

Jewish Socialist

10TH ANNIVERSARY APPEAL

With this issue, **Jewish Socialist** is celebrating its first ten years of publication. We could not have done it without your generous support.

Now you can help **Jewish Socialist** flourish for the next ten years. It's your magazine - please support it!

I want to help secure the future of Jewish Socialist

I enclose:

☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £100

☐ Other £_____

Cheques payable to **Jewish Socialist**

Name.....

Address.....

Please return to JS Appeal, BM 3725 London WC1N 3XX

THE WOBURN BOOKSHOP

10 Woburn Walk
London WC1H 0JL
0171-388 7278

**Second-hand and
antiquarian books
bought and sold**

... cultural studies, social history
philosophy, anthropology,
Jewish studies, cinema...

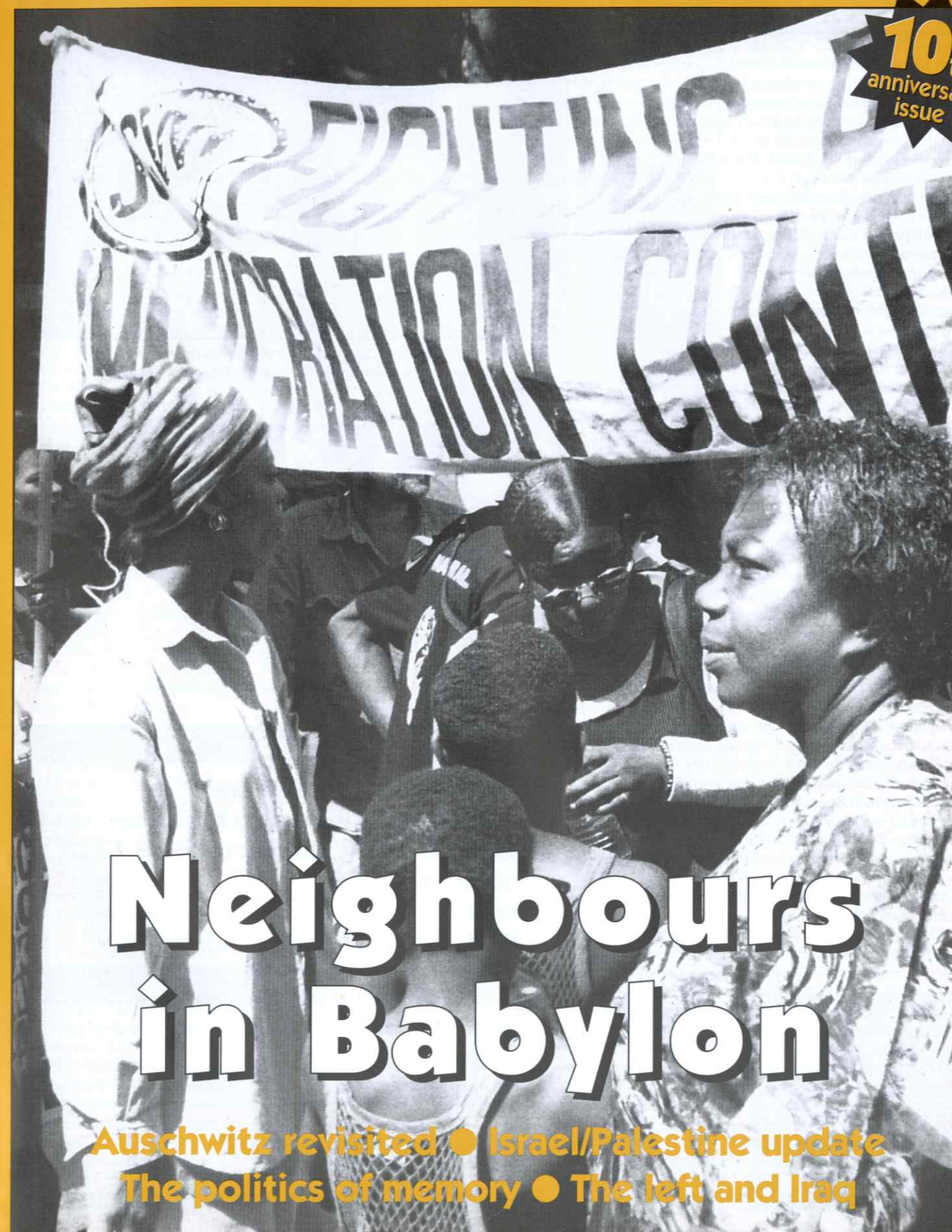
Monday to Friday 11.00-7.00
Saturday 11.00-5.00

Jewish Socialist

Magazine of the Jewish Socialists' Group

No 34 • Autumn 1995 • £1.50

10th
anniversary
issue



Neighbours in Babylon

**Auschwitz revisited • Israel/Palestine update
The politics of memory • The left and Iraq**

Subscribe now!

➤ **Jewish Socialist** is published four times a year. Don't be left without your copy. Subscribe today by sending the form below to: **Jewish Socialist**, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX. **Jewish Socialist** is also available on tape.

☒ Please send me **Jewish Socialist** for a year starting with issue.....

I enclose £7.50 (inc p&p). I also enclose a donation of £.....

Name.....

Address.....

(Overseas subscriptions: £15 Sterling)

WHERE WE STAND

● We stand for the rights of Jews, as Jews, in a socialist future.

● We fight for a socialist movement, embracing the cultural autonomy of minorities, as essential to the achievement of socialism.

● We draw on our immigrant experience and anti-racist history in order to challenge anti-semitism, racism, sexism, heterosexism and fascism today. We support the rights of and mobilise solidarity with all oppressed groups.

● We recognise the equal validity and integrity of all Jewish communities, and reject the ideology of Zionism, currently dominating world Jewry, which subordinates the needs and interests of Diaspora Jews to those of the Israeli state.

● We work for a socialist solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict based on equality and self-determination of Israeli and Palestinian Jews and Arabs.

.....
Join the Jewish Socialists' Group.
Write to: Membership Secretary,
JSG, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX

Jewish Socialist

This issue of *Jewish Socialist*, marks 10 years of continuous publication. Without the financial support of any institution within or outside the Jewish community, relying purely on volunteers, we feel this is no small achievement. In those 10 years several larger left-wing magazines have folded or faced great difficulties.

We launched *Jewish Socialist* to fill a vacuum. In the mid-1980s our Jewish communal establishment was very comfortable. Its stranglehold on the organised Jewish community through its commitment to political conservatism, Zionism and religious orthodoxy seemed unassailable. Yet we knew that this did not meet the experience of many Jewish people of all generations who felt marginalised and alienated, especially those who were politically active in the wider society.

At the same time the left has not always been the most welcoming home. Many socialist organisations still believe that minorities should shed all aspects of their culture in the name of universalism.

One of the main aims of the magazine is to provide a voice for the marginalised. Working class Jews, Jews with disabilities, feminists, Jews in mixed relationships, lesbian and gay Jews, Jews critical of Zionism, and Jews fighting to combine their cultural identity with their political beliefs, have all found a place to express their views in *Jewish Socialist*.

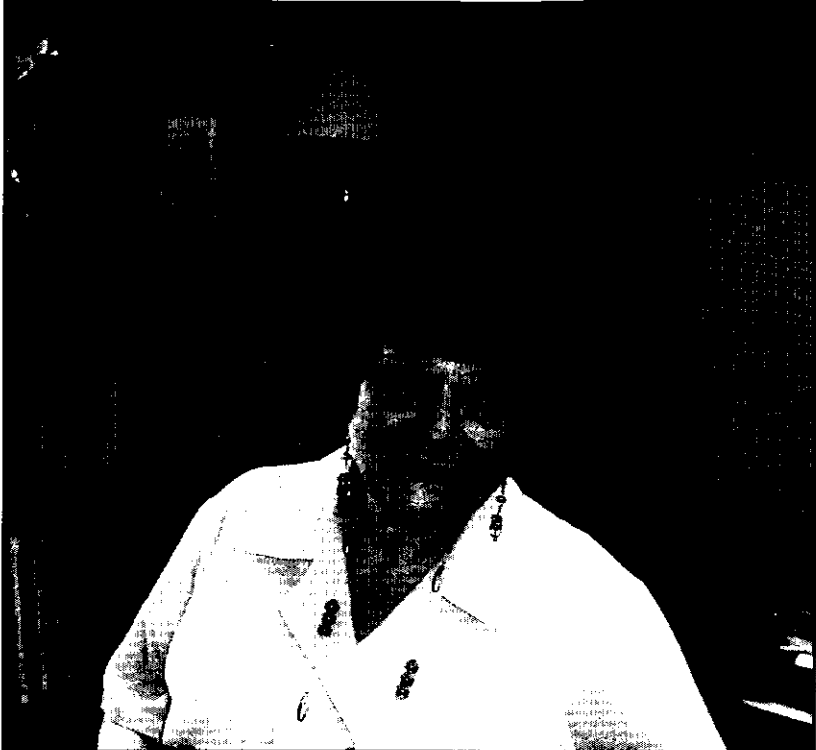
We have also tried to break the taboos around certain issues in our community such as circumcision and political manipulation of the Holocaust. In 1995 these issues are more openly debated, these voices find more resonance and 'leaders' of the Jewish community know their ideas and authority are more widely contested.

Nevertheless most Jewish community publications remain within the religious and/or Zionist fold. But our magazine is avowedly secularist, socialist and diasporist. We have been particularly committed to linking Jewish diaspora experience with other minorities, crossing the boundaries that divide us. Our feature 'Neighbours in Babylon' in this anniversary issue, written jointly by two women – one black and one Jewish – advances a debate generated by black writer Paul Gilroy in an earlier issue of *Jewish Socialist*.

The last ten years have been difficult for socialists in Britain, but new fronts are opening and, as always, the left needs forums where we can discuss, debate and develop new ideas as a spur to action. We hope that *Jewish Socialist* will continue to be one such forum among many.

Thank you for your continued support.
● 10th anniversary appeal – see back cover

Editorial committee: Julia Bard, Paul Collins, Ralph Levinson, Ruth Lukom, Simon Lynn, Karen Merkel, Charlie Pottins and David Rosenberg. Design: Clifford Singer. Cover photo by Simon Lynn: Joy Gardner's mother, Myrna Simpson at an anti-racist demonstration, London, August 1995



Helen Bamber describes her work with refugees and torture victims from Belsen to Bosnia. Interview on page 14

contents

NEWS	
Joy Gardner	3
Bonded labour scandal	3
Women in the community	4
Paris police racism	5
Jewish AIDS trust	5
Notes from America	6
FEATURES	
Reflections on Israel and Palestine	8
Holocaust museum: the politics of memory	12
Belsen to Bosnia: Helen Bamber interview	14
Neighbours in Babylon	18
Auschwitz 1995	20
The road of no return – short story	23
REVIEWS	
Iraq understood	28
Memorials and meaning	30
Model occupation	32
Conscience and courage	33
Immigration controls, Amos Oz	34

Plus: Dybbuk's diary 7 • Letters 17 • Poetry 35

HOWARD'S WAY

Most readers of *Jewish Socialist* will know that Joy Gardner died when three police officers tried to capture her to deport her to Jamaica and that these officers have been acquitted of manslaughter. The officers wrapped four metres of tape round her mouth, as a consequence of which Joy Gardner stopped breathing.

Whatever the legal reasoning that enabled the police to evade being jailed for Joy's death, her campaign is continuing to fight to secure justice and get the police and immigration authorities to admit responsibility.

The major point that has been almost completely ignored in the protests against her killing was that Joy Gardner should never have been deported at all. Her mother was settled in this country. Joy Gardner should have had the right to live here as well.

Her mother, Myrna Simpson, like many Caribbean women, came to work in Britain when Joy was 10, leaving her with relatives. Many Caribbean women who came here alone intended to send for their children as soon as they found work and somewhere permanent to live. They found they were not entitled to bring their children over unless they could show that the people caring for them were unfit to do so.

But if these carers were unfit the mothers would hardly have left their children with them. Usually, the only argument that convinced the immigration authorities was that the grandparents had become too old.

If the rules seem like a conspiracy to exclude black families it is because others coming simply to work here were excluded long ago. Immigration officers would try to prove that the wives and children of Asian men



Joy Gardner's mother continuing the campaign

settled here were not really their relations. Eventually expensive DNA tests could prove that they were, but only after thousands of children had grown up away from their fathers. It also became very difficult for third world men to prove that the 'primary purpose' of their marriages was not to gain residency in the UK.

Released from harassing Asian families due to DNA tests, the immigration officers turned their energies to harassing third world visitors to this country – in particular those from the Caribbean. Several were refused entry on every flight until, just before Christmas 1993, over 100 Jamaicans visiting their families were refused entry. As most of the visitors from the Caribbean come to visit families this is another attack on black families.

Nowadays visitors from most of the world need a visa

simply to visit the UK.

In many ways immigration laws in the European Union are being coordinated, though the Home Office is fighting any attempts to harmonise laws that would relax the UK's rigid controls at Dover. For the first time a European campaign has been formed to coordinate opposition to racist immigration laws. The recently formed Family Immigration Rights is the UK group of the *Coordination Européenne pour le Droit des Etrangers à vivre en famille*.

Meanwhile the Joy Gardner Campaign continues despite the exoneration of the police officers. But it might avert future tragedies if the campaign joins the fight against racist immigration laws, and against the 'stop all black people settling here' attitude that led to the death of Joy Gardner.

Bernard Misrahi

A CRUEL TWIST

India's 'Rugmark' scheme which guarantees a handknitted carpet to have been made free of exploited child labour has produced a backlash. Bonded Liberation Front activists have been arrested in India and Pakistan after orders from Germany were cancelled. The charges against the activists range from spying to criminal libel while for the factory owners it's business as usual.

Consumer pressure on retailers is central to the success of the Rugmark campaign as Germany has proved. Crucial, too, is the continued financial support of the Indo-German Export Promotion Council for the Rugmark Foundation which operates the scheme.

● Further information from the Anti-Slavery Society, 180 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AT.

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

A growing number of Jewish interest books are appearing in the catalogue of Letterbox Library – specialist distributors of anti-racist and anti-sexist children's books. Their latest lists include *Ima on the Bimah*, *Jeremy's Dreidel*, *Eve and her Sisters*, and *My Grandmother's Stories*.

● Further details from Letterbox Library, Unit 2d, Leroy House, 436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP.

Write on!

Celebrate 10 years of *Jewish Socialist* with a brilliant, colourful anniversary pen. It writes in English and Yiddish, from right to left or left to right. It's got black ink and a Jewish *neshome* and it only costs £1.25 (inc p&p). From *Jewish Socialist*, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX.

JOHNNY ROTTEN

A year after the publication of the Chief Rabbi's report on women in the Jewish community, there is growing frustration at the continuing discrimination. Julia Bard reports

'I think we've behaved amazingly well. We've been waiting patiently for nearly 2000 years,' says Sandra Blackman, an agunah – an orthodox Jewish woman 'chained' to her ex-husband by discriminatory religious divorce laws. She is one of hundreds of women who took part in research for the report on Women in the Jewish Community instigated by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. Now, a year after the report's publication, she is frustrated that its recommendations have been either ignored or hived off from the public domain to be negotiated by rabbis behind the scenes. And she is not alone. The Jewish Women's Network has accused the Chief Rabbi of ignoring the plight of women and of breaking his promise that the report would not be allowed to gather dust.

Meetings organised by the research team unearthed a catalogue of grievances experienced in every sphere of Jewish life by every type of Jewish woman, young and old, lesbian and heterosexual, rich and poor, religious and secular. It was as if the lid had been blown off a pressure cooker.

Single women, childless women, lone mothers, lesbians, widows and divorcees all described their feeling of isolation and exclusion from a community which places so much value on the 'traditional family'.

Orthodox women in the mainstream of the community felt just as strongly about discrimination. They resented being relegated upstairs in the synagogue and were disappointed at

being told they must not recite Kaddish for a loved one who has died. A women-only prayer group was angered at being forbidden to read from the traditional scrolls.

Most painful of all were reports from the research group on get (Jewish divorce) and agunah (the 'chained wife'). As Jewish law is currently interpreted, no man can be forced to grant his wife a get. But without a get a woman is effectively excommunicated. She cannot remarry in an orthodox synagogue; if she establishes a new relationship, she is deemed an adulteress and any subsequent children are categorised as bastards who can only marry other bastards for nine generations.

Disappointment

Adrienne Baker who headed the group looking at divorce says: 'We knew that change couldn't be radical, but we felt the Chief Rabbi had a real commitment to do everything in his power to improve the situation.' In October 1993 he announced the introduction of a Pre-Nuptial Agreement – a clause added to the marriage contract which would oblige a husband to grant a get if the marriage breaks down. But, to the disappointment of the research team, he soon caved in to pressure from more orthodox rabbis and withdrew this initiative.

Many women were sceptical from the start. Jewish Women's Network member Dena Attar says: 'There was such a high level of suspicion, mistrust and anger among women who attended discussions that the researchers were repeatedly

called on to explain what working with the Chief Rabbi would achieve, and to guarantee that he would not interfere with the content of the final report.'

Janet Cohen, a member of the group researching the family, says: 'My expectations were not high that the Chief Rabbi would do anything, but I had a sense that perhaps the real work was to say to women, "What are you going to do?"' As a member of a Progressive synagogue, Janet Cohen's perspective differed from the Chief Rabbi's and this emerged clearly in her area of research – intermarriage. Jonathan Sacks says that mixed marriage 'now threatens the very basis of Jewish survival'. He talks of the community 'losing ten Jews a day', expressing a fundamentalist argument that continuing the Jewish heritage 'requires two Jews to marry and have Jewish children.' Janet Cohen prefers a more inclusive vision of the Jewish community in which non-Jewish partners are respected and welcomed.

Many women believe that Sacks is stalling because the evidence of the review, that women want diversity, debate and to define their own needs, conflicts with his own view that Jewish survival depends on maintaining a core of orthodox Jews living according to the letter of the law – under his authority. But, says Rosalind Preston, 'the genie is out of the bottle and you can't get it back in. I think the Chief Rabbi would like to see progress but he doesn't want to be responsible for rocking the boat.'

Doreen Fine, who headed the religious affairs group agrees. 'We feel betrayed. We have asked for simple religious guidelines on issues that affect people's lives so dramatically, but they

haven't been issued because of a fear about what the right wing [ultra-orthodox] rabbis will say. My personal belief is that women who want to stay within orthodox Judaism must find rabbis who are learned and confident enough to give the necessary rulings and bypass the central authority.'

This is already happening. Sharon Lee, chairwoman of the Jewish Women's Network does not accept the Chief Rabbi's directives. She says that Jonathan Sacks is making political, not religious, rulings, and stifling debate by threatening to disenfranchise those who publicly flout his instructions. 'Women have to support each other and to make things happen,' she says. 'Change will only take place when women stop paying homage to the rabbinic establishment.'

Inflated

This leaves the Chief Rabbi in a dilemma of his own making, as Dena Attar describes: 'Since he was appointed, all the media attention has enabled him to claim an inflated status as leader of the entire Jewish community when in fact he is head of just one synagogue movement out of several and has no jurisdiction on secular issues. But ironically, the more he has promoted his role, the more he comes under attack, the more he is delegitimised and the less respect he has. People are beginning to question his right to represent them. I think he should go back into obscurity.'

Sandra Blackman, the agunah waiting in vain for a ruling that would release her and other women from an injustice that is blighting their lives, says: 'I've lost my faith in Jonathan Sacks. We feel so let down, but we'll never, never give up till we see justice.'

● Further information about the Jewish Women's Network from 41 Dorset Drive, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7NT. Tel 0181-905 61222.

PARIS POLICE UNITE JEWS AND ARABS

While commemorating the Holocaust, we cannot afford to ignore the growing threat of present-day racism and antisemitism. An incident in Belleville in May – when Xavier Lelloum, a 21 year old Jew, was brutally ill-treated during an identity check by police who then physically attacked the protesting crowd and shouted 'dirty Jew, dirty Arab' – reflects deeply entrenched racism in the French police and is symptomatic of a growing tide of overt racism.

Belleville is a multi-ethnic district of east Paris. It includes Arab, Jewish, Turkish, African and more recently, Chinese communities. All the immigrant communities have their own patch close together in the district. They coexist and indeed often mix. Jews and Arabs mix too, sharing a common North African culture. There is life and vitality in Belleville,

where slums are giving way to apartment blocks.

Unfortunately, the incident in May comes as little surprise to those who know police attitudes in the area well. For the truth is that police regard Arabs, Blacks and Jews as second class citizens. There is no certainty that the current generation of police would not collaborate with a fascist government as their 1940 counterparts did. Little appears to have been learnt from the experience of the Vichy days, though the incident does appear to be giving rise to some solidarity among Jews, Arabs and other minorities against racist authority.

The recent drowning of a Moroccan in the Seine, pushed to his death by a group of skinheads attending a Front National (FN) rally, is further evidence of indifference on the part of French authorities to the rights of black people. Why,

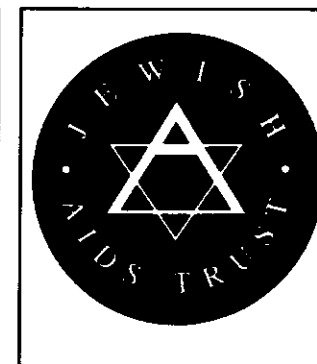
for instance, did it take a Polish rather than a French TV camera crew to come forward with video evidence? Contrary to Le Pen's claim that there was no connection between the Front National and the skinheads who attended the FN rally, the pictures clearly show him and skinheads exchanging salutes as they marched past the FN leader's rostrum.

Then there is the fact that the FN polled a healthy 15% in the first round of the recent presidential elections. The plain fact is that the political credibility given to the FN by the electorate promotes the message that racially motivated attacks – and even murders – are acceptable. Incidents such as those that took place in Belleville or on the banks of the Seine go hand in hand with a far right agenda that is supported by a growing proportion of the voting public.

Tony Blend



Jewish Socialists' Group members turned out in East London to protest a Nazi attack on a Jewish cemetery. The attack on Marlow Road grounds in East Ham was one of three recent attacks. Cemeteries in Hull and Bournemouth have suffered similarly. More than 50 gravestones were smashed in the East Ham attack. There have also been arson attacks on Jewish school buildings in London and Manchester. The East Ham protest was called by the local Anti-Nazi League. The ANL collected hundreds of signatures of local people on a petition condemning the attack.



'IT DOESN'T HAPPEN HERE'

The Jewish AIDS Trust was established in 1988 to provide the community with education, counselling and support in connection with HIV infection and AIDS. It serves the entire spectrum of the Jewish community, offering confidential counselling for people with HIV/AIDS as well as their partners, families and friends. There is an education programme for schools, universities, rabbis and social welfare and other organisations. The Trust provides financial support for people facing hardship due to an AIDS/HIV diagnosis and there is a telephone line offering advice, information, support and counselling run by trained volunteers. Although it receives funding from a range of sources including statutory authorities, charitable trusts, synagogues, youth movements and individuals, the Trust always needs donations.

The organisation is sensitive to how AIDS, HIV and related issues may be perceived by more orthodox people in the community, and there is a strong emphasis on the particular implications of HIV/AIDS for Jews. Their publicity material emphasises that a caring and compassionate approach to people with

Continued on page 6

'IT DOESN'T HAPPEN HERE'

Continued from page 5

HIV infection or AIDS and to their families and their friends is fully compatible with a continuing commitment to the 'highest Jewish values and ideals' such as chesed ve'emet, respect for our fellow human beings, behaving with kindness and compassion and accepting that HIV/AIDS are no respecters of religion, race or nationality and bikur cholim, our duty to care for the needs of the sick.

In common with much HIV/AIDS prevention material, the Trust's publicity lists what you cannot catch HIV from — including specifically Jewish rituals like sharing a kiddush cup, blowing a shofar and using the mikveh.

The number of Jewish people with HIV/AIDS seeking support from the Trust is rising fast. Rosalind Collin, the Trust's director, says that most of their counselling work is with families of people who are HIV positive or who have AIDS. People are seeking reassurance about the religious position or about their place within their communities. Rosalind says that the community has been slow to accept that Jewish people may have HIV/AIDS.

The Jewish AIDS Trust is treading a difficult tightrope, ensuring that it is accessible to Jewish people who have HIV/AIDS at the same time as being acceptable to those who find the whole notion of Jewish people with AIDS unthinkable. So far they are succeeding.

● **Jewish AIDS Trust, HIV Education Unit, Colindale Hospital, Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5HG. Telephone helpline 0181-200 0369, 7.30pm-10pm Mondays.**

NOTES FROM AMERICA

Los Angeles. As everyone knows, the place is designed for cars rather than people. Until I went there for the first time recently, I didn't understand the reason: LA is a third world city. In fact the United States is a third world country with a privileged elite surrounded by unbelievable poverty. In the third world a car is more than a status symbol: it's a way of avoiding the people with no money. Cars allow members of the elite to travel to each other's homes and to their shops, schools, churches and clubs without having any contact with the poor.

Poor transport — cramped and unreliable — is only for the lower classes. When I insisted on taking a bus ride in LA, strenuous attempts were made to dissuade me, as if I was taking foolhardy risks — exactly the same reaction I got in Zimbabwe. The movie stars and other wealthy residents move about their world while the rest live in amazing poverty; amazing only because this is the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth. In New York too I saw endless streets where the degradation and misery reminded me of the worst parts of Harare.

There is, of course, resistance. On Santa Monica beach in north LA an endless stream of beautiful people cruised on rollerblades. I watched them with a newly-found distant cousin, a teacher in an inner-city school and a union activist. As we walked he told me all the reasons why he hates capitalism. Another cousin runs a feminist bookshop where I bought a copy of Z Magazine: intelligent, readable, stimulating with some excellent humour.

Later I bought Socialist Worker from a street seller in Brooklyn. I said that the British paper of the same name spends a lot of time accusing the Labour Party of betrayal and sounding

surprised about it. The seller said that their paper criticised the Democrats in the same way, though in fact the paper was full of news about industrial disputes and attacks on the Republicans. A left paper in the UK that combined the virtues of their Z Magazine and Socialist Worker might be worth reading...

In Santa Barbara, a sleepy, wealthy town on the Californian coast where I was attending a conference, the local newspaper had a lengthy piece by a local writer about his father's experiences in the Korean war. These experiences led his father to campaign against later US military adventures in Vietnam and Central America, to serve time in jail for non-violent direct action and to encourage his son to share his values. In the New York Times I read about an industrial dispute in the newspaper business in Detroit, a city with a long history of union militancy. Walking down Fifth Avenue, I looked down from the skyscrapers to see a union picket outside the Alitalia office.

The US is a country of extremes, and this is certainly true of the Jewish community, which my left-wing cousins in LA have little to do with, though their

80-year-old mother goes to a havurah group for older people. The mainstream Jewish newspaper in LA has a left-of-centre editor and ran a feature on young community leaders which included many with leftist politics. I met similar Jews in New York with whom I made Friday night kiddush in Prospect Park just near an open air performance of The Threepenny Opera.

At the other extreme, I visited an elderly cousin in Brooklyn whose entire neighbourhood has been bought out by a hassidic sect (the diamond business has a lot to answer for). In the virulently right wing weekly Jewish Press, one angry article after another denounces Rabin and Peres for selling out to terrorists. A Rabbi Stone explains that conquering the entire land of Israel is a 'milchemet mitzva' — a battle we are commanded to do. On another page a Likud Member of Knesset scornfully dismisses Rabin's claim that such rabbis are 'Ayatollahs'; he 'cannot understand how any Jew could so insult the very people who are perpetuating the Jewish heritage'. Makes you proud, doesn't it? I never thought it would be a relief to come home to the Jewish Chronicle.

Raphael Salkie

celebrate anarchy

We are organising 'A Celebration of Jewish Anarchism' with music, food, poetry, anecdotes and speeches, to take place in Whitechapel in October 1995. We are inviting any JS readers who are interested to be involved in the planning of this event. We hope to raise money to publish a Turkish edition of Emma Goldman's 'Living my Life' that is being translated by the Turkish 5th May Group (Turkish Anarchists in London).

Contact: North and East London Solidarity Federation, c/o The Colin Roach Centre, 56 Clarence Road, London E5 (0181-533-7111)

SIR ALF BRINGS THE HOUSE DOWN

To the Mother of Parliaments, for a meeting about 'peace in the Balkans'. Tony Benn talks about atrocities committed by the Ottoman Turks, and the assassination of 'Archduke Otto' (he means Franz-Ferdinand) in Sarajevo in 1914. He tells us Bosnian Muslims are only 'converted Serbs'. 'Then why are they being ethnically cleansed?' someone asks.

More recent atrocities are what you expect in a war, we're told. It's all the fault of the Germans. Right! If the European Union hadn't recognised Croatia and Bosnia, the Yugoslav National Army could have carried on bombarding cities and butchering people, and we could pretend it was restoring internal order, like Czar Boris has done in Chechnya. Serbia had to delegate, so we call it a civil war.

Bosnians who've been through it ask how anyone can equate a multicultural Bosnia with those striving for an ethnically pure Serb state. A Jewish Socialist recalls the accusation made by Warsaw ghetto veteran, Marek Edelman, that Europe was behaving to Bosnia's Muslims just as it had to the ghetto; he quotes prime minister Aris Siladzic: those who uphold the arms embargo are accomplices in genocide, and is applauded. The platform is horrified.

A young American announces he has details of payments to the Serb lobby. This is the cue for the star of the evening. 'You'd better not have my name there or you'll be hearing from my lawyers!' quips Sir Alfred Sherman, rising to his feet.

'Where's your pal, Le Pen?', shout delighted fans. The old Stalinist-turned-Tory assures us he has nothing against Muslims, but... he launches into a colourful, albeit far-fetched picture of fundamentalists imposing Muslim dress code and polygamous marriage in Bosnia

dybbuk's diary

that brings the only laughter of the evening.

'I'm proud to be an adviser for Karadzic!' Sir Alf concludes.

This was supposed to be a 'peace' meeting, and Dr. Karadzic is a war criminal, but as Le Pen would say, that is 'a mere detail'.

WINNIE'S WINDFALL

Competition has been keen for this year's Prize for Chutzpah. There's Sir Alfred Sherman posing as a peacenik, for instance. Or Paul Johnson, on Radio 4's Sunday programme, accusing gays and lesbians of proselytising and preying on the young: there are a lot of militant lesbians in the world, who want to get hold of young girls and convert them to their proclivities. They want to get hold of our daughters and granddaughters! Two days earlier yet another priest of Mr Johnson's persuasion had been convicted for sexual assaults on young boys.

In the union field Jimmy Airlie, whose AEEU wangled the scab electricians' union back into the TUC, expressed outrage at the National Union of Mineworkers discussing a merger with the oilworkers' OILC.

But leading the field for chutzpah so far is Winston Churchill, MP who won £12.5 million from the national lottery without even buying a ticket, by selling the nation his grandfather's papers, which most people assumed were State property anyway.

The Member for Davyhulme

then told a radio interviewer that 'more and more' immigrants were coming to this country for the 'good life' on state benefits. Bernard Manning isn't Manchester's only master of bad taste.

BASIL'S BRUSH

A new book about the Communist Party reveals an odd byway of British Jewish history. In 1946 Basil Henriques, scion of one of Anglo-Jewry's most noble families, sought to enlist East End Communist MP Phil Piratin in a united front, not against fascism, but against Zionism.

Sir Basil belonged to the Jewish Fellowship, which tried to counter the Zionist conquest of institutions like the Board of Deputies, arguing that British Jews were a religious group, not a nationality.

Piratin and Jack Gaster had testified before the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine in 1946. Sir Basil wrote that he was 'amazed and delighted' to see their position 'was almost identical with that given by the Jewish Fellowship'. He urged Piratin to join the Fellowship, 'for the Jewish members of the Communist Party are only waiting for a lead from someone like yourself'.

In 1947 the Communist Party executed a swift about-turn when Moscow backed partition and Jewish statehood. Phil Piratin's book *Our Flag Stays Red* does not touch on such matters. The Henriques letter, now in the Zaidman collection at Sheffield

University, is quoted in Henry Srebnik's essay on the CP, Jewish Communists and Zionism, in *Opening the Books*, published recently by Pluto Press.

IN A JAM

At Sukkos (Tabernacles to you, too), it is customary to take to the synagogue the four *minim* (kinds), to wit: a *lulav* (palm branch, three myrtle branches and two willow branches, bound together) and an *esrog* (citron fruit). No, son, the partridge in a pear tree is from another tradition.

After Sukkos last year, Alan, in Baltimore decided to make 'esrog jelly'. (I guess, being an American, he means jam). 'Somehow I made a mistake in the recipe and we ended up with 'esrog rock candy', which we were unable to remove from the jar in any real amount.'

Nu, so why not throw it out? Ah...

'Since this jelly was made from a *shmitta esrog*, (meaning it was grown in the seventh year of a cycle, when the land is supposed to have a sabbatical), we can't throw it out or burn it or sell it or even give it away to a non-Jew.' OK, so why not keep it? Here, like a *yeshiva bokher's* sidelock, the plot gets another twist.

'The problem is that on one of our attempts to eat some of the jelly, a piece of bread became stuck in it. With Pesach coming up, we now have a real problem — *chometz* that we can't get rid of.

The jelly has two pounds of sugar in it so it is not likely to spoil any time in the next century. Has anyone ever had a similar problem? The rabbis we have asked so far in Baltimore are at a loss. I didn't find out what Alan did with his jelly, or jam. Our resident rabbi's suggestion wasn't very helpful. 'If Alan lived in Eretz Yisroel, in a nice Orthodox neighbourhood, he could chuck it at a passing motorist on Shabbos.' Maybe JS readers have other ideas?

REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

A Jewish Socialists' Group dayschool ● 5th November 1995 ● 10-30am-5pm

Caxton House, St John's Way, Archway, London N19

Further details and registration from JSG BM 3725, London WCIN 3XX

Peace when?

Reuven Kaminer argues that the Middle East peace process must steer a precarious course between the right and the rejectionists. And despite the difficulties, Michael Heiser found the Israeli peace movement in a confident mood

My political friends and associates have split into three factions regarding the Oslo Accords and the current peace process. The first group, the 'counsellors of despair', have defined Oslo as the result of a massive failure of nerve and will on the part of the Palestinian leadership; in short, capitulation. Oslo, they say, can lead only to the demise of the national liberation movement of the Palestinian people.

The second group, has defined Oslo as an irreversible process leading to Palestinian self-determination and to Arab/Palestinian - Israeli peace. This group builds its optimism on the assumption that the main actors in the Middle East drama, under United States tutelage, have decided to end the conflict.

The third group rejects both brands of determinism. Oslo, they argue, was basically the only viable strategy for the Palestinians. It is a new terrain of struggle but it involves a complicated set of dangers and opportunities. The Palestinians have not been defeated, nor have they reached the promised land. Everything depends on Palestinian resourcefulness, on the battle for peace in Israel and on the international scene. I belong to the third group, the party of hope and struggle.

Sadly, Edward Said, has taken on the role of the prophet of those who claim that all was lost at Oslo. Azmi Basharah, Tanya Reinhart and a host of other intellectuals are disciples. It is almost superfluous to praise Azmi and Tanya (and others who agree with them on Oslo) for their firm and consistent contribution to the common struggle against Israeli chauvinism and militarism in all its forms. Nothing in this current debate with them could or should affect the quest for unity in day-to-day actions against the continuing occupation.

The background for the Oslo Accords was the dismal and almost hopeless situation in which the PLO and the Palestinian national movement found itself during the summer of 1993, and Yasser Arafat has succinctly defined the Accords as the 'best possible agreement in the worst possible conditions'. The basic elements of these 'worst possible conditions' were clear and undeniable. The Soviet Union and its allies had disappeared as an independent political force; progressive Arab nationalism had been decisively defeated; and, to the degree that the status quo was being challenged in the Arab world, that challenge was coming from the Islamic fundamentalists.

Well before the signing of the Accords, informed critics were declaring that the PLO had, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist. It took courage to recast Palestinian strategy and to chart a course based on political realities instead of revolutionary phraseology, (that most consistent and deadly enemy of any real revolutionary action). Arafat made the decision. It is not surprising that the opponents of Oslo refrain from analysing the

real alternatives that existed then, in the late summer of 1993, when the bitter and hard decision had to be made. It is, of course, much easier, to pretend that Arafat and his supporters really believed that they had made it to the promised land and to 'expose' the stark realities after Oslo and after the Cairo agreements.

Edward Said presents the following arguments against Arafat. Firstly, Arafat has not received the approval of any legitimate Palestinian bodies for the Agreements. Secondly, his policy is one of surrender and in this latter scenario, redeployment is not included, ie will never take place. Thirdly, Arafat is not a democrat and this proves that he is really not struggling for a state. Of course, the thrust of all this is 'betrayal of the national aims'. The accusation is loud and clear.

Dr Azmi Bisharah carried this one step further when he declared at a recent meeting marking the 28th anniversary of the occupation that the Palestinian national movement was beaten and eliminated and there is no longer any basis for talking about a Palestinian state. In addition to everything else, 'after Syria also makes peace with Israel, the Palestinians will lose their last backing... and the Palestinians do not have the land reserves necessary to establish a state after these have been taken over by the settlements'.

Professor Tania Reinhart stated that the occupation has actually grown more efficient and more effective in the post-Oslo conditions. Palestinians are physically divided, the closure reigns supreme. In short the occupation is administered by 20,000 Palestinian police instead of the Israeli Defence Forces.

Our post-rejectionists have taken over some of the more negative aspects of Marxist, or rather Stalinist rhetoric. The opponents are traitors (despite their past record) and their actions have already destroyed all chances of a Palestinian state. Arafat has condemned the Palestinians to a dreary existence in isolated cantons run by his lieutenants, who are in the pay of Israel. The drama unfolds around the act of treachery, the act sets in place inexorable and irreversible processes.

The really serious accusation by Said was that of betrayal, leading to an unjustified capitulation. The argument that Arafat did not have a majority in PLO bodies seems artificial. If the strategy he proposed was betrayal, what difference would it make if he had 55% instead of 45% in the PLO bodies (none of which were ever elected). The formal argument, with all due respect for the various bodies of the PLO, seems more appropriate to traditionally democratic, stable, constitutional entities than to Palestinian realities. Arafat closed shop in Tunis to go to Palestine where the real test of his status and his strategy will take place and where it will be tested in every sense regarding popular, democratic support. Said's naiveté is even more

obvious when he explains that Arafat's disregard for democracy proves that he is indifferent to sovereignty. It is enough to repeat this accusation to sense its emptiness. Alas, in real life, there is no necessary connection between democracy and sovereign power.

Oslo may turn out to have been a mistake, and perhaps one form or another of the Masada option for the organised national movement may have been a wiser choice. We will be able to decide this question on the basis of the outcome of the present struggle whose results are not a foregone conclusion. Much depends on the struggle of the Palestinian people, the peace forces in Israel and international developments. The struggle continues and the Palestinians still have many moral, political and material reserves. The post-rejectionists level many logical and helpful criticisms of the Palestinian Authority; they certainly say the right things about Israel's colossal crimes against chances for peace. But they are the heralds of a deep and profound despair. The struggle is over, they say; we have lost, we have been betrayed. Despair is a poor counsellor. Illusions are even worse, and Yossi Sarid is the leader of our party of illusions.

Yossi Sarid has announced, at least a dozen times during the last year that, for all practical purposes, a Palestinian state already exists. Sarid represents many sections of dove political opinion which, having to support and rely on Rabin, try and convince themselves that Rabin is proceeding in the right direction and that the questions of settlements, land confiscations, prisoner release, closures, and the encirclement of Jerusalem are only tactical phenomena.

Sarid is not only a minister, he is a central figure in the negotiations. The difficulty is that Rabin has figured out the Sarid technique. Sarid wants Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement and is willing to try and convince Rabin of the validity of the Palestinian position. But when Rabin refuses to buy the goods, Sarid invariably returns to Arafat and explains that Palestinian concessions are inevitable to save the process. Like any mediator between unequal sides, who does not have his own clear and consistent line, Sarid and many others under his influence represent Rabin more than Arafat. Sarid is far less capable of moving Rabin than Peres, who will always prefer to outmanoeuvre Rabin, rather than try to convince him of anything.

Rabin is subject to pressure and could be influenced from the left, despite his clear preference to make compromises on his right. This was proven beyond a shadow of a doubt when the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) forced Rabin to back down on land confiscations in Jerusalem, by convincing him that they would go all the way on the issue. On the morning of the no-confidence motion, Rabin, who gave everyone the impression that he would do anything, including resignation, except surrender to the Communists, capitulated totally, blaming the Likud for lack of Zionist solidarity. If they had supported him, he said, the confiscations would still be intact. This was an important political lesson. Given his way, Rabin will continue to endanger the peace process by



trying to exploit every advantage Israel has. But under pressure, he will do whatever is necessary to stay in business and keep the peace process going.

The illusions fostered by Sarid and others have served to paralyse the peace movement by trying to convince the participants that the peace process is on its way to success and that Rabin is not susceptible to pressure from the left. Some sharp parliamentary tactics by the DPFE exposed Meretz's inactivity. However, the DPFE tactic could only succeed because the outcome has not yet been decided. After Oslo, after Cairo, on the eve of redeployment or the first stage of redeployment, a running political battle rages between those forces in and around the Israeli government which are powerful and influential. They hope to use the peace process to truncate and degrade Palestinian self-determination and to bypass the broad front of forces, headed by the Palestinian people, which still has a great deal to say about the outcome of the present struggle.

Not a day goes by without evidence of attempts by Rabin and co to realise the Edward Said scenario and not a day goes by without evidence that mass political struggle can still shape the future. The police, under orders from the Likud-led Jerusalem municipal council embarked on a campaign to destroy ostensibly 'illegal' structures (built without the required building permit). After

Israeli peace protesters

an ugly affair in Issaswayeh, the Justice Minister ordered a 'cease and desist' order against the municipality. The government has joined the right-wing paranoia against Orient House, the Palestinian political headquarters in Jerusalem. Even so, Rabin's fear that the Palestinian Authority is operating in Jerusalem has not prevented the European Community from deciding that a visit to the spot is de rigueur for its foreign ministers (but not its prime ministers who visit Gaza, Jericho, Jenin, Nablus or Ramallah.) On the eve of an agreement on the second phase of the first stage, Israel is trying to bypass the prisoner issue, but the Palestinian masses are poised to intervene. Rabin takes pride in keeping every settlement on the West Bank intact during and after redeployment but complains that the financial cost of the (temporary) security arrangements for two settlements of 30 families each is \$250,000 per family! The temporary first stage may cost Israel up to a billion dollars and the Finance Minister has warned that the money must come out of the existing budget. So the fight over the conditions of the redeployment is in full swing.

It was impossible that any agreement would be reached by July 1, so Israel invented a new multi-phased stage 'creation' - redeployment in stages (after Gaza, they said 'Jericho first', now they say 'Jenin, Tulkarem and Kalkilyah first' and so on). This is a clear breach of the Oslo and Cairo accords. Rabin is trying to wring every conceivable concession from the Palestinian National Authority as the price for its entrance to the West Bank. This illuminates one of the main differences between the 'Oslo-was-worse-than-death' theoreticians and many of us in the peace camp: since Israel is in breach of Oslo, we can pursue the political battle for a just peace and Palestinian independence under the banner of international legitimacy. Israel is trying to sabotage both the letter and the spirit of the agreements. Why accept every Israeli deviation from its international commitments and why claim the accords are a figment of the imagination because the Palestinians via Arafat agreed to Israel's subsequent actions at Oslo, when this is simply not true?

Israel is committing a colossal crime by trying to squeeze every advantage for itself and ignoring basic Palestinian needs. Israeli security is important, but it will never be achieved if it is based on Palestinian unemployment and the malnutrition of Palestinian children. Israeli democracy will have to meet the challenge from the right-wing settlers and chauvinistic fundamentalism. Delaying the hour of truth can only increase the demands and the fantasies of the right and their allies.

True enough, Oslo and Cairo are so structured that the Israeli side is 'giving' territory and jurisdiction to the Palestinian side, which has no immediate remedy or sanction against Israeli procrastination. Rabin and co are tempted to believe that they have all the time in the world. Arafat, in response, has only one real sanction: to stop the process.

But that is the kind of trump card you use sparingly, if at all. So, the forces of peace and the Palestinian people, will take up the slack and continue the struggle.

Positive signs

A week is a long time in politics. In Israel in the week leading up to the 1 July deadline there were negotiations everywhere. In Cairo and Gaza Arafat and Peres tried to reach agreement. In Washington, Israeli and Syrian military envoys came face to face with each other and carried on talking. And Israeli and Jordanian negotiators reached a draft trade agreement. This last piece of news, which once would have merited banner headlines, slipped past on the English language news bulletin as second or third item.

In the Jerusalem theatre a photographic exhibition of scenes from Arab states features a Palestinian flag. Not too long ago it was a criminal offence to display one in Israel and the West Bank.

But if things are changing they are changing slowly. At the end of June there are demonstrations for the release of Palestinian prisoners. In Nablus, troops open fire and three Palestinians are killed. Tear gas is used outside Orient House, the PLO's HQ in East Jerusalem, and the mayor of Jerusalem threatens to close the building for breach of planning regulations.

Adam Keller of the Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc) saw the protests on the issue of prisoners as a grass roots movement organised by Fatah (Yasser Arafat's movement within the PLO). He said, 'Fatah feels that the armed struggle is over and that their comrades are now parties to negotiations while they are still in gaol. People in the West Bank feel that nothing has changed. Families share the anger of the prisoners and put pressure on Fatah. It strengthens Arafat's negotiating position.' Since the protests started, Rabin has announced that a ministerial committee will consider the issues. However the prisoners Israel will find hardest to release are those who have the greatest status in their own communities. 'In Palestinian society, the highest honour is to have a "two digit" term of imprisonment,' said Adam Keller.

In any case, for the Palestinian leadership, an agreement is strategically more important than prisoners. An agreement changes the situation on the ground. If Israel stays in the territories even if all the prisoners are released, the gaols would fill up again. Because of that the Palestinians have not made an issue of 1 July, but they expect an agreement to include withdrawal from Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm and Kalkilya. On my last visit, three years ago, there were demonstrations in the heart of West Jerusalem of both the peace bloc and the right wing. Today there are only supporters of the settlers.

Anat Israel from Peace now says that the situation has changed since then. 'Today we have a government that is trying. We stand against the government when necessary. If we were running the government it would be different.' But she points out, 'the things that were said by only a few people then are said by half the population now.'

Anat Israel says: 'We don't want to stand against the settlers. We only give them more power if we do that. Soon the army will leave the main West Bank cities. They are in a difficult position but they can't bring people on to the streets.'

Peace Now is concentrating on concrete initiatives

to win over public opinion. In March they published a list of 26 West Bank settlements - a total of only 7,000 residents - which they proposed should be evacuated as part of a second stage agreement. At the same time they proposed detailed arrangements for joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols to assure security for the remaining settlements in the interim phase.

In June they unveiled a plan to compensate settlers who move back over the Green Line, including giving them assistance with housing and, if necessary, employment.

The 'moderate peace camp' includes Peace Now, Meretz (a 'peace oriented' party in the governing coalition) and doves in the Labour Party such as deputy foreign minister, Yossi Beilin. Adam Keller feels they have an ambiguous role, saying they want to change the establishment, but they are themselves changed. 'He believes there is hope for a division of labour: 'People within the establishment are doing what they can but there are limits to this action. They need the support of people beyond that.'

He talked about the Hebron Solidarity Committee. The town of Hebron was under curfew while the centre was occupied by settlers. The committee, which includes people opposed to the Oslo Accords, demonstrated outside the home of Shulamit Aloni, one of the most high profile Meretz ministers in order to show that Meretz was a 'liberal fig leaf' for the government. Aloni invited the demonstrators in and listened to their arguments. She raised the issue in the Cabinet and, as a result, the curfew was raised. Subsequently the Committee held a joint demonstration with Meretz supporters in Hebron.

Reuven Kaminer of Gush Shalom is more critical of Meretz. He feels it has fallen into the trap of a determinism based on seeing the role of American imperialism as decisive. Meretz sees a Palestinian state as inevitable, because Washington wants it, without understanding that Rabin is susceptible to pressure from the left.

But Kaminer is also critical of the Palestinian rejectionist camp. To (Meretz minister) Yossi Sarid's 'party of delusion' he counterbalances (Palestinian intellectual) Edward Said's 'party of despair'.

'The Palestinians had to decide upon a new strategy or go to Masada,' he says. The Oslo accords reflect the balance of forces when they were made. There are lots of problems but the agreement needs to be measured against liquidationism. 'While not pointing to any particular figures, he adds: 'You would be surprised how many intellectuals become aware when they stop getting free aeroplane tickets.'

Gush Shalom, the more radical peace movement, had their origins in the Jewish-Arab Committee against Deportations. They strongly support adherence to the text of Oslo and demand that Rabin should implement it. They have published an advertisement in the Hebrew language daily paper *Ha'aretz*, calling for Jerusalem to be the capital of both the Israeli and Palestinian states that 'will live side by side'. 'Our Jerusalem must be united, open to all and belonging to all its inhabitants, without borders and barbed wires in its midst.'

On the issue of human rights in Gaza and Jericho, Reuven Kaminer is critical of authoritarian tendencies in the Palestinian leadership which he calls 'bureaucratic'. But he sees Palestinian liberation as

the dominant question 'until the establishment of two states.' He sharply disagrees with the position of Uri Davis who, in a letter to *Ha'aretz* said that the 'Israeli occupation was better than the Arafat occupation'. Both Reuven Kaminer and Anat Israel make clear that their support is for the secular Palestinians, not for Hamas. Peace Now does have links with religious Moslems in Jericho, but not with Hamas. However Anat Israel points out that Hamas did keep their agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

Peace with the Palestinians is one thing, but how about with Syria? Adam Keller thinks Washington is much more interested in peace with Syria than with the Palestinians. However, that will entail withdrawal from the Golan and any timetable is likely to be completed before the next Israeli elections. Rabin is likely to go for a referendum, particularly as he fought the last elections on not giving up the Golan. Everywhere in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv posters and bumper stickers proclaim 'Ha'am im ha golan' (The People with the Golan). However Adam Keller feels that if real peace were on offer Rabin will win a majority. Previously the Golan lobby had made an effort to be bi-partisan, now it is becoming more and more identified with the West Bank settlement lobby who have much less support among the general public.

Anat Israel has not forgotten that Rabin is the man who ordered bones to be broken at the time of the Intifada but Adam Keller believes the 'individualisation' of Israeli society, where collective institutions such as the Histadrut trade union federation and the kibbutz movement are in a precarious economic position, ironically favours the peace process. At the same time the Zionist movement is openly pondering its future in a situation where the diaspora is focusing more on its own needs than Israel's.

Walking along the sea front in Tel Aviv with its high rise blocks and new shopping malls, this 'individualisation' is clearer than in Jerusalem. At Ben Gurion airport flights to Cairo and Amman are marked up, perhaps the peace process is irreversible, helped on its way by both the 'inside' and 'outside' peace movements but driven by the same 'end of ideology, which is confronting the left in the rest of the world.

Anat Israel of
Peace Now



Putting the Holocaust in its place

Is the Imperial War Museum an appropriate site for Britain's proposed Holocaust Museum? And what should its focus be? Ralph Levinson reports on a much-needed debate

I remember, as a small schoolboy, I went on a visit to the Imperial War Museum (IWM) with my pals. It was the sort of thing 'boys' did at the time, or were supposed to do even if they didn't want to go near the place. My abiding memory of the IWM is a vast hall of fighter planes, wax models of men in combat jackets, dull greys and browns, and rifles - lots of 'em. It must have been a formative experience because I've never been back. So, it came something of a surprise to learn that Britain's first major Holocaust museum is to be sited there. The IWM's director, Dr Alan Borg, has put forward proposals for its development to the Holocaust Educational Trust and these proposals have the support of the Board of Deputies.

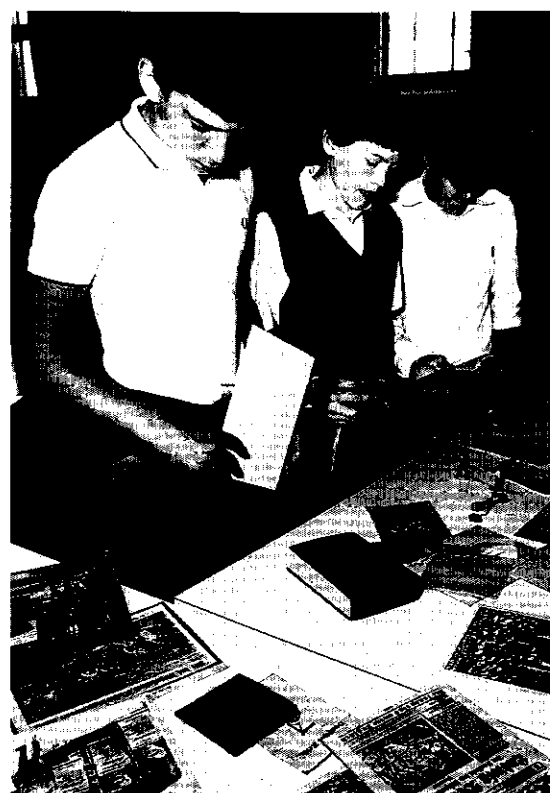
Support for the Imperial War Museum's bid is not universal. The museum's name is hardly educating people about this affront perpetrated by the Nazis. Tony Kushner, a leading academic researching the Holocaust, is sceptical about the IWM's curriculum vitae. He points out that the 1990 Belsen 1945 exhibition concentrated on the British liberation of Belsen as 'our camp', and played down the Jewish side. The camp's inmates were hardly mentioned.

According to Suzanne Bardgett, co-ordinator of 'Man's inhumanity to Man', the IWM is the 'obvious site' for the new museum with the new set of galleries to be devoted to Genocide in Our Time, taking the Holocaust as its central theme.

In the IWM's favour:

- the museum already covers the background history of the Holocaust and has recently housed the 'After Auschwitz' exhibition
- the facilities are in place to accommodate educational groups, particularly schools (the Holocaust is now included in the History National Curriculum)
- it will make a good case for the necessary funding from sources such as the Millennium Commission and National Lottery money. The expected cost is £7 million distributed equally between buildings and exhibition materials and equipment.

Three quarters of the 1000 sq m of space will concentrate on the Holocaust. The Scapegoat in History is the theme of 150 sq m with a multimedia exhibit covering 750 sq m dedicated to the Holocaust. This is expected to include such items as a tableau of the Wansee conference which



Schoolchildren examine Imperial War Museum materials on Nazism

sealed the fate of European Jewry, a mock-up of a London radio station recording Jewish spokespeople talking about the extermination camps and enlarged photographs of key pieces of evidence. The remaining 150 sq m will be devoted to other genocides: the Herero (a tribe annihilated by the German army in Namibia at the beginning of the century), the Armenians and Cambodians, the Indonesian Communists, the Hutus and Tutsis. 'The underlying philosophy', says Suzanne Bardgett, 'is to examine the phenomenon of humans to destroy fellow human-beings'.

It is precisely this broad coverage of genocide that Tony Kushner warns against. The danger is that the specific Jewish aspect will be played down, reflected in a liberal approach that blurs the distinctive experiences of minorities. There is also the risk of minimising the difference between the Holocaust and other genocides. 'How can they explain Cambodia in such a small space?' asks Tony Kushner. The Washington Museum roots the Holocaust very much in the Nazi era rather than in a more general arena of inhumanity. This point is also echoed by Eric Moonman, showing at least some breaking of ranks with the Board of Deputies' support for the IWM venue. The IWM's broad sweep approach to genocide has raised Moonman's hackles. He argues that the blueprint should be the Washington museum.

But the IWM may not be the site of the only significant Holocaust museum in London. A group of Jewish people with financial resources is proposing another project to build a Washington-style museum. Their idea is not to stymie the IWM project but to complement it. Thus, the IWM Holocaust Museum will be seen to parallel the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance whilst this alterna-

tive proposal will focus more closely on the particularity of the Holocaust.

The central problem, argues Tony Kushner, is that the IWM may overlook where the individual fits in. What were the responses of people in Britain to the enormity of the Holocaust? How will the commitment of people like Eleanor Rathbone be memorialised, if at all? Will there be room for the individual stories of survivors? A quick run through a multimedia world can end up being a lot of noise for so many children. There needs to be enough time within the visit for school students to become involved in the stories, experiences, memories and pictures which record the effect of loss on a family.

The model for Britain with its more limited resources may not be the museums in the US but the proposals for developing a Holocaust museum as an integral part of the Manchester Jewish Museum. This will build on the experience of the Jewish Museum and focus on the memories and opinions of ordinary people. The partnership involved in this development comprises Holocaust survivors, the Second Generation group and the trustees of the Manchester Jewish Museum. Plans for this museum have been progressing over the last four years and there is now an advisory group, chaired by Bill Williams, a founder of the museum.

The philosophical approach, according to Bill Williams, should be rooted in Jewish history. This will enable the effects of the Holocaust to be studied as the systematic attempt to destroy a culture and its effect on Jewish history and society. But any

representation of the Holocaust will be a balance of emphasis. Whilst the Holocaust will be represented as a Jewish experience there are also more universal themes to be conveyed, such as power and prejudice. It will also focus on the assault upon individuals, on the intolerance against nonconformists, social outcasts and gay men.

Whilst fears have been expressed that the IWM would overshadow other Holocaust museums in Britain, this is not something that concerns Bill Williams. The museum in Manchester would serve a massive population, and as Bill points out, the numbers attending the Anne Frank exhibition in Manchester exceeded those attending any other exhibition.

The problem still remains of Holocaust museums competing for resources and, perhaps, duplicating exhibits. One potential solution is to appoint a co-ordinating committee for Holocaust museums and memorials. However, this would not necessarily assist co-operation as the make-up of any such group could well serve the interests of the establishment and suppress the voices of other groups.

One important aspect of the recent prominent controversy over a Holocaust museum at the IWM is that the portrayal of the Holocaust need not necessarily be restricted to Jewish or specifically historical museums. The efficiency of murder was made possible by the concentration of scientific and technological resources in the hands of the Nazis. If there is a case to be made for an exhibition of genocides then the Science Museum might be as apposite as any other.

Should a Holocaust museum be sited here?



Fifty years ago, 19-year old Helen Bamber went into Belsen camp to care for survivors. The evil of persecution and torture did not end in 1945. Today, Helen is still caring, as director of the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture, for survivors from 65 countries. Charlie Pottins spoke to her

This November the Medical Foundation commemorates its 10th anniversary. When I called at their north London premises on a Saturday afternoon, I found a relaxed, homely atmosphere, a couple of mothers with toddlers, and a children's art class due to start. I asked Helen how her work began, when she went into Belsen.

'I was brought up to know about persecution, of Jews and others. My father felt it very deeply. He had worked tirelessly in the late 1930s to help people out of Nazi Germany. There was a group trying to help refugees. They weren't all Jewish. There were Quakers and churchmen. Our home was often filled with refugees. I heard many of their stories.'

'My father's family came from Russia and Poland, but he was a good linguist and spoke German perfectly. We listened to the broadcasts from Germany. It was like an invasion in the house, to have those strident voices, particularly Hitler's, ranting and raving, filled with hatred.'

'We had fascists in this country too. My aunt was very much to the left, and worked in the East End for many years. She was involved in the Battle of Cable Street. So the whole question of racism and fascism, and persecution, was very close.'

'I felt a little cut off from my contemporaries, from people who wouldn't believe what was going on. So I grew up rather quickly. It wasn't possible to shut reality out.'

'During the war I did visualise the possibility of the Germans reaching here, and was in little doubt what would happen if they did. We knew about the concentration camps. My father lobbied decision-makers, he tried to alert people to what was going on. It was very painful, watching his unhappiness.'

Horror and heroism

'A year before the end of the war I decided to try and work for the rehabilitation of people who'd been in the concentration camps. I joined the Jewish Relief Unit which worked under the UN training people to go to Germany and Greece to work in former concentration camps.'

'We were not the first to enter Belsen. We arrived after Camp 1 had been burnt down. Many of the former inmates were housed in what had been German barracks. These were very grim and terribly overcrowded. People were still debilitated, and many died.'

'Gradually, over time, they began to recover. At some point, it seemed there was no solution for these people. Nobody actually wanted them. Most of the people in the camp were Jewish. Polish, Russian and other people had begun to trickle back to their countries, but the Jews of Europe - many of whom flocked to Belsen to find relations - had nowhere to go. Some remained in the camp for years. It didn't close until 1953.'

'When the camps were first liberated, there

were feelings of outrage, compassion and disbelief. People began to group together, formed committees, and elected spokespeople to demand from the authorities some change in their circumstances, even to be allowed to travel. Attitudes changed. Attitudes hardened.'

'People who were by this time called 'Displaced Persons' were seen as a nuisance. In some of the soldiers compassion changed to irritation and hostility. The very thing for which we were all working - restoration, rehabilitation, empowerment - became reason for disapproval and the focus for hostility.'

'What I remember most were the stories people told over and over again. It took a long time for me to realise that telling the stories was very important, and bearing witness on my part was equally important.'

'Nothing I could do would eradicate their memories, but bearing witness was important. I learnt this lesson in the camps of Germany. Some of the stories were so horrific it was difficult to listen. But there were also stories of incredible heroism. Not the sort we were brought up to believe or understand. People say "Why didn't they resist?" I have given up trying to get people to understand that terrible machinery that was Nazi persecution, the science that could destroy and recycle people as though they were pieces of material.'

'I could give many examples of how people resisted. But they didn't fit into the Sunday war film Errol Flynn sort of heroism.'

Nowhere to go

'I also believe that if countries had opened their doors, readily and generously, to that bedraggled group of people after liberation, if there had been a policy to share responsibility for their future, we might have seen a very different situation in Israel today. Realizing they were not wanted, people began to plan for their future in Israel. There had always been a Zionist movement, but I didn't find many people who wanted to go there at first. Over time, the need to have somewhere to go became for them a need to go to the land of Israel.'

'I've been to Palestine. I didn't feel at home. I don't agree with the torture and persecution of Palestinians. But I do have a long memory; and fervour for a national home didn't just happen. It developed because of a whole history of persecution, and in the final analysis, of nowhere for people to go after the concentration camps.'

'It's a terrible tragedy upon a tragedy that the same people who were persecuted have become perpetrators themselves. We must all take some responsibility for this.'

'But I'm pleased to see that there are Israelis who oppose what is going on, who work with Palestinians to change things, such as the Association of Israeli-Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights and *Betsalem*. These good, courageous Israelis are working for a better future. I



Helen Bamber
Photo: Simon Lynn

wish they had a better press outside Israel.'

'Recent commemorations of Auschwitz and Belsen indicate there is greater understanding of the tragedy than there was immediately after the war and in the 1950s and '60s. In those years people were very resistant to hearing about the Holocaust. I'm pleased too that documentaries and broadcasts have revealed the true extent of the horror. I heard stories and saw things that are truly unbearable. I think the 50th anniversary somehow enabled people to speak for the first time and to be heard.'

'There is a deeper understanding about war and persecution but not of what we can do about it. It seems so difficult for people and governments to make logical links. If you provide Saddam Hussein, for example, with equipment, with gas, with arms, you cannot be too surprised if he uses them in a way that offends you. You cannot be part of a whole industry of war, and not expect war.'

'While individuals feel very worried about the world situation, we seem unable to stop it. I've spoken to many MPs who still say "If we don't arm so-and-so, someone else will." There's money in war and the machinery of war.'

'The psychology of war, of violence, is another

matter. Organisations like my own Medical Foundation are concerned with this. Many people address as best they can the question: "What enables someone to persecute, or torture another person, to treat them as a lesser being?" It's still vexing psychologists and psychiatrists. I find it hopeful that more people today concern themselves with this subject of violence and evil, and try to examine it. But we've a long way to go.'

Working with survivors

'I worked in Amnesty International, and started the Medical group of Amnesty's British section which became the Medical Foundation in November 1985. We've worked with more than 8,000 people, from over 65 countries. But torture exists in over 100 countries according to Amnesty International.'

'It's a mistake to think everybody suffers a high degree of post-traumatic stress and needs psychological help. But everybody is affected by torture. Their interaction with families and friends may be complicated, often blunted by their experiences. Learning to trust fellow human beings again can be a slow process.'

'Physical injuries can be repaired or to some extent alleviated. But the memory of torture

From Belsen to Bosnia



Photo: Helen Stone

remains and can be compounded by time. Very flexible, holistic responses are necessary when treating people who have been tortured. It's more to do with releasing people from a form of bondage (which is the purpose of torture) than of looking for a "cure".

'At the same time, we have to realise we are working with survivors. Just like the survivors of the Holocaust, they have something within themselves which fought to survive. It is that element, that core component, that you have to find and work with.

'Many of the people we help were perfectly normal, articulate human beings prior to being tortured. We don't see them as ill, sick people, but as normal people reacting to an abnormal situation. There is a tendency to "pathologise" torture and its victims. We work hard to avoid this, to avoid giving labels. This is a safe place for people to express their anger. I regret that Holocaust survivors did not have this opportunity.

'There is enormous interest in the work we do, both in our models of care and the way we combine practical help. We have a core staff of 42, which apart from a clinical staff made up of a psychiatrist, a woman physician who works mainly with women who have been sexually tortured or raped, a child psychotherapist, a family therapist, caseworkers etc, includes a clinical administrator, a lawyer, a fundraiser, and a press and information officer.

'But the Medical Foundation could not give as comprehensive a service as it does without the dedicated help of over 75 volunteer health professionals - physicians, surgeons, medical specialists, psychotherapists, osteopaths, art therapists and an art teacher for our children. There are too many to mention them all.

'We're now exporting our skills and we have training exchanges with workers in other countries. Our training philosophy is about empowering people at local and community level rather than imposing a Western model of care.

'Refugees very often form community centres. It's very important for us to work with them, not

just for their language skills but for our understanding of their culture. We have some 30 interpreters taking part in our therapeutic programme, and expanding knowledge of cultures, languages and issues. You have to be humble, and learn a hell of a lot, or you might as well pack up and go home.

'Everybody here is on first name terms. If you hear someone referred to as 'Doctor' it is 'Doctor Jill', or 'Doctor Jack', and the title is soon dropped. It's a place of learning, very vigorous, very lively. On a Saturday we have a children's art group. These children have suffered, or witnessed torture, or had to face parents who could no longer parent, because of all they had suffered.'

I mentioned children I'd met in Bosnia. Helen smiled, and nodded, asking me whereabouts I'd been. She told me that two of her staff, a psychiatrist and a social worker, had just returned from working in Tuzla.

Asked about government attitudes to the Medical Foundation's work, Helen Bamber said: 'The Medical Foundation documents cases of torture, sometimes in support of an asylum claim. We have become increasingly concerned about the Government's restrictive measures in dealing with asylum seekers. We are concerned that people who have been tortured may be hindered in their attempts to reach safety and, once here, will face procedures which could result in their being returned to face further torture and persecution.

'We know that this has happened in some cases, with grave consequences, and we are deeply concerned for our clients. We have made our views known to the Government, the media and the public, and we will continue to do so.

'Sometimes when I read headlines I'm reminded of the 1930s. "Lock up camps for migrant cheats"; "Bogus refugees"; "Illegal immigrants". All these terms are created to confuse the public so people no longer understand that refugees are entitled under international law to seek asylum if they have a well-founded fear of persecution.

'We have had lots of Jewish volunteers and help from people in the Jewish community. I've spoken in Liberal synagogues. I think it's terribly important for the Jewish community to see beyond their Jewishness. I feel I can say that because I am Jewish, and I know that it's very important to work for our community, but also for wider communities. Until we make these links, we will be isolated.

'I'll end up on a little story. I work with a group of former Far East prisoners of war who are still suffering from their experiences of torture and witness to atrocity. I told them about my experience of going to Belsen. Belsen had a very conspicuous smell, not really offensive, rather like the smell of geraniums, a damp, sweet smell. Sometimes I go out on the patio and I smell the geraniums, I am not quite sure why. After the meeting one of these elderly men, from a Scottish Border town, came up to me and said 'I understand why you smell the geraniums.' We have to make these links and try and bond with others.

● The Medical Foundation for the Care of victims of Torture can be contacted at 96 Grafton Road, London NW5. Telephone 0171-482 0219/284 4321.

MATERIAL INTEREST

JS We noted with interest James D Young's article, 'Protest and Survive' in your spring 1995 issue. With his usual energy and passion, Young correctly underlines the importance of the anti-Nazi material he examined in the papers of the International Solidarity Committee at Duke University Library.

As Young points out, this collection (as well as other archival material dealing with anti-Nazi activity supported by American labor and socialist groups) has not been much used by scholars.

What Young does not do, however, is explain clearly how interested people can find and use these papers.

The ISC papers form part of the larger Socialist Party of America papers at Duke. In 1975, the SPA papers were microfilmed and the film, with a printed guide, is owned by a number of research libraries. The ICS papers are part of series IV of the SPA papers and they

appear on reels 113-120 of the microfilm. Young could have found them in New York, at the Tamiment Library/Wagner Labor Archives at New York University. Even better, for Jewish Socialist readers, the microfilm is available at the British Library in London.

The ISC papers were donated to Duke University in 1960 by Phil Heller, who was at that time a staff member of the Jewish Labor Committee in New York. The JLC has its own stirring anti-Nazi history and its archives - similar to but much larger than the ISC papers - are housed at the Wagner Labor Archives, NYU.

The JLC was founded in 1934 on New York's Lower East Side by leaders of the Jewish garment unions, the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Daily Forward Association, the Jewish Socialist Verband and other kindred groups in response to the rise of Nazism in Germany. Much of the anti-Nazi work done by the American labor movement

was either initiated or coordinated by the JLC. Before and during the war, the JLC raised emergency funds for European Jews and other victims of Nazism, including partisans and refugees. In America, it organised demonstrations, mass meetings, an anti-Nazi boycott and counter-Olympics and carried out intensive anti-Nazi propaganda work and fundraising in the labor movement and the broader Jewish community. In 1940, the JLC was instrumental in arranging for the American Federation of Labor President, William Green, to secure emergency visitors visas, which were ultimately used to rescue more than 1,000 labor and socialist figures - both Jewish and non-Jewish - via Marseilles and Vilna.

During the war, the JLC established a "Special Labor Aid Project", which continued into the post-war period. It provided stipends and medical care for elderly socialist and labor refugees - among them Angelica Balabanoff and Friedrich Adler. This and other JLC

projects closely paralleled the work of the ISC, which operated under the direct oversight of the Socialist Party.

In Europe, the JLC committee's closest political ties were to the Jewish Labor Bund of Poland. The Bund had been the training ground for many JLC leaders, such as Baruch Charney Vladeck of the Forward, and President David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. Together, the vast archives of the JLC and the Jewish Labor Bund at YIVO Institute in New York provide a treasure trove of research material related to the issues which Young discusses.

About 200 linear feet of JLC material, covering the years 1934-1947, have been catalogued and microfilmed. Enquiries about use of the collection should be directed to Robert F Wagner Labor Archives, Bobst Library, New York University, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012. Telephone (212) 998 2636. Fax (212) 995 4070. *Arieh Lebowitz and Gail Malmgren, New York*

DEFEND FREE SPEECH

JS In response to Dave Landau's article on Islamic fundamentalism (JS33): Socialist Organiser-Workers Liberty stands for free speech as a basic matter of political health. We are opposed to state, student union or college-imposed bans on Hizb ut-Tahrir.

The fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir is utterly reactionary is not a sufficient justification for suppressing their right to free speech.

One difference between Hizb ut-Tahrir and the BNP is that it is perfectly possible for socialists to leaflet Hizb ut-Tahrir meetings and talk to their members. The problem with fascists is not just that they hold filthy views but that they are on a war footing against the left, and Black and Jewish people. If it was just a

matter of discussion, surely we believe we could win the arguments.

Hizb ut-Tahrir say bigoted things but unlike the nazis they do not carry out physical attacks. So why not argue with Hizb ut-Tahrir? We may not convince their hard-core, but we can offer a socialist alternative to the alienated youth that turn up to hear their message.

Muslim fundamentalism is a real issue in the colleges and elsewhere but banning groups is often counter-productive. The politics of the fundamentalists becomes muddled up with the issue of free speech. We don't want to create a precedent for banning 'extremists'. Generally these bans are used against the left. Most importantly, especially after the experience of Stalinism, we should not educate the left in the spirit of stopping people speaking if

we do not like them.

Workers Liberty members in student unions do demand that colleges refuse meeting rooms to fascists. But this is subordinate to a policy of mass mobilisation against the fascists.

What if lesbian and gay, Muslim or other students are 'intimidated'? It depends: are we talking about physical attacks or saying unpleasant things? What next? Do I try to stop students who favour immigration controls from speaking in union meetings? Someone might say something offensive.

What's the answer? Organising, campaigning, educating, not banning. We must not give up the socialist struggle for free speech by making free speech conditional! *Mark Osborn
Alliance for Workers Liberty
London SE15*

A COMMON FIGHT

JS Thank you for your welcome expression of solidarity with the Kent targets of C18. This very generous contribution adds to the heartening response we have had from a wide spectrum, and especially from the Sikh, Muslim, West Indian and Chinese communities in our town.

All this has now been sufficient to repair the damage to Gill Emerson's home and to turn it into something of a fortress. The fight against racism and fascism will go on. Once again, many thanks. *Reg Weston
Rochester, Kent*

● SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
Jewish Socialist, BM 3725,
London WC1N 3XX

Neighbours in Babylon

Relations between Blacks and Jews have been alternately fruitful and troubled. Karen Merkel and Inge Blackman explore the possibilities for the future

Visitors to us in north east London from New York often claim to feel familiar here amongst so many races, the downtrodden people and street markets. However, it is not New York, we have no equivalent of Spike Lee and chassids do not ram raid their way around the pavements of the Stamford Hill area of our borough. This notwithstanding, Louis Farrakhan's boys selling the Final Call have been active around the streets of Hackney. Once dusk falls in Stamford Hill, the chassidic communities lock themselves in for fear of attack by young black men. Is there a connection? This open warfare is a new development since our communities have collaborated and coexisted for many years. Maybe this camaraderie was only ever fragile and the fissures are beginning to show. Are we now failing to unite to fight a common oppressor, or is it easier to pick on someone our own size?

Black people feel that white Jewish people use their whiteness to assimilate which they can do much more readily than if they had a black skin. Jewish people feel that they have had to hide here in order to protect themselves against antisemitism – the reason for the number of anglicised surnames. Our enemies tell us that Jews are exploiters and Blacks are scoundrels. People gasp when we utter the unspeakable *'Money: Jews make it and Blacks nick it'*. There are more shibboleths to come out of the closet. These sets of fears need to be examined. Our communities have suffered the ancient colonial tactic of 'divide and conquer'. Hierarchies of oppression separate us.

We are operating in a harsh economic climate in London where there is an ever widening gap between the haves and have-nots. People are tempted towards instant and easy answers. Old fears and damaging myths resurface to fuel suspicion between natural allies. Conventional race relations politics have bred inertia and cynicism, and many people look to new orthodoxies for immediate comfort and solutions. Pride in one's roots is articulated in simplistic dogma and revisionist history. Consequently, there is a growing attraction for the separatist and essentialist politics preached by fundamentalist movements.

Increasing racist and antisemitic attacks are a potent catalyst for action. Young people become attracted to the certainties of religious dogma, hence their vigorous participation in vigilante groups, adoption of fundamentalist positions and scorn for assimilation. At the same time, we shouldn't ignore another parallel trend of young people in both communities wanting to melt into the mainstream so as not to be set apart by their ethnicity or culture.

Britain's hideous involvement and subsequent amnesia over the transatlantic slave trade has yet to be properly admitted to, never mind dealt with. This denial of history continues to arrest the advancement of many thousands of black people. And within only the last 60 years, boat loads of

Jewish refugees from the holocaust were sent from these shores to their certain death. Past and present memories of being enslaved should provide a deep and emotional connection between our two communities. It is when you can recognise *'Masters'* that you can understand what it is to be *'Other'*.

Britain is not like the United States on the whole, racism and antisemitism are more subtle and insidious here. The frame of reference within which Americans define themselves culturally is much clearer. It is unthinkable that we could ever say we African Britons, or Asian Britons or Jewish Britons. It sounds ridiculous, but why? Britain has a mighty unwritten law that we must adhere to the notion that the country is white. We can call it multiracial and multicultural till the cows come home, but what is really expected is that we should all muck in and celebrate, or at least tolerate, Christmas, Sundays, cricket and warm beer. Britain has never lost its colonialist approach to the world – the benign patron, the ever tolerant nanny. The fact that this prevalent attitude is so without current critique is chilling.

There is a growing call from black people active within cultural politics for white people to begin to analyse what it means to be white. Most white people believe they have a nationality but many are unconscious of their colour and ethnicity and see themselves as 'simply human'. This assumption maintains an ideology of racial domination and colour privilege. The proposal to deconstruct whiteness suggests that once this questioning begins there will be a greater understanding that whiteness is in itself impure and has roots derived from many and various routes. In this way, it is as adulterated as blackness is. Once white people begin to look at their own histories from the perspective of race, they may see that there are no fixed points and, consequently, ideas about hybridity become positive and creative.

Along with other diaspora communities, white Jews should welcome the challenge of moving this discussion forward. Like black people, Jews have an understanding of what it means to be outsiders amongst a hostile 'host' community. Experiences of being British but somehow not quite English have a lasting effect. We need to begin by taking on board in a real way ideas of diaspora which can then be a meeting place for Blacks and Jews. Together as communities living in Europe, we can challenge the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant notion of race and culture which assumes its supremacy and regards anyone else's ethnicity as static, immutable and most definitely *not* universal.

One way to do this is to look at how similar we are as communities – our humour, love of gossip, use of language. A few decades ago we shared a love of fried fish, home made soup, gambling, our big breasted mamas and boxing. The cultural manifestations of our similarities have shifted somewhat but try this list: flash cars, jazz, gold teeth, football, obsessive hygiene, interrupting conversations, pho-

bias, fear of things rural, a love and need for the security and bustle of urban life. And we would never dream of having a party without real food!

We all know about the mythic construction of Blacks and Jews pathological sexuality: the 'hot passion' of the 'Negress' and the 'Jewess', the black man as the super stud and the Jewish man with insatiable desire. Both black and Jewish women know the allure that the golden nordic princess holds for Jewish and black men. In some ways both communities are betrayed by people who 'pass' for plain ole white. Intermarriage, not the taboo it once was can still be taken as betrayal. Assimilation can stem from a lack of self-esteem, misplaced aspirations and pretence. It is also a tactic for survival. If we share nothing else in common, Blacks and Jews are both all too familiar with the sensation of compensating for what we aren't.

We do not think it is useful 'for the sake of unity/solidarity' to pretend that our two communities have only similarities to share. It is important to note and understand the assumptions and differences, the conflicts and betrayals, the acrimony and the lack of understanding and communication. We need to look at the ways in which Jews and Blacks are repelled from each other. It is interesting to consider the phrases which appear over and over again; 'they're dirty', 'they're lazy', 'they're untrustworthy', 'they're cheats', 'they're greedy'. We experience them being said of us but find it difficult to admit that members of our own communities say these same things of others. The so-called issues that keep people apart stem from xenophobic revulsions and cultural ignorance. Stereotypical perceptions of each other's communities are informed by the all pervading Anglocentric view. It's when we fail to challenge this that fundamentalist politics move in.

This occurs where there is a political vacuum, a disdain for conventional political organisation, a lack of confidence in asserting individual views and where cultural boundaries become fixed. The sheer arduousness of daily existence can be assuaged by religious observance and the succour that it brings. Fundamentalism in its evangelical practices, tramples on dissent and difference, the needs of the few being sacrificed to the greater good with the means always justifying the ends.

We must challenge the idea that cultures are permanent and based around fixed identities. If we fail to, then those who attempt to define culture, ethnicity and religion as synonymous with their territorial boundaries will continue to be in ascendance. And what a dangerously attractive proposition this is.

Honest dialogue needs to occur in order to unpick painful themes. Once this process begins we can look at the places we can work together.

How can we move beyond all this essentialism? We need to create safe places which do not fall prey to this mode of thinking, where people are not afraid to say exactly what they feel; where they feel



a sense of belonging, a respect for their identity and where their value is acknowledged. We are not describing a happy 'United Colors of Benetton' world. We are looking for real points of commonality to be recognised and even exploited for a coherent political strategy against racism and fascism. There are models where black people and Jewish people have created just this scenario through civil liberties movements, most notably in the United States and South Africa.

In Britain, our communities have long histories of organising around liberation struggles and trades union action and have learned many hard lessons particularly in immigration issues and anti-deportation campaigns. A contemporary example we could gain strength from is the struggle of Lesbians and Gays within our communities. The tensions of dealing with heterosexual oppression, and discrimination at the same time as fighting to own their own cultural identity are the experiences from which we should draw insights.

As importantly, we must recognise publicly the massive contributions that our communities have made to popular culture in this century, music, film and television simply would not be as they are today without our voices. We each share a vital commodity, the knowledge of complex cultural aspirations and pleasures of our communities. These are the places where people express themselves and this is valuable energy indeed. It is not as if we need to be subversive. We should acknowledge our separate skills and celebrate what they could combine to achieve. We need to see our differences as exciting and challenging, not as a mutual threat. What we need to do here in Britain is to create projects together drawing from the richness of our histories. Through such activities we can have a real impact on 'British' culture and extend it beyond its stagnant nostalgia and refusal to acknowledge the heterogeneity of contemporary Britain.

We are here. Most of us are staying. This is *our* home.

TRACKING DOWN HISTORY

As government dignitaries and war veterans marked the 50th anniversary of the end of the War in Europe, Britain's Anti-Nazi League organised a visit to Auschwitz. David Rosenberg kept a diary of this trip

It's seven in the morning at Victoria Coach Station and people are gathering at Bay 3. Some recognise each other and others make contact when they notice one another's Anti-Nazi League badges. Half an hour later two coaches set off. We are a diverse group: some are school students and one is 84. He is Leon Greenman, a survivor of Auschwitz. We are about to return with him to see the death factory for ourselves and he can tell us how it all happened, what he saw, what he remembers, and what he must wish he could forget.

On the long coach journey people start to get to know each other. Besides school students there are teachers and lecturers; people sponsored by various trade unions. Some represent anti-racist groups. Some lost family in the Holocaust. There are pensioners who can remember the war at first hand. One student tells me of her Jewish grandmother who came to Britain from Austria before the war — leaving behind parents who died in a camp.

We are crossing Germany as night falls. It's hard to sleep and I'm wide awake when we reach the Polish border at five the next morning. We are heading for Krakow — once Poland's capital city, and the closest major town to Auschwitz. The rural landscape is very green but in the towns the buildings are crumbling. Only the satellite TV dishes look new. Power stations belch smoke into the sky.

We arrive in Krakow at midday and later have a guided tour to the castle high on a hill and Kazimierz — the old Jewish ghetto. Five hundred years ago the local Jews were forced into this ghetto. It is remarkably well preserved. Lots of different synagogues some tiny, others very grand — all different styles. Only the Remuh Synagogue still functions but it is full every Friday night. Across the street new Polish-Jewish cafes have sprung up and outside the new Jewish cultural centre a sign offers 'Schindler's List' tours.

There are only 200 Jews living in Krakow today but many visit, especially from America. A memorial stone dedicated to the 65,000 Jews from this area murdered by the Nazis stands in the middle of the street.

Back at the hotel I read that one synagogue we saw was the site of the Nazis' first action against the Krakow Jews. In December 1940 armed Nazis entered the Stara Bosnica Synagogue when it was full, forced the congregants to spit on the holy scrolls and then shot all of them. But the Nazis did not destroy the old Jewish ghetto. Instead they moved the Jews south over a bridge to Podgorze — an area less than a mile away — and created a new ghetto. In Podgorze a plaque marks the old headquarters of the Jewish Combat Organisation and a small museum, detailing the ghetto's daily life, stands in the building that was the ghetto pharmacy. The most famous landmark now is Oscar Schindler's factory where a growing work-

force literally slaved for their lives to cheat the Nazi death machine.

In the evening we all eat together. You can sense the trepidation about the next day's trip to Auschwitz. During the meal, Clare, who is one of the organisers, introduces everyone. The tension slips away as we realise our common concerns and motives and the significance of the trip to us all. Leon Greenman, who has revealed all kinds of memories with great detail on the journey, has only a few words to say: 'Don't let me down, boys and girls. Be ready at quarter to nine.'

We set off on schedule for Auschwitz. Our coaches park there among many others. We are at Auschwitz 1 — originally a camp for Polish political prisoners. Its large stone prison blocks have been transformed into a museum. In the distance we see the ironic welcome sign 'Arbeit Macht Frei' (Work Makes You Free). We are led into a small room and watch a 20-minute film containing original footage from the liberation of Auschwitz. It's an old film that stresses the heroism of the Red Army. Not everything has changed in Poland yet. The harrowing images prepare us for the day ahead.

We return to the coach for the short ride to Auschwitz 2 — Birkenau. As we approach, I see a railway line disappearing under a watchtower — a familiar image from Holocaust books and films — usually cast in black and white. But today the sky is blue, green grass grows around the railway tracks and the roofs are reddish almost pink. I try to imagine disembarking on a bleak winter day.

Birkenau has been left as it stood after liberation. As the Nazis fled they destroyed many of the camp's wooden buildings but their stone foundations remain — as do some of the wooden barracks. Some post-war memorials have been added.



Leon Greenman inside a barrack at Birkenau

The size of the camp is staggering. The railway line continues down to the area of the 'shower' blocks and crematoria. To the left stand the stone barracks which housed women prisoners, to the right the remnants of the wooden barracks which housed the men. On either side they stretch endlessly into the distance, fenced off by barbed wire and overseen by more watchposts.

We are joined now by three volunteer guides — non-Jewish Poles. Each had close relatives incarcerated in Auschwitz during the war. We walk slowly along the railway lines and then into the barracks. Leon describes the daily life and humiliations. The sanitary block has a small washing area and a long row of stone latrines with barely any space between them. He shows us the bunks, piled three high, and explains how eight people slept across each bed. On a quick calculation we realise that each barrack housed 1,000 inmates. A guide adds that around 100,000 people were kept at any time in Birkenau's 440 acres. Leon answers all our questions and encourages us to ask more. He describes how quiet it was at night as the weary, beaten men returned from labour duties and just lay down.

We followed the railway line to the end and found four clearly defined areas of rubble where the gas chambers and crematoria once stood. Three chambers were destroyed by the Nazis just before liberation but one block had been destroyed a few weeks earlier in a mini-revolt led by four Jewish women inmates. Walking among the rubble you see the tracks along which the bodies were wheeled before being pushed into continually burning ovens. Back at Auschwitz 1 a gas chamber and crematorium stand intact to reveal the whole process. Looking back to the main watchtower, around the camp, the barracks, the barbed wire, the guardposts, the gas chamber area, and hearing Leon describe the transports, the selections, the numbers who came, I know why it was called a 'factory' of death.

Before leaving Birkenau we look more closely at the 1960s memorial erected in front of the gas chamber areas and we stumble into a controversy. There are memorial stones in many languages for the inmates of Auschwitz. There are stones in Yiddish and Hebrew, but none in Ladino, though one visitor remarks to me that Greek Jews were also deported to Auschwitz. Soon after the regime changed in Poland these stones were wiped clean and rewritten. The originals exaggerated the number of Polish political prisoners and Soviet Prisoners of War murdered at Auschwitz and downplayed the Jewish identity of the overwhelming majority of victims. The new stones give more realistic figures and specifically mention Jews. Current estimates suggest that 90% of Auschwitz's victims were Jews and many others were Gypsies. But a further controversy is revealed. Around the camp are photographic exhibits recalling specific events and usually annotated in Polish, English

Minut fun bitokhn
Yidn zol zayn freylekh
Shoyt nit lang ikh hor
S'et bald di mitkome
Es kumt bald zayer sof
Freylekh nor nit zorn
Un nit anungeyn t'ib
Hot gedult Baidon
Un hamt als on far ib
Nor gedult bakhn
Nit k'et aroyt lan hamt
Undzer alt day zayn
Vos hat undz gor
banand
Hulst lanst tayonim
shoyt nit lang ikh hor
Geben a mol a Homen
Es vart af in zayn sof
Hulst lanst tayonim
Layn ken a yid
S'et di shvoste arbet
Undz keyn mol maln
mit
Ken? Zol zayn Ken!
Kol zman ir vet zayn
iz unzist dos ken
S'et do nit vem reyn
Vashn? zol zayn vashn!

Keyns royer flek
Havis bit fun hartsn
dos vasht zikh nit avok
Traybt undz fun di dres
Shneyt undz op di berd
Yidn zol zayn freylekh!
Mir hobn zay in d'rend

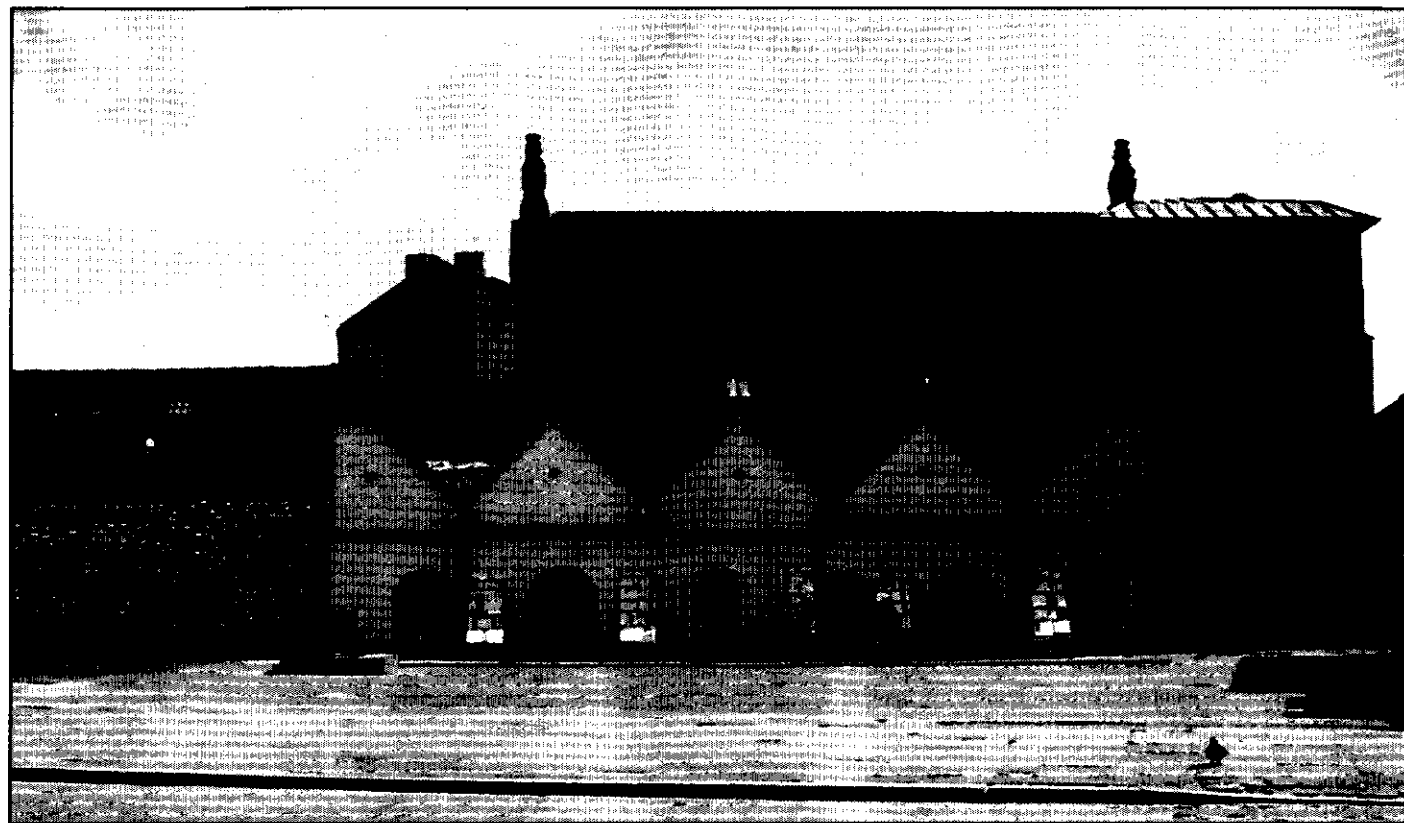
Moments of Hope
Jews let us be cheerful
It won't be long don't
fear
The war will soon be
over
Their end is very near
Cheerful don't you worry
Don't go around so sad
Have both hope and
patience
Bear things and be glad
Only hope and patience
Don't let them out of
hand
Our ancient weapons
Help us together band
Revel, dance, you
butchers
It won't be long I hope
There was once a
Haman

For you too waits the rope
Revel dance you butchers
Jews their pain can
bear
the hardest tasks and
labour
Will not our will impair
Sweep then? we will
sweep them
As long as you may
deem
It's in vain the sweeping
It never will come clean
Wash then, we will
wash them
Cain's bright red stain
Abel's heart that's
bleeding
Though washed will still
remain
Chase us from our
dwellings
Cut our beards and yell
Jews let us be cheerful
Let them go to hell
This song was written
by Mordecai Gebirtz in
the Krakow Ghetto,
October 1940

and Hebrew — the language of Jewish prayer and of the post war State of Israel. But most Jews who lived and died at Auschwitz spoke Yiddish. Back at Auschwitz 1, a guide tells me, the main exhibition describing Jewish martyrdom is annotated in Polish, English and Yiddish. Israelis are now lobbying to replace it with Hebrew. The Holocaust may be over but the battle for ownership of it rages on.

After lunch we return to Auschwitz 1. The difference in atmosphere is very striking. When the barbed wire is just out of vision you see large solid stone buildings along wide tree-lined avenues. I once read in a newspaper that 'Birds don't sing at Auschwitz'; that 'The whole place exudes evil'. Today the sun was shining, the trees stretched skyward and the birds chirped endlessly. What occurred here was grisly enough without journalists adding their hype. If anything, the surroundings were shockingly pleasant. Everything seemed so orderly. Of course the appearance is deceptive.

Walk along the avenues and the grim realities strike you — the watchtowers, the electrified barbed wire fences, the gallows standing in the most public places and the alleyway between two stone blocks known as the 'wall of death' where individual executions took place. Then we enter the



The Stara Bosnica Synagogue in Krakow

blocks to view a museum of death and, most shockingly, the exploitation of the dead. Imagine entering a long room and all along one side stands a glass case. It is filled with human hair. There is a similar room with glass cases along both sides. Whichever way you look you see a mountain of shoes, children's shoes, adults' shoes and you try to conjure a picture of the individuals who wore them.

Other mass exhibits show the remains of people's everyday existence — thousands of brushes, for teeth, for clothes, for shaving; crutches and false limbs, suitcases and a mountain of spectacles. And then you contemplate that these are only what remained when the camp was liberated. Previous 'goods' had already been sent back to Berlin for recycling. Each tiny, even tattered, commodity meant more in value to the Nazis than the person who used them.

For the last 25 years I have been exposed to media images of Nazi atrocities. I have spent many hours talking with survivors but it still seems a bit abstract until you walk round Auschwitz; it still seems as if it happened on another planet until you see the field and villages around and the people going about their everyday lives.

Looking at exhibits about Polish prisoners and talking to the older guides I get more insight into the extent of Polish resistance. I wonder whether ordinary Poles, especially in rural areas where literacy levels were low, knew in detail what the Nazis were doing to the Jews. I think about the gulf between ingrained prejudices fostered through the Catholic Church and support for industrialised slaughter. I return more aware of how short-lived Polish independence was and why nationalism could be a far more potent force than human solidarity.

We left Auschwitz around 7pm. People talked

long into the night and the next morning. It was only just starting to sink in. After breakfast we met to share insights. A young Indian woman who had travelled with her mother described her immense feeling of hope when she realised that one other person on the trip had spent his teenage years in the Young National Front. People stressed how they would be returning to Britain shocked, but angry, and determined to combat our local racists and fascists.

After the meeting we went for a last look at Krakow. I helped lead our own 'Schindler's List' tour. I talked about the different kinds of resistance — physical, political, cultural — in many ghettos and camps and quoted poems and songs by the Yiddish folk poet, Mordecai Gebirtig, murdered in 1942 in the Krakow ghetto. We entered the small museum in the ghetto pharmacy. To my surprise and delight, there was a display about Gebirtig. We also found the buildings where the Judenrat (Jewish Council) had operated, and discussed its role. The Nazis tried to make Jews accomplices in their own destruction. Some members of the Jewish Councils carried out their orders but others managed to subvert the system. We returned over the bridge to the old ghetto where anti-Nazis from Britain settled down to latkes, gefilte fish and other Jewish delicacies at the various cafes!

Just before I went to Poland I read about a murderous racist attack near the school where I teach. When I came back to Britain I heard about a similar incident near where I live, an attack on Jews and Arabs in Paris, and the smashing of grave-stones in Jewish cemeteries in London and Hull. It had seemed like a long journey to Auschwitz. Maybe it wasn't so far away.

● David Rosenberg was sponsored by the Islington branch of the National Union of Teachers

By Rachel Korn. Translated from Yiddish by Miriam Waddington

THE ROAD OF NO RETURN

Among the many atrocities perpetrated during the Holocaust, one particularly tormenting and vicious involved the process of self-selection. Nazis regularly demanded that families themselves choose one of their own to be sent away, often to certain death. This method guaranteed that everyone became a victim. 'The Road of No Return' is set in an occupied town in Galicia. Rachel Korn, a survivor herself, writes of a family's dilemma and resulting shame when forced into the betrayal of one of its members.

By morning the whole city had heard about the new edict, but in Hersh-Lazar Sokol's household everyone pretended they knew nothing. And just like on any other day, Beyle lit the stove and began to cook the family's ghetto portion of grits and half-rotten potatoes. And just like on any other day, she set the table with seven plates and seven spoons laid out in a double row. The double row was to ward off the evil spirits lurking outside.

Every few minutes she ran to the door, and with a corner of her apron wiped the steam from its glass windowpane and looked down to the street. On that autumn day of 1942 there wasn't a Jew to be seen in that Galician village, except for a Jewish policeman with a bundle of documents under his arm who would pass by and disappear in the street that led to the office of the Yudenrat.

'Father hasn't come back yet,' Beyle muttered, more to herself than to the others. Her aged mother-in-law, who was sitting near the kitchen sorting plucked feathers into a patched bag, turned and asked, 'What's that you're saying Beyle?' 'Nothing, Shviger.'

All at once there was a commotion in the corner where the two youngest children were playing. Dovidl was pulling a doll out of Sorke's hands and waving a stick at her. 'When I order you to hand over the baby you must obey! Otherwise, I'll take you away too, and you'll be beaten into the bargain.'

Beyle ran over to the children. 'What's all this uproar about — what's going on here?' 'Mother, he's hitting me!' Sorke bust out.

'Let go of her this minute!' Beyle ordered. But eight year old Dovidl wouldn't let go, and kept on tugging at his sister's doll.

'We're playing the game of cursing, and in cursing, there's no mother around. In this game you must obey the police! If she won't hand over her baby then both she and the baby will have to go! See, here's my rifle,' and he pointed to the stick.

'Tfu, may your game moulder and smoulder in some wretched wilderness! Throw away the stick this instant! And come here! Some game you've invented for yourselves!'

'But Mother, you saw what happened to our neighbour Malke, and to Shmerke-Yoysef's son?

'BEYLE BEGAN TO ROCK TO AND FRO, HER HEAD IN HER ARMS, SOBBING ALL THE WHILE'

The police took her away along with her child – don't you remember?

'In my house I won't allow such games, you hear? Such a big boy and he understands nothing! Go, go to your brother Lipe.'

Whenever Beyle couldn't handle Dovidl she would turn him over to her oldest son. Lipe was the only one Dovidl would listen to.

Lipe was sitting at the table in the next room, writing. He neither turned around nor uttered a single word. His mother came in and stood at his back waiting for him to help her rein in her unruly young one. Dovidl too was waiting. He had become suddenly quiet and was staring eagerly at his older brother. The pen in Lipe's hand moved quickly across the blank paper as if it were hurrying towards some inevitable goal where Lipe was only an accessory and the instrument of someone else's will.

Beyle's ears, always alert to the smallest sound, now heard an odd rustling like the swish of silk. Turning towards the sound she saw the open wardrobe, and between its doors her daughter Mirl taking out her dresses and trying them on one by one in front of the mirror.

'What bleak holiday are you celebrating today?'

'Oh Mother, I just felt like trying on my dresses.'

Beyle gave her a searching glance as if she were some newly-arrived stranger. For the last two years, living with constant anxiety and fear, she had begun to think of her children as a precious charge she must protect from all outside threat and danger. And in that same instant she recognised that Mirl, her fourteen year old daughter, had suddenly grown up and ripened into a young woman. Mirl's thin childish shoulders were now softly curved as if waiting to take on the burden of new and mysterious longing. Her brown gazelle's eyes were filled with a womanly acceptance of fate.

And as if she owed this burgeoning daughter something she could never repay, Beyle, like a bankrupt debtor, sat down and gave herself up to a wail of grief. Her bottled-up fear and dread of the unavoidable future now found its way through some obscure channel inside her, releasing a storm of tears. Beyle began to rock to and fro, her head in her arms, sobbing all the while as if her breast were being torn to pieces inside her.

The two children tiptoed into the kitchen and began to nose around like two kittens among the pots and pans. Sorke returned and pulled Mirl

away from the clothes cupboard, 'Come, let's stick a fork into the potatoes and see if they're done.'

Dovidl ran to the door. 'I'm going outside to find out what's taking Father so long.'

Beyle was startled out of her trance. 'Don't dare step out of this house! Do you want to cause, God forbid, a catastrophe?'

The dragging sound of feet was now heard on the stairs, climbing each stair slowly one at a time. Lipe folded his writing in his breast pocket and ran to open the outside door, which had been kept locked and bolted since the arrival of the Germans.

Father and son confronted each other. The son's eyes were full of questions, demanding to know what the father had learned and what, for the time being, would have to be kept hidden from the others.

The father bowed his head as if he himself were guilty for what was now happening, guilty for having taken a wife and for having brought children into the world – a wife and children he could no longer protect.

It took only one look at her husband for Beyle to realise there was no point in asking him anything.

The lines in Hersh-Lazar's face had grown deeper. They were etched in greyness, as if they had absorbed all the dust and debris of the street. His nose seemed to have grown longer and was as sharp as that of a corpse, while his usually neat and tidy beard was unkempt and dishevelled.

'– Will you wash your hands now, Hersh-Lazar?'

'Yes, at once, and we'll sit down to eat.'

They ate in silence. No-one paid attention to what and how much each spoonful held. They swallowed their food half-chewed. Even the children, already used to uncertainty and fear, felt a disaster was about to happen but dared not ask what. Something ominous was in the air.

Whenever a spoon accidentally struck the edge of a plate and made it ring they were all startled, and looked reproachfully away. Of them all, only the grandmother concentrated on her food as she brought each spoonful to her toothless gums.

The first to rise from the table was Hersh-Lazar. Wiping his moustache with the back of his hand, he began to pace back and forth with maddening regularity. When Beyle started to clear the table he signalled her – 'Don't bother, Beyle.'

She let her hands fall; they had suddenly become too heavy and she stood in front of her husband blocking his way and trying to stop him pacing the room.

'WHO WOULD BE CHOSEN AND WHO WOULD DO THE CHOOSING'

'Have you heard anything more? Is it true what people are saying?'

'True, all true, Beyle.' Her husband's voice sounded hoarse and muffled as if a thorn were stuck in his throat. 'Placards are posted everywhere – on all the buildings and fences. Every family must send one of its members within two hours. Do you realize what that means? Each family must choose its own victim. One of us must go, otherwise all of us will be taken. All of us, without exception! And,' he added ironically, 'the Germans are allowing us free choice!'

They were all stunned but no-one was surprised. You could expect anything from the Germans. Each one studied the others. Who, who would go? Go to the place from which there is no return?'

Abruptly a wave of estrangement overwhelmed them. Each one could already see the victim in the other. Each one felt the enmity of the others. Who would be chosen and who would do the choosing? With what measure should they be measured, on what scales should they be weighed in order to decide who must die now, and who deserved to stay alive, at least for now?

'– In that case,' Lipe spoke with unusual calm without looking at the bowed heads. 'In that case –' and he stopped in mid-sentence as if the weight of his just-now-uttered words were too heavy for their quaking limbs to bear.

'In that case' all of them sat down. They all tried to find the lowest, most insignificant chair as if they intended to sit *shive* for their own inner selves.

Beyle seized the two youngest as if she could hide them in her own two hands, or build walls around them which no enemy could breach.

The grown-ups had begun to calculate the years each had already lived and the years still promised. They added up the lines in every face and counted the gnarled veins on the back of every hand.

The father mustn't go, that was clear. He was the provider, the breadwinner. And the mother, definitely not. What would become of the children without her? As for Lipe, what had he tasted of life in his four-and-twenty years, the last two darkened by the German occupation? Let him consider carefully. Maybe he should quickly steal away and be done with it. His mother would wail and tear her hair, and his father would agonise while saying *kadesh* and Dovidl would miss him day and night without understanding why his Lipe had disappeared.



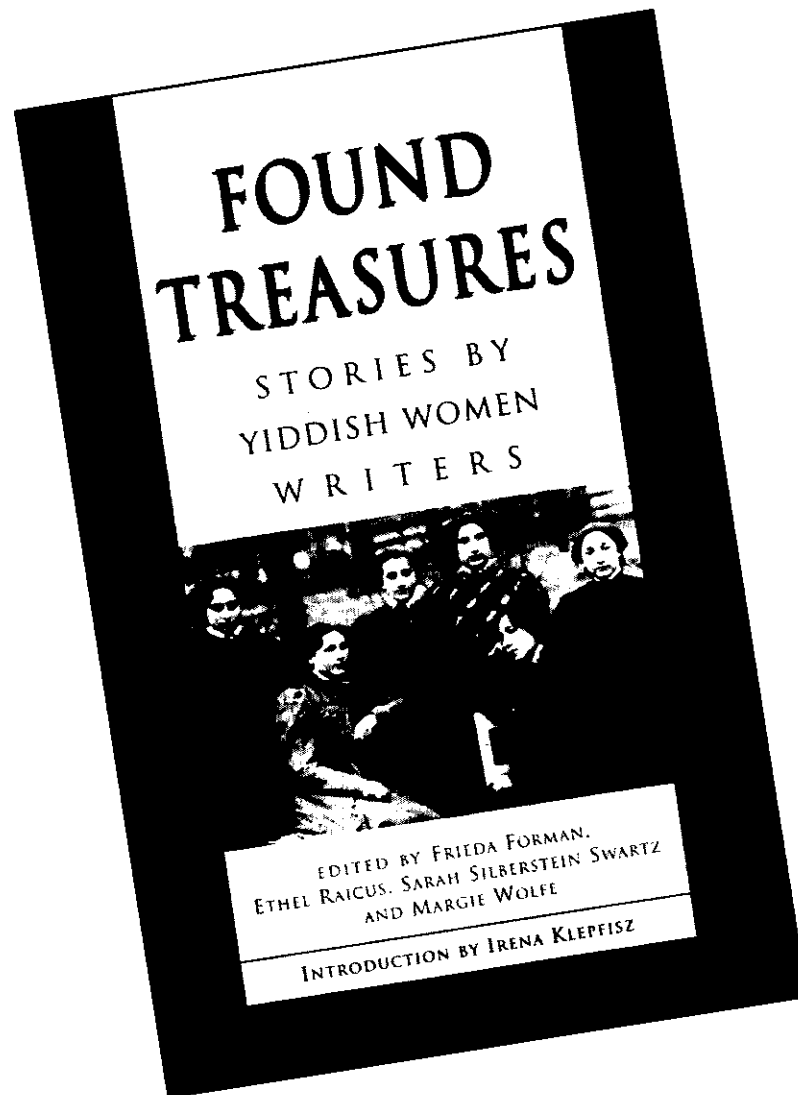
Rachel Korn

But at first they would all breathe easier because he would have released them from the need to mourn their own lost souls.

In his mind Lipe was already bidding them all adieu. Tomorrow he would be gone. Everything would remain just as it was except that he would no longer be among them. He would no longer see the sun, the sky, or the old clock on the bureau. He touched his breast pocket and removed his watch and the money he kept there, and unobserved, pushed them underneath the big clock, folding a few bank notes into the pages he had been writing. It was a letter to Elke; his last letter. He would have to find a Polish messenger since it was forbidden to receive letters from the ghetto. Elke was living on the other side as a Pole with false aryan papers, and she had recently let him know that she was preparing similar papers for him, complete with seals and signatures. Together they would go to one of the big cities where it would be easier to hide and lose themselves in the Polish crowds.

Was there anyone who should go in his place? What about the grandmother, his old *bobe*? As Lipe's glance searched for the grandmother it met

'EVEN HER SON'S EYES SOUGHT HER OUT AND POINTED TO HER'



his parents' eyes. They had already added up her years, years that had fallen as gradually as leaves from a tree in autumn, leaving its trunk naked and vulnerable. But no-one dared utter such thoughts aloud, no-one dared to say 'go' or to become the judge of her last few ragged years. As their eyes ate into her, the old lady began to droop and hunker down into her chair, as if she would have liked to dissolve and become part of the chair. She wanted to become so rooted in the bit of ground under her that no-one would ever be able to dig her out. In that moment the senses of the others became suddenly keener, and more sensitive. Each one's thoughts lay open to the others in these moments of heightened perception. Only the grandmother's thoughts remained closed to them, as closed as her half-blind extinguished eyes. She had sealed all the avenues to her inmost self in order to ward off this prelude to death. She suddenly felt isolated in the

circle of her family – beside the son she had given birth to and cared for, beside her own flesh and blood. Even her son's eyes sought her out, and pointed to her. And because of it she would resist with all the strength of her being. There was no-one to take her part, no-one to give her a loving look across the wall of separation. When you know you will be missed, it is easier to die.

They imagine it's less difficult for old people to die. Maybe so. But only if death comes in its proper time and place, in your own bed. But to go forth and meet death willingly, carrying your bundle of worn-out bones! Quiet, hold everything, she's not ready yet – she still has to go back over her life, she still has to remember it once more from the beginning, starting with the time she was a child in her mother's house. She too had been a child just like her son and grandchildren. She too had sat on her mother's lap just like Sorke on Beyle's: 'Mother, mother,' she murmured through blue lips as if she would call her back from the world of the dead. 'Mother,' she called, just as she used to do in her childhood when she was afraid of being spanked. She had almost forgotten what her mother looked like – her features had faded, and were rusted with time. Two big tears rolled from her closed eyes and fell into the net of wrinkles covering her face.

And later – she pictured herself as a bride. She had only seen her bridegroom David once, at the time of the betrothal. Even then, all her dreams were centred on him. When they began preparing her wedding clothes she had insisted on the best of everything, on the most costly materials. She chose an iridescent blue silk shot through with roses woven into the cloth. She had wanted to please her bridegroom. Her wedding dress had hung in the cupboard until recently. She hadn't let anyone touch it. It was only during the last few months that she had let them make it over for Mirl, because Mirl looks like her. When she looks at Mirl she sees herself as a girl.

The clock struck once and then twice. Everyone suddenly came to life. Soon, soon. Until now they had all been waiting for something to happen. Some miracle. And now there was less than an hour left.

Mirl drew herself up to her full height. She whipped her coat off its hanger and stood in the middle of the room.

'I'm leaving.'

All heads turned.

She stood there in the made-over iridescent silk dress she had forgotten to take off when her moth-

'FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE MIRL FELT A DEEP HATRED FOR HER FATHER'

er scolded her for trying it on. Or perhaps she just enjoyed wearing it. Whether the dress made her look older and more grown-up, or whether it was the stubborn expression on her face, it seemed to everyone that Mirl had grown taller in the past few hours.

'Where – what kind of going?' This from her father with his red-rimmed bloodshot eyes.

'You know very well where... Goodbye everybody.' And she was at the door.

With a single leap her father was beside her, holding her sleeve.

'Get back this minute. If you don't there'll be trouble! Do you hear?'

As Mirl struggled with her father there was a sharp whistling noise as the ancient silk of her sleeve split and tore.

Everyone looked on but no-one moved, neither to stop the father, nor to help Mirl. With one hand Hersh-Lazar was holding Mirl, and with the other he was undoing his belt.

No-one understood what was happening. Was their father intending to beat Mirl now of all times? His favourite child against whom he had never before raised a hand? The one for whom he always bought special gifts – for her rather than for the two youngest? It could only be due to the confusion and turmoil they all felt, the kind they had suppressed with all their might. Now it had grown and festered in their father like a boil that ripens and finally bursts.

At last he had the belt in his hand and was twirling it above Mirl's head like a lasso. He lowered it over her shoulders then slid it down to her waist and tightened it as if she were a stook of wheat in a field. He tested the belt several times to see if it was tight enough. Only then did he grasp the loose end, and, dragging Mirl like a trussed-up calf, he led her to the table and fastened the belt to the table's leg post. Tying a knot at the other end he pulled the belt through the buckle with his teeth, then he wiped his forehead and sat down with his hands on his knees and drew a few harsh choppy breaths.

Mirl was on her knees leaning against the table leg where her father had left her. She was motionless, completely drained by the scene of the last few minutes. For the first time in her young life she had aspired to something brave – let it be death – so what? She had gone forth to meet it like a bride her bridegroom. From early morning she had been preparing for this gesture. And now she had been shamed and humiliated. And her father, her darling father, who knew her better than any-

one else, including her mother – was the one who had shamed her. He wouldn't let her make her sacrifice. It was all very well, it seems, for Isaac to be sacrificed, but not for her. And his father, Abraham was himself the one who brought him – he had taken him by the hand knowing full well what God demanded. And here, all of them – yes, she saw it, she knew, all of them wanted the grandmother to go. Did grandmother have the strength to drag herself to far away places? And what was the sacrifice of an old person worth, since the old person would have to die soon anyway?

For the first time in her life Mirl felt a deep hatred for her father. She tried angrily to free herself so she could at least stand up, but she had forgotten about the belt which now cut more and more into her body. She fell back and lay stretched out across the threshold, her head buried in her arms.

A band of light from the window came to rest at her feet. As the light fell on her the iridescent blue silk interwoven with rose-coloured flowers shone with new life. The room had grown silent again, except for the buzzing of a single fly as it searched for a quiet spot to have its last wintry sleep.

All heads were bowed. Let whatever has to happen, happen. Let the parting be dictated by some external force, by fate. And if all of them had to go instead of just one, then so be it. If God above willed it, if he could let it happen, they would accept it gladly.

Only the ticking of the clock divided the silence as its hands moved inexorably towards the appointed hour.

Abruptly the father turned; all eyes followed the direction of his glance. The grandmother's chair was empty. Everyone was so absorbed in his own thoughts that no-one had noticed her going. Where had she gone? How did she leave the house so quietly that no-one had heard her? Not one of them had heard her. It must have happened only a few minutes ago.

Everyone's eyes now searched the corners of the room. Suddenly a shadow appeared on the glass pane of the door that led to the vestibule. As the shadow came closer it gradually filled the entire window. All eyes followed it – yes it was the grandmother in her old black cape, the one she wore on holidays. Under one arm she carried a small pouch with her prayer book, while with the other arm she slowly unfastened the chain on the outer door. Soon the door closed and swung back on its hinges.

● 'The Road of No Return' is from *Found Treasures – Stories by Yiddish Women Writers* edited by Frieda Forman, Ethel Raicus, Sarah Silberstein and Margie Wolfe, with an introduction by Irena Klepfisz. Published by Second Story Press (Ontario, Canada), it is available in Britain from Airlift Book Co, 26 Eden Grove, London N7, price £15.99.

Muddled East

Cruelty and Silence
Kana Makiya
Penguin, £6.99

Cruelty and Silence is a rare and important book. It is about genocide, poison gas, torture rooms, the bulldozing of bodies, villages and communities. It is also about silence and collusion, the political and cultural malaise in the Arab world, and the cowardice, lack of integrity and self-delusion of intellectuals who stood by while these things happened. What makes it a rare piece of writing is the way it probes into the thinking processes which led to such moral collapse.

The author, Iraqi exile Kana Makiya, specialises in saying the unsayable. *Republic of Fear* (1989), written under the pseudonym, Samir Al-Khalil, meticulously documented the growth and workings of the fascist Ba'ithi state, and warned that Iraq had become a serious danger; *The Monument* (1991) analysed the aesthetics of Saddam's terrorist dictatorship. These earlier revelations about life in a terrorist state are shocking and sickening to read, but the cruelty Makiya exposes in *Cruelty and Silence* (1993) is still worse. After the war it was possible to trace witnesses and gather evidence of Saddam's years of operations against the Kurds. Makiya reproduces the stories of traumatised survivors, and pieces together the evidence left behind in liberated Kurdish north Iraq of a deliberate and systematic campaign. His dissection of 'silence' links this disturbing and horrific material with other atrocities, such as the massacring of the Shi'a opposition in Iraq, the Syrian army's killing of tens of thousands in Hama in 1982 and inter-Palestinian violence.

There are two kinds of silence in the book: the silence of the dead and the terrorised, whose stories demand to be found and told, and the silence of those who said nothing. Makiya argues that the institutionalised violence of the Middle East is hardly ever addressed by Arab intellectuals and most western self-styled anti-imperialists. He believes they have effectively maintained a deliberate silence for years. Such extensive self-censorship cannot be excused just as the product of fear. Makiya indicts the intellectuals he targets, many of whom live safely and comfortably in the West, for caring less about the real fate of the mass of people actually living in the Middle East than about their own self-righteous politics.

He notes 'how uninteresting were the deaths of between 500,000 and one million Iraqis and Iranians' to the very people who talked about the hypocrisy of the West during the gulf War. The evidence of silence much of it quotations from Arab writers and intellectuals is of avoidance and cover-up, at best a fake concern, at worst a willingness to disregard and distort the facts. One Washington-based Palestinian researcher, Dr Hati al-Hasaini, wrote mourning the American government's destruction of Basra, Kirkuk and Kerbala. However, Makiya points out in response that Basra's repeated destruction during the Iran-Iraq war got little attention; Saddam, not the Allied forces, destroyed Kerbala during the uprising; the Basran-born Iraqi writer Sa'di Yousef attributed the killing of 50,000 Basrans to Saddam, not the Americans. Makiya wonders how much the intellectuals who produce such rhetoric really care about these deaths. Sometimes they are same

'There are two kinds of silence: the silence of the dead and the terrorised, and the silence of those who said nothing'

ones who visited Baghdad and were feted by the regime before the war.

Makiya is not alone in arguing that the shock and disappointment at naive Palestinian support for Saddam during the gulf War caused a rupture between Iraqis and Palestinians. The Iraqi-American Ayad Rahim ('Iraqis and Jews', *Jewish Quarterly*, Spring 1995) writes of Iraqis feeling betrayed and bitter because so many Arabs and Muslims took the side of the murderous regime oppressing them. Rahim describes being confounded and repulsed before the invasion of Kuwait when Palestinian colleagues derided accounts of uprisings against Saddam, denied that Saddam had gassed any Kurds and even suggested the Kurds deserved it. Rahim says: 'A Palestinian friend inside Israel responded excitedly to Saddam's threat ... to burn half of Israel.' I can't forget that at a left-wing party in London before the Gulf War

started I heard a woman say, to amused support, 'All this fuss about poor old Saddam. All he did was kill a few Kurd's.

Saddam himself exploited every opportunity to offer himself as an anti-imperialist, anti-zionist hero. Makiya easily understands how Palestinians under occupation desire a strong champion and allows that some of Saddam's fans can't be blamed, since censorship and lack of education, not just self-delusion, kept them from knowledge of the real nature of the Iraqi regime. He also sees that there are others in influential positions with no such excuse for their inhumanity who must be held responsible for their words and views. This leads him to question the uses of anti-imperialist rhetoric and politics more generally, when there has been such neglect for so long of democracy and human rights issues in most countries of the region. His conclusion is that conditions will not change until the Arab intelligentsia questions the growth of cruelty, is willing to acknowledge mistakes and take responsibility rather than blaming everything on western imperialism, and starts taking human rights for everyone everywhere seriously – minorities included.

Makiya's impassioned arguments have made some people rethink their positions, (including it seems Edward Said and Rana Kabbani). Others predictably have attacked him, often on a personal basis. For myself, his words provide extraordinary moments of recognition, when a whole understanding and way of seeing is suddenly out in public, no longer smothered or isolated or even denied.

There were more such moments, shared by many, at a public meeting this April organised by the *Jewish Quarterly* and the Spiro Institute. The event was a conversation between Sami Michael, an Iraqi-born Israeli writer, and Kana Makiya and was billed as an Israeli-Iraqi conversation on peace, democracy and human rights. Speaking to a packed, tense audience which included members of the Iraqi-Jewish community in London, Makiya dealt first of all with the question of why, in *Republic of Fear*, he had seen the fate of the 3,000 Jews living in Iraq in 1968 – 1969 as so important. It is extremely rare for Arab intellectuals or anyone else on the left to deal with such issues and they are usually seen as propaganda topics inflated by the zionist right. There had been speculation about Makiya's motives in paying attention to such events, and as far as I know he has been virtually alone in bothering to assess

their impact not just on the Jews themselves but on the whole Iraqi population.

The Ba'ithi regime, in his view, used what it did to Iraq's tiny Jewish community as a way of legitimising itself. The public hangings of Jews and display of bodies in a carnivalesque atmosphere in 1969 had traumatised some witnesses. This transformation of death into a spectacle was a taste of what was to come for the rest of the population, profoundly changing the nature of Iraqi society. Contrasting this perspective with other views from the left helps give some idea of how difficult it must have been for Makiya, himself a non-Jewish Iraqi, to force serious consideration of the meaning of the executions. In *Prophets in Babylon* (1980) – an unreliable book which is nevertheless used as a respectable source by some writers – Marion Woolfson had no qualms of conscience about defending the hangings on all sorts of grounds. Woolfson attacked the worldwide protests rather than the 'trials' and executions, and even quoted approvingly the Baghdadi official who said: 'Why do we have public hangings? Because our people are not very sophisticated and they find it difficult to accept abstract ideas We are sure that what we are doing is for the good of all the people in the country.' Woolfson added the comment that from 1974 until 1980 Iraq had indeed 'succeeded in maintaining an unprecedented stability'. Terror, it seems, provided it was presented as anti-zionist, was a perfectly acceptable means.

In discussing the role of Iraqi Jews, Sami Michael went back further to the earlier persecution which had pushed out – in his words – most of the ancient community in 1948-1951, despite the doubts many Iraqi Jews had about Zionism and their active involvement in Iraqi cultural and political life. Michael saw this as doubly evil, first because the persecution of Jews introduced 'something new and bad in Iraqi society', and secondly because modern Iraq 'lost an important part of its reality when the Jews left'. Speakers from the audience concurred with this, suggesting that Iraq could never have gone down the road to mayhem, fascism and virtually ceaseless war if the Jews, more educated than most Iraqis and well-integrated into civil society, had been able to stay. Makiya hoped the culture, preserved by the Iraqi Jews but lost to Iraq itself, might one day be restored from totalitarianism and help the wrecked country to repair its identity.

Asked about the future, both Michael and Makiya were tentatively positive. Both felt that for most people, the politics of pure ideology were over, having brought them nothing but suffering. Now there was no choice other than the politics

of survival, pragmatism and making peace, however slow and difficult that was going to be – and neither had any romantic illusions. Michael quoted an Egyptian acquaintance who explained Sadat's willingness to sign a treaty as follows, recalling how many thousands of Egyptians died in the Sinai desert: 'We came to the conclusion that the rejectionists wanted to fight to the last Egyptian for a foolish cause. So we stopped.' Makiya too confirmed that the Middle East agenda has changed: 'Life has shown the Palestinian cause is not the defining question. There are lots of countries and peoples and many deep-rooted problems. Responsibility falls on the Palestinians themselves squarely. No Iraqi today is going to shed their life for Palestine. Those days are gone.'

But where are the intellectuals now in all this? According to both Michael and Makiya, they are still not helping. Makiya felt it a major problem that intellectuals on the Arab side had not welcomed the peace process, which was being driven by politicians, supported by war-weary people on the ground, but obstructed by the 'layer in between'. Rejectionist language remained operative amongst people who had made

it into a profession. Michael criticised the shallow, masculine culture of war which had been created on both sides, allowing a dangerous platform for 'mediocre' artists and intellectuals, who profited from it while others were silenced.

It might be more comfortable to review the 'conversation', as well as *Cruelty and Silence*, purely in terms of other people – Arab and Israeli intellectuals, the victimised populations of the Middle East, tyrants and imperialists. But that would be an evasion, because the unequivocal message is that the whole mind-set on the Mid-

dle East which has dominated the left, and I would have to include *Jewish Socialist*, has to be rethought. When the Gulf War broke out *Jewish Socialist* carried an editorial which I was and am critical of. This editorial, which claimed to be 'fully aware' of the dangers posed by Saddam's Iraq, treated the war as a minor theme compared with the Israel-Palestine question (Makiya asks how different it would have been if everyone, Palestinians included, had rejected Saddam's idea of 'linkage'). The Scud missiles landing on Israel at the time, which as it turned out mainly succeeded in destroying the homes of Iraqi Jews in Ramat Gan, were the occasion for what I suspected was fake outrage about the late distribution of gas masks in the West Bank. It was difficult to communicate my criticism which is not just over a particular form of words, but also about unravelling many years of selective interest and slanted thought. Only zionists were supposed to voice such complaints, and conversely these kinds of complaints tended to be dismissed as part of zionism's rhetoric. But *Cruelty and Silence* contains exactly that critique. The debate it opens is many years overdue.

Dena Attar

Open Eye
Challenging media censorship

Noam Chomsky
The New Repression
Vandana Shiva
Ward Churchill

Icke and the Nazis
GATT: Global Plunder
Tim Lang
Alternative Medicine
M15 Targets Greens

New issue of the eco-political investigative magazine
Issue 3: £1.70 (inc p&p); sub: UK £5.00, Europe £6.00, USA £8.00.
Cheques payable to 'Open Eye' - must be drawn on a UK bank.
Address: BM Open Eye, London WC1N 3XX Tel 0956 250654

Not set in stone

*The Texture of Memory:
Holocaust Memorials and
Meaning*

James E Young
Yale, £13.95 paperback

*Depiction and Interpretation:
The Influence of the Holocaust
on the Visual Arts*

Ziva Amishai-Maisels
Pergamon, £120 hardback

'What is the use to the modern man of this "monumental" contemplation of the past?' And why does James Young quote this nihilistic question from Nietzsche (of all people) at the beginning of his own painstaking and beautiful book of Holocaust memorials?

This year's events make it look as if Nietzsche might have been right. When speeches were made and candles were lit at the gates of Auschwitz, the report on the Nine o'Clock News said 'it will never happen again'. But there is slave labour in Pale, the attempted expulsion and extermination of Europe's indigenous Muslims and genocidal rumbling towards the Gypsies. Meanwhile Schindler's List museums proliferate in North American cities where Native Indian skulls were once sold as ornamental ink-wells.

This is why I agree with James Young that the work of memory must never become 'monumental' – congealed, self-congratulating, governmental. Memorials must go inside us and keep on asking difficult questions.

The Texture of Memory is an austere graceful book, with haunting pictures taken by the author from unexpected angles, and narrow columns of print floating on the white page like memorial tablets. But the text never becomes nostalgic, and doesn't miss a single trick – not allowing us to read the memorials at their face value, not allowing governments (from Poland to Israel) to get away with using the monuments for nationalistic ends.

James Young is continually inserting new bits of history which carry you down unexpected routes of enquiry. Like showing you the rehabilitated second life of Dachau, as a transit camp for



Memorial obelisk at Treblinka. Photo: James E Young

Sudeten Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia. Like showing you a woman shopper resting on the back of Vienna's memorial sculpture of a street-washing Jew and adding that 'later, a barbed-wire crown of thorns was added to discourage this practice'. Like giving you the information that 'the treatment of Poles was so brutal at the outset of the war that many of the especially desperate members of the intelligentsia actually donned the Jewish star as a means of protection from the Nazis'.

This gives us a new angle on the most magnificent of all monuments, the sculptured graveyard at Treblinka – a Christian homage to Hebrew headstones, erected only a few years before Poland's communists expelled the last Jews in their 'anti-Zionist' witch-hunt of 1968. *The Texture of Memory* shows why Poles have tended to Christianise the Holocaust, in ways that are touching

as well as terrible (by remembrance fields full of handmade Stars of David hung from wooden crosses, as well as by the ravings of Cardinal Glemp, defender of the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz).

On his 10-year voyage through the smallest sites in Europe, Israel and the Americas, James Young also used the huge official archives at Yad Vashem, Israel's national Heroes' and Martyrs' Memorial. He politely, but unmistakably, points out the instrumental way Holocaust memory has been yoked to the military cemetery on this endlessly expanding site: 'as the state grows, so too will its memorial underpinning'. The Children's Memorial, Young says, 'reminds some of a theme-park ride'. He continues: 'It may exaggerate the matter slightly to suggest...that these child-victims are being cynically used to emblemize all Israelis, thus turning every soldier and settler into a picture of



Memorial sculpture at Dachau

total innocence. But by turning these children into "potential citizens", the memorial may [be] suggest[ing] that the Holocaust was a crime against the state of Israel itself'.

In Germany, by contrast to all this marshalling of official memory, artists have had to erect counter-monuments – memorials to the official suppression of memory. So, instead of re-erecting the Jew's Fountain destroyed by the Nazis in Kassel, the local artist Horst Hoheisel rebuilt the monument upside down and buried it in the same site. Only the base is visible, while spectators can hear the water gushing deep underground.

In Hamburg, conceptual artists Esther and Jochen Gerz made a vanishing column in the shopping centre of an industrial suburb. The public were invited in six languages 'to add their names here to ours [by scratching their signatures on the lead surface]'. In doing so, we commit ourselves to remain vigilant'. As each portion of the soft metal column became covered with names, it was lowered into the pavement with a series of ceremonies over five years, then sealed with a gravestone.

Ziva Amishai-Maisels' heroic compilation of Holocaust art (which she calls with unbelievable modesty an 'interim report') is a very different kind of memory-work. This is a volume to pester your library for, not to read straight; the price,

the layout and some of the other editorial decisions make it purely a reference book. I've already found masses of invaluable information in the 700 pages of *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts*. My criticisms are only of the moments where this massive collection stops provoking memory and becomes – a monument.

On principle, the book makes no evaluations. It never distinguishes between famous artists (Chagall, Rothko, Frank Stella, Anselm Kiefer – religious Jew, atheist Jew, Italian-American Catholic, contemporary German respectively); less-known figures whose work becomes incredibly gripping because of their experiences (Felix Nussbaum, Maryan S Maryan); or survivor-artists who made art to try to heal themselves, not regarding themselves as artists at all.

So the word 'depiction' in the title counts for more than the 'interpretation'; there's a string of themes and images – from David and Goliath, Mother and Child, the Jewish Crucifixion to railway tracks and chimneys – slotted into a consecutive list of artists. The 'Holocaust' part of the title is also infinitely more important in this book than the 'Art' – a word which Amishai-Maisels often prints in fright quotes.

Suspicious of artists who may have

wanted to universalise the experience of genocide, she seems to regard most forms of abstract art as escapist. But the opposite problem, of producing all-too-accessible and perhaps sincere Holocaust kitsch, is something the book never seems to admit.

Loyalties are sometimes assessed in a narrow spirit. So Rothko – an anarchist who taught throughout his life at a Jewish community centre, and kept the High Holy days while married to a Christian – is rebuked for his 'retreat into abstraction'. But Ludwig Meidner's conversion to reform Judaism and then born-again Orthodoxy (during his persecution in Germany and his exile and internment in England) is viewed quite uncritically. Even though Meidner then went back to Germany as a famous Expressionist, dropped Jewish themes and changed his signature back from Hebrew, we are not encouraged to view the paintings of his 'Jewish period' with any scepticism.

Amishai-Maisels has also accepted the help of the Yad Vashem archive, and unlike James Young has let gratitude affect her text. Even a dissident Zionist artist and Holocaust survivor like Yigael Tumarkin is given a full political rake-down for depicting Israel as an 'embattled ghetto' and exploring Arab claims to the land.

Amanda Sebestyen

Unity sometimes

**Workers' Control not
Immigration Controls**
Steve Cohen
Greater Manchester
Immigration Aid Unit

This Pamphlet is an essential weapon in the battle to make trades unions genuinely anti-racist – to stop the currency of racist ideas and collaboration with state racism. Steve Cohen chronicles the disgraceful role of trades unions in the past as advocates of immigration control. This history goes back to the turn of the century when the TUC campaigned for the introduction of controls against Jews. This miserable tradition continued in relation to controls against black people.

But it doesn't have to be like that. The pamphlet shows how self-organisation of Jews and black people within the trades unions has challenged these policies and in recent years some unions have been at the forefront of many anti-deportation campaigns.

Today the trades union movement has turned away from outright support for immigration controls in favour of arguing for 'non-racist immigration controls'. The pamphlet shows this to be a nonsensical policy and puts forward clear arguments for fighting against immigration controls altogether.

Steve Cohen anticipated that if elected, the Labour Party would try to introduce employer sanctions – laws penalising those who employ 'illegal immigrants' and making employers, local authorities etc anti-immigrant police – and would seek the support of trade unions for such a policy. In fact, in the short time since the pamphlet was written, Home Secretary, Michael Howard, has already indicated his intention to bring in these sanctions, probably this autumn. This makes the pamphlet's arguments against employer sanctions even more relevant.

David Landau

● Available from Greater Manchester Immigration Unit, 400 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 9LE. £2.50 per copy or £1 per copy after the first 10.

Ozzzz

Israel, Palestine and Peace
Amos Oz
Vintage Original, £5.99

A few years ago I read David Grossman's book, *Yellow Wind*, a reflective exploration by an Israeli Jew of a variety of positions on Palestine, including those of Palestinians as well as Israelis.

Yellow Wind, unwittingly, exposes the dilemma of the Israeli left; those in power, however benevolent, will always be viewed with suspicion by the oppressed and the occupied. However, one felt that Grossman had taken the trouble to talk to Palestinians and that what emerges are paradoxes that are deep and truly felt.

Amos Oz is even more well-known than Grossman as a literary figure on the Israeli left. The title to Oz's collection of essays is somewhat misleading. It may well cover Israel and Palestine but as entities decontextualized from their inhabitants.

Oz does not seem to have asked questions of anyone, much less listened. It is a series of essays, generalised, literary, skillfully argued and ultimately, self-adulatory.

Unlike Grossman, Amos Oz has answers – assertions – but these are answers to his own questions.

He makes no bones about his position: he favours the two state solution as he propounds again and again. Oz is not a romantic about peace – it is about valuing life above disputed claims with one's enemies, and therefore concessions are necessary.

But whilst these essays have literary arguments they are not the essays of a writer who has a handle on the dynamics of Israeli and Palestinian society.

Perhaps it is unfair to characterise Oz's views on the basis of this book alone. It is a collection of twelve speeches and articles for journals and newspapers.

Often the arguments overlap and are repeated and, far from giving this book a resonance, they simply seem to lack coherence.

It is also irritating that the dates of the articles appear at the end of articles rather than at the beginning. At £5.99 for 130 pages this is an exercise in making money out of a big name.

Ralph Levinson

POEMS BY LIZ CASHDAN

ACCENTS

I never heard my mother's foreignness
only her harsh voice calling my name
Rough skinned hands smelling of onion
washed me, combed my hair,
sometimes slapped my legs.
She wouldn't come to school events
frightened of other parents
who'd recognise her Russian consonants
she stayed at home washing floors
doing her best with wartime rations
laughing at Tommy Handley, Monday Night at Eight

One evening late home from school
(I'd spent two hours corner-talking
while leafy Bucks flattened my Hampstead vowels)
I found her slumped in her dressing gown
listening to Kreisler on the wireless
Tchaikovsky's violin concerto
crying into her silence

● These poems appear in *Laughing all the way*, Liz Cashdan's first solo collection of poetry, published by Five Leaves Publications, PO Box 81 Nottingham NG5 4ER, Price £5.99

ORAL HISTORY

1. HOW DO YOU SAY

Today I am talking Russian and Hebrew
I am in Tel Aviv, the sun is hot

Galina has come to clean my sister's house
In Russia she was a school teacher
She recites Pushkin: 'It may be that love
has not completely died in my soul.'
Once she lived near Chernobyl
her son Alex may have leukaemia
Such possibilities are difficult in any language

On T.V. four hundred Palestinians turn to Mecca,
their faces touch the snow of no-man's-land
How do you say that in Hebrew?
Jews know the word for exile in every language.
The Palestinians pray in Arabic

'I am afraid of Arabs,' Galina says.
Yesterday the Arab who had come to empty
her dustbin stopped to greet her.
'He would kill me,' Galina says.
She uses the conditional particle.
'He would kill to save his children.'

Dyeti, yeladot - Russian and Hebrew words.
How do you say children in Arabic?

CASABLANCA, the 'political magazine that's true, clean and fearless' (*according to The Face*), 'a literary hand grenade' (*New Statesman*), 'rude' (*the Guardian*), 'devastating' (*Private Eye*), and 'promised lunch to anyone who gave it a mention' (*Workers Press*), sends **JEWISH SOCIALIST** best wishes for a Happy Birthday.



Inside September's CASABLANCA:

Our spy-on-the-wall-with-a-prawn-sandwich hears **Julia Bard** and **Larry Kramer** dispute the existence of Jewish Sexuality; **Donald Kenrick** looks at the sudden rush of interest in Gypsies; radical philosopher **Jonathan Rée** has heretical thoughts about higher education; a galley slave on the *Independent* writes of **Martin Jacques' New Crimes**.

PLUS

GIANT POSTER FOR BOSNIA: What we can do
NOT AFRICA 95: South Sudan, a culture at war
£2.20 from all good bookshops – or **subscribe**

Subscribe

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order for payable to CASABLANCA LTD.

☐ £12 for 4 issues ☐ £21 for 8 issues ☐ £7 for students

Institutional subscriptions: ☐ £20 for 4 issues ☐ £35 for 8 issues

Europe airmail: ☐ £16 for 4 issues ☐ £30 for 8 issues

World airmail: ☐ £19.50 for 4 issues ☐ £39.50 for 8 issues

Send to **CASABLANCA, FREEPOST KE 8595, LONDON EC1B 1QB**
CASABLANCA CREDIT CARD HOTLINE 071 608 3784



**One year's
subscription
£26.85
(&20 concs)**

September Issue OUT NOW!

● **Anthea Davey** on Labour's authoritarian populism

● **Lesley Riddoch** questions Tony Blair's scrapping of women-only shortlists

● **Pension Funds** — **Richard Minns** asks how the public can gain control, while **Arthur Scargill** demands action to end abuse of our pension funds

● **Jonathan Steele** sees the UN's failure in the former Yugoslavia as a bloody legacy of the Cold War

● **Marie Holzman and Harriet Evans** on the reality of women's lives in China

<http://www.rednet.co.uk/redpepper/>



3 FREE ISSUES WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE BY DIRECT DEBIT*

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

DIRECT DEBIT

Bank _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

Account holder _____
Account no. ____ / ____ / ____ / ____ / ____ / ____
Sort code ____ / ____ / ____

Signed _____ Date _____

Banks may decline to pay direct debits from some kinds of accounts. Originators ID No 974090. Originators Ref:

CASH

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £26.85 payable to **Red Pepper**

*NB FREE issues offer open to Direct Debit subscribers only

Direct Debit subscribers will receive **FREE** copies of the next three issues of *Red Pepper* plus your choice of free gift if you decide to continue with your subscription. You are under no obligation to continue with *Red Pepper* after the three magazines have been delivered. You may cancel by writing to *Red Pepper* within seven days of receiving the third issue, and no money will have changed hands. If you want to continue you need do nothing. Your account will be debited annually until cancelled.

Choice of **FREE** gift* (cross one box only)
☐ Red Pepper T-shirt or
☐ Billy Bragg CD: ☐ *Don't try this at home* ☐ *Back to basics*
☐ Victim of geography
* Free gift will be sent on payment of first year's subscription

Please return this form to: **Red Pepper**,
3 Gunthorpe Street, London, E1 7RP.

JS/8/95