

Herbert Loebel

## REFUGEE INDUSTRIES IN THE DEPRESSED AREAS

In the late thirties, as I mentioned in the first part of this discussion in the August *AJR Information*, the desperate needs of the depressed areas of the North coincided with the equally desperate needs of the refugees to find factory space, to the eventual benefit of both.

In the exhaustive study of the subject I undertook I was able to record the history of all the 54 surviving firms and provided as much information as I could get on the 22 firms which were no longer in existence on my dateline, the 1 November 1974. In other words, there were 76 refugee firms founded in the depressed areas of the North, taking into account both those founded before and after the War, that is, in the 25 years from 1937. As an aside, I should say that of the 22 firms no longer in existence, only three failed in the course of business. Others closed down because of War conditions, internment and transport overseas, retirement of the founder or, indeed, after acquisition by a larger group and removal from the area. So far as surviving firms were concerned, there were about 100 founders.

Before the War, it was firmly believed—and not only by the powerful lobby opposing the admission of refugees—that for every refugee admitted, one British worker would lose his job. It is interesting, therefore, that these 100 founders employed, in their firms, 16,500 people on my dateline. I was able to cross-check this figure with the Department of Industry globally and my total figure, obtained from firms concerned, and theirs, were only about 4 per cent apart, so that it is quite accurate.

The variety of products these firms made is quite astonishing. Some of these products were not particularly technical, they just happened not to have been produced in Britain before, or, at least, not in adequate quantities. Quite a few products were completely new and for this reason, many firms exported a good part of their output.

But employment and export were not the only benefit resulting from the refugee settlement: they helped to diversify the industrial base of the region. They trained people in entirely new skills and they were the first to employ female labour, for whom there were no previous employment opportunities in the depressed areas. They created managerial and technical jobs, again, very scarce in the areas. And I should mention that they did all of their research and development "in house", in contrast to the branch factories which were established in the depressed areas after the War.

I have summarised for you in a few minutes matters to which I devoted some 250 pages in my study. The case histories alone take up some 120 pages. There is obviously not the time to discuss

individual histories nor to discuss many other matters of interest. But it may not be out of place to look for a moment behind the facts and statistics to turn the spotlight briefly on the men who created the enterprises concerned and to say something about them.

After reading and correcting the case histories, my wife remarked that, in their totality, they had almost the quality of an epic. The Oxford Dictionary defines an epic as a poem "narrating continuously the achievements of one or more heroes", the implication being that the achievements referred to were attained after great struggles. The definition is not, therefore, inappropriate to the picture revealed in our case histories.

Safe arrival in this country was already an achievement for many, if not most. Once here, they had to feed and clothe their families—as well as finance their new venture—in the knowledge that they had nothing and nobody to fall back upon if things went wrong. They battled with a new language, with strange business customs and with markets they did not know well, if at all. Then there was the internment episode which, while not affecting all of them, stretched their resources to the limit and destroyed the tender plant they had nursed to modest health. For many, this episode required yet another new start! The different origins, backgrounds and experience of the founders were remarkable. At one end of the scale we find founders who tried to continue skills developed by their families over several generations. At the other, there were professional men with no previous business experience on their own account who tried to earn a living by making relatively simple products. There were false starts which would have discouraged men of lesser courage. Some created important new markets but lacked the resources to carry on, only to see others reap the benefit. There were one or two firms which simply could not support two founders and their families, so that one of them had to leave! In one such case, the departing partner eventually established a manufacturing concern which today counts its sales in many millions and which has branches and factories in several countries overseas. One could go on picking out such fascinating details. Altogether, the case histories present a record of courage, imagination and hard work.

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Given the low level of local enterprise, the refugee manufacturers were soon recognised as useful citizens. Senior officials remarked on several occasions that the only enterprising people were the former refugees. One put it more crudely—intending to pay us a compliment. "The trouble with Britain" he said, "is that there are no more pogroms in Europe".

By the end of 1974, seven founders appeared in the Honours Lists, of whom two received knight-hoods. There were also five Queen's Awards for Export Achievements up to the same date. These numbers form, of course, a higher percentage than for small and medium-sized firms in Britain as a whole. I do not believe that we have reasons to complain that our efforts went unrecognised. Speaking personally—and making a case for living and working in the provinces—I find it gratifying

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### SELF AID CONCERT

On page 7 of this issue you will find the advance notice of this year's Self Aid Concert for Sunday, 1 November 1981, at 3.00 p.m., in the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

We ask supporters of the cause to offer greetings from their children and grandchildren on the "Young Supporters' Page" of our Souvenir Brochure. Each entry costs £1.50. We have advertising space available for any firm wishing to take advantage of this opportunity and to help needy former refugees at the same time. Terms on application to Self Aid, 328 3255 or 624 9096.

This year's Self Aid Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall will take place on a Sunday at 3 p.m. It was felt that many of our patrons might prefer the afternoon to the evening. This would enable them to bring with them younger members of the family.

The programme will, as always, be shared between several artists.

Mr. Yfrah Neaman has managed to fit the concert into his very busy schedule and will play the well known sonata for violin and piano by César Franck as well as a shorter piece, Baal Shem by Bloch, which is particularly suited for a concert such as ours.

The pianists Karl Ulrich Schnabel and Joan Rowland will play a number of works for four hands, including the Mozart Sonata in F Major, K.497, and a number of smaller items such as five pieces from *Jeux d'Enfants* by Bizet and the *Allegro Brilliant*, Op. 92 by Mendelssohn. There are very few ensembles playing four hands at the present time which means that a whole realm of musical gems is rarely heard. Mr. Schnabel and Joan Rowland are leading artists in this field.

Mr. Schnabel, of course, is no stranger to these shores and certainly not to Self Aid for whom he played in 1964, but it is the first time that this particular ensemble can be heard in this country at all. Mr. Schnabel used to play, and recorded, four-handed works with his father Artur Schnabel.

All the artists are giving their services free and we would like to take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to them for this generous gesture.

## REFUGEE INDUSTRIES

Continued from Page 1

to work in a place where one's work, however modest, is seen by others to be of some significance. Many refugee manufacturers or members of their families have done and are doing public work of one kind or another. Several have been appointed magistrates. In this connection, the establishment of the Rosehill Theatre in Cumbria by the late Sir Nicholas Seker may be mentioned, and there are several other significant examples of refugee manufacturers putting something back into the communities which received and accepted them.

But public recognition apart, many of the firms became successful and well-known in their trade, so that it is not surprising that by the end of 1974, 30 of the surviving 54 firms had been acquired by larger groups. Commercially, this is a fine compliment.

## Summing up

The industrial contribution by refugees to the British industrial scene as a whole has never, to my knowledge, been studied so far. It would, in any event, be a formidable undertaking.

Up to the spring before the War, this contribution was made largely in the depressed areas which included, apart from the North, South Wales, parts of Scotland, and Northern Ireland as a special case. Some two-thirds of all refugee manufacturing firms were located in these areas in February 1939, the last date for which we have official information.

But even up to the War, important refugee industries were established outside the depressed areas. Specialist firms in the chemical, leather tanning, rubber and machine tool industries—to quote only a few—were established in London, Birmingham, Leicester, Manchester and other places. And, of course, clothes were manufactured all over the place.

Since the end of the War and particularly since naturalisation was completed in the late 1940's, the industrial activities of former refugees became so intimately mixed with those of British industry as a whole that studies attempting to isolate their contribution would be very difficult indeed. We know that by 1947 there were at least 1,000 refugee manufacturing firms, employing some 250,000 people. But we would merely guess if we did try to estimate the number of refugee-founded manufacturing firms and their employment today.

The particular reason why refugees in Britain showed such a marked tendency towards industrial activities is largely explained by the composition of the refugee population at the outbreak of the War in 1939. It appears from the records of the Aliens Tribunals, that one-third of all adult German and Austrian refugees described themselves as manufacturers in their countries of origin. This means that there must have been something like 5,000 manufacturers among these refugees. We have a breakdown amounting to over 2,000 in clothing, textiles, industrial chemicals and leather goods alone.

When we look for general explanations for the achievements of refugees in the industrial field, we touch upon more fundamental questions. It may be possible, I believe, to generalise about the enterprise shown by minorities and immigrants, particularly involuntary immigrants—who, by definition, were members of minority groups in their countries of origin—from examples in many different countries and circumstances.

The evidence on which such a generalisation might be based can be seen with particular clarity in the development stage of industrial countries and, more recently, in under-developed countries. Elkan, in his *Introduction to Development Economics*, notes the entrepreneurial role played by

## WEST GERMAN TRADE WITH ISRAEL

Israel's most important trading partner in the EEC is West Germany, which takes 26 per cent of Israeli EEC exports and supplies 29 per cent of EEC imports. Next in line comes Britain with figures of 22 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. In the years 1978-1980, Israel's exports to the nine-nation EEC rose from \$725,000,000 to \$1,000,000,000. Over the same period, imports increased from \$1,750,000,000 to \$2,700,000,000.

## SHELLING STARTS FOREST FIRES

Besides the immediate human suffering, shelling in Northern Israel has set off forest fires which have destroyed 175 acres of trees. Firefighters have been hampered by the steepness of the mountain slopes which prevent vehicles reaching the fire areas. About 1,000,000 trees are estimated to have been destroyed, most of them planted by villagers 30 years ago and many paid for by British subscribers.

## HIGH INTEREST MENACES INDUSTRY

Israeli industrialists fear that light industry in the country may collapse because of the high rates of interest. They say that the real interest rate in Israel, taking into consideration the inflation of the shekel at 100 per cent per annum, is among the highest in the world and now runs at 170 per cent. Factory owners have difficulty in obtaining credit because "speculative financing is more profitable than honest labour".

## CONSTRUCTION HEAD EXPELLED

During the building of the new air base at Ramon in the Negev, several antisemitic incidents have been reported, including one case of swastika-daubing. The Defence Ministry could have taken action, but declined to intervene until the head of the American company carrying out the work allegedly remarked, "Hitler should have finished what he started." He was thereupon asked to leave the country within 48 hours.

minorities—often of immigrant origin—in such countries and the higher degree of enterprise shown by them than by the population among which they live.

*Development depends on people who are enterprising. Frequently—but not invariably—an initial upsurge of development is attributable to the enterprise exhibited by some minority group of the population—Chinese in South East Asia, "Levantine" in West Africa, Asians in East Africa, Parsees in India, Samurai in 19th century Japan, or Non-Conformists in 17th century England. What they share is neither a common race nor a particular set of beliefs that might predispose them to entrepreneurial aptitudes. They do, however, have in common minority status of "deviance" and perhaps the resulting feelings of insecurity propel them forward towards economic success in a way that distinguishes them from the rest.*

90 per cent of the refugees who came to Britain were Jewish or of Jewish origin, as defined by the Nazis. These refugees were, in a sense, "deviants" twice over. They belonged to a minority in the countries from which they came—and where they had already displayed strong entrepreneurial aptitudes, in accordance with Elkan's account; their status as insecure strangers in a foreign land was to be superimposed on the attitudes with which they arrived, and which, in quite a few cases they transmitted to their sons.

This double "deviance" may well be a part of the explanation for their remarkable enterprise.

(This was the second half of the talk given by Mr. Loebel at the AJR Annual General Meeting.)

## THE ISRAELI SCENE

## NEW AMBASSADOR FOR PORTUGAL

Riga-born Dov Halevy-Miman, the first Israeli Ambassador, was received with great ceremony when he presented his credentials to the President of Portugal. Portugal is not yet diplomatically represented in Israel. The new Ambassador emigrated to Palestine in 1937 when he was 18 and fought in the War of Independence. A founder member of Herut and Likud, he has also held a senior post in the Israeli mission to the EEC.

## BRITISH SUPPORT ISRAELI TENNIS

Recently inaugurated, the Israeli Tennis Centre in Ashkelon has received the greater part of its finances from the Jewish community in Britain. In recognition of this fact, the sum of £1,000,000 raised for the project will be administered by both the Project Renewal organisation and the British Supporters' Committee. The ceremony of inauguration was conducted by Edward Roche, formerly the junior tennis champion of Lodz and an organiser of the Maccabi Club there in the 30s.

## BRITISH WORKERS ENVIED

Untaxed dollar payments to British workers in Israeli armaments factories have aroused resentment among their fellow-workers. Thousands of skilled men were brought in after the war of October 1973 to help in the rearmament programme, but only about 200 are still employed in Israel. Two years ago, the State Comptroller criticised the use of foreign workers and demands for a change in the law are intensifying. The British, it is said, are being paid three times as much as Israelis doing the same work and they recently received a fifty per cent rise to bring their hourly rate of pay to £6 sterling.

## BALTIC JEWISH LEADER APPEALS

Baltic Jews met recently in Tel Aviv to mark the passing of forty years since the destruction of the Jewish communities in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Among the speakers present was Jacob Lossos, Chairman of the Association of Baltic Jews in Great Britain, who appealed to the Soviet Government either to let Jews go or to let them practise their religion openly. Other speakers were President Itzhak Navon, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the Mayor of Tel Aviv.

## THEA NATHAN HONOURED

In recognition of her outstanding social services Thea Nathan (née Meyrowitz) was awarded the Eschel Prize. For many years she was in charge of the social work of the AJR's sister organisation in Israel, the Irgun Oley Merkaz Europa. She also held responsible positions with the Tel Aviv municipality. She is particularly experienced in care for the aged, and several homes owe their establishment and administration to her guidance. Originating from the German-Jewish youth movement "Kameraden" and active in social work before she emigrated, she is also well known to many members of her generation outside Israel.

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## HOME NEWS

### "GERMAN INSULTED IN TWIN TOWN"

Claims that a youth leader from Helmstedt, Rudi Altenhoff, had been insulted when he brought a group to Chard in Somerset have been disputed by local councillors. It was said that he met schoolchildren who were wearing T-shirts decorated with swastikas and that he had angrily left a council discussion on re-naming a Chard street as Helmstedt Link in honour of the two towns' twinship. References were made at this meeting to the Holocaust.

In his farewell to the party, the Mayor of Chard apologised for any unpleasantness caused by the "upsetting and inaccurate" claims concerning anti-German incidents. Later he said that the reports had originated from a local anti-German minority, but he was glad that the links between Chard and Helmstedt had not suffered.

Rudi Altenhoff made no comment before returning to Germany, but earlier he had said, "The war was not a good thing, but people should now forgive and forget. I lost members of my family in concentration camps—if there is anyone in Chard who should be outspoken it is me and I am working hard for friendship around the world."

### NAZI NETWORK SUPPLIES WEAPONS

Following a "World in Action" ITV programme, the police have been informed of a network of neo-Nazis in Britain, which is ready to supply sympathisers with guns and other weapons, and is interested in acquiring radio jamming equipment. Appearing on the programme was a German neo-Nazi, Willi Kraus, a self-proclaimed "soldier for Adolf Hitler", who declared that Britain was a haven for his kind, where such organisations as "The League of St. George" provided "safe houses" where fascists fleeing justice could hide. In Germany, Kraus faces imprisonment for his activities and he is alleged to have connections with the Munich Bierfest bomber, but he has been living and working in Britain without concealment or fear of arrest. The programme also tested known right-wing radicals in Britain to discover whether they were prepared to supply weapons. At least two such men said they could obtain guns or "untraceable weapons".

Willi Kraus was subsequently charged with theft in a Bradford court, where he was jailed for six months and recommended for deportation. The judge was told that members of the British Movement who had helped Kraus to escape from West Germany had demanded £1,000 to cover their costs. He had stolen the takings from the hamburger bar where he worked for fear of the consequences if he failed to pay.

### BELGIAN MODEL FOR JEWISH RADIO

Radio Judaica, an all-Jewish radio channel, has now been operating for a year in Belgium with great success. Broadcasting 12 hours a day, the station provides three weekly English-language bulletins of news about Israel, as well as programmes in Hebrew, Yiddish, French and Flemish. Now Mr. M. Berenson of Golders Green proposes to introduce a similar radio channel in Britain and has approached the Belgian company for technical information. He hopes to go on the air in about six months' time. It may be remembered that a prospectus for a Jewish radio company was issued in the interwar period, no doubt with the object of countering Nazi propaganda, but the project does not seem to have materialised.

### "UNFAIR DISMISSAL" FOR ANTI-SEMITISM

The director of a textiles firm, Mr. Eric Walters-Kohn, a former concentration camp inmate, was outraged when he heard one of his machinists tell a Jewish workmate, "The Germans knew how to deal with Jews". He sacked the machinist on the spot. However, she took the case before an Industrial Tribunal, alleging unfair dismissal, and obtained about £200 in compensation. The tribunal agreed that the woman had played a part in her own dismissal and therefore reduced her redundancy payment by three-quarters, but they found that Mr. Walters-Kohn had "failed to make a proper investigation of the facts" before taking his summary action.

### PROPAGANDA FROM PAKISTAN

Pamphlets posted in Pakistan have been arriving at the homes of prominent people in British public life, trade unionists, peers, journalists, television personalities, industrialists and many others. The themes of these publications are anti-Zionism, antisemitism and denial of the Holocaust. Dr. Gewirtz, of the Board of Deputies' Defence Committee, sees the propaganda action as confirmation of the links between Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, and neo-Nazi groups in Europe and elsewhere.

### RUSSIANS FEND OFF WALLEBERG PLEA

At the Soviet Embassy in London, a Leeds delegation recently attempted to present a petition bearing 8,000 signatures and calling for action in the case of Raoul Wallenberg. Wallenberg saved the lives of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the War by giving them Swedish diplomatic protection. He was arrested by the Russians in 1945, who at first claimed to know nothing about him and then said he had died in 1947, but there are reliable reports from released prisoners that he has been seen in various Soviet camps and prisons. The official who opened the door refused to accept the petition since it was Sunday and no one was available to deal with the delegation. However, he took in two letters from Leeds clergymen. The following day, the delegation were seen by a Russian official who stated that the Embassy was only concerned with Anglo-Soviet relations and Wallenberg was a Swede; in any event, "his case was history". The two letters were returned unopened.

### AID FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

As their main project for this year, the League of Jewish Women in Leicester is seeking to help Vietnamese refugees in the city. They are supplying bedding and visiting each family frequently to help them with learning English and to advise them in their new life.

### TOPICAL LECTURE COURSE

We should like to draw our readers' attention to the Theodor Herzl Society Lecture Course, which is announced in this issue. In view of the distinction of the lecturers, all of whom are well known in the community, the course will be of particular interest to our readers and their friends.

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### VAST JUDAICA COLLECTION CONSERVED

After 85 years, the tremendous task of conserving 140,000 fragments of manuscripts, brought from the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo in 1896, is nearing its end. The material, testifying to the 1,000-year history of the synagogue and its community, was discovered by Dr. Solomon Schechter and presented to Cambridge University in 1898. Over 30,000 items were treated and classified at that time, but work ceased in the early years of this century and was not recommenced until 1955. Conservation was then carried out on 42,000 further fragments, and in a great spurt from 1973 onward the remaining 67,000 pieces of manuscript have been or are about to be treated by the Taylor-Schechter Research Unit at Cambridge and its Director, Dr. Stefan Reif. The work should be finished this year. Half the expenses of the Unit are met by the university, but the other half has to be financed privately.

The material includes Hebrew poetry, correspondence of all kinds (including an autograph letter of Moses Maimonides), marriage contracts, children's exercises and a rich hoard of other documents. In an illustrated lecture, Dr. Reif said that the work of conservation opened a storehouse of knowledge on a wealth of Judaica. From the salvaged documents, a new light is thrown on subjects such as the medieval emigration of persecuted Jews to Palestine from France and Germany, the flight of Jews to Egypt from Palestine following the arrival of the Crusaders, and the Khazar king who invited exponents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam to argue their respective cases in his presence before he opted for Judaism.

### ZIONIST DOCUMENTS ON SHOW

Rare items in the Kressel Collection of the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies were on display at Yarnton Manor in honour of the 70th birthday of Getzel Kressel, the Israeli author and journalist. His archive and library were acquired by the Centre some years ago and now in all probability represent the finest collection in Europe for researching into the history of Zionism.

### JEW'S COLLEGE EXPANSION?

Removal of Jews' College from Central London is expected to take place next year, coupled with the opening of a new University of Jewish Studies in North-West London. College authorities look forward enthusiastically to an expansion of its role, although the need for financial support from the community is ever-present. Among other facilities in prospect are an extension of teacher training programmes, evening education courses and seminars.

### NEED FOR MARRIAGE BUREAU

An immediate and overwhelming response followed the Jewish Marriage Council's decision to sponsor a communal marriage bureau. In the past few years the council has received many requests to help people to find Jewish marriage partners; telephones never stop ringing in the daytime and the answering machine is always full of messages in the morning, said the JMEC treasurer recently. The head of the new bureau will be Mrs. Janet Gilbert.

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## NEWS FROM ABROAD

### FRANCE

#### Professor Convicted in Paris

After complaints by several human rights organisations, Professor Robert Faurisson was charged before a Paris court with incitement to race hatred, arising out of his persistent denials of the existence of any gas chambers at Auschwitz. Speaking on the radio last December, Faurisson described the reports of gassings as an historical lie, a gigantic politico-financial deception on behalf of Israel and international Zionism. At his trial the prosecuting counsel declared that "Whoever denies the systematic wiping-out of the Jews murders the victims for a second time". The court sentenced the professor to three months' suspended imprisonment and a fine of about £2,000.

#### Historic Jewish Art on Show

Jewish art treasures formed the subject of a remarkable exhibition recently mounted in Paris. The objects are normally housed in the Musée de Cluny, most of them having been presented in 1890 by the Baroness Nathaniel de Rothschild. The original collector was Isaac Strauss, a musician living in the Paris of Napoleon III; he travelled throughout Europe to find examples of Jewish art and religious objects.

Manuscripts, mediaeval wedding-rings, embroideries and silverware were all on view, but perhaps the most striking part of the display was a group of mediaeval tombstones, discovered in 1849, dating from the thirteenth century and perhaps as early as 1223. The stones came from the old Jewish burial ground in the Latin Quarter of Paris and bear finely carved inscriptions which have been compared with the best examples of mediaeval calligraphy.

### ITALY

#### Author Fined for Libel on Pope

Legal struggles continue over the book "Death in Rome" and the film "Retaliation" based upon it. The author, Robert Katz, alleges that Pope Pius XII knew beforehand of the Nazi plans for the Ardeatine Caves massacre but had not tried to forestall the crime in any way. The massacre was a reprisal for the deaths of 32 German soldiers killed by partisans; over 300 Italians, including about 100 Jews, were murdered and their bodies left in the Ardeatine caves.

In 1975 Mr. Katz was convicted of defaming the Pope, but this decision was overturned on appeal. Following re-opening of the case by the prosecution, he now faces a suspended prison sentence and a fine of £200. The author, who also wrote "Black Sabbath" on the deportation of Roman Jews, intends to bring a further appeal against this finding.

#### "Mein Kampf" in Italy

A new Italian version of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" has recently appeared on Roman book-stalls. Since this edition has been issued without any publisher's or printer's imprint, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities are asking the authorities to seize all copies. Under Italian law, the book cannot be banned simply by reason of its contents.

### ROMANIAN POGROM VICTIMS REMEMBERED

Thousands of Romanians joined their Jewish fellow citizens in a ceremony held to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Jassy pogrom, when 14,000 Jews were murdered by Nazis and Romanian fascists. Speakers at the meeting included the Chief Rabbi of Romania, Dr. Moses Rosen, as well as the First Secretary of the Jassy Communist Party and the Mayor of Jassy. Services were also held beside the mass grave of the victims.

With acknowledgement to the news service of the Jewish Chronicle.

### SOVIET-JEWISH LECTURER PUNISHED

Attempts by Jews in Leningrad to preserve their cultural traditions and learning have been crushed by the KGB. A seminar on Judaism and Jewish history was raided by police and militia, and 80 people present were detained for their particulars before being allowed home. Some of them are still under police supervision.

The speaker at the time of the raid, Grigory Wasserman, was fined about £35. Replying to his appeal, the authorities said that three youths under 18 were listening to his lecture on the religious significance of the Sabbath, and pointed out that Soviet law prohibited religious instruction of minors.

### US ARAB ENVOY SACKED

The American Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Robert Neumann, has been asked to resign by the US Secretary of State. A Jewish-born survivor of Dachau and Buchenwald, Mr. Neumann is now a Catholic. In lobbying for support of the sale of Awacs planes to Saudi Arabia, he is said to have made "extreme" statements against Israel and against Mr. Haig, the Secretary of State. His resignation has been called for on the grounds of insubordination.

### PETITION AGAINST CANADIAN CRIMINALS

Prosecution of war criminals and restraint of White Supremacy groups has been urged upon the Canadian Justice Minister by 30,000 signatories to a petition handed to the Minister by the Canadian Holocaust Remembrance Association. Members of the Association pointed out that the necessary legal machinery was available to the Government, which also has international treaty obligations to prosecute war criminals.

### FRENCH MOVE AGAINST BOYCOTT

French companies are henceforward prohibited from declaring that they have no links with Israeli firms or individuals, as required by the Arab boycott rules. An order to this effect has been issued by the Prime Minister of France, Pierre Mauroy.

### AUSTRIAN ATTITUDES CONDEMNED

When "Aktion gegen den Antisemitismus", the all-party Austrian organisation, recently celebrated its Silver Jubilee, Professor Friedrich Heer took the opportunity to make a forthright appeal for international, organised and open opposition to antisemitism. In support of his arguments, the well-known historian and author described the case of the "Tiroler Tageszeitung", which last year published an article on the Church and anti-semitism. One passage ran: "Anarchy and nihilism are just as much children of Jewish intellectuality as is modern atheism. It was such men as Teller, Oppenheimer and Einstein who first envisaged and then created the holocaust of the atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The rebellion against the Fourth Commandment is a product of the Jewish Frankfurter School—Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer". Professor Heer told his audience that no amount of protest could move the editor to publish a retraction. In general, the attitudes of the Austrian press ranged from "pitiable" to "shameful". He also complained that, apart from lip-service and ritual attendance at memorial meetings, the political parties refused to involve themselves in the question of community relations.

### "HIT MEN" IN AUSTRIA

The Syrian-backed Al Assifa terrorist organisation, which claimed responsibility for the murder in May of Heinz Nittel, is believed to have despatched two groups to Austria with the aim of assassinating Chancellor Bruno Kreisky. Al Assifa's newspaper recently described the Chancellor as a "pimp" trying to lure the Palestinians into a settlement with Israel. Herr Nittel, a frequent critic of Dr. Kreisky, was president of the Austria-Israel Friendship Association and at the time of his death the Israeli Embassy rejected the idea of PLO involvement. However, the Austrian Interior Minister confirmed that in his opinion the Chancellor is in real danger from Al Assifa.

## OBITUARIES

### MEYER LEVIN

The controversial writer Meyer Levin has died in Jerusalem at the age of 75. Born in Chicago, he travelled widely in Europe and America and for some time made his home in Palestine. His works, covering many aspects of Jewish life, included a film "The Illegals" made in 1948 and dealing with emigration to Palestine, and a novel based on his Chicago youth, "The Old Bunch". He also reported the Eichmann Trial in 1961 for the Jewish Chronicle, while perhaps his best-known book was "Compulsion" based on the Loeb-Leopold murder case in America. He often condemned the "Jewish literary mafia" led as he believed by assimilationists, who blacklisted his work and so prevented his books from attaining greater success, though several of his books were best-sellers.

### MARTHA HUBERT

The recent death of Mrs. Martha Hubert, at the age of 76, was felt strongly in the community here as well as in Israel. She was born in Schluechtern in Hesse, wrote "A Jewish Woman's Handbook" which has become a standard work, was the first major donor to the Vocational High School for Girls in Bnei Brak, and was a great supporter and honorary life member of the Child Resettlement Fund. Her warmth and widespread charitable activities earned her the nickname of "the matriarch" of the St. Anne's philanthropic family. Her husband, Arthur Hubert OBE, was imprisoned in Buchenwald in 1938, but was able to join his wife and his son Walter only three days before the outbreak of the war and fled to Britain, where they settled in Blackburn.

### LADY VASEY

Lady Vasey, who has died in London, was born Hannah Strauss, the only survivor of the six daughters of a Bingen lawyer, who, because he had been prominent in a number of pre-1933 trials of Nazis in the Rhineland, was severely ill-treated and forced to emigrate soon after the Nazis' advent to power. They settled in Holland from where they were eventually deported to the East and perished. Hannah came to London in 1940 and in 1944 she married Sir Ernest Vasey, KBE, adviser to the World Bank Development Service and later Mayor of Nairobi in Kenya and Minister for Finance in both Kenya and Tanganyika.



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## SIGNPOSTS FROM GERMAN JEWISH LIFE

## Important LBI Bulletins

The Yearbooks of the Leo Baeck Institute have become essential contributions to the study of contemporary history and are read all over the world by scholars and students of the German-Jewish past. Another, perhaps less well-known, publishing enterprise of the Institute is its series of German-language bulletins of which 58 have been issued in the last 20 years. Like the Yearbooks, they are sent to all members and Friends of the LBI, but their contents probably have a much wider general appeal. Hitherto all bulletins have appeared in Israel under the imprint of the Bitauon Verlag, Tel Aviv, but the latest issue, Nr. 58 bears that of the Jüdischer Verlag (Athenäum Verlag), Bad Königstein/Taunus.

The Bulletins, though edited in as scholarly a fashion as the Yearbooks, contain shorter essays on a great variety of subjects by many different authors who share a personal connection or a special interest in their chosen themes. Like its predecessors, Bulletin Nr. 56/57 contains studies of special situations and personalities—most of them of lasting significance. Two essays throw new light on Theodor Herzl's discussions and correspondence with Moritz Güdemann the conservative chief rabbi of Vienna whom he shocked deeply by having a Christmas tree in his room where they met for a discussion of the "Judenstaat." The Jews of Silesia, their history under Hapsburg and Prussian rule and their contribution to Silesian economic and cultural life are discussed by Kurt Schwerin who mentions that in 1934, Gerhart Hauptmann was the only non-Jew attending the funeral of Max Pinkus, the founder of the "Schlesier" Library and wrote a requiem, "Die Finsternisse", for him on the Jewish tragedy.

The Hebrew and Jewish symbols on the late Friedrich Torberg's novel about Süskind von

Trimberg, the 13th century Jewish Minnesänger, are studied in an essay by Abraham Tobias. An investigation of the treatment of Jewish pupils in German schools under the Nazis reveals that in spite of the harsh laws which inflicted great misery on the children there were teachers who tried to make the life of their Jewish students more bearable, often at great personal risk.

Bulletin Nr. 80, the one published in Germany, probably gives a foretaste of its future programme by trying to form a link between past and present. It opens with a reprint from Robert Weltsch's now almost unobtainable 1939 "Jüdische Welt-rundschau", an essay "Das geistige Erbe des deutschen Judentums" by the philosopher Julius Guttman, whose centenary fell in 1980.

Stephane Moses reviews Franz Rosenweig's life and work on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death. Miriam Sambursky quotes letters from Hugo Bergmann, the Prague-born philosopher and life-long Zionist and friend of Martin Buber, to many outstanding German academics of the period. She is at present preparing an edition of Bergmann's diaries and letters for his 1983 centenary. The ones quoted here concern his failure to secure a chair at a German-language university prior to his 1920 emigration to Palestine where he lived and worked for 55 years, first as head of the National Library and after 1936 as professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University. Max Kowalski, Frankfurt lawyer, composer and friend of Arnold Schönberg is the subject of an appreciation by Peter Gradenwitz.

The final contribution in this Bulletin is a 25-page sketch by our old friend Dr. Charles Kapralik "Erinnerungen eines Beamten der Wiener Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde 1938/39." The title is as unassuming as the writing, but what a story he

has to tell! It is equally illuminating for Jews from Germany who, preoccupied with their own pressing problems, often failed to realise how much more acute, if shorter in time, was the persecution of Austrian Jews in the pre-war period, and to Jews from Austria who are confronted with the background to their eventual escape. In an introductory paragraph, Dr. Kapralik explains that he has had to rely on sketchy notes jotted down during his 1940 internment in the Isle of Man. Afterwards, his involvement with the Central British Fund, the Jewish Trust Corporation and the Old Age Homes, and after his retirement the publication of his two-volume History of the Trust Corporation, have prevented him from writing his memoirs. It is our loss! In his essay, after a few short notes about the important jobs he held in insurance and banking before the catastrophe, he outlines the growing calamities which faced the Jewish community in Vienna after the Berchtesgaden meeting between Hitler and Schuschnigg in 1937, and the work in which he became involved to enable Viennese Jews, poor as well as rich, to emigrate. Modestly, he only hints at the personal sacrifice involved, culminating in his decision to accept new responsibilities and remain in Vienna when he had just been preparing his emigration to France where Prime Minister Chautemps, Grandmaster of the Grand Masonic Lodge, had personally granted visas to him and his wife. At that moment, however, he was implored by the leaders of the community to take over the management of a newly established foreign exchange bureau for the community, as he was the only head of such an office who, because of his special knowledge and his integrity, would be readily accepted by the Nazi authorities. We all have reason to be grateful, that, having fulfilled this task almost to the last moment, he eventually managed to reach England.

Bulletins, like the two under review here, are bound to appeal to many people who may not have the time or the perseverance to read the scholarly essays of the LBI Yearbooks. They should act as an additional inducement to join the Friends of the LBI, an institution which uses its limited funds to such good purpose.

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## COMEDY OF ERRORS

## Internment in Canada

"I never knew so many Jews were Nazis." On arrival at his Canadian camp an internee heard the adjutant making this remark to the commandant. And this sums up one of the strangest interludes of the war. But there is so much more that offends common sense or our irony. In his book\* Erich Koch tries to find the reason for the mishap, explains the negotiations between the British and the Canadian governments about receiving civilian internees and POWs, describes the organisation of the camps in Canada and relates the most important or curious events in them. He provides a lengthy list of former internees, telling us what happened to them after their release and whether they are still alive.

Reading the book, written very soberly and lucidly, a stream of memories comes back to one who was interned here in England and in Canada for nearly two years. May I be allowed to speak about my own experience? At Whitsun 1940 I was a teacher at a small public school in a beautiful little town in Kent. Three pupils at least as dangerous as myself were arrested with me. It never rains but it pours. In my first camp in Canada 40 per cent of the inmates were between 16 and 20.

Still in England, we were taken by boat from the Isle of Man to Scotland and transferred to the 'Jan Sobieski'—to go where? When my turn came to board the ship, she was, so to speak, booked out. I was led to the dining hall where I had three possibilities to rest my tired body during the night. In the dormitories they had only one: the bed. I had at my disposal the floor, a bench or a table. I chose the table. Unfortunately I had to get up before the others because the table had to be laid for breakfast.

There were also German POWs on our boat, separated from us by barbed wire. They behaved normally. After our arrival at Quebec

\*E. Koch, *Deemed Suspect. A Wartime Blunder*, pp. 272. Illus. Methuen, Toronto, 1980. Copies may be ordered from Methuen Publications, 2330 Midland Avenue, Agincourt, Ontario, M1S 1P7, Canada. (\$16.95 CDN plus \$1.35 for postage to be included.

we were taken to a sports stadium at Three Rivers. As we approached, there were some German civilian internees leaning out of a window, welcoming us with the song "Wenn's Judenblut vom Messer spritzt . . .". The German internees were removed within three days.

Erich Koch describes other internment camps in Canada where internees were ill-treated and there were hunger strikes, anti-semitism and temporary malnutrition. As far as I can remember, I never encountered any of these annoyances in camp. Apart from other internal problems we faced the problem of a Communist group. Its more active members tried to dominate the camp which I could not understand at all. Weren't we all united in our hatred of the Nazis, wasn't our overriding interest winning the war? You can read more about it in "Deemed Suspect".

Whilst the "missionary" efforts of the communists, particularly amongst the young, were fairly successful, the same could not be said of Mr. Poliakoff the apostle of the "Judenchristen". He was a colourful personality. His parents had come to Leipzig from the East and he maintained that, when he was young, books by Martin Buber had, for the first time, drawn his attention to Jesus. His sect sought to combine a trace of Judaism with Christianity, and this led to a curious incident. In Canada there already lived a missionary of the same organisation who was allowed to visit his brother in Moses and Christ in the camp. Poliakoff knew very little English, his colleague had no German, thus Christian matters were discussed in Yiddish which both spoke. We had a special hut for Roman Catholic missionaries from Germany and Austria and another hut for orthodox Jews. These two communities received everything necessary for practising their faith liturgically and, in the Jewish case, ritually as well. At Pessach for instance they got masses of Mazzoth. But . . . there was a small Chasidic group who would not touch the Mazzoth because it was in no way clear that they were made with source water. The religious life in those two huts might have been quite intense, but did not illuminate the minds or thought of the other internees.

However, there were lights that shone in our darkness. One day, there appeared a little man in the camp, the rabbi of a small congregation. He had heard of our existence and felt the urge to be of help to his imprisoned brethren. He told us that members of his own flock had warned him not to have anything to do with such suspect characters as ourselves. The rabbi, simple, humane and poor, said, "The members of my congregation are animals". Undaunted, he visited us every Sunday.

There were also less pleasant experiences. I happened to know a high ranking British official who was posted to Ottawa for the duration. His wife found it scandalous that I was interned at all and that no use was made of me as a teacher which was my real profession. One day she informed me that the headmaster of a distinguished private school in Ottawa was prepared to employ me. A few days later the deal was off. The chairman of the school governors had told her that no Jew would ever teach at "his" school.

Koch also has some interesting things to tell

about anti-semitic trends in the Canadian administration of that time. He hastens to add that things have greatly improved since then.

In connection with human attitudes and values I should like to mention a man called Alexander Patterson (late Sir Alexander Patterson), who was Commissioner of prisons in England. He "was appalled by the anti-semitism rampant among some of the military personnel" and drafted an order against it which the general in charge signed and communicated to his troops. Patterson, simply, was a "Mensch".

Koch's book is based on interviews, letters, diaries and documents from archives. It is an admirable achievement.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## ALBAN BERG'S "WOZZEK"

Sir,—Under the heading "50 years ago" (AJR July 1981) it is stated that Erich Kleiber conducted Alban Berg's opera "Wozzek" to much acclaim in Philadelphia, whilst in Germany the work was criticised as "modern radicalism".

This statement requires some elucidation. The first performance of "Wozzek" took place in Berlin on December 14 1925 under Erich Kleiber, who kept it in the repertoire for two seasons and performed it again in a new production in 1929 and 1932. After performances in Prague (1926) and Leningrad (1927), Oldenburg became the first medium-sized German town to produce the opera, proving that it was possible for a smaller opera house to stage this difficult work. Between 1929 and 1933 the opera was consequently shown (by no means unopposed) in 14 German towns.

The first performance of the opera in America took place in 1931 in Philadelphia and New York under the baton of Leopold Stokowski in the wake of Kleiber's concerts in 1930 and 1931, when the Lyric Suite and Fragments from "Wozzek" were played, which paved the way for the American "Wozzek" premiere and for Berg's art in America

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## GERMAN SOCIAL INSURANCE

(1) Victims of Nazi persecution who have paid insurance contributions for past periods (Nachentrichtung von Beiträgen) on the basis of the fact that they have received indemnification for loss of educational opportunities (section 10a WGSVG—Law concerning indemnification for National Socialist discrimination in the field of social insurance) are now able to pay an additional contribution. This amounts to a maximum of approximately DM 13,700. An additional contribution of this amount would, for those who already draw their pension, mean an increase of approximately DM 5,000 p.a. for an old age pension and of approximately DM 3,400 p.a. for a pension for partial invalidity (Berufsunfähigkeitsrente). Applications for consent to such an additional contribution payment must be submitted at the latest by 31.12.1981 to the insurance authority which originally dealt with the contribution application. An application which reaches the insurance authority later than that date will be time-barred, even if the applicant does not yet draw a pension.

So far, persons belonging to this category and whose residence is outside the Federal German Republic were able to pay these contributions for the period from 1.1.1933 (or from completion of the age of 16, if later) to 31.5.1945 (or to completion at the age of 65, if earlier) only. According to a judgment of the Federal Social Insurance Court passed in 1979, the right to pay such contributions extends to 31.12.1955 (or to completion of the age of 65, if earlier). This accounts for the fact that payment of an additional contribution payment is now possible.

(2) In the previous paragraph we dealt with those who have already made contribution payments as per section 10a WGSVG. We now comment on those who have made no such payments and who, whilst having received the education indemnification have not submitted an application (for which the time limit expired on 31.12.1975) for the consent of the insurance authority to payment of contributions.

(a) In view of the afore-mentioned judgment, the insurance authority may consider admitting

such applications (which must reach the insurance authority—Bundesversicherungsanstalt fuer Angestellte, Ruhrstrasse 2, 1000 Berlin 88—latest by 31.12.1981), even though the time limit has been missed. The insurance authority may, in individual cases, come to the conclusion that it is only the recent extension of the contribution period to 31.12.1955 which has made a contribution payment possible or worthwhile and may for this reason consider belated applications.

To give an example: Take a person who was born on the 1.6.1929 and who has received the usual education indemnification. He or she would not have been able to take advantage of the possibility of payment of social insurance contributions, discussed in this article, as long as the contribution period ended on 31.5.1945. This is apparent from the fact that by that time he or she had just completed the age of 16. Now, however, since according to the judgment passed in 1979 contributions may be paid for the period up to 31.12.1955 that person can pay contributions for the period from 1.6.1945 (completion of the age of 16) to 31.12.1955, provided other conditions, which are discussed under (b) are fulfilled.

There are other cases in which that judgment, while not opening up a previously not existing contribution possibility, may make a considerable difference in the number of contributions payable. To give an example: A person who was born on 1.1.1925 would have been able, as per the old procedure, to pay contributions as per section 10a WGSVG for the period from January 1941 (completion of the age of 16) to 31.5.1945, i.e. for 53 months only, whilst the new procedure allows that person a contribution payment of 180 months (up to December 1955), (again provided that other conditions mentioned under (b) are fulfilled). It is possible that in such a case the insurance authority will admit an application for consent to contribution payments now, even though the time limit of 31.12.1975 has been missed.

We express ourselves cautiously—by saying that "it is possible that . . . the . . . authority will admit an application"—because one cannot say

definitely whether an application of this nature will succeed.

(b) In any case, the possibility of making belated applications as stated under (2a) is only of limited importance. It applies only to those

A. who are either German nationals or who have no own British social insurance contributions to their credit for the months January-March 1973 and who are British subjects or stateless

and

B. in respect of whom the German insurance authority accepts that only the recent extension of the contribution period to 31.12.1955 has made a contribution payment possible or worthwhile.

(3) Dependants may be able to pay additional contributions, as stated under (1), or submit belated applications under the conditions pointed out under (2), if the recipient of the education indemnification is no longer alive.

(4) This article deals with rights of persons resident in the United Kingdom. The position may be different for those living in other countries.

(5) Persons who contemplate taking advantage of the opportunity to pay a further contribution should consult their legal advisers. This is a somewhat complicated subject and it is not practicable to give more detailed explanations, particularly in respect of the points mentioned under (2b). We wish to stress that the German insurance contributions envisaged in this article concern only contribution payments which are based on the fact that the applicant has received the education indemnification, but not those cases of further contribution payments which are based on termination of employments due to persecution.

F. E. GUMPERT.

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## BIRTHDAY TRIBUTES

### DR. ERNA GOLDSCHMIDT—80

In paying tribute to Dr. Erna Goldschmidt on her 80th birthday one can only sketch briefly the many great achievements she can muster in a lifetime of service to the community and beyond. Her main work and interest has always been connected with the Order of B'nai B'rith. In Germany, having graduated as a Dr. Phil. in Mannheim, her place of birth, and having worked as a social worker in Berlin, she became a member of the Spinoza Lodge together with her husband Dr. Frederick Goldschmidt, and immediately helped with all the welfare projects of that Lodge. She later became Chairman of all the Women's Lodges in Germany.

In this country she became the Founder President of the Leo Baeck (London) Women's Lodge on the inauguration of the Lodge in 1946 and later served again as President for two years. The Lodge owes much to her energy and determination which she displayed in launching plans and seeing them through, not only during her presidential years but ever since. During the immediate post-war years she was indefatigable as organiser of the relief project—the dispatch of parcels containing clothes, food and toilet articles—for the small number of Jewish survivors who had returned from the camps to their devastated homes in Germany. With her long and wide experience in the field of social care she became Chairman of the Welfare Committee of the Lodge when it was first formed many years ago, and she continues to be its Chairman to this very day, and as such also supervises the Home Help scheme.

In more recent years, the subject of housing and care for the elderly, particularly the ageing members of the Leo Baeck Lodges in London, has

been one of Erna Goldschmidt's high priorities. In 1965 she was instrumental in establishing Clara Nehab House in Golders Green, a home for nine elderly ladies and to this day she continues to be a loving friend to its residents. But above all, ever since she served as Founder President of the Leo Baeck Women's Lodge, it had been her dearest wish that the Leo Baeck Lodges should have their own home for their meetings and social activities and she has done everything she could to make her dream a reality.

When, therefore, in 1975 it was envisaged that the Leo Baeck Lodges should sponsor a scheme for flatlets for the elderly combined with a social centre for the Lodges, she became an enthusiastic and generous supporter of the Leo Baeck Housing Association which was founded for this purpose and a most active member of its Management Committee.

It must be remembered that all this work is not just being carried out in committees and organisations but with personal devotion and attention to personal problems and needs. This has won Erna Goldschmidt countless friends and much admiration. The spirit of personal service also manifested itself in the support she gave to her husband, who had a distinguished record as a High Court Judge in Berlin, and who in this country did pioneering work in the field of restitution, and himself contributed much to the amelioration of distress among members of our community.

Alas, due to indifferent health, Erna Goldschmidt has had to reduce her activities and to give up her work as a member of the House Committee of Otto Schiff House. We are glad, however, that she continues to be an interested

member of the Board of the AJR. Her colleagues on the Board, as well as the Officers and her many many friends, near and far, extend to her sincere good wishes for many happy years in undiminished useful and enjoyable activity.

S.H.

*\*Mrs. Goldschmidt will spend the day with her close family, and not at home.*

### ELSE MEIDNER 80

Our heartfelt congratulations go out to Else Meidner, who will be 80 on September 2. She can look back on a wide range of artistic achievements. Born in Berlin, she was discovered and encouraged by Kaethe Kollwitz. One of her teachers was Ludwig Meidner, whom she later married. Her own particular style was described in this paper a few years ago, when she had an exhibition at the Ben Uri Gallery. Referring to one particularly impressive picture of mother and child, our contributor, Mr. A. Rosenberg, wrote: "Here everything is emotion. Here the suffering of millions of mothers and babies in our own time finds expression just as much as the destiny of many generations of Jews". Her personality and work were also put on record three years ago in a special publication by Josef Paul Hodin, "Aus den Erinnerungen von Else Meidner" (Justus von Liebig Verlag, Darmstadt). The author recalls the crowning of her all too short career in Germany in 1932 by an exhibition of her works in the "Juryfreie" in Berlin. Yet notwithstanding the great difficulties she had to face as a refugee she continued her creative work in this country as long as her health enabled her to do so. Now, as her activities have come to a standstill, she may be content in the thought that she has left her mark on the world of art and that those who come from the same background as herself feel particularly close to her on this important birthday.

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F. Reinach

## POETESS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Modern German Literature, written by authors in exile ("Exilliteratur"), has lately very much come into its own. The German-Jewish poetess Nelly Sachs, whom the Oxford Companion to German Literature describes as "one of the most outstanding German poets of the mid-twentieth century," would appear to be a case in point.

Ehrhard Bahr has added another monograph to the considerable amount of bibliographies and especially learned essays which have been written about her.\* Bahr was born in 1923, studied at the University of Cologne and is now Professor of German Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles; a fair amount of research about Nelly Sachs is indeed carried out at American Universities.

The poetess was born into a non-orthodox assimilated Jewish family in Berlin in 1891. The lonely, introverted child wrote poetry from an early age; some of it appeared in the *Vossische Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*. She was clearly not influenced by the expressionist and surrealist tendencies of her time, but more by early 19th century Romanticism. The family had few contacts with organised Jewish life before 1933, but after this year, some of her early poetry appeared in the Jewish periodical "Der Morgen". It is interesting that the "Gebetsbuch für die neue Synagoge in Berlin", 1890 edition, was found in her Stockholm library and the reviewer is of the opinion that the liturgical part of it influenced some of her later poetic work. From her 15th year, she had a spiritual friendship with the Swedish poetess Selma Lagerlöf, and this was of decisive influence in May 1940. On the same day on which she and her mother received a Gestapo order to be ready for transportation to a "labour camp", their Swedish entry visas arrived, and on the advice of a police officer they at once flew to Sweden instead of going by train as originally planned; this saved their lives.

The Warburg Foundation of the Jewish Community in Stockholm provided a small flat for mother and daughter, and in this same flat she spent the rest of her life until her death in 1970; she acquired Swedish citizenship in 1952. Besides writing poetry and plays mainly to satisfy a personal need rather than for publication, she worked as a Swedish translator, and avoided all contact with Germany until 1960. She then had to visit the country in order to receive the Droste Prize for poetry, but on hearing the German language again she had the first of a number of recurring attacks of persecution mania and she had to be hospitalised in Sweden for three years with only short periods of remission. A planned journey to Israel in 1967 had to be cancelled on medical advice.

\*Ehrhard Bahr: *Nelly Sachs*. C. H. Beck, Muenchen, DM 12.80. In English: *Nelly Sachs*. Penguin European Poets.

So much for the story of her life, but what significance has she as a writer, as a poet and a playwright? W. Berendsohn, the leading authority on German Literature by writers in exile, calls her "die Dichterin jüdischen Schicksals" and this definition is widely accepted. In America, however, she is often described as the poetess of the Holocaust. Jewish destiny is seen by her in a Biblical context as exile, homelessness and flight, and she looked at her own life as part of this pattern. Her reception in Sweden is viewed against the Biblical background of the divine reception of the people of Israel in the desert. The great change which has taken place in the 20th century is the creation of the State of Israel, which is the fulfilment of a Biblical promise and the return to the land of those who have suffered persecution. As far as the Germans are concerned, Bahr is, however, critical of the description of Nelly Sachs as the poetess of Jewish destiny. It implies that they are placing a certain distance between themselves and her, that they view her as somebody alien, although she is part of the German cultural tradition and writes in German.

It is perhaps of greater importance that she is one of the very few writers who made the Holocaust the main subject of their work. George Steiner had expressed deep doubts about the future of the German language after Auschwitz, and yet she faces the reality of the concentration camps and their unheard of inhumanity with complete concreteness, especially in her collection of poetry called "In den Wohnungen des Todes," written in 1944-45. She works with images and symbols, such as chimneys, piles of shoes left behind, or fingers of camp officers pointing one way or another and deciding people's destiny. Nelly Sachs proves that art is not dead and that it can describe the indescribable.

The time of persecution and the subsequent events were a spiritual turning point in her life. She reads Gershom Scholem, a contemporary of Nelly Sachs and an authority in the field of Kabbalah studies and Jewish mysticism. In this way she tries to understand at a time of personal crisis the existence of suffering in this world. Further sources of her work are the German mystics, Jakob Böhme, the poet Novalis and, of course, her personal experience of suffering.

Bahr distinguishes three periods in her life. Her early period (after 1940) can be interpreted by reference to the Old Testament and Chasidism (Buber), in her middle period Jewish mysticism of the Spanish Middle Ages plays a major role and her late period has a more universalist tendency, in which the Jewish people stand for the whole of suffering humanity. Her mysticism is now derived from a number of different sources, including Christian and Buddhist symbolism. Her lyric poetry of the "Glühende Rätsel", written in 1964 and 1965, aims at the absolute and divine more or less beyond positive religions. Her concrete point of reference is still Auschwitz, but there is also mention of Hiroshima. Her commitment is now to all the oppressed, persecuted and suffering. Drawing on her own experience in a home for the mentally sick, she describes with great understanding their life and feelings.

Her dramatic work is considerable, but in Bahr's opinion insufficiently appreciated even by art critics. She uses new dramatic techniques by combining words, dance and music and her conception is that of a "total theatre". She experiments with this in a series of short, dramatic works under the general title "Das Haar", but this remains incomplete. Her early mystery play "Eli", first produced by Andersch in 1958 on the South German radio, is based on a Chasidic tale of an innocent, simple-minded, but deeply religious boy with his pipe; child murder is the main theme of this play. But most of her plays are hardly ever shown on the German stage, except perhaps in a small experimental theatre. The explanation lies not only in their essential difficulty; Bahr believes that this is also due to the fact that her plays are still looked at as "Wiedergutmachungstheater".

Continued on Page 10

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Continued from Page 9

Martin Stern

## POETESS OF THE HOLOCAUST

As for the attitude of the German literary world to her work in general, it is interesting to read that her first collection of poetry appeared in East Berlin in 1947, while she remained practically unknown in the Federal Republic for almost 14 years after the war. The great change came in 1959, when she was celebrated by Hans Magnus Enzensberger as "the greatest poetess who writes to-day in the German language". A number of prizes, including one awarded by the Association of German Industrialists (Cultural Section) and another one founded by the City of Dortmund in her name, were awarded to her in the 1960's, but she liked best of all the conferment of the Nobel Prize by the King of Sweden on her and Agnon in 1966. (See the article in AJR Information, December 1966.) Her relationship to Germany remained ambiguous to the end of her life, Sweden was her permanent home and this was facilitated by her excellent knowledge of the Swedish language.

Is she well known in Germany at present? This must be doubted. There is a Nelly Sachs School in Neuss on the Rhine, but the majority of its pupils don't know why it has this name. Bahr made his own enquiries in Western Germany and her name was either unknown or she was taken for a pianist or a Russian dissident.

Her works, including translations into Swedish and literary criticism, were very much in vogue in the 1960's but literary trends change and little has appeared about her in the last 10 years. The work of this distinguished poetess, it must be admitted, tends to be esoteric and her language of symbols, metaphors and allusions is difficult to grasp. Ehrhard Bahr has done us a good service by setting her work within the background of her life and her thoughts, and it is to be hoped that this book will contribute to a wider understanding and appreciation of her work.

## NEUSCHUL IN BOND STREET

The calm ambience of a Bond Street gallery was an appropriate setting for the serene colour harmonies of Ernst Neuschul's paintings, but what a turbulent life lay behind them. (Wylma Wayne Fine Art, 17 Old Bond Street). He was born in Aussig, Bohemia, in 1895, studied in Prague, Vienna and Cracow, and won the Rome Prize of the Berlin Academy in 1918. In the twenties he was a co-founder, with Otto Dix, of the Neue Sachlichkeit movement, and there are two lovely nudes from that phase in this exhibition, a side-view leaning on a chest of drawers, and a magnificent back view. In retrospect, it is now clear that the precise elegance of line and contour are not the "photography" they might have been called at the time, but rather a kind of poetry of precision.

In the twenties Neuschul became involved in left-wing politics, and later was a member of the Novembergruppe. When the Nazis came to power he had a shouting match with Goebbels at the Reichskunstkammer, and soon afterwards, Nazi toughs slashed his paintings at an exhibition. He was a marked man, and when he was invited to become professor of art at Kharkov, he accepted the Soviet invitation, and was given a one-man show at the Museum of Western Art in Moscow in 1935. He was praised as a master of "socialist realism", but this was more a tribute to his subject-matter—workers at their occupations—than his style, and the Soviet critics warned him about the persistence of elements of his "idealist dreamworlds".

Nevertheless, his fame was such that he was invited to paint a double portrait of Stalin and Dimitrov (the Bulgarian Comintern leader who had been acquitted at the Reichstag Fire Trial). Dimitrov sat for Neuschul almost every day, so that his part of the double portrait was far advanced, whereas the busy Stalin could only sit from time to time. On one occasion Stalin asked why Dimitrov's portrait was so much more advanced, and when told why, ordered Neuschul to

paint it back to the same state as Stalin's own. And though he was a much shorter man, he had Neuschul paint him as if he were the same height as the Bulgarian. There was a curious footnote to this picture. When, during the war, in order to placate their allies, the Soviets disbanded the Comintern, the portrait was cut in half to dissociate Dimitrov from Stalin!

Neuschul first felt the chill wind of the Stalin purges when his commissar, Bubnov, acted coldly to him, and it was explained to him that this was really a friendly warning. He was not slow to get the message and left Russia with his wife and small son. He spent some time in his native Aussig (he had painted the official portrait of President Masaryk) and in Vienna, but he sensed the gathering storm, and in 1939 came to Britain. During the war years he was with his family at Mumbles, in Wales, and later settled in Hampstead, where he died in 1968.

The terror he had witnessed in the Soviet Union, and the Nazi scourge of Europe, produced a profound crisis in the man and in his art. He turned away from Sachlichkeit towards abstraction, and perhaps his finest work stems from the transition period between the two. There is a superb example in this exhibition, "The Shepherd", with richly coloured planes intersecting the standing figure leaning on a staff, with a bold yet complex effect, oddly enough, of perfect pastoral. He later returned to figurative painting, and there are many lovely canvases from that late period in the show. (He had anglicised his name to Norland, but went back to Neuschul eventually.)

After his early fame, England was a quiet time of relative obscurity, though he had shows in Swansea, Cardiff and London. There was a large retrospective at the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem in 1959, and also one in Berlin before he died. His early work is now very highly prized, and the rest will soon start to take on that classic look.

### FAMILY EVENTS

Entries in the column Family Events are free of charge: any voluntary donations would, however, be appreciated. Texts should be sent in by 15th of the month.

#### Births

**Kossman:**— Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kossman, 22 Dawson Road, London, N.W.2, are proud to announce the arrival of their fourth grandchild "Joanna Lea", daughter of Shirley and Ralph, and third grandchild for Pearl and Len Goodwin, Wembley.

#### Ruby Wedding

**Newton:**— Betty (née Mann) and Bernard Newton, of 25 Viceroy Court, Didsbury, Manchester, will celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary on 8 September.

#### Deaths

**Casson:**— Claude Casson passed away after an operation on 25 July. Deeply mourned and very much missed by his wife Marion, son Ronnie, daughter-in-law Mary, family and friends.

**Hubert:**— Martha Miriam Hubert died on Shiva-assar b'Tammuz. Deeply mourned by her husband Arthur and her son Walter and family.

**Israel:**— Leo Israel, of Eleanor Rathbone House, passed away suddenly at Brighton, on Sunday, 19 July, 1981, at the age of 82. Deeply mourned by his widow Grete and relatives and many friends. Mrs. Israel thanks sincerely for all the expressions of sympathy in her sad loss.

**Leser:**— Mrs. Else Leser, of 162 Cholmley Gardens, Mill Lane, London, N.W.6, passed away on 17 July after a long illness. Very much missed by her friends.

**Loewenstein:**— Am 2. Juli verstarb nach langem, tapfer ertragenen, schwerem Leiden unsere liebe Renate Loewenstein, geb. Lustig, aus Gleiwitz. Ihre Güte und Selbstlosigkeit werden uns stets ein Vorbild sein. Familien Curt G. Loewenstein (P. Goyena 948, 1640 Acassuso, Argentinien); Eva, geb. Lustig, und Otto Hirschler (Quintana 2046, 1640 Martinez, Argentinien); Dr. Ernst und Hanna Ruth Lustig, geb. Loewe (Rossittenweg 10, D-3340 Wolfenbuettel).

**Nathan:**— Fred Emil Nathan died 29 July 1981, after a long illness; beloved husband of Margot and father of Anthony and Stephen.

**Zeitlin:**— Ernst Zeitlin, aged 80, passed away peacefully on 6 August. He was dearly loved and will be sadly missed by his wife Gerti and all his family and friends.

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**Ursula geb. Baum:**— Ursula Beate geb. Baum, geb. 1921/22, letzte Wohnung Berlin-Tempelhof, M.v. Richthofenstr., ausgewandert ca. 1938, wird gesucht von Gisela Stahlknecht, geb. Neuling, Friedrichstr. 11b, 307 Nienburg.

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### RACIALISM IN SCHOOL MAGAZINE

Two school magazine editors, aged 18 and 19, have appeared before a juvenile court in Cologne, accused of incitement to race hatred. The complaint was made about an article they had published, denying the Holocaust and calling the film "Holocaust" a "Horror-Show" (sic) of the worst description. Later, the superior court in Cologne confirmed the juvenile court's sentence on the two youths, a fine with the option of community work.

### CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN POP SONG

In West Germany, "A & P", a punk group from the Sarnberger See district, is enjoying a certain success with "Dachau". The words of this piece, written by a member of the group, run, "In Dachau ist nichts mehr los, in Buchenwald ist nichts mehr los, in Belsen ist nichts mehr los, in Auschwitz ist nichts mehr los...". The group's promoters defend them on the grounds of "freedom of thought" and say that the words are meant to be taken ironically. The increasingly obvious involvement of "punk" and violent extremism in Britain throws a somewhat lurid light on this distasteful "pop song".

### JEWISH-ARAB VISIT TO BERLIN

The head of the Jewish community in Berlin, Heinz Galinski met a mixed Jewish-Arab group from the Martin Buber Institute of the Hebrew University when they came to Berlin recently. He gave a talk detailing the history of the community since its rebirth and its current welfare activities.

### A GREAT PHOTOGRAPHER

On the eve of his 81st birthday, Hans Casparius opened an exhibition of his photographs at the Camden Art Centre. It included some charming 1930 photographs of the Caledonian Market and London Streets, a number of Berlin pictures taken at about the same time, and his famous 1932 portrait of Sigmund Freud. He was born in Berlin and was a pioneer in the use of hand-held cameras for his work in the German film-industry. As a cameraman, he travelled the world, and some of the pictures taken in New York and Canada were included in the exhibition. His importance as a photographer has been acknowledged by exhibitions in many places, including his home town which gave him a rousing welcome three years ago.

### DR. WALTER SCHINDLER, 85

Dr. Walter Schindler, who recently celebrated his 85th birthday, has left his mark on many general and Jewish ventures. He did pioneer work in the field of group psychology and became known as a guest lecturer at many universities and congresses. In the Jewish sphere his activities included the arrangement of the annual University Extra-Mural lectures under the auspices of the Theodor Herzl Society. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Schindler, who has also been an interested member of the AJR since its inception.

### PROFESSOR S. S. PRAWER

Professor Sigbert Solomon Praver, who came to this country as a refugee from Germany in 1939 and received his education in this country, has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He is Taylor Professor of German Language and Literature at Oxford and has published a number of books in English and German on German writers and poets. His sister is the writer Ruth Jhabvala Praver. Professor Praver is a member of the London Board of the Leo Baeck Institute.

### LEGACIES

The AJR Charitable Trust received a legacy of £35,000 from the estate of the late Miss E. Fischer. £300 was received from the estate of the late Mrs. J. Eisenger, and £150 from the estate of Mrs. Rose Ader.

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# THEATRE AND CULTURE

**London. Coming events:** The Royal Festival Hall promises a remarkable musical evening on 26 September under the title "London greets Berlin", when a concert, introduced by David Jacobs, will feature tenor *Werner Hollweg* and the charming soprano *Anneliese Rothenberger* as soloists. The new Stoppard play "On the Razzle", joining the repertoire of the Lyttleton Theatre, is based on Johann Nestroy's play "Einen Jux will er sich machen."

**Tit-Bits.** Within the framework of a symposium "Literature and Public Life" the works of Heinrich Mann will be discussed in Lübeck between 17 and 19 September; Vienna's Lessing monument, a statue on the Judenplatz which was removed during Hitler days, has been reconstructed and will be re-erected on its original site.

**Birthdays.** Actor Erwin *Faber*, Innsbruck-born, who started his career at the Kammerspiele Munich in 1916, and after many years in Vienna, Salzburg and Bonn became a member of the "Bayrische Staatsschauspiel" is 90 years old. *Gustav Knuth*, German character actor, formerly

of Berlin, now mainly in Switzerland where he is starring in films and on television, celebrated his 80th birthday.

**Obituary.** The world of light music has lost two composers whose songs will remain unforgotten for a long time: Peter *Kreuder* who has died at the age of 76, wrote song-hits for Marlene Dietrich, Pola Negri and Zarah Leander, but is probably best known for his film music ("Sag beim Abschied leise Servus.") Heinrich *Strecker*, among the oldest authorities on Viennese songs, has died in Baden near Vienna. His almost classical song "Drunt' in der Lobau" is being whistled today as much as 50 years ago. Lena *Felkel*, wife of the landscape and portrait painter, the late Carl Felkel, who has died in London at the age of 79, was the daughter of the Austrian writer Felix Dörmann, who wrote the words to the Oscar Straus operetta "Ein Walzertraum."

**Musical Biography.** An appraisal of composer *Anton von Webern*, due for a long time, and now written by Hans and Rosaleen Moldenbauer, has been published by Atlantis Verlag, Zürich. (Title:

"Anton von Webern.") As a friend and follower of Arnold Schoenberg, Webern composed under the influence of contemporary events: thus, the names of Alban Berg, Zemlinsky, Klemperer and Mahler figure in an interesting work about a man with an unhappy fate: having survived the Nazi period, he fell victim to an American soldier who shot Webern in Mittersil (Salzburg) through an unfortunate error in 1945. S.B.

## ANELY JUDA GALLERY

Under the heading *Configuration 1910-1940* an exhibition is being held at the Anely Juda Gallery (11, Tottenham Mews, W1) until September 26. Once again we are faced with a selection of outstanding works by twenty-seven artists. Among them are Max Ernst (1891-1976), who was a member of the *Junge Rheinland* group of poets and painters, and Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), who left Germany in 1937 to settle in England. Less well known is Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart (1899-1962), who was born in Osnabrueck and became a member of the *De Stijl* group; he received his accolade by being included in the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition of 1936. Four of his compositions are on display, and they alone are worth a visit. The *Bauhaus* artists Kandinsky (1866-1944), Paul Klee (1879-1940) and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) are also represented. A.S.

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