

Jewish Historical Studies

Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England

Obituary:

Professor Ada Rapoport-Albert ז"ר

Chani Smith^{1,*}

How to cite: Smith, C. 'Professor Ada Rapoport-Albert ז"ר'. *Jewish Historical Studies*, 2021, 52(1), pp. 288-289.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.jhs.2021v52.018>.

Published: 03 June 2021

Peer Review:

This article has been peer reviewed through the journal's standard editorial peer review.

Copyright:

© 2020, The Author(s). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY) 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.jhs.2021v52.018>

Open Access:

Jewish Historical Studies is a peer-reviewed open access journal.

*Correspondence: Chanismith22@gmail.com

¹Leo Baeck College, London, UK

Professor Ada Rapoport-Albert ל"ר

CHANI SMITH

Ada was my Ph.D. supervisor and in the seven years of my research she changed my life and enriched it greatly. I feel deep gratitude to her for encouraging me to study for an M.A., and some years later to embark on a Ph.D. She instilled confidence in me, and because she herself was strong and forceful I trusted her guidance. I would not have gone deeper and deeper into my research into Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav's perception of music were it not for her support. She knew how to push in the right direction. Many students, as well as organizations, benefited from her drive, vision, and imagination.

Ada had enormous charm, humour, a healthy mixture of Israeli/British chutzpah, a brilliant and clear mind. She was beautiful, inside and outside, and possessed a radiance that could be almost blinding. She was a talented actress and singer, and I think that anyone who ever met her remembers well their first meeting. She had an unforgettable personality and presence.

At the same time, Ada was modest, and exacted high academic standards from herself as well as her students. At times, she could be a very demanding supervisor, and often a draft chapter I submitted for her feedback would return with more black comments than my original writing. On one occasion when I found these critical comments a little too much to take, I turned to another lecturer to share my despair. He kindly gave me a helpful insight into Ada, and into serious learning. He said: "Enjoy every comment she shared with you. No one will ever read what you write so closely and with such an incisive gaze." He went on to tell me that many of the lecturers in University College London would consult Ada regarding papers they intended to publish. Her language and editing skills were legendary; her own writing exceptionally clear. Her extensive feedback, however critical, grew out of her love, loyalty, and generosity, and a wish to help her students.

Ada was a breath of fresh air in the academic world. She was open, friendly, and direct, yet had an enigmatic quality. She will remain for ever

a one-off and will be sorely missed. May her memory continue to bless and inspire.