

AJR Information

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July 1990

£3 (to non-members)

Don't miss . . .

A saving remnant
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Internment
overseas p. 12

Privatising hate

No end to history

Last autumn an American political scientist put forward a thesis that briefly earned him extensive media attention, not to say guru status. The thesis was that the collapse of Communism spelt the end of East-West confrontation and that, with the end of this conflict, history itself was coming to an end.

Since then, we have all sobered up. For one, Communism has not completely collapsed in the Soviet Union. It fights a stubborn rearguard action in alliance with Great Russian nationalism. Such nationalism has diverse spokesmen. One is Valentin Rasputin, a writer of Slav *Schollenromane*, extolling traditional village life. Since Rasputin's work carries intimations of blood and soil, his appointment to Gorbachev's Presidential Council was disquieting, to say the least. Other spokesmen for Russian nationalism are, of course, the Pamyat thugs. The pogrom those bloodthirsty Jewbaiters

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threatened for 5 May (Karl Marx's birthday) did not take place. Satisfaction over its non-occurrence, however, is tempered by the fact that the Soviet authorities confront lethal antisemitic threats – when they actually do confront them – as a law-and-order issue. The moral dimension of the problem is glossed over; Gorbachev has not seen fit to utter one syllable in condemnation of Jewbaiting.

Elsewhere in the former Soviet Bloc the situation appears threatening also. In the *glasnost* era, East European Jewbaiting – to use an analogy from the sphere of economics – has shaken off state control and is in the hands of thrusting entrepreneurs.

In the former satellite states of Hungary and Romania, Jews currently find themselves in 'mirror image' situations. In Transylvania, xenophobes of the Romanian Hearth (*Vatra Romaneasca*) organisation have instigated pogroms against minority Hungarians – and this has swung public opinion behind the *völkische* Magyars of the Democratic Forum across the border in Hungary. In Bucharest a veteran of the National Peasant Party denied – in an interview with *The Observer* – that the part-Jewish Prime Minister Petr Roman could be a genuine Romanian. Conversely the deputy leader of the Hungarian Democratic Forum rubbished the rival Free Democrats in an election broadcast as 'led by an alien minority', i.e. Jews. And what about Western Europe? Skinhead outrages notwithstanding, the German political Establishment – sensitive as it is to world



Echo of the past?

(From *A Social History of the Third Reich* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

continued on page 2

One of the 'top ten'

Josef Schwammberger, recently extradited from Argentina to Germany, ranks on Simon Wiesenthal's list of ten most wanted war criminals. Driven by greed and cruelty, he allegedly made a habit of pulling gold teeth out of prisoners' mouths with pliers; the wealth thus acquired helped him evade capture after the war. Like other monstrous figures in the Nazi murder machine – Kaltenbrunner, Eichmann, Globocnik, Stangl, Brunner – Schwammberger hails from Austria. (Brunner, incidentally, is still enjoying the protection of the Syrian government, which earned Western plaudits for its role in the hostage affair.) □

Diagnosis equals disease

By alleging a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy to destroy Russia, *Pamyat* has triggered a mass exodus of Jews from the Soviet Union. This is depriving the country of the very expertise that could help stave off its decline.

(Gerd Koenen, *Kommune*, April 1990) □

Attack on racists

An Arab member of the Israeli parliament is seeking legislation to provide six-months gaol sentences for people using Arab ethnic names, such as 'Mohammed', in a racist way. □

Tents situation

With 150,000 Soviet Jews expected in Israel by the end of this year housing has become an urgent problem. Some estimates predict the complete exhaustion of housing stocks within weeks. Officials are discussing the importing of prefabricated dwellings and the setting up of tent camps when other choices are no longer viable.

Israelis face raised taxes as the government desperately seeks £1.1 billion to fund the unprecedented influx of Soviet immigrants.

Once the housing crisis is overcome, the government will have to deal with job creation in the long term. □

Denial

Josze Antall, Prime Minister-designate of democratic Hungary, has denied that his Democratic Forum Party is antisemitic or xenophobic. 'We only want to maintain the national values of our country'. □

Message in a bottle



A letter from Theresienstadt.

A rather unusual letter arrived in the AJR office recently. Nothing unusual about that, you may think. You would be right, millions of letters are posted and received every day, few of them warrant articles in monthly journals like this one. However, we felt that this letter did warrant a little extra attention. Sent in by Mrs. Lillian Green, a resident of Hale, in Cheshire, it tells of another letter, from her Grandmother.

Mrs. Green's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kent, escaped, by the Grace of God, from Vienna and now live in London. Over the years Mr. Kent has developed a keen interest in stamp collecting and has become an expert and respected member of the Philatelic Society. He shares this interest with his friend Rabbi F. F. Carlebach, who has himself built up a considerable collection, particularly in the field of Judaica stamps.

On a recent visit Mr. Kent and Rabbi Carlebach withdrew to the study to compare notes and discuss their individual collections. In the course of their conversation Rabbi Carlebach drew Mr. Kent's attention to an album of 'Holocaust Specials', stamps, envelopes and letters which had been sent from prisoners in concentration camps, which he had compiled.

The Rabbi pointed out, as an item of special interest, an envelope sent from the Theresienstadt camp which he had

purchased from a stamp dealer in Tel Aviv. The envelope was marked with a German cancellation and had been opened and passed by the camp censor. Much to Mr. Kent's surprise, he recognised the name of the sender, which was clearly handwritten on the reverse side of the envelope. It was his wife's family name.

They instantly showed the letter to Mrs. Kent. Her reaction was dramatic: upon seeing the names and addresses on the envelope she fainted.

It was an emotional moment. The letter was from her mother and addressed to her late brother in America. Tears of awe, amazement and great sadness followed.

Needless to say, Rabbi Carlebach has restored the document to its rightful owner.

It has taken fifty years for this letter to reach a proper destination; what had been a relic of the past, a part of a historical collection, has become an heirloom, a part of someone's present, like a message from home.

Is this, then, a 'happy accident', an 'amazing coincidence' or could it be evidence of a more powerful hand moving, providentially, in mysterious ways? □ M.N.

continued from front page

opinion – can probably be relied on to curb antisemitic excesses prompted by reunion euphoria. West of the Rhine, the situation is clearcut. Official France, having been on the Allied side at the end of the war, felt no great compulsion to purge its Vichy past. Petainist thinking with xenophobic undertones thus lingered on and in the current Le Pen-inspired climate of race hate, stomach-turning antisemitic incidents have occurred. Disgust at these manifestations have stung the political Establishment into meaningful – if belated (see p. 16) – action.

It was moving to see President Mitterand head the protest march after the tombstone desecrations at Carpentras. If and when President Gorbachev makes an equivalent gesture in response to a Pamyat outrage, we shall know that history – as a story of unending conflict – is drawing to an end. □

Bouquets of barbed wire

The fiftieth anniversary of mass internment of enemy aliens in May 1940 was marked by two events in London. The first was an all-day symposium organised by the Wiener Library at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre, with Tony Kushner of Southampton University and Professor François Lafitte as main speakers. Dr Kushner placed the agitation leading up to internment within the historic context of anti-alienism shading off into antisemitism in the British collective consciousness. At the same time he gave due weight to the countervailing liberal spirit at work in the public arena (literally incarnated, on this occasion, by the presence of Professor Lafitte in our midst). The latter spoke of the problems and pressure – of, for instance, constant updating – while he got the manuscript of *The Internment of Aliens* ready for the printers in autumn 1940. Professor Lafitte amended his depiction of Sir John Anderson, the then Home Secretary, as illiberal; it appears that the man who supervised the indiscriminate round-up implicit in Churchill's 'collar the lot' directive did so against his own better judgment.

A number of illuminating points emerged during the discussion. A former woman internee recalled her Isle of Man landlady saying 'We are treating you nicely in the expectation that you'll put in a good word for us when the Germans get here'. In a more serious vein, Mr Ludwig Spiro spoke of eight refugees committing suicide as a reaction to internment; addressing the wider, not to say perennial, issue of English xenophobia he put forward 'utility' (i.e. usefulness to this country) as the only means whereby aliens might gain true acceptance in Britain.

Such usefulness was, in fact, highlighted in the press coverage of the second event – a reunion at the Imperial War Museum – commemorating internment. The *Daily Telegraph* quoted Sir Hermann Bondi's work on naval radar, and Lord Schon's chairmanship of the National Research Development Corporation. A *Times* photograph featured the former alongside Norbert Brainin and Siegmund Nissel of the Amadeus Quartet (the founding of which Prof. Lafitte dubbed 'the only positive by-product of internment').

Mingling with the prominent ex-internees at the reunion were such public personages as Lord Dacre (Hugh Trevor-Roper) and Michael Foot; the latter pledged his support to Professor Fred Parkinson's campaign to have the still embargoed cabinet papers relating to the Dunera Scandal made available to public scrutiny. □

'The truth shall prevail'

Reality, alas, made mock of this description on Prague's Jan Hus monument for the past fifty years. At the start of this gruesome half century Czech Jewry suffered decimation at the hands of the Nazis; later its remnant was dispersed by the Communists. Now, at the end of the fifty years – to be precise, in April 1990 – Czech Jews held a world rally in Israel (with generous assistance from Robert Maxwell). The venues for the gathering ranged from a Jerusalem congress hall to the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv, which staged the exhibition *Where Cultures Meet: The Story of the Jews of Czechoslovakia*, and Kfar Masaryk. The last-named Kibbutz, established by Czech *olim* in 1940 honours the memory of a man who early in his political career defended a Jew

accused of ritual murder, and who, as President, visited Palestine twenty-one years before the establishment of the State of Israel.

The rally was an emotion-charged experience for all participants – particularly the several hundred who had been flown in from Czechoslovakia itself. What lent it additional significance was the opening address by Vaclav Havel, heir to the tradition of Thomas Masaryk and Jan Hus. Havel resembles his predecessor as President of democratic Czechoslovakia in pursuing politics grounded in morality; his notion of 'living within the truth' recalls Hus's famous motto.

The rally symbolised a turning point for the several thousand Jews of the Czech lands and Slovakia. Standing, as citizens, on the threshold of an age of democracy, they can, as Jews, feel themselves to be members of a worldwide family once again. Symbols apart, all participants agreed that it had been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. □

Diplomatic relations

Mr Winston Churchill, MP for Davyhulme, speaking at 10 Downing Street, disclosed that his grandmother and mother, who was six months pregnant at the time, were given instructions to kill at least one Nazi each, should the Germans invade.

It seems that Mr Churchill's mother was dining with her parents when Sir Winston rounded upon the two ladies and declared: 'If the Huns come, I am relying on each of you to take at least one German with you'.

'But Papa,' replied the young mother to be, 'I do not have a gun, and I would not know how to use one'. 'My dear', Sir Winston rejoined, grabbing a knife from the table and holding it above his head, 'You can use a carving knife'. □

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Reviews

A saving remnant

Robin Ostow *JEWS IN CONTEMPORARY EAST GERMANY, The children of Moses in the land of Marx. Macmillan 1989*

This study, based on in-depth interviews, has a double focus: the East German *Gemeinde* and the unaffiliated Jews of that country. Of all Europe's postwar communities the East Berlin one probably had the most chequered history. The miniscule *Gemeinde* resulted from the division of the city and the subsequent escape of the entire postwar communal leadership to the West. This development coincided with the whipping up of antisemitism throughout Eastern Europe by means of the Doctors' Plot, the Slansky Trial, the purge of Anna Pauker, etc.

Although East Berlin also demoted prominent Jews like Rudolf Herrnstadt, the DDR never descended to the Jewbaiting practised in 1950s Czechoslovakia or 1960s Poland. The reason for this derives from the very nature of the country. As the alternative German state – i.e. alternative to the allegedly Nazified Federal Republic – it could not have recourse to gutter tactics which would further undermine its credibility. This did not deter it from pursuing a viciously anti-Israel policy and denying Jewish restitution claims; on the other hand, Jewish camp survivors and returnees enjoyed the marginally privileged status of 'victims of Fascism'.

Local survivors and returnees, in fact, make up the entire *Gemeinde* in East Germany – whereas its Western counterpart largely comprises DPs and subsequent immigrants from Poland, Hungary, etc. Lacking reinforcements, the tiny East Berlin community is 'frozen' in size; according to its critics it is also frozen in attitudes.

'To become part of it is complicated, incredibly complicated. You get the feeling that it is a conspiratorial brotherhood because it has so few members and they all joined when they were young, and have known each other for decades'.

At the head of this 'conspiratorial' group stands Peter Kirchner (who, at Rabbi Riesenburger's prompting, became communal *mohel* while still a medical student). A *Mischling* with a Jewish mother, Dr. Kirchner escaped deportation;

postwar, he was *Barmitzvah* at Rykestrasse Synagogue and eventually took a similarly descended wife. As president of the *Gemeinde* since 1971 he has instituted well-attended cultural events, and has latterly established contact with international Jewish bodies.

For all Dr. Kirchner's efforts, there is still a considerable gap between the two hundred members of the community and the (estimated) four thousand East Berliners with a tenuous connection to Judaism. The latter break down into two groups: half and quarter Jews, and full Jews who de-Judaised themselves for the greater glory of Marx.

Dr. Irene Runge was born in wartime New York to Jewish Communist *émigrés*, and taken back to East Berlin in 1949. She recalls:

'My parents and their friends needed to be together; they were always having parties. We knew a lot of people who came from concentration camps. People would often talk about those days and what they experienced in the camps. I didn't realise till much later that that's not Germany, but a special social and political culture.'

Most of our friends and acquaintances were Jews, but none of them were religious. We talked a lot about being Jewish and we told Jewish jokes, but the Jüdische Gemeinde seemed very religious and we had no contact with it'.

Nonetheless, in the 1970s Irene joined the community. Several years later she initiated a 50-strong group of Jewish-descended intellectuals, writers and artists who were looking for their roots. This group has been holding joint events with the *Gemeinde* ever since. Several other exciting developments have affected the community in the mid and later Eighties. After 22 years it had its first fulltime rabbi in the shape of U.S.-domiciled Rabbi Isaac Neumann (whose incumbency was, however, of short duration). The Honecker government subsidised the reconstruction of the Rykestrasse Synagogue, and building work at Weissensee Cemetery and the former Oranienburgerstrasse

Synagogue; in addition it allowed Dr. Kirchner to visit Israel.

This easing of the situation of East German Jewry was motivated by East Berlin's desire to build bridges with the West, especially Washington. Meanwhile, of course, the Honecker regime has been tossed into the lumberroom history, and every institution of the former DDR is in the melting pot. Until this somewhat chaotic situation gets clarified Ostow's study will be the last word on the subject. □ R.G.

Singer – but not Bashevis

'After Auschwitz' wrote Adorno 'there can be no poems'. He was right in that all art presupposes the existence of truth and beauty somewhere in the universal scheme of things, while the occurrence of the *Shoah* totally negated such an assumption. But he was also wrong in the sense that their experiences drew an 'artistic' response from some camp survivors – Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Eli Wiesel – while writers like William Styron, D. M. Thomas and I. B. Singer produced great imaginative literature on the Holocaust survivor theme.

The playwright Peter Flannery had the idea of imaginatively reconstructing the life of the one camp survivor whose name has, alas, entered the English language: Peter Rachman. In Flannery's *Singer* (currently staged at the Royal Shakespeare Company's Pit Theatre in the Barbican) the hero, having survived Auschwitz, comes to postwar Britain where he advances from smalltime black marketeering to largescale racketeering in slum property.

At the climax of his career Singer experiences such self-disgust that he fakes a suicide and disappears. His next incarnation is as a philanthropist dispensing largesse to impecunious artists. When the shock encounter with an ex-concentration camp guard ends this phase of his life, Singer spends two decades performing anonymous acts of charity among London's down-and-outs.

One could therefore say that in Flannery's morality play the hero transmogrifies from Peter Rachman into John Stonehouse and then into John Profumo.

Such a bold summary may do an injustice to an author who empathises movingly with Jewish suffering, and poses profound questions about the 'meaning' of the camps. Even so Flannery deserves censure. In intermingling the theme of Auschwitz with that of 'cardboard city' he seems to suggest a parallel between the victims of Nazism and of Thatcherism, which one theatre-goer, at any rate, found so offensive that he left before the end of the play (even though he wanted to stay to applaud a hardworking cast headed by the brilliant Anthony Sher). □ R.G.

Eternal Quadrangle

Writers, *pace* James Joyce, are the 'consciousness of the race'. However high-faluting this may sound, in the case of Bashevis Singer it is largely true. Singer's imagination does encapsulate the race memory, not of Jewry as such, but of its – vital – East European component.

Today, when the way of life of the *Ostjuden* is rapidly receding into a past beyond recall we turn to Singer's books to catch echoes of that vanished civilisation. The flavour of his work is bitter-sweet and, to use a modern catchphrase, reader-friendly. Even in stories about Holocaust survivors he displays the true fabulist's gifts of producing dark tales shot through with quirky humour. A case in point is the novel *Enemies, a love story*, which Paul Mazursky has faithfully translated into a film currently on general release.

The film's hero is the talmudically educated Broder who – alone among his family – survived the *Shoah* thanks to a Polish servant girl. He married and took her to New York, where he works as ghost-writer for a fashionable rabbi. Talmudic study has not, however, curbed his libido. He deceives his naive wife with glamorous Masha, a camp survivor, and compounds the offence by undergoing a Jewish religious wedding ceremony with her. The tragicomic complications of Broder's life receive a further twist with the arrival – literally from the dead – of his first wife.

In the end, notwithstanding the suicide of one protagonist, and the disappearance of another, the tangled story finds a happy resolution (of sorts). One leaves the cinema with a feeling of having been simultaneously moved and entertained. More: one has been in the presence of an

author who extends compassionate indulgence to all his characters, even the wayward Broder. However duplicitously the latter acts in the amorous charades of his own devising, solicitude for all his victims shows through. (Victims is in fact a misnomer, since the three women show themselves possessed of greater inner strength than the 'trigamist'.)

The pleasure derived from Singer's many-layered depiction of character is further enhanced by Mazursky's deployment of cinematic resources. The soundtrack modulates from *klesmer* tunes via synagogal chants to 1940s pop, and a nostalgic mood is induced by shots of New York's Lower East Side – all peeling brownstone and metal fire escapes – intercut with vistas of Coney Island and the arcadian *kosher* Catskills. The acting, uniformly good, reaches its apogee in Anjelica Houston's portrayal of the presumed dead first wife. A film to enjoy and treasure in the memory.

□ R.G.

Hard times

On the other side: *To my children from Germany 1940–46*. Channel 4, 15.5.90

Mathilde Wolff Monckeberg, an upper middle-class Christian, lived in Hamburg when war broke out in 1939. Four of her five children had already left Germany. She wrote them many unsent letters.

This drama-documentary was based on these letters, which were discovered by one of the Monckeberg children in 1972. The programme was extremely 'professional', using a very moving combination of ciné-montage made up of footage of Nazi Germany with its swastika bedecked streets, marching soldiers and cheering civilians whilst the voice-over read excerpts from the letters. These pieces were interspersed with interviews with Mrs Monckeberg's children today and scenes from modern Hamburg.

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PETER C. RICKENBACK

In the latter half of the film there was a return to the montage-voice-over mode with some very disturbing footage of corpses lying in the streets after allied bombing raids and of shell-shocked civilians trying to reestablish their lives in the face of the hardships of rationing and housing shortages. More disturbing than this, however, was the content of the letters, which began to pose questions like: 'Who has bombed our beautiful cities?', which led on to forward the proposition that everyone who had been involved in the war shared equal guilt. This built upon the concept that the whole second world war was caused by 'one man who had a lunatic vision of being chosen by God'. This view, however, is naive in the extreme. Would it have been possible for the *Führer* and *Reich* to have functioned so effectively without the *Volk*?

In the end this was the story of a privileged person and her privileged children who were lucky enough to live through a catastrophic war with only one casualty.

Tilli Monckeberg was reunited with all but one of her children. She died in 1958. □ M.N.

Dutch recall the Occupation

The 45th anniversary of Liberation prompted considerable soulsearching in the Netherlands. The reason can be deduced from the following statistics: Among a population of nine million, *resistants* numbered under twenty thousand – roughly the same number as that of Dutch SS volunteers on the Eastern Front. The total number of collaborators is estimated at 450,000, of whom about a third were (at least temporarily) taken into custody after the war. Special postwar courts conducted 15,000 trials, and civil courts handed down an additional 37,000 guilty verdicts.

These figures indicate that the Dutch have seen their wartime conduct as more heroic than it actually was. Some analysts even ascribe the persistence of anti-German feeling in the country to the mismatch between Dutch self-perception and historic reality. □

Harold Meyer

In our June edition Mr. Meyer's age was wrongly stated, he is nearly 66. We apologise for this; and any other mistakes which may have been contained in the article, unreservedly.

Letters to the Editor



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Sir – A dear friend of ours who resides in London sends us *AJR Information* regularly, and we enjoy every issue, reading it from the front page to the last advertisement.

We enjoyed the January, February and March issues with the wonderful articles about Wagner, Goethe, Strauss (by my former music teacher Hans Freyhan in Berlin) and the various comments on events in Germany right now.

Thank you very much for producing such an interesting, well written and informative paper.

Reston, Virginia Inge Berner
U.S.A.

Our satisfaction at this flatteringly positive feedback is tempered by the thought that if our many 'second-hand' readers took out subscriptions, it would give us a sounder organisational and financial base. Ed.

EDITORIAL MYOPIA

Sir – I refer to your recent criticism of the Jewish comedian Jackie Mason.

In my opinion the richness of Jewish humour has always relied largely upon exposing the shortcomings and imperfections amongst our people. To laugh at ourselves cannot, surely, be a bad thing.

Maybe one day a Jewish comedian will appear who will present us all as paragons of virtue. While he may or may not be successful in converting any latent antisemites to love us, I doubt somehow that his humour would be very funny.
Holders Hill Avenue Ludwig Levy
London NW4

Charged with hypersensitivity I would refer Mr Levy to the article 'Burning faith' (April 1990). Ed.

BARBED BLESSING

Sir – The author of *The Internment of Aliens* suggests that the only blessing to come out of internment was the 'genesis of the Amadeus String Quartet'.

At Prees Heath internment camp I shared a tent with Norbert Brainin, who

had brought his violin and kept up spirits by playing for us. I introduced Brainin to Peter Schidlof, an ex-schoolmate of mine, and Brainin realised that Schidlof had great musical talent. (He later arranged for Schidlof to get further training etc.)

Knowing that Schidlof had played for his school, and even on Vienna Radio, as a boy, I told Norbert, who gave him his violin and asked him to play. No further proof of Schidlof's talent was required.
Hawkshead Lane Henry Toch
North Mymms, Herts

OMISSION

Sir – Your excellent articles on the development of Australian Jewry omitted one significant character: General Sir John Monash, possibly the outstanding Allied general of the First World War. He deserves a place in any history of Australian Jewry, and is remembered both in Australia and the U.K.

Ruskin Close John M. Davies
London NW11

PICTURE THIS

Sir – In your June issue you report that the new German banknotes will bear portraits of famous people and illustrations of their work. The DM200 note is to have a picture of Paul Ehrlich, who discovered a cure for syphilis: I wonder how this will be illustrated? The mind boggles.

Tooke Close Paul Samet
Hatch End

PRE-WAR BERLIN SCHOOLS

Sir – May I, through your column, request information on the following:

Names of teachers from Berlin, who came to this country. Whether they were able to continue in their profession or what other occupations they pursued. What can your readers tell about the educational methods in classrooms that were tried at the time, i.e., *Briefkästen*

NOTICE

In the June issue, in the letter from Mr. Harold Becker about correspondence with families in Leipzig, we omitted to state the house No. which is 41.

(post boxes where pupils were able to put awkward questions or criticisms of the teachers, anonymously of course).

Helfersystem (older children helping younger ones). *Schulaufgabengruppen* (homework in groups). Also, did anyone attend or know anything about the School which later was located in the Choriner Strasse, up to 1941? Does anyone know what Clara Chodowski (teacher at the Ryke Strasse) did in this country? She arrived here on 28.4.1939, last known address 18.4.1946, 92 Colney Hatch Lane, N10, died 30.6.1962, buried at Willesden Liberal Cemetery.

I have promised to help to contribute to a book being written on the Jewish schools in pre-war Berlin, their teachers and their method of teaching. Due credit will be given to all contributors.

Sneyd Road Martin Teich-Birken
London NW2 Association
of Jewish Ex-Berliners

MAKING A WILL

Sir – My very bitter experiences with an executor – a solicitor appointed in her will by a relative – will be of some value to your readers as enormous delays, fabricated to 'justify' massive charges, are far from rare! I have learnt from three other cases that executors who do not make a living out of it, can normally finish such jobs in a very few months, whilst 'professionals' manage to stretch them into years!

What can a victim do? High Court procedures are costly. Help from the Law Society is a forlorn hope; its rules are far from user-friendly!

Here is my advice to testators: Keep your heirs out of those claws by appointing them, or an outsider who does not make a living out of it, as executor(s) with the right to seek professional advice (of their choice) when needed and at costs to be agreed – which are to be borne by the estate. You may need legal help when drawing up your will; but do not appoint a little dictator – he will look after himself first!

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Twenty year search

Mr Leon Brenner was twenty-seven years old when he found out that he had been adopted. That was twenty one years ago. Since then he has been trying to trace the identity and whereabouts of his natural mother. Until March of this year all he had been able to find out was that he had been born at the Booth Memorial Hospital in Cape Town on 3 July 1941, that he was adopted on 14 October 1941 and that his mother had turned twenty some time between his birth and his adoption.

However, in April of this year Mr Brenner gained access to his mother's immigration file. Her name, he discovered, was Gerda Vansburger and she was the child of Ernest and Anna Vansburger. She was born in Berlin in 1922. The family had left Germany in 1936 to escape the Nazis.

Gerda Vansburger arrived in South Africa on 16 February 1939, intending to marry a Hans Gerstle. The marriage did not take place and she left in March 1942 for Buenos Aires.

Mr Brenner has subsequently found out that his mother is dead. But, much to his surprise, he also learned that he has a sister, named Susanna, living somewhere in South America. He is determined to find her.

Mr Brenner's search for his family has been going on for over two decades. If anyone has any information about them please contact him: Leon H. Brenner, PO Box 781 407. Sandton. 2146. Republic of South Africa. □

VERJAGT, ERMORDET

*The Art of Jewish Children
Germany 1936-1941*

Julo Levin was born in Stettin in 1901 where he attended the local art school. In 1919 he moved to Düsseldorf, living with his uncle Max Arnfeld. After completing his studies he became a member of the ASSO (Assoziation revolutionärer bildender Künstler) and was consequently arrested in 1933 and imprisoned for three weeks. After his release from prison he continued painting and his works were included in the national exhibition of Jewish artists in 1936 sponsored by the Kultusgemeinde and the Berlin community. In 1936 Levin became art teacher at the new Jewish school in Düsseldorf and in 1938 he moved to Berlin where he taught at the Kaliski and subsequently at the Holdheim school. With the closing of most Jewish schools in 1941, Levin was forced to work as a handyman/carpenter. He had opportunities to emigrate but refused to do so. In 1943 he was arrested and deported to Auschwitz. The date of his death is not known.

During his teaching years Levin preserved much of the work of his pupils. He gave many of them to his friend Carl Lauterbach and the remainder, together with some of his own work, was saved by Frau Mieke Monjau after his deportation. These collections remained hidden until they were given to the Düsseldorf Municipal Museum in 1982/3.

'The Art of Jewish Children Germany 1936-41' will be shown at the Ben Uri Art Gallery from 15 July under its original title 'Verjagt, ermordet'. This exhibition has travelled widely in Europe and the U.S.A. Many of the pictures were signed and of 299 children, 166 have been identified. Of these 43 were murdered in concentration camps.

□ *Alice Schwab*

Irene White 70

Now 70 years of age, Irene White continues to be one of the AJR's most active members.

After spending most of her childhood in Berlin, her family emigrated to Israel in 1934, where Irene became a trainee nurse. In 1938 she came to England to complete her training, her first posting being St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. During the Blitz she was transferred to Hampstead General (now the Royal Free) so that her linguistic abilities could be utilised to the fullest extent.

Irene's is a busy life. At present she maintains a library of over 1,000 audio tapes which are available on loan - these range from synagogal music to opera and from 'easy listening' to the taped versions of AJR Information which she has been producing for the last four years, the latter recorded with the help of a small team of readers and the Talking Newspaper Association of Great Britain, who place their cassette duplicating services at her disposal.

As well as this time consuming task Irene spends two days a week at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. She also visits residents in all the Homes on behalf of the Belsize Square Synagogue, where she is a member of the Friends Group, the Women's Society and leads a weekly painting class.

We are all thankful to Irene and appreciate her hard work. We hope that she will remain fit, well and happy for many years to come. □

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PAUL BALINT AJR DAY CENTRE

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Morning Activities – Bridge, kalookie, scrabble, chess, etc., keep fit, discussion group, choir (Mondays), art class (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

*Afternoon entertainment***JULY**

- Monday 2 Danny Kraus Entertains
Tuesday 3 Music For a While – Wendy Duke & Kathryn Salmon
Wednesday 4 Melody Makers – Kathy McCormack & Ken Penney
Thursday 5 A Selection of Israeli & Jewish Songs – Malka Shinar
Monday 9 (a) Outing to Docklands
(b) Songs – Past & Present – Hans Freund
Tuesday 10 A Life of Music with Piano Illustration – Doris Samuels
Wednesday 11 Dorei Duo accompanied by Heather Ramsden (Piano)
Thursday 12 The Dulwich Piano Trio
Monday 16 Kol Rinah Singers conducted by Johanna Lichtenstern
Tuesday 17 The Country Which Stood by its Jews – Talk by Walter Goddard
Wednesday 18 Musical Ensemble – Alan Starr & Jennie Sandler
Thursday 19 Joyce & Godfrey van Leer Entertain You With Magic
Monday 23 Musik & Poesie – Fred Stern
Tuesday 24 Musical Entertainment with The Sugar Rianos
Wednesday 25 Collection of Songs & Arias – James Pocha accompanied by Bob Goldsmith
Thursday 26 I play – You sing – Gerard Tichauer
Monday 30 Jack & Lily Sing For You – Jack Harris accompanied by Lilian Goldstein
Tuesday 31 Music For You – Linda Sherratt

AUGUST

- Wednesday 1 A Sentimental & Zany Afternoon – Patricia Powers
Thursday 2 (a) Outing to Waddesdon Manor
(b) B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Songsters
Monday 6 One Man Music Hall Show – Mickie Driver
Tuesday 7 Classical Music & Song Recital – Sybil Michelow (Mezzo) accompanied by Michael Runge
Wednesday 8 Popular Classical Music – Maurice Isaacs (Violin) accompanied by Isabel Isaacs
Thursday 9 The Thames Trio – Ben Brickman

Exodus 1990 – The Eastbourne affair

On the 'Day Centre Weekend' (11–13 May) Cleve Road luminaries Sylvia and Renee arranged a most successful weekend outing to Eastbourne.

The participants, all 53 of them, boarded the hired coach outside the Day Centre at 10.30am and were whisked away, up the A22, to East Grinstead, where a light lunch was laid on at the Felbridge Hotel. After lunch the company headed for Eastbourne, arriving at about 4pm. The four star, seafront Queen's Hotel provided elegant rooms, with all 'mod cons', for everyone. After a brief wash and brush-up it was out for a stroll along the seaside to take the air and build up the appetite for the tasty five course table d'hôte dinner with long chats over coffee for afters.

On Saturday the twelfth all members woke ready for action. After a substantial breakfast everyone headed to the coach for a 'Mystery Tour' which covered the

whole area from Beachy Head to Newhaven and back again. Back at the hotel all members were greeted by the shapely form of Lydia Lassman, who had come along from the AJR, to make sure that everything was going according to plan.

That evening, after another excellent dinner, the party headed for the Eastbourne Royal Hippodrome for a marvellous performance by the Minstrel Stars; this event alone would have made the journey worthwhile.

Sunday morning began with yet another huge breakfast, followed by a coach trip around the 'Mysterious East', Pevensey, Bexhill, St Leonards and Hastings. Unlike the last invasion, 1066, there were no casualties.

The party then returned to Eastbourne for lunch and thence to London, arriving back at Cleve Road in the early evening.

End of Exodus. A jolly fine weekend.
With thanks to Gerard Tichauer

Success stories

There are two happy reports from our Volunteers Department this month.

The first comes from a couple who have been visiting the same gentleman for over three years now. A widower, he was very lonely and much in need of support. The visiting couple found out that he had never received a pension from the Austrian authorities and set to work to gather together the necessary documents, complete the long and complicated forms, make trips to the Embassy etc. (This was before Aggie Alexander came to the AJR to run her 'Drop-in' centres). After sending off the documents there was the usual interminable wait. However, just recently, after eighteen months, our volunteer couple have been informed that their friend is to receive a pension. Our

thanks and congratulations to the persevering pair.

Another of our volunteers, a gentleman, was asked to visit a lady who intended to go on aliyah to Israel to join her only surviving relative, her sister, in a residential home. In her eighties, the lady was finding it difficult to make the necessary decisions, clear her flat of furniture, fix dates, decide what to take and what to leave and all the other complications which arise when one decides to emigrate.

Our volunteer's patience has been inexhaustible. He has supported this woman throughout this fraught period, helping her with all her enquiries and keeping in touch with the home in Israel to make sure all the details remained clear.

With his help, the lady is expected to be leaving this country to settle with her sister in the very near future.

L.H.

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Our Annual General Meeting



Mr Marx re-elected.

Oxford has its May Week in June. In West Hampstead it still felt like April on 6 June the day of our AGM. Despite showers and blustery winds, however, a large audience assembled in the glassed-in hall of the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre. In his Chairman's address Mr Theo Marx stressed the ever heavier burden which a combination of factors – the increased age of Home residents (which currently averages 85), the lower entitlement to German pensions of new admissions, reduced grants from Local Authorities – is imposing on the Association's financial resources. He linked this to the main theme of his address: the AJR's £4 million Residential Care Appeal. With the Paul Balint Trust having primed the pump, quite a few individual members had already responded to the appeal, but far

more was needed to implement the large-scale refurbishment programme. As a first stage he announced that the residents of Otto Schiff House are being moved into a new purpose-built wing of Osmond House while the former old age home is to be converted into sheltered accommodation for thirty people.

Mr Marx concluded by paying a warm tribute to AJR staff, ably led by the Administrator Mrs Lydia Lassman, and volunteers.

The Chairman's point about the Association's onerous financial burden was echoed by Mr M. Kochmann in his Treasurer's report. But for an unusually high income from legacies in 1989, said Mr Kochmann, we would have had to make heavy inroads into our reserves. The point that legacies to charitable organisations are not subject to tax was emphasised in the discussion that followed. Other points made by speakers from the floor related to membership figures, the annual subscription charge and the AJR's relatively limited success in publicising its existence. Replying, Mr Marx announced that Association membership currently stood at just below four thousand, emphasised that the £25 annual subscription was waived for hardship cases and asked all present to go out and recruit new members.

There followed the election of the Executive Committee – whose composition was listed in the May issue – and the lecture by Mr Manfred Durst.

A sentimental journey and the magic of gold

Mr Manfred Durst gave a most entertaining account of his early life and entry into the jewellery trade which, it transpired, was the result of shock induced by the paying of a fortune (12 shillings) for a wartime watch repair.

Mr Durst had arrived in this country on a kindertransport, accompanied by his sister. From Dovercourt camp he went, via London to a Wiltshire Village, where he had his first experience of great British institutions like tin baths and bucket operated plumbing. It was from here that he entered his apprenticeship. He was offered a choice of three trades, the others being carpentry and fur. Remembering his watch repair, he chose jewellery. At that time he was unaware of the difference between a jeweller and a watchmaker.

Upon completing his apprenticeship Mr Durst spent time in the U.S.A. where he learnt the 'wax moulding' method of mass producing gold jewellery. He brought this technique back to Britain and was, for some time, its only British exponent.

Grateful to this day for the benefits bestowed upon him by his apprenticeship, he has invested much time and effort in supplying training facilities for young people both here and in Israel.

Mr Durst's speech, accompanied by colour slides, was very interesting and its title most apt. On this 'sentimental journey' through Mr Durst's life it became obvious that it had been charmed – by 'the magic of gold'.

AJR 'on the air'

The AJR's former Treasurer, Mr Ludwig Spiro, was interviewed on LBC Radio's 'You don't have to be Jewish' on June 17.

He spoke of the problems encountered by the ageing refugee community and the importance of the Residential Care Appeal in raising funds to provide a place for them to live. For the many who have no surviving family the company of others with shared experiences and a common language can provide great comfort.

Efforts to raise the £4 million needed for the expansion of the existing facilities are continuing, Mr Spiro told the programme's presenter, Michael Freedland.

DON'T FORGET

Our Residential Care Appeal.
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AJR

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Prophet motive

Ben-Gurion wrote in a letter to a newspaper editor in 1961: 'The world will end the Cold War in 1985 or 1987. The pressure of the Russian intelligentsia for more freedom, and of the masses for higher living standards, must lead to a democratisation of society within the next quarter century.' (April issue, *Mitteilungsblatt des Irgun Olei Merkas Europa*, Tel Aviv.)

Cairo warning

President Mubarak of Egypt has voiced his fears that 'Soviet Jewish immigration threatens to blow up the peace march and put the whole region on the verge of a new bloody confrontation'. □

Forked tongues

Every English conversation has three levels of meaning: what you think, what you say, and what you wish to be understood as saying. (US-born Janet Daley, *The Independent* 21 March)

Plaque – but no claque – for Werfel

The centenary of Franz Werfel's birth was marked by two events in Vienna, where the Prague-born author had spent his most productive years. A memorial plaque was unveiled in the presence of a personal representative of the Prime Minister of the Armenian Soviet Republic. (Werfel's *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* dealt with Turkish genocide of the Armenians during the Great War.)

There was also an international symposium on the writer's work at which, however, criticism outweighed acclaim. Participants cited adverse comments by some of Werfel's contemporaries, such as Robert Musil's 'I have nothing to say to a world in which Werfel finds interpreters', and Ernst Bloch's 'After the War Werfel swapped his abstract pacifism for a toy trumpet'; Martin Esslin, former Head of BBC drama, described Werfel's plays as 'kitsch Burgtheater ham on the level of school broadcasts'.

VERSE AND WORSE

WALDHEIM

'You expect me to remember
Dates like Tenth of November?
The Austrians find it easier
To share in my amnesia.'

ROALD DAHL

His tales beguile a billion kids,
He thinks all publishers are Yids
And out-chills Saki, Poe et al;
Truly, 'Wer Dahl hat, hat die Qual'.

JUNG

Freud's chosen heir and *shabbas goy*
He saw some good in Strength through Joy
And thought old Sigmund sex-obsessed.
In love – as war – the Swiss know best.

KARAJAN

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A Party member since way back –
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OPEN DAYS IN THE HOMES

Osmond House
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Otto Schiff House
Sunday 12 August
at 3 p.m.

Entrance £2.00 and £1.00 children

Heinrich Stahl House
Sunday 2 September
at 2.30 p.m.

Entrance £2.00 and £1.00 children

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Alice Schwab

Art Notes

Our old friend Annelly Juda is moving premises and it will no longer be necessary to risk life and limb on her steep stairs in the interest of art. Her new gallery is at 23 Dering Street, W1 and the first exhibition to be held there (from 28 June) will be an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Naum Gabo (1890–1977).

Madame Yevonde (1893–1975) was an original and exciting British photographer. An exhibition of her work, arranged jointly by the Royal Photographic Society and the National Portrait Gallery, under the title *Colour, Fantasy, Myth* will be held at that gallery (20 July–30 September). The *Goddess* series of her work is being shown in its entirety, including portraits of Lady Diana Moseley as Venus and Gertrude Lawrence as the Muse of Lyric Poetry. Other portrait photographs include Gielgud, Vivien Leigh and the Mountbatten family.

Dr Fritz Eichenberg is said to be one of the greatest wood engravers of this century. Born in Cologne he studied under Hugo Steiner-Prag and began his book illustrations while still a student. He left Germany in 1933 and settled in New York where he founded the Pratt Graphic Arts Centre. Recently he has been working on his autobiography and has produced 17 wood engravings on aspects of death. A small exhibition of his work was recently held (until 29 June) in the vaults of the Royal Society of Arts.

After its successful showing in London at the Goethe Institut (until 18 June), the Art of German Drawing Exhibition VII is moving to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh (24 June–2 September). Marika Eversfield RAS who trained in Hungary, Vienna, Perugia and at the Arthur Segal School in London has been exhibiting from 1971 onwards. She has had three successful exhibitions in May and June this year and will be showing at the Hyde Park Gallery, Craven Terrace, W2 for two weeks from 11 September.

The Whitechapel Art Gallery is mounting two important exhibitions (until 5 August). The first is of sculptures and drawings by Julio Gonzalez (1876–1942).

Gonzalez was born in Barcelona and trained as a craftsman in metal. He moved to Paris in 1910 and between 1928–31 he helped Picasso with the production of a series of welded iron works. Over 40 of his sculptures, including stone carvings and plaster figures, together with 20 drawings will be on display at this exhibition. The other artist whose work is being displayed at the Whitechapel is Harald Klingelhöller (born 1954) who lives and works in Düsseldorf. His sculptures are not easy; he uses unconventional combinations of materials, cardboard, mirror glass and metal, to construct complex forms with slightly mysterious titles which, seemingly, form an intrinsic component of the work. A catalogue is available which contains essays about much of his recent work.

One of the most exciting and vivid shows in London is *The Pursuit of the Real: British figurative painting from Sickert to Bacon* at the Barbican (until 8 July). This exhibition was organised by the Manchester City Art Galleries and was shown there until April. After its showing at the Barbican the exhibition will be moved to Glasgow (until 16 September). The exhibition represents the work of twelve artists: Sickert, Bomberg, Spencer, Coldstream, Uglow, Auerbach, Freud, Bacon, Kossoff, Lessore, Andrewes and Wonnacott. Some really beautiful pictures are on display and the excellent catalogue (price £12.95) is well worth the money.

Continuing its series of exhibitions (the tenth in the series) of works selected by individual artists, the National Gallery is showing a selection of its paintings chosen by Victor Passmore (until 7 October). Each artist has his or her own favourites and Passmore has selected works by Rembrandt, Turner and Titian, as well as two works by Passmore himself.

Finally, for those in Bristol, the touring exhibition of Bauhaus Photography will be shown at the Arnolfini Gallery (14 July–19 August). □

THE DAY CENTRE NEEDS

- (1) A temporary (3/4 months) helper on Thursdays from mid-day to help serve at tables in the dining room, clear up etc.
- (2) Drivers still needed to take people to and from the Centre.

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SB's Column

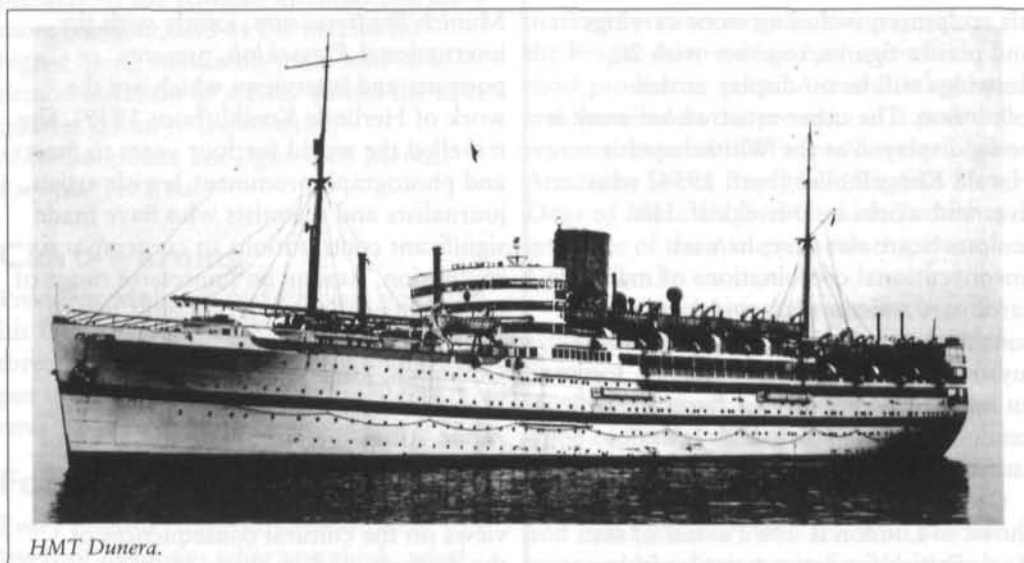
More than a photographic exhibition. The Munich *Stadtmuseum*, jointly with the international *Presseklub*, presents portraits and interviews which are the work of Herlinde Koelbl (born 1939). She travelled the world for four years to meet and photograph prominent Jewish artists, journalists and scientists who have made significant contributions to contemporary civilisation. Among an impressive range of personalities she met Jerusalem's mayor Teddy Kollek, Sir Georg Solti, Sir Ernst Gombrich, Lord Weidenfeld, Simon Wiesenthal and veteran film star Gitta Alpar. Altogether an impressive array of people who talked to her about their relations to present-day Germany, their views on the cultural consequences of the diaspora and on the roots of antisemitism.

Kaffeehausliteratur. A recital with this promising title was given at London's Leighton House, Holland Park, under the auspices of the Austrian Institute. The Vienna 'Burg' actor Erich Auer concentrated on authors who enriched Austria's poetry and prose between the wars, and read stories, scenes and sketches by Roda Roda, Friedell, Anton Kuh, Peter Altenberg, Alfred Polgar and Hans Weigel. It was a very pleasurable evening which proved what a diversity of real talent was lost when all these authors were dispersed, or perished, during the Nazi era.

Birthdays. Austrian born composer Ernst Krenek celebrated his 90th birthday in his California home. Krenek, whose first jazz opera *Johnny spielt auf* created no minor sensation when first performed in Vienna in 1927, met unmitigated criticism and overt antisemitic comments. His earlier works were followed by compositions in his U.S. exile (mainly choral). He completed his oratorio *Opus Sine Nomine* as late as 1988. – Austria's 'grand old lady of dance' Rosalia Chladek, a famous choreographer, is 85 years old. – Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the celebrated German baritone, a frequent visitor to Britain, honorary doctor of Oxford University, who became a symbol of Anglo-German reconciliation when he sang at the inauguration of the new Coventry Cathedral in 1962, attained the age of 65.

'War on the wrong people'

Part 2. Internment overseas



HMT Dunera.

Canada

Between June 22 and July 7, 1940, four ships left Liverpool for Canada with internees on board. Only three arrived. The fourth was the *Arandora Star*, which sank in the Atlantic after being struck by a German torpedo. The other three, the *Duchess of York*, the *Ettrick* and the *Sobieski*, carried between them 7,500 German, Austrian and Italian nationals, of whom (if the published figures are reliable) not quite 3,000 were internees originally classified into the 'friendly' categories 'C' and 'B'.

The Canadian government had offered to 'help out' with the problem of internment and had assumed that the arrivals from England would all be German prisoners of war, merchant seamen or pro-Nazi civilians. In fact, there were a good many refugees, among them 'schoolboys, undergraduates, priests and rabbis'. The Canadian authorities, therefore, separated the Jews from the rest. Prisoners were placed in five camps, identified respectively by letters 'P', 'S', 'A', 'N', and 'B' – all but the last in Quebec Province. Two were mid-river island fortresses, one was located in sheds alongside a railway line.

Conditions were poor to start with; but they soon improved – at any rate in comparison with those suffered by those unfortunately miscategorised who were in consequence of that error placed in Camp 'R', where they were exposed to vicious taunts, and worse, by their Nazi fellow-

prisoners. In due course the government in London sent out an emissary, who, after a long and thorough inspection, recommended continued amelioration and eventually release under the provisions of the three White Papers of July, August and October 1940. The first 287 refugees thus returned to England in December of that year and another 604 during the ensuing six months. By the time war ended the Canadian government had reclassified those remaining as 'Interned Refugees (Friendly Aliens)', and 972 responded to its invitation to apply for citizenship.

Australia

Australia, too, had offered internment facilities as a contribution to the war effort. And so it came about that only days after the *Arandora Star* disaster, the *Dunera* sailed from Liverpool bound for Australian ports with 2288 internees from Lingfield and the Isle of Man, together with 440 German and Italian *Arandora Star* survivors. The grossly overloaded vessel was tossed by stormy waters; a torpedo scored a near-miss, and her 'passengers' suffered appalling hardship from cramped accommodation and disgusting sanitary arrangements. They were exposed to the vagaries of thieves among the escorting troops, to molestation from their Nazi shipmates and harsh treatment from the guards, three of whom were later tried by court-martial. Most of the refugees were

disembarked at Sydney and taken by train to a camp located 450 miles inland, near a town called Hay. As time went on, conditions improved, apart from the almost unbearable heat; and small-scale enterprises, such as market gardening, woodworking, tailoring, as well as the wide-ranging cultural and educational activities, kept up the internees' morale. In the course of 1941 they were transferred to other camps (Orange in New South Wales and Tatura in Victoria) as a preliminary to their release. When that came, one-half returned to Britain, a few went to other countries and just over 900 stayed in Australia and settled there.

Mauritius

In November 1940, the *SS Atlantis* docked at Haifa. Her passengers were Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. They had endured unspeakable hardship on their journey, first down the Danube, then on board an unseaworthy vessel. But they were illegal immigrants and thus refused permission to land. Instead, they were taken to the British island colony of Mauritius, far out in the Indian Ocean – some 1500 men, women and children. They landed on Christmas Day and were driven in buses through the streets of Port Louis on their way to the prison camp at Beau Basin.

Their first year was terrible. They suffered from poor food and from the extremes of climate. Only in 1942 was the strict segregation of the sexes relaxed. After that, weddings were celebrated and children were born. Help from the generous Jewish community in South Africa began to arrive. But only at the end of the war did the ordeal really cease. The deportees were released, and 1250 of them were taken back to Haifa – this time to stay. Two hundred men had joined the Allied Forces. One hundred and twenty-four had died and were buried on the island.

Southern Africa

The Union of South Africa distinguished from the start between true Nazis and *bona fide* refugees, who were classified as 'friendly enemy aliens'. These, for the most part Jews, were either not interned at all, or, if they were, were thoughtfully kept apart from 'real' Germans and released after a very short spell. On principle, all refugees were free to make their own contribution to the war effort in

any way they chose, including as members of the fighting services.

In Rhodesia refugees were not interned; but neither could they volunteer for the Forces, except by joining the Internment Camp Corps, in which capacity they were put in charge of internment camps for genuine enemy aliens, a subtle example, perhaps, of psychological warfare.

Fifty years have passed since these events, this paradox of World War II, took place. They were described by a British politician as a 'bespattered page in our history'. And so it was. But let us now be thankful that the page has been turned. □ *David Maier*

Toilet paper diary

In the summer of 1940 Ernst Pollak worked as a farm hand in the South of England. One day two detectives called for him. He expected to be back by nightfall, but he was wrong. He was taken to Huyton camp, then to Liverpool, from whence he was shipped to Canada.

He wrote a diary on toilet paper and brought it with him when he returned to England to be detained on the Isle of Man. The following are the opening paragraphs:

Monday September 23rd 1940. One can see it quite clearly now, autumn has already shown its face; the temperature has dropped, the leaves of the trees have changed their colours and a slight drizzle has descended upon this Canadian landscape. It will probably be only a few days now before we shall move into the huts which are nearing completion and leave the tents in which we have been housed during the summer months.

A cool wind sweeps with biting effect through the grounds of the camp and suddenly the sun becomes visible from the slightly clouded sky.

On the watchtower, which I can see from my tent, they are just changing the guards. In the last two weeks they have also installed a machine gun up there. That apparently is the regulation, although they know by now that we are only friendly aliens and not war prisoners.

The barbed wire is electrified; that at least we were made to understand when we first arrived here two months ago. But for them it doesn't seem sufficient since they are always working on some improvements to ensure that there is no escape.

Fifty paces from the outer barbed wire fence there is an embankment. Daily the trains roll by, and just now with a clattering noise like a death rattle, a train speeds by with its huge engine and the roar of its mounted, continuously ringing bell. In the street two girls are walking slowly along. A car stops and the driver looks inquisitively out of the window into the camp. From the watchtower there are shouts and the car moves on. The two girls who were standing behind it are taking flight. Dolefully I am looking over to the embankment for some time after the hastily departing girls.

(From Departure to Freedom Curtailed by Ernst Pollak. Published by Ernst Pollak, 8 Newton Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2SH. Original manuscript in the Imperial War Museum.) □

Making a will?

Remember the AJR

Something that none of us should avoid is making a will and keeping it up to date.

We know we cannot take our worldly possessions with us but we can – at least – see that whatever is left behind goes:

- (a) where it will be appreciated,
- (b) where it will do some good,
- (c) where it is needed.

Many of our former refugees have found their association with the AJR a rewarding one. This is an opportunity to support the AJR Charitable Trust. Your solicitor will be able to help you; alternatively you can consult with our welfare rights advisor, Aggie Alexander, on 071-483 2536 (Tues, Weds, Thurs) or the social workers at the Day Centre 071-328 0208.

If you have already made a will, it is quite easy to add a codicil.

Whatever amount you are able to leave to the AJR, it will be well received, carefully applied and remembered with gratitude.

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FAMILY EVENTS**Birthday**

Ison Klompus Wishes for good health and happiness on your 84th birthday. All our love. Brother George, Helga and many friends.

Deaths

Bronner. Professor Dr. Josef Bronner, Fellow I.Mech.E., Member of Engineering Council, dearly beloved and loving husband of Marianne and beloved brother of Dr. Marzel Bronner, passed away at his home in Bournemouth on 1 May 1990, six months only after the death of his beloved youngest brother Dr. Max Bronner.

Dawidowsky Emma Dawidowsky passed away 14 May. Deeply mourned and sadly missed by her brother in Auckland, New Zealand. **Lewin-Herxheimer** Betty Lewin-Herxheimer, born in Germany, died 12 November 1989, aged about 96. Missed by her daughter, Anne Pollard, and Weiss family in South Africa.

Philipsborn Frida Philipsborn died on 21 April, aged 99. Beloved mother of Ruth and Ellen, grandmother of Barbara and great-grandmother of Adam and Abigail. **Rabold** Ella Rabold, born 20.10.1902 in Czechoslovakia, died 12 May 1990. A lady of great

dignity and charm. Missed by Sandra Carmen, Denise and John Vigor and family.

Rahmer Bernd Anselm Rahmer died 14 May, aged 81, after a short illness. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Smurka Irmgard Smurka, born in Germany, died suddenly 17 January 1990, aged 85. Missed by her sister, Karolina Keiler and the Kiwi family of Ohio, Cleveland, USA.

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Obituary

Charlotte Loose

Dr Charlotte Loose, the Art Historian, died peacefully at the age of 88.

She studied in Berlin and Wuerzburg and was active in the art world in Berlin in the twenties and thirties. Her work brought her into contact with famous painters such as Max Liebermann, Lesser Ury and Abbo.

With the help of good friends, she came to England in 1939 and had to do work as a domestic servant.

Dr Loose continued her studies at the British Museum, and took an active part in the evacuation of art treasures from London at the outbreak of war. As soon as it became possible, she joined the British Army. On her discharge, she took up teaching at various private schools, where she taught German, French, Art, History and Music – having learnt to play the piano and violin as a young girl.

She was a delightful lady who never made any demands on her friends and was reluctant to accept any offer of help.

She will be greatly missed by those who were privileged to know her.

□ *Gerald Steiner*

Aliska Bierer

A well-known resident of Hampstead, Aliska Bierer died recently at the age of 95. She was a woman of many talents, an operatic singer, pianist and player of the lute and guitar. She was also active in many voluntary organisations until her death. Born in Bratislava in 1895 she had a successful career in the world of operetta and, as Alice Hubsch, was famed in Europe as the 'Czechoslovakian Nightingale'.

She came to London in 1937, and during the war entertained the troops as a member of ENSA, giving two performances before Queen Mary who wrote an appreciation of her recitals.

Later she returned to her interest in art and set up the 'Gallery Petit' in Marble Arch. Gaining the world copyright of the first official portrait of the Prince of Wales, by Major Davidson-Houston, in 1971 she presented a print to the Prince at Buckingham Palace. She was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1975. □

40 Years Ago this Month

DESECRATION OF CEMETERIES

The Cemetery of Berlin-Weissensee (Soviet Sector) was desecrated recently. The culprits, 11 young workmen, were found out 5 days later. Desecrations are also reported from Wuerzburg, Frankfurt a.M. and Hemsbach, near Mannheim.

The U.S. Regional Commissioner for Bavaria, Clarence M. Bolds, strongly appealed to the German Authorities to take energetic measures against the desecration of cemeteries.

The Land-Government of Hesse expressed its horror at the happenings. Parents, teachers and churchmen should make young people realise that the last resting place of human beings is sacred.

The editor of the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung', Paul Sethe, writes that the German attitude should not be determined in the first line by the impression which might be created abroad, but that counter-actions are primarily necessary for the sake of the Germans themselves. 'It is our duty', he says, 'to speak to our youth about the terrible happenings in Auschwitz. Whatever happens to Jewish cemeteries is a shame for ourselves'.

AJR Information July, 1950.

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Benefit of clergy

Christian culpability for Jewish suffering is a vast subject whose roots go back to the Gospel writers and early Church Fathers. Even in modern times when religion yielded primacy to secular ideologies, such as nationalism, Church influence – as shown in the Dreyfus case – proved harmful to the Jews.

Between the wars Catholics active in the political arena sponsored the antisemitic boycott in Poland, prepared the ground for Pétain in France, and helped bury the Weimar Republic. (The *Zentrum* Party provided the necessary two-thirds Reichstag majority for Hitler's Enabling Law.) Croat and Slovak clerics even promoted Fascist regimes responsible for genocide during the Second World War.

In Western Europe, meanwhile, the Church played a more differentiated role: some clergy hid Jews, some pursued a purely 'spiritual' role, and some worked for collaborationist regimes. In France, for instance, Catholic chaplains were attached to the notorious *milice*, auxiliaries in the Gestapo roundup of Jews and *résistants*.

The head of *milice* intelligence Paul Touvier – 'the hangman of Lyon' – had in prewar days contemplated entering the priesthood; postwar he spent half a lifetime enjoying Church sanctuary. He was hiding from justice with two death sentences (for war crimes and high treason) hanging over his head. Monks, secular clergy, and members of lay orders, all conspired to make a mockery of the due judicial process for over forty years

(during which time Touvier not only occasionally lived in his parental home, but married and raised a family.) But the Church's role in the Touvier affair did not end there: Archbishop Gerlier of Lyon petitioned the Elysée for a pardon on the 'hangman's' behalf, and in 1971 President Pompidou duly obliged 'in order to heal the scars the war had left on the soul of France'.

The resultant outcry made Touvier disappear without a trace and – the original capital charges against him having lapsed after twenty years – a new *sine die* charge of crimes against humanity was preferred. In the late 1980s a journalist, having infiltrated the ultra-right lay order of the *Chevaliers de Notre Dame*, who were sheltering the 'vanished'

Touvier, finally led police to his bolthole. The 50-minute documentary on the whole unsavoury affair (shown on BBC 1 in late April) ended with the ominous words: 'There are many people in high positions in France who hope the case never comes to trial'.

The documentary could hardly be faulted. It stayed rigorously factual, and except for one shot of corpses, eschewed pictorial horror. The soundtrack may have been overly liturgical, and the camera work a bit tricky, but I have only one serious quibble: when the commentator reported the Parisian Archbishop Lustiger's refusal to disband the *Chevaliers de Notre Dame* he omitted any reference to Lustiger's own Jewish origin. □ R.G.

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EXHIBITION

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Ex-Service [1943] Association

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Please confirm to Mr. R. R. Kennard,
9 Ashbourne Road, London W5 3ED that you will be attending.

Ex-Service [1943] Association

We would like to establish in our Association a section for Ladies who have served during the war in any of the Armed Services. The only qualification necessary to join us is that they were born on the Continent of Europe.

Anybody interested should contact the Hon. Secretary Mr. R. R. Kennard, 9 Ashbourne Road, London W5 3ED.

Property claims in East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

Pritchard Englefield & Tobin is a 22-partner international law firm with offices in London, Frankfurt and Hamburg, and well over a dozen German-speaking lawyers.

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While the situation is still very uncertain, it is advisable to find out what has happened to these properties and to submit an early application to the local German authorities in the district where the property is situated.

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