

AJR Information

Volume XLVI No. 4
April 1991

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Don't miss . . .

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Shoa debate update

Le Pen is fined heavily for dismissing the holocaust as a bagatelle. Austrians denying the existence of Auschwitz are to be constrained by law. The DDP takes action against Lady Birdwood for disseminating *Stürmer*-type literature.

Simultaneously Edward Heath made a contribution to the debate on the War Crimes Bill that defies rational analysis. The man who as Prime Minister displayed the vision to take Britain into Europe spoke in tones that fill one with a mixture of disbelief and horror. For an elder Western statesman to endorse the self-exculpating we-only-obeyed-orders chorus of the accused at Nuremberg is bad enough; but for him to describe Jewish representatives seeking belated punishment for heinous crimes as vengeful Shylocks awakens echoes of what was shouted from Nuremberg's rooftops for twelve years before the Trial.

Different, and yet the same

Exodus – then and now

This Passover editorial was written on the Feast of Esther – ever a time of crisis. In pre-Purim days when Jews met in Moscow one would ask the other 'Are you off to Saddam's War, or are you staying for ours?' 'Ours' in this context meant the incipient war of all against all – but especially against the Jews – that threatens to engulf the unravelling Soviet Empire.

As we know, many Russian Jews elected to brave the palpable danger of Saddam's Scud missiles rather than the incorporeal but ever-present threat of Pamyat-instigated pogroms. How fittingly symbolic that we should celebrate this year's Passover against the backdrop of the greatest Jewish exodus in modern history! Some forecasts predict that the influx of Soviet immigrants into Israel will ultimately increase the population of the Jewish State by

between a quarter and a third. This will inevitably set up tensions as new *olim* compete with 'natives' for jobs, housing and social service provisions. Even so, however great the strain on Israel's social fabric, no one is going to tell the newcomers to go back to their own country.

The absence of this jibe from the Israeli vocabulary constitutes the crucial difference between immigration into the Jewish State and any other on earth.

Israel, of course, pursues a policy of 'ingathering exiles'. It is, however, not totally unique in so doing. The Federal Republic receives ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, and former DDR residents, but its citizens show little affection for the newcomers.

Of late the catchphrase 'All men are Jews' has gained a certain currency in intellectual circles. It implies that modern man facing ecological disaster or social disintegration shares the archetypal Jewish experience of alienation.

The superficiality of the catchphrase can be gleaned from the reaction to immigrants in even the most prosperous and pluralistic societies.

Germany, Croesus of the EEC and the object of praise for unifying without nationalist triumphalism, has a much disparaged underclass of (mainly) Turkish *Gastarbeiter*. Guest workers have also met with much antipathy in those oases of neutrality and *bien pensant* prosperity, Switzerland and Austria. France, with several million North African immigrants, 'boasts' the numerically strongest racist party in the whole of Europe.

Not that the number of immigrants is directly proportionate to the degree of hatred they arouse. The now defunct DDR imported around fifty thousand Vietnamese guest workers who are current targets of vicious – and sometimes lethal – assault by neo-Nazi skinheads.

In the 1990s immigration, and its attendant problems, bids to move to the top of the global agenda. Driven by hunger, millions will want to cross the metaphorical Rio Grande separating their squalid homelands from the *goldene medines* of North America and Western Europe. That this, too, forms part of the Jewish experience, is something it behoves us to remember during Passover 5751.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The Association of Jewish Refugees in
Great Britain advises Members and
Friends that the Annual General Meeting
will be held on**

THURSDAY 6 JUNE 1991, 7.30 p.m.

at

15 CLEVE ROAD, LONDON NW6

A talk will be given by

Rabbi Hugo Gryn

Full details and Annual Report will appear in
the May issue.

Red top brass

Major General Filatow, who is about to reprint the Protocols of Zion in the Soviet *Journal of Military History* (AJR Information March issue), flew to Baghdad just before the land war started. He said Soviet experts had done a good job training Saddam's soldiers. 'These people are very cunning. They have prepared a lot of traps. The Americans will find some and fall into others. Blood will flow in torrents,' he warned. □

An historic first

The Lubavitch movement organised the distribution of Purim parcels for 2,000 Jewish American soldiers serving in the Gulf. Interestingly enough, this was the first time in some 1,300 years that Purim was celebrated in Arabia. □

Hamburg combats amnesia

An exhibition *Four Hundred Years of Jews in Hamburg* will open on 7 November 1991, fiftieth anniversary of the start of deportations from the Hanseatic port. One key exhibit will be a *menorah* donated to the community in 1662 by Jews fleeing Chmelnitzki's pogroms. Another will be an illuminated *ketubah* dated 1648; the groom listed in that marriage contract was Manuel Isaac Texeiras, Royal Swedish emissary to the Hanse and donor of the copper roof of St Michael's church. The Hamburg Land committee of the FDP want to turn the exhibition into a permanent memorial to Hamburg Jewry, a community which in its heyday numbered over 20,000. □

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Child carer



Elizabeth Ney.

Photo: Newman.

Elizabeth Ney's family had lived in South-West Germany for generations. She assumes that they migrated to Württemberg in the 1700s, having previously lived in Hohenems. This small Austrian town near the Swiss border hosts an annual Schubert Festival often attended by (the older) Miss Ney. Love of music ran in the family. Her mother played piano, her brother violin; a more distant violin-playing relative was Albert Einstein. Professionally the Neys were engaged in the textile and leather trades.

Elizabeth came to England in the Nazi-shadowed Thirties. Since she was unhappy as a domestic, Woburn House-based Anna Schwab arranged for her to attend Secretarial College on a loan, to be repaid out of subsequent earnings. After a stint with the scriptwriter of *The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel* she went to work in Mrs Schwab's office, moving with her to Bloomsbury House.

Initially her brief was the placing of domestics as well as catering to the manifold needs of refugee children. After a while the 'Movement for the Care of Children' took up all her time. Work with the *Kinder* only ended in 1948 and included the post-war settlement of young Holocaust survivors in Britain. In all this she derived guidance and support from such pivotal figures in Refugee Aid as Joan Stiebel, Mrs Gerstley and Mrs Blond.

Hereafter Elizabeth took a Social Work diploma at LSE and served in various localities - London, Nottinghamshire, Surrey - as a Child Care officer, rising to a position where she herself supervised students. In retirement since 1976 she has added art appreciation to music as a favourite leisure time pursuit, though failing

eyesight and other disabilities have, increasingly, restricted her scope.

Fortunately, a ticket scheme for the disabled operates in London, under which volunteers take them to plays and concerts. Recently one such volunteer and her husband drove Elizabeth home from a concert at the Festival Hall. En route, they passed the unfinished British Library building which is festooned with blow-ups of such all-time greats as Darwin and Einstein. The sight of the latter prompted Elizabeth to say 'Einstein was my uncle; I still have a postcard he sent me'. 'And I know exactly what he wrote on that postcard', said the volunteer's husband, Mr H. Smolins, a former Physics lecturer steeped in Einstein's life and work. (The postcard is the famous one where Einstein, to compensate Elizabeth - who had never seen him - for her exclusion from a family outing, sent her a description of himself as having a modest paunch, angular gait and a cigar in the mouth.)

Miss Ney shares many of her famous relative's attributes: modesty, musicality, a strong inclination to do good. Unlike him, she is only known to a few. But those she has helped remember her down the years: two former *Kinder* do her weekly shopping now. □ RG

THE STORY OF OUR GROUP!

The London Leo Baeck Institute
has just published

Second Chance Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom

Co-ordinating Editor
Werner E. Mosse
Editors

Julius Carlebach, Gerhard Hirschfeld
Aubrey Newman, Arnold Paucker, Peter Pulzer

Over thirty authors write on different aspects of the history of the refugees from Central Europe who came to this country fleeing Nazi persecution. They also trace the story of those who had come before them seeking a new life in the United Kingdom.

This volume marks the first systematic attempt to evaluate the German-Jewish experience in Britain. It covers the process of migration, including the legal and administrative problems that needed to be overcome, the patterns of settlement, the difficulties of adaptation and the two-way process of integration. The essays in this collection show both what the newcomers received from British society and what they were able to contribute. In attempting to draw up a balance sheet the evidence suggests that for both parties the movement to Britain of German-speaking Jews was an advantageous bargain neither side had cause to regret.

Until 30 June 1991 *Second Chance* can be bought for the Special Subscription Price of £36.00.

This offer only applies to the United Kingdom and is only available through

Leo Baeck Institute
4 Devonshire Street
London W1N 2BH.

Sir Yehudi at 75

Prodigy, polymath and publicity seeker

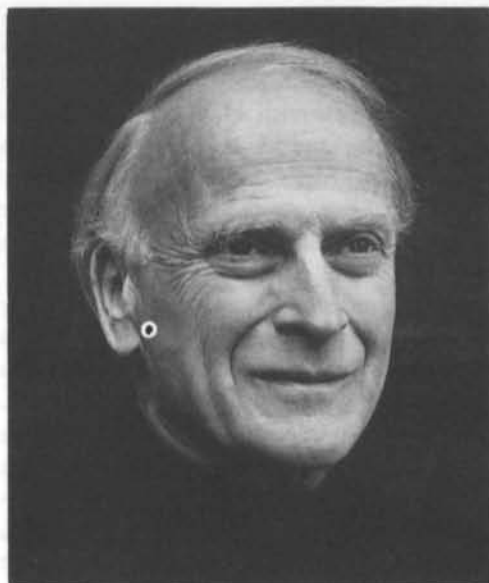
On 22 April Sir Yehudi Menuhin celebrates his 75th birthday. Although New York-born, he belongs to the élite of Jewish violin virtuosos who originated in Russia. His father Moshe was the scion of a rabbinical dynasty in Gomel, White Russia. His mother hailed from the Crimea. They named their first born son Yehudi, which in Hebrew means 'the Jew'.

No performing art has produced as many child prodigies as violin playing: Joachim, Sarasate, Ysaye, Hubermann, Kreisler, Elman, Milstein, Heifetz. Most reached the summit of excellence between the ages of ten and twelve. What was special about the child Yehudi was the fact that he was hailed as an accomplished musician from his earliest beginnings. Audiences were fascinated beyond belief by his deeply moving interpretations of the classics. There he stood, clad in velvet shorts, making people completely forget his age and all technical difficulties, involving them in a musical experience of immense depth and beauty they were never likely to forget.

Peaked at thirteen

Menuhin reached his peak with his Berlin debut on 19 April 1929, three days short of this 13th birthday, an event which has gone down in music history as the 'Concert Of The Three Bs', because he played 3 violin concertos – by Bach, Beethoven and Brahms – to an ecstatic audience. After the concert Professor Albert Einstein embraced the boy in the artists' room and exclaimed 'Now I know that there is a God in heaven!'. Menuhin maintained this superb standard of performance for more than a decade. His recordings during the thirties, since transferred to LP records, are ample proof of the unparalleled excellence of his artistic achievement.

One day, usually during adolescence,



Sir Yehudi Menuhin.

every *wunderkind* has to face the moment of truth when he ceases to be a prodigy. Everything one did instinctively or subconsciously before, suddenly begs analysis in conscious terms. This crisis confronted Menuhin later than usual, at 27. Midway through World War II he suffered a breakdown leading to a sudden and steep decline of his violinistic potential. This necessitated an interruption of his normal concert schedule for several years, during which he underwent intensive studies of a technical nature under the guidance of two prominent teachers, Theodore and Alice Pashkus of New York.

Diversification

He eventually returned to the concert platform, but it soon became obvious to many (and particularly to those who remembered his peak in the thirties) that he no longer engendered the magic that had so delighted the music world in the past. Although he never referred to this tragedy – and it must be regarded as such – he realised the change that had drastically affected his career. This was in all probability the reason that prompted him to change course and branch out into activities not normally pursued by violin virtuosos. He formed his

own chamber orchestra, commenced an entirely new career as conductor, started a music school for gifted children in Surrey, organised annual music festivals in Bath and Gstaad, and wrote 13 books; in short, he engaged in feverish activity which made him the most talked about musician of our time. To help him achieve universal popularity he set in motion a public relations campaign of gigantic proportions. With the exception of Niccolò Paganini no violinist has ever generated as much publicity as Yehudi Menuhin. He used television as the chief means for advertising his numerous enterprises. Programmes featured him rehearsing orchestras, conducting violin master classes, entertaining friends at intimate chamber music sessions, teaming up with the famous jazz fiddler Stéphane Grappelli, and being interviewed by Jimmy Savile and other TV personalities.

Elitist

Some of his PR exercises bordered on gimmickry. A few years ago a newspaper photograph showed him standing on his head, conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Beethoven's 4th Symphony with his feet. To crown it all, a recent television programme entitled *Menuhin – A Family Portrait* afforded viewers an almost embarrassing insight into the artist's domestic circumstances. A subsequent interview in the *Independent* hardly generated good publicity. Menuhin emerged as an elitist, a man who likes to mingle with the mighty and takes a poor view of ordinary folk. Told that he had an abnormal childhood, he retorted crossly 'It was just different from being dragged up in the street, from going to school every day – and American schools always smell, they smell of feet'.

One must, nonetheless, admire Yehudi Menuhin's fighting spirit, and the endurance with which he turned adversity into one of the greatest musical success stories of this century. Knowing that he will never retire one wishes him many more years of active life. □ J. Rotter

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Re-working a legend



Illustration: Horst Hessel.

The legend of the Prague Golem has inspired writers as diverse as Gustav Meyrink and Egon Erwin Kisch. It has also provided material for film makers. A 1950s Czech film showed the Golem as a Frankenstein monster capable of wreaking destruction on its creator. Currently a much more sensitive variation of the story, entitled *The Golem of Princelet Street* is being filmed by Brett Turnbull, a Zimbabwe-born Jewish director.

The film's action takes place mostly around the derelict synagogue in Princelet Street, off Brick Lane in Spitalfields. The protagonists are both immigrants – a Muslim boy and an elderly Jewish character loosely based on a former occupant of the synagogue who was allowed to live in its attic for 30 years because of his lack of financial means. The plot revolves around the touching friendship which develops between the elderly recluse and the young Muslim.

Yusef is a recent immigrant from Bengal, seen as somewhat of a 'yokel' by his London-wise contemporaries. After school hours he is employed in his uncle's rag-trade sweatshop. Whilst on a lone expedition exploring the seemingly abandoned synagogue he unexpectedly meets its sole inhabitant, Mr Levy. The chance meeting is the beginning of a difficult relationship between the two who, although kindred spirits, are separated by widely differing cultures.

They overcome these difficulties, how-

ever, and Yusef helps the old man to clean up the synagogue. In return he is taught how to be a 'real' tailor, learning on the antique sewing machine with which Mr Levy makes costumes for manikins constructed from potatoes and forks.

In time, Levy tells the boy the story of the Golem. It becomes a shared fantasy which forms a central part of their relationship.

Unfortunately, the synagogue is due for demolition and the poised bulldozers threaten to destroy the old man's home, his links with the past and his new friendship. The two loners decide to build a Golem in the builders' yard and bring it to life with cabalist magic. Mr Levy, afraid of disappointing Yusef, refuses to incant the spell, making excuse after excuse to postpone the boy's disillusionment. Levy's equivocation exasperates Yusef and the two quarrel. The old man returns to the synagogue alone to prepare for his inevitable eviction while Yusef, determined to see the affair through to the bitter end, remains in the yard. There he is joined by some of the local boys who manage to get him drunk in order to play a cruel trick on him. They destroy the Golem and substitute the stripped, muddled and unconscious Yusef in its place. Levy prays throughout the night, unaware of this development.

At dawn Levy returns to the yard for a last look at the clay figure. Miraculously, it comes to life as Yusef revives. The boy's befuddled state maintains Levy's illusion that he has created an artificial man. This misunderstanding results in a tragi-comic stand against progress in which Levy and his 'Golem' win an unexpected victory. But, the triumph is fleeting as reality, inevitably, takes over with tragic results.

The film's director says that his interest in the story of the Golem was reawakened during a visit to the Old Jewish Quarter of Prague in the mid-eighties. He had heard the story as a child and, on returning from Czechoslovakia, read the Gustav Meyrink version. Having lived in the East End for ten years he was looking for a way to compare the old Jewish immigrant community with the present one of Bengali Muslims. He used the re-working of the Golem legend to achieve this aim.

In these troubled times, when 'Scud' and 'Jihad' are becoming household terms, it is refreshing to find a work like this which promotes tolerance while others rejoice in cultures clashing.

The film will be entered for competitions and festivals internationally; if successful it will be shown on British television later this year.

□ M.N.

For Habsburg and Herzl

Drüben am Wiesenrand/hocken zwei
Dohlen/Fall ich am Donaustrand,
sterb ich in Polen;/ Was liegt daran./
Eh sie meine Seele holen,/kämpf ich als
Reitersmann.

The verse may be a little uneven, but the sentiment was transparently sincere: the writer of the Austrian Cavalry Song died in action in 1915.

Hugo Zuckermann was born exactly 110 years ago at Eger (Cheb), Bohemia. He grew to manhood in the *fin-de-siècle* when anti-semitism was becoming a not-to-be-overlooked political phenomenon in the Habsburg State. Since his comfortably situated assimilationist parents resolutely closed their eyes to it Hugo grew up with a divided sense of identity. Sharing his father's Habsburg loyalties he nonetheless became an enthusiastic Zionist.

He steeped himself in the Old Testament, wrote biblically inspired poetry, participated in a Jewish Theatre project and served as delegate to Zionist congresses. His Habsburg patriotism found expression when, while working as a lawyer, he adumbrated constitutional reform ideas designed to prevent the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy.

The same Habsburg patriotism prompted him to volunteer as soon as the Great War broke out; characteristically he also dubbed this step his 'revenge for Kishinev' (site of the goriest Czarist pogrom).

Zuckermann died in May 1915 from wounds sustained on the Galician Front. His (non-Jewish) wife committed suicide at his graveside. □ R.G.

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Reviews

The tongue in exile

Ilse R. Wolff (Ed) *DOCH DIE SPRACHE BLIEB. Eine Prosa-Anthologie des PEN-Zentrums deutschsprachiger Autoren im Ausland*. Bleicher Verlag. DM 34.00

This unique anthology by authors who fled Nazi Germany, as well as by postwar emigrants, brings together real and fictitious biographies. Some contributors consider the degree of integration into the countries of resettlement, describing their unaccustomed environment with love, but also, often, with the distance of the newcomer.

One of the gems of the collection is the essay *Unsere Strasse in London* by the recently deceased Egon Larsen. Written in 1970, it describes the street in North-West London, and its cosmopolitan population, which was Larsen's habitat. The prewar houses, originally built for middle-class families with servants, were gradually partitioned into self-contained flats. Others remained undivided and were shared by several occupants. One such had been turned into an Old Age Home for Jewish refugees who, once accustomed to comfortable flats on the Continent, now lived in greatly reduced circumstances.

Wrapped up in an allegorical story, a moving description of the Kitchener Transit Camp in wartime is presented by Herbert Freedman, the one-time co-editor of *AJR Information*. The inmates, most of them former concentration camp prisoners, were cut off from their families. Backgrounds differed, but the lawyer from Mannheim and the fur trader from Leipzig, sitting on their field beds in the barracks, were, alike, near to breakdown. 'The first bombs will drop on Kitchener Camp', one man desperately exclaimed. Many who had not observed the Holy Days before attended the Rosh Hashana service; prayer suddenly had a topical meaning.

Many German Jewish refugee lives are mirrored in the reminiscence of octogenarian Hamburg-born Rudolph R. Bachner, now retired to the beautiful township of La Jolla, California. He recalls his youth under the Kaiser with its annual Sedan celebrations, the First World War, the collapse of the Weimar Republic and his subsequent personal odyssey. From France, his first

refuge, he escaped via the Pyrenees, a hazardous route taken by many without success. Now he lives by the Pacific, free of professional duties and financial worries, but lonely, in declining health and full of memories of the crises he had to go through. A fate more or less shared by many of his generation.

Another life story is encapsulated in the contribution of Peter Baiken, a postwar emigrant to the U.S.A. He describes meeting a highly cultured, elderly lady from Vienna who, after emigration, uncomplainingly faced a life of domestic service and manual work. She never referred in her conversation to what had happened to her after the *Anschluss*, this only became apparent after her death, and in very curious circumstances. Among her belongings an old toothbrush was found, wrapped in a piece of newspaper. The cutting gloatingly referred to the 'revenge' against the Jews, who, having 'dirtied' Vienna's streets, now had to clean them. The toothbrush had been used for this cruel scrubbing job. A story both impressive and well told.

The difficulties of integration into the new environment are dealt with by H. G. Adler. He writes about an invisible wall separating his family from the indigenous residents of *Schaeferheide* (Shepherd's Bush). Though this barrier gradually lessens it never disappears.

Manuel Wisnitzer's piece on Arnold Zweig exemplifies the problems of German-speaking intellectuals in Eretz Israel. Here the use of all languages other than Hebrew (including Yiddish) was discouraged; German, the language of the enemy, was positively shunned. Ironically, the most prominent victim of this linguistic discrimination was Arnold Zweig, a lifelong Zionist and the only top rank German-Jewish writer to choose Palestine as his country of emigration. He lacked an outlet for his literary activities: one of his great disappointments was the rejection of his play *Bonaparte in Jaffa*, written under the impact of his first encounter with the Mediterranean world, by the *Habimah* Theatre.

The skilful editorship of Ilse Wolff has welded these diverse contributions into an organic entity, and the anthology is enhanced by a biographical index of its 44 authors.

The book is available at the European Bookshop, 4 Regents Place, London W1.

□ Werner Rosenstock

Israel's Havel?

The CLIVE JAMES INTERVIEW
Broadcast 10 February 1991, BBC2

February 10th was a red letter day: a prominent Israeli was *not* being harassed on British TV. Clive James conducted the encounter as a thoughtful interlocutor, and not, as usual, the scourge of unimportant foibles.

Amos Oz, Israel's most distinguished novelist and advocate of peace with the Palestinians, was the perfect interviewee. Though the Gulf War kept him in his homeland – the interview was conducted via satellite – he displayed Jewish gallows humour, saying that if Israelis could currently see light at the end of the tunnel it meant that their gas-proof safety room was not properly sealed. More seriously, Oz opined that 85 per cent of the Israeli population supported restraint in the face of Scud attacks and he argued that the latter made a mockery of the worn-out strategic concepts of secure borders.

Saddam, he thought, wanted war even more than he wanted Kuwait, and while he, Oz, strove for peace he did not abjure war under all circumstances. Force was justified in defence of the homeland, but not in such 'optional' tactical manoeuvres as the Lebanon incursion which he condemned.

Pressed on the question of PLO support for Saddam, Oz replied that one couldn't choose one's enemies the way one chose one's friends.

James' reminder to Oz that he had been called a 'traitor' drew the smiling, but firm, response that anyone who engages with sincerity in politics must bear such denigration with pride, like a medal.

Amos Oz has advocated partition, almost the building of a wall between Palestine and Israel – a solution embarrassingly reminiscent of that of fanatics at the other extreme of the political spectrum who want the Arabs 'transferred'. He defended his concept: the house must be shared, but divided so that the families can develop without constantly rubbing against each other. He refused to concur with what he sees as the cynical despair of the Shamir Government. A future Arab-Israeli agreement, as envisaged by him, will not be a love feast, but a peaceable standstill 'with clenched teeth'.

□ John Rossall

Between playground and killing ground

THE OUTLANDER, Broadcast 28 January and 4 February, BBC Radio 5

April de Angelis' play accommodated at least three themes: the Holocaust, the woes of puberty, and a controversial theory of history teaching.

It may be said that this is too rich a mixture for an hour's play, like the layer cake which plays a minor part in it. But overcoming the very disadvantages of radio compared to TV made this gentle *tour de force* possible. In surreal flashes, discreetly underscored by the strains of Beethoven's *Pastoral*, the play made the listeners live, for a brief while, in two worlds. Its heroine, underachieving Gayle is a prickly outcast among her peers. She has six fingers on one hand and bears daily persecution by her class-mates now with despair, now defiance; their persecution includes the comment that freaks like Gayle should not be allowed to live.

Back in time

One day she visits a department store to buy gloves to conceal her crippled hand. She drifts into the music section where she is suddenly approached by three young people speaking broken English. One, Sophie, has vodka, a gun, and a chocolate layer cake. Gayle goes with them into the street . . . and finds herself in the Warsaw Ghetto. The rough voices of Nazi Jew hunters drive them into flight . . . and Gayle comes to in the department store.

Bathos follows tragedy; she is interrogated at her school as to why a girl of St Ignatius was 'inebriated' in public. But Gayle keeps her own stubborn counsel; she reads up about the Holocaust at the local library.

Back at school the bullies harry her relentlessly, and she fights them. As she does so she finds herself back in the Ghetto in the thick of a Nazi 'action'. People are hunted to the trains. Sophie asks Gayle where she comes from, and gets the reply: 'Forty-eight years from now.' Her friends are only concerned with resistance. They want her to 'go out' to bring weapons - petrol if all else fails - and a whimsical chocolate cake. Gayle is beaten by the guard for not wearing the yellow star, but instead of being dragged to a transport she is pulled out of the schoolyard *melée* . . . with a black eye. From then on she constantly goes about with a rucksack containing a can of petrol, a

chocolate cake and a Beethoven record. She is thus seeking to get back to the Ghetto and back in time to help her friends. No wonder she is sent to a psychiatrist.

Finally running away from home, she is thrown out of a vehicle in the middle of nowhere . . . There, as she lies frozen and abandoned, bloodstained Sophie appears to her, a heroine of the Warsaw Uprising. When Gayle wakes Sophie is lost to her, but she has found herself. History gives her a passport to her hostile peers . . . she can tell them how 'her friends' lived and died.

The author took a great risk with her inclusion of this 'history' theme but she integrated it convincingly and movingly.

□ J.R.

Aftermath of war

Jacki Kohnstamm THE HOUSE AT No. 9 RUE FLEURIE, Broadcast 14 February, BBC Radio 4

The time of the play was the end of the Second World War, the place the pleasure resort of Monte Carlo. The protagonists were a handful of people living in a house owned by the Baums, a German refugee couple who had escaped to England, where the husband had died 'in freedom'.

Warsaw-born Mr Zilber administers the house for the widow, and does so with unerring conscientiousness. But he himself has to hide from the Germans, which he does with the help of the housekeeper and an Italian 'wide-boy', Mario. In any case, in Monte Carlo even the Nazis are preoccupied with the pursuit of pleasure, specifically gambling. At the casino one of the residents of the house, 'clairvoyant' Rosa, has done her bit for the Allied cause by foretelling the Nazi defeat.

Sunshine and roses

The great wartime events punctuate the lives of the protagonists. In fact the play unrolls backwards. Early on the Germans march out, accompanied by the distorted cadences of the Horst Wessel song. For a while they are still nearby, and gunfire can be heard. Then the Americans move in and Zilber reports to Mrs Baum on the state of her property, which he is having repaired. He fervently hopes that when the war is really over Mrs Baum will return and they will remember, over tea, bygone days of sunshine and roses.

Then the blow falls. Zilber hears that his entire family in Poland has perished. Near-suicidal, he is kept alive by his sense of duty and the sympathy of his tenants. When the half-starved residents celebrate New Year's Eve, Zilber begs Rosa to read his palm. Rosa, who doubts her 'gift', is very reluctant. Zilber wants assurance that Mrs Baum, and the good times, will soon return, but Rosa manages to stall him. Her mind is on other things; Mario, whom she abhors, and who had vanished, has returned in disguise.

Revenge trials

Sure enough Mario is the harbinger of disaster. To the accompaniment of martial music the revenge squads of the Resistance move in. Mario is tried as a collaborator, and since Zilber was connected with him he, too, is interrogated none too pleasantly. Zilber insists that Mario saved him without exacting payment. In fact, Mario had bargained for a rent cut. (I thought that this was no great extortion in return for a life.) Perhaps Zilber's white lie saved Mario; one was not told. But Mr Zilber is so upset that he can scarcely drag himself to a nearby barbershop where he collapses and dies. An impressive ending to a bitter-sweet, entertaining and imaginatively directed play.

□ J.R.



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TUESDAY AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

TUESDAY CIRCLE

Entertainment in the form of a variety of interesting and topical talks given by guest speakers on the first Tuesday of each month at 2.30pm followed by refreshments

SEW & SO

A social group of people meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 1.30pm to participate in making knitted, crocheted and embroidered items for synagogue and charitable functions

BRIDGE CLUB

All bridge players are welcome to join the Bridge Club which meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 1.30pm.

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Germany's 'gift' to Britain



Sir Claus Moser.

Presenting Sir Claus Moser for admission to an honorary degree at the University of Wales ex-Prime Minister Lord Callaghan said: 'If it is possible for good to come out of evil, Sir Claus Moser's presence here is such an illustration. Had it not been for the Nazis' racist persecution in pre-war Germany it is almost certain that Claus Moser would have grown up in Berlin and would in due course have made an outstanding contribution to the cultural and commercial life of Germany. Instead this country has been the beneficiary.'

When his family left Germany, Claus Moser was sent to Frensham Heights School, a rather unorthodox establishment.

Whether his parents were fully acquainted with its educational theories I have never asked, but the boy from Berlin would have had no difficulty in riding out any oddities of commuter-belt Surrey. He emerged unscathed only to be interned as an alien at the beginning of World War Two. We treat our friends very strangely, but Claus Moser used his detention to show a foretaste of what was to come and instructed his guards in the best method of organising their statistical records.

Later he joined the Royal Air Force where he served until 1946 when he became an Assistant Lecturer at the London School of Economics. By 1961 he was a Professor at the School.

It was no surprise when, in 1967, Prime Minister Harold Wilson invited Claus Moser to become Head of the Government Statistical Service. He brought not only the freshness of an outsider, but the strict methodology which gave new authority to reports on social policy and assisted in improving the quality of government decision making.

I have described only one part of a cultured man. He is Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and a Trustee of the British Museum. Even more important in his life is his love of music which led to thirteen years as Chairman of the Royal Opera House. At present he is Head of an Oxford College, Chancellor of Keele University, a Director of *The Economist* and also of a famous merchant bank. He has great personal warmth, is a tremendous conversationalist and, as those who know him best have testified, a man of instinctive and sympathetic understanding. □

Figarotively speaking

This journal scored a notable first in September 1989 when it published the Gillette History Theorem. The theorem postulates that a leader's character can be deduced from the proportion of the surface of his face covered by hair. The most malign Red Czars, for instance, were all hairy-faced: Lenin bearded, Stalin moustached, Brezhnev beetle-browed. German history provides even more cogent proof of the theorem's validity: when the four hirsute Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Bismarck, the Kaiser, Hindenburg and Hitler were followed by the clean-shaven Chancellors Adenauer, Brandt and Kohl, the rest of the world gathered that something fairly fundamental had changed in the *Vaterland*. Last, but by no means least, the Anglo-American architects of victory over Hitler, Churchill and Roosevelt, were clean-shaven.

Barbarian symbol

The same holds good currently of President Bush and Prime Minister Major. And, *pari passu*, what is it that luxuriates below Saddam Hussein's nose – if not the barber-crafted symbol of the barbarian?

In conformity with the Gillette theorem Iraqi top brass sport moustaches to a man. The ostentatious display of facial hair is, in fact, the *sine qua non* of leadership in the Arab world. Notable past examples were Kings Ibn Saud and Abdullah and President Nasser. Today's hirsute Sultans are Fahd of Arabia and Assad of Syria. The fact that they are also members of the U.S.-led coalition should deceive no one. *By their moustaches shall ye know them!*

Yasser stubble

If additional demonstration of the validity of the Gillette theorem is required one need look no further than Yasser Arafat. His perennial three days' growth of beard indicates aspirations to leadership doomed to permanent disappointment.

Islam teaches that God alone is capable of perfection. Since every Muslim craftsman tries to live in conformity with this venerable precept, carpet weavers in Isfahan deliberately introduce tiny irregularities into their handiwork. By the same token the Gillette History Theorem cannot account for miniscule inconsistency: what is that pepper-and-salt moustache doing snaking its way across Prime Minister Shamir's gnarled countenance? □ R.G.

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Afternoon entertainment –

APRIL

- Monday 1* CLOSED
- Tuesday 2* Piano and Cello Concert – Atalia Weiss (Piano) and Dominique Gurbois (Violin)
- Wednesday 3* European Songtime – Ariana Prussner (Mezzo) accompanied by Elizabeth Upchurch (Piano)
- Thursday 4* Music by The Bagatelles – Francoise Geller
- Monday 8* Making the Best of Old Age – A Chat with Irene White
- Tuesday 9* Hans Freund and Marion Lewis (Mezzo) with piano accompaniment
- Wednesday 10* An Hour of Variety, Songs and Tap Dancing – Joe Chisholm
- Thursday 11* Isabel Beyer and Harvey Dagul At The Piano
- Monday 15* Musical Cocktail – Barry Dawson
- Tuesday 16* Music That You Love – Sylvia Dorff (Soprano) accompanied by Mabel Witztum (Piano)
- Wednesday 17* Songs and Arias – Geoffrey Strum (Tenor) accompanied by Johnny Walton (Piano)
- Thursday 18* From the Good Old Days to Grand Opera – Eddy Simmons with Piano Accompaniment
- Monday 22* George Kanzaszi (Tenor) accompanied by Gerald Benson (Piano)
- Tuesday 23* Songs from Many Lands – Lola Rand and Sarah Aaronson accompanied by Sylvia Cohen (Piano)
- Wednesday 24* Recital – Bernard Wilcox (Tenor) and Valerie Monasi (Soprano) accompanied by Leslie Barnes (Piano)
- Thursday 25* Musical Entertainment by Estelle Maier and Pamela Majaro

The AJR at Work

Untrumpeted volunteer



Gary Leon on his 80th birthday. Photo: Newman.

Over the past decade a great number of the most painstaking and time-consuming tasks undertaken at the AJR offices have been performed by an unpaid volunteer.

Mr Gary Leon, who joined the AJR over thirty five years ago, first became a voluntary clerical worker when the offices were situated in Fairfax Mansions with the late

Mrs Trude Oettinger presiding over the Reception and Membership Department. At that time he was seventy years of age. Since then he has been a regular member of the office team. When the move was made to Hannah Karminski House, in 1987, Mr Leon came too.

During his ten years voluntary service Gary Leon has tackled a variety of chores with great good humour and patience. His sterling work in transferring the AJR's paper-based filing system onto computer discs and in arranging the international distribution of *AJR Information* has been invaluable. His approachability and good humour have often led to him being asked to give staff the benefit of his experience with both AJR related and personal problems.

This March Mr Leon reached his 80th birthday. He is still sprightly, extremely well organised and his popularity remains undiminished.

It is often said that no one is indispensable. This may be true, but, over the years, Mr Leon has come very close. Fortunately, it is unlikely that a replacement will be needed in the very near future since all the evidence points to Gary Leon having no trouble whatsoever in reaching a hundred and twenty.

The AJR would like to take this opportunity to thank Gary Leon for his dedicated service and wish him all the best in this, his 80th, year.

□ M.N.

APRIL

- Monday 29* Let's Be British – Songs and Stories of Ivor Novello, Noel Coward and Vivian Ellis – Presented by Audrey Samson
- Tuesday 30* Caspar Fawden (Tenor) Entertains With A Selection of European Songs and Opera, accompanied by Alexander Wells

MAY

- Wednesday 1* Music In Spring – Marianne Vidal (Soprano) accompanied by Joseph Phibbs (Piano)
- Thursday 2* The Beaufort Ensemble
- Monday 6* CLOSED
- Tuesday 7* Light Musical Entertainment – Shirley Gurevitz (Soprano) accompanied by Sylvia Cohen (Piano)
- Wednesday 8* The Channing Flutes Entertain with Ruth Newman

AJR

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**THURSDAYS 10 am–12 noon at
Hannah Karminski House, 9 Adamson
Road, London NW3**

No appointment necessary but please bring along all relevant documents, such as Benefit Books, letters, bills, etc.

Diary Dates

The Annual General Meeting of the AJR will be held on Thursday 6 June at the Paul Balint AJR Day Centre, 15 Cleve Road, NW3 at 7.30 p.m. As always, refreshments will be served after the meeting. This year the talk will be given by Rabbi Hugo Gryn. A large turn-out is expected for this, AJR Golden Anniversary Year, AGM.

One set of dates which everyone should keep in mind are the Open Days at the Residential Homes. The first one this year will be at Balint House on Sunday 9 June. Osmond House is opening its doors on Sunday 23 June. The dates for Leo Baeck and Heinrich Stahl Houses have yet to be finalised but, as soon as they are available we will announce them.

July sees the Golden Anniversary of the AJR. This 50th birthday celebration will be marked by a number of special events, not least a 'bumper edition' of *AJR Information*.

Our Annual Charity Concert will take place on Sunday 10 November at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in the South Bank Centre. All concerned look forward to this yearly get-together with happy anticipation.

Members should also look out for notice of an extra-special event planned for October in connection with the AJR's Residential Care Appeal. Although details have yet to be finalised it is expected that there will be a huge demand for places at this gala occasion. There will, however, be a limited number of tickets which will be distributed on a first come—first served basis, so watch this space for further details.

That about sums up the special events planned, so far, for this year. Details of these, and any others which occur as the year unfolds, will be publicised in *AJR Information*. □

WHO IS WHO IN THE AJR OFFICE

Administrator	Lydia Lassman
Editor, <i>AJR Information</i>	Richard Grunberger
Publications and PR Manager	Maurice Newman
Assistant to Administrator	Carol Rossen
Sheltered Accommodation	Katia Gould
Head of Homes Department	Ruth Finestone
Head of Social Services Welfare Rights Advisor	Agnes Alexander
Day Centre Organiser	Sylvia Matus
Volunteers Co-ordinator	Laura Howe
Membership/Reception	Sarah Hannon

APPRECIATION

Sir – As someone connected with the homes for two decades may I express my admiration of the great improvement over the last years. Osmond House, which houses the most frail, is well staffed and has a specially kind matron. New facilities such as invalid chairs and special bath facilities have been acquired since the late seventies. Activities are organised and clearly listed on a notice board. Also the staff on duty are named on the board in the entrance hall.

Leo Baeck House always seems to me a haven of peace when I see people there, whom I used to visit in former times at Eleanor Rathbone House as a volunteer.

A resident who moved from there to Leo Baeck 6 months ago, asked me to express her appreciation of the help she gets every Monday from a volunteer who assists her with her personal correspondence. She is nicely settled in her cosy little room, enjoys the good cuisine, the activities in the home and the outings by minibus to the Day Centre in Cleve Road.

I peeped through the glass front doors of newly opened Balint House when I visited the other 2 homes at the top end of Bishops Avenue last Sunday. It certainly looked welcoming with the elegant furniture in the

OUR DAY CENTRE NEEDS:-

Volunteer drivers to take people to and from the Day Centre in Cleve Road NW6. Also a volunteer hairdresser to give us some time each week.

Please contact SYLVIA MATUS/
RENEE LEE 071- 328 0208.

AJR CLUB

15 Cleve Road, London NW6

SUNDAY 21st APRIL at 3 p.m.

Harry Blacker (NERO), cartoonist
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Eleanor Rathbone House Avenue Road, London N6

Volunteer car driver needed to shop once weekly for elderly tenants.
Details from Laura Howe, AJR Office.
Tel: 071-483 2536

hall and the standard lamp spreading a friendly light. I am delighted that so many who had a hard life are finding a peaceful home in their declining years.

Southwood Lawn Road
London N6

Eva Trent

HOUSE ANGELS

Sir – Before her death I used to visit Mrs Ilse Bachner at least once a week in Heinrich Stahl House. On these visits I was able to observe at first-hand the immense care and kindness with which the devoted staff looked after her.

It was a greatly deserved recognition of all that the House had done for her over so many months when the Reverend Fine, speaking at her cremation, ended his address by referring to the many 'Angels' of the House who, with such devotion, had cared for her and look after the other residents in so exemplary a manner.

Barn Hill

Wembley Park

Anna Spiro

50th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Quotes of the month

In a Radio 3 discussion on the Gulf War entitled Cock-Up or Conspiracy Dr Yaqub Zaki of the Moslem Institute prefaced a denial that his theories of Zionist conspiracy were in any way antisemitic with the words 'As Sir Oswald Mosley said . . .'

The Independent, 19 February 1991

Iraq's deliberate pollution of the Gulf has been a propaganda boon for the West. Pictures of dying cormorants have done more to arouse public anger in Europe, especially Germany, than any evidence of President Saddam Hussein's cruelty to people.

Michael Binyon, The Times

Let them (the Palestinians) look for me. I have no phone in my bomb shelter and in my sealed room I cannot hear the telephone ring.

After the war, when 'Allah' is less great, don't call me, I'll call you.

Citizens' Rights Movement Knesset Member Yossi Sarid

Ten minutes with a map will show the utter unreasonableness of expecting Israel to withdraw from the heights of what it calls Samaria overlooking the coastal plain. No Scud missiles would be needed to destroy Tel Aviv: a few short-range artillery pieces would finish the job in no time.

Geoffrey Taylor, The Guardian

German honour

Peter Galliner, a longtime member of the AJR, has been awarded the Knight Commander's Cross (Badge and Star) of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic.

Foreign manager of the Financial Times 1947-60, and Chairman of the Ullstein Publishing Company, Berlin 1960-64, Mr Galliner headed the International Press Institute since 1975.

The award was made for his work in promoting press freedom throughout the world and strengthening Anglo-German relations. □

Tragic comic

Just over fifty years ago the Viennese cabaret performer Fritz Grünbaum died in the Dachau camp 'hospital' as a result of systematic ill-treatment and privation. Grünbaum had earned the special hatred of his jailers by the pointed anti-Nazi remarks he had made both on stage and in print in pre-Anschluss days. As a camp inmate he was put to work in the quarry, pulling a cart laden with stones; in the evenings he occasionally entertained fellow prisoners at clandestine theatre evenings. Among his Jewish KZ colleagues were the Socialist politician Robert Danneberg, the dramatist Jura Soyfer, Lehar's librettist Fritz Beda-Löhner and the Schlager composer Hermann Leopoldi. The last-named was the only one to obtain release (on the strength of a U.S. affidavit); all the others perished. □

VERSE AND WORSE

FRIEDELLE née FRIEDMANN

A change of name – effort misspent
On camouflaging wrong descent.
The right descent: a fall to death
With *Achtung* frozen on the breath.

GORBACHEV

Both *urbi* and *orbi*
Let's be nice to Gorby
Lest the Tartar increase
On his iron teeth.

THOMAS MANN

He told the Germans: 'As to books,
Trade in Mein Kampf for Buddenbrooks;
If you want lies, read Felix Krull's'.
They painted crossbones under skulls.

RILKE

His life spun round a narrow axis
Twixt praising Thurn and hailing Taxis
The *Adelsblatt* complained 'Herr Rilke's
Keeping dowagers on *shpilkes*'.

No masquerade

During the Gulf War a Jewish group in Vancouver collected money to buy gas masks for West Bank Palestinians. □

Memo to Genscher

The Los Angeles based Simon Wiesenthal Centre's leaders are meeting Ramat Gan officials to discuss possible legal action against German companies whose armaments have been used by Iraq to attack Tel Aviv. □

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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Please contact our German speaking partner Mr Hans H. Marcus or our resident German attorney Dr Karsten Kuehne at the following address:

Pritchard Englefield & Tobin, 23 Great Castle Street, London W1N 8NQ.
Tel: 071-629 8883 Fax: 071-493 1891

Alice Schwab

Art Notes

First of all – a correction: the price of the tickets for the Ben Uri Annual Picture Fair was £50, not £5 as stated in the February issue. Some wonderful pictures were available and plenty of bargains for purchasers with a discriminating eye.

The Evening Standard Art Machine exhibition at the Barbican Centre's Concourse gallery (25 April–16 June) is a 'hands-on' event. An enormous success at the 'Glasgow 1990' exhibition, it includes a giant sea monster, a depiction of the Venice Carnival and over 80 other specially created works. Children can try their skills at almost anything. Also at the Barbican Centre (level 3 foyer) is a delightful exhibition *Babies: Photographs* by Sue Packer, one of Britain's finest portrait photographers (17 April–2 June).

After his most successful *60 Years of Design* exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre, Abram Games has been invited by the Ben Uri Art Society to exhibit his designs for Jewish organisations and Israel in the gallery (15 April–12 May – Mon–Thurs 10–5, Sunday 2–5). The exhibition will be opened by Chaim Bermant, the author and journalist, and examples of Games's work will be available for sale.

In 1983 *Josef Herman* presented an album of 159 drawings and watercolours to the Tate Gallery. A small selection from these, mainly of Welsh miners and their work environment, will be on show in the Coffee Shop Gallery at the Tate from early



Mare with foals (1912). By Franz Marc (1880–1916).

Photo courtesy of the National Gallery.

April to late July. While at the Tate, the opportunity should not be missed to see the magnificent Max Ernst exhibition, (until 21 April). The superb collection of pictures has been drawn from public galleries and private collections all over the world. A comprehensive catalogue produced by Prestel-Verlag in association with the Tate, is available (price £17.95).

Ellen Kuhn, born in Germany in 1937, lived in the U.S.A. until she settled in Britain in 1961. A selection of her mixed media on paper and silk screen prints is at the Manor House Society (until 7 April). *Art London '91*, the 6th International Contemporary Art Fair is at Olympia (18–21 April). Over 120 galleries from 16 countries will be exhibiting over 3,500 works.

It is very gratifying to know that, despite financial restrictions, there is no let-up in acquisitions by the great national galleries. Until 21 April it is possible to see *Prints and Drawings: Acquisitions 1986–1990* at the British Museum. Among recent acquisitions are drawings by Henry Moore, Stanley Spencer, Vanessa Bell, William Roberts, Ceri Richards and David Bomberg.

John Bratby (born 1928) is a contemporary artist of considerable stature who during the 1950s was linked with the so-called 'kitchen sink' school. A retrospective exhibition of his work is at the National Portrait Gallery (until 27 May) and an illustrated book on the artist is being published to coincide with the exhibition (price £11.95). □

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ALL LEGAL WORK UNDERTAKEN



SEARCHING (?) QUESTIONS

Sir – I notice the mast-head of *AJR Information* no longer indicates that this is the journal of the Association of Jewish Refugees.

I would have thought that its Editor would strongly and loyally promulgate the views of the AJR Council and Association.

It is amusing to observe the special notice in the February issue to the effect that the views expressed by the Editor are NOT necessarily those of the Association.

Is there a contradiction somewhere along the line?

Linfields (Mr) K. L. Orpen
Little Chalfont

The change of masthead occurred in July 1983! It had to do with the 'look', and not the contents, of the journal. The note in the February issue was an indication not of divergence, but of editorial freedom. (Lord Beaverbrook allowed Michael Foot similar leeway.)

THE RETORT COURTEOUS

Sir – The review *A Unique Family* in the February issue reminded me of the following story:

Moses Mendelssohn had a correspondence with the anti-Jewish Johann Caspar Lavater. Lavater wrote to Mendelssohn *An Gott den Vater glaubt Ihr schon/warum glaubt Ihr nicht an Gott den Sohn?* to which Mendelssohn replied *Warum dem Sohn Kredit denn geben/Der Vater wird doch ewig leben.*

Norrice Lea E. M. Jacob
London N2

JORDANIC VERSES

*His Royal Shortness King Hussein
A fence is his shaky domain
He'll be Shiva sitting, it is feared
That is why he grew a beard*

*Old Yasser Arafat
Has more lives than a cat
The way things take their course
It looks like he backed the wrong horse.*
Mohl Netanya Ernest J. Sicher
Israel

LEARNED IGNORAMUSES, A VARIANT

Sir – Chaim, a pious Jew asks his friend Shlomo to join him for supper one Friday evening. Shlomo accepts, but says *I have to make hafdala first before I come to you.*

Chaim replies *One does not make hafdala on Friday, but Saturday night.*

Shlomo: *My late father always made hafdala on Friday night.*

Chaim: *Then your father must have been an Am-Ha-aretz.*

Shlomo: *Yes, that he was and a very famous one!*

Perceval Avenue W. Goddard
London NW3

SHADOW OF TEMPLE MOUNT

Sir – Francis Steiner fears for the democratic future of Israel, because it will be 'populated by Sephardi and Russian immigrants from very undemocratic countries'.

The early pioneers from Russia and Poland came from 'undemocratic' countries and started the *Kibbutzim*, a form of practical socialism which has survived the Russian and East European varieties.

I have no fear. Israel is now a more democratic country than present-day Poland with its rising anti-semitism.

Hatfield Margaret Toch
Herts

Sir – The Land of Israel contains over 1½ million Palestinians who have no vote. If this is not a flawed democracy, what is?

Roy Gardens P. Prager
Ilford, Essex

MAGGILOMANIAC AND UNCHARITABLE

Sir – Your note on the February letters page suggests that, like Mrs Thatcher – 'We are a grandmother' – you use the *pluralis majestatis* when writing your editorials. If such editorials were devoted to AJR's charitable purposes, this would, of course, be perfectly in order. *AJR Information*, however, is the journal of an organisation which unites under its umbrella people from right across the political spectrum, who cannot be bunched together under an editorial 'we'. I

had somehow been under the impression that charities are not supposed to use their publications to further political interests.

Wembley Park Ruth Willers
Middlesex

Strictly speaking, AJR is not a charity, but a friendly society, and the demand that editorials be confined to charitable matters is self-evidently absurd. Since developments in Israel concern all of us, we – including Ruth Willers (see August 1988 issue) – have long debated them in these columns. Why should I be excluded from the debate? Ed.

'EXECUTORS' RACKET

Sir – Several people contacted me following my letter in the July 1990 issue of *AJR Information*. I continue my three year struggle against the solicitor inflicted on me by my aunt's will, through the solicitors' complaints bureau. (Or rather, as they are so very compliant, now through the newly appointed Legal Ombudsman.)

It may be some value to readers if I mention another of the executor's tricks. He made the old lady appoint his wife as joint executor, so now avoids answering questions by referring to her. She is not a solicitor, but an accountant, and so is not subject to the discipline of the Law Society.

Dove Park Frank Selby
Hatch End, Pinner

CRI DE COEUR

Sir – I have come no nearer to finding out why we Jews are so bitterly hated. If Christians really do love Jesus, they will be grateful to us for providing him – but for some reason it doesn't work that way at all. In sadness and confusion.

Cricket Road Hans Hammerschmidt
Oxford

This letter has been reprinted without the unfortunate printers' error which appeared in the March edition, Ed.

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SB's Column

Statistics for opera goers. Visitors to London sometimes complain that there is little choice in the operatic repertoire when they come here for a limited period. They have a point: taking February 1991 as an indicator only three operas were produced at the Royal Opera House. During the same period East Berlin staged eighteen operas, West Berlin ten, the Vienna Staatsoper ten, Prague's Smetanatheater nine and Dresden's Semperoper eight. However, somewhat surprisingly, La Scala (Milan), La Fenice (Venice) and the Paris Bastille Opera only 'clocked up' two each. Perhaps it is not quantity, but quality, that counts.

Kleist in two versions. One of the lesser-known German classics of the early nineteenth century, Kleist's *Der zerbrochene Krug* (occasionally performed in the U.K. under the title *The broken jug*) has recently been the subject of widely differing interpretations. At the Deutsche Theater, East Berlin, a new version of the play pointedly compares corruption in judicial circles with conditions in present-day Germany, whilst the Vienna 'Burg' expanded it into a surrealistic piece of modern vulgarity. Emphasizing the erotic nature of Dorfriecher Adam's nocturnal adventures, the productions showed him arriving back from his conquest in the nude.

60 years ago. 1931 was a vintage year for light popular music on stage and screen. Paul Abraham followed *Victoria und ihr Husar* with his second tuneful operetta *Blume von Hawaii*; Robert Stolz composed the first German language film comedy, the musical *Zwei Herzen im Dreivierteltakt* (*Two hearts in waltztime*) which has since become one of the most frequently-heard evergreens of the period.

Birthday. Marianne Hoppe, the German actress, widow of the late Gustaf Gründgens, celebrated her 80th birthday. Extrovert and versatile, on occasion slightly eccentric, she is still a woman of many parts.

Obituary. The death is announced of Louis Segnier, one of the outstanding figures of the French theatre. He was 87. A great interpreter of the classics especially Molière, he joined the Comédie Française in 1939. Never surpassed as King Lear, Cyrano or Lorenzaccio, he came to Britain several times, appearing as Tartuffe at the St. James Theatre, London, and as Bourgeois Gentilhomme at the Edinburgh Festival. □

The perennial Protocols

As yet they are isolated voices lacking the decibel strength of a chorus. Edward Pearce hints at it in the *Guardian*. Andrew Faulds trumpets it in the House of Commons. Bob Beckman asserts it in his *Investors Chronicle*: the Israelis instigated the Gulf War.

Characteristically none of these self-appointed commentators has any title to political expertise. Pearce is a literateur, Faulds an actor and Beckman a market analyst. In fact Beckman's powers of analysis in his proper *métier* are such that the *Sunday Times* called him 'the man who always gets the markets wrong', and LBC radio dispensed with his services as resident financial guru.

Given this track record one hopes that subscribers to the *Investors Chronicle* will extend their scepticism about Beckman's stock exchange tips to his ramblings on what he terms the 'Zionist Factor'. Briefly his contention is that Hitler bears no blame for the Holocaust; the culprits are the 'Zionists for whom the sacrifice of their German and Polish brethren was a small price to pay for the acquisition of a homeland'.

In other words Beckman's 'analysis' is a rehash of the poisonous brew that Jim Allen served up several years ago in *Perdition*, his (unperformed, but published) play about

Nazi-Zionist collaboration in wartime Hungary.

However unpersuasive these carrion vultures feeding on charred remains may appear, they are dangerous because of their very persistence in the face of all proven facts.

The persistence of antisemitic poison in the atmosphere is even more pronounced in continental Europe. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are still producing toxic fallout ninety years after their first publication. No matter that in 1921 the *Times* Istanbul correspondent exposed them as a forgery perpetrated by Sergius Nilius in the service of the Czarist secret police. No matter that in 1937 the Swiss Court of Appeal handed down an identical judgment after judicial proceedings that had dragged on for two years (and in which Chaim Weitzmann appeared as a witness).

Today new editions of the Protocols pour off the printing presses in many countries: in the Polish language in Warsaw, in Serbo-Croat in Zagreb, in Russia for the *Pamyat* readership. The Swedish authorities felt compelled to close down the Stockholm-based Radio Islam after it broadcast what is readily available in Arabic print anywhere between the Atlantic and the Gulf.

Such a mass readership for the Protocols almost persuades one of the truth of Hitler's contention, advanced in *Mein Kampf*, that any lie will be believed as long as it is big enough.

□ R.G.

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FAMILY EVENTS

Birth

Schuman On 24 February 1991 to Gillian (nee Davies) and Martin Schuman the birth of a son, Jonathan Leo. First grandchild for Lotte Davies.

Deaths

Elkan Margaret Elkan (née Laquer) of Jerusalem died 18 March 1991 after a long illness in a Tel-Aviv nursing home. Mourned by her family and friends here and in Israel.

Hofheimer Erni Hofheimer (née Klebe, Fulda) dearly beloved mother and mother-in-law of Marion and Freddie, passed away on 18 March 1991 after a painful illness and much suffering. The example of her goodness and generosity and the memory of her kindness will remain forever in the hearts of her small and deeply grieving family.

Rosney George J. After many years of suffering George passed

away at Osmond House aged 69 years and 50 weeks. Beloved husband and father, devoted, unselfish, courteous and brave to the end. Thank you, George, for being ours. Ever loved by his wife Audrey, children Elizabeth and Clifford, sister-in-law and brother-in-law Isobel and Martin Saphir, nephews Julian and Andrew Saphir, cousin H. C. Mayer and family and many other friends.

Silver Miss Herta Silver of Heinrich Stahl House, Bishops Avenue passed away peacefully on the 2nd of February. She will be missed and remembered by all her friends.

Weiss Helene Weiss (nee Stanke) devoted wife of the late Erich, died peacefully at Mapesbury Lodge, Kilburn on 19 February 1991 aged 91. Much missed and fondly remembered.

Wolfson Hans Wolfson. On 4 March my dear brother died peacefully in Heinrich Stahl House. Sadly missed by his sister Lotte Kennett.

In memoriam

Weiss Karl Weiss who left me heart-broken March 1982, also Tommy who died suddenly March 1956 not quite eleven years old. 'To the world they were only grains of sand, to me they were the whole world.'

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Obituaries

Gitta Alpar

Gitta Alpar, operatic *diva assoluta* of 1920s Berlin, has died aged eighty-seven. The daughter of a Budapest cantor, she had studied singing, and made her debut at the local opera house in 1923. After guest appearances in Munich and Vienna she eventually, at Erich Kleiber's invitation, went to the Berlin Staatsoper and won acclaim as Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Then, abruptly changing genres, she starred in the early sound film *Die oder Keine*.

That title also summed up how Richard Tauber felt about her professionally. He made her his partner, and got Franz Lehár to compose *Schön ist die Welt* as a launching vehicle for the new team. Other operettas in which Gitta Alpar wowed the Berlin public were *Der Bettelstudent* and *Die Dubarry*.

The Nazi takeover in 1933 put an abrupt end to her career in Germany. It also ended her marriage to Gustav Fröhlich, whose opportunism in divorcing a Jewish wife contrasted with the steadfastness of an Albert Bassermann or Joachim Gottschalk.

Thereafter Gitta lived in Vienna, and did film and stage work before emigrating to the U.S.A. in 1936. Her last film role was in René Clair's *The Flame of New Orleans* (1941) starring Marlene Dietrich. There followed half a life time of obscurity offset by her return to Berlin in 1987; there, at the scene of her greatest triumphs, she collected the Golden Riband of the Germany film industry. □

André Kaminski

The author André Kaminski has died in Zürich, aged sixty-seven. The Geneva-born son of a Polish-Jewish psychiatrist, he had returned to his 'ancestral homeland' after the Second World War to participate in what he perceived, with the idealism of youth, as the building of Socialism. Trained as a television journalist in Warsaw, he went to North Africa in the late 1950s to report the independence struggle in Algeria; afterwards he helped set up that country's nascent TV service.

In 1968, when government-instigated antisemitism swept Communist Poland, he returned to his native Switzerland. For the next twenty years he divided his time between scriptwriting and directing for television, and creative authorship. He finally achieved widespread literary recognition with the publication, in 1986, of *Next Year in Jerusalem*, the tragicomic saga of a sprawling Polish-Jewish family. □

40 Years Ago
this Month

Old Acquaintances

Showcase Berlin: - 'I wonder how much longer the Americans will pay for this showcase of the West just to annoy the Russians?' said a Berliner. This month's column reaches you from Berlin after a short visit to Duesseldorf and a week's stay in Hamburg. Life in Germany looks still as incredible as a year ago, and more so. A new Kempinski Hotel is going up on Kurfuerstendamm on Marshall Aid, and this is what a third of Berlin's population is living on too. There is nothing you cannot get; the shops are full of goods you haven't seen in London for a long, long time. But they are so expensive that only very few people can afford the prices. You meet the same people in the same posh places again and again; every third person is on the dole. But now austerity seems to be in sight. The Berliners have the impression the Americans will stop putting up more money to show the East what free enterprise can do. But the Six Days race attracted the masses, and the whole town seems to live in a world of make-believe. And no doubt, Berlin still has a certain attraction for visitors because the spirit of the people is unbroken.
AJR Information April 1951.

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Geopolitical gobbledegook

The old Latin tag *Si vis pacem para bellum* – If you desire peace prepare for war – is currently being amended to 'If you desire peace after the war prepare for it during hostilities'. All sorts of postwar scenarios are projected, some hopeful, others not. The Oxford philosopher Michael Dummett predicts that the wrongs of neither of the most oppressed groups in the Middle East – the Kurds and the Palestinians – will be remedied after the war. To help the former he argues that Kurdish Northern Iraq be granted independence.

Dummett's blithe disregard of the fact that there are also irredentist Kurds in Syria, Turkey and Iran is all of a piece with his indictment of President Bush. The U.S.A., he alleges, caused the war by refusing to call a conference on Palestine as a *quid pro quo* for Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait.

Fifty years ago a similar case could have been made out for Britain's and France's guilt for the Second World War: after all, they had not put pressure on the Warsaw government to grant the demands of the Germans in the Polish Corridor. (Strange to relate, Michael Dummett is Professor of Logic (!) at Oxford University.)

A similar obfuscation of historical truth issued from the pen of Richard Gott. The leftist *Guardian* correspondent condemns UN action in response to Saddam's invasion because the world body took no action when he 'invaded Iraq'. In other words the highminded Gott disqualifies the United Nations from combatting *external* aggression – i.e. from preserving peace – because they do nothing about dictatorships *inside* countries. His prescription seems to be: establish parliamentary governments from China to Albania, and Ethiopia to Guatemala, before you prevent the takeover of one country by another.

Unsurprisingly Gott goes on to derogate the United Nations as an instrument of the

old imperial powers – 'as their League of Nations predecessor had been'. Hitler's and Mussolini's sentiments precisely! Not for the first time the views of Far Left and Right coincide. The French have a word for it: *les extrêmes ses touchent*. So, incidentally, did the Germans: *Gott mit uns!*

□ R.G.

Singular power, multiple guilt

Of late the spotlight of public interest has increasingly been turned on Allied ill-treatment of Germans – soldiers and civilians alike – at the end of the war. A recent television programme alleged that U.S. guards deliberately caused the death of between 50,000 and 100,000 POWs at Remagen camp. Though huge, those figures are only a fraction of the estimated casualties that resulted from the expulsion of Germans from Russian-liberated Eastern Europe.

Historians speak of over 2,000,000 fatalities among a total of 12,000,000 expelled – caused by a combination of cold, hunger and deliberate massacre. (One often-cited example was the drowning of 3,000 Sudeten Germans at Usti-nad-Labem.)

Such details are recalled in *Germany, The Empire Within* (Jonathan Cape) by Amity Shlaes, who nonetheless adds 'I find it hard to succumb to the pathos of these accounts'. Her comment prompted a reproof from the *Independent's* Edward Steen. Demanding dispassionate condemnation of all atrocities he argues that history, and above all the Holocaust, should be unharnessed from present political polemics.

Steen's prescription, admirable in its liberal even-handedness, leaves one key factor out of account. That factor is the degree to which an entire population partakes of the guilt of the dictator ruling them. Since no section of German society gainsaid Hitler – in contrast to Fascist Italy, whose army sabotaged orders to deport Jews from occupied territories – one concludes that the

people were complicit with the Führer. (Admittedly most victims of the expulsions had resided outside the Reich, but the vast majority of Czech and Polish *Volksdeutsche* were thoroughly nazified.)

The regrettable fact that virtually an entire nation may exhibit complicity with their dictator is also demonstrated by the recent history of Iraq. One of the repercussions of the 1948 Israeli War of Independence was the wholesale expulsion of long-settled Jewish populations from all the Arab states. Forty years on vestigial traces of Jewish life can, nonetheless, still be found in Morocco, Egypt and even Syria – but not in *judenrein* Iraq. Let it not be forgotten that even pre-Baath Baghdad scored a notable first in barbarism by publicly hanging 'Zionist spies' and bussing in parties of schoolchildren to observe the spectacle.

The notion that in a dictatorship, even of the Third World variety, all guilt originates from a single dictator is a highminded fallacy.

Equally fallacious is the idea that when it comes to apportioning guilt for wartime atrocities women can be exempt. It was an all-female audience in 1940 Berlin that cheered Hitler to the echo when he threatened, in response to some pin-prick RAF raids, to obliterate (*ausradieren*) English and French towns. And who can forget the procession of Palestinian women in Amman demanding that Saddam drop poison gas on Tel Aviv?

The fact that the Age of the Common Man (and Woman) has seen the concentration of power into ever fewer hands does not, by any means, rule out a widespread diffusion of guilt.

□ R.G.

Dutch treat

About 50,000 Israelis found a small surprise in their mailboxes during the Gulf War. This is the number of hand-written postcards offering prayers, love and support sent there by a group of Dutch Christians. □

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