

EDITORIAL

European Judaism is almost forced to turn to the German scene from time to time. The various shifts and changes in this heartland of Europe require continuous observation, even though each observer brings a different point of view to this periodical. There is too much to report, and we can only gain glimpses of what may be emerging. However, the very differences of these reports, which often disagree with each other, ultimately result in a richer panorama that will challenge our readers. Of course, the writings may reflect more of each author's 'personal agenda'; that, too, may be enlightening.

Behind the texts looms the reality of an anti-Semitism which is dormant in Germany. It may well be that there is far more hatred against the Jews in France and Austria, for example, than in a Germany which has at least tried to come to terms with its past. Still, just as the poison of Chernobyl still lives in the atmosphere and poisons the countryside and living beings, so the smoke of Auschwitz resides in the lives of those who have to cope with that dreadful inheritance. The issue has become more that of responsibility for the past than the guilt of the grandparents, but it is just as real to the Germans of today. There is a 'second generation' pattern which is explored within German literature (Bernard Schlink's is an example here); and this is also reflected in the current politics of a *Bundestag* which has returned to Berlin. Fritz Stern, who received the Frankfurt Book Fair Peace Prize in 1999, gave a response to Martin Walser, the German author who felt that it was time to let the Auschwitz image disappear from German literature. Stern had already warned, in 1977, that the collective memory of the Holocaust was beginning to fade. In Frankfurt, he reminded the Germans of the continuous task of memorialising the *Shoah*. Some of this is reflected in this issue of *European Judaism*.

In this issue, Eric Brothers report on the development of the neo-Nazi scene in East Berlin is significant as it addresses the worries of the world wide Jewish community – it is set against my own meditation of a Berlin as it might exist in fifty years. Perhaps I should point out that this was written for the influential *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as part of a major series where over fifty scholars reflected in the course of a year what kind of a future would exist within their disciplines in half a century. My own approach was positive; but then, it *was* a dream.

Perhaps we gave a deeper perspective when we moved into the past with Marvin Heller's examination of the Court Jew, where some of the darker images of Jewish life in the past helped us to examine the present. But

Marina Sassenberg's reflection on Selma Stern's classic study of the Court Jew brings us into the world of the German emigré community. Rachel Rosenblum reflects upon the continuing impact of Primo Levi and the larger image of the testimony of the survivors. It helps to realise that each survivor had his/her own identity, and that every testimony is unique even when it tells its own tale. We are often told that, as much as luck, one needed to have faith in the camps: it could be traditional, liberal, Zionist or Communist; each commitment also kept one within a community of believers. This endured in the post-*Shoah* age, and Andrea Zielinski's essay upon the identity structures of religious Jews in post-war Germany gives us insight into both the achievements and failures of the pious Jews who live in the shadow of that darkness. Germany can be seen from within and also from the outside, and Michael Daxner's 'Coming Home into a Foreign Country' gives us an insight here, as well as Jens Reich's 'Germany, My Germany' – again, every 'Germany' has its unique aspects. The ambivalence of the re-emergence of a Jewish community in Berlin is tellingly invoked by Joachim Schlör.

Once again, this issue of *European Judaism* is something of a kaleidoscope. It is not unrelated to the central theme to reflect upon the differences we see in discussing the millennium: 2000, 5760, 1420. We begin to realise that individual traditions shape time in their own pattern, as described by Amira Abdin, Ruth Scott, and Michael Hilton (whose book on the Christian roots of Judaism is selling well in Germany). The nature of the 'trialogue' of the three religions is examined by Guy Rammenzweig's 'Walking Upright Together', where the Jewish-Christian-Muslim encounter makes sense. Sadly, this is still under attack, as shown by Micha Brunnlik's recent unreasonable treatment of the Bendorf experience in an article in the German-Jewish *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Traditional thinking retreats from the recognition of other religious faiths.

Other articles give depths to the current issue, not least the sermon for *Shabbat Zakhor* by Kati Kelemen and Judge Buergenthal's insights into Progressive Judaism beyond the *Shoah*, as well as the poems and the book reviews. Still, we would also like you to see this issue of *European Judaism* as one link in a pattern of continuous reflection upon the European scene which has not been interrupted for over thirty years. Many of the contributors, the great intellectuals of post-*Shoah* Jewish life have passed away, and our first editors: Michael Goulston and Ignaz Maybaum set an enduring pattern for us before they died.

Dor holech v 'dor ba, one generation goes, and another arrives; and it is important to us that the younger scholars who are so much part of this periodical add new insights as they preserve the vision of these founders. We

have entered the new millennium with hope, and the knowledge that *European Judaism* has much to contribute in the years ahead of us.

Albert H. Friedlander