hilfsschule, Berlin**. Researcher wishes to hear from or about erstwhile Jewish inhabitants of Billerbeck and the jüdische Hilfsschule. Contact Dagmar Drows, Im Konkamp 11, 48727 Billerbeck, Germany. Email: drows@t-online.de.

Were you brought over to Britain in 1938-39 by the **Church of England Committee for non-Aryan Refugees** or by the **Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe**? Please contact Dr Margaret Brearley, Advisor to the Archbishops' Council, 29 Pages Lane, London N10 1PU Tel 020 8444 8935.

Gerda Mosse née Brasch, born Berlin 23.10.1898. Resident in Frogal Gardens, London NW3 in 1958. Any information, please telephone 020 8908 0582.

Leonie Feiwel née Schneeweiss, born Rzeszow 19.01.1891. Lived in Baden-bei-Wien until 1969, then moved to England.

Members celebrate their 60th anniversary in style

Ronald Channing



More than 500 AJR members and their families filled the elegant ballroom of London's Grosvenor House Hotel to enjoy a tea, entertainment and one another's company in celebration of the Association's 60th anniversary. Among those present were two founders and outstanding leaders, Ludwig Spiro and Theo Marx. The present Chairman, Andrew Kaufman, the son of refugees from Nazi Germany, recalled AJR's proud history and restated the continuing need for services to the Jewish refugee community.

Pointing to the irony of a new Jewish museum being opened in Berlin that very day, Andrew Kaufman praised the foresight of AJR's founders in the dark days of 1941, when "Britain stood alone, our families were torn apart, the



Theo Marx



Ludwig Spiro

Holocaust was about to begin, and the State of Israel was a distant hope." Former refugees had benefited their country of adoption in many ways, not least in science, the professions, the arts, business and politics. Today's responsibility, said Andrew Kaufman, was "to assist those less fortunate to improve the quality of their lives", a role which would continue for many years. He thanked special guests Esther Rantzen and David Baddiel for their support.



Esther Rantzen with Andrew Kaufman



Katia Gould and friends

Newsround

Czech land transferred

The Czech government is transferring a number of state-owned properties to the representatives of Czech Jewry as part of a compensation package for losses suffered under the Nazi and, subsequent, communist regimes, reports the *Jewish Chronicle*. A special decree will be passed to implement the transfers.

Sharon appeal not to 'appease' Arabs

Concerned that Israel might be sacrificed in the US administration's bid to include Arab states, some of which Israel regards as terrorist - such as Iran, Syria and the stateless Palestinians - in its anti-terrorist coalition, Prime Minister Sharon appealed to the West, primarily the US: 'Do not repeat the dreadful mistake of 1938 when enlightened European democracies decided to sacrifice Czechoslovakia for a convenient temporary solution. Do not try to appease the Arabs at our expense ... Israel will not be Czechoslovakia. Israel will fight terrorism.'

Sites of mass graves in Lithuania and Latvia to be signposted

The governments of Lithuania and Latvia have agreed that the sites of mass graves of Jews murdered during the Holocaust will be officially signposted. Lord Janner, who brokered the agreement, said: 'If the mass graves are not swiftly identified and signposted, they will soon disappear forever.' There are thought to be some 220 mass graves in Lithuania and a further 50 in Latvia.

Wimbledon rabbi moves to former East Germany

Rabbi William Wolff is to become the regional rabbi in Schwerin and Rostock in the former East Germany. Rabbi Wolff, who is leaving his Wimbledon Reform Synagogue, will be the first rabbi in this area for almost 70 years.