

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité - et Vérité?

France occupies a special place in the collective Jewish psyche. It does so for several positive, and one salient negative, reason: it was the post-revolutionary Convention (parliament) of 1790 that issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Decree of Jewish Emancipation. There too Heine and Börne found asylum, Meyerbeer and Offenbach gained more fame than in their native narrow-minded Germany, Sarah Bernhard became the world's first drama queen, and Léon Blum was the first ever (unbaptised) Jewish prime minister in Europe.

However, it was in the self-same France that during the Dreyfus trial Herzl encountered mobs baying for Jewish blood, and conceived of Zionism as the solution to the perennial Jewish problem. Dreyfus was eventually pardoned, but 40 years later French Nazi collaborators turned the grisly imaginings of the anti-Dreyfusard gutter into reality. Collaboration became France's most shameful secret after Liberation, and the country remained largely in denial until a remarkably frank admission of national guilt by President Chirac in 1997.

The latter also acted as patron to the establishment of a Jewish museum in a renovated 4th-arrondissement palace, in the courtyard of which stands an imposing statue of Captain Dreyfus, the jagged blade of his broken sword in hand. The enlarged photographs (ca. 1930) in the foyer are of Jewish-owned and -staffed workshops producing clothing and leather goods. The immigrants employed there can be seen on other photographs using their scant leisure time to relax or engage in left-wing political activity. (The last-mentioned was graphically evoked in the May Day 1937 chapter of Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Fall of Paris*.) With the next exhibit the mood abruptly darkens. An eye-catching red Nazi placard of 1941 lists the names, and East European provenance, of two dozen executed Jewish resistance fighters. One

of the walls in the courtyard, too, is inscribed with dozens of names of *Shoah* victims.

With those two notable exceptions, all the exhibits illustrate the 'normal', chequered, but ultimately upward-spiralling millennial history of the Jews in France.



La Rue des Rosiers, Paris

Nearby, the Place des Vosges, a beautiful colonnaded seventeenth-century square, is of special interest to former German refugees. Its centrepiece is an equestrian statue of Henry IV, the king who gave France freedom of conscience. When Germany's literary elite fled there early in 1933 Lion Feuchtwanger wrote *Paris Gazette*, a novel about an émigré anti-Nazi newspaper, Joseph Roth indulged his Habsburg nostalgia in *Radetzky*, and Heinrich Mann discharged his debt of gratitude to his country of asylum through a biography of Henry IV.

In 1940 the severely depressed Roth managed to drink himself to death just ahead of the Wehrmacht's entry into Paris; fleeing the country, Feuchtwanger later had his traumatic experiences recounted in *The Devil in France*; Werfel and the elderly Heinrich Mann trudged up the Pyrenees to escape into Spain - while Walter Benjamin found merciful release in suicide.

After such melancholy reflections the visitor seeks solace in the nearby heart of Jewish Paris, the Rue des Rosiers (aka *dos Pletzl*). Despite the nickname, alas, one

barely hears Yiddish there. However, Sephardi-owned restaurants, butcher shops and the like display the notice 'Kasher, Beth Din', which is a sort of compensation.

Another, longer walk brings one across the river to the Left Bank. Ambling along the periphery of the Latin Quarter, the visitor might be intrigued by the street name Le Chat Qui Pêche. I first read Yolán Földes's *Die Strasse der fischenden Katze* in 1937. It is the story of Hungarian economic migrants eking out a living in the eponymous street, where they live cheek by jowl with refugees from Lenin's Russia, Fascist Italy and Hitler's Germany. Földes painted a picture of a hard, yet vibrant refugee existence close to the edge of the despair, but hopeful against all the odds. The authoress was not in Paris when the Nazi tide engulfed it, or she would subsequently have withdrawn it from circulation as wildly over-optimistic.

However, fiction writers have a licence to inject feel-good tropes into their narrative which is not granted to historians. This was my reaction to the exhibition 'France in the Second World War', which occupies three floors of that overblown shrine to Napoleon, the Invalides. The exhibition focuses heavily on French resistance to Nazi occupation, but rather skirts round the - understandably sensitive - issue of French collaboration. Display items include proclamations of the Vichy government and photographs of Marshal Pétain addressing large crowds - but there is no pictorial, or any other, record of French policemen or uniformed *miliciens* rounding up Jews for despatch to Drancy.

Discomfort at these omissions does not mean one concurs in any way with Prime Minister Sharon's maladroitness appeal to French Jews to make collective *aliyah*. Abroad Chirac may be the Palestinians' best friend, but at home French Jewry could not have a better friend in the Elysée Palace.

Home is where Herts is

Richard Grunberger

'London Jews head north', proclaimed the *Jewish Chronicle's* front-page headline earlier this year. Although 'north' in this instance meant Bushey rather than Burnley, I consider this just another typical instance of Jews swimming against the tide, the universal direction of which is southward.

In Spain, people head south to the Costa del Sol. In France, they head towards the Riviera and Provence. In Germany, millions annually go so far south that they leave the country altogether, to find themselves in Italy. In so doing they follow the example of Goethe, who undertook two Italian journeys and was inspired to write *Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen?* (Do you know the country where the lemons bloom?). The English always went everywhere except north. Shelley and Byron died in the south, Kipling lived in the east, and Charles Kingsley wrote *Westward Ho*. The American thrust has historically been to the west. This was encapsulated 150 years ago in the mantra 'Go west, young man!', coined by the crusading journalist Horace Greely.

Contrarywise, the 'mystic' east has always exerted the strongest pull worldwide, so strong that a distinctive phrase - *Drang nach dem Osten* - was coined to encapsulate it. In Nazi mouths, that phrase had a horrific connotation, but not all Germans were natural-born aggressors.

To Rilke, the pull of the east meant going to Russia in quest of spiritual enlightenment, whereas Hermann Hesse received good vibes from India. In this he was followed by thousands of young westerners, from the hero of Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* to the Beatles.

Their number is dwarfed by that of Muslims who annually go to Mecca - and even by Christians who went on Crusades for the remission of their sins. Pious, unarmed Jews journeyed in the same direction, eager to be on hand at the Coming of the Messiah. They would rub their eyes in wonderment to learn that Shenley is the new Sfad.

World War II: French collaboration cover-up?

French officials and guards of French-run concentration camps in South West France continued to deport inmates of all nationalities to a near-certain death in Germany even as the country was being liberated, according to an exclusive report in *The Guardian* newspaper. Other internees continued to be held in those camps by French guards when the war was over until 1949 - proof, the paper alleges, that France went to extraordinary lengths to conceal evidence of collaboration.

A mass of registers, telegrams, manifests and other documents were uncovered in the Toulouse office of France's national archive by 84-year-old Austrian-born Kurt Werner Schaechter. He found both that French officials collaborated with their fleeing Nazi occupiers and that the government of Charles de Gaulle continued to hold hundreds of foreigners in an internment camp near Toulouse for up to four years after the end of World War II.

Noé camp, some 25 miles south of Toulouse, was one of 300 camps set up after 1939 to hold Jews, communists and other 'anti-French' militants, gypsies, criminals and enemy aliens. As France was progressively liberated in the summer of 1944, many of Noé's inmates were quickly shipped out, although Allied bombing of the railway lines and intensified fighting meant that many people could not be moved. The last transport left Noé-Longages station on 30 July 1944, with most internees

believed to be destined for Dachau. This was two days after Charles de Gaulle's victory parade down the Champs Elysées in Paris.

In February 1946 a letter from the camp's director drew the 'urgent attention' of the prefect in Toulouse to the fact that the money seized from the inmates was no longer adequate to feed and maintain them. Camp accounts confirm that people were still being forced to pay for their incarceration in September 1947. Letters from the interior ministry were dated 5 and 29 March 1949.

'This is an untold story of the dark side of France's liberation 60 years ago', said Mr Schaechter. 'French functionaries were involved in a national scandal that continued until 1949: the despicable treatment of allied and neutral civilians interned during the war.' He believed that they were not released at the end of the war because it would have been too embarrassing. 'The last thing de Gaulle wanted, when he was trying to build up France's image as victor and hero', he said, 'was to reveal the true extent of the collaboration by freeing neutral and allied internees held in French camps by French guards.'

Noé continued to function secretly for several years after the war. Of many elderly and infirm people who remained in the camp, some were moved to Pithiviers or Rivesaltes camps (both officially closed) in 1947, others were recorded as 'transferred', and some were marked 'Agreed with Mr Casse - to be lost'. RDC

AJR Journal

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Time frames and place names

Richard Grunberger

Jews count time from the Creation, Christians from the birth of Jesus, and Muslims from Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina. Roman chronology began with the foundation of their city. Finally, because the French Revolutionaries claimed they were restarting the evolution of society from scratch, they declared the overthrow of the king their year Zero, and even renamed the months, turning February into Pluviose (rainy), August into Thermidor (hot), and November into Brumaire (foggy).

Sweeping away the past has also been the motive behind the renaming of many places. Currently, the most eye-catching of these changes are part of the rebranding that followed decolonisation in the Third World. Notable examples are Beijing (formerly Peking), Mumbai (formerly Bombay) and Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia).

Something analogous happened half a century earlier. In post-revolutionary Russia the Bolshevik drive to erase any trace of the Tsarist past led to the transformation of St Petersburg into Leningrad, Ekaterinburg into Sverdlovsk and Tsaritsyn into Stalingrad. The autocratic and antisemitic Romanovs have no claim on our pity; even so, detaching the name of a city from that of its founder strikes me as an affront against history. Another offence against history occurred when the Bolsheviks renamed Nizhny Novgorod - a place name evocative of the very soul of Russia - Gorky.

At around the same time as the Communists consolidated their grip on Russia, the Turks drove the Greeks out of their enclaves in Asia Minor. Following their victory, they renamed the city of Smyrna Izmir - a change which sticks in my craw. Not because I am particularly pro-Greek - I would never return the Elgin Marbles - but because Smyrna is a name redolent of classical antiquity. (It was one of the seven Greek towns that disputed the honour of having been the birthplace of Homer.)

Another change of place name I can't warm to is the morphing of Königsberg into Kaliningrad. Admittedly, Königsberg was a stamping ground of Prussian Junkers

and Slavophobes, but the name was encrusted with the patina of age - whereas Kaliningrad has neither history nor hinterland, and immortalises a nondescript Soviet *apparatchik*.

There must be many elderly Germans and Austrians born in historic outposts like Königsberg, Breslau and Pressburg who mourn the disappearance of those place names from the map. If they want to assuage their nostalgia, they should look up a list of Jewish 'show biz greats'. Königsberg appears in all movie reference works as the birth name of Woody Allen, while Pressburg, now Bratislava, was evoked by the name of the great British filmmaker Emeric Pressburger. On a lesser order of magnitude, Breslau, now Wrocław, lived on in the name of the comic Bernie Bresslaw (and Grünberg - now Zielona Gora - in that of your editor).

From this moderately contentious issue I move on to a literally explosive one. What does the place name Al-Quds mean to you? Very little, I assume. But to a billion Muslims it is the Arabic name of Jerusalem, their third holiest city.

In the hypothetical event of a change of sovereignty over the city and its rebranding as Al-Quds, what, I ask, would be the effect on the Western imagination? The title of Tarquato Tasso's Renaissance epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* would become quite meaningless; the same holds good for Selma Lagerlöf's story collection *Jerusalem*, Margaret Drabble's *Jerusalem the Golden*, and Arnold Wesker's play *They Call This Place Jerusalem*. Likewise, the words of William Blake's mystical hymn *Jerusalem* (almost Britain's substitute national anthem) would become unintelligible.

The reason why Blake's words have a special place in the nation's affection is intimately connected with the Jews' Passover 'toast' 'Next year in Jerusalem'. The phrase is not primarily an affirmation of Zionism, but expresses a yearning for a better world. This is an example of the Judeo-Christian heritage at the heart of Western civilisation, for in the *Book of Revelation* the 'New Jerusalem' symbolises a perfect society.

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Birmingham member's special honour

Ronald Channing

Retired automobile engineer and author Paul Oppenheimer MBE received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Wolverhampton in recognition of his programme of lectures and talks as an eyewitness of the Holocaust. He holds the conviction that he has to make a personal contribution to alerting both students and adults to the dangers of racism and the dehumanisation of minorities.

Paul and his family fled Nazi Germany for Holland, but were deported in 1942. They ended up in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they faced appalling conditions. Within a short time, both of his parents succumbed to disease and starvation, but he, his brother and sister struggled to survive. Following their liberation by the British army in 1945, all three went to England, where they were taken in by an uncle.

Paul qualified as an engineer and settled in Birmingham with his wife Corrine, and they have three children. In recognition of his contribution to advances in motor engineering, he received an MBE in 1990 for services to British industry.

It was only after Paul retired, and had attended a reunion of Belsen survivors, that he began to give public talks about the Holocaust. It became a new



Paul Oppenheimer, made Doctor of Letters for his contribution to Holocaust education

mission in his life, presenting his eyewitness account as a warning against the recurrence of such disregard for the sanctity of human life. Paul's autobiography, *From Belsen to Buckingham Palace*, complements his lectures, and he has now talked to more than 500 organisations. Paul and Corrine are both active members of AJR's popular West Midlands group.

'We Want the Light'

Christopher Nupen writes about the DVD release of his prize-winning film

'Make a television film about the Jews and German music for the Holocaust Memorial Day slot on both British and German Television and do it in 59 minutes.' Oy! Why does television always have to be in a hurry, no matter what the subject?

After a year of trying I was convinced that it could not be done - at least not on a level which the subject deserved. What to do? The answer: spend another year working on it and be rescued by the inspiring 98-year-old Alice Sommer Herz, who is now approaching her hundred and first birthday, who played more than 100 concerts in the Theresienstadt camp, and who still practises the piano for two and a half hours each day.

With her help we produced something that both the BBC and German television thought worthy of the slot and it won two international prizes: Best Editing at the New York Film and Television Festival, 2004 and The Jewish Cultural Award for Film and Television, 2004 - a prize which they gave last year to Steven Spielberg and Roman Polanski and this year to Daniel Barenboim, Maxim Vengerov and Christopher Nupen.

Amazing - one can never know in advance

how a film will turn out or how the world will receive it. Still I felt that those 59 minutes were not enough and so we have produced a DVD version which gives the contributors more space and we have included others whose interviews could not be squeezed into a 59-minute television film. We have made it also for 2005, which will see the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The DVD version will be published on the BBC/OpusArte/Allegro Films/The Christopher Nupen Films label and, with the additional interviews, it will have a duration of over five and a half hours. It is divided into three parts, with all sequences and interviews fully chaptered and instantly accessible.

The contributors include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Daniel Barenboim, Leon Botstein, Margaret Brearley, Michael Haas, Evgeny Kissin, Norman Lebrecht, Zubin Mehta, Itzhak Perlman, Alice Sommer Herz, Samuel Adler, Uri Toepflich, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, Yirmiyahu Yovel and Pinchas Zukerman.

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Arts Diary November

Mon 1 Gerald Home/Hans Seelig, 'More about Furtwängler'. Club 43

Tues 2 Dr Klaus Weber, 'Jewish Welfare and Philanthropy in Europe, 1800-1940: A New Project Focusing on the Rothschild Family as a Case Study'. Parkes Institute, University of Southampton, Room 1163 Avenue Campus. 5.30 pm. Tel Frances Clarke on 023 8059 2261

Tues-Sat 2-6 Diane Samuel's play 'Kindertransport'. The Burton Taylor Theatre, Gloucester Street, Oxford, 7.30 pm. Tel 01865 305350

Fri 5 A concert in celebration of the life of Albi Rosenthal. Wigmore Hall, London W1, 7.00 pm. All friends welcome. Contact Julia Rosenthal on 07957 480 920

Mon 8 Jens Brüning (Berlin), 'Karawanserei des alten Europas: "In Tyrannos" der Selbstverständigungstext des Club 1943' (in German). Club 43

Thur 11 'Dr Zorath Warhaftig: The Man Behind the Extraordinary Rescue of Jews to Japan and Shanghai during the Holocaust', film screening with filmmaker and historian Pamela Shatzkes. London Jewish Cultural Centre, 7.30 pm

Mon 15 Ernst Flesch MA, 'Uzbekistan: A Journey to Central Asia'. Club 43

Mon 15 Professor Geza Komoroczy, 'Hebrew Sources on Hungarian Jewish History'. Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, Gustave Tuck Theatre. 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7679 3520

Thur 18 'Imagining and Re-imagining Herzl'. An international symposium with Gideon Shimoni, Stephen Beller, Michael Berlowitz, 10.00 am-5.00 pm. At the Austrian Cultural Forum. Contact London Jewish Cultural Centre

Mon 22 Dr David Williams, 'General Sir Brian Robertson, Military Governor/High Commissioner of the British Zone in Germany, 1945-1950'. Club 43

Tues 23 Professor John Grenville, 'Bitter Harvest: Jews and Christians in one German City: Hamburg 1933-1945'. Wiener Library, 7.00 pm

Mon 29 Dr E. M. Batley, 'The Political Problem of Goethe's Freemasonry'. Club 43

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

London Jewish Cultural Centre King's College, Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3 tel 020 7431 0345

Wiener Library 4 Devonshire Street, London W1 tel 020 7636 7247

Forgotten veterans

Max Sulzbacher

On a recent motoring trip through France we passed a German military cemetery near Arras. Looking at the graves, we found that interspersed with the large number of crosses there were some tombstones. On further examination, we discovered that they were inscribed with both Hebrew and German names as these fallen soldiers were obviously Jewish.

We made a note of one such name and later looked it up in the *Gedenkbuch* for the 12,000 German Jewish soldiers who fell in the First World War. This book was issued by the Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten (RJF) in 1932 with a foreword by President Hindenburg. Its preparation involved many years of devoted labour by the RJF and it consists of an alphabetical list of soldiers together with their place of origin. This is followed by a list of all places of origin together with the names of the fallen, the

dates of birth and death, and the names of places of birth which, in most instances, is the same as the places where they lived at the time of enlistment.

What is so remarkable is the hundreds of places listed in the book, showing that Jews lived in so many places in 1914. It even includes three locations in German East Africa where Jewish soldiers lived and died, as well as four villages of the same name, Reichenbach. My own family had relatives and friends throughout the German countryside and, unfortunately, they are all in the list.

Why was the *Gedenkbuch* compiled? The short answer is antisemitism - which was virulent at that time. Although Jews could not become officers before the war, they did receive commissions during the war. The most insulting and tragic wartime episode was the so-called *Judenählung*, a census of Jews at the front. Jews were suspected by the

authorities of shirking their responsibilities. The results were never published.

This census aroused anger among the Jewish soldiers and I remember an old lady telling me that at the time of the census her brother asked their mother to send him a modern Hebrew primer; he said that if he survived the war, he would learn the language and go to Palestine. He did in fact do so and he became a professor at the Hebrew University.

The sacrifice of the German Jewish soldiers was never taken into consideration after the Nazis gained power. Those who survived the war did not receive any privileges and perished in the Holocaust if they were unable to leave Germany. These sacrifices are, of course, but a tragic shadow when compared with the greater tragedy of the Holocaust but it is still a sad reflection even after all these years.

Jewish Military Museum opens in London

Ronald Channing

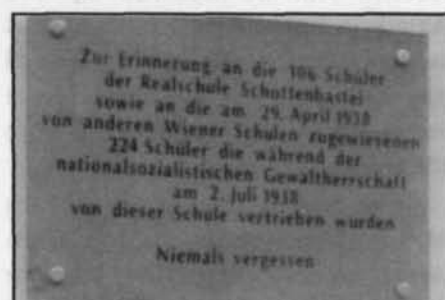
The Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, AJEX, has opened a new and enlarged military museum in Hendon, North London. Its premises at AJEX's head office in Stamford Hill were far too restricting to do justice to a collection which documents, illustrates and records the outstanding contribution made to the British military by men and women of the Jewish faith, of all ranks.

The collection includes the uniforms, insignia and medals of Jewish soldiers, pictures and photographs, even weapons, and the Books of Honour from World Wars I and II. The museum also records the service given by many members of the Jewish refugee community during World War II, from duty in the Pioneer Corps to action with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) behind enemy lines, many making the supreme sacrifice to

secure Europe's freedom from Nazi oppression and the defence of their adopted country of allegiance.

AJEX National Chairman Ron Shelley invited historian Professor Sir Martin Gilbert to open the museum. 'This wonderful museum tells many stories of bravery', said Sir Martin, who praised the battlefield contribution made by British Jews from the Boer War to Iraq. He complimented the museum's curator, Henry Morris, and archivist, Martin Sugarman, for their work in re-establishing the museum at its new location.

For further information please contact the Jewish Military Museum, Shield House, Harmony Way (off Victoria Road), Hendon NW4 2BZ Mon-Thurs 10 am-4.30 pm. Viewing is by appointment. Please telephone 0208 202 2323.



'In commemoration of the 106 original pupils and the 224 transferred pupils who were expelled from this school in July 1938. Never forget.'



Stamp issued on the centenary of Theodor Herzl's death by the Austrian Post Office



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

AUSTRIAN COMPENSATION

Sir - There is goodish news and frustrating news about reparation payments by the Austrian government to Holocaust victims. The goodish news is that we will all receive an extra £700 for loss of apartments and belongings. All those who have already been paid \$7,000 will be sent a letter asking for the name of their bank and the money will be sent there automatically. The frustrating news is that all insurance claims for policies held with Austrian companies have been passed on to the General Settlement Fund (GSF) of the Nationalfond. The trouble is that the GSF has been frozen until there is a decision on whether the class actions taken out in the United States against Austria will be allowed by the American Supreme Court. If 'yes', it is very doubtful whether the GSF will pay out - which, in fairness, we were told by the Nationalfond from the very start.

Please believe that, together with Michael Newman of the AJR, I am doing my best to ensure that we receive what is due to us, but it is not an easy task. Earlier agreements stand in our way and we may well have to resort to law, which is not a cheap option.

*Peter Phillips
Loudwater*

BERLIN

Sir - The reason why I have not been back in Berlin (letter from George Vulkan, September 2004) is precisely because of the present generation of Germans.

It is the present generation at the Allianz which in 1998 insisted that I supply the details of a policy my father took out and the existence of which was admitted. Auschwitz deprived

him of his life and me of all documents. Since the Allianz of old insured concentration camps, the present managers can be deemed to know the fate of their former clients only too well.

The present generation at the Hamburg insurance office informed me that my time as a slave labourer did not entitle me to a pension because (a) there had not been a voluntary contract of employment (too true); and (b) my employer had not paid contributions (also true: that is what slave labour was all about). Nazi ideology still rules OK there.

The present-day German industry refused to contribute to a slave labour fund, resulting in a shortfall and derisory compensation which did not take into account the pain, suffering and inhumane conditions.

*Frank Bright
Ipswich*

Sir - George Vulkan's plea to visit Germany and to forgive the new generation is hard to accept when we know of the horrific crimes their parents and grandparents committed. The great, late Lord Jacobovits always refused to set foot on German soil. He said it was not in our province to forgive.

*George Lazarus
London N3*

Sir - I agree with Mr Vulkan that the municipality has made a great effort to remember their darkest days. However, when I attended my school reunion of the Grosse Hamburgerstrasse, I was told we were quite safe as there were armed guards on all the rooftops. A German man said it was because of the Middle East. When I asked him if he had ever seen the need for armed guards outside a

mosque he was taken aback and replied: 'You are right - they don't have to be afraid.'

*Gisela Feldman
Manchester*

VIENNA

Sir - I have been in touch with my secondary school up to 1938 - and received a very warm welcome. In the Pauseraum (the main informal assembly area in the school) there is a striking memorial tablet (see photo on page 5). My reason for writing to encourage others to get in touch with the school is that the initiative for the tablet came neither from the corporation, nor even the school staff, but from a group of ten pupils and it would help to encourage and support the liberal and humane teaching - patent from the school's annual report - if interest were taken. Incidentally, the school is now the Lise Meitner Realgymnasium, Schottenbastei 7-9, A-1010 Vienna.

Putting this in a broader setting, judging from the Wiesenthal Centre's quarterly *Response*, antisemitism is not a problem (or at least not a notable problem) in Austria. On the other hand, the most cursory examination of *Statewatch* or the *European Race Bulletin* shows that xenophobia is well and flourishing in official Austria, and the presence of the 'Freedom Party', now led by Haider's sister, is representative of a popular view.

*Francis Deutsch
Saffron Walden*

LEGACY OR WINDFALL

Sir - Heinrich Stahl House, and the other residential homes under the auspices of the Otto Schiff Housing Association, were bought with funds which were restitution for assets confiscated by the Nazis. These funds are the legacy left by the original owners who did not survive to reclaim their rightful property, and there were no inheritors with title. The wider community of Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression who settled in all parts of the UK are thus the 'heirs' to the so-called 'Erblose Besitz'. There are known, and as yet unknown, needs of

members of this group, many of whom do not live in the London area. They - we - have first priority as potential beneficiaries.

*Victor Simons
London NW3*

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Sir - Susanne Dyke's treatment at the hands of the Czech authorities (September issue) should come as no surprise. When at the end of the last war the few Czech Jews who had managed to survive the German concentration camps tried to reclaim their former homes, they were promptly expelled back into the arms of their recent tormentors - the Germans - allegedly because they spoke German. As far as I am aware, they never received an apology.

*Robert Miller
Leatherhead*

PC WORLD

Sir - You write about the removal of the statue of St James, the Moor slayer, from the Church of Santiago de Compostela (September issue). When it comes to offending the feelings of a religious minority, there is nothing as obscene as carvings of the *Judensau* depicting Jews suckling the teats of a sow. These, mostly created in the 15th century, are still to be seen on and in many churches and buildings in Germany.

To name one city - Cologne - there is such a carving on a choir stool in the cathedral as well as on a tower of the town hall. With the Holocaust in mind, it is an abomination and a disgrace that they have not been removed. The excuse that they are historical monuments is totally unacceptable.

*Ernest G Kolman
Greenford, Middx*

Sir - The solutions suggested in your article will, as far as Spain is concerned, hardly contribute to a more amicable relationship with their Arab brethren. One might go the whole hog and destroy the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella in Granada.

*Anthony Goldsmith
Wembley, Middx*

CLAIMS CONFERENCE

Sir - Readers may like to know about my disappointing experience with regard to a claim for compensation for my parents' property in the former East Germany. My brother and I (in our late 70s/early 80s) put in the 'goodwill' claim in April 2002 to the Claims Conference Successor Organisation in Frankfurt and provided the complex legal documents in July 2002. Despite reminders, nothing was heard until October 2003, when further detail was provided to a Berlin office.

In May 2004 Frankfurt informed me that the claim had been submitted for decision to the New York office. A personal visit to the Frankfurt office in July revealed that the German government had transferred the money in November 2003. When I contacted the New York official who was apparently dealing with the case I was told that no such claim existed in New York. Since then, numerous reminders obtained no replies or the evasive statement that the large number of cases did not permit them to deal with individuals, until I finally received an acknowledgement on 9 September that New York was 'working on' my case without any indication as to when it would be finalised. I find this incompetence and arrogance by an organisation which will deduct at least 20 per cent from the money due to me quite unacceptable and wonder whether I am exceptionally unlucky or whether other AJR members have similar tales of woe

*Eric Mark
Brussels*

LOOK FORWARD

Sir - Would it be possible for you to include more forward-looking articles in your excellent publication? The Holocaust is, of course, of the greatest importance to remember, but let's read about what contribution we make globally as Jews in this day and age as well. It will increasingly be second-generation Jews who will be your readers and will want to know this.

*Dorothy Graff
Australia*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Judy Bermant *Quizzical* (Chaim)
Watercolour (from the Judges'
final selection)

The indefinable interaction between photographer and subject helped **Yaki Assayag** win the **International Jewish Artist of the Year Award** (IJAYA) for two photographs of Israelis in relaxed and thoughtful mood. By rejecting any preconceptions about the portraits before starting them, Assayag claims to have aroused the emotional response he needed for this series of work.

The annual competition, launched in 2001 and co-hosted by the **Ben Uri Gallery**, the **London Jewish Museum of Art** and **Friends of the Hebrew University**, this year attracted 800 entries from 15 countries. The genres spanned painting and sculpture to new media. But many questions of comparison arise. If we can even define Jewish art in the twenty-first century, is one artist more *Jewishly* creative than another? The Ben Uri is currently deep in self-searching as it takes upon itself the task of broadening the contextual interpretation of Jewish art, posing such questions as: Is there such a thing as Jewish art? Clearly, if this competition is anything to go by, the

answer is yes. And the BU's exhibition of the work of the post-Modernist painter, **Alfred Wolmark**, featured last month, show-cased within its proscribed space Wolmark's developing talent, from an obvious to a far more subtle way of being a Jewish artist. Here was certainly a Jewish artist, with an eye and a sense for his roots.

But the same cannot be said for the general feel of this IJAYA exhibition, which - held in the large but uninspiring **Tram Studios** in Camden Town - lacked any immediate sense of visual excitement, energy or cohesion. I was immediately assailed by *12 Pieces of Dutch Circumcise* (sic), an extremely flat, unframed series of photographs of a circumcision. Its creators, **Anita Frank** and **Pauline Prior**, have merely created a cringe-worthy piece of Jewish documentary. Perhaps deliberately but tastelessly, the baby in the hands of the *mohel* was like a lamb to the slaughter.

There are some interesting works, among them **Frank Lisser's** arresting portrait of his maternal family, *The Elions*, *The Deported Family*, *A Posthumous Reunion*. The subjects, described as an ordinary Dutch Jewish family in the early twentieth century, most of whom died in the war, stare out in stilted, formal pose at the future they never shared. Based on old family portraits, it is a romantic construct into which the artist can express a personal fantasy reunion - a painful, Jewish dream common to many who lost family in the Holocaust.

Of course, the Holocaust has its own focus and its best exponents offer an oblique message. **Jenny Stolzenberg's** acclaimed ceramic shoe installation - **Forgive and Do not Forget** - loses in this smaller version the overpowering poignancy of its earlier BU exhibition. I liked **Aliza Freedman's** set of four acrylic *Purim Portraits*. These certainly offer a new way of looking at the Purim cast, depicting Esther as a full-featured, sensual Ethiopian, garlanded with green fronds; Ehasueras as an African warlord with braided beard; Mordechai as an archetypal elderly bright-eyed Jew; and Haman in a three-cornered hat looking as evil as Iago.

RG's INTERFACE

Bunker cinema By macabre symbolism the Berlin premiere of the much-trumpeted film *Der Untergang* (The Downfall), which allegedly humanises Hitler, coincided with neo-Nazi electoral successes in Saxony and Brandenburg. On screen the *Führer's* 'humanity' is demonstrated by his fondness for chocolate cakes and for his pet Alsatian dog. The critics were not impressed.

Camp drama The renowned actor Sir Anthony Sher has adapted Primo Levi's imperishable classic about Auschwitz *If This Is a Man* for the stage of the National Theatre. He is also playing the lead.

The play *Guantanamo*, based on interviews with relatives of Islamic prisoners held in the US 'facility', has been a critical success on both sides of the Atlantic. Interestingly, both the play's co-author, Gillian Slovo, and its director, Nicholas Kent, are Jews. One wonders whether this would strike the detainees as bizarre.

Tales of childhood Philip Roth, widely considered the greatest living American writer and heir to Faulkner, revisits his childhood in his new novel *The Plot Against America*. The trigger for the story is the fictitious choice in 1940 of the pro-Nazi aviator Charles Lindbergh as the Republican Party's presidential candidate. Lindbergh is duly elected on a wave of isolationist sentiment, and proceeds to introduce a 'modified' form of Nazism - which has Jewish apologists - into the USA.

In his memoir *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, Amos Oz, the best-known Israeli author, writes about growing up in Jerusalem in the first years of the Jewish state. The central figure of the work is his cultured, hypersensitive mother, who eventually committed suicide. Interestingly, the writer, today one of the country's leading peaceniks, had a father who espoused the Likud ideology.

Obituary Elmer Bernstein, the frequently Oscar-nominated composer of music for films - *The Ten Commandments*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, *Ghostbusters* - and musicals - *Thoroughly Modern Millie* - has died in Los Angeles, aged 82.

Figures of myth

MOSES, MAN OF GOD

Translated and edited by
Sidney Brichto

Sinclair-Stevenson £12.99

APOCALYPSE

Translated by Sidney Brichto

Sinclair-Stevenson £6.99

These volumes are the latest in the series *The People's Bible*, Sidney Brichto's admirably accessible translation of books in the Old and New Testaments. Brichto is seeking to present the scriptures as a work of moral literature and to change the perception of the Bible as a divinely dictated text, worth reading only out of duty. Certainly, some who have taken the plunge find themselves confronted with propaganda they find hard to accept, since the God described in these texts seems at times immoral. This was indeed my impression as I made my way through *Moses, Man of God*, the first of two books into which Brichto has divided the text of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The numerous laws recorded in these texts, randomly introduced and often abstruse, have been conveniently assembled in the second book, *The Laws of Moses*. The first book relates the exodus from Egypt and the 40-year wanderings of an obdurate people under the direction of an apparently vengeful God.

A Progressive rabbi, Brichto not only appraises the claims of the New Testament from the perspective of an interested outsider but also challenges the veracity of the Hebrew Scriptures. He contends that rather than being revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Torah (Pentateuch) was discovered at the time of the prophet Jeremiah when, as recorded in the Second Book of Kings, the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, leading King Josiah to repent and destroy all idols. It was after that discovery too, Brichto says, that Passover was

REVIEWS

celebrated for the first time as a commemoration of the exodus from Egypt rather than as a seasonal festival.

For Brichto, Moses and Jesus, as presented in the scriptures, are figures of myth, central to each religion. The exodus, the myth of national redemption, is deeply embedded in Jewish liturgy, while the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection is the core component of the myth of universal salvation through Christ.

Miracles are an important feature of each myth. Brichto sees Pharaoh and Caiaphas as 'tools of God', in that Pharaoh's heart had to be hardened so that God could perform the miracles leading to the escape of the Israelites from slavery, while Caiaphas performed a similar function in the Christian narrative.

Apocalypse, Brichto's closely annotated volume of the writings of St John, reveals a tension between the art of the translator and the critical faculty of the commentator. The former is intent on conveying a powerful narrative in language which captures the attention of the reader and adheres as closely as possible to the meaning of the original, while the latter remains ever ready to point out inconsistencies in the text and flaws in the author's line of reasoning.

Brichto, like others, identifies in John's gospel a welter of anti-Jewish elements, which throw doubt on the authenticity of his portrayal of Jesus. For example, it is unlikely that Jesus would have distanced himself from the Torah by referring to it as 'your Law'. On another level, rather than proselytising among the gentiles, as the Jesus of St John instructs his followers to do, the Jesus of St Matthew makes clear that his message is for 'the lost

sheep of the house of Israel'. These and numerous other inconsistencies Brichto attributes to the influence of St Paul, whose teachings John has put into the mouth of his Jesus.

Of particular significance is John's portrayal of Peter. As Brichto points out, Matthew's Peter calls Jesus the Son of God and is referred to by Jesus as 'the rock of my church'. In *Apocalypse*, in contrast, Peter has become the 'anti-Christ' and is even called 'Satan' because he refuses to believe in the divinity of Jesus. It would appear then that the 'anti-Christ' is the Jewish-Christian, like the adherents of St Peter and St James, who opposed the Pauline message and was waiting for Jesus to restore the sovereignty of Israel.

While for many of his followers Jesus was 'the messiah', others saw him as the special prophet of whom Moses had spoken. Familiar as I am with the words at the end of Deuteronomy stating that 'no prophet has ever arisen in Israel like Moses', I had been unaware of this prediction. It is, however, of particular interest as my late brother influenced me to aspire to find for Jesus an honoured place among his own people. Because of their millennial suffering, provoked by the dominance of the Christological, Pauline version of the Jesus story, Jews have been inclined to disregard him, as evidenced by the writers of the Talmud, who referred to him as 'that man'. Had Jesus been recognised as 'the prophet' rather than 'the Christ' of Pauline invention, how different history might have been.

Emma Klein

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**CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
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JEW MADE IN ENGLAND

Anthony Blond

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Anthony Blond was born into the Jewish *haute bourgeoisie*. His father, after a distinguished army career, was involved in many enterprises, including the founding of the Royal Court Theatre. Not all his schemes were successful, yet he managed to send his sons, Anthony and Peter, to Eton. Anthony's maternal grandfather had come to Manchester from Tripoli. One of his sons became the famous photographer Baron. Anthony's mother, who had a lifelong antipathy to things Jewish, moved her family from the 'ghetto' of Cheetham Hill to the suburb of Bowdon. Anthony writes: 'She brought Peter and me up as if we were Gentiles, which meant I was not allowed to be barmitzvahed.'

Anthony's father returned from the army into the wealthy arms of Elaine Marks, sister of Simon of M & S. Anthony describes the break-up of his parents' marriage with equanimity: 'I spent weekends evenly between my mother's and my stepmother and father's country establishments, finding the contrast both marked and agreeable. Thank God ... for the pleasures of a broken home.'

During a spell at Oxford he makes friends with Jimmy Goldsmith, Milo Cripps, nephew of Sir Stafford, and Burgo Partridge, a scion of the Bloomsbury Set. On a trip to Greece with Burgo, he samples a group of the local sex-talent, whom he describes as 'our lot', and Burgo is duly robbed by one of them. Blond's throwaway humour is in evidence in his account of Burgo's end: 'One afternoon, whilst talking ... on the telephone, Burgo died ... Part of his aorta had flaked off and choked him. I am told that when his mother was informed, she telephoned Harrods and asked them to collect her son's body, cremate him and send her the bill.'

Following a stint in the family

business, for which he feels unsuited, he enters the publishing world and promotes the talents of writers like Simon Raven, Tom Stoppard and Jean Genet. Married to Charlotte, a member of the Strachey family, he suffers the loss of their son, who is stillborn. The most heartfelt part of the book is the description of the scant respect with which bereaved parents were treated in those days.

After the break-up of this marriage there follows a period of 'rackety life' with many partners of either sex until he settles down once more, in late middle life, with Laura Hesketh, the granddaughter of an earl. Together they adopt a young boy from Sri Lanka who gives them much amusement.

There are many portraits of the great and not-always-good whom Blond moves among, including Robert Maxwell, John Betjeman and Graham Greene. In fact, the index is totally composed of the names of these luminaries. If witty and perceptive portraits of well-known personalities told in the style of the gentleman's club are what you enjoy, then this is your book. Of serious reflection there is little, but then one wouldn't expect to find the solidity of a suet pudding in a meringue.

Martha Blend

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Letter from Israel

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

They came in their hundreds, in full force, fighting fit and in fine fettle. The Yekkes were attending an international conference devoted to themselves, held recently in Jerusalem. Its purpose was to examine the heritage of the Jews of Central Europe to various aspects of Israeli society and culture. Jokes were told about Yekkes and by Yekkes and, above all, every session started on time (most unusual for Israel).

The conference, held under the joint auspices of several august bodies, among them the Jerusalem Foundation, various government ministries, the Goethe Institute and the Konrad Adenauer Association, consisted of lectures and symposia on such subjects as 'Was German Jewry a Model of Assimilation?' and 'The Unique Nature of German Zionism' as well as many other equally fascinating topics.

Alongside the conference was an exhibition of photographs depicting the absorption of German immigrants in Israel in the pre-independence period with professors becoming chicken farmers and physicians building labourers. Many German artists made a notable contribution to the development of art in Israel, and a special exhibition of work by Yekke artists was on display during and after the conference.

The meals at the opening dinner and those served in the restaurant during the conference followed a traditional Yekke menu, and of course there was 'Kaffee und Kuchen' galore. Naturally, the contribution of the Yekkes to every aspect of Israeli life - music, medicine, politics, the theatre and the media - was glossed over for lack of time.

Some speakers confessed shamefacedly that they were not 'true' Yekkes but considered themselves Yekkes by adoption, giving rise to a heated discussion as to whether being a Yekke was the result of heredity or the environment. But the general consensus, in true Yekke fashion, was that it was both of the above.

As I made my way to the north London home of Professor Leslie Baruch Brent, I swiftly brushed up my knowledge of zoology - wasn't it something to do with animals? - as well as of immunology - something to do with flu jabs? - but was caught on the hop when I saw that my host was keen to begin our meeting with a discussion of politics. Stemming from a previous interview he had given, he wished to make clear his abhorrence of both the US occupation of Iraq and of Sharon's policies. We were to return to politics - albeit of the British domestic variety - before very long.

Leslie Baruch Brent - he reverted to the Baruch in recent years - was born in the north German town of Köslin (now in Poland). The family was well assimilated and steeped in German culture. They were also practising Jews, going regularly to synagogue and lighting Sabbath candles, though by no means observing *kashrut*. Leslie's father was a representative of a company selling children's clothes, so away from home a lot.

As the Hitler regime consolidated its grip, Leslie encountered anti-Jewish sentiment at school among fellow pupils and teaching staff alike. During the winter of 1936-37 his parents put him in the Pankow Jewish Orphanage in Berlin. After Kristallnacht, the Orphanage's director, Dr Kurt Crohn, nominated him for the first Kindertransport. His parents and older sister stayed behind. In a Red Cross message his father wrote to him: 'We're sure all will go well with you for you are, after all, *ein Sonntagskind* (Sunday's child).' His parents and sister were deported in October 1942.

Leslie was very fortunate in being able to attend the German-Jewish co-educational boarding school run by Anna Essinger at Bunce Court in Kent (on his visit to Ulm to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Anna Essinger, see page 16). It was more than a school and pupils were showered with loving care and attention. It was also home for Leslie: he had nowhere

PROFILE

Howard Spier

Leslie Baruch Brent *Ein Sonntagskind*



else to go. Some of the teachers were to become his friends for life.

In early 1942 Leslie joined the Birmingham Central Technical College as a lab technician in the chemistry department. He didn't actually know any chemistry but he learned fast. He recalls a senior colleague being strongly antisemitic - or maybe his colleague was just strongly anti-German ...

At the end of 1943 Leslie, eager to do anything he could to help his parents, volunteered for the British Army. After five weeks of training in Glasgow, he was made a lance-corporal. He was sent to Italy but the war was over and he saw no action. He returned to Germany as a lieutenant. When the British army liberated Belsen he obtained some idea of the fate of his family. To this day he is not totally sure of their ultimate fate.

Having left the army in 1947 with the rank of Acting Captain and intending to become a school teacher, Leslie obtained a grant to study zoology at Birmingham University. In his final year

he was elected president of the students' union. His relations with his vice-president, Joanne, were exemplary: in 1955 they married. She was to bear him three children: Simon, Susanna and Jennifer.

Having graduated from Birmingham, Leslie came to UCL as a PhD zoology student under Professor Peter Medawar. Soon he was appointed a lecturer. Peter Medawar, making use of some of Leslie's findings, later won the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Leslie was now also working on the rapidly developing discipline of immune tolerance, including skin graft and transplanting organs. In 1965 he was appointed Professor of Zoology at Southampton University and in 1969 Chair of Immunology at St Mary's Hospital Medical School in London. He retired in 1990 and married Carol in the following year.

At this point in the proceedings, we resumed the political dialogue, always of major importance to Leslie. In the 1970s he joined the Labour Party. An exceptionally active member, he was to become especially concerned with the medical handicap experienced by working-class children on account of their lack of adequate early schooling. Fighting racism too was a very important part of his political activity.

But in 1979, disillusioned with the party-line discipline of parliamentary practice, he left the Labour Party and helped to found the SDP. He supported the subsequent merger with the Liberals. Now he is a member of the Lib Dems, which party he sees as being well to the left of Labour. He took part in the well-known 2003 anti-war march and will never forgive Tony Blair for Iraq.

Leslie has participated in a number of Kindertransport reunion events and has been an AJR member for a number of years. In May 2001, at a reunion of 27 survivors at the Pankow Orphanage, he was one of four individuals on whom the makers of a German TV documentary focused. He is currently writing his memoirs. They should make interesting reading!

INSIDE the AJR

HGS: Vivid memories of internment

Ludwig Spiro's talk, to a packed audience at Balint House, was extremely interesting and brought back vivid memories of my own internment in Huyton and Onchen. It was a pleasure to welcome an old friend of OSHA and those who had not previously met Ludwig were amazed at his deliverance, without consulting any notes and standing for an hour and a half.

Jack Lee

Next meeting: Monday 1 November, 10.30 am. Rabbi Frank Dabba-Smith, 'The Leitz Family', a presentation with slides

Ilford: Bombs and babies

Eli Benson of Magen David Adom (MDA) gave us insight into the work of this marvellous organisation, which is supported by private donations only. We were shown a short video which graphically demonstrated the work done on the ground by MDA after a suicide bomber has struck. Apart from these massive rescue operations they also undertake more basic duties and apparently quite a number of babies come into the world in an MDA ambulance en route to hospital. A very thought-provoking morning indeed.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: Wednesday 3 November, 10.30 am

Recent holidays of Essex members

For one member, a lifelong dream had come true: he had visited Poland, the land where he was born, and where his parents and grandparents had lived their lives and were buried in the Jewish cemetery. Although the Nazis had robbed the graves of their stones he was still able to say *Kaddish* there. Berlin

and Vienna too were much revisited by former refugees despite their bitter memories. A few of us ventured out to far-away countries where we were total strangers but never felt alone. The magic words 'Shabat shalom!' opened the hearts and homes of the local Jews, who welcomed us like much-loved brothers.

Julie Franks

Next meeting: Tuesday 9 November, 11 am

Extracts from 'Glückel from Hameln' read to West Midlands (Birmingham) group

Dr Henry Cohen spoke to us about 'Glückel from Hameln: A Jewish Woman in a Gentile World', while his wife read extracts from it. It was such a treat for me, being partially deaf, to have someone speak and read in the most beautiful English. We had a very nice tea as well.

Henny Rednall

Next meeting: Tuesday 2 November

South London talk on history of JFS

David Lerner gave us a very interesting talk on the Jewish Free School. Following Cromwell's return, the first Jewish school in the world was founded in England in 1732. Other schools followed - first for boys only, later also for girls. David also told us about life in the schools and the subjects taught. After 1939 many refugee children came from Germany and Zionism and Ivrit became important subjects. We realised just how important the JFS and other Jewish schools have been and continue to be.

Anne Poloway

Next meeting: Thursday 18 November. Celebration of our 10th anniversary and a quiz

Happy New Year at Brighton & Hove Sarid

We had a lively meeting to celebrate Rosh Hashana. Myrna Glass gave us an extensive account of the festival with special reference to the blowing of the *shofar*. Members shared some of their memories and experiences, while tasting a delicious

homemade honey cake and dipping apples into honey for a good and sweet year.

Fausta Shelton

Next meeting: Monday 15 November, 10.45 am. Eli Benson of Magen David Adom, Israel's Red Cross

North London day out at Little Venice

We had a most enjoyable day at Little Venice in west London organised by Leo and Helena Horn. A coach took us from Whetstone to Little Venice, from where we took a waterbus to Camden Lock, where lunch had been arranged at Lloyds Bar. The weather was glorious and we were able to sit outside watching the boats, the ducks, the moorhens, and cosmopolitan homo sapiens. A terrific day enjoyed by every one of the 28 people lucky enough to have been there.

Ruth Jacobs

Next meeting: Thursday 25 November, 10.30 am. Bernd Koschland, 'From Furth to Hendon and Places in Between'

Pinner: 'Enemy aliens' proud to be British

It was a particular pleasure to listen to Daniel Snowman, the eminent writer and broadcaster, speak engagingly about his latest book *The Hitler Emigrés*. Some 50,000 refugees from the Nazis suffered as 'enemy aliens' in an insular England but went on to spark a marked enrichment of culture in music, art, architecture, theatre, history, philosophy, science, book publishing and soap manufacturing, becoming justly proud to be British.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thursday 4 November, 2 pm. Israeli political analyst Abbi Ben Ari will speak on 'Israel: A New Dimension'

MEETINGS IN NOVEMBER

Weald of Kent Tuesday 16. Royal Tunbridge Wells

East Midlands Tuesday 23. Lunchtime get-together. Speaker Bob Norton

Surrey Wednesday 24. Social get-together

South West Midlands Sunday 28. Lunchtime get-together

Oxford get-together



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Oxford, famed for its university and dreaming spires, hosted for the very first time, in its splendid ecumenical synagogue, a get-together of AJR groups and members from the region. The get-together was organised by AJR's Southern Area team, led by Myrna Glass, and members came for the day from Birmingham, South West Midlands, Pinner and North London to enjoy the wit and wisdom of guest speaker Bettine Le Beau, whose theme was 'Laugh Yourself to Health'. Ronald Channing, Marcia Goodman and Michael Newman updated guests on the latest developments and support services offered to members. Everyone enjoyed a splendid lunch, with plenty of time for socialising with members from other groups, and are looking forward to joining in the area's next get-together.

'Continental Friends' in the North of England



Leeds Continental Friends at recent Garden Party

It started three years ago with the formation of a small Harrogate AJR social group. The group now includes members from York, Otley, Wetherby and surrounding areas and meets regularly at the home of AJR member Inge Little. Although members did not previously know each other, the group now has a family feeling of friendship and shared past history.

Together with Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association (HSFA) groups, AJR has set up small social groups in Leeds and Bradford for former refugees and survivors of Nazi persecution. These groups, called 'Continental Friends', provide an opportunity for people from the same background to meet socially and exchange views.

The Leeds Continental Friends group is for members living mainly in the north Leeds areas of Moortown, Roundhay and Alwoodley. It was formed in spring 2003 and volunteers Barbara Cammerman and Janet Friedman host the meetings in their homes. The group has gone from strength to strength and recently 30 members of the Leeds Continental Friends group enjoyed a garden party in glorious sunshine at the home of volunteer Pippa Landey.

The Bradford Continental Friends group, formed last year, brings together members from Bradford, Shipley, Bingley, Elland, Baildon, Batley and Huddersfield. Meetings are held in the Springhurst Road Synagogue Hall.

This year we have also established four localised Continental Friends, small social groups in Manchester in the Cheshire, Didsbury, Prestwich, Whitefield and Broughton Crumpsall areas. They meet in members' homes for lively discussions. In tandem with these small social get-togethers, Werner Lachs continues to organise the successful main AJR meetings in Manchester which are held about every three months with a speaker.

Meetings of all the new Continental Friends groups are held every two months and, if any members would like to join in, they would be very welcome. Transport to the meetings can be arranged. Please contact Susanne Green, AJR Northern Groups' Co-ordinator, on tel 0151 291 5734 for the Manchester, Harrogate, Hull and Sheffield groups, or Pippa Landey for the Leeds and Bradford groups, on tel 0113 2893144.

Susanne Green

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Tue 9	Madeleine Whiteson
Wed 10	Hounslow Community Opera
Thur 11	Curtain Up
Sun 14	CLOSED
Mon 15	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 16	Stephen Baron
Wed 17	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 18	Michael Heaton
Sun 21	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon 22	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 23	Sheila games
Wed 24	Margaret Gibbs
Thur 25	Michelle Artiss
Sun 28	CLOSED
Mon 29	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 30	Paul Coleman

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

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Sigler, Rolf Sigler, after a long illness, died peacefully in his 90th year on 15 September. Beloved husband to Hilla, much missed by his children Helen and Michael, son-in-law Peter, daughter-in-law Carmen, and four grandchildren.

Tischler, Salomon (Bubi), born Vienna 29.01.18, died 28.07.04. Sadly missed by his many friends.

Classified

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Day Centre

Pamela Bloch at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. Clothes sale, separates, etc. **Wednesday 3 November 9.30-11.45 am.**

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Obituary

Klaus Hinrichsen

Klaus Hinrichsen, an art historian and businessman, has died aged 92. He was a champion of émigré artists who like him had fled to the UK to escape Nazi persecution.

He was born in Lübeck. His father, a lawyer whose forbears were Sephardi Jews, had converted to Christianity and brought his children up as Lutheran Protestants. In 1931 he went to Munich University to read art history, theatre history and archaeology. In 1936, having completed his PhD (on the baroque sculptor Tonnies Evers), he found it difficult to get work owing to his being half-Jewish.

On Kristallnacht he was arrested but, being 'half-Aryan', was released. He was to use this 'privilege' to aid other Jews to emigrate, by negotiating on their behalf with German emigration and tax officials. In May 1939 he obtained permission from the German authorities to go abroad for three months, but he was never to live in Germany again.

During an eleven-month internment at Hutchinson Camp on the Isle of Man he found himself in the company of some of Germany's leading modernist artists, men such as Schwitters and Erich Kahn, who had fled the Continent at the outbreak of war.

Following his release from 'Hutchinson University', he joined the Home Guard and, after the war, began a successful career in pharmaceuticals. He established an office in the City of London, becoming a freeman in 1962. He was for eight years chairman of the Highgate and Archway Liberal Party and he supported the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

He also became the chronicler of art in internment, writing the chapter 'Visual Arts Behind the Wire' for the book *The Internment of Aliens in 20th-Century Britain* (edited by David Cesarani and Tony Kushner, 1993). He spoke on numerous radio and television programmes and assisted with exhibitions of internee art. In July 2004 he was honoured for his work at the 'Kurt Schwitters in England' conference held at Tate Britain.

Search Notices

Mary Triester, born approx. 1909 in Troppau, Czechoslovakia. Daughter of Mac/Max Treister and Susanna Dubs. Last known address (in 1938) Lerchenfeld Gasse 19, Reichenberg (Liberec), Czech Republic. Any information please to British Red Cross, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EJ, tel 020 7235 5454, Ref 9517/Albino Okello.

Katherine Kramer, born 24.2.1904, maiden name **Käte Mann**. 1950-56 lived at The Homestead, Cadole, Mold, Flintshire. 1956 to approx. 1962 lived at The Lodge, Ravenscroft Hall, Middlewich, Cheshire. Any information please to Social Attaché, Austrian Embassy, London SW1 telephone 020 7235 3731.

I am a historian looking for the families of **Jewish doctors who emigrated from Hamburg** in the 1930s-40s. Any information, please to Anna v. Villiez at annavonvilliez@gmx.de.

I am working on an exhibition about the hostel established in 1939 by the **Gloucester Association for Aiding Refugees. Ten Kindertransport boys** aged from 12 to nearly 15 were housed there in the care of a couple from Prague called **Arnstein**. I would like to find out what happened to any of the boys after the war. Any information, please contact James Turtle, Education and Outreach Manager, Gloucestershire Record Office, Alvin Street, GL1 3DW tel 01452 425088 email james.turtle@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Dr Georg Wilde was the last rabbi to serve in Magdeburg, Germany. He arrived in England in 1939 and is thought to have died in the UK in about 1949. The Centrum Judaicum in Berlin is researching into rabbis who served as German army officers during World War I and we would be very grateful to hear from anyone who has any knowledge or information about this rabbi. Any information please to Chana Schuetz, Stiftung 'Neue Synagoge Berlin - Centrum Judaicum', Oranienburger Strasse 28/30, D-10117 Berlin, tel 030-880 28 300, email cjudaicum@snaflu.de.

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Additional Austrian payments

Following an agreement reached at the beginning of September, recipients of the \$7,000 award from the National Fund in respect of confiscated rental apartments, household belongings and personal possessions will receive an additional compensation of \$1,200 (approx. £660). The awards are made from the residual monies already allocated to the National Fund.

The National Fund will write to everyone on their database in the next few weeks requesting confirmation of up-to-date bank details. It is envisaged that payments will be made in January next year. Heirs of survivors who received the original award but have since passed away will be entitled to claim instead.

Austrian pension charges

Recipients of an Austrian pension who are still incurring commission charges from Austrian banks are advised to close their Austrian bank account in order to avoid account-running charges.

To transfer their pension from Austria to the UK, pensioners had to open an account at an Austrian bank, usually Creditanstalt-Bankverein or Bank Austria. Today, however, in order to avoid charges, it is possible to have the annuities transferred direct by the pension authority in Vienna to a UK account via the Deutsche Post Stuttgart. Application forms for the direct transfer of a pension are available from this office.

Quoting your account number, Creditanstalt-Bank Austria - which merged in 2003 - can be contacted at Internationale Privatkunden, Schottengasse 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to michael@ajr.org.uk. Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment, please ring 020 8385 3074.

A remarkable tribute: Ulm celebrates Anna Essinger's 125th anniversary

Leslie Baruch Brent



Bunce Court, the school run by Anna Essinger in Kent

Bunce Court, on the North Downs of Kent, became the home of Anna Essinger's avant-garde co-educational *Landschulheim* when she moved it from Herrlingen, near Ulm, in 1933. Her farsighted and courageous decision was taken immediately after she had been forced to fly the swastika flag on the school building. She took with her some 60 pupils and a number of teachers.

This year Ulm is commemorating its 1,150th anniversary and, together with Anna Essinger, the city also chose to honour Albert Einstein, who was born in the city 125 years ago.

Anna Essinger's achievements and contribution to the development of *Reformpädagogik* (hers was the first such school in the state of Württemberg) became known to the city of Ulm in 1989, when someone bought a house she had used in the 1920s-early 1930s and became intrigued by people knocking on her door to enquire about the fate of the school. In 1990 the two schools housed under the same roof - the *Gymnasium* and the *Realschule* - decided to adopt the name Anna-Essinger-Schulen. Plaques sprang up outside the house in Hafengasse in which she was born, as well as outside the four houses that had comprised the *Landschulheim* and associated children's homes. Gradually Anna Essinger became a household name as the schools as well as the city expressed their pride in this association and claimed her as their own.

The week of festivities, to which members of Anna's family (from the

UK, Israel and Germany) and several ex-Bunce Court and ex-Herrlingen pupils had been invited, was remarkable. It began with early-morning speeches and music and sophisticated gymnastics in the square outside the *munster* (the gymnastics were inspired by Anna's philosophy that children should have physical exercise before breakfast), watched by 1,200 children and their teachers and some parents, many carrying large banners and pennants bearing her photograph. All walked to the house in which she was born and only then was breakfast taken. Other events in the week included an assembly of the schools in the large amphitheatre outside the school building, addresses by the lord mayor of Ulm and by the head teacher of the *gymnasium*, the singing of 'Happy Birthday', a musical offering, and an extraordinary rap performance by a young Turkish boy who had composed the words himself. Talks about Anna Essinger's educational philosophy and achievements, a question-and-answer session between the school children and former pupils of her schools, and a light-hearted evening commemorating her achievements followed.

For those of us who were pupils in Herrlingen and Bunce Court, and for Anna Essinger's relatives, it all seemed like a wonderful dream. How appropriate that Anna Essinger should be further honoured this year by her inclusion in the new edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Newsround

Berlin exhibition protests

The opening in Berlin of a spectacular exhibition of contemporary art was picketed by Jewish protesters. The exhibition's benefactor, Christian Flick, is the grandson of the wartime German industrialist Friedrich Flick, who worked slave labourers to death in his explosives factories and took over confiscated Jewish firms, but refused to compensate any of his surviving workers. Though he served four years in jail, when he died in 1972 he was one of the world's wealthiest men.

Churchilliana

The grandson of Sir Winston Churchill sold Sir Winston's papers after 25 years of trying. Revealed in a previously embargoed file, the Major government agreed to pay £12.5 million from the national lottery funds. Many hold the view that Sir Winston's archives belonged to the nation.

Prayer returns to Sarajevo synagogue

Nine years after the civil war in Bosnia, Sarajevo's sixteenth century synagogue, now partially restored, was consecrated as a house of worship on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year). Sarajevo's 700-member Sephardi Jewish community share the same street with a mosque and Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Hitler on the big screen

A major new film about Hitler, *Der Untergang* (The Downfall), has been released in Germany. It explores his last 12 days in a bunker beneath the bombed-out chancellery in Berlin. Germany retains its ban on the Nazi Party, the wearing of swastikas, publication of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and other relics of National Socialism.

'Trading with the Enemy?'

US Senator Prescott Bush, grandfather of President George Bush, represented German companies which were financial backers of Hitler. Evidence was found in the US National Archives that the company for which he worked represented Germany's largest coal and steel company, Thiesen, who helped fund Hitler in the 1930s. The business relationship lasted until its assets were seized in 1942 under the Trading with the Enemy Act.