

OCHJS NEWS BULLETIN No. 25 : JUNE 2005

Recent months have brought a series of notable lectures to the Centre, as well as further Library acquisitions and the usual kaleidoscope of learned visitors.

LECTURES AND EVENTS

On 19 May Robert Gellately of Florida State University, currently Bertelsmann Europaeum Visiting Professor at Oxford, lectured on "Nazi Persecution of the Jews and German Public Opinion". The lecture was part of Professor Gellately's series entitled *Stalin and Hitler: Dictatorship and Social Catastrophe*.

A reception to celebrate the acquisition by the Muller Library of the Loewe Collection of pamphlets was held at Yarnton Manor on 6th June. This collection dates back to Professor Raphael Loewe's great-grandfather, the orientalist Louis Loewe, who was the secretary of Sir Moses Montefiore and the first Principal of the Judith Montefiore College at Ramsgate. As the Librarian explained to the gathering, the collection was enlarged by subsequent generations of the family and consists of pamphlets and offprints on a variety of subjects (Archaeology, Bible, Midrash, Talmud, History, Biography, Bibliography etc.), dating back to the earlier 19th century. Professor Loewe then spoke entertainingly about some of the collection's highlights and, more especially, about his childhood memories of academic and Jewish society in Oxford during the 1920s and 30s.

Arrival of the Loewe pamphlets will be followed in due course by the Louis Jacobs library (see Press Release issued on 1 March 2005 as a supplement to our Bulletin No. 24) and by further major acquisitions, details of which are still confidential. Watch this space!

The fifth Martin Goldman lecture, again at Yarnton, was given by Dr Ada Rapoport-Albert of University College London on Sunday 12th June. Her topic, presented not only in scholarly depth but in her inimitable thespian style, was "Messianic Sectarianism in 18th Century Poland: Jacob Frank and the Filipovtsy." The series was established by Mrs Helen Goldman in memory of her son and is based around the general theme of Polish-Jewish relations. Previous lecturers have included Ezra Mendelsohn, Gershon Hundert, Antony Polonsky and the late Felek Scharf, who gave the fourth lecture in 2002.

SEMINARS AND VISITORS

Emeritus President David Patterson opened the summer term's Seminar series with a memorable overview of the emergence and development of Modern Hebrew Literature. The range and eloquence of the lecture, delivered without a note, belied the speaker's years, and even more, his insistence that this was to be his academic swansong.

Among the Centre's recent Visiting Skirball Fellows who gave seminars during the past two terms are Leah Hochman, Benjamin Hary, Henrietta Mondry and Joshua Zimmerman.

Professor Hochman, from the University of Florida, spoke about concepts of the Ugly and Ugliness in 18th and 19th century European thought and their relationship to social policy making in the late Enlightenment. Questions of Jewish physiognomy featured. Professor Hary of Emory University, Atlanta, lectured on the phenomenon of 'Jewish Languages' in diverse Jewish communities in numerous areas, including Judeo-Arabic, Yiddish, Judeo-Italian and Ladino. He also analyzed the special literary genre of verbatim translations of sacred Hebrew texts (such as the Bible or Passover Haggadah) into Jewish languages. Professor Mondry, of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, gave a seminar entitled "Russian Politics of the Jew's Body: the Case of Vasily Romanov". And Dr Zimmerman, of Yeshiva University, USA, spoke about the attitude of the Polish Home Army to the Jews during the Holocaust.

ALUN' S MARATHON EFFORT

Alun Ward, the Centre's webmaster, ran in the Stockholm Marathon on 4th June after months of training and preparation. His aim was to raise funds for the Burns Unit at Selly Oak Hospital, where his partner was treated in 2003. Many congratulations to Alun, whose successful completion of the marathon in 3 hours 50 minutes and 10 seconds, was awarded with over £1200 in sponsorship money.

FELINE RESCUE!

The services of Don Burnett, long-time employee at the Manor, were called upon one spring day when all other rescue attempts had failed. A black cat belonging to the new vicar of St Bartholomew's Church was spotted in the upper branches of a huge sycamore tree, where it had apparently been trapped for two days. Don, watched by an ever-growing audience, eventually managed to dislodge the recalcitrant creature, which at first climbed even higher, and then manoeuvred itself into another tree, from which it half-jumped, half-fell to the ground before bolting home to the vicarage at lightning speed. The vicar later reported that the cat had eaten a huge meal and seemed none the worse for her adventure.

Peter Oppenheimer – President
Sue Forteach - Bulletin Compiler