

Museum for the future

I WISH to address some issues raised by Ron Finkel (*AJN 31/3*) who expressed concern that a donor had given to the Jewish Museum of Australia, and by his assertion "to the past" instead of to Hillel and thus to the "future" of Australian Jewry.

Firstly, Mr Finkel indicates a lack of appreciation of the role of the Jewish Museum of Australia. We preserve and present the heritage of Australian Jewish life as a bedrock onto which the present and future of our community is founded.

We build bridges between our past and our future by displaying and celebrating the history, the heritage, culture and religion which bind us together as Jews and define our identity as a people.

We help shape the cultural identity of Australian Jewry through our contemporary exhibitions. Through our exhibitions and our extensive education programmes we function as an

important educational institution reaching Jews of all different degrees of identification and interest.

Indeed our potential as an educational institution within that Jewish community will be greatly augmented when we move to our own premises where we will have, for instance, holiday programs for children about rituals and practices, which no one could claim are only part of our "past."

Furthermore, we have an important educational role as a bridge between the Jewish and the wider community. Our schools program teaches thousands annually about our religion and life style. The success of our latest program where over 1000 students from Christian schools visited St Kilda Synagogue and the Temple to learn about Barmitzvah, the role of the rabbi and Pesach, is reported in the same issue of the *Jewish News* as Mr Finkel's comments. The importance

of this aspect of the Museum to the future of our community lies in our unique ability to "demystify" Judaism for the young and hence hopefully help prevent racism and antisemitism.

I would also suggest that it is counter-productive to compare the value of one institution unfavourably against another. Hillel is undoubtedly an important service and it requires funding. It is unfortunate that we all must compete for funds. But it is up to the donor to contribute "Tzedakah" as he or she wishes. In the end it is the community that benefits.

Goodwill among ourselves is an essential component on which to build our future. Let us relegate such comments as those by Ron Finkel to the past.

*Dr Helen Light
Director/Curator
The Jewish Museum of Australia*

Peace against terror

IN HIS letter (*AJN 24/3*), Dr Eric Stock advocates that, because of high risk, Israel should abandon the peace process and "deter war through strength and determination" as in days of yore, or face a second Holocaust.

I have many problems with this. The two most obvious are that Israel's primary problem today is not war, but terrorism, and that "strength and determination" have not solved it. Dr Stock's alternative involves returning to a situation, wherein events control you, rather than you controlling events. This has never been Israel's way, nor is it consistent with those lessons learnt from the first Holocaust.

The strategy behind the current peace plan is brilliant in its simplicity. You give the Palestinians something of such value, that they will be disinclined to lose it. In order to

avoid risk they will control terrorism and make deals. Even if the Tunisian leadership is following the "Stages Plan", it is unlikely that they will find takers. In the worse case, the Palestinians cannot pose any military threat to Israel.

The time for "pressing the eject button" is long gone; the cost, considering Israel's diplomatic gains alone, are too high. Dr Stock, and the Likud, would have done better to jump on the bandwagon and try to balance the tendency of the extreme Left to give away our birthright.

While the Likud could balance the demands of the extreme Left, the Left, in turn, should realise that putting yourself into somebody else's shoes does not involve abandoning your own.

*Morry Sztainbok
East Bentleigh*

ONE VOICE

YES, A lesbian group was at Concert in the Park. So were Chabad, the Zionist Youth Council, the Elsternwick Jewish community, the Jewish Secular Humanist Society, the Liron Choir and the Skif Grunge Orchestra. No individual feels at home with all these groups.

But you don't have to agree with your family to love them as family. Community means enjoying our diversity and celebrating in One Voice.

*Deborah Stone
Elsternwick*

TOLERANCE/ACCEPTANCE

TUVYA Rosengarten (*AJN 31/3*) writes that the Jewish lesbian stall at Concert in the Park was "totally inappropriate" as it was "meant to be a family event".

Perhaps it would surprise Tuvya and others to find that our group comprises mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, cousins, etc of people at the Concert. Jewish lesbians are part of families in the community and therefore have a right to be openly represented at communal events.

Tuvya preaches tolerance, but not acceptance. As a Jew in Australia he would surely wish to be accepted, not just tolerated. Why

should lesbians (or gay men) expect any less?

*Melbourne Jewish
Lesbian Group*

GETT WOMEN

WHILE READING your report "Orthodox-Liberal Progress on Gett" (*AJN 24/3*), I noted with amazement and disbelief that all but one of the Orthodox-Liberal Dialogue Group are men. I do not understand how a committee which purports to explore the issue of the gett can fail to include at least an equal representation of women — those for whom the issue is most problematic and oppressive.

In fact, any such committee representing the community should reflect the gender make-up of the community itself, regardless of the issue — but particularly this one, which is addressing a question which affects women so significantly. It has been the insensitivity, inflexibility and impotency of male rabbis which have perpetuated the predicament of the agunah. It hardly inspires confidence that another group of men is trying to find an "Halachically acceptable formula" to this problem.

*Rebecca Forgasz
East Brighton*

RED ARMY

I HAVE read about the Holocaust in your paper many times. But I can't recall once reading about the Jews who served in the Soviet Union's Red Army and provided the crucial backbone to the Red Army in crushing the Nazis.

According to the Encyclopedia Judaica 500,000 Jews served in the Soviet Army, 170,000 were decorated — 70,000 for exceptional heroism — and 140 received the award of 'Hero of the Soviet Union'. There were 200 Jews who were generals or above including General Moshe Vinrub at Stalingrad who commanded the armoured forces that closed the trap on 720,000 Germans and their allies, and Brigadier General Leonid Vinokur who formally accepted German Field Marshal von Paulus's surrender.

Then there was the Lithuanian Division whose operational language was Yiddish. After the war the Russians suppressed and denigrated the crucial Jewish contribution to defeating the Germans. Because of the Cold War we connived at this suppression. But now that the Cold War is over I believe we are free to give the credit that is due to those forgotten Jews.

*Sol Bud
Ormond*

Grants against racism

IT WAS surprising to see that Bernard Freedman's report on the new round of Commonwealth anti-racism funding (*AJN 24/3/95*) made no mention of one of the largest and most innovative Victorian-based grants.

The Victorian Community Relations Council, in association with the Ecumenical Migration Centre has been awarded \$104,000 to conduct a two-year media training project. The project is designed to achieve more accurate reporting and representation of community relations issues in the print media, problems which were identified in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's *Racist Violence Report* in 1991. This project will be run in conjunction with another project at Deakin University which will con-

centrate on the development of training materials for law and journalism students.

The project application was supported by the Media and Arts Alliance union, publishers and journalists, as well as a wide range of community organisations concerned with community relations and racism. The project will begin in Victoria, aiming at national adoption of its training package.

We also hope to meet with the other Commonwealth-funded projects, perhaps in a joint forum, in order to share common issues of concern and to ensure that support continues for these important strategies against racism.

*Larry Stillman
Victoria Community Relations
Council*

LETTERS' POLICY

WE welcome letters to the editor. But we give preference to short letters of no more than 300 words. Letters may be cut for length, or edited for style and clarity. We only consider letters which include the sender's street address, day contact phone number, and full first name (not an initial) and surname. In common with standard newspaper practice we do not advise writers whose letters are not published.

mazaltou

BIRTH

Belik (Rosenberg)
Harvey, Loretta, Yonatan and Daniel
are thrilled to announce the birth
of their daughter and sister
Ayelet Pninah
on 25th March, 1995, in Israel.
Ph: 0011 972 97712383 R'aanana.

BIRTH

Mandi Katz
and
Ashley Browne
are thrilled to announce the birth
of their beautiful daughter
Romy Mina Browne
רחל מינה
on 3rd April, 1995,
at Frances Perry House.
Another grandchild for Myra and
Rubin Katz, Rebecca and Bruce Krass
and Noel Browne.
Yet another great-grandchild
for Mania Fish.
Many thanks to Dr L. Steinberg.

ב"ה

BIRTH

Anat and Malcolm (Chuck)
proudly announce the birth,
in Israel, of their
Twin Sons
on 3rd April, 1995.
Grandparents
Uschi and Werner Grumach
are overjoyed.

BIRTH

Lynda and Wally Jablonka
are proud to announce the safe arrival
of their first grandchild
Jenna
Born to
Karrie and Michael
on April 3, 1995.

The Australian Jewish News

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BIRTH

Tendler (Freedman)
Lisa and Norman
are thrilled to announce
the arrival of their fourth child,
another gorgeous boy
Michael Joel
on 30th March, 1995.
Brother for **Amelia, Darren** and **Jason**.
Fourth grandchild to
Barbara and Bernard Freedman,
Sixth grandchild to **Steve Tendler**.

ב"ה

BARMITZVAH

Ester, Ori, Natalie and Julia
have much pleasure in announcing the
Barmitzvah of their son and brother
Joseph Eliezer Feldman
who will be called to the Torah
at the Caulfield Hebrew Congregation,
572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield
on Saturday, 8th April, 1995
at 9.30 a.m.
A Kiddush will follow the Service.